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JESSICA CHASTAIN TRYING TO LEARN ITALIAN FOR HUSBAND

Actress Jessica Chastain has said that she is still trying to master Italian so she can speak to her husband Gian Luca Passi de Preposulo in his native language. Chastain has been married to Preposulo since June 2017 and the couple has two children, daughter Giulietta and son Augustus.

GoT STAR BELLA RAMSEY VOWS TO BE AUTHENTIC

Actress Bella Ramsey has vowed to present an authentic version of herself. Speaking to HELLO!, the Game of Thrones star said, "For me, it's all about being authentic, because I want people to know me as a person, not just some fabricated version of myself."



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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES
You will be very logical and rational today, as creativity is put on the back-burner. The situation at your workplace will be full of challenges, but you will take them head-on. Later, all the stress will be mitigated by the soothing touch of your loved ones, says Ganesha.

TAURUS
This day, you can't afford to take chances with your health, says Ganesha. If there is the least sign or symptom of illness, go consult a doctor straight away. As you are going to be unusually prone to injuries and infections, it is advisable that you stay at home. Over exertion is bound to weaken you and affect your physical condition.

GEMINI
Analysing other people's minds and thoughts will be your favourite pastime today. You will find yourself thinking about your family life, security and financial issues. Your sensitivity and emotional nature will endear you to many, and they will bestow their love and affection upon you, says Ganesha.

CANCER
The mundane will bring contentment to you today, and you will rather spend the day doing routine stuff. It looks set to be an ordinary day, but then you can always find thrill even in routine activities. Work will keep you on your toes through the day, but then as the day drags ahead, you may feel a tad bored.

LEO
You may experience some tension trying to stay ahead of your busy schedule. You will need to maintain your mental and physical health. Important meetings will conclude successfully, but they may leave you fatigued at the end of the day. Find ways to unwind, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
Today you will find yourself overflowing with ideas. You have a soothing touch, the hands-on healer, and so you will be able to help many people, says Ganesha. You will be very considerate, and your mind-reading abilities will work wonders both for you and your loved ones.

LIBRA
Ganesha says that you will behave unlike your nature and take a more serious attitude towards life. This is unlike you but your seriousness will give you the opportunity to take up further responsibilities that will prove to people that you can be responsible too. Ganesha says that towards evening you may visit an art gallery or a heritage or cultural place.

SCORPIO
Suddenly, you become conscious about your looks today, says Ganesha. How you look, how you dress-up and the way you walk, all becomes a matter of concern for you. All prim and proper, you imagine your self to be the best. Besides makeover, splurging is another activity that you indulge in.

SAGITTARIUS
Dark and gloomy shall be your temperament for most part of the day today. But the afternoon may just see the skies clearing. The apparent mood change, says Ganesha; will mainly be because of good news from abroad and business profits from your partner.

CAPRICORN
You have taken your personal relationships for granted but some irregularities in them have caught your attention. Now, you will focus upon them and try to get to the heart of the matter, feels Ganesha. Communication is the key when it comes to solving misunderstandings, and with that you will be able to clear out a number of them.

AQUARIUS
You have done back-breaking work to come this far. Today, you will see your efforts come to fruition. But, you need to be aware about the presence of the green-eyed people around you, especially if you are in some kind of a business, warns Ganesha. Take care of your health.

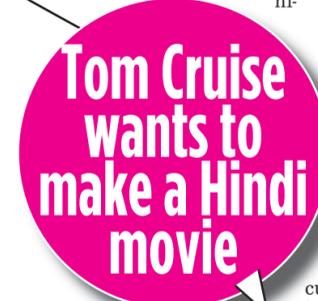
PISCES
Today you will be attracted by the heart and not the mind. This is usual for your star sign. Attempt to understand your emotions today. Ganesha says today you might figure out the way to control both your heart and your mind.

Neetu's regret

Mumbai: Actress Neetu Chandra has opened up about the lack of support she received from men in the film industry.

In a recent conversation, the actress revealed that despite her consistent efforts and talent, she was often met with doubt and questioned for not having an industry background. Instead of waiting for validation, she chose to build her journey step by step-gaining strength through theatre and creating her own opportunities when none came her way.

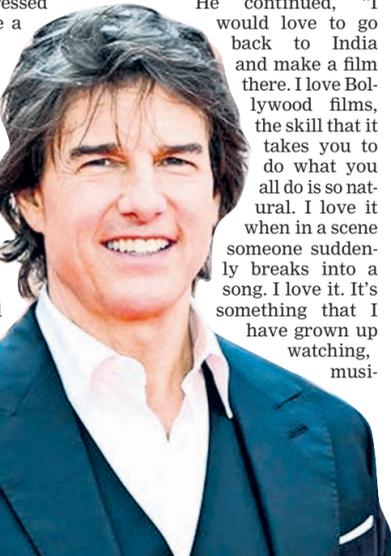
Neetu told this agency, "Generally, men haven't supported me much. They've questioned how I would make it, saying I lacked a background. But I never let go of my own hand. I kept building myself step by step. Earlier, I feared not getting work. But after more than a decade of doing theatre, I don't feel that fear anymore. If I don't find something that resonates with me, I create opportunities."



Mumbai: Hollywood legend Tom Cruise, who is releasing the final part of his Mission: Impossible franchise in India, is in love with Hindi cinema, and has also expressed his wish to make a Hindi film.

During the global promotions of Mission: Impossible - The Final Reckoning, Tom shared his memorable experiences and affection for Indian culture, cinema, and people.

He said, "I feel so much love for India. India is an amazing country, people, and culture. I have to say the whole experience has been etched in my memory. Every single moment. From the moment I landed, going to the Taj Mahal, and spending time in Mumbai, I remember each moment quite vividly."



Speaking about her experience of working in Bollywood, Chandra mentioned that she always wanted to do action films.

"Being a martial artist, Hollywood gave me my first opportunity, and I'm grateful. But my roots are in Bollywood. I debuted opposite Akshay Kumar and John Abraham at a very young age. I've always felt thankful to Bollywood-it gave me identity and courage. I've learned a lot from failures too. They've only made me stronger," shared the Garam Masala actress.

"I would love to go back to India and make a film there. I love Bollywood films, the skill that it takes you to do what you all do is so natural. I love it when in a scene someone suddenly breaks into a song. I love it. It's something that I have grown up watching, music from different countries. I love Bollywood movies. You can just break out into a song, it's so beautiful. I love the dancing, singing, the actors. That is such a unique experience and craftsmanship of the actors to be able to sing, dance, and act".

He further mentioned that he cannot wait to go back to India as he has so many friends here. The actor recollected meeting "such amazing people" in the country.



First look of Baghuni unveiled at Cannes



Bhubaneswar: Odia film Baghuni - Dance Like a Tiger has made history as the first-ever international co-production from Odisha to be unveiled at the 78th edition of prestigious Cannes Film Festival. Written and directed by internationally acclaimed filmmaker Jitendra Mishra, the film's first look was revealed May 15 at the Bharat Pavilion, hosted by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India.

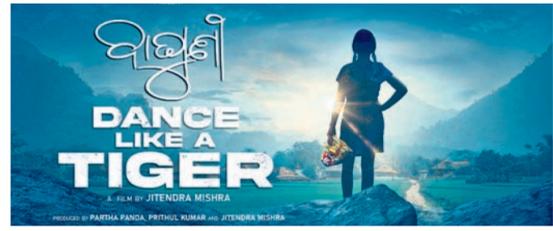
This landmark Odia feature is a joint venture between the National Film Development Corporation of India (NFDC), Glocal Films UK Ltd, and Cinema4Good Pvt. Ltd.

Odisha-born, London-based producer Partha Panda has partnered with NFDC for this project, marking a significant

return of the organization to Odisha after over two decades.

Starring actor Sabyasachi Mishra, Baghuni is a powerful story of resistance, resilience, and transformation, confronting deep-rooted societal traditions. Written & directed by internationally acclaimed filmmaker Jitendra Mishra, the script is penned by National Award-winning writers Shankhajeet De and Dr. Sulagna Mohanty, with Utpal Borpujari as script consultant and Susanta Mani as dialogue writer.

Set to be filmed across Odisha and London in September and October 2025, Baghuni will have a multilingual release across the country — Odia, Sambalpuri, Koshli, and Hindi, according to the makers.



Kaveri shares her idea of fame

Mumbai: Kaveri Kapur may belong to Gen Z, but she is no ordinary Gen Z artist. The daughter of filmmaker Shekhar Kapur and singer-actress Suchitra Krishnamoorthi has chosen to pursue a path that is quite different from what her peers are doing.

Kaveri was already an established musician and poet before she even turned her focus to films, having 4 music videos under her belt!

When asked about

her idea of fame, considering her famous pedigree, she said, "I want people to feel something real when they hear my music or read my poems. I want them to relate to the character I am playing. I want to establish a genuine connect with the people who see my projects and want them to resonate with me. That is the kind of 'fame' that I want to be known for."

The approach to self-expression for the Bobby Aur Rishi Ki Love Story actress is simple - to carve a path for herself, on her own merit.



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

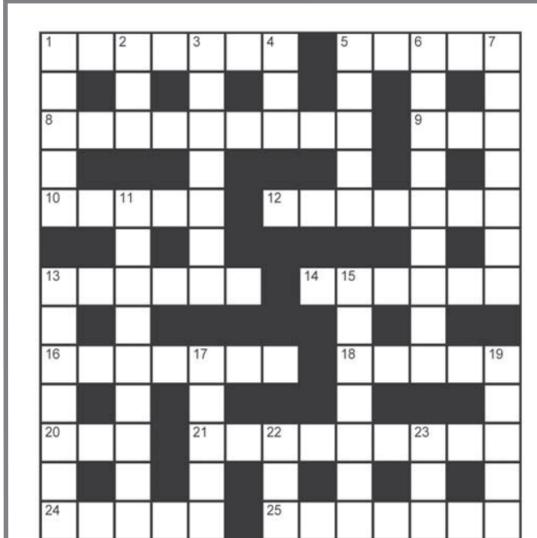


BREVITY



FUN post

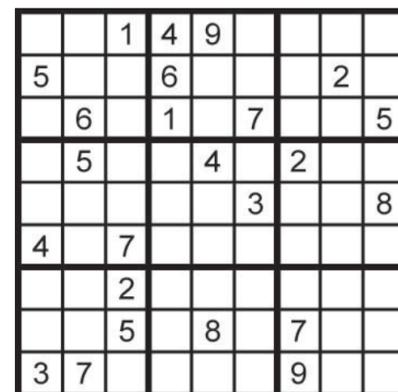
CROSSWORD



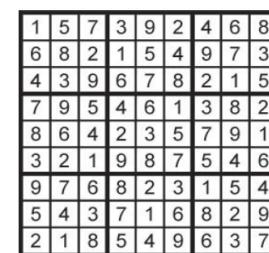
- Across**
- 1 Attila the Hun, for one
 - 5 Oomph
 - 8 Confess (4,5)
 - 9 Make a move
 - 10 Little rascal
 - 12 Detective or hunter, e.g.
 - 13 Lacking in insight
 - 14 Japanese attire
 - 16 Unpredictable
 - 18 Organ part
 - 20 Musical Yoko
 - 21 Happen
 - 24 Perspicacity
 - 25 Tailor's tools
- Down**
- 1 Fires
 - 2 Resistance unit
 - 3 A chef uses them
 - 4 Artist's asset
 - 5 Italian seaport
 - 6 Potato chips, e.g. (5,4)
 - 7 Smallest of the Great Lakes
 - 11 Time of day
 - 13 Spotted wildcats
 - 15 Stalemate
 - 17 Frau or Señorita
 - 19 Vichyssoise vegetables
 - 22 Barley bristle
 - 23 Not in the pink

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

30 OPCC office bearers

The All India Congress Committee (AICC) appoints 30 office bearers for Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC), Saturday

DOWNTOWN | P2

Fresh offensive

Israel launches major operation in Gaza Strip to pressure Hamas to release remaining hostages

INTERNATIONAL | P8

'No tariff for US goods'

India is willing to cut 100 per cent tariffs on American goods, US President Donald Trump claims, saying trade deal is coming soon

BUSINESS | P9

Gill, Pant for captancy

Former India coach Ravi Shastri says Shubman Gill and Rishabh Pant are ideal candidates to captain India in the Test format

SPORTS | BACK PAGE



FLYING HIGH: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi leads a Tiranga Yatra in Ekamra Assembly constituency in Bhubaneswar to honour the Indian armed forces for their resounding success in Operation Sindoor, Saturday

Indian missiles hit airbase: Sharif

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 17: Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in a rare public admission confirmed Indian ballistic missiles struck the Nur Khan Airbase and other targets inside Pakistan during the early hours of May 10. Speaking at a ceremony in Islamabad, Mr Sharif recounted a 2:30 am call from the Chief of Army Staff, General Syed Asif Munir, informing him of the missile attacks launched by India.

"In the intervening night of May 9-10, around 2:30 am, General Asif Munir called me through a secure phone and told me India has launched its ballistic missiles. One has landed at the Nur Khan airbase and some at other areas," Prime Minister Sharif said in a public address. The Nur Khan Airbase, located between Rawalpindi and Islamabad, is a strategic military facility long central to Pakistan's air operations. It was also targeted by Indian forces during the 1971 Indo-Pakistan war.



Curbs on import of Bangladeshi goods

New Delhi: The government Saturday imposed port restrictions on the import of certain goods, such as readymade garments and processed food items, from Bangladesh, in response to similar curbs placed by Dhaka on certain Indian products last month. According to a notification of the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), these port restrictions will not apply to Bangladeshi goods transiting through India but destined for Nepal and Bhutan, it added.

P9

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



But, why send delegations when our supreme leader decides everything in the world?

Politics over diplomacy

The government's choice of designating former UN diplomat-turned-MP Shashi Tharoor to lead one of the seven multi-party delegations comprising 51 leaders to represent the country on a high-level diplomatic mission to 31 world capitals in the wake of Operation Sindoor triggered an intense slugfest between BJP and Congress. It was after the Thiruvananthapuram MP said he is honoured by the government's invitation. Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh accused the government of playing 'Narad Muni' politics by announcing names of heads of diplomatic outreach without consulting the party. He also took an apparent swipe at Tharoor by accusing the latter of deviating from party discipline. Reacting, BJP IT department head Amit Malviya said questions over Tharoor's nomination was uncalled for given his eloquence, long experience as a UN official and deep insights on matters of foreign policy

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 17: The selection of Congress MP Shashi Tharoor to head a delegation abroad for diplomatic outreach following Operation Sindoor and his subsequent acceptance were frowned upon by his own party, which Saturday accused the government of playing politics with a 'mischievous' mindset.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said the confidence between the government and the principal Opposition party, which is normally there, has been shattered after the government asked the Congress to give names for all-party delegations abroad but named leaders of its own without consulting it.

On Tharoor's inclusion, Ramesh said, "Congress mein hona aur Congress ka hona mein zameen-aasmaan ka antar hai (There is a difference between being in the Congress and of the Congress)."

Though the Congress nominated Anand Sharma, Gaurav Gogoi, Syed Naseer



Hussain and Amarinder Singh Raja Brar, the government announced that Opposition leaders Tharoor, Kanimozhi, Sanjay Jha and Supriya Sule and ruling alliance members Ravi Shankar Prasad, Baijyant 'Jay' Panda and Shrikant Shinde will lead the delegations to key partner countries to convey India's message of zero tolerance against terrorism following Operation Sindoor.

Addressing a press conference, Ramesh also alleged that the entire diplomatic exercise is being done as the government's narrative stands punctured after Operation Sindoor was suddenly halted amid claims made by US President Donald Trump

that he mediated between India and Pakistan to stop the hostilities.

Accepting the nomination, Tharoor said in a post on X, "I am honoured by the invitation of the government of India to lead an all-party delegation to five key capitals, to present our nation's point of view on recent events." "When national interest is involved, and my services are required, I will not be found wanting. Jai Hind!" he added.

Asked about Tharoor's inclusion, Ramesh said that in a democratic system, when individual MPs are sent as part of an official delegation, MPs must seek the concurrence of the party.

"The Congress is like the mighty Ganga, which has many tributaries. Some of them dry up and some get polluted," Ramesh said but ducked questions on whether there would be any action against Tharoor.

The names of some other senior Congress leaders like Salman Khurshid and Manish Tewari have also come out as being part of

the government's diplomatic missions, but Ramesh did not answer on any of them. Ramesh also said Khurshid was approached by the government and he informed them that the party has to decide.

He also accused the government of playing "Narad Muni politics".

The BJP, on the other hand, questioned the Congress' choice of leaders for the delegations and wondered if it was because it thought Tharoor outshines the party high command.

Reacting to Ramesh's statement, BJP IT department head Amit Malviya said in a post on X, "No one can deny Shashi Tharoor's eloquence, his long experience as a United Nations official, and his deep insights on matters of foreign policy."

"So why has the Congress Party -- and Rahul Gandhi in particular -- chosen not to nominate him for the multi-party delegations being sent abroad to explain India's position on key issues?" he said.

YouTuber arrested on charge of spying for Pak

AGENCIES

Chandigarh, May 17: A Haryana-based YouTuber has been arrested on the charge of passing on sensitive information to Pakistani intelligence operatives, police said Saturday.

Jyoti Malhotra, who runs a YouTube channel, Travel with JO, and hails from Hisar in Haryana, was arrested from New Aggarsain Extension, they said. She has been booked under the relevant sections of the Official Secrets Act and the BNS, said police.

She was sent to a five-day police remand after being produced before the court. Jyoti, whose YouTube channel and Instagram account have 3.77 lakh subscribers and 1.33 lakh followers respectively, allegedly was in contact with a Pakistani staffer working at the Pakistan High Commission in Delhi. On May 13, India had expelled that Pakistani official for allegedly indulging in espionage.

Her YouTube channel account shows some videos regarding her visit to Pakistan - 'Indian Girl in Pakistan', 'Indian Girl Exploring Lahore', 'Indian Girl at Kataraj Temple' and 'Indian Girl Rides Luxury Bus in Pakistan'. She has made a total of 487 videos so far.

She has described herself as a 'Nomadic Leo Girl', 'Wanderer Haryana + Pun-



jabi' and 'purane khayalon ki modern ladki' on her YouTube channel.

In 2023, Jyoti came in contact with Ehsan-ur-Rahim alias Danish at the Pakistan High Commission where she went to seek a visa to visit the neighbouring nation, according to an FIR lodged at Civil Lines Police Station May 16.

Jyoti, who visited Pakistan twice, had met Danish's acquaintance Ali Ahwan who arranged her stay there, the FIR read. Ahwan arranged Jyoti's meeting with Pakistani Security and Intelligence officials and met Shakir and Rana Shahbaz. She saved Shahbaz's mobile number as 'Jatt Randhawa' to avoid any suspicion.

She was in contact with these persons through WhatsApp, Telegram and Snapchat, and passed on sensitive information to them, according to the FIR, which was registered on the complaint of sub-inspector Bijender Singh.

Cong: Govt buckled under US pressure at IMF on Pak loans

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 17: A day after Defence Minister Rajnath Singh urged the IMF to rethink its assistance to Pakistan, the Congress Saturday alleged that the Modi government had 'simply buckled under US pressure' at the IMF Executive Board meeting when the loans to that country were deliberated upon.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said Singh is now criticising the IMF for approving loans to Pakistan May 9, 2025, "but April 29th itself - before the Modi government woke up - the Congress had said that the IMF Executive Board was meeting on May 9th to consider this issue and that India should oppose it

forcefully".

"As it turns out, India only abstained May 9th. Later the Modi government's drumbeaters, cheerleaders and apologists argued that this was the only option available to India. This is a lie," Ramesh claimed.

There is indeed a provision to vote No in the Executive Board, he said.

Russia had voted No on a loan proposal to Ukraine in September 2016 and India herself had voted No September 11, 2005, on the issue of the expulsion of Zimbabwe, the Congress leader said.

"Where there is a will there is a way. The Modi government simply buckled under US pressure on May 9th at the IMF Executive Board meeting," Ramesh said.

'Melania' goes missing in Slovenia hometown

'Melania Trump' appeared on the banks of the River Sava in July 2020, four months before her human inspiration left the White House.

Now, four months after the erstwhile Melania Knavs resumed residence at Washington's most famous address, her larger-than-life-size avatar has apparently made an undignified exit from her Slovenian hometown, Sevnica.

All that remains of the massive bronze statue are the feet - and the two-metre-tall tree stump they were standing on. The symmetry would probably appeal to the whimsical US director Wes Anderson - who often features bizarre heists in his films. But even in his back catalogue, there has never been anything quite like the case of the cursed First Lady statue.



Because this is not the first time a Melania Trump tribute has met a sticky end in Sevnica.

The first iteration was unveiled in July 2019. Carved from a single piece of wood by a chainsaw-wielding local artisan called Ales 'Maxi' Zuperc, it lasted a year before an unidentified perpetrator decided to turn it into



a Fourth of July bonfire.

Luckily, US artist Brad Downey - who commissioned Maxi to create the wooden original - had already made a cast of the statue. It duly made a comeback in bronze, at the same site.

At its unveiling, Mr Downey said the new version had been designed to be 'as solid as possible, out of a

durable material which cannot be wantonly destroyed'.

But, as it turns out, it can be chopped off at the ankles and taken away.

Local police say they are treating 'Melania's' disappearance as 'theft' and have launched an investigation.

Brad Downey has always insisted that his work was political. He chose Maxi as a

collaborator because his upbringing had been similar to that of the First Lady.

And he argued that Melania Trump benefitted from a fast-tracked US citizenship process, while other immigrants suffered under her husband's 'xenophobic' policies.

Now he suspects the statue's disappearance 'has something to do with Trump getting re-elected'.

Meanwhile, in Sevnica, the local authorities have mixed feelings. They condemned 'any form of interference with private or public property'.

But, they added, 'the image of the US First Lady was not something anyone was proud of'. Police spokeswoman Alenka Drenik Ranguis said after the police were informed about the theft of the statue they were working to track down those responsible.

Man gets 25 years in jail for sexually assaulting boys

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 17: A man was sentenced to 25 years in jail by a Jharsuguda court Saturday for sexually assaulting multiple boys.

He was arrested based on the complaint of the mother of an 11-year-old boy, and during the investigation, it was found that he had sexually assaulted other boys in the village as well.

The verdict was pronounced by a POCSO court less than two months after the filing of the complaint.

The boy was sexually assaulted by the man March 21. During the investigation, it was found that the man had earlier also sexually assaulted some other boys of the village, including his nephew. It was also found that he was previously in jail in a rape case, police said.

AGENCIES

Mahaprasad not on dining tables: SJTA



Lord Jagannath's 'Mahaprasad' is highly sacred and known as 'Anna Brahma' (rice soul). SJTA advises devotees to consume the cooked 'bhog' sitting on the floor with gratitude.

the cooked 'bhog' by sitting on the floor with gratitude.

"Mahaprasad holds immense religious significance and must be treated with the utmost reverence," the administration emphasised.

"Eating it on a dining table is considered disrespectful to the divine offering and contradicts the spiritual customs associated with it," they added.

In its advisory, the SJTA also called upon hotels, restaurants and eateries in Puri to discourage such practices and educate visitors on the proper way to consume the Mahaprasad.

Establishments were urged to inform guests of its religious importance and the traditional manner of partaking in the sacred food.

The administration said the photo and video of some people taking the Mahaprasad while sitting on a dining table has hurt the religious sentiments of scores of devotees.

Shree Jagannath Temple administration urges devotees to honour tradition and maintain reverence while partaking Mahaprasad

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Puri, May 17: The Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) Saturday urged devotees to show utmost reverence to Mahaprasad, the sacred offering to Lord Jagannath, and avoid consuming it while seated at dining tables.

The appeal follows reports and social media showing peo-

ple eating the Mahaprasad in a hotel in Puri while seated at tables and wearing shoes — an act the SJTA described as "against the age-old traditions of Srimandir."

Stating that Lord Jagannath's Mahaprasad is highly sacred and considered as "Anna Brahma" (rice soul), the SJTA said in accordance with tradition, devotees should consume

CM, LoP laud Neeraj Chopra for new feat

Bhubaneswar: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and Leader of Opposition (LoP) Naveen Patnaik Saturday congratulated Neeraj Chopra for his maiden javelin throw of over 90 metres in an international event in Doha. Chopra finally breached the elusive 90m frontier with a 90.23m throw, but the trailblazing Indian had to settle for second place behind Germany's Julian Weber in a dramatic men's javelin contest at the Doha leg of the prestigious Diamond League Meeting series Friday. Majhi termed Chopra's achievement as a "historic moment and a proud milestone for Indian athletics". "Congratulations to India's golden boy and Olympic gold medalist, @Neeraj_chopra1, on breaching the iconic 90m mark with a phenomenal 90.23m throw at the Doha Diamond League...Odisha joins the nation in celebrating this incredible achievement. #OdishaForSports," he said. The 27-year-old double Olympic medallist Indian sent his spear 90.23m in his third attempt to join a list of javelin throwers, led by his current coach Jan Zeleny of Czechia, who had recorded 90m-plus efforts. Chopra became the third Asian and 25th overall to achieve the feat. Patnaik said, "Congratulations India's javelin star #NeerajChopra on making history as he became the first-ever Indian to cross 90m mark in javelin and standing second at the #DohaDiamondLeague. May he continue to excel in his sporting career and make India proud. Best Wishes."

Odisha to regulate private ambulances



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 17: In a significant step to enhance emergency medical transport services in Odisha, a meeting was held here under the chairmanship of Commerce & Transport department Principal Secretary Usha Padhee, along with Health and Family Welfare department Commissioner-cum-Secretary Aswathy S Saturday. The discussion focused on creating a comprehensive regulatory framework for private ambulance services across the state.

Recognising the crucial role of private ambulances in bridging healthcare gaps—particularly in remote and underserved areas—the meeting stressed the need for enhanced transparency, operational consistency, and improved accessibility for citizens.

To address this, a campaign-mode registration drive will be launched to bring all private ambulances under a unified, standardised platform. This initiative aims to create a verified database, streamline enforcement, and enable efficient, real-time service deployment.

A key highlight of the dis-

cussions was the proposal to incentivise private ambulance operators to register and comply with service guidelines. These incentives, along with clear regulations, aim to encourage wider participation and ensure voluntary adherence to the new framework. Additionally, all registered ambulances will be integrated with the Vehicle Location Tracking System (VLTS) for GPS-based monitoring and quicker emergency response. Plans are also in place to link ambulance services with the Odisha Yatri App, offering a seamless, tech-enabled platform for citizens to easily locate, book, and access ambulance services—thereby strengthening last-mile healthcare delivery.

To safeguard citizens from arbitrary charges, the departments' proposed developing a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for fare regulation. The fare structure will be linked to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) to ensure fairness and affordability across time and regions.

Among those who actively participated in the meeting and contributed valuable insights were the National Health Mission (NHM) Mission Director Brundha D, Additional DMET Umakant Satapathy, Deputy Superintendent of Capital Hospital Dhananjaya Das, and senior officials from both departments.



DEFT HANDS: Roopakar servitors carve intricate designs for chariots at Rath Yard in Puri, Saturday

PHOTO: YAGNESWAR MOHANTY

AICC names 30 OPCC office bearers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, May 17: The All India Congress Committee (AICC) Saturday appointed 30 office bearers for the Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC), nearly three months after senior leader Bhakta Charan Das assumed charge as the state party president.

The All India Congress Committee (AICC) Saturday appointed 30 office bearers for its Odisha unit, three months after senior leader Bhakta Charan Das took charge as the state party chief.

AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge appointed the new team comprising seven vice-presidents, 10 general secretaries, 12 secretaries and a treasurer, a statement by party general secretary KC Venugopal said.

Fifth-term MLA Taraprasad



Bahinipati, three-time legislator Ramesh Jena, two-time MLA CS Raazen Ekka and former MLAs Santosh Singh Saluja, DEBAS Patnaik, and Lalatendu Mohapatra have been appointed as vice-presidents. Prominent woman leader Sasmita Behera has also been named as one of the vice presidents of the OPCC.

The new general secretaries are MLAs Ashok Das, Appal Swamy Kadraka, Prafulla Pradhan, Mangu Khilla, Pabitra Saunta, Nilamadhab Hikaka, ex-MLA Subarna Nayak and youth

leaders Syed Yashir Nawaz, Bijaynanda Chaulia and Madhusmita Sethy.

Siddharth Swarup Dash has been appointed as the treasurer. The new secretaries are Tuleswar Naik, Sasmita Panda, Shilpisri Harichandan, Debasmita Sharma, Lakshmidhar Singh, Dilip Duria, Rupak Turuk, Simanchal Giri Ulaka, Manisha Tripathy, Sakka Sujit, Mohan Hembram and Anima Minz.

This apart, the AICC has also approved the appointment of Satyajet Gomang as the chairman and Santosh Pradhan as co-chairman of the party's social media department.

After the Lok Sabha and Odisha Assembly polls last year, the Congress president had dissolved all organisational committees of the OPCC.

Meet on new cold storage policy held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 17: A meeting between members of the Odisha Cold Storage Association (OCSA) and entrepreneurs interested in setting up cold storage facilities was held at Krushi Bhawan here Saturday. The session was chaired by Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment department principal secretary Arabinda Kumar Padhee.

Departmental officials held detailed discussions with entrepreneurs regarding the state government's new cold storage policy. Agricultural entrepreneurs from across Odisha welcomed the initiative, stating it would aid in preserving produce and boosting the state's agricultural economy.

Min urges focus on quality for global competitiveness

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 17: Union Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Jayant Chaudhary Saturday urged enterprises to focus on producing high-quality products in order to distinguish themselves in the global marketplace.

Addressing the valedictory function of a two-day skill development workshop titled 'Promoting Entrepreneurial Growth: Economic Inclusion, Market Access, and Digital Skills Development', Chaudhary emphasised that the world is looking to India not only for the quality of its products but also for the capabilities of its citizens and businesses — an advantage that can significantly enhance the country's

competitiveness.

Referring to the Union Budget 2025, Chaudhary highlighted several initiatives aimed at empowering women and marginalised communities.

Notably, loans totalling around ₹10,000 crore have been sanctioned under the Fund of Funds (FoF) to help these groups embark on their entrepreneurial journeys.

The Union Minister noted that while the government has implemented various schemes to help citizens realise their aspirations, these efforts will only bear fruit if people understand and exercise their rights to access such opportunities.

The workshop was organised by the National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (NIES-BUD) under the Ministry of

Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.

It brought together participants from diverse backgrounds and addressed key challenges in entrepreneurship, including limited access to finance, market barriers, and the low adoption of digital tools.

The event featured panel discussions and expert-led sessions on a range of important topics such as government economic schemes, institutional credit, venture capital investment, and alternative economic models to support business growth.

The two-day training session aimed to foster an entrepreneurial mindset among emerging business leaders and equip them with knowledge on government initiatives, financial

literacy, market access, and digital skills. More than 100 entrepreneurs from Odisha, Bihar, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh — most of them trained under the ministry's 'Riksal' programme — participated in the event.

Participants were provided with practical roadmaps to scale their businesses and enhance their professional networks, enabling them to thrive in the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was also signed between NIESBUD and IIM-Sambalpur to promote entrepreneurship in Odisha.

This initiative aligns with India's vision of becoming a self-reliant nation through the promotion of digitally-enabled and inclusive entrepreneurship.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before Executive Magistrate, Bhubaneswar, dated-07.03.2025, I, Kanakalata Bhola, Address: Village/Town- Baliapal, P.O.- Jamkunda, Dist.- Baleswar, Odisha, PIN-756026 declare that I have changed my name from Kanakalata Pradhan to Kanakalata Bhola. Henceforth, I shall be known as Kanakalata Bhola for all purposes. Kanakalata Bhola

OBESITY SILENT TSUNAMI OF INDIA'S DISEASE BURDEN

Obesity has emerged as one of the most urgent and under-recognised health crises in India, with experts warning that it now functions as a silent tsunami sweeping through the population.

A study published in The Lancet projects that nearly one-third of Indians or approximately 449 million people could be obese by 2050. This includes an estimated 218 million men and 231 million women.

The rising tide of obesity is closely linked to a surge in chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular ailments, fatty liver, hormonal disorders, infertility, and even certain cancers, experts said.

India already holds the global record for the highest number

of people living with diabetes, estimated at over 101 million. Increasingly, these conditions are being diagnosed at younger ages, they said. An alarming rise in non-communicable diseases among individuals in their 20s and 30s, the most productive age group, a trend that is largely being driven by excess body weight, said Neeraj Nischal, additional professor in the department of Medicine at AIIMS.

"The obesity epidemic is quietly reshaping India's disease profile and, unless confronted with urgency, will place an unmanageable burden on the country's healthcare infrastructure and economic productivity," he said.

Dr Rajesh Upadhyay, director and head of the department of



Gastroenterology and Hepatology at Max Super Speciality Hospital, Delhi, and past president and dean of Association of Physicians of India, said that obesity is no longer a matter of

personal choice or appearance. It has become one of the most influential medical risk factors in the country today, he said. "Obesity is not a cosmetic issue. It is a clinical, systemic

concern that is driving a surge in diseases like fatty liver, diabetes, gastrointestinal complications, and heart disease. In my practice, I see its consequences every day. To address this, we must move beyond awareness campaigns and commit to deep-rooted preventive reforms across schools, offices, hospitals, and even the medical curriculum," he said.

Echoing this concern, senior consultant of Internal Medicine at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, Mohsin Wali, noted that the crisis is growing quietly but with devastating consequences.

"This is India's silent tsunami. The burden of obesity is not always visible on the surface, but its impact is evident in hospital admissions, in the

rise of chronic illnesses, and in the younger age of onset for lifestyle diseases. We must treat this as a National emergency. Prevention must begin at the institutional level. What we serve in school and hospital canteens, what we teach young doctors, and how we screen for risk? All must change," he said.

Health experts are urging immediate and coordinated action to treat obesity as a systemic public health challenge.

They called for greater accountability in public institutions, widespread access to preventive screenings, nutritional reform in institutional food environments, and a fundamental shift in how India approaches medical education and policy.

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SPCB raises serious concern over pollution in Jeera River

Jeera water not even suitable for bathing: SPCB tells NGT



PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar/Bargarh, May 17: The State Pollution Control Board (SPCB), Odisha, has flagged alarmingly high levels of pollution in the Jeera River, a tributary of the Mahanadi River.

The SPCB, in its affidavit submitted to the National Green Tribunal (NGT) also revealed that the water of the Jeera River is not even suitable for bathing.

Following the instructions of the NGT in connection with a plea filed by one Ramakanta Rout, the SPCB had collected surface water samples from upstream (near Bargarh Law College) and downstream (near PHED Pada at the old water intake point) of Bargarh town from Jeera River.

The test report disclosed that the sample collected from the river upstream at Bargarh Law College contained 790 MPN/100 ml, which increased to 54,000 MPN/100 ml in the sample collected from the downstream at PHED Pada, Bargarh.

The SPCB team also found that untreated urban sewage from the Bargarh town is being

Untreated urban sewage from the Bargarh town is being directly discharged to the Jeera River by the Bargarh Municipality, flouting all the guidelines and rules

ing directly discharged to the Jeera River by the Bargarh Municipality, flouting all the guidelines and rules.

During the hearing of a case, the Bargarh Municipality has itself proposed the setting up of five Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) of 125 KLD at five different locations inside the municipality area. The said STPs were to be installed and made operational by December 31, 2023.

The SPCB, during inspection conducted March 21, 2025, found that no such STPs of the said capacity have been installed by the Bargarh Municipality to date, and no document was available with the municipality regarding STP establishment.

However, the Bargarh Mu-

nicipality has installed and made operational one Septage Treatment Plant (SeTP) of 30 KLD capacity at Tentela, and has obtained Consent to Operate (CTO) vide Letter No-562 dt.04.03.2022 valid up to dt.31.03.2022.

The NGT further asked the Bargarh Municipality to ensure complete treatment of legacy waste through Biomining/Micro Composting Centres/Material Recovery Facilities by December 31, 2023.

However, the SPCB affidavit exposed that the municipal authority has not completed the remediation of the legacy waste at the alleged dumpsite site near the town till the inspection by SPCB team March 21.

During the inspection, it was observed that approximately 20,000 MT (as enquired with the representative of the unit) only of legacy waste has been bio-mined out of approximately 51,476 MT from the dumping site.

The apex green court of the country also remarked that legacy waste dumpsites have resulted in huge damage to the environment and population in the vicinity of such dump sites, which have suffered in safety, health, and comfort. It has been directed that one-third of the land occupied by legacy dump sites on reclamation needs to be reserved for afforestation, but the SPCB in its affidavit clarified that the Bargarh Municipality has no information about such orders.

Meanwhile, the NGT May 14 asked the Odisha SPCB to file an Action Taken Report (ATR) by May 20 regarding action taken against the Bargarh Municipality for failing to comply with the instructions of the apex green court.



MOCK DRILL: An anti-hijacking mock exercise of flights underway at Rourkela Airport as per the guidelines of Security Bureau of Department of Civil Aviation, Saturday

PTI PHOTO

COMPLETED NEW BUILDING AWAITS INAUGURATION

Patients suffer in corridors at Bhadrak DHH

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhadrak, May 17: Despite the completion of construction six months ago, the new building for the Bhadrak District Headquarters Hospital at Gelapur remains unopened, forcing patients to continue receiving treatment in overcrowded and under-equipped conditions at the old facility.

The delay in relocating the hospital is reportedly due to pending clearances from the Town Planning and Fire Safety departments. As a result, the old hospital building, which lacks adequate beds, is overcrowded with patients being treated on verandas and ward floors. The absence of a proper drainage system has created unhygienic conditions, contributing to foul odour on the hospital premises.

Parking remains another



major issue, as there is no designated space for vehicles of patients and visitors, resulting in frequent traffic congestion. Moreover, the lack of space has restricted ambulance movement on the hospital campus.

Adding to the woes, the elevator in the old building has been out of service for long. A woman died after being crushed in the lift recently, prompting

authorities to shut it down. Since then, patients—many in serious condition—are being carried to the second and third floors of the medicine ward by their relatives.

Although the construction of the 300-bed facility, equipped with modern health infrastructure including ICU and semi-ICU units, was completed during the previous ad-

ministration, the inauguration was repeatedly delayed. After a change in government, the newly-built structure was repainted, replacing the original colour scheme.

District Collector Dillip Routray had stated that the relocation could not take place due to the lack of clearance from the Fire Safety and Town Planning departments, which came to light after the death of the woman in the hospital elevator.

While there were discussions regarding the inauguration in January, the event is yet to materialise. However, with the necessary clearances now reportedly granted, Chief District Medical Officer (CDMO) Dr Sudhanshu Sekhar Bal has confirmed that the hospital will be inaugurated and made operational in the second week of June.

Doctor rescues TB patient from clutches of superstition

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, May 17: A doctor at the Veer Surendra Sai Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (VIMSAR) in Burla has successfully persuaded a woman suffering from tuberculosis (TB) to seek proper medical treatment, making her overcome years of resistance rooted in superstition.

The patient, identified as Jyotsna Barla of Khulia village under Maneswar block and the Themra Community Health Centre (CHC), had refused medical care despite being diagnosed with TB three years ago.

Her reluctance stemmed from deep-rooted fear and stigma, especially after her father died from the disease five years earlier. Several other villagers, including elderly men and women, were also reportedly affected.

Initially, a medical officer in-



charge at the CHC and a senior treatment supervisor had counselled her at home, leading to her starting and reportedly completing treatment at that time.

Recently, following a letter from an international organisation, Dr Sanjeeb Kumar Mishra, assistant professor, Department of Community Medicine at VIMSAR, visited Jyotsna's home Sunday. During his visit, Dr Mishra engaged in detailed discussions with her family and neighbours to dis-

pel misconceptions surrounding the illness and emphasise the importance of medical care.

Following a clinical examination, Jyotsna was provisionally diagnosed again, and arrangements were made for laboratory testing, including a sputum examination.

Reassured by Dr Mishra's explanation and support, her family finally agreed to pursue hospital-based treatment. She was brought to VIMSAR Tuesday in a 108 emergency ambulance

and admitted to the tuberculosis ward for further treatment.

"Despite significant efforts by the government to eradicate TB, many patients still hide their illness due to ignorance, stigma, and fear of discrimination," said Dr Mishra.

"The health department provides free diagnostic services, medication kits, and supplementary nutrition to support patients. ASHAs also carry out awareness campaigns, door-to-door visits, and rallies to fight these myths."

He emphasised that persistent superstitions hinder TB eradication efforts and put lives at risk.

Dr Mishra's timely intervention serves as a powerful example of how awareness and compassion can save lives. He urged the public to trust medical science and take advantage of government healthcare schemes to help achieve a TB-free future.

Teachers plant 500 mangrove saplings along Guptagiri bank

POST NEWS NETWORK

Mahakalapara, May 17: Amid rising global concerns over climate change, local teachers under this block in Kendrapara district are setting an inspiring example by dedicating their summer vacation to environmental restoration efforts.

A group of teachers from Kochila village under Mahakalapara block have taken the initiative to plant more than 500 mangrove saplings along the banks of the Guptagiri River, a distributary of the Mahanadi. These educators, who teach in schools across districts like Malkangiri, Kalahandi, Nabarangpur, and Koraput districts, returned to their native village during the summer holidays



and used the opportunity to contribute to environmental conservation.

The plantation drive stretched about 2 km from Agua to Bachhuria Kandha. The teachers planted native mangrove species such as Rai, Sinduka, Bani, Kalia Chuan, Orua, Data, Guan, Garani, Kharasi, Dhala Sundari, and Banderi. They also sowed seeds of several of these species in select locations for future growth.

These plant species are unique because they have the ability to survive in areas having a mix of freshwater and saltwater along the coastlines, estuaries, and lagoons. Mangroves are not only important for their ecological role but also play a crucial role in protection of the coastline and carbon sequestration.

The teachers noted that the coastal areas are now experiencing more intense heat compared to forest-rich regions of western Odisha, emphasising the urgent need for local action. Inspired by their concern, the group, along with local youth and the support of childhood friend and nature enthusiast Subhas Swain, undertook the planting effort along the riverbank.

10 critical in clash between 2 villages over Kewda flowers

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chhatrapur, May 17: At least 10 persons sustained critical injuries after residents of two villages clashed over plucking of Kewda flowers from an orchard on a disputed piece of land near Yagnashala village under Chamakhandi police limits in Ganjam district Saturday.

The confrontation involved the groups from Yagnashala and Sindurapalli villages. The villagers attacked each other with lathis and sharp-edged weapons resulting in critical injury to over 10 persons.

On being informed, Chamakhandi police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

Both groups have lodged complaints at the local police station. Following an initial investigation, police have arrested 17 persons from both the villages. Chhatrapur SDPO Chandan Ghadei said more arrests would follow if others are found to be involved in the violence.

According to reports, a



long-standing dispute exists between the two villages over the ownership of the land where the Kewda plant grows.

Pintu Nayak of Sindurapalli village alleged that while plucking Kewda flowers from a tree located on their land in the Yagnashala village, some people attacked them. Similarly, some residents of Yagnashala also filed complaints claiming they were assaulted.

Based on the cross-complaints, Chamakhandi police registered two separate cases-209/25 and 211/25, confirmed IIC Sabyasachi Malla of Chamakhandi police station. Both sides have claimed ownership of the land in question.

SDPO Ghadei stated that the matter of actual land ownership will be clarified after consulting the local tehsildar.

Light & sound show resumes at famous Samaleswari temple

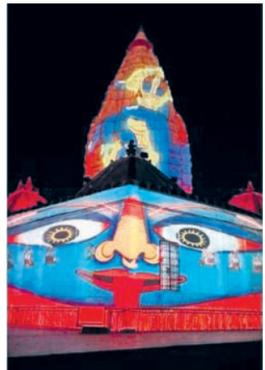
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sambalpur, May 17: The popular light and sound show at the 16th-century Samaleswari temple in Sambalpur city has resumed after six months, an official said.

The Samaleswari Temple Trust Board will run and manage the light and sound show, said president of the trust, Sanjay Baboo.

He said the script for the light and sound show has been stopped since September 2024 due to a technical snag. The script has been prepared both in Odia and Hindi. "We are also planning to prepare scripts in Sambalpuri language soon," he said.

The duration of the show will be around ten minutes, during which the history of Samaleswari temple, rituals and festivals celebrated, and the culture of western Odisha are also being exhibited, he added.



The light and sound show will be an added attraction for tourists visiting the temple. It is also expected that the show will be helpful in attracting more numbers of tourists to this holy shrine.

The 16th-century Samaleswari temple, which was constructed by the first

Chauhan king of Sambalpur, Balram Dev, is a major tourist attraction of this region. Devotees and tourists from across the state come to the temple for a glimpse of the deity, Samaleswari.

The state government has set up the SAMALEI (Samaleswari Temple Area Management and Local Economic Initiative) corridor project over 42 acres of land adjacent to the temple at an expenditure of ₹200 crore. The facility was inaugurated in January last year.

Second phase construction of this project slated to be completed by February next year, an official said, adding that the first phase of this project includes beautification, river front development, construction of ghat, four gates, cafeteria, renovation of heritage pond, haat (shopping complex), parking area, bhoga mandapam, war watch tower and line system for devotees.

Govt. of Odisha
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER (AGRI.),
NORTHERN ZONE, SAMBALPUR, ODISHA
E-mail ID - senzambalpur@gmail.com

"e"-Procurement Notice No- 874 /Agril, Date-15.05.2025
Bid Identification No.: 01/Agril./NZ/2025-26 dt.15.05.2025

No.L-13:- The Superintending Engineer (Agril.), Northern Zone, Sambalpur, Odisha on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bids in single cover system from the eligible class of contractors through e-procurement in ONLINE MODE only in the website "www.tendersodisha.gov.in", for the work as detailed below (Composite Tender)

- Nature/Type of the Work: As Mentioned in Column - 02**
- Estimated Cost put to Tender- Varies from Rs. 33.23 Lakhs to Rs. 49.99 Lakhs**
- EMD Amount: Varies from Rs. 33,236.00 to Rs. 49,992.00**
- Bid Cost: As Mentioned in Column - 07**
- Period of Completion: 06 (Six) Calendar Months Mentioned in Column - 08**
- No. of Work (Tender): 03 Nos.**
- Class of Contractor: 'C' & 'B' Class with valid License as Mentioned in Column - 06**
- Date & Time of availability of bid document in the Portal: 19.05.2025 at 10 AM. to Dt.28.05.2025 at 5.00 P.M.**
- Last date / Time for receipt of bids in the Portal: Dt.28.05.2025 at 5.00 P.M.**
- Date of submission of original documents in the tender box: Dt. 21.05.2025 at 10 AM. to Dt.30.05.2025 at 1.00 P.M. (Working days) only.**
- Date & time of opening of online bids: Dt.31.05.2025 at 10.00 AM & onwards**
- Name and address of the officer inviting Bid: Superintending Engineer (Agril.), Northern Zone, Remed Chowk, Sambalpur, Odisha, PIN-768006**

NB. The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only in the e-Procurement website: <https://tendersodisha.gov.in> with matching class DSC. Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender/other details of the DTCN can also be seen in the said website. Authority reserves the right to reject/accept any or all of the tenders, increase/decrease the quantities of works without assigning any reasons therefor.

Sd/- Superintending Engineer (Agril.)
Northern Zone, Sambalpur

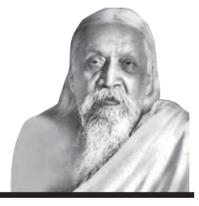
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FOCUS LEADERSHIP

PORTRAITS OF POWER

The first step on this long path is to consecrate all our works as a sacrifice to the Divine in us and in the world.

SRI AUROBINDO



Global Power Shift

The historian Max Hastings described the Second World War as primarily the death grapple between two gargantuan monsters — Adolf Hitler's Nazi armies against Joseph Stalin's Soviet forces. The rest, Winston Churchill's speeches and the American struggle against Japan in the Pacific, was at the most a sideshow and that is true as the nationality of those killed reveals.

The great contest of our time is also between just two powers: Donald Trump's United States of America and Xi Jinping's People's Republic of China. The rest of the world is a noisy sideshow. The contest between America and China is not military, at least not yet, but the stakes are similar and in many ways higher.

From the outside it can be seen as the struggle for global economic dominance between the West and Asia. Ordinarily we would or should support a fellow Asian power against the West but desis in my experience are both insecure and petty. Let us leave it at that.

What China needs is time. In 1991, when India entered this new phase called liberalisation, we were level with China in economic terms. The average India produced as much as the average Chinese. It is true that China had been reforming for a decade before that, and that is seen as an advantage over us, however it had done so from a position which was much below India's. In industry and agriculture, it had been shut off from the world for decades, unlike India. And unlike us, the Chinese leadership had put ordinary Chinese through gratuitous suffering out of which the country was just emerging.

Over the next 35 years, China averaged 9 per cent annual GDP growth, faster economic advance than any power had ever achieved in the West. In the last 10 years, China has slowed to average 5.8 per cent growth, which was similar to India's but on a base five times larger.

If China gets another decade to grow without distraction, it will eclipse the United States as the world's largest economy. It has already done so in what is called Purchasing Power Parity terms, but in a decade it will likely be larger also in absolute terms. Being number two in a world it has dominated for 150 years is totally unacceptable to the United States. Western political scientists like John Mearsheimer say that China's rise will inevitably lead to conflict because of what is called the Thucydides Trap, which theorises that when a rising power is about to displace the dominant one, war is the result. In this theory, violence is the result because the existing dominant power, in this case the US, will never accept second position and will subdue its rival however it can. Some argue that this is probably a Western way of looking at things and that Asian powers are not interested in meddling in global affairs in the way that Europe and the US have done for the last two centuries. They think China's rise will not threaten US bases around the world or its stranglehold on institutions like the IMF, World Bank and United Nations Security Council.

And therefore the US should consider that when assessing what China's becoming number one means. But just like the Thucydides Trap, this is also mere theory and nobody knows how China will act when it eclipses the US.

For the last eight years, the US has tried to stall and block China's economic progress. It has denied China's companies access to advanced semi-conductors. It has imposed duties on Chinese exports using the drug Fentanyl as an excuse just as much as it has used 'dumping'.

It has accused China of building over-capacity in industry, though this is normally what is called export-oriented growth. And under Trump's second presidency it has tried to decouple from China entirely through imposing tariffs so high that trade would become impossible. Unfortunately for the US, that has failed. The stock and bond markets told Trump firmly that any idea of isolating China would lead to harming the US economy and this has forced Trump to backtrack.

China has now won time. How much time? I believe it is enough to see it through. Already the focus of the Trump administration has moved away from trade to tax cuts and for the rest of this year that will take up most of its energy. With the mid-term elections in 2026 for US Congress, the appetite to do reckless things of the sort Trump has done on trade over the last few months will be lower. That will also buy China time. Given the failure of Trump's trade gambit, it is possible and perhaps likely that his successor will not go down the same road after 2028.

The Chinese have prepared for the last eight years for a trade war. They have deliberately removed state support from floundering real estate businesses and let them collapse, to get capital to flow to industry.

They have tried to build markets for their exports around the world outside the US and they have consolidated their supply chains through deals in Africa and Latin America.

The US is only the third biggest trading partner for China now, behind the Association of South East Asian Nations and the European Union. Above all, they have accelerated their lead in a range of future-facing technologies. The leverage that Trump's US has on Xi's China has shrunk.

If things continue as they are, for the first time in 200 years, the largest economic power in the world will not be Western but Asian.

The implications of this will affect all nations though the government in no country, including the US, has prepared its citizens for the shift.

There is a peculiarly American tradition of commissioning official painted portraits of each president. The National Portrait Gallery in Washington handles the commissioning and display, guided by the rule that no painting may be displayed until after the individual's time in the White House is up. This means that the last oil painting currently hanging in the museum's signature exhibition, "America's Presidents," depicts Barack Obama. Joe Biden's official portrait has yet to be unveiled, while Donald Trump, who recently began his second, non-consecutive presidency, is represented in photographs.

Trump's portrait, taken in 2017 by Washington Post photographer Matt McClain, is a dramatic chiaroscuro with seemingly supernatural light illuminating golden hair, a white shirt, and a vermilion tie framed by a black suit that almost blends into the background. The shadowy vignette draws the eye toward Trump's piercing gaze, which blends authority with intimidation. He is, if the portrait is to be believed, the "chosen one" — a leader not to be challenged.

The spirit of McClain's portrait is perfectly aligned with the White House website's official image of the president: an intense close-up, in which Trump glares directly into the camera lens, chin down, one eye narrowed, mouth curled into a frown veering toward a sneer. It also bears some resemblance to another photo, taken for Time magazine in 2019 by Pari Dukovic, which the National Portrait Gallery installed temporarily around Trump's second inauguration (January 13-February 11), though this one also stands out in key ways.

For starters, consider the exhibition labels. There is something subversive in the description on the Dukovic photo, which notes that Trump won the presidency by "tapping into populist American sentiment" and reminds viewers that he lost, but "did not



It is the hour of the predator, as the Italian author Giuliano da Empoli puts it, and Trump has been declaring wars left and right: trade war, culture war, war on immigration, to name a few

concede" the 2020 presidential election, so a "mob of his supporters...attacked the US Capitol complex" on 6 January, 2021. The label on the McClain puts a more positive spin on Trump's story, such as when he "overcame a crowded primary field to win the Republican Party's nomination and the 2016 election." Both mention his two impeachments, but instead of recounting the Capitol riot, McClain's label highlights his "historic comeback" in 2024. It is this portrait and label that will remain on view until Trump's commissioned painting is unveiled.

But perhaps a more interesting contrast is the one between Trump's photographs — especially the Dukovic image — and Obama's portrait, painted by artist Kehinde Wiley. In Wiley's depiction, Obama sits on a chair facing the viewer, leaning slightly forward, his posture relaxed, with his arms folded across his lap. There is a furrow in his brow, but his overall expression is calm, simple, and direct.

Even before noticing such details, however, one observes that Obama's figure is surrounded on all sides by a kind of oneiric garden, comprising a tangle of leaves dotted with flowers. As the Smithsonian explains, these have been carefully chosen, with the white jasmine representing his birthplace of Hawaii, the chrysanthemums symbolizing

Chicago, where he grew up and became a state senator, and the purple African lilies signifying his father's Kenyan heritage.

With leaves curling in front of his chair, ankles, and shoulder, Obama does not dominate the scene so much as dwell within it. Here is a president who is comfortable being hosted by nature, who does not need to act as its "master and owner," in the words of the French philosopher René Descartes. The scene reflects both Obama's apparent humility — he never demonstrated a need to be personally idolized as a warrior or hero — and his commitment to the fight against climate change.

Trump is also seated in the Dukovic photograph — unlike McClain's — but that is where the similarities end. Whereas Obama sits on a slim, polished mahogany chair, with traditional carvings and visible woodgrain, small enough that his knees rise slightly above the seat, Trump is perched on a massive, upholstered leather chair. His right hand grips the armrest, helping him to turn toward the viewer, who is situated slightly behind him, a familiar stern expression on his face. Meanwhile, his left forearm rests on the Resolute Desk — for this is no dream garden, but the Oval Office, the seat of American power.

All US presidents serve as Commander in Chief of the country's armed forces, but it

is Trump's photo that puts this front and center. Flags representing the five traditional branches of the military — the Army, the Marine Corps, the Navy, the Air Force, and the Coast Guard — line the wall behind him. While the powerful symbols that adorn the flags — from the anchor-grasping eagle of the Marine Corps to the thunderbolts of the Air Force — are hidden among their heavy folds, they stand ready to be revealed by the winds of the battlefield, should the president so command.

Behind the flags, flanking Trump, are portraits of carefully selected predecessors. Closer to the viewer is the austere Andrew Jackson, who, like Trump, rose to power on a populist, anti-establishment wave and then remade his party in his own image. It was Jackson who signed the Indian Removal Act of 1830, paving the way for the forced relocation of Native Americans in what would become known as the Trail of Tears. On the other side is Benjamin Franklin, whose many hats — printer, writer, inventor, entrepreneur, natural philosopher, politician, and statesman — surely impressed the multi-hyphenate Trump.

One might see the military power of Trump's portrait — especially in contrast to the flower power of Obama's — as a sign of his weakness. The fewer real responsibilities or achievements a leader has, the greater their need for regalia and accolades. While this is often true, it would be dangerous to settle on that interpretation today. It is the hour of the predator, as the Italian author Giuliano da Empoli puts it, and Trump has been declaring wars left and right: trade war, culture war, war on immigration, to name a few. At this rate, those military flags may well unfurl far sooner than anyone would like.

The writer, a faculty fellow at American University, is a lawyer and art historian.

PROJECT SYNDICATE



Vanessa Badrè

THE FEWER REAL RESPONSIBILITIES OR ACHIEVEMENTS A LEADER HAS, THE GREATER THEIR NEED FOR REGALIA AND ACCOLADES



Aakar Patel

BEING NUMBER TWO IN A WORLD IT HAS DOMINATED FOR 150 YEARS IS TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE TO THE UNITED STATES

SPECTRUM SUSTAINABILITY

Compressed biogas in India's energy transition

India's successful energy transition hinges on the ability to diversify the energy mix. More importantly progressive energy transition depends on indigenous economically viable clean energy solutions available to large sections of users. Often, the promising and emerging domestic clean energy solutions struggle to make meaningful impact due to other competing clean energy options. Some of the extremely promising clean energy solutions get policy backing but fail to convert intentions into groundbreaking actions. Occasionally such options remain at the epicentre of media coverage and policy briefing. For instance, the National Biofuel Policy highlighted the increasing role of compressed biogas (CBG) to strengthen indigenous bioenergy generation, distribution, and consumption. Considering the critical role of CBG in reducing India's energy import dependency, especially imported LNG, the government launched Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable

Transportation (SATAT). As per SATAT website, SATAT scheme received 2227 active letters of intent. Under SATAT, 94 CBG plants sold 31422 tons of CBG in 2024-25, with an average commercial output of 334.26 tons per annum per plant, which means average sales of 0.91 ton per day (tpd).

The government continues to enhance adoption of CBG by creating the enabling ecosystem, with heightened focus on CBG production, transmission, and consumption. To facilitate CBG business, the government introduced a scheme for procurement of biomass aggregation machinery, with a financial outlay of ₹564.75 crore (FY24 to FY27). Under this scheme, the government can grant financial assistance of ₹1.8-9.0 crore to a project with plant capacity of 4tpd.

Also, the government allocated ₹994.50 crore (FY25 to FY26) to create pipeline infrastructure to inject biogas produced from CBG plants into the City Gas Distribution (CGD) networks. The scheme aims to provide financial as-

sistance to 100 CBG plants, 50 each in FY25 to FY26. As per this scheme, the minimum plant capacity should be 2 tpd. To encourage installation of large scale CBG plants, the scheme gives preference to plant capacity above 5 tpd. This scheme offers a maximum financial assistance of ₹28.75 crore per project for constructing pipelines (Steel/MDPE) up to 75 km.

Despite government support for promoting CBG, the CBG industry continues to face financial bottlenecks. To improve better access to funds from the scheduled commercial banks, the Reserve Bank of India places CBG under priority lending sector. The government has directed banks to facilitate loans for the SATAT and other CBG-linked schemes.

Initially, SATAT set a target of 5000 plants. Mid course reassessment indicates 1000 large size CBG plants by 2030 look more realistic. The CBG industry will require investment of ₹58,000 – ₹60,000 crore to set up 1000 large size CBG plants by 2030. The industry can of-

fer 15000 direct jobs for plant operations and maintenance and 45,000 indirect jobs in the value chain.

In the CBG value chain farmers play an important role in supplying the raw material for plants. Educating the farmers about the potential benefits of waste-to-energy can help better implementation of government schemes. The CBG industry enhances millions of farmers' income through valorization of agri-waste material.

For commissioning of new CBG plants the industry requires improved market dynamics which include better affordable technologies, easy financing, efficient supply chain, support of states and access to trained manpower. The stakeholders must realign and address the grappling challenges to fast-track CBG's contribution to India's energy transition.

The writer is Professor, Department of Management Studies, Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Petroleum Technology.



Sanjay Kumar Kar

THE CBG INDUSTRY ENHANCES MILLIONS OF FARMERS' INCOME THROUGH VALORIZATION OF AGRI-WASTE MATERIAL

WISDOM CORNER

We are what our thoughts have made us; so take care about what you think. Words are secondary. Thoughts live; they travel far.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Generosity is giving more than you can, and pride is taking less than you need.

KAHLIL GIBRAN

Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them humanity cannot survive.

DALAI LAMA

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa Post are most welcome to contribute letters (100 words), articles and columns (between 600-1000 words). Contributors are requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID. They may also send their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: edit@orissapost.com

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Green warrior

Sir, We all are familiar with the Supreme Court's role as the protector of our rights, liberties, freedoms and, of course, the defender of the Constitution. It may also be credited with being the defender of India's flora and fauna, if the recent development in Hyderabad's Gachibowli area is an indication. Had the Supreme Court not intervened, 100 acres of forest land, repository of a variety of flora and fauna dating back to millions of years, would have been lost permanently to "development." This brings to mind the "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" campaign launched by PM Narendra Modi. Indeed, the least we can do for our country is to plant a few trees in our life. Trees are the most useful and yet, the most defenceless of creatures..

Avinash Godbole, DEWAS

Call for hope

Sir, HIV/AIDS remains a serious global health challenge, but there has been remarkable progress in combating it. Since 2004, HIV-related deaths have declined by 69%, yet millions still live with the virus, and many lack access to proper treatment. World AIDS Vaccine Day, observed on 18 May, is a reminder of the urgent need for a preventive vaccine. The 2025 theme, "Innovations Face Real-World Challenges," underscores the difficulties scientists encounter while striving for a safe, effective, and accessible vaccine. Despite the life-saving benefits of antiretroviral therapy (ART), which helps control HIV, a complete cure remains elusive, making vaccine development a critical priority. This day honors the relentless efforts of doctors, scientists, and volunteers while promoting global awareness and education to combat stigma and misinformation. World AIDS Vaccine Day is more than a scientific observance—it is a call for compassion, education, and global solidarity. Governments, NGOs, and health organisations use this occasion to raise awareness about HIV prevention, promote testing, and support those living with the virus. It is a time to remember those who have lost their lives to AIDS, support those still battling it, and stand with the researchers working tirelessly to create a future free from HIV.

Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD

Devastated border dwellers demand shelter

Scars of the recent conflict are etched in the villages—damaged homes, splinter-pitted walls, shattered windows, bloodstains, and dead livestock reflect the destruction

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Khour (Akhnoor), May 17: Devastated by intense artillery shelling from across the Line of Control (LoC), several border residents of hamlets in the Khour-Pargwal sector of the Jammu district are pleading for government help after losing their homes, livestock, and livelihoods.

With homes damaged and livestock lost, they are now urging the government to provide immediate shelter - roof over their heads, and long-term rehabilitation. The shelling followed India's Operation Sindoor targeting terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) after the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack that claimed 26 civilian lives.

The recent shelling and drone strikes in Jammu killed 27 people and injured more than 70. Thousands have fled from the Line of Control (LoC) and International Border areas to seek refuge in government-run relief camps.

Kamla Devi, a resident of a border village, returned home with her brother only to find her house in ruins and their livestock dead. "Where would we live now? We were dependent on these animals. Now they are dead and our house is



destroyed," she said tearfully.

"We demand war. I came back home forcefully, despite my husband saying no. There is no work here now. Please give us a place to live. We are homeless," she said.

Recounting the trauma of displacement, Kamla said, "Due to the tension on the border, we fled and took shelter at my father's house. The ceasefire was announced May 10. My husband was home but left in the evening. That night, despite the ceasefire, Pakistan shelled our village heavily. Two shells hit our home, three of our bovines were

killed. We narrowly escaped." Anger is mounting among villagers over the recurring shelling and the perceived failure of the ceasefire agreement over the years. Former panchayat member Joginder Lal, supported by other villagers, demanded a full-scale war.

"What is the point of a ceasefire when Pakistan does not honour it? We want war to teach Pakistan a lesson. We cannot be hostages to any government policy that puts us in uncertainty," he said. Deepak Kumar, who sustained a minor injury to his

ear and suffered damage to his house, echoed similar sentiments how the artillery shells destroyed the house of his neighbour Karan Singh, triggering fear psychosis.

"It was like a war waged by Pakistan. If they carry out terror attacks in the future, we must give a befitting reply. But this (tit for tat) policy only brings more suffering to border residents. The only solution is war with Pakistan," he said.

Expressing the pain of losing homes, he said, "We want a roof over our heads. We urge Prime Minister Narendra Modi to ensure shelters and compensation. Most of us are now living with relatives."

Scars of the recent conflict are etched in the villages—damaged homes, splinter-pitted walls, shattered windows, bloodstains, and dead livestock reflect the destruction.

Lal reiterated his support for military action under Prime Minister Modi's leadership.

"We are with the Army and Prime Minister Modi. We want a full-fledged war, once and for all. We've been running since 1947, then again in 1965, 1971, and 1999. How long will we continue to suffer from Pakistani shelling? Only war will bring us peace," he said. Although people are slow-

ly returning to their villages near the International Border, schools remain shut and farming activities are yet to resume.

To assess the ground situation, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo visited Akhnoor and Khour and inspected the damage to homes and public infrastructure and directed the administration to expedite relief and rehabilitation work immediately.

Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) working president and former deputy chief minister Tara Chand, who represented this Assembly constituency several times, demanded land and financial aid for the affected.

"We demand that 10 marla plots and ₹5 lakh be given to each family living along the border so they can relocate to safer areas," Tara Chand told PTI.

"There are over 80 villages in the Pargwal-Khour-Garkhal-Chhamb belt. The shelling has affected areas as deep as 10 kilometres. The damage is widespread," he added.

Deputy Commissioner Jammu, Sachin Kumar Vaishya, also toured the Chhamb sector to listen to public grievances. "The government will ensure all necessary support and measures for the affected people," he said.

Ex-servicemen to protect vital infrastructure in J&K

The initiative builds upon the previous success during the Covid pandemic, where 2,500 ex-Servicemen volunteered to support the administration

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, May 17: The Jammu and Kashmir government has approved a proposal for deploying former military personnel to safeguard vital infrastructure across the Union Territory, an official said Saturday.

Termining it a unique collaboration between veterans and civil authorities, the official said 4,000 ex-servicemen volunteers have been identified for the initiative, and their role is non-combatant, focusing on static guard duties, presence-based deterrence, and local coordination.

In a major step towards strengthening community-based security and harnessing the capabilities of former military personnel, the Sainik Welfare Board of Jammu and Kashmir had moved a proposal for mobilising Ex-Servicemen (ESM) to safeguard vital infrastructure across the Union Territory.

This proposal has now been formally approved by the Jammu and Kashmir government, setting the stage for a unique collaboration between veter-

ans and civil authorities, officials said here.

According to the approved plan, 4,000 ex-servicemen have been identified, and among them, 435 possess licensed personal weapons, significantly enhancing the capacity to respond effectively to localised security situations, the official said.

The ex-servicemen will be employed for the protection of critical infrastructure in all 20 districts of Jammu and Kashmir, including power stations, bridges, government installations, and other vulnerable points, he said.

The initiative builds upon the previous success during the Covid pandemic, where 2,500 ex-Servicemen volunteered to support the administration. The increase to 4,000 reflects both the growing spirit of service among veterans and the trust reposed in them by the government and local populace.

As outlined in the proposal, these volunteers will serve under the overall coordination of the respective District Sainik Welfare Officers. They will function in close coordination with the district administration and local police. Uniforms and basic equipment will be provided through the Sainik Welfare Board with administrative support from district authorities, while training and orientation programmes are being planned to ensure standardised conduct and efficiency, the official said.

POST PAHALGAM ATTACK

Valley strawberry farmers hit hard as prices plummet

AGENCIES

Srinagar, May 17: Strawberries, the first fruit to ripen in the Kashmir Valley after winter, have arrived in local markets, but the mood among farmers is far from festive.

A sudden slump in demand and prices, attributed to the recent attack in Pahalgam, has left strawberry growers grappling with losses during what should have been a profitable season.

Farmers from Gusso village in Hazratbal, on the outskirts of Srinagar, who are currently harvesting the crop, say the Pahalgam incident has cast a shadow over the strawberry market.

"Strawberries are eagerly awaited by both locals and tourists, and the market was initially promising," said Manzoor Ahmed, a farmer from Gusso. "But the Pahalgam incident



changed everything overnight. Prices crashed, and the demand dried up."

Manzoor, who has been cultivating strawberries for the past eight years, said that the fruit which earlier fetched between ₹80 to ₹100 per box is now being sold at ₹40. Similarly, larger boxes that once fetched ₹600 are now selling for as low as ₹250.

"This fruit has a very short shelf life, only three to four days once harvested, and we cannot afford to let it go to waste," he added, expressing frustration over the lack of storage and transport facilities.

Strawberry farming is a relatively new practice in Kashmir, with many farmers in Srinagar and parts of Ganderbal shifting from traditional vegetable cultivation to this crop. Gussu has emerged as one of the key strawberry-producing pockets in the valley.

Officials said that Kashmir produces over 300 metric tonnes of strawberries annually.

Last year, the Jammu and Kashmir administration had arranged refrigerated vehicles to transport the strawberries to markets in Jammu, which helped prevent losses. However, farmers allege that no such arrangements have been made this year.

Pakistan has become threat to humanity: Owaisi

One of the sharpest opposition voices against the BJP, the fifth-term Lok Sabha member has emerged as one of the most vocal supporters of the government's tough stand against Pakistan, drawing praise even from a section of people generally hostile to his politics

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad, May 17: AIMIM leader Asaduddin Owaisi said Saturday that Pakistan with its long history of sponsoring terrorism is becoming a threat to humanity, affirming that this will be the heart of his message to the international community as a member of all-party delegations the government is sending to world capitals.

In an interview to PTI Videos, the Hyderabad MP said the world will have to be told about the slaughtering of innocent citizens by Pakistan-sponsored terrorists for a long spell of time.

"India has been a big victim of Pakistan-sponsored terrorism. We all have seen the tamasha, slaughtering of people since the time of Zia-ul-Haq," he said in his most explicit and fiery condemnation of Pakistan.

He added, "You can never trust Pakistan as long as the Pakistani deep state, Pakistani ISI, Pakistani military's objective is to destabilise Bharat."

Owaisi, however, added that he is yet to be briefed by the government about the details of the diplomatic drive following the Pahalgam attack and Operation Sindoor.

One of the sharpest opposition voices against the BJP, the fifth-term Lok Sabha member has emerged as among the most vocal supporters of the government's tough stand against Pakistan, drawing praise even from a section of people generally hostile to his politics.

"Politically, we (his party) will continue to fight the BJP's ideology. But when you come to the country and kill the citizens of the country, the citizens of India, then where does any



question arise in this of my political ideological differences?" he said, emphasising that his exhortation of Pakistan reflects the wider sentiments among Muslims.

Asked if the anger he is expressing is a reflection of the entire Muslim community, he said, "Absolutely! Why won't they be? I am talking on behalf of my party, and our party is made up of Indian Muslims. How are we different?"

He added, "We are against the BJP's ideology, but when you come to my country and kill my countrymen, then where is the question of my religion coming in the way of my feelings."

Elaborating, he said every

one of the Indian citizens is sailing in the same boat.

"If anyone is creating a hole in the boat, we all sink together. No one will save us. It is obvious that we have to be together to fight every storm. We can sort out our issues internally."

Asserting that destabilising India, fomenting communal divide and stalling the country's economic rise is part of Pakistan's unwritten ideology, Owaisi said this has always been the objective of the Pakistani deep state and its military.

He said, "They have a stated ideology which is unwritten about the various ways in which they can destabilise India. How they can spread hatred in India? How can India's progress be stopped? They are working on it till today and will continue to do so tomorrow. These people are not going to stop."

The firebrand parliamentarian said it is necessary to call out Pakistan for projecting itself as the protector of Islam and Muslims in its confrontation with India. This is nonsense. Nearly 20 crore Muslims live in India. This too must be conveyed.

Miss World 2025 queens soak up Telangana's culture

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad, May 17: In a blend of beauty, culture, and environmental consciousness, Miss World 2025 contestants immersed themselves in Telangana's natural and cultural heritage with a visit to the legendary 700-year-old banyan tree at Pillalamarri in Mahabubnagar district.

Located about 100 km from Hyderabad, the ancient tree is not only a marvel of nature but also a silent witness to seven centuries of history. Spanning over three acres, its enormous canopy resembles a green umbrella that can shelter nearly a thousand people at once.

Recognised by the Telangana Forest Department as one of the oldest banyan trees in the country, it has become a symbol of the state's ecological pride.

As the contestants from 22 countries arrived at the site, they were greeted by local women performing the vibrant Banjara dance.

The beauty queens joined in with enthusiasm, celebrating Telangana's culture by participating in Bathukamma festivities and folk songs, adding colour and charm to the visit.

Guided by forest officials, the group took a tour around the tree, learning about its history and the government's ongoing conservation efforts. They also

BEAUTY MEETS HERITAGE



explored stalls showcasing exquisite handloom sarees and handicrafts from Narayanpet and Gadwal—Telangana's pride in traditional weaving.

While the ancient banyan offered a serene, grounding experience for the international guests, the visit turned into a unique moment for local school children, who had the rare chance to interact with the contestants of a global pageant.

Sharing her thoughts, Miss India World Nandini Gupta said, "My father is a farmer, and I truly appreciated the love and care shown for this tree. We have seen the foundation of India."

She added that she and her fellow contestants would carry the memories of the visit with them and hoped to re-

turn someday.

Another contestant encouraged the children to "write their dreams in notes and work towards realising them," inspiring young minds in the heart of rural Telangana.

Meanwhile, 24 contestants from the Miss World Asia-Oceania group, accompanied by reigning Miss World 2024 Krystyna Pyszková, explored the awe-inspiring Experium Eco-Tourism Park on Hyderabad's outskirts.

Spread across 250 acres, Experium is hailed as one of India's most immersive, expansive nature-based destinations—a living canvas of innovation, sustainability, and artistry.

The contestants were welcomed in traditional style with

lively 'Dhol' beats and joyfully danced along before setting off in eco-friendly buggies for a curated tour.

They explored Experium's

Fun and frolic mark sports day

After back-to-back visits to various tourist destinations in Telangana, the Miss World 2025 contestants indulged in sports Saturday. A celebratory mood filled Hyderabad's Gachibowli Indoor Stadium as the contestants practised yoga postures, then competed in badminton, chess, and other games for Sports Day Saturday. It was fun and frolic all the way for the contestants as they cheered each other and treated themselves to friendly banter. Thoroughly enjoying the day, the participants also danced and waved to the crowds.

standout attractions, including Sundowner Point, known for its spectacular sunsets; the Buddha Inside Tree Spot—a tranquil blend of nature and spirituality; the vibrant Red Tile Formation; a rare Oval Umbrella-Shaped Tree canopy; and the striking Egyptian Rock Spot.

The beauty queens also participated in photo sessions and expressed admiration for the park's vision and execution.

The Telangana government, leveraging the Miss World event to boost tourism and international outreach, has put together an elaborate action plan to promote the state as a global tourist and investment destination.

As part of this vision, the contestants are touring major attractions across the state. They took part in a heritage walk at the iconic Charminar May 13, visited the Ramappa Temple in Mulugu—a UNESCO World Heritage Site—May 14, and offered prayers at the revered Lord Narasimha temple in Yadagirigutta May 15.

The Miss World 2025 journey began with a grand ceremony in Hyderabad May 10 and will continue until May 31, showcasing not just the spirit of global beauty but also the rich tapestry of Telangana's cultural and natural wealth.

L-G increases ex-gratia for victims of terror violence

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, May 17: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Saturday increased the ex-gratia relief under Security Related Expenditure in case of death, disability or injury of civilians and government employees due to violence or any other form of civil commotion, an official spokesperson said.

He said this enhancement is over and above the Central Scheme for Assistance to civilian victims of terrorist violence under which ₹5 lakh is paid for death and permanent disability. In case of the death of a civilian, the ex-gratia has been increased from ₹1 Lakh to ₹2.5 lakh, which is a two-and-a-half-fold increase (250 per cent enhancement), the spokesperson said.

In case of permanent disability due to violence or civil commotion, the ex-gratia has been enhanced from ₹75,000 to ₹1.5 lakh, he said. In case of death of ex-servicemen (Police), the ex-gratia has been increased by 200 per cent from existing ₹2 lakh to ₹4 lakh, he added.

The spokesperson said in case of permanent disability for ex-police personnel, ex-gratia has been enhanced from ₹75,000

to ₹1.5 Lakh.

At present, in case of death of a Magistrate on duty, the existing ex-gratia is ₹2 Lakh. This has been enhanced to ₹5 Lakh by the lieutenant governor, he said.

In case of permanent disability of Magistrate while on duty, the ex-gratia would be ₹1.5 Lakh, he added.

Under the SRE scheme, Sinha has also approved the ex-gratia for village defence guards, the official said. In case of death of VDGs, the ex-gratia has been enhanced from ₹1 Lakh to ₹2.5 lakh and in case of permanent disability, the ex-gratia would be ₹1.5 Lakh, he said.

In case of death of government employee while on duty due to violence, the ex-gratia has been increased by 500 per cent and it has been enhanced to ₹5 Lakh from existing ₹1 Lakh, he said. In case of permanent disability, the ex-gratia has been increased from ₹75,000 to ₹1.5 Lakh.

The governor paid tributes to the people who made the supreme sacrifice in service to the nation. He said India has been subjected to cross-border terrorism for many decades but Operation Sindoor has drawn a new red line, marking a shift from deterrence to direct action.



Members of all big parties will be included in these delegations and it is a good opportunity to present India's viewpoint in front of the important countries

OMAR ABDULLAH | CHIEF MINISTER, JAMMU AND KASHMIR

36 ILLEGAL BUNGALOWS RAZED ON BANK OF INDRAYANI RIVER

Civic authorities in Pimpri Chinchwad near Pune Saturday demolished 36 bungalows built illegally along the Indrayani River. Acting on the orders of the National Green Tribunal (NGT), officials and personnel from the Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC), along with a heavy police cover, reached the River Villa project in Chikhali village in the morning



of the day quote

While commenting on irresponsible statements made by some people on the Operation Sindoor, Naqvi said that it is the responsibility of all to refrain from any attempt to create confusion on the victory of the country



MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI | SENIOR BJP LEADER AND FORMER UNION MINISTER

The procurement of naturally grown wheat has already commenced and the state government is offering MSP of Rs 60 per kg to the farmers for their produce



SUKHINDER SINGH SUKHU | CHIEF MINISTER, HIMACHAL PRADESH

Our priority is that public work should not stop. We are presently busy with clearing liabilities of the previous government like the incompleting work and pending dues



REKHA GUPTA | CHIEF MINISTER, DELHI

SHORT TAKES

ED official booked in corruption case

Kochi: A senior official of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) has been booked by the Kerala Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau in a corruption case. The officer, attached to the Kochi unit of the central agency, was booked as the first accused in the corruption case registered as per the complaint of a businessman, VACB sources said. Three persons, including a chartered accountant, have already been arrested in the case for allegedly seeking a bribe of Rs two crore from the businessman not to arraign him in an ED case, they said.

4 killed, 15 injured in road accident

Karur (Tamil Nadu): At least four persons were killed and 15 sustained injuries when an omnibus hit a tractor, smashed a median and collided with a tourist van proceeding in the opposite direction near Semmadai in this district Saturday, police said. The van driver, too, was among those dead, police said and added the injured were admitted to a nearby government hospital for treatment.

20 Maoists held, arms seized

Hyderabad: Twenty members of the banned CPI (Maoists) were arrested by police in different places in Mulugu district of Telangana and several arms were seized from them, police said Saturday. The Maoists, including one division committee member and five area committee members, were arrested between May 16 and 17 during vehicle checkings, search operations and during patrolling under Venkatapuram, Wazeedu and under Kannaigudem police station limits, Mulugu District Superintendent of Police Shabarish P said in a release.

Farmer killed by leopard in UP

Bijnor (UP): A farmer was killed by a leopard near his house in a village here, police said Saturday. The deceased farmer was identified as Kamaljeet (52), a resident of Sansarpur village. Kamaljeet was returning home after delivering milk to the village dairy late Friday evening when the leopard came from the fields near his house and attacked him, leaving him badly injured. The animal fled into the forest, said Sanjay Kumar, Station Officer, Chandpur.

Dalit girl gang-raped on way to school in UP's Sultanpur

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sultanpur (UP), May 17: A 14-year-old Dalit girl was allegedly raped by three youths, including a minor, when she was on her way to school here, police said Saturday.

According to police, the incident occurred Friday morning when the survivor, a student of Class X, was on her way to school. The 15-year-old accused, sitting in a car, met her and made her sit in the vehicle under the pretext of dropping her off at school.

However, they then drove her around and mid-way two other accused, Pradeep (18) and Saunabh (18), boarded the vehicle and took her to a room where they tied and gagged her, and raped her, police said.

When she regained consciousness, after about an hour, the accused had fled. She then called for help. The rape survivor first informed her aunt about the incident who informed her other family members.

Based on the mother's complaint, a case was registered against the accused under sections 115(2) (voluntarily causing hurt), 352 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of peace), 70(1) (gang rape) and 110 (attempt to commit culpable homicide) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, POCSO Act, and Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.

The police arrested two accused and detained the third Friday. The arrested accused were sent to judicial custody for 14 days and the minor was sent to juvenile home, Additional Superintendent of Police Akhand Pratap Singh said.

I SEE NO POLITICS IN IT: THAROOR

The Central government has named Tharoor as leader of one of the seven multi-party delegations to project India's national consensus and resolute approach to combating terrorism in all forms and manifestations and carry to the world the country's message of zero tolerance against terrorism



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, May 17: Congress MP Shashi Tharoor Saturday stood by his decision to accept the Centre's invite to lead a multi-party delegation abroad to put across India's stand against Pakistan on terrorism, saying "I see no politics in it".

At the same time, he denied any knowledge about any names being suggested by the Congress for the delegation, saying that it was between the party and the central government.

Tharoor, speaking to reporters here, said that Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijju recently officially invited him to lead the delegation in view of his past experience in handling

foreign affairs and "I immediately agreed".

"I see no politics in it. According to me, politics become important when we have a nation. We all are Indians. When the nation is in crisis and the central government seeks the help of a citizen, what other answer would you give," the Congress MP from Thiruvananthapuram said.

He further said that everyone saw the 88 hours long battle with Pakistan and therefore, "we all need to have a role in what the world is saying about us".

"It is in that spirit I agreed to it," Tharoor added.

On being asked by reporters whether the Congress was unhappy with his decision and why it released the names of the people it had suggested for

the delegation, Tharoor said the media should pose these queries to the grand old party.

"You will have to ask them (Congress)," he said when asked whether the party has any reservations about him leading the delegation.

He also said that when he initially received a call from Rijju inviting him to lead the delegation, he had informed the party about it.

On reporters' queries whether the party was trying to insult him by releasing the names suggested by it for the delegation, Tharoor said that he cannot be insulted so easily. "I know my worth," he asserted.

He said the Centre sought his service for the nation and he was always ready for it.

"National service is the duty of every citizen," he added.

The Congress MP further said that when the country is attacked, "all of us speaking in one voice and standing united is good for the nation, according to me".

The central government has named Tharoor as leader of one of the seven multi-party delegations to project India's national consensus and resolute approach to combating terrorism in all forms and manifestations and carry to the world the country's message of zero tolerance against terrorism.

CPI(M) joins delegations despite reservations



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 17: The Communist Party of India (Marxist) Saturday said it has agreed to be part of the all-party delegations to the government's international outreach following the Pahalgam attack and Operation Sindoor in national interest despite having "reservations", and again demanded a special session of Parliament.

Party General Secretary MA Baby questioned the prime minister's "silence" on the demand for a special session and said the government should reach out to all members of Parliament.

"The Communist Party of India (Marxist) feels that it is unfortunate that the prime minister and his government refused to convene a special session of Parliament to discuss the Pahalgam terror attack and subsequent developments," CPI(M) said in a statement.

"We urge the government to immediately convene the Parliament session, apprise the people of India and also provide opportunities to seek clarifications, if any," the Left party said. With CPI(M)'s Rajya Sabha floor

leader John Brittas among the MPs who will be going to different nations as a part of the multi-party delegations, the CPI(M) said they have agreed to it in national interest.

"The government has called the leader of our party in the Rajya Sabha and informed him about the various delegations that it has decided to send to different countries as part of its diplomatic outreach. Despite our reservations mentioned above and while reiterating our above demands, in the larger national interest, we feel obliged to be part of such a delegation," the CPI(M) said.

The Left party also said that calling "only the chief ministers of the BJP-NDA ruled states" to brief them about 'Operation Sindoor' is discriminatory, especially on an issue of national importance.

"We demand that the government call a meeting of all the chief ministers of the country, including those from the opposition, for such a briefing," the CPI(M) said.

"The government is first accountable to the people of India and should be transparent in its actions. The campaign by ruling party leaders and even state ministers to communalise the situation must stop forthwith," they said.

Baby, meanwhile, said MPs should get an opportunity to seek clarification in Parliament.

"First of all, the prime minister should have responded to our demand for a special session of Parliament. We should have an outreach to Indian people, all the members of Parliament," he said.

FIRST IN OVER 75-YEAR HISTORY

IUML inducts 2 women in national leadership



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram/Wayanad, May 17: For the first time in over 75 years after its formation in 1948, the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) has inducted two women, one of them from the Dalit community, to its national leadership. Jayanthi Rajan, a Dalit leader from Kerala's Wayanad, and Fathima Muzaffer, a corporation councillor from Tamil Nadu, were selected as national assistant secretaries in IUML's national committee at a party event held in Chennai Thursday.

While Muzaffer is the president of the IUML's National Women's League, Rajan is its joint secretary.

Welcoming the development, IUML Rajya Sabha MP Abdul Wahab said it was a "necessary" move as there were no women in its national leadership, but the times and the society needed to change for it to happen.

"Now is the time for it. It is a necessary move. We did it to ensure more representation and opportunities for women in the party, even though we have a separate women's wing," he said. "Therefore, to be in tune with the changing times and bring in more inclusivity, the decision was taken," he told PTI, adding that IUML has been giving priority and importance to the SC/ST community.

On being asked whether it was a move to cast aside the 'male-dominated' image of the party, Wahab said that all parties all over the world were male-dominated.



Boys play in a canal to cool off during a hot summer day, near Kartavya Path, in New Delhi, Saturday

PTI PHOTO

Study flags chemical contamination risk to endangered Gangetic dolphins

THE GANGETIC DOLPHIN POPULATION HAS DECLINED BY OVER 50 PER CENT SINCE 1957, AND THEIR RANGE HAS SHRUNK BY NEARLY A QUARTER, DESPITE BEING DESIGNATED AS INDIA'S NATIONAL AQUATIC ANIMAL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 17: A scientific study has revealed alarming levels of toxic chemicals in the Ganga river, threatening the health and survival of the endangered Gangetic dolphins.

Published in the journal 'Heliyon', the study by the Wildlife Institute of India found that these freshwater mammals are being exposed to a hazardous cocktail of endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs) through their diet.

The researchers analysed the dietary exposure risks of 39 EDCs in fish species consumed by Gangetic dolphins.

The findings indicate significant bioaccumulation of industrial pollutants such as di(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP) and

di-n-butyl phthalate (DnBP) in the prey base of the dolphins.

Residues of banned pesticides like DDT and Lindane (γ-HCH) were also detected, pointing to poor enforcement of environmental regulations in the Ganga basin.

The Gangetic dolphin population has declined by over 50 per cent since 1957, and their range has shrunk by nearly a quarter, despite being designated as India's national aquatic animal.

With only five species of river dolphins left globally, all of them threatened, the study warned that India could risk a repeat of the Yangtze River tragedy, where a similar species went extinct due to unchecked human activities.

The study attributes the contamination to several



sources: runoff from agriculture, untreated industrial effluents from the textile sector, vehicular emissions, poor solid waste management, and rising tourism in ecologically sensitive areas.

The effects of EDCs are particularly worrisome as they can disrupt hormonal systems and reproductive functions in mammals, and persist in the ecosystem for long periods.

Although toxicity risk

Published in the journal 'Heliyon', the study by the Wildlife Institute of India found that these freshwater mammals are being exposed to a hazardous cocktail of endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs) through their diet

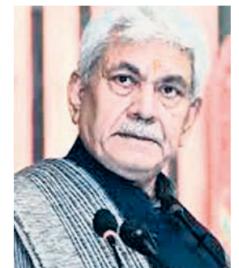
With only five species of river dolphins left globally, all of them threatened, the study warned that India could risk a repeat of the Yangtze River tragedy, where a similar species went extinct due to unchecked human activities

quotients based on standard values were found to be low, when analysed against the reference dose -- a more realistic measure of exposure risk -- the dolphins were at a high risk from seven key pollutants -- DEHP, DnBP, DDT, arsenic, mercury, cadmium, and poly-

chlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).

The study recommended the urgent inclusion of these chemicals in dolphin conservation-monitoring programmes and calls for a scientifically informed national framework to assess and regulate chemical contamination in river ecosystems.

The Gangetic dolphin is protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, but the study stresses that protection on paper must translate into actionable policy and pollution control if the species is to survive. The research from last year was among several key documents unveiled on a new portal launched by the Ministry of Jal Shakti to promote access to ecological data and conservation insights.



Reviewed security situation on the ground with Army and Police officials. Interacted with our brave Jawans in Tangdhar. They are standing tall, full of confidence and with determination to safeguard the territorial integrity of the nation
MANOJ SINHA |
J LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR, JAMMU AND KASHMIR

HP RANKS 2ND AMONG SMALL STATES ON JUSTICE DELIVERY

Himachal Pradesh has secured the second position among states with populations of less than a crore on delivering justice, according to a report by the India Justice Report 2025



of the day quote

We don't interfere with others, but if someone tries to create trouble for us, we don't spare them
SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN | UNION MINISTER

Just as the wisdom of our forefathers has guided our communities, so too can it coexist with the formal legal system
NEIPHU RIO | CHIEF MINISTER, NAGALAND

One of the MPs named in the list (from Assam) has not denied his prolonged stay in Pakistan—reportedly for two weeks—and credible documents show that his wife was drawing salary from a Pakistan-based NGO while working in India
HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | CHIEF MINISTER, ASSAM

POST OF THE DAY

BJP's political surgical strike it has been some time that @ShashiTharoor has been a persona non grata in @INCIndia

- but just how deep that rift is - became public in the last 2 days. While the Govt made its own call on who send in the All-Party Delegation - @Jairam_Ramesh's tweet makes it clear that Tharoor wasn't even in the consideration set from the Congress - despite doing a great job of putting India's point of view forward (even better than what @DrSjaishankar could manage) Why is the Congress humiliating Tharoor like this?? Does primacy of @RahulGandhi matter more than the image of India?? @TheDeshBhakt

SHORT TAKES

Massive blaze destroys over 30 shanties

Gurugram: A massive fire gutted more than 30 shanties in a slum area near the Wazirabad village Saturday afternoon, officials said. The fire spread rapidly after some mini cooking gas cylinders exploded in the slum located near Wazirabad in Sector 52, and it took around two hours to bring the flames under control, a fire official said.

Sambhal violence: Court charges against 50

Sambhal (UP): Paving the way for trial, a local court framed charges Saturday against 50 people for attempt to murder, rioting and other offences over alleged involvement in the violence that erupted November 24 last year during protests against a court-ordered survey of a mosque here. Additional District Sessions Judge (SC/ST) Ragini Singh rejected discharge applications submitted on behalf of several accused.

Tiger spotted after fatal attack; hunt on

Malappuram (Kerala): Search for the tiger, which killed a rubber-tapping worker near Kalikavu here two days ago, intensified Saturday after its image was captured in one of the over 50 camera traps set up in the area, the forest department said. Dr Arun Zachariah, a senior veterinarian accompanying one of the forest personnel teams searching for the tiger, said that an image of the feline was captured by one of the camera traps set up in the area.

AFZAL GURU MENTIONED IN EMAIL

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, May 17: Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport and the iconic Taj Mahal Hotel, a key site of the 26/11 terror attacks, received fresh bomb threats Saturday, sparking heightened security measures across the city.

The threat, issued via email to the Mumbai Airport Police, referenced the execution of terrorist Afzal Guru and warned of imminent bombings at both high-profile locations.

According to officials, the email claimed that the bombing would be carried out in retaliation for what it called

Mumbai airport, iconic Taj Hotel receive bomb threats

the "injustice" of Guru's hanging, and also mentioned S Shankar, another executed convict. The police have launched a full-scale investigation, and security has been intensified at the airport and the hotel. Bomb detection and disposal squads have been deployed, and search operations are underway.

This is not the first time Mumbai Airport has been targeted by such threats. However, the reference to Afzal Guru and the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel which had come under siege during the 26/11 terror attacks has raised particular concern among authorities.

The email's contents have



brought back haunting memories of the 2008 terror siege, when armed militants targeted several landmarks, including the Taj hotels.

A bomb threat was sent to Ta-



ta Memorial Hospital in Mumbai May 9, causing a security alarm. The threat, received via email at around 9 AM, claimed that a bomb had been planted on the hospital premises. The

The email's contents have brought back haunting memories of the 2008 terror siege, when armed militants targeted several landmarks, including the Taj hotels

email also instructed that patients should be evacuated immediately. However, later it turned out to be a hoax.

Afzal Guru, a resident of Jammu and Kashmir, was convicted for his role in the December 13, 2001 attack on the Indian

Parliament. He was accused of aiding the terrorists by providing logistical support and was executed in 2013. His hanging has been a subject of political and public debate, with opinions divided over the fairness of his trial and execution.

While Mumbai Police have received several such threats in the past — many of which turned out to be hoaxes — authorities are treating this incident with utmost seriousness because of the importance of the two places targeted.

Investigations are ongoing, and the source of the email is being traced. As of now, no explosives have been found. Further updates are awaited.

2 ISIS sleeper cell members arrested

The accused, identified as Abdullah Faiyaz Shaikh alias Diaperwala and Talha Khan, were intercepted by the Bureau of Immigration at the Mumbai International Airport Terminal 2 last night when they tried to return to India from Jakarta, Indonesia, where they had been hiding



AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 17: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested two absconders allegedly part of a sleeper cell of terrorist outfit ISIS from Mumbai airport, officials said Saturday.

The duo was wanted in a 2023 case related to fabrication and testing of IEDs in Pune, Maharashtra, they said.

The accused, identified as Abdullah Faiyaz Shaikh alias Diaperwala and Talha Khan, were intercepted by the Bureau of Immigration at the Mumbai International Airport Terminal 2 last night when they tried to return to India from Jakarta, Indonesia, where they had been hiding, the officials said.

The NIA team then took them into custody and arrested them, said a statement issued by the probe agency.

The two accused had been on the run for more than two years and also had non-bailable warrants issued against them by the NIA Special Court, Mumbai. The NIA had also declared a cash reward of Rs 3 lakh each for information about the two accused.

The case relates to a criminal conspiracy by these men, along with eight other Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) Pune sleeper cell members already arrested and in judicial custody, the statement said.

They had conspired to com-

mit terrorist acts with the aim to disturb India's peace and communal harmony by waging a war against the Government of India in furtherance of the ISIS agenda to establish Islamic rule in the country through violence and terror, it said.

These two men, already chargesheeted along with the other arrested accused, were allegedly involved in assembling IEDs from a house rented by Abdullah Faiyaz Shaikh in Kondhwa, Pune, the NIA said. During the 2022-2023 period, they had also organised and participated in a bomb-making and training workshop, besides carrying out a controlled explosion to test an IED fabricated by them, at these premises, it said.

The NIA, which has been actively investigating the activities of ISIS in India in a bid to foil its terrorist plans, had previously chargesheeted all the 10 accused in the case under various sections of the Unlawful Activities of Prevention Act, Explosive Substances Act, Arms Act and the Indian Penal Code.

Besides Abdullah Faiyaz Shaikh and Talha Khan, the others arrested in the case are identified as Mohammed Imran Khan, Mohammed Yunus Saki, Abdul Kadir Pathan, Simab Nasiruddin Kazi, Zulfikar Ali Barodawala, Shamil Nachan, Akif Nachan and Shah Nawaz Alam, the probe agency said.

MONITORING STUDENTS' SUGAR INTAKE

CBSE asks schools to set up 'sugar boards'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 17: The CBSE has directed affiliated schools to establish "sugar boards" to monitor and reduce sugar intake of children, according to officials.

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has noted that there has been a significant increase in Type 2 diabetes among children, a condition once primarily seen in adults, over the past decade.

"This alarming trend is largely attributed to high sugar intake, often due to the easy availability of sugary snacks, beverages and processed foods within school environments. The excessive consumption of sugar not only increases the risk of diabetes but also contributes to obesity, dental problems and other metabolic disorders, ultimately impacting children's long-term health and academic performance," the CBSE said in a letter to school



principals.

Studies indicate that sugar constitutes 13 per cent of daily calorie intake for children aged four to 10 years, and 15 per cent for those aged 11 to 18 years, substantially exceeding the recommended limit of 5 per cent.

"The proliferation of sugary snacks, beverages, and

processed foods, often readily available in school environments, contributes significantly to this excessive intake," it said.

The direction was issued after a nudge by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) -- a statutory body formed to ensure that rights of children,

especially those who are most vulnerable and marginalised, are protected.

The schools have been asked to establish "sugar boards" where information is displayed to educate students about the risks of excessive sugar intake.

"These boards should provide essential information, including the recommended daily sugar intake, the sugar content in commonly consumed foods (unhealthy meals such as junk food, cold drinks, etc.), health risks associated with high sugar consumption, and healthier dietary alternatives. This will educate students about informed food choices and promote long-term health benefits among students," it said.

Schools have also been asked to organise awareness seminars and workshops in this regard.

"A brief report and few photographs may be uploaded by the schools before July 15," the board said.

SNIPPETS

23 terror associates booked under PSA

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir Police Saturday said it has booked 23 terror associates and miscreants under the stringent Public Safety Act (PSA) in Srinagar. The accused have been detained and lodged in district jails of Poonch, Udhampur and Kot Balwal Jammu, a police spokesperson said. "In a decisive action against subversive and criminal elements inimical to the security and public order of the nation, Srinagar police has booked 23 terror associates of proscribed terror outfits involved in subversive activities and miscreants involved in public disturbance under the PSA," he said. The accused were booked after obtaining formal detention orders from the office of the district magistrate of Srinagar based on dossiers prepared against them by the Srinagar police. He said several criminal cases have been registered against these individuals.

Soldier injured in landmine blast near LoC in J&K's Poonch

JAMMU: An army personnel was injured in a landmine explosion near the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district Saturday, officials said. The landmine exploded when the troops were patrolling in a forward area in Digwar sector this afternoon, the officials said. As part of an anti-infiltration obstacle system, the forward areas are dotted with landmines which sometimes get washed away by rains, resulting in such accidents. The injured Havaldar was immediately evacuated to hospital for treatment, the officials said. Meanwhile, a Bomb Disposal Squad destroyed an unexploded mortar shell in a controlled explosion near the Regal border outpost in Samba district this morning. The mortar shell was found by some villagers who informed police and subsequently, a team of experts was rushed and the explosive device was neutralized, the officials said.

SIA conducts raids at multiple places in Kashmir

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Police's State Investigation Agency (SIA) Saturday conducted raids at 11 locations in Kashmir and detained several suspects for questioning as part of its investigation into sleeper cell modules in the valley, officials said. "In continuation to the raids conducted across South Kashmir by the SIA, Kashmir, earlier this week, in the investigation related to sleeper cell modules, extensive raids were carried out today at around 11 locations across Central and North Kashmir," an official said. The officials said these raids were conducted in connection with the investigation of case FIR No. 01/2025 registered under various sections of UAP Act. The competent court has authorised these searches which are being conducted in the presence of executive magistrates, they said. During the raids, substantial incriminating materials have been seized and the suspects have been rounded up for further questioning, the officials said.

Countdown for launch of PSLV-C61 mission begins

The lift-off for the PSLV-C61 is scheduled to take place at 5.59 am from the first launch pad at this space port May 18, which is also the 101st mission for the Bangalore-headquartered space agency

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sriharikota (Andhra Pradesh), May 17: The 22-hour countdown for the launch of an earth imaging satellite on-board a PSLV rocket commenced here Saturday, ISRO sources said.

The lift-off for the PSLV-C61 is scheduled to take place at 5.59 am from the first launch pad at

this space port May 18, which is also the 101st mission for the Bangalore-headquartered space agency.

"The countdown started by 7.59 am Saturday. Total 22 hours countdown," sources told PTI.

The Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) in its 63rd mission, would carry the Earth Observation Satellite (EOS-09) which would be capable of capturing high-resolution images of the Earth's surface under all weather conditions.

The round-the-clock imaging by the satellite is vital for applications like agriculture, forestry monitoring, disaster management, urban planning and national security.

Later, in an update in their website, ISRO said, "12 hours to ISRO's 101st space launch.



PSLV-C61 is mission-ready." Weighing around 1,696.24 kg, the EOS-09 satellite will join the constellation of Earth Observation satellites, aimed at addressing the need for expanded real-time coverage across the country's vast territory.

The EOS-09 (RISAT-1B) is a follow-on to the RISAT-1 sat-

ellite which is equipped with similar configuration. It complements and supplements data from the Resourcesat, Cartosat and RISAT-2B Series satellites.

The Earth Observation Satellite-09 is a repeat satellite of EOS-04 launched in 2022. It has been designed with the mission objective to ensure remote

sensing data for the user community engaged in operational applications and to improve the frequency of observation.

The PSLV-C61 rocket, after a 17 minute journey, is expected to place the EOS-09 satellite into the Sun Synchronous Polar Orbit (SSPO). Scientists, after the satellite gets separated in the desired orbit, would use the Orbit Change Thrusters (OCT) on the vehicle to reduce the altitude of the orbit, later.

The mission life of EOS-09 is 5 years, ISRO said.

According to scientists, a sufficient amount of the fuel has been reserved for de-orbiting the satellite after its effective mission life by lowering it to an orbit that ensures its decay within two years, towards ensuring a debris-free mission.

Heli ambulance crash lands in Kedarnath, all on board safe



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Rudraprayag, May 17: A 'Sanjeevani' heli ambulance from AIIMS, Rishikesh on way to Kedarnath to airlift an ailing pilgrim Saturday crash-landed, just a few metres below the helipad at the Himalayan temple.

People on the ground were taken aback as the heli ambulance nosedived towards the helipad but landed heavily on a flat surface a short distance away.

The heli ambulance twisted briefly anti-clockwise after crash landing and its tail rotor broke. Two doctors and a pilot on board escaped unhurt.

The AIIMS administration said the incident occurred at around 11 am. It said everyone on board the aircraft was safe.

The Sanjeevani heli ambulance had gone from AIIMS, Rishikesh to Kedarnath to rescue Shree Devi, a pilgrim suffering from respiratory distress, when it developed a technical snag, District Tourism Development Officer Rahul Choubey said.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) will conduct an investigation into the incident, Choubey said.

Before landing on the main helipad of Kedarnath, the heli ambulance developed some technical fault. Realizing it on time, the pilot thought it best to land on a flat surface just before the helipad. However, the helicopter's tail rotor broke while landing, the official said.

international

of the day **note**

My message has been clear with India, Pakistan and international partners. The ceasefire must be sustained, further conflict is in nobody's interest

DAVID LAMMY | UK FOREIGN SECRETARY

The tendency to oppose even the right thing and create discord has been evident in the communist movement since history. Even though there was no real ideological difference, divisive lines were drawn based on personal interests

KP SHARMA OLI | NEPAL'S PRIME MINISTER

This genocide has reached levels of ugliness not seen in all conflicts throughout history

MOHAMMED SHIA AL-SUDANI | IRAQ'S PRIME MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Comey quizzed by Secret Service

Washington: Former FBI Director James Comey was interviewed by the Secret Service Friday about a social media post that Republicans insisted was a call for violence against President Donald Trump. The interview was part of an ongoing Trump administration investigation and was expected to help authorities assess the purpose and intent of the post and whether Comey intended to communicate a threat to the president, which he has flatly denied. At issue is an Instagram post from Thursday in which Comey wrote "cool shell formation on my beach walk" under a picture of seashells that appeared to form the shapes for "86 47."

Severe weather leaves 9 dead

St Louis: Storm systems sweeping across the Midwest have left at least 16 dead, including nine people killed after a tornado sparked a mass casualty event in southeastern Kentucky. Kentucky authorities said there were also severe injuries when a twister tore across Laurel County late Friday. "The search is continuing in the damaged area for survivors," the office of Sheriff John Root said in a statement posted on social media. In Missouri, meanwhile, at least seven people died and authorities were searching from building to building for people who were trapped or hurt after severe storms including at least one possible tornado. The storms were part of a severe weather system Friday that also spawned tornadoes in Wisconsin, left several hundred thousand customers without power in the Great Lakes region and brought a punishing heat wave to Texas.

2 dead in Vegas gym shooting

Las Vegas: A shooting inside a Las Vegas gym Friday afternoon left two people dead, including the suspect, and injured at least three others, police said. One person was killed at the Las Vegas Athletic Club on the city's west side as gunfire erupted, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Undersheriff Andrew Walsh said. Officers shot the suspect, who was armed with a gun, after he ran out the door, the police department said in a statement. He was confirmed dead at a local hospital, police said in a social media post. Police said three people who were injured were transported to local hospitals, with one in critical condition. Walsh said there was no longer a threat to the public.



On the one hand, he (Donald Trump) speaks of peace and on the other, he threatens with the most advanced tools of mass killing

MASOOD PEZESHKIAN | IRANIAN PRESIDENT

TURKIYE FREES SWEDISH SCRIBE

Joakim Medin, a Swedish journalist arrested in Turkiye in March when he travelled there to cover nationwide protests was released and returned home to Sweden Saturday. Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson wrote on X that "hard work in relative silence has paid off" and that Joakim Medin's release was due to intensive lobbying by the Swedish foreign ministry and European colleagues



Israel launches fresh Gaza offensive

More than 150 people killed in Israeli strikes in last 24 hours



REUTERS

Jerusalem, May 17: Israel said Saturday that it has launched a major operation in the Gaza Strip to pressure Hamas to release remaining hostages, following days of strikes across the Palestinian territory that killed hundreds of people.

Defence Minister Israel Katz said that Operation Gideon Chariots was being led with "great force." Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had vowed to escalate pressure with the aim of destroying the militant group that has ruled Gaza for nearly two decades.

The military operation came a day after US President Donald Trump concluded his Middle East trip without a visit to Israel. There had been hope that Trump's trip could increase the

chances of a ceasefire deal or the resumption of humanitarian aid to Gaza, which Israel has prevented for more than two months.

Negotiations between Israel and Hamas have yet to achieve progress in Qatar's capital, Doha. Hamas, which released an Israeli-American hostage as a goodwill gesture before Trump's trip, insists on a deal that ends the war and leads to the withdrawal of Israeli forces — something Israel said that it won't agree to.

Israel's army said on social media that it was intensifying attacks and exerting "tremendous pressure" on Hamas across Gaza, and wouldn't stop until the hostages are returned and the militant group is dismantled.

Israel believes as many as 23 of the hostages in Gaza are still alive, although Israeli authori-

ties have expressed concern for the status of three of them.

More than 150 people had been killed in Israeli strikes in the last 24 hours, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. It said more than 3,000 have been killed since Israel broke a January ceasefire on March 18.

On Saturday afternoon, an Israeli strike killed at least four children in the Jabaliya refugee camp in the north, according to al-Awda Hospital, which received the bodies. Seven others were wounded in the strike, which hit a house. A later strike in Jabaliya killed four, the hospital said.

An airstrike east of Deir al-Balah in central Gaza killed a woman and three children, with the bodies arriving at al-Aqsa hospital. Another strike in Deir al-Balah killed four people, including a woman.

There was no immediate Is-

Pak to rebuild JuD sites ravaged in Indian strike

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lahore, May 17: Pakistan government has assured to rebuild the mosques - the JuD headquarters - the Pahalgam destroyed in the Indian strike, the Pakistan Markazi Muslim League said Saturday.

The Pakistan Markazi Muslim League (PMML) is a political wing of the banned Jamaat-ud-Dawah (JuD) and is a front for Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) that has carried out terror strikes in many parts of India, including the horrific 26/11 Mumbai attack in 2008.

As part of the Operation Sindoor, Indian military carried out missile strikes May 7 on nine terror targets in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir, including the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) stronghold of Bahawalpur and the LeT's

base at Muridke in retaliation for the Pahalgam terror attack that killed 26 people.

Pakistan claims it was a mosque and an educational complex that were hit in the strikes at Muridke, located at about 40 kms from Lahore.

Three JuD activists were killed and a controversy erupted when the Pakistan Army, police and civilian bureaucracy senior officers attended their funeral. "The government has announced to rebuild the mosques destroyed in the Indian attack. It is a welcoming step," PMML president Khalid Masood Sindhu said in a statement.

In his address to air warriors at Gujarat's Bhuj Air Force station, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said Pakistan has again started trying to rebuild the terror infrastructure destroyed by India last week.



Emma Stone, centre, avoids a bee while posing with Austin Butler, left, and Pedro Pascal upon arrival at the premiere of the film 'Eddington' at the 78th international film festival, Cannes, southern France

US Supreme Court maintains block on Trump deportations

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, May 17: The Supreme Court Friday barred the Trump administration from quickly resuming deportations of Venezuelans under an 18th-century wartime law enacted when the nation was just a few years old.

Over two dissenting votes, the justices acted on an emergency appeal from lawyers for Venezuelan men who have been accused of being gang members, a designation that the administration says makes them eligible for rapid removal from the US under the Alien Enemies Act of 1798.

The court indefinitely extended the prohibition on deportations from a north Texas detention facility under the alien enemies law. The case will now go back to the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which declined to intervene in April.

In Spain, homelessness crisis unfolds at Madrid airport

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madrid, May 17: Every morning at 6 am, Teresa sets out in search of work, a shower and a bit of exercise before she returns home. For around six months, that has been Terminal 4 of Madrid's international airport.

Teresa, 54, who didn't want her full name to be used because of safety concerns, is one of the estimated hundreds of homeless people sleeping in the Spanish capital's airport amid a growing housing crisis in Spain, where rental costs have risen especially fast in cities like Madrid, the country's capital, and Barcelona.

She and others sleeping at Adolfo Suarez Madrid-Barajas Airport — the third-busiest airport in Europe in 2023, according to Eurostat — described a situation where for months, authorities have neither helped them

find other living arrangements nor have they kicked them out from the corners of the airport that they have occupied with sleeping bags unfurled on the floor as well as blankets, shopping carts and bags.

Spain's airport operator AENA this week said that it would start limiting who can enter Madrid's airport during low-travel hours by asking visitors to show their boarding passes. AENA said that the policy would take effect in the next few days, but didn't specify exactly when. It said that exceptions would be made for airport workers and anyone accompanying a traveller.

Teresa, a Spanish-Ecuadorian who said she has lived in Spain for a quarter-century, told The Associated Press Thursday that she hadn't heard of the new policy. She and her husband would be forced to sleep outside on park benches



and other public spaces if they aren't allowed back in.

"We can't make demands. We're squatters," Teresa said, using a controversial term common in Spain. "Squatters in what is private property. We are aware of that. We want help from authorities, but not a single one has come here."

For months, a political blame game between officials at different levels of government has meant that the homeless encampments in the airport have largely gone unaddressed. In recent weeks, videos on social media and news reports of the airport's homeless population put a spotlight on the issue.

Russian drone strike kills nine in Ukraine



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kyiv, May 17: A Russian drone hit a bus evacuating civilians from a front-line area in Ukraine's northeastern Sumy region Saturday, killing nine people, Ukrainian officials said, hours after Moscow and Kyiv had held their first direct peace talks in years that failed to yield a ceasefire.

Seven people were also injured in the attack in Bilopilnia, a town around 10 kilometres from Russia's border, three of them seriously, according to local Gov Oleh Hryhorov and Ukraine's national police.

The Associated Press couldn't independently verify the report. There was no comment from Moscow.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy described the attack as "deliberate killing of civilians," adding in a post on Telegram messaging app that "Russians could scarcely not realize what kind of vehicle they were hitting."

He lamented the missed opportunity from Friday's peace talks, saying that "Ukraine has long proposed this — a full and unconditional ceasefire in order to save lives."

"Russia only retains the ability to continue killing," Zelenskyy added.

British Foreign Secretary David Lammy said he was "appalled" by the attack. "If Putin is serious about peace, Russia

must agree to a full and immediate ceasefire, as Ukraine has done," he wrote on X.

In Bilopilnia, a period of mourning was declared through Monday. Local community chief Yuri Zarko called the day "Black Saturday." The injured were taken to a hospital in Sumy, the regional capital.

The local media outlet Suspilne said the passengers on the bus were being evacuated from the town when the strike happened. Authorities are working to identify some of the victims, most of them elderly women.

Russia's defence ministry claimed its forces hit a military staging area in the Sumy region Saturday morning, some 50 kilometres southeast of Bilopilnia, without mentioning any other attacks there. According to a Washington-based think tank, Ukrainian forces have been inching forward into Russian territory in the Kursk region, just north of Bilopilnia. The Institute for the Study of War said last week Ukrainian troops had advanced south of the Russian border village of Tyotkino.

Russia said last month that its forces had fully reclaimed the Kursk region, nearly nine months after a lightning incursion by Kyiv captured more than 100 settlements there and promised to hand Ukraine a bargaining chip in possible negotiations with the Kremlin. Ukrainian officials claimed fighting in Kursk is ongoing.

of the day **QUOTE**

As a dredging company, I will not be limited only to India. There is an acute fleet shortage in whole of Middle East and South East Asia and South Asia. And now when many ports are coming up and particularly when industries are coming up, the demand (dredging) is very high



DURGESH KUMAR DUBEY | CEO, DCI

As RITES started diversifying its QA client base into new areas such as renewables (solar), PM Vishwakarma Yojana, power transmission & distribution, states' Jal Jeevan Mission & Public Health Engineering Departments, vendor assessment (GeM), Independent Safety Assessment and international business, a big chunk of multi-sectoral business



RAHUL MITHAL | CHAIRMAN, RITES LTD

This growing concern highlights the need for comprehensive healthcare solutions, rising cost of medical treatment is a cause of concern for a vast majority of people in India, despite having a health cover



ANUP RAU | CEO, FUTURE GENERALI

Q4 RESULTS

Heritage Foods profit down

New Delhi: Heritage Foods Ltd has posted 5.75 per cent drop in consolidated net profit to ₹38.16 crore for the fourth quarter of 2024-25 fiscal year on higher expenses. Net profit stood at ₹40.49 crore in a year-ago period, the company said in a statement.

Data Patterns posts profit

Chennai: Data Patterns (India) Ltd has reported a profit after tax of ₹114.08 crore for the January-March 2025 quarter, Saturday. The company had earned a profit after tax of ₹71.10 crore registered during the corresponding quarter of last financial year. For the financial year ending March 31, 2025, the profit of the company surged to ₹221.81 crore, from ₹181.69 crore registered in the year ago period.

Crompton profit rises

New Delhi: Crompton Greaves Consumer Electricals Ltd (CGCEL) reported an increase of 28.7 per cent in its consolidated net profit to ₹171.74 crore in the March quarter of FY25. The company had posted a net profit of ₹133.43 crore in the January-March quarter a year ago, according to a regulatory filing from CGCEL.

LT Foods profit up

New Delhi: FMCG firm LT Foods Ltd reported 6.83 per cent increase in consolidated net profit at ₹160.51 crore for March quarter FY25, led by rise in margins and distribution expansion. It had reported a net profit of ₹150.24 crore for the January-March period a year ago, according to a regulatory filing from LT Foods Ltd

Lupin PAT jumps

New Delhi: Drug firm Lupin has reported over two-fold increase in consolidated profit after tax at ₹782 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 31, 2025, driven by new products and operational efficiencies. The Mumbai-based firm reported a profit after tax (PAT) of ₹368 crore in the January-March quarter of the 2023-24 fiscal year.



The immense pressure resulting from these circumstances is adversely affecting my physical and mental well-being, leading to a complete loss of focus on my responsibilities. Therefore, I have made the difficult decision to resign, believing it to be in the best interest of the company under these trying conditions

JABIR MAHENDI MOHAMMEDRAZA AGA | CFO, GENSOIL

SAPPHIRE MEDIA ACQUIRE BIG FM 92.7

Sapphire Media Limited has completed the acquisition of debt-ridden Reliance Broadcast Network, which owns Big FM 92.7, through the insolvency process. Reliance Broadcast Network Ltd (RBNL) was going through the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process since February 2023.



India to scrap 100% tariffs: Trump

As India and US are one of the oldest trading partners, this cent percent tariff cut should be reciprocal. Considering that, it would have a significant impact on Indian economy as it can boost various sectors, but can also be a prominent reason for imbalance trade

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York, May 17: India is willing to cut 100 per cent tariffs on American goods, US President Donald Trump claimed once again, saying that a trade deal between New Delhi and Washington is coming soon.

In an interview to Fox News, Trump, however, said that he is not in a "rush" for the proposed trade deal.

Against the backdrop of the US president's repeated claim of India offering to drop all tariffs on American goods, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said in New Delhi Thursday that "any trade deal has to be mutually beneficial".

Trump again described India as "one of the highest tariff nations in the world."

"They make it almost impossible to do business. Do you know that they're willing to cut 100 per cent of their tariffs for United States?" Trump said.



When asked if the deal with India is coming soon, Trump said, "That'll come soon. I'm in no rush. Look, everybody wants to make a deal with us."

Then he went on to add: "South Korea wants to make a deal but I'm not going to make deals with everybody. I'm just going to set the limit. I'll make another some deals. Because I can't, you can't meet with that

many people. I've got 150 countries that want to make deals."

India and the US are holding talks to firm up a trade deal. Meanwhile, Thursday, Jaishankar said trade talks have been going on between India and US.

"These are complicated negotiations. Nothing is decided till everything is. Any trade deal has to be mutually beneficial; it has to work for both countries.

That would be our expectation from the trade deal." Jaishankar said.

On the contrary, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal is currently in Washington to assess the progress of negotiations for the proposed trade agreement. He is expected to hold talks with US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick and US Trade Representative (USTR) Jamie-Greer.

To boost bilateral trade, India is seeking duty concessions for labour-intensive sectors like textiles, gems and jewellery, leather goods, garments, plastics, chemicals, shrimp, oil seeds, chemicals, grapes, and bananas in the proposed pact with America.

However, US wants duty concessions in sectors like certain industrial goods, automobiles (electric vehicles in particular), wines, petrochemical products, dairy, agriculture items such as apples, and tree nuts.

Trade probe goes digital

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 17: The government is developing a digital platform to enable the electronic submission of documents in trade remedy investigations with a view to further promoting transparency, efficiency, and ease of access for all stakeholders, an official statement said Saturday.

These investigations are carried out by the commerce ministry's arm Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR). Since 1995, India has initiated over 1,200 trade remedy investigations and recent interventions have protected domestic sectors including solar energy and advanced materials, such as solar cells and copper wire rods, from unfairly priced imports and subsidized goods.

Looking ahead, the government is developing a digital platform to enable the electronic submission of documents in trade remedy investigations, the commerce ministry said in the statement. The platform is expected to go live soon, offering enhanced transparency, efficiency, and ease of access for all stakeholders, it said.

The main objective of the directorate is to protect sensitive sectors against the adverse impact of the trade liberalization like dumping and



subsidy from any exporting country, by way of carrying out investigations in a time-bound manner.

The main functions of the DGTR include conducting anti-dumping, anti-subsidy CVD (countervailing duty), and safeguard investigations.

The finance ministry takes the final decision to impose these duties. In addition, DGTR, through its trade defence wing, has effectively contested the imposition of trade remedy measures by foreign trade remedy authorities.

These efforts have resulted in either reduced duties or complete relief from such measures on Indian exports, thereby protecting India's international trade interests, the ministry said.

It was established in 2018 through the consolidation of the Directorate General of Anti-Dumping and Allied Duties (DGAD) and the Directorate General of Safeguards.

India partially bans B'desh imports

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 17: The government Saturday imposed port restrictions on the import of certain goods, such as readymade garments and processed food items, from Bangladesh, in response to similar curbs placed by Dhaka on certain Indian products last month.

According to a notification of the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), these port restrictions will not apply to Bangladeshi goods transiting through India but destined for Nepal and Bhutan, it added.

The notification imposes "port restrictions on the import of certain goods such as readymade garments, processed food items etc., from Bangladesh to India," the ministry said. The order said that readymade garments imports from Bangladesh will not be allowed from any land port. However, it is allowed only through Nhava Sheva and Kolkata seaports.

For items like fruits; fruit flavoured and carbonated drinks; processed food items (baked goods, snacks, chips and confectionary); cotton and cotton yarn waste; plastic and PVC finished goods, dyes, plasticisers and granules; and wooden furniture, the



notification said the inbound shipments from the neighbouring country shall not be allowed through any LCSs (Land Customs Stations) and ICPs (Integrated Check Posts) in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram; and LCS Changanabandha and Fulbari, in West Bengal.

It also said that these port restrictions do not apply to the import of Fish, LPG, Edible Oil, and Crushed stone from Bangladesh. To make these changes, a new paragraph is introduced in the country's import policy regulating the imports of these goods from Bangladesh to India, "with immediate effect," it said.

April 9, India withdrew the transshipment facility it had granted to Bangladesh for exporting various items to the Middle East, Europe and various other countries except Nepal and Bhutan. It was announced against the backdrop of the controversial

Big jump in equity market, FPIs invest ₹8,831 crore

Foreign Portfolio Investors displayed strong confidence in Indian equities this week, injecting ₹4,452.3 crore between May 13 to 16. Despite a volatile Tuesday, May's total FPI investment reached ₹18,620 crore

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, May 17: Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) continued their buying streak in Indian equities for the third straight session on Friday, mopping up shares worth ₹8,831.1 crore -- the highest single-day inflow since March 27, according to provisional data from the National Stock Exchange (NSE) released Saturday.

The strong FPI inflow highlights growing foreign investor confidence in Indian markets, especially amid broader global uncertainties. Thursday, FPIs had bought shares

worth ₹5,746.5 crore, taking the total net inflow so far in May to ₹18,620 crore. This marks a sharp improvement from April, when overseas investors had net bought ₹4,223 crore worth of equities, as per National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL) data.

Domestic institutional investors (DIIs) also turned net buyers Friday after a brief pause, purchasing equities worth ₹5,187.1 crore. Despite the robust foreign inflows, benchmark indices ended lower Friday due to profit booking in large-cap stocks. The Nifty slipped 42.30 points or 0.17 per cent to close at 25,019.80, while the Sensex declined 200.15 points or 0.24 per cent to settle at 82,330.59. During the intra-day session, the Nifty had dropped as much as 0.44 per cent to 24,953.05 and the Sensex fell 0.47 per cent to 82,146.95.

However, for the week ended May 16, both indices logged strong gains - with the Nifty rising 4.21 per cent and the Sensex climbing 3.62 per cent, marking their best weekly performance since October 2024.

DPIIT, GEAPP to support climate-tech startups

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 17: The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) Saturday said it has inked a pact with Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet (GEAPP) to support early-stage climate-tech startups through funding access and mentorship.

As part of the MoU, GEAPP will launch the Energy Transitions Innovation Challenge (ENTICE), a competitive platform offering up to USD 500,000 in rewards for high-impact solutions, it said.

Sanjiv, Joint Secretary, DPIIT said the collaboration will help startups scale technologies that support India's long-term net-zero goals.

"India's climate leadership depended on a strong entrepreneurial base. The partnership would open significant opportunities for clean energy startups to scale technologies that support the country's long-term net-zero objectives," he stated.

Investment support will also be facilitated through partners like Spectrum Impact and Avana Capital. The MoU was signed by DPIIT Director Sumeet Jarrangal and Saurabh Kumar, Vice President - India, GEAPP.

SEBI resolves complaints through SCORES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 17: Capital markets regulator Security Exchange Board of India (SEBI) disposed of 4,239 complaints through grievance redressal mechanism SCORES platform in April.

The markets watchdog received 4,341 fresh complaints in the month and a total of 4,263 complaints remained unresolved at the end of April, slightly higher than the 4,161 complaints that were pending as of March 31, according to a public notice by the Securities and Exchange Board of India.

The regulator also highlighted that the average resolution time taken by the entities to submit the Action Taken Reports (ATR) in April was eight days, while the average time taken for complaints under First Level Review was four days, it added.

Under the upgraded SCORES 2.0 framework, complaints are automatically forwarded to the entities, which are given 21 days to submit an ATR to the investors. If dissatisfied, investors can opt for a first-level review within 15 days.

During this period, if the investor continues to be unsatisfied, they can escalate the issue to a second-level review by the regulator.

US IMPOSES 5% TAX ON NRI REMITTANCES

For NRIs, new tax on every transaction could have profound financial implications. People need to be more watchful as there is going to be a juggle between supporting family and managing finances

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 17: The cost for Indians in US sending money back home will rise, with their total annual outgo is likely to cross USD 1.6 billion as the Trump administration plans to impose a 5 per cent tax on outward remittances.

The estimated outgo is based on data for the 2023-24 period compiled from a recent RBI article.

In President Donald Trump's big priority bill, there is a proposal for a 5 per cent excise tax on remittance transfers that would cover more than 40 million people, including those holding green cards and H1B visas. The proposed levy won't be applicable for US citizens.

India's remittances have more than doubled from USD 55.6 billion in 2010-11 to USD 118.7 billion in 2023-24, according to a recent article published in the Reserve Bank's March Bulletin.

The article highlights findings of the sixth round of India's remittances survey conducted for 2023-24. The fifth



round of the survey conducted for 2020-21 was published in July 2022.

The results of the sixth round survey highlight the gradual shift in dominance of India's remittances from the Gulf countries to advanced economies, particularly the US, the UK, Singapore, Canada and Australia. These advanced economies together accounted for more than half of the 2023-24 inward remittances in India.

In 2023-24, the share of the US in India's total remittances remained largest, rising to

27.7 per cent from 23.4 per cent in 2020-21, as per the article. A back of the envelope calculation shows that 27.7 per cent share translates to around USD 32.9 billion worth remittances in absolute terms. A 5 per cent tax on USD 32.9 billion would amount to USD 1.64 billion.

The RBI article also mentioned the cost of a remittance transaction includes two elements - the fees charged at any stage of the transaction and the exchange rate conversion from local currency to the currency of the recipient country.

It also said that given the fact that inward remittances are largely for family maintenance, the cost of sending cross-border remittances has socio-economic impact and therefore, reducing this cost has been a crucial policy agenda globally for over a decade.

The article has been authored by Dharendra Gajbhaye, Sujata Kundu, Alisha George, Omkar Vinherkar, Yusra Anees and Jithin Baby, all from the Department of Economic and Policy Research of RBI.

According to the World Bank, India has continued to remain the top recipient of remittances since 2008, with its share in world remittances rising from around 11 per cent in 2001 to about 14 per cent in 2024.

The top five recipient countries for remittances in 2024 were India, with an estimated inflow of USD 129 billion, followed by Mexico (USD 68 billion), China (USD 48 billion), the Philippines (USD 40 billion), and Pakistan (USD 33 billion), World Bank said in a blog in December 2024.

Impact on immigrants

The impact of this new tax bill announcement would be high regardless of amount of transfer. Though this was merely an announcement, but it will be live soon as the legislative works swiftly there. The House aims to pass the bill by Memorial Day, May 26, 2025, after which it would head to the Senate. Lawmakers hope to have it signed into law by July 4th. If approved, transferring money would become a burden to NRIs and family as every transaction would take 5%.

There are people working aboard simply to support family, or may be for someone's education. They have to be more cautious in terms of financial management. Budgeting for the additional cost, reviewing investment strategies, and exploring alternative ways to support families will become necessary. Proper documentation of transfers will become even more important, not just for tax filings, but also for future legal and financial clarity. The proposed 5% remittance tax represents a significant change for NRIs in US.

DC to take on formidable GT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 17: Shaken by the abrupt suspension of their previous match due to the India-Pakistan conflict, a struggling Delhi Capitals will look to regroup and address bowling concerns when they face table-toppers Gujarat Titans in a reverse-leg IPL clash here Sunday to keep their play-off hopes alive.

If three defeats and a no-result due to rain in their last five games weren't enough, DC's previous fixture was called off midway following air raid alerts in neighbouring Jammu and Pathankot, prompting a week-long suspension of the league.

Although the tournament has resumed, several overseas players have not returned to complete their commitments, forcing franchises to make major adjustments to their squads.

DC, currently just outside the top four with 13 points from 11 matches, suffered a major setback with premier pacer Mitchell Starc deciding not to return for the remainder of the season. The Australian left-arter is the team's leading wicket-taker with 14 scalps, and his absence is a significant blow to DC's already slim playoff hopes.

In a bit of relief, the Capitals managed to secure the services of Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman, who obtained the 'No Objection Certificate' from his national board Friday.

The Axar Patel-led side has endured a disappointing run at home, managing just one win — that too via a Super Over — at the Arun Jaitley Stadium this season.

When the two teams last met April 19, DC were blown away by Jos Buttler's 97 off 54 balls as GT chased down a 200-plus total with ease to win by seven wickets.

DC's problems have only deepened in recent outings. Their top and middle-order



crumbled against Sunrisers Hyderabad in a rain-hit match, while their bowlers were hammered by Punjab Kings, who raced to 122 for one in just 10.1 overs before the game in Dharamsala was abandoned.

GT, comfortably perched at the top of the table with 16 points from 11 games, have been a well-oiled unit this season.

DC will need to strike early to expose that middle order and halt GT's momentum.

TEAMS

Delhi Capitals: Axar Patel (c), Mustafizur Rahman, Abishek Porel, Karun Nair, KL Rahul (wk), Tristan Stubbs, Ashutosh Sharma, Vipraj Nigam, Mitchell Starc, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohit Sharma, Mukesh Kumar, Sameer Rizvi, Darshan Nalkande, Tripurana Vijay, Dushmantha Chameera, Faf du Plessis, T Natarajan, Ajay Jadav Mandal, Manvanthi Kumar L, Madhav Tiwari.

Gujarat Titans: Shubman Gill (c), Jos Buttler (wk), Kumar Kushagra (wk), Anuj Rawat (wk), Sherfane Ruth-

PUNJAB EYE PLAYOFF SPOT

Jaipur: Punjab Kings will look to renew their bid for a playoff berth with another commanding performance here Sunday against Rajasthan Royals, who have failed to rise above mediocrity despite possessing the resources this season. As action returns to the Savai Mansingh stadium after a week-long enforced break, Shreyas Iyer's side will hope to move past the nightmare May 8, when their match against Delhi Capitals in scenic Dharamsala had to be called off due to India-Pakistan border tensions, forcing the players to return to their dressing rooms in pitch darkness. As PBKS take the field Sunday, comfortably placed at third spot on the table with 15 points from 11 games, there would be some scepticism with regard to the changes in the lineup owing to the enforced break. The hosts — RR has already been eliminated from the playoff race and currently languish in ninth place on the points table with just three wins from 12 matches. The crestfallen Royals will hope to bow out on a high in front of their home fans, but for that, they will have to lift themselves from a slump, having lost four of their last five games.

TEAMS: Rajasthan Royals: Sanju Samson (c, wk), Ashok Sharma, Nandre Burger, Tushar Deshpande, Shubham Dubey, Fazalqah Farooqi, Wanindu Hasaranga, Shimron Hetmyer, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Dhruv Jurel, Kumar Kartikeya, Akash Madhwal, Kwen Maphaka, Riyan Parag, Lhuan-dre Pretorius, Kunal Singh Rathore, Vaibhav Suryavanshi, Maheesh Theekshana, Yudhvir Singh. Punjab Kings: Shreyas Iyer (c), Arshdeep Singh, Priyansh Arya, Pyla Avinash, Azmatullah Omarzai, Xavier Bartlett, Yuzvendra Chahal, Praveen Dube, Aaron Hardie, Harnoor Singh, Harpreet Brar, Josh Inglis, Kyle Jamieson, Marco Jansen, Musheer Khan, Mitchell Owen, Prabhsimran Singh, Kuldeep Sen, Shashank Singh, Marcus Stoinis, Suryansh Shedge, Vishnu Vinod, Vijaykumar Vysnak, Nehal Wadhwa, Yash Thakur.

erford, Nishant Sidhu, Mahipal Lomror, Washington Sundar, Mohammed Arshad Khan, R Sai Kishore, Jayant Yadav, Karim Janat, B Sai Sudharsan, Dasun Shanaka,

Shahrukh Khan, Mohammed Siraj, Prasadhi Krishna, Manav Suthar, Gerald Coetzee, Gurnoor Singh Brar, Ishant Sharma, Kulwant Khejroliya, Rahul Tewatia, Rashid Khan.

Gill, Pant ideal for captaincy; do not burden Bumrah: Shastri

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, May 17: Former India coach Ravi Shastri says Shubman Gill and Rishabh Pant are ideal candidates to captain India in the Test format, given that they have age on their side and already have the experience of leading IPL sides.

Shastri also feels that Jasprit Bumrah would have been an obvious choice for the leadership role in the traditional format but for his fitness issues, the pacer should be protected from the additional burden.

"See for me, Jasprit would have been the obvious choice after Australia. But I don't want Jasprit to be made captain and then you lose him as a bowler," Shastri said on the latest episode of the ICC Review with Bumrah's wife Sanjana Ganesan.

The selectors will have to pick a new Test captain following the recent retirement of Rohit Sharma.

India's next assignment is a five-match series against England, starting June 20 at Leeds.

Bumrah, 31, struggled with a back injury sustained in the final Border-Gavaskar Trophy match in Sydney. He was out of action for nearly three months — early January until April — and missed India's Champions Trophy winning campaign.

Bumrah returned to play in the IPL after missing a few initial games and has since taken 13 wickets in eight games for Mumbai Indians.

"I think he (Bumrah) has to take his body one game at a time. He's coming back now after a serious injury. He'll have played IPL cricket, which is four-over cricket. Now will come the test of bowling 10 overs, 15 overs (in Tests). And the last thing you want is some pressure on his mind being cap-



The selectors will have to pick a new Test captain following the recent retirement of Rohit Sharma. India's next assignment is a five-match series against England, starting June 20 at Leeds

tain as well."

With Gill and Pant in their 20s, Shastri feels the board should look at the key factors like age and longevity to decide on the future India skipper.

Gill is leading Gujarat Titans while wicket-keeper and attacking batter Pant is captaining Lucknow Super Giants.

"You groom somebody and I would say Shubman's looked very good. Give him the opportunity. He's 25, 26 years of age, even give him time," Shastri said.

"There's Rishabh as well. I think these two are the obvious ones I'm looking at because of their age and they have a decade ahead of them. So, let them learn. They've got experience

as captains, now, capturing their (IPL) franchise and that makes a difference," he added. Shastri said that Gill's calm demeanour makes him a good choice to lead India.

"The little I've seen of Shubman looks very interesting. Composed, calm, he has all the qualities," said Shastri about the No 1-ranked batter in the ICC ODI Player Rankings.

He also quashed quashed concerns over Gill's form overseas, saying his class and calibre will come to the fore on foreign tours sooner or later.

"You people will talk he's not scored runs overseas. You know, that topic always comes, not scored runs overseas. Sometimes I tell them, go and see your own record, how much have you done overseas? Overseas, overseas, let him play, let him get a run overseas, then he'll score runs. He's a class player. He has a decade of cricket ahead of him for the country," Shastri said.

"And I'm sure he'll get cracking in one of the tours, he'll make up for all those runs he's not got on earlier," he added.

SHORT TAKES

Junior shooters gear up for ISSF World Cup

New Delhi, May 17: A first batch of 40 Indian shooters and support staff will leave for the blue-riband event of the junior international shooting calendar, the ISSF World Cup, in Suhl, Germany, Saturday. The official arrivals are scheduled for May 19 while competitions begin from May 20 and will conclude May 26. India, who finished on top in two of the three ISSF junior events last year, have fielded the largest contingent of 57 shooters, who will be accompanied by 21 officials, including coaches and support staff. A second batch of 38 members (28 shooters and 10 support staff) will leave for Germany Sunday. After an absence in the Olympic year last year, the Suhl junior world cup is back with a bang attracting over 630 athletes from 59 countries.

Karnataka's Avani emerges champion

Mumbai: Karnataka's Avani Udipi emerged champion on the basis of superior tiebreaker score over Mayuresh Parkar of Maharashtra in the All India Chess Masters FIDE rated tournament here Saturday. The 20-year-old Avani, who finished with identical seven points with Parkar, was declared winner by chief arbiter Ajinkya Pingale. Avani secured a tie-break score of 36.5 as against 32 of Parkar, which was the decisive factor in the Karnataka girl being named victor.

Praggnanandhaa wins after a tough tiebreak

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bucharest (Romania), May 17: Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa defeated Maxime Vachier-Lagrave of France to win his first-ever tournament on the Grand Chess Tour by showcasing his supremacy in the Superbet Classic here.

SUPERBET CLASSIC

The Indian, after drawing with the Armenian-American GM Levon Aronian in the final round, was assured of a tie for the first place.

Maxime Vachier-Lagrave and Alireza Firouzja also won to match Praggnanandhaa on 5.5 points. This led to a tie-breaker between the three, with five minutes and a two-second increment after every move.

In the first game with black pieces, Praggnanandhaa had to work hard in a slightly difficult position against Firouzja but the end result was a draw. In the second game Firouzja drew with Vachier-Lagrave.

In the last game of the event, Praggnanandhaa crashed through the defences of Vachier-Lagrave to earn the top prize. The Indian scored 1.5 points in his blitz games, half a point



more than Firouzja and one more than the other French Grandmaster.

It was a sweet comeback for Praggnanandhaa after last year's debacle when he lost all his games in the play-offs.

"I didn't do so well last time. I guess getting to rest a few hours before the tiebreak certainly helps," Praggnanandhaa said at the prize-giving ceremony.

After his relatively early draw with Aronian in the Classical game, the Indian had rested in his room for a few hours.

Praggnanandhaa also thanked his second for the tournament, GM Vaibhav Suri, and his permanent trainer Grand-

master RB Ramesh on the occasion. The Indian won a cash award of USD 77,667 (around Rs 66 lakh) for his efforts.

Results (Round 9): R Praggnanandhaa (Ind, 5.5) drew with Levon Aronian (USA, 4); Deac Bogdan-Daniel (Rou, 4) lost to Alireza Firouzja (Fra, 5.5); Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (Fra, 5.5) beat Jan Krzysztof (Pol, 3); Wesley So (4) drew with Nodirbek Abusattorov (Uzb, 4.5); D Gukesh (Ind, 4) drew with Fabiano Caruana (USA, 5).

Tiebreak result: Praggnanandhaa drew with Firouzja; Firouzja drew with Vachier-Lagrave; Praggnanandhaa beat Vachier-Lagrave.

Animesh Kujur excels in 100m, 200m sprints

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, May 17: Odisha's star sprinter Animesh Kujur stamped his authority in the men's 100m and 200m sprint events with dominant wins in the Indian Grand Prix 2 here Saturday.

The 21-year-old 200m national record holder emerged the fastest runner by winning the short dash in 10.31 seconds before clinching the 200m title in 20.55 seconds.

His personal best in 100m dash is 10.27 seconds, while he holds the national record in 200m — 20.40 seconds — set in April in Kochi.

RESULTS

Men 100m (Race A): Animesh Kujur (Odisha) 10.31 seconds, Lulu Prasad Bhoi (Odisha) 10.57 seconds, Dondapati M (Odisha) 10.57 seconds.

100m (Race B): Mohammed H (Kerala) 10.83 seconds, Dhannush K (Karnataka) 10.90 seconds, Dheeraj K (Army) 10.98 seconds.

100m (Race C): Abhinash Sahu (Odisha) 10.74 seconds, Aryan Manoj (Karnataka) 10.79 seconds, Ajin R (Kerala) 10.83 seconds.

200m (Race A): Varun (Tamil Nadu) 21.51 seconds, Abhinash Sahu (Odisha) 21.88 seconds, Astik Pradhan (Odisha) 21.92 seconds.



200m (Race B): Abhay Singh (Madhya Pradesh) 21.43 seconds, Sam Vasanth S (Tamil Nadu) 21.73 seconds, Aryan Jagdish K (Maharashtra) 21.80 seconds.

200m (Race C): Lulu Prasad Bhoi (Odisha) 21.23 seconds, Dharmveer Choudhary (NOCE Trivandrum) 21.32 seconds, Mohit Kumar (NOCE Trivandrum) 21.41 seconds.

200m (Race D): Animesh Kujur (Odisha) 20.55 seconds, Vishal TK (NCOE Trivandrum) 21.06 seconds, Ragul Kumar G (Tamil Nadu) 21.10 seconds.

Women 800m: Laxmipriya A Kisan (Odisha) 2:09.10, Vijaya Kumari GK (Karnataka) 2:09.58, Priscilla Daniel (NCOE Trivandrum) 2:12.94.

100m hurdles: Nithya Ramraj (Tamil Nadu) 13.27 seconds, Pragnay Prasanti S (Odisha) 13.27 seconds, Sabita Toppo (Odisha) 14.20 seconds.

Akula loses but India taste plenty of success

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Doha, May 17: India number one Sreeja Akula crashed out in the first round but the country's contingent enjoyed plenty of success in other matches with Diya Chitale and Manush Shah progressing to the second round of women's and men's singles competitions in the table tennis World Championships here Saturday.

The Mukherjee duo — Ayhika and Sutirtha — and the pairing of Diya and Yashaswini Ghodpade also won their respective women's doubles opening matches on the first day of the premier tournament.

The Indian pair of Manav Thakkar and Manush Shah too tasted success in their first round men's doubles match.

An error-prone Akula lost to Thailand's Suthasini Sawettabut 1-4 (11-9 11-6 11-5 11-2-11) rather tamely.

It was a disappointing outing for the Indian as she made an early exit after losing to the world number 84.

Sreeja won the opening game, but after that, lost her momentum, dropping innumerable points and making unforced errors to go down in just 33 minutes.

The Indian contingent though had plenty to smile about as Asian Games medalists Ayhika and Sutirtha beat the Turkish pair of Ozge Yilmaz and Ece Harac 3-2 (4-11 11-9 10-12 11-9 11-7) in a five-game thriller.

The result meant that the Indian pair ended a six-match losing streak while progressing to the next round of the ITTF World Championships.

Diya and Yashaswini advanced with a win over Uzbekistan's Magdieva and Erkebaeva 3-1 (9-11 11-2 11-9 11-8).

They started off on the wrong note and lost the opening game by a close margin but bounced back to win the next three games and confirm their place in second round.

The Indian duo of Thakkar and Shah continued their good form this season with a straight-game win over Slovenia's Deni Kozul and Peter Hribar. They won 3-0 (11-7 11-8 11-6).

Later in the evening, Shah began his men's singles campaign with a 4-2 (11-6 2-11 11-7 11-6 5-11 11-6) win over Portugal's Tiago Apolonia.

INT'L DEAF SERIES 2025 Trinidad & Tobago to host Indian deaf cricket team

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 17: The Indian Deaf Cricket Association (IDCA) has announced the highly-awaited International Deaf Series 2025, a milestone event as Trinidad and Tobago welcomes the Indian team for the very first time in the history of deaf cricket.

Scheduled from May 23 to 29, the series will have an exciting five-match itinerary, consisting of two ODIs and three T20Is at top venues across Trinidad and Tobago, representing a new era of international recognition and integration in deaf cricket.

Following their remarkable performances in past international deaf cricket tournaments, Team India, under the

leadership of the Indian Deaf Cricket Association (IDCA), is all set to take on Trinidad and Tobago in a historic encounter.

Marking the first time Trinidad and Tobago will host an international deaf cricket series, the event, titled 'Historic Boundaries, New Beginnings', symbolises not just sporting competition but a deepening of global solidarity and the promotion of deaf cricket on an international scale.

Expressing his enthusiasm, IDCA president Sumit Jain said, "We are honoured to be invited by the Trinidad and Tobago Deaf Cricket Association (TTDCA) for the International Deaf Series 2025. This historic event marks the first time the



Indian team will be hosted by Trinidad and Tobago, reflecting the growing global footprint of deaf cricket. Our team

is well-prepared, and we look forward to competitive matches that showcase the spirit and skill of the sport."

The Indian team, selected by the All-India Men's Selection Committee, has undergone intensive training under

the guidance of coach Santosh Kumar Rai and assistant coach Susheel Gupta. With robust preparation, Team India is poised to extend its dominance in international deaf cricket. Roma Balwani, CEO of IDCA, emphasised the spirit of unity and inclusion, stating, "The International Deaf Series 2025 is more than just competition; it represents unity, inclusion, and the spirit of sportsmanship."

"We are honoured to be part of this historic moment as Trinidad and Tobago hosts its first-ever international deaf cricket series. We look forward to an inspiring display of cricket that transcends barriers and celebrates resilience and talent," Balwani said.