



Sharvari’s journey

Actor Sharvari Wagh reflects on her film journey, highlighting the struggles she faced and the unwavering dedication behind her success

LEISURE | **P2**



Fresh ground ops

Israel launches 'extensive' new ground operations in Gaza, while airstrikes in a new offensive kill at least 103

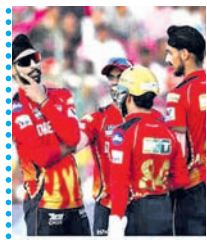
INTERNATIONAL | **P10**



Electric revolution

India continues to be the world's largest market for electric three-wheelers for a second year in a row

BUSINESS | **P11**



Punjab beat Rajathan

Nehal Wadhwa and Shashank Singh strike half-centuries, while Harpreet Brar takes three wickets as Punjab Kings defeat RR

SPORTS | **P12**

17 KILLED IN HYDERABAD BUILDING FIRE

AGENCIES

Hyderabad, May 18: A blaze triggered by a suspected short circuit in a building near the iconic Charminar here Sunday left 17 people dead, with a majority of them being children.

The fire broke out at a building in Gulzar House here, police said.

“All 17 who were shifted to hospitals were brought dead,” a senior police official said.

A narrow staircase was the only escape route for the inmates of the building, but they could not rush out.

The building housed jewellery shops on the ground floor and people were residing in a flat above, police said adding smoke spread and people suffocated.

Telangana State Disaster Response and Fire Services Director General Y Nagi Reddy, who inspected the spot, told reporters that the fire accident was reported between 6 am and 6.15 am.

There was a call to the fire department at 6.16 am and the fire engine was turned out at 6.17 am, he said. There were shops on the ground floor while the first and second floors were residential, he said.

“Prima-facie cause of the fire is short circuit in the mains in the shopping area,” Reddy said.

A total of 21 people were in the building when the fire erupted, and of them 17 were shifted to hospitals by the fire department in an unconscious state.

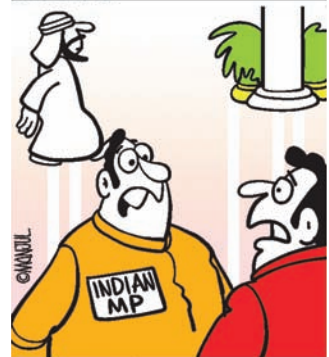
There was only one escape route, the staircase, which was very narrow and the inmates could not run to safety, he said.

Telangana Fire Department in a statement said the fire broke out on the Ground floor (G+2 building) and spread to the floors above.

In a post on X, Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed anguish over the loss of lives due to the fire tragedy. He announced ₹2 lakh for the kin of those who died and ₹50,000 to the injured.

More **P8**

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



I tried to brief him about Operation Sindoor. He says he already knows. Trump has told him everything

Faulty PSLV fails to deliver satellite in orbit

Sriharikota (Andhra Pradesh): ISRO Sunday failed to put its earth observation satellite in orbit after its trusted PSLV rocket developed a fault minutes after launch from the spaceport here. In ISRO's 101st mission from the spaceport here, the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C61) had a text-book lift off at 5:59 am, only to experience an anomaly in the 12th minute of the flight. “Today we targeted the 101st launch from Sriharikota, the PSLV-C61 EOS-09 mission. The PSLV is a four-stage vehicle and up to the second stage, the performance was normal. The third stage motor started perfectly but during the functioning of the third stage we are seeing an observation and the mission could not be accomplished,” Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman V Narayanan said. He said there was a fall in the chamber pressure of the motor case and the mission could not be accomplished. “We are studying the entire performance, we shall come back at the earliest,” Narayanan said post the unsuccessful launch. **P9**



FLOATING DISASTER: A Mexican navy sailing ship on a global goodwill tour struck the Brooklyn Bridge in New York Saturday, snapping its three masts, killing two crew members and leaving some sailors dangling from harnesses high in the air waiting for help.

AP PHOTO

Puri YouTuber under scanner

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 18: The Odisha Police have started an investigation into the alleged links between Puri-based YouTuber Priyanka Senapati and Jyoti Malhotra, who was arrested on the charge of passing on sensitive information to Pakistani intelligence operatives, an officer said Sunday.

The police found that Malhotra, who runs a YouTube channel - Travel with JO - and hails from Hissar in Haryana, had visited Puri in September 2024 and came in contact with Priyanka in the coastal town, who is also a YouTuber, the officer said.

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.

The woman in Puri had also travelled to Kartarpur Sahib Gurdwara in Pakistan recently, Puri SP Vinit Agrawal said.

“We found that Jyoti Malhotra had visited Puri last year,

PAK SPY RING



Priyanka and (R) Jyoti

and we are verifying the fact. Anything more can be shared after the verification,” Agrawal said. Asked whether the YouTuber from Puri had shared intelligence inputs with Malhotra, Agrawal said, “The Haryana Police are investigating the matter and we are providing them the required assistance.”

The police are also ‘examining the objective’ of Malhotra’s visit to Puri, and trying to find out ‘where she stayed, whom she contacted and any possible suspicious activities’, the Puri SP said.

“We are in touch with various Central agencies and the Haryana Police. We will share details with the media after field verification,” he said while responding to queries from re-

porters.

Priyanka’s father said the police had quizzed her daughter Saturday and sought some information. A team of police personnel visited the woman’s residence in Puri for an investigation into the matter.

“My daughter came in contact with Jyoti Malhotra as both are YouTubers. As a friendship developed between them, Malhotra visited Puri. As it is a matter of the nation’s security, a proper investigation should be carried out. We will cooperate with the police,” he said.

“My daughter visited Kartarpur in Pakistan with another friend, not Malhotra, three or four months ago for a pilgrimage. My daughter has no involvement in anti-national activities and was unaware of Malhotra’s alleged espionage,” he said.

In a social media post, Priyanka said, “Jyoti was just a friend of mine, and I came in contact with her through YouTube. I was unaware of anything which she is accused of. I would not have been in touch with her if I knew she was spying for enemy Pakistan.”

She further stated that her connection with Malhotra was

City gets NIA police station

Bhubaneswar: The state government has officially designated the National Investigation Agency (NIA) office in Bhubaneswar as a police station with jurisdiction across the entire state. The move, enabled under Section 2(1) (u) of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, allows the NIA to exercise full investigative powers within Odisha for scheduled offences under the NIA Act, 2008. According to a notification issued by the state Home department, the newly recognised police station will be located at the office of Superintendent of Police, in-charge of NIA police station, at VSS Nagar here. A Superintendent of Police (SP) will be in charge of the station. The notification will come into effect upon its publication in the Odisha Gazette. The development follows the recent arrest of travel vlogger Jyoti Malhotra for her alleged espionage activities on behalf of Pakistan. Malhotra had visited Odisha in September, during which she toured the Jagannath Temple in Puri, accompanied by Priyanka Senapati, another travel vlogger based in Puri who is presently under the scanner.

purely professional, limited to content creation.

“If any investigative agency wishes to cross-question, I would provide full cooperation. Nation is above all. Jai Hind,” she wrote on an Instagram post. **P8**

AGENCIES

Mumbai, May 18: Stopping short of calling it a protocol violation, Chief Justice of India BR Gavai Sunday expressed his displeasure over the absence of senior Maharashtra government officials, including the Chief Secretary, from his first public event in the state after taking oath as the head of the Judiciary.

“It’s a question of respect by the other organs of the institution to the judiciary,” said CJI Gavai, addressing a felicitation programme organised here in his honour.

“If the Chief Justice of India is visiting Maharashtra for the first time, and the state’s Chief Secretary, the Director General of Police, and the Mumbai Police Commissioner don’t feel it appropriate to be present, then they need to reflect on that. There’s nothing new about the protocol — it’s a matter of respect from one constitutional institution to another,” he said.

CJI Gavai said, “When the head of a constitutional institution visits the state for the first time, the kind of reception given to them must be considered carefully... These may seem like small matters, but people

need to understand their significance.”

The three pillars of democracy -- the judiciary, the legislature, and the executive -- are equal, and every organ of the Constitution must reciprocate and show respect to the other, he said.

The CJI’s remarks come at a time when there is a perceived tension between the judiciary and the executive, aggravated by the use of strong words by constitutional functionaries like Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar and some MPs amid allegations of judicial overreach in the Tamil Nadu Bills case.

In a candid observation, the CJI also sought to use the Mumbai event to remind the executive about the constitutional conventions and limits.

“If it had been one of us in such a situation, discussions about Article 142 might have taken place,” he said, amid a light-hearted applause from the audience.

The power under Article 142 of the SC has become a matter of debate following the Tamil Nadu Bills case verdict, which is perceived to have brought the functioning of the President and Governors under judicial review by setting a time limit for granting assent to bills.

Guns N' Roses rekindles nostalgia at Mumbai concert

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 18: Legendary rock band Guns N’ Roses, who returned to India after 12 years with a live concert, treated fans to an energetic show in Mumbai that resonated deeply with audiences of all ages.

The American group -- comprising vocalist Axl Rose, lead guitarist Slash, bassist Duff McKagan, guitarist Richard Fortus and Richard Fortus, rhythm guitarist Izzy Stradlin, drummer Isaac Carpenter, and keyboardists Dizzy Reed and Melissa Reese -- took on the stage around 7 pm Saturday at the Mahalaxmi Race Course in South Mumbai.

Post Operation Sindoor, this was the first major concert by international artists, which saw thousands of people across age groups, especially the middle aged and elderly, queuing up as early as 3 pm at the venue.

Guns N’ Roses performed continuously for over 3 hours and belted out over 25 songs, including classics such as ‘Welcome to the Jungle’, ‘It’s So Easy’, ‘Pretty Tied Up’, ‘Yesterday’, ‘November Rain’, and ‘Knockin’ on Heaven’s Door’.

Fans beat the financial city’s humidity to catch a glimpse of the rock band performing their childhood favourite songs as they turned up in huge numbers with hand fans and portable fans.



Many cheered and clapped, with some even dancing to their cherished tracks. Among them was a spirited 68-year-old woman from Bengaluru.

“‘November Rain’ and ‘Knockin’ on Heaven’s Door’ have been my childhood favour-

ites. I have no inhibitions dancing to the songs that I love. It’s my way of expressing my love for them,” she said.

Two cousins, one from Bengaluru and another from Kolkata, said they thoroughly enjoyed the concert and that it

was worth traveling the miles.

Unlike other notable artists and bands like Ed Sheeran, Chris Martin of Coldplay band, Maroon 5, and Shawn Mendes, who interacted with their fans throughout the concert, Guns N’ Roses frontman Rose chose to entertain simply through music.

“I’m having a nice time, hope you are having it too,” the vocalist said to the crowd, who had gathered from different parts of the country including cities like New Delhi and Hyderabad. Towards the end, Slash took off his jacket and ring and threw them in the audience bay, something for lucky fans to remember him by.

leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Ganesha anticipates some exciting times for you. You are likely to meet some people today who will prove to be assets in the future. You apply yourself to perfection in work, and in your thinking. Towards that end, says Ganesha, you will have to remain practical.

TAURUS
You are going to be exceptionally intense in the way you communicate your emotions and feelings. You will, no doubt, succeed in making the impact, the impression you are striving to make, says Ganesha. You will be so involved in this that you are likely to get caught in the mysterious and magical web of relationships. You are advised not to get too mixed up in inter personal affairs and focus on more meaningful things instead

GEMINI
An occurrence from the past will become a cause of worry for you today. You will also be concerned owing to the deteriorating health of the elders in your family. You will encounter medical expenses. The latter half of the day should see your worries abate somewhat, says Ganesha.

CANCER
People will surround you. You will entertain them with your hilarity. Social contacts will benefit you. Students will excel and concentrate on their work. It will be a good day, says Ganesha.

LEO
You are business like and practical in your approach, however, you have a tendency to lose your temper. You will be able to channelise your aggression into business today. It is a good thing, since you need an outlet for your energy. The advice of your elders will help you. You will be able to comfortably sail through the day today, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
Don't procrastinate matters regarding your health, advises Ganesha. Today you are raring to take on some past wounds. However, peace and quietude are the dominant flavours today. Ganesha suggests that you go ahead and enjoy yourself, if only just to recharge your batteries.

LIBRA
Ganesha says you will stay in accordance with your prestige or social status. Your innovative ideas will help you progress in your work field. Now is a good time to put into completion those ideas, which had taken a back seat. Ganesha wishes you a day full of joy and happiness ahead

SCORPIO
Blood is thicker than water, and you will experience this in true sense today, says Ganesha. Dedicate this day to your family and friends, enjoy and make merry. Feel as if you are on the top of this world when you set out on a secret date with your beloved. Life's beautiful, indeed!

SAGITTARIUS
Tempers will fly today, warns Ganesha. Rein in your anger by the leash of control and restraint. But the buck will stop somewhere! When it does, dig your feet in and battle the crunch situation, advises Ganesha.

CAPRICORN
You are witty and wise. With your extraordinary vision and intelligence you will help many their career and later, thanks to you, they will be near to their goals. Whenever some dark clouds of reality hover above your head, you know how to find the silver lining and get out of a problem. If you are handling a project, you will bring it to its successful completion today, foretells Ganesha.

AQUARIUS
The cupid may strike you today. You don't want make a wrong first impression, so wear something nice and be presentable all the time. Professionally, the day will be favourable for you to make some important decisions. Overall, you are in a happy mood and you will spread the joy around, feels Ganesha.

PISCES
Organized and sorted as you are, you will still find yourself clouded with emotions today. Those you are thoughtful and calculative as a person, you will discover the joy of emotions and the warmth that accompanies them. You will take the time to feel things instead of thinking of them and this change in your behaviour will either be the cause of worry or amusement for those who are close to you, says Ganesha.



WILLEM DAFOE TO STAR IN CUDDLE

Hollywood star Willem Dafoe is set to feature in the near-future drama, titled *Cuddle*. According to the entertainment news outlet *Variety*, the film is directed by Barbara Paz, it marks her fiction feature debut. The project also reunites Dafoe and Paz, who worked together in *My Hindu Friend*

SCARLETT JOHANSSON SETS NEW RECORD ON SNL

Scarlett Johansson made *Saturday Night Live* history by becoming the most frequent female host in the iconic show's history. Hosting the season finale of *SNL's* milestone 50th season, Johansson marked her seventh time at the helm, surpassing previous record-holders Tina Fey and Drew Barrymore, who each hosted six times



Sharvari's luckiest year

Mumbai: Sharvari, who recently clinched the Best Young Actor award at the *Zee Cine Awards*, took a moment to reflect on her journey in the film industry.

Opening up about the hurdles she overcame and the dedication that fueled her success, the actress shared that the audience has helped her find her feet in this industry. At the *Zee Cine Awards 2025*, Sharvari won the award for 'Outstanding Performing Performance by a Young Talent' for her role in *Munjiya* and *Vedaa*.

Sharvari shared, "2024 has truly been my luckiest year — a year with amazing opportunities huge success stories. To have a 100 crore hit, to receive unanimous love for my acting in *Vedaa* and *Maharaj*, to get the kind of films that I have got now due to these successes is truly incredible."

Speaking about her latest win, the *Maharaj* actress credits the audience for embracing her and delivering the hits that proved her undeniable talent and rightful place in the industry.

Work-wise, Sharvari is next gearing up for the release of her upcoming project *Alpha*, part of the YRF Spy Universe, where she stars alongside Alia Bhatt. The film, directed by Shiv Rawail—known for *The Railway Men*—is scheduled for release December 25, 2025.

filled and

IAN S



Saiyami describes her ideal man

Mumbai: Saiyami Kher once revealed her idea of the perfect man—and it's not just one person, but a combination of three iconic personalities.

In a 2023 interview, she shared that she was single at the time and often joked about wishing Gulzar saab were 50 years younger. For her, the ideal partner would be someone who merges the poetic soul of Gulzar, the sportsmanship and passion of Sachin Tendulkar, and the emotional strength and vulnerability of Roger Federer—a dream blend of intellect, heart, and athleticism.

Interestingly, acting wasn't always on Saiyami's radar. A sportsperson for most of her life, she never saw herself in front of the camera. It wasn't until college—where the theatre scene was thriving—that she decided to explore the craft. To everyone's surprise, especially her own, she took to acting quite naturally. Though she's inherently reserved and introverted, Saiyami found that acting gave her a space to channel emotions she otherwise kept buried. It became a form of emotional release, allowing her to step into various lives and stories. What started as a curious experiment soon turned into a deep passion. Today, she says she can't imagine herself doing anything else.

AGENCIES

Huma on pay disparity

Mumbai: Huma Qureshi, widely praised for her powerful performance as Rani Bharti in the hit series *Maharani*, recently spoke out about the changing digital entertainment landscape and the persistent issue of pay inequality in the industry. While she acknowledged the tremendous opportunities that OTT platforms have created for actors, she also highlighted the glaring pay gap that continues to disadvantage women.

Despite *Maharani* being one of the most-watched shows and her playing the central role that drives the narrative, Huma revealed she is still paid significantly less than her male counterparts. She expressed her disappointment that even when a female actor is instrumental in a show's success, male actors continue to receive disproportionately higher fees. Citing examples, she pointed out that some male actors reportedly earn as much as 45 crore for OTT projects—a figure far from what most female leads are offered.

When asked about this persistent disparity, Huma candidly admitted, "It's just the way edging the lack of a clear for such pay gaps. How-mains hopeful. With in-versations and greater about this issue, she the industry might move to-bal-uitable system of compensation.

AGENCIES



GURU DUTT CLASSICS AT CANNES

New Delhi: Ultra Media & Entertainment Group has unveiled fully restored versions of Guru Dutt's iconic films, including *Pyaasa* and *Kaagaz Ke Phool*, at the Cannes Film Festival as a tribute to the legendary filmmaker ahead of his 100th birth anniversary.

The company is hosting a special showcase at the 78th edition of the film gala through a dedicated stall, where Dutt's movies are

being presented as part of a celebration of his cinematic legacy.

Chaudhvin Ka Chand and *Sahib Bibi Aur Ghulam* are some of Dutt's other films that will be screened.

"This is a small homage that we are paying to the legendary actor, producer and filmmaker Guru Dutt," said Rajat Agrawal, COO & Director, Ultra Media & Entertainment Group.

"Film restoration and preservation are not just about technology; they are



also about respect for our storytellers, audiences, and

cultural legacy," he added.

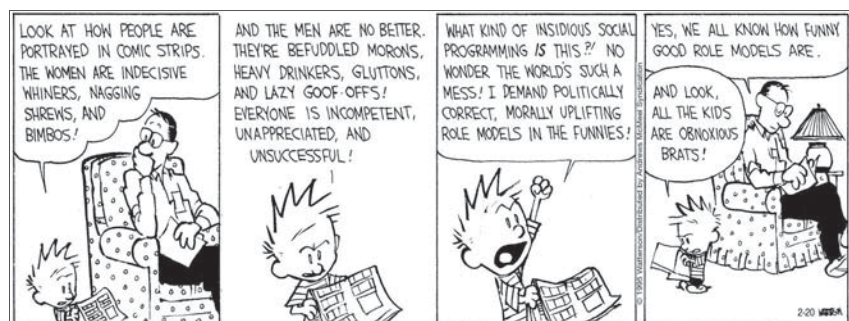
Born July 9, 1925, Dutt made his debut as an actor with a minor role in 1945's *Lakhrani*. Regarded as one of the greatest actor-filmmakers of Indian cinema, Dutt was known for his multi-layered storytelling that simultaneously explored themes of romance, poverty, comedy, satire, and social ills. His filmmaking was considered unconventional in his experiments with light and shadows, and evocative imagery.

PTI

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



FUN post

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post

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Across

- 1 Mongrel
- 3 Queries
- 6 Plant production
- 9 Rust
- 10 Dogma
- 11 Cuzco's country
- 12 Larval frog
- 13 Marionette
- 15 Cohoe
- 18 Pergolas
- 20 Manacle

23 Plaudits

- 24 Pasta dish
- 25 Plea at sea
- 26 Some stingers
- 27 Small whirlpool

Down

- 1 Like some points
- 2 Strong string
- 4 Detective

5 Filled to excess

- 6 Solarium
- 7 Sewing aid
- 8 Water down
- 13 Solar system members
- 14 Small stones
- 16 Niche
- 17 Fish hawk
- 19 Give voice to
- 21 Greenland sight
- 22 Shipshape

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

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.

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

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

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

SUDOKU

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

Singh Deo holds key talks with Vaishnaw



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 18: Deputy Chief Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo held crucial meetings with Union Ministers in New Delhi Sunday. The meetings focused on strengthening the state's infrastructure and contributing to national defence preparedness.

During a detailed discussion with Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, Singh Deo reviewed the progress of major railway projects in Odisha. The talks emphasised enhancing connectivity in backward regions such as South Odisha and expediting pending rail infrastructure developments.

Highlighting the Centre's growing support, Singh Deo pointed out that the Union Government has significantly increased its allocation for Odisha's railway sector—Rs 10,599 crore in the 2025–26 Union Budget, compared to ₹838 crore during 2009–2014. This twelve-fold rise underlines a renewed focus on Odisha's transportation growth.

Among the key projects discussed were the final location survey for a proposed 250-kilometre railway line between Gopalpur and Rayagada, and the doubling of the Nuapada–Gunupur–Theruvali line. These developments aim to boost industrial corridors, generate employment, and benefit remote tribal belts in the state.

In a separate meeting, Singh Deo met Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh for a courtesy visit. He praised the Defence Minister's leadership and reaffirmed Odisha's alignment with national strategic goals.

The interaction highlighted shared concerns on defence preparedness and the importance of Centre-state coordination in national security matters.

"These meetings reflect our commitment to accelerating Odisha's development by closely working with the Centre on strategic and infrastructure priorities," Singh Deo stated.

The visit underscores the state government's proactive approach to building partnerships for transformative growth and national interest.

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BJP Kisan Morcha thanks CM Majhi

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 18: The BJP Kisan Morcha state president Maheswar Sahu Sunday expressed gratitude to Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi for the state government's proactive steps toward farmer welfare, particularly the recent cabinet decision to provide aid to farmers affected by unseasonal rain and nor'westers.

During a meeting at the Chief Minister's official residence, Sahu, along with state secretary Bikram Keshari Routray, conveyed their appreciation for the CM's focus on agricultural development.

Sahu lauded the Chief Minister's commitment to doubling farmers' income in Odisha and highlighted several key welfare measures. These include the procurement of paddy at ₹3,100 per quintal, creation of cold storage facilities in 58 subdivisions, irrigation support for 15 lakh hectares, and an annual assistance of ₹4,000 to over 51 lakh farmers under the CM Kisan Yojana, disbursed in two installments.

He also welcomed the government's decision to offer an incentive of ₹58,000 per hectare for potato cultivation, describing it as a significant boost for crop diversification and income enhancement.

"These initiatives reflect the Chief Minister's strong resolve to ensure farmer prosperity and sustainable agricultural growth in the state," Sahu said.

He added that discussions were held on strategies to ensure these schemes effectively reach grassroots farmers. "The Chief Minister has assured robust implementation and urged us to take an active role in spreading awareness among the farming community," Sahu noted.



REGALING POSE: Artistes perform Odissi at 'Upasaranam' organised by Srjan at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

PIC: BIKASH NAYAK

Women lead Dublagadi beach cleanup

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasore/Bhubaneswar, May 18: In a significant step for marine conservation, a women-led beach cleanup was recently conducted at Dublagadi beach in Balasore, marking the first community-driven environmental initiative in the area. The drive was organised by members of the Kalyani and Radhakrushna Village Forest Councils, with over 30 participants from local fishing and forest-dependent communities.

The cleanup removed more than 250kg of plastic waste, ghost nets, and other harmful non-biodegradable materials threatening marine life and coastal habitats. Ghost nets—



abandoned fishing gear—are especially hazardous as they continue to trap marine animals and damage breeding grounds.

The initiative was jointly organised by Bikash Saathi, Wildlife Trust of India, Fonderies, and the Forest Department.

Key speakers, including Biswajeet Panda, Rebati Singh, and Rashmirekha Kabat from Bikash Saathi, highlighted the impact of plastic waste on marine species such as the endangered Horseshoe Crab and its repercussions on human health through the food chain.

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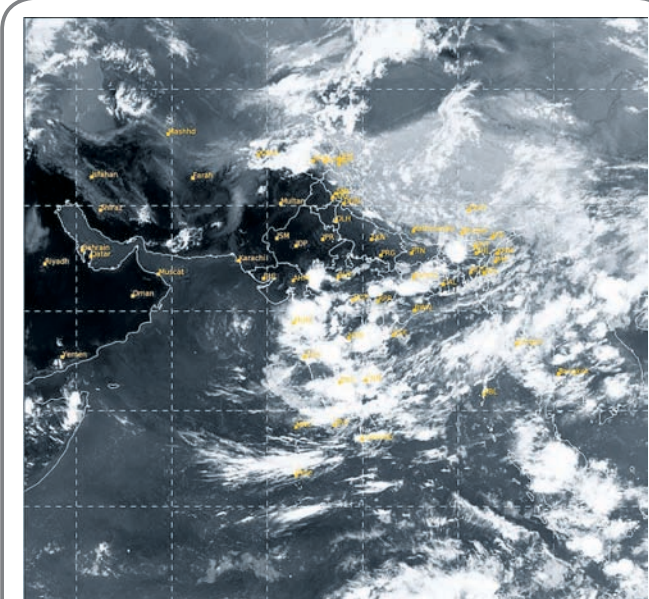
CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

I, Sanjay Kumar Acharya, S/o Harihar Acharya, R/o Ujjalpur, Sundergarh, Ujalpur Sundergarh, Odisha 770011, have changed the name of my minor son namely Ikansh Acharya (Aged 05 years) and he shall hereafter be known as Agasthya Acharya for all future purposes.

I, Rakesh Agarwalla, S/o Gobind Prasad Agarwalla, R/O Ward No-11, At/p.o.: Karanjia, Dist.: Mayurbhanj, Odisha-757037 shall henceforth be known as Rakesh Kumar Agarwalla vide an affidavit sworn before The Notary Public at Karanjia Court on 20.01.2025. That Rakesh Kumar Agarwalla and Rakesh Agarwalla all are the same and one identical person.

LOST

I, Prasanta Kumar Gadanayak, S/o - Duryodhan Gadanayak, At/P.O.- Khalari, P.S./ Dist.- Angul do hereby declare that I lost my mutation case record vide No. 928/99 alongwith Final Decree of Civil Suit No. 36/1994 somewhere else. On found please contact on my Mo. No. 9861553157.



WEATHER			
	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	38.0°	36.0°	Clear Sky
Min Temp	27.6°	27.8°	
Humidity	69%	77%	
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	

CAREER TUG-OF-WAR

Students caught between demands and dreams

In an evolving job market, Odisha's youth grapple with making informed choices that will shape their academic and professional lives

RESHMI YADAV, OP

Bhubaneswar, May 18: As career options diversify and job markets evolve, students in Odisha are increasingly grappling with critical choices about their academic and professional futures. Influenced by parental expectations, peer trends, and emerging sectors like technology, healthcare, and national service, the question persists—who should

guide students in making informed decisions?

A growing concern is the herd mentality among students. "When I passed Class 10, everyone was talking about which stream to choose. Most just followed their friends—I did the same," shared Nidhi Agarwal, a recent graduate from Bhubaneswar. "Looking back, I feel career counselling could have broadened my outlook. Students need to know there are more options beyond science and commerce."

However, student aspirations are not monolithic. Chirag Mallick, a Class 12 student at DAV Public School, said, "I haven't decided yet, but I'm inclined towards a BSc in Physics or B.Tech in Computer Science. My interest in Physics started



early, and my parents have given me full freedom to choose."

Yet, parental influence remains strong, often guided by conventional ideas of stability. "We want what's best for our children. Engineering and medicine have always felt secure," said Madhusmita Mohanty, a parent. "That said, we are now

open to newer fields like cybersecurity or agri-tech, as long as there's job potential."

Teachers, too, play a key role in shaping student choices. "We interact with students daily and understand their potential," said Manoj Kumar Nayak, PGT Economics at DEV International School. "While professional counsellors are valuable, teachers are in a strong position to identify and nurture students' strengths."

Narsingh Majhi, PRO and member of the Career Counselling and Placement Cell at Rama Devi Women's University, added, "Career counselling must be institutionalised—just like yoga is today. Students also need soft skills and exposure to emerging career paths. Teachers can bridge

that gap due to their academic rapport with students."

Odisha's growing economy, with Bhubaneswar emerging as a tech hub and traditional sectors like steel, agriculture, and tourism opening new career avenues, is influencing student choices. Prestigious institutions such as IIT Bhubaneswar and NIT Rourkela further strengthen the state's academic landscape.

In conclusion, there is consensus among stakeholders: students must be empowered with both freedom and informed guidance. A hybrid model involving parents, teachers, and trained counsellors could help Odisha's youth align their passions with purpose—building careers that are both meaningful and future-ready.

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NHRC seeks ATR on condition of rural populace in Keonjhar



POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, May 18: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has sought an Action Taken Report (ATR) from the Keonjhar District Collector on the deplorable quality of life of rural populace in the district who are deprived of basic education, healthcare, employment, and essential amenities.

Acting on a petition filed by human rights activist and Supreme Court lawyer Radhakanta Tripathy, the NHRC passed the order, highlighting the precarious living conditions and deprivation faced by residents in 781 villages across the district.

Tripathy stated that although Keonjhar generates substantial revenue for the state, its people continue to live in abject poverty. The northern district holds vast reserves of iron ore, chromite, limestone, dolomite, nickel, and granite. According to District Mineral Foundation (DMF) reports, Keonjhar has an estimated 2,555 million tonnes of iron ore reserves, expected to last for another 60 years at the current extraction rate of 55 million tonnes annually.

Despite the district's mineral wealth, the tribal (44.5%) and Scheduled Caste (11.62%) pop-

ulations face ongoing political, social, cultural, economic, and environmental marginalisation. Mining companies, Tripathy contended, continue to accumulate wealth by displacing and neglecting these vulnerable communities.

Citing a baseline survey, Tripathy pointed out that 94.1% of households are below the poverty line, and 58.4% live in mud houses. Although substantial development funds are made available to district authorities, poor utilisation has resulted in widespread deprivation. The failure to develop road infrastructure has exacerbated poverty, malnutrition, and social exclusion in tribal areas.

Tripathy noted that there is no shortage of resources or funds for social and economic development. Proper utilisation and equitable distribution of DMF funds could eradicate hunger, poverty, and homelessness while establishing world-class infrastructure in health, education, transport, and communication, transforming the lives of people across 2,137 villages and 297 gram panchayats.

Based on international calculations, if DMF funds are disbursed appropriately, each village in Keonjhar could receive

₹5.46 crore, and each gram panchayat could get ₹39.34 crore, the petition argued.

Tripathy further criticised successive state governments for approaching mineral-rich districts like Keonjhar with a rent-seeking, colonial mindset—extracting wealth without addressing the welfare of the local population. He labelled this neglect as a result of visionless leadership that treats politics as a means of personal enrichment.

He urged the NHRC to initiate an urgent reassessment of the quality of life of tribal communities in Keonjhar and to explore the role of education in improving these conditions. He also recommended the implementation of Artificial Intelligence (AI)-driven accessibility audits to improve planning and execution processes. These audits, he said, could help identify infrastructure gaps in real time using sensor networks and computer vision systems.

“The commission is of the considered view that the allegations levelled in the complaint are serious violations of the human rights of the victims. Accordingly, the registry is directed to send a copy of the complaint to the District Magistrate-cum-Collector, Keonjhar, Odisha, to examine the matter and submit a report expeditiously within a period of 15 days, treating the matter as very urgent,” the NHRC stated in its order.

As per DMF Keonjhar, a total of ₹11,684 crore has been collected cumulatively. In the 2023–24 financial year alone, ₹1,731 crore was collected, compared with ₹580 crore in 2014–15. As per constitutional provisions, these funds are intended for the welfare of local communities, particularly those affected by mining-related industrialisation.



BEDECKED BOULEVARD: A view of a street along the newly built railway overbridge at Durgapalli in Sambalpur, with its wall decorated with paintings on Sambalpuri culture ahead of its inauguration

OP PHOTO

Missing CRPF personnel found hanging from tree

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bolangir, May 18: A CRPF jawan, who had been missing since May 16, was found hanging from a tree in Bolangir district Sunday, police said.

The deceased was identified as Ganeshram Bhoi, a resident of Ghasian village under the Larambha police station limits in the district, a senior officer said.

According to the family members of Bhoi, the CRPF jawan had come to his village on leave, and he went missing Friday.

Some villagers spotted Bhoi hanging from a tree at an isolated place Sunday and informed the local police station, the officer said.

A police team rushed to the spot and started an investigation into his death, he said, adding that a forensic team has also been sent there.

The reason behind the death of the CRPF personnel is yet to be ascertained, he added.

We want our jobs protected: Steel plant workers after top court order

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jharsuguda, May 18: Fear of loss of jobs among workers of a steel plant in Jharsuguda has been growing with each passing day, following the Supreme Court setting aside a resolution plan and ordering liquidation of the unit's original owner, Bhusan Power and Steel Limited (BSPL), earlier this month.

The workers, who have been demonstrating in front of the plant for the past several days, said they do not understand legal issues involved in the case, and only want their jobs to be protected.

Not only the plant's employees, but also contractual workers, local vendors, and small traders are a worried lot as they held demonstrations at the main gate of the plant, originally owned by BSPL.

After the BSPL failed to repay a loan of over ₹47,000 crore, lenders dragged the company to insolvency proceedings and JSW Steel emerged as the successful bidder for BSPL.

The Supreme Court May 2, however, set aside a resolution plan submitted by JSW Steel for BSPL, holding it illegal and in violation of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC). The

The apex court has ordered the liquidation of the Bhusan Steel unit under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code

apex court also ordered the liquidation of BSPL under the IBC.

The functional and now a profit-making unit has also been the industrial showpiece in the mineral-rich region, and many people depend on it for their livelihood.

While about 3,000 people are directly employed in the BPSL plant, it provides indirect employment to around 20,000 others. They include suppliers, transporters, shopkeepers and small traders.

As an air of uncertainty prevails in the western Odisha town which used to be affected by migration of workers, state Industries Minister Sampad Candra Swain told PTI, “We are looking into the matter. I do not want to speak more on the issue now.”

Workers do not want the legal wrangle to jeopardise their livelihood. “We are worried about our ‘roji roti’ (liveli-

hood). The company is making profits due to stability in its operations. Thousands of people will be forced to starve or start migrating again if there is liquidation,” said one of the workers of the plant, who did not wish to be identified.

Asked about the court order, another employee said, “We are not legal experts and don't understand the law. We only want our livelihoods to be protected.”

The local sarpanch of Thelkolo, Avanti Nayak, said that the local people including employees of the BPSL were concerned over the development.

“This plant not only provides employment to local people but also supports thousands of ancillary jobs, small businesses, and community initiatives,” she told PTI. Similar views were also expressed by Hemant Pandey, a supplier of manpower to industrial units in the Jharsuguda region.

“Sending a functional, employment-generating industrial asset into possible liquidation poses a threat to economic recovery of the region,” Pandey said.

The stakeholders are hoping for a positive outcome through judicial and government intervention into the matter.

Youth electrocuted while saving friend

POST NEWS NETWORK

Anandapur/Ghasipura, May 18: A 19-year-old youth died Saturday evening after coming in contact with a live wire while trying to save his friend from getting electrocuted at Andhari Square under Korei police limits in Jajpur district.

The deceased was identified as Subham Sahu of Badapadana village under Ramachandrapur police limits in Keonjhar district. Two of his friends were also critically injured in the incident.

The mishap sparked tension in the area, with angry residents staging a demonstration outside the power department office near Andhari and blocking National Highway-20. The protest was called off after officials assured compensation to the bereaved family.



According to police, Subham and his friends, Manas Sahu and Kalandi Sahu, had gone to a fast-food centre about 2 km from their village. Due to the heat, the trio took their food to the terrace of the building to eat.

Manas accidentally came in contact with an overhead 11-KV transmission line passing near the terrace. When he screamed for help, Subham tried to rescue him by pulling him by the legs. Manas fell back onto the terrace, but Subham came into contact with the wire and lost consciousness.

Ramachandrapur and Korei police rushed Subham and Manas to the Anandapur Sub-Divisional Hospital, where doctors declared Subham dead. Manas was admitted for treatment. Kalandi's condition was not immediately known.

Police have registered a case and handed over the body to family members after a post-mortem examination.

Woman stabbed to death by siblings over property

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kuchinda, May 18: A woman was fatally stabbed by her elder sister and younger brother during a family gathering in Majhipada village under Baramra block in Sambalpur district, local police said Sunday.

The incident occurred during the post-death rituals of their late uncle. The victim, identified as 40-year-old Leena Sahu, had returned to her paternal home to attend the ceremony. An argument reportedly ensued among the siblings over the division of ancestral property, which escalated and Leena was allegedly stabbed by her elder sister, Pushpanjali Sahu, 45, and younger brother, Golek Sahu, 30.

Family members present at the ceremony rushed Leena to Govindpur Medical Centre,



where she was declared dead upon arrival.

Govindpur police arrested the accused siblings and presented them before the Kuchinda Sub-Divisional Judicial Magistrate's Court the same day. A case (67/25) has been registered under sections 103(1) and 3(5) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

Investigations are ongoing, with Govindpur Inspector-in-Charge Rajendra Behera, Kuchinda SDO Pradeep Kumar Das, and a forensic team from Sambalpur examining the crime scene.

Sources indicate that Leena, who was married and residing in Sambalpur, had been working at a jewellery store. She was seeking her share of the family property and her demand reportedly led to tensions with her unmarried siblings, culminating in the fatal incident.

The local community remains in shock over the incident, highlighting the devastating consequences that familial disputes over property can entail.

Declining demand: Bamboo artisans struggle to make a living

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baliapal, May 18: Bamboo artisans in Baliapal block of Balasore district are facing increasingly difficult times, as the demand for handmade bamboo items continues to decline. Once a thriving family profession passed down through generations, the traditional craft now faces extinction due to the rise of plastic and steel alternatives.

“From our forefathers' time, we have been sustaining ourselves through this craft,” said one artisan. “But now, it's no longer possible to earn a decent living. We still hold on to hope that people will appreciate and purchase our handmade goods, but the income we made 20 years ago is no longer achievable.”

In Madhupura, Bada Simulia, Balarampur, Barasah, Gopinathpur, Khaladiha, and Biripalia villages under Baliapal block in Balasore district, many people from the Harijan community and oth-



er socially and economically backward groups earn their livelihood by crafting and selling various bamboo-made household items. These artisans traditionally produced items such as kula (winnowing fans), pachhia (storage trays), bhogei (carrying baskets), jhampa (flat trays), and dala (round baskets), which once

enjoyed strong market demand. Customers even used to pay in advance to secure these products. However, that demand has now significantly declined.

The younger generation shows little interest in continuing the craft. “Why should we learn this work?” they ask their parents. “What have you gained from it that we would

stick to it?”

At present, there is still some appreciation for bamboo items, even at the national level, yet many rural artisans lack access to proper training and support. “The government promotes self-help groups (SHGs) with various benefits and training,” noted a local artisan. “Why can't the same be done for us?”

With minimal earnings and no viable alternatives, many artisans are forced to sell their handmade goods at low prices just to sustain their families. Some younger community members have abandoned the trade altogether, migrating to other states as laborers in search of better livelihood.

Artisans like Minati Ghadai, Ramakanta Ghadai, Panchanan Ghadai, Basanti Ghadai, Sanyasi Ghadai, Seema Ghadai, Ganesh Ghadai, Sandhya Ghadai, and Purnachandra Ghadai from Bada Simulia express frustration at being left behind. “We can't leave this profession, nor do we have any alternative source of income,” they said.

Despite the challenges and meager earnings, some families across Balasore district continue to keep the tradition alive. “If the government provided financial incentives and skill training, it could improve the economic condition of these artisans,” said social worker Anuj Mohapatra.

Live bombs, sharp weapons seized

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Berhampur, May 18: Police have recovered four live bombs and sharp weapons that were lying on the Lanjipalli-Kamapalli road here, officials said Sunday.



The firearms were found packed in a bag, while five sharp weapons were wrapped in a cloth, they said.

The weapons were seized Saturday during patrolling in the area by police personnel, whose presence could have prompted miscreants to leave these behind and flee, said SP Saravana Vivek M.

All the bombs have been defused, he said. Police have detained some persons for questioning, the officer added.

EAST COAST RAILWAY

Tender Notice No. 07-SBP-TRD-OT-2025-26,
Date : 09.05.2025

NAME OF WORK : TRD RELATED WORKS IN CONNECTION WITH THE WORK OF "CONSTRUCTION OF PQRs DEPOT AT SIKIR YARD IN CONNECTION WITH JHARSUGUDA J.N. - TITLAGARH (UP, DN & SL) - TSR (P) - 33,546 TKM IN SAMBALPUR DIVISION..

Approximate Cost (₹) : 25,95,559.64,
EMD (₹) : 51,900.00, Completion Period : 12 Months.

Tender Closing Date and Time :
At 1530 Hrs. of 02.06.2025

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Note : The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 15 (Fifteen) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / corrigendum issued for this tender.

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (TRD),
PR-135/Q25-26 Sambalpur

In sincerity is the certitude of victory. Sincerity! Sincerity! How sweet is the purity of thy presence?

THE MOTHER



Need of the Hour

The first direct parleys between Russia and Ukraine in three years should have been a watershed moment in the ongoing war between the two countries. But, it took less than two hours in Istanbul on 16 May to become crystal clear that the direct negotiations were nothing but a failure. However, such an outcome was expected even though the two sides managed to reach an agreement to exchange 2,000 prisoners.

As it turned out, for Russian President Vladimir Putin the negotiations were a dilatory or even an avoidance tactic. His objective is not difficult to understand as he came under renewed pressure after a proposal for a 30-day ceasefire had been put forward at a summit in Kyiv where key European leaders gathered with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to support Ukraine. Zelenskyy too had openly been snubbed by US President Trump and hence did not risk provoking the latter further. He decided to come to Turkey, while throwing, at the same time, a challenge to Putin to attend the talks. What was more, Trump himself had not ruled out that he might come and join the two Presidents, squeezing out time from his diplomatic tour of the Arabian Peninsula, should such a summit materialize.

But in the end, Putin refused to travel to Turkey and sent a lower-ranking delegation. He seems to be putting across the message to the world that he has no interest in discussions aimed at ending the war that he himself had started. Perhaps, his major premise is that in the war he is in a position of strength and hence on the driver's seat to dictate its course.

The whole development offers some lessons to global players, especially Trump. The key lesson is that it is not prudent for a country to unreservedly align with the aggressor's positions at the victim's expense. The second lesson for Trump is that by entrusting this complex issue to his envoy, a completely inexperienced diplomat and wealthy real estate developer like Steve Witkoff, has its own down side. This has put the White House in such an embarrassing position that Republican Senator Lindsey Graham of South Carolina advocated that "devastating" new sanctions are needed to deprive Russia of the oil revenue that funds the war, if the Kremlin continues to reject the prospect of peace negotiations. But, more than that the US can force Russia to come to the negotiating table by resuming arms deliveries to Ukraine. The European Union has already geared its efforts in this direction. But, this is easier said than done since the US under Trump has portrayed Ukraine and the EU, instead of Russia, as the source of all the problems.

Significantly, a day before the summit Trump declared, "nothing will happen" on Ukraine as long as Putin does not meet him. He, however, carefully avoided unveiling his plan to end the fighting, should such a Russia-US summit occur. The key question surely remains whether Trump can be persuaded to be more helpful to Ukraine and its European allies rather than supportive of Putin. Trump's insistence that only a meeting with Putin can yield results is chilling, to say the least. Whatever is achieved on the diplomatic stage, the fact remains that Russian attacks are still on. An immediate ceasefire is the need of the hour.

WISDOM CORNER

In everyone's life, at some time, our inner fire goes out. It is then burst into flame by an encounter with another human being. We should all be thankful for those people who rekindle the inner spirit.

ALBERT SCHWEITZER

Enthusiasm is the yeast that makes your hopes shine to the stars. Enthusiasm is the sparkle in your eyes, the swing in your gait. The grip of your hand, the irresistible surge of will and energy to execute your ideas.

HENRY FORD

A man who as a physical being is always turned toward the outside, thinking that his happiness lies outside him, finally turns inward and discovers that the source is within him.

SOREN KIERKEGAARD

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1536: Having been found guilty on charges of adultery, Anne Boleyn—the second wife of King Henry VIII of England and the mother of Queen Elizabeth I—was beheaded.

1571: Spanish explorer Miguel López de Legazpi established the city of Manila in the Philippines.

1643: During the Thirty Years' War, the French army—led by Louis II de Bourbon—defeated the Spanish in the Battle of Rocroi, ending Spain's military ascendancy in Europe.

1743: Jean-Pierre Christin invents the Celsius thermometer. The centigrade temperature scale, which is based on the freezing and boiling point of water, is used by most countries around the world. Exceptions include the United State, Belize, and Palau.

1919: Mustafa Kemal Atatürk sets off the Turkish War of Independence. The fight against the allies of the Triple Entente ended some four years later. The Republic of Turkey was founded, and Atatürk became its first President.

1935: British archaeological scholar, military strategist, and author T.E. Lawrence, whose life inspired the epic film Lawrence of Arabia (1962), died at age 46 following a motorcycle accident.

LOL

THE GOLF BALL

A golfer, playing a round by himself, is about to tee off, and a greasy little salesman runs up to him, and yells, "Wait! Before you tee off, I have something really amazing to show you!" The golfer, annoyed, says, "What is it?"

"It's a special golf ball," says the salesman. "You can never lose it!" "Whattaya mean," scoffs the golfer, "you can never lose it? What if you hit it into the water?"

"No problem," says the salesman. "It floats, and it detects where the shore is, and spins towards it."

"Well, what if you hit it into the woods?"

"Easy," says the salesman. "It emits a beeping sound, and you can find it with your eyes closed."

"Okay," says the golfer, impressed. "But what if your round goes late and it gets dark?"

"No problem, sir, this golf ball glows in the dark! I'm telling you, you can never lose this golf ball!"

The golfer buys it at once. "Just one question," he says to the salesman. "Where did you get it?"

"I found it."

SPECTRUM

SUSTAINABILITY

How carbon pricing is advancing

Many fear that America's withdrawal from the Paris climate agreement will undermine the international consensus to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions. Yet just in the last month, there have been two major steps toward widespread carbon pricing where it is needed most. To be sure, carbon pricing is not always the best policy, and not all sectors need to be subjected to schemes that require international consistency. If India electrifies its vehicle fleet more slowly than Europe, European industry suffers no competitive disadvantage. But the situation is different in long-distance shipping and aviation, and in heavy industries such as steel and chemicals, which account for around 25% of global emissions. Here, carbon pricing is key to cost-efficient decarbonization, and must be imposed on an internationally consistent basis.

Fortunately, the technologies needed to achieve net-zero emissions by mid-century in each sector already exist. For example, methanol or ammonia can be used instead of fuel oil in ship engines, and hydrogen can replace coking coal in iron production. As matters stand, these technologies would impose a

significant "green cost premium" at the intermediate product level, but with only a small impact on consumer prices. Carbon pricing is essential to overcome the green cost premium, and it could drive cost-efficient decarbonization at a trivial cost to consumers. But in each of these sectors, inherently international products or the international trade in products (steel) make purely domestic approaches untenable. That is why the International Maritime Organization (IMO) agreed on 11 April to impose a carbon levy reaching \$380 per metric ton on ship operators whose emissions intensity exceeds a defined threshold.

The IMO agreement is not perfect. The organization aims to cut global shipping emissions by 20% by 2030, but the new pricing scheme would achieve only an 8% reduction. Still, concluding a new multilateral agreement despite a US boycott of the negotiations is a big step forward. China, India, and Brazil were among the 63 countries in favor.

Carbon pricing could also drive decarbonization in heavy industry, but if it is imposed in only some countries, production and emissions will simply move to others. Though the ideal solution

would be common carbon prices worldwide for these energy-intensive sectors, there is no international rule-making body like the IMO. The second-best solution, then, is for individual countries to impose domestic carbon prices combined with border carbon tariffs. The European Union is pursuing this approach. Not only will its emissions-trading scheme likely price carbon around \$140 per metric ton by 2030; it is also removing the free allowances that heavy industry previously enjoyed and introducing a border carbon adjustment mechanism (CBAM) to subject imports to the same carbon pricing as domestic production. But the CBAM has been too weak, and heavy-industry decarbonization projects have been delayed. As a result, in March the European Commission committed to strengthening the regime in three respects: by ensuring a level playing field for exports as well as domestic sales; by widening the product coverage; and by improving the measurement of imports' carbon intensity.

The crucial question now is how developing countries will respond. In the past, several governments – in particular China and India – have criti-

cized CBAMs as protectionist. But their arguments are unconvincing. Combining a domestic carbon price with a CBAM does not give domestic producers a competitive advantage. It simply maintains the competitive balance that existed before both were introduced. Moreover, it is the only way that developed countries can truly decarbonize their heavy industry, rather than hypocritically claiming to reduce emissions that have merely moved to other countries. These arguments are beginning to gain traction in developing countries. China's own emissions-trading scheme has been extended to heavy-industry sectors, and prices are slowly increasing – though they still hover around \$10-15 per metric ton. If carbon prices in China, India, and other developing countries gradually rose to European levels, and if CBAMs were imposed on those outside this low-carbon club, Chinese and Indian companies would also decarbonize.

These ideas should be debated at COP30 in Brazil this November, regardless of whether an official US delegation attends.

The writer is Chair of the Energy Transitions Commission. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE



Shivaji Sarkar

GULF COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN LOOKING TO REVAMP THEIR TIES WITH THE US, MOVING AWAY FROM A TRANSACTIONAL OIL-FOR-SECURITY UNDERSTANDING TO STRONGER PARTNERSHIPS

President Donald Trump's recent Middle East trip has messages for India. He on 16 May announced that India has offered a trade deal that proposed almost "no tariffs" on US goods, as the South Asian nation seeks to avert higher import and export costs. Trump on 14 February had issued a blunt warning to BRICS nations, threatening a 100% tariff on all imports into the US if they proceed with launching a common currency. He had said this hours before a scheduled meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, dismissing the economic bloc's relevance, declaring, "BRICS is dead." BRICS is still kicking, but definitely Trump's aggression for a unipolar dollarized world has thawed it a bit as Russia listens to him for ceasefire with Ukraine and the US-China trade conflict settles for lower tariff.

His agreements with Saudi Arabia, UAE and Qatar add further teeth to the anti-BRICS mission. Trump had said, "I don't care, but BRICS was put there for a bad purpose and most of those people don't want it. They don't even want to talk about it now. They're afraid to talk about it because I told them if they want to play games with the dollar, then they're going to be hit with a 100% tariff."

New Delhi is looking to clinch a trade deal with the US within the 90-day pause announced by Trump on 9 April, on so called reciprocal tariffs for major trading partners. On 8 May, the White House secured a trade agreement with the UK, two days after India inked a similar pact with the latter.

Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the UAE all "wanted to showcase they were open for business, which they were able to do, and they wanted to get the US on side," Dina Esfandiary, Middle East lead for Bloomberg Economics, says. "They wanted to show that they were back in terms of being in America's graces," she



Trump's tea with Syrian President Ahmad al-Sharaa, a former jihadist who until recently had a \$10 million US bounty on his head, has opened up opportunity worth billions of dollars for Gulf countries that have been keen to invest in Syria

said, adding that in return, Trump was able to get massive deals with headline figures.

Gulf countries have been looking to revamp their ties with the US, moving away from a transactional oil-for-security understanding to stronger partnerships that are rooted in bilateral investments and shared visions. "It was a new dawn in the US' relationship with the Gulf," Jasmine El-Gamal, a Middle East analyst and former adviser to the Pentagon says.

Saudi Arabia did not get a formalised security deal with the US. That would be replacing the ally, Israel. It came closer to it. Last year, the two nations came close to finalizing a landmark defence and trade pact – but the deal stalled over the Israeli insistence that Israel commit to a path toward Palestinian statehood. Trump now gave to Riyadh a handful of arms deals that may pave the way for a wider agreement. At a formal signing ceremony in a gilded ballroom at the Saudi capital's Royal Court, Trump and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman signed memoranda of understanding, letters of intent and other executive agreements spanning different government agencies.

Saudi Arabia also committed \$600 billion in US investments, including an expansive defence partnership valued at nearly \$142 billion, which the US touts as the "largest defence sales agreement in history." Riyadh did not get a civilian nuclear programme as it insisted on enriching uranium domestically – raising concerns in the US and Israel over nuclear weapons proliferation.

The Saudis are being given massive business opportunity in Syria, as the US lift sanctions on the latter. Trump's tea with Syrian President Ahmad al-Sharaa, a former jihadist who until recently had a \$10 million US bounty on his head, has opened up opportunity worth billions of dollars for Gulf countries that have been keen to invest in Syria.

The baits are enough to keep off BRICS, the US believes. The Saudis are silent since they attended the last BRICS summit in October 2024. Qatar's emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, says that talks with Trump, a first visit by US President on this trip will "give new impetus to the existing strategic cooperation between the two countries." They signed a host of deals in-

cluding a \$96 billion agreement for Qatar to acquire up to 210 American-made Boeing planes. Trump also accepted a Boeing 747-8 jet from Qatar, to be used initially as Air Force One, a gift that is stated to influence the Trump administration.

Qatar is the Gulf state with the most formalized security ties with Washington. It hosts the biggest US military installation in the Middle East, which the State Department describes as "indispensable" for US military operations in the region. It even helped the US in its Afghanistan operations.

The UAE's main target from Trump's trip was deeper investments on AI and technology, and while it achieved victories in that regard, the visit fell short of what Abu Dhabi really wanted: unrestricted access to advanced American microchips. Trump gave the UAE a partnership to build a massive data centre in Abu Dhabi to advance AI capabilities with 5-gigawatts of capacity – enough to power a major city. The complex would require 2.5 million chips, bigger than all major AI infra so far.

The Arab states got business opportunities in the US, Syria, and in their own countries. They, however, could not replace the ally Israel and may have to protect it even against their will, a major US gain.

The US is India's largest trading partner, with bilateral trade totalling some \$129bn in 2024. India ran a \$45.7bn surplus with the US last year, mainly in the form of pharmaceutical products, electrical machinery and jewellery. The Americans have got what they want with various kinds or arm-twisting methods in the region.

Finally, India may get its tariff relief as it extends more to the nutty US relations. India, however, is continuing with BRICS as Union Minister of Power and Housing & Urban Affairs Manohar Lal visits Brazil to attend the BRICS Energy Ministers' Meeting on 19 May.

INFA

Letters

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 in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: edit@orissapost.com

OrissaPOST
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Politics over principle

Sir, This refers to, "Politics over diplomacy," Orissa POST, May 18. In a striking twist, the government has chosen Congress MP Shashi Tharoor to lead a parliamentary delegation on the Operation Sindoor—despite his own party excluding him from its official list. This move lays bare the deepening factional feud within the Congress, where political insecurities are allowed to eclipse national interest. Tharoor, with his unmatched diplomatic credentials, should have been the natural choice. Yet, Congress' omission reeks of internal turf wars and misplaced priorities. The BJP, sensing an opportunity, has seized the moment. By endorsing Tharoor, the ruling party not only strengthens the credibility of the delegation but also strategically exploits the Congress' internal divide. It is a calculated move aimed at drawing Tharoor closer—one that highlights how political rivalries are being played out on the global stage. At a time when the country demands unity and clarity in international diplomacy, the Congress' internal politicking is unbecoming of a responsible Opposition. Petty factionalism has once again trumped merit. National interest should never be the casualty of party ego. In choosing politics over principle, Congress has not just weakened its own stance, but also embarrassed itself on a matter that demanded statesmanship, not squabbling.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Misplaced emotion

Sir, The Turkish apple and Turkish towels, once admired, have suddenly become symbols of hate due to Türkiye siding with Pakistan during the recent Indo-Pak tensions. But nature's products remain unchanged; only human perceptions shift—labeling things with love or hate. It's wiser to cancel future imports if protest is necessary, but the existing stock should be used—the products aren't to blame. Reacting impulsively only reflects misplaced emotion. Should Pakistanis stop eating Shimla mirch just because 'Shimla' is an Indian city and the 1971 Shimla Agreement remains unhonoured? That would be equally absurd. Let us separate sentiment from utility. Objects don't carry politics—humans do. Let reason prevail over reaction.

RS Narula, PATIALA

PIONEERING INITIATIVE

Robotics must for Class X students in Kerala

Demonstrating a continued commitment to future-ready skills, AI learning has also been incorporated into the ICT textbooks for grades 8, 9, and 10 as well

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, May 18: In a pioneering initiative, Kerala has emerged as the first state in the country to make robotics education mandatory for all 4.3 lakh students of class 10, starting from the upcoming academic year June 2.

The integration of robotics into the tenth-grade ICT textbook, specifically the sixth chapter titled "The World of Robots" in the first volume, will empower students to explore fundamental robotics concepts through engaging activities, an official statement said Sunday.

These include circuit construction, utilising sensors and actuators, and controlling electronic devices using computer

programming, K Anvar Sadath, CEO of KITE and Chairman of the ICT Textbook Committee, said in a statement.

KITE is the technical arm of the General Education Department of the Kerala government.

It has already distributed 29,000 robotic kits to high schools across the state to ensure the effective implementation of this curriculum.

"This ambitious initiative builds upon Kerala's prior success in making Artificial Intelligence (AI) learning accessible to all seventh-grade students, another national first achieved in the previous academic year," Sadath said.

Demonstrating a continued commitment to future-ready skills, AI learning has now



been incorporated into the ICT textbooks for grades 8, 9, and 10 as well.

The practical experience gained from the robotics curriculum piloted for Little KITEs

(Kerala's IT club for students) has been instrumental in shaping this comprehensive rollout for all class 10 students, the statement further said.

The initial hands-on activ-

ity in the textbook challenges students to utilise components from the provided robotic kits – such as Arduino breadboards, IR sensors, servo motors, and jumper wires – to construct an automated sanitiser dispenser that activates upon detecting a hand, it said.

Progressing further, students will also delve into creating AI-powered smart home automation systems, including face-recognition-enabled smart doors.

To facilitate this, they will utilize the 'Face Detection Built-in Model' within the Picoblocks software's programming IDE, leveraging webcams on laptops and Arduino kits supplied by KITE to program door-opening mechanisms.

KITE's innovative robotics

learning approach is designed to equip students with the skills to address a wide range of practical problems through cutting-edge technologies.

KITE has already conducted the first phase of training on the new tenth-grade ICT textbook for 9,924 teachers.

Sadath said dedicated robotics training for teachers will be organised in July.

Furthermore, KITE will ensure the availability of additional robotic kits, extending support to unaided schools following the state syllabus that may require them.

The ICT textbook is being provided to all students in Malayalam, English, Tamil, and Kannada mediums, the official added in the statement.

GMC celebrates legacy of 180 yrs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 18: One of South Asia's oldest medical institutions, Grant Government Medical College (GMC) aka Sir JJ Hospital, turned 180 May 15, marking nearly two centuries of pioneering contributions to medical education and research in India.

Conceived by Sir Robert Grant, then Governor of the Bombay Presidency, the iconic institution was envisioned to train native Indians in modern medicine. Notably, ₹44,000 was raised through crowdfunding for its construction.

The proposal, made in March 1838 by Grant, was approved by the British Government, but unfortunately, the news of its sanction arrived in India nine days after Grant's death at Dapodi, Pune.

A memorial meeting in Mumbai led by civic leader Jagannath Shankarsheth commemorated Grant's vision. It was here that he proposed naming the upcoming medical college after Sir Grant. Philanthropist Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy contributed ₹1 lakh to construct a hospital to accompany the college.

An additional ₹44,000 was raised through crowdfunding—an early example of community-supported public healthcare, recalled Dr Rewat Kaninde, a devoted chronicler and alumnus of GMC.

Known as the centre of excellence in medical education, research, and patient care in Central India, the Grant Government Medical College and Sir JJ Hospital is the alma mater for thousands of doctors.

The foundation stone for the hospital was laid January 3, 1843, and the "School of Practice" began functioning May 15, 1845.

Healthcare goes haywire in Maha



Lack of funds for resources keeps more than 200 newly built primary health centres locked in Maharashtra

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 18: More than 200 newly constructed primary health centres (PHCs) and sub-centres in Maharashtra are lying unused, as funds have not been allocated for essential supplies and staff, a senior official from the public health department said.

PHCs and sub-centres are crucial to the rural healthcare system and are the first respondents during medical emergencies and outbreaks of diseases in villages, providing affordable treatment. They run national health programmes, including immunisation drives and provide essential care to women and children.

The official said several PHCs and sub-centres built over the last four years have remained non-functional, as

they haven't received funds for furniture, power connection and staff.

"The department approved the construction of more than 400 primary health centres (PHCs) and sub-centres across the state between 2021 and 2025, and of these, 210 buildings have been constructed, but many remain non-functional," he said.

The official said in some instances, fully-constructed buildings have remained unutilised for nearly two years.

"Although the physical infrastructure is ready, the absence of basic operational support means that these centres are yet to start functioning," he said. According to the department's data, 98 PHCs were sanctioned in the last four years.

"Only 64 PHCs are operational, and 34 remain locked due to an acute shortage of staff and essential supplies," the official added.

Local health authorities say they have repeatedly requested the government for funds for furniture, medicines, electricity, and staffing.

The situation is no different for sub-centres in rural areas.

According to the department's data, 98 PHCs were sanctioned in the last four years

"Of the 308 sub-centres approved for construction, only 129 have become operational, and the remaining 179 buildings are lying unused," the official noted, adding that the department is flooded with requests from across the state for human resources, electricity, and equipment.

He, however, explained that fund allocation becomes difficult as each facility is in different stages of completion.

"We cannot judiciously assign funds when every centre requires a different level of support, which is why many buildings are technically ready but lie unused," the official said.

State Public Health Minister Prakash Abitkar had said the department has revised its procedural guidelines.

"Earlier, furniture procurement and staff appointments would only begin once construction was 75 per cent complete. Now, we have decided to start preparations when the work is 50 per cent complete," the minister had said.

A former senior official cited the department's vast infrastructure network as a challenge.

"The public health department operates an extensive system of PHCs, sub-centres, civil and rural hospitals. With such a wide reach, it is not feasible to focus resources on any one facility. As a result, projects take longer to complete," he explained.



An elephant that was brought to Wildlife SOS Elephant Conservation Centre from Maharashtra feasts on watermelons on completion of ten years of its arrival at the rehabilitation centre, near Agra

PTI PHOTO

Kerala fishermen violate TN fishing ban

The move underscores the ongoing tensions between fishing communities across state borders and the strict enforcement measures being undertaken to ensure compliance with seasonal bans

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, May 18: Owners of two Kerala-based fishing vessels have been summoned to appear before the Joint Director of Fisheries in Tamil Nadu Monday, after being charge-sheeted for violating the ongoing fishing ban along the east coast.

The vessels -- a mechanised bottom trawler and a fibre boat -- were intercepted by Tamil Nadu authorities for operating illegally in the sea off Thoothukudi during the ban period.

The Joint Director of Fisheries, who also serves as the adjudicating officer, will oversee

further proceedings in the case.

According to fisheries department officials, the boats were caught Thursday night during a coordinated inspection involving officials from the Fisheries Department, the Fisheries Enforcement Wing, the Coastal Security Group, and local fishermen representatives.

The operation was launched following complaints from local fishermen about banned fishing activities in the region. The inspection team located the two

Kerala-registered vessels operating 32 nautical miles off the Thoothukudi coast. Both boats were found carrying a total of 16 fishermen and had onboard a significant haul --1,732 kilograms of fish and 110 kilograms of fishlings.

Notably, the fibre boat was reportedly using illegal light fishing methods, which are strictly prohibited during the ban period. The authorities seized both vessels and escorted the crew to shore for legal action.

A senior fisheries official confirmed that the catch was subsequently auctioned for approximately ₹4 lakh.

A formal charge sheet has been filed against the owner of the two boats for violating Tamil Nadu's fishing regulations. "The fishing ban is in place to protect fish breeding during critical spawning periods. Any violation, especially by vessels from neighbouring states, is taken very seriously, the official said.



Mild ground shaking, loud rumble spark panic in Kozhikode

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kozhikode, May 18: A mild ground shaking accompanied by a thunderclap-like rumble from underground triggered panic in a village in northern Kozhikode district, residents said.

According to villagers, the shaking lasted only a few seconds Saturday night.

Following complaints from residents of Ellikkampara in Kayakkody panchayat, officials from the geology department and local authorities visited the area and inspected it Sunday.

Many residents reportedly ran out of their homes in fear. Nadapuram MLA EK Vijayan, who visited the area, told reporters there was no immediate cause for concern, but an expert study was necessary to determine the exact cause.

A report will be submitted to the government through the district collector, she added.

YOGA ON TRAIN

Mumbai commuters stretch, find calm in chaos

As part of Heal-Station's 100-day countdown to International Yoga Day 2025, two trained instructors each daily board different suburban trains across the city, guiding passengers through a 15-minute routine that include stretches, breathing techniques and posture corrections

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 18: As the morning rays greet Mumbai's skyline, the city's famed local trains are already bursting with life. But as the bustle gradually subsides, something quietly transformative unfolds.

While some passengers scroll through their phones or steal a nap, others sit upright, shoulders relaxed, eyes closed, breathing deeply to the rhythm of the moving train.

Welcome to Mumbai's most unconventional yoga class!

This unlikely setting is the brainchild of Ruchita Shah, founder of Heal-Station, a wellness initiative that turns commute time into yoga time.

What began as a modest experiment on International Yoga Day in 2017 has today blossomed into a full-fledged wellness movement embraced

by thousands of daily commuters and over 100 volunteering yoga instructors.

"People often ask: 'Yoga? In a crowded train? How is that even possible?' That is exactly what we wanted to show them -- live, not just in words," Shah told PTI.

"In Mumbai, where life runs non-stop and commuters spend two to three hours in transit daily, we wanted to introduce a gentle shift. This is not about doing complex asanas like handstands. It is about easy and impactful practices like hasta mudras, gentle stretches, breath awareness and micro-meditations that anyone can do even while seated in a packed compartment. If there is space in trains for bhajans and festival celebrations, why not for inner well-being?" Shah said.

Especially for working wom-



en juggling household duties, long commutes and jobs, this becomes a moment of recharge, she said.

The exercises are carefully

designed to suit the train environment, requiring no mats or space beyond what a commuter normally occupies.

"We began this countdown on

March 13 right inside Mumbai locals," said senior yoga teacher and campaign coordinator Varsha Ahuja, who leads the 100-day Travel Yoga initiative by Heal-Station.

"Every day, two teachers board from their nearest station during non-peak hours and provide guidance on simple, seated yoga practices in reasonably filled trains. From Panvel to CST, Virar to Churchgate, Mulund, Ghatkopar, Dadar and Bandra, we have covered the city coach by coach, station by station," Ahuja told PTI.

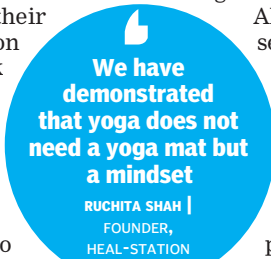
At Heal-Station, the majority of yoga teachers volunteering for this demanding campaign are senior citizens.

"Who says seniors lack

strength or stamina? With dedication and grace, they are not just teaching yoga. They are becoming wellness ambassadors for Mumbai's local trains, adding true value to society every single day," Shah said.

All the teachers do this service voluntarily, Ahuja said. They buy their own tickets, dedicate two to three hours daily, and lead with pure intention.

With the campaign crossing its 75-day mark, excitement is building for the grand finale June 21 -- the International Day of Yoga. Celebrity wrestler Sangram Singh is set to join the celebrations, when the trains would turn into moving yoga grounds with synchronised sessions across Central, Harbour and Western lines.



of the day

quote

Besides preventing future terror strikes, there is a need to rein in criminal, casteist and communal elements who seek to pollute the peaceful atmosphere in the country with their narrow-minded, hateful, and venomous language and actions

MAYAWATI | BSP SUPREMO

India ranks among the top five armed forces globally. The world has accepted that we have the best defence capabilities. Our defence capacity is five times greater than Pakistan's

DEVENDRA FADNAVIS | MAHARASHTRA CM

The primary reason behind (the ED) action against me was I stopped the BJP from coming to power. I also stood as a protective wall in defence of the Thackeray government. After that the Thackeray government collapsed

SANJAY RAUT | SENA (UBT) LEADER

X POST

OF THE DAY

If you can't take a 50% salary cut. And, survive financially--- you need to build a side income over your weekends.

Here are 3 simple side incomes you can build:

- 1) Video editing (learn to use AI tools)
- 2) Newsletter management
- 3) Digital Assistant (learn all tricks and tips on how you can save someone's time and make them more organized) If you wish to go Ops heavy: learn how to manage AirBnBs for others.

Each job will bring in 25K/month easily for you. You can learn everything online. Or by working as an apprentice with someone. You might be old. And, think these jobs are beneath you. But, trust me: I have been through bad financial phases in my life -- nothing is worse than going hungry to bed. So suck up your ego. And, create an income stream 2.

@Akshat_World

SHORT TAKES

RCP Singh joins Jan Suraj Party in Bihar

Patna: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's former close aides Prashant Kishor and RCP Singh joined hands Sunday and vowed to take on their ex-mentor in the assembly polls due in a few months. At a press conference here, Singh, who is also a former Union minister, announced the merger of his Aap Sabki Aawaz, floated barely six months ago, with Kishor's Jan Suraj Party.

NCC expedition team summits Mt Everest

New Delhi: An expedition team of the National Cadet Corps Sunday summited Mt Everest -- the world's highest peak, the NCC said. "Historic moment... Mt Everest Expedition Team of NCC summited Mt Everest today at 0445 hours. Summit photos awaited," the NCC posted on X.

Assam: Three more 'anti-nationals' held

Guwahati: Three more persons have been apprehended in the ongoing "crackdown against anti-nationals" in Assam, taking the total number of such arrests to 68 in the state in the wake of the Pahalgam terror attack last month, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said Sunday.

No expiry date on truce with Pak: Army



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 18: There is "no expiry date" to the understanding reached between Indian and Pakistani Director Generals of Military Operations (DGMOs) on cessation of hostilities nearly a week back, the Indian Army said Sunday.

The clarification came following reports that the arrangement between the two militaries on stopping the hostilities is ending this evening.

The Director Generals of Military Operations (DGMOs) of India and Pakistan May 12 decided to continue with the understanding of halting all military actions. The arrangement was originally reached for two days when the DGMOs held a conversation over the hotline May 10. "As far as continuation of break in hostilities, as decided in DGMOs interaction of May 12 are concerned, there is no expiry date to it," the Indian Army said in a brief clarification.

It also made it clear that there are no "DGMO talks" scheduled for Sunday as reported in a sector of the media.

The arrangement reached May 10 came after four days of intense hostilities that saw the two sides targeting each other's military installations with drones, missiles and long-range weapons that raised fears of a wider military conflict.

The DGMOs of India and Pakistan May 12 again deliberated on ways to avoid "inimical" military actions and agreed on considering immediate steps to reduce troops of the two militaries from the borders and forward areas. In the conversation, the two officers focused on continuing the commitment that both sides must not fire a "single shot" or initiate any "aggressive and inimical" action against each other.

ISRO's 101st mission fails due to pressure issue

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sriharikota (Andhra Pradesh), May 18: ISRO Sunday failed to put its earth observation satellite in orbit after its trusted PSLV rocket developed a fault minutes after launch from the spaceport here.

In ISRO's 101st mission from the spaceport here, the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C61) had a text-book lift off at 5:59 am, only to experience an anomaly in a little after six minutes into the flight.

"Today we targeted the 101st launch from Sriharikota, the PSLV-C61 EOS-09 mission. The PSLV is a four-stage vehicle and up to the second stage, the performance was normal. The third stage motor started perfectly but during the functioning of the third stage we are seeing an observation and the mission could not be accomplished," Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman V Narayanan said.

He said there was a fall in the chamber pressure of the motor case and the mission could not be accomplished. This was the third failure of the PSLV, ISRO's trusted war-

Experts call for urgent action on men's mental health issues

The incidents of atrocities against men -- ranging from false accusations and emotional abuse to domestic violence and legal harassment -- not only cause significant psychological trauma but also reflect a deeper, systemic neglect of male emotional well-being

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 18: Men accounted for 72 per cent of suicides committed in India in 2022. This data from the National Crime Records Bureau has experts raising concerns about the rising mental health issues in men, which they say are largely overlooked.

Men are often conditioned to suppress vulnerability, leading to silent suffering and in many cases devastating consequenc-



Each branch of the State in a democracy, be it the legislature, executive or the judiciary, especially in a constitutional democracy, acts within the framework of the Constitution

B R GAVI | CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA

Cong slams govt over 'mismatch' in Covid death figures

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 18: The Congress Sunday attacked the Centre over alleged mismatch between the official COVID-19 death toll and the figures reflected in the Civil Registration System data, saying it would be too much to expect this government to show regret for its "tone-deaf" actions but when history is written, it will be sure to record this "act of depravity".



Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said more than five years ago, the world was ravaged by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It was clear - even in that moment -? that India underwent devastation on a scale that we hadn't seen for more than a century," he said on X.

From the migrant crisis to the manufactured shortage of vaccines, from the mass deaths and oxygen shortages to the Prime Minister's insistence on campaigning in West Bengal rather than prioritising human lives -? the cruellest and vilest impulses of the Modi government -were on display during the pandemic, Ramesh alleged.

"While we always knew that the Government had systematically underreported COVID-19 deaths, we now learn that there were an additional 20 lakh deaths reported across India in 2021 alone," he said.

Most of these can be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic ? and this estimate of 20 lakh is nearly six times higher than the official Covid death tally of 3.3 lakh, Ramesh said and shared graphs citing the Civil Registration System data.

The Prime Minister's home state of Gujarat has achieved the dubious distinction of undercounting deaths on a staggering scale - 33 times more deaths were reported than acknowledged by the Gujarat Government, he claimed.



horse rocket that launched the Chandrayaan-1 and Mars Orbiter Mission. The PSLV has had 63 launches so far. The previous failures were in 1993, the inaugural flight of the PSLV, and in 2017 when it did not succeed in putting in

against men -- ranging from false accusations and emotional abuse to domestic violence and legal harassment -- not only cause significant psychological trauma but also reflect a deeper, systemic neglect of male emotional well-being.

A study conducted in rural Haryana further revealed that 52.4 per cent of married men reported experiencing gender-based violence, often without access to legal recourse or psychological support.

Societal narratives continue to overlook the pain of men and the need of the hour is urgent reforms, including gender-inclusive mental health policies, safe spaces for emotional expression, and the dismantling of harmful stereotypes that dis-

EAM EMBARKS ON 3-NATION VISIT TODAY

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will embark on a six-day visit of the Netherlands, Denmark and Germany beginning Monday during which he is expected to highlight Pakistan's relentless support to cross-border terrorism



A participant competes at the state-level bullock cart race organised on the occasion of Kollapuradamma Jatra Mahotsava in Chikmagalur, Karnataka

PTI PHOTO

Oppn condemns Ashoka varsity professor's arrest

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sonipat (Haryana), May 18: Some Opposition parties including CPI(M) and TMC Sunday condemned the arrest of Ashoka University's head of the political science department, Ali Khan Mahmudabad.

Mahmudabad was arrested Sunday after two FIRs were lodged on stringent charges, including endangering sovereignty and integrity, for his social media posts related to Operation Sindoor, police and his lawyer said.

The CPI(M), AIMIM leader Asaddudin Owaisi and Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra were among those who condemned the arrest.

"Haryana police reportedly arrested him from Delhi, violating legal process. This targets an individual for his opinions; his post wasn't anti-national or misogynistic. A mere complaint by a BJP worker made Haryana police take action," Owaisi said on X.

In a post on X, the CPI (M) said, "We condemn the arrest of professor Ali Khan Mahmudabad for his social media post against hate. While hate-mongers like Vijay Shah (Madhya Pradesh minister) roam free, those calling for justice and peace are targeted in Modi's India." TMC leader Mohua Moitra said they will move the court against the arrest.



"Horried at arrest of distinguished scholar & academic Prof @Mahmudabad - has this bigoted govt & @police_haryana totally lost it? We are moving court asap (sic)," she said on X.

The arrest comes days after the Haryana State Commission for Women sent a notice to associate professor Mahmudabad questioning his remarks, though he had maintained that they were "misunderstood" and asserted that he had exercised his fundamental right to freedom of speech.

"Ali Khan Mahmudabad has been arrested in Delhi," Assistant Commissioner of Police, Rai, Ajeet Singh said over phone, adding the action came in connection with some comments related to Operation Sindoor.

ating from an elliptical orbit at present.

On Sunday, post lift-off, the PSLV C61 flight was tracked from the Mission Control Centre and other units of ISRO located in various parts of the country. According to the data shared by ISRO, the PS1 (first stage) separation was scheduled for 111.64 seconds after lift-off, but it was achieved at 110 seconds. Further, the second stage ignition of the rocket was targeted to be achieved at 111.84 seconds, but the process occurred at 110.2 seconds leaving a marginal difference.



courage vulnerability in men.

Dr Shweta Sharma, General Secretary of the Indian Association of Clinical Psychologists and Founder of Mansa Global Foundation for Mental Health, said, "Men who experience violence or are wrongfully accused

often suffer in silence, fearing ridicule or disbelief. These experiences not only impact their mental health but also distort their sense of identity, purpose and safety. In therapy,

Gaurav Gogoi visited Pak on ISI invitation: Himanta

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, May 18: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma Sunday alleged that Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi visited Pakistan on an invitation from its spy agency ISI, and that he worked closely with the establishment of the neighbouring nation.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of an official function here, Sarma asserted that the government has documentary evidence to support this claim, and "every proof will be presented before the public by September 10" after proper verification.

"Gaurav Gogoi visited Pakistan on an invitation of the ISI. For the first time, I am saying this. We have documents of the same. He did not go for tourism purposes. He went there definitely for taking training," the CM claimed.



The Deputy Leader of the Congress in Lok Sabha went there on a direct invitation of the Pakistan government and "it was dangerous", Sarma said.

"... He was (working) closely with the Pakistan establishment. When does the Home Department send an invitation? It is only to impart training. Otherwise, why would ISI invite him?"

The Chief Minister stressed that the government here has proof of Gogoi's actions, and there is no way to escape from it. The Assam CM and the BJP have been attacking Gogoi over his wife's alleged connection with ISI. Sarma had claimed that Gogoi's British wife Elizabeth Colburn had travelled 19 times between India and Pakistan.

Sarma also criticised a section of the media, stating that there is nothing childish as being projected by some local outlets here about Gogoi visiting Pakistan after receiving a letter from the home department of that country.

of the day

quote

My firm impression is that both the Europeans and the Americans are determined to work together, but now also in a goal-oriented manner, to ensure that this terrible (Ukraine) war ends soon

FRIEDRICH MERZ | GERMAN CHANCELLOR

I don't put much credence in the Moody's downgrade of the U.S. sovereign credit rating

SCOTT BESSENT | US TREASURY SECRETARY

Putting the economy in order is not enough. We must strengthen institutions, be predictable and regain respect for one another

MAURICIO MACRI | FORMER ARGENTINA PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

1 killed in Palm Springs explosion

Palm Springs: An explosion killed a person and heavily damaged a fertility clinic Saturday in the upscale California city of Palm Springs in what the FBI characterised as an “intentional act of terrorism.” Akil Davis, the head of the FBI’s Los Angeles field office, said in the evening that the clinic was deliberately targeted, while declining to elaborate on how authorities have reached a conclusion on a motive. Authorities were still working to confirm the identity of the person who died at the scene. Davis would not directly say whether that person was the suspect but said authorities were not searching for a suspect. Davis also said four people were hurt but provided no additional details on the severity of the injuries. Authorities were also investigating the possibility that the explosion was being livestreamed. The FBI said it was sent investigators, including bomb technicians, to the scene.

4 soldiers killed in Balochistan

Karachi: Four levies soldiers were killed when militants attacked their check post in the restive Balochistan province’s Khuzdar district along the strategic China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) route, police said. The masked gunmen Saturday evening attacked the check post in the Nal area of the district and fled the scene, a police official said. While no group has claimed responsibility for the attack, security officials believe it was carried out by the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), which is blamed for the increasing terrorist activities in the mineral-rich province.

Argentina votes in local elections

Buenos Aires: Votes were being cast across Buenos Aires Sunday in local elections that will test Argentina’s President Javier Milei’s political strength as he seeks to steer mainstream conservatives toward his radical libertarian platform. The election results could boost Milei’s La Libertad Avanza party, or LLA, in crucial national midterms later this year. Some 2.5 million people are eligible to vote in Sunday’s election, in which half of the 60 legislative seats are up for grabs. A former TV pundit known for his angry rants against Argentina’s political class, Milei founded LLA just four years ago, drawing a motley crew of political novices into his anti-establishment agenda.



Several attempts were made to force us to make this mistake (the use of nuclear weapons) but we have ample force to achieve objectives without this option

VLADIMIR PUTIN | RUSSIAN PRESIDENT

BRITISH CLIMBER SCALES EVEREST FOR 19TH TIME

A British mountain guide has scaled Mount Everest Sunday for the 19th time breaking his own record for the most ascents of the world’s highest mountain by a non-Sherpa guide. Kenton Cool, 51, from southwest England, scaled the 8,849-metre peak Sunday along with several other climbers, said Iswari Paudel of Himalayan Guides Nepal, which equipped his expedition.



Israel begins fresh ground ops in Gaza



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Deir al-Balah, May 18: Israel launched “extensive” new ground operations in the Gaza Strip while airstrikes in a new offensive killed at least 103 people, including dozens of children, overnight and into Sunday, hospitals and medics said, and forced northern Gaza’s main hospital to close. Airstrikes killed more than 48 people in and around the Palestinian territory’s southern city of Khan Younis, some hitting houses and tents sheltering displaced people, according to Nasser Hospital, which said it struggled to count the dead because of the condition of the bodies. Eighteen children and 13 women were among them, spokesperson Weam Fares said. In northern Gaza, a strike on a home in the built-up Jabaliya refugee camp killed nine members of a family, according to the Gaza Health Ministry’s emergency services. Another strike on a residence in Jabaliya killed 10, including seven children and a woman, according to the civil defence, which operates under the Hamas-run government. In Gaza City, Um Mahmoud al-Aloul lay across the shrouded

body of her daughter, Nour al-Aloul. “You took my soul with you,” she cried. “I used to turn off my phone from how much you called.” Israel’s military had no immediate comment, but its statement announcing the ground operations said that preliminary strikes over the past week killed dozens of militants and struck more than 670 targets. Israel blames civilian casualties on Hamas because the militant group operates from civilian areas. Israel launched the offensive Saturday with the aims of seizing territory, displacing hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to Gaza’s south and taking greater control of aid distribution. An Israeli blockade on food, medicine and other supplies is now in its third month, with global food security experts warning of famine across the territory of more than 2 million people.

Talks in Qatar

Israel has said it is pressuring Hamas to agree to a temporary ceasefire on Israel’s terms — one that would free Israeli hostages held in Gaza, but wouldn’t necessarily end the war. Hamas says it wants a full withdrawal of Israeli forces and

a pathway to ending the war as part of any new ceasefire deal. Israel had said it would wait until the end of US President Donald Trump’s visit to the Middle East before launching its offensive, saying it was giving a chance for efforts at a new deal. Trump didn’t visit Israel on his trip, which ended Friday. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s office said that his negotiating team in Qatar’s capital, Doha, was “working to realise every chance for a deal,” including one that would bring an end to fighting in exchange for the release of all remaining 58 hostages, Hamas’ exile from Gaza and the disarmament of the Palestinian territory. Hamas has refused to leave Gaza or disarm. Israel shattered a previous eight-week ceasefire in March, launching airstrikes that killed hundreds of people. Days before that, Israel halted all imports into Gaza, deepening the humanitarian crisis. The war in Gaza began on October 7, 2023, when Hamas-led militants attacked southern Israel, killing 1,200 people and abducting 251 others. Israel’s retaliatory offensive has killed more than 53,000 Palestinians, many of them women and children, according to Gaza’s Health Ministry, which doesn’t differentiate between civilians and combatants in its count.

Houthi rebels launch missile at Israel The Israeli military said that it intercepted a missile launched early Sunday by Iranian-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen. The rebels said that they fired two ballistic missiles — including a hypersonic one — towards Israel’s main airport near Tel Aviv, whose grounds were struck by a Houthi missile earlier this month.

ONE DAY, THREE ELECTIONS IN EUROPE

Poles vote for new president

Warsaw: Poles voted Sunday in a presidential election at a time of heightened security concerns stemming from the ongoing war in neighbouring Ukraine and growing worry that the US commitment to Europe’s security could be weak-



ening under President Donald Trump. The top two front-runners are Warsaw Mayor Rafal Trzaskowski, a liberal allied with Prime Minister Donald Tusk, and Karol Nawrocki, a conservative historian with

no prior political experience who is supported by the national conservative Law and Justice party. Recent opinion polls show Trzaskowski with around 30% support and Nawrocki in the mid-20s. A second round between the two is widely expected to take place June 1. The election is also a test of the strength of other forces, including the far right. Slawomir Mentzen, a hard-right candidate who blends populist MAGA rhetoric with libertarian economics and a critical stance toward the European Union, has been polling in third place.

Portugal holds 3rd general election in 3 yrs **Lisbon:** Voters in Portugal returned to the polls Sunday for a third general election in three years, as the country’s increasingly fragmented political landscape defies efforts



to unite behind policies on pressing national issues such as immigration, housing and the cost of living. Hopes that the ballot might end the worst spell of political instability in decades for the European Union country of 10.6 million people could be dashed, however. Polls suggest the election is poised to deliver yet another minority government, leaving the Portuguese back where they started. “What the polls indicate is that there will not be major differences from the last

election results,” says Marina Costa Lobo, head researcher at Lisbon University’s Institute of Social Sciences. That outcome could bring another scramble to build political alliances in Parliament, she said.

Romanians vote in presidential runoff

Bucharest: Romanians voted Sunday in a tense presidential runoff between a hard-right nationalist and a pro-Western centrist in a high-stakes election rerun that could determine the geopolitical direction of the European Union and NATO member country. The race pits front-runner George Simion, the 38-year-old leader of the hard-right Alliance for the Unity of Romanians, or AUR, against incumbent Bucharest Mayor Nicusor Dan. It comes months after the cancellation of the previous election plunged

Romania into its worst political crisis in decades. Polls opened at 7 am local time and were to close at 9 pm. By noon, more than 4.6 million people — or about 25 per cent of eligible



voters — had cast ballots, according to official electoral data. Romanians abroad have been able to vote since Friday at specially set-up polling stations, and more than 750,000 have already voted.



Pope Leo XIV on his popemobile tours St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican prior to the inaugural Mass of his pontificate, Sunday

Russia launches war's largest drone attack

REUTERS

Kyiv, May 18: Russia launched Sunday its largest drone attack on Ukraine since the start of the war, destroying homes and killing at least one woman a day before US President Donald Trump is due to discuss a proposed ceasefire with Russia’s Vladimir Putin. Ukraine’s intelligence service said it also believed Moscow intended to fire an intercontinental ballistic missile later on Sunday as an attempt to intimidate the West. There was no immediate response from Moscow to the accusation. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, straining to restore ties with Washington after a disastrous February White House visit, met Vice President JD Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio in Rome on Sunday on the sidelines of Pope Leo’s inauguration. Ukrainian media said

the meeting lasted 40 minutes. Ukraine and Russia held their first face-to-face talks in more than three years Friday, under pressure from Trump to agree to a ceasefire in a war he has pledged to bring to a quick end. The warring sides agreed to swap 1,000 prisoners each but failed to agree to a truce, after Moscow presented conditions that a member of Ukraine’s delegation called “non-starters”. The leaders of Britain, France, Germany and Poland planned to speak to Trump before the US and Russian presidents speak Monday, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said Sunday. The four European leaders jointly visited Kyiv last week where they called for new sanctions on Russia unless Moscow accepts a ceasefire, and Zelenskyy has said they joined him in phoning Trump Friday after the Russia-Ukraine talks.

Nepal hosts eco conference as glaciers melt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, May 18: The first edition of the ‘Sagarmatha Sambaad’ concluded in Kathmandu with the adoption of the 25-point ‘Sagarmatha Call for Action’, an urgent appeal to the international community to address the ongoing climate crisis, with a special focus on conserving the mountain ecosystems. The three-day global dialogue from May 16 to 18 brought together over 300 participants including experts and officials from governments, multilateral institutions, academia, civil society, the private sector, and media from India, China, Bhutan and Azerbaijan. “Climate change is an unprecedented challenge and the well-being of present and future generations of humankind depends on immediate and urgent response,” said a statement at the end of the dialogue. The declaration acknowledged the urgency to maintain environmental integrity as mountain glaciers and the cryosphere are receding, exerting pressure on snow-fed river systems that constitute the lifeline to species, ecosystems and genetic resources. Convened under the theme “Climate Change, Mountains and the Future of Humanity”, the dialogue underscored the vulnerability of mountain regions in the wake of global warming, stressing the role these ecosystems play in maintaining planetary health. Participants highlighted that with glaciers melting at an unprecedented rate, the impacts of climate change were not confined to the highlands but ripple across lowland and coastal regions through disrupted hydrological cycles, biodiversity loss, and increased frequency of natural disasters. US-Israeli relations remain strong, Trump administration officials have privately expressed irritation with Netanyahu’s refusal to fall into line with Washington’s positions on Gaza and Iran, according to sources familiar with the matter. Six regional and Western sources said friction between the US and Israel was building before Trump’s regional trip. The tension began when Netanyahu flew to Washington on a second visit in April seeking Trump’s backing for military strikes on Iran’s nuclear sites - only to discover, to his shock, that Trump was opting for diplomacy. An unbending advocate for a hardline stance against Tehran, Netanyahu was caught off guard, learning just hours before his meeting that negotiations were about to start.

Trump's Gulf tour reshapes MidEast diplomatic map

REUTERS

Dubai, May 18: Nothing captured Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s isolation more starkly this week than the image of US President Donald Trump shaking hands with Syria’s Islamist leader Ahmed al Sharaa - a man Israel has branded “an al Qaeda terrorist in a suit.” “He’s got the potential. He’s a real leader,” Trump told reporters after talks with Sharaa Wednesday in Riyadh - a meeting brokered by his Saudi hosts, with whom the US president agreed a slew of arms, business and technology deals. Trump’s whirlwind four-day tour of Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates this week was more than just a diplomatic spectacle marked by lucrative investments.

It sealed the emergence of a new Sunni-led Middle East order - one that eclipses Iran’s shattered ‘axis of resistance’, and leaves Israel sidelined, according to three regional and two Western sources. Amid growing irritation in Washington with Israel’s failure to reach a ceasefire in Gaza, Trump’s tour was a snub to Netanyahu, a close US ally who was the first foreign leader to visit Washington after the president returned to office in January, the sources said. The message was clear: in Trump’s less ideological, more results-driven vision of Middle East diplomacy, Netanyahu could no longer count on unconditional US support for his right-wing agenda, the sources said. “This administration is very frustrated with Netanyahu and that frustration is showing,”



said David Schenker, a former US Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs under Republican former President George W. Bush. “They’re very, very transactional, and Netanyahu isn’t giving them anything right now.” The sources said that the US

was not about to turn its back on Israel, which remains a vital US ally whose support in Washington runs deep and is bipartisan. But the Trump administration wanted to deliver the message to Netanyahu that America has its own interests in the Middle East and it does

not like him standing in its way, the sources added. US patience has been strained not just by the Israeli prime minister’s refusal to countenance a Gaza ceasefire but also his objection to US talks with Iran over its nuclear programme, according to sources familiar with the matter. Netanyahu’s office did not respond to requests for comment. It has made no public statements on Trump’s regional visit. A spokesperson for the White House’s National Security Council emphasized Trump was a friend to Israel. “We continue to work closely with our ally Israel to ensure remaining hostages in Gaza are freed, Iran never obtains a nuclear weapon, and to strengthen regional security in the Middle East,” NSC spokesman James Hewitt said. While publicly insisting

GT seal playoff berth

PBKS edge past Rajasthan

Gill, Sudharsan steal thunder from Rahul as Gujarat Titans humiliate Delhi Capitals with a 10-wicket defeat

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 18: Openers Sai Sudharsan and Shubman Gill scripted an incredible run chase as Gujarat Titans handed Delhi Capitals a humiliating 10-wicket defeat and sealed their playoff berth in a crucial IPL match here Sunday.

Chasing 200 for victory, Sudharsan (108 not out) and Gill (93 not out) made light work of the target, powering Gujarat to 205 for no loss with six balls to spare.

While Sudharsan struck 12 boundaries and four sixes, Gill clobbered seven sixes and three fours during the unbeaten stand.

Earlier, KL Rahul flourished as an opener, hammering 14 fours and four sixes in an unbeaten 112 off 65 balls to propel Delhi Capitals to 199 for 3 after being put in to bat.

With this win, Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Punjab Kings also confirmed their playoff berths. Delhi Capitals, meanwhile, must win both of their remaining matches and rely on other results to stand a chance of qualifying for the knockout stage.

DC's ploy to open with a spin-pace combination backfired as GT raced to 31 without loss in two overs, with Sudharsan plundering 20 runs off T Natarajan, including three fours and a six. Axar Patel too was expensive, conceding 11 and 12 in his first two overs.

Bangladesh's Mustafizur Rahman and Sri Lanka's



Dushmantha Chameera briefly stemmed the flow of runs with tidy spells as GT reached 59 for no loss at the end of the powerplay.

The spin duo of Vipraj Nigam and Kuldeep Yadav was introduced soon after, but DC burned two reviews in successive overs — both involving Sudharsan. The left-hander first survived a caught-behind appeal off Vipraj on 44, and then a leg-before shout off Kuldeep on 46, much to the home team's frustration.

Sudharsan brought up his half-century with a boundary off Axar in the ninth over.

Earlier, DC suffered an early blow when Faf du Plessis (5) was dismissed by Arshad Khan (1/7 in 2 overs) in the fourth over.

IPL STANDINGS					
TEAM	M	W	L	NRR	PTS
GT	12	9	3	0.795	18
RCB	12	8	3	0.482	17
PBKS	12	8	3	0.389	17
MI	12	7	5	1.156	14
DC	12	6	5	0.260	13
KKR	13	5	6	0.193	12
LSG	11	5	6	-0.469	10
SRH	11	3	7	-1.192	7
RR	13	3	10	-0.701	6
CSK	12	3	9	-0.992	6

Rahul, however, anchored the innings with composure and aggression, forging a 90-run stand off 52 balls with Abishek Porel (30), followed by

a 45-run partnership in 26 balls with skipper Axar Patel (25), and an unbroken 48-run stand-off 22 deliveries with Tristan Stubbs (21 not out).

Rahul, who has had success as an opener for his previous franchises, was in complete control, peppering the off-side with crisp cut shots and clearing the ropes with ease. He pulled Kagiso Rabada over long leg for his first six and followed it up with another over long-off.

BRIEF SCORES	
Delhi Capitals:	199 for 3 in 20 overs (KL Rahul 112 not out, Abhishek Porel 30; Sai Kishore 1/47, Prasidh Krishna 1/40) lost to
Gujarat Titans:	205 for no loss in 19 overs (Sai Sudharsan 108 not out, Shubman Gill 93 not out).

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, May 18: Left-arm spinner Harpreet Brar bowled a match-turning spell after Nehal Wadhara and Shashank Singh made bruising fifties as Punjab Kings edged closer to an IPL play-off berth with a 10-run win over Rajasthan Royals here Sunday.

Brar, who came in as a substitute for skipper Shreyas Iyer -- who suffered a finger injury -- was introduced in the fifth over and the left-arm spinner walked away with an impressive 3/22 in four overs, helping PBKS to restrict RR to 209/7 in the chase of 220.

The Punjab side had earlier made 219 for five riding on an unbeaten on 59 off 30 deliveries (5x4, 3x6) by Shashank and Wadhara (70, 37b, 5x4, 5x6).

The Ricky Ponting-coached side needs just one more point to secure a playoff berth for the first time since 2014.

Brar, who mixed up his angles, trajectory, and pace with precision, played a big part in that. His scalps included the 14-year-old sensation Vaibhav Suryavanshi (40 off 15; 4x4, 4x6)

and Indian opener Yashasvi Jaiswal, who had launched a brutal assault up front with his (50 off 24).

Together they flew off the blocks with a standoff 76 runs in just 4.1 overs. Azmatullah Omarzai (2/44) then landed a double blow, sending back skipper Sanju Samson (20 off 16) and Shimron Hetmyer (11 off 12), as RR's chase lost steam.

Dhruv Jurel (53 off 31 balls; 3x4, 4x6) hit form to score his second fifty of the season but it went in vain as Marco Jansen (2/41 in three overs) removed him and Wanindu Hasaranga in successive balls in the last over to end their chase. Jaiswal was in explosive form from the outset, smashing four fours and a six off Arshdeep Singh's first over.

Suryavanshi matched him stroke for stroke, cracking two sixes and a four off Jansen.

RR raced to 51 for no loss in just three overs -- 50 of those runs coming in boundaries, and one via a wide.

Suryavanshi continued his fireworks with back-to-back sixes off Arshdeep, helping RR

storm to 76 in just 29 balls.

However, Brar's introduction proved decisive, as he first removed Suryavanshi and then dismissed Jaiswal, who fell immediately after completing his sixth fifty of the season.

It saw the required rate jumping to 12 from under 10, and the Royals couldn't recover.

Earlier, fiery half-centuries from Wadhara and Shashank powered PBKS to a commanding total.

Opting to bat, PBKS started briskly but lost opener Priyansh Arya in the second over, caught by Hetmyer off Tushar Deshpande (2/37). Prabhsimran Singh briefly kept the momentum going, striking Maphaka for a four and a six, but wickets continued to tumble.

BRIEF SCORES	
Punjab Kings:	219 for 5 in 20 overs (Nehal Wadhara 70, Shreyas Iyer 30, Shashank Singh 59 not out; Tushar Deshpande 2/37) beat
Rajasthan Royals:	209 for 7 in 20 overs (Yashasvi Jaiswal 50, Vaibhav Suryavanshi 40, Dhruv Jurel 53; Harpreet Brar 3/22, Azmatullah Omarzai 2/44)



SHORT TAKES

World TT: Manika, Manav cruise ahead

Doha: Star Indian table tennis player Manika Batra cruised to the second round of the World Championships with a dominant straight-game win while Manav Thakkar also made a confident start to his singles campaign, here Sunday. Seeded 22nd, Manika registered a commanding 4-0 (11-5, 11-6, 11-8, 11-2) victory over Nigeria's Fatima Bello in a women's singles fixture that lasted just 24 minutes. She will be up against Korea's Park Gahyeon in the round of 64. India's top-ranked male singles player, Thakkar, also began in style, defeating New Zealand's Timothy Choi 4-1 (11-3, 11-8, 6-11, 11-7, 14-12) in his men's singles opening round.

Bhambri, Galloway end runners-up

New Delhi: India's Yuki Bhambri and his American partner Robert Galloway fought tooth and nail in the thrilling title clash of the ATP Challenger event in Bordeaux but had to be content with a runners-up finish, here Sunday. The second seeded Indo-American team lost 6-7(1), 6-7(2) to fourth seeded combine of Francisco Cabral from Portugal and Lucas Miedler from Austria. India's N Sriram Balaji and Sumit Nagal were also in the fray but they lost at different stages of the clay court tournament in their respective events.

Diksha set to shine

Hilversum: Indian golfer Diksha Dagar is in position for another fine finish as she carded a fine 2-under 70 to be placed tied ninth at the Dutch Ladies Open here. Diksha produced a nice finish with three birdies and one bogey in the last six holes and was at 3-under at the end of 36 holes with one more day to go. As for the other Indians, Hitaashee Bakshi, No 1 on Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour, playing her first LET event outside India, made a great start. She shot 71-73 and is even par for two days and tied-26th, while the third player making the cut was Avani Prashanth, who improved by seven shot in her second round. After 77 on the first day, she shot 70 on the second day and was T-51st.

Verstappen breaks Piastri's win streak

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Imola, May 18: Max Verstappen gave his Formula 1 title defense a big boost with victory at the Emilia-Romagna Grand Prix Sunday after a daring overtake on standings leader Oscar Piastri at the start.

The Dutch driver built a commanding lead which was wiped out when the safety car bundled the field back up. He still held on to win ahead of Lando Norris, who overtook his McLaren teammate Piastri for second with five laps remaining.

Verstappen took his second win of the season, and first since last month's Japanese Grand Prix, and denied Piastri — who finished third — what would have been his fourth win in a row.

Verstappen praised his Red Bull team's "fantastic execution all round" as the team marked its 400th F1 race with a win.

Lewis Hamilton recovered from 12th on the grid to finish fourth in his first race for Ferrari in Italy.

Hamilton profited from a late-race fight between his teammate Charles Leclerc and Alex Albon of Williams.

Alcaraz beats Sinner again to win maiden Italian Open

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rome, May 18: There's only one player who is consistently beating Jannik Sinner.

Carlos Alcaraz defeated the top-ranked player again, beating Sinner 7-6 (5), 6-1 to win his first Italian Open Sunday and add another big clay-court title to his resume.

Since the start of last year, Alcaraz is the only player to beat Sinner more than once and now he's done it four straight times.

Alcaraz's victory before Sinner's home fans at the Foro Italico snapped the Italian's 26-match winning streak, which stretched back to Octo-

Trophy drought ends for Crystal Palace

FIRST MAJOR TITLE IN 164 YEARS



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Wembley, May 18: Crystal Palace etched their name into English football folklore Saturday as they stunned Manchester City 1-0 in the FA Cup final to lift their first-ever major trophy in 164 years, at the Wembley Stadium.

Eberechi Eze was the hero at Wembley, scoring the decisive goal in the 16th minute to deliver a moment of glory that will be remembered for generations in south London.



ber — when Alcaraz beat him in the China Open final in a third-set tiebreaker. Alcaraz now leads the career series 7-4. It was Sinner's first tournament back after a three-month doping ban.

Alcaraz also solidified his status as the favorite to defend his title at the French Open, which starts next Sunday.

Eze's early strike seals historic FA Cup triumph for Crystal Palace at Wembley

Eze latched onto a clever pass and weaved through the City defense before calmly slotting past Stefan Ortega to send the Palace end into delirium. His goal was not just a spark of brilliance, but the foundation of a monumental upset against a City side that had dominated domestic

football for nearly a decade. Manchester City responded with urgency and nearly found a way back into the game when Erling Haaland broke through on goal, only for Palace keeper Dean Henderson to controversially handle the ball outside the penalty area.

Referee Stuart Attwell initially let play continue, and though VAR intervened, it was eventually ruled that Henderson had not denied a clear goalscoring opportunity, sparing him a red card. Just minutes later, Hen-

derson further justified that decision by saving a penalty from Omar Marmoush after a Palace handball inside the box.

The second half saw City push relentlessly for an equaliser, but Pep Guardiola's decision to go without a holding midfielder left his side exposed in transition. Palace thought they had doubled their lead through Daniel Munoz in the 58th minute, but the goal was disallowed for offside after a VAR review.

City threw everything forward in the closing stages, including teenage sensation Claudio Echeverri, but Henderson stood tall again, producing two outstanding late saves to preserve the Eagles' slender lead.

The final whistle sparked scenes of unbridled joy among Palace players and fans alike. For a club that helped found the FA Cup in 1871 and played in its first semi-final, this was a full-circle moment — their first major trophy, their first FA Cup, and a ticket to the 2025-26 UEFA Europa League.

For Pep Guardiola, it marked the end of a glittering eight-year streak of winning at least one major trophy per season with Manchester City, as Palace completed one of the biggest upsets in modern FA Cup history.

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Shami before Bangladesh equalised in the 61st minute through Md Joy Ahamed.

The shootout was not for the faint-hearted. Rohen Singh's limp second penalty gave Bangladesh the upper hand as keeper Md Ismail Hossain Mahin saved the spot-kick; the stadium fell silent.

But Bibiano Fernandes' boys refused to buckle. When Bangladesh skipper Nazmul Huda Faysal blazed his effort over

the crossbar, the game swung back India's way. With renewed belief, India converted their remaining kicks, and goalkeeper Suraj Singh Aheibam delivered when it mattered the most. He dived low to his left to deny Salahuddin Sahed.

Captain Singamayum Shami, who had started the evening with a stunning goal, stepped up for the final kick. Calm, composed, and full of conviction, he slotted it in to crown India champions once again. A fitting end to a tense and fiercely fought contest.

India had come flying out of the blocks. Within two minutes, they were ahead. Awarded a free-kick from over 30 yards out, Shami spotted the Bangladesh keeper slightly off of position and went for goal.

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But Bibiano Fernandes' boys refused to buckle. When Bangladesh skipper Nazmul Huda Faysal blazed his effort over

the crossbar, the game swung back India's way. With renewed belief, India converted their remaining kicks, and goalkeeper Suraj Singh Aheibam delivered when it mattered the most. He dived low to his left to deny Salahuddin Sahed.

Captain Singamayum Shami, who had started the evening with a stunning goal, stepped up for the final kick. Calm, composed, and full of conviction, he slotted it in to crown India champions once again. A fitting end to a tense and fiercely fought contest.

India had come flying out of the blocks. Within two minutes, they were ahead. Awarded a free-kick from over 30 yards out, Shami spotted the Bangladesh keeper slightly off of position and went for goal.

Multiple games introduced under Khelo India scheme

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 18: Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya Sunday announced the broadening of the scope of the Khelo India initiative with the introduction of multiple games to cover school sports, martial arts, beach and water sports from this year onwards.

While launching the Khelo India Annual Calendar, Mandaviya said that the government will soon introduce a series of Khelo India Games and other competitions, including Khelo India North-East Games, among others.

He said the aim was to strengthen India's sporting ecosystem, provide strategic year-round schedule to boost grassroots competitions and talent identification.

"The Khelo India Annual Calendar is not just a schedule but it is a strategic blueprint strengthening India's domestic competition structure for transforming India into a global sporting powerhouse," Mandaviya said.

"Over the past decade, Indian sports have undergone a remarkable transformation... We have created a dynamic and inclusive sporting ecosystem with regular national-level competitions under the Khelo India initiative. Taking this vision forward, we will soon introduce Khelo India Beach Games (KIBG), Khelo India School Games (KISG), Khelo India Water Sports and Khelo India North-East Games, among others."

Mandaviya said these events will be pivotal in identifying, nurturing, and preparing India's young talent.

"Through structured competitions, year-round engagement, and pan-India participation, we are building the foundation for sustained sporting excellence as we gear up for the Commonwealth Games 2030 and the Olympic Games 2036.

India is on the move, and the youth are at the heart of this sporting revolution," the sports minister added.