

leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181*

ARIES
You may be spoilt for choices today! Contemplating a change of job, business, or even a relationship? Consider long-term implications before you commit to anything, says Ganesha. A romantic evening is on the cards.

TAURUS
Overall, it will be a good day to relax and enjoy good health, says Ganesha. However, there is a catch: you will need to be vigilant when it comes to money matters as there is a looming threat of swindling or mismanaging. An evening of merry-making will subdue your love for delicacies and good food.

GEMINI
Ganesha advises you to remain steadfast and disciplined in any work that you take up today. You will be full of enthusiasm, and will try to complete all your pending work. However, you need to make sure that your energies are being channeled in the right direction. You need to take care of your health as well, says Ganesha.

CANCER
You get full co-operation of Dame Luck, says Ganesha. You will plan a new business strategy to achieve success. Kids will benefit as also profit and prestige is indicated from your father's side, too. Hopes of foreign travel may blossom. Today you feel a unique sense of joy and zest for life.

LEO
Rise and shine! There is a very bright chance that today will be one of those super energetic and enthusiastic days. Ganesha predicts you will have a great time socialising with neighbours, friends and relatives. Also, you may end up spending a small fortune in trying to please your sweetheart.

VIRGO
Despite all the adversity that you face, you will stay firmly down to earth. Ganesha says there is a strong likelihood of the afternoon bringing some good tidings and good results that you have been looking forward to. Love and peace will prevail in your domestic life.

LIBRA
Sharing is the key to joy, and today, you shall be unlocking many doors with that key as you reveal your innermost feelings. Share them unabashedly with your family members. You are backed up with high energy levels that will soar as the day proceeds.

SCORPIO
Though not like in an X-Files series, expect to find yourself open to the unknown and the supernatural today, says Ganesha. Time spent at your work station will be troublesome. You may end up spending a small fortune on your health.

SAGITTARIUS
Your mood is high on expectations today. You shall plan meticulously before noon, and the ninth afternoon, your plans shall fall in place, and deliver expected results. The opposite sex will find you intellectually stimulating and attractive. But be careful in matters of dollars and dimes in the evening, says Ganesha.

CAPRICORN
Striving hard to meet deadlines and taking time out to pursue your passion will be the major highlights of the day, says Ganesha. You may also wonder why your boss suddenly appears so pleased with you, but don't get carried away by the outward show. When everything seems right is exactly when you need to watch out for trouble.

AQUARIUS
Legal issues may be resolved in your favour today and that will bring a huge sigh of relief! You may just wish to spend time with your family after all that anxiety. Ganesha says you should go for more exciting stuff to take your mind off. Why not join a dance class?

PISCES
For those who are single, today is a good day to 'get hitched'. For those who are married or have lovers, a romantic day awaits you which will bring you closer to your partner. New partnerships in business are also a possibility. It is a good day to form new relationships or to renew old ones, says Ganesha.



JOSH O'CONNOR TO STAR IN JACK OF SPADES

British actor Josh O'Connor, best known for *The Crown*, is set to star in *Jack of Spades*. According to the entertainment news outlet *Deadline*, the upcoming film is directed by Joel Coen. The shooting is expected to begin in summer in Scotland.

TURNER VOICES SUPPORT FOR EX-HUSBAND

Things may not have turned out exactly the way actress Sophie Turner and her ex-husband Joe Jonas but they are maintaining cordial relations. *The Game of Thrones* star recently voiced her support for Joe Jonas following the release of his new album, reports *Female First UK*.



Jafar Panahi wins Palme d'Or at Cannes

Cannes: Iranian dissident filmmaker Jafar Panahi won the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival for his revenge thriller *It Was Just an Accident*, handing the festival's top prize to a director who had been banned from leaving Iran for more than 15 years.

Cate Blanchett Saturday presented the award to Panahi, who three years ago was imprisoned in Iran before going on a hunger strike. For a decade and a half, he has made films clandestinely in his native country, including one film (*This Is Not a Film*) made in his living room, and another (*Taxi*) set in a car.

The crowd rose in a thunderous standing ovation for the filmmaker, who immediately threw up his arms and leaned back in his seat in disbelief before applauding his collaborators and the audience around him.

On stage, Panahi was cheered

by Cannes jury president Juliette Binoche, who in 2010 in Cannes held up Panahi's name to honour the director when he was under house arrest.

Panahi said what mattered most was free-

dom in his country. "Let us join forces," said Panahi. "No one should dare tell us what kind of clothes we should wear, what we should do or what we should not do. The cinema is a society. Nobody is entitled to tell what we should or refrain from doing."



dom in his country. "Let us join forces," said Panahi. "No one



Adah on nepotism

Mumbai: While nepotism continues to spark debate in the film industry, actor Adah Sharma has her own take on it. "Had I been from a film family, they would've waited to launch me with the perfect romantic movie," she quips. "My film family wouldn't let me do a horror movie. Who starts their career looking possessed on screen with black teeth? I didn't have the opportunity to start my career with a usual romantic movie that probably would have happened if I had the DNA of a famous person. I started with *1920* and I feel fortunate for that. The audience has accepted me whenever I try something crazy and maybe that's why filmmakers also have the guts to cast me in different roles," she adds.

In an industry where star kids often get tailor-made debuts, Adah has carved her niche without shortcuts. She has seamlessly transitioned between genres—doing high-octane action in the *Commando* series, portraying a layered character in *The Kerala Story*, and surprising viewers as a bar dancer in *Sunflower Season 2* and an IPS officer in *Bastar: The Naxal Story*. Now preparing to play a devi in her upcoming project, For Adah, the key to success lies in making every character believable and distinct.

AGENCIES



Kajol sparks curiosity with latest post

Mumbai: Kajol is all set to return to the big screen with *Maa*, a gripping thriller directed by Vishal Furia. Ahead of the film's release, the actress has stirred excitement by unveiling a mysterious poster with the cryptic message, "From the world of Shaitaan."

Sharing the eerie visual on Instagram, Kajol wrote, "Fear begins tomorrow. Stay tuned! #Maa," accompanied by haunting background music from Shaitaan, hinting at a dark, emotional narrative. Fans immediately flooded the comments with speculation and anticipation. From curious questions like "Shaitaan 2?" to enthusiastic reactions like "BRING IT ON," the buzz around *Maa* is undeniable. In this emotionally charged drama, Kajol takes on what she calls her "strongest role ever" as a fearless mother willing to battle sinister forces to protect her daughter. The film explores the depth of a mother's love and the lengths she will go to ensure her child's safety, blending horror, suspense, and raw emotion.



AGENCIES



Alia's sweet gesture

Mumbai: Actor Alia Bhatt, currently representing India at the 2025 Cannes Film Festival, recently warmed hearts with a touching gesture towards a fan. A video shared on X (formerly Twitter) captures a sweet moment between Alia and an elderly admirer. As she ascended a staircase, the fan called out, "Alia ji! The photo didn't come out well." Without hesitation, Alia smiled, extended her hand, and said, "Let me click."

The fan handed her phone to Alia, who patiently waited as the woman entered her password. The two shared a lighthearted exchange, ending with mutual smiles and gratitude. The internet quickly reacted to the clip, praising Alia's humility. "Such a sweet soul," one user wrote. Another commented, "Who does that nowadays?"

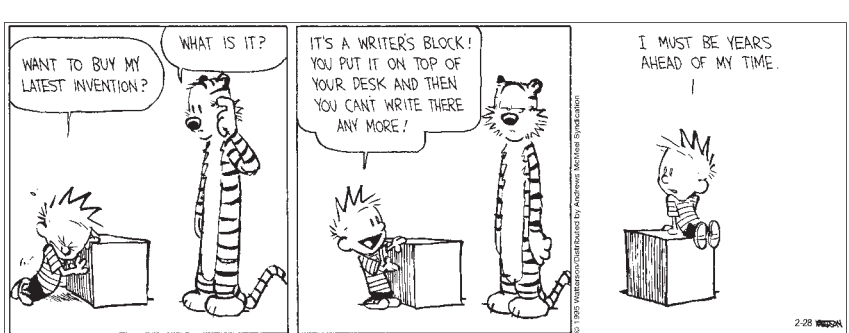
Beyond her fan interactions, Alia has been turning heads on the red carpet. On the first day, she wore a pastel off-shoulder fishtail gown adorned with delicate floral embroidery, paired with minimal makeup and a bun. At the closing ceremony, she stunned in the first-ever Guccisaree, embellished with Swarovski crystals. Alia, the global ambassador for L'Oréal Paris, confirmed her Cannes debut earlier this year and continues to charm fans worldwide.

AGENCIES

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

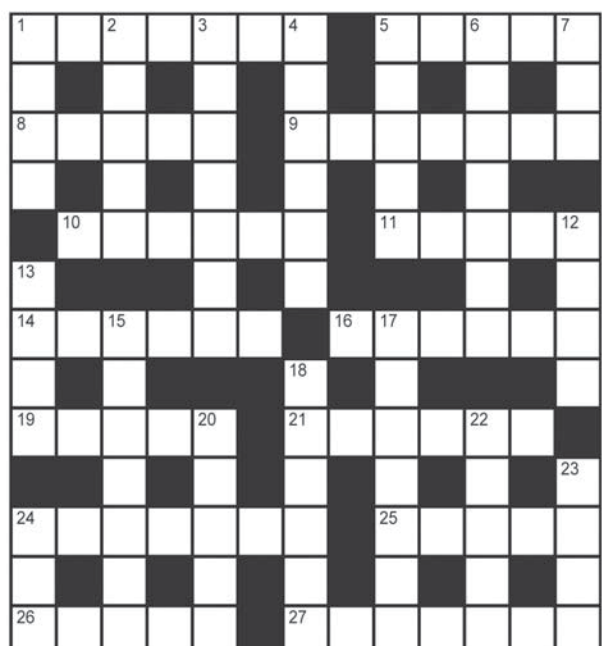


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD

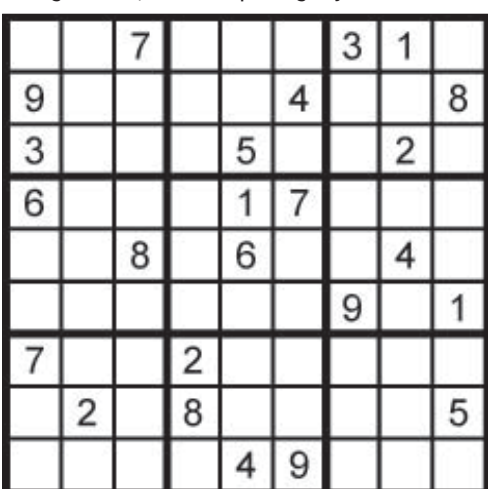


- Across**
- 1 Colourful arc
 - 5 Explode
 - 8 Hotel employee
 - 9 Cricket hitter
 - 10 First-aid item
 - 11 Digress
 - 14 Be in charge
 - 16 Clean house (4,2)
 - 19 Have the throne
 - 21 Destroyed
 - 24 Unemotional
- Down**
- 25 Hitch-hiker's digit
 - 26 Animal group
 - 27 Aircraft part
 - 1 Four-star review
 - 2 Ice house
 - 3 Gambling
 - 4 Like geese feet
 - 5 Chomps
 - 6 Get hitched again
 - 7 Malaysian export
 - 12 Shrill barks
 - 13 Fujairah bigwig
 - 15 Capital of Kenya
 - 17 Ridiculous
 - 18 Lark about
 - 20 Mother-of-pearl
 - 22 Outfit
 - 23 Passing remarks?
 - 24 Tree juice

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.

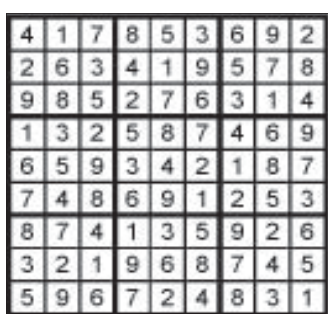


SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



Mayor faces complaint over immigrant remark

Controversy brews as BMC Mayor Sulochana Das' alleged pro-immigrant comments lead to police complaint and public criticism



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 25: A controversy erupted Sunday after a complaint was filed against Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Mayor Sulochana Das for her alleged remarks in support of Bangladeshi immigrants. The complaint was submitted by the Anchalika Surakhya Mancha at the Capital Police Station.

Jagannath Pradhan, president of the outfit, along with several supporters, alleged that the Mayor had expressed sympathy toward Bangladeshi im-

Mayor's comments sparked public criticism and protests across the City

Police have received the complaint but have not registered a formal case yet

migrants during a recent media interaction. According to Pradhan, the Mayor had reportedly stated that the immigrants were "friends" of the local people and should be allowed to stay, as many had already obtained Aadhaar and voter ID cards. She allegedly added that it was not feasible to deport them.

Pradhan condemned the remarks, calling them irresponsible and inappropriate for

someone holding public office. "Many underprivileged citizens in Bhubaneswar are still struggling for basic needs. Instead of focusing on their welfare, the Mayor seems more concerned about illegal immigrants. This will only encourage further infiltration and could lead to a spike in criminal activities," he said.

He also referenced Bangladesh's alleged diplomatic stance during the recent India-Pakistan conflict as a reason to be cautious about harbouring immigrants from the neighbouring country.

The organisation has demanded strict action against Mayor Das, including a public apology.

Meanwhile, a senior official from Capital Police Station confirmed receiving the written complaint but said that no official case has been registered yet. "Given the sensitivity of the issue, we cannot comment further at this stage," the official stated.

Mayor Sulochana Das has not issued any public statement in response. Her remarks have sparked city-wide protests and drawn sharp criticism from various quarters.

Odisha unveils plans to boost road safety

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 25: A crucial meeting was held recently to review and discuss various road safety initiatives, chaired by Commerce and Transport department principal secretary Usha Padhee, Transport commissioner Amitabh Thakur, and Road Safety Consultant Venkatesh Balasubramanian from IIT Madras. The session emphasised several key measures aimed at reducing road accidents and promoting safer driving practices across Odisha.



The rollout of the Zero Accident Development (ZAD) programme is set to begin soon, marking a significant step toward advancing the state's road safety objectives. In addition, the upcoming 'Chintan Shibira' event—fully supported by the Odisha government and hosted at a state-provided venue—will bring together stakeholders and experts to discuss and strategize on road safety measures.

Governor highlights Odisha's maritime legacy at ICICH

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 25: Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati emphasised the importance of history in addressing modern challenges while speaking at the valedictory ceremony of the third International Conference on Indian Cultural Heritage (ICICH) held here Sunday. Highlighting Odisha's maritime heritage, he said it plays a vital role in connectivity, cultural exchange, and sustainable development.

On the theme 'Kalinga and Southeast Asia: The Civilization Connect,' the Governor noted that ancient Kalinga's maritime trade and cultural links with countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam offer valuable lessons for today's environmental and developmental challenges. "Odisha's maritime history is not only a matter of pride but also a guide for regional cooperation," he remarked.

Kambhampati praised the



collaborative efforts of the Odia Language, Literature and Culture department, Utkal University, and the Institute of Media Studies in organising the conference, calling it a meaningful step to reconnect with Odisha's glorious past.

He explained that Kalinga (present-day Odisha) maintained strong cultural and maritime ties with Southeast Asia for over 2,000 years. This legacy is reflected in the architecture of temples like Angkor Wat and Borobudur, as well as in

shared customs, inscriptions, and festivals such as Nyeipi and Pchum Ben.

Among others who spoke on the occasion were Cuttack MP Bhartruhari Mahtab, former foreign secretary Lalit Mansingh, Odia Language, Literature and Culture department principal secretary Sanjeeb Kumar Mishra, and One Asia Foundation chairman Patita Paban Mishra. Vote of thanks was delivered by third ICICH chairman Professor Upendra Padhi.

'CASTE CENSUS NOT DIVISIVE'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 25: Nix-ing insinuations that caste enumeration would create chasms in society, National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) Chairperson Kishor Makwana said the data gathered would serve as a foundation for policy decisions and strengthen social justice.

It will help uplift the marginalised backward communities, he told PTI in an interview.

With the BJP-led NDA government deciding to include caste enumeration in the next census, Makwana welcomed the move, saying that unlike in 2011, "definite figures would be available" that would ensure proportionate access to welfare schemes.

The UPA government conducted the Socio-Economic and Caste Census in 2011, which was the first attempt since 1931 to collect caste data nationwide. However, the caste data from SECC-2011 was never fully released or utilised.

MGRSFT recognises road safety warriors



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 25: The Master Girija Road Safety Foundation Trust (MGRSFT), an organisation committed to promoting road safety awareness, organised a memorial event at Rotary Bhawan Sunday to mark the 6th death anniversary of Master Girija, a 17-year-old who tragically lost his life in a road accident.

Professor Manas Kumar Behera of Ramadevi Women's University graced the occasion as the chief guest,

while Bhubaneswar Traffic DCP Tapan Kumar Mohanty attended as the guest of honour. The event was presided over by MGRSFT Managing Trustee Amiyabala Parida. Additional Commissioner of GST and Services Tax, Kananbala Nayak, along with other dignitaries, also participated in the event.

Twenty-six meritorious students from CBSE and CHSE, who excelled in their Class X examinations, were felicitated with the 'Girija Medha Award' for academic excellence. Several jour-

lists, including Orissa POST's Reshmi Yadav and Dharitri's Anuradha Maharana, were honoured with the 'Girija Seva Samman' for their contributions to journalism.

Sambit Kumar Behera received the prestigious 'Girija Debaduta Samman' for his dedication to the cause of road safety. Premananda Malik was also conferred with 'Prerana Samman' in recognition of his social work.

Addressing the gathering, Behera highlighted the dual nature of technology, stressing the need for responsible usage. "Technology is a double-edged sword. It can empower us, but excessive use, especially of mobile phones while riding or driving, has become a major cause of accidents. We need to remain alert and focused on the road — not on our screens," he said.

Mohanty lauded the foundation's efforts and stated, "Awareness is the first step towards change. By creating awareness, we can significantly reduce road accident fatalities."



THEATRE SHOW: Artistes from Bidyakanak perform 'Eka Bhinna Nispati' on the concluding day of National Theatre Festival at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

PICT: BIKASH NAYAK

Scientists find germ that consumes hospital plastic

While plastic-eating microbes could help tackle global waste, their presence in hospitals raises new concerns about medical safety and infection risks



Plastic materials in hospitals might unintentionally support harmful bacteria by serving as a food source

Understanding plastic-eating germs is crucial for designing safer medical equipment and infection control strategies

used in medical devices. Plastics are widespread in healthcare environments, forming the basis of items such as dissolvable sutures, wound dressings, catheters, and implants.

A new study focused on the genomes of known hospital pathogens to see if they con-

tained the same plastic-degrading enzymes previously identified in environmental bacteria. To the researchers' surprise, some hospital-acquired pathogens—including Pseudomonas aeruginosa—appeared to carry such enzymes.

Pseudomonas aeruginosa is

responsible for an estimated 559,000 deaths globally each year and is a common cause of hospital-acquired infections. It poses particular risk to patients with ventilators, surgical wounds, burns, or catheters.

The researchers examined one specific strain of P aeruginosa that had been isolated from a wound infection and found to possess a gene encoding a plastic-degrading enzyme. Laboratory tests confirmed that the bacterium could not only break down plastic but also use it as a nutrient source. The enzyme responsible, named Pap1, enabled the bacteria to grow using plastic as food.

This bacterium also formed more robust biofilms—protective layers that shield bacteria from antibiotics and immune responses. The presence of Pap1 enhanced this effect, allowing the bacteria to build larger, stronger biofilms using degraded plastic as part of the matrix. Essentially, the plastic acted like a form of biological

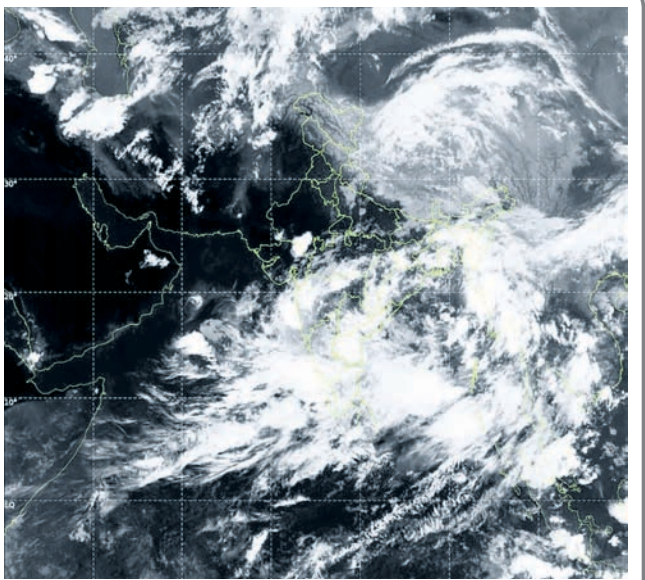
"cement," reinforcing the bacterial community.

These findings raise concerns about the potential for plastic-eating pathogens to thrive in hospital environments, where plastic is abundant. The researchers suggest that this capability may help explain the persistence of certain superbugs in clinical settings.

The study highlights the need for caution when selecting materials for medical devices. While some efforts are already underway—such as adding antimicrobial substances to plastics—this new evidence suggests that plastic-degrading traits in pathogens must be taken into account to prevent treatment failures and worsening of patient conditions.

The research underscores the double-edged nature of microbial plastic degradation: while it may hold promise for tackling environmental waste, it could also complicate infection control in hospitals.

(The Conversation)



WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	34.2°	33.6°
Min Temp	25.6°	24.5°
Humidity	92%	95%
Rainfall	37.1mm	18.4mm

FORECAST

Generally cloudy sky with one or two spells of rain or thunderstorm



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Absence of ‘division’ leaves kendu leaf collectors in lurch

Despite contributing significantly to state exchequer, over 26,000 kendu leaf collectors in Subarnapur district remain deprived of basic welfare schemes, and face exploitation in the hands of middlemen and unscrupulous persons



POST NEWS NETWORK

Sonepur, May 25: Absence of a dedicated kendu leaf division has led to persistent exploitation of rural labourers - who collect these leaves - and poor implementation of the welfare schemes meant for them in Subarnapur district.

Often referred to as the ‘green diamond’ of western Odisha, kendu leaf provides vital seasonal income to thousands of collectors who sell those to the government.

According to reports, at present, Subarnapur has no independent kendu leaf division. Instead, its nine kendu leaf ranges operate under the jurisdictions of Bolangir, Sambalpur, and Redhakhole divisions.

For example, the ranges in Khaliapali, Singhbahali, and Tarbha under Sonepur block fall under Bolangir division. Similarly, the Ulunda block’s Ulunda, Jaleo, and Sindol ranges are managed by the Sambalpur division, while Bahalpadar and Khandhata ranges in Birmaharajpur block are under the Rairakhol division.

Approximately 26,000 ken-

du leaf workers in the district are involved in tasks ranging from plucking, drying, and turning leaves to storing them in godowns. Despite the government’s formation of welfare committees for both collectors and binders, implementation remains inadequate. Provisions such as footwear for plucking during dry seasons, financial aid, and insurance allegedly remain on paper. Workers are also entitled to benefits like gratuity upon retirement and essential supplies—mosquito nets, blankets, and lanterns—for binders.

The state government has committed to paying insurance premiums under the Janashree Bima Yojana for kendu leaf workers. In case of natural death, workers’ families are entitled to receive ₹30,000, and ₹1 lakh in case of accidental death, alongside annual educational assistance for up to two children from Class IX to XII. However, these schemes are reportedly falling through the cracks due to the apathy of departmental officials.

While kendu leaf trade in the

district generates over ₹7 crore in annual revenue, workers’ voices remain unheard. Most are unable to travel to divisional offices located in Bolangir, Sambalpur, or Redhakhole due to financial and logistical constraints. Consequently, despite their crucial role in sustaining this revenue stream, these labourers—many from impoverished families—continue to be exploited.

Further allegations of corruption surface annually during leaf procurement. Workers claim they are pressurised to collect more leaves than officially required, with the excess not being accounted for in government records—raising concerns about misappropriation and underpayment.

Experts said the lack of a dedicated divisional office in Subarnapur district has severely hindered the fair administration of welfare measures and allowed systemic exploitation to persist. Establishing a local division could pave the way for accountability and much-needed relief for the district’s kendu leaf workers, they added.

When contacted, Subrata Kumar Patra, DFO of Redhakhole Kendu Leaf Division in Sambalpur district, said that due to cotton cultivation on forest and grazing land, the production of kendu leaves has decreased in the Bahalpadar and Badakirasira areas. “These two ranges fall under Subarnapur district. Whenever complaints related to labour exploitation comes to our knowledge, we are addressing them,” he added.



DIVINE MARRIAGE: State Revenue Minister Suresh Pujari carrying out a last minute check on the items to be gifted to Goddess Parvati during the upcoming Sital Sasthi Jatra in Sambalpur as his wife Padmini Nayak and other family members looks on, at their Sakshipada residence in the City, Sunday. Pujari and his wife will discharge the role of the Goddess’ parents, and will give the deity away in marriage to Lord Lokanath Baba of Jhaduapada temple in the town during the festival.

OP PHOTO

₹52.93-crore master plan for Maa Kichakeswari temple revamp

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, May 25: A detailed master plan worth ₹52.93 crore has been prepared for the development of the revered Maa Kichakeswari temple at Khiching in Mayurbhanj district.

The project falls under the Central government’s PRA-SHAD scheme (Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Heritage Augmentation Drive), overseen by the Ministry of Tourism.

Reports said that the plan aims to enhance the temple’s infrastructure and overall pilgrimage experience through destination development and improved tourism facilities. Once approved, the historic



temple is expected to become a model spiritual site and could drive transformational change in regional development.

Khiching, the former capital of the princely state of Mayurbhanj, is already a prominent tourist destination. To support the temple’s revival, President Droupadi Murmu visited the site February. 29, 2024, and announced its inclusion in the

PRASHAD scheme.

Following the announcement, a committee was formed, and after approval from the State Integrated Plan Approval Committee (SIPAC), the Odisha Tourism department drafted a comprehensive development plan.

The proposal includes 34 projects, such as the construction of a heritage gate, renova-

tion of the Mrutyunjaya Mahadev Temple, beautification of the temple pond, road and transport upgrades, a bus stand and parking facility, public parks, a Kalyan Mandap (community hall), a yagna mandap (ritual pavilion), enhancement of the temple frontage, development of a pilgrims’ resting area (Yatra Padia), a dining hall, a cultural marketplace (Anand Bazaar), a museum and accommodation for guests.

Work on the proposed projects will begin once final approval is granted, officials said. An official said that the move will help in increasing tourist footfall in the area and help put the site in the global tourism.

Car accident in Sambalpur leaves 2 dead

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 25: Two persons were killed and two others injured after the car in which they were travelling crashed into a road divider and then hit a truck on the opposite side of the road in Sambalpur district, police said on Sunday.

A police officer said the accident happened Saturday near Laldukhai village on National Highway 53.

The village falls under the jurisdiction of the Burla police station of Sambalpur district.

The front portion of the car was completely damaged, the officer said.

Locals rescued all four occupants of the car and took them to VSS Medical College and Hospital (VIMSAR) in Burla, where doctors declared two of them dead on arrival, the police officer said.

The deceased were identified as Manish Yadav and Subrat Sahu, he said, adding that the two injured persons, Saurabh Gupta and Akash Patttnayak, are undergoing treatment at the hospital.

The police have launched an investigation into the accident, he added.

103-year-old Bhanjanagar DFO office to get new address soon



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhanjanagar, May 25: The 103-year-old office building of Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) in Bhanjanagar, which now stands in a dilapidated condition, will soon find a new address.

Originally built in 1922, the ageing structure standing on a 1,856-sq ft plot has grown increasingly unfit for use, especially with a rise in the number of officers and staff. The lack of adequate workspace further underscores the need for a new facility.

Following a directive from local MLA Pradyumna Kumar Nayak, DFO Himanshu Sekhar

Mohanty has initiated steps for the construction of a new office. A proposal has been submitted to build the new facility on the Lal Singh Permanent Nursery premises along the College Road.

The Forest department is in the process of preparing the design for a two-storey building on 18,000 sq ft land. The blueprint will be sent to higher departmental authorities for approval, after which the government will take the next steps. The estimated cost of the project is over ₹ 5 crore.

Once completed, the office will be shifted there from the old building, resulting in an official change of address.

The DFO office is part of a broader legacy of British-era infrastructure in Bhanjanagar. During their rule, the British took numerous steps to develop the region—then known as Ghumusar—in areas such as education, irrigation, transport and healthcare. Notable projects included the Bhanjanagar Lohrakhandi bridge, Russelkonda reservoir, medical facility and sub-jail, all of which were constructed by 1884.

They also focused on forest conservation, establishing the Ghumusar North forest division in 1922 and the Mujagada forest range in 1915. British administrators built a glasshouse on the Balingia hills in 1904 as a leisure retreat and forest outpost, which now remains inaccessible and in ruins due to the surrounding dense jungle.

In 1913, they also built the Rambha Dak Bungalow in the region, further expanding the forest infrastructure.

Meanwhile, other colonial-era buildings in Bhanjanagar—including the sub-collector’s office and tehsil office—are also facing structural decay and may require demolition and reconstruction in the near future.

DURGAPALI ROB UNVEILED IN SAMBALPUR

AGENCIES

Sambalpur, May 25: Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, who is on a visit to the City, inaugurated the Durgapali Railway Over Bridge (ROB), built at a cost of over ₹60.43 crore, Sunday.

Speaking on the occasion, Pradhan said the construction of the ROB is a good step towards making the City more beautiful and modern, with the joint cooperation of the Central and state governments. This will reduce traffic congestion in the area and make public movement safe and smooth.

In the coming days, Sambalpur be developed into a prosperous city by the double engine governments. Roads, drinking water, health and sanitation will be improved. Communication and related infrastructure will be strengthened, he said.

He said a ring road will be built in Sambalpur, while internal roads within the city will be constructed. A bridge will be built over the Mahanadi, connecting Yaga Burla and Hirakud, he added.

“Our government is committed to making Sambalpur city a large corporation,” he said.

Rescued deer dies during treatment



POST NEWS NETWORK

Baghiapada, May 25: A wild deer that was rescued by villagers after the animal strayed into Kamira village in Boudh district Sunday morning, died during treatment at a veterinary hospital later during the day.

According to Forest officials, the deer had entered Kamira village, under Mundapada panchayat in Boudh block, in the morning hours from the Gandisar forests. Local residents managed to safely capture the animal and alerted the Forest department.

Forest guard Ramakanta

Panigrahi took the injured deer from the villagers and shifted it to the Boudh veterinary hospital. The animal had sustained head injury, and had a broken antler.

Following a necropsy, the carcass was buried by Forest officials at the Bamanda nursery.

Officials suspect the deer might have been targeted by poachers, as the nature of the head injury suggests external trauma. Villagers said deer are occasionally seen roaming in the nearby protected forest, and they have urged the Forest department to step up conservation efforts to ensure the animals’ safety.

Historic Bhudharchandi temple wallowing in neglect

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nilagiri, May 25: Despite the state government providing substantial grants for the development of religious sites such as monasteries and temples, many historic and culturally significant shrines remain neglected due to administrative apathy.

One such example is the ancient temple of Goddess Bhudharchandi at Sajanagarh in Balasore district.

Situated just five kilometres from Nilagiri, the temple, under the management of the Endowment Department, can trace its origin to the rule of the Nilagiri royal dynasty. While there is no conclusive historical documentation regarding its establishment, it is believed that in 1452 AD, King



Narayan Basanta Birata Bhujanga Mandhata founded the temple.

Later, during the late 1500s, the temple was attacked and partially vandalised by the invader ‘Kalapahad’. The idol was reportedly hidden under a neem tree to protect it. Eventually, King Ramachandra

Mardaraj Harichandan rebuilt the temple following a divine vision.

Today, this heritage site is in a dilapidated condition. The outer boundary wall of the temple is crumbling, with visible cracks and peeling plaster. Due to long-term neglect, the wall is now covered in moss and black-

ened layers, with vegetation growing from the cracks.

Despite being a regular destination for devotees and tourists, particularly during festivals, the lack of maintenance of the monument has caused growing discontent among visitors. A public toilet constructed near the temple at considerable government expense is currently defunct and unusable, causing perennial inconvenience to female devotees and tourists.

In 2024, the state government had sanctioned ₹20 lakh for the renovation of the temple’s boundary wall, and the amount was allocated to the Nilagiri Adivasi Unnayana Sanstha. However, reports suggest that no work has been carried out yet.

When contacted, Karu Soren, project administrator of the

integrated tribal development agency, admitted the funds were received 10 months ago. He explained that while estimates had been prepared and a project tender had been floated, a lack of cooperation from the assistant executive engineer had delayed the process. Consequently, a letter had been prepared to return the funds due to inaction.

Temple head priest Bijay Kumar Panda expressed his frustration, stating that while the government has been proactive in restoring many other temples and monasteries, the indifferent attitude of certain officials has stalled progress in this case. Local residents have strongly demanded immediate administrative intervention to ensure restoration efforts begin without further delay.

5 poachers arrested in Kuldiha

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nilagiri, May 25: Five armed poachers have been arrested with a country-made gun, bows and arrows from a forest in Kuldiha wildlife sanctuary under Nilagiri sub-division of Balasore district, an official said Sunday.

The accused were identified as Ramesh Munda, 45, Ganeshwar Munda, 21, Gopi Ho, 35, and Hadia Bhadra, 27, forest personnel said. They were interrogated in this connection and later, produced in the court. Out of the five poachers, four belong to Oupada area in Balasore district and another to neighbouring Mayurbhanj, a forest official said.

The incident took place Saturday, after the poachers allegedly tried to steal a trap camera installed inside the



forest, and their images were recorded in another camera secretly installed inside the forest, he said. These poachers have been stealing trap cameras to escape arrest.

Based on that information, a team of forest officials raided an area near Chemchata beat house and arrested them, he added.

“

The whole world yearns after freedom, yet each creature is in love with his chains; this is the first paradox and inextricable knot of our nature

SRI AUROBINDO

Strategic Red Flag

In a disconcerting development that could pose a serious threat to India’s strategic interests, Afghanistan has decided to join the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project. The foreign ministers of China, Pakistan and Afghanistan announced this at Beijing last week as part of broader efforts to boost “trilateral” cooperation. India has been opposing the \$62 billion CPEC project because it violates the country’s sovereignty and territorial integrity by passing through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). Now, the westward expansion of the CPEC could have grave geopolitical consequences for India, especially in the wake of the recent military confrontation with Pakistan.

The trilateral meeting took place against the backdrop of Islamabad’s ongoing criticism of the interim Taliban government for not taking action against militant groups based in Afghanistan that are waging war against Pakistan. Islamabad has consistently condemned the interim Taliban government for failing to take action against the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and the Balochistan Liberation Army, which it alleges are fighting for the independence of Balochistan. For an extended period, the three countries maintained a trilateral foreign ministers’ mechanism, which has not met recently due to increasing tensions between Islamabad and Kabul over Pakistan’s forcible repatriation of thousands of Afghan refugees.

Now, in the aftermath of the Indo-Pak conflict, China’s efforts to bring Pakistan and Afghanistan closer to its sphere of influence could pose several challenges for New Delhi.

The CPEC is Beijing’s ambitious initiative designed to link China’s Xinjiang province with the Gwadar Port in Pakistan’s restive Balochistan province through a network of roads, railways, and energy projects. Spanning 3,000 kilometres, this connectivity project is seen by China as a way to boost its “all-weather friend” Pakistan’s struggling economy while providing Beijing with direct access to the Arabian Sea. However, Beijing’s investment in infrastructure in PoK and Balochistan raises concerns for India, as it may enhance military mobility for both Pakistan and China in the region. Additionally, New Delhi worries that the CPEC could undermine its own regional connectivity efforts, such as the Chabahar port in Iran, by establishing alternative trade routes that exclude India. Another significant concern for New Delhi is the potential for Pakistan to use Afghan territory to conduct anti-India operations, given that Afghanistan has previously harboured terrorists from groups like the Jaish-e-Mohammed and the Lashkar-e-Taiba. In this context, it is pertinent to note that following India’s airstrikes on Pakistan in response to the Pahalgam terror attack, some terrorist groups in Afghanistan, especially the Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent, issued a statement condemning the airstrikes as an “act of aggression” and vowed to launch a “jihad” against India.

All said and done, Afghanistan joining the China-Pakistan axis is yet another failure of India’s foreign policy establishment. This is true especially if seen in the context of India having invested over \$3 billion in Afghanistan, primarily in infrastructure and other development projects. Not long ago, India had good ties with most of its neighbours, with the exception of Pakistan of course. However, something has gone wrong with our diplomacy that China has been successful in winning over one after another of India’s neighbours – Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Myanmar – over the last decade or so.

WISDOM CORNER

“Once conform, once do what other people do because they do it, and a lethargy steals over all the finer nerves and faculties of the soul. She becomes all outer show and inward emptiness; dull, callous, and indifferent

VIRGINIA WOOLF

“We shall probably get nearest to the truth if we think of the conscious and personal psyche as resting upon the broad basis of an inherited and universal psychic disposition which is as such unconscious, and that our personal psyche bears the same relation to the collective psyche as the individual to society

CARL JUNG

“A man who becomes conscious of the responsibility he bears toward a human being who affectionately waits for him, or to an unfinished work, will never be able to throw away his life. He knows the ‘why’ for his existence, and will be able to bear almost any ‘how.’

VIKTOR E. FRANKL

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- **1896:** The Dow Jones Industrial Average is first published. The Dow Jones is one of the world’s most important stock market indices. Today it comprises data from 30 major US companies.
- **1897:** Irish writer Bram Stoker published the Gothic horror classic Dracula, which became the basis for an entire genre of literature and films about vampires.
- **1908:** Engineers make the first major oil find in the Middle East. The discovery in Masjed Soleyman in Iran had a major impact on the country’s and the world region’s economy and politics. More than half of the world’s oil reserves are located in the Middle East.
- **1927:** The Ford Motor Company ended production of its famed Model T, which had helped “democratize the automobile.”
- **1940:** During World War II the British began to evacuate their troops from Dunkirk, France.
- **1966:** Formerly a colony of the Dutch and later the British, Guyana gained its independence.
- **1972:** The Soviet Union and the United States sign the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. The ABM Treaty regulated the establishment of anti-ballistic missile shields against nuclear missiles. It was one of the most important treaties between the two superpowers during the Cold War.

THE DENTIST

A couple of old guys were golfing when one said he was going to Dr. Taylor for a new set of dentures in the morning. His friend remarked that he had gone to the same dentist a few years before. “Is that so?” the first said. “Did he do a good job?” “Well, I was on the course yesterday



when the fellow on ninth hole hooked a shot,” he said. “The ball must have been going 200 mph when it hit me in the stomach. That,” he added, “was the first time in two years my teeth didn’t hurt.”

FOCUS

GEOPOLITICS

A DIVIDED WEST



As the liberal-democratic camp struggles to regroup, its illiberal adversaries are proving far more coordinated



Laurence Nardon

VIEWING THE EMERGING TRANSATLANTIC DIVIDE AS GEOPOLITICAL IS MISLEADING. THE SPLIT IS IDEOLOGICAL

After US Vice President JD Vance’s hostile speech at February’s Munich Security Conference and President Donald Trump’s shameful treatment of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy during his Oval Office visit later that month, even the most naive Europeans were forced to confront a sobering reality: the US, under Trump, is no longer on their side.

To be sure, Trump’s unpredictability leaves room for sudden policy reversals, particularly when it comes to the strongmen he openly admires. His recent criticism of Vladimir Putin suggests growing frustration with the Russian president’s refusal to agree to a ceasefire in Ukraine. Similarly, Trump has noticeably distanced himself from Israeli PM Binyamin Netanyahu, as evidenced by his overtures toward Iran and multibillion-dollar AI-chip deals with Gulf states.

That said, it is clear that the transatlantic alliance has entered an especially difficult period – worse than during Trump’s first term. Notably, Trump’s attacks are not limited to specific countries and their leaders but extend to the EU itself. He despises the EU – a supranational, liberal project fundamentally incompatible with his nationalist worldview.

But viewing the emerging transatlantic divide as geopolitical is misleading. The split is ideological. On one side is an illiberal, extremist project led by Trump and his allies in Europe; on the other are those determined to preserve liberal democracy, rooted in the eighteenth-century Enlightenment principles that have guided the West since 1945. Trump’s administration and supporters promote ideas, ranging from nationalist populism to Silicon Valley libertarianism, that resonate in Europe, where leaders like

Hungarian PM Viktor Orbán, Slovakia’s Robert Fico, Italy’s Giorgia Meloni (who has, however, moderated her rhetoric since taking office in 2022), and various opposition parties champion similar illiberal views.

To be sure, Romanians recently rejected far-right candidate George Simion in favour of his pro-EU liberal opponent, Nicu or Dan, but Europe’s political landscape remains in flux. Voters in Poland may soon elect a president backed by the far-right Law and Justice Party, and Russian interference – particularly in Romania’s election – has been widespread and well-documented. As French President Emmanuel Macron noted in January, the global alliance of far-right populist forces reflects the emergence of a “reactionary international.”

On the other side of Europe’s political divide are leaders committed to defending liberal democracy: Macron, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, British PM Keir Starmer, Polish PM Donald Tusk; and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. Their closest ideological counterparts in the US include centrist Republicans and moderate Democrats. The former have largely disappeared from the political map; the latter remain

disoriented, fragmented, and without clear leadership in the wake of Trump’s re-election.

As the liberal-democratic camp struggles to regroup, its illiberal adversaries are proving far more coordinated. For years, far-right intellectuals and politicians on both sides of the Atlantic have engaged in frequent and intense exchanges over shared grievances, such as immigration and the perceived moral decay of the West. French author and conspiracy theorist Renaud Camus – especially his “Great Replacement” conspiracy theory – has been widely embraced by the American far right and Trump-aligned politicians.

So far, efforts to establish a transatlantic “populist international” have yielded only limited progress, mainly because the practical interests of these groups often clash. But that did not deter Trump from inviting several prominent figures from Europe’s radical right – including Reform UK leader Nigel Farage, French far-right polemicist and Reconquête leader Eric Zemmour, and Alice Weidel of Alternative für Deutschland – to his inauguration. In many ways, Trump himself serves as a symbolic figurehead linking these otherwise disparate movements.

Liberal thinkers have lacked their illiberal counterparts’ strategic focus. For decades, relations among Western democracies have evolved naturally through established channels and institutions, with political leaders reaffirming their shared democratic values during official visits. Former US President Joe Biden’s rousing speech on the beaches of Normandy on the 80th anniversary of D-Day, in which he extolled the virtues of freedom and democracy, is a prime example. Given that liberal values underpinned the Western-led international order, there appeared to be little need for deeper reflection or debate about the importance of democracy and human rights. Liberalism was like water in an aquarium: essential, yet invisible to the fish. Western academics, writers, and mainstream commentators operated within this framework without questioning its underlying assumptions. With the rise of Trump, Orbán, and other far-right demagogues, these assumptions can no longer be taken for granted.

There is much to discuss: How can younger voters be convinced of the enduring value of democracy and the rule of law over the allure of charismatic strongmen? How can we devise economic policies that support workers without undermining the international trade system or accelerating climate change? And how should liberals respond to immigration pressures? Transatlantic discussion of these issues could play a vital role in revitalising liberal ideals and developing political platforms capable of defending democratic governance in the years ahead.

The writer is Head of the Americas Program at the Institut français des relations internationales.


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SPECTRUM CLIMATE CHANGE

Moving towards irreversible damage

Extreme heatwaves are a public health concern. According to the WHO, more than 166,000 people died due to heatwaves in India between 1998 and 2017. This number includes deaths directly attributed to heatstroke and heat exhaustion; as well as, other heat-related illnesses. In 2024, India reported more than 40,000 heatstroke cases and more than 100 heat-related deaths. According to a recent study conducted by CEEW (Council on Energy Environment and Water), 3/4th of India’s population is currently at high to very high heat risk.

In April of 2025, industrial town Jharsuguda, Odisha, experienced a record-breaking heatwave, reaching a temperature of 46.2°C. This temperature not only surpassed the previous highest April temperature recorded in Jharsuguda; but also made it the hottest place in India. This occurred amidst a severe heatwave, which affected at least 15 other districts of Odisha, with temperatures exceeding 40°C. Similarly, on 16 March, Boudh recorded the highest temperature (43.6°C) in the country; whereas, other places like Jharsuguda, Angul and Bolangir also experienced extremely high temperatures. As per IMD, in March this year four of the top-five hottest places in



Sanjib Kumar Karmee

RESEARCH BY THE CLIMATE IMPACT LAB, USA PREDICTS THAT ODISHA COULD BECOME THE HOTTEST INDIAN STATE BY 2100

the country were from Odisha. Routinely many climate disasters are happening in Odisha; which are causing extreme heat during summer. According to reports, this year between February and March the Forest Survey of India has detected thousands of fire points in different forests across Odisha. For most of the cases fire spreads unchecked destroying vast patches of forest. This burning of vegetation releases heat and carbon into the atmosphere. Coal-fired thermal power plants located in Jharsuguda, Angul, and Talcher are also responsible for a lot of environmental problems, including air pollution and rising temperatures. These areas have been identified as critically polluted due to intense industrial activities, including coal mining and power generation. The release of pollutants like suspended particulate matter is a major cause of concern.

Mahanadi is the lifeline of Odisha. Several towns – Sambalpur, Subarnapur, Athamalik, and Boudh – are located on its banks. Mahanadi experiences reduced flows and even several dry stretches during the summer. As the water level decreases, the riverbed gets exposed and dries out quickly, especially in areas where the river channel is wide. The sand and soil on the riverbed heat up

significantly under the summer sun, leading to very high temperatures. This is creating a desert-like environment in some areas, with hot, dry conditions.

Odisha has experienced deforestation in several districts. Mining activities and land diversion for other purposes are major contributors to deforestation. Certain areas have seen a decline in green cover. A decrease in green cover in combination with deforestation, can lead to rapid increase in temperature.

It is estimated that by 2030, more than 40% of India’s population would be living in the urban areas. Urbanisation is responsible for rise in surface temperatures, a phenomenon known as the Urban Heat Island effect. This phenomenon occurs because urban areas are warmer than surrounding rural areas due to replacement of natural surfaces with built-up areas, which absorb more solar radiation and emit more heat. In reality, urban areas are hit hard by climate change.

Heatwaves have broader impacts on health, environment, infrastructure, and economy. Research by the Climate Impact Lab, USA predicts that Odisha could become the hottest Indian state by 2100. According to estimation, by 2100 around 40,000 people could die in Odisha each year due to excessive heat.

It is worth mentioning that the Odisha govt had implemented several measures for plantation. For example, the Green Mahanadi Mission was started with around ₹500 crore budgetary outlay to create a green cover and to rejuvenate major rivers. The mission is a failure since most saplings died without care. Solving environmental issues should be a top priority of the government. Focus should be on increasing green cover through plantation and forest conservation, implementing water management, and avoiding over-concretization of open spaces. In consultation with environmentalists, authorities should set-up Miyawaki forests to increase the tree cover in all district headquarters and urban centres. These measures will help to increase the state’s ability to withstand and mitigate the effects of high temperatures and extreme heat events. The government also needs to build heat shelters in rural and urban areas both for people and animals. Policymakers urgently need to implement transformative measures to combat the ongoing climate crisis. Failure to act will result in significant adverse impacts on people and ecosystems, pushing the Earth towards irreversible damage.

The writer is a scientist.

Letters TO THE EDITOR

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

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Blueprint for development

Sir, The recently held 10th Governing Council meeting of the NITI Aayog, under the theme “Viksit Rajya for Viksit Bharat@2047”, saw Prime Minister Narendra Modi reiterate the need for Centre-state synergy to fast-track national development. While this vision of “Team India” is commendable, it was met with both collaboration and contention. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin rightly pointed out the deviation from the promised 41 per cent devolution of Central taxes, highlighting a pressing fiscal concern. Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, meanwhile, raised issues of perceived “stepmotherly treatment” of the Centre towards the state and called for equitable water-sharing and financial support. However, what stood out as a constructive roadmap was Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu’s proposal to establish three focused sub-groups between the Centre and the states. These would target GDP growth through investment and job creation, harness India’s demographic dividend, and usher in technology-led governance. His pitch reflects a pragmatic, structured approach to cooperative federalism. As India charts its course toward 2047, such data-driven, solution-oriented contributions deserve attention beyond rhetoric..

Gopalaswamy J, CHENNAI

Nightmare on flight

Sir, An Indigo flight from Delhi to Srinagar faced a nightmare when it was denied permission to enter Pakistani airspace while flying over Pathankot, due to turbulent weather on its normal route. To avoid the hailstorm, it needed to deviate 180 km into Pakistan and then re-enter India to land safely at Srinagar. Alternatively, it could have turned southwest to Amritsar but it did not, the reasons of which are under probe now. However, the flight continued straight into the storm, suffering nose damage, and eventually landed safely at Srinagar with Indian Air Force guidance. In this context, it is essential that NOTAMs (Notice to Airmen) must account for emergencies, ensuring civilian aircraft of any nation are granted airspace or landing rights on humanitarian grounds after proper identification.

RS Narula, PATIALA

WAY OF WATER

Women reroute bandits to farming

Tripura's rare Bostami turtles face extinction

Karauli, once among Rajasthan's worst-hit dacoit areas, witnessed a transformation after community-led water conservation efforts by women revived groundwater sparked hope and renewed farming opportunities

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Karauli, May 25: Until about 15 years ago, Sampatti Devi and many women like her in Rajasthan's Karauli district lived in constant fear, dreading the day their husbands might not return home.

Repeated droughts, driven in part by declining rainfall linked to climate change, had turned their land barren. Water sources dried up, crippling agriculture and animal husbandry, the lifeblood of their livelihood.

With no other way to survive, many men were forced into

dacoity, hiding in jungles and risking their lives every day to evade the police. Karauli's average annual rainfall dropped from 722.1 mm (1951-2000) to 563.94 mm (2001-2011), according to government data.

But in the 2010s, something remarkable happened. The women, weary of fear and despair, resolved to reclaim their lives. They convinced their husbands to come out of the jungle and give up arms.

Together, they began reviving old, dried-up ponds and constructing new pokhars (water bodies) with the help of Tarun Bharat Sangh (TBS), an Alwar-based NGO dedicated to water conservation since 1975.

"I would have been dead by now. She convinced me to come back and start farming again," recalls Jagdish, Sampatti Devi's husband, now 58, who surrendered his weapons and chose peace.

Pooling every penny earned over the years by selling milk, they built a pokhar at the base of a hill near their village, Alampur, in 2015-16.

When the rains came, the



pokhar filled and for the first time in years, their family had water, enough to sustain them for a longer period.

"Now, we grow mustard, wheat, pearl millet and vegetables," says Sampatti Devi, sitting proudly on the pokhar's embankment. She even rents it out for water chestnut cultivation, earning about Rs 1 lakh each season.

Over the years, 16 such pokhars have been built in the surrounding forest, each capturing runoff from the slopes. Diesel pumps now lift water to irrigate fields.

"With water, stability is returning," says Karauli Superintendent of Police Brijesh Jyoti Upadhyay.

Sumit Dookia, an associate professor at Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University and a Rajasthan native, says the Chambal region's rocky terrain hastens rainwater runoff, limiting groundwater recharge.

He says that similar transformations have also occurred in Uttar Pradesh's Etawah, where former dacoits

returned to farming.

SERNI RIVER REVIVED

In Karauli, this wave of conservation has transformed the Serni, once a seasonal river, into a perennial one. Just a decade ago, the river would run dry after Diwali, leaving people desperate for water.

"Now, the river holds water even in the peak of summer. The groundwater level has risen to just five to 10 feet below the surface," says Ranveer Singh from TBS.

Forty years ago, he says, the river flowed all year round, but overuse and climate change had drained it dry. With no options left, some men migrated to cities in search of work, while others turned to mining or dacoity.

"Illegal mining exposed them to lethal silica dust, causing silicosis, a painful and incurable lung disease. Many did not live past 40," said Rajendra Singh, the Magsaysay Award and Stockholm Water Prize-winning water conservationist who leads TBS.



301 B'deshi infiltrators deported from Rajasthan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jodhpur, May 25: A total of 301 Bangladeshi infiltrators have been deported from Rajasthan between May 14 and 23, as part of a large-scale crackdown on illegal immigrants in the state.

In the second round of deportation, 153 Bangladeshi nationals were flown from Jodhpur Airport to West Bengal on a special Air India flight, an official said Saturday.

From there, the Border Security Force (BSF) will facilitate their handover to Bangladesh. In the first round May 14, 148 infiltrators had been deported.

The Bangladesh government has been duly notified of the repatriation of its citizens.

The deportation drive gained momentum following the terrorist attack in Pahalgam. In response, Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel Chaudhary, a forest guard, were killed when their camper vehicle collided with a truck in the Lathi area of Jaisalmer Friday night.

With the support of villagers, Radheshyam created more than 100 watering holes for birds across Pokhran, a desert area, which were filled regularly using tankers.

"Radheshyam made wildlife conservation his life's mission. He worked on the ground. He started a great mission to provide

GREAT INDIAN BUSTARD SAVIOR

Conservationist's death shocks wildlife lovers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, May 25: The untimely deaths of three wildlife activists, including prominent conservationist Radheshyam Pemani Bishnoi, and a forest guard in a road accident in Jaisalmer have shocked wildlife lovers and locals.

Radheshyam (28) was an animal rescuer from Dholia village in Pokhran, who was known for his efforts to save the Great Indian Bustard (GIB), the state bird of Rajasthan, considered India's most critically-endangered bird species.

Radheshyam, conservationists Shyam Bishnoi and Kanwar Raj Bhati, and Surendra Chaudhary, a forest guard, were killed when their camper vehicle collided with a truck in the Lathi area of Jaisalmer Friday night.

With the support of villagers, Radheshyam created more than 100 watering holes for birds across Pokhran, a desert area, which were filled regularly using tankers.

"Radheshyam made wildlife conservation his life's mission. He worked on the ground. He started a great mission to provide



vide water to birds and animals inhabiting this desert area. I urge the youth of the region to come forward and carry forward his mission," Shivraj Bishnoi from the Akhil Bhartiya Jeev Raksha Bishnoi Sabha said.

On Friday night, Radheshyam, Shyam Bishnoi, Bhati and Chaudhary were going to check on a tip-off about poaching activity in the Lathi area. But before they could reach the spot, their camper vehicle collided with a truck, leaving all four dead, police said.

Radheshyam was known for raising the plight of the Great Indian Bustard in the desert region. He also rescued and rehabilitated many birds and animals.

Reopening of border haats: Volatile B'desh situation adds to uncertainty

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Agartala, May 25: The five 'Border Haats' - two in Tripura and three in Meghalaya - have remained closed for a long time, and their prospects are uncertain amid the volatile situation in Bangladesh, officials said Sunday.

These 'Border Haats' (border markets) along the India-Bangladesh borders have remained closed since March 2020 after the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns. However, three 'Border Haats' in East Khasi Hills district and South West Garo Hills district in Meghalaya reopened in 2022, and the south Tripura border market reopened in May last year. But, these border markets again closed after the violence in Bangladesh began in June-July last year, especially after the fall of the former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League government on August 5, 2024.

A senior official of the Tripura Industries and Commerce Department said in Agartala that before the unrest began in Bangladesh in June-July last year, district administration officials of the concerned dis-



tricts of the two countries held a series of meetings to reopen the 'Border Haats', but there has been no positive progress after that.

In the weekly border market, on average, at least 25 to 27 vendors, including women from both sides of the border, sell their products and various items.

The first 'Border Haat' was inaugurated in 2011 between the West Garo Hills district of Meghalaya at Kalaichar and Kurigram in Bangladesh. Subsequently, other 'Border Haats' were set up in Meghalaya and Tripura.

According to Indian officials, before the unrest in Bangladesh started, the governments of the two countries had approved 10 more 'Border Haats' along the India-Bangladesh border in Tripura and Meghalaya. Out of them, six are in Meghalaya, and four are in Tripura.

Both the Indian and Bangladeshi governments were earlier keen to reopen more 'Border Haats' in the four northeastern states - Tripura, Meghalaya, Assam and Mizoram, which share a 1,880-km border with Bangladesh to boost the local economy and increase the income of the border villagers.

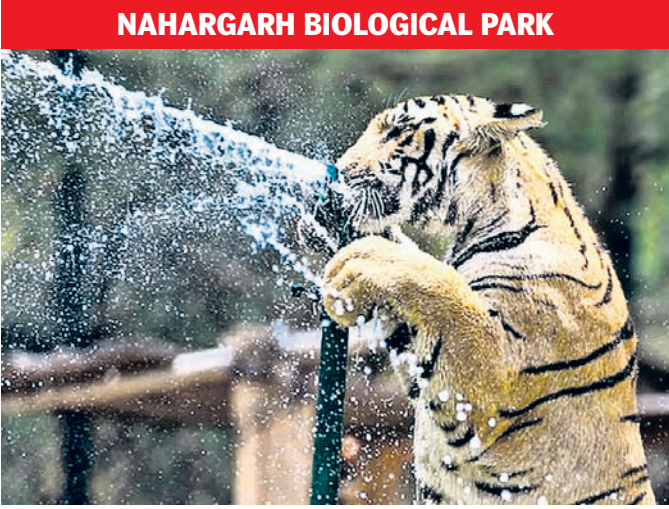
Ice cream, 'sattu': Animals get treats to beat the heat

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, May 25: To shield animals from the intense summer heat, Jaipur's Nahargarh Biological Park has made several arrangements, such as installing desert coolers in their enclosures and incorporating ice cream and 'sattu' in their diet.

Senior veterinary doctor Arvind Mathur said that fruit ice cream has been introduced into the animals' diets. The sloth bears are being provided with 'sattu' (protein-rich flour), honey and special fruit ice cream, while deer and hippopotamuses are being served watermelon and cucumber, Dr Mathur said.

Mercury in the city is soaring, with the day temperature Saturday being recorded at 42



degrees Celsius, which is expected to rise further in the days to come.

"Special measures have been taken to safeguard the animals from the ongoing heat waves.

The dietary plans of the animals have been adjusted to match the season, with special attention given to the tiger and lion cubs, some of whom are experiencing the sweltering heat for the first time

Mercury in Jaipur is soaring, with the day temperature Saturday being recorded at 42 degrees Celsius, which is expected to rise further in the days to come

Desert coolers have been installed, and rain guns have been positioned in the open enclosures of tigers, lions and leopards. These devices help keep the temperature down by spraying water in the enclosures," Dr Mathur explained.

He also said that a hippopotamus gave birth to a calf a couple of days back, and extra care is being taken to ensure the mother and calf are comfortable.

"Green nets, sprinklers and mud ponds for sambar (deer) and water ponds for other animals have been arranged. Adult

animals are housed in open enclosures, while the cubs have been placed in the zoo area, where they are a key attraction for visitors," he added.

"To help regulate their body heat, they are given ice cream made from milk and fruits to bears well as fresh fruits, honey and sattu. Seasonal fruits like watermelon and cucumber are also part of the diet for deer, hippopotamuses and chital," he said.

To protect other animals, such as panthers, leopards, foxes, baboons, and various species of deer, from the heat,

Agartala, May 25: The Indigenous People's Front of Tripura (IPFT), an ally of the BJP-led coalition government, has decided to organise a mega rally August 23 to mark 'Tipraland statehood day', said a party leader Sunday.

The rally will also mark the party's campaign for the elections to Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) due in March or April next year.

"We had a state committee meeting here on Saturday to take stock of the state's prevailing political situation and discussed organisational issues in view of the next year's elections in tribal council," party general secretary Swapan Debbarma said.

The party has always been voicing in favour of Tipraland's demand in Delhi's Jantar Mantar by organising mass gathering August 23 but this time it will be held in the state to garner people's support, Debbarma said.


"The state committee has decided to organise a rally demanding Tipraland to mark the statehood day on August 23 in the state, unlike previous years. This will be a big rally after the party's election rally for 2023 Assembly elections," he said.

water sprinklers have been installed outside their cages, while desert coolers have been placed in the enclosures of tigers and lions.

Nahargarh Biological Park has diverse species, including Asiatic lions, Bengal tigers, panthers, hyenas, wolves, deer, crocodiles, sloth bears, Himalayan black bears and wild boars. The park currently has 13 tigers, including seven cubs, five lions, including one cub, three leopards and five sloth bears, including two cubs.

The park, which spans 720 hectares and is part of the Nahargarh Sanctuary, is located on the Jaipur-Delhi highway, about 12 km away from Jaipur. It is known for its rich flora and fauna, hosting numerous bird and animal species.

Out of 10 doctors in the US, six are from India. Our way of life and its value system will always be there, and we will also accept modern science and technology, and we want a society to do so. A balance between both is a way to become Vishwaguru




NITIN GADKARI | UNION MINISTER

We welcomed delegations from over 80 countries -- from Japan to Europe to ASEAN nations -- and there was one unanimous sentiment: India's future lies in Northeast



JYOTIRADITYA SCINDIA | UNION MINISTER

One Nation, One Election' will not only save thousands of crores of rupees, but will also allow better utilisation of administrative machinery, security forces, and human resources in national interest



RAGHUBAR DAS | EX-'KHAND CM

POST OF THE DAY

Tatkal booking on IRCTC has become a joke. Seats show available, but the moment it turns 10 AM, the site hangs.

10 AM: Seats visible.

10:01: Website freezes.

10:03: All seats gone—even in remote routes.

10:04: Site suddenly smooth.

By the time it works again, all tickets are gone even for small routes.

Then the website runs smoothly because nothing's left to book. This used to happen years ago. Suresh Prabhu had fixed it, but now it's back.

Agents win, common people lose again.

#IRCTC #TatkalBooking #IndianRailways

@Panks_Arora

SHORT TAKES

Boy electrocuted in park in Delhi's Kalkaji

New Delhi: A nine-year-old boy got electrocuted while playing in a park in southeast Delhi's Kalkaji area, police said Sunday. The incident took place Saturday night. Aryant Chaudhary was playing at a MCD park when he came in contact with an open electric switchboard, they said. The police said they received a PCR call regarding the incident at around 9.30 pm.

Doctor arrested for taking bribe

New Delhi: The CBI has arrested a senior doctor working as an assessor with the National Medical Commission (NMC) for allegedly taking a bribe of Rs 10 lakh in West Bengal's capital Kolkata for issuing favourable inspection report of a private medical college, officials Sunday said.

Protesters scuffle with security forces

Imphal: A scuffle broke out between protesters and security forces Sunday while they were on their way to gherao the Raj Bhavan here against the removal of the state's name from a government bus. The protesters responding to a call by COCOMI (Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity) to stage mass agitation gathered at Khwairamband and took out a rally for some 500 metres before they were stopped by security forces.



Our army has proved that if any country promotes terrorism on our territory, the consequences would be more severe than Operation Sindoor

OM BIRLA | LS SPEAKER

TAJ MAHAL TO GET DRONE PROTECTION

The security of the iconic Taj Mahal is set to become more high-tech with the installation of an anti-drone system to counter potential aerial threats, a senior official said Sunday



VIKSIT BHARAT

PM urges NDA states to adopt best practices

The sources said Modi noted that his government has worked for those left behind, be it geographic regions like the North East and backward districts or women as a gender, in every sector

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 25: Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserted Sunday that caste enumeration is a step towards bringing into the mainstream of development those left behind, as he emphasised that his government does not believe in caste politics but in the empowerment of the marginalised.

Addressing a conclave of NDA chief ministers and deputy chief ministers, Modi said the success of Operation Sindoor was an endorsement of the country's push towards self-reliance in the defence sector, an apparent reference to the important role played by indigenous defence technology in the recent India-Pakistan conflict, sources said.

Presentations on seven best governance practices, including the Uniform Civil Code in Uttarakhand, in as many states were made by different CMs and deputy CMs. Modi suggested forming a committee to study them and how they can be integrated elsewhere.

A synergised effort from the NDA-ruled states can speed up the realisation of 'Viksit Bharat', he added.

Sources said the prime minister also asked leaders to avoid the tendency to speak out of turn, seen as an expression of disapproval in the backdrop of political rows triggered by insensitive and contentious remarks made by the members of the ruling alliance at several places following Operation Sindoor.

Briefing reporters, BJP president JP Nadda said 20 chief ministers and 18 depu-



ty chief ministers attended the conclave in which two resolutions -- one hailing the valour of armed forces and Modi's brave leadership in the context of the recent military action and another praising the decision of caste enumeration in the next census-- were passed.

Nadda said the prime minister in his remarks praised the bravery of the armed forces. Modi also emphasised the goal to turn India into a developed country at a fast pace and to make it "powerful, capable and self-reliant", the BJP president noted.

A census of castes, Nadda said, was always part of the ruling alliance's imagination, noting that the Bihar government headed by JD(U) leader and Chief Minister Nitish Kumar was the first to do it.

The resolution has made it clear that the NDA does not believe in caste politics but acknowledges the need for a caste census to bring into the mainstream of development the

deprived, exploited, Dalits and others left behind. It is the need of the society, he added.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister and TDP president N Chandrababu Naidu did not attend the meeting due to a prior commitment in his state, sources said.

The sources said Modi noted that his government has worked for those left behind, be it geographic regions like the North East and backward districts or women as a gender, in every sector.

Haryana CM Nayab Singh Saini proposed the resolution, which was seconded by Andhra Pradesh Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan, both leaders from backward classes.

The resolution on Operation Sindoor was read out by Rajasthan CM Bhajanlal Sharma and seconded by Maharashtra Deputy CM Eknath Shinde.

The resolution said Operation Sindoor has boosted the self-confidence of Indians, sources said.

Maldivian Foreign Minister begins three-day India visit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 25: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Maldivian counterpart Abdulla Khaleel will Monday take stock of the implementation of the India-Maldives comprehensive economic and maritime security partnership.

Khaleel, accompanied by a high-level delegation, arrived in Delhi this evening on a three-day visit. It is his third trip to India this year. The India-Maldives vision document on comprehensive economic and maritime security partnership was adopted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu in October last year. "Warm welcome to FM @abkhaleel of Maldives to India," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in a social media post.

CBSE Sugar Boards to guide informed sugar choices: Experts

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 24: With the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) directing schools to set up dedicated 'Sugar Boards' to underline the importance of limiting sugar consumption, experts feel the move will encourage both students and parents to make informed choices on sugar intake. The initiative targets a growing public health concern: the silent but significant rise in childhood obesity, Type-2 diabetes, and metabolic disorders.

The initiative comes amid increasing concern over children's excessive intake of added sugars, contributing to a spike in obesity, Type-2 diabetes, and metabolic disorders. CBSE has asked its 27,000 affiliated schools to display sugar awareness boards that high-

light hidden sugars in daily diets.

Dr R Goswami, professor of endocrinology at AIIMS Delhi, called it a commendable step. He explained that foods high in free sugars, such as cold drinks and refined flour-based snacks, are cheaper and more accessible than protein-rich alternatives. "Excessive consumption of such carbohydrate-rich foods, especially without adequate exercise, leads to obesity. While moderate sweet consumption doesn't cause diabetes by itself, portion control is key," he said.

India has over 250 million school-aged children, and the potential public health impact of this initiative is substantial. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), added sugars should make up less than 10% of daily caloric intake,



ideally below 5% for additional health benefits. However, Indian children far exceed these limits. Data shows children aged 4-10 consume about 13% and those aged 11-18 nearly 15% of their daily calories from added sugars—almost three times the recommended amount.

Dr Ritika Samaddar, regional

head of dietetics at Max Healthcare, Delhi, applauded the initiative, calling it vital to combat empty calorie intake from sugary beverages and snacks. "This poses a significant public health concern, impacting not just physical health but also behavior and cognitive development," she said.

The Sugar Boards will serve as interactive, real-time nutrition education tools. Schools will display sugar content in commonly consumed snacks, drinks, and meals. Infograph-

INDIA HAS OVER 250 MILLION SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN, AND THE POTENTIAL PUBLIC HEALTH IMPACT OF THIS INITIATIVE IS SUBSTANTIAL

ACCORDING TO THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO), ADDED SUGARS SHOULD MAKE UP LESS THAN 10% OF DAILY CALORIC INTAKE, IDEALLY BELOW 5% FOR ADDITIONAL HEALTH BENEFITS

HOWEVER, INDIAN CHILDREN FAR EXCEED THESE LIMITS. DATA SHOWS CHILDREN AGED 4-10 CONSUME ABOUT 13% AND THOSE AGED 11-18 NEARLY 15% OF THEIR DAILY CALORIES FROM ADDED SUGARS—ALMOST THREE TIMES THE RECOMMENDED AMOUNT

The Sugar Boards will serve as interactive, real-time nutrition education tools. Schools will display sugar content in commonly consumed snacks, drinks, and meals. Infograph-

ics, comparison charts, and weekly updates will help students recognize hidden sugars in items like flavored yogurts, packaged juices, and breakfast cereals.

Workshops and engaging activities will further reinforce healthy eating habits, making the message both educational and enjoyable. Isha Vashisht, wellness expert and founder of the Forever Healthy India campaign, hailed the CBSE's move as a "national movement in the making." She emphasized its role in instilling lifelong healthy eating habits and addressing lifestyle diseases at the grassroots level.

The initiative marks a shift toward integrating health literacy into school culture—an essential step in safeguarding the well-being of India's future generations.

Aizawl, May 25: The Mizoram government may soon collect biometric details of over 33,000 refugees from Myanmar taking shelter in the state, an official of the home department said Sunday.

The official said that Union Home Minister Amit Shah had informed Chief Minister Lalduhoma during a meeting in New Delhi on Friday that the Centre has completed rectification of a portal for collecting biometric data of Myanmar refugees taking shelter in Mizoram.

"A demonstration of a portal was held recently online and was recommended for the Home Ministry's approval. Once the MHA gives its approval for format and credentials, we will begin biometric enrollment," the official told PTI on condition of anonymity. "The earlier format demanded various mandatory credentials, which are not possible for the refugees to produce or furnish. Moreover, the format was primarily designed for the deportation of illegal immigrants. They were not suitable for recording the biometric details of Myanmar nationals, who are classified as displaced people and are giv-

en shelter on humanitarian grounds," the official said.

The displaced Myanmar nationals, mostly of Chin community from Chin state, who share ethnic ties with the Mizos, have been taking shelter in Mizoram since February 2021 after the military takeover in the neighbouring country. In April 2023, the MHA had directed the governments of both Mizoram and Manipur, which share borders with Myanmar, to capture the biometric and biographic details of "illegal immigrants" in their states.

Again in June, the Centre directed the states that the exercise be completed by the end of September that year and directed both to prepare a plan and initiate the process.

Although the Mizoram government had initially processed the initiative towards the Centre direction by conducting training and appointing nodal officers, the Council of Ministers in its meeting held in September 2023 decided not to conduct biometric and biographic enrollment for refugees citing it is not advisable to undertake the exercise due to the state Assembly polls to be held in November that year.

Mizoram may soon collect biometric data of Myanmar refugees



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

According to the govt's latest record, there are 33,023 displaced people from Myanmar, including 12,361 children, currently taking shelter in Mizoram

international

of the day

quote

The current international situation is a stalemate... Unilateralism and protectionism are on the rise, bullying behaviour is increasing.

LI QIANG | CHINESE PREMIER

ASEAN nations are among those most heavily affected by the US-imposed tariffs. The US-China trade war is dramatically disrupting production and trade patterns worldwide. A global economic slowdown is likely to happen

MOHAMAD HASAN | MALAYSIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

In a society governed by the rule of law, no judiciary should face political pressure. Institutions that protect fundamental rights cannot bend to political cycles. If they do, we risk eroding the very stability they were built to ensure

ALAIN BERSET | COUNCIL OF EUROPE SECRETARY GENERAL

SHORT TAKES

Journalist shot dead in Pak

Karachi: A journalist in Pakistan's Balochistan province was allegedly killed when he resisted an attempt by unidentified gunmen to abduct him Saturday. A senior police official said that the journalist, Abdul Latif Baloch, who worked for a Quetta-based newspaper, was shot dead when the gunmen entered his house and tried to kidnap him. "When he resisted, he was shot dead, killing him on the spot," DSP Daniyal Kakar said. The killers fled the scene and could not be arrested till this morning. An investigation into the killing is underway, police said. Incidentally, the eldest son of Baloch was also kidnapped a few months ago and was later found dead. Journalist organisations, including the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists, have condemned the killing of Baloch, who worked for the Daily Intekhab newspaper.

Bodies of 5 skiers found

Warsaw: The bodies of five skiers have been found on a glacier above the Swiss resort town of Zermatt, authorities said Sunday, after two hikers reported seeing abandoned skis near the Rimpfischhorn, a 4,000-meter peak in the Valais Alps. Valais cantonal police said Sunday the victims were located on the Adler Glacier following aerial and ground searches. Formal identification of the victims is still underway, and their nationalities have not yet been released. Authorities have opened an investigation into the circumstances of the accident. Weather conditions and avalanche activity in the region are being examined as part of the probe.

B'desh tribunal charges 8 persons

Dhaka: Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal Sunday framed charges against a former police commissioner and seven other officers for their alleged atrocities during last year's anti-government protests. The protests had led to the ouster of then prime minister Sheikh Hasina's regime. The tribunal for the first time took cognizance of a case filed over mass killings and atrocities committed during the July 2024 uprising. A three-member bench of the tribunal, headed by Justice M Golam Mortuza, accepted the charges submitted by the prosecution against Dhaka's ex-police commissioner Habibur Rahman Habib and seven other policemen and set June 3 as the date for starting hearing in the case.

Strauss' 'Blue Danube' waltz launching into space

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cape Canaveral, May 25: Strauss' "Blue Danube" is heading into space this month to mark the 200th anniversary of the waltz king's birth.

The classical piece will be beamed into the cosmos as it's performed by the Vienna Symphony Orchestra. The celestial send-off on May 31 — livestreamed with free public screenings in Vienna, Madrid and New York — also will celebrate the European Space Agency's founding 50 years ago.

Although the music could be converted into radio signals in real time, according to officials, ESA will relay a pre-recorded version from the orchestra's rehearsal the day before to avoid any technical issues. The live

performance will provide the accompaniment.

The radio signals will hurtle away at the speed of light, or a mind-blowing 670 million mph (more than 1 billion kph).

That will put the music past the moon in 1 ½ seconds, past Mars in 4 ½ minutes, past Jupiter in 37 minutes and past Neptune in four hours. Within 23 hours, the signals will be as far from Earth as NASA's Voyager 1, the world's most distant spacecraft at more than 15 billion miles (24 billion kilometres) in interstellar space.

NASA also celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2008 by transmitting a song directly into deep space: the Beatles' "Across the Universe." And last year, NASA beamed up Missy Elliott's "The Rain (Supa Dupa



Fly)" toward Venus.

Music has even flowed from another planet to Earth — courtesy of a NASA Mars rover. Flight controllers at California's Jet Propulsion Laboratory sent a recording of will.i.am's "Reach for the Stars" to Curios-



ity in 2012 and the rover relayed it back. These are all deep-space transmissions as opposed to the melodies streaming between NASA's Mission Control and orbiting crews since the mid-1960s.

Now it's Strauss' turn, after

getting passed over for the Voyager Golden Records nearly a half-century ago.

Launched in 1977, NASA's twin Voyagers 1 and 2 each carry a gold-plated copper phonograph record, along with a stylus and playing instructions for anyone or anything out there.

The records contain sounds and images of Earth as well as 90 minutes of music. The late astronomer Carl Sagan led the committee that chose Bach, Beethoven, Mozart and Stravinsky pieces, along with modern and Indigenous selections.

Among those skipped was Johann Strauss II, whose "Blue Danube" graced Stanley Kubrick's 1968 sci-fi opus "2001: A Space Odyssey."

The tourist board in Vienna, where Strauss was born on Oct.

25, 1825, said it aims to correct this "cosmic mistake" by sending the "the most famous of all waltzes" to its destined home among the stars.

ESA's big radio antenna in Spain, part of the space agency's deep-space network, will do the honours. The dish will be pointed in the direction of Voyager 1 so the "Blue Danube" heads that way.

"Music connects us all through time and space in a very particular way," ESA's director general Josef Aschbacher said in a statement. "The European Space Agency is pleased to share the stage with Johann Strauss II and open the imaginations of future space scientists and explorers who may one day journey to the anthem of space.



Unease grips Bangladesh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 25: A sense of unease intensified in Bangladesh overnight amid protests in the civil administration and the business sector over policies of the interim government led by Muhammad Yunus.

The mass circulation Prothom Alo newspaper carried a report headlined "protests in the secretariat, NBR turned dysfunctional, Nagar Bhan under lock and key" referring to an ongoing demonstration of government employees against a proposed law involving government employees service, protests of officials of national revenue board and the employees of Dhaka South City Corporation.

A prominent business community leader, Showkat Aziz Russell, meanwhile, said businessmen in the country were being killed just like the intellectuals in the 1971 Liberation War. He warned of famine-like situation as more people become jobless.

"We don't know how we will pay bonuses and salaries to workers ahead of Eid-ul-Adha," said Russell, who is the president of Bangladesh Textiles Mills Association (BTMA), at a joint press conference of business chambers. He told the press conference, co-hosted by the apex Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FBCCD), that in the last eight months, the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority had failed to bring in a single investor.

"You are inviting foreigners to invest in the country... (but) foreigners know that investment in Bangladesh is not viable. They know Vietnam is more profitable than Bangladesh," Russell said.

Government employees,

meanwhile, for a second consecutive day staged protests inside the Bangladesh Secretariat, the heart of the administration, on Sunday against the proposed Government Service (Amendment) Ordinance, 2025.

The protesters have been demanding its withdrawal, calling it a black law that made it easy for authorities to take punitive actions and terminate the government employees.

Chief Adviser Yunus's interim Cabinet approved the law last week and now awaits presidential assent. National Board of Revenue (NBR) officials also abstained from work for the second consecutive day demanding scrapping of a separate new ordinance and on Sunday announced an indefinite halt to nearly all import-export activity from Monday.

The announcement prompted the government to issue a statement promising not to implement the law without discussions with the Revenue Reform Advisory Committee and other key stakeholders.

The protest began after the NBR Reform Unity Council rejected the finance ministry decision to amend the revenue policy and revenue management ordinance which seeks to dissolve the NBR and form two separate divisions, separating tax policy making from administration.

Yunus's government in the past two days faced several other challenges. There have been reports of discord between the military and the interim government over the possible timeline for holding the parliamentary elections and other policy issues related to Bangladesh's security affairs, particularly involving a proposed humanitarian corridor of aid channel to Myanmar's rebel-held Rakhine state.

Can Pope Leo remain a US citizen?

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, May 25: Pope Leo XIV's election as the first US-born leader of the Catholic Church elevated him to the extremely rare, and legally thorny, position of being an American citizen who now is also a foreign head of state.

Born in Chicago as Robert Prevost in 1955, the new pope for the past decade has held dual citizenship in the US and Peru, where he spent time as a missionary and bishop.

As pope, Leo serves as leader of both the Holy See, the governing body of the Catholic Church, and Vatican City, an independent state. Can the pope remain a US citizen while leading a foreign government? Here are things to know about Leo's citizenship.

Is the Vatican considered a sovereign nation?

In addition to being the spiritual leader for what the church says is roughly 1.4 billion Catholics worldwide, Leo is also the head of what's recognised as the world's smallest nation.

Vatican City covers just 0.17 square miles (0.44 square kilometers) and has a population of a few hundred people. It became an independent state in 1929 un-



der a treaty between Italy and the Holy See.

Could Leo be stripped of his US citizenship?

Americans working for foreign governments aren't automatically at risk of forfeiting their US citizenship.

But the US State Department says on its website that it may "actively review" the citizenship status of Americans who "serve as a foreign head of state, foreign head of government, or foreign minister."

"Such cases raise complex questions of international law, including issues related to the level of immunity from US jurisdiction that the person so

serving may be afforded," the policy states.

The State Department declined to comment on the pope's status. A spokesperson said the department doesn't discuss the citizenship of individuals.

The core issue is whether foreign leaders should hold American citizenship when they also enjoy broad immunity from US laws, said Peter Spiro, a Temple University law professor and an expert on citizenship law. Such immunity clashes with the constitutional principle that no US citizen should be above the law.

However, the US Supreme Court in a 1980 decision ruled

that Americans can't be stripped of their citizenship unless they intentionally renounce it.

"The State Department never assumes that you intend to lose your citizenship unless you specifically say so through the renunciation process," Spiro said. He said it would be hard to argue that Leo, by becoming pope, demonstrated an intent to give up being a US citizen.

"I think it's highly unlikely that the US moves to terminate the pope's citizenship," Spiro said. **Can the pope remain a citizen of Peru?**

Peruvian law has no conflict with Pope Leo remaining a citizen, said Jorge Puch, deputy director of registry archives at Peru's National Registry of Identification and Civil Status.

Leo was granted Peruvian citizenship in August 2015, the month before Pope Francis appointed him bishop of Chiclayo in the South American country's northern region. To qualify, he had to live in Peru for at least two years and pass a civics test.

"It is the most praiseworthy thing our beloved supreme pontiff could have done: Wanting to have Peruvian nationality without having been Peruvian by birth," Puch said.

Israel's latest strikes in Gaza kill 38 people

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Deir Al-Balah (Gaza Strip), May 25: Israeli strikes over the past 24 hours killed at least 38 people in Gaza, including a mother and her two children sheltering in a tent, local health officials said Sunday, with no data available for a second straight day from now-inaccessible hospitals in the north.

Further details also emerged of the local doctor who lost nine of her 10 children in an Israeli strike Friday.

Gaza's Health Ministry said 3,785 people have been killed in the territory since Israel ended a ceasefire and renewed its offensive in March, vowing to destroy Hamas and return the 58 hostages it still holds from the October 7, 2023, attack that triggered the war.

Israel also blocked the import of all food, medicine and fuel for 2 1/2 months before letting a trickle of aid enter last week after experts' warnings of famine and pressure from some of Israel's top allies. Israel has been pursuing a new plan to



tightly control all aid to Gaza, which the United Nations has rejected.

Israel also says it plans to seize full control of Gaza and facilitate what it describes as the voluntary migration of much of its population of over 2 million Palestinians, a plan rejected by Palestinians and much of the international community. Experts say it would likely violate international law.

The new strike on the tent housing displaced people that killed the mother and children occurred in the central city of Deir al-Balah, according to al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital. A strike in the Jabaliya area of northern Gaza killed at least five, including two women and a child, according to Gaza's Health Ministry.

of the day

quote

India's Grade A++ commercial real estate has emerged as a global value proposition offering world-class quality at a more efficient cost



SIRIRAM KHATTAR | VC, DLF

The Reserve Bank of India is expected to adopt a more accommodative monetary policy stance. This could involve further rate cuts to stimulate domestic demand and support economic growth. The sudden escalation at the border has also added more uncertainties for the coming year



RAMESH BABU | MD, KARUR VYASA BANK

Organisations must recognise that offering sustainable, future-focused benefits is not just an HR function, but a strategic investment in employee loyalty, productivity, and growth



RP YADAV | MD, GENIUS CONSULTANTS

SHORT TAKES

NSDL posts profit

New Delhi: IPO-bound National Securities Depository Ltd (NSDL) Sunday reported a 4.77 per cent rise in consolidated net profit to Rs 83.3 crore for the three months ended March 2025. The company had posted a net profit of Rs 79.50 crore in the same quarter of the preceding fiscal. Its total income rose 9.94 per cent to Rs 394 crore in the quarter under review from Rs 358 crore in the January-March quarter of 2023-24, NSDL said in a statement. For the full fiscal year, the depository's net profit surged 24.57 per cent to Rs 343 crore and total income rose 12.41 per cent to Rs 1,535 crore over FY24. The depository's board of directors has recommended a final dividend of Rs 2 per equity share for the financial year FY 2024-25, subject to the approval of the shareholders. The depository cut its initial public offering (IPO) size as per the addendum of its draft paper. The issue now comprises 5.01 crore shares compared to 5.72 crore shares mentioned in the draft red herring prospectus earlier.

RGICL profit up

New Delhi: Reliance General Insurance Company Limited (RGICL), an arm of Reliance Capital recently acquired by IndusInd International Holdings Ltd (IIHL), reported 12.5 per cent growth in net profit to Rs 315 crore for the financial year ended in March 2025. Gross Direct Premium (GDP) of the company rose to Rs 12,548 crore, an increase of 7.4 per cent over the last financial year, outpacing general insurance industry growth of 5.2 per cent. Net worth of the company also witnessed 10.2 per cent improvement to Rs 3,429 crore in FY25, Reliance General Insurance said in a statement. IIHL, which acquired Reliance Capital through the insolvency process in March this year, infused Rs 100 crore in May 2025 in the general insurance company reinforcing its financial strength and growth momentum. To resurrect the position of the company, the new promoter infused capital amounting to Rs 300 crore during the insolvency process. Solvency margin stood at 159 per cent as against regulatory requirement of 150 per cent at the end of March 2025. Reliance General Insurance CEO Rakesh Jain said the financial year 2024-25 marked a year of disciplined execution, strategic investments, and resilient growth, even in a dynamic and challenging market environment.



Going forward, maximization of recovery and preventing fresh slippages are going to be priority areas. We are targeting a higher total recovery of Rs 16,000 crore as against of recovery of about Rs 14,000 crore in FY'25...we are expecting that the quarterly our slippages will be in the range of around Rs 1,500 crore to Rs 1,700 crore

ASHOK CHANDRA | CEO, PNB

CENTRALISED OVERSIGHT MECHANISM FOR TRIBUNALS: CII

Establishing a centralised oversight institution for tribunals would significantly enhance India's justice delivery system, making it more responsive and efficient, industry body CII said Sunday. This move would also boost regulatory credibility, improve ease of doing business, and increase investor confidence, CII added



INDIA now 4th largest economy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

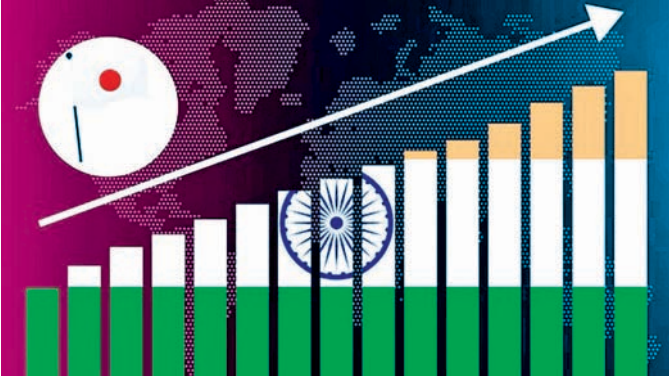
New Delhi, May 25: India has surpassed Japan to become the fourth largest economy in the world, NITI Aayog CEO BVR Subrahmanyam confirmed.

Subrahmanyam said the overall geopolitical and economic environment is favourable to India. Citing IMF data, Subrahmanyam said India, today is larger than Japan. Till 2024, India was the fifth-largest economy in the world.

"It is only the US, China and Germany which are larger than India, and if we stick to what is being planned and what is being thought through, in 2.5-3 years, we will be the third largest economy," Subrahmanyam said.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF), in its World Economic Outlook (WEO) report released in April had said that India is expected to be the fourth largest economy in the world with a GDP of \$4.19 trillion in 2025, ahead of Japan.

India's nominal GDP for 2025 (FY26) is expected to be \$4.187 billion marginally more than the likely GDP of Japan which is estimated at \$4.187 billion,



the IMF had said.

According to IMF data, India's per capita income has doubled from \$1,438 in 2013-14 to \$2,880 in 2025.

The IMF in its WEO report also said the Indian economy is projected to grow at 6.2 per cent in 2025-26, slower than earlier estimated rate of 6.5 per cent, due to escalated trade tensions and global uncertainty.

"For India, the growth outlook is relatively more stable at 6.2 per cent in 2025, supported

by private consumption, particularly in rural areas," the IMF had said.

According to the report, the global growth is projected at 2.8 per cent in 2025, lower by 0.5 percentage points estimated earlier. In 2026, the global economy is estimated to grow at 3 per cent.

NITI Aayog approach paper titled Viksit Rajya for Viksit Bharat 2047 said from being considered a part of the 'fragile five' economies of the world, India rose to become the top five

Four main board IPOs to hit D-Street next week



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 25: The initial public offering (IPO) lane will be busy next week, with four main-line companies, including Leela Palaces Hotels & Resorts operator Schloss Bangalore Ltd and Aegis Vopak Terminals tapping the primary market to raise over Rs 6,600 crore collectively.

Other public issues scheduled for the week are Prostar Info Systems and Scoda Tubes.

Additionally, D-Street will witness the debut of two firms, including Borana Weaves and Belrise Industries, expected to list on May 28 and May 29, respectively.

Overall, there has been a slowdown in new listings as only 12 firms came out with their IPOs in 2025 so far owing to volatility in the equity market due to a combination of global and domestic factors.

This shift followed a remarkable 2024, in which 91 maiden public issues collectively raised Rs 1.6 lakh crore, driven by robust retail participation, a resilient economy, and booming private capital expenditure.

Despite the slowdown, an impressive number of documents are getting filed and waiting for market conditions to stabilise. According to Axis Capital IPO Market Update May 2025, 57 companies have received final observations from the markets

regulator, and another 74 firms are awaiting Sebi's final observations, which is necessary to float public issues.

These companies planning to raise funds through IPOs are staggered across sectors like solar renewable, co-working spaces, pharma-healthcare, cable-wire-electrical, tubes-pipes, manufacturing, chemicals, realty, Indian arms of global MNCs, and even film entertainment, among others.

For Schloss Bangalore, the company's Rs 3,500-crore IPO is a combination of a fresh issue of equity shares worth Rs 2,500 crore and an offer for sale (OFS) of stocks valued at Rs 1,000 crore by promoter Project Ballet Bangalore Holdings (DIFC) Pvt Ltd.

Schloss Bangalore, plans to use the proceeds of the fresh issue to pay loans availed by the company and its subsidiaries and for general corporate purposes, with a price band of Rs 413-435 per share. The issue will be open for public subscription during May 26 to 28.

On the contrary, Aegis Vopak Terminals aims to raise Rs 2,800 crore from a fresh issue of equity shares. Proceeds worth Rs 2,016 crore will be used for payment of debt, Rs 671.30 crore to fund capital expenditure for the acquisition of a cryogenic LPG terminal at Mangalore and the remaining amount will be allocated for general corporate purposes.

Range Rover limited edition trims to debut in Indian market

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gaydon (UK), May 25: India could see the introduction of more Range Rover limited edition trims, especially curate for the country, to cater to the diverse set of customers in the market, according to a top company executive.

The brand is looking at enhancing its presence and growth in Indian market with the number of high-net-worth individuals expected to rise at a fast clip by the end of this decade.

The global MD of Range Rover, Martin Limpert said that with localisation to a certain

extent, the brand has been able to offer products for customers seeking value for money.

Jaguar Land Rover plans to develop individual growth strategies for its four brands; Jaguar, Range Rover, Discovery, and Defender, each cater to a specific audience and retail landscape.

Range Rover has already announced the local manufacturing in India.

"Customers appreciated the fact that we are building a context with the Indian market. We have that experience in other markets as well. So, we want to build more on this, either limited editions or small collector

Airtel proposes peers to collab against rising scams

Gone are the days when scams were limited to theft and dacoity. With technology advancement, scammers are also taking a step ahead as digital fraud

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 25: Airtel has informed the government and Telecom regulatory authority of India (TRAI) that it has approached Reliance Jio, Vodafone Idea (Vi) with a proposal for a joint initiative to unite the industry against rising telecom fraud and scams.

Airtel has also urged all telcos to collaborate and collectively address the growing threat of deceptive and malicious scams targeting vulnerable individuals.

In separate letters to the telcos, it cited data that India recorded over 1.7 million cy-



bercrime complaints in the first nine months of 2024, resulting in financial losses exceeding Rs 11,000 crore.

The call for action comes at a time when cybercriminals are using increasingly sophisticated tactics like phishing links, fake loan offers, and fraudulent payment pages, leading to a surge in digital fraud and identity theft incidents.

Airtel has upped the ante on the war on digital spams and scams, and the last few weeks have seen the Sunil Mittal-led telco rolling out fraud detection solution to block rogue sites across communication OTT

India registers triple growth in RE sector

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi: India has logged threefold growth in its renewable power capacity in the last decade, with the installed green energy capacity reaching 232GW, including large hydro power plants, currently compared to 75.52GW capacity in March 2014, official sources said. India has emerged as a global front runner in renewable energy space as the traiff of the grid-connected solar power plants has gone down by 80 per cent to Rs 10.95 per unit (for 170MW at Neemuch), sources said. In March 2014, India's installed solar energy capacity was 2.82 GW, which has crossed 108GW now, recording multifold growth. Wind energy capacity has more than doubled to 51GW presently from 21GW in 2014. In 2024, India has transformed into a global leader, with solar module manufacturing skyrocketing to 90GW and by 2030.



series for the Indian market," Limpert stated.

"We want to build on this equity. We want to further sharp-

WEEKLY UPDATE

Mcap of six top valued firms erodes by ₹78,166.08 crore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



New Delhi, May 25: The combined market valuation of six of the top-10 most valued firms eroded by Rs 78,166.08 crore last week, with Reliance Industries taking the biggest hit, in line with weak trends in equities.

Last week, the BSE benchmark dropped 609.51 points or 0.74 per cent and the Nifty declined 166.65 points or 0.66 per cent.

While Reliance Industries, TCS, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Infosys and Hindustan Unilever were the laggards, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, Bajaj Finance and ITC were the gainers from the top 10 list.

The market valuation of Reliance Industries declined by Rs 40,800.4 crore to Rs 19,30,339.56 crore. Tata Consultancy Services' valuation dropped by Rs 17,710.54 crore to Rs 12,71,395.95 crore.

The valuation of Infosys went lower by Rs 10,488.58 crore to Rs 6,49,876.91 crore and that of Hindustan Unilever eroded by Rs 5,462.8

crore to Rs 5,53,974.88 crore.

The market capitalisation (m cap) of ICICI Bank edged down by Rs 2,454.31 crore to Rs 10,33,868.01 crore and that of SBI dipped by Rs 1,249.45 crore to Rs 7,05,446.59 crore.

However, the mcap of Bharti Airtel jumped Rs 10,121.24 crore to Rs 10,44,682.72 crore.

The valuation of Bajaj Finance surged Rs 4,548.87 crore to Rs 5,74,207.54 crore and that of ITC climbed Rs 875.99 crore to Rs 5,45,991.05 crore.

The mcap of HDFC Bank went up by Rs 399.93 crore to Rs 14,80,723.47 crore.

Reliance Industries remained the most valuable firm followed by HDFC Bank, TCS, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Infosys, Bajaj Finance, Hindustan Unilever and ITC.

apps, and platforms, including WhatsApp, Telegram, Facebook, Instagram and others.

"However, given the recent alarming rise in phishing attempts and malicious URL-based scams targeting unsuspecting individuals, it became evident that more coordinated industry action was needed. These sophisticated fraud schemes often exploit the gaps in coordination between service providers," Airtel wrote in letters to Telecom Secretary Neeraj Mittal and Trai Chairman Anil Kumar Lahoti.

Airtel said that to combat this growing threat of telecom frauds, spams and scams and in the spirit of unified industry action; it has reached out to TSPs with a proposal to launch a Joint Telecom Fraud Initiative May 14, 2025.

Airtel recalled that in October of 2024, it had written to all Telecom Service providers (TSPs) with a proposal to adopt a collaborative approach to address the growing issue of

Unsolicited Commercial Communications (UCC).

The proposal emphasised the mutual sharing of details of corporate connections used for commercial calling in a standardised format to enable proactive spam monitoring and mitigate any potential misuse.

"We also proposed the establishment of a centralised data-sharing platform akin to the existing Distributed Ledger Technology (DLT) system to enhance our collective ability to combat UCC without disrupting legitimate enterprise services," Airtel said.

Meanwhile, Airtel Vice Chairman and MD Gopal Vittal will soon reach out to customers on the issue of financial frauds and scams that have become a regular threat for Indians.

Talking about the new solution, Vittal assures customers that whenever they are on the Airtel mobile network or connected to Airtel Wi-Fi, this added layer of protection will be active by default.

RBI's dividend eases govt's fiscal position

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 25: The Reserve Bank of India's bumper dividend of about Rs 2.7 lakh crore will ease the fiscal position of the government, economist at SBI said in a report.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget for 2025-26 projected a dividend income of Rs 2.56 lakh crore cumulatively from the RBI and public sector financial institutions. With the RBI's transfer, this number would now be much higher than the budgeted estimates.

"We expect the fiscal deficit to ease by 20 basis points from the budgeted level to 4.2 per cent of GDP. Alternatively, it will open up for additional spending for around Rs 70,000 crores, other things remaining unchanged."

according to the latest edition of SBI Research's Ecowrap.

RBI announced a record Rs 2.69 lakh crore dividend for the financial year 2024-25 (April 2024 to March 2024) compared with Rs 2.11 lakh crore transferred in the previous FY24, an increase of 27.4 per cent.

"The (RBI) Board had recommended that the risk provisioning under the Contingent Risk Buffer (CRB) maintained within a range of 7.5 per cent to 4.5 per cent of RBI's balance sheet," it said.

"This surplus payout is driven by robust gross dollar sales, higher foreign exchange gains, and steady increases in interest income. Notably, the RBI was the top seller of foreign exchange reserves in January among other Asian central banks," the report said.

It's a big market, obviously 1.5 plus billion people. I think 65 per cent of the people are younger than 35 so going forward, there's an opportunity for us to grow with those people, the working population, and the wealth that is increasing

MARTIN LIMPERT | MD, RANGE ROVER

en that positioning as part of the House of Brands strategy for the next level of success in the Indian market," he added.

The company recognises the fact that there is a big growth opportunity in India. The In-

dian economy is growing by 6-7 per cent annually, which is quite outstanding at the moment in the global context.

And since the brand launched the locally manufactured products, sales increased by 2.5 times for Range Rover and Range Rover Sport, Limpert added.

"So, we of course are investigating what should be our future strategy, we are understanding the growth opportunity in the market. We know the high net worth individuals which are around 9 lakh can grow to 12 lakh by the end of the decade. So, there's a market for us," he said.

FORMULA 2

KUSH SCRIPTS HISTORY IN MONACO

THE RACER BECOMES FIRST INDIAN TO WIN IN MONACO WITH SPRINT RACE TRIUMPH

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Monte Carlo, May 25: Kush Maini secured victory in the Monte Carlo Sprint Race for DAMS Lucas Oil, converting pole position at the Circuit de Monaco. The Indian driver held off fellow Alpine Academy talent Gabriele Mini, who finished second for PREMA Racing, and became the first Indian driver to win a race at the iconic venue.

Maini got the perfect start, but Luke Browning fell down the order to fifth by Turn 1. His poor getaway allowed Gabriele Mini to climb up to P2.

Into Mirabeau, Lindblad attempted a pass on Jak Crawford for third but contact between the two allowed Browning back past for fourth and ahead of the American. The Campos driver emerged from the tangle in third but was later handed a 10-second time penalty for causing a collision.



With DRS enabled, Mini was on the rear wing of the race leader, the gap hovering at 0.3s in the opening 10 laps while the

pair pulled over eight seconds clear of Lindblad in third. The gap was neutralised on Lap 12 when the Safety Car

It's a great honour and a dream come true. I want to say thank you to DAMS and everyone who has supported me. We keep believing!

KUSH MAINI

was deployed to recover Joshua Duerksen's AIX Racing car. The Paraguayan driver was left in the barriers ahead of Portier following contact with MP Motorsport's Oliver Goethe out of Mirabeau that left the AIX with race-ending damage.

Back to racing conditions entering Lap 15, Maini escaped from DRS range to Mini behind while Lindblad had Browning right on his gearbox in the battle for third on the road.

Goethe was on the move again, sneaking his MP car up the inside of Victor Martins at

La Rascasse to take P9 on the road. Contact between the pair resulted in a 10-second time penalty for Goethe.

With 10 laps to go, Mini was back to within 0.2s of the race leader, while Lindblad had dropped back by over 10 seconds in order to set up a late-race charge to minimise his time penalty. The Red Bull Junior Team driver was told to push on Lap 22, and he immediately upped his pace to put a buffer between himself and Browning.

By the final lap, he was on the rear wing of Mini in second with Maini a further couple of seconds up the road. With Lindblad's time penalty applied, it gave Browning P3 and dropped the Campos driver to eighth position.

Crawford wound up fourth ahead of Richard Verschoor, Sebastian Montoya, Leonardo Fornaroli, as Lindblad completed the points in P8.

Djoko bags 100th ATP Tour title

With his 100th tour-level trophy, Djokovic joined Jimmy Connors (109) and Roger Federer (103) as the only men in the Open Era to hit the triple-digit mark

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE



Geneva, May 25: Novak Djokovic fought back from a set down to beat Hubert Hurkacz and captured his 100th tour-level title at the Gonet Geneva Open here Saturday. The former No 1 player in the ATP Rankings dug deep in an absorbing championship match and rallied for a 5-7, 7-6(2), 7-6(2) victory over sixth seed Hurkacz to triumph at the clay-court ATP 250 event.

Ahead of the upcoming French Open, Djokovic rallied from 2-4 in the deciding set before sealing victory after three hours and five minutes, the longest match of this year's tournament.

"I had to work for it, that's

for sure. Hubi was probably closer to victory (in) the entire match than I was," Djokovic said. "I had some chances in the first set to break his serve, then had a bad game which ended up with the double fault on set point, Djokovic told the ATP Tour Saturday.

"I was just trying to hang in there, I don't know how I broke his serve. He probably broke himself in the third, when he was 4-3 up, but this is what happens at the highest level. Very few points decide the winner. Incredible match, 7-6 in the third with a full stadium and a beautiful atmosphere. I'm just grateful to clinch the 100th here," the Serbian star said.

CSK dent GT's hopes

Brevis, Conway fire Chennai Super Kings to 83-run win over the Titans

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, May 2: Gujarat Titans' hopes of a top-two finish in the IPL suffered a massive dent when they went down by 83 runs to Chennai Super Kings, who were powered by fifty-makers Devon Conway and Dewald Brevis, here Sunday.

The Titans have 18 points after a full set of 14 league matches and are still on top of the table despite the Net Run Rate taking a nose dive after this big defeat.

To maintain their position inside the top two, GT now require Royal Challengers Bengaluru (17 points) to go down to Lucknow Super Giants in their final league match.

It's important because either Mumbai Indians (16) or Punjab Kings (17 points) will overtake GT with a win from their face-off.

Cutting back to the match, once asked to chase a stiff 231, the Titans floundered badly losing in-form skipper Shubman Gill, Jos Buttler and Sherfane Rutherford in the Power Play passage itself with just 35 runs on the board.

The Gujarat side was bowled out for 147 in 18.3 overs.

Pacer Anshul Kamboj did the early damage, claiming the wickets of Gill and Rutherford.

Sai Sudharsan (41, 28b), the latest entrant into the India Test squad, and his Tamil Nadu team-mate M Shahrulkh Khan



(19) added 55 runs for the fourth wicket to infuse some interest into the chase.

But left-arm spinner Ravindra Jadeja returned for his second spell to dismiss both Sudharsan and Shahrulkh in the space of four balls in the 11th over, and the match effectively ended at that point.

CSK finished their IPL 2025 engagements at the bottom of the pile with eight points from 14 matches, the five-time champions' worst ever finish in the 10-team league.

Earlier, seasoned Conway and

promising Brevis produced fifties of contrasting character, laying the foundation for Chennai Super Kings' healthy 230 for five.

Once the Super Kings elected to bat on a super hot afternoon, Conway and Brevis led the charge with a 52 off 35 balls, and a 23-ball 57 on a smooth pitch.

But Conway's knock was put to shade a bit by cameos by Ayush Mhatre (34, 17b) and Urvil Patel (37, 19b), who made runs at a respective strike rate of 200 and 194, ensured runs came at a fast clip for CSK.

The CSK raced out of the

IPL STANDINGS					
TEAM	M	W	L	NRR	PTS
GT	14	9	5	0.254	18
PBKS	13	8	4	0.327	17
RCB	13	8	4	0.255	17
MI	13	8	5	1.292	16
DC	14	7	6	0.011	15
SRH	14	6	7	-0.241	13
LSG	13	6	7	-0.337	12
KKR	14	5	7	-0.305	12
RR	14	4	10	-0.549	8
CSK	14	4	10	-0.647	8

paddock, making 44 in just 3.4 overs, courtesy Mhatre's brutal assault on pacer Arshad Khan.

Mhatre carved Arshad for 2, 6, 6, 4, 4, 6 in the second over to milk 28 runs and Chennai rarely let that momentum slip.

Mhatre, who was recently appointed as the India U19 skipper, soon fell to Prasidh Krishna, skying him to Mohammed Siraj in the deep. But Urvil continued the aggressive ways, while adding 63 runs for the second wicket with Conway.

Brief Scores:	
Chennai Super Kings: 230 for 5 in 20 overs (Dewald Brevis 57, Devon Conway 52; Prasidh Krishna 2/22) beat Gujarat Titans: 147 all out in 18.3 overs (Sai Sudharsan 41; Anshul Kamboj 3/13, Noor Ahmed 3/21)	

SHORT TAKES

Xabi returns to troubled Madrid

Madrid: Xabi Alonso is returning to Real Madrid to take over a club that failed to meet expectations this season. The Spanish powerhouse announced the hiring of Alonso Sunday to replace Carlo Ancelotti, who is leaving to take over the Brazil job. Alonso will take over June 1 and will be given a contract through June 2028, the club said. He's to be presented as coach Monday. The 65-year-old Ancelotti is departing after four mostly successful seasons with Madrid. He bid a tearful farewell on Saturday in the team's final Spanish league match. Ancelotti's contract ran to the end of next season, but the club confirmed his departure Friday after he had already been announced as the next Brazil coach.

Eves beat Chile 2-1

Rosario: The Indian junior women's hockey team came back from one-goal down to beat Chile 2-1 and begin its campaign in the Four Nation Tournament on a positive note here. Sukhveer Kaur (39th minute) and Kanika Siwach (58th) netted the goals for India while Javeria Saenz (20th) scored the only goal for Chile. India, however, equalised in the third quarter, courtesy of Sukhveer in the 39th minute. Kanika then scored the winning goal in the 58th minute to ensure India's victory.

CM Trophy to empower Odisha's grassroot sporting talent: Suraj



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 25: The logo, trophy, jersey and anthem of the CM Trophy (Under-15) Football Championship 2025 were officially unveiled Sunday at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar by Sports and Youth Services Minister Suryabanshi Suraj.

Speaking on the occasion, Suraj emphasised that the CM Trophy initiative is a significant step towards nurturing grassroots level sporting talent in Odisha. He stated that the state government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, is committed to identify and promote young sporting talent.

The CM Trophy 2025 is being organised jointly by the Sports and Youth Services Department, Government of Odisha and the Football Association of Odisha.

The first phase of the tournament, held from 16th January to 19th April this year, witnessed the participation of 271 football clubs and over 5,000 players from across all districts of the state. The zon-

al level (second phase) of the championship is scheduled to take place from 28th May to 5th June, 2025. Teams selected from the districts will be grouped into four zones such as Sambalpur, Bhubaneswar, Keonjhar and Berhampur, to compete for a place in the state level final round.

The three-phase tournament structure, district, zonal and state, aims to provide a robust platform for young athletes to showcase their skills and talent. "This championship will be instrumental in identifying exceptional talent from the grassroots level. The newly launched anthem beautifully captures the energy, passion and commitment of young athletes. The Government is committed for the overall development of Sports and athletes in the state", said Suraj.

Football Association of Odisha Secretary Ashirbad Behera, Principal Secretary of Sports and Youth Services Department Bhaskar Sarma, Director Deepankar Mohapatra, Additional Secretary Bijay Kumar Swain and Joint Secretary Bijayananda Nayak were present in the event.

Arsenal win Women's Champions League

Arsenal women have now added another continental title to their illustrious history, which has seen them lift a record 15 league titles, 14 FA Cups and seven League Cup

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lisbon, May 25: Arsenal women have won the 2024/25 UEFA Women's Champions League after beating Barcelona 1-0 in Lisbon thanks to Stina Blackstenius' goal.

Having previously been the only English side to become European champions courtesy of their 2007 success, Arsenal women have now added another continental title to their illustrious history, which has seen them lift a record 15 league titles, 14 FA Cups and seven League Cups.

The victory in Portugal caps a remarkable campaign for

the side, who entered the tournament in the first qualifying round back in September. After beating Hacken and Rangers to reach the group stages, Arsenal finished ahead of Bayern Munich, Juventus and Valarenga to reach the knockout stages, despite Renee Slegers replacing Jonas Eidevall as manager back in October.

They then embarked on a dramatic route to the final, overturning a 2-0 first leg loss to beat Real Madrid 3-0 at Emirates Stadium in the quarter-finals, and then hammering Lyon 4-1 on their own patch to advance 5-3 on aggregate to book their place in the Lisbon

showpiece.

Arsenal women beat the three-time winners and previous holders, with Blackstenius coming off the bench to net a 74th-minute winner and secure the silverware, becoming the first English team to win eight matches in a single edition of the competition.

Slegers, who is a former academy product and won her first five group games to ensure they made it into the knockouts, has become the first Dutch manager to win the Women's Champions League, and third overall to win either the men's or women's competition after Louis Van Gaal and Frank Rijkaard.



MALAYSIA MASTERS

Srikanth's inspired run ends with defeat in final

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kuala Lumpur, May 25: His long title drought did not end but shuttler Kidambi Srikanth capped a remarkable campaign with a runner-up finish at the Malaysia Masters Super here Sunday, going down in straight games to China's world No. 4 Li Shi Feng in the men's singles final.

The 32-year-old, who charted a long road back from injuries and missed opportunities, made his first BWF World Tour final in six years, starting from the qualifiers and riding a resurgent wave all the way to the title clash of the BWF 500 tournament.

The former world No 1 was erratic and struggled to break through the second-seeded Li's solid defence and was unable to convert openings, eventually losing in 11-21 9-21 in 36 minutes.

"It has been pretty good week. It's my third tournament, played decently well in the first two as well but couldn't really win those matches. But pretty happy with the way how it went so far. Not exactly the way I wanted to be today but still I think he played really well," Srikanth said.

Despite the loss, it was an inspirational show from Srikanth, who, after slipping to world No 82 earlier this month, showed grit and class to remind the world of his calibre.