

Tamannaah comes clean

Actor Tamannaah Bhatia clears air about the controversy involving Deepika Padukone's exit from 'Spirit'

LEISURE | P2



Musk exits Trump admin

Tesla CEO Elon Musk leaves Trump administration after a disruptive efficiency campaign that shook federal agencies

INTERNATIONAL | P10



RBI annual report

The RBI report confirms that Indian economy is poised to remain the fastest-growing major economy in FY 2025-26

BUSINESS | P11



Chelsea crowned

Chelsea beat Real Betis to become the first club to win all major **European titles**

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BHUBANESWAR | FRIDAY | MAY 30, 2025



AGRI PUSH: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Deputy CM Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo and Agriculture department Principal Secretary Arabinda Kumar Padhee during the launch of 'Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan' at Sakhigopal in Puri, Thursday (Report P3)

ED Dy Director in CBI net for accepting ₹20L bribe

Bhubaneswar, May 29: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) here Thursday arrested a Deputy Director of the Enforcement Directorate's (ED) Odisha branch, Chintan Raghuvanshi, while accepting ₹20 lakh bribe.

According to preliminary information, a CBI team apprehended Raghuvanshi while he allegedly accepted ₹20 lakh as first instalment of the ₹50 lakh demanded bribe.

As per sources, a businessman having crusher units in Dhenkanal had approached Raghuvanshi to dismiss an ED case against him. Raghuvanshi had allegedly been demanding a huge amount of bribe from the mine operator. Finally, the bribe amount was fixed at ₹50 lakh, said sources.

However, the complainant informed the CBI officials regarding his demand, following which a trap was laid and Raghuvanshi was caught red-handed from his office while accepting ₹20 lakh bribe from the former at a hotel here.



The CBI team apprehended **Chintan Raghuvanshi while** he allegedly accepted ₹20 lakh as first instalment of the ₹50 lakh demanded bribe

the Central agency officials caught the ED Deputy Director and seized the colour-coded cash from him as evidence. A 2013-batch officer of the

During the special operation,

Indian Revenue Service (IRS), Raghuvanshi happens to be the Deputy Director of Bhubaneswar Zonal Office of the ED said reports.

The ED official was later arrested and taken to the CBI office for questioning, the reports added.

CM announces ₹50L grant for Sital Sasthi

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 29: In a significant step towards preserving and promoting Odisha's vibrant cultural heritage, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Maihi Thursday announced a grant of ₹50 lakh from his own fund.

On his X account, the CM said, 'Sital Sasthi Yatra is a unique messenger of our culture and tradition. The wedding festival of Lord Mahadev and Goddess Parvati, the festival marks a sacred union that is observed with much pomp and religious fervour, particularly in the state's western and central regions. The grant aims to support local communities, artisans, and organisers in making the upcoming Yatra even more grand and inclusive."

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



I felt the same when we were 5th largest - and when they said we became 4th

Two dead, 6 critical US court blocks Trump's tariffs during physical test

POST NEWS NETWORK

Paralakhemundi, May 29: Two candidates died while six others were hospitalised after appearing for the physical test for home guard recruitment at Paralakhemundi in Gajapati district Thursday. The deceased were identified

as Sulanta Mishal of Parisal village and Deepak Padal of Narayanpur under Ramgiri police limits. Both collapsed during a physical fitness run on a 2-km stretch from Ranipentha to Padmapur early Thursday morning. Sulanta was rushed to the district headquarters hospital where doctors pronounced him dead while Deepak was shifted to MKCG Medical College and Hospital where he succumbed during treatment.

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi expressed deep sorrow over the incident and announced an ex gratia of ₹4 lakh each for the families of the deceased. "The loss is irreparable," the CM said in his statement. Gajapati Superintendent of Police (SP) Jatindra Panda also visited the hospital and offered condolences. He assured that a member of Sulanta's family would be offered a home guard position on compassionate grounds.

HOME GUARD RECRUITMENT DRIVE



Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi expressed grief over the incident and announced an ex gratia of ₹4 lakh each for the families of the deceased

They were among the 1,200 aspirants participating in interviews for 144 home guard posts. Six candidates with critical health conditions have been admitted to Paralakhemundi headquarters hospital for treatment. They were identified as P Babuii of Paralakhemundi, Arfan Pani of Gumma, Sanjay Sabar of Goshani, Balakrushna Limma of Kashinagar, Shiba Prasad Mohapatra and another unidentified candidate from Gurandi.

According to officials, eight candidates fell ill during the run and were rushed to the



district headquarters hospital (DHH) in Paralakhemundi.

A senior official said, "We are surprised over the death of two youths. The 209 women candidates participated in the run and successfully completed the 2-km race much before the stipulated time of 12 minutes. However, the male candidates fell ill and two of them died."

The official added that there was no abnormal temperature in Gajapati.

Sulanta's uncle stated that the family had already lost one

of the two brothers earlier. "Sulanta's death has now caused an irreparable loss to the family. At home, his widowed mother and daughter were left in shock upon hearing the news. He has appealed to the government to provide assistance to the bereaved fam-

Washington, May 29: A federal trade court has blocked US President Donald Trump from imposing sweeping tariffs on imports under an emergency-powers law.

The ruling from a three-judge panel at the New York-based Court of International Trade came after several lawsuits arguing Trump has exceeded his authority, left US trade policy dependent on his whims and unleashed economic chaos.

"The worldwide and retaliatory tariff orders exceed any authority granted to the president by IEEPA to regulate importation by means of tariffs,'

the court wrote, referring to the 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA).

At least seven lawsuits are challenging the levies, the centrepiece of Trump's trade policy. Tariffs must typically be approved by Congress, but Trump says he has the power to act because the country's trade deficits amount to a national emergency

He imposed tariffs on most of the countries in the world at one point, sending markets reeling.

The plaintiffs argued that the emergency powers law does not authorise the use of tariffs, and even if it did, the trade deficit does not meet the law's requiregered only by an "unusual and extraordinary threat". The US has run a trade deficit

ment that an emergency be trig-

with the rest of the world for 49 consecutive years. Trump had earlier plastered

levies on imports from Canada. China and Mexico to combat the illegal flow of immigrants and the synthetic opioids across the US border. His administration argues that courts approved then-president Richard Nixon's emergency use of tariffs in 1971. and that only Congress, and not the courts, can determine the political" guestion of whether the President's rationale for declaring an emergency complies

Hardcore Maoist Hidma with ₹4L bounty arrested

Koraput, May 29: Security forces arrested hardcore Maoist Kunjam Hidma alias Mohan, an area committee member of the banned CPI (Maoist) group, during a joint operation early Thursday near Petiguda village under Boipariguda police limits in Koraput district.

This was stated during a presser by Koraput SP Rohit Varma at the SP office here Thursday. Varma said Hidma was apprehended during a joint combing operation by Koraput police and DVF. The search operation was led by Jeypore SDPO Partha Kashyap and DVF Assistant Commandant DP Parida in the nearby forest.

Hidma, who also goes by the alias Mohan, had a bounty of ₹4 lakh on his head.

During the operation, the security forces came face-to-face with the Maoists and asked the rebels to surrender. But, they opened fire on the forces, prompting retaliatory action. Hidma and three of his associates tried to flee towards Andhra Pradesh but were captured. One AK-47 rifle, 35 rounds of bullets, a magazine and 27 electronic detonators were seized. P5

Spying for Pak: Maha jr engineer arrested

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 29: The Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) has arrested a Thane-based man working as a junior engineer in a defence technology firm on the charge of providing sensitive informa tion to a Pakistani intelligence agent, who honey-trapped him on social media, officials said.

The 27-year-old accused, iden tified as Ravindra Murlidhar Verma, is a resident of Kalwa in neighbouring Thane city, an official said Thursday.

"Verma was working as a junior engineer with a firm involved in defence technology. As an employee of the company he had access to enter the Naval Dockyard in south Mumbai and he used to work at the naval ships," he said.

Verma was honey-trapped by a Pakistani agent who posed as a woman and befriended him on Facebook, he said.

He was found to have shared sensitive information about a vital installation with the 'Pakistan Intelligence Operative (PIO) through WhatsApp from November 2024 to March 2025 the official said.

A case was registered against him and two more persons under Section 3 of the Official Se crets Act that deals with espio nage, and Section 61 (2) (criminal conspiracy) of Bharatiya

Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). After interrogation, Verma was placed under arrest.

Past findings have indicated bobtails accounted for nearly 80 per cent of the cats in Nagasaki, twice the occurrence of anywhere else in Japan Nagasaki residents hope the and member of the Nagasaki Cat protect shipments on their way from Southeast Asia to Japan,

Nagasaki, May 29: In Japan, cats with hooked and bent tails are considered good luck, and Nagasaki is the place to find

They are known as "omagari neko" (bent-tail cats) or "kagi neko" (hook cats). They have their own society of admirers and even a dedicated Shinto

Their tails come in varieties, including hook-shaped at the tip, curved or in a bun, explained Kazuva Hideshima, a worker at Omagari Neko Shrine

Past findings have indicated bobtails accounted for nearly 80 per cent of the cats in Nagasaki, twice the occurrence of anywhere else in Japan.

Japanese cats are believed to have come from China in the 6th century with Buddhist monks, serving as rat hunters to protect religious scriptures on ships.

Nagasaki bobtails have their roots in the Dutch East Indies when the city was the only foreign port during Japan's closed era in the 17th to 19th centuries. They hunted rats to



In Japan, bobtailed cats are a lucky charm

according to Nagasaki cultural

Soshin Yamamoto, a veterinarian and cat specialist, said the large population of bobtails in Nagasaki is likely the result of a genetic mutation that reproduced in a relatively isolated environment when the nation was shut up tight.

"Having bobtails is no prob lem for most cats living a normal life, as long as they live near humans and aren't jumping and running around like wild cats in a forest," he said.

cats bring in tourists and help Natsuno Kani, a 50-year-old

tourist from Tokyo who recently visited the bobtail shrine. said she knew Nagasaki was famous for bent-tail cats.

But Abigail Tarraso, an artist from Spain based in Takeo City in neighbouring Saga prefecture, was unfamiliar with the species, which is not as popular

Today is the first time in Nagasaki that I have ever heard of this," said Cindy Bi, an American who is also an artist.

Isure



TO VISIT INDIA'

'I REALLY WANT

Actor Park Bo Gum, a popular name for K-drama fans across the globe for shows such as Reply 1988, Love in the Moonlight, Encounter and When Life Gives You Tangerines, says he would love to travel to India and meet his admirers.

JLO THINKS SHE IS TOO HARD ON HERSELF

Jennifer Lopez feels that at times she gets 'so hard' on herself. The 55-year-old star has enjoyed huge success as a singer and as an actress, and has confessed to being a 'perfectionist'. The chart-topping star recently hosted the American Music Awards and relished the challenge of hosting the show.



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Your creative juices are flowing today, says Gane-sha,and you are raring to take on new challenges. Your workplace may offer some interesting benefits. Remember to relax, your body requires attention every now and then.

As concerns of your future grip you,you will start working on a method to improve things today.It is a day of moderation and there will be neither a ninsurmountable problem nor a eulogistic high to brag about by the end of it. Things might get dull around the evening, but be patient as the new sunrise will have more exciting prospects to offer, says Ganesha.

GEMINI

You have a pleasing personality. Today, you will leave quite an impression on others, especially members of the opposite sex. At work, your colleagues wi need your expertise to help them through difficult tasks. Later in the evening, a long rather remarkable day.

It is quite likely that both close and distant relatives will fill your heart with thrill and happiness, portends Ganesha. There may be a little misunderstanding with vourpeers at work. You will make quite a progress both at work and in personal life.

Surviving an earthquake will seem easier compared to getting through this day without ruffling your feathers, says Ganesha. It is not your best day, and you shall have to work really hard to meet your targets today. Business-wise, do not expect to gather the dividends you havebeenexpectingsofar.

You are bursting at the seams with the creativity bubbling within you. However, you will find yourself struggling more than usual in dealing with the challenges at work. here are some monetary benefits on the cards. Ganesha advises you to take good

Having an elderly hand to

guide you and back you upis always a good thing. Today promises to be very advantageous to you when it comes to gaining from your seniors. It may have something to do with your exceptional skills in building rapport with people, or your ability to perform truthfully.

SCORPIO

The Dons in the office may bypass your superiors and probably make you run around as an errand boy. You are likely to impress your superiors with your brilliance. Evening, though, will ring out the exhaustion of the morning. Ganesha advises you todelay bidding on sealed tenders for today

SAGITTARIUS

A day where your thoughts will be inclined towards God and divinity, says Ganesha. Don't ease those purse strings easily too. At work, rise to the occasion and take charge. Your superiors will give you a pat on the back. Romantic escapades will be marked by rude health - as if you mind!

CAPRICORN

You may have craved for a mini vacation to some place quaint and peaceful for long, and would have given up the idea every time because of the burgeoning work pressure. But it's time to get impulsive. Give your imagination a free reign today, and go where it takes you, for travel is on the cards, and that too with your sweetheart, says Ganesha.

AQUARIUS

Hurry, splash on some Giorgio or curl your tresses! The spotlight is on you today, and you don't want a drab work jacket to take away the shine. You remain brilliant, both on the personal and professional fronts. Your rivals will envy your easy charm, says Ganesha.

PISCES

You will need to enlist the cooperation of your colleagues while chalking out strategies at the workplace today, if you desire to make substantial progress, says Ganesha. The good news is that your efforts are likely to fructify. Some important decisions will be delayed if left unattended until the evening.



Tamannaah blames it on Instagram

Mumbai: Bollywood actress Tamannaah

Bhatia has addressed speculation linking her to the ongoing controversy involving Deepika Padukone's exit from Spirit, a film directed by Sandeep Reddy Vanga and starring Prabhas. The rumours stemmed from Tamannaah liking an Instagram reel that spotlighted issues women face in professional settings. The video included a throwback clip from a 2020 Chhapaak press conference, where Padukone strongly responded to a reporter who implied her husband, Ranveer Singh, funded the film. The reel touched on gender pay gaps, unprofessional behavior, and misogvnv. and gained attention amid Padukone's reported fallout with Vanga over work-hour demands and compensation.

Fans interpreted Tamannaah's 'like' as a show of support for Padukone. However, Tamannaah quickly shut down the speculation via Instagram Stories, attributing the action to a platform glitch. "Can Instagram pls figure out how it likes pages on its own? Cause random ppl are making this news and I really have work to do." she wrote, adding laughter emoiis.

Director Vanga had earlier taken to X to call out an unnamed actor for leaking the film's storyline and engaging in "dirty PR games," which many assumed was directed at Padukone. This controversy has reignited conversations around gender dynamics in the film industry.

AGENCIES

Urvashi's claim about DiCaprio

Mumbai: Urvashi Rautela claims Hollywood icon Leonardo DiCaprio called her the 'Queen of Cannes' but social media users aren't buy-Urvashi took to Instagram, where she

shared a string of selfies with Dicaprio and captioned it: "When Leonardo DiCaprio calls you the Queen of Cannes! Thank Leo... now that's Titanic compli-

#Queenment MovesOnly #QueenOfCannes #LeoAndUR vashiRautela #Cannes2025 #leonardodicaprio.' However, it's the com-

ment section that really steals as social media users are skeptical of the actress's claim especially given her track record. One asked: "Does Leo know that he called you the gueen of Cannes?

Another asked a similar question in the comment section: "Does Leonardo himself know about this?" A user simply said that Urvashi is not 21. A netizen questioned the actress if the Hollywood icon compliment her for Daaku Maharaai and Dabidi Dibidi. One user wrote: "So, u wanna to be like KATE. "It's a desperate selfie," said another.

actress was at the Cannes Film Festival, where she walked the carpet on the sidelines. However, there too she managed to find herself in



Mumbai: Actress Rashmika Mandanna took to social media to share a heartwarming glimpse into the things she holds closest to her heart

Describing them as her 'irreplaceable favourites,' the actress posted a series of photos filled with vibrant colours, cherished memories, and heartfelt emotions-each element reflecting a special part of her life. The Animal actress took to her Instagram handle and shared a series of photos and captioned it, "These pictures have all of my favourites.. The

colour, the vibe, the place, the beautiful lady who gifted me the saree, the photographer and the everything and everything in this photo is irreplaceable to me."(sic) In the images, Rashmika is

seen dressed in an orange sa-

ree, striking different poses for

the camera. She is seated on a couch, smiling as she poses. To note, the Pushpa

actress doesn't just use Instagram to share glimpses of her personal life or drop stunning photos-she also keeps fans updated on her professional journey. Just a few days ago, she shared a video from her upcoming film Kubera, giving a sneak peek into what's next on the work front. The upcoming pan-India film, helmed by director Sekhar Kammula, also stars Dhanush, Nagarjuna, and Jim Sarbh.

Bhumi on how she 'gets high'

Mumbai: Actress Bhumi Pednekar recently offered a glimpse into what keeps her spirits soaring on set.

In a candid moment, she shared how she often 'gets high' on life while working. Taking to Instagram, Bhumi shared photos of herself from the sets, writing, "Bun maska and chai gets me high:)))" In the images, the *Bhakshak* actress is seen enjoying tea with bun maska. In the video, Pednekar could be heard saying, "Bread, butter, and chai ultimate."

Bhumi shared a series of photos from the sets, capturing the cozy mood of a rainy-day shoot. Along with her post, she used hashtags like #monsoons, #onset, #filming, #BhumiPednekar, and #chai — perfectly summing up her love for simple pleasures during a busy filming schedule. Professionally, the Badhaai Do actress was most recently seen in the series *The Royals*, which also starred Ishaan Khatter, Zeenat

Aman, Sakshi Tanwar, Nora Fatehi, Vihaan Samat, Dino Morea and Milind Soman. Directed by Priyanka Ghose and Nupur Asthana, the romantic comedy centered on a once-wealthy royal family in present-day India, facing financial hard-

ships. Their fate begins to change when the family's heir partners with a hospitality entrepreneur to transform their ancestral palace into

a high-end resort.

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBES

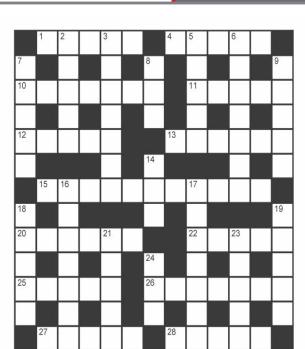


BREVITY



DOST

CROSSWORD



25 Banana oil, e.g.

- 1 Public relations 26 Hot pepper 27 Put to the test concern

Across

- 4 Aesop's forte
- 10 Come apart 11 Bullion unit
- 12 Keyboard key
- 13 Wall paintings
- escapes (5,6)
- 20 Prevaricator 22 Alcove

- 3 Rules
- 6 Suitcases
- Down 2 Reason for a raise

28 Proclamation

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- 5 Gallic goodbye

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

- 21 Chill-inducing
- 7 Stubborn sorts
- 23 Disparager 24 Slick

8 Pesky insect

9 Secret supply

16 Seafood entree

14 Venomous

17 Ticked off

18 Frequently

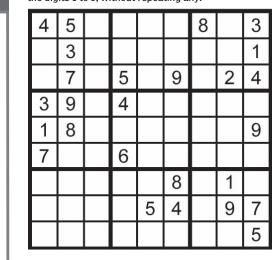
19 Small three-

masted vessel

snake

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

TEA FROAD ASTI SYSTEM

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

SUDOKU



owntown

PM: VKSA an opportunity for farmers to clear doubts

Bhubaneswar, May 29: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Thursday said the 'Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan' (VKSA) provides a unique opportunity to farmers across the country to clear their doubts by asking questions to agriculture scientists, who visit their areas during the campaign.

Modi said this in a video message which was played at a programme held at the Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT) and attended by Union Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, scientists, farmers and others. Speaking on the VKSA

which was launched May 29, the Prime Minister said that the farmers across 700 districts of the country will get the opportunity to clear their doubts when preparing to start Kharif crop cultivation after the onset of the monsoon. He said over 2,000 teams of agriculture scientists and experts will visit villages (from May 29 to June 12) in a mission mode as part of his vision of 'Lab to Land' and the concept of a developed India.

Modi said scientists and experts will visit villages and meet farmers with all data and information. "This campaign will certainly help farmers before beginning of the cultivation activities," Modi said appealing to the scientists to take the campaign in a mission mode and help farmers in acquiring modern knowledge in

"I would like to tell the scientists and other employees that this is a big mission before them. The challenge that you are taking is not just a government assignment. Please do it in a spirit of serving the nation. You have to satisfy the intellectual curiosity of farmers and also record their valuable suggestions," Modi said, adding that the VKSA will open a new door of progress for Indian

Stating that there has been a lot of progress in the agriculture sector in the last decade, Modi said this success should reach the farmers working in the field.

We have worked on how to raise the income of farmers, strengthen the agricultural economy, increase foodgrain production, tackling climate change challenges, cultivation in less water and modernise cultivation. These experiences should now reach farmers,"

The PM also suggested that the farmers be made aware of solar panelling in their fields.

NCAP review lauds

City public transport

Bhubaneswar/New Delhi.

May 29: Bhubaneswar has

emerged as one of the standout examples of progressive clean

air action in the country, ac-

cording to a comprehensive

national review of the National

Clean Air Programme (NCAP)

which was released Thursday

by the Centre for Science and

The City was recognised for

its significant transformation

in public transport, starting

from a limited baseline to build-

ing a more modern and efficient

bus system. Moreover, Odisha

has been acknowledged for its

leadership in deploying Con-

tinuous Emission Monitoring

Systems (CEMS) in industries.

enhancing regulatory oversight

The findings were unveiled

during a national conference in

New Delhi, marking five years

since NCAP's inception. The

CSE's report, 'Driving Clean

Air Action under NCAP' cap-

tures emerging good practices

from across India in four criti-

cal sectors: vehicles, industries,

solid waste, and construction

and demolition ($C\D$) waste.

on industrial emissions.

Environment (CSE).

POST NEWS NETWORK

₹800 paddy assistance an example: Chouhan



Bhubaneswar, May 29: Odisha has set an example for the country by providing ₹800 per quintal as paddy assistance, Union Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said while launching 'Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan' (VKSA) at Sakhigopal in Puri, Thursday.

Chouhan launched the VK-SA, a nationwide campaign aimed at transforming Indian agriculture through scientific intervention, in the presence of Chief Minister Mohan Charan Maihi, Deputy CM and Agriculture Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo, local MLAs and senior agriculture

Chouhan said the campaign seeks to help India become the 'food basket of the world' by directly connecting agriculture scientists with farmers.

Under the initiative, scientists from across the country will leave their laboratories to engage with farmers in over 700 districts, providing hands-on guidance and collecting feedback from the field.

The campaign will run from May 29 to June 12, aiming to reach and directly engage with around 1.5 crore farmers nationwide. Chouhan encouraged agriculture scientists to view their field visits as a service to the nation's 'Annadatas' (food providers).

He also appealed to farmers to actively engage with

bee farming under sweet revolution, the impact of chemical and pesticide use and convert agricultural wastes

"The farmers should be informed on where and how to grow 'Sree Anna' for better production, inclusion in 'Govardhan Yojana' and others," the PM said.

Describing the campaign as an 'aspiration initiative' on the part of the government of

"India is now capable of feeding its population of 145 crore. But we must not stop aim to become the food basket of the world, not just meet our domestic needs but also export to other countries," he said.

Chouhan said that Odisha has set an example for the whole of India. "Through the Samriddh Kisan Yojana, the government is purchasing paddy from farmers at ₹3.100 per quintal, which is ₹800 more than the MSP of paddy. This is a very important step because if the income of the farmers increases, the income of the country increases," he said.

Chouhan attributed this success to the blessings of Lord Jagannath, underlining the symbolic importance of launching the campaign from Puri, the holy land of the deity.

Before inaugurating the campaign, Chouhan participated in a 'Tiranga Yatra' and a plantation programme, alongside Ma ihi and other dignitaries.

The CM said that steps will be taken to ensure that research-based agricultural information reaches farmers. "Farmers will be made aware of soil health testing, the use of soil health cards, fertilizer management and climate resilient agriculture," he said.

He said that the government has taken various steps to provide better prices to farmers and to bring them into the economic mainstream of the society.

India to make farmers aware of changes being made in the agriculture sector and aim to achieve 'Viksit Bharat' through 'Viksit Krishi', the PM pointed out that the agriculture market is fast changing along with the priorities of consumers.

Though agriculture is a state subject as per the federal structure, Modi said the farmers should be aware of the changes being made in the sector and transform it for progress.

'Lakhpati Didi' a strategy for sustainable devpt: CM

Bhubaneswar, May 29: The Lakhpati Didi Yojana is not merely a welfare scheme but a comprehensive strategy for inclusive and sustainable development, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi said here Thursday.

Speaking at the National Lakhpati Didi Conclave 2025, which brought together participants from 25 states and Union Territories, Majhi highlighted that the primary objective of the initiative is to empower women financially and foster leadership among rural women.

Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Chief Minister said, the Lakhpati Didi Yojana has enabled women to earn more than ₹1 lakh per annum.

'This is not just about employment," he said, adding, "Its core aim is to ensure financial independence of women and nurture leadership qualities among them.

Majhi emphasised that the conclave was not merely a celebration of achievements but

We are committed to promoting women in entrepreneurship and leadership. The goal is to make Lakhpati Didi Yojana not just a livelihood programme but a movement for women's dignity.

self-reliance, and leadership MOHAN CHARAN MAJHI | CHIEF MINISTER

a reaffirmation of the government's commitment to women's leadership.

Highlighting the recent legislative progress, the Chief Minister noted that the Nari Shakti Vandan Act which was passed in the Parliament, ensures at least 33 per cent reservation of seats in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies for women in the upcoming elections

"Odisha has led the way in implementing the Lakhpati Didi Mission, with nearly 17 lakh women achieving the coveted status, making the state No. 1 in the country," Mahji announced.

He attributed this success to the dedication of self-help group (SHG) women, Mission Shakti initiative, the Odisha Livelihood

Mission, and effective grassroots

The Chief Minister further shared that women SHGs in Odisha are now eligible for interest-free loans up to Rs 10 lakh. The revolving fund support has been increased from Rs 15,000 to Rs 30,000, while the Community Investment Fund has risen from Rs 35 lakh to Rs 60 lakh.

"These efforts are helping SHG members grow their businesses and livelihoods with confidence," he said, adding that platforms like the Subhadra Shakti Mela provide opportunities for women to build their own identities and conduct business worth lakhs of rupees. "We are committed to promot-

ing women in entrepreneurship and leadership. The goal is to make Lakhpati Didi Yojana not just a livelihood programme but a movement for women's dignity, self-reliance, and leadership," he said. On the occasion. Lakhpati Didis such as Vindhy abashini from Rayagada district and Shobha Digambara Kadam from Maharashtra shared their success stories and experiences.

The Chief Minister honoured

Shakuntala Dhal (Deogarh dis trict), Sulami Dalabehera (Gajapati district) and Mamata Nath Sharma (Kendrapara district) as best Lakhpati Didis. Nayagarh district received accolades for achieving 98 per cent success in creating Lakhpati Didis, followed closely by Kendrapara, Cuttack Bhadrak, and Jagatsinghpur dis tricts- each achieving 97 per cent success. Devi Prasad Nayak fron the Odisha Livelihood Mission Bhubaneswar, was recognised as the best officer at the state level. During the event, the Chief Minister also released a video, a coffee table book, and a booklet highlighting the impact of the

Deputy Chief Minister and Women & Child Development Minister Pravati Parida, in her address, said the Lakhpati Did Yojana is bringing women out of the confines of their homes and connecting them to mainstream development.

Lakhpati Didi initiative.

She noted that rural women are excelling in various fields such as agriculture, anima husbandry, tailoring, and running cafes, becoming inspiring examples for others.

Lopar intensifies into deep depression

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, May 29: The well-marked low-pressure area over the northwest Bay of Bengal, which intensified into a deep depression Thursday, is likely to trigger heavy to very heavy rainfall in parts of Odisha, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

In its bulletin, the IMD stated that the depression over the northwest Bay of Bengal off West Bengal-Bangladesh coasts moved nearly northwards with a speed of 20 kmph during the past 3 hours and intensified into a deep depression about 60 km southeast of Sagar Island, 110 km east-southeast of Digha and 260 km east of Balasore It is likely to continue

to move northwards and cross West Bengal-Bangladesh coasts between Sagar Island and Khepupara (Bangladesh) by afternoon,



Cong holds 'Jai Hind Sabha' in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 29: The Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) Thursday organised 'Jai Hind Sabha' at Master Canteen Square as part of the party's nation-wide initiative to honour the valour of armed forces during 'Operation Sindoor'.

The programme, which was organised under the leadership of OPCC president Bhakta Charan Das, saw the participation of Rohtak (Haryana) MP Deepender Singh Hooda, senior leaders and thousands of activists, who came from various districts.

Veteran soldiers from Indian Army, Air Force and Navy were felicitated at the programme.

Speaking on the occasion, Hooda said Pakistan has always envied the growth of

India. "Since Independence,

Pakistan has made repeated tryman. The entire nation

attempts to harm our citizens through wars and terrorism. However, our brave soldiers defeated them in every battle, and thwarted their terror acts with all might." Hailing the Indian forces

for the success of 'Operation Sindoor', the Congress MP, however, took a dig at the Central government alleging intervention of US in calling a ceasefire. "It was a bolt to the patriotism of every counwas united at that time. The BJP destroyed the unity for narrow political benefits,' Hooda said.

In his address, the OPCC president said the programme is dedicated to soldiers. "We honour all our martyrs and those who are away from home guarding our borders. Be Pakistan or China, our soldiers have always kept the enemies at their place through their bravery.

₹30K bribe over UPI: Two govt officials held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 29: The state Vigilance sleuths Thursday arrested two Minor Irri gation department officials in Gajapati district after catching them red-handed while ac cepting a cumulative bribe of ₹30,000 to approve the pending bills of a contractor.

A senior Vigilance officer identified the arrested officials as Suraj Prasad Jaiswal and Naresh Pattanaik who work with the Minor Irrigation de partment in Gajapati district While Suraj is posted as a Divi sional Accounts Officer, Naresh works as a Senior Assistant at the superintendent's office.



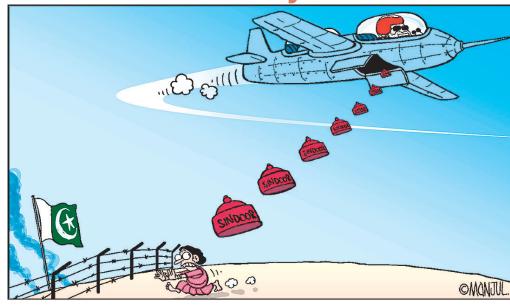
The Vigilance official said Suraj and Naresh had demanded ₹15,000 each from the complainant, a contractor, when the latter approached them to clear pending bills worth ₹32 lakh. "The complainant had earlier received three work orders in his name, and one in the name of a relative, with the total work order exceeding ₹86 lakh. However, the two officers refused to clear his bills despite multiple rounds of request," the

Vigilance officer said. The aggrieved contractor moved the Vigilance department with a complaint after the duo demanded bribes to clear his bills following protracted delay. Acting on the complaint the Vigilance sleuths laid a trap and apprehended Suraj and Naresh while they accepted bribes of ₹15,000 each over Phone Pe payment application on their respective smartphones, the

officer added. Following their arrest, Vigilance sleuths carried out simul taneous searches at locations linked to the duo to ascertain their disproportionate assets,

(Amendment) Act, 2018.

POLITICKLE by



'Childhood leukaemia cases on rise'

Bhubaneswar, May 29: India is witnessing a significant rise in cases of blood cancer, or leukaemia, among children, according to a medical expert.

Prof Privanka Samal of the Institute of Medical Sciences and SUM Hospital stated that

children between the ages of one and 10 are increasingly being diagnosed with the

However, she noted that children in this age group show a greater ability to recover from it with timely and appropriate treatment.

Speaking at an event here,

Samal, who heads the Department of Haematology, Hemato-Oncology, Bone Marrow Transplant, and Cellular Therapy at the hospital, emphasised that approximately 80 to 90 per cent of children diagnosed with leukaemia can overcome the disease when provided with proper medical care.

NIA team begins probe into loot of explosives by Maoists

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 29: A team of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) rushed to Bankua. under K Balang police station in Sundargarh district Thursday to investigate the looting of nearly four tonnes of explosives by Maoists.

The incident reportedly occurred in the Odisha-Jharkhand region May 27.

According to reports, around 30 armed Maoists intercepted a truck loaded with explosives near Bankua close to the Saranda forest The truck, which was transporting mainly gelatin sticks intended for quarrying purposes, was hijacked at gunpoint.

The Maoists forced the driver to divert the vehicle into the Saranda forest, where they unloaded the explosives and abandoned the truck. The rebels released the driver unharmed within the forest. Meanwhile, police forces from Odisha, Jharkhand, and West Bengal, along with the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), have launched an extensive combing operation in the Saranda forest. a known Maoist stronghold, to



recover the stolen explosives. Odisha Director General of Police Yogesh Bahadur Khura-

nia convened a high-level meeting with senior police officials in Rourkela to strategise the combing operation and further security measures The Odisha-Jharkhand border has been sealed, and search

sha Police sources said. Sources said that the CRPF Inspector General and Commandant have also arrived on-site to support the joint forces in the on-

operations have been intensified

to trace the looted explosives, Odi-

going operation. Police revealed that standard operating procedures (SOPs) were not followed during the transport of such a large quantity of explosives. Neither the company that dispatched the consignment nor the one meant to receive it had informed the police about the consignment.

if any. The searches are still on. The officials have been

booked under Section 7 of the Prevention of Corruption

Mixed reactions as govt raises upper age limit for Odisha jobs

Aspirants welcome extended age limit but express concerns over increased competition and limited vacancies

MANOJ KUMAR JENA, OP

Bhubaneswar, May 29: The Odisha government's recent move to increase the upper age limit for state government job applicants from 32 to 42 years has triggered mixed reactions among aspirants. While some welcomed the decision as a lifeline, others expressed concerns over rising competition and reduced chances for younger

Ambika Prashad Das (27), preparing for the Odisha Civil Services and OSSC exams, appreciated the step but voiced

"Though the decision benefits many, it also means more aspirants per post. Older candidates can manage a job and preparation together, something fresh graduates like us can't do. This might reduce our



Sharing a similar concern, Subrat Kumar Nayak (26), an ASO aspirant, said, "While the move benefits over-aged candidates, it will intensify competition unless the government increases the number of vacancies. The government should ensure a fair balance."

Akankhya Rout (25), preparing for OCS, emphasised the need to align attempts and vacancies with the new age

ASPIRANTS APPRECIATE THE **EXTENDED OPPORTUNITY FOR** OVER-AGED CANDIDATES

CONCERNS RAISED OVER INTENSIFIED COMPETITION AND UNCHANGED NUMBER OF **VACANCIES**

attempts remains unchanged. So, even with age relaxation, serves no purpose for many candidates in our age group, she noted.

On the other hand, many welcomed the government's initiative as timely and inclusive. Sahashrabda Mishra (31) said, "This change brings hope to aspirants who had given up due to age restrictions. It allows capable candidates to return and compete again.'

Bikas Barik (29) added, "Financial struggles had forced many to leave preparations. This policy allows them to dream again. It's a fair and positive step.

The decision, while expanding opportunities, has sparked a broader debate on competition, fairness, and the need for structural reforms in recruit-

TALENT HONOURED: Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati felicitates ICSE-2025 topper (99%) Maittraya Abhilash Patanayak of Stewart School Bhubaneswar, at an event held recently at Raj Bhavan

Samanta gets 67th honorary doctorate

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 29: Renowned social worker, educationist, and KIIT and KISS founder, Achyuta Samanta, with his 67th honorary Doctor of Literature (D.Litt.) degree (Honoris Causa) by Himalayan University, Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh.

The prestigious recognition was awarded during the university's grand convocation ceremony. The university's academic council and board of management had unanimously recommended the honour in acknowledgment of Samanta's exceptional contributions to education and social development.



Minister of Education, Rural Works, Parliamentary Affairs, Tourism, and Libraries Pasang Dorjee Sona, university chairman Hemant Goyal, vice chancellor Prakash Divakaran along with distinguished dignitaries, scholars, and students from across India.

Health dept ramps up monsoon disease fight



Bhubaneswar, May 29: The Health and Family Welfare department has stepped up efforts to tackle vector and water-borne diseases ahead of the monsoon season. A high-level review meeting led by Secretary Aswathy S was held Thursday to assess preparedness and issue directives for intensified grassroots action

Secretary Aswathy stressed the importance of awareness campaigns, drug availability, and the active involvement of ASHA workers, Sub-centres. PHCs, CHCs, district hospitals, women self-help groups, and

community leaders. Proper use of Long Lasting Insecticidal Nets (LLINs) was a key focus. CDM&PHOs were directed to oversee LLIN distribution and usage, with ASHA and MPHW workers supporting

efforts at local levels. Field visits by officials from the Directorate of Public Health and National Health Mission will ensure the availability of test kits, drug stocks, and robust surveillance in high-risk

districts. Advisories will also be issued for sanitation and disinfection of water sources in hostels and residential complexes ahead of school reopening. Seven districts-including Ravagada. Koraput, and Kandhamal were identified as malaria hotspots, while Sundargarh and Khurda will see intensified

dengue prevention. The meeting, held in hybrid mode, saw participation from CDM&PHOs, public health officers, NHM officials, and disease

control experts.

OES unveils list of eco awardees

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 29: The Orissa Environmental Society (OES) will honour individuals for their outstanding efforts in environmental protection on the occasion of World Envi ronment Day, June 5.

Eminent cardiologist and former head of cardiology depart ment at SCB Medical College Hru dananda Mishra will be bestowed to Health Services Award' and Mahanadi Bachao Andolan con vener Sudarsan Das, who is actively involved in river protection campaigns, will be presented the 'Water Man of Odisha Award'.

Prerana International Green Army founder Dillip Srichan dan will be honoured with the 'Environmentalist of the Year Award - 2025' for his notable contribution to plantation and nature conservation.

Similarly, APOWA director Bijaya Kumar Kabi will be felic itated with the 'Green Crusader Award' for undertaking mangrove plantation in Kendrapara coast. The occasion will be graced by the Odisha University of Technology and Research vice chancellor Bibhuti Bhushan Biswal as chief guest and CIPET director PK Sahoo as chief speaker.

MARKET WATCH							
CU	IRRENCY	BOURSES		COMMODITIES			
NDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION		
OLLAR	85.34 ♦ 0.03	SENSEX	81633.02 ♦ 320.70	GOLD	₹ 95,478 ♦ 200.0		
URO	97.08 4 0.65	NIFTY	24833.60 4 81.15	SILVER	₹ 97,659 404		

ASSIFIED

I, Ranjana Agrawal, D/o- Late Prabhudayal Agrawal, resident of Choudhuri Bazar, Keuta Sahi, Cuttack Sadar,

Cuttack, Cuttack G.p, Odisha PIN-753001 declares by this affidavit No.- 225, dtd. 27th May, 2025 that now onwards shall be known as Ranjana Agarwal for

future purposes.

Affidavit before Notary Public, Digapahandi No. - 1587/07.05.2025, I Smt. Swarnalata Sahu, W/o Abinash Pattanayak, Vill/PO - Digapahandi, PS - Digapahandi, Ganjam (as per my Aadhaar Card and other testimonials) say that I change my surname from Sahu to Pattanayak after marriage to Abinash Pattanayak on dated 18.02.2024. Henceforth I shall be known as

Swarnalata Pattanayak for all future purposes.

By virtue of an affidavit before Executive Magistrate, Kantabanji on 29.05.2025, formerly I am known as Ahalya Bhoi, D/o-Giridhari Bhoi which is recorded in my Educational Documents but after marriage to Shankar Thela of Village-Hial P.O.- Kuibahal, P.S.-Kantabanji, Dist.-Balangir my name is recorded as Ahalya Thela, W/o-Shankar Thela in my Aadhaar Card where as Ahalya Bhoi and Ahalya Thela, W/o-Shankar Thela is same and one person and from today I will be known as Ahalya Bhoi, D/o-Giridhari Bhoi as per my educational records.

from God: Dy CM Parida

Menstruation, a blessing



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 29: Menstruation is a blessing given by God and breaking the taboo around it is necessary to create a menstruation-friendly environment in society, said Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida at an event on the occasion of World Menstrual Hygiene Day celebration organised by Women and Child Development (W&CD) department and Aaina, an NGO, at the State Institute of Women and Children here Thursday

"To combat the myths and superstitions associated with menstruation, we need to bring change at the grassroots level as well as change our own mindset. Mothers at

ICFAI, Hyderabad and

Centre for Social Studies,

Surat, surveyed

Bhubaneswar's Shree

Krishna Anand Old Age

Home, highlighting critical

issues faced by senior

citizens in healthcare,

emotional support,

and finances

RESHMI YADAV, OP

home should also take more their sons," Parida said, calling for creating women friendly zone at public places. Additionally, she highlighted the importance of clean toilets for girl students in schools and colleges.

W&CD principal secretary Shubha Sharma mentioned the steps taken by the Odisha government towards breaking the taboo around menstruation. The programme was or-

ganised in collaboration with WaterAid, PCI India, Piramal Foundation, HealthPlus, Navo Plus, Unicef, CYSD, Views India, UNDP, CIAFAR, PJS, Water Initiatives, JITA and

Survey reveals silent struggles of elderly



Bhubaneswar, May 29: A field survey conducted recently at Shree Krishna Anand Old Age Home in Bhubaneswar brought to light the pressing challenges faced by elderly residents, including limited healthcare access, emotional neglect, and financial hardship.

The visit was part of a broader research initiative led by the ICFAI School of Social Sciences (ISoSS), Hyderabad, in collaboration with the Centre for Social

Studies (CSS), Surat, under the ICSSR-sponsored project titled "Demographic Transition: Changing Family System and the Quality of Life (QOL): A Study of Bihar, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana". The project aligns with the Vision

Viksit Bharat @ 2047 initiative. The field survey was conducted by associate professor and project director (PD), ISoSS, Sushanta Kumar Mahapatra, along with field investigator Sadashiba Pati.



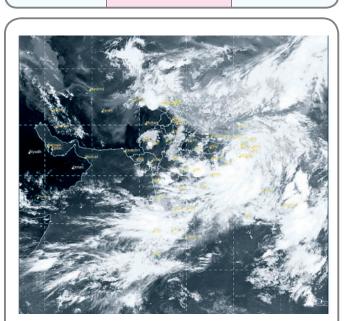
They engaged directly with the residents, staff, and manage ment of the old age home, as well as with elderly individuals living alone or with their families in the surrounding community.

The Shree Krishna Anand Old Age Home, operated by the Seva Dharma Charitable Trust, has three branches in Bhubaneswar. It currently accommodates 100 senior citizens from across India and is supported by 15 staff members. During the survey, many residents expressed a

deep sense of loneliness and a need for more emotional connection. Health services were found to be limited, and some residents reported difficulty in affording their medical and daily expenses. There was a general appeal for greater financial and policy-level support from the government.

While many residents acknowledged that circumstances had forced them into institution al living, several still hoped for more dignified and independent alternatives. Suggestions for organising regular cultural and so cial activities were also shared. as these could help recreate a homely environment and improve mental well-being.

The project is being guided by a team of experienced scholars including associate professor and project coordinator (ISoSS), Laila Memdani, CSS (Surat) Gagan Bihari Sahu, IC-FAI Business School's Debajani Sahoo and ISoSS, IFHE dean and professor Tamma Koti Reddy.



	WEATHI	ER	
	BBSR	СТС	FORECAST
Max Temp	33.7°	33.4°	Cloudy sky with
Min Temp	25.7°	24.4°	one /two spells of rain
Humidity	87%	84%	SM42
Rainfall	4.7mm	Nil	

BOOKING OUR SSIFIED ISEMENTS CONTACT

Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur- 9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech-Tankapani Road-9861341486 Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816 Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookieman-9439491273, Nigamananda Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347 Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point-9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.

Irregularities in sale of SC, ST land in Subarnapur

Sonepur, May 29: The state government has recently announced to buy land owned by members of Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities to protect them from exploitation and help them get the genuine prices for their land.

However, a government audit has uncovered serious irregularities in the granting of sale permissions for SC/ST land in Subarnapur district. Moreover, no action has been taken so far despite the recommendations of

According to the report from the Principal Accountant General (AG), land belonging to SC and ST individuals was unlawfully cleared for sale by the offices of the sub-collectors in Birmaharajpur and Sonepur. These permissions allegedly violated land protection laws,

with wealthy and influential individuals benefiting from the transactions.

As a result, members of the SC and ST communities sold their land at undervalued prices and, in many cases, became landless while their land ended up in the hands of affluent non-tribal groups. The matter came to the fore in an audit report of Principal Accountant General (AG) of Odisha.

The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report issued under Letter No. 1105/02.02.2024, recommended action against the involved tehsildars and sub-collectors and suggested that the sold land be restored to its rightful SC and ST owners. The report was sent to the Odisha government and the district collector.

Despite the findings, no action has been taken so far by the district administration in



Subarnapur, leading to discontent among the members of SC and ST communities. Many are now demanding a high-level investigation into the matter.

According to the audit report, the Birmaharajpur Sub-Collector granted sale permissions for 213.938 acres of SC/ST land to 218 individuals. Of 181 cases examined under Section 22 of the Odisha Land Reform (OLR)

Act, irregularities were confirmed in 138 cases, involving 200.753 acres of land. The total government-assessed value of this land was approximately Rs 6.17 crore.

the Sonepur Similarly, Sub-Collector approved sales of 181.37 acres of SC/ST land to 322 individuals. Out of 115 reviewed case documents, 101.594 acres were found to have been

Action recommended against six former sub-collectors in CAG audit report

irregularly approved, with a government value of around Rs 5.23 crore. The report further revealed that from 2018 to 2023, a total of 322.347 acres of SC/ST land was approved for sale by six former sub-collectors across the district The lack of administrative ac-

tion has raised concerns among marginalised communities, fuelling protests and calls for accountability.

According to the report, the government valuation at the time was Rs 11.40 crore. During this period, Gopinath Sarka, Subrata Kumar Behera, and Ashok Kumar Bhoi served as sub-collectors in Birma-

harajpur. It was during Bhoi's tenure that approval was granted for the sale of a larger portion of land. Similarly, in Sonepur, Balram Mallik, Nihar Ranjan Kanhar, and Ipsita Priyadarshini Mishra held the post of sub-collector. The report notes that during the tenures of Balram Mallik and Ipsita Priyadarshini Mishra, permission was also granted for the sale of additional land. Following the release of the report, the District Collector's office requested case records from the sub-collector offices of both Birmaharajpur and Sonepur. However, no action has been taken so far.

When contacted, Subarnapur District Collector Anya Das said that the audit report has confirmed irregularities, and action will be taken after the translated version of the report is reviewed.

2 women killed in lightning strikes

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bargarh, May 29: Two women were killed by lightning strikes Thursday under Attabira police station limits of Bargarh district, officials

The victims were identified as Shanti Chatria, 48, of Naliyan Jhupudi village, and Yashoda Mallik, 36, of Topa

According to reports, Chatria was returning home after collecting firewood when lightning struck her in the chest. Mallik was headed to a field to deliver lunch to her husband, a daily wage labourer, when she was fatally struck by lightning.

Both women were rushed to the Attabira Community Health Centre (CHC), where they were declared dead on arrival.

Attabira region has been experiencing unseasonal rain accompanied by thunder and lightning over the past five days. The inclement weather has not only claimed lives but also damaged paddy crops, adding to the distress of local farmers.

The incident underscores the heightened risk faced by rural residents during extreme weather and highlights the need for increased awareness and preventive measures.

Hardcore Maoist Kunjam Hidma arrested Rs 4 lakh on his head.

Koraput, May 29: Security forces arrested hardcore Maoist Kunjam Hidma alias Mohan, an area committee member (ACM) of the banned CPI (Maoist) group hailing from Usur police station area in Bijapur area of Chhattisgarh, during a joint operation early Thursday near Petiguda village under Boipariguda police limits in Koraput district. This was stated here by Koraput SP Rohit Varma in a presser at the SP office here Thursday afternoon.

Addressing mediapersons. Varma said Hidma was apprehended during a joint combing operation launched by



Koraput police and District Voluntary Force (DVF) based on intelligence inputs about Maoist movement in the area. The search operation was led by Jeypore SDPO Partha Kashyap and DVF Assistant Commandant Dibya Prasad Parida in the nearby forest

area. Hidma had a bounty of

partment, he said.

service period.

death," Prusty said.

colleges, he added.

Sahu pledged to donate his body July

30, 2019, and gave a letter to the anatomy

department of the medical college in this

for their studies and research purposes at

the department, Sagar Prusty, a professor

of the Department of Anatomy, at the med-

Sahu, a professor of medicine, served

He was also associated with different

social organisations in the state and ren-

dered free health services to poor peo-

ple. Several eminent people, including

Berhampur MLA K Anil Kumar, former

MLAs Ramesh Chandra Chyau Patnaik

and Bikram Kumar Panda visited his

house to pay tribute to Sahu after he died.

medical college this year, which has re-

forward to donate the bodies after their

bodies, as the hospital can accommo-

date around 40 cadavers. Besides ca-

tering to the needs of MKCG, cadavers

have been given to other new medical

ceived 34 bodies in the last 12 years.

It was the fifth body donation to the

'We are happy as more people come

He said there was no problem storing

in three government medical colleges at

Berhampur, Cuttack and Burla during his

The body will be helpful to the students

Body of retired physician donated

to MKCG medical college for study

During the operation, the security forces came face to face with the Maoists and asked the rebels to surrender. However, they opened fire on the security forces, prompting retaliatory action. Hidma and three of his associates tried to flee towards Andhra Pradesh but were captured.

Police recovered one AK-47 rifle, 35 rounds of bullets, a magazine, 27 electronic detonators, 90 non-electric detonators, 2 kg gunpowder, Maoist literature, and other incriminating items from his possession.

SP Varma said Hidma joined the Maoist movement in 2007 at

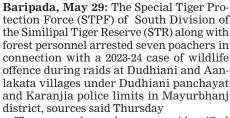
"Kunjam Hidma is also involved in many other anti-government and anti-national activities in Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh area, which will be verified during the investigation," the SP added.

Additionally, he is wanted in four cases registered at Boipariguda police station in Koraput district and three cases at Mathili police station in Malkangiri district.

The police also suspect his involvement in multiple encounters between Maoists and security forces.

Jeypore SDPO Partha Kashyap was also present at the press conference.

Similipal STPF nabs 7 absconding poachers



The accused poachers were identified as Raghunath Soy, Baburam Soy, Sukulal Hembram, Mangal Badra, Jayasingh Sirka, Kunaram Samad, and Bava Banara from the two villages. The accused poachers had been absconding for a long time. They were remanded to judicial custody Thursday.

Forest officials seized six bows, 11 arrows two snares, two catapults, an axe, two horns of a barking deer, and a pair of antlers of a spotted deer during the raid. The Forest department has deployed advanced AI-enabled cameras in the Similipal National Park for wildlife protection. The AI system can instantly capture and transmit photos of suspects to authorities, enabling quicker response and higher success in catching poachers and protecting wildlife.

Deputy Director, STR South Division, Samrat Gouda said the department had previously arrested 13 others in connection with the same case, bringing the total number of arrests to 20.

Man beheaded on suspicion of sorcery

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhawanipatna, May 29: A 65-year-old man was allegedly beheaded on suspicion of practising sorcery in Kalahandi district, police said Thursday.

The headless body of the victim, identified as Rupsingh Majhi of Deypur village under Kalampur police limits, was recovered from a village pond.

According to police, Rupsingh was allegedly killed May 18 night. His decapitated body was found in Baijhali Sagar, a large pond in the village, while a search is still underway for the missing head. Rupsingh's brother Durjan

Majhi lodged a missing complaint in Kalampur police station May 20, after the elderly man failed to return home for two days. Police discovered bloodstains

behind Deypur panchayat office May 23, raising suspicions of During investigation, it was

found that a local youth had left the village shortly after Rupsingh went missing. Police lat-



er apprehended the 21-year-old suspect from Goa.

During interrogation, the vouth confessed to murdering Rupsingh with an axe on the panchayat office premises claiming he believed the victim practised sorcery. He then disposed of the body in Baijhali Sagar, police said. 'When we brought the ac-

cused to the crime spot, he pointed out where he dumped the body. With the help of the ODRAF (Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force) and fire services, we recovered the headless body yesterday," Nilambar Jani, Inspector-in-Charge of Kalampur Police Station, said Thursday.

Search operations to locate the severed head continued Thursday despite heavy rain. The accused remains in custody, and further investigation is ongoing.

Sd./- GENERAL MANAGER.

Year ended

NAME OF WORK: REPAIR OF WAGONS DURING ROUTINE OVERHAULING AT ROH SHED PARADEEP & ATTENDING REPAIR OF Advertised Value : ₹ 9,20,89,949.19

<u>:MD :</u> ₹ 6,10,500/-, <u>Period of Comple</u> 2 Months.

Tender Closing Date and Time : At 1530 Hrs. of 20.06.2025.

eceived shall be ignored.

Complete information including e-Tender locuments and corrigendum is available n website www.ireps.gov.in Sr. Divl. Mechanical Engineer(Frt)

WATCO 🕮 OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER, **WATCO DIVISION-I, BHUBANESWAR,** Vanivihar Square, Bhubaneswar-751022, Odisha, India

Telefax: +91-674-2542821 E-mail - gmdivonewatco@gmail.com NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH

e-PROCUREMENT Invitation For Bids (IFB)

	GMWATCO-1/18/ 20	2:	5-26 Dt.23.05.2025
01	Name of the work	:	13 Nos (Thirteen nos works)
02	Estimate cost		Rs. 11.61 Lakhs to 44.81 Lakhs
03	Period of completion	:	12 (Twelve Months)
04	Class of contractor		D, C, B Class
05	Date & Time of availability of		From 11.00 A.M. of
	bid document in the portal		Dt.02.06.2025 to 5.00 P.M. of
	·		16.06.2025
06	Last date / time of receipt of	:	5.00 P.M. of 16.06.2025
	bids in the portal		
07	Last date & time of seeking	:	5.00 P.M. of 05.06.2025
	clarification		
80	Date & Time of opening of bids	:	At 12.30 P.M. of 17.06.2025
09	Name and address of the		General Manager
	Officer Inviting Bid		WATCO Division-I, BBSR
Fur	ther details can be seen from the	9 6	e-Procurement portal "https://ww
tend	dersorissa.gov.in"		

OIPR-13083/11/0011/2526 WATCO DIVISION-I, BHUBANESWAR

Quarter ended

SURYO FOODS & INDUSTRIES LIMITED Regd. Office: A-54/1 & A-55/1, Dinalipi Bhawan, Baramunda, Bhubaneswar-751003

Email: suryofoods.industries@gmail.com, web site: www.suryofoods.com,

CIN - L05004OR1989PLC002264

Extract of Audited Financial Results for the Quarter

and Year ended 31st March, 2025

who had served in three medical colleges in state, has been donated to the government-run-MKCG Medical College here. The body and eyes of the retired physician, Prafulla Chandra Sahu, were donated Wednesday to the medical college

Berhampur, May 29: The body of a

94-year-old retired professor of medicine,

authorities by his sons Lalatendu Sahu and Bibudhendu Sahu, in the presence of his relatives and several social activists. "As per his last wish, we decided to

college," Lalatendu Sahu said. Before donating the body, his eyes were

donate his eyes and body to the medical

donated to the medical college's eye de-भारत सरकार कारपोरेट कार्य मंत्रालय त्वरित कॉपोरिट समापन प्रसंस्करण केन्द्र (सी-पेस). आई.आई.सी.ए. बिल्डिंग, 7वीं मंजिल,

प्लाट P-6,7,8, से.-5,

आई.एम.टी. मानेसर

गडगाँव, हरियाणा – 122050

Email: roc.cpace@mca.gov.in



Government of India Ministry of Corporate Affairs Centre for Processing Accelerated Corporate Exit (C-PACE), IICA Building, 7th Floor, Plot P- 6, 7, 8, Sector-5, IMT Manesar, Gurgaon, Haryana - 122050 Email: roc.cpace@mca.gov.in

Form No. STK - 6

[Pursuant to sub-section (2) and sub-section (4) of section 248 of the Companies Act, 2013 and rule 7 of the Companies (Removal of Names of Companies from the Register of Companies) Rules, 2016] Public Notice: ROC/C-PACE/STK-2/248(2)/2025-26/467 Date: 20/05/2025

Reference: In the matter of striking off or removal of names of (6) companies in the state of Odisha under section 248 of the Companies Act, 2013 in respect of:

S. No.	Work Item	CIN	Company Name			
1	AB3951492	U55209OR2020PTC033263	BLUESTRAW FOODS PRIVATE LIMITED			
2	AB3810630	U74910OR2023PTC041810	WARRIORS GLOBAL SERVICES PRIVATE LIMITED			
3	AB3807858	U43123OD2023PTC042072	CRIMSON CREATION MARVELS PRIVATE LIMITED			
4	AB3739288	U52391OR1997PTC005083	ROURKELA MARKETINGS PRIVATE LIMITED			
5	AB3139278	U29309OR2021PTC037228	MAAKALI AGRI IMPLEMENTS PRIVATE LIMITED			
6	AB3123829	U45201OR2009PTC010891	GHAR BAHAR ESTATES PRIVATE LIMITED			
2. Notice is hereby given that the Registrar of Companies had received applications from the above-mentioned companies uni						
section 248(2) of the Companies Act, 2013 for removal of its/their name (s) from the register of companies either on the grou						

not carrying on any business or operation for a period of two immediately preceding financial years and has/have not made any application (s) within such period for obtaining the status of a dormant company under section 455 of the Companies Act, 2013 or the company(ies) have obtained the status of dormant company/subscribers to the memorandum have not paid the subscription which they had undertaken to pay at the time of incorporation of a company and a declaration to this effect has not been filed within one hundred and eighty days of its incorporation under subsection (1) of section 10A/ have not been carrying on any business or operations, as revealed after the physical verification carried out under sub-section (9) of section 12, but it/they do not ish to continue its/their registration as companies and have, therefore, requested for removal/strike off of its/their names fro the register of companies.

3. Accordingly, the Registrar of Companies proposes to remove or strike off the names of the above-mentioned companies fror

4. Any person objecting to the proposed removal or striking off name of the companies from the register of companies may sen

nis or her objection to the office address mentioned here above within thirty days from the date of publication of this notic

Irkan Tirkey **Assistant Registrar** CBC 07123/11/0215/2526 **Centre for Processing Accelerated Corporate Exit**

PUBLIC NOTICE

31.03.2025 31.12.2024 31.03.2024 31.03.2025 31.03.2024 **Particulars** (Audited) (UnAudited) (Audited) No. (Audited) (Audited) Total Income from operation (net) Other income (net) 2,058 6.313 Other Gains/(Losses Net Profit/(Loss) for the period (before Tax. 1,952 -79 1,538 2,339 14,114 Exceptional and Extraordinary items) Net Profit/(Loss) for the period before Tax. 1,952 -79 1,538 2,339 14,114 after Exceptional and Extraordinary items) Net Profit/(Loss) for the period after Tax, -79 2,100 -1,2622,487 (after Exceptional and Extraordinary items) Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and 2,100 -79 -1.2622.487 11,314 Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)] 39,600 Equity Share Capital (Face Value of Rs. 10/- each) 39,600 39,600 39,600 39,600 Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve) as shown in -65,079 -65,079 -67,241 -65,079 -67.241the Audited Balance Sheet of the previous year Earnings Per Share (of Rs. 10/- each) (for continuing and discontinued operations) -0.53 0.02 2.86 0.63 2.86 Basic: Diluted: -0.022.86 0.63 2.86

Note: The above financial results of the Company for the quarter and year ended 31st March, 2025 have been reviewed by the audit Committee and approved by the Board of Directors at the meeting held on 29th May, 2025. The above financial results have been prepared in accordance with Indian Accounting Standards (Ind AS) presribed under

section 133 of the companies Act, 2013 and other recognised accounting practices and policies to the extent applicable. The full format of the financial results of the Company for the Quarter and Year ended 31st March, 2025 are available at the Company's website http://www.suryofoods.com,and websites of all Stock Exchanges, where the Equity shares of the Company are listed.

For Suryo Foods & Industries Limited Place: Bhubaneswar Sd./- Aditya Dash Date: 29th May, 2025

(CEO, Director and Chairman of the Metting)

E-AUCTION OF PARKING STAND

Auction Catalogue No.: SDCM-KUR-PKNO

(2) Station & Location : Brahmapur-MIX (2)

Auction Start Date & Time: 12.06.2025 at 1100 hrs., Auction End Date & Time: 12.06.2025 at 1130 hrs. Note: Prospective bidders are advised to visi

information regarding this e-auction Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager PR-175/Q/25-26

EAST COAST RAILWAY

File No. DRM/Engg/KUR/25-20 E-Tender/21, Dt. 26.05.2025 (1) eTender-CenKUR-75-2025, Dtd.: 19.05.2025 DESCRIPTION : EXECUTION OF

COMPLETE TRACK RENEWAL (SECONDARY) AT BUDHAPANK YARD UNDER SENIOR SECTION ENGINEER (P.WAY) TALCHER OF KHURDA ROAD Approx. Cost of the Work: ₹ 49.60 Lakhs, <u>EMD :</u> ₹ 99,200/-

(2) eTender-CenKUR-74-2025, Dtd.: 19.05.2025 DESCRIPTION : EXECUTION OF P.WAY RELATED WORK FOR PROPOSED RAISING OF SPEED FROM 30 KMPH

TO 50 KMPH IN LOOP LINES FROM BUDHAPANK TO HINDOL ROAD OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION. Approx. Cost of the Work: ₹ 49.95 Lakhs, <u>EMD :</u> ₹ 99,900/-(Rs. In '000', except EPS)

(3) e-Tender-estatekur-73-25, Dtd.: 20.05.2025 DESCRIPTION: PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT TO OFFICES, TOILETS AND OTHER ALLIED WORKS OF RAIL

SADAN (ZONAL HEAD QUARTER BUILDING) AT CHANDRASEKHARPUR, BHUBANESWAR. Approx. Cost of the Work: ₹ 301.82 Lakhs, EMD : ₹ 3,00,900/-(4) e-Tender-NORTHKUR-76-2025, Dtd.: 21.05.202

CONSTRUCTION : PROPOSED
CONSTRUCTION OF LIMITED HEIGHT
SUBWAY (LHS) IN LIEU OF THE
EXISTING MANNED LEVEL CROSSING

NO. JD-01 AT RAILWAY KM. 147/44-148/2 BETWEEN DATR-TOMKA STATIONS OF Approx. Cost of the Work: ₹ 298.50 Lakhs, <u>EMD :</u> ₹ 2,99,300/ Completion Period: 06 (Six) Months (for Sl. No. 1), 10 (Ten) Months (for Sl. No. 2), 12 (Twelve) Months (for Sl. No. 3)

and 08 (Eight) Months (for SI. No. 4). Tender Closing Date and Time : At 1500 Hrs. of 11.06.2025 (for all the Tenders). No manual offers sent by Post / Courier/ Fax

No manual offers sent by 1957 Courter/ Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.

Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-Tender is available in website: www.ireps.gov.in

Note: The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 10 (Ten) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / corrigenda issued for this tender. The tenderers/bidders must have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate and nust be registered on IREPS Portal, Only egistered tenderer/ bidder can participa on e-tendering. Divisional Railway Manager (Engg)

PR-176/Q/25-26



There is no greater pride and glory than to be a perfect instrument of the Master.

SRI AUROBINDO



Kaushik Basu

While GDP has

role in modern

economics, its

limitations are

difficult to ignore.

Over time, it has

in itself, enabling

politicians to use

growth figures

as a convenient

distraction from

persistent social

and economic

fractures

become an end

increasingly

played a valuable

undoubtedly

The GDP Obsession

n mainstream economics, description is routinely treated as secondary to analysis. Labeling a work as "purely descriptive" conveys dismissiveness. Yet, as Nobel laureate economist Amartya Sen observed in a seminal 1980 paper, every act of description involves choices. Whether we are describing a historical event, an individual, or a country, what we choose to include and what we leave out can be critical. Description shapes perception, and perception, in turn, can profoundly influence behaviour.

Describing the state of a country's economy is a complicated task. In the past, scholars wrote lengthy volumes debating whether one country was doing better than another. But over time, a single measure has come to dominate the conversation: gross domestic product (GDP), which represents the value of all goods and services produced within a country in a given year. With some adjustments, it also approximates the population's total income. It is an astonishingly concise metric, often used as shorthand for economic well-being.

As Diane Coyle noted in her 2014 book on the history of GDP, its emergence marked a watershed moment in economic policymaking. Developed by Simon Kuznets in the early 1930s, GDP has brought much-needed rigor to policy debates. Politicians could no longer simply

point to tall buildings as evidence of progress (though many still do). Today, assessing a country's economic performance over time means tracking the growth of its GDP.

To be sure, there are other ways to assess national well-being, such as the United Nations Human Development Index and the World Bank's shared prosperity indicator. But when it comes to determining whether one economy is outperforming another, GDP (or GDP per capita) remains the default benchmark.

While GDP has undoubtedly played a valuable role in modern economics, its limitations are increasingly difficult to ignore. Over time, it has become an end in itself, enabling politicians to use growth figures as a convenient distraction from persistent social and economic fractures. Growing unease with GDP-centric policy thinking was powerfully articulated in UN Secretary-General António Guterres' 2021 report Our Common Agenda, which urged global policymakers to embrace a broader set of progress indicators.

As an economic indicator, GDP has three key weaknesses. First, by focusing solely on a country's total income, it can create the illusion of widespread prosperity, even when inequality is rising. GDP per capita can rise even as a majority becomes worse off. As Joseph E. Stiglitz put it in his 2010 book Freefall, "A larger pie does not mean everyone - or even most people - gets a larger slice." But most people may celebrate GDP growth nonetheless - much like they cheer their country's Olympic medal count without questioning who actually benefits.

This concern was highlighted by the Commission on the Measurement $\,$ of Economic Performance and Social Progress, which was established in 2008 by then-French President Nicolas Sarkozy and included Stiglitz, Sen, and other prominent economists. Its final report called for incorporating measures like income distribution and inequality into GDP

The second weakness of GDP is that its maximization often rewards activities that undermine democratic governance. Being super-rich, after all, involves more than just owning more cars, mansions, planes, and yachts. Extreme wealth – especially in the age of social media and AI – also means having a louder voice and disproportionate influence over how people think.

In traditional societies, when a feudal lord entered a village council meeting, ordinary people who may have been arguing and pleading for change just moments earlier would fall silent. That same dynamic is now playing out on a global scale. As wealth becomes concentrated in fewer hands, and as a handful of online platforms shape what billions of internet users see and hear, many are discovering that they are losing their voice – the most essential instrument of democracy.

Clearly, the time has come to develop new measures of national progress that do not strengthen the forces threatening democracy. As US Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis famously warned, "We can have democracy in this country, or we can have great wealth concentrated in the hands of a few, but we can't have both.'

Lastly, GDP can be inflated at the expense of future generations. We can and do boost GDP growth by engaging in activities that damage the environment and accelerate climate change, leaving our descendants with a scorched earth. Given this, merely acknowledging the urgency of climate action is no longer enough. To ensure a sustainable future, we must reform our most prominent measure of economic welfare so that sustainability is central to how we define prosperity

The writer, a former Chief Economist of the World Bank and Chief Economic Adviser to the Government of India, is Professor of Economics at Cornell University and a non-resident senior fellow at the Brookings Institution.

WISDOM CORNER

The snow goose need not bathe to make itself white. Neither need you do anything but be yourself.

When you are sorrowful look again in your heart, and you

shall see that in truth you are weeping for that which has been vour delight.

To practice five things under all circumstances constitutes perfect virtue; these five are gravity, generosity of soul, sincerity, earnestness, and kindness.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

sporting events.

- **1431:** Joan of Arc burned at the stake. Having led the French army in a momentous victory over England at Orléans during the Hundred Years' War, Joan of Arc was charged with heresy and witchcraft and, on this day in 1431, was burned at the
- **1806:** Andrew Jackson, who later served as president of the United States (1829– 37), fatally shot Charles Dickinson in a duel; during his life Jackson was involved in
- 1911: The first Indianapolis 500 is held. Ray Harroun won the first running of the 500-mile automobile race, which is today one of the world's most prestigious

FOCUS HIGHER EDUCATION

THE QUALITY PARADOX

education is a matter of concern everywhere in the world. The determination and maintenance of standards of teaching, examination, and research in universities in India are the responsibility of the University Grants Commission (UGC), which established the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) in 1994 to fulfil its role. In ad dition, the National Board of Accreditation and the All India Council for Technical Education assess the quality of education in technical areas. The Ministry of Education (MOE) also releases an annual ranking of higher education institutions using the national institutional ranking framework (NIRF).

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP2020) promises a "light but tight" higher education system regulated by a single agency. Recognising the role of multiple agencies in quality assessment, the MOE constituted a committee in 2022 to strengthen the accreditation process and develop a roadmap to align the different approaches to the vision of NEP2020. While the committee's recommendations are being implemented, the efficacy and suitability of the methods and criteria used by NAAC and NIRF for assessment and ranking have been questioned. Quality assurance is a means to maintain the country's higher education standard. However, the current practice of quality assurance needs a lot of rethinking. The government plays a critical role in providing equitable access to quality higher education for 'public good'. Therefore, policymakers must focus on the key issues ensuring the system's quality. There are paradoxes in the current quality assurance and ranking system, which need to be carefully addressed.

First, assessment, accredita-



Many quality universities around the world are now mandating the training of teachers in higher education to ensure quality and innovations in the scholarship of teaching and learning

tion, and rankings are concepts often used interchangeably in the discourse. We assess the quality to accredit an educational institution or a programme of study, and using the resultant score, a group of institutions is ranked to provide a list. International ranking methods. especially the popular ones worldwide, apply specific criteria irrelevant to the Indian context. Thus, the MOE started its ranking system, Global rankings provide a benchmark for our institutions to compare with similar institutions worldwide. Most of the time, such rankings are used for marketing and recruiting students. But, in the Indian context, what problem does rankings solve? Indian students have limited choices regarding which institution to attend based on their ranking.

Second, what does the NIRF ranking, or NAAC score demonstrate to the public or the employer? Are all the students passing out of a quality-assessed institution of the same quality? The quality assessment only provides information that the institution has met certain operating standards, but the outcome

may not be uniform throughout the institution. Are the quality criteria good enough to ensure progressive and allround development of learners, knowledge frontiers of the disciplines, and the society?

Third, the criteria for assessment are the same for all the institutions that volunteer to be assessed. Interestingly, the funding of these institutions is not even similar. Most public universities depend on government funding, which is not based on specific criteria, such as the number of students or programmes offered. With funding disparity, quality also differs among these institutions. While the intention is not comparing institutions in the quality assessment of NAAC, unlike the NIRF, the scoring automatically leads to comparison. The new binary system of accreditation addresses this issue.

Fourth, the faculty plays a critical role in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. Many public universities face the challenge of filling the vacant teaching posts. While thousands of teach ing posts remain vacant, is it fair to discuss the quality and ranking of these universities? While

recruitment of teachers is more important, our focus must also be on pedagogical innovations in teaching. A teacher at the school level needs specific pre-service training to be eligible to teach. In contrast, a university teacher requires no pre-service training to teach adult learners. Many quality universities around the world are now mandating the training of teachers in higher education to ensure quality and innovations in the scholarship of teaching and learning. In India, we are only focusing on short-term in-service training. Quality teaching and learning will require quality training of teachers.

Fifth, who is assuring the quality? In a society with poor values, ethics, and integrity, any system could be manipulated or tweaked to benefit some people. A data-dependent quality assurance system (currently being planned) will also require human intervention, and therefore, engaging people with high integrity in the quality assurance processes and providing ethics training for the peer team members becomes important. People engaged in the entire process of quality assurance must be highly trained, like auditors in the financial system.

Quality higher education in the Indian context also includes equity and inclusion. Our objective is not to create an elite system of quality, but we need a quality system to "enable personal accomplishment and enlightenment, constructive public engagement, and productive contribution to the society," as envisioned in NEP2020. Reflection on the internal incongruity present in the current system will lead to improved quality assurance system.

The writer is Education Specialist at the Commonwealth of Learning, Canada. Views expressed are personal.

SPECTRUM SOCIETY

Sanjaya Mishra

STUDENTS

CHOICES

WHICH

ON THEIR

RANKING

REGARDING

HAVE LIMITED

INSTITUTION TO

ATTEND BASED

INDIAN

Rekindling the flame of student revolt



Bhabani Shankar Nayak

THERE IS NO EXAMPLE OF A SUCCESSFUL MOVEMENT IN HISTORY THAT DID NOT INVOLVE STUDENT PARTICIPATION

TO THE EDITOR

are most welcome to contribute letters

requested to send their contact

address/email ID. They may also send in

their valuable comments, opinion and

suggestions, preferably by email, to:

OrissaPOST

B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Readers of Orissa Post

(100 words), articles and

words). Contributors are

numbers and full postal

columns (between 600-1000

tudents have always been at the forefront of struggles—from resisting feudalism to opposing colonialism, apartheid, Zionism, capitalism, and imperialism. From anti-war protests to movements against gender, racial, and sexual discrimination, students have served as the moral conscience of society. Civil rights movement is another chapter in the glorious history of student movements and their participation in social transformation. There is no example of a successful movement in history that did not involve student participation. Student movements not only

challenge the status quo and offer transformative alternatives. but they also play a vital role in defending liberal, secular, and constitutional democraciesnow facing growing threats worldwide. Students have long been seen as persistent foes of the governing classes. Students continue to confront new forms of oppression in their everyday lives, witnessing and experiencing the injustices perpetuated by illiberal forces in society. By rekindling the revolutionary spirit rooted in the long living history of radical student activism based on progressive values, students persist in their struggle to achieve egalitarian justice. Therefore, there are

various forms of attacks on students, staff, and universities in America, Britain, India, Israel, and many other parts of the world. These attacks are not new. Ruling classes have always feared emancipatory knowledge; hence, they attempt to control curricula, campuses. and classrooms to create a sanitised educational system that aligns with the interests of both ruling and non-ruling elites, as well as their hegemonic capitalist and imperialist structures that govern people and the planet without challenge.

These forces aim to cultivate a compliant culture in which questioning authority is criminalised in the name of national interests. These national interests are not working-class interests but the interests of the capitalist classes. There is nothing novel about this assault on students, staff, universities, and other institutions of higher learning. From medieval feudal powers to modern capitalist and imperialist regimes, centers of learning have consistently been viewed as threats to hegemonic rule.

As a result, strategies such as privatisation, commercialisation, depoliticisation, and, ultimately, direct physical and financial assaults on students and academic institutions are employed to undermine social,

economic, and political progress toward peace, prosperity, equality, justice, liberty, and fraternity. These strategies erode liberal and progressive values, undermine the processes of deepening of democracy and citizenship rights by militarising minds under the banners of nationalism, religion, and regionalism.

Despite the ruling classes'

various strategies and persistent efforts to undermine reason, science, and secular, liberal, and democratic values. students continue to uphold and celebrate these ideals. Student radicalism endures across generations, thriving within student communities as a force for resistance and renewal. Both ruling and non-ruling classes have failed to domesticate students and extinguish the progressive values that persist within student communities.

Therefore, governing classes worldwide today use security forces to control students and employ government policies and administrative processes to throttle the independence of universities and other institutions of higher learning. The present condition and future trajectories of students are intrinsically linked to the future of our society. Therefore, all democratic, liberal, and progressive forces must stand in solidarity

with students who are currently facing the onslaught of ruling classes across the globe.

As the ruling classes have shaped the nature and character of educational systems and processes based on a politics of control and dominance—aimed at producing a compliant culture and workforce to uphold their own interests-it becomes imperative for students and staff of universities and institutions of higher learning to define their own politics of knowledge production and dissemination.

Diverse, democratic, decolonial, and radical knowledge traditions—rooted in science, reason, and secularism—are essential for guiding the production and dissemination of knowledge that not only emancipates people from poverty but also transforms the exploitative conditions that give rise to poverty and other forms of marginalisation. Let curricula, classrooms, and campuses become sites of struggle for democracy, peace, and egalitarian prosperity. History is only the witness but also documents to celebrate the victories of student movements and sacrifice of students in all its glorious pages

The writer teaches at the London Metropolitan University.

Bangladesh unrest

Sir, This refers to "Bangla power struggle," Orissa Post, May 28. Bangladesh stands at a critical juncture following the ousting of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in August 2024. The power vacuum has led to a complex struggle among the interim government led by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus, the military, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party under Khaleda Zia, and emerging political forces. The interim administration, formed after student-led protests known as the July Revolution, faces mounting pressure to hold elections. While Yunus has proposed elections by June 2026, the BNP demands polls by December 2025, and the military has expressed concerns over the slow pace of reforms. The recent suspension of the Awami League's registration has further complicated the political landscape. Khaleda Zia's return to Bangladesh has added to the tension, with her presence intensifying calls for a swift electoral process. The National Citizen Party, formed by student activists, is positioning itself as a new political force, aiming to challenge the traditional dominance of the BNP and Awami League. As Bangladesh navigates this intricate political terrain, the risk of descending into instability reminiscent of Pakistan's history looms large. N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Police encounters

Sir, The Supreme Court asked the Assam Human Rights Commission (AHRC) to inquire into allegations of fake police encounters in the state for advancing it to its logical conclusion after a petitioner pointed 171 such incidents. Deciding a PIL, after minutely scanning the data placed before it by the petitioner, prima facie it seems that barring a few cases, it is difficult to infer that there has been a procedural breakdown or the PUCL guidelines were flagrantly violated. The records furnished by the state themselves indicate that some instances may warrant further evaluation to ascertain whether the guidelines laid down in PUCL have been meticulously complied with in both letter and spirit. The Supreme Court underlined the importance of the human rights commissions in protecting vulnerable groups, ensuring accountability, and strengthening institutional mechanisms for enforcing human rights.

Jayanthy Subramaniam, MUMBAI



TWO STATES





Goa to boost monsoon tourism



The southwest monsoon has already hit the coastal state, shutting down its pristine beaches for swimming, while opening up the *hinterlands for adventure*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Panaji, May 29: The Goa government is planning to a give push to monsoon tourism by highlighting various festivals held during the rainy season and other popular activities for visitors in the coastal state, minister Rohan Khaunte has said.

Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant and Tourism Minister Khaunte recently held a series of meetings with stakeholders, including hoteliers and airline representatives, to chalk out a strategy for promoting tourism during the monsoon season.

The southwest monsoon has already hit the coastal state, shutting down its pristine beaches for swimming, while opening up the hinterlands for adventure.

Goa witnessed a 10 per cent rise in tourist footfall during the first three months in 2025 compared to the same period last calendar year, but the terror attack in Pahalgam (in Jammu and Kashmir)

changed things for the indus-

try, Khaunte told PTI Videos.

The tourism industry witnessed a slump in the footfall after the April 22 terror attack and the impact continued this month, he said. With things normalising in the country after the successful Operation Sindoor, the tourism industry is working to promote itself as "safe destination," the minister said.

During the calendar year 2024, the coastal state received 1.04 crore visitors -- 99.41 lakh domestic tourists and 4.67 lakh foreigners, as per the tourism department's data.

The Goa government led by CM Sawant, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has been working on promoting the state as a tourist destination during the monsoon season, Khaunte said.

While fighting back competition from markets like Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Vietnam, the state is positioning itself as a preferred destination for vacations during the monsoon season, he said.

The state has been promoting various traditional festivals that are celebrated in monsoons, including mud festival (Chikhal Kalo), Sao Joao, Bondera, Sangod and others, which are tour-

ist attractions, the minister said. Hoteliers and airlines have also been asked to rework their rates to ensure Goa becomes an affordable destination, he said.

The state receives around 100 domestic flights everyday, Travel and Tourism Association of Goa (TTAG) president Jack Ajit Sukhija said.

As Goa is close to metro cities like Mumbai and Bengaluru, domestic tourists have been arriving in the state on a regular basis."So the next question comes after this is, what can they do in the monsoon?" Sukhija said.

Goa is famous for its beaches, but they are shut for swimming during the monsoon. "The night life is also less during this time," he said. This time around, it was decided that the industry will promote its hinterland and life beyond beaches in a big way, Sukhija said.

The industry will promote the monsoon festivals which are part of the coastal state's culture, he said.

"There are also other experiences which become unique, like visit to waterfalls, sanctuaries and others," he added.

IHCL Goa's senior vice pres ident Ranjit Phillipose said it is a great time to visit the state during monsoon. "There is another side of Goa which is serene and very close to nature which is absolutely gorgeous," he said. Sitting on the beach even in rains, watching the showers, clouds roll over the ocean, is something magical, he said.

Phillipose said he believes Goa is a 365-day holiday destination and during the monsoon period they promote various festivals and activities to attract tourists.

Surat gears up amid unseasonal rains

OVER 1,500 DILAPIDATED BUILDINGS AWAIT REPAIRS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Surat, May 29: As unseasonal rains lash Surat and the monsoon season inches closer, the municipal administration has begun scrambling to address a longstanding urban hazard dilapidated buildings

With just weeks to go before the rains intensify, the Surat Municipal Corporation (SMC) has launched a renewed crackdown on structurally unsafe properties, particularly in the vulnerable Limbayat zone.

Every year, the SMC surveys the city's aging infrastructure in anticipation of the monsoon. Notices are issued to property owners, instructing them to either carry out repairs or demolish hazardous structures.

This year is no exception but with the premature rains already making an appearance, the urgency has increased.

According to SMC data, 1,563 properties across the city remain pending for repair, while 91 have been declared dangerously dilapidated, posing a serious risk to residents and neighbouring structures.

In a recent operation in Kumbhariya village, located in the Limbayat zone, a dangerous residential building was voluntarily demolished after discussions with the owners.

The demolition was part of a targeted effort to reduce potential casualties during the monsoon. In another case, officials removed a precarious balcony from a building in Jalaram Nagar, Dindoli, highlighting the administration's piecemeal but necessary interventions.

Officials say more such dem-



GUJARAT BRACES FOR WEEK-LONG RAINFALL

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a detailed seven-day weather forecast for Gujarat, Diu, Daman, and Dadra & Nagar Haveli, warning of light to moderate rainfall in multiple regions, with isolated heavy showers expected in southern Gujarat and parts of Saurashtra. The forecast highlights changing weather patterns as the monsoon inches closer to the state. The IMD has flagged the next 24 hours as potentially intense, especially for the districts of Narmada, Bharuch, Surat, Dang, Naysari, Valsad, Tapi, and Daman, as well as the Saurashtra districts of Amreli and Bhaynagar, where heavy rainfall is likely to occur. Authorities in these regions have been advised to stay alert for possible waterlogging and localized flooding in low-lying areas. Despite the expected rains, the IMD has forecast that maximum temperatures across the region will remain largely stable over the coming week, with no significant shifts in mercury levels anticipated. Starting from May 29, light to moderate rain or thundershowers are expected at scattered locations across Gujarat's districts. The weather activity will extend to May 30, covering a broad swathe of districts including Vadodara, Chhota Udepur, Narmada, Bharuch, Surat, Dang, Navsari, Valsad, Tapi, and the union territories of Daman and Dadra & Dadra & Daman and Dadra & Dadra Haveli. Rain is also likely in Panchmahal, Dahod, Mahisagar, Amreli, Bhavnagar, Gir Somnath, and Diu.

olitions and safety measures are on the cards as they race against time — and the weath er — to minimise urban risk in one of Gujarat's most floodprone cities.

Vadodara faces a similar predicament, with 1,012 buildings deemed structurally unsound. particularly in the Char Darwaja area. Residents have expressed fears of collapses, yet

municipal action has been limited, leaving many structures standing despite the risks.

In Ahmedabad, the situation is compounded by the deterioration of government-constructed housing for Economically Weaker Sections.

Notably, 1,664 houses in Vatva were demolished after being unoccupied for over a decade and found to be structurally unsafe.

Nearly half of the 18,928 units constructed under the Rajiv Gandhi Housing Scheme have exhibited structural issues over the past 12 years.

Rural areas are not exempt from this crisis and data indicate that 2,433 gram panchayats in Gujarat either lack buildings or have structures in a dilapidated condition.

8,326 gram panchayats

in Gujarat to go to polls

Ahmedabad, May 29: As ma-

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

REEL TO REAL

'Drishyam'-style plot unfolds in Gujarat

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patan, May 29: Loosely drawing on a plot from crime thriller "Drishyam", a married woman along with her paramour allegedly killed a middle-aged man and dressed the corpse with her clothes before setting it on fire to fake her own death in Gujarat's Patan district, police said Wednesday.

The half-burnt body of the man from Jakhotra village in Santalpur taluka was recovered Tuesday night, following which the police nabbed Geeta Ahir (22) and her lover Bharat Ahir (21) in the early hours of Wednesday from Palanpur railway station, an official said.

The accused woman told the investigators she hatched a conspiracy to fake her own death after getting inspired by "Drishyam" film, he said.

Addressing a press conference, Patan Superintendent of Police (SP) V K Nayi said, "Geeta, who lives with her husband at Jakhotra, came up with this plan and convinced her lover



to arrange a dead body so that they can fake her death and live together after fleeing from

On Tuesday night, Geeta left her house when everyone was asleep. Later, when her husband and other family members were searching for her, they found a half-burnt body lying near a pond on the outskirts of the village. Navi said.

"Since Geeta's 'ghagra' (long traditional skirt) and her anklets were found on the body, her kin initially thought it was Geeta's body. However, after bringing the body home, they found the deceased was a man. After being informed about it, we registered a case of murder

around Earth but you

have also made a place in

the heart of every Indian.

today, I feel as if a father is

meeting his two daughters

Her family has been her

"spine" throughout her life

as she made unconventional

choices, she said, adding, "I

After meeting you both

RAJNATH SINGH | DEFENCE MINISTER

and launched a probe," the SP

The deceased was later identified as 56-year-old Harjibhai Solanki, who used to live a nomadic life at neighbouring Vauva village in Santalpur taluka, according to Nayi. After coming to know that

Geeta was in love with Bharat and both might flee to Rajasthan by train, a police team rushed to Palanpur station, where they were found waiting for a train to travel to the adjoining state, the SP said.

During subsequent interrogation, they admitted to committing the horrific crime, said the police officer.

'Ĝeeta told us that since she had seen "Drishyam" as well as "Drishvam 2" movies, she came up with this plan to fake her death so that she can spend the rest of her life with Bharat, who agreed to act as per her plan and started searching for a man or a woman for murder. On May 26, he spotted Solanki and offered him a lift on his motorcycle," the SP said.

ny as 8,326 gram (village) panchayats across Gujarat would go to polls on June 22, with 27 per cent OBC reservation. to elect sarpanches as well as panchayat members, the State Election Commission (SEC) an-

nounced Wednesday. Notably, the elections to the lowest level of local government administration, usually fought on non-party basis, are being held after a delay of nearly two years, mainly due to the issues surrounding OBC (Other Backward Classes) reservation.

With the announcement of election schedule, which fixed June 25 as the counting date the model code of conduct has

come into force in Gujarat. Gram panchayat elections on such a big scale are being held in Gujarat for the first time after the state government in 2023 announced to give a 27 per cent reservation to OBCs in local bodies like panchavats municipalities and civic corpo rations on the basis of Zaver

Commission's report. Of these 8,326 gram panchayats, 4,688 are going for general or mid-term elections, while bypolls would be held in 3,638

Candidates in panchayat elections stand individually and not on party tickets though they may be affiliated to politi

cal outfits otherwise. While polling will be held between 7 am and 6 pm on June 22, counting of votes will be undertaken on June 25. The last date to file nominations is

The elections will be conducted using ballot papers and voters will be given the option of NOTA (None Of The Above).

son said. Having traversed 3,896 nauvillage councils, the SEC said in a release in Gandhinagar.

June 9, while the same for with drawal of candidature is June 11, said the release.

it said.



Indian Navy officers return after sailing around globe You have not just gone INSV Tarini made her first

Panaji, May 29: "The world of the sea is the same planet but a whole different world," said Lt Cdr Roopa A of the Indian Navy Thursday as she and her partner Lt Cdr Dilna K returned to Goa after successfully circumnavigating the globe in a sailing boat.

The duo, with back-up support from the Navy, covered more than 25,600 nautical miles in 238 days in INSV Tarini, their sailing boat. It was the first circumnavigation of the globe in a sailing vessel by Indian women in `double-handed' mode, said a Navy spokes-

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh welcomed the two intrepid women and their vessel upon the completion of the eightmonth 'Navika Sagar Parikrama II (NSP II)' expedition at Mormugao Port Authority in Vasco. Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Dinesh Tripathi, who had flagged off the expedition on October 2 last year, was also

The whole country was proud of the achievement of the wo women officers, Singh said.

Excavators being used to demolish illegal residential structures during an anti-encroachment drive by the

Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) at Bapunagar area, in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, Thursday

Women have played a pivotal role in the Indian Defence system since gaining entry, and women officers played an important role in aerial attacks on Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir during Operation Sindoor, he

Admiral Tripathi said Navika Sagar Parikrama II was a historic milestone for the Navy. The defence minister's interaction with the crew during the expedition gave them moral support, he added.

Speaking on the occasion, Lt Cdr Dilna K said, "Yes, we

"On October 2, we left Goa with lot of hope and courage... Today, we stand here alive and strong together," she said.

They flew the national flag and the Indian Navy flag across the globe, she said, adding, "Wherever we landed, we were cheered. We proudly represented India in this journey



of lifetime."

The expedition was a promise she had made to her father. Dilna said, adding, "He is no more with me, but I felt his presence throughout the journey. My mother and my husband held me really strong. And vou let me fly. I wish everyone get a husband like mine.'

Talking about her experienc-

es, Lt Cdr Roopa A said she felt like she lived all her seven lives in these eight months.

"The world of the sea is the same planet but whole different world," she said.

Referring to her partner Dilna, Roopa said, "In this voyage I found a friend in you and a friend in myself whom I can trust lifelong.'

dedicate this journey to you all (family) but this is not going to be my last. There was no end to the earth or challenges in this iournev. The journey showed the

world what Indian women are made of, Roopa said, adding that there was a point during the journey when they realised "this is an Indian dream which we were breathing and living.'

The expedition was flagged off October 2, 2024 by Admiral Tripathi from the Boat pool of INS Mandovi in Goa.

After 39 days of non-stop voyage across the Indian Ocean,

land-fall at Fremantle, Australia, November 9, the Navy spokesperson said. "In their second stop, having

traversed 4,450 nautical miles after crossing the Great Australian Bight and the Tasman Sea, they arrived at Lyttelton, the port of Christchurch, New Zealand, on December 22, 2024, the spokesperson said.

Subsequently, marking the "most demanding and dramatic leg" of the expedition, the crew arrived at Port Stanley on February 18, 2025. "One of the most significant

achievement of this leg was that Tarini became the first sail ship to cross Point Nemo in South Pacific, often referred to as the Oceanic Pole of inaccessibility, on January 30," the spokesper-

tical miles and crossing the Prime Meridian and braving the 'Roaring Forties', the Tarini reached Cape Town, South Africa March 31, 2025, and then started its homeward journey.

national



Instead of controlling the BJP, which is trying to loot **Telangana resources, my opinion** is that attempts are being made to handover BRS to the BJP. Because when I was in prison, the same proposal was brought to me. I firmly said no. BRS is Sriram Raksha for the Telangana party

SC REJECTS PLEA OF CHRISTIAN MICHEL

The Supreme Court Thursday dismissed a plea filed by British national Christian Michel James, who had challenged the Delhi High Court's order directing him to furnish details of the address where he intended to reside post-release on bail in the ₹3,600-crore AgustaWestland money laundering case





the 4-lane Badvel-Nellore Corridor by the **Union Cabinet**

forward in our state's growth N CHANDRABABU NAIDU AP CM

Nineteen patients are admitted to hospitals and the remaining are receiving treatment at their homes. But COVID-19 has not reached the point where people need to worry

Illegal colonies mushroomed across Punjab, leaving residents without basic amenities like sewage, electricity or potable

REKHA GUPTA I DELHI CM



BHAGWANT MANN | PUNJAB CM

SHORT **TAKES**

Man kills wife with sickle, ends own life

Morena (MP): A man allegedly killed his wife by attacking her with a sickle before ending his own life by consuming poison in Morena district of Madhya Pradesh, police said Thursday. The incident took place Wednesday in Khumanpura village under Kailaras police station area, about 47 km from the district headquarters, they said.

Police, civic bodies get robotic boats

Palghar: The District Disaster Management Authority has provided 10 robotic boats to police and civic bodies for deployment at key locations in Maharashtra's Palghar. making use of technology to save people, an official said Thursday. These boats costing Rs 1.66 crore, will be a boon to save people from drowning, district disaster management cell chief Vivekanand Kadam said.

India, EU to carry out mega naval exercise

New Delhi: India and the European Union (EU) will conduct a joint naval exercise in the Indian Ocean next month in line with their growing defence and strategic cooperation. The threeday joint exercise, beginning Sunday, will involve Indian Navy warships and two frigates, one from Italy and another from Spain, deployed with the European Union Naval Force as part of Operation Atalanta. "The joint exercise will focus on advanced counter-piracy operations, interoperability, tactical manoeuvres, and enhanced communication protocols, reflecting the growing maritime security cooperation between the two sides," the EU said Thursday.

Kejriwal moves court

New Delhi: Former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, an accused in the Delhi excise policy case, moved court Thursday seeking a no objection certificate (NOC) for the renewal of his passport. Special Judge Dig Vinay Singh issued notice to Enforcement Directorate (ED) and Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and sought their replies by

June 4, the next date of hearing.

Teen ends life

Thane: A 16-year-old girl allegedly committed suicide at her home in Maharashtra's Thane district after her family opposed her relationship with a male cousin, police said Thursday. The incident took place at Khambalpada in Dombivli area Tuesday, an official from Tilak Nagar police

Ceasefire: India rejects US' claim

India's fresh assertion came in the wake of US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick telling a New York court that India and Pakistan reached a "tenuous ceasefire" only after President Donald **Trump offered both nations trading access with the US to avert a "full-scale war"**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 29: India Thursday said the issue of trade did not come up in its discussions with the US during the clashes between the Indian and Pakistani militaries, virtually rejecting Washington's repeated claims that its offer of trade to the two sides stopped the conflict.

New Delhi's fresh assertion came in the wake of US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick telling a New York court that India and Pakistan reached a "tenuous ceasefire" only after President Donald Trump offered both nations trading access with the US to avert a "full-scale war.' In the last few weeks, Trump

has also repeatedly claimed that he threatened India and Pakistan that the US will stop trade with the two nations if they don't stop the conflict.

India has been consistently maintaining that the understanding on cessation of hostilities with Pakistan was reached following direct talks between the Directors General of Military Operations (DGMOs) of the two militaries. "From the time Operation Sindoor commenced on May 7 till the understanding on cessation of firing and mili-



tary action was reached on May 10, there were conversations between Indian and the US leaders on the evolving military situation," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

"The issue of trade or tariff did not come up in any of those discussions," he said at his weekly media briefing.

Jaiswal was answering questions on the Trump administration's submission at the New York court. "The external affairs minister has also made it clear that the cessation of firing was decided upon in direct con-

tacts between the DGMOs of India and Pakistan," Jaiswal said.

Lutnick made the submission in the the Court of International Trade last week, while opposing any attempt to restrain President Trump from using emergency powers to impose tariffs.

The top official said the president's power to impose tariffs is crucial to his ability to conduct real-world diplomacy.

"For example, India and Pakistan - two nuclear powers engaged in combat operations just 13 days ago - reached a tenuous ceasefire on May 10. This ceasefire was only achieved after President Trump interceded and offered both nations trading access with the United States to avert a full-scale war," Lutnick said in the submission.

'An adverse ruling that constrains presidential power in this case could lead India and Pakistan to question the validity of President Trump's offer, threatening the security of an entire region, and the lives of millions," he said.

The US Court of International Trade on Wednesday ruled that a majority of Trump's tariff policies are illegal and ordered a stay on them. US Vice President JD Vance had a phone conversation with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on May 9 that focused on ways to de-escalate the India-Pakistan tensions.

After India launched Operation Sindoor May 7 in retaliation for the Pahalgam attack, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar too held a phone conversation with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and many of his counterparts from across the world.

It is learnt that after Operation Sindoor was launched, India told the US that it would respond to Pakistan's military

Congress claims 'Emergency Session'

New Delhi, May 29: The Congress Thursday claimed that a special session of Parliament is being considered for June 25-26 to mark the 50th anniversary of the Emergency, and said this will be yet another classic exercise in "diversion and distraction" from real and more urgent issues by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Congress general secretary incharge communications Jairam Ramesh said that at a time when the BJP should be targeting Pakistan and terrorists, it is only interested in attacking the Congress. Ramesh said that from the night of April 22nd itself, the Indian National Congress has been calling for an all-party meeting on the Pahalgam terror attack and its fallout to be chaired by the PM himself.

That has yet to take place, he said. "On May 10th, both the LoP in the Lok Sabha and the LoP in the Rajya Sabha wrote to the PM requesting for a special session of Parliament to be convened and to demonstrate the nation's collective resolve through a resolution. The PM has NOT accepted that suggestion as well," Ramesh said in a post on X. "Now it appears that a special session of Parliament is being considered for June 25-26 to mark the 50th anniversary of the Emergency, Ramesh claimed. There was no immediate response from the



government or the BJP. The Congress leader said, "This will be yet another classic exercise in diversion and distraction from real and more urgent issues by the PM - the man who has placed the nation under an undeclared Emergency for 11 years and the man who refuses to answer why the Pahalgam terrorists are still absconding. why he allowed President Trump to broker a ceasefire, and why he gave a clean chit to China publicly June 19th, 2020?

speaking PTI, Ramesh said instead of talking about the present is sues and challenges, they want to discuss what happened 50 years ago. He also reiterat ed the demand that a special session be called and the resolution of February 1994 on Pakistan-occupied Kashmir be reiterated and updated in view of India and Pakistan both becoming nuclear powers and new challenges having emerged, especially the "jugalbandi" that has been formed between Pa kistan and China.

INSOLVENCY AND BANKRUPTCY CODE

Parl panel flags 'ambiguities'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 29: A parliamentary committee Thursday flagged "ambiguities" in the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), with sources saving that the government appeared to be considering amendments in the law to address existing

Sources said the recent Supreme Court judgment quashing JSW Steel's resolution plan for Bhushan Power and Steel Ltd (BPSL) also came up in the deliberations of the Standing Committee on Finance headed by seasoned BJP MP Bhartruhari Mahtab, a order which has trig gered a debate over the efficacy of the insolvency mechanism.

The apex court Monday put a status quo on BPSL's liquidation, which it had ordered in its last month verdict, on a plea by JSW Steel as the company argued that the liquidation would be detrimental to it, lenders, and employees.

Corporate Affairs secretary and representatives of several banks appeared before the committee on Thursday as its members discussed the agenda of the "review of working of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code and Emerging Issues". Sources said some committee

members flagged deficiencies like delay in resolution process. and it was noted that the previous panel, headed by Jayant Sinha, in its report had also highlighted certain gaps in the law and recommended some changes. The government had accommodated some of the suggestions in an earlier amendment of the law. "We believe that the government is very much in the thick of things as far as addressing the issues related to the IBC are concerned. We got the view that there may be more amendments in the offing," a source said. He said the IBC in many cases has served the company in distress and the creditors well.

"Any law is a dynamic process. It evolves with time," he said, adding that the IBC was enacted in 2016 and has proved helpful in several cases.





Children play football in a wet field amid rainfall, in Nadia, West Bengal

Govt doc in audio clip urges killing Cov patient; FIR filed

Latur, May 29: Police have registered an FIR against a senior doctor of a government hospital in Maharashtra's Latur district for allegedly instructing a colleague to "kill" a COVID-19 patient during the pandemic in 2021, officials said . Thursdav.

An audio clip recently surfaced on social media of the purported conversation between the accused, Dr Shashikant Desh-

pande, who was then additional district surgeon at the Udgir Government Hospital in Latur, and Dr Shashikant Dange, who was posted at a COVID-19 care centre. The clip, now widely circulated on social media, is purportedly of the time during the COVID-19 crisis peak in 2021 when hospitals were crowded with patients and resources were scarce.

The patient, Kausar Fatima, wife of Dayami Ajimoddin Gaussoddin (53), had later recovered from the disease

Princeton-based ETS, which conducts

enhancements in the exam, some of

which will be implemented from May

30, 2025, and the remaining from 2026

·According to officials, ETS will imple-

the reading and listening sections of the TOEFL iBT from 2026

ment a multi-stage adaptive design for

exams like TOEFL and GRE, has

In the conversation, Dr Deshpande is allegedly heard saying: Don't allow anyone to go inside, just kill that Dayami woman.' To this, Dr Dange responds cautiously, noting that oxygen support had already been reduced.

Based on a complaint by Gaussoddin, the Udgir city police registered a case against Deshpande May 24 under legal provisions for deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings and other offences

Several Congress Muslim leaders quit in Dakshina Kannada

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mangalore (Karnataka), May 29: In a dramatic turn of events, several Muslim leaders of the Congress party in Dakshina Kannada district announced their resignation from party posts during an emergen cy meeting held at Shadi Mahal in Bolar Thursday.

The move comes in protest against the deteriorating law and order situation in the dis trict and what they allege is the government's failure to protect minorities. The decision comes in the wake of the killing of a 32-year-old man in Bantwal ta luk. The victim, Abdul Rahiman. and his 29 year-old co-worker Kalandar Shafi, were unload ing gravel when two motorcy cle-borne youth made a murderous assault on them with a sword Tuesday. While Rahiman succumbed to his injuries, Shafi is undergoing treatment. Rahi man's murder comes close on the heels of Hindu activist Suhas Shetty's killing May 1 in the communally sensitive Dakshina

Prominent among those who resigned were MS Mohammad, State General Secretary of the Minority Cell, and K Abdul Rauf, District Vice-President. The res ignations were declared from the stage itself. The leaders accused the state's Home Department of failing to curb a spate of murders in the region and expressed dissatisfaction over what they described as the continued mar ginalisation of Muslims in

Kannada district.

ETS to revamp TOEFL with adaptive testing, AI ID verification

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 29: From 2026, English language test TOEFL will be offered as a personalised test which will adjust in real time based on how a student performs and will feature AI-assisted identity verification, according to the Educational Testing Service (ETS).

Princeton-based ETS, which conducts exams like TOEFL and GRE, has announced a series of changes and enhancements in the exam, some of which will be implemented from May 30, 2025, and the re-

maining from 2026

will implement a multi-stage adaptive design for the reading and listening sections of the TOEFL iBT from 2026.

"This means the test will adjust in real time based on how a student performs. Additionally, traditional content will be supplemented with modern, equitable topics. The tailored test will better reflect how students use English in real academic settings, like group discussions and project work.'

"The test will use content that is relevant, accessible and carefully reviewed to reduce cultural bias," said Rohit Sharma, Senior Vice President eign Language (TOEFL) is a

universities The test is recognised by more than 12,000 institutions

standardised test to measure the English language abilities of non-native speakers wishing to enrol in English-speaking

destinations such as the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, and also by over 98 per cent of universities in the UK. In addition to their traditional scoring, TOEFL will introduce an intuitive score

scale of 1-6.

scale and the traditional 0-120 scale, institutions will receive training and resources to ensure a smooth integration. From May 2025, home edition of the test will be redesigned to create a more seamless and supportive experience.

The new additions include ETS-trained in-house proctors for consistent support throughout the testing session; AI-assisted identity verification (ENTRUST) to confirm test taker identity while easing checkin friction and simplified registration and test-day workflow, reducing stress and administra-

more real-world academic content that reflects today's global student, relevant regardless of their background. Whether testing at a centre in India or from home in Denmark, every student deserves a fair shot to demonstrate their English proficiency," said Omar Chihane, Global General Manager of TOEFL at ETS.

ETS had in 2023 executed a series of changes in the 60-year old test to create an optimal experience for those taking it. Reducing the duration to less than two hours instead of three and allowing candidates to be able to see their official score release date upon completion of the test were among them.

tive hurdles. While the score reports will "We have updated niche topof Global Mobility Solutions at in over 160 countries and uni-According to officials, ETS ETS. Test of English as a Forversally accepted in popular display both the 1-6 banded ics like Greek mythology with

national



increase eightfold to define Viksit

APEX COURT AGREES TO HEAR PETITION BY BYJU'S PROMOTERS

The Supreme Court Thursday agreed to hear a petition filed by the promoters of tech company Byju's, seeking to uphold a pre-**Corporate Insolvency Resolution** Process (pre-CoC) settlement in the company's insolvency proceedings





category of giving

Tribal Affairs Department and the Social Justice Department

DEVENDRA FADNAVIS | MAHARASHTRA CM

MARSHAL A P SINGH | IAF CHIEF AIR CHIEF

This Operation Sindoor that we've been talking about it's a national victory. I thank each and every Indian. I am sure, every Indian wanted... was looking towards this victory



will also return to the mainstream of India someday listening to their voice of soul

RAJNATH SINGH | DEFENCE MINISTER

SHORT **TAKES**

Man becomes thief to maintain 3 wives, 9 kids

Bangalore: A 36-year-old man, who became a thief to take care of his three wives and nine children, has been arrested in Bangalore, a police officer said Thursday. Police recovered 188 grams of gold ornaments, 550 grams of silver ornaments and ₹1,500 in cash from Babajaan, he added. A case has been registered at the Electronic City police station in Bengaluru. "With the arrest, we have solved eight theft cases," the officer told PTI. "It's difficult for him to maintain the family. So he became a thief. This is how it appears prima facie," he added. According to him, his wives are in Shikaripalya near Anekal on the outskirts of Bengaluru, Chikkaballapura and Srirangapatna.

PM inaugurates new terminal of Patna airport

Patna: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Thursday inaugurated the new terminal building of the Patna Airnort and laid the foundation stone for a new civil enclave at the Bihta airport on the outskirts of the city. The new passenger terminal at the Jay Prakash Narayan International Airport in Patna was built at a cost of ₹1,200 crore, while the civil enclave at the Bihta airport will be developed at ₹1,410 crore, officials said. The PM unveiled the projects at a function at the Patna airport after he arrived in the poll-bound state on a two-day visit.

Rain-related incidents claim 16 lives in Maha

Mumbai: Sixteen persons have died in Maharashtra over the last five days due to rain-related incidents such as landslides, lightning, tree or structure collapse, according to a state government report. Maharashtra witnessed heavy rains from May 24 as the monsoon made its onset early this year.

Nitin Kohli joins AAP

Chandigarh: Industrialist Nitin Kohli joined the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Thursday in the presence of senior party leader Manish Sisodia in Punjab's Jalandhar district. Following his induction into the party, Kohli replaced MLA Raman Arora as halga in-charge of the Jalandhar Central assembly constituency The announcement was made by Sisodia, AAP's Punjab in-charge. "It is a matter of happiness that Punjab's industrialists, while keeping faith in the AAP's governance, stand shoulder to shoulder with the party," Sisodia told reporters in Jalandhar.

'Operation Sindoor' not over yet: Modi

Alipurduar (WB), May 29: Prime Minister Narendra Mondy Thursday said 'Operation Sindoor' was far from over and warned that India would continue to exact a heavy price on those who sponsor terrorism, asserting that Pakistan has already been hit "three times inside its home.

While addressing his first rally in West Bengal since the launch of 'Operation Sindoor' earlier this month, the PM invoked the region's deep cultural and emotional connection with 'sindoor', referring to the traditional ritual of 'Sindoor Khela' observed by Bengali women during Durga Puja.

"Now that I am standing on the sacred land of 'Sindoor Khela', it is only right that we speak about a new resolve against terrorism 'Operation Sindoor',' Modi said to loud cheers.

He added, "On April 22, the brutal terrorist attack in Pahalgam shook the nation. The pain and anger felt across West Bengal were deeply understood. I could feel your outrage. The terrorists dared to wipe off 'sindoor' from the foreheads of our sisters. But our brave soldiers made them realise the power of that sindoor'.

"From this land of Bengal, I, on behalf of 140 crore Indians, declare that 'Operation Sindoor is not over yet," Modi said. "There was a lot of anger in West Bengal, too, after the barbarity committed by terrorists



in Pahalgam, Lunderstood very well the anger and rage that was within you. The terrorists dared to wipe away the 'sindoor' of our sisters. Our army made them realise the power of 'sindoor'." he reiterated.

Asserting India's zero-tolerance policy towards terrorism, Modi said, "After the Pahalgam attack, India has told the world that if there is a terrorist attack on India, the enemy will have to pay a heavy price for it. Pakistan should understand that we have entered your house and killed you three times."

While the Prime Minister did not spell out the details of the three instances, his remarks are being widely interpreted as a reference to the 2016 surgical strikes following the Uri terror attack, the 2019 Balakot air strikes after the Pulwama bombing, and the recent cross-border strikes as part of 'Operation Sindoor'.

In a direct rebuke to Islamabad's military establishment,

TMC hits back at PM's claims

Narendra Modi of diverting attention from the BJP-led Centre's failures, the Trinamool Congress (TMC) Thursin response to the PM's remarks Bengal, In a post on X, the party called Manipur, which had witnessed severe vears, "Modi ii listed 5 'Sankats', Let's X handle. Coming to other posers, the Unnao to Hathras, @BJP4India's track Youth honelessness? Paper leaks. ment - BJP's national gift to students. the regional party said. "Corruption? Half your Cabinet is out on bail. Irony turning the corruption charge towards

the Prime Minister accused Pakistan of institutionalising

The Prime Minister also invoked historical wounds. linking Pakistan's legacy of terrorism to the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War. "Ever since it came into existence, Pakistan has only nurtured terror. It has carried out terrorist attacks on India ever since Partition in 1947. After a few years, the terror it spread in our neighbourhood — present-day Bangladesh (then East Pakistan) — is also unforgettable," Modi said.

Modi concluded with a stern warning, saying India would relentlessly pursue terrorists across the border and ensure that enemies of peace face the consequences.

People of PoK part of Indian family: Rajnath



New Delhi, May 29: People of Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (PoK) are part of India's "own family" and the day is not far when they will return to the Indian mainstream by listening to their inner voice, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said Thursday.

Laving out India's policy ap proach towards Pakistan, Singh said New Delhi has "redesigned and redefined" its strategy and response to terrorism and that possible dialogue with Islamabad will be only on terrorism and PoK.

In an address at the CII Busi ness Summit, he said 'Make-in-India' in the defence sector has been an essential component in the country's national security and it played a key role in India's effective action against terror ism during Operation Sindoor.

In the remarks, Singh appeared to be largely attempting to reach out to people of PoK saying India considers them to be part of its "own" family and exuded confidence that they will return voluntarily.

"I believe that the people of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) are our own, part of our family," he said. "We are committed to the resolution of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' (One India, Best India) and we have full faith that those of our broth ers who are geographically and politically separated from us to day, will also return to the mainstream of India someday or the other with self-respect, listening to their voice of soul," he said.

Rajasthan: Suspected Pak spy detained; BJP alleges Congress link

New Delhi, May 29: A Rajasthan government employee was detained in Jaisalmer on suspicion of espionage for Pakistan with the BJP claiming he was an assistant to former Congress minister Shale Mohammad and visited Pakistan several times without informing the government.

Shakur Khan, who works in the district employment office as Assistant Administrative Office, was found to have phone numbers associated with Pakistan stored on his device, an official said. Intelligence unit sources said that Khan went to Pakistan seven times for meeting his relatives and to visit a religious place since 2011.

It is alleged that Khan shared security related updates from Jaisalmer and he is being interrogated by central intelligence agencies in detail. The official said Khan was detained Wednesday night by an intelligence department team which was acting on security-related inputs. "There were inputs about

Shakur Khan that he could be involved in spying for Pakistan. He was on surveillance following inputs and was detained last night," the official said. While police refrained from

saying anything about Khan's political connections, sources and the BJP said he worked as an assistant to Mohammad, a former minister in the Ashok Gehlot-led government. Mo-



hammad could not be reached for comments.

A joint interrogation was conducted in Jaisalmer following which the team left for Jaipur with Khan, Khan got recruitment as a fourth class employee in the district employment office in Jodhpur He was periodically promoted to LDC, UDC and AAO.

He has been working in the district employment office in Jaisalmer since 1999. He has a government accommodation on Barmer road in Jaisalmer.

BJP leaders targeted the Congress over the issue and demanded a thorough probe BJP IT department head Amit Malviya claimed that Khan used to share confiden tial information of border areas with Pakistani officials There was no immediate reaction from the Congress on the BJP's charge.

Union minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat said a detailed investigation should be done and all those involved should be arrested.

BJP state president Madan Rathore said whoever is in volved should be punished.

Pune teen held for 'Op

Sindoor' post, out on

bail, appears for exam

Centre clears appointment of three judges in top court



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 29: Acting swiftly on the recommendation made by the Supreme Court Collegium, the Centre Thursday cleared the appointment of three judges to the top court.

In a post on X, Union Minister for Law and Justice Arjun Ram Meghwal said the President, after consultation with the Chief Justice of India (CJI), was pleased to appoint Justice NV Aniaria, the incumbent Chief Justice of Karnataka High Court; Justice Vijay Bishnoi, presently functioning as Chief Justice of the Gauhati High Court; and Justice Atul S. Chandurkar of the Bombay High Court as SC judges.

The apex court Collegium, headed by CJI BR Gavai Monday forwarded its recommen-

dations to the Centre. "The Supreme Court Collegium in its meeting held 26th May, 2025 has recommended elevation of the following Chief Justices / Judge of the High Courts, as Judges in the Supreme Court: (i) Mr Justice NV Anjaria, Chief Justice, High Court of Karnataka, (PHC: High Court of Gujarat) (ii) Mr Justice Vijay Bishnoi, Chief Justice, Gauhati High Court, (PHC: Rajasthan High Court) (iii) Mr Justice AS Chandurkar Judge, High Court of Bombay," said a statement uploaded on the website of the apex court.

Justice Anjaria was elevated as Additional Judge of the Gujarat High Court in November 2011, and in September 2023, he was confirmed as a permanent Judge. He took oath as the Chief Justice of the Karnataka High Court February 25 last year.

Justice Bishnoi, the present Chief Justice of the Gauhati High Court, was appointed as Additional Judge of the Rajasthan High Court in January 2013 and took oath as a permanent Judge of the Rajasthan High Court in January 2015.



A fisherman casts a traditional net in a stream, on the outskirts of Jagdalpur in Bastar district, Chhattisgarh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 29: A Pune engineering student, who was arrested for a social media post critical of the government's "Oper ation Sindoor" and later released on bail, appeared for her semester examination Thursday under heightened security, her lawyer informed the Bombay High Court.

Advocate Farhana Shah representing the student, informed a vacation bench of Justices Gauri Godse and So masekhar Sundaresan that her client was released from jail Tuesday night, pursuant to the court's directives. "The college issued her the

admit card Wednesday and she has appeared for the exam scheduled Thursday," Shah in formed the bench.

"No further directions are required now. The development comes after the High Court Tuesday sharply criticised the Maharashtra government for its "absolutely shocking" and "radical" response to the student's post and her subsequent arrest.

Heatwaves to last longer and affect more areas: Scientists

Climate models show that the area and duration of heat waves in India would increase. said Krishna Achuta Rao, Head, Centre for **Atmospheric Sciences at Delhi's Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 29: Heat waves in India are expected to last longer and affect larger scientists regions, warned, as climate change continues to intensify extreme weather events.

Climate models show that the area and duration of heat waves in India would increase, said Krishna Achuta Rao, Head, Centre for Atmospheric Sciences at Delhi's Indian Institute of

Technology (IIT). Speaking at the India Heat

Summit 2025, organised by research group Climate Trends, Rao said "this means the northern plains and several states across the southern peninsula will experience heatwaves that last longer and cover larger areas".

"What might have been a week-long event could turn into a month-and-a-half or twomonth-long event. Our future looks very stark," he added.

The scientist said the models also suggest that heat waves may occur during the monsoon months which could be

more dangerous. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) sixth assessment report and recent scientific papers have warned of more frequent and intense heat waves in South Asia even during monsoon months. in India's rivers.

Faroog Azam, senior cryosphere specialist at the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICI-MOD), said the rising temperatures are melting glaciers faster, affecting water availability

Azam said the country depends heavily on water from glaciers for agriculture and

electricity generation. At present, there is more water because of warming-driven glacier melt, but there is a threshold beyond which glaciers will start contributing less water, called peak water. Some models project that peak water could occur around 2050 in the Indus, Ganga and Brahmaputra river basins, while some studies suggest it may have already been reached in the Brahmaputra system, he added. Azam warned that this could mean "more floods until 2050" and water shortages afterwards. He said that 2022 saw the most negative glacier mass balance -- more ice was lost than gained -- although annual temperatures were higher

in 2023 and 2024.

"This is because early heat waves in March 2022 led to early melting of glaciers, resulting in high river flows when water was not needed The early heat waves and ear ly monsoon contributed to the devastating floods in Pakistan that year," added Azam.

ICIMOD's Hindu Kush Himalaya Assessment and studies by the World Weather Attribution have linked glacier melt and climate change to increased flood risk in the region.

The senior cryosphere spe cialist also said that glacier melt in the Himalayas has more immediate impacts than glacier loss in Iceland or the Arctic, as the Himalayan glaciers supply water to more than a billion people in the Indus, Ganga and Brahmaputra river basins.

international

US will begin revoking the visas of some Chinese students, including those with connections to the **Chinese Communist Party or studying in** critical fields

MARCO RUBIO

US AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE IN DAMASCUS REOPENED

The US flag was hoisted Thursday outside of the long-shuttered ambassador's residence in Damascus, in a signing of growing ties between Washington and the new Syrian government. The US ambassador to Turkey, Tom Barrack, who has also been appointed special envoy to Syria, arrived to inaugurate the residence

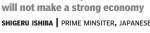




fident of a positive development for the border situation, and that both sides agreed that they don't wish for violence

I do not want to see any fighting between armies that does not bring two countries and peoples, especially those who are fighting directly on the front lines HUN MANET | PRIME MINISTER, CAMBODIA





SHORT TAKES

China launches spacecraft

Taipei: China launched a spacecraft that promises to return samples from an asteroid near Mars and yield "groundbreaking discoveries and expand humanity's knowledge of the cosmos," the country's space agency said. The Tianwen-2 probe launched early Thursday from southern China aboard the workhorse Long March 3-B rocket. The probe will collect samples from the asteroid 2016HO3 and explore the main-belt comet 311P, which lies even further from the Earth than Mars, according to the China National Space Administration. Shan Zhongde, head of the CNSA, was quoted as saving the Tianwen-2 mission represents a "significant step in China's new journey of interplanetary

exploration" and over its decade-long mission will "yield groundbreaking discoveries and expand humanity's knowledge of the cosmos."

2 police officers, 4 Talihan killed in Pok

Islamabad: At last two police officers and four Taliban militants were killed in an overnight shootout in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), officials said Thursday. The clash followed after the security forces, on a tip-off about the presence of militants, launched an operation in the Hussain Kot forest area in the Rawalakot district of the region. The Senior Superintendent Police (SSP) Rawalakot, Riaz Mughal, told the media that the police launched a raid after a tip-off regarding the presence of terrorists in the area. He said that the terrorists were hiding in a cave and were surrounded, but when the police attempted to apprehend them, one of the terrorists hurled a grenade at the officers, prompting retaliatory fire.

Smugglers jailed for

New York: Two men have been sentenced to jail in the US for their roles in a human trafficking racket that resulted in the death of an Indian couple and their two children in January 2022, Harshkumar Ramanlal Patel, 29, and his co-conspirator Steve Anthony Shand, 50, were part of a large-scale human-smuggling operation that brought Indian nationals to Canada on fraudulent student visas and then smuggled them into the US across the northern border, Ramanial Patel, an Indian national from Florida. was sentenced to 10 years and in the conspiracy. He will be his sentence. Shand was

Israel announces new West Bank settlements



Jerusalem, May 29: Israel's government has approved 22 new Jewish settlements in the occupied-West Bank, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich said Thursday, a move that could deepen divisions with some allies, who have threatened sanctions over further expan-

Far-right Smotrich, an advocate for Israeli sovereignty over the West Bank, wrote on X that the new settlements would be located in the northern area of the West Bank, without specifying where.

Israeli media cited the Defense Ministry as saying that among the new Jewish settlements, existing "outposts" would be legalised and new settlements would also be built.

Around 700,000 Israeli settlers live among 2.7 million Palestinians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, territories Israel captured from Jordan in the 1967 war. Israel later annexed East Jerusalem. a move not recognized by most countries, but has not formally extended sovereignty over the West Bank

Israel approves 22 new settlements in West Bank, **Smotrich announces**

European countries threaten sanctions over settlement expansion

♥ Palestinian Authority and Hamas condemn Israel's settlement decision

Palestinians see expansion of the settlements as a hindrance to their aspirations to establish an independent Palestinian state in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including occupied East Jerusalem.

There is a growing list of European countries demanding that Israel end the war in Gaza, while Britain, France and Canada this month warned Israel it could impose targeted sanctions if Israel continued to expand settlements in the West Bank

Most of the international community considers the Jewish settlements illegal. The Israeli government deems settlements legal under its own laws, while some so-called "outposts" are illegal but often tolerated and sometimes later

Musk exits Trump administration

took to his social media *platform X to thank*

President Donald Trump as his time as a special government employee with the Department of Government Efficiency draws to an end

Washington, May 29: Billionaire Tesla CEO Elon Musk is leaving the Trump administration after leading a tumultuous efficiency drive, during which he upended several federal agencies but ultimately failed to deliver the generational savings he had sought.

His "off-boarding will begin tonight," a White House official told Reuters late Wednesday, confirming Musk's departure from government. Musk earlier Wednesday took to his social media platform X to thank President Donald Trump as his time as a special government employee with the Department of Government Efficiency draws to an end.

His departure was quick and unceremonious. He did not have a formal conversation with Trump before announcing his exit, according to a source with knowledge of the matter, who added that his departure was decided "at a senior staff level.'

While the precise circumstances of his exit were not immediately clear, he leaves a day after criticizing Trump's marquee tax bill, calling it too expensive and a measure that would undermine his work with the US DOGE Service.

Stunt performer sues Kevin Costner

Musk has begin tonight," sweeping staff cuts as criticized a special government Republican tax official says nd budaet bil Some senior White House

officials, including Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller, were particularly irked by those comments, and the White House was forced to call Republican senators to reiterate Trump's support for the package, a source familiar with the matter said.

While Musk remains close to the president, his exit comes after a gradual, but steady slide in standing.

After Trump's inauguration, the billionaire quickly emerged as a powerful force in Trump's orbit: hyper-visible, unapologetically brash and unfettered by traditional norms. At the Conservative Political Action Conference in February. he brandished a red metallic chainsaw to wild cheers. "This is the chainsaw for bureaucra cy," he declared.

Musk clashed with three of

when a shot was beginning or

ending. "There was no escap-

members - Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy and Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent. He called Trump's trade adviser Peter Navarro a "moron" and "dumber than a sack of bricks." Navarro dismissed the insults, saying, "I've been called worse.

At the same time, Musk began to hint that his time in government would come to a close, while expressing frustration at times that he could not more aggressively cut spending.

DOGE GOES ON

Musk's 130-day mandate as a special government employee in the Trump administration was set to expire around May 30. The administration has said DOGE's efforts to restructure and shrink the federal government will continue.

Several cabinet secretaries

creases the budget deficit, not just decreases it, and undermines the work that the DOGE team is doing ELON MUSK | TESLA CEO

White House how to proceed without further alienating Con gressional Republicans. But even as department heads will keep some DOGE infrastructure in place, they will likely move to reassert control over budgets and staffing, sources have told Reuters.

"The DOGE mission will only strengthen over time as it becomes a way of life throughout the government," Musk said.

Trump and DOGE have managed to cut nearly 12%, or 260,000, of the 2.3 million-strong federal civilian workforce largely through threats of fir ings, buyouts and early retire ment offers, a Reuters review of agency departures found.

At the same time, DOGE has hit a number of roadblocks with federal courts at times propping back up agencies shortly after DOGE had moved to eliminate them. In some cas es, staff and funding cuts have led to purchasing bottlenecks, increased costs and a brain drain of scientific and techno logical talent.

The most recent source of friction came Tuesday when Musk criticized the price tag of Republicans' tax and bud get legislation making its way through Congress.

"I was disappointed to see the massive spending bill, frankly, which increases the budget deficit, not just decreases it. and undermines the work that the DOGE team is doing," Musk told CBS News

SK navy patrol plane crashes, killed four



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Seoul, May 29: A South Korean navy plane crashed during a training flight Thursday, killing all four crew members on board, the navy said.

The P-3 patrol plane took off from its base in the southeastern city of Pohang at 1:43 pm and crashed due to unknown reasons, the navy said in a statement. It said it had identified the bodies of the four crew members and was in the process of recovering them.

An emergency office in Po hang said that rescuers and fire trucks were dispatched to the site after receiving reports from residents that an aircraft crashed on a hill near an apart ment complex and caused a fire

Photos showed firefighters and emergency vehicles near the crash site with flames flickering as a smoke engulfed trees. Fire crews sprayed water on what appeared to be the aircraft debris.

passenger plane crashed at aviation history.

Nepal observes R-Day amidst protests by pro-monarchists

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, May 29: Nepal Thursday observed the 18th Republic Day with two opposing political groups organising demonstrations for and against the federal democratic republic system established May 28, 2008.

The government has mobilised around 6,000 security personnel, including hundreds of riot policemen, to prevent possible clashes between ruling CPN-UML and the pro-monarchist groups led by Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) at Ratnapark and Bhrikutimandap areas in the heart of the city.

Various groups, consisting of people wearing ethnic attire and cultural tableaux, gathered at Bhrikuti Mandap for the Republic Day celebrations organised by the CPN-UML on the occasion.

On the other hand, pro-monarchists led by the RPP organised a protest rally carrying the banners of former King Gyanendra's picture, demanding the reinstatement of monarchy, the establishment of Nepal as a Hindu state and the abolition of the republic system.

ASSOCIATED PRESS Los Angeles, May 29: A stunt performer has sued Kevin Cost-

ner, alleging she was subjected to an unscripted rape scene without proper warning, consent or protocols while shooting his film 'Horizon: An American Saga: Chapter 2'.

Devyn LaBella filed the lawsuit Tuesday in Los Angeles Superior Court. It names Costner the director, star and cowriter of the 'Horizon' series of Westerns — and its production companies as defendants.

'The impact of this impromptu work demand on Ms LaBella has been profound, not only upending a career Ms LaBella spent years building but leaving her with permanent trauma that she will be required to address for years to come," the lawsuit savs.

Costner's attorney said the lawsuit has no merit, and La-Bella's assertions are contradicted by both the facts and her behaviour.

A former gymnast, the 34-year-old LaBella has worked steadily as a Hollywood stunt performer since 2020, with credits including 'Barbie' and 'Yellowjackets'.

LaBella's lawsuit says she

was the stunt double for one of the 'Horizon' leads, Ella Hunt, throughout the production. The shoot included a planned sexual assault scene, shot in May of 2023, that LaBella performed much of because of its violent and physical nature, the law-

For that scene, protocols were followed, including meetings, rehearsals, the presence of an intimacy coordinator and minimal crew

But it alleges that the following day, in an unscripted scene with no warning, rehearsal or choreography, Costner directed an actor to pin LaBella down on a wagon and simulate rape.

The lawsuit says Costner asked for many takes as he experimented with the violent action and did not make it clear

ing the situation, and all Ms LaBella could do was wait for the nightmare to end," the suit says. It alleges that safeguards were ignored in violation of union contracts and industry standards Costner's attorney. Martin Singer, said that while Costner

wants everyone to be comfort-

able on his sets, LaBella's claim

has 'absolutely no merit, and

it is completely contradicted by her own actions - and the "The scene in question was explained to Ms LaBella, and after she performed the rehearsal in character with another actor, she gave her Stunt Coordinator supervisor a thumbs up' and indicated her willingness

to then shoot the scene, if need-

ed (which she was not)." Singer

said in a statement That night, Ms LaBella had dinner with her supervisor, the stunt coordinator, and with the assistant stunt coordinator, and she was in good spirits and made no complaints to them. She continued to work on the movie for a few more weeks until her wrap date, and she took the stunt coordinator to a thank-vou dinner.'

There were no immediate re-

ports of civilian casualties on the ground. The navy set up a task force to investigate the crash and temporarily groundIn December, a Jeju Air

Muan International Airport in southern South Korea, killing all but two of the 181 people on board. It was one of the deadli est disasters in South Korea's

'GOOD DAYS ARE OVER'

REUTERS

Beijing, May 29: Chinese students with offers from US universities expressed despair after Washington promised to start "aggressively" revoking Chinese student visas and ordered US missions abroad to

stop scheduling new student visa appointments. If applied to a broad segment of the 277,000 Chinese students already at US colleges, the move could disrupt a major source of income for universities and a crucial pipeline of talent for US technology companies as the Trump administration pursues

"It's pretty absurd. It doesn't seem like something that should happen these days. I scrolled social media and felt quite anxious seeing other people's reactions," said Chen,

its hardline immigration agenda.



22, who has a postgraduate offer to study a humanities subject from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

"Although my major is not sensitive, my visa application process hasn't started yet and my course begins in early August.'

western megacity of Chengdu, is prepared to defer her studies for a term if the visa doesn't come through in time. She preferred not to share her full name for privacy reasons. "If I really can't go to the US,

I may take up an offer from the UK's London School of Economics," she said. Reuters reported that US

Chinese students despair as US cracks down on visas

Secretary of State Marco Rubio asked his department to pause the scheduling of student visa appointments until the department

updated issues tate Department did not sav guidance on social when visa appointments media vetting of apwould resume plicants The news set off a

puts major

be affected

wave of confusion and despair on China's Instagram-like platform RedNote, as incoming students scrambled to book the last remaining visa interview slots and others complained that they could no longer book.

Wu said she staved up until 3 am Wednesday frantically refreshing the webpage until

she managed to snag a precious mid-June interview slot at the US Consulate in Shanghai.

"At nearly midnight I saw the news and immediately

source of income for started book **US universities at risk** ing, the page crashed sev-Trump administration did not eral times,' say how many would

> uters The 29-year-old bi-

ology student, who preferred not

she told Re-

to share her full name for privacy reasons, has an offer from the University of Minnesota Duluth and no back-up plan if her visa is rejected.

Map shows the place of origin of all foreign students enrolled in the United States higher education institutions in 2023-24 academic year

said previously scheduled ap pointments may proceed but did not specify when the interview booking system would resume. Nor did Rubio specify when the visa revocations would begin. "The Department's sched

The cable, signed by Rubio

uling of nonimmigrant visa interview appointments is dynamic," a State Department spokesperson said in response to Reuters' questions about the suspension of appointments.

"Visa applicants may continue to submit applications Consular sections constantly adjust their schedules to allow for sufficient time to fully vet the cases before them.

The spokesperson added that the Trump administration was focused on "upholding the highest standards of national security and public safety through our visa process."

deaths of Indian family

one month in prison for his role deported from the US following sentenced to six years and six months in prison.

business



The appointment of N Venu will reemphasize our vision and mission of making India as one of the most lucrative business hubs within Hitachi's cosmic ecosystem. N Venu has been instrumental in driving and steering business at Hitachi Energy, which has witnessed expansive growth under

NCLAT STAYS ORDER AGAINST VEDANTA'S DEMERGER

Appellate tribunal NCLAT has granted an interim stay on an order of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) rejecting demerger of Vedanta's power business and its merger with resultant entity Talwandi Sabo Power Ltd (TSPL). The order came as a relief to Vedanta Ltd which is in the process of demerging its businesses into separate entities.





thrilled to our first domestic order of FY26 from a very reputed

PSU developer and continue to build on our strong position in the Gujarat market

GLOBAL CEO, SWREL



focused on empowering Indians with Al-nowered devices, we are firing on all

MITUL SHAH | MD SERVICES, GOOGLE INDIA



significant milestone in redefining lung cancer

treatment in India SANJEEV PANCHAL

Q4 RESULTS

SAIL net profit jumps

New Delhi: SAIL Wednesday reported over 11 per cent growth in consolidated net profit to Rs 1,250.98 crore in March quarter, driven by revenues. It had posted a net profit of Rs 1,125.68 crore in the January-March period of the preceding 2023-24 financial year, the company said in an exchange filing. SAIL increased its revenue from operations to Rs 29,316.14 crore in the fourth guarter of FY25, from Rs 27,958.52 crore in the same period a year ago. The expenses stood at Rs 28,020.56 crore in the quarter under review, as against Rs 26.473.86 crore in Q4 FY24. On a quarter-on-quar ter basis, the net profit was around 9-fold higher compared to Rs 141.89 crore net profit earned in October-December FY25. In FY25, the net profit was down at Rs 2,371.80 crore, as against Rs 3,066.67

■ UP Cooperative **Bank posts profit**

Lucknow: UP Cooperative Bank Wednesday reported a net profit of Rs 100 crore in 2025, on the back of increased lending activity and improved management practices. The total business stood at Rs 41,234 crore, reflecting its growing role in the rural economy, according to a statement."The bank's net profit, which stood at Rs 32.82 crore in 2017, has now crossed Rs 100 crore -- registering a threefold increase.

Bata India profit falls New Delhi: Footwear major Bata India Wednesday said its operating profit declined 36 per cent to Rs 37 crore in the fourth quarter ended March 31, 2025. The company reported an operating profit of Rs 58 crore for the January-March period of 2023-24 fiscal. Revenue from operations in the quarter stood at Rs 788 crore as compared with Rs 798 crore in the year-ago period, Bata India said in a regulatory filing. Total dividend for 2024-25 accounted for an outgo of Rs 244 crore, it added.

Welspun Corp profit jumps New Delhi: Welspun Corp Ltd (WCL) has posted over 143 per cent growth in consolidated net profit to Rs 699.19 crore in the March quarter, aided by a reduction in expenses. It had posted a net profit of Rs 287.28 crore in the January-March period of the preceding financial year, the company said in an exchange filing.

RBI annual report bats for dovish monetary policy

The strength of financial sector, reflected in improved asset quality and well-capitalised banks, further supported economic activity. Amidst multiple global headwinds, the Indian financial markets demonstrated resilience and orderly movements

Mumbai, May 29: The balance sheet of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) increased to Rs 76.25 lakh crore, aided by nearly 33 per cent gains in foreign exchange transactions, as of March 2025, leading to a bumper Rs 2.7 lakh crore dividend to the central government, said the central bank's annual report released Thursday.

The report confirms that the Indian economy is poised to remain the fastest-growing major economy in 2025-26 by leveraging its sound macroeconomic fundamentals, robust financial sector and commitment towards sustainable growth. Keeping in mind the global

financial market volatility, geopolitical tensions, trade fragmentation, supply-chain disruptions and climate-induced uncertainties gave a hint of downside risks to the growth. However, factors like easing of supply-chain pressures, softening global commodity prices and higher agricultural production on above-normal south west monsoon augur well for inflation outlook, the report said.

Shifts in tariff policies may result in sporadic episodes of volatility in financial markets, it said, adding that exports may encounter headwinds on "inward-looking policies and tariff-wars". The trade pacts being signed and negotiated by India will help ensure that the impact is limited

The RBI, which has already lowered key policy rates in two consecutive reviews, said in the annual report that there is now a "greater confidence" on durable alignment of headline inflation to the 4 per cent target

over a 12-month horizon

Considering the dynamic nature of the interest rate risk, banks need to address hoth trading and banking book risks, especially in light of moderation in net interest margins, it recommended.

Giving details about its accounts for 2024-25, RBI said the size of the balance sheet as on March 31, 2025 increased by 8.20 per cent year on year. While income for the year increased by 22.77 per cent, expenditure increased by 7.76 per cent.

The year ended with an overall surplus of Rs 2,68,590.07 crore as against Rs 2,10,873.99 crore in the previous year, resulting in an increase of 27.37 per cent. The size of the balance sheet increased by Rs 5,77,718.72 crore, 8.20 per cent from Rs 70,47,703.21 crore as on March 31, 2024 to Rs 76,25,421.93 crore as on March 31, 2025. Increase on assets side was due to rise in gold, domestic investments and foreign investments by 52.09 per cent, 14.32 per cent and 1.70 per cent, respectively.

Exchange gain from foreign exchange transactions increased by about 33 per cent to Rs 1.11 lakh crore as on March 31, 2025 from Rs 83,615.86 crore

The Reserve Bank spent Rs 6.372.82 crore on printing of currency notes in the last fiscal, an 5,101.4 crore in the preceding financial year.

The report said that the value and volume of banknotes in circulation increased by 6 per cent and 5.6 per cent, respectively, during 2024-25.

"During 2024-25, the share of Rs 500 banknotes at 86 per cent, declined marginally in value terms," it said.

In volume terms, Rs 500 denomination at 40.9 per cent, constituted the highest share of the total banknotes in circulation, followed by Rs 10 denomination banknotes at 16.4 per cent. The lower denomination banknotes (Rs 10, Rs 20 and Rs 50) together constituted 31.7 per cent of total banknotes in circulation by volume.

The withdrawal of Rs 2000 banknotes from circulation, initiated in May 2023, continued during the year and 98.2 per cent of Rs 3.56 lakh crore in circulation at the time of announcement have returned to the banking system up to March 31, 2025. The value and volume of

coins in circulation increased by 9.6 per cent, and 3.6 per cent respectively, during 2024-25. Also, the value of e-rupee in circulation increased by 334 per cent during 2024-25. The supply of notes increased

by 24.69 per cent from 2,43,000 lakh pieces during the year 2023-24 to 3,03,000 lakh pieces during 2024-25.

Currency in circulation includes banknotes, central bank digital currency (CBDC) and coins. Presently, banknotes in circulation comprise denominations of Rs 2, Rs 5, Rs 10, Rs 20, Rs 50, Rs 100, Rs 200, Rs 500 and Rs 2000.

Philippines' policy for India gains traction

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 29: The Philippines' decision to offer visa-free entry for Indians is a positive move to trigger greater interest in the country as a holiday destination, experts said Thurs day. The Philippine Bureau of Immigration has recently introduced a visa-free stay in the country for up to 14 days for Indian passport holders. "Indian travellers are in-

creasingly prioritising conve nience and ease of travel, and visa-free access is a key factor influencing destination choice. The Philippines' move to offer visa-free entry to Indians is a strong step that will likely spark greater interest in the country as a holiday destination," ixigo Group CEO Aloke Bajpai said.

MakeMyTrip co-founder and Group CEO Rajesh Magow said the high-spending Indian traveller continues to be a focus for global tourism boards.

"Combining easy visa access direct flights, affordability, and diverse attractions are key to attracting Indian tourists," he added. Thomas Cook (India) President and Country Head - Holidays, MICE, Visa, Rajeev Kale said the Philippines' announcement of visa-free entry for Indian nationals is a strategic move aimed at unlocking the potential of India's powerful and rapidly growing outbound market.

SOTC Travel President and Country Head - Holidays and Corporate Tours, SD Nandakumar said this visa-free access will create a significant strategic advantage for the Philippines- a yet underleveraged destination and we see potential, especially for travel-hungry young India's millennials, GenZ, couples, working professionals and groups of friends and MICE segment.

"Our recent India Holiday Report 2025 reiterates that simplified visa processes and easy access are key drivers in India's outbound story with 44 per cent of respondents".

Stock markets rebound; Sensex up 320 points

BSE SENSEX

MAY 29, 2025



-0.32 %





PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 29: Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty rebounded Thursday after two days of decline, mirroring a rally in global markets as a US court blocked President Donald Trump's reciprocal tariffs. The 30-share BSE Sensex

climbed 320.70 points or 0.39 per cent to settle at 81,633.02 in a volatile session amid monthly expiry in derivative contracts. During the day, it jumped 504.57 points or 0.62 per cent to 81,816.89. The 50-share NSE Nifty

went up by 81.15 points or 0.33 per cent to 24.833.60. The index swung sharply in both directions on the monthly expiry day before ending with gains. Metal, realty, pharma, and IT sector indices were maior gainers. Among Sensex firms, In-

dusInd Bank climbed 2.41 per cent a day after markets regulator Sebi barred its former CEO, Sumant Kathpalia, and four other senior officials from accessing the securities markets in connection with an alleged insider trading in the Sun Pharma, Adani Ports,

Eternal, Tata Steel, Tech Mahindra and Axis Bank were also among the gainers. Bajaj Finance, ITC, Bajaj

Finserv and Asian Paints were among the laggards. The BSE midcap gauge

climbed 0.48 per cent and smallcap index went up by 0.39 per cent. Among sectoral indices, re-

alty jumped the most 1.21 per

cent, followed by metal (0.89 per cent), BSE Focused IT (0.79 per cent), services (0.69 per cent), teck (0.65 per cent). consumer discretionary (0.55 per cent) and commodities (0.53 per cent).FMCG emerged as the on-

ly laggard. As many as 2,022 stocks advanced while 1,954 declined and 135 remained unchanged on the BSE.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi, Japan's Nik kei 225 index, Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng set tled in positive territory Markets in Europe were trading higher. US markets ended lower Wednesday.

Foreign Institutional In vestors (FIIs) bought equi ties worth Rs 4,662.92 crore Wednesday, according to exchange data. Also, the Reserve Bank said that the country is poised to remain the fastest-growing major economy in the world even in FY26.

Value of gold with RBI surges 57.12% to ₹4.32L-cr in FY25

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 29: The value of gold (including gold deposit) held as asset of Reserve Bank increased by 57.12 per cent to Rs 4,31,624.8 crore as on March 31, 2025, mainly on account of addition of 54.13 metric tonnes of precious metal and increase in its prices.

The value of gold held as asset of Banking Department was Rs 2,74,714.27 crore as March 31, 2024. "As on March 31, 2025, total gold held by the Reserve Bank was 879.58 metric tonnes as compared to 822.10 metric tonnes as on March 31, 2024 reflecting an increase of 57.48 metric tonnes of gold during the year." said the RBI's annual report released Thursday.

Of 879.58 metric tonnes as March 31, 2025, 311.38 metric tonnes of gold is held as an asset of the Issue Department as compared to 308.03 metric tonnes as March 31, 2024, it said.



The remaining 568.20 metric tonnes as March 31, 2025 is treated as asset of the Banking Department as compared to 514.07 metric tonnes March 31. 2024. "The value of gold (including gold deposit) held as asset of Banking Department increased by 57.12 per cent from Rs 2,74,714.27 crore as on March 31, 2024 to Rs 4,31,624.80 crore as on March 31, 2025," the report said.

addition of 54.13 metric tonnes of gold and also due to increase in price of gold and depreciation of INR vis-à-vis USD, said the annual report for 2024-25.

DoT seeks TRAI's views on spectrum auction

New Delhi, May 29: The government has approached telecom regulator TRAI for recommendations on reserve price and other modalities for the auction of at least nine mainstream spectrum bands, including 800 MHz, 900 MHz and 1800 MHz, which are primarily used for transmitting mobile phone voice and data signals.

Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has been asked for its views on 2500 MHz, 3300 MHz and 26 GHz bands, as well. DoT has also urged the telecom regulator to offer fresh recommendations for auction of spectrum in 600 MHz bands. In the last auction in 2024, this particular band - 600 MHz (612-652, 663-703) had not been put on the block as it did not find

any takers in the 2022 auctions. "In the ITU Radio regulations also, this band has not been identified at the regional or global level for international mobile telecommunication. It was also



decided that fresh consultation with TRAI may be taken before putting up this band for auction...In view of the above, there is a need to re-examine and seek fresh recommendations for the auction of spectrum in the 600 MHz band," DoT has said in its reference to TRAI.

TRAI has also been asked to look at the possibility of auction for newly identified 6,425-6,725 MHz and 7,025-7,125 MHz bands for recommendations on auction timing, band plan, reserve price, and terms and conditions This latest reference by

DoT seeks TRAI's recommendations on reserve price, band plan, block size, quantum of spectrum to be auctioned and associated conditions for auction of spectrum in the existing bands viz 800 MHz, 900 MHz, 1800 MHz, 2100 MHz, 2300 MHz, 2500 MHz, 3300 MHz, 26 GHz bands, sources said.

In the last auction held in 2024, Sunil Bharti Mittal's Airtel had emerged as the biggest bidder for radio waves, cornering about 60 per cent of the Rs 11.341 crore worth of spectrum sold after two days of bidding in June last year.

While Bharti Airtel bid and won airwayes worth Rs 6.856.76 crore, rival Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Jio - had got Rs 973.62 crore worth of spectrum. Vodafone Idea bagged spectrum val ued Rs 3,510.4 crore.

In all, 141.4 MHz of radio waves were sold for Rs 11,340.78 crore in the 2024 auction.

The government had offered a total of 10 GHz of spectrum ranging between 800 MHz and 26 GHz, which was worth Rs 96,238 crore at the base or auction start price.TRAI began the consultation process on another important piece of connectivity, the backhaul

spectrum, Wednesday

TRAI floated a consultation paper for assignment of spectrum in six bands traditional ly used for microwave back haul (between mobile towers) 6 GHz, 7 GHz, 13 GHz, 15 GHz 18 GHz, 21 GHz Bands, E and V Band, as the regulator sought stakeholder views on aspects like demand, terms and conditions, and charges

UK flags new Indian market for Scottish salmon trade after FTA

London, May 29: The UK government has flagged the unlocking of the Indian market for Scottish salmon following the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with India, finalised earlier this month and expected to be formally signed off in the com-

Downing Street has this week been highlighting benefits of the India-UK FTA and other trade pacts struck in its wake with the US and European Union (EU) in an effort to showcase the sectors and regions across the United Kingdom set

"These trade deals deliver long term security for people

less trade and attract inward investment to grow the economy, making a difference to people's lives," Prime Minister Keir Starmer said in a statement.

"These changes will be felt everywhere, whether it's lower food prices at the checkout, more choice for consumers and higher living standards that will improve livelihoods across Scotland," he said. Downing Street noted that

the FTA had unlocked a new salmon market through our deal with India, with tariffs dropping from 33 per cent to 0

unnecessary barriers like tar-

"Securing frictionless access to key markets such as the EU, along with expanding opportunities in India, is crucial to protect our producers from

iffs and red tape," said Tavish Scott, chief executive of Salmon Scotland, the key representative of the sector.

However, in Scotland, the spotlight remains on the whisky industry which is set to

see tariffs for exports to India slashed significantly over the next decade following what the UK has dubbed as a "landmark deal" - agreed on May 6 and expected to add an extra GBP 25.5 billion annually in the long run to the current two-way trade of GBP 41 billion. Under the pact, Scottish dis-

tillers will immediately see tariffs halved from 150 per cent to 75 per cent and eventually to just 40 per cent over the next

UK Business and Trade Secretary Jonathan Reynolds said 'The three landmark deals secured this month with the US, India, and the EU have shown this government is serious about striking the deals that our businesses want and need.

"From our world-renowned whisky distilleries to our cutting-edge green energy sector, Scotland has so much to offer international markets. By securing better access to the European Union, United States and India, we're creating real opportunities for Scottish busi nesses to grow, supporting jobs in communities from the Highlands to the Borders," added Secretary of State for Scotland Ian Murray

At the Indian end, leading Goa-based whisky producer John Distillers welcomed the India-UK FTA as a significant step towards strengthening bilateral trade and economic cooperation between the two Until further details of the

FTA emerge, the Indian distiller said it plans to continue to "build awareness and availabil ity" of its portfolio in the UK Other industries boosted by the FTA include soft drinks and food that the UK government says will "ramp up" Scotland's export economy.

in Scotland. They will create opportunities for more seamThe increase is on account of

Blues script European history

CHELSEA WIN CONFERENCE LEAGUE TO COMPLETE SET OF UEFA TITLES IN LIFTOFF FOR AMERICAN OWNERS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, May 29: Chelsea finally has a trophy to show for the unprecedented levels of spending under its American owners, even if it's hardly one they'd have craved.

The English club produced an impressive second-half rally to beat Real Betis 4-1 in the final of the Conference League Wednesday, becoming in the process the first team to have all four of UEFA's club competitions in its trophy collection.

Aside from the 1971 and 1998 titles in the now-defunct Cup Winners' Cup, Chelsea's other European silverware — the Champions League in 2012 and 2021 and the Europa League in 2013 and 2019 — came in the trophy-laden tenure of Russian oligarch Roman Abramovich.

The Abramovich era ended in 2022 following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and Chelsea was bought by a consortium fronted by Los Angeles Dodgers part-owner Todd Boehly that has since spent around \$1.3 billion on new players in a high-risk move to remodel the squad with mostly young stars.

Some of them delivered in the turnaround against Betis, with Enzo Fernandez and Nicolas Jackson converting pinpoint crosses from Cole Palmer in the 65th and 70th minutes, respectivelv. before substitute Jadon Sancho and Moises Caicedo added more goals in Wroclaw, Poland.

Boehly went on the pitch after the final whistle to congratulate Chelsea's players after club captain Reece James lifted the trophy to a backdrop of ticker tape and loud roars



from teammates in the middle of the field.

"Coming into this competition, it was something we had to win," James said of the Conference League, Europe's oft-maligned third-tier competition. "Next season we go again in the Champions League."

That elite competition is where Chelsea feels it belongs and a fourth-place finish in the Premier League, secured Sunday, sealed a return to the Champions League.

Not a bad few days, then, for the London team and its Italian manager, Enzo Maresca, at the end of his first year in charge.

Betis comes up shortPlaying in its first European final, Betis went ahead through Abdessamad Ezzalzouli's goal in the ninth minute and was the better team in a first half of few

The Seville club faded in the second half, however, as Chelsea's strength off the bench showed. One of those influential substitutes was James, a 25-year-old right back who joined the club at the age of 6 and has suffered many longterm injuries in recent years. He said he was "devastated" not to be picked to start the final but had a big impact when he came on as a halftime replace-

"In the first half we were flat," James said. "The game didn't go our way early on and it looked like it took a lot out of us. We needed a reaction in the second half, and we got it."

The result ended a remarkable run of successes for Spanish teams in European men's title matches. Before this game, all 23 continental finals featuring Spanish clubs since the start of the 2001-02 season had been won by a Spanish team. That included four all-Spanish matchups.

Betis couldn't maintain it in a bid to win a European title for the first time.

Palmer makes the differencePalmer is one of the shining lights in Chelsea's team and the England playmaker inspired the turnaround by setting up Fernandez's equalizer with an inviting, inswinging cross that the Argentina midfielder glanced past flat-footed Betis goalkeeper Adrian.

Palmer then delivered a brilliant piece of skill to spin his marker with a feint and cross with his weaker right foot to Jackson, who bundled the ball

Betis folded and Chelsea flooded forward for more goals, with Jackson over-running the ball when through one-on-one with Adrian.

home off his shoulder.

Sancho made no mistake by cutting inside and curling a shot into the far corner in the 83rd for the last goal of his loan spell from Manchester United that might be made permanent this summer.

Caicedo — arguably Chelsea's star player this season got in on the act with a deflected stoppage-time strike from the edge of the area.

"We struggled a bit first half, second half we were much better and now we are very happy," Maresca said.

Pre-match violenceThe match was preceded by fan disorder in the Polish city that led to 28 people being arrested.

Police used stun grenades and a water cannon against the teams' fans who were disturbing public order in the city, Polish state news agency PAP reported.

English doubleSo far, this season's European trophies have gone to English clubs, with Tottenham winning the Europa League title last week by beating Man United — another Premier League team — 1-0 in the final.

It can't be a treble for England because Saturday's Champions League final in Munich will be between Paris Saint-Germain and Inter Milan.

SINGAPORE OPEN

Satwik-Chirag in quarters; Prannoy, Sindhu bow out



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Singapore, May 29: The Indian men's doubles team of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty entered the quarterfinals, while former world champion PV Sindhu suffered an early exit in the Singapore Open badminton tournament here Thursday.

Satwiksairaj and Chirag rallied to beat seventh-seeded Indonesian pair of Sabar Karyaman Gutama and Moh Reza Pahlevi Isfahani 19-21 21-16 21-19 in a gruelling contest that lasted one hour and 14

They will face the second seeded Malaysian team of Goh Sze Fei and Nur Izzuddin in the next round

It was a commendable performance by the Indian duo, which is making a comeback after battling fitness issues for the past few weeks.

Double Olympic medalist Sindhu went down to world No 5 Chen Yufei of China 9-21, 2118, 16-21 in 65 minutes in a hard fought second-round match.

Sindhu, who recently slipped to world No 17, showed glimpses of her old form, especially in the second game where she led 19-12 before closing it out 21-18

However, the decider saw her struggle to match Chen's sharp smashes and court control. It was Sindhu's seventh loss

to Chen in 13 meetings, high lighting her ongoing inconsistency this season. Despite a dominant 21-14, 21

9 win over Canada's Wen Yu Zhang in the opening round, the 2022 Singapore Open cham pion failed to build momentum.

While Sindhu sparkled in patches, her sluggish reflexes and lack of control in rallies allowed the Chinese star to dictate terms in the final set.

There was disappointment for India in the men's singles competition as HS Prannov bowed out following a 16-21 14-21 loss to French man Christo Popov in the pre-quarterfinals.

IPL STANDINGS

DOMINATING DISPLAY

Gold rush for India at Asian Athletics C'ship

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gumi (South Korea), May 29: It rained gold for India at the Asian Athletics Championships on Thursday as the country's fastest woman hurdler Jyothi Yarraji, seasoned steeplechase runner Avinash Sable and the 4x400m women's relay team delivered stupendous performances to finish on top here.

After Jyothi and Sable set the tone, the quartet of Jisna Mathew, Rupal Chaudhary, Kunja Rajitha and Subha Venkatesan clinched the gold medal in the women's 4x400m relay event after clocking their season-best time (3:34.18sec) to extend India's dominance on the third competition day of the continental championship.

This was the 10th gold overall for India in the event and first since 2013. Overall, India snared three gold, two silver and a bronze medal on Thursday taking their overall tally to 14 after proceedings were disrupted by a massive thunderstorm.

In the women's event, Vietnam took silver with 3:34.77sec, while Sri Lanka settled for the bronze with 3:36 67sec

The men's 4x400m relay team of Jay Kumar, Dharmveer Choudhary, Manu Thekkinalil Saji and Vishal TK also looked to be on course for a gold medal before settling for silver with a timing of 3:03.67sec which was their best performance so far.

Qatar (3:03.52sec) won the gold medal, while China (3:03.73sec) ended the race with bronze in the men's 4x400m relay

Earlier, on his way to victory with a season-best performance, Sable became the first Indian man in 36 years to win a gold medal in steeplechase at the Asian Championships.

Soon after, Jyothi produced a late burst to clinch her second straight gold medal in this competition with a new championship record of 12.96 seconds. The previous record was 13.04 seconds, achieved by Kazakhstan's Olga Shishigina in 1998 and Sun Yawei of China

Sable clocked 8:20.92sec to claim the top honour, which is also his second Asian medal after a silver in the 2019 edition. It was, however, nowhere close to his national record of 8:09.91sec achieved in 2024.

FRENCH OPEN

Three Indians in men's doubles second round

BOPANNA, BALAJI, BHAMBRI ADVANCE IN STYLE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Paris, May 29: Rohan Bopanna and N Sriram Balaji advanced to their respective men's doubles second round at Roland Garros with contrasting wins, making it three Indians in the round of 32 at the French Open. Bopanna and Czech partner

Adam Pavlasek battled past Americans Robert Cash and JJ Tracy 7-6(8), 5-7, 6-1 to advance to the next round late Wednes-The duo converted four break

points and won 68% of their first-serve points in the hardfought encounter that lasted two-hour and 11 minutes

Later, Balaji and his Mexican partner Miguel Reyes-Varela

cruised past China's Yunchaokete Bu and Argentina's Camilo Ugo Carabelli 6-2, 6-1 in just 51 minutes.

The Indo-Mexican duo dominated from start to finish, firing four aces, winning 81 percent of first-serve points and converting four of 10 break-point opportunities.

Their aggressive return also earned them nearly half (49%) of receiving points.

With Balaji's win, three Indians have now made the round of 32 in the men's doubles at the Roland-Garros

Earlier, Yuki Bhambri and American Robert Galloway had edged past Robin Haase and Hendrik Jebens 6-3,



RCB one step away from elusive goal

Royal Challengers Bengaluru enter IPL finals after eight-wicket pounding of Punjab Kings

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mullanpur, May 29: Royal Challengers Bengaluru raced to their first Indian Premier League final since 2016 with an eight-wicket pounding of Punjab Kings in a lopsided Qualifier 1 here Thursday.

Punjab Kings' ultra-aggressive approach backfired on the day as RCB skittled out the home team for 101 in 14.1 overs.

RCB, who are yet to win the IPL despite reaching three finals (2009, 2011, 2016) since the league's inception in 2008, gunned down the small target in 10 overs courtesy a belligerent fifty from opener Phil Salt (56 not out off 27). With a near perfect performance, RCB marched to the title clash scheduled in Ahmedabad on June 3.

Punjab Kings, who reached the play-offs for the first time since 2014, will get another shot at reaching the final in Qualifier 2 in Ahmedabad June 1. The home team batters found it difficult to hit through the line but it seemed Salt was batting on a different surface, collecting boundaries for fun. He ended up smashing six fours and three sixes including a crisp pull off pacer Arshdeep Singh.

The match ended prematurely when RCB skipper Rajat Patidar slog swept Musheer Khan for a maximum. Puniah Kings were blown away by RCB but Kyle Jamieson got the home



crowd going for a brief period by bowling a stellar wicket maiden that included the wick-

et of Virat Kohli (12 off 12). Earlier, the all-out attack strategy of the Punjab Kings contributed to their downfall after they were put in to bat. Their innings lasted just 14.1 overs. The RCB pace trio of Josh Hazlewood (3/21), Bhuvneshwar Kumar (1/17) and Yash Dayal (2/26) exploited the conditions well before leg-spinner Suyash Sharma (3/17) made it worse for the opposition.

Punjab Kings' steep slide began when in-form opener Priyansh Arya was caught at cover off Daval as he couldn't check his drive. His opening partner Prabhsimran Singh (18 off 10) followed him back into the dugout in the following over from Bhuvneshwar.

Captain Shrevas Iver, who has been central to the team's success this season, went for a

	TEAM	М	w	L	NRR	PTS
	PBKS	14	9	4	0.372	19
	RCB	14	9	4	0.301	19
	GT	14	9	5	0.254	18
	МІ	14	8	6	1.142	16
	DC	14	7	6	0.011	15
	SRH	14	6	7	-0.241	13
To the second	LSG	14	6	8	-0.376	12
	KKR	14	5	7	-0.305	12
ii.S	RR	14	4	10	-0.549	8
	CSK	14	4	10	-0.647	8
17 ka	wild ele	ים טי	er ii	0.71	owood.	on hi

vild slog off Hazlewood on his third ball of the innings but was caught behind.

The batters continued to go for their shots to hasten Punjab Kings's slide. Against leggie Suvash, the likes of Marcus Stoinis (26 off 17) and Shashank Singh went for the slog sweep but could not connect to the googly. Having put up a poor effort with the bat, Punjab Kings would take some confidence from their league stage outing against KKR when they defended 111 on a challenging surface here.

Gukesh beats Nakamura to get campaign back on track

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Stavanger (Norway), May 29: World champion D Gukesh brought his campaign back on track on his 19th birthday, defeating world No 2 Hikaru Nakamura of the USA in the third round to open his account even as Arjun Erigaisi suffered his first defeat in the Norway Chess Tournament here Thursday.

Gukesh, who suffered backto-back defeats to world No 1 Norwegian Magnus Carlsen and compatriot Arjun Erigaisi in the first two rounds, put Nakamura -- one of the best Rapid and Blitz players -- under time pressure to win the game in 42 moves and collect three points.

Playing with white pieces,

Gukesh, who was constantly under time pressure in the last two games, was the one who got Nakamura staring at the clock in round three of the six-player double round-robin tournament.

"I feel quite good (about the win). I think my time management was much better today than before. He (Nakamura) had some drawing chances, but I guess, overall, it was good," said Gukesh as he moved to fifth spot on the points table ahead of Chinese No.1 Wei Yi.

Nakamura realised soon after the start of the game that something had gone wrong early on in a Giuoco Piano opening. He decided to reverse the situation by switching to



a kingside attack that could exploit Gukesh's vulnerability after a difficult start.

However, the Indian wasn't

Though Nakamura came agonisingly close to a draw, he admitted to relaxing too soon.

When the American offered a draw on move 30, he was instead met by a move, which

sent him on a downward spiral. It was a remarkable fightback for Gukesh after two successive defeats and he acknowledged

that the previous two days had

Arjun Erigaisi loses

After a superb start, Erigaisi suffered a setback as he went down to Grandmaster Fabiano Caruana, while defending

NORWAY CHESS

champion Carlsen lost the Armageddon tie-break to China's

Caruana jumped into sole lead after logging in three more points to take his tally to six. while Carlsen was second on five points and Erigaisi and Nakamura tied for the third position with 4.5 points each.

Caruana began the game with a very rare 7.h4 in the French Defence and Erigai-

si, playing with black pieces said later he was optimistic he could pull off a win as "white is a bit underdeveloped" move in French Defence.

However, Caruana said after

the match that his Indian opponent's optimism was the reason

behind his loss. **Humpy in joint lead**

In the women's competition, two-time World Rapid champion Koneru Humpy, playing with white pieces, emerged joint leader with Ukraine's Anna Muzychuk on six points following a win over Irani an-Spanish Woman Grand Mas ter Sara Khadem in the third round. China's Ju Wenjun got the better of R Vaishali in the Armageddon tie-break

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