



## Tamannaah comes clean

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

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## Musk exits Trump admin

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

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## RBI annual report

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

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## Chelsea crowned

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

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**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)**

## 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 Majhi 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 knew it could be fake news. I felt the same when we were 5th largest - and when they said we became 4th

# Two dead, 6 critical 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 Babuji 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 family," he said.

## US court blocks Trump's tariffs

AGENCIES

**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 IEPA 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 require-

ment that an emergency be triggered only by an "unusual and extraordinary threat".

The US has run a trade deficit 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" question of whether the President's rationale for declaring an emergency complies with the law.

## Hardcore Maoist Hidma with ₹4L bounty arrested

POST NEWS NETWORK

**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 Jey-

pore 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 information to a Pakistani intelligence agent, who honey-trapped him on social media, officials said.

The 27-year-old accused, identified 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 'Pakistani 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 Secrets Act that deals with espionage, and Section 61 (2) (criminal conspiracy) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

After interrogation, Verma was placed under arrest.

# In Japan, bobtailed cats are a lucky charm

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

AGENCIES

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

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 shrine.

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

and member of the Nagasaki Cat Society.

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



protect shipments on their way from Southeast Asia to Japan, according to Nagasaki cultural officials.

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 problem 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.

Nagasaki residents hope the cats bring in tourists and help business.

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 in Spain.

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



# leisure

## FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Your creative juices are flowing today, says Ganesha, 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.

**TAURUS**  
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 will need your expertise to help them through difficult tasks. Later in the evening, a long stroll with your sweetheart will end a rather remarkable day.

**CANCER**  
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 your peers at work. You will make quite a progress both at work and in personal life.

**LEO**  
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 have been expecting so far.

**VIRGO**  
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. There are some monetary benefits on the cards. Ganesha advises you to take good care of your health.

**LIBRA**  
Having an elderly hand to guide you and back you up is 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 to delay 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.



## 'I REALLY WANT TO VISIT INDIA'

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.



## 'LIKE' FOR DP

# 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 misogyny, 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 emojis.

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.



# 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 buying it.

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 you, Leo... now that's a Titanic compliment #Queen-MovesOnly #QueenOfCannes #LeoAndUR #UrvashiRautela #Cannes2025 #leonardodicaprio."

However, it's the comment section that really steals the show, 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 queen 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 complimented her for *Daaku Maharaaj* and *Dabidi Dibidi*. One user wrote: "So, u wanna to be like KATE."

"It's a desperate selfie," said another.

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



# Things Rashmika holds closest to heart

**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 saree, striking different poses for the camera. She is seated on a couch, smiling as she poses.

To note, the



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'

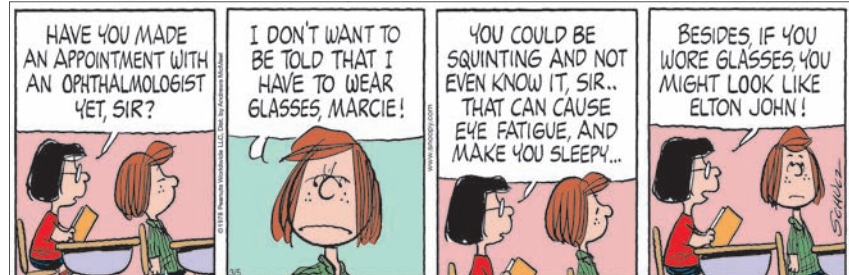
**Mumbai:** Actress Bhumi Pednekar recently offered a glimpse into what keeps her spirits soaring on set.

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 *Bhakhshak* actress is seen enjoying tea with bun maska. In the video, Pednekar could be heard saying, "Bread, butter, and chai ultimate."

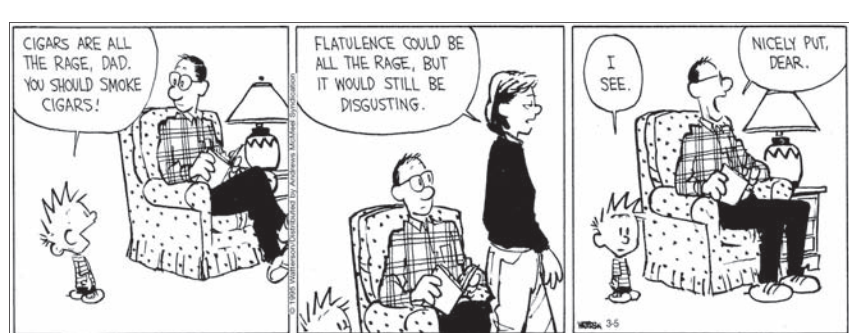
Bhumi shared a series of photos from the sets, capturing the cozy mood of a rainy-day shoot. Along with her post, she used hashtags like #monsoons, #onset, #filming, #BhumiPednekar, and #chai — perfectly summing up her love for simple pleasures during a busy filming schedule.

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 hardships. 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 HOBBS

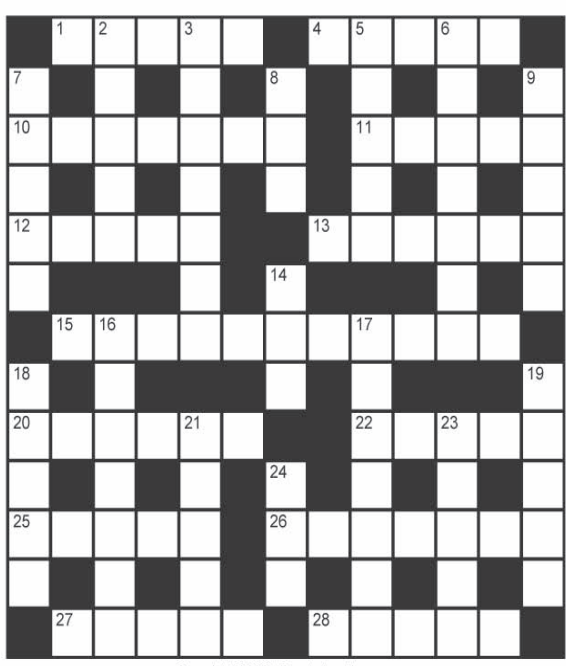


## BREVITY



## FUN post

## CROSSWORD



- Across**

  - 1 Public relations concern
  - 4 Aesop's forte
  - 10 Come apart
  - 11 Bullion unit
  - 12 Keyboard key
  - 13 Wall paintings
  - 15 Narrow escapes (5,6)
  - 20 Prevaricator
  - 22 Alcove
- Down**

  - 2 Reason for a raise
  - 3 Rules
  - 5 Gallic goodbye
  - 6 Suitcases
  - 7 Stubborn sorts
  - 25 Banana oil, e.g.
  - 26 Hot pepper
  - 27 Put to the test
  - 28 Proclamation
- 8 Pesky insect
  - 9 Secret supply
  - 14 Venomous snake
  - 16 Seafood entree
  - 17 Ticked off
  - 18 Frequently
  - 19 Small three-masted vessel
  - 21 Chill-inducing
  - 23 Disparager
  - 24 Slick

## 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.

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

## SOLUTIONS

### CROSSWORD

Z	A		O	G	L
C	O	G	N	A	C
N	G	O	A	E	V
T	E	A	L	R	O
E	R	S	E		
O	F	F	R	O	A
G	R	I	N	A	T
N	T	A	X		
G	O	L	F	C	A
R	A	R	E	U	W
C	A	N	N	O	N
L	T	S		E	R

### SUDOKU

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW





# PM: VKSA an opportunity for farmers to clear doubts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**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 agriculture.

“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 farmers.

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,” he said.

The PM also suggested that the farmers be made aware of solar panning in their fields,

## ₹800 paddy assistance an example: Chouhan



AGENCIES

**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 VKSA, a nationwide campaign aimed at transforming Indian agriculture through scientific intervention, in the presence of Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, Deputy CM and Agriculture Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo, local MLAs and senior agriculture scientists.

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 ‘Anna-datas’ (food providers).

He also appealed to farmers to actively engage with

the scientists.

“India is now capable of feeding its population of 145 crore. But we must not stop — we 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 Majhi 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.

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

“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 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

AGENCIES

**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,” Majhi announced.

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

Mission, and effective grassroots execution.

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 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,” he said. On the occasion, Lakhpati Didis such as Vindhyaabashini from Rayagada district and Shobha Digambara Kadam from Maharashtra shared their success stories and experiences.

The Chief Minister honoured

## Lopar intensifies into deep depression

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, May 29:** The well-marked low-pressure area over the north-west 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 Ben-

gal-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, the weather office said.

# 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 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 coun-

tryman. The entire nation was 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.”

## NCAP review lauds City public transport

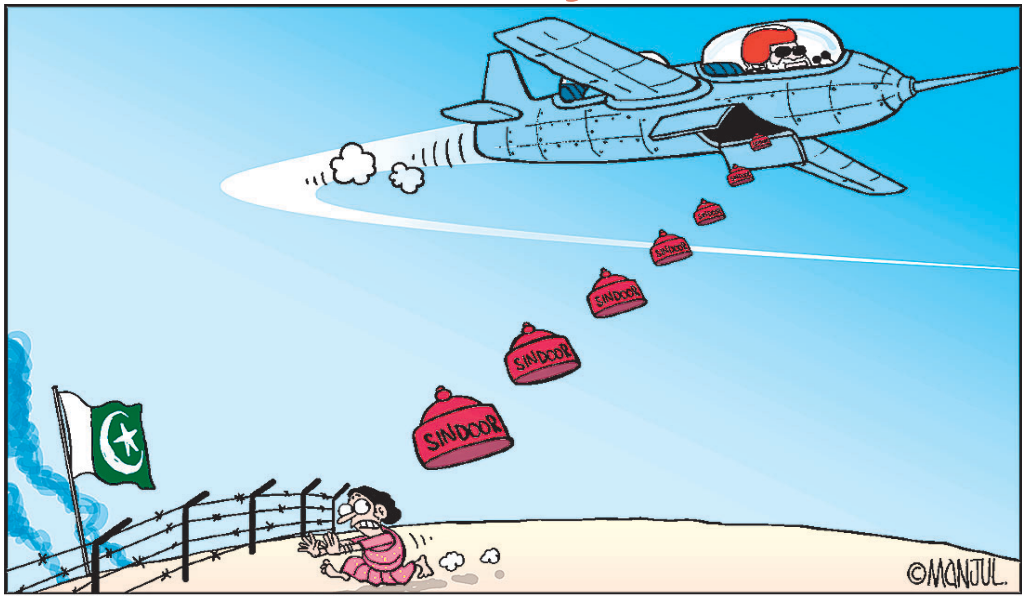
POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar/New Delhi. May 29:** Bhubaneswar has emerged as one of the standout examples of progressive clean air action in the country, according to a comprehensive national review of the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) which was released Thursday by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE).

The City was recognised for its significant transformation in public transport, starting from a limited baseline to building a more modern and efficient bus system. Moreover, Odisha has been acknowledged for its leadership in deploying Continuous Emission Monitoring Systems (CEMS) in industries, enhancing regulatory oversight on industrial emissions.

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’ captures emerging good practices from across India in four critical sectors: vehicles, industries, solid waste, and construction and demolition (C&D) waste.

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL



# 'Childhood leukaemia cases on rise'

AGENCIES

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

Prof Priyanka 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 disease.

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.

Shakuntala Dhal (Deogarh district), 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 districts—each achieving 97 per cent success. Devi Prasad Nayak from 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 Lakhpati Didi initiative.

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

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



## ₹30K bribe over UPI: Two govt officials held

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, May 29:** The state Vigilance sleuths Thursday arrested two Minor Irrigation department officials in Gajapati district after catching them red-handed while accepting 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 department in Gajapati district. While Suraj is posted as a Divisional 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 simultaneous searches at locations linked to the duo to ascertain their disproportionate assets, if any. The searches are still on.

The officials have been booked under Section 7 of the Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Act, 2018.



# 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 life-line, others expressed concerns over rising competition and reduced chances for younger candidates.

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

"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



ASPIRANTS APPRECIATE THE EXTENDED OPPORTUNITY FOR OVER-AGED CANDIDATES

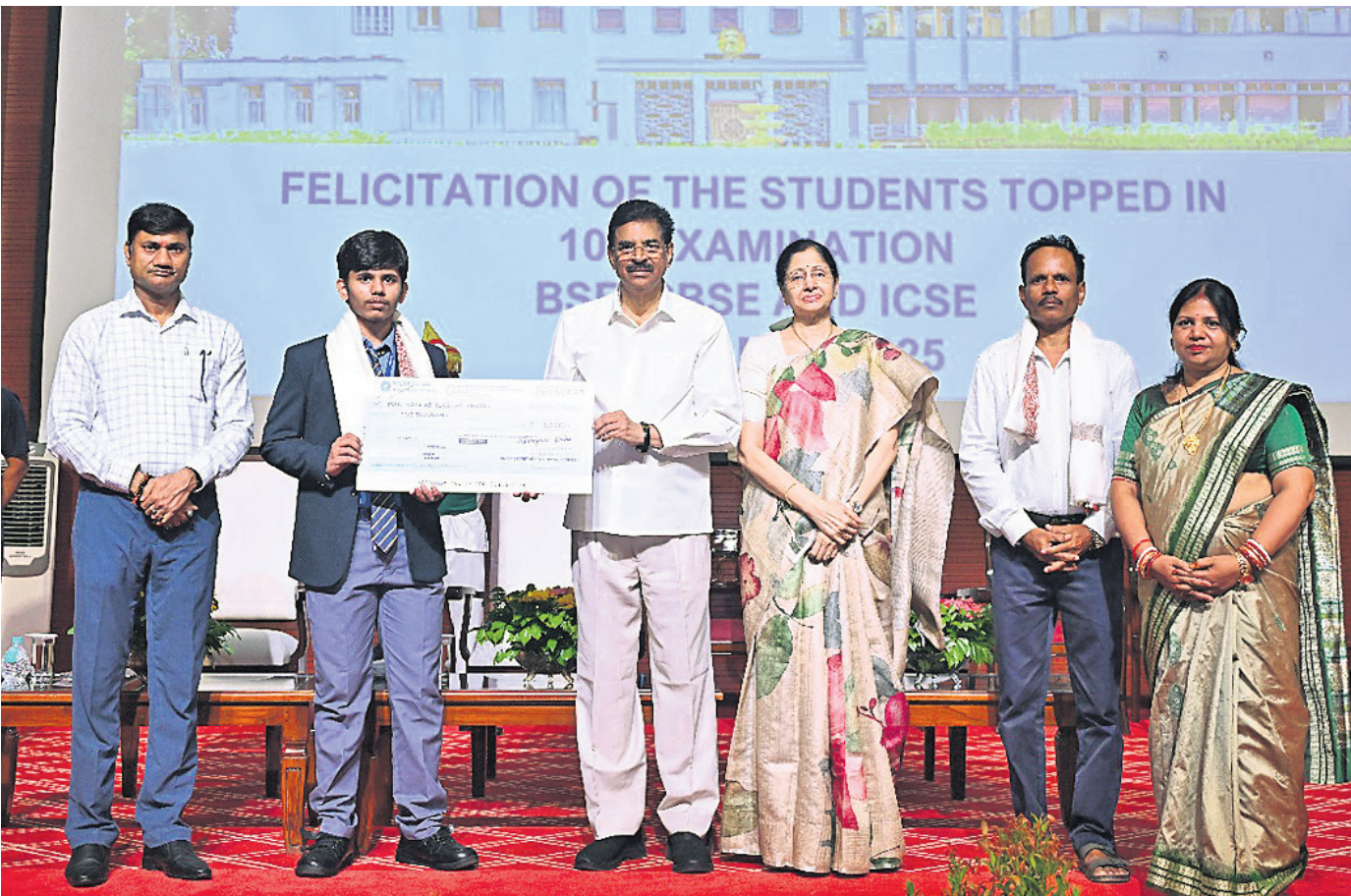
CONCERNS RAISED OVER INTENSIFIED COMPETITION AND UNCHANGED NUMBER OF VACANCIES

attempts remains unchanged. So, even with age relaxation, if attempts are exhausted, it 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 recruitment policies.



**TALENT HONOURED:** Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati felicitates ICSE-2025 topper (99%) Maitraya 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, has been recently conferred 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.



The event was graced by 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



POST NEWS NETWORK

**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 Rayagada, 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 Environment Day, June 5.

Eminent cardiologist and former head of cardiology department at SCB Medical College Hrudananda Mishra will be bestowed with the 'Lifetime Contribution to Health Services Award' and Mahanadi Bachao Andolan convener 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 Srichandan 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 felicitated 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.

## CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

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.

## Menstruation, a blessing from God: Dy CM Parida



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 Pravat 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 grass-roots level as well as change our own mindset. Mothers at

home should also take more care of their daughters than 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 organised in collaboration with WaterAid, PCI India, Piramal Foundation, HealthPlus, Navo Plus, Unicef, CYSD, Views India, UNDP, CIAFAR, PJS, Water Initiatives, JITA and others.

## Survey reveals silent struggles of elderly

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

**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

### BHUBANESWAR OLD AGE HOME



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.

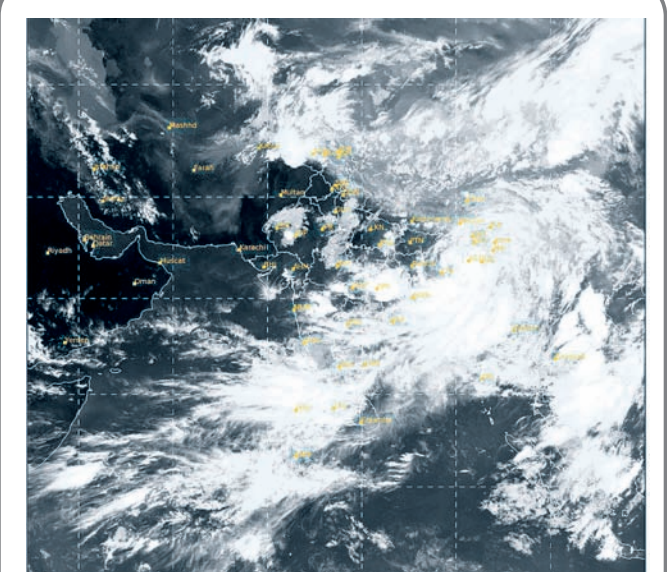
They engaged directly with the residents, staff, and management of the old age home, as well as with elderly individuals living alone or with their families in the surrounding community.

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 institutional living, several still hoped for more dignified and independent alternatives. Suggestions for organising regular cultural and social 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, ICFAI Business School's Debajani Sahoo and ISoSS, IFHE dean and professor Tamma Koti Reddy.



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

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## 2 women killed in lightning strikes

POST NEWS NETWORK



FOCUS HIGHER EDUCATION

THE QUALITY PARADOX



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 all-round 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 teaching 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

Rekindling the flame of student revolt

Students 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 democracies—now 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.



Bhabani Shankar Nayak

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

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

SRI AUROBINDO

The GDP Obsession

In 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.



Kaushik Basu

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

WISDOM CORNER

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

LAO TZU

“When you are sorrowful look again in your heart, and you shall see that in truth you are weeping for that which has been your delight.”

KAHLIL GIBRAN

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

CONFUCIUS

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

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 stake.

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 numerous duels—some accounts estimate 100—and many of them were in defense of his wife, Rachel.

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 sporting events.

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

B-15, Rasulgarih Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

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. Jayanthi Subramaniam, MUMBAI





BEYOND BEACHES

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 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 industry, 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 (Chikhhal Kalo), Sao Joao, Bondera, San-god 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 president 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, Navsari, Valsad, Tapi, and Daman, as well as the Saurashtra districts of Amreli and Bhavnagar, 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 & Nagar 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 weather — to minimise urban risk in one of Gujarat's most flood-prone 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 struc-

turally 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.



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

PTI PHOTO

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 Gujarat."

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, Nayi 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

and launched a probe," the SP said.

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.

"Geeta told us that since she had seen "Drishyam" as well as "Drishyam 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.

8,326 gram panchayats in Gujarat to go to polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Ahmedabad, May 29:** As many 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) announced 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.

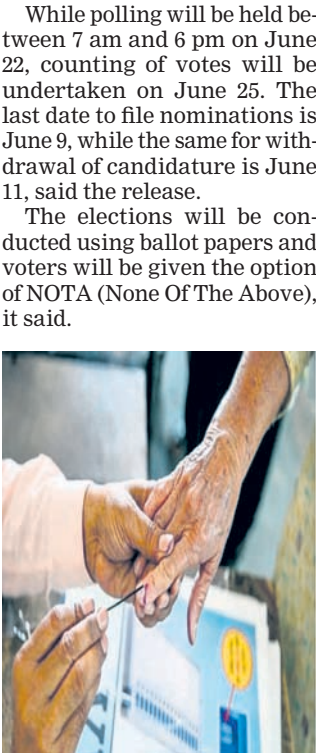
Gram panchayat elections on such a big scale are being held in Gujarat for the first time after the state government in 2023 announced to give a 27 per cent reservation to OBCs in local bodies like panchayats municipalities and civic corporations on the basis of Zaveri Commission's report.

Of these 8,326 gram panchayats, 4,688 are going for general or mid-term elections, while bypolls would be held in 3,638 village councils, the SEC said in a release in Gandhinagar.

Candidates in panchayat elections stand individually and not on party tickets though they may be affiliated to political 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 June 9, while the same for withdrawal of candidature is June 11, said the release.

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



HISTORIC VOYAGE

Indian Navy officers return after sailing around globe

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**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 spokesperson.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh welcomed the two intrepid women and their vessel upon the completion of the eight-month '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

present.

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

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 said.

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 made it.

"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 you 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."

**You have not just gone around Earth but you have also made a place in the heart of every Indian. After meeting you both today, I feel as if a father is meeting his two daughters**

RAJNATH SINGH | DEFENCE MINISTER

Her family has been her "spine" throughout her life as she made unconventional choices, she said, adding, "I 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 journey."

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,

INSV Tarini made her first 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.

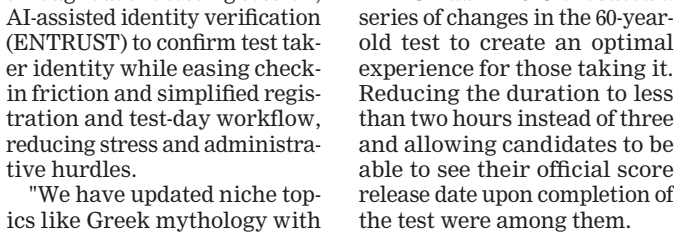
"One of the most significant achievement of this leg was that Tarini became the first sail ship to cross Point Nemo in South Pacific, often referred to as the Oceanic Pole of Inaccessibility, on January 30," the spokesperson said.

Having traversed 3,896 nautical 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.





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





of the day quote

Ladki Bahin Yojana falls under the category of giving personal benefit to beneficiaries. So, if you give money to this scheme, then as per budgetary rules, it has to be shown under the Tribal Affairs Department and the Social Justice Department

DEVENDRA FADNAVIS | MAHARASHTRA CM

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

MARSHAL A P SINGH | IAF CHIEF AIR CHIEF

We have full faith that those of our brothers who are geographically and politically separated from us today 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 Airport 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 halqa 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.



The income of people has to increase eightfold to define Viksit Bharat

JAGDEEP DHANKHAR | VICE PRESIDENT

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



'Operation Sindoor' not over yet: Modi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**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. I understood 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

**Kolkata:** Accusing Prime Minister Narendra Modi of diverting attention from the BJP-led Centre's failures, the Trinamool Congress (TMC) Thursday posed five 'counter-questions' in response to the PM's remarks about crises allegedly affecting West Bengal. In a post on X, the party called upon the PM to first "fix the mess" in Manipur, which had witnessed severe law and order problems for over two years. "Modi ji listed 5 'Sankats'. Let's talk facts," the TMC said in its official X handle. Coming to other posers, the party said, "Women's safety? From Unnao to Hathras, @BJP4India's track record is soaked in silence and shame." "Youth hopelessness? Paper leaks, NEET scam, and 45 per cent unemployment - BJP's national gift to students," the regional party said. "Corruption? Half your Cabinet is out on bail. Irony died a slow death," the party said, turning the corruption charge towards the Modi cabinet.

the Prime Minister accused Pakistan of institutionalising terrorism.

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



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**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.

Laying out India's policy approach 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 Business 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 terrorism 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 brothers who are geographically and politically separated from us today, 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

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**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 confidential 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 involved should be punished.

Pune teen held for 'Op Sindoor' post, out on bail, appears for exam

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 "Operation 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 Somasekhara 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 informed 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.

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 Anjaria, 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

PTI PHOTO

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 regions, scientists have 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 two-month-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.

Farooq Azam, senior cryosphere specialist at the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), said the rising temperatures are melting glaciers faster, affecting water availability in India's rivers.

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 early 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 specialist 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.



of the day

quote

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



PAETONGTARN SHINAWATRA | PRIME MINISTER, THAILAND

I do not want to see any fighting between armies that does not bring any benefits to our two countries and peoples, especially those who are fighting directly on the front lines



HUN MANET | PRIME MINISTER, CAMBODIA

High tariffs will not bring economic prosperity. A prosperity built on sacrifices by someone or another country will not make a strong economy



SHIGERU ISHIBA | PRIME MINSTER, JAPANESE

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 saying 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 Taliban 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 deaths of Indian family

**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. Ramanlal Patel, an Indian national from Florida, was sentenced to 10 years and one month in prison for his role in the conspiracy. He will be deported from the US following his sentence. Shand was sentenced to six years and six months in prison.



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 | SECRETARY OF STATE, US

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



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



ELON MUSK | TESLA CEO

White House how to proceed without further alienating Congressional 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 firings, buyouts and early retirement 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 cases, staff and funding cuts have led to purchasing bottlenecks, increased costs and a brain drain of scientific and technological talent.

The most recent source of friction came Tuesday when Musk criticized the price tag of Republicans’ tax and budget 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.

Israel announces new West Bank settlements



REUTERS

**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 expansion.

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.

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.

« 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 legalised.

Stunt performer sues Kevin Costner

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Los Angeles, May 29:** A stunt performer has sued Kevin Costner, 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 says.

Costner’s attorney said the lawsuit has no merit, and LaBella’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

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.



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 lawsuit says.

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



“Off-boarding will begin tonight,” White House official says

Musk oversaw sweeping staff cuts as a special government employee

Musk has criticized Republican tax and budget bill

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 bureaucracy,” he declared.

Musk clashed with three of Trump’s most senior cabinet

members - Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy and Treasury Secretary Scott Besent. 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 are already discussing with the

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.

There were no immediate reports of civilian casualties on the ground. The navy set up a task force to investigate the crash and temporarily grounded its P-3s.

An emergency office in Pohang 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 apartment 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.

In December, a Jeju Air passenger plane crashed at Muan International Airport in southern South Korea, killing all but two of the 181 people on board. It was one of the deadliest disasters in South Korea’s aviation history.

Chinese students despair as US cracks down on visas

‘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 its headline immigration agenda.

“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,



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.”

Chen, who lives in the southwestern 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 Secretary of State Marco Rubio asked his department to pause the scheduling of student visa appointments until the department issues updated guidance on social media vetting of applicants.

The news set off a 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 stayed 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 started booking, the page crashed several times,” she told Reuters. The 29-year-old biology student, who preferred not 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

Move puts major source of income for US universities at risk

Trump administration did not say how many would be affected

State Department did not say when visa appointments would resume



of the day

Quote

We are thrilled to announce our first domestic order of FY26 from a very reputed PSU developer and continue to build on our strong position in the Gujarat market

CHANDRA KISHORE THAKUR | GLOBAL CEO, SWREL

India remains a strategic focus and key market for Pixel. With a strategy squarely focused on empowering Indians with AI-powered devices, we are firing on all cylinders

MITUL SHAH | MD SERVICES, GOOGLE INDIA

With Osimertinib's approval for this additional indication, we are reaching a significant milestone in redefining lung cancer treatment in India

SANJEEV PANCHAL | MD, ASTRAZENECA PHARMA INDIA

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 quarter 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-quarter 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 crore in FY24.

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.




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 his leadership

BHARAT KAUSHAL | EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN, HITACHI INDIA

### 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.



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

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**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 both 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 a year ago.

The Reserve Bank spent Rs 6,372.82 crore on printing of currency notes in the last fiscal, an

increase of 25 per cent from Rs 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 Thursday. 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 increasingly prioritising convenience 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



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 major gainers.

Among Sensex firms, IndusInd 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 bank's shares.

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, realty 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 only 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 Nikkei 225 index, Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng settled in positive territory. Markets in Europe were trading higher. US markets ended lower Wednesday.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities 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.

The increase is on account of 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

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**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 airwaves 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 valued 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 traditionally used for microwave backhaul (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

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**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 coming weeks.

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 to benefit.

"These trade deals deliver long term security for people in Scotland. They will create opportunities for more seam-

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 per cent.

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



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

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 businesses 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 countries.

Until further details of the FTA emerge, the Indian distiller said it plans to continue to "build awareness and availability" 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.



# 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, respectively, 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 chances.

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 long-term 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 replacement.

"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 home off his shoulder.

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

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 minutes.

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, 21-

18, 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, highlighting 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 champion failed to build momentum.

While Sindhu sparked 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 Prannoy bowed out following a 16-21 14-21 loss to Frenchman Christo Popov in the pre-quarterfinals.

## 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 in 2011.

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 Wednesday.

The duo converted four break points and won 68% of their first-serve points in the hard-fought encounter that lasted two-hour and 11 minutes.

Later, Balaji and his Mexican partner Miguel Reyes-Varela

cruised past China's Yuncha-okete 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, 6-7(8), 6-3.



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. Punjab 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 wicket 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 Dayal as he couldn't check his drive. His opening partner Prabhsimran Singh (18 off 10) followed him back into the dug-out in the following over from Bhuvneshwar.

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

IPL STANDINGS						
TEAM	M	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	
MI	14	8	6	1.142	16	
DC	14	7	6	0.011	15	
SRH	14	6	7	-0.241	13	
LSG	14	6	8	-0.376	12	
KKR	14	5	7	-0.305	12	
RR	14	4	10	-0.549	8	
CSK	14	4	10	-0.647	8	

wild 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' slide. Against leggie Suyash, 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.

### Brief scores

Punjab Kings: 101 all out in 14.1 overs (Suyash Sharma 3/21, Josh Hazlewood 3/21, Yash Dayal 2/26) lose to Royal Challengers Bengaluru: 106 for 2 in 10 overs (Philip Salt 56; Kyle Jamieson 1/27)

# 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 back-to-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 vulnerable.

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

been tough for him.

### 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 Wei Yi.

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 Iranian-Spanish Woman Grand Master Sara Khadem in the third round. China's Ju Wenjun got the better of R Vaishali in the Armageddon tie-break.