



Madalsa's revelation

Actor Madalsa Sharma opens up about a shocking incident of casting couch at the beginning of her career

LEISURE | P2



Attack on oil infra

Ukrainian drones flying deep into Russia to strike oil facilities, sending up plumes of smoke that can be seen from space

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Fills net seller

Foreign institutional investors remain net seller for 10th consecutive month in April, as they sell ₹70,100cr worth Indian equities

BUSINESS | P11



Kuldeep's record leap

Kuldeep Kumar scripts history on Day One, breaking national pole vault record at inaugural indoor meet in Kalinga Stadium

SPORTS | P12



PASSING THE HURDLE: People wade through a part of Doda-Kishtwar road after a heavy landslide blocked the road with debris, in Doda, Jammu and Kashmir, Saturday

PTI PHOTO

95% students clear Class X board exam

Girls outperform boys this year as well

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 2: Over 95 per cent of 5.36 lakh students have cleared the Odisha Class X board examination, School and Mass Education Minister Nityananda Gond said Saturday. The minister also announced the results of the State Open School Certificate (SOSC) and Madhyama examinations. Gond said out of the 5.44 lakh students who had registered for the Class X exam, 5.36 lakh appeared at over 3,000 centres across the state between February 19 and March 2. He said a total of 5.19 lakh students (95.33 per cent) cleared the exam, conducted by the Board of Secondary Education (BSE).

Girls outperformed boys this year as well, with 2,63,152 girls and 2,56,099 boys passing the exam. The pass percentage among boys stands at 94.03%, while girls have outperformed with a higher success rate of 96.37%. The minister said 2,456 students secured A1 grade, 15,681

got A2, 43,565 received B1 and 86,103 secured B2. Similarly, 1,29,813 students secured a C grade, 1,46,152 students got D, and another 95,481 students received E grade.

As many as 8,364 students remained absent, while 17,055 failed to clear the exam. A total of 3,310 schools recorded 100 per cent results, Gond said. Gajapati district registered the highest pass percentage of 99.31, while Keonjhar district reported the lowest pass percentage at 94.35. For the first time, the board will issue certificates in Odia in addition to English, Gond said.

Registration for the supplementary examination will be held from May 8 to May 18, and the test will be conducted in July, BSE president Srikantha Tarai said. Students can apply online for rechecking from Monday and may also obtain copies of their answer sheets, he added. About 59.82 per cent students cleared the SOSC examination, while 87.3 per cent passed the Madhyama examination.

WOMAN, MINOR SON ELECTROCUTED IN DEOGARH DISTRICT

POST NEWS NETWORK

Deogarh, May 2: A woman and her seven-year-old son died after being electrocuted in a village in Deogarh district Saturday, police said.

The incident occurred in Kundeigola village under Reamal block when Upasi Bhutia, wife of Niranjana Bhutia, was operating a water pump near a well on the premises of their residence. Upasi reportedly came into contact with a live electric wire, and her son, Manpreet, was also caught in the accident while he was with her.

Family members rushed both victims to Kundeigola hospital, where doctors declared them dead on arrival. Police said they have seized the bodies and sent them for post-mortem examination. An unnatural death case has been registered and an investigation is underway.

US warns of sanctions for firms paying 'Hormuz toll'

BEIRUT: The United States is warning shipping companies they could face sanctions for making payments to Iran to safely pass through the Strait of Hormuz. The US Office of Foreign Assets Control alert posted Friday adds pressure in the standoff between the US and Iran over control of the strait at the mouth of the Persian Gulf, where about a fifth of the world's trade in oil and natural gas typically passes. Iran effectively closed the strait by attacking and threatening ships after the US and Israel launched a war Feb 28. It later began offering some ships safe passage by detouring their through routes closer to its shore, charging fees at times.

CM for overhaul of edu ecosystem

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 2: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Saturday called for a revolutionary overhaul of the state's educational ecosystem, outlining an ambitious roadmap to position Odisha as India's premier 'Knowledge Hub'.

Majhi also launched the 'ShaktiShree' mobile application during a two-day national workshop in the presence of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and Higher Education Minister Suryabanshi Suraj.

The ShaktiShree app aims to strengthen support systems for girl students by enhancing

safety and accessibility in higher education institutions.

It offers 24/7 SOS alerts, anonymous reporting of harassment and mental health support, and connects users with institutional Internal Complaints Committees.

The CM also released the internship guidelines, aimed at integrating academic learning with real-world exposure and making students industry-ready through internships, community engagement and skill-based learning in line with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

Addressing the gathering, Majhi said education is not limited to textbooks but is the



foundation of progress and innovation, reiterating the government's vision to transform Odisha into a leading knowledge hub.

Pradhan said NEP 2020 is "not merely a policy but a national mission" to position India as a global knowledge

capital, and stressed the importance of skill development and innovation.

He praised Odisha for its unique blend of culture and education and underscored the importance of skill development and innovation in shaping the future workforce.

Suraj described the initiative as a transformative step, stating, "The launch of the ShaktiShree App and the internship guidelines marks a new phase in Odisha's higher education journey. These initiatives will empower students, especially young women, with the tools, exposure and confidence needed to succeed in a rapidly evolving global landscape."

UP shocker: 4 kids found murdered; mom missing

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ayodhya, May 2: Four children were allegedly bludgeoned to death inside their house in Uttar Pradesh's Ambedkar Nagar district, while their mother is reportedly missing, police said Saturday.

The incident that took place in the Miranpur locality within the Akbarpur police station limits came to light around 3 pm Saturday, when locals alerted police as the house remained locked since morning. A police team rushed to the spot and found the blood-soaked bodies of the children on a bed in the house, officials said.

The deceased were identified as Shafiq (14), Saud (10), Umar (eight) and Sadiya (seven), the

children of Niyaz (42) who has been working in Saudi Arabia for years. The children lived at home with their mother, Naziya Khatoon (37), who has gone missing, police said.

Deputy Inspector General, Ayodhya range, Somen Barma said, "We received information around 3 pm that the bodies of four children were lying in a house. Police teams immediately reached the spot and launched an investigation."

Police said the main door of the house was locked from inside and the children appeared to have been killed after being hit with a blunt object, possibly a brick. A forensic examination is underway and evidence is being collected from the house and surrounding areas.

IED blast claims four cops in Chhattisgarh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kanker, May 2: Four police personnel, including an inspector of the District Reserve Guard (DRG), were killed after an improvised explosive device (IED) went off while they were trying to neutralise it during a demining operation in Chhattisgarh's Kanker district Saturday, police said.

This was the first blast incident linked to Naxalite activity in the state since it was declared free from armed Maoism March 31. It was also the first instance this year in which security personnel engaged in anti-Naxal operations have lost their lives.

The explosion occurred around 11.30 am in a forest area of Aadnar village under Chhotethiya police station limits,



near the Narayanpur district border, when a joint team of security personnel was conducting a demining operation to locate and defuse IEDs planted earlier by Naxalites, Inspector General of Police, Bastar Range Sundarraj Pattilingam told PTI.

Based on the inputs received from surrendered Maoist cadres and other intelligence over the past few months, security forces had recovered and neu-

tralised hundreds of IEDs planted earlier by Naxalites across the Bastar range, which comprises seven districts including Kanker, he said.

Saturday's operation was launched following similar inputs about Maoist dumps in the Chhotethiya area. The team, led by the DRG, also included personnel from the Bastar Fighters and the district force, he said. During the operation, the team

first detected a Maoist dump and recovered materials belonging to the ultras. Around 11.30 am, they found another dump containing an IED concealed beneath the ground, he said. However, the explosive went off while personnel were attempting to retrieve it for defusal, critically injuring four personnel, the official said. Inspector Sukhram Vatti (40) of the DRG, who was leading the team, constable Krishna Komra (35) of the district force, and constable Sanjay Gadhpal (29) of the Bastar Fighters succumbed to their injuries on the spot. Another injured constable, Parmanand Komra (29) of the Bastar Fighters, was airlifted to Raipur but died during treatment at a hospital there, he added.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Of course, our govt assured the people that there won't be any fuel price hike. But, that was a full 58 seconds ago

YouTuber solves Rubik's Cube in 23 secs while freefalling

High above the sweeping coastline of Mossel Bay, a coastal town in the Western Cape province of South Africa, where the ocean meets the sky in a blur of blue, a young man hurled himself into the void—with a puzzle cube in hand and a world record in sight. What followed was not just a feat of speed, but a striking blend of precision, nerve and imagination.

For most, solving a Rubik's Cube is a test of patience and logic, often attempted in the calm of a quiet room. For Tom Kopke, it became something



far more daring. The 23-year-old German YouTuber turned a freefall skydive into a stage

for an extraordinary challenge—solving the cube while plummeting through the air at

speeds exceeding 100 mph.

As the ground rushed closer, Kopke's hands moved with remarkable clarity and control. In just 23.333 seconds, he completed the puzzle mid-air, setting a new benchmark recognised by Guinness World Records. The feat eclipsed the previous record of 28.250 seconds, held by Sam Sieracki since 2023.

Kopke's journey to this moment began not in the skies, but with quiet determination on the ground. He first picked up the cube at 18, drawn to its intricate patterns and the discipline it demanded. Over time,

his curiosity evolved into a series of unconventional challenges—solving cubes underwater, mastering blindfolded attempts, and pushing the limits of what seemed possible. In one such experiment, he solved six cubes underwater, earning a tie in a Guinness World Records category, though the current record—16 cubes—is held by Daryl Tan Hong An.

Skydiving, however, had long remained an ambition just out of reach. Financial constraints and time commitments delayed his plans to train and obtain a licence. But the idea

never left him. When he finally took the plunge—literally—he did so with a clear objective: to transform a personal dream into a record-breaking reality.

For Kopke, the jump was more than a stunt. It was the culmination of years of persistence, a testament to how passion can evolve into something extraordinary when paired with purpose. In the vast openness of the sky, with seconds slipping away faster than gravity could pull him down, he solved not just a puzzle—but redefined the boundaries of it.

AGENCIES

leisure



KYLIE JENNER SUED BY SECOND HOUSEKEEPER OVER HARASSMENT

Just weeks after Kylie Jenner was sued by a former housekeeper, a second ex-staff member has filed a lawsuit with similar allegations of harassment, discrimination, and poor working conditions. The 28-year-old make-up mogul was hit by a lawsuit from Angelica Hernandez Vasquez last month, which alleged harassment, discrimination and labour violations.

TOM HOLLAND ON IMPACT OF ALCOHOL

Hollywood star Tom Holland quit drinking in January 2022 and he has now described the impact of alcohol on his life. Holland faced intense scrutiny over his personal life. The actor shared: "Drinking was something that was ultimately really getting in the way of my professional life too."



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Today, the stars put you on high alert... and not for nothing. You will save yourself from being swindled. Though you will easily manage to stay ahead of others, you may make a few enemies on your way. It's not a good day if you're looking to buy a house or vehicle, says Ganesh.

TAURUS
Impulsive action kicks in as you work and interact today. Do not let the pressure and strain cloud your thoughts, and instead focus on acting on the things at hand. If you find things spiralling out of control, take a break and listen to some music that soothes your heart, suggests Ganesh.

GEMINI
Bosses will assign new responsibilities to you, predicts Ganesh. Your daytime distress, however, will transform into jubilation by the end of the day's work, as you will be able to produce brilliant results. Ganesh advises you to delay bidding for tenders by a few days.

CANCER
Today, it is quite possible that you have a presentation of things that are about to happen. Scarily enough, the premonition may not be too far off the mark. All your senses, especially your sixth sense, are likely to remain highly active today. It is best for you to keep your eyes and ears open to avoid any misunderstanding at work or home, says Ganesh.

LEO
Your passionate and emotional nature contributes in a big way to your sudden outbursts of emotions, says Ganesh. Today, your anger may erupt abruptly. This makes it very likely for you to get carried away irrespective of your surroundings and circumstances, both at work and at home.

VIRGO
Stay clear of a coalition when it comes to business ventures, warns Ganesh. Alone, you can manage an entire stampede. By your own you are, by far, the best administrator of your department. Today, find yourself being the general and uniting people under your banner to achieve greater success, says Ganesh.

LIBRA
Ever heard of the phrase, 'To stick one's foot in one's mouth'? Well, today you might be doing exactly the same, albeit unwittingly. You are likely to invite trouble, especially if some of those heated discussions get out of hand. A legal dispute does not seem unlikely. One can always get an out-of-court settlement, but why go through all that? Just remember to be cautious today in all that you do or say, hints Ganesh.

SCORPIO
You shall probably realise the fact that seeing is believing. Learn to trust your own eyes more than what you hear. Don't get lost in the crowd, warns Ganesh. Strive to stand out and be in the spotlight, advises Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
Round and round they tumble, the wheels of life, smoothly gliding into a routine. You may spend your day in discontent due to the rut of regular activities. Sadly, there is little hope or adventure Ganesh foresees that might make this day worthwhile for you. There will be glimpses of excitement in the evening but on the whole, it will be nothing to write home about.

CAPRICORN
A good day always begins with a good start. It will be a good day for you today as you will start the day with a positive attitude to life, says Ganesh. Your unremitting dedication and determination will not only put you ahead of others, but will also help you get an edge over them. If tiffs with your life partner are rife, you can expect to a peaceful day, at least for today.

AQUARIUS
You are a polished diamond. Adversities come and go, yet you remain unruffled. Today, you manage to please your boss, and beloved, and that is a feat! It is yet another day of contentment. And in a cyclical process, this again rejuvenates you into giving your best, says Ganesh.

PISCES
Do not let your emotions influence your strategies in any way. Mixing business with sentiments is only for super spies. Keep a close check on your emotions and do not get carried away. Travel for business purposes is indicated, says Ganesh.

Madalasa's shocking disclosure

Mumbai: Actor Madalsa Sharma has opened up about a shocking incident of casting couch in Mumbai. During a chat with an entertainment portal, Madalsa shared what happened when a director made a shocking request in front of her. She said, "A very renowned filmmaker had called me for a meeting. Once I'm inside the room, he said that he wants to see whether I can wear a bikini. 'I want to see your body language,' he said, that whether I would be comfortable to wear it in front of the camera. I said, 'I am sorry, I am an actor by profession and if there is a requirement for a bikini scene, or whether it is a saree or a lehenga, whatever it is, I am ready to wear it in front of the camera, and I would be comfortable because that is a part of my job. But to wear it in front of you is not a part of my job! So if you want to cast me on the basis of trusting a talent then you can, and if you don't, then I know where the door is!'" Madalsa then shared that after a few days, she read a report of the same casting, and found out that the director and the actress for that part, were dating.



Malaika questions beauty standards

Mumbai: Actor-entrepreneur Malaika Arora led her life on her own terms as she stepped into showbiz, and continues to do it after almost 30 years of being here. During a conversation on an entertainment show, she said people still place the pressure of looking a certain way only on women. Asked whether the thought of ageing crosses her mind, even as her fitness and looks are still praised, she said, "Now that's a double-edged sword. There are days when it does cross my mind, where I do wonder or question the obvious. And then there are days where I don't. I just don't care because I am doing what I love, I am enjoying it, and I feel like I am in my prime." But she feels men too should be asked the same question. "I feel women are constantly asked this

question. Very rarely is a man asked any of these things. A woman who is asked, 'At your prime you were like this, and now you are at this age, so how does it feel? Do you still feel beautiful? Do you still feel desirable?' I've never heard anybody ask a man this question. Women are always subjected to this test of looking a certain way," she confessed on the show.



Big B shares life lessons

Mumbai: Amitabh Bachchan is considered one of the best actors in Indian cinema. Be it a film or as a host of a television show, he has earned praise for his commitment and dedication towards his work. Amitabh often takes to his blog to share his personal opinions on variety of things. In his latest blog post on Tumblr, the veteran actor talked about growth and how he considers 'learning' to be an integral part of life. He wrote, "As long as there is life there is a learning ... learning of matters and obstacles and

achievements, the lot. It needs recognition. It needs desire ... It requires belief ... And eventually - the deed ... How many of us can relate to this, is also a learning ... So ... I learn each day ... for no day can ever be the same ... The sooner we can 'learn' to contend with it the better." In a post that was shared last month, Amitabh had said that whenever he does not work for a day, the daily routine gets disrupted and it ends up making him anxious.



Living the dread and digging the dead- is this the living dead?

"Skeletons are a reminder that beneath the surface, we are all the same." - Anonymous



At the surface, the flesh and blood versions remind us often that we are all not the same. The societal stratification and disparity in fact calls for greater compassion and support for those less privileged, from those in charge. Sometimes it calls for comprehensible communication and assistance in releasing a precise sum of 19300 INR from bank account of a dead sister to a needy one. Staggering amount yeah! Alas! skeletons have to take care of this too. No peace in death, period. It would appear that "Neces-

sity is the mother of exhumation" as is "Politics the father of ambition". Politics also carries in its very nature the inclination to exhume skeletons of an opposing party's past, sans shovels or excavators. A reflection of this nature is on

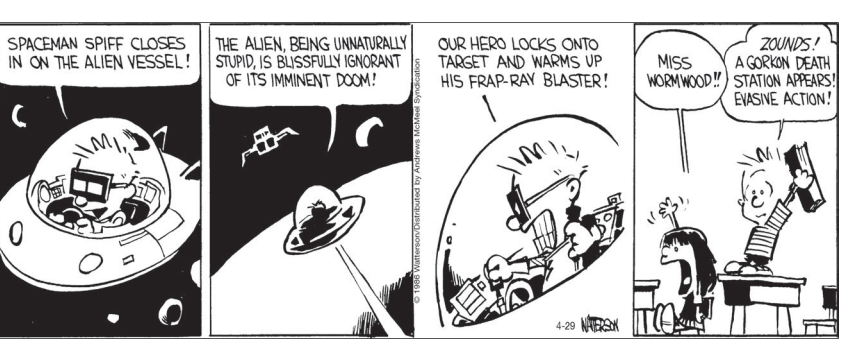
flagrant demonstration during the election season. Actual skeletons may fear intrusion and prefer sinking a foot deeper to rest in peace, given the relentless digging. Recently, there loomed a threat of skeletons rattling or

toppling out of the closet when, members of a distinguished family stomped off to join another in holy 'maitri-mon(e)y'. Disenchanted, I reminisced Poirot's quote- 'There was right, there was wrong, now there is you'. As much as my mind debates, hell, who am I to judge! In fact, someone just wants to do positive politics which is not remotely as common as a positive blood group; therefore commendable. Given the politics of digging, an everlasting challenge has been digging into the mind of the electorate, for no party possesses the skeleton key that unlocks all doors and wary, vigilant minds. Who is to blame, when positive politics has been something of a mythical creature.

PEANUTS



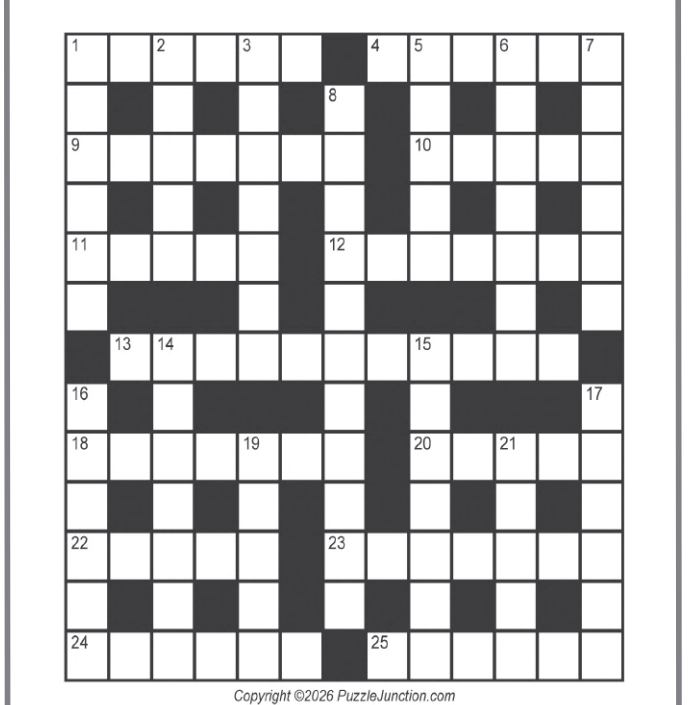
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



FUN POST CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Washed-out
 - 4 Previous
 - 9 Mexican saloon
 - 10 Apartment sign (2,3)
 - 11 Utopian
 - 12 Far-out
 - 13 Spirit chaser?
 - 18 Physics topic
 - 20 Clear the slate
 - 22 Thin crisp biscuit
 - 23 Sign on the back
 - 24 Some stockings
 - 25 Vinegar holders
 - Down**
 - 1 Cookout
 - 2 Fencing action
 - 3 They hang on eaves
 - 5 Santa's reindeer, e.g.
 - 6 Toy dog
 - 7 Decayed
 - 8 Marinated pot roast
 - 14 Attentive
 - 15 Svelte
 - 16 Kind of situation (3-3)
 - 17 Drives back
 - 19 City on the Po
 - 21 Feel the same

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

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

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

SUDOKU

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

Odisha hikes daily wages



AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 2: The Odisha government has announced a hike in daily wages of workers within the range of ₹472 to ₹622 with an increase in Variable Dearness Allowance (VDA) with retrospective effect from April 1.

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi announced it Friday while addressing the state-level celebration of International Workers' Day in Bhubaneswar.

The revised wages will raise the daily earnings of unskilled workers to ₹472, semi-skilled workers to ₹522, skilled workers to ₹572, and highly skilled workers to ₹622. The increase of ₹10 in VDA will be implemented retrospectively from April 1, the Chief Minister announced.

Highlighting the state's commitment to labour welfare, Majhi said that more than 5 lakh construction workers have been newly registered under the Odisha Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Board during the 2025-26

financial year, with assistance exceeding ₹541 crore disbursed so far.

Identity cards were distributed to 6,000 workers across the state, along with financial assistance worth ₹150 crore, covering education, marriage, and death benefits.

Paying tribute to the contribution of workers, the Chief Minister said that labourers are the true builders of human civilisation and their relentless efforts drive the progress of both the state and the nation, CM Majhi emphasised the need to ensure fair wages, social security, workplace safety, and dignity for all workers.

Focusing on employment generation, Majhi noted that increased industrialisation and skill development across districts are expected to address distress migration.

He said reverse migration has already begun, with workers returning from places like Tiruppur and Coimbatore to take up jobs in Odisha's textile sector.

"In the last 22 months, around 92,000 youths have secured employment in the private sector, including nearly 10,000 who have returned from other states," he added.



GUINNESS WORLD RECORD: A massive Tricolour, measuring approximately 60x40 metres was deployed beneath the sea in a complex, tightly coordinated operation involving multiple agencies and trained divers at Swaraj Dweep (Havelock Island) near Sri Vijaya Puram, Saturday. Personnel from the Andaman and Nicobar Police, Forest department, Indian Navy, and Indian Coast Guard, as well as scuba divers from various diving centres, collaborated to execute the intricate underwater unfurling (Report on P8)

Truck carrying illegal sand hits addl tehsildar's vehicle

POST NEWS NETWORK

Soro, May 2: An additional tehsildar had a narrow escape Saturday when a Hyva truck carrying illegal sand rammed his official vehicle during a high-speed chase on National Highway (NH) 16 at Panpana near Soro in Balasore district.

The incident occurred when

HOT PURSUIT

Soro Additional Tehsildar Krushna Mohan Singh, along with his team, was attempting to intercept multiple trucks suspected of transporting illegal sand, officials said.

Acting on intelligence inputs, Singh and his team positioned themselves on NH-16 near Soro to intercept the vehicles and successfully stopped two sand-laden trucks. However, one Hyva truck (OD01T-7193) attempted to speed away.

Officials gave a chase, and Singh's vehicle overtook the truck and moved ahead to force it to stop. Instead of complying, the driver allegedly accelerated and rammed into the rear of the government vehicle in a bid to escape. The impact damaged the car but eventually brought the Hyva to a halt.

While the vehicle carrying



During the chase, the team overtook the truck and blocked its path, but the driver allegedly rammed their vehicle from rear before being forced to halt

Singh sustained significant damage, the additional tehsildar and his staff were reported safe.

The truck's windshield was also reportedly shattered in the collision.

On being informed, Khantapada police rushed to the spot, seized the truck, and detained the driver for questioning.

Further investigation is underway.

Earlier, miscreants allegedly attempted to run over Vyasnanagar tehsildar-cum-executive magistrate Prashant Kumar Panda with a tractor while he was conducting a raid against illegal soil mining in Korei of Jajpur district April 18.

Acting on a tip-off about unauthorised soil extraction, a team led by Panda conducted a raid during which the miscreants allegedly ran over a tractor on him, a police officer said. Panda sustained serious injuries and was initially admitted to Korei Community Health Centre (CHC) before being shifted to a hospital in Cuttack for advanced treatment.

'Modi tattva' to feature in Guj varsity syllabus

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Vadodara, May 2: A university in Gujarat's Vadodara has introduced 'Modi Tattva', a module on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'charismatic leadership' and the history of the RSS into its Sociology syllabus to study their impact on society, an official said Saturday.

The Maharaja Sayajirao University's new course ti-

tled 'Sociology of Patriotism' in its two-year Master's in Sociology programme aims to scientifically analyse 'Modi Tattva' and the works of social reformers like Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and Sayajirao Gaekwad III, said Dr Virendra Singh, who heads the sociology department.

"Whether you like it or not, you will have to discuss PM Modi in a political field and a leadership role. He is an el-

ement that will remain there for a long time. We wanted to study sociologist Max Weber's charismatic leadership, seen in Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King. The same kind of charismatic leadership is seen in PM Modi. That is a scientific matter that needs to be inquired," he said.

Singh, who is also a part of the NITI Aayog's project to monitor public projects, said 'Modi Tattva' will also be the

focus of topics like media and digital nationalism, citizenship and dissent, and globalisation and identity politics, which are all part of the syllabus.

"These three parts will work scientifically on the concept of Modi Tattva, and talk about why he is becoming so famous, how his acceptability is so widespread, what is so great about him as he remains in power for the longest period in India," he said.

NEWBORN'S DEATH SPARKS PROTEST IN JAJPUR HOSPITAL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jajpur, May 2: Family members of a newborn protested at the Jajpur District Headquarters Hospital (DHH) here Saturday, alleging medical negligence as the cause of the baby's death, police said.

A woman delivered a baby boy Friday night at the DHH. However, shortly after birth, the infant was found to be unwell and was referred to Cuttack and later moved to a private nursing home, where doctors declared the baby dead.

Saturday, the family staged a protest at the DHH alleging negligence by the Hospital, police said.

The protest was withdrawn after the CDMO, assured of an inquiry into the incident.

Repoll in all booths of Falta seat May 21

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 2: In a rare move, the Election Commission (EC) Saturday ordered a "fresh" election in all the 285 polling stations of the Falta Assembly seat in West Bengal May 21 due to "subversion of democratic process".

A spokesperson for the poll panel said the counting of votes for the constituency will take place May 24.

It is rare for the poll authority to order a re-election in an entire Assembly seat.

Friday, the EC ordered a re-election in 15 polling stations of two Assembly seats in West Bengal - Diamond Harbour and Magarhat Paschim.

Cell broadcast alert system launched across country

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 2: Mobile phones across the country went abuzz after Union Telecom Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia launched the cell broadcast alert system Saturday that will warn citizens about emergency and natural disasters in their area.

The department of Telecom had already alerted citizens about the trial run of the service April 29 to avoid panic, with an appeal to ignore any alerts they receive. The test message read: "Extremely Severe Alert. India launched Cell Broadcast using indigenous technology, for instant disaster alerting service for its citizens. Alert citizens, safe nation. No action is required by the public upon receipt of this message. This is a test message- Government of India".

The alert system was sent across the network of all telecom operators across the country, except in poll-bound states.

"Union Minister for Communications and Development of North Eastern Region, Jyotiraditya Scindia, today launched the Cell Broadcast Alert System, developed indigenously by C-DOT in collaboration with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), under the guidance of Home Minister Amit Shah," an official statement said.

Through this system, critical information related to disasters, emergencies, and public safety will be transmitted directly and instantly to citizens' mobile phones, the statement said.

The system is based on the Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) as recommended by the UN body International Telecommunication Union. It is currently operational across all 36 states and Union Territories of India and delivers disaster and emergency-related alerts via SMS to mobile users within geo-targeted areas. Cell Broadcast (CB) technology has been introduced alongside SMS, enabling alerts to be transmitted to all mobile devices within a defined geographic area simultaneously, ensuring near-real-time delivery.

Mexico City sinking 10 inches a year: NASA report

REUTERS

Mexico City, May 2: The Capital city of Mexico, is sinking by nearly 10 inches (about 25 centimetres) a year, according to new imagery taken by NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR) satellite, a joint initiative between the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and NASA, making Mexico City one of the world's fastest-subsiding metropolises.

One of the world's most sprawling and populated urban areas, at 3,000 square miles (about 7,800 square kilometres) and some 22 million people, the Mexican capital and surrounding cities were built atop an ancient lake bed. Many downtown streets were once canals, a tradition that continues in the rural fringes.

Extensive groundwater pumping and urban development have dramatically shrunk the aquifer, meaning that Mex-



ico City has been sinking for more than a century, leaving many monuments and older buildings - like the Metropolitan Cathedral, where construction began in 1573 - visibly tilted to the side. The contracting aquifer has also contributed to

a chronic water crisis that is only expected to worsen.

"It damages part of the critical infrastructure of Mexico City, such as the subway, the drainage system, the water, the potable water system, housing and streets," said Enrique

Cabral, a researcher studying geophysics at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. "It's a very big problem."

Mexico City is sinking so fast that the subsidence can be spotted from space.

According to NASA's newly

released report, in some parts such as at the main airport and the iconic monument commonly known as the Angel of Independence, it is happening at an alarming average rate of 0.78 inches (2 centimetres) a month.

Overall, that means a yearly subsidence rate of about 9.5 inches (24 centimetres). Over the course of less than a century, the drop has been more than 39 feet (12 metres), according to Cabral. "We have one of the fastest velocities of land subsidence in the whole world," he said.

The NASA estimates are based on measurements taken between October 2025 and January 2026 by NISAR, which can track real-time changes on the Earth's surface.

NISAR scientist Paul Rosen said that by capturing details of the Earth from space, the project is also "telling us something about what's actually happening below the surface. It's basically documentation of all of

these changes within a city. You can see the full magnitude of the problem."

With time the team hopes to be able to zoom in even more on specific areas and someday get measurements on a building-by-building basis.

More broadly, researchers hope to apply the technology around the world to track things like natural disasters, changes in fault lines, the effects of climate change in regions like Antarctica and more. Rosen said it could be used to bolster alert systems, letting scientists alert governments to the need for evacuations in cases of volcano eruptions, for example.

For decades the government has largely ignored the problem other than stabilising foundations under monuments like the cathedral. But following recent flare-ups of the water crisis, Cabral said, officials have begun to fund more research.

India's enduring strength lies in its diversity: Guv

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 2: Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati has emphasised that mutual respect, cultural harmony, and national integration are essential to building a stronger and more united India, asserting that the nation's enduring strength lies in its diversity.

Addressing the Foundation Day celebrations of Maharashtra and Gujarat at Lok Bhavan here Friday, the Governor said India becomes stronger when people from different regions understand one another's cultures, respect traditions, and celebrate diversity together.

He said such unity transforms India from merely a nation into a strong and unbreakable family, reflecting Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of "Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat", where diversity becomes the country's greatest strength. Beginning his address with greetings on International Labour Day, the Governor paid tribute to labourers and workers, describing them as the backbone of the nation whose hard work, dedication, and perseverance drive India's progress and development.



Extending his congratulations to the people of Maharashtra and Gujarat on their Foundation Day, Kambhampati said both states stand as shining symbols of India's rich heritage, vibrant traditions, and dynamic development.

Highlighting Odisha's cultural ethos, Kambhampati said the Jagannath culture conveys a universal message of inclusiveness, equality, and brotherhood. He also appreciated the contributions of people from Maharashtra and Gujarat residing in Odisha, describing them as an integral part of the state's growth and development.

WSC extends '26-27 application deadline

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 2: The World Skill Center (WSC), Bhubaneswar, has extended the deadline for submission of online applications for admission to its 2026-27 academic session until May 15, offering aspiring candidates across India an extended opportunity to take a decisive step towards industry-ready careers.

The online entrance examination for admission to the courses is scheduled to be conducted May 31, 2026, with the academic session set to commence in June 2026. WSC offers a wide array of programmes under the School of Engineering and the School of Services. The state government has reserved 10 per cent of seats for candidates from outside Odisha.

Students at WSC benefit from best-in-class pedagogy and strong industry alignment, gaining access to a wide range of specialised, future-focused programmes that equip them with practical skills and enhance their global employability.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before Executive Magistrate/Notary Public, Rayagada dated: 17th April 2026. I, KADRAKA RUPA, At- resident of Vill.- Batabirisi, P.O.- Narayanpur, P.S.- K.Singpur, Dist.- Rayagada, Odisha- 765016 declare that I have changed my son's name from SANJIB KADRAKA to SANJIP KADRAKA. Henceforth, he shall be known as SANJIP KADRAKA for all purpose.



AT LORD'S SERVICE: Bhoi servitors busy shaping a chariot wheel at Rath Yard in Puri, Saturday

PHOTO: YADUNATH MOHANTY

Odisha building resilient cities to drive growth: Min

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 2: As Odisha positions itself among the top-performing states in the country under the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) 2.0, Housing and Urban Development (H&UD) Minister Krushna Chandra Mahapatra said Saturday that the government is focused on building resilient cities that will drive Odisha's growth while improving the quality of life for every citizen.

Mahapatra said the state's impressive performance under AMRUT 2.0 is a direct outcome of strong political will, decisive policy direction and a relentless focus on delivery. "This achievement reflects our government's unwavering commitment to transforming urban Odisha with speed, scale and sustainability. We are not just implementing schemes—we are delivering a comprehensive urban water revolution that ensures every household has access to safe and reliable drinking water," he said.

He further emphasised, "Our focus is clear—time-bound execution (of projects), accountable governance and future-ready infrastructure. We are building resilient cities that will drive Odisha's growth and improve the quality of life for every citizen. Under the vision of 'Viksit Odisha', our government will continue to lead from the front and set new benchmarks in urban transformation."

According to the H&UD department, the government has ensured accelerated im-

AMRUT 2.0: ODISHA AMONG THE TOP-PERFORMING STATES

- A robust portfolio of 345 projects, with an investment of ₹4,030.18 crore, has been rolled out with a sharp focus on universal water supply and rejuvenation of urban water bodies
- 7 new water treatment plants with a combined capacity of 43 million litres per day have been commissioned, benefiting nearly 2.83 lakh citizens
- 5 high-impact infrastructure projects worth ₹3,030.61 crore have been proposed under the Urban Challenge Fund for key cities such as Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Sambalpur and Berhampur

plementation of AMRUT 2.0 across 89 urban local bodies (ULBs).

"A robust portfolio of 345 projects, with an investment of Rs 4,030.18 crore, has been rolled out with a sharp focus on universal water supply and rejuvenation of urban water bodies. As many as 107 projects have already been completed, reflecting the government's emphasis on time-bound execution and accountability, while the remaining projects are progressing at a rapid pace under close monitoring at the highest levels," the department said in a statement.

Placing water security at the centre of its urban development agenda, the government has delivered tangible outcomes, it said.

"Seven new water treatment plants with a combined capacity of 43 million litres per day (MLD) have been commissioned, benefiting nearly 2.83 lakh citizens. The rollout of 24x7 water supply systems in key urban centres and the provision of over 2.7 lakh household tap connections have ensured improved access to safe drinking water for more than

5 lakh urban residents, marking a significant step towards universal coverage," it added.

Large-scale community participation has been mobilised through initiatives such as 'AMRUT Mitra' and 'Women for Trees', empowering women self-help groups (SHGs) to take leadership roles in water body rejuvenation and environmental sustainability, it said. Strategic convergence with national programmes like 'Pey Jal Survekshan' and 'Jal Hi AMRUT' has further strengthened efficient water management and reuse practices.

The state is also leveraging innovative financing mechanisms to scale up urban transformation. Under the Credit Enhancement Initiative, 16 bankable projects worth Rs 70.27 crore have been prepared for smaller ULBs. In addition, five high-impact infrastructure projects worth Rs 3,030.61 crore have been proposed under the Urban Challenge Fund for key cities such as Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Sambalpur and Berhampur, positioning them as engines of growth and investment, the department said.

STA detains 226 illegal vehicles

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack/Bhubaneswar, May 2: The State Transport Authority (STA) has launched a state-wide enforcement drive against the illegal transportation of passengers in goods vehicles, leading to strict action across the state. The special drive, initiated by Commerce and Transport department under the direction of Transport Minister Bibhuti Bhushan Jena, has been in force since April 29.

During the first three days of the drive, authorities inspected a total of 3,034 vehicles across the state. Violations were detected in 326 cases, resulting in the issuance of challans. Demonstrating a strict stance against offenders, enforcement teams detained 226 vehicles and seized 93 vehicles for serious violations.

City doc performs complex shoulder surgery

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 2: In what is being described as a first-of-its-kind procedure in Eastern India, Dr Sarthak Patnaik, a leading orthopaedic and sports medicine specialist in Bhubaneswar, has successfully performed a complex shoulder surgery on a 64-year-old man suffering from a severe rotator cuff tear, sources said Saturday.

The severe rotator cuff tear had resulted in pain and restricted shoulder movement in the patient. Usually, shoulder replacement is the standard treatment for such cases. However, Dr Patnaik performed a unique procedure involving arthroscopic repair of the torn tendon, reinforced and augmented with a human dermal allograft to enhance structural support and promote faster

Social mobility important than career growth

RASHMI RANJAN MOHAPATRA

India's caste system has long governed society, carving deep divisions that persist across generations. The lowest strata face not only economic hardship but a far crueller burden: the denial of dignity. Governments have made concerted efforts to bring marginalised communities into the mainstream, yet the deeper question remains unanswered. Does society truly accept them, unequivocally and without prejudice? People may progress along Maslow's hierarchy, meeting physical and safety needs, but they continue to crave something far more fundamental: belonging.

Education and meritocracy were conceived as the great equalisers, platforms that could cut across caste, gender, and social bias. Instead, the education system has spawned its own internal class structure. Skill education sits at the very bottom of this hierarchy.

ITIs and polytechnics, once envisioned as engines of opportunity, struggle with outdated curricula and social stigma. Vocational training is not yet aspirational; it is accepted under duress, a last resort, not a first choice. Parents remain reluctant to send their children down this path, and skilled work is seen as lesser work.

Students who enrol in ITIs often arrive from the lower strata of society, carrying real ambition. They see their trainers and recruiters as role models. They work hard, secure employment, and over time achieve financial stability. By Maslow's framework, they are progressing. And yet, something remains persistently out of reach.

The failure becomes stark at the point of marriage. A plumber or a welder, no matter how competent or well-earning, is looked down upon. Families hesitate. The social needs of skilled workers—love, belonging, respect—remain systematically denied. A good income cannot purchase what society withholds: acceptance.

"The certificate becomes a vi-

sa—not for a foreign country, but for a society that should already have welcomed them."

When the desire for social mobility finds no legitimate outlet, it seeks other paths. The most common shortcut is a higher education degree, not pursued for knowledge, but as a passport to social acceptability. A typical ITI worker may spend up to a third of their annual salary to obtain a certification credential. That certificate may not represent improved skill, deeper competence, or career advancement. But the certificate achieves what skill alone could not: it opens doors, helps secure alliances, and grants social permission.

The problem is that skilled vocations do not yet carry the social prestige they deserve. We cannot build more training centres and expect the problem to resolve itself. We must dismantle the invisible hierarchy that devalues skilled work.

A dual-degree approach, one that integrates vocational training with academic credentials, could serve as a bridge. It would allow students to build competence while earning the social currency that society demands.

Ultimately, what skilled workers need is not merely a job. They need to be seen as full participants in society: worthy partners, respected neighbours, valued citizens. Skilling is one essential means to that end, but it cannot be the only one.

The deeper work is cultural. It requires educators, employers, policymakers, and citizens to genuinely interrogate and dismantle the hierarchies we have inherited. A truly mobile society is one where a welder can dream not just of a better wage, but of a better life—professionally, personally, and socially. We must bring skilled workers into the fold and give them the social acceptance they have always deserved.

Respect is one of the means. Respect is the destination.

The author is the CEO of World Skill Center, Bhubaneswar. He is a recognised voice on leadership, talent, and the future of work.



DR SARTHAK PATNAIK

healing through early integration, thereby preserving the natural joint.

This technique represents an important advancement in shoulder surgery, particularly for patients with poor tissue quality or large and complex tears. In such cases, conventional repair methods may fail due to weak or thinned tendon tissue. Biological augmentation adds strength and thickness to the repair, improving the ten-

don's ability to withstand physiological loads and significantly reducing the risk of re-tear.

Explaining the procedure, Dr Patnaik, founder and senior consultant at Sports Science India, said, "Arthroscopic biological augmentation with a human dermal allograft allows us to address challenging rotator cuff injuries more effectively. In patients with compromised tissue quality, reinforcing the repair with a dermal graft improves healing potential and functional outcomes."

The patient showed rapid recovery after surgery, was discharged within 24 hours, and has already reported significant improvement in mobility and daily function.

Avana Medical Devices Pvt Ltd supported this landmark case by ensuring timely and compliant access to the human dermal allograft.

LoP seeks Sitharaman's intervention

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 2: BJD supreme and Leader of Opposition (LoP) Naveen Patnaik Saturday sought Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's "compassionate intervention" in an incident in Keonjhar, where a 50-year-old tribal man was forced to exhume his sister's skeletal remains and produce them as proof of her death to withdraw money from a rural bank in the district.

Noting that he wrote the letter to Sitharaman with a sense of deep anguish and urgency to highlight the incident that took place April 27 at the Maliposi branch of Odisha Grameen Bank (OGB), Patnaik said Jitu Munda was forced to exhume his sister's skeletal remains and carry them to the bank as proof of her death in order to withdraw his rightful money.

Jitu had exhumed the skeletal remains of Kalra Munda, 56, who died in January this year. He then walked around 3 km to

KEONJHAR SKELETON EPISODE

the OGB branch and produced them before an official as proof of her death. A video of Jitu carrying the skeletal remains has gone viral on social media, drawing widespread condemnation.

Referring to the initial findings of the state government's probe into the matter, Patnaik pointed out that the tribal man was forced to carry the skeletal remains of his sister because, despite multiple visits to the bank, he failed to receive any assistance or clarity from officials to resolve his issue.

"What is more shocking is the bank's attempt to justify this inhuman conduct by citing RBI guidelines. This shows a disturbing intent on the part of the bank officials to hide behind procedures and abandon the very people they are meant

to serve," Patnaik said.

He also wrote, "In a democracy, rules are meant to empower citizens, not humiliate them. This horrifying incident has outraged public sentiment across Odisha and has also drawn attention in international media."

Patnaik added that the incident, though isolated, offers an opportunity to put in place a more humane banking system, especially in remote tribal areas. "I urge you to ensure that clear accountability is immediately fixed for this shocking lapse. This will send a strong signal to all rural banks to guarantee citizen-centric service delivery with empathy and compassion," Patnaik wrote.

He expressed confidence that, with Sitharaman's "compassionate intervention", such inhuman treatment of citizens



WEATHER FORECAST			
	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	35.6°	35.8°	Light to moderate rain or thunderstorm
Min Temp	24.0°	22.8°	
Humidity	77%	98%	
Rainfall	TRACE	7.4	

“
The inside must be made entirely calm and quiet and there should reign an upward aspiration – a state of awaiting.
”
SRI AUROBINDO



Polarisation Politics

If you are normal, you have any number of parties you can support and vote for. There is the DMK, ADMK, TDP, NCP, PDP, TMC, INC, JD (S) and JD (U), there is NCP, TRS, the new TVK, CPM, CPI and so on. There is no shortage of parties with different platforms. But if your interest list primarily in the bullying and harassment of Indian minorities, particularly Muslims, there is only one party for you and that is BJP. Fortunately, it is on offer nationally and in most states. It unites prejudiced Indians in the same way as cricket and the English language do in the way it is able to cut through regions.

In a recent media interaction, an analyst put the same thing in a different way. He said of the BJP's appeal that: "Anybody who has a right-wing ideology has one party. On the other side, there is so much competition and that vote gets split."

Let us try and understand why this is the case, because it is true: the BJP has no competition when it comes to what it does. The words 'right-wing' are a euphemism for hate-based, and we shall see why in a moment. First, after accepting that there is no rival to the BJP, we have to also accept that it offers a simple and easy to understand formula.

'I hate Muslims' does not require further elaboration. It is clear, direct and effective. The voter does not need to examine the manifesto to understand what the party represents. The distilled essence of the BJP ideology is anti minority.

If you are in the market for a party that does this, you have one at hand with a national presence and with decades of proven delivery on this issue. So why look for another? There is no need.

A question arises: Can the BJP not face competition from another party whose position is: "But I hate Muslims more!"

It could and it might, but that position can also be legitimately taken within the BJP, as we shall likely see when the succession struggles commence. The acceptable spectrum of the BJP's ideology, such that it is, ranges from dislike minorities to detest minorities and all of the sentiments contained within this spectrum are acceptable.

This is the first and most important reason why the BJP has no rival in what it does: it is genuinely anti-minority. The second reason is that other parties either choose not to do what the BJP focusses on, or they do it episodically, and come across as inauthentic. Many parties in India have dabbled in communalism as we know. But communalism is not at the centre of their politics or their identity. The BJP is not the only party that has profited from division and hate but it is the only one to have made this their platform.

The list of issues that made the BJP what it has, our largest party, remained unchanged for years. First, Muslims must give up their mosque in Ayodhya; Second, Muslims must give up their constitutional autonomy in Kashmir; third, Muslim must give up their personal law. Note that there is nothing for Hindus in this ideology, for instance, private second reservations for Dalits and Adivasis. The focus is on minorities, which is why one can conclude what one does about the party and what it stands for.

Having achieved most of what it sought to achieve, it has remained on the same path as we have seen: Muslims must give up their diet; give up their agency on who to fall in love with and marry; give up agency on where to stay, where to pray; whether Muslims can vote; whether they can seek asylum and so on and on. And on. There is no end to this and there will never be an end to this because harassment is the intent and bullying is the only ultimate end.

This bigotry is referred to as 'right wing' ideology and politics which is a slur on the term. Conservatism, as generally understood in politics, has a long and noble tradition. It seeks continuity. It values stability. Abolishing currency, for instance, is a radical idea not a conservative one. None of the arbitrary tinkering, renaming, chopping and changing, and decapitation of institutions we are witnessing is conservative. What is portrayed right wing here is just intense prejudice cloaking itself in something else.

It is for this reason that the BJP manifestos over the decades have experimented with and taken up and cast away many things. They were socialist in the 1960s and 1970s. Under Vajpayee, the party declared it would cap the incomes and home sizes of all Indians. This was given up. It demanded that mechanisation would not be allowed to replace labour in factories. This was given up too. It wanted farmers to use bullocks instead of tractors. This also was given up. None of these things were taken up or discarded with any explanation, because no explanation to voters was needed. The primary product that the BJP/Jana Sangh was offering was always on display and that was its genuine, authentic, unchanging hate of minorities. The rest was irrelevant. As long as they delivered on this when taking office (and they have done so, one must concede), the rest was unimportant. That is why we have only one BJP and will not have a challenger.

WISDOM CORNER

There is no greatness where there is no simplicity, goodness and truth.
LEO TOLSTOY

Love is the only reality and it is not a mere sentiment. It is the ultimate truth that lies at the heart of creation.
RABINDRANATH TAGORE

The world is full of willing people; some willing to work, the rest willing to let them.
ROBERT FROST

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1494: Explorer Christopher Columbus encountered the island of Jamaica, which he named Santiago.

1978: Gary Thuerk of the Digital Equipment Corporation sent a message to about 400 users of ARPANET inviting them to attend his company's product demos in California. Many people who received it weren't happy, and his boss rebuked him. But a few dozen people showed up, and Thuerk later claimed his invite generated \$12 million in sales. Thus was spam born.

1996: At the first formal review of the 1980 Geneva Convention on Inhumane Weapons, the signatories agreed to curtail the use of land mines over the next decade.

FOCUS CHINA

LIMITS OF LIBERALIZATION

Ever since the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, the country has served as a cautionary tale about the dangers of political reform in one-party states. After Viktor Orbán's defeat in Hungary's parliamentary elections last month, this lesson is being pondered again by the world's autocratic powers—not least China.

The story starts 70 years ago with Nikita Khrushchev's "Secret Speech," delivered to a closed session of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. In that speech, Khrushchev denounced Stalin, condemning his predecessor's cult of personality, his brutal purges, and his lack of preparedness for the Nazi invasion.

Supposedly delivered in secret, the speech nevertheless quickly leaked, sending shock waves through the Eastern Bloc countries then under the Kremlin's thumb. The idea that Stalin, the emblem of absolute power, could come under attack from one of his own acolytes elevated hopes for new political possibilities.

The effect was particularly dramatic in Hungary. A Budapest debate club called the Pet fi Circle—named after the poet who helped inspire the Hungarian Revolution of 1848-49 against the Austro-Hungarian Empire—had been founded in 1955 by the Communist Youth League as a controlled outlet for tame discussions about reform. After Khrushchev's speech, the group's members began to ask more radical questions.

In debates that drew thousands of spectators, members criticized Hungary's Stalinist leader, Mátyás Rákosi, and called for press freedom, economic reform, and political rehabilitation and restitution for purge victims. This helped



After watching Nikita Khrushchev's repudiation of Stalin lead to a revolution in Hungary, Mao Zedong concluded that under one-party rule, no amount of political liberalization is safe

ignite widespread opposition to Soviet rule. Within months, student protests had widened into the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, a national movement that sought effective independence from the Soviet Union. Khrushchev ultimately sent in troops to crush the uprising.

Communist Party of China (CPC) Chairman Mao Zedong watched the events in Budapest unfold with growing unease, given the uncomfortable parallels between himself and the version of Stalin that Khrushchev had renounced. Concerned that similar disillusionment might be brewing in China, Mao launched the Hundred Flowers Campaign in 1956, creating space for citizens to air grievances and suggest improvements without threatening the CPC's legitimacy.

The campaign's results shocked Mao. Instead of a well-controlled safety valve through which mild criticism and discontent could escape, a deluge of demands for press freedom, calls for the CPC to loosen its grip on economic and cultural life, and accusations of entrenched privilege poured out.

By mid-1957, Mao concluded that the experiment could pose an existential risk to him and to the CPC's rule. The result was the Anti-Rightist Campaign, which claimed that some of the criticisms were "poisonous weeds" rather than the "fragrant flowers" Mao supposedly welcomed. More than 550,000 intellectuals and professionals were caught in the campaign's net; most were sent to labor camps, and many committed suicide. Their families bore the stigmatizing "rightist" label for years.

Khrushchev's repudiation of Stalin had led to a revolution in Hungary, and Mao's experiment with liberalization had produced a legitimacy crisis that the Chairman believed could be resolved only through mass repression. The lesson Mao drew from these events was that under one-party rule, an opening for dissent can easily ignite rebellion. Autocratic leaders cannot permit intellectual freedom while guaranteeing that it will not undermine the system itself. This headline view has informed the CPC's thinking ever since, especially under President Xi Jinping's leadership.

Against this backdrop, Orbán's defeat is significant for the Chinese leadership. After taking power in 2010, Orbán systematically hollowed out the country's democratic institutions by undermining judicial independence, capturing public media, and rewriting electoral rules to entrench his party's advantages. Taking inspiration from Russian President Vladimir Putin, Orbán sought to consolidate power through his model of "illiberal democracy," which made genuine democratic competition increasingly difficult.

But even under an illiberal democracy, remnants of an independent press survived, and a unified opposition party was able to contest elections and mobilize civil society. In the end, this was enough to remove Orbán from power.

For Xi and his underlings, the takeaway is less about Orbán's missteps and more about the binary nature of autocratic power. A regime that permits genuine opposition has conceded something it cannot get back. Once citizens can vote out their rulers, or debate their leaders freely, or organize an independent press, the logic of accountability has been introduced into a system designed to exclude it; once legitimized, it tends to build its own momentum.

Armed with this understanding, Xi has spent more than a decade consolidating power and purging rivals with extraordinary resolve. Orbán's fall—the latest episode in a historical dialogue between Hungary and China that started in 1956—will only reinforce Xi's conviction that no amount of political liberalization is safe.

The writer is a senior fellow at the Asia Society's Center on US-China Relations.

PROJECT SYNDICATE



Sam Chetwin George

FOR XI AND HIS UNDERLINGS, THE TAKEAWAY IS LESS ABOUT ORBÁN'S MISSTEPS AND MORE ABOUT THE BINARY NATURE OF AUTOCRATIC POWER

SPECTRUM REFORM

Changing dynamics of 'ease of doing business'

The Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) study was developed by the World Bank in 2003. The first report on "Ease of Doing Business" was published in 2003, covering 133 economies. Over time, its coverage expanded to 190 economies, becoming a widely used global benchmark for comparing business regulations. The study was conducted every year until 2020, when the World Bank discontinued it following concerns over data irregularities. Concerns were raised about the quality of data used for the mammoth exercise.

Dasarathi Mishra

INDIA'S PERFORMANCE IN THE EODB RANKINGS HAS SHOWN IMPROVEMENT OVER TIME, REACHING 63RD POSITION GLOBALLY

The objective of the study from its inception was to measure how regulations affect the lifecycle of a business—from starting operations to closure—and to encourage governments to implement reforms that promote a more business-friendly environment.

India's performance in the EoDB rankings has shown improvement over time, reaching 63rd position globally. The country has performed relatively well in areas such as getting electricity and getting credit, where it ranks 23rd and 25th respectively. However, significant challenges persist in areas like starting a busi-

ness (rank 136) and registering property (rank 154), indicating procedural complexities and administrative bottlenecks.

In the Indian federal context, states play a crucial role in implementing reforms to improve the business climate. Odisha has emerged as a notable performer, becoming the 7th state to successfully undertake EoDB reforms stipulated by the Ministry of Finance, Government of India. As a result, the state became eligible to mobilize additional financial resources of Rs 1,429 crore through open market borrowings.

The Government and RBI have contributed positively to enhance ease of doing business through regulatory reforms.

As mentioned, the EoDB report was discontinued by the World Bank in 2021 due to data credibility issues. It argued that the data focused mainly on regulations, ignoring real-world challenges like infrastructure, policy uncertainty, and governance quality. It did not account for modern priorities such as sustainability, ESG factors, and inclusion. So a change was needed. The World Bank has developed Business En-

abling Environment (BEE)/ Business Ready (B-Ready) framework which is a modern, improved successor to EoDB, designed to measure not just regulatory ease but the overall business ecosystem, including governance quality, service delivery, and sustainability. Core features of the framework are: a three-pillar structure to assess Regulatory Framework, Public Services and Operational Efficiency. It has lifecycle approach as it covers 10 key areas across the life cycle of a firm, such as business entry, utilities, labour, finance, taxation, trade, dispute resolution, competition, workers and consumers. The new framework is being rolled out in phases, with pilot data already released for select countries. It is expected to gradually become the new global benchmark. There are three pillars:

Pillar I: The Regulatory Framework pillar focuses on the rules that shape business activity. This pillar examines the laws and regulations that businesses must follow, such as how to register a company, labor protections, and rules for resolving disputes. It also considers how governments set up these rules to promote transparency, fair competi-

tion, and property rights.

Pillar II: The Public Services pillar measures the support governments provide to help businesses comply with regulations. This includes the availability of online systems for permits, digital tax platforms, and infrastructure at borders for trade.

Pillar III: The Operational Efficiency pillar captures how easy it is for businesses to comply with rules and use public services. This pillar looks at the real-world experience of firms, such as how long it takes to get utilities connected, how easy it is to participate in public procurement, and the reliability of digital payment systems.

The pillars are mutually reinforcing.

Globally, the B-Ready system is being introduced by the World Bank in 2026. Even without a global ranking, India continues to improve its business eco system. Government is implementing Business Reforms Actin Plan (BRAP 2026) to improve state level ease of business. This is a step in right direction.

The author is a former CGM, Reserve Bank of India.

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

OrissaPOST
B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

A resolute judge

Sir, The Delhi High Court's decision in Arvind Kejriwal's liquor policy corruption case underscores that allegations of judicial bias must satisfy the stringent test of "reasonable apprehension," supported by credible material and not mere inference. Justice Swarna Kanta Sharma's refusal to recuse reflects judicial firmness and a commitment to duty over convenience, thereby reinforcing institutional integrity and public confidence in the judiciary. Courts operate on consistency in legal positions. A party cannot simultaneously express faith in a judge's competence and yet allege bias without compelling evidence. Such contradictory stands weaken the credibility of the claim and risk diluting the seriousness of recusal jurisprudence. Procedural strategies aimed at avoiding judicial scrutiny rarely succeed where merits are strong. If the actions under challenge for Kejriwal are lawful, they will withstand examination before any court. Allowing accused persons to shape procedural expectations in their favour may set an undesirable precedent, potentially affecting the efficiency and credibility of the justice delivery system in the longer-term perspective.

AP Thiruvadi, CHENNAI

LPG price rise

Sir, The hike in the LPG price structure could create burden on the ultimate consumers directly or indirectly. The LPG price rise has significantly hit operational costs of hospitality sector. Commercial LPG is not subsidised, leaving small businesses exposed to market price fluctuations. Many eateries, which operate on thin profit margins, say the sudden surge has disrupted their cost structures. Considering the wedding seasons at its peak, the changes in price impacted the pocket expenditure of the households as the commercial cylinders prices are raised and the households could not avoid the ceremonial functions of their beloved ones and due to this, the hoteliers have left with no option but to increase the prices of food items by up to 10%. One way or the other, the members involved under the hospitality sectors have urged the Centre and the State government to offer tax concessions or subsidies to enable the sector to withstand the crisis and to protect the livelihoods of thousands of workers.

Dimple Wadhawan, KANPUR NAGAR (UP)

SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION IN MIZORAM

16 prison inmates escape by forgery; SIT to probe

Spurred into action by the revelation, police apprehended 12 of those released convicts



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Aizawl, May 2: Over the past few months, 16 convicts got released from south Mizoram's Lunglei district jail, and nobody batted an eyelid. It was only last week that it came to light that the inmates were freed based on forged documents. Spurred into action by the revelation, police apprehended 12 of those released convicts. Officials said an SIT has been formed to probe the lapse. Jail authorities said the forgery of the documents was detected when officials at the Lunglei district and sessions court could not locate judicial records authorising the release of those inmates. According to Lunglei Superintendent of Police, J Lal-muankima, 16 convicts serving jail terms of varying durations

had walked out of the district jail using forged court orders and fabricated seals. "Police launched a manhunt immediately after the forgery came to light with the filing of a police complaint on April 25. Twelve of the 16 released convicts have since been apprehended, while one died while on the run," he told PTI, adding the search for the remaining three was underway. A four-member Special Investigation Team (SIT), headed by Sub-Divisional Police Officer R Thankima, has been formed to probe into the fraud, the senior police officer said on Friday. Lalmuankima said that preliminary investigation has

identified 22-year-old jail inmate Jeremy Lalthangtura, already facing a litany of charges, including online fraud, as the mastermind behind the forgery. He was remanded to police custody on Friday for questioning, the SP said. According to the jail authorities, the fraud began early this year but remained undetected until last week. The discrepancy surfaced when officials at the Lunglei district and sessions court were unable to locate records authorising the release of specific inmates, they said. Following this discovery, a formal police complaint was filed. Lunglei district jail deputy superintendent Lalruatsanga said that the counterfeit release orders had fabricated seals and a formatting that closely resembled authentic court directives. "The documents appeared genuine and had passed initial scrutiny. The inmates were released because there is no scope for delay or questioning court orders by the prison administration," he said.

Frame guidelines for doctors on VIP duty: KHRC to govt

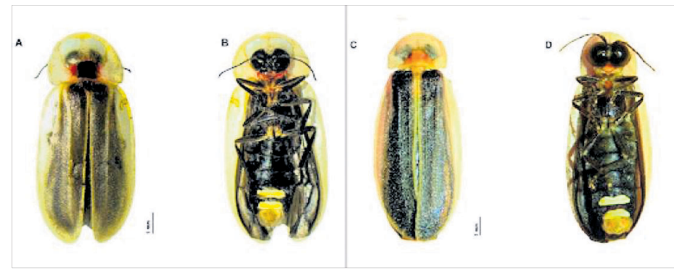
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, May 2: The Kerala Human Rights Commission (KHRC) Saturday directed the state government to issue guidelines enabling medical officers on VIP duty to work without pressure. KHRC Chairperson Justice Alexander Thomas said the guidelines should incorporate the recommendations submitted by the Special Branch of the police before the panel. The direction was issued to the Public Administration (Political) and Health Departments following a complaint by the Kerala Government Medical Officers Association (KGMOA), which sought an end to the alleged human rights violations faced by medical officers assigned to VIP duty. The Special Branch recommendations, which the Commission directed to be implemented immediately, include requiring District Medical Officers (DMOs) to prepare a monthly roster of doctors for VIP duty, ensuring that at least five doctors are available each day. The panel said that such a system would allow doctors to perform their regular responsibilities without disruption.

Meghalaya: New fireflies species discovered in Mawlynnong village

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shillong, May 2: Mawlynnong, dubbed as Asia's cleanest village, has added another distinction to its name with the discovery of a new species of firefly, as researchers documented Meghalaya's first-ever scientifically recorded luminous insects in the area, officials said Friday. The study, led by Emma Magdalene Nonglang of Assam Don Bosco University, identified two previously unknown species, *Diaphanes meghalayanus* and *Diaphanes mawlynnong*, the latter named after the village where it was first recorded, they said. While *D. meghalayanus* was found across multiple habitats in the state, *D. mawlynnong* was observed in the dense forested surroundings of Mawlynnong village close to the India-Bangladesh border. Researchers said the fireflies were located in relatively undisturbed habitats, including semi-evergreen forests and bamboo patches near rocky streams, areas marked by minimal human interference and very low levels of artificial lighting. Field observations showed



Researchers said the fireflies were located in relatively undisturbed habitats, including semi-evergreen forests and bamboo patches near rocky streams, areas marked by minimal human interference and very low levels of artificial lighting

that *D. meghalayanus* thrives in cool, humid conditions of 18-20 degrees Celsius, with males emitting soft green flashes while flying at heights of 10-15 metres above the ground. In contrast, *D. mawlynnong* is associated with denser forest canopies. While males also fly at higher altitudes, the wingless females were found beneath rocks, producing a slower and longer-lasting glow, the researchers explained. The finding is significant as there were previously no published records or museum specimens of fireflies from Meghalaya. Nonglang said firefly populations are highly sensitive to light pollution, noting that the loss of natural darkness often leads to their decline. Co-researcher Jane Wanry Shangliang said fireflies act as key indicators of environmental health and ecological balance. The team believes Meghalaya's varied topography and elevation gradients could harbour a rich but largely undocumented diversity of firefly species, highlighting the need for further scientific surveys.

NAGALAND TO ORGANISE 'WALK FOR HUMANITY'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kohima, May 2: The Indian Red Cross Society Nagaland State Branch (IRCSN) is set to commemorate World Red Cross Day May 8 with a major public outreach event titled 'Walk for Humanity', aligning with this year's global theme, 'United for Humanity'. The day marks the 198th birth anniversary of Jean Henri Dunant, the visionary founder of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the first recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize.



World Red Cross Day is observed worldwide to honour Dunant's legacy and recognise the humanitarian services rendered by Red Cross volunteers across conflicts, disasters, and crises. This year's theme, 'United for Humanity', emphasises solidarity in the face of increasing global challenges, including conflicts and attacks on humanitarian workers. Speaking at a press briefing, officials of IRCSN, led by its general secretary Akhale Khamo, highlighted that the theme seeks to "reclaim the narrative in the face of dehumanising trends", reminding society that both volunteers and beneficiaries are "human beings, not statistics". In a departure from previous years' indoor observances, the Nagaland state branch is organising a Walk for Humanity to increase public visibility and participation. Convener of the Organising Committee, Khyochano TCK, said the event will begin at 7 am from the Red Cross Complex in Kohima, proceeding to the Old NST, Main Town area. At the culmination point, she said, local MLA Dr Tsielhoutuo Rhtuso would share a motivational health talk on health as a medical professional. The event has drawn support from multiple stakeholders, including Nagaland State Disaster Management Authority, Nagaland Voluntary Blood Donors Association, Kohima Village Youth Organisation, Health-focused NGOs such as Kripa Foundation and Family Planning Association of India. The organisers stressed that the walk is more than a symbolic event as it marks the beginning of a broader campaign to strengthen humanitarian awareness and volunteerism in Nagaland. "Red Cross has been serving Nagaland for over three decades, often as first responders during disasters. But humanitarian work cannot be done alone. We need a collective movement," said Santu Thapa, joint secretary of IRCSN Kohima Branch.

KERALA POLLS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thrissur (Kerala), May 2: State Police Chief Ravada V Chandrasekhar Saturday said tight security arrangements have been made across Kerala for the Assembly election vote counting May 4. Speaking to reporters here on the sidelines of the pass-

Tight security in place for vote counting

ing-out parade of police sub-inspectors, Chandrasekhar said forces have been deployed across the state to prevent any untoward incidents on counting day. "We are taking more preventive measures. As part of it, CCTV and drone surveillance activities have been enhanced. The entire police force

has been mobilised for security purposes," he said. He said counting centres would be guarded by central forces. "We have deployed 25 companies of central forces to guard counting centres. Outer cordon and perimeter security will be handled by the Kerala Police. Apart from the counting cen-

tres, arrangements have been made for the security of other places as well," he said. Regarding politically sensitive areas where violence is often reported after election results, Chandrasekhar said arrangements had been made to prevent such incidents. "We have readied police officers for the purpose. Strict

action will be taken if anyone is found causing law and order issues. We have given instructions in this regard," he said. He added that patrolling and surveillance activities had been intensified in border areas. Polling for the 140 Assembly seats in Kerala was held April 9, and the results will be announced May 4.

Hotel owners protest against gas price hike

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Palakkad (Kerala), May 2: Hotel and restaurant owners Saturday held a protest march in Palakkad against the recent nearly ₹1,000 hike in commercial gas cylinder prices. The protesters marched through the town holding placards and images of gas cylinders. They also carried two cylinders on a stretcher with a wreath placed on top, according to visuals aired on television channels. The hotel and restaurant owners contended that it would be difficult for them to sustain their businesses in view of the high cost of commercial gas cylinders. They said that many of them had been forced to shut their establishments earlier due to the scarcity of commercial gas cylinders, and that most had only recently reopened. "But the sudden increase in commercial gas cylinder prices has affected our operations," the protesters said. Similar concerns were raised by restaurant owners and workers from other parts of the state in response to queries from reporters. The Kerala Hotel and Restaurant Association had on Friday announced a statewide protest strike May 6 against the ₹993 hike in commercial LPG cylinder prices.

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The Puri Urban Co-operative Bank Ltd, e-auction Sale Notice
Puri Kacheri Road, Puri -1

E-Auction Sale Notice (Sale through e-bidding only)
email - puriucb.ltd@gmail.com, Phone No. 06752 223309

E-Auction Sale Notice

Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and / Guarantor (s) indicated in Column (1) that the below described immovable property (ties) described in column (3) Mortgaged / charged to the secured creditor to the constructive / physical possession of which has been taken as described in column (4) by the Authorised officer of The Puri Urban Co-operative Bank Ltd, Puri will be sold on "As is where is" " As is what is" and " Whatever there is" as per the details mentioned below.

Notice is hereby given to Borrower / Mortgage (s) / legal heirs legal representatives (whether known or unknown) executor (s), administrator (s) successor (s) and assign (s) of the respective Borrowers (s) / Mortgagor (s) (Since deceased) as the indicated in Column (1) under Rule 8 (6) of the Security interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

For detailed terms and conditions of the Sale, please refer to the link provided in <https://praveen.thevar@auctiontiger.net>

(Name (s) of borrowers / Mortgagor (s) Guarantors / Legal Heirs and legal Representatives (whether known or unknown) Executors (s) Administrators (S) Successor (S) and Assigns (s) of the respective Borrowers (s) / Mortgagors (s) Guarantor (S) (Since deceased) as the case may be	Outstanding Dues to be Secured Debt) Rs.	Description of the Immovable Property / Secured Asset	Type of Possession	Date & Time of Inspection	Reserve Price (Rs)	Last date of Submission of bids	Earnest Money deposit	Bid Incremental Rate	Date of Auction and time
Borrower:- Smt. Sudipta Chand, W/o-Mrutyunjaya Chand At-Chudanga Sahi, Near Bhagabata Tungji, Po-Puri-1, Ps-Puri Town, Dist-Puri. Guarantors:- 1)Smt. Radhamani ChandW/o-Upendranath Chand At-Chudanga Sahi, Near Bhagabata Tungji, Po-Puri-1, Ps-Puri Town, Dist-Puri. 2) Sri Mrutyunjaya Chand, S/o-Upendranath Chand Near Bhagabata Tungji, Po-Puri-1, Ps-Puri Town, Dist-Puri.	Rs. 37,40,280 as on 31-12-2015	Dist-Puri, S.R.O-Puri Tahasil:Puri Tahasil No-658, Ps-Puri Town Thana, Puri P.S. No-18, Revenue Village-Chudanga Sahi, Puri Hal Khata No-217, Hal Plot No-366, Area-Ac. 0.024 dec. Boundary by-N-Akura Bisoi S-Krushnalata Sahoo E-Ramji Matha W-Road Mortgagor (s)- Smt. Radhamani Chand.	Physical Possession	02/06/2026 From 11 AM to 3 PM	Rs.74,20,000	04/06/2026	10% of the Bid Rs.7,42,000	Rs 20,000	05/06/2026 From 11 AM to 12 PM

- Together with further interest @ 18% p.a as applicable, incidental expenses, costs charges etc incurred up to the date of payment and / or realization thereof.
- In Respect of the Property at Serial No. 1 the outstanding due to the Builder / society or any other statutory /electricity /water/ property tax other dues has to be cleared /paid by the successful purchasers /bidders and The Puri Urban co-operative Bank Ltd will not be liability to make any payment whatsoever.
- <https://praveen.thevar@auctiontiger.net> would be assisting the authorised officer in conducting the auction through an e-bidding process. For any assistance related to inspection of the property or for obtaining the Bid documents and for any other queries, please get in touch with M/s Auction Tiger Praveen Kumar Thevar. <https://praveen.thevar@auctiontiger.net> and support@auctiontiger.net
- Authorised officer The Puri Urban Co-operative Bank Ltd, Puri Sri Manoranjan Mohanty, Mob:- 9861678885.
- The Bid Document can be collected/ obtained from the Authorized officer of The Puri Urban Co-operative Bank Ltd having his officer at Kacheri Road, Puri-1 Odisha
- The secured asset is being sold on "As is where is" and "As is what is" basis.
- To the best of knowledge and Information of the Authorised officer of The Puri Urban Co-operative Bank Ltd, there are no encumbrances in respect of the above immovable properties / Secured Assets.

Dated - 03/05/2026
Place : Puri

Sd./- Authorised Officer

यूनियन बैंक Union Bank of India
एक शासकृत बैंक A Government of India Undertaking

Regional Office: Sambalpur
1st Floor, Balaji Midtown, Budharaja, Sambalpur- 768004, Dist.: Sambalpur, Odisha

E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

E-Auction Sale Notice of 30 days for Sale of Immovable Secured Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/ charged to the Secured Creditor, the possession of which has been taken by the **Authorised Officer of Union Bank of India (Secured Creditor)** will be sold on "As is Where is", "As is what is" and "Whatever there is" basis for recovery of outstanding dues to the **Union Bank of India** from the Borrowers and Guarantors mentioned below. The Reserve Price and the Earnest money deposit is stated in the column respectively.

Date & Time of Auction: 04.06.2026 between 12.00 Noon. to 5.00 P.M. (with 10 min unlimited auto extensions)

Sl. No.	BIRMAL BRANCH, BARGARH / Name & Address of Borrower/Guarantor	Description of Property to be Auctioned	Total Dues (in ₹)	Reserve Price/ EMD / Bid increment Amount
1.	Borrower/Guarantor/Mortgagor/Co-Obligant: 1) Mrs. Rajni Dash, W/o: Lokanath Dash, 2) Mr. Lokanath Dash, S/o Jagabandhu Dash, Both are R/o: Shanti Nagar Bheunria, PO: Padampur via Rajborasambar, Dist.: Bargarh, Odisha - 768036.	Land admeasuring an Area: Ac 0.070 Dec., Kissam: Gharabari with G+1 residential building thereon bearing Plot No.: 772/1668, M.S. Khata No.: 246/143, situated at Mouza: Bheunria, PS/Tahasil: Padampur, Dist.: Bargarh, Odisha - 768036 belonging to Mrs. Rajni Dash and bounded by East: Road, West: Land of Mahendra Mishra, North: Land of Kalprasad Sahu, South: Land of Dalimba Purohit.	₹17,61,197/- as on 30.04.2026 + interest and charges thereon	₹34,65,000/- / ₹3,46,500/- / ₹34,650/-

Date and Time of Inspection of Property for Intending Purchasers : upto 03.06.2026 during Banking Hours

Details of encumbrances if any : NIL

LAST DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF EMD : On or before the commencement of E-Auction

For registration and login and bidding rules visit <https://baanknet.com> and <https://www.unionbankofindia.bank.in/auction-property/view-auction-property.aspx>

STATUTORY 30 DAYS SALE NOTICE UNDER RULE 8(6) OF STATUTORY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002

This May also be treated as notice under Rule 8(6) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 to the borrower/s and guarantor/s of the said loan about the holding of E-Auction Sale on the above mentioned date.

For any query please contact: **Mob.: 8291220220**

Place: Sambalpur
Date: 02.05.2026

Sd/- Authorized Officer
Union Bank of India



When there is an urgent need for this law (the Shakti Act) in the state, the Centre and the state government are passing the buck to each other instead of implementing it and wasting time

ANIL DESHMUKH | NCP (SP) LEADER

GOVT APPOINTS 2 FULL-TIME MEMBERS TO NITI AAYOG

The Centre Saturday appointed academician Joram Aniya and scholar-author R Balasubramaniam as full-time members of the Niti Aayog, taking the total number of such members in the government think tank to seven, along with a vice-chairman. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is the chairman of the Niti Aayog



of the day note

The recent global uncertainty is an indication that we must turn crises into opportunities. We must give maximum attention to our manufacturing sectors through regional conferences



JP NADDA | UNION MINISTER

I have always respected the party. I did it yesterday, am doing it today and will continue to do so even tomorrow. I have never betrayed those who made me big. This is not in my nature. But I can't say the same about what will the circumstances be tomorrow



SANJAY JADHAV | MP, SHIV SENA (UBT)

While emphasising the spiritual nature of his visit to Leh on the pious occasion of Buddha Purnima, he urged for a focussed approach on sustainable development. Large-scale plantation and water security were identified by HM as key pillars for overall development of Ladakh



VK SAXENA | LG, LADAKH

FY26 ANNUAL REPORT

ED's arrests decline; raids, attachments peak

The agency restored assets worth ₹32,678 crore during the last fiscal as compared to ₹15,263 crore handed over to the victims of fraud during FY25



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 2: Arrests effected by the ED in money laundering cases have reduced by about 27 per cent during the last financial year, but the value of attached assets recorded an all-time high at over 81,000 crore for the period, official data stated.

Searches or raids conducted by the central agency under the stringent provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) almost doubled to 2,892 during the 2025-26 fiscal that ended dated March 31.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has sweeping powers under the PMLA in connection with the definition of the proceeds of crime, power of arrest, search and seizure and attachment of properties. The provisions of the Act also make securing bail extremely difficult because the court must be satisfied that the accused is

not guilty, as well as not likely to commit another crime while on bail.

In the past fiscal, the ED breached its set target of restoring attached assets to victims of fraud by double, as it restituted properties worth more than Rs 32,000 crore during the said time period. The agency had set a target of restoring assets worth Rs 15,000 crore at the start of the FY26 in April 2025.

The ED reasoned that the arrests were reduced because it was undertaking "more targeted and evidence-based investigations".

Elaborating on the "highest-ever" provisional attachment of assets done by it in a single year (FY26) - a whopping 171 per cent increase in value of attachments at Rs 81,422 crore under 712 orders - the agency said this was a "central instrument" through which it ensures that criminals are deprived and stripped of the fruits of crime

generated "illicitly".

In comparison, the agency had issued 461 provisional attachment orders with assets valued at Rs 30,036 crore frozen during FY25.

The report added that the ED was not relying "entirely" on physical searches but its investigators were "triangulating" financial intelligence from multiple databases simultaneously, tracing cryptocurrency flows through block chain analytics and accessing corporate and property records in real-time.

This led the ED to successfully file a "record" 812 chargesheets during FY26 as compared to 457 such complaints for prosecution filed before courts during the previous year.

Data showed that the number of Enforcement Case Information Reports (ECIRs) registered to trigger PMLA probes, jumped 39 per cent to 1,080 cases during the last fiscal as compared to 775 cases filed during FY25.

The most critical data was reflected in the restitution of assets category where the ED restores assets attached by it under the PMLA to the victims of fraud such as investors, homebuyers and banks.

The agency restored assets worth Rs 32,678 crore during the last fiscal as compared to Rs 15,263 crore handed over to the victims of fraud during FY25.



Students celebrate after the declaration of Maharashtra State Board HSC class 12 results, in Nagpur, Maharashtra, Saturday

PTI PHOTO

JAMMU BRIDGE COLLAPSE 3 bodies, 1 injured pulled out from rubble; probe ordered

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, May 2: Rescue workers pulled out three bodies and an injured person from the debris of a partially collapsed old bridge during a 12-hour search operation on the outskirts of Jammu, officials said Saturday.

One injured worker was rescued, Friday, shortly after a portion of the bridge collapsed in the Thuthar area of Bantalab. According to the officials, labourers were carrying out retaining wall and foundation-laying work on the bridge, which was damaged in flash floods last year, when a portion of it gave way, trapping four of them.

"The search and rescue operation concluded this morning. Three bodies have been recovered from the spot. Two others have been rescued in injured

condition," a senior officer told.

Dep-CM Choudhary ordered a probe into the incident and directed the authorities to complete it in five days.

Following his order, Assistant Executive Engineer Sahil Verma and Junior Engineer Sajad Mir were placed under suspension, pending inquiry into their conduct, the officials said. The government has also constituted a three-member inquiry committee headed by Purshotam Kumar, Secretary Technical (Engineer-in-Chief), Public Works (R&B) Department.

Superintendent Engineer, Public Works (R&B), Circle Jammu South, Arit Gupta, and Executive Engineer, Public Works (R&B) Satwari division, Rajan Mengi are members of the panel, they said.

Chintan Shrivir concluded at Patanjali University



AGENCIES

Haridwar, May 2: A two-day "Chintan Shrivir" for officials from the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, concluded at Patanjali University, Haridwar, from April 30 to May 1. The camp was organized by the Ministry with the aim of holistic development of tribal communities. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs, the nodal ministry of the Government of India, is responsible for formulating and implementing policies for the socio-economic development, health, education, and preservation of culture of various communities in the country. The Chintan Shrivir was attended by Principal Secretaries from various states of India, senior Ministry officials, experts, and other representatives. The program began with a chorus by Dr. Archana Tiwari and her team.

Mr. Manish Tripathi, a representative from the Government of India, provided detailed information on livelihood models in rural communities. He shared ground-level work done in the areas of tribal development, economy, and sustainable livelihoods. On this occasion, the schemes implemented for tribal communities were reviewed and strategies for strengthening future schemes were emphasized. In this context, representatives and experts from the Government of India shared their collective efforts and experiences regarding tribal welfare schemes. On this occasion, renowned astrologer and Vastu expert Dr. Jai Madan shared tips on maintaining balance and positivity in life through Vastu. Referring to the sacred drink "Soma," described in the Vedic text Rigveda, he explained that it was a medicinal juice made from the Somalata tree, which was offered to the gods in yagnas.

SHORT TAKES

Terrorists held in Pulwama

Srinagar: Saturday, security forces arrested an overground worker (OGW) of terrorists in Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir. The OGW was identified as Umar Malik, a resident of the Kachipora area of the south Kashmir district. According to the officials, a star pistol, two rounds of ammunition, a magazine, a Chinese grenade, a Pakistani grenade, and a mobile phone were recovered from Malik

Crane collapse kills 2 labourers

Thane: Saturday, 2 labourers were killed when a crane collapsed at the under-construction Dahisar-Bhayander Link Road project site in Maharashtra's Thane district. According to the police, the "gantry crane coastal girders platform", where labourers were working, suddenly collapsed at 12:30 PM in Bhayander (West), severely injuring the two. They were declared dead at a hospital. The Dahisar-Bhayander Link Road (DBLR) elevated coastal road project connects Dahisar (West) and Bhayander (West)

Mother, son die by suicide after argument

Etwah (UP): A 21-year-old man here allegedly died by suicide by consuming poison following an argument with his mother, who later hanged herself in shock upon finding his body. Vivek Kumar consumed a poisonous substance following an altercation with his mother, Guddi Devi (55), leading to his death. Guddi Devi later found her son lying dead in their house and, overcome with grief, allegedly hanged herself using a saree

4 workers killed in coal slurry collapse

Dhanbad (Jharkhand): At least four workers died after being buried under coal slurry in Jharkhand's Dhanbad district, Saturday. The incident took place at Moonidih coal washery in the command area of Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCL). The incident took place when coal slurry was being loaded into trucks by workers, during which a large chunk of slurry fell and trapped several workers underneath.

Man held in Gujarat's Kutch for 'promoting' ISIS ideology online

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kutch (Gujarat), May 2: Police have arrested a 32-year-old man in Gujarat's Kutch district for allegedly promoting the ideology of ISIS, a terrorist organisation, on social media, officials said Saturday.

Accused Fakirmamad Gagda, a resident of Bhuj in Kutch, was arrested Friday, they said. He allegedly posted videos, writings and images promoting a particular ideology, an official release from West Kutch-Bhuj Special Operations Group (SOG) said. After his mobile phones were checked, it was found that the accused had created multiple Instagram and Facebook accounts under different names. "It came to light that he was following the ideology of the terrorist organisation ISIS and also shared posts on social media that misled people into gathering for Islamic war, Khilafat and Jihad, thereby posing a threat to the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India," the release said.

SC rejects TMC plea on counting staff deployment

The Election Commission's counsel termed the TMC's apprehensions 'completely misplaced' and said it was following its circular, which also provided for state government employees in the counting process

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 2: The Supreme Court, Saturday, declined to pass further directions on a plea filed by Trinamool Congress (TMC) challenging the deployment of central government personnel during vote counting in West Bengal by the Election Commission (EC).

Effectively upholding the framework outlined by the poll panel, a special bench comprising justices PS Narasimha and Joymalya Bagchi said that the EC's April 13 circular, which provides for a mix of central



and state government employees in the counting process dated May 4, was not contrary to law.

It said that the poll body has the discretion to appoint counting personnel from either pool.

"No further orders are necessary in this case except to record the statement of Mr DS Naidu, appearing for the poll panel, that the Election Commission will implement the circular dated April 13 in true letter and spirit. With these clarifications, the special leave

petition stands dismissed," the bench said in its order.

In its April 30 judgment, the Calcutta High Court had rejected the TMC's contention that the EC's directive was issued without jurisdiction or based on vague apprehensions.

The high court also dismissed allegations that central government or PSU employees could be influenced by the Union government, noting the presence of multiple layers of oversight in the counting process.

The TMC rushed to the top

EC deploys additional counting, police observers

Ahead of the counting of votes in West Bengal scheduled for Monday, the Election Commission, Saturday, deployed an additional 165 counting observers and 77 police observers in the state. While the additional counting observers will assist the 294 such observers already deployed per constituency, the additional police observers will strengthen security and oversee law and order arrangements outside the counting centres, the poll body said. The observers will function under the poll body's superintendence and control. The police observers will oversee the security and law and order arrangements around the counting centres assigned to them and ensure that the arrangements follow the EC's instructions.

court to appeal against the directive leading to the special hearing on a Saturday, a court holiday.

Andaman sets Guinness Record for largest underwater flag

The achievement highlights the growing stature of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands as a destination for adventure tourism, marine activities, and globally recognised events

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sri Vijaya Puram, May 2: The Andaman and Nicobar administration, Saturday, set a new Guinness World Record by unfurling the world's largest underwater national flag at Radhanagar beach, officials said.

The massive Tricolour, measuring approximately 60 by 40 metre, was deployed beneath the sea in a complex, tightly coordinated operation, involving multiple agencies and trained divers at Swaraj Dweep (Havelock Island), they said.

Lieutenant Governor D K Joshi, Chief Secretary Chandra Bhushan Kumar, and Director General of Police H S Dhaliwal, along with senior officials, were present to witness the event.

Personnel from the Andaman and Nicobar Police, Forest Department, Indian Navy, and Indian Coast Guard, as well as scuba divers from various diving centres, collaborated to execute the intricate underwater unfurling.

Three school children "Fateh Jahaan Singh (16), Lavanya Eira (15) and Ranvijay Singh (14)"



were the youngest participants among more than 200 divers.

At 10.35 am, Rishi Nath, adjudicator from Guinness World Records, formally confirmed the achievement and presented the certificate to Joshi, the officials said. Addressing the gathering, Joshi praised the teams

involved for their coordination and commitment, calling the feat a significant addition to the islands' record of unique accomplishments.

The achievement highlights the growing stature of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands as a destination for adventure

The massive Tricolour, measuring approximately 60 by 40 metre, was deployed beneath the sea in a complex, tightly coordinated operation, involving multiple agencies and trained divers at Swaraj Dweep (Havelock Island)

tourism, marine activities, and globally recognised events, the officials said.

Fateh, a Class-12 student of the Shri Ram School in Gurugram, told PTI: "I don't have

words to express how beautiful the marine world is. I am feeling so proud to have become a part of this event."

He is a trained equestrian who has participated in many international events.

Lavanya and Ranvijay "students of Class-11 and Class-10, respectively, at Rishi Valley School in Bengaluru and Sardar Patel Vidyalaya in New Delhi" were equally thrilled over the achievement. "Holding our national flag underwater is a truly emotional moment and gave us an adrenaline rush," they said.

The administration is set to attempt another Guinness World Record, Sunday, the "Tallest Human Stack", at the Lighthouse dive site on Swaraj Dweep, with the Lt Governor and senior officials expected to attend.



Some states may get more, some states may get less in delimitation—that is a different story. But the Rajya Sabha should be given Senate-like powers, like the US Senate. Every state should have a fixed number of representatives in the Rajya Sabha

6K PERFORM 'BHUJANGASANA', ENTER ASIA BOOK OF RECORDS
Over 6,000 people made history at Kanha Shanti Vanam near here Saturday, performing 'Bhujangasana' in unison to secure a place in the Asia Book of Records for the largest gathering performing the asana simultaneously



of the day quote

Hariprasad told me that he met the CM, but he did not disclose what was discussed between them. Hariprasad, Zameer Ahmed Khan, and I met over dinner, and we discussed the elections held in four states and one union territory



As India marches toward completing 100 years of its Independence, it is imperative that we envision a future that is inclusive, just and innovation-driven



Chief Minister Choudhary has time and again clarified that the present government is being run under the guidance of Nitish Kumar, and that there will be zero-tolerance towards communalism



4-yr-old girl sexually assaulted, murdered

The accused, 65, has criminal history, with cases registered against him in 1998 and 2015



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pune, May 2: A 65-year-old man with criminal record has been arrested for allegedly sexually assaulting and murdering a four-year-old girl in Bhor tehsil of Pune district, police said Saturday, as the incident led to angry protests in the area.

The accused, who works as a labourer, allegedly lured the girl with the promise of food Friday and took her to a cattle enclosure where he sexually assaulted her and later killed her by hitting her with a stone, said a police official.

He was arrested on the basis of CCTV footage from a private residence which captured him with the child. A case was registered against him under relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

He was later produced before the sessions court in Pune which remanded him in police custody till May 7.

Members of Maratha organisations tried to block the police vehicle carrying the accused on the court premises.

The incident triggered massive outrage in Bhor area, with hundreds of villagers rushing to the local police outpost and demanding action against the accused. They also staged a blockade on the Mumbai-Bengaluru Highway.

Pune (Rural) Superintendent of Police Sandip Singh Gill assured the villagers that

a charge sheet will be filed in the case within 15 days and the trial will be expedited.

"The accused has criminal history, with cases registered against him in 1998 and 2015. He was acquitted in both cases. He is a labourer and typically wanders around the village and occasionally takes up jobs," he told reporters.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, who also heads the home department, said the incident was "extremely shameful and deeply painful" and promised a fast-track court trial.

"We will request the High Court to appoint a special public prosecutor. Efforts will be made to ensure capital punishment for the accused in the shortest possible time," he said, while also stating that politicisation of the incident is insensitive. Fadnis also expressed condolences for the deceased child's family and said the government stands with them in this difficult time.

NCP (SP) leaders Supriya Sule and Rohit Pawar visited the deceased girl's village. Sule, in whose Baramati Lok Sabha constituency the village falls, said she would meet Fadnis Tuesday and seek stringent action against the accused.

"How did this accused get bail in past criminal cases? There should be a fast-track trial in the case," said the MP while also ruing that the state women's commission does not have a chairperson at present.

MP Sandeep Pathak booked in Punjab

BJP accuses Kejriwal of 'political vendetta'

Chandigarh/New Delhi, May 2: The Punjab Police has booked Rajya Sabha MP Sandeep Pathak, who recently quit the AAP to join the BJP with six of his colleagues, sources said Saturday.

Two FIRs have been lodged against Pathak under non-bailable sections, they said. No further details about the FIRs have been disclosed yet.

Pathak was among the seven Rajya Sabha MPs who quit the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) recently.

A Punjab police team went to Delhi but Pathak had already left his residence in a sports utility vehicle (SUV) before its arrival. In a video, Pathak was seen leaving his residence when some journalists approached him for his reaction to the development.

Pathak, a former professor at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi, was credited with drafting the AAP's election and campaign strategy and building the party organisation. Once considered close to AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal, Pathak played a significant role in the party's triumph in the 2022



Punjab Assembly polls.

The development comes close on the heels of a raid conducted by the Punjab Pollution Control Board at the premises of Trident Limited April 30. Rajya Sabha MP Rajinder Gupta is the chairman emeritus of the company. Gupta was also one of the seven MPs who quit the AAP

and joined the BJP last month. Earlier, the Punjab Police had withdrawn the security cover of MP and former cricketer Harbhajan Singh.

The AAP suffered a jolt when seven of its 10 Rajya Sabha MPs quit the party April 24, alleging that the Kejriwal-led outfit has strayed from its principles, values and core morals.

Besides Pathak, Gupta and Singh, the others who quit the party were Raghav Chadha, Ashok Mittal, Vikramjit Sahney and Swati Maliwal. Six of them were from Punjab.

Rajya Sabha Chairman C P Radhakrishnan later officially accepted their merger with the BJP, reducing the AAP's strength in the Upper House of Parliament to three.

Meanwhile, Punjab BJP leaders accused the AAP government in Punjab of indulging in "political vendetta".



A Yellow footed green pigeon yawns as perches on a royal poinciana, commonly called Gulmohar, tree branch, in New Delhi, Saturday

Nashik court denies pre-arrest bail to TCS employee Nida Khan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Nashik, May 2: A court in Nashik Saturday rejected the anticipatory bail application of Nida Khan, an accused in a case related to alleged sexual harassment and forcible religious conversion at the Nashik unit of TCS, after the prosecution stressed the need for her custodial interrogation.

"The offence is a serious one, Nida Khan is one of the prime accused and therefore her custodial interrogation is necessary. The court rejected Nida Khan's bail application today. The final order will be uploaded soon," public prosecutor Ajay Misar told reporters. According to the FIR, Khan allegedly advised women employees to dress and behave in accordance with Islamic traditions. Khan had sought pre-arrest bail, citing her pregnancy.

A search is underway for Khan in different parts of Maharashtra, police had said.

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the Nashik Police is probing nine cases of sexual harassment of some female employees at the IT major's Nashik unit by their male colleagues. The SIT has arrested eight persons, including a female operations manager, by registering nine FIRs. Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) had last month stated that the firm has adopted a zero-tolerance policy towards harassment and coercion of any form for a long time.

POST OF THE DAY

One Question: If there is so much development, progress in the last 13 yrs, why does every person who has the resources wanna leave this country today? Why is settling in foreign countries still the peak goal for from middle-class Indian households children today? Why not the diasporas from all countries coming back here and settle in India instead of doing Modi Modi from there?

@RahulSeeker

SHORT TAKES

44 peacocks die of H5N1 in K'taka

Bangalore: After 44 peacocks died of the H5N1 virus in Tumakuru district, K'taka Minister Eshwar Khandre, Saturday, directed officials to implement strict precautionary measures to prevent its spread across forest areas, including zoos and bird sanctuaries. The directive comes after laboratory reports from the ICAR "National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases" in Bhopal recently confirmed H5N1 avian influenza as the cause of the deaths.

₹2,672cr bank fraud: Kamlesh Parekh held

New Delhi: The CBI has arrested Kamlesh Parekh, a fugitive wanted in a 10-year-old ₹2,672 crore bank fraud case, after his extradition from the UAE, officials said Saturday. Parekh, wanted in the bank fraud case filed against Shree Ganesh Jewellery House (I) Ltd, Kolkata, was extradited from the UAE Friday, they said. The CBI had registered the case in 2016 against the company and others for allegedly cheating a consortium of 25 banks to the tune of ₹2,672 crore.

Prasar Bharati gets new chairman

New Delhi: Noted lyricist, writer and communications expert Prason Joshi has been appointed as the chairman of Prasar Bharati, India's public service broadcaster. The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting appointed Joshi to the key post, according to an official statement Saturday. Joshi, a distinguished creative professional with wide-ranging contributions across literature, advertising, cinema, and public communication, and known for his impactful writing and deep cultural sensibility, has played a significant role in shaping contemporary Indian media narratives, the statement said.

India, Ecuador eye 2026 trade deal

India will provide grant assistance worth up to ₹12 crore to Ecuador over a period of five years for the implementation of various socio-economic development projects

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 2: India and Ecuador are looking at the possibility of firming up a preferential trade pact, besides agreeing to shore up cooperation in areas of healthcare, agriculture and digital technology.

Ways to further solidify bilateral relations were the focus of talks between External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Ecuadorian counterpart Gabriela Sommerfeld Rosero this week, according to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

The two-day visit of Foreign Minister Sommerfeld, along with her deputy Alejandro Davalos, to India marked a "new chapter" in strengthening bilateral ties between the two nations, the MEA said Saturday.

The ministry said that in their talks April 29, Jaishankar and Sommerfeld "re-affirmed their commitment to enhancing bilateral cooperation in multiple areas, including healthcare and pharmaceuticals, agriculture, trade and investment, digital technology, cultural relations, capacity building and cooperation in multilateral institutions".

It said Sommerfeld handed



Jaishankar and Sommerfeld also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for Indian grant assistance to implement 'Quick Impact Projects' (QIPs) in Ecuador

over formal letters to the Indian side marking Ecuador's decision to join the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA).

Jaishankar and Sommerfeld also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for Indian grant assistance to implement 'Quick Impact Projects' (QIPs) in Ecuador.

Ecuador, fostering development and public trust," the MEA said.

Sommerfeld also met Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and the two leaders discussed a roadmap for a preferential trade agreement (PTA) between the two countries, it said. The discussions also focused on scaling up Indian pharmaceutical exports to Ecuador and supply chain partnerships for critical minerals like copper and gold, it added.

Sommerfeld also met Union Health Minister J P Nadda to discuss advancing bilateral health cooperation, specifically focusing on affordable healthcare solutions and high-end medical systems.

"The discussions centred on establishing an institutional technical mechanism to advance various initiatives, including the recognition of Indian Pharmacopoeia (IP) by Ecuador to exchange information and promote regulatory cooperation, with the aim of strengthening bilateral relations in the field of medical products," the MEA said.

They also agreed to have an MoU on health cooperation between the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and its counterpart ministry in Ecuador, it said.

MP BOAT TRAGEDY

Death toll rises to 11; two tourists missing



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jabalpur, May 2: The bodies of two boys were recovered Saturday evening from the Bargi Dam in Jabalpur district of Madhya Pradesh, raising the death toll in the cruise boat tragedy that occurred two days ago to 11, while search continued for two missing persons.

The boat, operated by the state tourism department, capsized during a storm Thursday evening with some of the survivors alleging negligence and safety lapses such as life jackets not being distributed in time.

The bodies of Viraj Soni (6) and Tamil (5) were recovered Saturday, said Sub-Divisional Officer of Police (SDOP) Anjul Ayank Mishra. (SDOP) Anjul Kamraj, an employee of the Ordnance Factory at Khamaria, and Kamraj's nephew Mayuram (5) were still missing, he added.

Divers and disaster response

teams have expanded the search radius to five km, the police official said. Of the 41 identified passengers on board the ill-fated vessel, 28 were rescued, police said.

More than 200 rescuers, including around 20 Army divers airlifted from Agra, joined the search operation that resumed at 5 Saturday morning. The operation, involving the National Disaster Response Force, State Disaster Response Force and local divers, was briefly affected at around 9 am due to strong winds, officials said. Post-mortem examinations of nine deceased persons have been completed, Mishra said.

"Our priority is to search for the missing persons. We will also register a First Information Report in the case soon," he said. Police said CCTV footage near the boarding point showed 43 people heading towards the boat while the identities of 41 passengers have been confirmed so far.

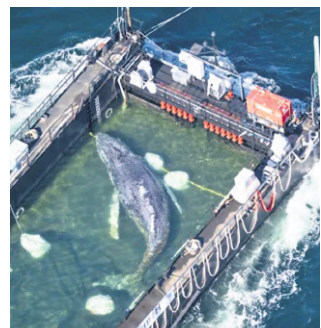
international



The US is taking decisive action to disrupt Iran's illicit oil trade, the Iranian regime's primary revenue streams that fund terrorism and regional destabilization
TOMMY PIGOTT | US DEPARTMENT OF STATE SPOKESMAN

STRANDED 'TIMMY' RELEASED

A rescue team Saturday released from a barge in the North Sea a humpback whale that had been stranded in shallow waters near Germany since March, witnesses said. Nicknamed Timmy by German media, the whale was spotted swimming near Germany's Baltic Sea coast March 3, far from its natural habitat in the Atlantic Ocean



of the day quote

The ghastly fact is that Jews are on everybody's list, all of those hateful groups, whether you're extreme left, whether you're Islamist terrorist, whether you're right-wing terrorist, and some hostile states as well now with some sort of Iranian-related threats
KEIR STARMER | UK PRIME MINISTER

Obviously we're concerned about the mice situation including in Western Australia. A mice plague is a very difficult situation for farmers and for industry and for governments
CHRIS BOWEN | ENERGY MINISTER

Cuba's got problems. On the way back from Iran, we'll have one of our big, maybe the USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier - the biggest in the world - we'll have that come in, stop about 100 yards offshore, and they'll say, "Thank you very much. We give up"
DONALD TRUMP | US PRESIDENT

Berlin pushes EU defence unity

Pentagon announced withdrawal of 5,000 troops after German leader's war comments as transatlantic tensions simmer over Iran, tariffs

REUTERS

Berlin, May 2: A planned drawdown of 5,000 US troops from Germany was expected, but should spur Europeans to strengthen their own defences, German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius said Saturday, after Washington's latest salvo against transatlantic ties.

The Pentagon announced the drawdown from Germany, its largest European base, Friday, as a rift over the Iran war and tariff tensions place further strain on relations between the US and Europe.

Trump called for a reduced military presence in Germany as far back as his first term and has repeatedly urged Europe to take responsibility for its defence. However, he stepped up the threat earlier this week after sparring with German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, who has questioned Washington's exit strategy in the Middle East.

NATO WORKING WITH WASHINGTON ON DETAILS

Pistorius said the partial withdrawal would affect a current US presence of almost 40,000 soldiers stationed in Germany.

According to the US Defense Manpower Data Center, 36,436 active service members were stationed in Germany as of December last year.

US WITHDRAWS TROOPS



We Europeans must take on more responsibility for our own security. Germany is on the right track by expanding its armed forces, speeding up military procurement and building infrastructure
BORIS PISTORIUS | DEFENCE MINISTER, GERMANY

The Pentagon said the withdrawal was expected to be completed over the next six to 12 months. It did not say which bases would be affected, nor whether the troops would return to the US or be redeployed within Europe or elsewhere.

A NATO spokesperson said the alliance was working with the US to understand the details of the decision.

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk, whose country is seeking assurances of continued US support on NATO's eastern flank amid the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, expressed concern about the latest setback to the alliance.

"The greatest threat to the transatlantic community are

not its external enemies, but the ongoing disintegration of our alliance. We must all do what it takes to reverse this disastrous trend," Tusk wrote on X Saturday.

The Pentagon's plans were the latest blow to Germany from Washington this weekend, after Trump said he would ratchet up tariffs on EU auto imports to 25%, accusing the EU of not upholding a trade deal - in a move that threatens to cost the German economy billions.

A foreign policy official from Chancellor Merz's CDU party said the two announcements should be viewed in light of pressure on Trump both at home and abroad, amid weak opinion polling and pressure over unresolved conflicts in Ukraine, Venezuela and Iran.

"Against this backdrop, both the troop withdrawal and the trade policy seem less like the expression of a coherent strategy and more like a political reflex and a reaction born of frustration," Peter Beyer told Reuters.

SOARING FUEL PRICES

Kyiv targets Russia's oil facilities

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Moscow, May 2: Ukrainian drones are flying deep into Russia to strike oil facilities, sending up plumes of smoke that can be seen from space and bringing toxic rain to tourist destinations on the Black Sea.

The attacks are aimed at slashing Moscow's oil exports, a key source of funding for its grinding invasion of Ukraine. But the economic impact is so far unclear, as the rise in oil prices from the Iran war, and a related easing of US sanctions, have helped replenish the Kremlin's coffers.

Still, the range of the attacks and their environmental impact is bringing the war home to ordinary Russians far from the front lines.

Oil is spilling onto the street

Ukrainian drones have hit the oil refinery and export terminal in the Black Sea town of Tuapse on four occasions in just over two weeks, sparking fires that prompted local evacuations and sent up massive plumes of smoke. The town is roughly 450 kilometres (280 miles) from the front lines.

In a video posted by local Governor Veniamin Kondratyev after the third attack April 18, an emergency official said boiling



oil products had spilled onto the street, damaging cars.

Ukraine said Thursday that it hit an oil pumping station in Russia's Perm region, more than 1,500 kilometres (900 miles) from Ukraine, two days in a row. Russian media reported the attacks, though Perm Gov. Dmitry Makhonin said only that drones had hit industrial facilities.

Ust-Luga on the Baltic Sea, one of Russia's largest oil and gas export terminals, was hit three times in the space of a week in late March. It is more than 800 kilometres (500 miles) away from Ukraine.

'Attacks cost Russia billions'

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has compared such strikes to the international sanctions on Russia. They

are seen as even more crucial now that Moscow is collecting windfall profits from the global energy crisis linked to Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

Zelenskyy said Friday that Russia has lost at least \$7 billion since the start of the year as a direct result of attacks on its oil sector. Earlier in the week, he said Ukrainian intelligence indicates a drop in exports from key oil ports such as Ust-Luga and Primorsk.

Russian crude and oil product exports rose by 320,000 barrels per day month-on-month to hit 7.1 million in March, the International Energy Agency said. Rising prices meant that oil export revenues almost doubled, from \$9.7 billion to \$19 billion. It is unclear whether April's strikes will disrupt that trend.

31 BASES, 68K PERSONNEL: HOW US IS STACKED UP MILITARILY IN EUROPE

The US troops are stationed in more than a dozen European countries. Germany, Italy and Britain have the biggest presence of personnel. This list comprises some of the largest contingents.

GERMANY - The largest US base in Europe is the air base near the German city of Ramstein, where troops have been stationed since 1952. According to DMDC data, as of December 2025, 36,436 active service members were stationed in Germany, divided into five garrisons.

ITALY - US military personnel have been stationed in Italy since the end of World War Two and comprise Army, Navy and Air Force divisions. DMDC data shows that Italy hosted 12,662 active-duty soldiers at the end of 2025 across bases in Vicenza, Aviano, Naples and Sicily.

BRITAIN - The US forces in the United Kingdom comprised 10,156 service members as of December last year, garrisoned in three bases, hosting mainly Air Force personnel.

SPAIN - The country hosts US Navy and Air Force bases near the Strait of Gibraltar. DMDC data shows that as of December 2025, 3,814 personnel were permanently assigned to Spain.

POLAND - Poland hosts 369 permanently assigned active-duty service members, as well as about 10,000 personnel of rotational forces funded through the European Deterrence Initiative, DMDC and Congressional Research Service data shows. The personnel are garrisoned across four bases with temporary US access.

ROMANIA - Similarly to Poland and other ex-communist bloc countries, Romania hosts a rotational presence of US forces on top of 153 permanently assigned service members, according to DMDC and the Congressional Research Service. The bases to which the US has access include Mihail Kogalniceanu Air Base, Camp Turzii, and Deveselu.

HUNGARY - The US conducts rotational deployments and exercise missions in Hungary. DMDC said in December that the country hosted 77 permanently assigned service members stationed in two bases, Kecskemet, and Papa Air Base.

LONG-RANGE FIRES BATTALION CANCELLED

NATO members have pledged to take on more responsibility for their own defence but with tight budgets and vast gaps in military capability it will take years for the region to meet its own security needs.

Germany wants to boost the number of active-duty Bundeswehr soldiers from a current 185,000 to 260,000, though critics of the defence minister have called for more in response to a widely perceived growing threat

from Russia. The US military presence in Germany, which began as an occupation force after World War Two, peaked during the 1960s when hundreds of thousands of American military personnel were stationed there to counter the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

The loss of the long-range fires will be a particular blow to Berlin, as it had been due to form a significant extra element of deterrence against Russia while Europeans developed such long-range missiles themselves.

Israeli airstrikes on Lebanon kill 7 amid fragile ceasefire

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Beirut, May 2: Israeli airstrikes on southern Lebanon killed at least seven people and wounded others Saturday as hostilities continued between Israel and Hezbollah despite a ceasefire.

The Israeli airstrikes on southern Lebanon Saturday came as Israel's military issued a new warning for residents of nine southern villages to evacuate.

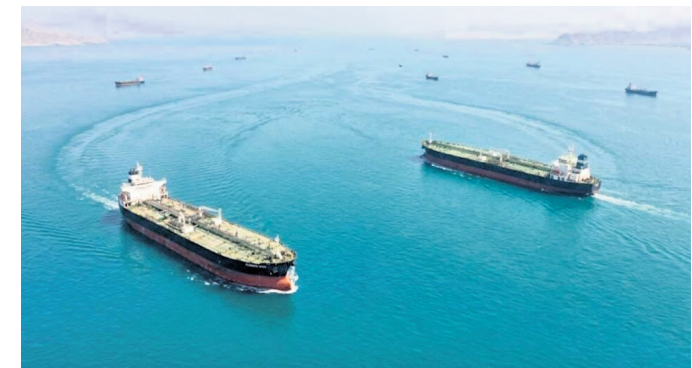
Israel's military and Lebanon's Hezbollah have kept up their attacks despite a ceasefire in place since April 17.

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency reported an airstrike on a car in the village of Kfar Dajal that killed two people, while another hit a home in the village of Lwaizeh killing three. NNA also reported a strike on the village of Shoukin that killed two people.

Israel's military Arabic-language spokeswoman, Lt. Col. Ella Waweya, posted on X that the Israeli air force carried out about 50 airstrikes over the past 24 hours, saying that they targeted Hezbollah infrastructure and members.

Hezbollah said that it attacked Saturday Israeli troops who gathered inside a house in the coastal village of Bayed with a drone.

US warns shipping cos over paying Iran to transit Hormuz



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Beirut, May 2: The United States is warning shipping companies they could face sanctions for making payments to Iran to safely pass through the Strait of Hormuz.

The US Office of Foreign Assets Control alert posted Friday adds pressure in the standoff between the US and Iran over control of the strait at the mouth of the Persian Gulf, where about a fifth of the world's trade in oil and natural gas typically passes.

Iran effectively closed the strait by attacking and threatening ships after the US and Israel launched a war February 28. It later began offering some ships safe passage by detouring them through routes closer to its shore, charging fees at times.

That "tollbooth" effort is the focus of the US sanctions warning, which said payment demands could include transfers not only in cash but also "digital assets, offsets, informal swaps, or other in-kind payments," including charitable donations and payments at Iranian embassies.

The US responded to Iran's closure of the strait with a naval blockade of Iranian ports April 13, preventing Iranian tankers from leaving and depriving Tehran of oil revenue it needs to shore up its ailing economy. The US Central Command has said 45 commercial ships have been told to turn around since the blockade began.

Nobel laureate Mohammad's health at very high risk

Imprisoned Nobel Prize

HISTORIC SETTLEMENT

NY church to pay \$800mn over sex abuse claims

REUTERS

New York, May 2: The Catholic Archdiocese of New York has agreed to pay \$800 million in a settlement with 1,300 sex abuse survivors, one of the largest payouts in a wave of lawsuits over clergy sex abuse in the United States.

The settlement is second only to the \$880 million deal reached by the Archdiocese of Los Angeles in 2024. The Catholic Church has paid billions of dollars in settlements across the US in the past several years, after New York and other states enacted laws that temporarily enabled victims of child sexual abuse to file lawsuits over decades-old crimes.

Jeff Anderson, an attorney representing abuse survivors, said that the settlement was a triumph that would end nearly six years of legal battles with the archdiocese and its insurers. The proposed settlement is subject to final documentation and full survivor agreement before it is complete, Anderson said.

In addition to the \$800 million payment, the Archdiocese agreed to release documents pertaining to sexual offenders in the Church.

"It is far from full accountability, but it is a measure of responsibility," Anderson said in a Friday statement.

The settlement will allow abuse survivors to litigate against the Church's insurers for additional payouts.

Ghana latest African nation to shun US health deal

In February, authorities in Zimbabwe said they rejected the proposed deal over issues around health data, fairness and sovereignty. Zambia is also reported to have pushed back on a section of its deal

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Accra (Ghana), May 2: Ghana has rejected a proposed health deal with the United States over concerns about data privacy and is now seeking a new agreement, an official said Friday. It was the latest African country to walk away from the deal over similar concerns.

PRIVACY CONCERNS



The deal included provisions that would have allowed US entities access to Ghana's sensitive health data without necessary safeguards, according to Arnold Kavaarpoo, executive director of Ghana's Data Protection Commission.

The scope of the data access

that was requested under the deal "went far beyond what would typically be required," Kavaarpoo told The Associated Press.

A US State Department spokesperson said the department does not disclose details of bilateral negotiations. "We continue to look for ways to

strengthen the bilateral partnership between our two countries," the spokesperson added, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss the matter.

Under the Trump administration's "America First" approach to global health funding, the US has struck such health deals with more than 30 countries, most of them in Africa. The new approach that kicked off late last year replaces previous health agreements under the now-dismantled United States Agency for International Development.

The deals offer hundreds of millions of dollars in US funding to some of the African countries worst hit by the US aid cuts to support their public health systems and help fight disease outbreaks. The agreements, however, have raised questions about

data privacy concerns. Activists in Africa say the agreements often lack adequate safeguards for the use of the data and are sometimes limited in who is being helped, such as in Nigeria, where the US committed to supporting mainly Christian faith-based healthcare providers.

The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention Director General Jean Kaseya had also cited "huge concerns" regarding data sharing in comments to reporters about the deals.

Under the proposed agreement worth around \$300 million, Kavaarpoo said Ghana would have received about \$109 million in US funding over five years, with supplemental investments coming from the Ghanaian government.



Overlying these challenges is the recent escalation of geopolitical tensions in West Asia. Energy prices have risen sharply amidst damage to energy infrastructure and disruptions in supply chains. It has already affected economic activity

SANJAY MALHOTRA | GOVERNOR, RBI

AXIS BANK OPENS FIRST DIGITAL LOCKER-FOCUSED BRANCH

Private sector lender Axis Bank Saturday inaugurated its first digital locker-focused branch here. The new branch marks a step in the bank's effort to reimagine secure banking by bringing together advanced automation, superior security, and differentiated customer experience through sophisticated locker services, Axis Bank said in a statement



business

of the day quote

We are actively looking at ways in which land does not become a constraint for deployment of solar modules

SANTOSH KUMAR SARANGI | SECRETARY, MNRE



The ... priority for us is to create strategic buffers. This energy shock is the most difficult one compared to any other previous energy shock in terms of energy lost as a percentage of total global energy supply, not just oil, including gas

V ANANTHA NAGESWARAN | CHIEF ECONOMIC ADVISOR



Market fundamentals continue to strengthen, with pan-India vacancy dropping to a five-year low of 14.7 per cent

RAHUL ARORA | HEAD - OFFICE LEASING & RETAIL SERVICES, SENIOR MANAGING DIRECTOR (KARNATAKA, KERALA), INDIA, JLL



Commercial LPG hike worsens crisis

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 2: The latest hike in the price of 19-kg commercial LPG cylinders used by hotels and restaurants has dealt a "severe blow" to the hospitality industry already reeling under the impact of closures and job losses, and will aggravate the situation, industry associations said.

They urged the government to intervene and roll back the hike.

The prices of commercial LPG - the one used in hotels and restaurants - have been hiked by Rs 993 to a record high of Rs 3,071.50 per 19-kg cylinder.

Pradeep Shetty, Spokesperson, Hotel And Restaurant Association (Western India) - HRAWI & Vice President, FHRAI (Federation of Hotels and Restaurants Association of India), said, "Due to the recent rise in LPG prices, a 10 to 15 per cent hike in menu prices is imminent. But even that may not be enough to absorb the impact. We urge the government to urgently intervene, roll back this hike and stabilise LPG prices to give the sector some breathing space. Without immediate relief, the hospitality industry, a key employment generator, faces an existential crisis".

According to Shetty, the latest increase of Rs 993 per 19-kg commercial LPG cylinder, coming immediately after hikes of Rs 195.50 in April and Rs 144 in March, has dealt a severe blow to the hospitality industry. "With commercial LPG prices now having risen by a



With commercial LPG prices now having risen by a staggering ₹1,332.50 within just three revisions, the sector is facing an unprecedented escalation in operating costs at a time when businesses are already struggling with supply disruptions, reduced operational capacity and weakened cash flows

PRADEEP SHETTY | SPOKESPERSON, HOTEL AND RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION (WESTERN INDIA)

The prices of commercial LPG - the one used in hotels and restaurants - have been hiked by ₹993 to a record high of ₹3,071.50 per 19-kg cylinder

staggering Rs 1,332.50 within just three revisions, the sector is facing an unprecedented escalation in operating costs at a time when businesses are already struggling with supply disruptions, reduced operational capacity and weakened cash flows," Shetty said.

He highlighted that many establishments are already operating with curtailed

hours, limited menus and alternative cooking arrangements due to inconsistent supply and rising fuel costs. This latest revision will further strain margins and make operations increasingly unsustainable.

Shetty observed that many establishments have already shut down temporarily; this latest hike will accelerate closures and job losses.

FII's remain net seller for 10th month on trot

Foreign investors sold ₹70,100cr worth Indian equities last month

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 2: Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) continued to remain net seller for the 10th consecutive month in April, as they sold Rs 70,100 crore worth Indian equities last month, according to the provisional exchange data.

On the other hand, domestic institutional investors (DIIs) continue to provide support to the market, emerging as net buyer during last month, with investments totalling Rs 51,000 crore. Last week, FIIs sold net about Rs 13,000 crore while DIIs infused around Rs 11,500 crore during the same period.

"A weaker rupee and an elevated oil prices have led to selling by the FIIs, they have remained seller in all the four months of the current calendar year offloading Rs 2,40,750 crore, as per provisional exchange data," said Pabitra Mukherjee, Associate Vice President-Research, Bajaj Broking.

DIIs are absorbing a significant portion of the selling pressure and limiting deeper market declines.

Meanwhile, crude oil prices

surged during last week following confirmation from the White House that President Donald Trump had asked officials to prepare for a prolonged blockade of Iranian ports.

Such a move points to sustained supply disruptions, particularly through the strategically critical Strait of Hormuz. Elevated energy prices have reignited inflation concerns. It has led to selling by the FIIs in all the four trading sessions during last week, said market watchers.

The Indian equity benchmarks closed in the red this week, as persistent selling from the foreign institutional investors (FIIs) and higher crude prices weighed on market sentiment. Nifty lost 0.73 per cent during the week and dipped 0.74 per cent on the last trading day to reach 23,997. At close, the Sensex was down 582 points or 0.75 percent at 76,913. It dropped 0.97 per cent during the week.

Going ahead, institutional activity is likely to be primarily influenced by global news developments, they added.

In particular, progress or setbacks in US-Iran negotiations will remain a critical factor to monitor, given their significant implications for geopolitical stability and their potential to drive volatility in the crude oil prices.

FinMin notifies 100% FDI in insurance sector, amends FEMA Rules



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 2: The Finance Ministry Saturday notified 100 per cent foreign direct investment (FDI) in the insurance sector under the automatic route.

While 100 per cent foreign investment will be allowed in insurance companies and intermediaries, including brokers, under the automatic route, the cap is 20 per cent for Life Insurance Corporation (LIC), said the Foreign Exchange Management (Non-debt Instruments) (Second Amendment) Rules, 2026.

The Parliament had passed the Sabka Bima Sabki Raksha (amendment of insurance laws) Bill, 2025, in December, 2025, paving the way for hiking the FDI cap in the insurance sector to 100 per cent under the automatic route, from 74 per cent earlier.

Subsequently, after the President's assent, the Bill became law. Thereafter in February, 2026, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) under the Commerce and Industry Ministry had notified 100 per cent FDI in the insurance sector.

RESULTS CORNER

Jindal Steel turns profitable in Q4

New Delhi: Jindal Steel Saturday posted a consolidated net profit of Rs 1,041 crore during the quarter ended March 2026, on account of higher revenues contributed by "record sales". The steel maker had reported a loss of Rs 304 crore in the year-ago quarter. During the latest January-March period, the company's total income rose 25 per cent to Rs 16,484.28 crore from Rs 13,254.94 crore in the fourth quarter of the preceding 2024-25, according to a statement. On a quarter-on-quarter basis, the net profit jumped fivefold from Rs 189 crore recorded in the October-December quarter of FY26. In the entire FY26, the net profit jumped around 20 per cent to Rs 3,361 crore from Rs 2,846 crore as of March 2025. Total income surged to Rs 53,553.14 crore in FY26 from Rs 49,932.48 crore in the preceding financial year.

Kotak Mahindra Bank profit up 10%

Mumbai: Kotak Mahindra Bank Saturday reported 10 per cent rise in consolidated net profit at Rs 5,423 for the fourth quarter of financial year 2025-26. In the year-ago period, the profit stood at Rs 4,933 crore. On a standalone basis, it reported a 13 per cent year-on-year rise in net profit at Rs 4,027 crore. Core net interest income of the bank increased 8 per cent to Rs 7,876 crore from Rs 7,284 crore a year ago. Net interest margin improved to 4.67 per cent from 4.54 per cent in December quarter. However, it fell on a yearly basis, from 4.97 per cent in Q4FY25. Net advances increased 16 per cent year-on-year to Rs 4.96 lakh crore as on March 31, 2026. Customer Assets which comprise advances (including IBPC & BRDS) and credit substitutes grew to Rs 5.46 lakh crore as at March-end 2026 from Rs 4.78 lakh crore a year ago.

CDSL posts ₹455cr profit for FY26

Mumbai: Central Depository Services (India) Ltd Saturday said its consolidated net profit stood at Rs 80 crore in the March quarter of 2025-26 against Rs 100 crore in the year-ago period. Total income during the quarter was Rs 268 crore as against Rs 256 crore in the same quarter of FY25, a company statement said. For the full 2025-26 fiscal, net profit was Rs 455 crore against Rs 526 crore in the previous 2024-25 financial year. Total consolidated income rose to Rs 1,239 crore in FY26 against Rs 1,199 crore in FY25, CDSL said.

Odisha Grameen Bank organises CSR activities on Foundation Day



Cuttack/Jagatsinghpur: To celebrate its Foundation Day in a unique way, Odisha Grameen Bank organised various Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities in multiple locations of Odisha. The bank conducted a free health check-up camp at the Markat Nagar branch located in Cuttack. Suchismita Tripathy, Regional Manager of Cuttack region, inaugurated this camp. On this occasion, Diptimayee Sahoo, Branch Manager of Markat Nagar Branch; Arjun Kumar Singh, Business Head of Cuttack Regional Office; Credit Officers Bikash Kumar Swain, Sattapriya Mohanty, Soumen Mohanty were present. Many people from the local area visited this camp and got their health checked. Similarly, the Jagatsinghpur branch of the bank provided food and essential items to children at an orphanage. The program was attended by Suchismita Tripathy, Regional Manager of Cuttack region; Tusharkanta Sahoo, Branch Manager of Jagatsinghpur Branch; and Prakash Kumar Sahoo, Assistant Branch Manager. Additionally, Soumen Mohanty, Credit Officer of the Regional Office, and Anjaneya Acharya, Manager of the orphanage, were also present.

Lalchnd revolutionises jewellery market with 'Everyday Festival'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 2: After the runaway success of its Akshaya Tritiya Great Gold Rush festival that enlightened customers about smart jewellery buying and also saw unprecedented sales at its showrooms last month, Lalchnd Jewellers has announced an even more groundbreaking move - 'Everyday Festival' - that is all set to change the jewellery landscape in Odisha forever.

"This festival is not about a promotional offer or some temporary scheme. It is about showing how jewellery should be priced - transparently and fairly - for consumers. And we want to lead by example," says Sunjoy Hans, chairman of Lalchnd Group.

Throughout the Great Gold Rush festival, which ran for three weeks due to heavy public demand, team Lalchnd raised awareness about how jewellers were luring in customers with attractive offers, such as "50% off on making charges (MC)", while overcharging them in the end by quietly bumping

up the MC to anywhere between 14% and 30%.

"Thanks to our campaign, now more and more people are asking, and realising, why the bills they pay to other jewellers for gold jewellery of similar quality and size vary so much from ours," Hans points out, expressing hope that Lalchnd's latest effort to fight against such unscrupulous industry practices becomes a successful movement in the interest of jewellery buyers.

Early reports suggest that the Everyday Festival has all the makings of becoming a movement. From May 1, Lalchnd Jewellers showrooms are offering flat 5.9% MC on all 22-karat HUID hallmarked gold chains (including handmade, hollow, machine-made, Italian and designer); flat 8.9% MC on all other gold ornaments; 30% discount on IGI-certified diamond jewellery; fat 60% off on MC of silver jewellery; and 0% MC on all gold jewellery purchased under the 'Lalchnd

Sone Pe Suhaga' (SPS) Installment Scheme.

These offers become all the more attractive given Lalchnd boasts one of the widest collections of jewellery and designs in Eastern India. From lightweight daily wear to bridal masterpieces, from antique temple jewellery to modern Italian designs, not to mention chains, bangles, necklaces and designer jewellery from across India, Lalchnd customers have virtually limitless options to choose from.

"All of this without inflated costs, as you can check from every single invoice generated by us. We urge consumers to compare their bills, find out about the real MC they are paying so they can see for themselves that we are giving them something they richly deserve: true value," Hans states.

He concludes that, with the blessings of Lord Jagannath and Sri Sai Baba, the "Everyday Festival" reflects a core belief at Lalchnd: consumer welfare takes precedence over company profits.



SNIPPETS

AcreRise CSR supports Khurda school

Bhubaneswar: AcreRise Developers, as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative, donated a two-seater disc swing, a merry-go-round, and an arch swing for the students of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya in Khurda, Odisha. The initiative aims to enhance recreational facilities for children and contribute to their overall well-being and development. The event witnessed the presence of Co-Founder Shaik Mairajul Haque, who was accompanied by HR Head Suchitra Pattnaik, from HR Department - Deepa Khateel Marketing Manager Dipak Mitra, and Jagannathan Parida, representing the Digital Marketing team. The AcreRise team interacted with the students and school authorities during the visit, reinforcing the organization's commitment to community development through meaningful CSR initiatives.



Kedar awarded 'CEO with HR Orientation'

Bhubaneswar: Kedar Ranjan Pandu, Managing Director, Odisha Power Generation Corporation Limited (OPGC) was recently awarded with 'CEO with HR Orientation' at the 21st Best Employer Branding Awards 2026 organised here. Speaking on this occasion, Pandu emphasised the need of development and empowering HR for organizational growth. The selection process for 'CEO with HR Orientation' is conducted by Employer Branding Institute's dedicated research cell, which comprises Postgraduates in History and Management with over five years of research experience. The team meticulously identifies outstanding individuals based on their track records and achievements. An Independent Jury, consisting of senior industry veterans, then reviews the shortlist to ensure a fair and robust evaluation process.



After 34 yrs of ops, US low-cost carrier Spirit goes belly up

GLOBAL CARRIERS ARE CONTENDING WITH SURGING JET FUEL PRICES SINCE THE US-ISRAELI STRIKES ON IRAN DISRUPTED TRAFFIC THROUGH THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ, IN THE AIR TRAVEL INDUSTRY'S WORST CRISIS SINCE THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

Washington, May 2: Low-cost US carrier Spirit Airlines said Saturday that all of its flights have been cancelled as it started an "orderly wind-down of operations," citing spiking fuel prices in recent weeks that left it no choice.

The troubled carrier, which was set to emerge from its second bankruptcy in a year, an-

nounced it was ceasing operations after a potential White House bailout fell through.

Spirit Airlines' parent company, Spirit Aviation Holdings, said in an early Saturday press release that it has "started an orderly wind-down of operations, effective immediately."

"All Spirit flights have been cancelled, and Spirit Guests should not go to the airport," said the company, which had



put pressure on larger airlines with its no-frills offering launched over 30 years ago.

The company's webpage displayed a message telling guests that "customer service is no longer available." The airline said it will process refunds for purchased flights. Jet fuel prices have more

than doubled since the conflict with Iran began in February, prompting major US airlines to lower their profit forecasts, trim back on capacity growth plans or both.

Spirit's President and CEO Dave Davis said the company in March "reached an agreement with our bond-

holders on a restructuring plan that would have allowed us to emerge as a go-forward business."

"However, the sudden and sustained rise in fuel prices in recent weeks ultimately has left us with no alternative but to pursue an orderly wind-down of the Company," Davis

said in the press release. "Sustaining the business required hundreds of millions of additional dollars of liquidity that Spirit simply does not have and could not procure. This is tremendously disappointing and not the outcome any of us wanted."

In its statement, Spirit said there were "extensive and comprehensive efforts to restructure the business," but the lack of additional funding meant that Spirit "had no choice but to begin this wind-down."

Jan Brueckner, emeritus economics professor at the University of California, Irvine, told AFP last week that the fuel price surge was "the straw that broke the camel's back."

Kuldeep raises bar

Pole vaulter Kuldeep Kumar sets national pole vault record with a 5.41m leap at the inaugural Indoor Open meet

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 2: Kuldeep Kumar representing Madhya Pradesh won a battle of wits to set national men's pole vault record on Day 1 of inaugural Indian Indoor Open Combined Events and Pole Vault Competition at Kalinga Stadium here Saturday.

The 21 years old cleared the height of 5.41m in his first attempt to better the national record of 5.40m set last year by Dev Kumar Meena. Kuldeep Kumar also improved the national indoor record of 5.30m set earlier in March by Reegan G of Tamil Nadu.

The newly crowned champion missed all three attempts at 5.46m. "It was a good day for me," says Kuldeep Kumar after breaking the national record.

Dev Kumar Meena was in good form. Earlier this year he had equalled his national record (5.40m) in March in Taiwan. He was the pre-event favourite but settled for the bronze medal today.

It was the first indoor competition for Kuldeep Kumar. He found it challenging to get a good rhythm on the fast Mondo track here at Bhubaneswar's indoor stadium. "It was a good experience today," says Kuldeep Kumar.

The contest for gold medal was between three athletes--Dev Kumar Meena, Kuldeep Kumar and Reegan G.

As the competition progressed, Dev Kumar Meena struggled and settled for bronze (5.20m). Reegan G made attempts to cross 5.35m, but missed all three chances. He



settled for silver (5.25m).

Kuldeep Kumar cleared 5.35m in his second attempt. It gave a big boost to his confidence. He raised the bar to 5.41m, setting a positive tone for the major outdoor domestic competition at the end of May in Ranchi, Jharkhand.

The pre-event favourite and former national record holder Dev Kumar Meena says it wasn't his day. But was excited that the bar was raised to 5.41m. "It is always good to aim for new goals," says Dev Kumar Meena of the national record set by Kuldeep Kumar.

Both Dev Kumar Meena and Kuldeep Kumar practice at the same venue in Madhya Pradesh.

The upcoming outdoor season will be more exciting. Top three pole vaulters here in Bhubaneswar will be aiming to earn a place in the national team for Glasgow Commonwealth Games and Japan Asian

Games.

Exciting contest was also witnessed in heptathlon. Thowfeeq N of NCOE Trivandrum was leading on Day-One with 2943 points.

Odisha's Jashbir Nayak was close behind at second place with 2927 points.

Day one events in heptathlon were 60m, long jump, shot put and high jump. The Day-Two events will be 60m hurdles, pole vault and 1000m.

RESULTS

Men-Pole vault: Kuldeep Kumar (Madhya Pradesh) 5.41m (NR), Reegan G (Tamil Nadu) 5.25m, Dev Kumar Meena (Madhya Pradesh) 5.20m.

Men U20-Pole vault: Kavinraja S (Tamil Nadu) 4.90m, R Vishal (Tamil Nadu) 4.70m, Saurabh Yadav (Uttar Pradesh) 4.20m.

INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE

Clinical CSK outclass MI

8-WICKET WIN BOOSTS PLAYOFF PROSPECTS FOR CSK; MI ALL BUT OUT OF RACE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, May 2: Chennai Super Kings produced a thoroughly professional display to outclass Mumbai Indians by eight wickets in a critical Indian Premier League match and significantly boost their playoff prospects here Saturday.

Afghanistan left-arm spinner Noor Ahmad led a disciplined bowling effort to help CSK restrict a lacklustre Mumbai Indians to 159 for seven.

Noor returned excellent figures of 2/26 in four overs while Anshul Kamboj grabbed 3/32, even as Naman Dhir top-scored for MI with 57 off 37 balls in an insipid display by the visitors after winning the toss.

TODAY'S MATCHES

SRH VS KKR
TIME: 3:30 PM

GT VS PBKS
TIME: 7:30 PM

Star Sports channels & JioHotstar

Captain Hardik Pandya consumed 23 balls for his 18, reflecting MI's struggles.

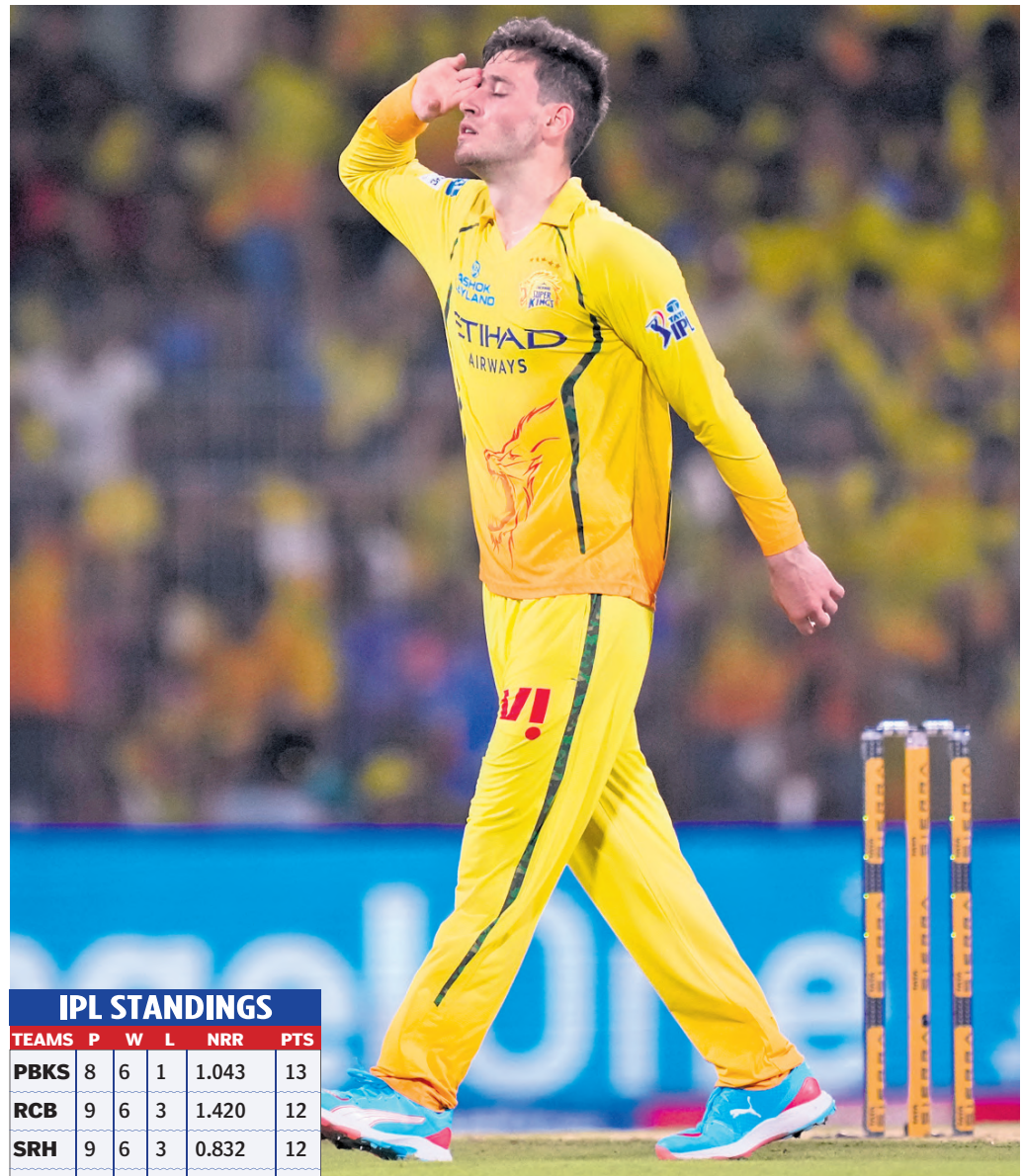
Pandya's counterpart Ruturaj Gaikwad then led by example with an unbeaten 48-ball 67 and he was well supported by Kartik Sharma (54 not out off 40 balls) and Urvil Patel (24 off 12 balls).

In the chase, CSK's man in form Sanju Samson was quick off the blocks with a couple of boundaries but Jasprit Bumrah cut short his stay with a beautiful outswinger that took the outside edge and Ryan Rickelton dived to his right to grab the ball.

Samson, who punched Bumrah through covers in the previous delivery, paid the price for his lack of foot movement.

Skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad smashed Trent Boult for a six over deep square-leg as 17 runs came off the third over.

Krish Bhagat leaked 18 runs



IPL STANDINGS					
TEAMS	P	W	L	NRR	PTS
PBKS	8	6	1	1.043	13
RCB	9	6	3	1.420	12
SRH	9	6	3	0.832	12
RR	10	6	4	0.510	12
GT	9	5	4	-0.192	10
CSK	9	4	5	0.005	8
DC	9	4	5	-0.895	8
KKR	8	2	5	-0.751	5
MI	9	2	7	-0.803	4
LSG	8	2	6	-1.106	4

with Urvil Patel hitting him for two sixes and a four before Ru-

turaj got a maximum against AM Ghazanfar. Ghazanfar, though, dismissed Patel as the batter played the ball on to his stumps.

Gaikwad and Sharma then took CSK home.

Earlier, Mukesh Choudhary started the proceedings for CSK on an excellent note, conceding just one run in the opening over and then IPL debutant Ramakrishna made immediate im-

pact with a stunning catch to send back Will Jacks in the second over bowled by Anshul Kamboj.

BRIEF SCORES:

Mumbai Indians 159 for 7 in 20 overs (Ryan Rickelton 37, Naman Dhir 57; Noor Ahmed 2/26, Anshul Kamboj 3/32) lost to Chennai Super Kings 160 for 2 in 18.1 overs (Ruturaj Gaikwad 67 not out, Urvil Patel 24, Kartik Sharma 54 not out; Jasprit Bumrah 1/20) by 8 wickets

Pahel clinches All-Around gold

Odisha secures a fourth-place finish with a score of 119.635 in the Senior Women's Team Championship, reflecting a strong and competitive outing

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 2: The Day 3 of the Junior & Senior Artistic Gymnastics National Championships 2026-27 continued to showcase exceptional performances in the Women's Artistic Gymnastics (WAG) category at the Gymnastics High Performance Centre, Kalinga Stadium here.

In the Junior Women's Individual All-Around competition,



Pahel Shah from Maharashtra secured the gold medal with a score of 41.366, demonstrating impressive consistency and execution across all apparatus. Paromita Bera of West Ben-

gal claimed the silver medal with a close score of 41.167, while her state teammate Shreya Ghosh took home the bronze medal with 40.667, completing a strong showing for

the state.

In the Senior Women's Team Championship 2026-27, the Railways Sports Promotion Board delivered a dominant performance to secure the gold medal with a commanding score of 130.899.

West Bengal finished second with a total of 124.00, while Maharashtra claimed the third position with a score of 123.166, rounding off a competitive team podium. Host state Odisha secured a fourth-place finish with a score of 119.635, reflecting a strong and competitive outing.

The championship continues to highlight the rising standards and depth of women's gymnastics in India, with athletes demonstrating remarkable skill, composure, and competitive spirit across events.

India's relay setback

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gaborone (Botswana), May 2: All the five Indian quartets failed to make it to the respective final rounds and thus missed out on the 2027 World Championships berths on the opening day of the World Athletics Relays here Saturday.

They will still compete on the second day of the event Sunday in an additional round for four slots for the 2027 World Athletics Championships.

The men's 4x400m team of Dharmveer Choudhary, Rajesh Ramesh, Vishal TK and Manu TS, however, produced a creditable performance, finishing fourth in heat number three with a time of 3 minute 00.32 seconds.

The Second leg runner Rajesh was briefly in the clear lead,

while the national 400m record holder Vishal, who ran the third leg, was also neck-and-neck in the leading pack.

But the quarter-milers eventually finished fourth, behind Belgium (2:59.83), Qatar (2:59.83) and Spain (3:00.26) in heat number three and 12th overall to fail to qualify for the final round on Sunday.

The top two teams in each of the three heats and the next two quickest advance to the finals on day two, while also securing their qualification for the 2027 World Athletics Championships.

The remaining teams get another chance for 2027 Beijing World Championships qualification on Day 2 in an additional round where the top two teams in each of the two heats will make the cut.

SHORT TAKES

Lakshya ruled out

Horsens: A swollen right elbow has ruled out Lakshya Sen from India's Thomas Cup semifinal clash against France Saturday night and world No 30 Kidambi Shrikant will compete in his absence. The 24-year-old Lakshya had saved two match points to script an 18-21 22-20 21-17 victory over world No 6 Chou Tien Chen in a marathon clash lasting one hour and 28 minutes, helping India notch up a commanding 3-0 win over Chinese Taipei in the quarterfinals on Friday. However, the Commonwealth Games champion hurt his elbow while diving for a shot during an intense rally. With Lakshya unavailable, young Ayush Shetty will play the opening singles against world No 4 Christo Popov, who had defeated the Indian in their only meeting at the Hylo Open in 2024. Srikanth, who had won six matches during India's title run in 2022, will feature in the second singles against world No 10 Alex Lanier. HS Prannoy, who has delivered as a third singles player, will then take on world No 17 Toma Junior Popov.

Sinner-Zverev showdown

Madrid: World No 1 Jannik Sinner will play Alexander Zverev in Sunday's final after he beat Arthur Fils 6-2, 6-4 Friday, while Zverev defeated Belgian Alexander Blockx 6-2, 7-5 at the Madrid Open. Sinner was at his best to beat his big-hitting rival in straight sets in 85 minutes to reach his fifth consecutive Masters final, keeping alive his hopes of becoming the first man to win five straight titles at this level, reported Xinhua. Sinner was on the front foot all match, hitting 17 winners to Fils' 10 and moving his rival from side to side of the court. In the second semifinal Zverev breezed through the first set against Blockx, who has been the surprise packed in Madrid after beating four seeded players on his way to the last four. Zverev won the first set 6-2 without too many problems, and then broke Blockx in the 11th game of the second set before serving out for the match. Saturday sees the women's final between ninth seed Mirra Andreeva from Russia and Ukraine's 26th seeded Marta Kostyuk. Jannik Sinner became the youngest player to reach the final of all nine ATP Masters 1000 events. He completed the set at just 24 with his run at Madrid in 2026.

Lando takes pole

Miami Gardens: Reigning Formula 1 champion Lando Norris won the pole for Saturday's sprint race at the Miami Grand Prix, beating current F1 points leader Kimi Antonelli of Mercedes. Norris' McLaren teammate Oscar Piastri was third, only 0.017 seconds behind Antonelli, ahead of the second sprint race of the season. Friday was the first time drivers were able to test changes made by FIA, the sports governing body - during a five-week hiatus. The organization implemented changes to the regulations after drivers heavily criticized how the electrical battery power has changed the cars and competition. Charles Leclerc of Ferrari finished fourth, ahead of Red Bull's Max Verstappen.

Miami pole marks Maini brilliance

Indian racer Kush Maini edges Camara to seal second F2 career pole in the first FIA Formula 2 race

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Miami, May 2: Kush Maini delivered an outstanding performance in Miami by securing pole position for the first FIA Formula 2 race at the venue. The championship returned under unusual circumstances and featured one of the most competitive qualifying sessions of the season.

After previous rounds in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia were canceled, the revised schedule sent F2 to Miami for the first time. This created a unique situation where both rookies and seasoned drivers competed on a completely new circuit equally.

The session started with early benchmarks from Colton Herta, whose practice pace translated into qualifying as he briefly posted a 1:41.038. However, as grip increased and drivers found their rhythm, lap times rapidly improved. Rafael Camara then climbed to the top with a 1:40.441,



just ahead of Alexander Dunne, demonstrating the field's intense competitiveness.

In the final moments, the track was crowded as all 22 cars made their last runs. Nikola Tsolov started strong with a fast lap, but Gabriele Mini soon surpassed him. The ongoing changes at the top highlighted the high stakes of the session.

Maini ultimately performed at his best when it counted, recording a remarkable 1:39.888 to claim pole position by just 0.033 seconds ahead of Camara.

For Maini, securing pole position is a key milestone, his second in Formula 2. It sets him up well for the Feature Race, as he aims to capitalize on recent momentum and turn his qualifying speed into a major race-day result.

Zanardi, symbol of resilience, no more

Former F1 driver, paralympic champion Alex Zanardi dies at 59 after life-altering accidents

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 2: Former Formula 1 driver and Paralympic champion Alex Zanardi has passed away at the age of 59 Saturday. Zanardi's family confirmed the news in a statement. They informed that the former champion passed away peacefully, surrounded by the love of his family and friends.

Zanardi is known for his great comeback after losing both legs in a horrific crash in 2001, which ended his racing career. After the accident, he rebuilt his career and became a global icon in Para cycling. He competed for Italy in the 2012 and 2016 Paralympics, winning four gold and two silver medals.

The racing icon suffered severe injuries in a road accident in Italy in 2020, while riding his hand bike in Siena in northern Italy.

"It is with deep sorrow that

the family announces the passing of Alessandro Zanardi, which occurred suddenly yesterday evening, 1 May," Zanardi's family announced.

"Alex passed away peacefully, surrounded by the love of his family and friends. The family would like to express their heartfelt thanks to all those who are showing their support at this time and asks that their grief and privacy be respected



during this period of mourning."

The Italian was one of motorsport's most popular characters, competing in Formula 1 in the 1990s with Jordan, Minardi, Lotus, and Williams across 41 Grands Prix. His strongest stint was with Lotus in 1993 and 1994, with Zanardi scoring a career-best sixth-place finish in Brazil.

"I am deeply saddened by the passing of my dear friend Alex

The Italian was one of motorsport's most popular characters, competing in Formula 1 in the 1990s with Jordan, Minardi, Lotus, and Williams across 41 Grands Prix

Zanardi. He was truly an inspirational person, as a human and as an athlete. I will always carry with me his extraordinary strength. He faced challenges that would have stopped anyone, yet he continued to look forward, always with a smile and a stubborn determination that inspired us all. While his loss is profoundly felt, his legacy remains strong," Formula 1 President and CEO Stefano Domenicali said in a statement.

"At this time, my heartfelt thoughts and deepest sympathies are with his wife Daniela, his son Niccolò, the rest of the family, and all those who had the privilege of knowing him," he added.