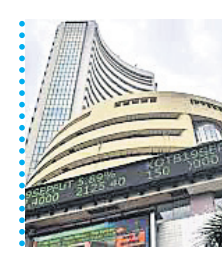




**Adah on success**  
Actor Adah Sharma says success for her is not confined to box-office numbers or critical acclaim  
LEISURE | P2



**Hormuz crisis**  
US forces launch an effort to guide commercial ships through the Strait of Hormuz Monday  
INTERNATIONAL | P10



**Markets rebound**  
Benchmark Sensex rises 356 points, while the Nifty settles above 24,100, following state poll results  
BUSINESS | P11



**Teen triumph**  
Kimi Antonelli wins the Miami Grand Prix, his third consecutive Formula 1 victory, to show he's a legitimate championship contender  
SPORTS | P12

# BJP sweeps Bengal, TVK rises in TN

Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma spearheads another straight victory while UDF set to regain power in Kerala

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Delhi/Kolkata/Chennai, May 4:** The BJP is set to form its first government in West Bengal with a landslide victory in the state polls as the Election Commission's (EC) trends Monday showed that the party has gone past the 200-mark in combined wins and leads in the 294-member Assembly.

The saffron party is also set to retain Assam for a third term, while the latest electoral cycle also saw a spectacular debut in Tamil Nadu by actor-politician Vijay's TVK with 107 wins and leads out of 234 seats to emerge as the single-largest party, a wipeout of the Left as it tasted defeat in its last bastion of a Kerala, and a solitary win there for the Congress, which has been battling diminishing electoral returns.

Three incumbent chief ministers - Mamata Banerjee (West Bengal), MK Stalin (Tamil Nadu) and Pinarayi Vijayan (Kerala) - are on their way out, with Banerjee and Stalin also losing their seats.

While Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) stellar showing in the West Bengal polls during a grand victory celebration at the party headquarters in New Delhi, both Banerjee and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi alleged that the mandate was stolen.

As votes were counted, the EC's trends showed a landslide victory for the BJP with 206 wins out of 293 seats in West Bengal, with the incumbent TMC left reeling at just 81. Re-polling has been ordered in one constituency in the state.

Modi hailed the verdict as a mandate for the politics of per-



**COLOURS OF VICTORY:** BJP supporters apply 'gula' on one another amid celebrations during vote tabulation on the day of West Bengal Assembly election results in Kolkata, Monday

formance. "Our mantra is nagarik devo bhava (citizens are god). We are dedicated to serving the people. That is why the people have shown their faith in the BJP. They know the BJP is synonymous with good governance, whether it is state government or civic elections as you saw the party winning its highest ever

vote share in the recent Gujarat local body polls," he said. Meanwhile, outgoing West Bengal Chief Minister Banerjee alleged that the mandate in more than 100 seats was "looted". "We will bounce back," the Trinamool Congress (TMC) supremo said while walking out of the counting centre at the Bhabanipur constituency.

In Assam, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma led the BJP to another straight victory, bagging 82 of the 126 seats. If West Bengal was one headline of Elections 2026, the other was superstar Vijay, who defied the odds and the taint of a stampede during his rally in Karur in September 2025, in which 41 people were killed.

With the Kerala win in her party's pocket, Congress general secretary and Wayanad MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra thanked the people of the southern state for their overwhelming support. "To all my brothers and sisters in Kerala, thank you for your faith and for your overwhelming support. The trust

you have placed in us will be the UDF's guiding force as we work hard towards building a better future for each one of you," she said.

WEST BENGAL		
PARTIES	LEADING	WON
BJP	0	206
AITC	2	79
INC	0	1
AJUP	0	2
CPI(M)	0	1

ASSAM		
PARTIES	LEADING	WON
BJP	0	82
INC	0	19
BOPF	0	10
AGP	0	10
AIUDF	0	2

TAMIL NADU		
PARTIES	LEADING	WON
TVK	0	107
DMK	1	59
ADMK	0	47
PMK	0	5
INC	0	4

KERALA		
PARTIES	LEADING	WON
INC	0	63
CPI(M)	0	26
IUML	0	22
CPI	0	8
KEC	0	7

PUDUCHERRY		
PARTIES	LEADING	WON
AINRC	0	12
DMK	0	5
BJP	0	4
TVK	0	3
IND	0	2

STATUS OF TOP FIVE PARTIES TILL 00.30 HRS SOURCE: ECI.GOV.IN

In Puducherry, the All India NR Congress had won or was ahead in 12 of the 30 seats. The DMK stood at five and the BJP at four. The TVK made its presence felt with two seats.

## Role of 8gm gold in TVK's success

Experts believe that the star of hits such as Mersal and Leo made the spectacular debut on political turf thanks to the campaign with a list of lofty poll promises. Prominent among them was 8 gm gold for marriage, worth about ₹1.12 lakh. Vijay's assurances in the party manifesto also included ₹2,500 monthly assistance for women below 60 years of age, and six free cooking gas cylinders a year per family.



## SHOCK DEFEATS FOR MAMATA, STALIN

**Kolkata/Chennai:** In an unprecedented turnaround, two of the prominent INDIA bloc leaders and incumbent CMs failed to retain their seats in the just-concluded state polls. West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee lost to BJP leader Suvendu Adhikari by a margin of over 15,000 votes, in Bhabanipur, the safe seat that sent the TMC chief to the Assembly. The loss adds insult to injury even as the BJP decimated the TMC in the West Bengal Assembly election. Exactly five years ago, BJP leader Adhikari made Banerjee taste a bitter defeat in Nandigram. Similarly, Tamil Nadu CM MK Stalin was defeated in his Kolathur Assembly constituency, a seat he had represented twice since 2011, by a margin of over 18,000 votes. He is the fourth sitting CM in Tamil Nadu to lose an Assembly election. Stalin has lost to VS Babu, a TVK candidate. Babu was once a close associate of the DMK president. He had served as the North Chennai district secretary of the DMK and was elected to the Assembly in 2006 from the Purasawalkam constituency.



## Jajpur: 5 dead, 7 hurt as SUV rams truck

PNN & AGENCIES

**Jajpur, May 4:** At least five people, including two women, were killed and seven others injured when an SUV in which they were travelling rammed into a truck in Jajpur district Monday, police said. The accident took place near Barada Chhak on the Daitary-Paradeep express highway

under Jenapur police station limits in Jajpur district. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi expressed grief over the accident and expressed his condolences to the families of the deceased. He also announced an assistance of ₹4 lakh from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) to the next of kin of each deceased. "Arrangements are being

made for the best treatment of those injured in the accident, and the chief minister has wished them a speedy recovery," a CMO release said. According to police, 12 people, including three women and two children, were returning home in the vehicle after attending a marriage ceremony in Keonjhar. The SUV hit a truck from

behind. Such was the impact of the collision that the SUV got stuck under the truck, police said. Five people travelling in the SUV were killed on the spot, while seven others were critically injured. The deceased were identified as Kandra Purti, his wife Geeta Purti, Balma Munda, her daughter Malati Munda and Namita Nayak.

## ₹ slips to all-time low of 95.23

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, May 4:** Rupee fell 39 paise to close at an all-time low of 95.23 (provisional) against the US dollar Monday, as the ongoing Middle East tensions are causing volatility in global markets, keeping oil prices high and raising fears of inflation and economic slowdown. Forex traders said Brent oil, hovering near USD 110 per barrel, is maintaining pressure

## 3 killed in suspected hantavirus outbreak

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Cape Town, May 4:** A suspected outbreak of the rare hantavirus infection on a cruise ship in the Atlantic Ocean killed three people, including an elderly married couple, and sickened at least three others, the World Health Organisation and South Africa's Department of Health said Sunday. In a statement to this agency, WHO said an investigation was underway but that at least one case of hantavirus had been confirmed. One of the patients was in intensive care in a South African hospital, the UN health agency said, and it was working with authorities to evacuate two others with symptoms from the ship. The Dutch company that operates the cruise said the ship was now sitting off the coast of Cape Verde, an island nation off Africa's west coast, and local authorities were assisting but had not allowed anyone to disembark. It said the two sick people on board requiring urgent medical care were crew members. Hantavirus infections are spread mainly by rodents.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



## Asia's largest valley that supports 40mn people

AGENCIES

**Beijing, May 4:** The Yangtze River valley is not just a geographical feature—it is the pulse of a civilisation. Stretching across China along the 30th parallel north, this immense river system supports nearly 400 million people, a population comparable to a third of India. It is here, in Asia's largest river valley, that water, climate, and human ingenuity converged to create one of the world's oldest continuous cultures. For thousands of years, the Yangtze's fertile basin has nurtured life. Archaeological



evidence points to rice cultivation dating back 8,000 years, when early communities first domesticated wild rice and laid the foundation for settled agriculture. Civilisations such as the Liangzhu flourished here, mastering irrigation, crafting

intricate jade artefacts, and building complex societies long before modern states emerged. Over time, innovations like iron tools and ox-drawn ploughs transformed the valley into an agricultural powerhouse, sustaining dense populations and

diverse cultures. Yet the Yangtze is not only about history—it is a landscape of striking beauty and dramatic contrasts. Nowhere is this more evident than in the legendary Three Gorges. This 192-kilometre stretch, comprising Qutang, Wu, and Xiling gorges, offers sheer cliffs, mist-covered peaks, and scenes that have inspired Chinese art for centuries. At its heart stands the monumental Three Gorges Dam, a modern engineering feat that generates vast amounts of electricity while also symbolising the complex trade-offs between develop-

ment and heritage. Further upstream, the river reveals a wilder side. Known here as the Jinsha River, it carves through deep canyons and remote terrain, culminating in the breathtaking Tiger Leaping Gorge. With cliffs rising over 3,000 metres, this is one of the deepest gorges on Earth. For travellers and historians alike, the Yangtze Valley offers more than scenic beauty. It is a journey through the forces that shape human existence—water, land, and time—flowing together to tell the story of a civilisation that continues to thrive.

# leisure



## I DIDN'T THINK I DESERVED TO BE IN H'WOOD: M CHU

Filmmaker Jon M Chu says he didn't think he deserved to be in Hollywood until his film *Crazy Rich Asians* turned out to be a hit, which he compares to winning a lottery. The director made his debut in 2008 with *Step Up 2: The Streets*

## CHARLIZE THERON'S PARENTING APPROACH

Charlize Theron, who is worth an estimated 151 million pounds, has designed a parenting approach centred on financial independence, saying her children will be expected to work and earn their own way. Theron made the remarks during an appearance on a podcast about her adopted daughters Jackson and August



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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#### ARIES

Today, you may want to make a short pleasure trip somewhere; it may either be to a historical place you've not been to, or to your role as a family person, caring and attentive to your loved ones' needs. Ganesha suggests a trip to the nearest park.

#### TAURUS

There is a strong prospect that an ordinary day will blossom into an extraordinary evening, predicts Ganesha. The afternoon may be filled with stress and tension. However, evening will be totally different when you will bask in the love and affection of your beloved.

#### GEMINI

There is a possibility that your peers may pass on their workload to you, predicts Ganesha. This extra responsibility is hardly fun and you will start feeling the pinch by afternoon. Evening, however, will be different. And why not? After all, you will be pampered by your partner's attention.

#### CANCER

In the first part of the day, your temper will be as volatile as sodium in water. A bad day in office and it will become as devastating as a dynamite. You need to get your blood pressure checked, advises Ganesha. Practice meditation, but don't lose your temper at work. The repercussions may be more severe than you think. You may try your hand at trekking and other adventurous activities, which Ganesha thinks is a good idea.

#### LEO

Innovation is the key to success. Let that be your mantra today, says Ganesha. Unleash your imagination as you seek creative solutions to help improve your prospects and connect to your work. This shall raise your spirits at work. On a more personal front, Ganesha says you may drain your energy and resources in your attempt to help others.

#### VIRGO

Trouble is brewing and you may well have your cauldron billowing black smoke, warns Ganesha. Toil hard to complete all pending work and piled up tasks. You may also share some of your most treasured secrets with your partner today.

#### LIBRA

It's a good day to get your hands on new valuables, says Ganesha – perhaps a new car, or even a new house, maybe. So, look forward to having to move to a new place soon. If you are feeling dejected at work, you will have to deal with it yourself.

#### SCORPIO

Social circles will be buzzing with your name and reputation today. At work, you may evoke jealousy in some people, and Ganesha advises you to be extremely cautious. Remember to vanquish the enmity and not your enemies, says Ganesha.

#### SAGITTARIUS

Those into aerobics and callisthenics will find themselves on the top of their game today. Expect a sudden turn of events sometime from afternoon. Ganesha sees you prowling the corridors of power at work today. You shall synchronise your career and family superbly.

#### CAPRICORN

Some people may not come across as very bright intellectually, but given them a chance to speak and they could leave their audience speechless. Your communication skills will stand in good stead for you today, says Ganesha. People will be swayed to your point of view, and it won't take you much of an effort to convince them to believe even the most ludicrous of the proposals. Staying composed will help you calm the storm brewing in your mind.

#### AQUARIUS

Today, your innermost feelings take precedence over all else. You may also make a short trip on a whim. At your workplace, people will find you more sympathetic than usual. It's the same with your loved ones, who will enjoy your softer side. Do this more often, suggests Ganesha.

#### PISCES

A nice, smooth day is in the offing. You will meet some people today who will turn out to be reliable and trustworthy in the long run. No conflicts ought to arise to trip you, and you will probably end up rounding off the day basking in the affection of your near and dear ones, says Ganesha.

## Wamiqa's awkward moment

MUMBAI: The trailer launch of *Pati Patni Aur Woh Do* in Mumbai drew unexpected attention after an awkward on-stage moment involving Wamiqa Gabbi.

What was meant to be a lively promotional event quickly turned uncomfortable when the host made a remark about her name that did not land well. In front of the audience and media, the anchor joked about the origin of "Wamiqa," linking it to singer Mika Singh in a way that many found inappropriate. As the comment unfolded, Wamiqa appeared visibly uneasy. She responded with a polite but strained smile and a brief laugh, choosing not to engage further or react openly to the remark. Videos of the moment soon went viral, with viewers pointing out her discomfort and criticising the host's attempt at humour. Many felt the comment was unnecessary and crossed a line, especially during a professional event. The incident sparked broader conversations online about how female actors are often put in awkward situations under the guise of entertainment. Despite the incident, Wamiqa maintained her composure on stage, continuing with the event alongside co-stars including Sara Ali Khan.



MUMBAI: Actress Parineeti Chopra hosted actor Imran Khan during the latest episode of her podcast *Mom Talks*.

In a heartfelt conversation, the *Jaane Tu... Ya Jaane Na* actor shared his deeply personal journey of fatherhood with the *Chamkila* actress. Sharing a fresh perspective towards parenting, Imran emphasised that he never saw parenting as an obligation, but as a privilege.

He was heard saying, "I did not view it as my duty; I always saw it as my privilege. The time I spent with my child is something I wanted for myself. It's not about fulfilling a role but about experiencing joy, love, and connection", he further added. The *Delhi Belly* actor added that parenting should never be viewed through the lens of gender. He stated that bringing a child up is not the responsibility of just one parent but a shared experience for both the mother and father. Sharing his views on co-parenting and equal/shared parenting to ease pressures on the mothers, Imran said that while family structures may alter over time, a child's emotional security should always remain the priority. He pointed out that a child thrives the most when he feels safe, supported and reassured that their parents are in control.



### Imran talks about fatherhood

## ADAH REDEFINES SUCCESS

MUMBAI: Actress Adah Sharma says that success for her is not confined to box-office numbers or critical acclaim alone, as for her it is also about making a lasting impact on the audiences with her performances.

Asked how she measures success at this stage of your career, Adah told this news agency: "Box office is like that loud friend that shouts '375 crore for *The Kerala Story* highest grossing female lead film' so everyone turns and looks, and of course, I'm grateful when that happens." "Critical acclaim is the quiet, intellectual friend who doesn't speak

much, but when he does, you feel like you passed some secret exam," added Adah, who made her debut in Bollywood in 2008 with the Hindi horror film *1920*. "Numbers and opinions come and go; what remains for me is how the audience reacts to scenes, remembers performances, and dialogues," continued the 33-year-old actress, who was loved for her work in *Commando*.

The actress, who tasted super success with *The Kerala Story*, shared that her fans still talk about her performances in *1920* and *Sunflower*, among others. "So many people I meet tell me how *1920* scared them, how *Sunflower* made them laugh, and *The Kerala Story* made them cry; they thought about Kshanam weeks after they watched it," concluded Adah.



## Nauheed on industry pressures



MUMBAI: Nauheed Cyrusi recently opened up about the industry pressures that shaped her career choices and limited her on-screen appearances. Addressing a frequently asked question about her reduced presence in films, the actress candidly

shared that certain contractual expectations, particularly around intimate scenes, made her uncomfortable. She revealed that many projects required actors to be at ease with kissing or making out on screen, something she chose not to agree to, even if it meant losing roles. Nauheed pointed out that such scenes are often unnecessarily inserted, adding that she personally does not find them appealing when portrayed on screen. Her refusal to comply with these expectations led to her being rejected even before discussions could progress further, highlighting a rigid mindset within the industry. Beyond creative differences, she also shed light on financial challenges, revealing that a portion of her payments was sometimes withheld, especially if a project underperformed. Without the means or inclination to pursue legal action, she often had to accept these losses. She further admitted that staying away from industry networking circles may have cost her opportunities. Despite these hurdles, Nauheed remains firm in her choices, prioritising comfort and integrity over compromise.

### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

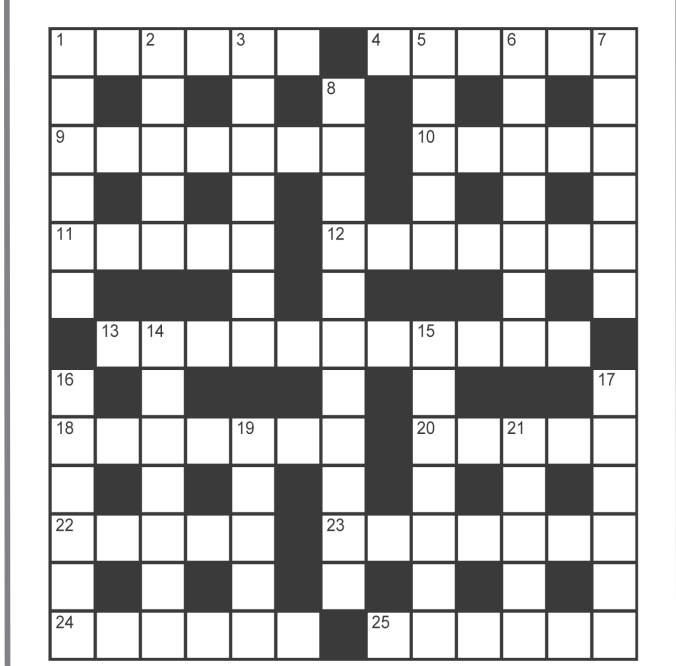


### BREVITY



### FUN POST

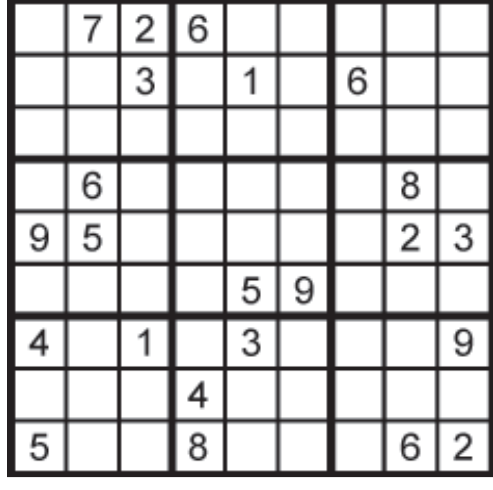
### CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Loathsome
  - 4 Printer type
  - 9 Mode of transportation
  - 10 Title holder
  - 11 Mid-afternoon
  - 12 Migrant
  - 13 It got better
  - 18 Radiator adjunct (3,4)
  - 20 Ridiculous
  - 22 It's a plus
- Down**
- 23 Address
  - 24 Yield
  - 25 Building material
  - 1 Goes around and around
  - 2 Sustain
  - 3 Ill-defined
  - 5 Plant life
  - 6 Largest city of Puerto Rico (3,4)
  - 7 Soup serving dish
  - 8 Restaurant booking
  - 14 Way of thinking (4-3)
  - 15 Like some lakes (3-4)
  - 16 Fling
  - 17 Young swan
  - 19 "The door's open!"
  - 21 Strong string

### SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.



### SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



**FUTURE IN PERIL:** Children at Durgapur under Mayurbhanj's Kaptipada block forced to study under unsafe conditions in a dilapidated house sans an Anganwadi Centre

## SC slams Odisha judiciary for 'regressive' bail terms

The top court noted that unprecedented bail conditions, like cleaning police stations for two months, were enforced by the Orissa HC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 4:** The Supreme Court Monday came down heavily on Odisha courts for imposing "regressive", "degrading" and "abhorrent" bail conditions like asking the accused, especially those belonging to Scheduled Tribe (ST) community, to clean police stations and set them aside. The court declared the "obnoxious" bail conditions imposed by the Orissa High Court and upheld by a lower sessions court as "null and void".

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joyimalya Bagchi urged all courts in the country to avoid imposing such terms in the future, stating that these orders reflect a deep-seated caste-based bias that undermines the constitutional promise of a casteless society.

The apex court had taken suo motu cognisance of the bail conditions imposed by the High Court and district courts in Odisha in a case in which members of the Adivasi and Dalit communities were held after protesting against land acquisition by a corporate entity.

The conditions required accused persons, primarily from Dalit and Adivasi communities, to clean police stations for several months. "Unfortunately, the High Court, as well as some district courts, while granting bail in Odisha, are imposing conditions which are obnoxious and bring a bad name to the image of the judiciary," the CJ said. "The nature of conditions is so cruel and abhorrent that it has the capacity to project the Odisha judiciary as caste-biased.

The most inalienable gift by the people through the Constitution was a casteless society through substantive equality," he said.

The bench addressed the facts of a specific case where 40 individuals were arrested, and some received bail from the HC. It noted that unprecedented conditions, like cleaning police stations for two months, were enforced.

"In another order, the High Court, while granting bail to a petitioner - a similar such order was passed - it has been rightly reported that it exposes bias of the judiciary since the accused belongs to a marginalised community and thus justified to subject them to such

be justified to subject them to such burdensome requirements," it noted.

The bench emphasised that even if these conditions were imposed without outright bias, their nature was so distasteful and degrading that it raised serious doubts about the presence of caste-based discrimination in the Odisha judiciary.

In its ruling, the bench cited various judgements affirming that law must provide just, fair, and reasonable procedures, thereby incorporating substantive due process into the constitutional framework.

They reiterated their strong disapproval of the degrading conditions imposed by the Odisha judiciary,



## CM embarks on 3-day Gujarat visit

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar/Ahmedabad, May 4:** After successful roadshows in Hyderabad and Kolkata, Odisha is now set to take its investment momentum to Gujarat, with Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi embarking on a three-day visit to the western state Tuesday.

Building a strong industrial bridge between east and west, the visit aims to deepen business link-

strong infrastructure and a skilled workforce. This Gujarat outreach will open new opportunities for our people, while creating jobs across key sectors in the state. We see this three-day visit as a milestone to attract investments and invite industry partners to be part of Odisha's growth journey towards a Samruddha Odisha by 2036."

According to reports, a flagship investors' roadshow will be held in Ahmed-



ages with Gujarat's manufacturing strength while opening new opportunities in Odisha's rapidly expanding sectors. With a focus on textiles, chemicals & petrochemicals, metals & downstream industries, and pharmaceuticals, the visit is expected to generate investment intents from west coast of India. The outreach will also strengthen engagement with Odia diaspora in Gujarat, connecting them to the state's growth story.

abad May 5, followed by roundtable discussions with top business leaders and one-on-one meetings with leading industry players, enabling focused and result-oriented engagements.

Several MoUs and exchange of investment intention forms are expected to be signed, reflecting growing investor confidence in Odisha. Discussions will be centered on high-potential sectors including chemicals and petrochemicals, metal and downstream industries, pharmaceuticals and medical devices, and textiles and apparel.

## 79K beneficiaries receive ₹61cr

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, May 4:** Deputy Chief Minister Pravatī Parida Monday disbursed financial assistance of over ₹61 crore to more than 79,000 beneficiaries, who had earlier missed the first, second, or third instalments of 'Subhadra' scheme due to various reasons, officials said.

Parida released the aid to the beneficiaries' bank accounts through the direct benefit transfer (DBT) system from the conference hall of the Women and Child Development department here.

The women were excluded from the scheme due to issues like inactive NPCI linkage, e-KYC biometric errors, and pending grievance resolutions.

According to official data, a total of 21,901 beneficiaries received the first instal-



ment, 22,347 got the second instalment, and 79,601 beneficiaries were provided with the third instalment under

### SUBHADRA MONEY

the ambitious women-centric scheme of the BJP government. The disbursement was made after due verification and resolution of cases pending at various administrative levels, the officials said.

Parida reaffirmed the government's commitment to ensuring that no eligible beneficiary is left out, em-

phasising that all genuine cases will be addressed through a robust system of verification and grievance redressal.

She reiterated that 'Subhadra' scheme marks a significant step towards advancing women's financial empowerment in the state.

She also reviewed the status of left-out beneficiaries with district administrations, including Ganjam, Jajpur, and Kalahandi, and directed officials to expedite the verification process to ensure timely inclusion of all eligible beneficiaries.

## Woman dies as truck hits motorcycle in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, May 4:** A 48-year-old woman, who was travelling with her husband on a motorcycle, died Monday afternoon after a container truck crushed her near Palasuni foot over bridge under Mancheswar police station here. Her husband sustained minor injuries.

The deceased was identified as Namita Raula.

Police said Namita was moving towards Rasulgargh

with her husband when the truck hit their motorcycle from the rear.

The duo fell on the road and the truck ran over Namita killing her on the spot while her husband sustained minor injuries. Enraged locals vandalised the truck following the incident.

"We've detained the driver and seized the vehicle from the spot and further investigation into the matter is underway," said Mancheswar IIC Dayanidhi Nayak.

## Youth forced to lick shoe in Raj village

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kota, May 4:** A youth was forced to lick the sole of a shoe as an apology after he was caught allegedly scamming women in a village in Bundi district by luring them with promises of benefits from various government schemes and the approval of houses under PM Awas Yojana, collecting money from them in the process.

The villagers later released the youth and chose not to file a complaint with

**The youth, identifying himself as VDO, tried to dupe women luring them of benefits under government schemes**

the police. However, the incident came to light Sunday afternoon when a video clip of the event went viral on social media.

According to locals, the youth arrived in Kabri village under Hindoli police station Saturday, presenting himself as a village development officer (VDO).

He interacted with the villagers, enticing women with benefits from government schemes and allegedly requesting between ₹1,000 and ₹2,000 for the necessary formalities to access these benefits. Some women even gave him money.

However, other villagers, including some young men, became suspicious of his claims. When questioned about his identity and asked to produce an ID card, the youth admitted that he was not a legitimate government official and returned the money he had extorted.

To teach him a lesson, the villagers made him lick the sole of a shoe three times while he repeatedly apologised, declaring, "I will not repeat such a mean act in the future."

In response to the viral video, Hindoli police identified the fake VDO as Manraj Prajapat, a resident of Rein village under Dablana police station in the same district. Despite the incident, no case was registered due to the lack of complaints.

## 1,500 beagles to get new lease of life

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Fort Lauderdale, May 4:** The first pack of beagles removed from a Wisconsin dog breeding and research facility that was the site of recent protests seemed to know right away that they were safe.

"They started within an hour or so coming up to us, seeking attention. Some crawled into people's laps. Every single one of them is super sweet," Lauree Simmons, president and founder of Big Dog Ranch Rescue, said Sunday. "I think they are loving the attention. I just know they know they are safe."

Big Dog Ranch Rescue and the Center for a Humane Economy negotiated a confidential agreement to purchase the 1,500 dogs for an undisclosed price from Ridgland Farms, where police used tear gas and pepper spray to repel activists trying to take beagles from the facility last month. Pro-



testers also broke into the facility in March and took 30 dogs. Sixty-three people were referred by the sheriff's department to the district attorney for potential charges related to that break-in.

Talks to purchase the animals began months before the April disturbance, and Simmons said her group wasn't connected to the protests. Now, Big Dog Ranch Rescue is working with partners all over the country to find homes for 1,000 of the dogs, while the Center for a Humane Economy

is taking the rest. Simmons said her group has received over 700 adoption applications, but it might take some time before the hounds are ready for their new homes as the organisation screens potential dog parents, moves the animals to shelters around the country and ensures the beagles are housebroken.

up a staging area with play yards in Wisconsin, where the dogs are being vaccinated, microchipped, spayed or neutered and prepared for transport, Simmons said. Big Dog Ranch Rescue has already started moving dogs to its location in western Palm Beach County, Florida.

Beagles are the most common breed of dog used for animal testing, primarily because of their smaller size and gentle temperament. They are just so trusting and docile and calm and forgiving. That is why they are the most chosen dogs for animal testing. And so we are going to take one of the sweetest, kindest, most trusting breeds and abuse them? This is wrong. This needs to stop," Simmons said.

About 1,000 activists from across the country came to Ridgland Farms in the rural village of Blue Mounds, about 40 km southwest of Madison, April 18 in an attempt to take the beagles.

ଝୁଣାକାର, ଗ୍ରାହକ ଏବଂ ପୁଷ୍ଟପୋଷକ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ହାର୍ଦ୍ଦିକ ଅଭିନନ୍ଦନ

**୨୦ତମ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା ଦିବସ**

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ଉପଲକ୍ଷେ

**ବୟନିକା**

ବିଶେଷ ରିହାତି

**90% + ୧୦%**

(ସମସ୍ତ ଶାଖାରେ ଉପଲବ୍ଧ)

୦୫ - ୦୭ ମଇ, ୨୦୨୬ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ

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ଓଡିଶା ରାଜ୍ୟ ହସ୍ତଚଳ ଝୁଣାକାର ସମବାୟ ସମିତି ଲିଃ ହସ୍ତଚଳ, ବୟନ ଓ ହସ୍ତଶିଳ୍ପ ବିଭାଗ, ଓଡିଶା ସରକାର

'ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ହସ୍ତଚଳରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଅସ୍ଥିତା'

31001/16/2627

OIPR-31001/31004/2/26-27/0005

# Bengal poll results show shift from fear to trust: CM

## Kanas attack: Oppn slams govt; 4 held



Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, Deputy CM KV Singh Deo, state BJP chief Manmohan Samal and Revenue & Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari among others celebrate the party's performance in West Bengal, Assam and Puducherry polls, during 'Vijay Utsav' in Bhubaneswar, Monday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, May 4:** Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi said Monday that the BJP's stupendous performance in West Bengal, where the saffron party is all set to form its government, reflects a transition from fear to trust.

Majhi issued a series of social media posts hailing the BJP's performance and joined a 'Vijay Utsav' at the party's state headquarters here.

"This mandate is more than an electoral outcome. It is a resounding call for change, a transition from bhay (fear) to bharosha (trust), signalling a collective aspiration for progress, stability, and principled

governance," Majhi said in an X post.

Stating that the ancient spirit of Anga (Bihar), Banga (West Bengal) and Kalinga (Odisha) finds its renewed expression on the day, the Chief Minister congratulated the people of West Bengal and every BJP worker who gave their "sweat, dedication, and conviction" to this cause.

"This victory is a testament to the people's unwavering faith in the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his transformative vision of Purvoday," Majhi, who also campaigned in the neighbouring state, said in the social media post.

The Chief Minister said a new dawn of progress is unfolding in West Bengal and this man-

date marks the beginning of a new era of accelerated growth and opportunity, strengthening the collective journey towards a 'Viksit Bharat'.

Majhi also congratulated the people of Assam on the NDA's win in the northeastern state. He said this is a mandate for an unprecedented third consecutive term for the BJP and its allies. "This resounding endorsement is a powerful testament to the people's unwavering trust in the transformative vision of Prime Minister @narendramodi and the dynamic leadership of Chief Minister @himantabiswa," Majhi said in another post.

May this renewed mandate serve as a catalyst for accelerated progress, prosperity, and

truly inclusive development, not just for Assam, but for the entire Northeast, he added.

Majhi, in another post, also congratulated the people of Puducherry on the NDA's win in the Union Territory.

"This renewed mandate is a clear affirmation of the people's unwavering trust in the visionary leadership of Prime Minister @narendramodi and their continued faith in governance driven by accountability, development, and the welfare of all," he said.

Majhi expressed hope that this consecutive mandate would further accelerate progress, expand opportunities, and bring lasting prosperity to Puducherry.

## BJP 'captures' states using Central agencies: Oppn

As the BJP is set to form its government in West Bengal, Odisha's opposition parties, the BJD and Congress, alleged Monday that the saffron party "captures" states using Central agencies and "does not win" through people's votes.

The BJP, on the other hand, claimed that TMC supremo and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has been taught a lesson for insulting Lord Jagannath by naming a Digha temple a "dham".

"They (BJP) are winning elections by hook or by crook by using ECI, ED, CBI and other agencies. There is no magic behind the elections in West Bengal and Assam. Had there been any magic, why did chief ministers, Union ministers and scores of leaders from different parts of the country campaign in West Bengal?" Pramila Mallik asked.

Replying to a question, the BJD leader said that the BJP's rise in West Bengal would not impact any regional party in eastern India. "How can it impact regional parties? Has TMC been finished? Mamata is fighting, and the manner in which the BJP people attacked the woman leader shows the BJP's hollow commitment to women's empowerment," Mallik said.

"They (BJP) have used all means against a woman leader; they used all means to capture the state," the 7-time MLA and former minister said.

Mallik also accused the BJP of misleading the people of both Odisha and Bengal.

Odisha Congress president

Bhakta Charan Das also criticised the BJP and alleged that the saffron party have manipulated polls. "BJP's election management has a big role behind this. You see how Rs 10,000 was transferred to the account of voters during the Bihar polls. This is totally against the election norms. They violate all rules. How could a Parliament session be convened when the election process in Bengal was underway? This session aimed to motivate women voters of Bengal. The Election Commission did not stop it," he said.

This election could be the victory of the Election Commission, Das claimed.

"They (BJP) have captured states, not through votes but by their poll management and ECI," Das said, wondering how the anti-incumbency could not become a factor in Assam while it is applicable for West Bengal. Senior BJP leader and Deputy Chief Minister Pravatiparida in an X post said, "BJP victorious in Anga (Bihar), Banga (Bengal) and Kalinga (Odisha)."

Parida, who hails from Puri district, claimed that Mamata Banerjee was taught a lesson for daring to insult Lord Jagannath by naming Digha temple a "dham". "Mahaprabhu Shri Jagannath does not tolerate arrogance; this has been proven in the West Bengal elections. After her brother (BJD chief Naveen Patnaik) suffered the consequences of dishonouring Mahaprabhu Shri Jagannath, now sister Mamata's arrogance has been shattered," Parida said.

**BJP CLAIMED THAT TMC SUPREMO AND WEST BENGAL CM MAMATA BANERJEE HAS BEEN TAUGHT A LESSON FOR INSULTING LORD JAGANNATH BY NAMING A DIGHA TEMPLE A "DHAM"**

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, May 4:** Opposition BJD and Congress Monday came down heavily on the state government following a broad daylight attack on a 35-year-old man in Kanas of Puri.

BJD president Naveen Patnaik and OPEC chief Bhakta Charan Das expressed deep concern after a video went viral showing a group of miscreants chasing Mrutyunjaya Bharima of Dokanda village in a crowded marketplace and launching a violent assault using a sharp weapon. The attackers also hit Bharimal with a motorcycle, creating panic in the area.



Patnaik said the incident in Kanas clearly shows that lawlessness in Odisha has crossed all limits. "In what direction is the BJP government taking Odisha? The sight of miscreants banding together in broad daylight to brutally and mercilessly carry out a fatal attack on a young man has left the entire populace of Odisha shaken and terrified," he said in a post on X. He alleged that the BJP government has utterly failed to ensure a safe environment for the people.

The OPEC chief said, "The incident of brutal violence in Kanas raises serious concerns over the prevailing law and order situation in the state. Even after 24 hours, the absence of prompt and decisive action is deeply concerning. The people of Odisha deserve a secure environment. The BJP government must act firmly without delay to uphold law and order."

Meanwhile, Dharmapada Badajena, Chandrakanta Jena, Chinmay Gajendra, and Ajay Baliarsingh have been arrested in connection with the incident.

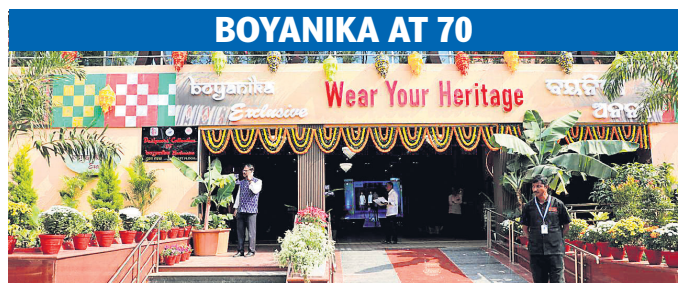
# Weaving trust, tradition & livelihoods

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, May 4:** The Odisha State Handloom Weavers' Cooperative Society Ltd (Boyanika), established in 1956 under the aegis of the state government, has emerged as a key institution in India's handloom sector, symbolising heritage, trust and collective progress.

As Boyanika completes 70 years May 5, the milestone marks not just its longevity but its sustained efforts in connecting rural weavers of Odisha to national and global markets while ensuring their livelihood and dignity.

Founded at a time when traditional weavers faced declining patronage and limited market access, Boyanika emerged as a structured platform ensuring fair trade, transparency and sustainable opportunities. From modest beginnings, it has



grown into a multi-dimensional organisation with a turnover of Rs 233 crore.

It now operates a network of 40 retail outlets across Odisha and in major cities such as New Delhi and Kolkata. These outlets serve not just as points of sale but as showcases of the state's rich handloom heritage, reflecting tradition, skill and cultural identity.

Beyond its scale and reach, Boyanika is defined by the trust it commands. As a gov-

ernment-backed institution, it is synonymous with authenticity and integrity, assuring customers that every product is a genuine handwoven creation that directly supports weavers' livelihoods.

At a time dominated by mechanised production and imitation, Boyanika continues to preserve traditional weaves such as Sambalpuri, Bomkai, Berhampuri, Kotpad and Khandua, reflecting Odisha's cultural essence.

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, May 4:** Deputy Chief Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo Monday inaugurated a state-of-the-art Power System Simulation Laboratory (PSSL) of Odisha Power Transmission Corporation Limited (OPTCL) at its Power Training Centre in Chandaka area, stating that the initiative reflects the state's commitment to building a modern, reliable, and technology-driven power sector in line with the vision of 'Viksit Odisha'.

The laboratory aims to significantly enhance OPTCL's technical capabilities in power system planning, grid management, and operational reliability.

Equipped with advanced simulation tools, the facility will enable engineers to model complex grid scenarios, analyse load flow, assess system stabil-



ity, and simulate fault conditions in real time.

"These capabilities are expected to strengthen the resilience and efficiency of Odisha's transmission network, while supporting the integration of renewable energy and meeting the state's growing power de-

mand," an OPTCL official said.

Addressing the gathering, Singh Deo, who also holds the Energy portfolio, emphasised that a robust transmission network is fundamental to a developed Odisha.

He noted that the new laboratory would empower engineers

to anticipate challenges, optimise grid operations, and ensure uninterrupted, high-quality power supply across sectors, including industry, agriculture, and households.

"The initiative reflects the government's commitment to building a modern, reliable, and technology-driven power sector aligned with the vision of 'Viksit Odisha'," Singh Deo said.

Speaking on the occasion, OPTCL Chairman-cum-Managing Director Bhaskar Jyoti Sarma described the laboratory as a centre of excellence for capacity building, research, and innovation in power system studies. He added that it would provide hands-on training to OPTCL and State Load Despatch Centre (SLDC) engineers, enable data-driven decision-making, and enhance preparedness for grid contingencies.

## IKS Olympiad: CUO students honoured

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Koraput, May 4:** The Central University of Odisha (CUO), Koraput Monday felicitated students of its Sanskrit department for excelling in the IKS Olympiad held August 12, 2025.

The olympiad, organised by the Central Sanskrit University, New Delhi, aims at promoting the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) among university students.

Nabin Kumar Pradhan, Assistant Professor and in-charge of the department, said Subhashree Mishra and Rupesh Kumar Pradhan, both MA fourth semester students, secured gold and silver medals, respectively, in the recently-declared results.

Vice Chancellor (i/c) NC Panda felicitated the winners and lauded their achievement. He said the National Education Policy emphasises the IKS as a means to reconnect with the country's educational roots, and expressed pride in CUO students' strong grounding in tradition and heritage.

The students were mentored by faculty members Nabin Pradhan, Sanjib Sarkar and Debashish Karmakar.

# Class X: Schools for blind & deaf secure 100% result

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Berhampur, May 4:** Disability has not deterred the visually and hearing-impaired students from the path of success as all 25 students from the two special schools for the blind and deaf here in Ganjam district cleared the annual Class X state board examination this year, officials said Monday.

The result of the High School Certificate (HSC) examination was published Saturday. Twelve students from the Red Cross School for the Blind and 13 hearing-impaired students from the Helen Keller Red Cross School for the Deaf here cleared their HSC exam this year. Both schools have achieved 100 per cent results for the past several years, school officials said.

The Red Cross School for the Blind has achieved 100 per cent results for the last 43 years, said Priya Ranjan Mahakuda, the school's principal.

Altogether 12 visually-impaired students, including three girls, who appeared for the HSC examination this year, successfully passed the test, said Mahakuda.

Two boys secured B1 grade

by scoring above 70 per cent of marks, while eight other students got B2 grade with 60 to 69 per cent, and two other students achieved C grade (50-59 per cent), he said.

Since the first batch of students in 1983, the residential school for the visually-impaired students has achieved cent per cent results in the matriculation examination. The teaching staff in the residential school took extra care of the students for their success in the examination, which is why the school achieved 100 per cent results in all the years, said the principal.

He said that the school was established in 1974 to impart school education to visually-impaired children in the state. The school has developed its own infrastructure facilities recently.

In the classroom, students are taught using Braille textbooks. They, however, appeared for the examination through the help of a scribe. The blind students dictated the answers to the scribe, who was a junior student to them, said Mahakuda.

Most of the students who passed from the school are now working in different organisations, including government

sectors across the country, said Nabeen Satapathy, a retired principal of the school.

Jitendra Sahu, a visually impaired student in the school who secured a B1 grade in the examination, wants to pursue Class XII in college. Similarly, others who passed the HSC examination also want to pursue higher studies.

Earlier, students admitted to the school faced difficulties due to the non-availability of Braille textbooks. In the last several years, the government has supplied the test books for the students, which are printed in the Braille press, the only press located here.

"We have printed the Braille textbooks for Class X and other classes and supplied those to different institutes free of cost, following the government's direction," said Prakash Narayan Rath, manager of the government-run computerised Braille press here.

## DRIEMS, OUTR ink pact on tech edu & research

**CUTTACK:** A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between DRIEMS University, Cuttack and Odisha University of Technology and Research (OUTR), Bhubaneswar Monday. The MoU focuses on educational development and research, teacher training, teacher-student exchange, organising national and international workshops, curriculum and infrastructure development-based Center of Excellence (CoE) facilities, project preparation, and the exchange of new technology. The special programme was attended by DRIEMS University Vice-Chancellor Prakash Kumar Hota, Registrar Krushna Prasad Pati, Dean Biswaranjan Mohanty and Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering department Chandan Kumar Sethi. On behalf of OUTR, Vice-Chancellor Bibhuti Bhusan Biswal, Registrar Meera Viswawandya, Mechanical Engineering department Head Sudhansu Sekhar Sahoo and Pramod Kumar Parida were present. DRIEMS University Founder Chairman Pramod Chandra Rath, Administrative Director Balaram Kar, Director Pradepta Chandra Rath and Director Chinmayee Rath noted that the partnership is a vital step towards achievement of excellence in technical education and providing students and teachers with world-class opportunities.

MARKET WATCH					
CURRENCY		BOURSES		COMMODITIES	
INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION
DOLLAR	95.37 ▲ 0.26	SENSEX	77269.40 ▲ 1342.27	GOLD	₹149,129 ▼ ₹2,223
EURO	111.70 ▼ 0.10	NIFTY	24119.30 ▲ 355.90	SILVER	₹242,500 ▼ ₹3,802

WEATHER			
	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	35.2°	34.2°	Light to moderate rain or thunderstorm very likely to occur
Min Temp	23.2°	21.2°	
Humidity	83%	85%	
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	

## Woman killed in elephant attack

**Athamalik:** A woman died after being attacked by an elephant while collecting kendu leaves in a forest near Nuagaon village under Madhapur forest range and Athamalik forest division of Angul district, officials said. Jyotsna Biswal, 40, of Madhapur area was attacked by the elephant Monday morning. Other women who had gone to collect kendu leaves heard her screams and raised an alarm, causing the elephant to retreat. Biswal was taken to the Madhapur hospital for initial treatment before being shifted in an 108 ambulance to the Athamalik Sub-Divisional Hospital, where she was pronounced dead by attending physicians. On being informed, Forest department officials including Foresters Santosh Kumar Nayak and Subrata Satapathy reached the hospital and took stock of the situation. Athamalik police also reached the hospital, conducted a post-mortem and handed over the body to the family members. Madhapur Range Officer Swadhin Samal and Forester Santosh Kumar Nayak visited the victim's home and provided the family ₹30,000 in immediate financial assistance.

# Farmers, fisherfolk worry as Mahanadi goes dry

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jharsuguda, May 4:** Prolonged heatwave conditions across the state have triggered a growing water crisis, with several rivers drying up in Odisha. The situation has worsened for Mahanadi River, with reduced flow affecting livelihoods in border areas.

Residents allege that multiple dams and barrages constructed upstream in Chhattisgarh are holding back water during the non-monsoon season, disrupting the river's natural flow into Odisha. This has led to drought-like conditions in several villages along the river. Conversely, during the monsoon, sudden release



of water from these structures often triggers flooding in downstream areas of the state. Villages near where the

river enters Odisha including Sukhasoda, Mahulapali, Muhudi, Tarabha, Chikhili, Tiligi, Kusmel and Palsada

**At the interstate border, gates of the Kalma Barrage in Chhattisgarh are reportedly kept mostly closed, with only minimal water release.**

face a dual crisis of drought and floods, leaving residents in persistent distress.

At the interstate border, gates of the Kalma Barrage in Chhattisgarh are reportedly kept mostly closed, with only

minimal water release. As a result, the riverbed and islets have dried up in many stretches, intensifying water scarcity in riverside villages.

The lack of water has disrupted agriculture, while local fisherfolk have lost their primary source of income due to the absence of fish in the depleted river. Crop losses are mounting, and residents are struggling even for drinking water.

With the Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal yet to deliver a resolution, hardships continue to mount for people in these areas. Locals have called for urgent coordination between the two states and immediate intervention by the tribunal to find a lasting solution.

## Toddler dies after bus runs over him

**Baripada:** A two-and-a-half-year-old boy was killed after being run over by a private bus at Baripada bus stand in Mayurbhanj district Monday, police said. The child, identified as Lipun Hansda of Andhari village under Kuliya police limits, died while undergoing treatment at the district headquarters hospital. According to officials, the boy was travelling with his family to Dangadih under Badasahi police limits. They had reached the Baripada bus stand by an auto-rickshaw and were waiting to board a bus. During this time, the family went to a nearby shop to buy ice cream. At around 12:30pm, a private bus bound for Chandaneswar allegedly entered the bus stand at speed and hit the child and his mother. Both fell to the ground, and the bus ran over the boy's thigh. The mother sustained minor injuries. Police seized the vehicle and launched an investigation. Local residents blamed poor management and congestion at the bus stand for the accident. They alleged that buses operate in a haphazard manner, endangering passengers.

# EGI to help strengthen regional journalism: Sanjay Kapoor

Sanjay Kapoor is a veteran Indian journalist and President of Editors Guild of India (EGI), elected unopposed in late 2025. With decades of editorial experience, he is best known for his work as Editor of 'Hardnews Magazine'. Widely respected for his expertise in foreign affairs and political strategy, Kapoor has long been a prominent voice on South Asian geopolitics and media ethics. In an exclusive interaction with Arindam Ganguly of Orissa POST, during his current visit to the state capital, he spoke on key contemporary issues like the role of EGI in safeguarding editorial independence, the state of press freedom in India, the growing challenge of misinformation, and the impact of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence on journalism

**What key initiatives or reforms do you plan to introduce to enhance the Guild's relevance and effectiveness?**

Our priority is to take the Editors Guild beyond Delhi and strengthen its national presence. We will expand activities in regional centres like Bhubaneswar, engage more closely with local editors, and create platforms for dialogue and collaboration. This will make the Guild more inclusive, responsive, and better aligned with the needs of journalists across India.

**What role can the EGI play in strengthening regional journalism, especially in states like Odisha?**

Odisha has a strong newspaper readership, even though its media ecosystem is smaller than states like West Bengal or Maharashtra. This creates an important opportunity to strengthen regional journalism in the state. The Guild can support this by building closer ties with local journalists and media institutions, strengthening networks, and enabling knowledge-sharing to address resource constraints in newsrooms. Going forward, regular Guild en-

agements in Bhubaneswar can provide a platform for dialogue, capacity-building, and greater national attention to regional media issues.

**How do you assess the current state of press freedom in India?**

I am concerned about the state of press freedom in India, with growing constraints on the media's independence and transparency. For example, during recent coverage of developments in West Asia, access to on-ground information and authentic visuals was limited, with much of the content appearing filtered or controlled. This raises serious concerns about the flow of credible, unbiased news.

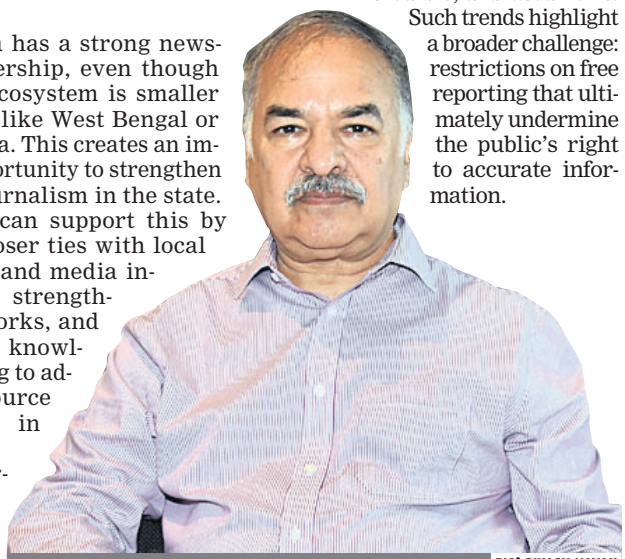
Such trends highlight a broader challenge: restrictions on free reporting that ultimately undermine the public's right to accurate information.

**How should traditional media respond to misinformation, fake news?**

Misinformation has grown rapidly in scale, speed, and sophistication, driven by digital platforms and advances in AI, making it harder to detect and counter. In this environment, traditional media must reinforce rigorous verification, fact-checking, and editorial standards, while maintaining transparency to rebuild public trust. A major concern is the amplification of misinformation by influential voices, which blurs the line between fact and falsehood and makes it more difficult for audiences to identify credible journalism.

**How do you see AI role in journalism?**

AI is becoming an important tool in journalism and cannot be ignored or sidelined. However, it must be used primarily as an aid, not a substitute for editorial judgement. While AI can support tasks like background research, data analysis, and efficiency in reporting, it cannot replace active, on-ground, human journalism. The strength of journalism lies in verification, context, and independent reporting—areas where human oversight is essential. Over-reliance on AI without editorial control risks undermining credibility, so it should be used carefully as a support system, not a decision-maker. AI must support journalism, not replace human judgement.



PIC: BIKASH NAYAK

## 3 women killed as tree gives way during storm



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Nandapur/Padua, May 4:** Three women were killed and another person was critically injured after a tree got uprooted and fell on them during a Kalbaisakhi storm at a weekly market in Peda Baaili on the Odisha-Andhra Pradesh border Monday afternoon.

The deceased have been identified as Seetama Khara, 40, and Tilatama Khara, 30; both from Jarai village under Panthlung panchayat in Nandapur block of Koraput district, and Mani Pampa of Panthlung village.

According to officials, strong winds and heavy rain lashed the area causing a large tree in the middle of the crowded marketplace to give way trapping several people underneath. Seetama and Tilatama died on the spot after being crushed by the tree. Mani Pampa and Ramchandra Pampa sustained serious injuries and were shifted to the Munchimput primary health centre in Andhra Pradesh for treatment. Mani later succumbed to her injuries while undergoing treatment.

Police and fire services personnel from Munchimput rushed to the site and cut through the fallen tree to recover the bodies. The bodies were sent to the local health facility for post-mortem.

Pottangi MLA Rama Chandra Kadam visited the site, expressed condolences to the bereaved families, and held discussions with Andhra Pradesh officials to ensure prompt medical care for the injured. He also urged the Koraput district administration to provide Red Cross assistance to the victims' families.

Nandapur Block Development Officer and acting tehsildar Durga Prasad Dora informed District Collector Manoj Satyawan Mahajan about the incident and said further action would be taken as per directions. Local sarpanch Pooja Khil and social worker Akash Khil, along with family members of the deceased, are in discussions with Andhra Pradesh officials and the market committee seeking compensation.

### GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER RURAL WORKS DIVISION-II, JAJPUR

No.25001/84/2627 rwddivision\_jaraka@yahoo.co.in  
'E' PROCUREMENT NOTICE NO.RWD-II/JJPR-01/2026-27

- Name of work : Building works in the District of Jajpur for the yr. 2026-27
  - Total No. of Work : 07 nos. of works
  - Estimated Cost (Approx) : As indicated against each work in the NIT
  - Period of Completion : As indicated against each work in the NIT
  - Class of contractors : As indicated against each work in the NIT
- Other details as follows :
- Procurement Officer : Superintending Engineer, Rural Works Division-II, Jajpur at Jaraka
  - Availability of tender online & submission of bid : 07.05.2026 at 11.00 A.M. to 20.05.2026 upto 5.00 P.M.
  - Last date & time of seeking of tender clarification : 19.05.2026 upto 4.00 P.M.
  - Opening of Tender : 21.05.2026 at 11.00 A.M.
- Further details can be seen from the Govt. website [www.tendersodisha.gov.in](http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in)

OIPR-25001/25080/1/26-27/0001

### GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES O/o THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, ANGUL IRRIGATION DIVISION, ANGUL

No.32001/140/2627  
'e'-Procurement Notice No. SE-AID-1/2026-27

The Superintending Engineer, Angul Irrigation Division, Angul on behalf of the Government of Odisha invites online percentage rate basis bid in single cover system through e-procurement for the work mentioned below.

1	Total No. of Works	19 (Nineteen) Nos. Civil work
2	Cost of work put to tender	Approximately Rs.5.90 Lakh / Rs.21.18 Lakh
3	Tender Paper Cost	Rs.4,000/- / Rs.6,000/- (Non-Refundable)
4	Class of Contractor	'D' & 'C' / 'C' & 'B' equivalent Grade / Class
5	Period of Completion	90 Days / 60 Days
6	Availability of Bid Documents and receipt of bid through online	From 11.00 A.M. of 02.05.2026 to 5.00 P.M. of 11.05.2026 in the website ( <a href="http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in">www.tendersodisha.gov.in</a> )
7	Date, time & place for opening of online tenders	12.05.2026 at 11.00 A.M. and onwards in the O/o the SE, Angul Irrigation Division, Angul
8	Date, time & Place for finalization of tender through transparent lottery system (if required)	18.05.2026 at 11.00 A.M. in the O/o the SE, Angul Irrigation Division, Angul
9	Digital Signature Certificate	The bidders must possess compatible Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) of Class-II or Class-III
10	Name and address of Officer Inviting Tender (OIT)	Superintending Engineer, Angul Irrigation Division, Angul, At/PO : Hakimpada, Dist : Angul, Odisha, e-mail id - <a href="mailto:eeangulirrigation@gmail.com">eeangulirrigation@gmail.com</a>

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal of Government of Odisha at [www.tendersodisha.gov.in](http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in)  
Superintending Engineer  
Angul Irrigation Division, Angul  
OIPR-32001/32049/1/26-27/0001

### SURYO FOODS & INDUSTRIES LIMITED

Regd. Office: A-54/1 & A-55/1, Dinalipi Bhawan, Baramunda, Bhubaneswar-751003  
Email: [suryofoods.industries@gmail.com](mailto:suryofoods.industries@gmail.com), web site: [www.suryofoods.com](http://www.suryofoods.com), CIN - L05004OR1989PLC002264  
Extract of Audited Financial Results for the Quarter and Year ended 31st March, 2026  
(Rs. in '000', except EPS)

Sl. No.	Particulars	Quarter ended		Year ended		
		31.03.2026 (Audited)	31.12.2025 (UnAudited)	31.03.2025 (Audited)	31.03.2026 (Audited)	31.03.2025 (Audited)
1	Total Income from operation (net) Other income (net) Other Gains/(Losses)	1,366	1,361	3,318	5,479	6,313
2	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and Extraordinary items)	-3,286	-587	1,952	-2,874	2,339
3	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period before Tax, (after Exceptional and Extraordinary items)	-3,286	-587	1,952	-2,874	2,339
4	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period after Tax, (after Exceptional and Extraordinary items)	-3,582	-587	2,100	-3,180	2,487
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	-3,582	-587	2,100	-3,180	2,487
6	Equity Share Capital (Face Value of Rs. 10/- each)	69,300	39,600	39,600	39,600	39,600
7	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve) as shown in the Audited Balance Sheet of the previous year	-38,557	-38,557	-65,079	-38,557	65,079
8	Earnings Per Share (of Rs.10/- each) (for continuing and discontinued operations) - 1. Basic: 2. Diluted:	0.52 0.15	0.53 -0.15	0.53 0.53	0.46 0.46	0.46 0.46

**Note:**  
a) The above financial results of the Company for the quarter and year ended 31st March, 2026 have been reviewed by the audit Committee and approved by the Board of Directors at the meeting held on 04th May, 2026.  
b) The above financial results have been prepared in accordance with Indian Accounting Standards (Ind AS) prescribed under section 133 of the companies act, 2013 and other recognised accounting practices and policies to the extent applicable.  
c) The full format of the financial results of the Company for the Quarter and Year ended 31st March, 2026 are available at the Company's website <http://www.suryofoods.com>, and websites of All Stock Exchanges, where the Equity shares of the Company are listed.

Place: Bhubaneswar  
Date: 04th May, 2026  
For Suryo Foods & Industries Limited  
Sd/- Amarendra Dash  
(Chairman cum Managing Director of the Meeting)

### Bank of India Zonal Office: Keonjhar Zone, At: Kashipur, PO.: Mandua, Keonjhar - 758014 E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (SARFAESI Act) read with proviso to Rule 8 (6)/(9)(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 to be held on For SI. No.1 is on 26.05.2026 and For SI. No.2 & 3 is on 09.06.2026 From 10.00 A.M. to 5.00 P.M.

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Bank of India under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rules 8 & 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notices to the borrower, and the Authorised Officer has taken possession of the property described herein below. Offers are invited by the Authorised Officer under Sub-Rule 5 & 6 of Rule 8 of the said Rules by holding e-auction "As is where is", "As is what is", "Whatever there is" and "Whitout any Recourse" basis on For SI. No.1 is on 26.05.2026 and For SI. No.2 & 3 is on 09.06.2026 From 10.00 A.M. to 5.00 P.M. Public at large and Borrower, Mortgagor and Guarantor in general are being informed that E-auction under SARFAESI Act in respect of under noted property will be conducted for sale on the terms & conditions under Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 and to following conditions for realization of debts due to Bank.

**Date & Time of E-Auction : For SI. No.1 is on 26.05.2026 and For SI. No.2 & 3 is on 09.06.2026 From 10.00 A.M. to 5.00 P.M. with unlimited extension of 10 minutes each.**

**Last date for submission of EMD & Documents: For SI. No.1 is 18.05.2026 to 26.05.2026 and For SI. No.2 & 3 is 01.06.2026 to 09.06.2026 from 10.00 AM to 02.00 PM**

**Date & Time of Inspection of Properties : For SI. No.1 is 18.05.2026 to 25.05.2026 and For SI. No.2 & 3 is 01.06.2026 to 08.06.2026 between 10.00 A.M. to 4.00 P.M.**

For inspection please contact the Respective Branch Head or Recovery Department, Zonal Office, Keonjhar (Jajpur Town Branch Manager: 9861094691, Authorised Officer Mob.: 9438912726, Joda Branch Manager: 8056776580, Authorised Officer Mob.: 8056776580, Suakati Branch Manager: 7008433902, Authorised Officer Mob.: 7978766736, Zonal Office, Keonjhar, Recovery Department, Mob.: 9101508019)

Sl. No.	BRANCH / Name & Address of the Borrower / Mortgagor/ Guarantor / Total Dues	Description of the Property	Reserve Price / EMD / Type of Possession
1.	<b>JAJPUR TOWN BRANCH / Borrower/Mortgagor: Mr. Biranchi Narayan Sahoo, S/o.: Mr. Anadi Charan Sahoo, at Mouza: Abdalpur, Near Saraswati Sishu Mandir, College Chhak, P.S./ Tahasil/Dist.: Jajpur, Odisha-758034 / Guarantor: Mr. Karunakar Parida, At: Baidyajarajpur, PO./Dist.: Jajpur, Odisha-755007 / Total Dues: Rs.15,25,251.50 as on 27.08.2018 plus further interest, costs and incidental expenses</b>	All that part & parcel of property consisting of Equitable Mortgage of Land & Building standing in the name of Mr. Biranchi Narayan Sahoo, situated over Khata No.: 754 (New)/Khata No.: 714 (Old), Plot No.: 3077 & 3076 (New), Plot No.: 1485 (Old), Area: Ac. 0.040 Dec, KISSAM: Gharabari, at Mouza: Abdalpur, P.S./SRO/Tahasil/Dist.: Jajpur, Bounded by North: Niranjan Parida, South: Private Road (Plot No.: 3099), East: Plot No.: 3075, West: Plot No.: 3078 & 3080	₹ 18,17,100/- ₹ 1,81,710/- Physical
2.	<b>JODA BRANCH / Borrower: Mr. Goutam Singh, S/o.: Bhawani Shankar Singh, Plot No.: 423/1503, Infront of Hotel LAO Palace, Dist.: Keonjhar, Odisha-758064 / Guarantor: Mr. Trilochan Singh, At: Kamarjoda, PO: Joda, Dist.: Keonjhar, Odisha-758034 / Total Dues: Rs.47,68,679.04 as on 08.12.2025 plus further interest, costs and incidental expenses</b>	All that part and parcel of property consisting of residential Land and Building at Khata No.: 174/438, Plot No.: 423/1503, Area: Ac.0.065 Dec, ie.2831.40sqr. feet, KISSAM: Gharabari, Mouza: Kamarjoda Unit No.: 3, P.S.: Joda, Tahasil: Barbil, Dist.: Keonjhar, Odisha, standing in the name of Mr. Goutam Singh, SRO: Barbil, Dist.: Keonjhar, Bounded by North: R. Choudhury, South: M. Parmanik, East: M. Parmanik, West: Road	₹ 1,19,77,500/- ₹ 11,97,750/- Symbolic
3.	<b>SUAKATI BRANCH / Borrower/Mortgagor: Smt. Sanghamitra Behera, W/o: Mr. Manoj Behera, Plot No.: 365 1383, Ward No.: 18, Baniapat Khuntapada, Near DD College 1st Gate, Dist.: Keonjhar, Odisha-758001 / Total Dues: Rs.8,58,778.16 as on 26.10.2025 plus further interest, costs and incidental expenses</b>	All that part and parcel of land/land & building situated over Mutated Khata No.: 62/40, Plot No.: 43/548, 43, 43/547, Area: Ac.1.300dec., Mouza: Champai, KISSAM: Gharabari, PS: Rausuan, Dist.: Keonjhar standing in the name of Smt. Sanghamitra Behera, Bounded by North: Plot No.: 41 & 44, South: Upar Chmepi Mouza (Plot No.: 296), East: Road, South: Plot No.: 548	₹ 18,33,500/- ₹ 1,83,350/- Symbolic

**Terms and conditions of E-Auction**  
The Sale Notice containing the General Terms and Conditions of Sale is available / published in the following websites/ web page portal <https://banknet.com>. In case of any difficulty or need of assistance before or during e-Auction process may contact authorized representative of our e-Auction Service Provider <https://banknet.com>. Details of which are available on the e-Auction portal.  
The highest / successful bidder shall have to deposit 25% of the bid amount including the EMD already paid immediately / within one working day after acceptance of bid, failing which the EMD shall be forfeited. Balance 75% of the bid amount shall be payable on or before 15 days on confirmation of sale or such extended period as agreed upon in writing solely at discretion of Bank. In case of default in payment by the successful bidder the amount already deposited by the bidder shall be forfeited and Bank will be at liberty to cancel the auction and conduct fresh auction. Bank is not bound to accept the highest bid or any or all bids and reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the bids without assigning any reason thereof and vary, modify and waive any condition of sale in his absolute discretion. The Bank shall not be responsible in any way for any third party claims/rights/dues and also for the delay, costs and / or legal issues involved. On receipt of the entire sale consideration, Bank shall issue the sale Certificate in the name of bidder and the sale shall be considered complete.  
**15/30 DAYS E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN TO BORROWER(S)/ GUARANTOR(S)/ MORTGAGOR(S)**  
**This is also a 15/30 days sale notice to the Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s)/Mortgagor(s) of the aforesaid loan accounts for settlement of their outstanding dues with the bank and to participate in the E-Auction on the above mentioned date.**  
Place: Keonjhar, Date: 04.05.2026  
Authorised Officer, Bank of India



When we have passed beyond knowings, then we shall have Knowledge.

SRI AUROBINDO



## Voter The Leader

In the past, it was considered rather difficult to contest assembly elections without a recognisable chief ministerial candidate's face as a backup — someone whose name and face were well known to the electorate. The question that was perpetually raised was, "Who is the alternative?" This notion was captured by the acronym TINA — There Is No Alternative. However, Indian voters seem to be moving beyond such thinking.

During the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, it was said that there was no alternative to then CM Naveen Patnaik in Orissa. The ordinary voter, while looking at the BJP, could not discern any known credible leader on the horizon to match Naveen. Yet today, most Oriyas have come to accept Mohan Charan Majhi as a thoroughly welcome alternative.

In much the same vein, few political pundits who watch the BJP closely would be willing to wager that Suwendu Adhikari will definitely emerge as the choice for Chief Minister candidate in West Bengal, or that Himanta Biswa Sarma would assuredly serve as Chief Minister of Assam for a second consecutive term. It is only Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself who will take the final call on these matters.

Every successive election has demonstrated that the public warmly welcomes the administrative change brought about by setting aside the old guard and bringing in fresh faces — a good departure from the conventional, entrenched leadership of the past government.

It was quite foreseeable that the public in West Bengal would grow weary under Mamata Banerjee's third term — representing fifteen years of uninterrupted rule. The aspiration of Indian voters for change is entirely understandable and ought to be welcomed. The Indian Constitution grants a five-year term to each elected House, and since state assembly elections are held at various intervals, the party in power must continuously submit itself to the scrutiny of the electorate. This arrangement serves to strengthen and sustain democratic governance. Such elections compel every political party to remain mindful not only of its internal organizational strength but also of its obligation to respect the will of the people.

It is commonly said that a decade is quite sufficient to bring about meaningful change in a democracy. In several Indian states such as Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, and Kerala, the ruling party tends to change roughly every five years, only occasionally granted two terms - that is ten years - by the voters. It is perhaps for this very reason that South India has forged considerably ahead in terms of economic progress, industrial growth, and commercial development. Educated young men and women from Orissa often aspire to move to Hyderabad, Bengaluru, or Chennai. On the other hand, even unskilled Oriya workers are rarely seen migrating to Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, or Madhya Pradesh - Delhi being a notable exception. The reason is plain enough. States where political stability has been entrenched for prolonged periods tend to stagnate rather than flourish. The people of Orissa experienced this phenomenon firsthand during the twenty-four years of Biju Janata Dal's governance.

One cannot deny the developmental work carried out by the Naveen government during its first decade in power. However, as successive electoral victories mounted, the Biju Janata Dal gradually began treating Oriya voters as little more than its own domesticated subjects. This illustrates a broader truth. When any party remains in power for more than ten years, self-preservation inevitably supersedes public interest as its principal objective.

Indian voters are no longer content to allow razor-thin electoral contests to decide their fate. When support consolidates behind a particular party - as seen with the BJP in West Bengal, TVK in Tamil Nadu, and the UDF in Kerala - the electorate delivers resounding mandates. This ensures that the party assuming reins of governance faces no impediment in working earnestly towards the welfare of the people. In such circumstances, it is only right that politicians, having been entrusted with considerable power, should demonstrate within their first five years how responsibly they have exercised it. Only then they ought to expect a second term to be granted by the voter.

The recent assembly election results furnish compelling evidence that India does not merely require leaders. Rather it is the voters themselves who must become true leaders of the nation. Should the Indian electorate strengthen this conviction and exercise its democratic authority with wisdom and discernment, the progress of the country shall be well and truly assured.

### WISDOM CORNER

The only way to discover the limits of the possible is to go beyond them into the impossible.

ARTHUR C. CLARKE

There is no end to education. It is not that you read a book, pass an examination, and finish with education. The whole of life, from the moment you are born to the moment you die, is a process of learning.

JIDDU KRISHNAMURTI

I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear.

NELSON MANDELA

### THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1813: Danish religious philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, regarded as the founder of existentialist philosophy, was born in Copenhagen.

1862: Mexican victory in the Battle of Puebla. On this day in 1862, Mexico repelled the French forces of Napoleon III at the Battle of Puebla, a victory that became a symbol of resistance to foreign domination and is now celebrated as a national holiday, Cinco de Mayo.

1927: English author Virginia Woolf published *To the Lighthouse*, one of her most successful and accessible experiments in the stream-of-consciousness style.

1934: The first Three Stooges film is released. The comedy trio soon became famous, especially in the U.S., for their short films featuring slapstick humour.

1955: West Germany gains full sovereignty after World War II. The Federal Republic of Germany had been established in 1949. Its provisional capital was Bonn. After the 1990 reunification of East and West Germany, Berlin was declared the country's capital.

1960: Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev told the Supreme Soviet of the USSR that a US spy plane piloted by Francis Gary Powers had been shot down on May 1 over the Soviet Union; Khrushchev referred to the flight as an "aggressive act" by the United States.

# HAS DE-DOLLARIZATION BEGUN?

FOCUS CURRENCY

As the economic consequences of US President Donald Trump's war against Iran become evident, policymakers around the world are running out of patience. The recent Spring Meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank in Washington made this abundantly clear, with UK Chancellor of the Exchequer Rachel Reeves lamenting the "folly" of a war that is "not ours."

But much of the cost will be borne by the United States itself. The immediate effects are visible: a sharp rise in gas prices, inflation climbing to a two-year high, and growing concerns that, as consumers cut back on spending to offset higher costs, unemployment will rise. While these short-term shocks are serious, a major risk that has received less attention is that the dollar could lose its status as the world's primary trade and reserve currency.

The decline of a reserve currency is a slow process. The British pound ceded its dominance to the US dollar over roughly two decades, beginning in the 1920s. As Barry Eichengreen has noted, the Roman denarius—arguably the world's first international currency—also unraveled over a long period, starting when Emperor Nero debased it in the first century CE.

Any international currency ultimately depends on trust. I witnessed this during my time as chief economic adviser to the Indian government under Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. On August 5, 2011, S&P downgraded the US long-term credit rating from AAA to AA+, fueling fears of immediate capital flight. Instead, the opposite happened: money



Unless US policy reverses course, this year may go down in history as the moment the US dollar began to lose its status as the world's currency

flowed into the US economy. In the face of global turbulence, investors trusted that the US would honor its obligations, no matter the cost.

That trust, a cornerstone of soft power, is rapidly eroding. Samantha Power, the former administrator of the US Agency for International Development (USAID), highlighted this in a recent lecture at Cornell University, where she criticized the Trump administration's decision to dismantle the agency. The abrupt and "heartless" manner in which it was shut down, she said, halted humanitarian aid without warning, leading to immense suffering among populations around the world that had depended on its continuity.

The closure of USAID, alongside Trump's military adventures in Iran and Venezuela and relentless attacks on long-standing allies like Canada and Denmark, has cast a shadow over America's global standing and trustworthiness. This, in turn, puts the dollar's hegemonic status at risk.

To understand the potential

cost, consider seigniorage: because the dollar is globally trusted, the Federal Reserve can print a \$10 bill for less than seven cents, and it will be accepted at full value around the world. As empires from Rome to Britain have shown, issuing the world's leading currency allows a country to create value almost out of thin air. Losing that capacity would slow economic growth.

Unless US policy reverses course, this year may go down in history as the moment the US dollar began to lose its status as the world's currency.

This raises the question: Which currency will replace the dollar? The renminbi appears to be the strongest candidate. A decade ago, the Chinese currency gained credibility when the International Monetary Fund included it in the basket of global currencies underpinning Special Drawing Rights (the Fund's reserve asset), but it was still widely dismissed as "no match" for the greenback. Today, the prospect of renminbi primacy no longer seems unthinkable. Yet China's ability to as-

sume that global role is far from assured. As economist Qiao Liu observed in his 2016 book *Corporate China 2.0*, the country combines an "authoritative political regime" with more flexible institutional arrangements in which "relationships still matter," a hybrid that does not readily inspire the kind of global confidence a reserve currency requires.

Chinese President Xi Jinping appears to understand this dynamic. In a 2024 speech, Xi emphasized the need to internationalize the renminbi to bolster China's soft power, calling for a "powerful currency that can be widely used in international trade, investment, and foreign-exchange markets and attain reserve currency status." But the main obstacle to reserve-currency status for the renminbi—the maintenance of capital controls—remains firmly in place.

The strongest rebuke of Trump's policies over the past year came from an unexpected source: King Charles III. His address to Congress on April 28, delivered with characteristic British wit and restraint, sent a clear message that the US is on the wrong path, one that could destroy its global standing.

There was, however, cause for optimism. The repeated bursts of bipartisan applause Charles received from members of Congress suggested they were already aware of America's predicament.

*The writer, a former chief economist of the World Bank and chief economic adviser to the Government of India, is Professor of Economics at Cornell University.*

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### SPECTRUM CRUDE OIL

## UAE's OPEC exit & higher oil risks

None, not even US analysts, expected that a "non-descript war" with a small country like Iran could change the global energy scenario, that America is keen on monopolising. The US plans a conflict decades before as it had envisioned the 1969 Camp David accord with Egypt in a 1951 US congressional study. In 2026, its battle for supremacy is deeply hurt by Iranian strategies and devastation of US assets in 13 Gulf countries.

Now the OPEC seems to be in crisis, if not collapsing. The United Arab Emirates decided to leave from May 1 and the American dollar-sale accord with Saudi Arabia ended in 2024. The Saudis have shown inclination for trading in the Chinese Yuan and had expressed its desire to be part of BRICS, though stalled for now. India is the BRICS president for the current year.

It means the US could lose in trillions of dollars of transactions and if its NATO allies reach a peace deal with Russia, not unexpected, the global power scenario may shift faster than imagined.

For India, the UAEs' decision to leave OPEC is not just a Gulf political story—it is about fuel prices, inflation,

the rupee, and economic stability. As also having higher petroleum reserves India imports nearly 85% of its crude oil needs. Any rise in global oil prices directly raises petrol, diesel, transport costs, fertiliser prices, and leads to food inflation. With Brent crude already crossing \$110 per barrel due to the US-Israel war on Iran and disruption in the Strait of Hormuz, the UAE's exit from OPEC adds another layer of uncertainty.

At first glance, more oil from the UAE could help India by reducing prices. But in the short term, it may increase volatility because the move weakens OPEC's ability to manage supply and prices. For India, the real concern is not only oil availability but unstable and unpredictable pricing.

OPEC was formed in 1960 by Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, and Venezuela to protect oil-exporting countries by controlling production and keeping prices stable. The UAE joined in 1967. For decades, OPEC had enormous power over the global oil market. That power scenario is changing. At one time, OPEC controlled more than 50% of global oil output. Today, its direct share has fallen to around

30% because of rising production from the US, Brazil, and other independent producers. To recover influence, OPEC joined with Russia and others in 2016 to create OPEC+, controlling nearly half of world oil production.

The UAE produces around 3.4 million barrels of oil per day and can increase output to nearly 5 million barrels per day after investing almost \$150 billion in expanding capacity. Abu Dhabi had long demanded a bigger production quota inside OPEC to match this capacity. Saudi Arabia resisted because it wanted tighter supply to keep oil prices high.

The UAE wants to sell more oil while demand remains strong. Saudi Arabia prefers production discipline to defend prices. This difference became sharper after the Iran war damaged Gulf energy infrastructure and exposed political differences between the two countries. Iranian strikes hit UAE facilities like the Ruwais refinery and Fujairah export terminal.

The US is now OPEC's biggest rival. Once dependent on Gulf oil, America now produces nearly 20% of global oil through its shale boom and now, control over Venezuela.

Brazil and others are also expanding output. US President Donald Trump has repeatedly attacked OPEC, accusing it of keeping prices artificially high and harming consumers. He has demanded lower oil prices and even threatened tariffs and reduced military support for Gulf allies. Abu Dhabi has grown closer to the US and Israel in recent years. By leaving OPEC, it gets more freedom to align its oil policy with market demand and American strategic interests rather than Saudi priorities.

If the UAE increases output beyond former OPEC limits, more supply could soften global prices. Since the UAE is a low-cost producer, it can profit even at lower prices. This could reduce India's fuel costs and inflation pressure.

Still, immediate relief should not be expected. War damage, shipping disruption, insurance costs, and tanker risks will keep markets nervous. The UAE cannot suddenly flood the world with cheap oil. OPEC is not collapsing, but its authority is weakening. Chinese role in Pakistan-US-Iran talks remains strong. India so far is a bystander amid more oil shocks.

INFA

## Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

**OrissaPOST**  
B-15, Rasulgardi Industrial Estate,  
Bhubaneswar-751010

### Tectonic shift

Sir, The results of the five state Assembly elections have delivered a tectonic shift in Indian politics. In a historic first, the BJP has secured a monumental victory in West Bengal, as voters handed a decisive mandate to the party, defeating the strong regional TMC in a landslide result. This landmark verdict reflects a massive wave for change among the electorate and fulfills the saffron party's long-standing ambition in the East. The BJP further solidified its dominance by retaining Assam with a significantly larger victory than in previous years and securing a workable majority in Puducherry. Conversely, Kerala reaffirmed its distinctive electoral pattern by handing a decisive mandate to the UDF, signaling a clear voter preference for change and a return to balanced governance over the incumbent administration. The cycle's most sensational outcome belongs to Tamil Nadu, where actor Vijay's TVK party has achieved an unprecedented surge. Emerging as the single largest party—falling just a few seats short of a majority—TVK left the traditional Dravidian giants far behind. This historic breakthrough indicates that voters in Tamil Nadu chose a brand-new party as they became fatigued by the traditional Dravidian political giants who have dominated the regional landscape for decades, signaling a craving for fresh leadership and a new political vision for the state.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

### Avoid nature's wrath

Sir, The Supreme Court has sought updated reports on encroachments along the Ganga's banks across several states, granting a three-month window before action. While this reflects procedural fairness, the river is indifferent to deadlines. Structures raised in fragile floodplains stand at constant risk, especially during monsoon surges. Delay only heightens potential loss, as nature enforces its own corrections without notice. Experience shows that ignoring ecological limits invites far greater damage than timely intervention. The real choice lies between proactive, informed action and reactive crisis management. Acting now can prevent avoidable destruction. It is prudent to heed reasoned warnings rather than confront the harsh consequences of nature's inevitable response.

RS Narula, PATIALA

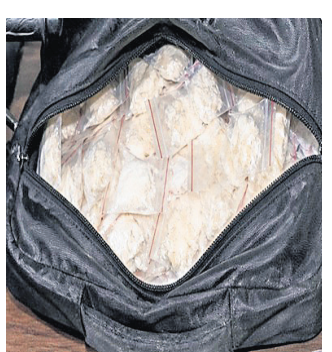
# TARN TARAN CRACKDOWN 490 NDPS cases, 47 kg heroin seized

Senior Superintendent of Police (Tarn Taran) Surendra Lamba Monday said despite challenges from across the border, the police have zeroed in on gangster networks receiving logistical support from Pakistan

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Chandigarh, May 4:** In a crackdown on organised crime in Punjab's border-sharing villages, the police in Tarn Taran have come down heavily on the drug trade involving Pakistan, which had been enabling gangsters to finance and run their illegal operations in the state. Over the past three months, since the 'Gangstran Te Vaar' operation by the government, the district police have registered 490 cases under the

Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, arrested 630 individuals, and recovered 47.527 kg of heroin. Senior Superintendent of Police (Tarn Taran) Surendra Lamba Monday said despite challenges from across the border, the police have zeroed in on gangster networks receiving logistical support from Pakistan. "So far, we have frozen assets worth Rs 65 crore within a year, most of it in the past three months. These assets



were directly or indirectly linked to gangsters and drug smugglers and were being used to run their operations. As we share a long border (around 102 km) with Pakistan, the hostile neighbour has been actively involved in sending narcot-

ics and weapons via drones. Smuggling techniques have rapidly evolved in recent times, but with a clear mandate to curb crime, the district police have implemented a targeted strategy to stop these illegal activities," said SSP Lamba. In 2024, 313 cases were registered, leading to 358 arrests and the recovery of 115 kg of heroin. Last year, 1,334 cases were registered, resulting in 1,662 arrests, with over 244 kg of heroin recovered. The "drone-drugs-guns" nexus has emerged as a high-tech operational model in border regions. Through the 'Gangstran Te Vaar' operation, the police have tightened their grip on such networks. Drug trafficking and illegal arms supply are be-

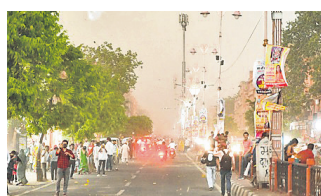
ing used by gangs to strengthen their financial base, while also recruiting local operatives to execute major criminal activities. According to police officials, drugs and weapons are being continuously dropped into Indian territory via drones launched from across the border. These consignments are then collected from border areas and distributed to various cities, with the youth being specifically targeted. This remains a major source of income for organised criminal syndicates. "Small drones can carry loads ranging from 0.5 to 12 kg, while larger drones can drop up to 25 kg in a single sortie. These drones can penetrate 5 to 15 km into Indian territory, posing sig-

nificant challenges for security agencies," said SSP Lamba, adding that despite being the second line of defence, the district police have delivered results through intelligence-led operations. The district police alone have registered 1,736 related cases and arrested over 2,200 individuals under the 'Yudh Nashiyan Virudh' and 'Gangstran Te Vaar' campaigns, aimed at dismantling networks operated from foreign soil. Under the recently conducted "Operation Prahar", 236 accused were arrested within six days, including 10 proclaimed offenders. During the operation, 3.5 kg of heroin was recovered. A total of 50 teams, each comprising 10 police personnel, were deployed.

## Rajasthan: Met warns of 70 kmph winds

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Jaipur, May 4:** The India Meteorological Department's Jaipur Meteorological Centre Monday issued a yellow alert for thunderstorms and rain in several districts of Rajasthan. Strong winds reaching up to 70 kmph are expected during this period.



Earlier, in the last 24 hours, there have been reports of winds, rains and storms coming in from different parts of the state. Met officials said that light to moderate rainfall, accompanied by thunderstorms and squalls, was recorded at isolated locations across the state. The highest rainfall in the last 24 hours was recorded in Srimadhapur at 48 mm. Also, maximum temperatures have declined in most regions and are now hovering between 39 degrees Celsius and 41 degrees Celsius, below normal for this time of year. Meanwhile, intense heat also continued in western Rajasthan and the highest maximum temperature, 44.8 degrees Celsius, was recorded in Phalodi.

Similarly, the lowest minimum temperature, 19.0 degrees Celsius, was recorded in Alwar. Thunderstorms, rain, and hailstorm activity continued across Rajasthan Sunday. Districts including Sikar, Dausa, Kotputli-Behror, Alwar, and Hanumangarh witnessed heavy rain accompanied by thunderstorms and hail. Strong winds uprooted trees and damaged temporary structures in several areas. Meanwhile the sudden change in weather in the state has brought noticeable relief, with temperatures in most cities dropping below 40 degrees Celsius. In Manpur (Dausa district) intense rain and hailstorms lashed the area for nearly an hour, with a fallen tree near the Jaipur-Agra National Highway blocking traffic for around 40 minutes.

## Man turns his SUV into ambulance, saves dozens over two decades

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jaipur, May 4:** A Jaipur-based tax consultant has been using his SUV as an improvised ambulance for over two decades, helping accident victims reach hospitals in time and saving several lives. Sandeep Gupta, a resident of Malviya Nagar, has so far rushed over 120 injured persons to hospitals in his vehicle, including at least 35 whose lives were saved due to timely intervention.



Recalling what inspired him, Gupta said that about 22 years ago, he witnessed a critically injured accident victim die while people waited for an ambulance near the state Assembly area. "That incident deeply affected me. I decided that no injured

person should have to wait for an ambulance," he told PTI. Since then, Gupta stops whenever he spots an accident victim and transports them to the nearest hospital without waiting for emergency services. His vehicle is equipped with basic first-aid supplies, sheets, and emergency signage, and even a siren when needed. He said the traffic police have been supportive, and in 2016, the deputy commissioner of police (traffic) issued a letter facilitating his work and ensuring right of way during emergencies. Several people credited Gupta with saving their lives. Mrudul Gautam recalled that he and his younger brother were severely injured in a road accident in 2017 and were rushed to hospital by Gupta. "Doctors said timely help saved us," he said. Similarly, Yogita Sharma said she was rescued and taken to hospital by Gupta after a serious accident in 2009 when she was left injured in a road-side pit. Gupta's humanitarian efforts have earned him recognition from former president Pratibha Patil, senior police officials, and various organisations.



Police personnel and locals remove an uprooted tree that fell on a road near Hawa Mahal following a storm, in Jaipur, Rajasthan

## Punjab expands Kharif maize scheme

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chandigarh, May 4:** In a push to promote crop diversification and encourage farmers to shift away from water-guzzling paddy, the Punjab government has decided to expand its Kharif maize cultivation scheme from six to 16 districts for the 2026-27 season with an incentive of Rs 17,500 per hectare.

The decision follows an "encouraging response" to a pilot project implemented in six districts during 2025-26. Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Gurmeet Singh Khudian said Sunday, while terming the expansion a "decisive step" to arrest the state's depleting groundwater levels. Khudian said that the scheme targets 20,000 hectares (50,000 acres) of Kharif maize across Amritsar, Bathinda, Fatehgarh Sahib, Gurdaspur, Hoshiarpur, Jalandhar, Kapurthala, Ludhiana, Moga, Patiala, Pathankot, Rupnagar, Sangrur, SAS Nagar, SBS Nagar and Tarn Taran. Farmers will receive a subsidy of Rs 17,500 per hectare, the same as last year. Of this, Rs 4,500 will be released upon

submission of input bills at the block agriculture office, while the remaining Rs 13,000 will be paid in two instalments after mandatory geo-tagged crop verification, he added. Urging the state farmers to adopt the Kharif maize cultivation to save the precious groundwater resources, the minister said that interested farmers can register on the government's designated portal and a mandatory J-form and geo-tagging of the field will be required to confirm the applicant grew paddy last year and is switching to maize this year. Khudian further said that verification will be done in two phases through the Unnat Kisan Portal -- first from July 15 to 25, followed by the second from August 5 to 15, 2026. After each verification, the district chief agriculture officer will release Rs 9,500 and Rs 7,500 per hectare, respectively. The entire process-- from registration to verification-- has been digitised to ensure transparency and timely disbursement of subsidy to eligible and right beneficiaries seamlessly, the minister emphasised.

## RAJASTHAN SI RECRUITMENT ROW

# SC upholds cancellation; no relief for selected candidates

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Jaipur, May 4:** In a major setback for candidates selected in the Sub-Inspector (SI) Recruitment-2021 in Rajasthan, the Supreme Court has dismissed the Special Leave Petition (SLP) challenging the cancellation of the recruitment process. With this, the apex court has effectively upheld the earlier decision of the Rajasthan High Court. The order was passed by a bench comprising Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice Satish Chandra Sharma while hearing the appeal filed by the selected candidates. Earlier, a Single Bench of the Rajasthan High Court had cancelled the recruitment process in its judgment dated August 28, 2025. This decision was later upheld by a Division Bench April 4, 2026. The selected candidates



subsequently approached the Supreme Court, challenging the Division Bench ruling, but failed to secure any relief. Notably, the state government has not yet filed an independent appeal before the Supreme Court in the matter. Meanwhile, trainee Sub-Inspectors have been continuously urging the government to move the apex court at the earliest and present a strong legal case. Earlier, the government had

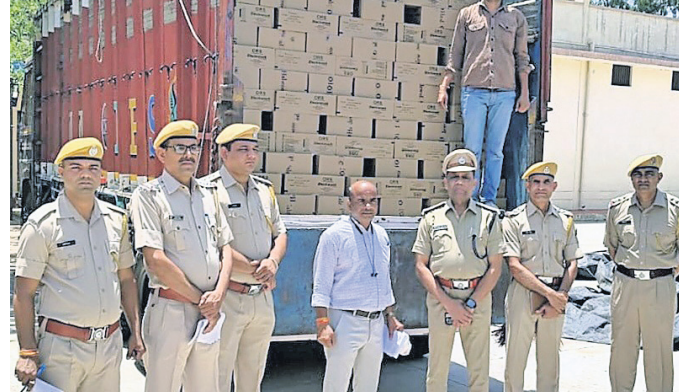
challenged the Single Bench decision before the Division Bench, along with a plea for condonation of delay. With the Supreme Court now dismissing the SLP, the High Court's decision to cancel the SI Recruitment-2021 stands reinforced, leaving the future course of action dependent on whether the state government chooses to pursue further legal remedies. A month back, in a significant ruling, the Rajasthan High Court's division bench, led by Acting Chief Justice Sanjeev Prakash Sharma, upheld the single-judge bench decision to cancel the 2021 Sub-Inspector (SI) recruitment examination. The notification for the SI 2021 recruitment was issued February 3, 2021, for 859 posts. The examination was conducted from September 13 to 15, 2021, with nearly 7.97 lakh candidates applying.

## ORSto be distributed among R'sthan police personnel

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jaipur, May 4:** In view of the scorching heat and prevailing heatwave conditions in Rajasthan, the state police will distribute five lakh ORS (oral rehydration salts) packets among its personnel to protect them from dehydration during duty, an official spokesperson said. The initiative was launched Monday following directions from Director General of Police Rajeev Kumar Sharma, the spokesperson said. Under the plan, five lakh ORS packets will be distributed to constables across the state to help them stay hydrated and safeguard against heat-related

### SEVERE HEAT



ailments while on duty. Deputy Inspector General (Training) Sharad Chaudhary is overseeing the campaign.

**Under the plan, five lakh ORS packets will be distributed to constables across the state to help them stay hydrated and safeguard against heat-related ailments while on duty**

The relief material will be supplied to 12 police training centres in Rajasthan, as well as four centres outside the state. Through range inspector generals, efforts are being made to

ensure the packets reach every constable. Each personnel will receive 10 ORS packets, which will particularly benefit those deployed in traffic management, law and order, patrolling and other public duties. The spokesperson said the first consignment of 90,000 ORS packets reached the Rajasthan Police Academy Monday and is being distributed to training centres. Another batch of around 90,000 packets is expected to arrive Tuesday. The spokesperson added that the campaign is being supported by Ashish Poddar, a Jhunjhunu native associated with the Rotary Club Mumbai.

**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF DISTRICT MEDICAL & PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER, NUAPADA**  
(Central Store)  
**TENDER CALL NOTICE**  
Notification No. CDM&PHO/01/X-RAY/2025-26  
No.10001/108/2627 : Sealed tenders are invited from registered Firms/Suppliers/Manufacturers /authorized distributors for supply of 300MA High Frequency X-ray Machine to the undersigned. Details regarding items with terms and conditions may be downloaded from District website [www.nuapada.odisha.gov.in](http://www.nuapada.odisha.gov.in). The tenders should reach the office of the undersigned by **Date-20/05/26 up to 02.00 PM through Speed Post/ Registered Post/ Courier Services only**. The tender will be opened on date **21/05/26 at 11.00 AM** in the office chamber / conference hall of the undersigned. The undersigned reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason thereof.  
Sd./- Chief District Medical & Public Health Officer, Nuapada  
OIPR-10001/10055/1/26-27/0004

**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT, MAHARAJA KRISHNA CHANDRA GAJAPATI MEDICAL COLLEGE HOSPITAL, BERHAMPUR, 760004, GANJAM, ODISHA**  
Tel.0680-2292624, Fax:0680-2292752/E-mail:suptdmkcg@gmail.com  
mckcgmbherhampur@gmail.com  
Website:www.mckgmch.org  
No.7609/MCH/CS/XI/2026 Dt/Berhampur the 30.4.26  
**1ST CORRIGENDUM TO THIS OFFICE**  
**TENDER CALL NOTICE NO.6654, DT.10.04.2026**  
No.10001/110/2627: The last date of receipt of tender for "Supply of PRP Machine for PAIN Clinic" of this hospital is extended upto 06.05.2026 at 5.00 P.M. and will be opened on 07.05.2026 at 12.30 P.M.  
The other terms and conditions remain unchanged. The tender call notice No.6654, dt.10.04.2026 and Terms & Conditions, Technical Specifications can available in website-[www.ganjam.odisha.gov.in](http://www.ganjam.odisha.gov.in).  
Sd./- Superintendent  
M.K.C.G. Medical College Hospital,  
Berhampur  
OIPR-10001/10028/1/26-27/0003

J-17011/418/2022-Admn  
**Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports**  
(Department of Youth Affairs)  
GPOA-3, Netaji Nagar, New Delhi-110023  
Website: <https://yas.gov.in>  
**WALK-IN-INTERVIEW**  
Walk-in-Interview for recruitment of Young Professionals on contract basis to be held from 05<sup>th</sup> - 07<sup>th</sup> May, 2026 at Department of Youth Affairs, Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, GPOA-3, Netaji Nagar, New Delhi-110023.  
**NB:** For vacancies, other details and corrigendum, if any, please visit frequently our website <https://yas.gov.in>. No separate notice in this regard shall be published in Newspaper.  
Sd./- Under Secretary to the Govt. of India  
cbc 47107/11/0002/2627

# End of Mamata era

West Bengal's Assembly poll verdict signals more than a change of government, it marks a structural rupture in the political order Mamata Banerjee built over the past decade and a half, with the Trinamool Congress (TMC) facing its most consequential moment of recalibration. For a party that has defined Bengal's political grammar since 2011, the loss is not merely electoral, it is systemic, evident by the BJP's decisive breach in a system that rested on centralised authority, welfare delivery and a tightly controlled organisational pyramid.

"The TMC's model was built on access to power. Once that axis shifts, the entire structure has to be reimagined," said political analyst Biswanath Chakraborty. The numbers underline the depth of the churn. The BJP's vote share rising to around 44.8 per cent from 38 per cent in the 2021 Assembly polls marks both consolidation and expansion. Conversely, the TMC's dip to nearly 41.7 per cent from 48 per cent during the same elections reflects a steady erosion of its social coalition - particularly in semi-urban belts and among segments that had anchored its 2021 sweep. A key point appears to be the 177 constituencies where voter defections exceeded past victory margins. In these seats, the BJP not only held ground where it was already strong but also made significant inroads into TMC-held territories, suggesting that what appeared to be a technical variable has translated into a political shift. "This is not a wave in the conventional sense-it is a redistribution of political ground. The BJP has moved from being a challenger to a system-altering force," said

another political commentator. The TMC's biggest strength - centralisation - has also emerged as its principal vulnerability. With authority concentrated at the top, the party has limited institutional buffers when that layer is weakened. Also, unlike the Aam Aadmi Party, which expanded beyond Delhi to build governing footholds in Punjab and a growing presence in states like Goa, the All India Trinamool Congress remains overwhelmingly focused on Bengal. This geographic concentration now amplifies the scale of the setback, leaving the party without an alternative power base to cushion the loss. Inside the TMC, the implications are immediate and potentially destabilising. A party whose cohesion has long been tied to administrative control, patronage networks and electoral dominance now faces the challenge of holding its organisational structure together without those levers. In the absence of strong ideological cohesion, a section of leaders and elected representatives - many of whom aligned with the party through access to power - could become vulnerable to defections, including to the BJP. This raises the prospect of an existential phase for the TMC. For Banerjee, this election is perhaps the defining battle of her political life. After three successive terms and over a decade and a half at the helm, she was not just contesting to retain power but to defend the political ecosystem she had built. Few leaders embody their party as completely as Banerjee does. The distinction between leader and organisation has, over time, blurred into near-complete overlap, making the current setback as much



## Big setback to INDIA bloc

The Opposition INDIA bloc suffered a setback Monday as regional titans Mamata Banerjee of the Trinamool Congress and MK Stalin of the DMK lost their homelands West Bengal and Tamil Nadu, respectively, and the Kerala win of the Congress-led UDF was the only silver lining. The impact of the election results will be felt deeply in national politics, with the cohesion of the INDIA bloc set to be tested after the fall of the state stalwarts and the BJP continuing with its winning momentum ahead of the next round of Assembly elections in states including Uttar Pradesh. The West Bengal results came as a huge blow not just to the TMC but to the entire opposition bloc, which has been struggling to keep the parties and cadres intact and united. Only a few days ago, the INDIA bloc member Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) lost seven Rajya Sabha MPs to the BJP. And today, the defeat of Mamata Banerjee and Stalin spells a challenging road ahead for the anti-BJP alliance. Having lost both West Bengal and Tamil Nadu, the Opposition bloc would be forced to come together and stand united against a resurgent BJP. Leaders in the Opposition alliance feel they have to rework their strategy and remain cohesive in the fight against the BJP. The electoral reverses have also raised questions on the Opposition strategy behind opposing the Constitution 131st Amendment Bill 2026 on the grounds that it sought to advance delimitation in the garb of 33 per cent women's reservation.

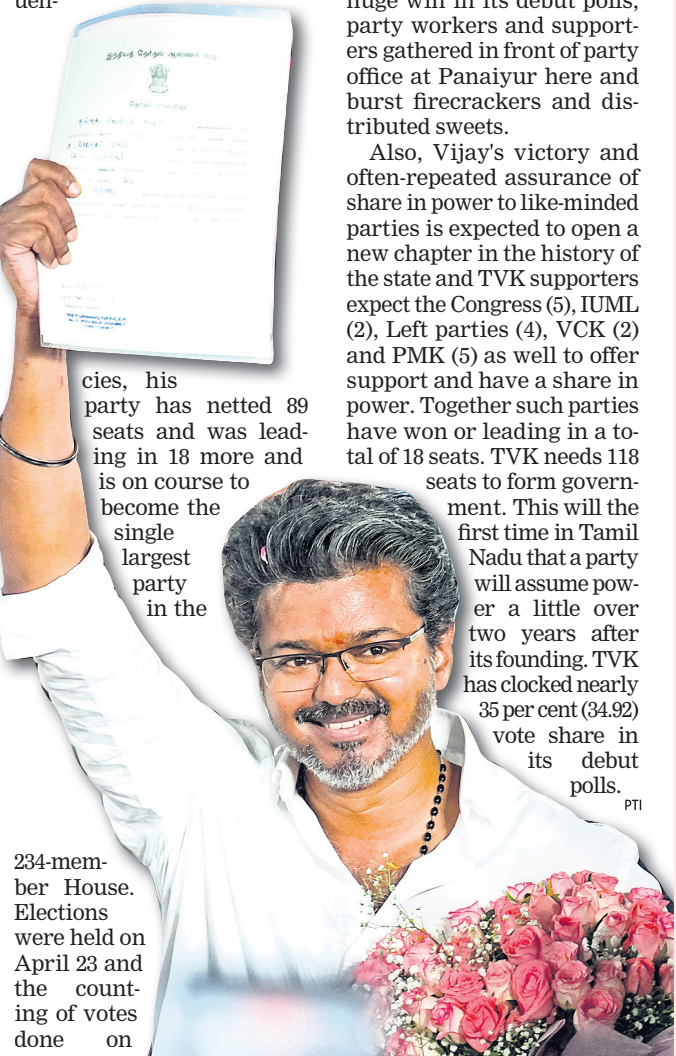
personal as political. At 71, and after three terms in office, the road to a comeback appears steeper. While Banerjee has repeatedly demonstrated an ability to rebound from setbacks - from Singur to Nandigram - the current moment presents a different scale of challenge, where time, organisational fatigue and a resurgent opposition converge. Yet, her politics has historically thrived in resistance. Stripped of power, she could seek to return to that idiom - recalibrating the party from a governance machine to an opposition force. Setbacks have often served as points of recalibration. Yet, this moment is different. It punctures the aura of inevitability that had come to define her leadership and redraws the relationship between mandate and authority. Nationally, the implications are layered. Losing Bengal weakens her immediate leverage within the Opposition bloc, but does not erase her relevance. A combative Banerjee outside power could still shape Opposition discourse - though from a diminished perch.

# SUN-SET, STAR-RISE IN TAMIL NADU

Actor-politician Vijay's ATVK Monday created a record of sorts in the electoral history of Tamil Nadu and emerged as the single largest party by delivering a shock defeat to incumbent DMK and its president,

Chief Minister MK Stalin in his Kolathur constituency, while the AIADMK was pushed to a distant third spot. This was the first time since 1967, when the first non-Congress government (DMK) came to power in the state, that a party other than the two Dravidian heavyweights emerged victorious in the hustings. Vijay and TVK have many firsts to their credit and the party founder will be the first person from a minority religion - Christianity - to helm the state. While Vijay won from both Perambur and Tiruchirappalli East constitu-

Monday. Perhaps the biggest shock was CM Stalin being defeated by a margin of 8,795 votes in his Kolathur constituency by little known V S Babu, who was formerly with the DMK and an ex-MLA. More than 10 ministers including Geetha Jeevan and Ma Subramanian were defeated. Stalin had last tasted defeat in 1991. Even Deputy CM Ud-hayanidhi's prospects appeared dim for a while as he trailed behind the TVK nominee in Chepauk-Thiruvallikeni. Eventually, he won. As soon as it became clear that TVK was inching towards an unprecedented, huge win in its debut polls, party workers and supporters gathered in front of party office at Panaiyur here and burst firecrackers and distributed sweets. Also, Vijay's victory and often-repeated assurance of share in power to like-minded parties is expected to open a new chapter in the history of the state and TVK supporters expect the Congress (5), IUML (2), Left parties (4), VCK (2) and PMK (5) as well to offer support and have a share in power. Together such parties have won or leading in a total of 18 seats. TVK needs 118 seats to form government. This will be the first time in Tamil Nadu that a party will assume power a little over two years after its founding. TVK has clocked nearly 35 per cent (34.92) vote share in its debut polls.



ties, his party has netted 89 seats and was leading in 18 more and is on course to become the single largest party in the 234-member House. Elections were held on April 23 and the counting of votes done on



I bow to each and every person of West Bengal. The people have given a spectacular mandate to BJP and I assure them that our Party will do everything possible to fulfil the dreams and aspirations of the people of West Bengal  
**NARENDRA MODI | PM**

Do you think this is a victory? It is an immoral victory, not a moral victory. Whatever the Election Commission has done, along with the Central Forces and the PM & Home Minister, is totally illegal. It is loot, loot, loot. We will bounce back  
**MAMATA BANERJEE | TMC SUPREMO**

On behalf of the Indian National Congress, I extend heartfelt gratitude to every voter of Kerala for placing their trust in Congress and the UDF  
**MALLIKARJUN KHARGE | CONGRESS PRESIDENT**

Thank you to my brothers and sisters in Kerala for a truly decisive mandate. Congratulations to every UDF leader and worker for a hard-fought, well-run campaign  
**RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER**

Millions of salutations to the people of Bengal... This is the victory of trust in Shri @narendramodi ji over the TMC's 'fear'. For every BJP worker like me, this is a moment of pride that from the source of Mother Ganga in Gangotri to Gangasagar, today the BJP's saffron flag is proudly waving everywhere  
**AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER**

I extend my heartfelt thanks to the voters who supported and ensured the victory of Congress candidates in the by-elections held in the Bagalkot and Davanagere South Assembly constituencies  
**SIDDARAMAIAH | KARNATAKA CM**

A special and heartfelt shoutout to my dear brother, Vijay! Emerging as the single largest party in your very first election is impressive. Wishing you immense strength and success as you embark on this new chapter of service  
**JAGAN MOHAN REDDY | YSRCP SUPREMO**



TMC supporters react during vote tabulation on the day of election results, in Kolkata



BJP supporters burst firecrackers during vote tabulation on the day of election results across in Srinagar

## NDA retains Puducherry, set for another term

Riding a pro-incumbency wave, the AINRC-led NDA emerged victorious in the April 9 Puducherry Assembly elections, all set to form the government for a successive term. AINRC leader and Chief Minister N Rangasamy won from both the seats that he contested - Thattanchavady and Mangalam, even as the party won a total of 11 seats and was leading in one, according to latest Election Commission figures. NDA constituent BJP won from four seats while other coalition members - AIADMK and LJK, won from one seat each. Winners from BJP included party senior and incumbent minister A Namassivayam. The NDA's victory came on a day when actor Vijay-led TVK won in neighbouring Tamil Nadu and also emerged victorious from two seats in the UT.



## NDA set to form govt in Assam for 3rd straight term

The ruling NDA is set to form the government in Assam for the third consecutive term after securing a two-thirds majority, with a record high of 102 seats in the 126-member Assembly, while the Congress-led Opposition delivered its worst performance in recent times Monday. The BJP, which contested 90 seats, won 82, while its allies - the Bodoland People's Front (BPF), which contested 11 seats, and the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), which fought in 26 seats - bagged 10 constituencies each. The saffron party secured a majority on its own for the first time in the state. It had won 60 seats in the previous two polls in 2021 and 2016. In the Opposition camp, the



Congress, which contested 99 seats, won 19 constituencies, while the Badruddin Ajmal-led AIUDF and Akhil Gogoi-led Rajjor Dal secured two seats each, and the Trinamool Congress bagged one constituency. Rajjor Dal, an Opposition alliance partner, had contested 13 seats, while the other parties in the camp - Assam Jatiya Parishad (AJP), CPI(M) and APHLC - drew a blank. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma won the Jalukbari constituency for the sixth consecutive term, defeating Congress candidate Bidisha Neog by 89,434 votes. In a major blow to the Congress, its state president Gaurav Gogoi lost in Jorhat to veteran politician and sitting BJP MLA Hitendranath Goswami by 23,181 votes.

## When the red fortress fell: What losing Kerala means for Left

The defeat of the LDF in Kerala has left parties of the left front without power in any state for the first time in decades, underscoring a broader national decline in their political influence. This also marks a sharp shift from their earlier position as both a governing force in key states and a significant bloc in national politics. The Left will be without control of any state for the first time in almost five decades, marking a significant shift from its earlier position as both a governing force in states and an influential bloc in national politics. The Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) won 102 seats, while the LDF won in 35 out of the 140 constituencies. In a limited sign of presence elsewhere, a lone Left candidate, Md. Mostafijur Rahaman of CPI(M) won from Domkal in West Bengal, while another AISF candidate Md Nawasid Siddique got elected from Bhangar. Earlier strongholds slipped away over the past decade, with the Left Front losing power in West Bengal in 2011 after 34 uninterrupted years, followed by the fall of its government in Tripura in 2018. Since then, Kerala has served as the only base of state power for Communist parties. The state occupies a distinct place in political history. In 1957, it elected the world's first demo-

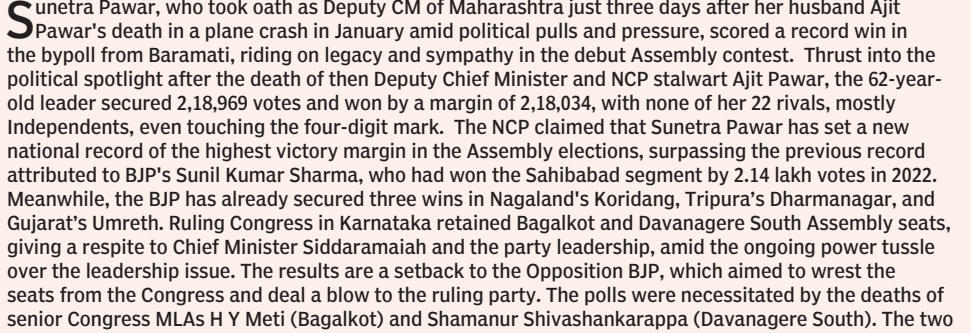
cratically chosen Communist government under EMS Namboodiripad, lending global visibility to parliamentary communism. The Left later consolidated under the LDF, formally constituted in 1980, under which Left governments have since been formed in 1980, 1987, 1996, 2006, 2016, and 2021. Over the decades, Kerala evolved into a key centre of Left politics, with power alternating between the LDF and the UDF in a largely stable bipolar system. At the national level, the Left once occupied a far more influential position. In the years following Independence, the Communist Party of India (CPI) emerged as the largest opposition party in Parliament. Through the 1990s and 2000s, Left parties remained a significant parliamentary bloc in Lok Sabha, often playing a key role in coalition politics. In the 1990s, the combined strength of Left parties in the Lok Sabha fluctuated but remained substantial - standing at about 52 MPs in 1991, rising to around 60 in 1996, and then settling at around 45 in 1998 and about 43 in 1999. Their influence peaked in 2004, when they won 61 seats and extended outside support to the Congress-led UPA government, exercising considerable leverage over policy decisions, particularly on welfare and economic issues.

## Few takers for NOTA option

The 'None of the Above' or NOTA option has once again not found favour among voters, the Election Commission data on the result of polls to five assemblies shows. Except for Assam, the NOTA option has not crossed the one per cent mark. In Assam, 1.29 per cent of the voters pressed the NOTA button on electronic voting machines (EVMs), followed by 0.81 per cent in West Bengal. Puducherry came third with 0.73 per cent of the voters exercising the option. In Kerala, 0.58 per cent of the voters pressed the NOTA button, followed by 0.41 per cent in Tamil Nadu. The distribution of NOTA votes across the states exhibits slight variation, reflecting regional political dynamics, voter preferences and levels of political engagement. The NOTA option in EVMs recorded its lowest percentage share in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls since its introduction in 2013, according to data shared by the Election Commission. The option was implemented in a Lok Sabha poll for the first time in 2014. According to the polls panel's 'Atlas-2024', a book containing data from last year's Lok Sabha polls, there has been a gradual decline in NOTA votes over the past three Lok Sabha elections, from 1.08 per cent in 2014 to 0.99 per cent in 2024.

## Cong takes it away in K'taka; Suntera wins Baramati bypoll

Sunetra Pawar, who took oath as Deputy CM of Maharashtra just three days after her husband Ajit Pawar's death in a plane crash in January amid political pulls and pressure, scored a record win in the bypoll from Baramati, riding on legacy and sympathy in the debut Assembly contest. Thrust into the political spotlight after the death of then Deputy Chief Minister and NCP stalwart Ajit Pawar, the 62-year-old leader secured 2,18,969 votes and won by a margin of 2,18,034, with none of her 21 rivals, mostly Independents, even touching the four-digit mark. The NCP claimed that Sunetra Pawar has set a new national record of the highest victory margin in the Assembly elections, surpassing the previous record attributed to BJP's Sunil Kumar Sharma, who had won the Sahibabad segment by 2.14 lakh votes in 2022. Meanwhile, the BJP has already secured three wins in Nagaland's Koridang, Tripura's Dharmanagar, and Gujarat's Umreth. Ruling Congress in Karnataka retained Bagalkot and Davanagere South Assembly seats, giving a respite to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and the party leadership, amid the ongoing power tussle over the leadership issue. The results are a setback to the Opposition BJP, which aimed to wrest the seats from the Congress and deal a blow to the ruling party. The polls were necessitated by the deaths of senior Congress MLAs H Y Meti (Bagalkot) and Shamanur Shivashankarappa (Davanagere South). The two victorious candidates in this by-election are family members of the deceased leaders.





**Hatred, communalism, SIR stopped Mamata Banerjee's victory. Her defeat was impossible. Today's BJP victory was achieved not through right means**  
SANJAY RAUTE | LEADER, SHIV SENNA (UBT)

## DELHI FIRE INCIDENTS RISE 73% IN APRIL

Fire-related emergencies in the national capital surged sharply in April, rising 73 per cent from March, while 32 people have died in fire accidents between January and April this year, according to official data. According to the 'Delhi Fire Services' (DFS) 'Call Summary 2026', as many as 2,663 fire-related calls were made in April alone, a steep rise compared to 1,538 in March and 1,096 in February



## of the day uote

We are waging an ideological struggle. The path of the struggle for democracy and truth against authoritarianism and falsehood is invariably long and arduous. Nevertheless, we will continue to forge ahead with unwavering resolve and steadfast determination

**JAIRAM RAMESH** | GENERAL SECRETARY IN-CHARGE OF COMMUNICATIONS, CONGRESS



Where Syama Prasad Mookerjee was born, that Bengal is ours. A heartfelt millionfold thanks to the patriotic people of West Bengal for the historic mandate in assembly polls

**SAMRAT CHOUDHARY** | CM, BIHAR



Everyone witnessed the plight of his 'bhaiya' Rahul Gandhi, and Tejashwi Yadav in Bihar, who have been completely routed. The SP should now abandon its dream of seizing power in Uttar Pradesh in 2027

**KESHAV PRASAD MAURYA** | DEPUTY CM, UTTAR PRADESH



# SC flags rise in acid attacks

*During the hearing, the CJI observed that the punishment prescribed for acid attacks was not proving to be a deterrent*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 4:** Flagging the "alarming increase" in the cases of "barbaric" acid attacks, the Supreme Court on Monday suggested that the Centre consider enhancing the punishment for such offences besides shifting the onus on the accused to prove that he is not guilty.

Under criminal jurisprudence, the onus to prove the guilt beyond a reasonable doubt against the accused lies on the prosecution unless the law provides otherwise.

The apex court directed that pending a suitable amendment, persons who are forcibly made to consume acid or have suffered internal injuries without any outer disfigurement would fall within the ambit of acid attack victims under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.

A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joydip Chakraborty said this clarificatory explanation shall be deemed to have been included from the



very inception when the 2016 Act came into force.

The top court passed the order while hearing a public interest litigation (PIL) filed by acid attack survivor Shaheen Malik who has sought that such victims be categorised as persons with disabilities to ensure access to welfare schemes.

During the hearing, Monday, the CJI observed that the punishment prescribed for acid attacks was not proving to be a deterrent.

"The number of cases has increased. Barbaric and brutal acid attacks have been made," the CJI said, adding, "Don't you think that the punishment should have been harsher?"

The bench said there has been an "alarming increase" in the number of acid attack

cases since 2013 which itself is a serious issue of consideration.

The bench also suggested that assets of those convicted in such heinous cases be attached to compensate the victims of acid attacks.

It also highlighted the need to have control over the sale of acid in the market.

During the hearing, it was pointed out before the bench that the victims, to whom acid was administered by force, were not included within the expression 'acid attack victims' under the 2016 Act.

"Pending suitable amendment... it is directed that for all intents and purposes, especially to give effect to the 2016 Act, acid attack victims shall also include the victims to whom acid has been admin-

istered and shall include those who have suffered internal injuries even if there is no outer disfigurement," the bench said.

While dealing with Malik's plea, the bench dated January 27 batted for "extraordinary" punitive measures for convicts in acid attack cases.

It had asked the Centre to consider amending the law to sternly deal with such cases on the lines of dowry death matters, where the onus of proving innocence lies on the accused.

The top court had also asked all states and Union territories to provide a slew of information, including the year-wise details of the number of acid attack cases and their status in courts besides the rehabilitation measures to support the victims.

The plea sought expansion of the definition of disabled persons under the law to ensure that the victims who suffered life-threatening damages to their internal organs due to forced ingestion of acid get adequate compensation and other reliefs, including medical care.

December 4 last year, the top court termed tardy trials in acid attack cases as a "mockery of the system" and directed all high courts to submit details of such pending cases across the country within four weeks.

## COURT CORNER

### SC issues notice to Centre on Transgender Act pleas

**New Delhi:** Raising concern over the possibility of persons masquerading as transgender to avail government schemes, the Supreme Court sought responses from the Centre and others on the pleas challenging the validity of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Act, 2026. The amended law does away with the self-identification of gender by those who claimed to be transgenders and it provides that a certificate of identity has to be issued by the district magistrate after examining the recommendation of a medical board. The bench agreed to hear the pleas and issued notice to the Centre, all states and Union Territories seeking their responses.

### SC closes contempt plea in minor's pregnancy case

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court, Monday, closed contempt proceedings against the Centre and the AIIMS in a case relating to termination of 30-week pregnancy of a minor girl. Justice Nagarathna said if AIIMS does not take the responsibility of carrying out Medical Termination of Pregnancy in such case then the woman's life would be at risk as she would turn to unqualified doctors. A minor child cannot be forced to bear a pregnancy, the top court said as of April 30 while pulling up the Centre and asking it to amend the law to permit rape survivors to terminate unwanted pregnancies even beyond 20 weeks.

### Aadhaar reliefs need legislative action: SC

**New Delhi:** The SC said the issuance of new Aadhaar only to citizens up to the age of six years require legislative intervention and appropriate amendments in the existing legal framework. The plea filed by lawyer Ashwini Upadhyay had sought a direction to frame stringent guidelines for issuance of Aadhaar to adolescents and adults to stop infiltrators from masquerading as Indian citizens. It had sought a direction to the authorities to install display boards at common service centres stating that the 12-digit unique identification number was only a "proof of identity" and not a proof of citizenship, address or date of birth. The petitioner said it was not an adversarial litigation and the plea was for preventing infiltrators from getting Aadhaar.

## POST OF THE DAY

- BJP announced freebies.
- Congress announced freebies.
- DMK announced freebies.
- TMC announced freebies.
- TVK announced freebies.

No matter who wins the election, the real winners are freebies and reservations paid by the taxpayers.

@RajeshwariRW

## SHORT TAKES

### Road crash leaves 5 dead, 10 injured

**Patna:** 5 people were killed and 10 injured after a container truck rammed into a bus and a pickup vehicle in Bihar's Rohtas district. Bihar CM Samrat Choudhary expressed grief over the deaths and announced ex gratia compensation of ₹4 lakh each to the dependents of the deceased. All the victims were returning to their village after attending a tilak ceremony. Near the village turn, people had stopped the bus and pickup vehicle, and were getting down when an uncontrolled container truck crashed into them.

### BJP leader booked in farmer suicide case

**Vidisha (MP):** Police have registered a case against BJP leader and former MLA Shashank Bhargava on charges of abetting a farmer's suicide in Madhya Pradesh's Vidisha district. The deceased recorded a video shortly before his death, in which he purportedly levelled serious allegations against the former MLA. The SIT probe found that Bhargava allegedly pressured the farmer into executing a house agreement and subjected him to financial harassment.

### Road crash leaves six dead in UP

**Jalaun (UP):** A speeding SUV rammed into a stationary truck in Kalpi area leaving six people dead and four others injured. The accident took place at about 5 am when the SUV coming from Kanpur side lost control. The victims, who were returning from Ayodhya, hailed from Lalitpur district. Four injured have been rushed to the medical college in Orai, where their condition was stated to be critical.

## Online bookings of domestic LPG rise to 99 %, supply stays normal

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, May 4:** The supply of domestic LPG is normal, with online bookings for cooking gas rising to 99 per cent Sunday and no dry-outs reported at retail distributorships despite the disruptions due to the West Asia crisis, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas said Monday.

Domestic LPG deliveries based on the authentication code sent to the registered mobile number of the consumer have increased to around 94 per cent to prevent diversion at the distributor level.

More than 23.58 lakh small 5 kg LPG cylinders used by migrant labourers have also been sold from April 1 to date.

About 6.12 lakh PNG connections have been gasified and infrastructure created for an additional 2.67 lakh connections, along with about 6.79 lakh customers registered for new connections since March this year, a ministry statement said.

Retail prices for petrol and diesel remain unchanged despite the global spike in oil prices, and adequate stocks of the two fuels are available at all petrol pumps of public sector oil companies, including Indian Oil, BPCL, and HPCL across the country, it said.

Enforcement actions continue across the country to curb hoarding and black marketing of LPG. More than 1,570 raids were conducted across the country on Sunday.

The public sector oil com-



panies have strengthened and continued surprise inspections and imposed penalties on 349 LPG distributorships, and 74 LPG distributorships have been suspended till Sunday.

Over 43,760 PNG consumers have surrendered their LPG connections via MYPNGD.in website till Thursday, which will help to ease some pressure on LPG demand.

The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas further stated that it is taking steps to ensure the uninterrupted availability of petroleum products and LPG across the country, despite the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

Citizens are advised to avoid panic purchases of petrol, diesel, and LPG and to beware of rumours and rely on official sources for correct information. LPG consumers are requested to use digital booking platforms and avoid visiting distributors.

All refineries are operating at high capacity with adequate crude inventories, while sufficient stocks of petrol and diesel are being maintained. Local LPG production from refineries has been increased to support domestic consumption, the statement added.

## JAPANESE DELEGATION CALLS ON FOREIGN SECY

### Both sides hold talks on advancing bilateral ties

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, May 4:** Chairperson of the Policy Research Council of Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Takayuki Kobayashi met Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri before wrapping up his India visit, Monday.

"Both sides reaffirmed the strategic importance of India-Japan relations and agreed to advance bilateral ties in domains of shared interest," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) stated on X.

Earlier in the day, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal held talks with the visiting Japanese delegation to strengthen bilateral trade and investment relations.

"Met the delegation led by Mr Takayuki Kobayashi, Member of the House of Representatives and Chairperson of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) Policy Research Council, Japan," Goyal said in a post on X.

"Discussed strengthening India-Japan economic engagement, enhancing MSME partnerships, and deepening collaboration in key sectors like automobiles, infrastructure, pharmaceuticals, and advanced manufacturing," he added.

Goyal also highlighted the



need to boost exports from India and improve market access. He reaffirmed India's commitment to further strengthening the business ecosystem, while exploring future pathways under CEPA and broader Indo-Pacific economic cooperation frameworks.

BJP National President Nitin Nabin had a "productive interaction" with Kobayashi Takayuki and the Japanese delegation Sunday.

The discussions focused on strengthening party-to-party engagement through structured dialogue and the exchange of best practices. Nabin also reaffirmed the shared commitment to further deepening India-Japan ties.

"Japan and India are not merely major powers. We are nations with rich civilisations

and long histories. Deepening Japan-India relations through cooperation in security, economic and industrial investment, and people-to-people exchanges will contribute to the stability and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific region. To that end, I shared the view with BJP President Nitin Nabin that it is necessary to promote party-to-party exchanges," Takayuki Kobayashi posted on X after the meeting.

As global supply chains realign and businesses look at setting up facilities outside China, India has emerged as a long-term strategic investment destination, with competitive export potential for Japan's mid-sized companies to partner with Indian MSMEs (micro, small, and medium enterprises) to drive growth.

## Fadnavis approves infra push in major metropolitan regions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, May 4:** Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis Monday approved the strengthening of infrastructure and ensuring sustainable urban development in major metropolitan regions.

He chaired meetings of metropolitan region development authorities covering Pune, Nashik, Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar and Nagpur, approving budgets, infrastructure projects and key policy reforms aimed at accelerating planned urban growth across the state. At the meeting of the Pune Metropolitan Region Development Authority (PMRDA), Fadnavis directed officials to prepare a structural development plan within six months based on detailed field assessments.

"The structural plan must be prepared within six months with proper on-ground inspection," he said.

The authority approved a budget of ₹4,628.85 crore for 2026-27, with a major allocation of ₹2,918.81 crore towards infrastructure works such as ring roads, metro projects, road development, the Katraj-Yerawada twin tunnel, and the Lonavala skywalk, an official release said.

Fadnavis also instructed setting up a special purpose vehicle for the twin tunnel project, with the Pune Municipal Corporation leading coordination efforts. He further directed the preparation of a development plan for 23 newly-merged villages, preceded by a structural framework.

# Airborne microplastics add 16% of soot's warming impact: Study

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 4:** Airborne micro- and nanoplastic particles may contribute to global warming at over 16% of the impact of black carbon, or 'soot', with higher values observed above ocean garbage patches, according to a study.

The findings, published in the journal Nature Climate Change, suggest that the plastic particles might previously have been unrecognised contributors to climate warming, but their role should be considered in future climate assessments, researchers said.

The team, including researchers from China's Fudan University and the US, examined the behaviour of individual micro- and nanoplastic particles and found that black and coloured particles

strongly absorb sunlight compared to white particles.

The authors "show that coloured MNPs (microplastic and nanoplastic particles) exhibit strong light absorption, with a mean refractive index of 1.49-0.22i at 550 nm (nanometres) and absorption coefficients 74.8 times higher than those of pristine particles."

Microplastics and nanoplastics are formed when larger plastic waste fragments. They are sized between one nanometre (one billionth of a metre) to up to 500 micrometres (one millionth of a metre) in diameter.

Studies have detected microplastics and nanoplastics in varied environments, including the human brain.

Previous studies have suggested that the contribution of airborne plastics to atmospheric



warming is minimal, but such analyses often assumed that they were uncoloured, despite real-world plastics commonly containing pigments, the researchers said.

The team said that the effective radiative forcing - the difference between solar radiation

absorbed and released by a planet's atmosphere - for microplastic and nanoplastic particles is equivalent to 16.2 per cent of that from black carbon emissions, a well-known air pollutant that contributes to warming.

"Resulting simulations yield mean DRF (direct radiative

**M**icroplastics and nanoplastics are formed when larger plastic waste fragments

**T**hey are sized between one nanometre (one billionth of a metre) to up to 500 micrometres (one millionth of a metre) in diameter

**S**tudies have detected microplastics and nanoplastics in varied environments, including the human brain

up to a factor of 4.7, especially over ocean regions with high concentrations of plastic, such as the North Pacific Garbage Patch, they said.

The study's findings indicate that airborne plastic particles, particularly coloured nanoplastics, contribute to atmospheric warming and may influence regional climate patterns, the researchers said.

They noted that the laboratory experiments are a simplified version of atmospheric processes and that the global distribution of micro- and nanoplastic particles needs to be better estimated by observations.

The team said further research is required to fully determine how micro and nanoplastics contribute to Earth's warming and to improve their representation in climate models.

forcing) of 0.039±0.019 Wm<sup>-2</sup> (Watts per square metre) for MNPs, equivalent to 16.2 per cent of black carbon forcing," the authors wrote.

Although the warming effect is small at the global level, it can exceed that of black carbon by

# international



I do not see those figures as dramatic, but I think they should be handled in a harmonious way inside the framework of NATO

JONAS GAHR STORE | PRIME MINISTER, NORWAY

## AFRICAN DANCE BIENNIAL

Twenty-five dance companies from across Africa descended on a small Senegalese fishing village over the weekend for the African Dance Biennial, the continent's largest showcase of contemporary African dance.



## of the day quote

Sri Lanka recognises the Maldives as an important economic partner in the region, and we are keen to further expand this partnership

ANURA KUMARA DISSANAYAKE | PRESIDENT, SRI LANKA

Our resolve & commitment are underpinned by the understanding that Taiwan will continue to engage with the world - no matter the challenges faced,

LAI CHING-TE | PRESIDENT, TAIWAN

A further concern is the coupling of the proposed agreements and frameworks to one another such that the conclusion of the critical minerals agreement is made conditional to the conclusion of the Health

MULAMBO HAIMBE | MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, ZAMBIA

# Trump launches new effort to reopen Strait of Hormuz

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dubai, May 4: US forces Monday launched an effort to guide commercial ships through the Strait of Hormuz, where hundreds have been stuck since the Iran war began.

Two American-flagged merchant ships have "successfully transited" through the critical waterway, the US military said. Separately, the US military denied Iran's claims that it struck an American Navy vessel southeast of the strait.

Iran handed over its latest proposal for negotiations with the US to mediators in Pakistan, Iran's state-run IRNA news agency reported Friday. Trump subsequently said he's "not satisfied" with it, but did not elaborate on the proposal's apparent shortcomings.

European leaders see Trump's troop drawdown from Germany as new proof they must go it alone

European leaders Monday said President Trump's snap decision to pull thousands of US troops out of Germany came as a surprise but is a fresh sign that Europe must take care of its own security.

The Pentagon announced last week that it would pull some 5,000 troops out of Germany, but Trump told reporters Saturday that "we're going to cut way down. And we're cutting a lot further than 5,000."

He offered no reason for the move, which blindsided NATO, but his decision came amid an escalating dispute with German Chancellor Friedrich Merz over the US-Israeli war on



- US military says its warships in Gulf assisting merchant traffic
- US says two US-flagged vessels safely passed strait
- Trump announced US operation to aid stranded ships
- Iran military tells US Navy to steer clear

Industrial Average was down 216 points, or 0.4 per cent, as of 9:35 am Eastern time, and the Nasdaq composite was up 0.1 per cent.

The action was stronger in the oil market, where the price for a barrel of Brent crude climbed 2 per cent to \$110.37 and briefly topped \$114 during the morning. Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz due to its war with the United States has kept oil tankers pent up in the Persian Gulf and away from customers worldwide.

US claims progress in reopening the Strait of Hormuz, saying two merchant ships have transited

The US military said Monday that two American-flagged merchant ships had successfully transited the Strait of Hormuz and Navy guided-missile destroyers in the Persian Gulf were helping to restore shipping traffic.

Iran, and Trump's anger over European allies' reluctance to get involved in the conflict in the Middle East.

Wall Street hesitates and oil prices climb with uncertainty about the Strait of Hormuz

The US stock market is holding tentatively near its record heights Monday, while oil prices climb with uncertainty about when oil tankers can resume crossing the Strait of Hormuz and restore the world's flow of crude.

The S&P 500 slipped 0.1 per cent, coming off its latest all-time high. The Dow Jones

# Nepal renews territorial claim over Lipulekh

Foreign Ministry seeks dialogue with India



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, May 4: Nepal Monday renewed its territorial claim over Lipulekh while advocating dialogue with India to resolve the issue, a day after New Delhi firmly dismissed Kathmandu's stance on the region.

India Sunday firmly rejected Nepal's objection to the upcoming Kailash Mansarovar Yatra via the long-established Lipulekh Pass in Uttarakhand, dismissing Kathmandu's territorial claims over the region as an "unilateral artificial enlargement" that New Delhi finds "untenable".

New Delhi's sharp reaction came hours after the Nepal

foreign ministry issued a statement, objecting to preparations by India and China for the annual pilgrimage via Lipulekh Pass, claiming the region belongs to it.

"Nepal doesn't intend to enlarge its boundary; the territory belongs to Nepal, and the government has a clear view about this and is committed to its stance," the Nepal government spokesperson, Sasmit Pokharel, said while talking to the media.

"The issue needs to be resolved through collaboration and diplomatic dialogue between the two countries," said Pokharel, who is also the Minister for Education, Science and Technology. He said that the Foreign Ministry has already notified India regarding the matter through a formal letter.

The pilgrimage to Mount Kailash and Mansarovar Lake in China's Tibet Autonomous Region holds religious significance for Hindus, Jains, and Buddhists.



Members of the 501st Legion Korean Garrison dressed as Star Wars characters parade to mark Star Wars Day, in Seoul, South Korea, Monday

# 3 Indians injured in UAE's Fujairah due to drone attack

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, May 4: Three Indian nationals were injured Monday after a fire broke out on the Fujairah Petroleum Industries Zone (FOIZ) in the UAE following a drone strike, officials and reports said.

In a post on X, the Indian Embassy in the UAE confirmed that three Indians sustained injuries in attacks in Fujairah.

"We are in touch with local authorities for ensuring adequate medical care and welfare of the affected Indian nationals," it added.

Earlier, the UAE's state-run WAM news agency reported that the relevant authorities in the eastern emirate of Fujairah confirmed that a fire had broken out in the FOIZ, resulting from a drone attack coming from Iran. Fujairah Civil Defence teams immediately responded to the incident and are continuing efforts to bring the fire under control, it added.

# Reclusive Turkmenistan shows signs of cautiously opening up

In tightly controlled Turkmenistan, long known for its isolation, a small but noticeable shift is underway as e-commerce ventures and digital trends signal a cautious opening

REUTERS

Ashgabat, May 4: From a brightly lit, open-plan office Azat Seyitmuhammedov runs an e-commerce startup, Wabrum, that he founded almost a decade ago.

In Berlin or San Francisco, this would be an everyday scene, but here in the capital of Turkmenistan, which is widely seen as one of the worlds most isolated and secretive countries, his business appears

pretty ground-breaking. "This may sound normal in Europe or the United States, but for Turkmenistan this is new," said the 38-year-old father of six. "E-commerce here is still in its very early stages, and we consider ourselves pioneers."

His company is part of a flowering of savvy, well-connected private businesses in Turkmenistan, a largely desert country in Central Asia bordering Iran and Afghanistan. From an on-site warehouse, Seyitmuhammedov's couriers fan out to customers across the former Soviet republic, delivering mostly Turkish-made clothes and shoes.

Granted rare access to Turkmenistan, Reuters was recently able to travel unescorted and to report freely on a country where technological innovations such as e-commerce are increasingly being embraced. In politics, meanwhile, President Serdar



Berdymukhamedov and his circle keep tight control.

## INDEPENDENCE AND ISOLATION

After independence from Moscow in 1991, President Saparmurat Niyazov - "Turkmenbashi" or head of the Turkmen - declared Turkmenistan "permanently neutral" and shut its doors to most visitors, adopting one of the world's strictest visa regimes. It remains largely in

place two decades after Niyazov's death.

Turkmen officials frame their country's isolation as a response to its challenging geography, citing the need to protect it from Islamist militants and drug smuggling from neighbouring Afghanistan.

Under Niyazov, an elaborate cult of personality grew around the president, while the capital city, Ashgabat, was

rebuilt as a marble showcase, funded by Turkmenistan's natural gas reserves, the world's fourth-largest. Under subsequent presidents, the system has largely remained unchanged.

But since 2022, when President Serdar Berdymukhamedov took over from his father, Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov, there have been signs of a modest thaw. The new president has strengthened Turkmenistan's diplomatic ties,

travelling abroad more often than his predecessors did.

Some foreign diplomats in Ashgabat told Reuters there is a sense of change, albeit slow, driven by generational change inside the ruling elite.

A CHANGING SOCIETY But away from politics, Turkmen society is changing, nowhere faster than online, though the country has a relatively low rate of internet usage.

The internet in Turkmenistan is slow and heavily censored, which officials say is necessary to counteract militant Islamist ideas that have spread online in other Central Asian countries.

However, social media sites such as Instagram and TikTok, still blocked but accessible via VPNs, have gained popularity in recent years.

## SHORT TAKES

### Japan, Oz deepen strategic ties

Melbourne: The prime ministers of Japan and Australia agreed to deepen cooperation in a wide range of areas including energy security, defence and critical minerals as the Iran war threatens global supply chains. Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi met her Australian counterpart Anthony Albanese at Australia's Parliament House Monday during Takaichi's first visit to the country as national leader.

### Philippines: Ashfall triggers mass evac

Manila: More than 300 families have been evacuated after massive amounts of ash billowed from the Mayon volcano over the weekend due to the collapse of lava deposits from its slopes, officials said Monday. There was no explosive eruption from Mayon, which has been erupting mildly on and off since January, but huge deposits of lava on its southwestern slope suddenly cascaded down in a pyroclastic flow - an avalanche of hot rocks, ash and gas - before nightfall Saturday, said Teresito Bacolcol, director of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology.

### Russian missile strike kills 6 in Kharkiv

Kyiv: A mid-morning Russian missile attack on the town of Merefa, in Ukraine's northeastern Kharkiv region, killed six people and wounded more than 30 others including a 2-year-old boy, Ukrainian officials said Monday. Regional governor Oleh Syniehubov said that at least 10 houses, an administrative building, four shops, a car repair workshop and a food establishment were damaged in the attack.

### Austria expels 3 Russian diplomats

Vienna: Austria declared three Russian diplomats persona non gratae over an "antenna forest" on the roofs of diplomatic buildings that could be used for spying, the government said Monday. Numerous satellite dishes placed on buildings used by the Russian state in Vienna, particularly a residential complex for diplomatic staff, have long attracted the attention of Austria's main domestic intelligence service.



**“**In this fragmented world, traditional and isolated development responses will fail. To survive and thrive in this new era, we must build deeply connected and resilient systems  
**”**  
MASATO KANDA | PRESIDENT, ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

## UPI ACHIEVES 22.35 BN TRANSACTIONS IN APRIL: DFS

**New Delhi:** About 22.35 billion transactions were carried out through the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) in April, Department of Financial Services said Monday. In volume terms, UPI transactions grew 25 per cent in April 2026 over the April 2025 when it was 17.89 billion



## of the day quote

**India must map and monitor key economic vulnerabilities, particularly in areas such as energy, food, fertilisers, metals and critical minerals, and proactively address both supply disruptions and price volatility**



S MAHENDRA DEV | EAC-PM CHAIRMAN

**Chinese-origin and Vietnamese imports continued to challenge India's stainless-steel industry, with substandard material often rerouted through ASEAN countries, reflecting persistent circumvention practices and raising concerns over the influx of substandard inputs**



ABHYUDAY JINDAL | JINDAL STAINLESS MANAGING DIRECTOR

**Supervision must look beyond formal compliance. Compliance asks whether the rule has been followed. Supervision asks whether the underlying risk has been understood and addressed**



SWAMINATHAN J | RBI DEPUTY GOVERNOR

## SHORT TAKES

### India-NZ FTA gateway to Oceania: Report

**New Delhi:** The India New Zealand free trade agreement sets a bilateral trade target of \$5 billion over five years and will act as a gateway to Oceania positioning India as a primary partner in the Pacific region, a report said Monday. The report from Brickwork Ratings said the pact also envisages \$20 billion of foreign direct investment into India over 15 years and that near term FDI will reportedly target pharmaceuticals, agri tech and education. Emerging technologies and green energy will remain longer-horizon plays in the emerging framework. The agreement signed on April 27, 2026, secures 100 per cent duty free access for Indian exports to New Zealand while opening 70 per cent of India's tariff lines to New Zealand goods. The report added that access to New Zealand technology and raw material inputs such as timber, coal and metal scrap could accelerate the next phase of manufacturing and industrial scale-up between the two countries. "The deal is a structural shift in India NZ economic relations, establishing a roadmap toward \$5 billion in bilateral trade. Long term success depends on effective implementation, supply chain integration, and addressing non tariff barriers in subsequent rounds," said Vikrant Chaturvedi, Associate Director, Brickwork Ratings.

### India, Canada begin next round of FTA talks

**New Delhi:** India and Canada Monday started second round of negotiations for a free trade agreement aimed at boosting two-way commerce and investments, an official said. The pact is officially known as the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) and negotiations will cover trade in goods, services, and other mutually agreed policy areas. "The five-day talks started on May 4 here," the official said. The first round was held in March. This round is important as Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal will visit Canada by end of this month to give an impetus to the negotiations. The negotiations mark the resumption of talks, as the two countries had earlier engaged in a similar exercise, but Canada paused it in 2023. Now, they decided to resume talks from the beginning as a lot has changed on the global trade front during these two years. The negotiations are important as the two sides have fixed a target to increase the bilateral trade to USD 50 billion by 2030. It stood at USD 8.66 billion in 2024-25 (USD 4.22 billion exports and USD 4.44 billion imports).

# Mfg growth sees mild recovery in Apr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 4:** India's manufacturing sector activity witnessed mild recoveries in growth of new business intakes and production, but rates of increase were the second-weakest in nearly four years. The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index rose from 53.9 in March to 54.7 in April, signalled the second-slowest improvement in overall operating conditions in close to four years.

The HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) is a gauge of overall conditions derived from measures of new orders, output, employment, supplier delivery times and stocks of purchases. In the PMI parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

The two largest sub-components of the PMI, new orders and output, rose since March but trailed readings seen in at least three-and-a-half years.

"India's manufacturing PMI rose to 54.7 in April, up from 53.9 in March, but still marking the second-slowest improvement in operating conditions in nearly four years," said Pranjal Bhandari, Chief India Economist at HSBC.

Survey participants indicated that advertising and demand resilience supported sales and production, but that growth was hampered by competitive conditions, the war in the



**ON THE PRICE FRONT, COMPANIES CONTINUED TO INDICATE THAT THE WAR IN THE MIDDLE EAST EXERTED UPWARD PRESSURE ON INFLATION. INPUT COSTS AND OUTPUT CHARGES ROSE AT THE QUICKEST RATES IN 44 AND SIX MONTHS RESPECTIVELY**

Middle East and a reluctance among clients to approve pending quotes.

"Spillovers from the Middle East conflict are becoming more evident, particularly through inflation: input costs increased at the fastest pace since August 2022, and output prices rose at the quickest rate in six months," Bhandari said, adding that "output, new orders (including exports) and

employment all grew moderately, pointing to continued resilience in India's manufacturing sector."

Meanwhile, new export orders expanded sharply at the start of the first fiscal quarter, with the pace of growth reaching a 7-month high. Firms noted better demand from clients in several countries, including Australia, France, Japan, Kenya, mainland China, Saudi Ara-

bia, the UAE and the UK.

On the price front, companies continued to indicate that the war in the Middle East exerted upward pressure on inflation. Input costs and output charges rose at the quickest rates in 44 and six months respectively.

Amid reports of higher prices for aluminium, chemicals, electrical components, fuel, leather, petroleum products and rubber, average cost burdens rose further in April. Panellists often attributed hikes to the Middle East war.

The overall rate of inflation climbed to its highest in August 2022. Subsequently, goods producers lifted their fees to the greatest extent in six months, the survey noted.

In terms of employment, despite only a marginal increase in outstanding business volumes, manufacturers recruited additional workers at the start of the first fiscal quarter. Moreover, the rate of job creation was marked and the strongest in ten months.

Indian manufacturers remained optimistic towards growth prospects. However, the overall level of positive sentiment slipped since March. Confidence was pinned on hopes that marketing efforts would bear fruit and that pending projects would be approved.

The HSBC India Manufacturing PMI is compiled by S&P Global from responses to questionnaires sent to purchasing managers in a panel of around 400 manufacturers.

# Stock markets rebound on buying in bluechips

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, May 4:** Benchmark Sensex rebounded by 356 points, while the Nifty settled above 24,100 Monday, as buying in blue-chip stocks and state poll results trending in line with market expectations lifted investor sentiment.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 355.90 points or 0.46 per cent to settle at 77,269.40. During the day, it jumped 997.25 points or 1.29 per cent to 77,910.75. The 50-share NSE Nifty rallied 121.75 points or 0.51 per cent to end at 24,119.30.

From the 30-Sensex firms, Adani Ports, Hindustan Unilever, Reliance Industries, Larsen & Toubro, Eternal and Maruti were among the biggest gainers. Bharti Airtel, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Tata Consultancy Services and ITC were among the laggards from the pack.

"Investor sentiment remained supported by a favourable election outcome in West Bengal and a better-than-expected Q4 earnings, helping markets look past Middle East-related concerns. However, intermittent profit booking persisted amid uncertainty surrounding the US 'Project Freedom' initiative to reopen the Strait of Hormuz," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

While the resolution path may take time, optimism around gradual progress continues, he said, adding that

crude prices holding below USD 110 are providing near-term comfort.

Broader markets also advanced with the BSE SmallCap Select index jumping 0.79 per cent and MidCap Select index by 0.75 per cent.

Among major sectoral gainers, BSE Realty, Services, Capital Goods, Industrials, Healthcare and Utilities gained more than 1 per cent. BSE IT and PSU Bank were major losers. A total of 2,607 stocks advanced, while 1,735 declined and 216 remained unchanged on the BSE.

"Markets are expected to sustain their gradual upmove, with near-term direction anchored around three key drivers - softer crude oil prices, strong domestic data (record GST collection & healthy April auto sales growth), and political clarity post state election outcomes. A BJP win in three out of five assembly elections is likely to reinforce political stability and provide a sentiment boost, while record GST collection and better-than-expected auto volume growth signals resilient underlying demand," Siddhartha Khemka - Head of Research, Wealth Management, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, jumped 1.48 per cent to USD 109.8 per barrel.

In Asian markets, South Korea's benchmark Kospi and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index ended higher. Markets in Japan were closed due to a holiday.

## BIZ BUZZ

### Chandi Bhandar launches Sangam collection for Sabitri

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, May 4:** Honouring the cultural significance of Sabitri Brata, Chandi Bhandar recently launched its new 'Sangam' collection.

The Sangam collection is crafted in hallmarked sterling silver and each Mangalsutra reflects a timeless expression of love, commitment, and togetherness. Alongside this, the collection also offers a wide range of oxidised, minimal, and sterling silver designs featuring zircon accents, del-

icate pearls, and intricate detailing crafted to celebrate bonds that last a lifetime.

Women can explore zircon-studded necklaces, bangles, earrings, rings, bracelets, and anklets, while the Amogh Collection for men features refined bracelets, rings, cufflinks, and chains. A charming range for kids adds playful yet premium silver pieces for precious moments.

"At Chandi Bhandar, every creation is designed to celebrate the beauty, resilience, and unique identity of every

woman. Through every design, we aim to honour the many roles she embraces and the strength, grace, and individuality that define her journey," said Lipsa Hans, Director, Chandi Bhandar.

Chandi Bhandar also announced an exclusive festive offer between May 1 to May 16 and customers can avail of a flat 20% off on making charges on jewellery. This limited-time offer celebrates the spirit of Sabitri and expresses heartfelt gratitude for the continued love and support received over the years.

### Odisha Grameen Bank holds free health camp at Pipili

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Pipili, May 4:** The Regional Office of Odisha Grameen Bank, Pipili organised a free health check-up camp for senior citizens on its 2nd Foundation Day.

The initiative was conducted under the leadership of Regional Manager Soumyadarshan Kar and witnessed enthusiastic participation from the local community.

The programme was formally inaugurated by Chief Guest, SK Babu, Chairman of NAC Pipili, who appreciated the bank's efforts in addressing the healthcare needs of the elderly. As part of its Corporate So-



cial Responsibility (CSR) initiative, the bank also arranged a special lunch for senior citizens residing in a government-approved old age home at Pipili, bringing warmth and care to the occasion.

The event received valuable support from Prafulla Kumar Panda, President of the Senior Citizens' Forum, Pipili, along

with other members of the forum, who actively contributed to the success of the programme.

The initiative has been widely praised across the locality and various forums, reflecting the bank's growing role in community welfare and its continued dedication to serving society beyond banking services.

# Axis Bank deepens Odisha roots: Focus on digital innovation, MSME support

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, May 4:** Axis Bank reaffirmed its long-term commitment to Odisha, positioning the state as a key growth market driven by inclusive banking, digital innovation, and a steadily expanding MSME ecosystem at a programme here Monday. The Bank highlighted strong momentum across retail, MSME, and institutional segments, supported by a wider physical footprint and accelerating digital adoption.

Highlighting the importance of operations in the state, Reynold D'Souza, President & Head - Branch Banking, North & TASC Business, Axis Bank, said, "Odisha is a strategically important market for Axis Bank, not only for its growth potential but also for the opportunity it offers to build inclusive and sustainable banking models. At Axis Bank, we are focused on contributing to the state's progress through strong partnerships, responsible banking, and innovation led solutions that create long term value for communities, businesses, and institutions alike."

"74% of the branches in rural and semi-urban areas in Odisha brings about our focus on how we want to look at financial inclusion and bring closer the differences in mainstream organised banking. In rural areas, we make sure that people



use the bank's infrastructure which helps them do things digitally. The 'Samaroh' customer outreach programme of the bank helps build relationships with both new and prospective customers. In terms of mobile banking, customers can get various services in different languages," D'Souza added.

With a well-diversified presence in all 30 districts, Axis Bank operates 258 branches, including 35 branches in Bhubaneswar, along with 300 ATMs and cash recyclers in the state.

As part of its forward-looking strategy, Axis Bank is advancing its 'phygital' banking model, seamlessly integrating digital capabilities with physical network. Nearly three-fourths of routine branch transactions have now migrated to digital

channels, enhancing efficiency and customer convenience. With its digital-first approach, Axis Bank has introduced AI-led tools like Adi and Siddhi to enhance productivity and customer engagement, alongside 24x7 Express Banking Digital Points and the industry-first fully digital Digi Locker Branch.

With MSMEs as a focused segment, the Bank is enabling their growth through solutions such as merchant cash advances, quick overdrafts, and early ecosystem engagement under Project Pravesh, complemented by cluster led outreach across 100+ districts.

Saurabh Datta, Regional Branch Banking Head - East 2 along with other officials of the bank were also present in the programme.

# RBI explores steps to mobilise dollar inflows as rupee slides

REUTERS

**Mumbai, May 4:** India's central bank is studying ways to mobilise dollar inflows to bolster its foreign exchange buffers and cushion rising pressure on the rupee from a spike in oil prices driven by the Iran war, three sources familiar with the discussions told Reuters.

The rupee has slumped 5.5% this year, sliding to an all-time low of 95.33 per dollar last Thursday, while foreign exchange reserves have fallen from a peak of \$728.5 billion and equity outflows have hit \$19 billion over March and April alone.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has maintained it is comfortable with its reserves - enough to cover 11 months of

imports - but the latest policy discussions underscore fresh urgency to bolster defences amid capital outflows.

The discussions at the central bank have not been previously reported, though analysts have speculated about how authorities might resurrect elements of their crisis-era playbook.

Among the steps being considered is reviving a mechanism last used in 2013 to draw in dollar deposits from non-resident Indians, two of these sources said. A second option being discussed is eliminating withholding tax on overseas government bond investors to encourage flows, they said.

No final decision has been taken, and any move would be made in consultation with the government, the third source



said. Reuters could not establish when a decision would be taken. "Both are under serious consideration," the source added, noting that the final decision on taxation rests with India's finance ministry.

The sources declined to be

identified since they are not authorised to speak to the media. An email to the RBI and the federal finance ministry seeking comment was not immediately answered.

The war between the US, Israel and Iran - now in its third

month - has weakened the Indian currency, adding to a near 5% fall in 2025.

The two measures under consideration could help draw in dollars from overseas.

The deposit scheme was used to stabilise the rupee in 2013 and brought in about \$26 billion at a time when U.S. interest rates were close to zero. At the time, the central bank allowed banks to swap dollars raised via such deposits at concessional rates.

The second option under discussion is removing a 5% withholding tax charged to foreign investors in Indian government bonds, which could encourage inflows, the sources said.

Foreign investors were net buyers of Indian government bonds in 2025, investing about

\$6.5 billion, but that momentum has cooled in 2026, with inflows of only around \$1.1 billion so far this year as sentiment turned more cautious after the Iran conflict.

Equity outflows have accelerated, taking cumulative 2026 withdrawals to about \$20.6 billion - exceeding outflows for all of 2025.

The measures will primarily help bolster foreign exchange reserves and steady the rupee as well, one of the sources said.

The central bank has already clamped down on arbitrage trades by banks while nudging oil companies to reduce dollar purchases in the spot market to support the rupee. However, its performance is in line with oil-importing Asian peers.

# MI back to winning ways

Rohit, Ricketlon run riot to power Mumbai Indians to 6-wicket win over Lucknow Super Giants

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, May 4:** Rohit Sharma (84) made a gratifying return from an injury-enforced layoff and Ryan Rickelton (83) gave another account of his hitting prowess as Mumbai Indians crushed Lucknow Super Giants by six wickets in their Indian Premier League match here Monday.

Openers Rohit and Rickelton put on their third century partnership in the IPL - this time 143 runs - and laid the foundation for the much-needed win. MI overhauled LSG's 228/5 with 229/4 in 18.4 overs.

After Nicholas Pooran made the most of some ordinary bowling from MI with a 21-ball 63, Rohit and Rickelton made merry during their 65-ball stand.

The former Mumbai Indians skipper Rohit had missed five matches due to a hamstring injury which he sustained while batting against Royal Challengers Bengaluru here on April 12.

But the 39-year-old showed no discomfort while clobbering seven sixes and six fours during his 44-ball knock, and Rickelton continued his rich vein of form with commanding stroke play around the park.

But Rickelton fell to Mohsin Khan in the 11th over, playing one straight to cover after a two towering sixes previously.

Rohit looked set for his third IPL ton but he top-edged impact



stepped thrice, Corbin Bosch (2/20) applied the brakes on LSG's charge in the middle-overs as they looked set for a total in excess of 240 at one stage.

Perhaps, jaded after months of T20 cricket, an off-colour Bumrah not only missed nailing his yorkers twice but also overstepped on one and Marsh smacked fours on both the occasions.

As many as 21 runs came off the fourth over from Bumrah and there was further misery in store for MI in the powerplay.

Will Jacks fed Pooran with deliveries in his zone and the former West Indies skipper obliged with three massive sixes to race to 22 off eight from 3 off three.

Pooran then tore into AM Ghazanfar, clobbering two sixes and a four off the sixth over to fire LSG to 90 for one in the powerplay, which is now the joint second-highest score in that phase for any visiting side against Mumbai Indians here.

**Brief scores:**  
**Lucknow Super Giants:** 228 for 5 in 20 overs (Mitchell Marsh 44, Nicholas Pooran 63, Aiden Markram 31 not out, Himmat Singh 40 not out; Corbin Bosch 2/20) lost to **Mumbai Indians:** 229 for 4 in 1.4 overs (Ryan Rickelton 83, Rohit Sharma 84, Manimaran Siddharth 2/47) by six wickets

TEAMS	P	W	L	NRR	PTS
PBKS	9	6	2	0.855	13
RCB	9	6	3	1.420	12
SRH	10	6	4	0.644	12
RR	10	6	4	0.510	12
GT	10	6	4	-0.147	12
CSK	9	4	5	0.005	8
DC	9	4	5	-0.895	8
KKR	9	3	5	-0.539	7
MI	10	3	7	-0.649	6
LSG	9	2	7	-1.076	4

and Will Jacks (10 not out) completed the task.

In the Power Play, MI weren't off to a flier but 50 odd runs came off in their first five overs. The hosts found the launchpad in the sixth when Avesh Khan was pulverised for 21 runs by Rohit.

The LSG seamer constantly missed his lengths and Rohit followed a couple of fours with as many sixes.

Ricketlon, who began with a six off Mohsin over deep square leg, lit up the chase with compelling shot-making against

pace and spin alike.

Earlier, Lucknow Super Giants rode on a whirlwind 20-ball 63 from Pooran to survive a mid-inning slowdown and post a par 228 for five.

Pooran cashed in on poor line and lengths from MI bowlers to pepper the on-side with eight sixes and a four in his minute-a-mile knock, which gave LSG the impetus along with Mitchell Marsh's 44 (25 balls; 4x4s, 3x6s) at the top.

While Jasprit Bumrah (0/45) remained wicketless and over-

## OWNING THE TRACKS

# F1 hat-trick for Antonelli

Kimi Antonelli wins the Miami Grand Prix for his third straight F1 victory

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Miami Gardens, May 3:** Kimi Antonelli won the Miami Grand Prix Sunday for his third consecutive Formula 1 victory as the 19-year-old Mercedes drivers continued to show he's a legitimate championship contender.

With this win, the Italian teenager stretched his Formula One championship lead to 20 points. The youngest driver ever to lead the standings, at 19 years old, Antonelli made more history as the first to take his first three career F1 wins in successive races and all from pole position.

Antonelli started from the pole but had a slick start on a damp surface at the Miami International Autodrome. Threats of heavy rain led F1 to move up the start of the race by three hours, and there was an early morning heavy thunderstorm with lightning strikes directly over the Hard Rock Stadium, but it had cleared by the time the event began.

Still, the first 25 laps were attacked by the drivers as if the rain could return at any moment, and it led to early chaos, even for Antonelli.

Charles Leclerc of Ferrari had a spectacular start from third and surged to the lead when Antonelli went wide off course trying to defend. A split-second later, Max Verstappen spun trying to hold off Leclerc when the two cars made contact. The contact caused Verstappen, who started a season-best second, to plummet to ninth after the spin.

Antonelli recovered and reclaimed the lead on the fifth lap, and the leaders briefly swapped positions as Leclerc moved back to the front before reigning world champion Lando Norris took over on Lap 14.

Verstappen worked his way through the field and briefly

took the lead as others pitted, but Antonelli beat Norris off pit lane and reclaimed the lead for good once everything cycled out.

Norris finished second, 3.2 seconds behind Antonelli, as the Italian and teammate George Russell have won the first four races of this season for Mercedes. Leclerc was going to finish third until Oscar Piastri of McLaren passed him on the final lap. Leclerc spun and settled for sixth.

Russell was fourth and Verstappen finished a season-best fifth for Red Bull. Lewis Hamilton of Ferrari was seventh.

Cadillac, in its first race in the United States, had an unimpressive weekend on the track even as it splashed its way through Miami with appearances and events. Sergio Perez finished 16th and Valtteri

started last, but his race lasted five laps before he drove his Red Bull into the wall. Hadjar was openly angry at the result as he pounded his helmet before climbing from his car and angrily stomping away.

Seconds later, Pierre Gasly and Liam Lawson made contact that caused Gasly's car to do a full rollover. The Frenchman's car ended stuck with its rear tires atop a barrier and he climbed from the half-suspended BMW on his own.

Up next The Canadian Grand Prix is next for F1 at Circuit Gilles Villeneuve in Montreal on May 24. That date was traditionally held by the Monaco Grand Prix but a tweak to the schedule shifted it to Canada, and F1 will no longer be the opener for what had traditionally been the most prolific day in motorsports.

The F1 race typically opened the morning ahead of the Indianapolis 500 and then NASCAR's Coca-Cola 600. Because the race is in Canada and not Monaco, it has a late afternoon start time and will follow the Indy 500 and end during the NASCAR race.



**TODAY'S MATCH**  
DC VS CSK  
TIME: 7:30 PM  
Star Sports channels & JioHotstar

sub Manimaran Siddharth (2/47) to be caught at short fine leg in the 14th over.

Tilak Varma (11) failed to make a dent, while MI stand-in skipper Suryakumar Yadav (12) was once again caught near the ropes, instilling some nerves in the hosts.

But Naman Dhir (23 not out)

## SHORT TAKES

### India gear up for test against Japan

**Suzhou (China):** India face a stern test against powerhouse Japan as they look to bounce back from their opening game defeat and revive their campaign in the AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup 2026 here Tuesday. The Young Tigresses lost their opening Group B match to Australia 0-2 and find themselves in a situation where every goal will matter after Japan crushed Lebanon 13-0 to garner three points. Japan, among the most technically refined sides in women's football, bring formidable pedigree into the clash, having reached the final in seven of the nine editions of the AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup and lifting the title four times. The Asian giants also underlined their global dominance by clinching the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup crown in 2014. Though Japan will start as overwhelming favourites, the Young Tigresses remain undaunted, with head coach Pamela Conti asserting that her players will take the field with a clear and focused mindset.

### Shooters continue poor World Cup form

**Almaty (Kazakhstan):** India's Ganemat Sekhon shot 70 out of 75 to end day one just a point outside the top eight, while veteran Mairaj Ahmad Khan endured another disappointing outing in the skeet competition at the ISSF World Cup Shotgun here Monday. The Chandigarh-based Sekhon, a silver medalist at this range three years ago, was the best-placed Indian, sitting ninth and in contention for a finals berth with 50 qualification targets and the finals scheduled for Tuesday. In the men's event, the 50-year-old Mairaj began with a 25 before slipping to 23 and 23, ending the day on 71 in 27th place. Fellow Olympian Anantjeet Singh Naruka also opened with a perfect 25 but managed only 23 and 21 thereafter to total 69, extending his underwhelming run this season. Gurjoat Singh Khangura shot 22, 24 and 24 for an aggregate of 70, placing him at 33rd. Among women, Raiza Dhillon shot 69 (22, 23, 24), while Parinaaz Dhaliwal managed 66 (22, 21, 23).

# INTER SEAL 21ST SERIE A CROWN

Inter Milan win the Italian league title in style with three rounds to spare

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Rome, May 4:** Inter Milan clinched its 21st Serie A title with three rounds to spare after a 2-0 win over Parma at San Siro.

Romanian coach Cristian Chivu achieved the feat of winning the Scudetto in his first year in charge of Serie A since the start of the season. The last person to do so was Sacchi at AC Milan.

Goals from Marcus Thuram and Henrikh Mkhitaryan secured the victory, sealing Inter's second league title in their three seasons.

Inter entered the match with a nine-point lead over



second-placed Napoli, which had been held to a 0-0 draw by Como Saturday, meaning a single point was enough to confirm the title.

The home side dominated

early but struggled to break down Parma until first-half stoppage time, when Piotr Zielinski's pass found Thuram, who fired home.

Inter maintained the pres-

sure after the break and doubled its lead in the 80th minute, as Lautaro Martinez set up fellow substitute Mkhitaryan for a close-range finish.

Martinez said, "I'm very happy. We always said this was our objective, and now we have to enjoy this moment because it wasn't easy to achieve such an important goal. In football and in life, you go through difficult moments. Last season is the example, when we came close to winning everything but in the end didn't lift a trophy. This season, however, shows that in football and in life you have to get back up, give everything, and never give up."

## Kiaan claims strong Asia Series finish

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Pattaya (Thailand), May 4:** Mumbai's Kiaan Shah, representing Rayo Racing, produced his best result in international karting, with a second place finish in round 2 of the RMC Asia Trophy here.

The 15-year-old clocked 51.218s on the 1.2 km Bira circuit, just 0.118 seconds behind Thailand's Pannu Stienmonkong, who was the fastest in the qualifying. Kiaan started fourth in heat 2, but lost a place at the start. He soon overtook Japanese racer Shun Sekiguchi and Eason Tseng of Chinese Taipei. Next, he got past Stienmonkong and finished second behind Thailand's Toby Gale.

Disaster struck in heat 3, when Kiaan's engine shut off while running third. A



quick-thinking Kiaan found the problem and fixed back a wire. But still finished last.

Kiaan was unable to close the gap with the leader and eventually finished second, 3.8 seconds behind Gale, who won. Stienmonkong was third. The same grid contested the Thailand Championship and therefore Kiaan won two trophies, one for the Asian Championship and one for the Thai.

## The Italian crushes Zverev to bag Madrid Open and claim record 5th straight Masters 1000 title

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Rome, May 4:** Most tennis players - even some of the very best ones - have days where they struggle and don't feel the ball the way that they want to.

For top-ranked Jannik Sinner, those types of days are getting rarer and rarer.

The World No 1 delivered a commanding performance to defeat Alexander Zverev and clinch the men's singles title at the Mutua Madrid Open Sunday, creating history with a fifth consecutive ATP Masters 1000 triumph.

The Italian needed only 58 minutes to seal a one-sided 6-1, 6-2 victory, extending his remarkable run at the elite level. With the win, Sinner became the first player since the series began in 1990 to capture five straight Masters 1000 titles, underlining his dominance across surfaces.

# Sinner's unstoppable wave hits home

Sinner seems unstoppable entering his home Italian Open. And with Carlos Alcaraz sidelined due to a right wrist injury, it doesn't seem like anyone can beat the top-ranked Sinner as the heart of the tennis season approaches with the French Open and Wimbledon coming up over the next two months.

"He's very stable. He doesn't have dips. He doesn't have phases where he goes down," No 3 Alexander Zverev said after getting routed by Sinner in Sunday's Madrid Open final for his ninth straight loss to the Italian. "That's why he's world No 1." Sinner's title in the Spanish capital made him the first player to win five consecutive Masters 1000 events - the top tournaments outside of the Grand Slams - and extended his winning streak to 23 matches. Sinner hasn't lost since getting beat by Jakub Mensik in the Qatar Open quarterfinals February 19.

"There's a big gap between Sinner and everybody else right now," Zverev said. "It's quite simple. And to think that at age 24, Sinner is still developing his game."

Italian Open next Up next for Sinner is his home Italian Open, which starts this week and also happens to be the only Masters Series event that he hasn't won.

While there have been questions over whether Sinner might sit out Rome after his string of successes and choose to rest up for the French Open, which starts May 24, he dismissed that idea after beating Zverev. "Playing at home is always very special," Sinner said. "Physically, I'm good. There is no reason not to play Rome."

Last year, Sinner lost the Rome final to Alcaraz in his comeback tournament after a three-month doping ban. Notably, Sinner also became the first player to win the sea-

son's opening four Masters 1000 events, having earlier completed the 'Sunshine Double' without losing a set and then overcoming Carlos Alcaraz in Monte-Carlo.

The Italian now stands on the brink of further milestones. He is one title away from completing the coveted Career Golden Masters, a feat achieved only by Novak Djokovic, and will have the opportunity to do so at the upcoming Rome Masters on home soil.



## OFC-BFC share spoils



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Margao, May 4:** Bengaluru FC were held to a 1-1 draw by Odisha FC in their Indian Super League match here Monday, as Braian Sanchez's second-half penalty cancelled out Rahim Ali's opener in a closely contested match at P.J.N Stadium.

Despite dominating possession for large spells, the Blues were unable to break down a resolute Odisha defence and could only rescue a point. They remain sixth in the standings with 17 points from 11 matches, maintaining their unbeaten away record, while Odisha FC remain 13th with seven points from 10 matches.

Braian Sanchez was named the Man of the Match for his influential performance and well-taken equaliser.