



PERFECT PERSPECTIVE

Actor Shruti Hassan says she would not write off the idea of marriage just because it didn't work for her parents

LEISURE P2



UK LEADERSHIP BLAMED

Britain's political leaders and top officials blamed for the culture that led to numerous lockdown-breaching parties

INTERNATIONAL P10



INDIA FACE INDONESIA

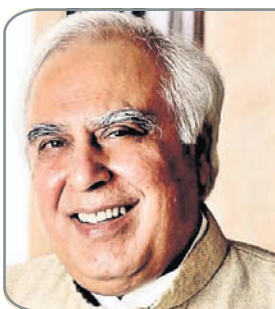
India need to beat Indonesia by a huge margin and hope Japan defeat Pakistan to advance in Asia Cup hockey

SPORTS P12



Army gets 1st woman combat aviator

New Delhi: Captain Abhilasha Barak Wednesday became the first woman combat aviator in Indian Army. Officials said she has been awarded the coveted 'wings' along with 36 Army pilots by the director-general of the Army Aviation during a ceremony held at Combat Army Aviation Training School in Nashik. "Captain Barak became the first woman officer to join the Army Aviation Corps as combat aviator after successful completion of the combat aviation course," an official said. She hails from Haryana and was inducted into the Army Air Defence Corps in Sept 2018.



Sibal picks 'cycle' for Rajya Sabha race

Lucknow: Announcing that he had resigned from Congress last week, Kapil Sibal Wednesday filed his nomination for Rajya Sabha as an Independent supported by Samajwadi Party (SP). Sibal, whose exit is another jolt for the electorally battered Congress, said his ideology is related to the party he has been with for three decades. The former Union minister went to the Uttar Pradesh Assembly premises to file his papers with SP chief Akhilesh Yadav, Ram Gopal Yadav and other senior leaders. A prominent member of G23, which had sought an organisational overhaul in the Congress, Sibal's tenure as Congress' Rajya Sabha MP ends in July.

P7

The Leaders' Choice

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TERROR FUNDING  
LIFE TERM FOR  
YASIN MALIK

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 25: A Delhi court Wednesday awarded life imprisonment to Yasin Malik, one of the foremost separatist leaders of Jammu and Kashmir, in a terror funding case, saying the crimes were intended to strike at the "heart of the idea of India" and intended to forcefully secede J&K from Union of India. Special Judge Praveen Singh awarded varying jail terms to Malik for offences under the stringent anti-terror law-Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) and the IPC, rejecting the NIA's plea for capital punishment. He said the crimes for which Malik was convicted were of very serious nature. "These crimes were intended to strike at the heart of the idea of India and intended to forcefully secede J&K from UOI. The crime becomes more serious as it was committed with the assistance of foreign powers and designated terrorists.



The seriousness of crime is further increased by the fact that it was committed behind the smokescreen of an alleged peaceful political movement," the judge said. The judge said the manner in which the crimes were committed was in the form of conspiracy whereby there was an attempted insurrection by instigating, stone pelting and arson, and a very large-scale violence led to shutting of the government machinery. P9

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Would you please stitch a bulletproof one? You see, I am visiting the US!

FESTIVAL DE CANNES



Jury president Vincent Lindon, centre, poses with members Jeff Nichols, from left, Deepika Padukone, Joachim Trier, Jasmine Trinca, Noomi Rapace, Asghar Farhadi, Rebecca Hall, and Ladj Ly upon arrival at the 75th anniversary celebration of the Cannes film festival and the premiere of the film 'The Innocent' at the 75th international film festival, Cannes

PTI PHOTO

Tourist buses asked  
to shun Kalinga Ghati

SIX TOURISTS FROM WEST BENGAL WERE KILLED AND 40 INJURED WHEN THE BUS THEY WERE TRAVELLING IN ROLLED DOWN THE ROAD AT KALINGA GHATI

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar/Berhampur, May 25: The state government Wednesday decided not to allow buses carrying tourists to ply on the treacherous route of Kalinga Ghati on Ganjam-Kandhamal border where six people from West Bengal died in a mishap late Tuesday night. The decision was taken in view of frequent accidents on this route. Speaking to mediapersons here, Commerce and Transport Minister Padmanabha Behera said a probe into the bus mishap has been ordered. In the past, several tourist buses had met with mishaps at Kalinga Ghati, he added. Such bus



The ill-fated bus at Kalinga Ghati

OP PHOTO

drivers have no expertise in driving in such hilly routes like Kalinga Ghati, he said, adding that the state government will issue an advisory for tourist buses coming on this route. These buses will be allowed to take a detour, he added.

At least six tourists from West Bengal, four of them women, were killed and 40 were injured when the bus they were travelling in met with an accident at Kalinga Ghati. "It had successfully crossed major portion of the ghati road, but lost control at the last turning due to brake failure. I could not stop the bus and it dashed against a post at

3 perish in Sambalpur

Sambalpur: At least three people died in an accident on National Highway-55 in Jujumara police limits of Sambalpur, Wednesday. One of the deceased was identified as Goutam Sahu, 38, of Khairamal village. Reports said Goutam and two others were going on a motorcycle to a crusher unit at Jujumara when a Hyva truck hit their bike from rear near a filling station in Bhawanipalli, leaving the three dead.

a speed before making several turns," an unhurt bus driver told reporters.

Contd... P4

'Drink From Tap' in  
Bhubaneswar soon

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 25: Following overwhelming response to Drink From Tap initiative in Puri, the Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited (BSCL) Wednesday announced implementation of the same in the Capital city to help denizens avail clean drinking water round the clock.

As per sources, the BSCL will spend ₹20 crore under Smart City Mission for the project which will cater to providing water at residential units which may be used for drinking and cooking purposes without additional filtering or boiling. Initially, the scheme will be introduced in Saheed Nagar, Satya Nagar, Kharvela Nagar, Bapuji Nagar and Ashok Nagar.

"Water safety and cleanliness are essential not just for human health, but are also needed for developing resilient communities by reducing absenteeism from school and work, ensuring a safe environment, and cutting healthcare costs. With an emphasis on urban poor; this will be a fair, sustainable, and people-centered service delivery," said Sanjay Kumar Singh, BSCL CEO.

While ₹20 crore would be provided by BSCL, the remaining will be provided by the state government.

21 killed in Texas  
school shootout

US President Joe Biden accuses the gun lobby of blocking enactment of tougher firearm safety laws

AGENCIES

Houston, May 25: In one of the worst school shootings in American history, an 18-year-old gunman in body armour massacred at least 21 people, including 19 children and two adults at an elementary school in Texas state, with an emotional President Joe Biden urging lawmakers to "turn this pain into action" to control the powerful gun lobby. The youth opened fire at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde town, Texas, 134 km from San Antonio, at about 11:30am Tuesday before he was killed by law enforcement, officials said.

Investigators say the suspect was armed with a handgun, an AR-15 semi-automatic rifle and high-capacity magazines.

Texas Governor Greg Abbott identified the killer as Salvador Ramos, a resident of the area where the school was located. The shooter's motive remains unclear. The teenager is suspected of shooting his grandmother at the start of the rampage, US media reports said.

"He shot and killed horrifically, incomprehensibly. Fourteen students and a teacher were killed," Abbott said. Later the toll was raised to 19 children and two adults dead. Two law enforcement officers were shot but are expected to recover, Abbott said.

Names of the deceased and other details were yet to be re-

leased. According to the school website, its students are aged between 5 years and 11 years.

Chief of Police, Uvalde, Pete Arredondo said the "mass casualty event occurred at Robb Elementary School at about 11:32 this morning." He said the killer acted as a lone wolf - who was shot dead in a police exchange.

The deceased children are in the second, third and fourth grades - aged between 7 years and 10 years, he said.

In a prime-time address Tuesday, a visibly emotional Biden asked what it would take to convince fellow lawmakers that "it's time to act." A Democrat, Biden accused the gun lobby of blocking enactment of tougher firearm safety laws.

President Biden again tried to comfort a nation grieving after a mass shooting, urging action to counter powerful gunmakers and repeatedly questioning why the country he leads lacks "the backbone" to stem the bloodshed.

"How many scores of little children who witnessed what happened - seen their friends die as if they're on a battlefield, for god's sake," said Biden. "To lose a child is like having a piece of your soul ripped away. There's a hollowness in your chest."

Turning to the issue of gun control legislation, Biden implored lawmakers to "turn this pain into action".



DEADLIEST SCHOOL SHOOTOUT: People react outside the Ssgt Willie de Leon Civic Center, where students had been transported from Robb Elementary School after a shooting, in Uvalde, US. (Inset: Accused Salvador Ramos)

MARKET WATCH			
INDEX		VARIATION	
SENSEX	53749.26	↓	303.35
NIFTY	16025.80	↓	99.40
DOLLAR	78.10	↑	₹0.04
EURO	82.80	↓	₹0.34
GOLD	₹50,869	↓	₹288
SILVER	₹61,586	↓	₹390

WEATHER			
BHUB		CTK	
MAX	36.2°C	37.2°C	
MIN	24.6°C	25.0°C	
Humidity	70%	68%	Forecast
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	Light rain very likely

Postmaster spends depositors' ₹1.25cr on IPL betting

THE DEPOSITORS WERE SHOCKED WHEN THE POST OFFICE EMPLOYEES TOLD THEM THAT THEIR FD NUMBERS AND ACCOUNT NUMBERS DID NOT EXIST IN RECORDS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sagar, May 25: A sub-postmaster in Madhya Pradesh's Sagar district allegedly spent depositors' money to the tune of ₹1.25 crore on IPL betting, an official said Wednesday.

The accused, Vishal Ahirwar, 36, was arrested May 20 after matter came to light earlier this month when some people contacted the sub-post office, located in a railway premises here, on the completion of their fixed deposit (FD) terms, GRP police station-in-charge Ajay Dhurve said.

The depositors were shocked when the post office employees



ACCUSED VISHAL AHIRWAR TOLD THE POLICE THAT HE HAD INVESTED THE DEPOSITORS' MONEY IN THE IPL BETTING RACKET APP THAT PROMISED QUICK AND RICH DIVIDENDS

told them that their FD numbers and account numbers did not exist in the records and there were no FDs in their names, he said.

When the depositors repeatedly visited the sub-post office for next few days to enquire about their investments, they were told that the

sub-post master had allegedly put their money into an IPL betting racket app offering to multiply it fast, the official said.

Ahirwar was then suspended, following which the depositors complained to police against him. Based on the complaints of the

depositors, the police arrested Ahirwar May 20, the GRP official said. During questioning, Ahirwar told the police that he had invested the depositors' money in the IPL betting racket app that promised quick and rich dividends, the official said.

The husband of a woman, Varsha, had deposited ₹9 lakh in the post office. However, she lost her husband and father-in-law during Covid-19 crisis, another official said. An elderly woman, Kishori Bai, had deposited ₹5 lakh in the post office for arranging funds for the marriage of her four daughters, but she is now left with nothing, he said.

CONSTABLE HELD  
FOR SEXUALLY  
ABUSING MINOR

PNN/ AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 25: The Mahila police here Wednesday arrested a constable on charges of sexually abusing a minor girl, an official said.

The accused identified as Rajanikant Gamango of Lingaraj police station had been sexually abusing the victim for the past four years, said the official.

"She was abused at the age of 13. The cop made a video of the shameful sexual act with the girl and blackmailed her. He continued to exploit the girl by threatening her to circulate the video on social media," the official added. The victim mustered courage and reported to Childline which helped her lodge a complaint.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

You have your hands full today. There will be planning, meetings and a lot of work to do. You may feel tired and dejected due to insufficient inputs from others. However, Ganesha says things will become clear slowly as matters come to a conclusion.

TAURUS

Today, you need to take hold of your emotions. Ganesha urges you to not get carried away by your feelings. Instead, you should try to maintain a practical, sensible frame of mind. Women are like to feature prominently in your life during the day. Try to be magnanimous and open hearted. That will take care of the problems that could be coming your way, and shall help you end the day on a happy, cheerful note.

GEMINI

Maintaining the image you have created in the minds of people, as well as upholding your reputation in society will give you some anxious moments today. You will work hard to improve your social standing, and will get results by the end of the day. It is an auspicious and lucky day for you, says Ganesha.

CANCER

Ganesha advises you to watch your back today. However, he wants to make it clear that you may be at the receiving end of others' actions. Anyway, your cautious and watchful approach will save you from needless discomfiture. In short, life will teach you priceless and precious lessons today, predicts Ganesha.

LEO

You will get good co-operation from your colleagues and subordinates. In your personal life also you will gain the support of your spouse and your friends. Other people will be accommodating of your problems and will try to solve them for you. Your expenses may increase, leading to some financial worries, says Ganesha.

VIRGO

You are quick-witted, sharp and artistic to the core, says Ganesha, so you may go ahead and enrapture people with your special abilities, perhaps at a social gathering. However, Ganesha says it would be better if you could conserve some of that enthusiasm in order to focus your attention on issues of greater importance.

LIBRA

Ganesha says that you will try to enhance your skill regarding new technological inventions and will want to learn about the same in your spare time. Ganesha says that if you wish to gain success you need to first leave your ego behind. Only then will you be able to stride ahead on the path to progress.

SCORPIO

You are in a mood of introspection and analysis, says Ganesha. This is likely to give you a clear vision in the days to come. Your systematic approach towards work will provide you room to think out of the box. Your innovative ideas may bag applause from superiors and bosses.

SAGITTARIUS

Begin your day with a renewed zest. Consider a jump case of lucrative offer. Cracking a telephonic interview may prove to be a milestone in your career path. Your dedication and determination towards your work and goals makes you a deserving employee, says Ganesha.

CAPRICORN

Things may just fall in to your lap today. You will help those in need but will get extremely upset when the out come is not as per your expectations, feels Ganesha. It is not an encouraging sight and it will affect your confidence adversely. But, you are over-reacting, as these disappointments are not as big as they seem. Keep your chin up and get ready for a new tomorrow.

AQUARIUS

You want to spread peace and joy all around, and today you may achieve that. You, however, may have to sacrifice your own preferences and interests to ensure that the problems get solved. It is a noble thing to play the role of peace maker, but people may take you for granted, feels Ganesha. You may feel that you are leading by example, but turn back, probably nobody is following you.

PISCES

Today your professional and love life will cause worry. You will want to be emotionally balanced but you may not find the time to sort things out. Long sightedness and open discussions will help resolve matters easily.



AMBER HEARD COULD'VE BEEN DROPPED FROM AQUAMAN 2

The president of DC Films recently testified that the studio considered replacing actress Amber Heard for *Aquaman 2* as she lacked chemistry with star Jason Momoa. Her lawyers have argued she couldn't renegotiate for more money due to the backlash over her domestic abuse allegations against Johnny Depp.

DOJA CAT REVEALS HER ACTING AMBITION

Rap star Doja Cat has already achieved huge success in the music business, and she would like to try her hand at acting one day. The *Juicy* hitmaker said: "I'd love to act. I'd love to be in movies. That's a massive want for me."



Urvashi on cloud nine after DiCaprio's praise



MUMBAI: After making her debut on the Cannes 2022 red carpet, Urvashi Rautela shares that she got emotional when Hollywood star Leonardo DiCaprio complimented her. She says: "I was freaking out and falling short of words after receiving compliments from Leonardo DiCaprio. I was so emotional and could feel happy tears in my eyes. At the same time I was blushing too."

Urvashi who was crowned Miss Diva Universe 2015 and represented India at the Miss Universe 2015 pageant attended the screening of the film *Forever Young* at the 75th Cannes Film Festival. She stated having met the American actor was a dream come true.

She continues: "He also appreciated me as a very talented actress. I was waking up pinching myself. Did that really happen last night? Was I dreaming about the sweet moment? I think it just shows how even the younger actors want to be out there and inspires young actors to keep going, that's my memory of meeting him."

Urvashi is known for featuring in Hindi movies like *Virgin Bhannupriya*, *Pagalpanti* and *Hate Story 4*. IANS



'Thought of marriage makes me nervous'

Chennai: Actor Shruti Hassan took a sabbatical for two years and moved to London. Cut to two years later, she came back to India, fully recharged and ready to dive into work again. From making her debut in the OTT space to bagging interesting projects down South, the actress has been on a roll.

However, she recently has opened up on her marriage plans.

Asked about her thoughts about marriage and plans to tie the knot, the *Bestseller* actress said, "The thought of marriage makes me nervous at this point. It is something that I wouldn't jump at right away"

Is it because she comes from a family where parents (Kamal Haasan and Sarika) separated while she was still growing up? "I think my parents had the most beautiful intentions for their marriage. When it worked, it was a fantastic marriage and that's what I chose to take away from it. Things may or may not work out. I always like to look at what was the good side of it. My parents went through a lot, and they stuck it out. Just because their marriage didn't work, it doesn't mean that I would write off the idea of marriage. When it worked, they were a brilliant couple, and that's what I chose to look at," explained Shruti. IANS



Hansal weds partner Safeena after 17 years, two children

MUMBAI: Filmmaker Hansal Mehta, who is known for directing *Shahid*, *Aligarh* and *Scam 1992: The Harshad Mehta Story*, recently tied the knot with his longtime partner of 17 years, Safeena Husain, in an intimate ceremony in San Francisco, California.

The filmmaker took to his Instagram to share an array of pictures from the simple and heartwarming wedding celebrations. He wrote in the caption, "So after 17 years, two children, watching our sons growing up and chasing our respective dreams we decided to get hitched."

"As always in life this was also impromptu and unplanned. Our vows however were truthful and but for this little ceremony they would never have been said. Ultimately love prevails over all else. And it has..." , he wrote further.

Safeena is a social worker and founder of Educate Girls – a non-profit organisation based out of Mumbai. She is the daughter of late actor Yusuf Hussain. Hansal has two daughters with Safeena and two sons from his previous marriage.

Hansal's friends and professional associates including actor Rajkumar Rao, Manoj Bajpayee, Pratik Gandhi, celebrity chef Ranveer Brar, congratulated the couple on the occasion. IANS



Aishwarya (L) with Sonali Bendre during a modelling shoot in the early 1990s

When Ash got ₹1.5K for a day's work

NEW DELHI: Social media users across the country Wednesday are glued to a modelling contract from 1992, of none other than Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, often touted to be one of the most beautiful women in the world. The modelling contract in question surfaced on the Reddit page 'Bolly Blinds N Gossip' and is dated two years before her coveted Miss World win in 1994.

The contract of May 23, 1992 shows that the actress received Rs 1,500 for a magazine shoot. As per the contract, Ash who was aged 'about 18' years at that time, agreed to work as a model for a magazine catalogue shoot for a company called Krupa Kreations. The single-page contract features Ash's signature and was inked in

Mumbai.

The contract was shared by a user along with the caption, "Aishwarya Rai got paid Rs 1,500 for one day's work in 1992. I wasn't even born then!"

Acknowledging that Aishwarya Rai Bachchan was always a star, one Redditor commented, "In 1992 my father's income was Rs 8,000 per month which was sufficient to run our house of 5. This is massive money for a day's work for an 18-year-old."

A Twitter user named Vimal Upadhyay shared pictures from the magazine shoot on Twitter in a series of tweets, complete with the catalogue photos and the magazine cover.

One of the tweets read, "Hello, Today I am celebrating the 30th

Anniversary of the Fashion Catalogue published by me. Aishwarya Rai, Sonali Bendre, Niki Aneja, Tejaswini Kolhapure were few of the models posed for this Catalogue."

Meanwhile, Aishwarya recently marked her 21st appearance at the ongoing 75th edition of the Cannes Film Festival, where she is a regular fixture at the red carpet. IANS

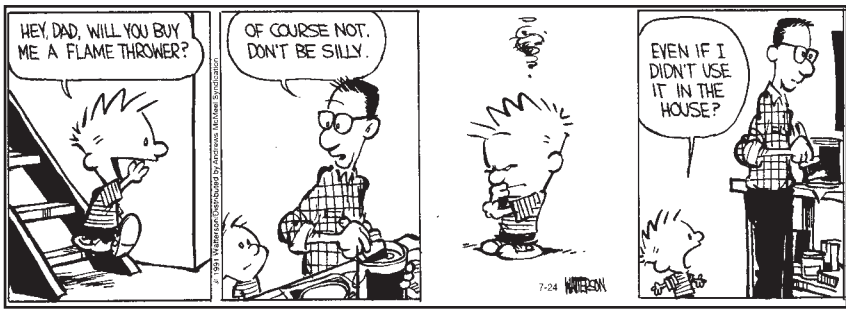


FUN post

PEANUTS



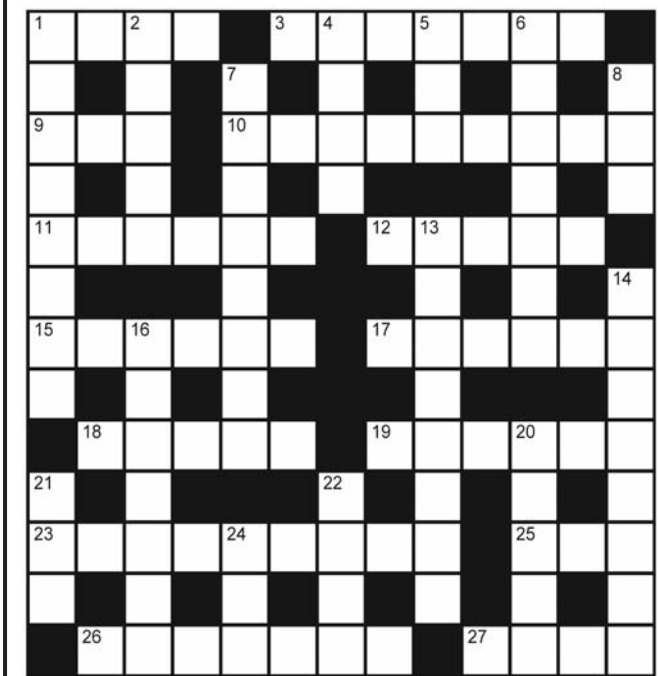
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



CROSSWORD



Across

- 1 Divan
- 3 Hide
- 9 Sprinted
- 10 Sergeant's call (5-4)
- 11 One who goes AWOL (2-4)
- 12 Oodles
- 15 Disinherit
- 17 Pleasure trips
- 18 Necklace item
- 19 Worker with acids

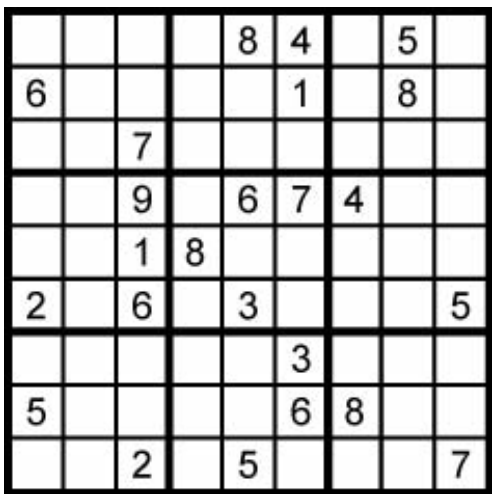
- 23 Beets and turnips, e.g. (4,5)
- 25 Father figures
- 26 Church tower
- 27 Proof goof

Down

- 1 Song under a window?
- 2 Discovers
- 4 Bassoon relative
- 5 Film director's cry
- 6 Arabian Nights boy
- 7 Large jellyfish (3-2-3)
- 8 Lair
- 13 Bawl out
- 14 Coffee order
- 16 Go on a date (4,3)
- 20 Cheerful
- 21 Unit of energy
- 22 Fencing sword
- 24 Pool tool

SUDOKU

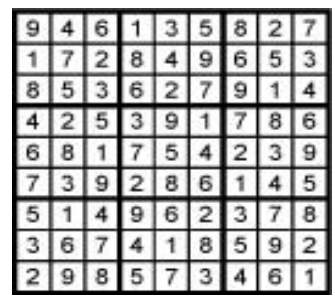
To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.



SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW







# State forms district-level panels for hit-&-run cases

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, May 25:** The state government has formed district-level committees for expeditious disbursement of compensation in hit-and-run accident cases, a Transport official said Wednesday.

According to the Compensation to Victims of Hit and Run Motor Accidents Scheme-2022 and the Motor Vehicle Accident Fund launched by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, a committee will have respective district collector as its head.

“The collector will act as the claims settlement commissioner of the district, while an officer nominated by the General Insurance Council will be the member secretary of the panel,” said the official.

The committee will also have a sub-divisional officer, SP or DSP (headquarters), chief district medical officer (CDMO), Road Transport Officer (RTO) and a representa-



A committee will have respective district collector as its head

The collector will act as the claims settlement commissioner of the district, while an officer nominated by the General Insurance Council will be the member secretary of the panel

The committee will meet at least once a quarter and take decision on the claim application after due examination

tive from a non-government organisation (NGO) working on road safety as its members.

The committee will undertake all functions connected with the im-

plementation of the solatium scheme at the district level. It will evaluate the progress of implementation of the scheme in the particular district and take corrective measures, wherever necessary, said the official.

The committee will meet at least once in each quarter and take a decision on the claim application after due examination. The money will be provided from the Motor Vehicles Accident Fund.

According to the solatium fund scheme, the legal heir of a deceased in a hit-and-run accident case is entitled to get between ₹25,000 and ₹2 lakh compensation. A critically injured person, on the other hand, is entitled to get between ₹12,500 and ₹50,000 under the scheme.

Altogether 1,108 and 907 persons had died in hit-and-run accidents in the state in 2019 and 2020, respectively. Besides, 1,250 and 902 persons had sustained grievous injuries in hit-and-run cases across the state in 2019 and 2020.

## CHHATISHA NIYOG MEET



Dignitaries, including Puri Collector Samarth Verma, SP KV Singh and SJTA chief administrator Vir Vikram Yadav, at the Chhatisha Niyog meeting ahead of the Rath Yatra in Puri, Wednesday

## MO SCHOOL ABHIYAN

# ₹21.90cr approved for school transformation

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, May 25:** The 34th Executive Council Meeting of Mo School Abhiyan, chaired by School and Mass Education Department Principal Secretary Bishnupada Sethi, Wednesday approved projects worth ₹21.90 crore in 26 districts.

Sources said under CSR contributions, Mo School has received ₹1.68 crore for the development of government and aided schools.

As per its commitment, the council approved projects worth ₹21.90 crore.

Balasore has topped the list with donor contribution of ₹1.36 crore, followed by Sonepur ₹40.22 lakh, Cuttack ₹36.15 lakh, Khurda ₹34 lakh and Jajpur ₹31 lakh. Till date, 6.75 lakhs alumni have contributed financially for the development of their alma mater, it was learnt.

The third phase of the programme will see transformation of over 2,000 high schools out of the remaining 4,310.

According to sources, in order to



promote scientific learning, Mo School will be collaborating with Odisha Bigyan Academy.

“Odisha Bigyan Academy has proposed to organise science exhibitions and celebrate the days of scientific importance in schools by inviting scientists and researchers. Similarly, it has also been proposed to hold special training sessions for science teachers,” said an official.

Focus will be given on practical science classes in the transformed schools. ‘Code Club’ activities will be rolled out in two phases in the 1,076 schools transformed under the first phase of the programme, added the official.

# Protect Puri’s ‘spiritual identity’: Seer

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, May 25:** Puri Shankaracharya Nischalananda Saraswati Wednesday sought protection of the holy city’s ‘spiritual ideals’ and existence.

He urged both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik to ensure a halt to the ‘destruction’ of heritage ‘under the grab of development’.

The Puri seer’s statement, released through a video message, came a day after a delegation headed by Gajapati king Dibyasingha Deb and a group of cultural activists met him at Gobardhan Peeth. A few days ago, the Shankaracharya had also released a similar video where he expressed deep concern over alleged damages to the 12th century shrine in the name of development.

“The Prime Minister and Chief Minister should give attention to the fact that the Puri is being ruined in the name of development. Muts are being demolished for widening roads... (this) is not right. The administration should stop implementing its plan immediately,” the statement said.

Ruling BJD spokesperson Lenin

## ROW OVER HERITAGE CORRIDOR PROJECT



The Shankaracharya urged both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik to ensure a halt to the ‘destruction’ of heritage ‘under the grab of development’

A few days ago, the Puri seer had expressed deep concern over alleged damages to the 12th century shrine in the name of development

BJD spokesperson Lenin Mohanty said the Srimandir Parikrama project was prepared and recommended by the Srimandir Managing Committee with all plans out in the public domain.

He pointed out that the National Monument Authority (NMA) gave all required permissions and it was passed by the Odisha Assembly unanimously

Mohanty in an apparent counter-statement said the Srimandir Parikrama project was prepared and recommended by the Srimandir Managing Committee with all plans out in the public domain.

He pointed out that the National Monument Authority (NMA) gave all required permissions and it was passed by the Odisha Assembly unanimously.

“The administration should also express regret over damages done to the places of worship and ensure that these kind of steps are not

taken in future,” the Shankaracharya said in the video.

While expressing deep anguish over the way the state government’s Puri Heritage Corridor Project is being implemented, the seer said, “all are in favour of development, but we do not want the heritage site to lose its identity in the name of development.”

It is not acceptable to destroy heritages in the name development, he added. Referring to the ruling BJD, which has been ruling the state for over two decades, the

Shankaracharya said, the administration should not think of itself as all-powerful because the public mandate may change any time. “Odisha people have trust in this government... But people’s opinion may change,” the seer cautioned without talking name of BJD.

Puri should not be made a centre of ‘sura-sundari’, the seer said adding that the sea beach, which is the place of meditation, has already become a place for ‘sura-sundari’ (wine and women).

He also warned the people that tarnishing image of the ‘Puri-dham’ and attack on its spiritual ideals may invite trouble for the entire state.

Immediately after the Shankaracharya’s statement, the opposition BJP and Congress rallied against the government and demanded an immediate halt to the corridor project work.

Odisha unit of BJP termed the corridor project work as ‘illegal’ as permission from the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has not been taken and demanded suspension of all works. The government has never been transparent in its plan for the project, said BJP spokesperson Jatin Mohanty.

The BJD spokesperson asserted that the plan was prepared and public opinion elicited. Thereafter, the plan was recommended by the Srimandir Managing Committee. The Srimandir Parikrama Plan was then taken to the Odisha Legislative Assembly, where it was passed unanimously by all MLAs without any opposition, it said.

He also said, “The ASI gave certain suggestions which were duly incorporated and modifications done (to the plan) accordingly.”

## 3 fresh Covid cases

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, May 25:** Odisha recorded three more Coronavirus cases Wednesday, while there was no new fatality, the Health department said.

There are 84 active Covid-19 cases and nine more patients have recuperated from the disease, according to a bulletin.

The daily positivity rate was 0.02 per cent and 14,129 samples were tested in the past 24 hours, a bulletin stated. The state had logged eight infections and zero death Tuesday.

The toll stood at 9,126 and these are confirmed as Covid deaths after an audit. Fifty-three other Coronavirus patients have died due to comorbidities so far, according to data.

## CLASSIFIED

### AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit before Notary Public, Bhubaneswar I have changed my name from Sangita Dakua (as per Board Certificate) to Shrimati Sangita which is reflected in Aadhar & PAN Card. So I declare that Sangita Dakua & Shrimati Sangita is one and same person & henceforth I shall be known as Shrimati Sangita for all purposes.

## Govt schools back in the reckoning among parents: S&ME Min

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, May 25:** School and Mass Education (S&ME) Minister Samir Ranjan Dash Wednesday said more and more parents are now showing their interest in government schools for the education of their children.

He said this while visiting Sundargarh district for a work-

shop on ‘Leadership and Digital Skills’ for school headmasters and teachers.

He asked the teachers to focus on the education of children as the classroom teaching could not be undertaken for almost two years due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Earlier, the S&ME department had expressed concern over reports that around 30 per cent students have not returned to schools

as classroom teaching resumed after a gap of two years due to the pandemic.

S&ME department secretary BP Sethi had asked the district collectors to devise a location-specific strategy to bring back the students to the classrooms.

Noting that the S&ME department has prepared a strategy to bring back the absentee students, he asked the collectors to

conduct a school-level survey to list the students who are not attending classes.

“The junior teachers who are posted in schools may be sent to the houses of the absentee students to know the reason for their absence from the classrooms,” he said.

Panchayat members and woman self-help groups can also be roped in for the exercise, Sethi added.

## FOR A CAUSE



Members of construction workers’ union stage a demonstration near the Labour Commissioner’s office in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday, to press for fulfilment of their demands

# Tourist buses asked to shun Kalinga Ghati



Mangled remains of a tourist bus which overturned rolled down off the road at Kalinga Ghati in Ganjam district

Continued from P1

The incident took place at 12:10am near Durgaprasad village in Ganjam and 15 people among the injured are in serious condition, the police said Wednesday. The bus, carrying 77 people, about 65 of them tourists from West Bengal’s Howrah and Hooghly, was moving towards Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh from Daringbandi in Kandhamal district when the mishap took place, Ganjam SP Brijesh Rai said.

Police and firefighters from nearby Bhanjanagar rushed to the spot and rescued the bus passengers, 40 of who were injured.

Police suspect that the bus rolled down the road while negotiating a curve in the hilly terrain after the driver lost control over the vehicle.

The bodies of the six tourists who died in the mishap were retrieved after breaking the win-

dow panes of the bus, Bhanjanagar SDPO SS Mishra said.

The deceased were identified as Supiya Denre, 33, Sanjeet Patra, 33, Rima Denre, 22, her mother Mausumi Denre and Barnali Manna, 34, from Sultanpur in Howrah district and Swapan Gushait, 44, the cook from Gopalpur in Hooghly, police said.

CM Naveen Patnaik has expressed grief over the accident and wished speedy recovery of the injured.

Notably, two people had died when a bus carrying migrant workers from Surat faced an accident at Kalinga Ghati May 2, 2021.

Similarly, December 16, 2021, a tourist bus from West Bengal had also faced an accident there. As many as 15 tourists were injured while three of them were critical. Then, the minister had assured that the drivers would be sensitized about needs for cautious driving on this route.

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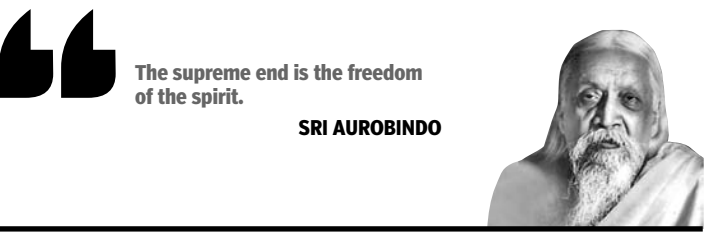
## Officer in Vig net

POST NEWS NETWORK

The firm is trying to retain the labourers and employees instead of dismissing them from service for which they have been urged to report for duty on alternate days through a notice served to them Tuesday. Attempts are being made to keep the present situation under control. He urged the Centre to reconsider its decision and waive the export duty failing which will severely affect the steel industries, he added.

Some locals requesting anonymity have urged the administration and police to intervene and take stringent action against her son and daughter-in-law.





Democracy’s Last Hope

A macabre political thriller recently unfolded in the Philippine province of Palawan, an island known mostly for its rich biodiversity and pristine beaches. On May 9, Joel T. Reyes, the alleged mastermind of the 2011 murder of well-known radio broadcaster Gerry Ortega, ran again for governor. Had Reyes won, the possibilities for Ortega’s family to obtain justice for the killing would have dwindled. Fortunately for them, he lost. Although episodes like the Ortega murder might seem extreme, they are more common than many realise. Powerful authoritarian subnational elites such as Reyes, supported by a political milieu that often guarantees them impunity, pose the deadliest threat to journalists.

Ortega was fatally shot after he publicly accused Reyes, Palawan’s governor from 2002 to 2011, of embezzlement. All members of the hit squad were soon arrested and subsequently confessed to the killing. But, despite strong evidence that Reyes ordered the murder, prosecutors refrained from indicting him.

The middleman in the scheme, Rodolfo Edrad, implicated Reyes as the mastermind and was placed under witness protection. However, prosecutors found Edrad’s testimony to be uncorroborated. Prosecutors decided that text messages sent by Reyes to Edrad shortly before and after the murder – including one that read, “Hopefully, upon my return, the problem is over” – could not be used as evidence because they were “filed out of time.”

A decade-long legal battle between Ortega’s family and Reyes ensued. A newly appointed prosecutorial team accepted the text message as evidence and resumed the case, after which Reyes fled to Vietnam. Although a court of appeals later ruled that the second prosecutorial panel was illegitimate, a new bench of that same court ordered in 2019 that the trial should proceed.

But the warrant for Reyes’ arrest, filed in 2021, was temporarily lifted, enabling him to campaign openly for the governorship. Meanwhile, Ortega’s family, their lawyers, and the Office of the Solicitor General have formally requested the Supreme Court to order Reyes’ immediate arrest – a step supported by global press-freedom organisations.

Whether Reyes is prosecuted soon has important implications for press freedom in the Philippines. The country currently ranks 147th in Reporters Without Borders’ World Press Freedom Index, not least because of the lack of safety for journalists. Widespread impunity or partial impunity for their killings is a security concern for all journalists in the Philippines.

Organisations like the Committee to Protect Journalists have expressed concern about the potential effect on press freedom of Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos, Jr.’s recent presidential electoral victory. But for many journalists, especially in large, decentralised countries such as the Philippines, who holds power at the regional and local level matters just as much – or even more. In young democracies with relatively weak institutions, authoritarian subnational leaders can rule in ways some national-level autocrats can only dream of. Clientelism and patronage give them the means to win elections and sometimes plunder public resources.

This phenomenon has been evident for decades in the Philippines, where, to take just one example, the Osmeña family has enjoyed dynastic preeminence in Cebu province. But it occurs in other countries, too. In Mexico, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) had ruled the state of Veracruz for almost a century when Javier Duarte, the governor from 2010-16, became the party’s poster child for corruption after embezzling millions of dollars in public money.

In such contexts, journalists like Ortega are democracy’s last hope. Authoritarian local leaders still care about their image, since a loss of face might lead central institutions to intervene. The cloning and distribution of fake versions of critical news magazines by the former state government of Quintana Roo in Mexico was a clumsy attempt to manage its image and silence dissent. The murder of journalists at the behest of such elites is a grimmer point on the continuum of repression.

Without access to accurate, objective information, there can be no free and fair local elections. The fact that democracy is the only game in town at the national level is scant reassurance for those living in a state or province ruled by a local autocrat. In Veracruz under Duarte’s administration, for example, 18 journalists were murdered with nearly complete impunity, and state prosecutors have been accused of torturing a local sex worker into falsely confessing to the murder of journalist Regina Martínez Pérez.

Unsurprisingly, both executive and judicial institutions are weak in such settings – how else could these local authoritarian rulers emerge? In the Ortega case in the Philippines, allegations of bribery within the judiciary are rife.

While it is difficult to uncover how and by whom a journalist has been murdered, assessing the exact intentions of local authorities during an investigation can be even tougher. One possible solution is to establish independent prosecutorial bodies to investigate murders of journalists and monitor local implementation of the United Nations guidelines for prosecutors on cases of crimes against journalists. But such efforts require political will from central governments.

Another way to combat impunity for the murder of journalists is through increased efforts to investigate cold cases. The project A Safer World for the Truth – a collaboration between Free Press Unlimited, the Committee to Protect Journalists, and Reporters Without Borders – is currently conducting such investigations. New findings can sometimes lead to these cases being reopened. For example, an investigation into the murder of Pakistani journalist Zubair Mujahid resulted in the family – together with lawyers – filing a petition at the High Court of Sindh to reopen the investigation.

National leaders who attack independent media – such as former US President Donald Trump, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, and Russian President Vladimir Putin – attract most of the attention. But, as at-risk journalists everywhere will confirm, the local struggle for press freedom and democracy matters just as much.

The writer is Research Coordinator for A Safer World for the Truth at Free Press Unlimited.  
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WORDSWORTH

Syzygy

If you look up at the sky and see the full moon, you’re witnessing an example of syzygy. From our point of view the sun is then on the opposite side of the sky to the moon, and so is said to be in opposition to it. The three are also in syzygy at new moon, this time with the moon and the sun apparently next to each other in the sky – a state called conjunction. Halfway between these states, when the moon is half full, the sun and moon are in quadrature. Spring tides form during syzygy (full and new moon), whereas neap tides form during quadrature (the waxing and waning phases of the moon). -- Science, 5 Jul. 1996. The word appeared in English in the seventeenth century, and at first could apply only to conjunctions. It comes via late Latin from the Greek *suzugia*, which derives from *suzugos*, yoked or paired. It was not until a century later that its meaning was extended to cover astronomical opposition, in defiance of its etymology. Syzygy has a variety of other meanings in mathematics, poetry and zoology, all of them developed from the idea of things being joined together.

FOCUS ECONOMY

THE INFLATION IMPACT



TM Thomas Isaac

IT IS MORE A COST PUSH INFLATION THAN THE CLASSIC DEMAND-PULL INFLATION



Jos Midas Bartman

National leaders who attack independent media attract most of the attention. But, as at-risk journalists everywhere will confirm, the local struggle for press freedom and democracy matters just as much

Does inflation impact the poor or rich more? The question may look ridiculous. Not so if you read the following statement in the monthly economic review for April published by the finance ministry: “While inflation is expected to be elevated in 2022-23, mitigating action taken by the Government and RBI may reduce its duration. Evidence on consumption patterns further suggests that inflation in India has a lesser impact on low-income strata than on high-income groups.”

Small wonder that the tweet became the subject of general ridicule on social media platforms and the Finance Minister had to issue a denial: “A Tweet with the picture of Union Finance Minister @nsitharaman is being circulated claiming that the Finance Ministry has stated – ‘Inflation will affect the rich more than the poor in 2022.’ The Claim is fake. @FinMinIndia has not given such statement,” the Press Information Bureau (PIB)’s fact check division posted on its Twitter account. But the statement quoted earlier in the Finance Ministry’s official report remains.

True, the country has been through worse inflationary situations. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) for April 2022 was 7.8 per cent. The situation was worse during the second term of the UPA government, but they also paid the price at the elections. Now, the relentless increase in prices has once again become a major socio-economic issue.

The synonym for CPI is the Cost of Living Index. As the name itself implies, when prices of commodities that people ordinarily consume increase, the cost of living also goes up. This means that their income remaining the same, they can purchase only less when compared to the period before the inflation. Thus, their “real” income declines, and living becomes difficult.

The above is more relevant in post-COVID conditions. National income has barely recovered to pre-COVID levels and the debt overhang of COVID times is high. The unorganised sector where most people earn their living has been shattered by demonetisation and COVID. For these reasons, the present inflation bites deep.

The largest component is the food and beverages group accounting 46 per cent of the total. The food price inflation surged to a 17-month high of 8.38 per cent in April



The system is so rigged, that whether it be COVID recession or post-COVID inflation, the rich gain and the poor lose

from 7.68 per cent in March. In April, prices of cereals and products touched a 21-month high of 5.96 per cent, largely reflecting the failure of procurement and unregulated wheat exports. The prices of vegetables and spices surged to a 17-month high of 15.41 per cent, 10.56 per cent respectively. Evidently, the poor who spend a larger part of their income on these goods get severely affected.

The persistence of high and rising oil and coal prices have contributed to the economy-wide effect of inflationary pressures. The escalation of international crude oil prices undoubtedly is the primary factor responsible for fuel inflation, but the government of India’s escalation of taxes in the petroleum sector is equally responsible. The taxes on petrol and diesel were increased 12 times since 2014. As a result, the tax on petrol rose nearly three times from ₹9.4 to ₹26.77 and the tax on diesel nearly nine times from ₹3.56 to ₹31.47. There is no parallel in Indian financial history of such a cold blooded and astounding hike in the tax rate for any commodity.

The result has been that the revenue from petroleum sector increased from ₹1.72 lakh crore in 2014-15 to ₹4.55 lakh crore in 2020-21 and to ₹4.16 lakh crore in 2021-22. The total sum of the revenue of the Modi government from petroleum taxes during its 8-year period is ₹26.52 lakh crore. The total number of households in India would be around the same number which implies that on an average an Indian household paid ₹1 lakh as petroleum tax. It has been a clear case of looting the poor. Fortunately for the NDA regime,

its ascendancy coincided with the decline in the international prices of crude oil. The tax escalation was calibrated to ensure that the gains of lower crude oil prices were not passed on to consumers and mopped up as additional tax revenue. The protests were muted because there was no increase in the retail prices. Even during the height of the pandemic, taxes were raised ruthlessly.

But at a time when the international crude oil prices began to firm up, the Central government refused to reduce the tax until the danger of inflation getting out of hand appeared on the horizon. In November 2021 and now this May 2022, the government reduced taxes on petrol and diesel cumulatively by ₹13 and ₹16 respectively. Yet, this is only a partial reduction of the huge increases that have been heaped on the nation during the period of the Modi government. The government is unwilling to roll back the entire hike in taxes on petroleum effected from 2014. The Modi government is clinging on to an effective additional tax of ₹12.27 for petrol and ₹10.47 for diesel, which have been added since it came to power.

There is yet another factor that is pushing up the cost of inputs – the depreciation of the Indian rupee. From ₹64 to a dollar the exchange rate has come down to nearly ₹78 to a dollar. This means that to import the same units of commodities or services purchased at ₹64 in 2014, the importers would now have to cough up ₹78.

The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) has been continually much above the CPI and in April 2022 it climbed to a 30-year high of 15.08 per cent

due to an across-the-board rise in prices in all segments. The high and persistent input prices may be absorbed by the manufacturers in the short-run at the expense of their profits but in the medium term it would be passed on to the retail prices. Therefore, the worst is yet to come.

The ultimate buyers, the consumers, would have to transfer a substantial portion of their income to the sellers – the traders and manufacturers. Inflation is a process of transferring income from the buyers to the sellers. It is very unlikely that the primary producers whose markets are controlled by the former would benefit from the commodity boom. And the government also stands to benefit as our brief discussion on oil prices has shown. But the people and the country stand to lose.

A recent Oxfam report ‘Profiteering from Pain’ has concluded that every 30 hours, one billionaire is born while nearly one million people crash into extreme poverty. The system is so rigged, that whether it be COVID recession or post-COVID inflation, the rich gain and the poor lose.

The major counter inflation intervention has been to raise the interest rate by 0.4 percentage point and mandatory cash reserve ratio of banks by 0.5 percentage points. It is evident that the policies pursued during the last two years will be reversed in the coming months and the monetary policy will retreat to the pre-COVID moorings.

The above approach assumes that excess demand is a major factor in triggering inflation. But more important are the supply side constraints pushing up the cost. It is more a cost push inflation than the classic demand-pull inflation. The attempt to squeeze the demand would have serious adverse consequences for growth. It can undermine the recovery.

Therefore, more resolute action is required on the supply side. The entire additional taxes imposed on petroleum products will have to be rolled back. Cereal procurement must be speeded up and the PDS strengthened. The oligopolistic pricing by business house cartels must be curtailed and competition promoted. It may be noted that Kerala and Tamil Nadu, which have a more robust PDS, have relatively much lower retail prices than rest of the country.

The writer is a former Finance Minister of Kerala.  
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SPECTRUM DIGITAL BANKING

Changing the way banking is done



Bikash Narayan Mishra

GOVERNMENT’S INITIATIVE TO SET UP 75 DBUs IN AS MANY DISTRICTS IS A MAJOR STEP TO BRING MORE PEOPLE INTO BANKING SYSTEM

India is accelerating fast on the highway of digital economy and currently boasts of a superior ecosystem which has encouraged a thousand innovations across the spectrum. We have already hit a century when it comes to unicorns in startups with a total valuation of \$332.7 billion. It is now said that one out of every 10 unicorns globally has been born here.

In this backdrop it comes as no surprise if digital lending is also attracting the attention of both banks and policymakers. While we celebrate our success in the field of IT, the bedrock of a country’s success lies if the fruits of development reach out to the last person.

The government’s initiative to set up 75 Digital Banking Units (DBUs) in as many districts is indeed a major step to bring more people into the fold of the modern economy. Even today, 65 per cent of our country’s populace live in rural

areas. There are as many as 6,40,000 villages in our country and a sizable population of these villages is still out of ambit of formal credit for various reasons. We have some 53,000-odd bank branches in villages. So on an average one bank branch is serving some 12 villages. But this is not uniform. In some states and in underdeveloped areas one bank branch is serving 20 or even more villages.

Across most states, and especially in eastern India – Bengal, Bihar and Odisha – the share of the number of accounts held by small and marginal farmers is disproportionately low when compared to their actual numbers. This again does not include landless farmers, oral lessees and sharecroppers. Most people in rural areas are still not comfortable visiting a bank branch and use the help of agents/middlemen. But they have comfort with a friendly branch manager of a bank who can un-

derstand their language and requirements. These new 75 DBUs will play a major part in breaking those barriers and make customers ‘aatmanirbhar’ to handle their banking needs and seek more services from their lenders. This initiative has the potential to break the chain where a lot of people in rural India continue to be largely dependent on informal sources of credit.

The focus of DBUs will be on educating customers and engaging prospective customers on a digital journey. Emphasis will also be on cyber security awareness and safeguards. A customer redressal mechanism will also be put in place to redress the grievances of customers of the command area. This indeed is a bold move to facilitate digitisation in rural areas. There are 775 districts in the country and this experiment which is being carried out in some 10 per cent of districts can be extended to more districts in future.

Bringing the postal offices, which is another budget announcement, under core banking solution will go a long way in enhancing the reach of rural populace to formal banking and formal credit network. The existing 53,000 bank branches and let us say another one lakh postal bank branches in rural areas will bring down the number of villages per bank branch from existing 12 to maybe 4/5. The business correspondents can continue to play their ‘Bank Mitra’ roles side by side. The transfer payment story has been quite a success from a modest beginning in 2016 to now when NPCI aims at 1 billion transactions a day in the next 3-5 years. In a similar fashion these DBUs can usher in the next generation reforms in India’s banking sector.

The writer is a senior advisor with the Indian Banks’ Association. Views are personal.

Woman of steel

Sir, Indian women’s boxing is almost synonymous with Mary Kom. She was the first Indian woman to win an Asian and World gold medal. Later Sarita Devi, Jenny RL and Lekha KC did India proud by winning gold medals at world championship. Of course, the redoubtable Mary was crowned champion for six times. It’s Nikhat Zareen’s turn now to hog the limelight. The 25-year-old comprehensively ousted Thailand’s Jitpong Jutamas in the 52 kg flyweight division at Istanbul to emerge victorious. Nikhat’s route to fame has not been rosy by any means. The girl from Telangana’s Nizamabad fought tradition and conservatism to become what she is today. Baptised to boxing at the age of 13, Nikhat went from strength to strength after early wins. Those in the know say that the boxer is a fitness freak, and that helped her a lot in staying focused. Even a crippling shoulder injury, which put her out of action for a year, could not threaten her ability to concentrate hard. Boxing in India is quite a popular sport. The sport discipline requires tremendous training to stay fit. Both professional and amateur boxers make it a point to train hard to retain or gain weight according to their set plans. For many Indian girls, what started as a pastime to boost the much-needed self-defence mechanism, boxing has flowered into a profession. Plenty of girls have taken to the game as a passion to excel. Presence of skillful and dedicated coaches has furthered the girls’ cause. Some top Indian women boxers, whose families struggled to make both ends meet, attained glory through years of hard work and focus. Sponsorship and government support have worked well but much more requires to be done to catch young talents in their nascent stage. Most importantly, parents should curb their natural instincts of being overprotective towards their daughters. Sports as a career in India, especially for girls, is still a taboo in most cultures and households.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Secure Indo-Pacific

Sir, India joined the US and eleven other nations in the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) that seeks an open, inclusive, interconnected and secure Indo-Pacific for sustainable growth of the region. The initiative came ahead of the crucial Quad meeting and aimed to counter China’s growing economic influence in the region. The IPEF covers half the world’s population and over 40% of the global GDP. Meanwhile, India and the US signed an Investment Incentive Agreement that superseded a similar pact in 1997.

NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST are most welcome to contribute letters (200 words), articles and columns (between 750-1250 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, Rasulgari Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010



The agencies working in the infrastructure sector, such as roads and railways, should map their projects with the water bodies being developed under Amrit Sarovar. This would be a win-win situation as the material dug out for the Amrit Sarovars can be utilised for civil works by the agencies

**NARENDRA MODI** | PRIME MINISTER

Extremely honoured to have the opportunity of meeting the Hon'ble President of India Shri Ram Nath Kovind ji at Rashtrapati Bhawan today. I sought his blessings for my onward journey as the Chief Minister of Tripura

**MANIK SAHA** | TRIPURA CHIEF MINISTER

The media has immense ability to shape the right public perceptions and perspectives as an effective tool of empowerment. The Doordarshan and All India Radio significantly delivered on their mandate of public service was proved by their role in setting the trend through prompt coverage, ground reports and organising programmes on public health

**ANURAG THAKUR** | UNION MINISTER FOR INFORMATION & BROADCASTING



**Nobody is asking anything for free, but everybody should get what is rightfully due to them. There is no alternative but to conduct a 'caste-based' Census**

**SHARAD PAWAR**  
NCP PRESIDENT

# EC tightens noose on parties flouting rules

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 25:** Tightening the noose around unrecognised registered political parties for flouting rules, including those related to filing of contribution reports and indulging in “serious” financial impropriety, the Election Commission Wednesday said it has initiated graded action against more than 2,100 such parties.

Sixty-six such parties claimed IT exemption in FY20 without complying with statutory requirements under the Representation of the People Act and 2,174 have not submitted contribution reports, the EC said.

“Action to be initiated against those receiving donations without due statutory compliances. Action initiated against three registered unrecognised political parties (RUPPs) reported to be involved in serious financial impropriety. Eighty-seven non-existent RUPPs shall be deleted from the list and benefits under the Symbols Order (1968) withdrawn,” the poll panel said in a statement.

Soon after Kumar had taken over as the financial services secretary, one of the first major decisions he took was to ask banks to flag shell companies deregistered by the Registrars of Companies and take appropriate action. Over 2.26 lakh shell companies were deregistered in 2017-18. Subsequently, banks were also asked



**THERE ARE 2,796 REGISTERED UNRECOGNISED POLITICAL PARTIES AS IN SEPTEMBER, 2021, WHICH IS AN INCREASE OF OVER 300 PER CENT SINCE 2001**

**THE MASSIVE CLEAN-UP DRIVE BY THE POLL PANEL CAME DAYS AFTER RAJIV KUMAR TOOK OVER AS THE CHIEF ELECTION COMMISSIONER MAY 15**

to ring-fence the cash flow of corporate borrowers and to ensure that their earnings are not diverted for other purposes to protect the interest of depositors.

The poll watchdog pointed out that out of 2354 RUPPs, over 92 per cent did not file their contribution report in 2019. 199 RUPPs claimed ₹445 crore as IT exemption in 2018-19 and 219 RUPPs claimed ₹608 crore IT exemption in 2019-20. Out of these, 66 have claimed income tax exemption without submitting contribution reports in Form 24A as mandated under section 29C of the Representation of the People Act.

It said 87 RUPPs have been found to be not in existence. In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, out of 2354 RUPPs only 623 contested polls – 70 per cent did not contest elections, it said.

EC said it has “noted with serious concern” that out of total 2796 RUPPs, a large number are neither taking

part in electoral process nor adhering to the one or several of the requirements which defeats the purpose of clean electoral ecosystem.

There are 87 RUPPs who have not informed EC about their change of address as required.

These parties have been found to be non-existent after a physical verification. The names of such non-existent RUPPs shall be deleted from the list of register of unrecognised registered political parties. Any party aggrieved from this, can approach the concerned chief electoral officer within 30 days.

Three RUPPs which have been reported, prima facie to be involved in serious financial impropriety such as incriminating documents related to bogus donation receipts, formation of shell entities, bogus and non-genuine purchases, facilitating accommodation entries, will be proceeded against under extant legal regime.

## Lightning kills 250 sheep

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Srinagar, May 25:** At least 250 sheep were killed by lightning in Jammu and Kashmir's Anantnag district, official sources said Wednesday.

“The incident took place in a pasture in Hoksar area of Kokernag tehsil in Anantnag district during the intervening night of Monday and Tuesday,” they said. Sheep from different low lying areas of the Valley are taken to highland pastures for grazing during the summer months. These vast open areas are usually vulnerable to the vagaries of nature like snowfall, hailstorm and



cloudbursts which result in huge damage to livestock. Widespread, light to moderate rains, thunderstorms, lightning and gusty winds were also observed in Jammu-Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, while scattered showers lashed Punjab, Delhi, Haryana and Chandigarh and Uttar Pradesh earlier this week.

## Cong makes light of Sibal's resignation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kochi/New Delhi, May 25:** The Congress Wednesday sought to put up a brave face after senior leader and former union minister Kapil Sibal quit the party, saying its space is large in the national polity and many leaders joining the grand old party in various states is not being taken note of.

Reacting to the development, Congress spokesperson Pawan Khara said he is a spokesperson of the party, or a law minister in the Congress government, “our identity” is through the Congress and not the other way round. “None of us should forget this,” he said. AICC General Secretary K C Venugopal said eight former MLAs joined the party in Haryana two days ago, and lamented that such fresh developments were not getting prominence.

He was responding to PTI's query on the continuing trend of leaders leaving the Congress even after the ‘Chintan Shivir’ held in Rajasthan recently. Venugopal said Sibal, who filed his nomination for Rajya

Sabha as an independent supported by the Samajwadi Party from Uttar Pradesh Wednesday, has not said anything against the Congress ideology in his resignation letter. Venugopal declined to comment when asked whether Sibal left the party eyeing only a Rajya Sabha seat as the Congress has no seats in its kitty to accommodate the senior leader. The Congress leader also did not respond to other queries like the implications for the party following Sibal's resignation.

Earlier, talking to reporters in Kochi on Sibal's exit, Venugopal said, “The space of the Congress is very broad”. He said there will be a complete revamp of the party very soon, as more young faces would be inducted in line with the decisions arrived at during the Udaipur conclave.

He said the Congress will continue to take on the BJP government, “which has unleashed central agencies including Enforce Directorate (ED), Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and Intelligence Bureau (IB) after their opponents to eliminate them politically”.

## Assam floods: Toll rises to 28

**Guwahati:** The death toll from the pre-monsoon floods in Assam Wednesday rose to 28 as two more deaths were reported, officials said, adding 5.75 lakh people in the state's 15 districts were affected. The flood situation, however, is said to have improved marginally. Officials of the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) said that an inter-ministerial Central team of six members would be on a two-day visit to the flood-ravaged state beginning Friday to assess the damage caused to the properties, crops, loss of lives and other aspects. The ASDMA officials said that the team, led by Ravinesh Kumar, Financial Advisor, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) of the Home Ministry, would visit Cachar, Dima Hasao, Darrang, Nagaon and Hojai districts to assess the extent of loss caused by rain-induced floods and landslides.

## TOUGH RULES

The Mumbai traffic police Wednesday issued a notification making helmets mandatory for pillion riders as well and warned of action against those who violate the rule



## 3 Pak JeM ultras killed in encounter

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Srinagar, May 25:** Three Pakistani militants of Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) outfit were Wednesday killed in a “chance” encounter with security forces in Baramulla district of Jammu and Kashmir, police said.

A cop also lost his life in the encounter which took place at Najibhat crossing in Kreeri area in the north Kashmir district.

Inspector General of Police, Vijay Kumar, said the encounter took place at one of the ‘nakas’(checkpoints) laid by the security forces across the valley. “There were nakas across Kashmir today (Wednesday). At one such naka at Najibhat crossing in Kreeri area, there

was a chance encounter (with militants). Three Pakistani JeM terrorists were killed,” the IGP told reporters here. He said a policeman was also killed in the encounter. Kumar said while the police force was pained at the loss of one of its men, the killing of the three terrorists was a huge success. “The three terrorists could have come to Srinagar and carried out some big attack,” he said. The IGP said the terrorists were active in the hilly areas of Gulmarg for the last three to four months. “We were regularly tracking them,” he said, adding, so far this year, 22 Pakistani terrorists have been killed in various encounters with security forces.

## Woman shot dead

**Srinagar:** Three Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorists shot dead a woman TV artist and injured her minor nephew at her home in Jammu and Kashmir's Budgam district Wednesday, police said. The incident took place in the Hashoora Chadoora area of the central Kashmir district. The woman was identified as Amreen Bhat and her nephew as Farhan Zubair (10), they said. Political parties condemned the “dastardly” attack and said there can be no justification for targeting innocents. A case has been registered in the matter under relevant sections of law and an investigation is underway, a police spokesperson said.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

It is herewith informed that, I the undersigned being the absolute recorded owner as per Mutation ROR in respect of Khata No-180/240, Plot No-397/922 corresponding to Khata No-180/215, Plot No-397/922, Area-Ac 0.500 dcml. under Mouza- Narasingha Prasad, PS- Bansada in Bhadrak District. That due to negligence the Regd. Sale Deed bearing No- 2211, Dt- 10.11.2006 as well as the Mutation ROR in respect of Khata No-180/215 as the previous link document were misplaced somewhere from my custody and as I am unable to trace/ find the same despite my best efforts. Neither I nor my family members have not created any type of mortgage/ charge/lien with any bank or financial institutions by depositing the said document/s in respect of the property as mentioned above. That the Punjab National Bank, Bapuji Nagar Branch, Bhubaneswar have in principle agreed to sanctioned to advance a Cash Credit loan in favour of M/s Golden Anchor Pvt. Ltd. by way of sale/ purchase against the security of above said immovable property and if any individual, Bank, Financial Institution is holding the said document/s in original as security for any mortgage/loan granted, they are requested to inform the PUNJAB NATIONAL BANK, BAPUJI NAGAR BRANCH, BAPUJI NAGAR, BHUBANESWAR-751014 (Mob. No 7738366030) within 15 days from the date of Publication of notice/advertisement relating to the above property.

**Smt Annapurna Dash**  
**W/o Amarendra Dash**  
**For & on behalf of Golden Anchor Pvt. Ltd.**  
**Address: Dinilipi Bhawan, A-54/1 & A-55/1,**  
**Nayapalli, Baramunda, Bhubaneswar-751003,**  
**Dist-Khordha, Odisha. 9040415899**

## FORM A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

(Under Regulation 6 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (Insolvency Resolution Process for Corporate Persons) Regulations, 2016)

**FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE CREDITORS OF M/s SOHAN MINERALS AND MINING COMPANY PRIVATE LIMITED**

RELEVANT PARTICULARS	
1. Name of corporate debtor	M/s SOHAN MINERALS AND MINING COMPANY PRIVATE LIMITED
2. Date of incorporation of corporate debtor	23/02/2007
3. Authority under which corporate debtor is incorporated / registered	Registrar of Companies, Kolkata
4. Corporate Identity No. / Limited Liability Identification No. of corporate debtor	U14219WB2007PTC113850
5. Address of the registered office and principal office (if any) of corporate debtor	8, Ho Chi Minh Sarani, Harrington Mansion Office No. 28/8, 3rd Floor Kolkata – 700071, West Bengal
6. Insolvency commencement date in respect of corporate debtor	24/05/2022
7. Estimated date of closure of insolvency resolution process	19/11/2022
8. Name and registration number of the insolvency professional acting as interim resolution professional	Rajesh Kumar Agrawal Regn No.: IBBI/PA-001/IP-P01023/2017-2018/11722
9. Address and e-mail of the interim resolution professional, as registered with the Board	Room No. 301, 3rd Floor, 1, Ganesh Chandra Avenue, Kolkata- 700013, West Bengal, India Email: rajes521@yahoo.com
10. Address and e-mail to be used for correspondence with the interim resolution professional	Room No. 301, 3rd Floor, 1, Ganesh Chandra Avenue, Kolkata- 700013, West Bengal, India Email: rajes521@yahoo.com
11. Last date for submission of claims	07/06/2022
12. Classes of creditors, if any, under clause (b) of sub-section (8A) of section 21, ascertained by the interim resolution professional	NA
13. Names of Insolvency Professionals identified to act as Authorised Representative of creditors in a class (Three names for each class)	NA
14. (a) Relevant Forms and (b) Details of authorized representatives are available at:	(a) <a href="https://www.ibbi.gov.in/home/downloads">https://www.ibbi.gov.in/home/downloads</a> (b) NA

Notice is hereby given that the National Company Law Tribunal has ordered the commencement of a corporate insolvency resolution process of the M/s Sohan Minerals and Mining Company Private Limited on 24/05/2022. The creditors of M/s Sohan Minerals and Mining Company Private Limited, are hereby called upon to submit their claims with proof on or before 07/06/2022 to the interim resolution professional at the address mentioned against entry No. 10. The financial creditors shall submit their claims with proof by electronic means only. All other creditors may submit the claims with proof in form, by post or by electronic means. A financial creditor belonging to a class, as listed against the entry No. 12, shall indicate its choice of authorized representative from among the three insolvency professionals listed against entry No. 13 to act as authorized representative of the class [specify class] in Form CA.

Submission of false or misleading proofs of claim shall attract penalties.

**Rajesh Kumar Agrawal**  
Interim Resolution Professional of  
Sohan Minerals and Mining Company Private Limited  
IBBI/PA-001/IP-P01023/2017-2018/11722

Date: 25/05/2022  
Place: Kolkata

## UCO Bank

**Zonal Office, UCO Bank Building, 2nd Floor, C-2, Ashok Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751009, Tel: 0674-2620423**

## POSSESSION NOTICE

**For Immovable Property**

(Under Section 13(4) of the Securitization & Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 for Immovable Property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the **UCO Bank** under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (No. 54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 issued a Demand Notice under section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the Borrower/Guarantor to repay the amount mentioned in the notice with interest at the contractual rate together with incidental expenses and costs within **60 days** from the date of the said Notice. The Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower/Guarantor and the public in general that the undersigned has taken **POSSESSION** of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13 (4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules. The Borrower/Guarantor in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the **UCO Bank** for an amount plus interest & expenses thereon.

AIIMS SIJUA BRANCH, BHUBANESWAR / Name and Address of Borrower / Guarantor	Amount Outstanding as on Specified Date	Date of Demand Notice / Date of Possession	Description of the Immovable property
<b>Borrower: Hariun Nesha, W/o.: Ayub Khan, At: Plot No.: 87/832, Near Mamta Ali High School, Jadupur, PS.: Khandagiri, Bhubaneswar - 751019 / Guarantor: Ayub Khan, S/o.: Late Rosan Khan, At: Plot No.: 87/832, Near Mamta Ali High School, Jadupur, PS.: Khandagiri, Bhubaneswar - 751019</b>	<b>₹15,85,910/-</b> and further interest, other charges thereon from 24.05.2022	<b>14.02.2022 / 24.05.2022</b>	EMTD of Residential Plot Area: 1307 Sq.ft. situated at Plot No.: 99/669 & 99/8119, Sub Plot No.: 99/B, Sale Deed No.: 11131112322, Dated: 23.09.2011, under Mouza: Begunia, SRO: Khandagiri, PS.: Khandagiri, Bhubaneswar, Khurda, <b>Total Area: 1307 Sq.ft.</b> , standing in the name of <b>Hariun Nesha, W/o.: Ayub Khan</b> , Bounded by North: Plot No.: 98, East: Purposed Road, South: Sub Plot No.: 99/A, West: Cada Nala
<b>Place: Bhubaneswar Date: 25.05.2022</b>			<b>Authorised Officer UCO Bank</b>

## FEDERAL BANK

YOUR PERFECT BANKING PARTNER

**LCRD/KOLKATA DIVISION**  
**No.91A/1, Park Street, 1st Floor, Avani Signature, Kolkata-700016**

## POSSESSION NOTICE

**For Immovable Property**

Whereas the undersigned being the authorised officer **The Federal Bank Ltd** under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (herein after referred to as Act) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 (herein after referred to as Rule) issued a Demand Notice under section 13(2) of the said Act calling upon the Borrower(s) to repay the amount mentioned in the notice plus interest and expenses thereon within **60 days** from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower(s) and the public in general that has taken possession of the properties described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules.

The Borrower(s) in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealing with the said properties will be subject to the charge of the **The Federal Bank Ltd** for the amount stated below with interest & expenses thereon.

Name & Address of the Borrowers/Co-obligants	Description of the Immovable Properties	Liabilities due on the specified date as per Notice	Date of Demand/ Possession Notice
<b>Borrowers : M/S Annadatta Pesticides, At: Kulunda, Babehira Canal, Attabira, Bargharh, Orissa-768027 / Co-obligants: 1) Mr. Anil Kumar Goditi, S/o: Goditi Venkat Rao, Babehira Canal, Attabira, Bargharh, Orissa-768027, 2) Mr. Gunnam Satish Choudhury, S/o: Gunnam Srinivas Choudhury, At: Bhalupali, Attabira, Bargharh, Orissa- 768027, 3) Mr. Goditi Venkat Rao, S/o: Buchi Raidu, At: Babehira Canal, Attabira, Bargharh, Orissa - 768027</b>	All that piece and parcel of the Landed property measuring Ac. 0.15 Dec., bearing Plot No.: 3127/10007, Khata No.: 1169/167 situated at Mouza: Kulunda, P.S./Tahasil: Attabira, Dist.: Bargharh, Bounded by East: Land of Hrushikesh Nayak, West: Land of Hrushikesh Nayak, South: Land of Hrushikesh Nayak, North: Road & (As per sale Deed Doc. No.: 10161300804/2013, Dated 26.07.2013 Registered at SRO, Attabira)	<b>1) In A/c No.: 2200550000438 ₹16,95,651 as on 30.04.2022</b> <b>2) In A/c No.: 22006900000085 ₹2,38,388.22 as on 29.04.2022</b> <b>together with further interest and Cost thereon</b>	<b>19.01.2022 / 20.05.2022</b>
<b>Borrowers : 1) Dinabandhu Rana, S/o: Damodar Rana, 2) Tilottama Rana, W/o: Dinabandhu Rana, Both are At: Janugani, Srikrushnapur, Remuna, Balasore, Odisha - 756019</b>	All that piece and parcel of the Landed property measuring Ac. 0.05 Dec., with Building bearing Plot No.: 720, Khata No.: 426/629, situated at Mouza: Srikrushnapur, PS.: Remuna, P.S. No.: 165, Tahasil: Remuna, Dist.: Balasore & Bounded by East: Plot No.: 718 & 719, West: Plot No.: 720, North: Road, South: Plot No.: 717. (As per sale Deed Doc. No.: 10061802504, Dated 31.03.2018, Registered at DSRO Balasore)	<b>1) In A/c No.:18537300000461 ₹9,37,566.43 as on 20.04.2022</b> <b>2) In A/c No.: 18537300000495 ₹9,96,689/- as on 26.04.2022</b> <b>together with further interest and Cost thereon</b>	<b>14.01.2022 / 20.05.2022</b>
<b>Place : Kolkata, Date : 25.05.2022</b>		<b>Authorised Officer under SARFAESI Act 2002, For The Federal Bank Ltd.</b>	



## KALINGA GHAT TRAGEDY

# Eerie silence grips Bengal village as news trickles in from Odisha

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Udaynaryanpur (WB), May 25:** Families of small farmers and factory workers had scrimped and saved for several years to pay for a tour of their dreams in Odisha and Andhra Pradesh.

But fate willed otherwise. The bus that took them on their holiday turned turtle in the intervening night of Tuesday and Wednesday at a spot near the border between Ganjam and Kandhamal districts of Odisha as it was travelling to the port city of Vizag, leaving six dead and 40 injured.

The bodies of the villagers who were claimed by the accident are expected to arrive here Thursday. Most of those injured will stay back in government hospitals in Ganjam for their treatment. Fifteen of them are in serious condition.

As reports of the mishap reached the village and TV news channels flashed visuals of the accident an eerie silence descended on Sultanpur, which is located Udaynaryan gram panchayat area in Howrah district. The only sound heard were the cries of close relatives lamenting the dead. Kitchens throughout the village remained shut.

Villagers told PTI that a tourist bus with 60 villagers had left Sultanpur for Darringbadi in Odisha's Phulbani district May 23. On May 24 they had left Daringbadi, a hill station in Kandhamal district of Odisha, for the sandy beaches of Vishakhapatnam after dinner.



Mangled remains of a tourist bus from West Bengal after it overturned and rolled down off the road at Kalinga Ghat, in Ganjam district, Wednesday

PTI PHOTO

Bikash Denre, who was among the tourists in the ill fated bus, said over phone from Bhanjanagar in Odisha that the vehicle had hit a lamp post at around 1 am and overturned.

Denre said he was seated just two rows behind the driver. Most of the people in the bus were sleeping as it was night time.

Local people arrived after some time as did the police to begin the process of extracting the dead and injured.

The accident has dealt a severe blow to a family, which lost the lady of the house. Mausumi Denre, and her 22-year-old daughter Rima, who was to get married in six months' time. Their house lies

empty and forlorn as the father and younger daughter who survived are in Ganjam undergoing treatment.

The couple's elder daughter, who is married, did not undertake the trip, said a relative.

The accident has also taken away the life of 34-year old Barnali Manna. Her sister-in-law Kabita Manna wept as she recollected their last meeting before Barnali left with her three-year-old daughter and husband for the trip.

"Didi's death is undoubtedly a tragedy. But what is worse is the news that the child will lose a leg due to the accident. I am very sad," she said with tears in her eyes.

Locals said that the families

who went for the tour would pay monthly subscription to a local travel club to organise their travel. A big one like this one would take place after several years as they needed to accumulate more money to fund it.

The principal secretary in the state disaster management department, the block development officer and other state government officers have left for the spot. Udaynaryanpur MLA Samir Panja, who was asked to go, was later instructed to stay back and look after grieving families.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee have condoled the death of the six tourists in the mishap.

# Shivraj moves out on street to urge people to donate for kids

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Bhopal, May 25:** Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan Tuesday moved on Bhopal's streets with a flower-decked handcart to collect toys and books for children. The move was part of a campaign to encourage people for adopting Anganwadi centres.

The campaign received wide acknowledgment and appreciation from the personalities from different sections, including Bollywood actor Akhay Kumar, poet Kumar Vishwas, Swami Avdheshananda and the Nobel Laureate and Bachpan Bachao Andolans Kailash Satyarthi.

Accompanied by his Cabinet colleague and the state medical education minister Vishwav Sarang and some BJP MLAs, Chouhan made his way through Ashoka Garden locality, where a large number of people, including children with piggy banks, gathered with books, toys and other items as donations for the initiative. 10 mini-truckloads of toys, games, TV sets, coolers, water-camper, utensils, chairs, rugs and other items have been collected. The items collected will be distributed among 1,800 anganwadi centres in Bhopal district, he said. On the occasion, people also donated nearly Rs two crore towards the development of anganwadis.

Chouhan said that the campaign, started from Bhopal, will become an inspiration for the entire state. He also appealed to the people to visit anganwadi centres on their birthdays, anniversaries, in the memory of their parents, and serve food, sweets, milk and other things to the children there.

"People will feel satisfied if chil-

## 'ADOPT AN ANGANWADI'



**“In the next one to one-and-a-half years, malnutrition will be completely eradicated from Madhya Pradesh and the anganwadis will soon become children's nutrition, education and cultural centres in the state**

SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN | CM, MADHYA PRADESH

dren become healthy with their efforts," he added.

On May 20, Chouhan had announced that he will kick-start a campaign aimed at creating awareness for prevention of malnutrition among children. "I am going out on Bhopal streets with a handcart to collect toys for the children of Anganwadi, and create awareness about malnutrition among children. It is a mission to connect people to work. Why should our children remain malnourished It is not the duty of the Anganwadi worker alone to make them free from malnutrition. There should be awareness in society," he had said.

Chouhan's campaign also received wide appreciation on social media. Actor Akshay Kumar in support of the mission tweeted, "I will be very happy if I can do any-

thing for the Anganwadi kids. It's a wonderful cause and I wish more power to you." Akshay Kumar in a tweet said he will be donating Rs one crore and adopting 50 anganwadis in the state.

Poet Kumar Vishwas also supported the move stating on social media that he will donate a few of his self-written children-literature and other necessary books for the kids.

However, the state Congress criticised the campaign calling it a well planned drama by Chouhan to divert attention of people from the real issues in the state.

"Shivraj Singh Chouhan never does anything that he is supposed to do. Whenever there is time to do anything, or to fulfil responsibilities, he instead indulges in making an event-drama," said the state Congress president Kamal Nath.

# Speculations galore as Dilip Ghosh relieved of WB affairs

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Kolkata, May 25:** In a significant move, BJP's national Vice President Dilip Ghosh was Wednesday relieved of the party's organisational responsibilities in home state West Bengal, and entrusted the task of expanding the party's base in Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Manipur, Meghalaya, Assam, and Tripura. Although the announcement on this count was officially made in New Delhi by the BJP's national President JP Nadda, the rippling effect of that development has led the ball of speculations roll in West Bengal.

Questions are making the rounds

on why Ghosh, under whose leadership the BJP achieved its best-ever results in any election in West Bengal in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls by bagging 18 out of 42 seats, was relieved from the affairs of the party organisation in the state. He is himself a MP from the state.

Political observers feel that in recent times severe differences between Ghosh and the other party leaders in West Bengal had done significant harm for the party in the state especially as regards to public image. So, considering the seniority of Ghosh in the party and his contribution in expanding the party's base in West Bengal, he was given a respectable exit route.

# Efforts on to restore peace in MP's riot-hit Khargone



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Bhopal, May 25:** One-and-a-half months after communal violence broke out in Madhya Pradesh's Khargone district that left one dead and many injured, efforts to restore peace and harmony in the riot-hit area by the district administration and the police continue.

Although, no incident was reported after April 10, the district administration and police have kept a close watch in this area. Section 144 was re-imposed May 12 in the district as a preventive measure and will remain till July 10, as per the earlier notification of the district administration.

"Section 144 has been re-imposed in Khargone district as a preventive measure and no processions, Jagarans, and shobha yatras will be allowed in the district till July 10," said an order issued by the district administration May 12.

In a step to restore peace and harmony between the two communities living together for the past several decades, newly appointed Collector Kumar Purushottam and the Superintendent of Police (SP) Dharamveer Yadav

reached out to people in their locality. The officials met the residents to rebuild trust among the people.

The officials had detailed conversations with the residents, ensuring them that no such incident would be repeated and the culprits will be given strict punishment. This visit was held Monday night when the Collector and the SP went to Bhatwadi locality of Khargone city.

"We have come here to assure that we will not let any violence happen now. You (residents) need not be worried and help us bring peace and harmony in your locality. Those who have done this will be taught a tough lesson," said Purushottam, during an interaction with the locals.

In an administrative reshuffle May 15, previous Khargone SP Siddharth Choudhary and Collector Anugraha P were transferred. Choudhary has been transferred to police headquarters, Bhopal as AIG, while Anugraha P is now OSD, MP Bhawan, New Delhi.

Ravi Joshi, MLA (Congress) from Khargone city, talking to IANS said, "The situation is peaceful in the city now. District administration and police are making all efforts to rebuild confidence among the people. It is the responsibility of people also to maintain peace and harmony with neighbours and help change the bad image of this historic city."

Communal violence broke out in Khargone city April 10 after a group of miscreants pelted stones at a Ram Navami procession.

## SHOWER IN CITY



Pedestrians holding umbrellas cross a road as a taxi drives by amid rainfall in Kolkata

PTI PHOTO

# Held in Nepal, Bengal photographer waits for relief

*The photographer, who identifies himself as a contributor of National Geographic on his LinkedIn page, has been waiting for assistance from India since his arrest in November on charges of carrying photocopies of US Dollars*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, May 25:** A trip to Nepal turned into a nightmare for a photographer from West Bengal as he ended up in prison for allegedly carrying jpeg image printouts of USD 100 notes, which he would have needed there for shooting a short film.

Alone and helpless in Nepal, Durlav Roy Chowdhury (24), a resident of Salkia in West Bengal's Howrah district, had been waiting for assistance from India since November.

Speaking to PTI over phone from ward number 2 of Jhapa Karagaar in Nepal, Roy Chowdhury said that

court hearing of his case is scheduled May 25, and he is hoping to get reprieve as he has not done anything illegal.

Eshor Raj Poudel, the consul general of Nepal in Kolkata, when approached by PTI, said he had no information about the case.

"I will explore this and talk to the authorities and the district magistrate of Jhapa. As this is a legal matter, we need to see the evidence. But I can give assurance that all support would be rendered to the family of the man under trial," Poudel stated.

The photographer, who identifies himself as a contributor of National Geographic on his LinkedIn page, claimed that he was being denied basic facilities in the jail.

He also said that he was subjected to torture for 20 days since his arrest November 24 before being produced before a court which then sent him to judicial custody.

"I started my journey last November. At every checkpoint, I had showed security personnel the printouts of the USD bills that I had with me for the shoot. They allowed me to get through. At the Chandragadi Airport, however, authorities sent me to an office and I was subsequently detained,"



he maintained.

Roy Chowdhury said he was carrying around 230 pieces of prop USD notes, which, in no way, matched with actual currency when forensic tests were conducted, the report of which he shared with PTI.

"I had planned to throw them in the air and shoot a sequence for my film 'Money Isn't Everything'. I

had never thought that I would be charged with 'Mudra Sambandhi Kasoor' (offence related to currency) for it in Nepal," he said.

"I have been treated like an animal by Nepalese Police. They didn't allow me to call my mother in India for weeks or share my ordeal with anyone else. For the first few weeks, I was not given my inhaler. My health deteriorated and

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Panna, May 25:** A woman from a village has found a 2.08-carat diamond in a shallow mine in Madhya Pradesh's Panna district, officials said Wednesday.

The stone is of good quality and may fetch up to Rs 10 lakh in auction, they said.

The woman's husband, who is a farmer, said they want to buy a house in Panna city if they get a good price from the auction of the diamond.

Chameli Bai, a housewife residing in Itwakala village, recently found the 2.08 carat diamond in a mine which she had taken on lease in Krishna Kalyanpur Pati area of the district, said Anupam Singh, an official from Panna's diamond office. The woman deposited the precious stone in the diamond office Tuesday, the official said.

The diamond will be put up for sale in an upcoming auction and the price will be fixed as per the government guidelines, he said.

The proceeds would be given to



the woman after the deduction of government royalty and taxes, officials said.

The woman's husband, Arvind Singh, said they had decided to try their luck in diamond mining and leased a small mine in Krishna Kalyanpur Pati area in March this year.

He said they now plan to buy a house in Panna city with the money from the diamond auction.

Panna district is estimated to have diamond reserves of 12 lakh carats.

only then they showed mercy," he said.

The 24-year-old also rued that language has been a major barrier. He claimed that the Indian Embassy in Nepal has been of little help to him.

"I keep calling the Indian Embassy here every day but the officials there maintain they won't be able to do much for me. The only thing they helped me with is a lawyer," the photographer stated.

His mother, Tripti Roy Chowdhury, a cancer patient, said she had been running from pillar to post to secure freedom for his son over the past few months. She said that she came to know about her son's imprisonment only in January.

She said that her attempts to reach out to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee yielded no result thus far.

Roy Chowdhury's mother, who is also in Nepal at present for the court hearing, said she would appeal to the judge for the release of her son, who is suffering in jail for no valid reason.

"I also want plead to the chief minister for help. I'm a cancer patient and have no one to turn to other than my son. I believe the CM will sympathise with my situation," she added.



of the day quote

The BJP is committed to bringing the Uniform Civil Code and it is going to implement it. It was the BJP, which had terminated Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir

SHRINIVAS POOJARI | MEMBER OF THE KARNATAKA LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Political developments in Maharashtra over the upcoming polls to the Rajya Sabha were an attempt to corner former MP Sambhaji Chhatrapati, who was seeking support for his candidature

DEVENDRA FADNAVIS | BJP LEADER

Wheat prices crashed after the announcement of an export ban, which meant a loss to farmers already hit by a heat wave that has reduced crop yield. At the same time changes in the ban order meant exporters could continue to export and profit (from high international wheat prices)

YOGENDRA YADAV | JAI KISAN ANDOLAN LEADER

SHORT TAKES

President to visit Kerala, Maha, MP

**New Delhi:** President Ram Nath Kovind will visit Kerala, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh to attend a host of programmes, according to a statement issued by the Rashtrapati Bhavan Wednesday. The president will leave Delhi Wednesday evening and return to the national capital Sunday, the statement said. Kovind will inaugurate the National Women Legislators' Conference-2022, being organised by the Kerala Legislative Assembly in Thiruvananthapuram, Thursday.

Partha Chatterjee appears before CBI

**Kolkata:** West Bengal minister Partha Chatterjee Wednesday appeared before the CBI here for interrogation in connection with its probe into the alleged irregularities of appointments in government-run and aided schools by West Bengal School Service Commission (WBSSC). Chatterjee, who was the education minister when the alleged illegal appointments were made, on Wednesday will be asked the same questions for which his answers did not match with those by the members of the advisory panel in connection with the scam, a CBI officer told PTI.

Retirees tap savings, eat less as living costs soar

REUTERS

**New Delhi, May 25:** In India, meagre state pensions mean only a minority of retirees can afford proper healthcare with nearly 15 million of those aged 60 and above - around 10% of the total - nearly homeless.

Food items, which account for nearly half of the consumer price index, have jumped, with wheat, edible oil, vegetables, fruits, meat and tea up by between 10% and 25% in a year. Cooking gas and petrol prices climbed more than 40%. "Inflation is the biggest blow to older people," said Anupama Datta, director at the HelpAge India charity, which estimates that nearly 90 million of 138 million people aged 60 years or more are working in order to earn enough to live on.

India's central bank warns elevated inflation will persist at least until September.

DIPPING INTO SAVINGS

Many Indian pensioners rely on savings built over decades for their retirement. There are no official estimates but pensioners' associations said many of them represent are now forced to draw more from those accounts than pre-



INDIA'S RETIREES FEELING THE PINCH AS INFLATION SURGES	SAVING RATES HAVE DROPPED AS PEOPLE WITHDRAW MORE MONEY
SOME OLDER PEOPLE ARE PUTTING OFF RETIREMENT	GOVERNMENT VOWS TO HELP, BUT STATE PENSIONS ARE TINY

viously, India's gross savings rate is estimated to have fallen to below 30% of GDP in the fiscal year ended March, from over 32% before the pandemic. Economists do not expect that to change next year. Average interest rates on long-term deposits have also fallen to 6% from 8.5% over the past three years, taking it below headline inflation. Some pensioners have

switched to riskier investments, including equities and mutual funds, but after two good years of returns even stocks are now struggling with the benchmark index (.NSEI) down over 6% this year. India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) conceded that the elderly have been particularly hard hit by inflation. Gopal Krishna Agarwal, the



In Pakistan, one man was lynched. They sentenced six to death and 12 others were given life sentence. How many Akhlaqs have been lynched here so far since 2015? No one has been punished

MEHBOOBA MUFTI | PDP PRESIDENT

Life comes full circle for Yasin Malik

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 25:** From a Pakistan-trained militant to one of the prominent separatist faces in Kashmir, life has come a full circle for chief of the banned Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) Yasin Malik who was in limelight for varied reasons over the past three decades of turmoil in the erstwhile restive border state.

Having renounced the path of violence and donned the political cloak in 1994, Malik, who is married to a Pakistani artist and has a 10-year-old daughter, had announced Gandhian way of protest after his release and was perceived to be a moderate voice in the separatist camp. Born April 3, 1966 in Maisuma locality in the heart of Srinagar, Malik is also facing trial in the much-publicised abduction case of Rubaiya Sayeed, daughter of the then Union home minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed in 1989, and an attack by JKLF militants on IAF personnel in Srinagar that left four dead and many others injured in 1990.

Malik started his anti-national activities at a very young age in 1980s when he formed Tala party which was involved in an attempt to disrupt the 1983 cricket match between India and West Indies in the Sher-e-Kashmir Stadium in



Srinagar besides staging a protest against the hanging of JKLF founder Mohammad Maqbool Bhat in Delhi's Tihar Jail February 11, 1984. After undergoing detention for months together on different occasions, Malik's activities increased after his Tala party was renamed as Islamic Students League (ISL) that campaigned vigorously for Muslim United Front (MUF) candidates in the 1987 assembly elections.

The MUF candidates including Mohammad Yousuf Shah lost the elections amid allegations of mass rigging. Shah alias Syed Sallahuddin is now the supreme commander of banned Hizbul Mujahideen based in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

Both Shah and Malik were prominent faces among many others ar-

Clashes erupt in Maisuma

**Srinagar:** Clashes erupted between supporters of JKLF chairman Yasin Malik and security forces in Maisuma locality here Wednesday, even as parts of the city observed a spontaneous shutdown ahead of a court's verdict on the quantum of sentence for the separatist leader convicted in a terror funding case, officials said.

rested for several months in the aftermath of the elections without a formal charge.

After his release, Malik was among the first batch of youths who crossed the Line of Control (LoC) into PoK for arms training in 1988 to join JKLF.

CHINESE VISA CASE

ED registers case against Karti, others



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 25:** The ED has registered a money laundering case against Congress MP Karti Chidambaram and others to probe alleged irregularities in the issuance of visas to 263 Chinese nationals in 2011 when his father P Chidambaram was the home minister, officials said Wednesday.

The federal agency has filed its case under the criminal sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) taking cognisance of a recent first information report (FIR) registered by the CBI in the same case, they said. The case pertains to allegations of Rs 50 lakh being paid as kickbacks to Karti and his close associate S Bhaskararaman by a top executive of Vedanta group company Talwandi Sabo Power Ltd. (TSPL), which was setting up a power plant in Punjab, the CBI FIR had said. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had raided the premises of the

Chidambaram family and arrested Bhaskararaman last week, even as Karti Chidambaram is expected to depose before it for questioning.

This is the third money laundering case against Karti Chidambaram with the INX Media and Aircel-Maxis cases being probed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) for some years now.

The ED will probe the possible "proceeds of crime" that could have been generated due to the alleged illegal activity in the visa case, they said.

The accused involved in the case will be questioned as part of the investigation, officials said. Fifty-year-old Karti Chidambaram, the Congress MP from the Sivaganga constituency in Tamil Nadu, has denied all allegations.

In a statement posted on his Twitter handle Tuesday, he said "if this is not harassment, not a witch hunt, then what is." According to the CBI, the work for setting up the power project was being executed by a Chinese company and was running behind schedule.

A TSPL executive had sought re-issuance of project visas for 263 Chinese workers for which Rs 50 lakh allegedly exchanged hands, according to the CBI FIR.

The CBI, in its FIR of May 14, has named Karti Chidambaram, Bhaskararaman, Makharia, Talwandi Sabo Power Limited (TSPL), and Mumbai-based Bell Tools Limited, through which alleged bribes were routed. The case was registered under Indian Penal Code sections 120-B (criminal conspiracy) and 477A (falsification of accounts) and sections 8 and 9 of the Prevention of Corruption Act.

SHAMEFUL INCIDENT

A man has been arrested for assaulting a sadhu and forcefully cutting his hair in Madhya Pradesh's Khandwa district, State Home Minister Narottam Mishra said. Minister Mishra condemned the incident saying that those insulting Sadhus should be taught a tough lesson



Govt begins search for new IB, RAW, NIA chiefs



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, May 25:** The government has initiated the process to select chiefs for the country's top intelligence agencies - the Intelligence Bureau (IB), the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW), and the National Investigation Agency (NIA), security sources said.

The government does not seem to be in the mood to give further extension to the present IB and R&AW chiefs, they said.

The tenure of current IB chief Arvind Kumar will come to an end by this month while R&AW chief Samanta Goel will be retiring on June 30. Both Kumar and Goel were given a one year extension in May last year beyond their scheduled service tenure.

The sources also said that the government, most likely, is willing to give command to the senior-

most officers of the IB and the R&AW, while appointing IPS officers from outside the organisations will be the last option.

As per the sources, the frontrunner for the post of IB chief is 1987 batch Bihar cadre IPS officer A.S. Rajan, who is currently serving as its number two.

Rajan has served as Deputy Director and Joint Director in Gujarat and is rated highly by the government.

Tapan Deka, a 1988 batch officer from Himachal Pradesh cadre, is also the in the race for the top IB post. He is at present working as Special Director and also is in charge of counter-terror operations in Jammu and Kashmir.

Sources said that present CBI Director Subodh Kumar Jaiswal is also being considered for the R&AW. He was head of R&AW's Mumbai station in 2008 when the terror attack took place and served a considerable time in the agency.

It is also learnt that CRPF DG Kuldeep Singh, who is holding additional charge of the National Investigation Agency, could be its next chief. The government is also searching for the new Director General of the Sashashtra Seema Bal which as of now under the dual charge of ITBP DG Sanjay Arora.



IN SYNC: A flock of geese swims on a waterlogged street after a heavy rain at Rukmoni Gaon in Guwahati, Assam

PTI PHOTO

SpiceJet faces ransomware attack; flights impacted

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 25:** Several flights of SpiceJet were delayed and cancelled Wednesday after the airline faced a ransomware attack last night.

In a statement, the airline said, "Certain SpiceJet systems faced an attempted ransomware attack last night that has impacted our flight operations."

While SpiceJet's IT team has to a large extent contained and rectified the situation, this has had a cascading effect on its flights leading to delays, it said.

"Some flights to airports where there are restrictions on night operations have been cancelled. SpiceJet is in touch with experts and cyber crime authorities on the issue," it added.

Earlier in the day, the airline had said that the ransomware attack slowed down morning flight departures but the airline's IT team rectified the situation and flights were operating normally.

**आर्द्रम इंजीनियरिंग (इंडिया) लिमिटेड / IREL (India) Limited**  
Formerly Indian Rare Earths Limited.  
(एआर ईआर एफ आर लिमिटेड)  
(A Government of India Undertaking)  
CN : 1151008M19500000187 Website : www.irel.co.in  
ISO 9001: 2015, ISO 14001: 2015 & ISO 45001 : 2018 Company

Ref: ADVT.NO.23-2394  
IREL, OSCOM invites request for proposal for the following items / job descriptions.  
Date: 26-05-2022

Bid No.	Job / Item Description
2022_IREL_116063_1	Implementation of Total Productive Maintenance at OSCOM.
2022_IREL_116225_1	Engagement of agency to impart skill up-gradation training at OSCOM
2022_IREL_116295_1	Replacement of purlin at REEP.
2022_IREL_116834_1	Structural painting work at OSCOM.
GEM/2022/B/2173962	Installation of 1000LPH RO Drinking water plant.
GEM/2022/B/2176971	Housekeeping work at MSP
GEM/2022/B/2180614	Supply of Soda ash.
2022_IREL_116845_1	Supply, fabrication and erection of skid base & super structure.
GEM/2022/B/2168431	Collection of rubble & zircon bag stitching, stacking, barcoding & housekeeping work

Bidder may download tender document from <http://irel.co.in> or CPWP website. Any corrigendum / extension to above tenders shall be hosted in above websites only.  
davp 48129/12/0003/2223 Sd/- Executive Director, OSCOM

**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER  
BHUBANESWAR (R&B) DIVISION NO II, BHUBANESWAR**  
eerb2 bbsr@yahoo.com  
**INVITATIONS FOR BIDS THROUGH e-Procurement**  
**Bid Identification No- C.C. (R&B) - 02**  
**e - Procurement Notice No. 07 of 2022-23**  
**No.B-222:** The Superintending Engineer, Bhubaneswar (R&B) Division No-II, Bhubaneswar on behalf of the Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bids for one number of Building Work to be received in online bidding. Double cover system for Building work as detailed in : <https://tendersorissa.gov.in>. The details of bid documents will be available in the above website from 06.06.2022 to 5.00 P.M of 18.06.2022. The bidders must possess compatible Digital Signature Certificate of Class II or III. Bids received online shall be opened at 11.00 A.M. of 20.06.2022 in the Office of the Superintending Engineer, Bhubaneswar (R&B) Division No-II, Bhubaneswar. Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal [www.tendersorissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in).  
Addendum / Corrigendum, if required, will be available only in the Website.  
**Sd/- Superintending Engineer,  
BBSR (R&B) Division No.II, BBSR**  
OIPR-34088/11/0008/2223

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA** E-mail: [ee\\_rwbdk@yahoo.com](mailto:ee_rwbdk@yahoo.com)  
**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS DIVISION-I, BHADRAK**  
**"e" Procurement Notice for Road Works**  
Bid Identification No. Online Tender 1 of 2022-23

No. O-338	1. Name of the Work	2. Total No. of Works	3. Estimated Cost	4. Class of Contractor	5. Period of Completion	6. Type of Tender	7. Other Details
	Road Works	28 Nos	Rs 5.31 lakh to Rs.45.45 lakh	As per Annexure	One to Two Months	Single Cover	

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender Online for Bidding	Date & time of Opening of Tender
1	2	From To	4
Superintending Engineer, Rural Works Division-I, Bhadrak	Online - 1 of 2022-23	31.05.2022 at 11.00 A.M.	09.06.2022 at 5.00 P.M.

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal "<https://tendersorissa.gov.in>"  
**Sd./- Er. Santanu Kumar Naik**  
Superintending Engineer, R.W. Division, Bhadrak  
OIPR-25060/11/0002/2223



# international

## of the day quote

I suppose I should abstain from having a final conclusion at this point since we haven't finished the process yet but let me say that we are at a very difficult juncture at the moment

**RAFAEL GROSSI** | CHIEF, UN NUCLEAR WATCHDOG

Racism is not only when black people or brown people cannot breathe because of police violence. Racism is when black people, brown people, people of colour take their last breath because of policy violence, when they are denied life-saving, pandemic-ending medicines

**WINNIE BYANYIMA** | UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL, UN

It is China that has placed sanctions on Australia. There is no justification for doing that and that's why they should be removed

**ANTHONY ALBANESE** | PM, AUSTRALIA

## SHORT TAKES

### Sri Lanka PM to helm FinMin too

**Colombo:** Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe was Wednesday given the additional responsibility of running the finance ministry as the island nation grapples with its worst-ever economic crisis. The South Asian island nation has suffered months of dire shortages and anti-government protests, with importers unable to finance vital food, fuel and medicines. Wickremesinghe, 73, was sworn in as finance minister after two weeks of wrangling among coalition partners for the crucial position ahead of bailout talks with the IMF.

### Palestinian teen shot dead in Israel

**Jerusalem:** Health authorities said a 16-year-old Palestinian died early Wednesday after being wounded during clashes with Israeli forces in the occupied West Bank, the latest in a wave of violence that has persisted for months. The Palestinian health ministry said Ghaith Yamin was wounded by a gunshot to the head and died at a hospital. Wafa, the official Palestinian news agency, reported that the clashes erupted when Jewish worshippers, escorted by the military, arrived at a shrine on the outskirts of Nablus city to pray.

### UK elects 1st Dalit female mayor

**London:** An Indian-origin politician from the UK's Opposition Labour Party, Councillor Mohinder K Midha, has been elected mayor of Ealing Council in west London, becoming the first female mayor of a local London council belonging to the Dalit community. Midha was elected for the next year's term of 2022-23 at a council meeting Tuesday. "We are so proud that Cllr Mohinder Midha has been elected Mayor of Ealing for the next year. The first ever Dalit woman mayor in the UK. A proud moment for us," the Labour Party in Ealing said.

### Blasts in Kabul Mosque claim 14

**Islamabad:** A series of explosions shook Afghanistan Wednesday, the Taliban said, including a blast inside a mosque in the capital of Kabul that killed at least five worshippers and three bombings of minivans in the country's north that killed nine passengers. The Kabul Emergency Hospital said it received 22 victims of the mosque bombing, including five dead.



When it comes to human rights issues, there is no such thing as a flawless utopia; countries do not need patronising lecturers

**XI JINPING** | PRESIDENT, CHINA

## AGAINST TALIBAN ATROCITIES

Male anchors in Afghanistan are showing solidarity with their female counterparts by wearing face masks on camera after the Taliban issued an order forcing all women to cover their faces on news channels. The protest, which on social media has used the hashtag #FreeHerFace, has picked up momentum as men from channel Tolo News wore masks to mimic their female colleagues



## N Korea launches ICBM after Biden summits with allies

REUTERS

**Seoul, May 25:** North Korea fired three missiles Wednesday, including one thought to be its largest intercontinental ballistic missile, after US President Joe Biden ended an Asia trip where he agreed to new measures to deter the nuclear-armed state.

South Korea's deputy national security adviser, Kim Tae-hyo, said the North also appeared to have conducted multiple experiments with a detonation device in preparation for its seventh nuclear test but that the test was unlikely to occur in the coming days.

In response to the missile launches, the United States and South Korea held combined live-fire drills, including surface-to-surface missile tests involving the US Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS) and the South's Hyunmoo-2 SRBM, both militaries said.

They also put on other military shows of force such as dozens of fighter jets in an "Elephant Walk" formation, highlighting new South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol's harder-line policy on the North's accelerating weapons tests.

North Korea has conducted a flurry of missile launches this year, from hypersonic weapons to test firing its largest intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) for the first time in nearly five years.

Washington and Seoul officials also recently warned that North Korea appeared ready to resume nuclear weapons tests for the first time since 2017, possibly during Biden's visit, his first to Asia as president.

## 8th US MASS SHOOTING THIS YEAR

# Texas' grim run of mass shootings continue

*Lawmakers are unlikely to adopt any significant new limits on guns. Last year, gun laws were actually loosened after a gunman at a Walmart in El Paso killed 23 people in a racist 2019 attack that targeted Hispanics*

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Austin, May 25:** Once again, one of America's deadliest mass shootings happened in Texas.

A mass shooting that left 21 school children dead in the deeply pro-gun state of Texas Tuesday increased pressure on US politicians to take action over the ubiquity of firearms -- but also brought the grim expectation of little or no change.

It was the eighth mass shooting this year, according to the Everytown gun control group, and came 10 days after another 18-year-old murdered 10 African Americans at a supermarket in New York.

Nearly 10 years after a man slaughtered 20 children and six others in an attack on the Sandy Hook elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut, and four years after 17 were killed at a Florida high school, restrictions on gun purchases and ownership have not significantly changed.

Guns of all kinds, especially



When in God's name are we going to stand up to the gun lobby? Why are we willing to live with this carnage? Why do we keep letting this happen? These kinds of mass shootings rarely happen anywhere else in the world. I am sick and tired. We have to act

**JOE BIDEN** | PRESIDENT, US

I pray for the children, for the adults killed and for their families. It is time to say enough to indiscriminate arms trafficking

**POPE FRANCIS**

high-powered assault rifles and semi-automatic pistols are cheaper and more widely available than ever across the United States. And the all-too-familiar arguments over guns, public safety and rights reopened immediately on the news of Tuesday's mass shooting.

**Gun massacres 'politicized'**

The debate is set to intensify going into the weekend when Houston, Texas hosts the annual convention of the country's leading pro-gun lobby, the National Rifle Association.

Scheduled to speak at the convention is former president Donald Trump, Texas Governor Greg Abbott, Texas Senator Ted Cruz and other prominent Republicans.

Senator Chris Murphy, who represents Connecticut, made an emotional call on the Senate floor on Tuesday for lawmakers to take action.

Cruz quickly pushed back, saying people will use the shooting to attack the right of people under the US Constitution's 2nd Amendment to own guns.

"When there's a crime of this

## Deadliest US school shootings

**SANTA FE HIGH SCHOOL, May 2018**

A 17-year-old opened fire at a Houston-area high school, killing 10 people, most of them students, authorities said. The suspect has been charged with murder.

**MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HIGH SCHOOL, February 2018**

An attack left 14 students and three staff members dead at the school in Parkland, Florida, and injured many others. The 20-year-old suspect was charged with murder.

**UMPUQA COMMUNITY COLLEGE, October 2015**

A man killed nine people at the school in Roseburg, Oregon, and wounded nine others, then killed himself.

**SANDY HOOK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, December 2012**

A 19-year-old man killed his mother at their home in Newtown, Connecticut,

then went to the nearby Sandy Hook Elementary School and killed 20 first graders and six educators. He took his own life.

**VIRGINIA TECH, April 2007**

A 23-year-old student killed 32 people on the campus in Blacksburg, Virginia, in April 2007; more than two dozen others were wounded. The gunman then killed himself.

**RED LAKE HIGH SCHOOL, March 2005**

A 16-year-old student killed his grandfather and the man's companion at their Minnesota home, then went to nearby Red Lake High School, where he killed five students, a teacher and a security guard before shooting himself.

**COLUMBINE HIGH SCHOOL, April 1999**

Two students killed 12 of their peers and one teacher at the school in Littleton, Colorado, and injured many others before killing themselves.

kind, it almost immediately gets politicized," Cruz said.

Attacking constitutional gun rights "is not effective in stopping these sort of crimes," he added.

**More guns, more shootings**

Yet data shows the grim national cost of gun crime.

Last week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said the number of gun deaths in the United States underwent a "historic" increase in 2020.

The US racked up 19,350 firearm homicides in 2020, up nearly 35 percent over 2019, and 24,245 gun sui-

cides, up 1.5 percent. At 6.1 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants in 2020, the firearm homicide rate was the highest in a quarter century.

The country is swamped with guns. US firearms makers produced more than 139 million guns for the commercial market over the two decades from 2000, and the country imported another 71 million.

That includes high-powered assault rifles, which can be found for \$500, and 9 millimeter pistols that combine ease of use, high accuracy and semi-automatic triggers with prices as low as \$200.

# UK leaders responsible for 'partygate' culture: Report

AGENCIES

**London, May 25:** Britain's political leaders and top officials "must bear responsibility" for the culture that led to numerous lockdown-breaching parties in Downing Street, said a long-awaited report by a senior civil servant published Wednesday.

"The events that I investigated were attended by leaders in government," the report, compiled by Sue Gray, said, adding: "Many of these events should not have been allowed to happen. The senior leadership at the centre, both political and official, must bear responsibility for this culture."

The 60-page report by Gray, the top civil servant in the Cabinet Office which supports prime ministers and ensures the effective running of government, follows a months-long probe into the "Partygate" scandal.

A separate police investigation led to police issuing 126 fines to 83 people, including Prime Minister Boris Johnson and finance minister Rishi Sunak.

Johnson initially denied any lockdown rules had been broken in Downing Street when the allegations first emerged last year.

He has since apologised for his fine and the various breaches but is refusing to heed calls from his political opponents and others to



**The Prime Minister said he was "humbled" and had "learned a lesson" but that it was now time to "move on" and focus on the government's priorities**

resign. In her series of conclusions, Gray found "many of these gatherings and the way in which they developed was not in line with Covid guidance at the time".

"I found that some staff had witnessed or been subjected to behaviours at work which they had

felt concerned about but at times felt unable to raise properly," she concluded.

"I was made aware of multiple examples of a lack of respect and poor treatment of security and cleaning staff. This was unacceptable."

The top official, in her 60s, said it was beyond her scope to recommend sanctions but reflected on the implications of the scandal.

"Many will be dismayed that behaviour of this kind took place on this scale at the heart of government," she noted.

"The public have a right to expect the very highest standards of behaviour in such places and clearly what happened fell well short of this."

## Fuel sale in SL gets difficult amid stir

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Colombo, May 25:** Fuel distribution in crisis-hit Sri Lanka has become more challenging due to public anger and a record hike in fuel prices with people many a times spending more than a day to get fuel with the rationed quantity.

At least 40 retail stations in most populous districts remain shut due to intimidation by angry public. Shantha Silva of the fuel distributors' association said workers at pumping stations had come under threat.

The police at a Colombo suburb said an attempt by one station to hoard 50,000 litre of fuel was thwarted. State fuel entity officials raided the station and ordered the entire stock of fuel to be released at the pre-increased prices.

The government raised the fuel retail prices at 3 am Monday and the station owners are accused of attempting to make an undue profit of rupees 4.6 million by selling fuel at the new rates when the station had bought stocks at the old prices.

The government has raised the petrol price by 24.3 per cent and diesel by 38.4 per cent, a record hike in fuel prices.

With the second fuel price hike since April 19, now the most-used Octane 92 petrol would cost Rs 420 (\$1.17) and diesel Rs 400 (\$1.11) a litre, an all-time high. The decision to raise the Octane 92 petrol price by 24.3 per cent or Rs 82 and diesel by 38.4 per cent or Rs 111 per litre was taken by the state fuel entity, Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC).

## US ENDS EXEMPTION

# Russia says it will pay foreign debt in rubles



*Punishing Western sanctions on Russia have largely severed the country from the international financial system, including blocking Moscow's ability to access funds held in US banks to pay its foreign creditors*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Moscow, May 25:** Russia said Wednesday that it will start paying its foreign debt in rubles after the United States ended an exemption allowing Moscow to make the payments in dollars held in Russia.

The US Treasury announced Tuesday it was closing the escape clause to the drastic financial sanctions imposed on Moscow after it sent troops to Ukraine, pushing Russia closer to default.

"Noting that the refusal to extend this licence makes it impossible to continue servicing government foreign debt in US dollars, payments will be carried out in Russia's currency," the finance ministry said in a statement on Telegram.

The ministry added that there would be a "possibility to later convert them (payments) into the original currency" using a Russian financial institution as the paying agent.

Russian Finance Minister Anton Siluanov said in the statement that the current situation was "artificially created by an unfriendly country." He said that it "primarily hurts the rights of foreign investors in Russian debt instruments".

Siluanov stressed the situation has "nothing in common" with 1998, when Russia defaulted on domestic ruble-denominated debt

## Russia parliament scraps age limit for army recruits

**R**ussia's parliament approved a law Wednesday in double-quick time removing the upper age limit for contractual service in the military, amid heavy casualties in Ukraine. Lawmakers in the State Duma lower house approved the bill in three readings in a single session, with the upper house, the Federation Council, giving its assent shortly after. The bill now needs only the signature of President Vladimir Putin to become law. State Duma speaker Vyacheslav Volodin said: "Today, especially, we need to strengthen the armed forces and help the Ministry of Defence. Our Supreme Commander is doing everything to ensure that our armed forces win, and we need to help." Currently, only Russians aged 18-40 and foreigners aged 18-30 can enlist as professional soldiers in the Russian military.

amid a broader financial crisis. "Now we have money and a desire to make payments, too," the minister said, adding that the step would not affect Russians' quality of life.

The next debt service deadline May 27 is for 100 million euros in interest on two bonds: one requires payment in dollars, euros, pounds or Swiss francs only; the other can be paid in rubles.

According to reports by Reuters and The Wall Street Journal Friday, the Russian Finance Ministry transferred funds out of the country early to make the payments and avoid default. Nearly \$400 million in interest is due in late June.



between the two. According to Geo News, the talks between the government and PTI continued for two-and-half hours, Geo News reported.

Pakistan Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb confirmed that no agreement has been

reached between the federal government and PTI. She said news of negotiations and an agreement between the government and PTI is "baseless".

Political tensions are at an all-time high in Pakistan with all eyes on Islamabad as the city braced

itself for the arrival of PTI workers and leaders heading towards the federal capital for the party's Azadi March despite the government's instructions not to.

So far, the day has been filled with political drama. Lahore turned into a battleground as multiple scuffles took place between the police and PTI marchers as the latter tried to wriggle out of the barricades placed on their way. Geo News reported.

PTI Chairman Imran Khan is leading the march, which he has said will be the "biggest" in Pakistan's political history, while Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah will address the public shortly over the ongoing situation.

In order to restrain Lahore's rally from entering Islamabad, the police tried to arrest former energy minister and senior PTI leader Hammad Azhar; however, party workers managed to save him.



of the day quote

We have at least four crises, which are interwoven. We have high inflation ... we have an energy crisis... we have food poverty, and we have a climate crisis. And we can't solve the problems if we concentrate on only one of the crises

ROBERT HABECK | VICE CHANCELLOR, GERMANY

The world has become much more difficult. We didn't imagine there would be so much supply chain disruptions. Chinese equipment were being supplied at a fast pace and at low costs, but that is not the case anymore

SUNIL BHARTI MITTAL | CHAIRMAN, BHARTI ENTERPRISES

We are delighted to forge partnership with Tvasta -- a fast-paced 3D printing firm founded by IIT Madras Alumni. We are excited that this technology delivers cost-effective construction method that offers quicker turn around as compared to conventional methods

RUPA GURUNATHI | WHOLE-TIME DIRECTOR, INDIA CEMENTS LTD

SHORT TAKES

Coal India Q4 net profit rises 46%

**New Delhi:** State-owned CIL Wednesday posted a 45.9 per cent rise in its consolidated net profit at ₹6,692.94 crore for the quarter ended March, 2022 on the back of higher revenue from operations. The company's consolidated net profit was at ₹4,586.78 crore in the year-ago period, Coal India Ltd (CIL) said in a BSE filing. The consolidated revenue from operations of CIL in the January-March period increased to ₹32,706.77 crore in FY22 from ₹26,700.14 crore in the year-ago period.

Digit Insurance sets \$5bn IPO valuation

**Mumbai:** India's Digit Insurance, backed by Canadian billionaire Prem Watsa's Fairfax Group, is considering raising about \$500 million in an initial public offering at a valuation of \$4.5 billion to \$5 billion, three people aware of the matter told Reuters. Digit was valued at close to \$4 billion earlier this month when it raised a tranche of funding. It has so far raised more than \$400 million from Sequoia Capital, A91 Partners and Faering Capital, besides Fairfax.

BPCL Q4 net drops 82%

**New Delhi:** Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) Wednesday reported a 82 per cent decline in net profit in the quarter ended March 2022 as the firm held fuel prices despite rise in cost. Net profit of ₹2,130.53 crore was reported in the January-March period as compared with ₹11,940.13 crore, according to a regulatory filing. Revenue from operations rose 25 per cent to ₹1.23 lakh crore on higher oil prices but losses on petrol, diesel and domestic LPG sales dented the financials.

CoinTracker forays into Indian market

**New Delhi:** Cryptocurrency portfolio tracking and tax compliance platform CoinTracker on Wednesday announced its foray into the Indian market. The company's move also comes against the backdrop of the government mandating a 30 per cent taxation on such transactions with effect from April 1.



Advanced economies, as per our estimates, will basically get back to where they would have been in absence of pandemic in 2024, but emerging and developing economies would be 5 per cent below where they would have been in the absence of the pandemic

GITA GOPINATH | DEPUTY MD, IMF

IKEA'S NEW STORE IN B'LORE SOON

Swedish furniture retailer IKEA would open its flagship store here in June. CEO of Ingka Group, of which IKEA is a part, Jester Brodin Wednesday met Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai at the World Economic Forum Meet in Davos, Switzerland, and held discussions in the backdrop of the store-opening



FISCAL DEFICIT

No plan for additional borrowing

In order to contain rising inflation, the government last week reduced excise duty on petrol by a record ₹8 per litre and that on diesel by ₹6 to give relief to consumers reeling under high fuel prices that have also pushed inflation to a multi-year high

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 25:** The government is not planning any additional borrowing and will stick to the borrowing target fixed for the current fiscal year despite sacrificing revenue on account of reduction in duties on petroleum products and other goods, official sources said Wednesday.

In order to contain rising inflation, the government last week reduced excise duty on petrol by a record ₹8 per litre and that on diesel by ₹6 to give relief to consumers reeling under high fuel prices that have also pushed inflation to a multi-year high.

Besides, it also provided ₹200 per cylinder subsidy on LPG to about 9 crore beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana. The tax reduction on petrol and diesel will lead to revenue loss of around ₹1 lakh crore per year for the government.

In addition to the fertiliser subsidy of ₹1.05 lakh crore in the Budget (for current fiscal), the government provided ₹1.10 lakh crore to further cushion farmers from the price increase due to the shortage of fertilisers.

It was feared that these sops may prompt the government to resort to additional borrowing to meet the fiscal deficit target of 6.4 per cent



THE GOVERNMENT WILL STICK TO ITS BORROWING CALENDAR PLANNED FOR THE CURRENT FISCAL

THE GOVERNMENT IN THE BUDGET HAD SET A GROSS MARKET BORROWING TARGET OF ₹14.31 LAKH CRORE FOR THE CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR

OF THIS, ₹8.45 LAKH CRORE IS ESTIMATED TO BE BORROWED IN THE FIRST HALF OR APRIL-SEPTEMBER PERIOD

of the GDP. However, official sources said that the government does not intend to resort to additional borrowing at the moment to make up for the duty loss.

As per the Union Budget document, the gross market borrowing through dated securities for 2022-23 will be ₹14,95,000 crore. Taking into account the switch operations conducted on January 28,

2022, the gross market borrowing through dated securities for 2022-23 is expected at ₹14,31,352 crore. The gross borrowing for 2021-22 was ₹12,05,500 crore.

In her Budget speech February 1, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman had said the fiscal deficit in 2022-23 is estimated at 6.4 per cent of GDP, which is consistent with the broad path of fis-

Govt on course to privatise two PSBs

**New Delhi:** The government is on course with the privatisation of two public sector banks (PSBs) and will take appropriate steps in the coming months, sources said. In the Union Budget for 2021-22, the government announced its intent to take up the privatisation of two PSBs in the year and approved a policy of strategic disinvestment of public sector enterprises. According to sources, the government is committed to the privatisation of two public sector banks and it is on course. Besides, sources also said the divestment of BPCL is also on the card and fresh bids will be invited. The government had to cancel the sale as only a single bidder was left in the fray, sources said.

cal consolidation announced by her last year to reach a fiscal deficit level below 4.5 per cent by 2025-26.

"While setting the fiscal deficit level in 2022-23, I am conscious of the need to nurture growth, through public investment, to become stronger and sustainable," she had said.

India joins First Movers Coalition

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Davos, May 25:** India has joined the First Movers Coalition, a global initiative aimed at decarbonising the heavy industry and long-distance transport sectors responsible for 30 per cent of global emissions, US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry announced Wednesday.

Launched by US President Joe Biden and the WEF at COP26 as a flagship public-private partnership to clean up the most carbon-intensive sectors, also saw 50 new

**The First Movers Coalition targets sectors, including aluminium, aviation, chemicals, concrete, shipping, steel and trucking, which are responsible for 30% of global emissions**

corporate members with collective market cap of \$8.5 trillion joining the force.

Besides India, Denmark, Italy,

Japan, Norway, Singapore, Sweden and the United Kingdom have also joined the US as government partners to create early markets for clean technologies through policy measures and private sector engagements.

India, along with Japan and Sweden, has also joined the steering board of the coalition.

Kerry made the announcement alongside Bill Gates, founder of Breakthrough Energy, at a press briefing hosted by the World Economic Forum here during its Annual Meeting 2022.

Higher fuel costs push IndiGo to bigger loss

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 25:** IndiGo Wednesday reported a net loss of ₹1,681 crore in the quarter ending March due to Omicron wave, high fuel costs and weakening rupee.

This year's Q4 loss was 46.6 per cent more than the loss incurred by the airline in the corresponding period a year ago, the airline's statement mentioned.

India's largest airline's total net loss of 2021-22 was ₹6,161 crore as compared to ₹5,806 crore net loss that it incurred in 2020-21, it mentioned. The total income of India's largest airline in Q4 of 2021-22 was ₹8,020 crore, which was 28.9 per cent more than the corresponding period a year ago, the carrier's statement noted.

IndiGo's load factor (occupancy rate) in the quarter ending March was 76.7 per cent as compared to 70.2 per cent recorded in quarter ending March during the last year; it



said. Fuel prices in Q4 of 2021-22 increased by 61 per cent compared to the same period last year, it mentioned.

The airline's CEO Ronojoy Dutta said, "This quarter has been difficult because of the demand destruction caused by the Omicron virus in the first half."

"We believe IndiGo is best positioned to maximise revenue in a recovering market. As we work to return the airline to profitability, we are focused on maintaining our cost leadership position and continuing to build the most efficient network in the region," he noted.

Inflationary concerns provide little room for GST rate rationalisation



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 25:** The current price situation leaves hardly any scope for rationalisation of GST rates on goods and services, sources said Wednesday.

Goods and services are taxed in four slabs of 5 per cent, 12 per cent, 18 per cent and 28 per cent under the GST regime. It was being considered to reduce these tax slabs possibly to three, an exercise which would have involved raising taxes on some items and a reduction in others. Besides, gold and gold jewellery attract a 3 per cent tax.

But with the inflation rate ruling at an all-time high, there is hardly any scope for GST rate rationalisation, sources said.

Sources further said that while the economy was recovering from the impact of Covid in 2021, geopolitical tension this year would again have bearing on it.

"The Council in the past was not unmindful of the then prevailing situation," sources said.

Under GST, essential items are either exempted or taxed at the lowest slab, while luxury and demerit items attract the highest slab. Luxury and sin goods attract cess on top of the highest 28 per cent slab. This cess collection is used to compensate states for the revenue loss due to the GST rollout.

The GST council last year set up a panel of state ministers, headed by Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, to suggest ways to augment revenue by rationalising tax rates and correcting anomalies in tax rates.

At the time of GST implementation July 1, 2017, the Centre had agreed to compensate states for 5 years till June 2022, and protect their revenue at 14 per cent per annum over the base year revenue of 2015-16.

The GST Council over the years has often succumbed to the demands of the trade and industry and lowered tax rates. For example, the number of goods attracting the highest 28 per cent tax came down from 228 to less than 35.

Sources further said that with the implementation of GST in 2017, around 18 cesses were abolished. The collection from these cesses in 2016-17 was ₹56,641 crore.

With the implementation of GST, these cesses were subsumed into GST and the collections are shared with the states as per the devolution formula. The only major cesses that remain are the GST compensation cess, health and education cess and cess for central road and infrastructure fund. The collection from these cesses has helped fund various government schemes and development activities.

The collection from road and infrastructure cess was over ₹2.03 lakh crore in 2021-21, while for the current fiscal the budget estimate is over ₹1.38 lakh crore.

The collection from GST compensation cess last fiscal was ₹1.05 lakh crore, while the budget has pegged it at ₹1.20 lakh crore in the current fiscal.

Collection from health and education cess was ₹47,307 crore last fiscal, and is budgeted to rise to ₹53,846 crore this fiscal.

Nalco registers 227% jump in profits

**Bhubaneswar:** Showing robust performance across all its business units, National Aluminum Company Limited (NALCO), posted its best-ever annual production and sales in FY21-22, registering highest ever revenue from operations and highest ever net profit of ₹14.18 crore and ₹29.52 crore respectively. Market dynamics for the Navratna CPSE under the Ministry of Mines has resulted in multifold increase in turnover and consequent profit in the fiscal year 21-22. The net profit of the company for the financial year 2021-22 has jumped by 227% over immediate preceding financial year. During the FY 21-22, the company has achieved bauxite production of 75.11 lakh tonne from its captive bauxite mines and produced aluminium at its name plate capacity of 4.60 lakh tonne for the first time since inception, surpassing all previous records. "The results were driven by strong operational performance coupled with effective raw material procurement and sales strategy, cost saving measures, supported by positive business outlook, favourable LME price and uptick in global aluminium demand. Strategic decision with focus on optimizing production and productivity in spite of COVID restrictions has paid dividends," said Sridhar Patra, CMD, NALCO.



Kalinga Hospital announces change in management

**Bhubaneswar:** The Kalinga Hospital, first corporate hospital of Odisha, Wednesday announced change in management as globally-recognized scientist Sita Kantha Dash took over as Chairman stating new plans and policies for the hospital. Dash, an entrepreneur and a globally-recognized scientist, visionary, is the founder of UAS Laboratories, the leading probiotic company of world along with Chancellor of JK University, Cuttack, and Chairman and Founder of DD Innovations Inc. Working in the health and wellness industry for last 30 years Dash has established Probiotic and Prebiotic Innovation Centre for Excellence and Endowed Professorship at the Indian Institute of Technology, Bhubaneswar, and South Dakota State University in America. "Kalinga hospital will regain its image as best corporate hospital in the state. We believe in delivering our promises and providing best services to common people. We have formulated number of plans and ideas which will make our healthcare accessible to more people at affordable prices," Dash said. Among various expansion plans Dash mentioned that 400 bedded hospitals in existing campus will be added along with new super specialty departments. Moreover, an Advanced diagnostic centre with state-of-the-art infrastructure will also be incorporated.



Paper exports from India jump 80% to all-time high

In the last five to seven years, paper mills in India have invested over ₹25,000 crore to create new capacities and induction of clean and green technologies

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 25:** Exports of paper and paperboard from India jumped nearly 80 per cent in FY 2021-22, touching a record ₹13,963 crore, according to industry body IPMA.

The export growth has straddled across different grades of paper, said a statement from Indian Paper Manufacturers Association (IPMA) while citing data released by Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence &

Statistics (DGCI&S).

"In value terms, exports of coated paper and paperboard increased by 100 per cent, uncoated writing and printing paper by 98 per cent, tissue paper by 75 per cent and kraft paper by 37 per cent," said IPMA.

"In volume terms, paper exports from India have gone up four times from 0.66 million tonne in FY17 to 2.85 million tonne in FY22. Similarly in value terms, the figures for corresponding years rose from ₹3,041 crore to ₹13,963 crore,"



Paper exports from India have been on an uptrend since the last five years

India is exporting papers to - UAE, China, Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, Vietnam and Sri Lanka

it said. "Exports have been rising in the last few years due to capacity expansion and technological upgradation undertaken by Indian paper mills, leading to better product quality which has found wider acceptance globally

ally," said Rohit Pandit, Secretary General, IPMA. "Domestic paper companies, in recent years, have also intensified their marketing efforts globally and invested in market development in foreign countries," Pandit added. In the last two financial years, India has become a net exporter of paper in volume terms.



# Rajat ton lifts RCB

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, May 25:** Rajat Patidar (112 n o, 54b, 12x4, 7x6) brought out his absolute best at the right moment as his splendid unbeaten century helped Royal Challengers Bangalore beat Lucknow Super Giants by 14 runs in the IPL Eliminator here.

A little-known domestic bulwark, Patidar, found his hour of fame as his magnificent knock propelled RCB to an imposing 207/4 after being invited to bat first on a day when the game was delayed by 40 minutes due to rain. In response, LSG were restricted to 193/6, despite a superb knock by skipper KL Rahul (79, 58b, 3x4, 5x6).

Chasing a massive 208-run target, LSG lost Quinton de Kock in the first over, bowled by Mohammed Siraj (1/41). Then Josh Hazlewood (3/43) got rid of Manan Vohra (19). However, Rahul found an able ally in Deepak Hooda (45, 26b, 1x4, 4x6) as the duo stitched together 96 runs for the third wicket to give some hope to LSG.

Wanindu Hasaranga (1/42) broke the stand dismissing Hooda and it eventually shattered the momentum. Rahul tried his best to take his side home, but three quick wickets – Marcus Stoinis (9), Rahul and Krunal Pandya (0) respectively – ended all hopes for a win.

Courtesy Patidar's masterclass, RCB literally knocked the stuffing out of LSG attack with Mohsin Khan's superb 1/25 proving to be only saving grace.

On a day their famed batting duo trio of Faf du Plessis (0), Glenn Maxwell (9) and Virat Kohli (25) failed to enthrall a capacity Eden crowd, RCB's No. 3 played out of his skin as 90 runs came in fours and sixes off just 19 balls.

While most of the star-studded RCB batters struggled for timing, the



28-year-old looked effortless with his slices, punches, counter-punches and drives to tower over the rest.

And to make Patidar's story more interesting, he wasn't picked from auction this season and joined the team after start when a player called Luvnith Sisodia was injured.

Had Sisodia been alright, RCB wouldn't have required services of Patidar, who made 65,000 at Eden Gardens stand on their feet.

He along with Dinesh Karthik (37 n o, 23b, 5x4, 1x6) put on a match-turning unbroken partnership of 92 runs from 41 balls as RCB scored 84 runs in the last five overs to prop up the total.

First, he showed the glimpses of his stroke-making skills to slam

Krunal Pandya for three boundaries and one six inside the power-play to overshadow Kohli in a 66-run partnership from 46 balls.

Having cruised to his half-century in 28 balls, he took another 21 balls to reach his maiden hundred in T20s. He got to the landmark pulling Mohsin over square leg with a sweet-timing of the bat that summed up his effortless stay at the crease.

RCB lost three key wickets of a well-set Kohli, Maxwell and Mahipal Lomror in the middle overs to see their run-rate drop.

In-form Karthik, who has played the role of a finisher to perfection for RCB this season, also survived some anxious moments against

Ravi Bishnoi to start with. But Patidar turned it around in the last over Bishnoi when he smacked the 'googly-man' for three sixes and two fours in succession in an over that read 1, 6, 4, 6, 4, 6.

A sloppy LSG also helped his cause as Patidar, who got reprieves on 59, 72 and 93. After a 40-minute delayed start due to bad weather, Lucknow got off to a superb start when Mohsin got RCB skipper Du Plessis for a golden duck in the first over.

**BRIEF SCORES:** RCB 207/4 (Rajat Patidar 112 n o, Dinesh Karthik 37 n o, Mohsin Khan 1/25) beat LSG 193/6 (KL Rahul 79, Deepak Hooda 45; Josh Hazlewood 3/43, Harshal Patel 1/25) by 14 runs.

# Buttler opens up on jittery start

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, May 25:** Rajasthan Royals opener Jos Buttler had no qualms in admitting that he struggled to get going initially against Gujarat Titans in the first qualifier, saying sometimes you have to "swallow your ego" and hang in there without panicking.

This season's Orange Cap holder Buttler, who now has 718 runs in 15 games, initially failed to time the ball and was 39 off his first 38 balls. But the opener shifted gears in style and smacked another 50 off his next 18 deliveries faced to lift RR's total to a challenging 188/6.

"I was determined to hang in there. It was a big game for us and we wanted to make sure to put a big score," Buttler said at the post-match press conference after RR's seven-wicket loss to GT Tuesday.

"Sometimes you got to swallow your ego, if you are finding it hard, you are finding it hard. I don't try to force too much, don't panic.

"The opposition would prefer me to panic and get out, just try to hang in there. I knew at some point I would get away. I trusted myself. Today, it came late in the innings," he added.

Buttler also had plenty of luck go his way as he got two reprieves in the middle in his 89 off 56 balls. It was Sanju Samson who gave RR a fiery start with his 47 off 26 and Buttler said the Royals skipper took some pressure off him.

"Yes I was finding it tough to start with and then Sanju came in and played well from ball one. He took a lot of pressure off me. I wouldn't say it was my most fluent innings but I just tried to hang in there and managed to get a little bit away in the end."

The Royals will now play the second qualifier against either the Royal Challengers Bangalore or Lucknow Super Giants Friday.

The 189-run target proved insufficient for the Royals as David



Miller and Hardik Pandya shared a 106-run unbroken partnership for the fourth wicket to seal a win and take GT to the final in their maiden IPL season.

"We just could not break that partnership, if we managed to take a wicket and found a way to break that partnership, it would have been crucial for us. The deeper they took, the harder it became for us.

"But we are still alive in the tournament after finishing in the top-two, we still got a chance. We're disappointed today, but still in the tournament," he added.

The Purple Cap-holder

Yuzvendra Chahal and India senior off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin, who have a combined tally of 37 wickets this season, were wicketless and leaked 72 runs against the Titans.

"Those two guys have been outstanding for us this season. It's a tough place for bowlers – spin or pace bowling. It's a small ground with a fast outfield. A lot of boundaries are available on this particular ground. So it is always going to be tough. There was a bit of dew also in the second innings," he said, throwing his support to the spin duo.

# Praggnanandhaa stuns Giri, meets Ding in final

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chennai, May 25:** Young Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa became the first Indian player to reach the final of the Meltwater Champions Chess Tour Chessable Masters tournament after he held his nerve to outwit Dutch GM Anish Giri 3.5-2.5 Wednesday.

The Indian chess star defeated the highly-rated Giri, pipping the Dutchman in the tiebreak after the four-game rapid online semifinal match ended in a 2-2 stalemate.

For the top prize, Praggnanandhaa will take on World No.2 Ding Liren of China, who shocked World No.1 Magnus Carlsen 2.5-1.5 in the other semifinal clash.

The opening game of the semifinal ended in a tame draw before the 16-year-old Praggnanandhaa pulled off a win in the second to hand Giri his first defeat of the tournament.

In the third game, the experienced Dutch player looked to have seized the upper-hand but Praggnanandhaa, as he is known in chess circles, fought hard to force a draw to go 2-1 up.

Staring defeat in the face, Giri hit back to win the fourth game to send the semifinal clash into the tiebreak. The Dutchman faltered in the first blitz game and surren-



dered it in 33 moves in an Italian Opening encounter.

In the second tie-break game, Giri managed to gain an advantage but the Indian held firm and a draw ensued sending the teenage ace into the summit clash.

The match ended late at night after which Praggnandhaa said, "I have to be at school around 8.45 AM, and now it is 2 AM!"

Meanwhile, his coach RB Ramesh, a GM himself, said "Congratulations @rpragchess for the victory over Anish in the semifinal of #ChessableMasters! The ability to beat strong players despite having a bad score in the past is amazing. Proud of you kutti."

Praggnanandhaa has been in splendid touch in the tournament. He had defeated Carlsen in the preliminary phase in which he finished fourth.

# 'Next to impossible' task awaits India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jakarta, May 25:** Defending champions India need to beat hosts Indonesia by a huge margin and hope Japan defeat Pakistan in the other Pool A match for advancing to the knockout stage of the Asia Cup men's hockey tournament here Thursday.

India's fate is not in their own hands anymore as even a win against lowly Indonesia will not guarantee them a knockout berth. Japan will have to beat Pakistan to keep India's faint hopes alive. With a draw and a loss, India are placed third in Pool A behind Japan (6 points) and Pakistan (4 points).

Under the guidance of Sardar Singh, India fielded a young team in the tournament alongside a handful of seniors like Birendra Lakra and SV Sunil, who came out of retirements. But the senior duo looked well past their prime if their performances in the two matches so far are to go by.

India conceded a last minute goal to draw 1-1 against Pakistan in their tournament opener before being thrashed by Japan 2-5.

But now, a 'next to impossible' task awaits the Indians as they not only have to score big against Indonesia but also hope that Japan beat Pakistan in the other Pool A match Thursday if they are to progress to the Super 4 stage.



India have a goal difference of minus three as against Pakistan's plus 13. If Pakistan lose to Japan, India will have to beat Indonesia by a huge margin to go past their western neighbours in goal difference and advance further in the tournament.

Inexperience was the major reason behind India's below-par performances as the young players, mainly drafted from the last Junior World Cup squad, are finding it difficult to get a measure of the

level of international hockey.

In the two matches so far, the Indians lacked cohesion in the three departments – defence, midfield and forwardline.

The Indians lacked a quality playmaker in the midfield, which was evident from their constant efforts of building attacks from the centre instead of using both the flanks more frequently.

The forwardline has been wasteful with the likes of Tokyo Olympian Simranjeet Singh and

youngster Uttam Singh not having the best of outings.

The lanky and strongly built Pawan Rajbhar is the only player who have impressed with his commitment and stick work in the two matches, creating chances and also scoring a goal.

Penalty corner conversion is another area where the Indians are struggling as they lack a quality drag-flicker in the side after veteran Rupinder Pal Singh pulled out at the last minute due to a wrist injury.

# IWL: Odisha Police go down fighting against Hans eves

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, May 25:** Hans Women scripted a thrilling comeback to notch a 3-2 victory over Odisha Police in their final Indian Women's League (IWL) game of the season at the Capital Ground here Wednesday.

Hans Women took an early lead in the fourth minute after Vaani Kalucha netted from close range. The team from Delhi kept its lead for the majority of the first half but conceded a penalty in the 45th minute after a foul inside the box.

Shibani Mundari stepped up for Odisha Police and found the target from the spot to put the scores level at the break. Odisha Police took the lead in the 69th minute, as Sarojini Tirkey tapped the ball in, following a melee inside the box.

The Delhi-based side refused to give up and found its equaliser on the 89th minute. Muskan Khan delivered a wonderful cross from the right flank and an unmarked Jyoti Ann Burrett made no mistake in finding the back of the net.

Finally, the Hans Women skipper Burrett found another breakthrough in the 92nd minute. She beat the goalkeeper from a difficult angle and ensured a hard-fought maiden win of the season for her side in their final game.

# HI placed under CoA for Sports Code violation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 25:** The Delhi High Court Wednesday placed Hockey India under a three-member Committee of Administrators (CoA) after observing that the federation has violated the National Sports Code.

The Court ruling came on a petition filed by former India player Aslam Sher Khan, who had challenged Indian Olympic Association (IOA) President Narinder Batra's appointment as life member of Hockey India.

The High Court held that HI's appointment of Batra as its life member and Elena Norman as CEO were illegal and thus the administrative setup of Hockey India was erroneous or illegal.

Now in a space of seven days, two national federations have been put under CoA as the Supreme Court, May 18, had appointed a three-member committee to manage the affairs of the All India Football Federation (AIFF) for violation of Sports Code.

Making a reference to the Apex Court ruling, the HC constituted a



committee, which will be headed by former Supreme Court judge AR Dave and will have former Chief Election Commissioner SY Quraishi and ex-Indian hockey team captain Zafar Iqbal as members.

"It would be in the public interest that its affairs be put in the hands of a Committee of Administrators (CoA) as has been directed by the Supreme Court on 18th May 2022, in the case of another NSF in All India Football Federation," the HC said.

"The administrative setup of R-2 (Hockey India) is, erroneously or illegally constituted because of the Life President and Life Members," the HC bench of Justices Najmi Wajiri and Swarana Kanta

Sharma said in its order.

"The Government of India cannot grant recognition to a NSF whose constitution is not in consonance with the Sports Code. The posts of Life President, Life Member in the NSF are illegal so is the post of CEO in the Managing Committee. These posts are struck-down."

A Hockey India source said the sports body has called an emergency meeting May 30. "We are yet to read the full judgement but we have already called an emergency meeting May 30 in New Delhi to decide our future course of action. So we won't comment anything further on the issue," the source said.

The HC said all such references in Constitution/Memorandum of

Association of Hockey India will have to be removed.

The development comes weeks after the CBI had registered a preliminary enquiry against Batra for alleged misuse of Rs 35 lakh of Hockey India funds. It was alleged in a complaint that Rs 35 lakh of Hockey India funds was used for personal benefits of Batra.

The HC empowered the CoA to recover whatever amount of money Batra owes to HI from the sports administrator, while asking the panel to bring in accountability.

As far as HI chief executive officer Elena is concerned, the court ruled that recovery of money "against the current CEO would not be warranted" as she is not an office bearer with voting rights and has assisted the federation only as an administrator.

The court also said the CoA would be at a liberty to make all appropriate arrangements, for the governance of Hockey India until fresh elections are held in terms of the Sports Code conforming constitution.

Besides, it has also been asked to "facilitate the holding of elections and the handing over of the af-

**BATRA REMOVED AS IOA PRESIDENT**

**NEW DELHI:** Veteran sports administrator Narinder Batra was Wednesday removed as IOA President after the Delhi High Court struck down the position of 'Life Member' in Hockey India, courtesy which he had contested and won the apex body elections back in 2017. Indian Olympic Association (IOA) senior vice president Anil Khanna took over as acting chief. Batra had filed his nomination for the IOA president's post as a representative (Life Member) of Hockey India. The Delhi HC ruled that the position of Life Member and Life President were 'illegal' since they were not in consonance with the National Sports Code and installed a three-member Committee of Administrators (CoA) to run the day-to-day affairs of Hockey India.

fairs to a democratically elected body in terms of its constitution which will be adopted, preferably within a period of 20 weeks from the date the learned CoA members give their assent."

# Maiden Grand Slam main draw win for Ramanathan



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Paris, May 25:** Indian tennis player Ramkumar Ramanathan cherished his first ever main draw win at a Grand Slam as he combined with American Hunter Reese to beat the German team of Daniel Altmaier and Oscar Otte in the men's doubles event of the French Open, here Wednesday.

Ramkumar, who has made umpteen attempts to crack a singles main draw of a Grand Slam without success, and Reese beat their

rivals 7-6(7-4), 6-3 in their opening round of the clay court major.

The 27-year-old Indian had broken into the doubles top-100 early this year, following his maiden ATP Tour title win with compatriot Rohan Bopanna in Adelaide and at home in Pune, competing in the Tata Open Maharashtra.

Rohan Bopanna and his Dutch partner Matwe Middelkoop had progressed to the second round with 6-4, 6-1 win over local wildcards Sascha Gueymard Wayenburg and Luca Van Assche, Tuesday.