



**Positive signs**  
Actor Prachi Desai believes that it's a wonderful time for everyone who is part of the entertainment industry

LEISURE | P2



**China death toll rises**  
The death toll in the expressway collapse in China's Guangdong province doubles to 48, the official media reports

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**Mfg moderates**  
India's manufacturing sector activity moderates in April, but still records the second fastest improvement in 3.5 years

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**India women triumph**  
India secure an unassailable 3-0 lead in the five-match women's T20I series after scripting a comprehensive win against Bangladesh

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Lok Sabha

Vidhan Sabha

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## LOOKOUT CIRCULAR AGAINST PRAJWAL

AGENCIES

**Kalaburagi, May 2:** Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara Thursday said a lookout circular has been issued to arrest Hassan JD(S) MP Prajwal Revanna who is facing allegations of sexually abusing women.

On Prajwal seeking seven more days to appear before the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the case as he is abroad, Parameshwara said there is no provision to grant more than 24 hours.

## EC ORDERS TRANSFER OF SUJATA KARTHIKEYAN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 2:** The Election Commission (EC) Thursday ordered immediate transfer of Mission Shakti department commissioner-cum-secretary Sujata R Karthikeyan to a non-public dealing department following complaints of alleged misuse of public office, sources said.

The BJP had petitioned the EC to remove Sujata from her post contending that she was 'actively' operating as an agent of the ruling BJD in the state.

"It is unfortunate that the serving IAS officer has given a go-bye to professionalism and is actively indulging as an agent of the BJD because of the influence of her husband on her. She is actively participating in the elections as a front person of the BJD in a manner which has been unheard of earlier," it said.



**BRUTE FORCE:** Law enforcement officers detain a protester at University of California, Los Angeles during a pro-Palestinian protest, Thursday Reuters

## With 3 more names, BJD wraps up candidate list

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, May 2:** Biju Janata Dal (BJD) president and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced the names of three more candidates and changed the nominee for one seat, finalising the contestants for all the 147 Assembly seats in the state, Thursday.

Among the new nominees, Sabitri Pradhan will contest for Khandapada Assembly seat in Nayagarh district, while Sandhyarani Das will fight for Korei seat in Jajpur district.

Sandhyarani is the mother of BJD's organisational secretary and Sambalpur Lok Sabha candidate Pranab Prakash Das and wife of former Janata Dal president Ashok Das.

Turncoat sitting MLA Sukant Kumar Nayak, who joined BJD March 31 after resigning from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), has been nominated for Nilgiri Assembly segment.

The BJD has replaced its candidate in Deogarh Assembly seat, with Romanch Ranjan Biswal taking the place of Arundhati Devi, the wife of erstwhile Deogarh king and BJP's Sambalpur MP Nitesh Ganga Deb.

### Naveen files nomination for Bolangir's Kantabanji

**Bhubaneswar:** BJD president Naveen Patnaik Thursday filed his nomination for Kantabanji Assembly segment under Bolangir Parliamentary constituency in the state's western region, two days after he filed papers for his traditional Hinjili seat in Ganjam. Patnaik chose Kantabanji as the second seat as it is strategically located and connected to three Lok Sabha seats - Kalahandi, Bolangir and Bargarh. Kantabanji seat was last won by Congress candidate SS Saluja.

# No lollipops: EC

*Have you received a text message from party X seeking your personal details for enrolment in some schemes after the elections, or a form from party Y requiring your financial details, including bank accounts, as part of a survey for some post-poll entitlements? As the electoral battle intensifies, winning strategies by political parties are getting more aggressive, often breaching lines of legality and straying into outright inducement with subliminal surveys. Peevled at the growing trend which is threatening to turn the democratic process into a barter game, the Election Commission has asked parties to desist from the practice of showing 'lollipops' ahead of the elections as a shortcut means to ensure victory*



through advertisements, surveys or mobile applications.

The EC said it has taken a 'serious view' of political parties and candidates seeking details of voters under the guise of various surveys for their proposed beneficiary schemes and cautioned that it amounts to a corrupt practice under the electoral law.

The poll panel pointed out that some political parties and candidates have been engaging in activities that 'blur the lines between legitimate surveys and partisan efforts' to register individuals for post-election beneficiary-oriented schemes.

In an advisory to all national and state-level political parties,

the EC asked them to immediately 'cease and desist' from any activity that involves registering people for such post-election schemes through advertisements, surveys or mobile applications.

At the same time, the EC acknowledged that 'generic and general electoral promises' are in the realm of permissibility.

It said the act of inviting or calling upon individual electors to register for post-election benefits may create an impression of the requirement of a one-to-one transactional relationship between the elector and the proposed benefit, and has the potential to generate a quid pro quo arrangement for voting in a particular way, thereby leading to inducement.

The EC also noted that such activities obscure the distinction between authentic surveys and biased attempts to enrol people in programmes for political gain - all while masquerading as legitimate survey activities or efforts to inform about government programmes or party agendas related to potential individual benefits.

## I'm natural successor to Naveen's values: Pandian

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, May 2:** Unfazed by the 'outsider' barb of his opponents, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's closest associate Kartik Pandian said he is a 'natural successor' to all the great values of Patnaik and he will do everything under the sun to help his 'guru' serve the people of the state.

In a no-holds-barred attack on the BJP, Pandian also said it is the ruling party at the Centre that has done nothing for the 'Odia Asmita' or for promoting the language, art and culture of the state despite repeated pleas by the CM.

In a candid video interview with PTI at Patnaik's residence here, the 49-year-old former IAS officer who last served as private secretary to the CM before quitting the service to join the party last year, said, "I call Naveen Babu my guru and I'm his shishya (disciple)." Pandian said he is just a foot soldier and not even an office bearer of BJD, but he is a big fan of Patnaik. "I do everything under the sun to see that Naveen Babu comes out with flying colours and continues to serve the people of Odisha in the best possible way and with all the big dreams he has for the state," Pandian said.

Asked about he being seen as a natural successor to 77-year-old Patnaik, who has been the state's CM for five terms and is seeking his sixth term in the ongoing polls, Pandian said, "I'm a natural successor to all the great values he possesses, whether it's his impeccable integrity, his commitment to people of Odisha, his hard work, punctuality, sincerity, everything."

"Every person in Odisha and perhaps in the country should try to succeed his values. That's the kind of successor of Naveen Babu I see myself as and I'm proud of it. I try to emulate whatever he is doing," he said.

On BJP's charge that he is an 'outsider' in Odisha, Pandian said, "BJP calls me an outsider for their own political reasons. People of the state don't say that."



## BJP names six more Assembly candidates

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, May 2:** The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Thursday announced candidates for six more Assembly seats in the state.

Party's state unit vice president Purnachandra Mohapatra, a doctor by profession, has been nominated for Barabati-Cuttack Assembly segment where Kendrapara MP and actor-turned-politician Anubhav Mohanty, who quit BJD, was also in the race for the BJP ticket, party sources said. Mohapatra's name was also in the discussion for BJP nominee for the Cuttack Lok Sabha seat. With the sixth list of candidates, the party announced its nominees for 146 seats for elections to the 147-member Assembly in the state.

The party is yet to announce its nominee for Nilgiri in Balasore. Prakash Ranabijuli has been named as the BJP candidate for Begunia Assembly segment and Umesh C Jena for the Bari Assembly seat.

The BJP fielded Sudhanshu Nayak from the Bhandaripokhari seat, while Ashish Patra and Sambhunath Rout will contest from Bhogarai and Ghasipura Assembly segments, respectively.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



A very dangerous trend has started. The media has begun asking us genuine questions

**MARKET WATCH**

INDEX	VALUE	VARIATION
SENSEX	74611.11	↑ 128.33
NIFTY	22648.20	↑ 43.35
DOLLAR	83.76	↑ ₹0.72
EURO	89.31	↓ ₹1.69
GOLD	₹70,746	↑ ₹21
SILVER	₹79,882	↑ ₹12

**WEATHER**

	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	39.0°C	38.6°C
Min Temp	24.2°C	26.5°C
Humidity	55%	79%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

**FORECAST**  
Partly cloudy sky with one/two spells of rain and thunderstorm

# Earth receives laser message from 140 mn miles away

AGENCIES

**Washington, May 2:** Earth has just received a laser message from 140 million miles away, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has revealed.

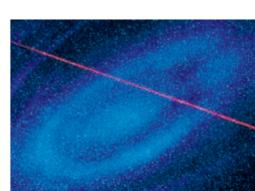
But before you think about aliens, there's an explanation. The laser was transmitted to Earth by NASA's Psyche spacecraft, which is currently 140 million miles away - 1.5 times the distance between Earth and the Sun.

This achievement provides a glimpse into how spacecraft could use optical communications in

the future, enabling higher-data-rate communications of complex scientific information as well as high-definition imagery and video in support of humanity's next giant leap: Sending humans to Mars, the 'Mail Online' reported quoting NASA.

The laser message was beamed to Earth by NASA's Deep Space Optical Communications transceiver, which is currently riding on board the Psyche spacecraft. The transceiver sends and receives data through an 8.6-inch aperture telescope, it wrote.

"We downlinked about 10 minutes of duplicated spacecraft



data during a pass April 8," said Meera Srinivasan, the project's operations lead at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Southern California.

"Until then, we'd been sending test and diagnostic data in our downlinks from Psyche. This

represents a significant milestone for the project by showing how optical communications can interface with a spacecraft's radio frequency comms system," Srinivasan said.

The experiment first kicked off in December 2023, when Psyche was just 19 million miles away from Earth. During that initial period, test data was transmitted at a rate of 267 megabits per second - comparable to broadband internet download speeds.

Now that the spacecraft is more than seven times further away, the rate at which it can send and receive data is reduced.

During the latest test, the spacecraft transmitted data at a rate of 25 megabits per second.

While this might sound low, NASA says it far surpasses the project's goal of proving at least one megabit per second was possible at that distance. Ken Andrews, project flight operations lead at JPL, said, "It was a small amount of data downlinked over a short time frame, but the fact we're doing this now has surpassed all of our expectations."

Previously, NASA has only used radio waves to communicate with missions that travel beyond the Earth.

## WB Guv accused of molestation

AGENCIES

**Kolkata, May 2:** West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose has been accused of molesting a woman, Trinamool Congress MP Sagarika Ghose claimed, Thursday. This comes ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's stay at Raj Bhavan in Kolkata Thursday night.

In a post on X, Ghose said a woman has alleged that she was molested while she went to meet the Governor at Raj Bhavan Thursday.

# leisure



## SOFIA ON WHY SHE CAN'T BE TOO PICKY ABOUT MEN

Actress Sofia Vergara feels she can't be too picky about who she dates, as it is already hard for women over 50 to find someone. "It's already hard for a 50-something-year-old woman to find someone. I'm not going to be now picky," the actress said.

## CHER'S VEGAS RESIDENCY SAVED HER FROM POVERTY

Legendary singer-songwriter Cher has opened up on how she turned her fortunes around. The singer recently appeared on The Jennifer Hudson Show and shared that she did something many artistes didn't do in the 1980s - begin a residency in Las Vegas - in order to make some money to support her family.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Today you will feel like going green, and Ganesh approves. You could plant a sapling, or organise some dustbins to keep the neighbourhood clean. If you wish to make the world a better place to live in, do it but take it step by step.

**TAURUS**  
You are likely to become too ambitious today and strive to outdo others. So says Ganesh. You will be over eager to do some thing big, lay your hands on something precious and valuable. Though you are quite likely to succeed to some extent your over enthusiasm may land you in serious problems that may affect your persona; and private life.

**GEMINI**  
Putting things in order will be your top priority, says Ganesh. You will possibly have a romantic dinner with your sweetheart. Seductive conversations may culminate in sensuous consummation. Your personal feelings will stir up your partner's private thoughts.

**CANCER**  
It is high time you paid attention to your family. You have been so lost in work and in making money that you have almost forgotten the very people you have been slugging for. Your spouse has been trying hard to improve the relationship. Ganesh feels it is time you respond to your partner's needs.

**LEO**  
You will leave no stone unturned to satisfy and please your partner today. So your chances of slipping up are very slight. You will be able to impress your partner today. You need to be careful in all your financial dealings today, says Ganesh.

**VIRGO**  
Your communication and creative abilities are your best weapons. You will be overflowing with zest for life and will exude cheerfulness. However, Ganesh warns that your creativity will bloom fully only in situations where there is no pressure or strain.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesh says that you will be full of joy, enthusiasm and vigor today. Your knowledge will improve by being in the company of intelligent people. Anything that you take up today will have your luck or destiny supporting you. Ganesh wishes you success in all your undertakings.

**SCORPIO**  
Focus is the buzzword for you; your eyes should be set on the things you aim, advises Ganesh. You may even indulge into some kind of research work. Today, you may bump into an old pal with whom you relive those good old school days and rejuvenate yourself.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Benevolence will be your middle name today. Being frank and open-minded will have its own advantages. You might just give your life partner a patient ear. This will make them feel treated well, says Ganesh.

**CAPRICORN**  
You have been waiting to hear some good news for long, and today is the day when the wait will be finally over. With your eyes firmly set on your goal, you will develop likings for your work. This will help you make plans and take decisions for the future, feels Ganesh. You wished to change your current job, but with some good news coming in you may not wish for the same any more.

**AQUARIUS**  
Today, you will want to expand your horizon of knowledge. You will give a tough fight to your opponents and come out triumphant, feels Ganesh. Troubles will not be able trouble you as you will be able to turn them into your advantage. You are clever, talented and have all that it takes to fly high.

**PISCES**  
Today you will feel generous and calm. You will shower those in the family who are younger than you with this generosity and as a result be the object of their fondness. With a clear perspective you will be able to see things for what they are. The only downside of the day is that your expenses might take a toll on your wallet, says Ganesh.

# Janhvi turns host for mom's home

**Mumbai:** Actress Huma Qureshi, who is currently busy shooting for her next project *Gulabi*, shared what perks her up even when she is sleep-deprived.

The *Maharani* star took to her Instagram stories, where she shared a video of her stepping into a bookstore. The actress seems to be at the airport when she spots her maiden novel *Zeba: An Accidental Superhero* kept in the 'highlight' section in the bookstore.

She captioned it: "No matter how sleep deprived.....This always perks me up."

Huma also shared a glimpse from the shoot of her upcoming film *Gulabi*, where she will be essaying the role of an auto-rickshaw driver. The shoot was taking place in a desert region. A glimpse also showed camels in the distance.

Talking about *Gulabi*, which is directed by Vipul Mehta, is based on a true story. It tells the journey of a brave auto-rickshaw driver who inspired women to reclaim their destinies.

Huma's debut novel *Zeba: An Accidental Superhero* is themed around 'magic, wonder and resilience'. In the story, the protagonist, Zeba, wears her hijab as a cape and turns into a relatable symbol of strength in the face of challenges.

**Mumbai:** Actress Janhvi Kapoor has turned a host for her childhood home in Chennai, owned by her mother, the late actress Sridevi.

The *Mili* actress shared sweet memories of the residence, describing it as a special chapter in her mother's legacy.

Sridevi's home in Chennai has been listed on the vacation rental company Airbnb's website under the category titled Icons.

Speaking at the launch event, Janhvi said, "I think this house symbolises such a special chapter in my mother's legacy and in all of our lives. It was her first major purchase once she started working, and her prized possession really."

The *Dhadak* actress went on to narrate the sweetest memories of her childhood home, saying, "Growing up, it was always like a theme in our lives. Alright, we are going to Chennai, and we have a city house. My mother loved the beach."

"So what you can expect is very good energy; we have made a lot of special memories in that house, an amazing view, access to the beach, and just a nice place to relax and be with yourself," she added.

On the Airbnb property, guests can enjoy authentic South Indian cuisine, and practice yoga with ocean views. It will be available from May 12, IANS

**HUMA REVEALS WHAT PERKS HER UP**



# When Rajesh slapped Sanjeev on set

**Mumbai:** Rajesh Khanna, the inaugural superstar of India, experienced an unparalleled level of craze that continues to stand unmatched.

The era spanning from 1969 to 1974 saw him reign as the undisputed superstar of not only Hindi cinema but the entire Indian film industry.

His life stories and career are still talked about due to his immense popularity. However, not all stories are pleasant. One such instance is his rivalry with fellow actor Sanjeev Kumar, which ended with the actor slapping him. The misunderstanding between Khanna and his ex-girlfriend, Anju Manhendru,

sparked the feud. They reportedly lived together from 1966 to 1972 but split when Anju turned down Khanna's marriage proposal repeatedly.

Shortly after their breakup, tabloids speculated about Anju's romantic involvement with Sanjeev Kumar. This gossip created turmoil in the actress' life, especially since Khanna, her former partner, was reportedly dissatisfied with the news. Anju's mother regarded Sanjeev as her brother and would insist on tying a Rakhi on his wrist. Therefore,

when rumours about Anju's alleged affair with Sanjeev Kumar emerged, it deeply disturbed her.

A few years back, in a film where Rajesh and Sanjeev shared screen space, there was a scene where Khanna had to slap Sanjeev. Holding onto his grudge, Rajesh opted not to fake the slap and instead delivered a real one to Sanjeev. Anju and Rajesh began speaking again in 1988 and stayed friends until Rajesh passed away. AGENCIES



# 'GOOD CONTENT WORKS ACROSS PLATFORMS'

**Mumbai:** Actress Prachi Desai, who is receiving a lot of positive responses to her recent release *Silence 2*, feels that good content works across platforms of the exhibition.

"I think good and engaging content is platform-agnostic. However, content is being consumed via various platforms and tools, and that's the reason why content is being tailored to suit them," she elaborated.

The actress believes that it's a wonderful time for everyone who is part of the entertainment industry, as the opportunities are unlimited. In *Silence 2*, the actress thinks that it cuts across the strata of the audience because of its universal appeal.

She said, "It's a thriller and a murder mystery. I think films from this genre have a universal appeal. Also on OTT, people all over the world are looking for engaging content, irrespective of the language. I think that's where *Silence 2* scores highly."

About her process as an actor, she said, "I read the script and follow the director's vision. Whether it's a mystery thriller or a romantic film, I ensure that, as an actor, I know my character well, and I am on the same page as my director."

*Silence 2* is available to stream on ZEE5. IANS

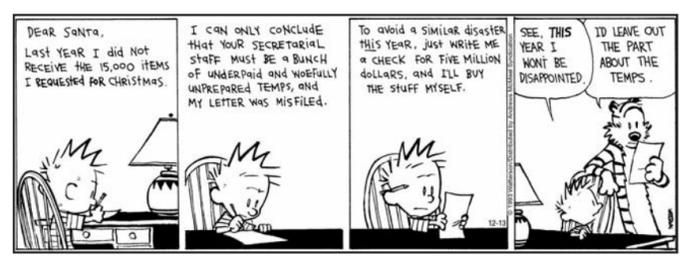


## FUN post

### PEANUTS



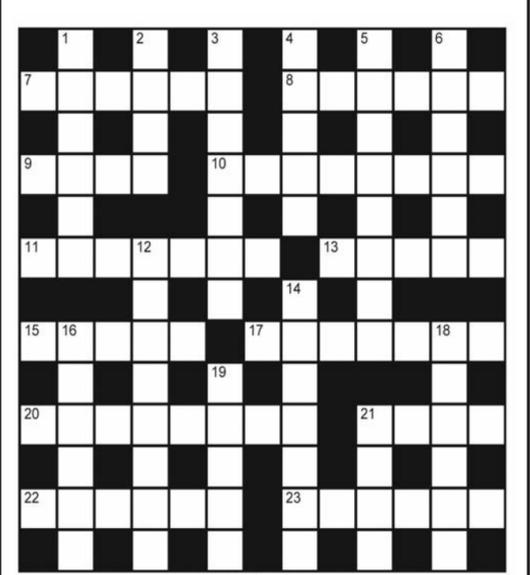
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



### CROSSWORD



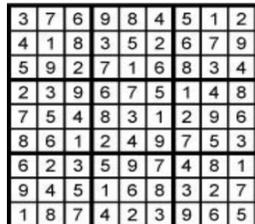
- Across**
- 7 Rancher's concern
  - 8 Boldness
  - 9 Zealous
  - 10 Tried and true
  - 11 Theatre section
  - 13 Personal journal
  - 15 Spiritual leader
  - 17 Triumph
  - 20 Pub serving
  - 21 Snowman prop
  - 22 Large lizard
  - 23 Bacon serving
- Down**
- 1 Riga locale
  - 2 Style of poker
  - 3 Kipper
  - 4 Tennyson poem
  - 5 Church musician
  - 6 Fisherman
  - 12 Funicular railway conveyance (5,3)
  - 14 Pistol
  - 16 Retaliate
  - 18 Kind of wit
  - 19 Two-mile-high capital (2,3)
  - 21 Tower site

### SUDOKU

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



### SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown

## SUMMER SOLACE

As temperatures soar, students of Stewart School distribute water to passersby at Mission Road in Cuttack, Thursday



## 'Naveen will never accept Bharat Ratna for father in return for alliance'



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, May 2:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik will never accept Bharat Ratna or any other award for his father Biju Patnaik in return for any election or political alliance with the BJP, his close associate and Biju Janata Dal (BJD) leader VK Pandian said.

The former IAS officer, who has worked in Odisha for over 25 years, including as private secretary to the chief minister, also hit out at the Central ministers from the state for having never spoken about the highest civilian award for the 'Pride of Odisha' and inspiration for every Odia, Biju Patnaik.

"One of the biggest identities for Odisha is the courage and valour shown by Biju Babu. If you see two Odias in any part of the world and if they speak about Odisha, they will end up speaking about Biju Babu," Pandian told PTI in an interview here.

"They will either have tears or they will have emotions. That is the connect Biju Patnaik has with the people of Odisha. He was

a freedom fighter, he has done so much for the country and the state. He is the architect of modern Odisha," he added.

Pandian said Biju Patnaik has been honoured by Indonesia and the UK with great civilian honours but the Government of India has not done it.

"We have seen how many people have been given Bharat Ratna. With due regard to all of them, I have nothing against any of them, they all have made great contributions but this entire race, the people of Odisha look up to Biju Patnaik with great inspiration," he said.

"He is not a person in Odisha, he is a phenomenon here. How can we insult a person like Biju Babu by not giving Bharat Ratna for so many years," Pandian said.

He hit out at the BJP for talking about Odia pride and Odia Asmita without thinking of Biju Patnaik. "There is a Central minister from here and there have been other Central ministers from Odisha in the NDA government, but have they ever spoken about it," he said in an apparent jibe at Union Education

Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. "Let's think of him as a freedom fighter and let's honour him. He has been an inspiration for generations of Odias. When they talk about Biju Patnaik, people of Odisha walk two inches taller, that's the kind of inspiration he has been. Can't they recognise this and respect this?" Pandian asked.

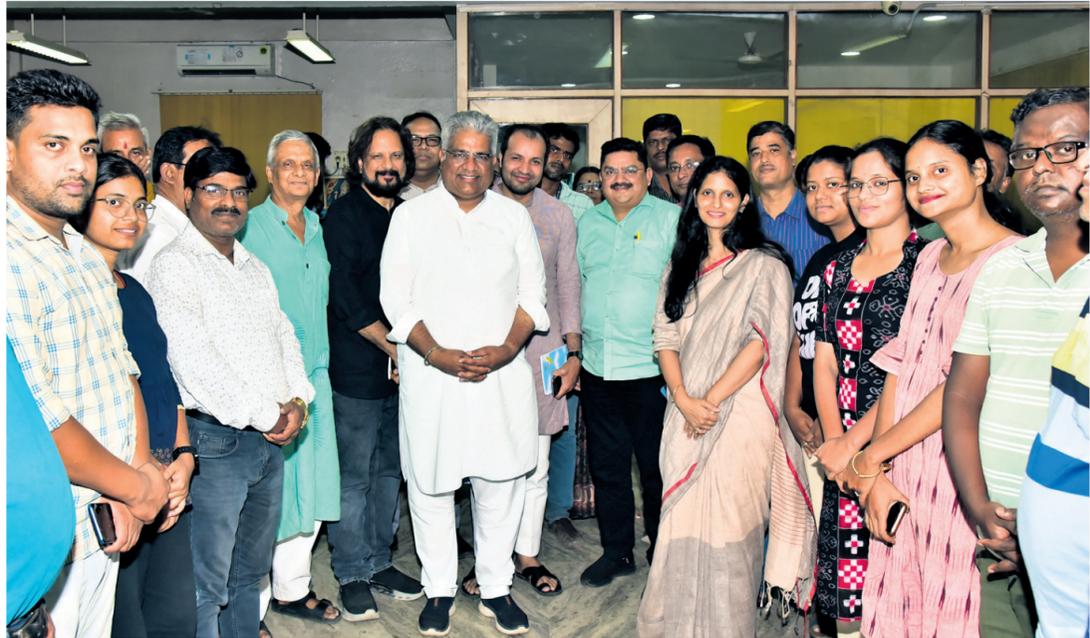
He accused the BJP of talking about Odia Asmita, Odisha's culture and Odia pride only for elections and said the people do not understand and see through this.

Asked if he thinks that Biju Patnaik, a former chief minister of Odisha, would have been conferred with the Bharat Ratna if the BJD had allied with the BJP as it happened with some other parties, Pandian said, "I don't think Naveen Babu would have been happy about it."

"You may remember, in 2019, Gita Mehta, the great writer, she is no more now, she was awarded Padma Shri for her contributions in her own field and in her own right. But she refused it," he said, referring to Naveen Patnaik's elder sister.

"With due regards and through a nicely written letter, she said her brother was in a political party and he was fighting an election and it may not be the right time for her to accept it. She said kindly don't insist for me to accept it. That is the kind of pedigree Naveen Babu comes from," Pandian said.

"He will be the last person to trade the valour of Odia pride for an award. He won't accept any award as part of an election or political alliance," he added.



**COURTESY VISIT:** Union Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Bhupender Yadav with Editor, Dharitri and Orissa POST, Tathagata Satpathy, Chief Executive Adyasha Satpathy and the staffers at the publications' office in Bhubaneswar, Thursday

## Odisha records highest-ever GST collection

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, May 2:** Odisha has recorded the highest-ever collection of Gross GST of ₹5,902.25 crore in April 2024 against corresponding collection of ₹5,035.74 crore recorded during April 2023, registering a growth rate of 17.21 per cent as against the national average growth rate of 13 per cent, a state Finance department release stated.

The state also recorded the



highest ever collection of State GST of ₹2,996.05 crore in April 2024 against corresponding collection of ₹2,253.71 crore

recorded during April 2023, registering a phenomenal growth rate of 32.94 per cent. Out of this, the collection of OGST during April of ₹2,081.83 crore is also the highest ever OGST collection, it said.

The collection under all Acts monitored by the Commissionerate of CT & GST, Odisha including OGST/IGST Settlement/VAT and Profession Tax during April 24 stands at ₹3,330.48 crore

against collection of ₹2,544.45 crore during April 23 with a growth rate of 30.89 per cent.

During April 2024, 23.15 lakh of waybills have been generated vis-à-vis 20.90 lakh waybills recorded during April 2023, recording a growth of 10.76 per cent, reflecting the buoyancy in the state economy. Out of the 23.15 lakh e-waybills generated during April 2024, 12.38 lakh were intra-state waybills while 8.51 lakh were inter-state waybills.

## Patnaik files papers from Kantabanji Assembly seat

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, May 2:** BJD President and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Thursday filed nomination papers from the Kantabanji Assembly seat in Bolangir district.

Naveen submitted his nomination papers to the returning officer at Titilagarh sub collector's office.

Patnaik had filed nomination for the sixth time from the Hinjili Assembly seat, April 30.

He was accompanied by BJD



leader Kartik Pandian, senior leader Ananga Udaya Singh Deo, BJD nominees for Titilagarh

Assembly seat, Tukuni Sahoo and Bolangir Assembly seat, Kalikesh Narayan Singh Deo.

Sitting MLA and senior politician Santosh Singh Saluja has been fielded by Congress for the Kantabanji Assembly seat. Meanwhile, Laxman Bag is contesting from the Kantabanji Assembly constituency as BJD nominee.

In 2019 Assembly polls, BJD candidate from the Kantabanji Assembly seat Ajaya Kumar Das had secured third position.

Meanwhile, the BJD aims to strengthen the party's organisation in the constituency with CM Patnaik's candida-

ture this time.

The ruling party's president is contesting from two Assembly constituencies- his home turf Hinjili and Kantabanji in Bolangir district in western Odisha.

With his win from either of the seats, Naveen will become the longest-serving chief minister of India this time.

In 2019, Patnaik also contested from the Bijepur seat in Bargarh district along with the Hinjili seat. However, he later resigned as Bijepur MLA.

## Cong slams PM over electoral bonds issue

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 2:** Calling the BJP 'Bhrasht Janata Party', the Congress Thursday alleged that the electoral bonds scheme was deliberately engineered by it to remove all transparency and oversight from political funding.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said it is time to expose Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'greatest jumla' that electoral bonds increased transparency in political funding.

"Before Electoral Bonds were introduced, parties had to submit an annual Contributions Report to the EC with the following information: For any donation more than ₹20,000 by any person or company - name and address of donor and mount contributed," he pointed out.

After electoral bonds were introduced, donations made through electoral bonds did not have to be mentioned in the contribution report, Ramesh said.

"Both the ECI and RBI voiced their opposition to this move," he said in a post on X.

"The Election Commission, in a May 2017 letter to the Law Ministry, stated that, 'it is evident... that any donation received by a political party through an electoral bond has been taken out of the ambit of reporting under the Contribution Report' and 'this is a retrograde step as far as transparency of do-

nations is concerned and this proviso needs to be withdrawn'," he said.

According to Ramesh, the RBI, in a January 2017 letter had also stated that, 'the intended purpose of transparency may not be achievable... The bonds are bearer bonds and are transferable by delivery. Hence who finally and actually contributes the bond to the political party will not be known.'



As the EC and RBI had feared, not a single detail of which party got funds from which donor was revealed to the public before the Supreme Court intervened in February, Ramesh said.

"We now know that companies which donated to the BJP received more than ₹4 lakh crore worth of government contracts and clearances during the same period. Corruption on this scale would have been impossible without the opaqueness provided by the electoral bonds Scheme," he said.

## Modi to address 2 rallies May 6

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Bhubaneswar, May 2:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be in the state May 6 to boost the BJP's poll campaign ahead of the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections, to be held simultaneously in four phases from May 13 to June 1.

The Prime Minister will address two election rallies at the Berhampur and Nabarangpur Lok Sabha constituencies, respectively during his visit.

Speaking to mediapersons here Wednesday, senior state BJP leader Golak Mohapatra said, "PM Modi will visit Odisha May 6 and address two public meetings. He will first address a public gathering in Berhampur at 10 am, before proceeding to Nabarangpur on the same day at around 12.30 pm."

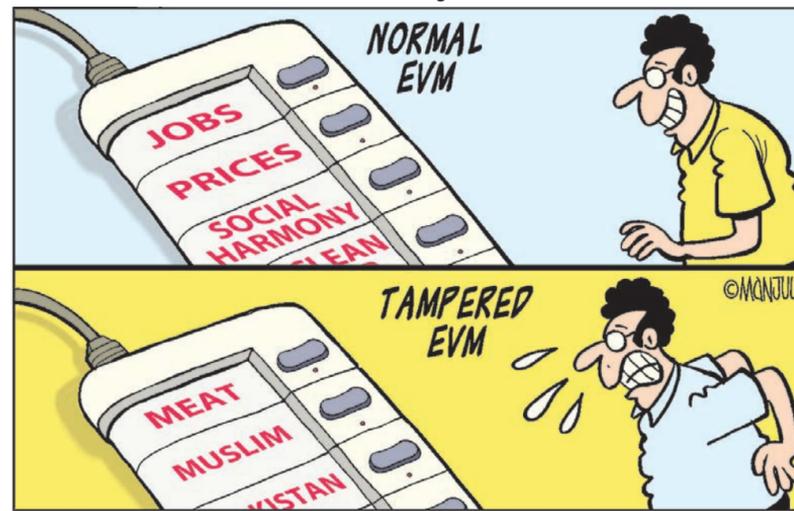
The BJP has fielded Pradeep

Kumar Panigrahy from Berhampur and Balabhadra Majhi from Nabarangpur, where polling will be held May 13.

Mohapatra also said that several other big leaders of the BJP, including Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Union ministers Smriti Irani and Rajnath Singh, among others, are scheduled to visit Odisha in the coming days for campaigning.

The BJP is worried over the massive corruption and poor implementation of various welfare schemes launched by the Modi government such as the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, and Swachh Bharat Yojana in the state, he said. Mohapatra also said it is a matter of great concern for the party that the society as a whole, including its language, literature, culture, and pride, is under threat in Odisha.

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL



## BJP moves EC against IPS officer over code violation

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, May 2:** The BJP Thursday lodged a complaint with the Election Commission against a senior IPS officer alleging that the police officer violated the model code of conduct (MCC), and demanded his transfer outside Odisha.

A delegation of state BJP leaders submitted a petition before the Odisha Chief Electoral Officer and complained that IPS officer Ashish Singh had violated MCC.

"The commission had previously transferred Singh from his earlier position of the IGP,

central range, Odisha. However, he continued activities in favour of the BJD," BJP spokesperson Satyabrata Panda alleged.

The saffron party urged the EC to seize Singh's phone immediately and initiate a probe into his conduct.

The party also demanded his transfer outside the state to ensure free and fair elections.

"Singh has been helping the ruling BJD in transporting black money through police officials to influence the election. The police officer is also accused of threatening rival candidates of BJD over the telephone," the BJP leader alleged.

## Docs warn gym goers as sudden heart attacks return

**H**ealth experts Thursday warned gym goers, especially those in their mid-30s and 40s, should get themselves properly evaluated by doctors before beginning their exercise regimen, as sudden heart attacks returned in India, claiming the lives of at least four people - three young adults and one minor - in Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat in the last 24 hours.

The tragic news has raised fresh concerns over the fatal disease, which soared significantly in the country post the Covid-19 pandemic.



Wednesday, a 17-year-old minor died in Rajkot, while a 40-year-old man living in Hanuman Madhi Chowk area died of a heart attack, Thursday.

Another man, aged 34 years, died of a heart attack in Gujarat's

Navsari while riding a bike.

"Whenever we start gymming/exercise, it should be a gradual onset, the duration should be staggered, should initially be less and then gradually be increased to match the

person's tolerance level," Dr Manish Aggarwal, Senior Consultant and head of interventional cardiology at PSRI Hospital, told IANS.

He noted that a doctor's assessment can warn of any risk factor for coronary artery disease, diabetes, hypertension, strong family history of heart disease, which can help avert any untoward incidents. Tobacco smoking, unhealthy lifestyle with increased intake of junk foods rich in salt, sugar, and unhealthy oils, and zero exercise are some of the major risk factors for the increasing heart attack cases in the country.

Last year, several people col-

lapsed at Garba events during Navratri in Gujarat, and at least 10 people reportedly died of heart attacks. The youngest of the victims was just 17 years old.

While heart attacks have been occurring for long, the Covid virus as well as the vaccine have been speculated as a risk factor.

The deaths also come amid reports of British pharma giant AstraZeneca admitting that its Covid vaccine, developed in collaboration with the University of Oxford - and sold as Covishield in India - can raise the risk of blood clots.

Blood clots, which narrow the arteries leading to the heart, can cause a heart attack. IANS

# Bolangir hottest with 45°C

TWIN CITY RECORDED LOWER THAN 40 DEGREES CELSIUS THURSDAY. BHUBANESWAR RECORDED 39 DEGREES CELSIUS, WHILE CUTTACK RECORDED 38.6 DEGREES CELSIUS

PNN/AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, May 2:** With a little rainfall Wednesday evening, the Capital city got relief Thursday with temperature going down below 40 degrees Celsius. Bolangir recorded the highest temperature at 45 degrees Celsius. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said heatwave conditions scorched parts of West Bengal, Bihar, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and coastal Andhra Pradesh. At least 17 places in these states recorded temperatures above the 44 degrees Celsius mark. Twin City recorded lower than 40 degrees Celsius Thursday. Bhubaneswar recorded 39 degrees Celsius, while Cuttack recorded 38.6 degrees Celsius. As many as 29 places in the

**As per IMD, there is no possibility of significant change in the day temperature for the next three days, although the day temperature is likely to drop by three to four degrees Celsius in next few days**

state recorded a maximum temperature of above 40 degrees Celsius. The temperature was 44.7 degrees Celsius at Angul, followed by Nuapada (44.6), Talcher (44.5) and Titilagarh (44.5). As per IMD, there is no possibility of significant change in

the temperature for the next three days, although the day temperature is likely to drop by three to four degrees Celsius in next few days. The coastal Odisha will get a break from the heatwave after two days. Meanwhile, severe heatwave condition very likely to prevail in the districts of Khurda, Bhadrak, Angul, Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Bolangir, Subarnapur, Nayagarh, Boudh, Ganjam, Jajpur, Dhenkanal, Bargarh, Nuapada and Kendrapara. After May 6, there is a possibility of a break in the summer flow in the state. The MeT office Wednesday said above normal maximum temperatures are likely over in most parts of the country during May and a significantly high number of heatwave days expected over the northern plains, central region and adjoining areas of peninsular India. April saw record-smashing maximum temperatures in east, northeast, and southern peninsular India prompting health warnings from government agencies and some states to suspend in-person classes in schools. A number of stations recorded their highest ever April day temperature. According to IMD data, the number of heat wave days this April was the highest in 15 years in Gangetic West Bengal and nine years in Odisha. Odisha also experienced the longest heat wave spell (16 days) in April since 2016.



**STOPGAP ARRANGEMENT:** Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) has put up temporary overhead sheds at main traffic junctions across City, Thursday, as a measure to provide relief to commuters from scorching heat. PIC- BIKASH NAYAK

## Wave of fake news as polls draw near

DEBADURLLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

**Bhubaneswar, May 2:** With prominent party leaders taking to social media for assembly polls, a wave of misinformation and fake news by unidentified miscreants have filled several platforms. Despite several hundreds of fake videos and posts, hoarding up in the social media, the Cyber Cell of Odisha police has kept a mum on the issue.

Sources revealed that many accounts with proxy identity on Instagram, are circulating deepfake videos of 5T Chairman Kartik Pandian and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, in which both are seen discussing misleading topics.

Moreover, several audio clips are being tampered by the miscreants, to garner more likes and followers. Barring this, fake videos of prominent leaders such as Dharmaendra Pradhan and Sambit Patra, are also making rounds in the social media. The fake content has spread across X, Instagram and Meta among others.

In a bid to crackdown against rising cases of cybercrime, the Commissionerate Police last month appointed an Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) for senior-level supervision along with an inspector rank officer and a sub-inspector.

In addition to this, the state government had been mulling to appoint a DSP-rank officer in all cyber police stations across the state.

A cyber-expert in the City said in a usual case of online fraud it takes a minimum of 10-15 days for the police to nab the culprit. However, in case of misinformation or fake news, each video or post is shared by countless accounts on social media. Hence, the case gets tough for police to act on miscreants.

## Mixed reactions to BMC's temporary traffic sheds

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, May 2:** To provide respite to citizens from scorching heat, Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) has started installing temporary sheds in all major traffic junctions across the City.

However, the move got mixed reactions from a cross-section of people. Taking to social media, one denizen asked, "Why not promote median plantation of big trees for a permanent solution? Shades do not cool the surrounding. The transpiration process of trees does."

Criticizing the move, another

person wrote, "Such temporary measures are nothing but a loss to government exchequer. It gets uncomfortable to wait in open traffic junctions such as Rupali Square and Ram Mandir Square even for few seconds. Permanent structure is required."

Some suggested that it would be better if trees are planted in the road dividers and in empty spaces along the road so in future there will be a natural shade.

"Sheds are temporary solace. Therefore, please go for massive plantation as it will give shade, fight climate change and

provide plenty of oxygen," a social media user told BMC.

BMC has installed temporary overhead sheds of polythene canopy with the support of bamboo poles and strings at different traffic posts of the state Capital.

The sheds have been put up at Nalso Nagar Road, Maitri Vihar, Gajapati Nagar and Kalinga Hospital Chhakk.

In addition, efforts are underway to conserve and restore water bodies in the City.

BMC also placed water pots at many places across the City for animals / birds to help them quench their thirst.

## ADITYA SCALES HIGHEST PEAKS IN AUSTRALIA

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, May 2:** A well-known young mountaineer from the state conquered the highest mountain peaks of Australia recently. Aditya Prasad Khadanga informed that in Kosciuszko national park there are ten peaks and he has climbed five of them viz Mt Kosciuszko, Rams Head, Rams Head North, Mt Abbott Peak and Etheridge Ridge. His adventure was supported by state's SNM Group.



Girijesh Prasad Khadanga, Aditya's father and mother Manjulata Satapathy thanked SNM Group for extending their support in their son's efforts. Aditya is from Sohela, Bargarh. Aditya and his team faced harsh weather conditions but with proper coordination and teamwork they reached the summit. Recounting his experience, he said after commencing ascent last August 15 in freezing cold with temperature plummeting to minus 15 degrees C, the team of climbers took around nine hours to reach the summit. He is currently preparing mentally and physically for his next goal of climbing Mt. Everest.

He is an adventure sports enthusiasts and fond of skiing and water sailing too. Aditya and his teammates Satyaki Bose and Gourav Das recently completed an expedition in Chilika by sail boat covering 148km in two days and they became Odisha's first civilians to sail across Chilika and complete the expedition.

## Global honour for Odia boy's startup

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, May 2:** Anup Paikaray, founder of Newrup Tech Solutions, a state-supported startup which manufacture the most affordable clean energy equipment, recently got an international honour at a programme in Boston.

Anup is a graduate from Odisha University of Technology and Research (OUTR), with a degree in Electronics and Instrumentation.

He was the winner of the Smartideathon contest organised by GITAM University in August 2023, following which he got the chance to attend the Boston immersion programme at Northeastern University from March to April 2024. In Boston,

his startup participated in the flagship business presentation event called Pitchathon.

His startup competed against startups of some of the greatest universities in the world, including Harvard University and MIT Innovation Lab. He emerged as one of the winners, winning a cash prize of 2 lakh and a trophy.

Earlier, Anup's startup has won many prestigious awards, such as Best Student startup of the year 2023 by Startup Odisha under the department of MSME, Green Bengal Innovation Contest, 3M Young Innovator's Award, Azim Premji Social Enterprise Award, and many more.

He is also the recipient of Nidhi Prayas from KIIT Technology Business Incubator and SISFS from AIC Nalanda.

## 2-day nat'l seminar on NEP concludes at CUO

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, May 2:** The Central University of Odisha (CUO), Koraput concluded a two-day national seminar on 'National Education Policy 2020: Challenges and Opportunities' Thursday.

The seminar was organised by the department of Education, in collaboration with Bharatiya Shikshan Mandal, a non-profit organisation.

The second day of the seminar commenced with a session aimed at facilitating dialogue and collaboration among the Heads of Departments (HoDs) across all academic departments of CUO. Chaired by the university vice-



chancellor Chakradhar Tripathi and graced by national organizing secretary of Bharatiya Shikshan Mandal BR Shankaranand, the session provided a platform for HoDs to share insights and experiences on implementing NEP 2020 within their respective departments.

Key points emphasised during the session included the importance of social responsiveness and organisational unity for national development, cultivating

fearlessness in students, and promoting a student-centric education system as envisaged in NEP 2020.

Cooperation over competition was advocated, along with the alignment of university policies with the mandates of NEP 2020. Flexibility in academic research and the prioritisation of social relevance in job interviews were also highlighted.

The session underscored the significance of interdisciplinary

approaches, mechanisms to increase Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER), and the introduction of need-based certificate courses for experiential learning. Furthermore, it stressed the importance of promoting integration between academia and industry and the encouragement of value-based literature and translation studies.

The seminar provided an invaluable platform for addressing the challenges and exploring the opportunities presented by NEP 2020. By fostering collaboration and dialogue among academic stakeholders, the event aimed to contribute to advancing education policy and practice in India.

## Advertising killed traditional journalism

News outlets relied for so long on advertising to sustain them, they could never recover once it went elsewhere.

The debate over the future relationship between news and social media is bringing us closer to a long-overdue reckoning.

Social media isn't trying to kill journalism; because social media has never really cared about journalism.

Social media is resolutely in the attention business. News propels some attention — perhaps a lot of attention for the few people who care a lot about it — but access to social media has always been far more important as a promotional tool for news outlets than news content has been to social media.

The business of most news outlets has been primarily about attracting attention, not delivering the best or highest quality news. As a result, social media was always a competitor; though not in the way often imagined.

Data on the shifting share of advertising, in Australia and

elsewhere, makes clear the profound change of the last two decades.

Money previously spent on print advertising and direct mail has migrated to search, social media, and online classifieds, such as Domain and Seek. Money spent on television advertising has moved as well, albeit more slowly and mostly just in the last decade.

The development of more effective and efficient advertising tools is what killed traditional newspaper operations, not the circulation of news on social media.

The commercial failure of news organisations is not due to their journalism product but because they are no longer nearly so strong a tool for attracting attention for advertisers.

The capabilities of internet distribution broke the business model of the 'bundled newspaper' that provided many people with enough value to enable its mass reach.

Once an agglomeration of information (weather, sports scores), news (thin details on



the events of the day), and journalism, most people now have specialty apps for information and we are awash in news from radio, television, notifications, and headlines we see in social media feeds.

The expense of journalism could be sustained by the wide reach of a paper attractive to many homes for many different reasons beyond the journalism it contained.

But advertisers became able to text and email regular consumers, social media advertising allows them to target consumers more specifically, and search allows advertisers' access to consumers interested in relevant keywords. All these features are more attractive to advertisers.

Unlike the business of newspapers and television, social media is an attention business

that does not have the costs of creating the content that attracts attention. Its business model will always be more profitable than attention businesses that create or license content.

Social media hasn't done better job producing or distributing news — but it was never in that business. The business has always been about attracting and selling attention. This too is the case for ad-funded news outlets; they weren't in the news business, but the attention business.

Shoring up the future of journalism has long required finding a different business model. The days of ad-supported journalism are well and truly gone.

The significant challenge of re-orienting the creation of journalism from other revenue has led to decades of misplaced energy spent chasing clicks and engagement that were never a pathway to a sustainable journalism.

Failing to address the core of the problem, as the case with the News Bargaining Code, has just prolonged the inevitable.

## Manoj Bajpayee joins Nand Ghar movement

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Mumbai, May 2:** Nand Ghar, which aims to transform 14 lakh anganwadis across India, unveiled a national movement — Agar Bachpan Se Poocha Khaana Khaaya, Toh Desh Ka Kal Banaya — with actor Manoj Bajpayee here Thursday. The movement is aimed at nourishing India's future generation by ensuring holistic health-care, quality nutrition and ensuring best-in-class preschool education for children.

Welcoming Bajpayee, Vedanta chairman Anil Agarwal said, "Project Nand Ghar is a national movement that supports the overall well-being of children and women with a focus on health and nutrition. We are delighted that Manoj Bajpayee ji has extended his support to this growing movement. His personal life story deeply resonates with Nand Ghar's cause to nourish and transform the



lives of our future generations." Bajpayee said, "As someone who has lived with hunger pangs, I understand the deep impact it can have on physical, mental and emotional well-being. That's why initiatives like Project Nand Ghar are so crucial."

"It not only ensures that children receive proper nutrition but also brings hope, opportunity, and a chance for a brighter future. Let's all join hands with the Nand Ghar movement to ensure that we nourish the potential of children, and together, prepare for a brighter India," he added.

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# Illegal water treatment plants create consternation in Paradip



19 companies are supplying hazardous drinking water in the port town

on five such plants located at Sandhakuda slum. Samples were collected during the raids Tuesday and those have been sent to the Food Safety department for tests. The plant authorities have also been issued notices for selling unhygienic water. However, they haven't been closed down following the raids. Kujang tehsildar Pushpashree Sandil, executive officer of Paradip Municipality, Abhilash Panda, district food inspector Pritish Das and cops from the Model, Lock and Marine police stations conducted the raids.

People in this town have also expressed concern over this development as these companies supply water to many households and offices. They are now worried whether this water will create health hazards.

Initially, media reports highlighted the functioning of such illegal water treatment plants. However, the district administration did not take any preventive measures. Officials sprang to action only when Sagar Biswal, president of social outfit 'Ahwan Foundation' lodged a complaint April 21 with Saha and submitted copies of the same to the food security officer and the chief district medical officer (CDMO).

It was only after Biswal's complaint that raids were conducted

on five such plants located at Sandhakuda slum. Samples were collected during the raids Tuesday and those have been sent to the Food Safety department for tests. The plant authorities have also been issued notices for selling unhygienic water. However, they haven't been closed down following the raids. Kujang tehsildar Pushpashree Sandil, executive officer of Paradip Municipality, Abhilash Panda, district food inspector Pritish Das and cops from the Model, Lock and Marine police stations conducted the raids.

Sources said that a well-oiled racket including influential politicians and businessmen are involved in the mushrooming of these illegal drinking water plants. They added that groundwater is being lifted and then are being sold to customers without proper treatment and in the process the companies are making huge profits. Locals said that more than 50 pickup vans are being used for the supply of the unhygienic water.

Meanwhile an official from the district food inspector's office on condition of anonymity informed that only a single plant functioning at Nimidihhi village under Paradipgarh panchayat has received the state government's approval to set up operations. When contacted, Das said that action will be taken against the plants that have been raided if there is anything amiss in sample reports.

# Odisha Police block 292 offensive poll posts

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, May 2:** The social media monitoring cell of the Odisha Police has blocked 292 offensive posts related to the general elections 2024. These posts were posted by supporters of various political parties and other groups on social media platforms like 'YouTube', 'Instagram', 'Facebook' and 'X' (formerly Twitter), a release said Thursday.

On the orders of Election Commission of India (ECI) and Chief Election Officer (CEO) of Odisha, a special cell has been created for social media monitoring in the CID-CB department. The IG of Police, CID-CB, Shefeen Ahmed has been designated as the nodal officer of this cell. A specialised team of the social media unit is functioning at the Cyber Complex office here.

The team comprises of a deputy superintendent of police, one inspector and a sub-inspector, four assistant sub-inspectors and two constables. This unit is continuously monitoring and carrying out cyber patrolling of social media platforms including 'Instagram', 'Facebook', 'X' and 'YouTube' for abusive/hate posts and taking steps to remove the content promptly for safe conduct of the upcoming elections, officials said in a press release issued Thursday.

So far 289 requests have been sent to Facebook for content removal. Out of those, 181 removals have already been carried out by 'Meta', the release informed. Similarly 190 requests have been sent to 'Instagram' for content take down and 110 have been complied with. Three requests on the same lines were sent to 'YouTube' and all of them have been removed the release said.

The release also informed that more than 275 handles across various social media platforms including 'Facebook', 'Instagram', 'YouTube', 'X' (formerly Twitter) and 'Reddit' are under surveillance and action as per law would be taken against those violating the rules. Two FIRs have been registered in the state since March 16 for misusing social media platforms and one person have been arrested so far, the release added.

The Odisha government has designated the Additional Director General of Police, CID-CB, as the nodal officer or designated official u/s 79 (3) (b) of IT Act 2000 and IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code Rules 2021) for issuing take down notices to the appropriate intermediary if any online content violates the law or any Act vide Government of Odisha notification (No 4228/HOME-CPM-MISC-0290-2023/CP&M, dated 03.02.2024).

Using this provision, notices have been issued to various social media intermediaries for content take down/removal. The release also said various open source intelligence tools have been deployed for effective monitoring of the social media. In addition, the district cyber help desk and social media cell have been established in all district police headquarters, the release informed.



# Female jumbo delivers stillborn; dies

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Keonjhar, May 2:** An adult female elephant died Thursday due to various complications after delivering a stillborn calf in a forest near Renda Sahi locality of Dubuna village under Bamebari section of Champua range in this district.

Environmentalists and wildlife enthusiasts have expressed concern over the death of the tusker. They informed that two dozen elephants have died in the past three years in Keonjhar forest division only.

According to the Forest department officials the female elephant died due to acute labour



pain and other complications. The calf got stuck inside the body of the elephant causing it severe pain. Officials said that pain started around 11.00pm Wednesday night. The tusker delivered the stillborn calf around

9.00am Thursday morning. "After giving birth to a stillborn calf, the animal failed to stand up and its condition deteriorated rapidly. At around 12.00 noon, the tusker breathed its last during treatment," di-

visional forest officer, Keonhar division, Dhanraj HD said. "Further details about the complications will only be available after the post-mortem report comes," he added. Both the tusker and the calf were buried in the forest later in the day.

Sources said several measures have been adopted for protection of the elephants under Keonjhar forest division. Elephant squads and 'Gaja Sathis' have been deployed to track and monitor the movement of wild elephants and ascertain their health conditions, but they failed to track this tusker, they added.

# Special initiatives to protect inmates of Sambalpur Zoo



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sambalpur, May 2:** To help the animals beat the heat, authorities at the 'Sambalpur Zoo' here are taking special initiatives. Temperatures in this town have constantly been soaring up to 40 degrees Celsius or more. Hence measures have been put in place to prevent heatstroke and dehydration among various types of animals, reptiles and birds in the zoo. Among them are bears, leopards, blackbucks, hog deer, sambars, barking deer, monkeys, pythons, mongooses, palm civets, cockatiels, budgerigars and peacocks.

The process to safeguard animals from the heatwave was initiated in March. All the 28 enclosures have been covered with bamboo sheds and thatch roofs. Also water holes have been created in all the enclo-

sures. Air coolers have been placed in the enclosures that house leopards and bears, officials informed.

Animals are provided special summer diet like glucose, ORS, honey and other electrolytes along with water to keep them hydrated. Fruits with water contents such as watermelons, sugarcanes, cucumbers, papayas, grapes and tomatoes are fed to herbivores, said an official. He added that constant watering of the thatched roofs is done to keep the atmosphere inside the enclosures cool. The official also informed that special care is being provided to animals and birds born in April. He added that the reptile section will see an increase in numbers soon as the rock python laid 15 eggs May 1.

Even during the heatwave, the 'Sambalpur Zoo' had a footfall of approximately 1,000 visitors daily, said another official.

# Passengers suffer as pre-paid auto services remain a non-starter

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rourkela, May 2:** The untimely closure of the pre-paid auto rickshaw stand at the railway station here is causing immense hardships to passengers. Upon their arrival here, the passengers are fleeced by local auto drivers who demand astronomical sums for taking them to their respective destinations. Passengers have been demanding for the pre-paid services, but nothing has been done for the last seven years, locals informed.

The pre-paid auto rickshaw stand at the railway station was conceived by former ADM Manisha Banerjee in 2016. The services were launched in 2017, but within two months it was shut down. The cabin from which the services were operating re-



mains deserted now.

Since then it has been a nightmare for passengers arriving here at the railway station. Not only are they charged huge amounts, they have to face other forms of harassment. And god forbid, if they arrive late in the night. Then they are at the mercy of the auto drivers. The story of an aged couple who arrived late in the night still does the rounds. They had to wait for more than two hours, but they did not get any auto. They appealed to the RPF and GRP personnel present at the station to help them, but nothing materialised. Finally

it was their neighbour who came to their rescue and arrived at the station to take them home.

The situation still persists, but it appears that the administration is in no mood to help out the passengers. At times it appears that even the police are in cahoots with the auto rickshaw drivers. Passengers are charged astronomical sums for going to places like Chhend, Kool Nagar, Fertiliser Township, Panposh, Bondamunda and other areas. "When will the administration and police help us," passengers lamented. Narrating her traumatic experience one lady told this correspondent, "I arrived from Kolkata early in the morning. However, the auto drivers prevented my son from taking me back home unless we hired one of them. Only when I shouted at them, they relented and let us go."

# 9 hurt in steel plant blast

**Keonjhar:** Nine workers of a steel plant suffered critical burn injuries following a blast at the induction furnace at Barpada under Rugudi police limits in Keonjhar district, Thursday. Among the injured, condition of three of the workers is stated to be very critical. All the injured were shifted to a private hospital in Cuttack after administration of primary treatment at the district headquarters hospital here. The incident occurred at around 4.30pm in the evening. Plant authorities rescued the injured workers and rushed them to the hospital. The identities of the injured workers are yet to be ascertained. Rugudi police station IIC Tarani Sen Bag confirmed the news of the accident. On being informed, police reached the spot but by then the plant authorities had already shifted the injured workers to Cuttack. Repeated efforts to contact the plant authorities for their version proved unsuccessful.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
M/S ASHIANA REALTY LLP is pleased to inform that the proposed Residential Project located at Plot No. 1113 (P), Khata No. 516 of Mouza: Dumuduma, Tahasil:Bhubaneswar, District: Khordha, Odisha, has been accorded Environmental Clearance from State Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA), Odisha vide EC Identification No.: EC24B038OR178443 dated 20.04.2024. The Copy of the Environmental Clearance Letter is available with the SPCB, Odisha & may also be seen on the website of SEIAA, Odisha.  
Sd/-Binod Kumar Agrawal  
Authorized Signatory

**EAST COAST RAILWAY**  
File No. DRM/Engg/KUR/24-25/E-Tender/05, Dt. 29.04.2024  
(1) Tender No. a-Tender-BRIDGEKUR-17-24, Dt. 24.04.2024  
**DESCRIPTION | REGIRDING OF IMPORTANT BRIDGE NO. 950 UP & 950 DN (RUSHIKULYA RIVER) HAVING THROUGH OPEN WEB GIRDERS OF BGML LOADING STANDARD IN SENIOR SECTION ENGINEER/ BRIDGE/SOUTH/KHURDA ROAD JURISDICTION UNDER SENIOR DIVISIONAL ENGINEER (BRIDGE), KHURDA ROAD IN CONNECTION WITH MISSION 3900 MT.**  
Approx. Cost of the Work: ₹ 7321.90 Lakhs, EMD: ₹ 38,11,000/-  
(2) Tender No. a-Tender-hq-kur-19-2024, Dt. 24.04.2024  
**DESCRIPTION | PROPOSED DESILTING OF SIDE DRAINS FROM KHURDA ROAD TO NUAGAON ROAD STATION, RAISING OF DRAIN WALLS AT KM. 14/2-7, 19/7-20/4, 6/7/7-14, 7/8/10-12, 7/9/12-14 AND REPAIRS TO CATCH WATER DRAINS AT KM. 6/7/7-12, 8/5/3-7 OF KHURDA ROAD-BLANGIR SECTION UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF SENIOR DIVISIONAL ENGINEER/ HEADQUARTER/KHURDA ROAD.**  
Approx. Cost of the Work: ₹ 161.54 Lakhs, EMD: ₹ 2,30,800/-  
(3) Tender No. a-Tender-hq-kur-25-2024, Dt. 24.04.2024  
**DESCRIPTION | PROPOSED MISCELLANEOUS REPAIRS TO DAMAGED DRAINAGE SYSTEM IN TRAFFIC COLONY & ACCOUNTS COLONY IN KHURDA ROAD SETTLEMENT UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF SENIOR DIVISIONAL ENGINEER/ HEADQUARTER/KHURDA ROAD.**  
Approx. Cost of the Work: ₹ 189.55 Lakhs, EMD: ₹ 2,44,800/-  
(4) Tender No. a-Tender-SPLKUR-22-2024, Dt. 23.04.2024  
**DESCRIPTION | EXECUTION OF WORKS RELATED TO DAILY TRACK MAINTENANCE AS PER DIRECTION OF SENIOR SECTION ENGINEER (P/WAY) IN CHARGE AT MAHANADI COALFIELDS LIMITED SIDING, TALCHER OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION UNDER DEPOSIT SCHEME FOR ONE YEAR.**  
Approx. Cost of the Work: ₹ 433.03 Lakhs, EMD: ₹ 3,66,500/-  
Completion Period: 24 (Twenty Four) Months (for Sl. No. 1), 08 (Eight) Months (for Sl. No. 2 & 3) and 12 (Twelve) Months (for Sl. No. 4).  
Tender Closing Date and Time: At 15:00 Hrs. of 15.05.2024 (all the Tenders).  
No manual offers sent by Post / Courier/ Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.  
Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website: www.irps.gov.in  
Note: The prospective tenderers are advised to visit the website 10 (Ten) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / corrigenda issued for this tender. The tenderers/bidders must have Class-II Digital Signature Certificate and must be registered on IREPS Portal. Only registered tenderer/bidder can participate on e-tendering.  
Divisional Railway Manager (Engg) / PR-69/P/24-25 Khurda Road

# Sundargarh forest fires under control: Officials

FOREST DEPARTMENT THANKS LOCALS FOR THEIR HELP IN DOUSING FLAMES

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rourkela, May 2:** Due to the co-operation and assistance of locals, forest fires have remained more or less under control in various ranges of Sundargarh district, officials stated Thursday. The Bonai forest is one of the biggest ranges in this district. A fire had broken out in a part of the forest, but it was finally brought under control Wednesday, an official said. "We faced difficulties, but the situation is finally under control," said district forest officer (DFO), Bonai range, Lalit Patra.

The DFO also explained why the department had faced difficulties in controlling the flames. "The problem was due to the gradient of the area. The fire spread to the upper region and we initially found the going tough. However due to the efforts of the staff and locals, we managed to control the flames," Patra informed.

Currently there are 459 fire points in Sundargarh district. Most of these are in Hemgiri forest range. "We have kept the situation under control due to the assistance of the



FILE PHOTO

locals. They promptly inform the Forest department if they see flames. At times they even douse the fires, before we arrive at the spot," informed Patra.

Pradip Mirase, DFO Sundargarh division informed that time span in tackling forest fires have come down drastically. "Bonai is one of the largest forest divisions in Odisha. This year our time in tackling forest fires has come down to five hours instead of the 10-12 hours in the past. This is because we have managed to control the fires," Mirase said.

Patrolling, especially early in the morning by volunteers and Forest department officials have helped in controlling the situation.

"This year Sundargarh division had three large fires and those were near the Chhattisgarh border. Our patrolling teams, locals and satellite imagery helped us reach the area with pinpoint accuracy and helped in dousing the flames promptly," informed Mirase.

The easy availability of equipment like blowers has also helped in controlling the fires. Construction of water bodies for animals has also played a major role in preventing large fire incidents. "In most parts of the forests there is abundant quantity of water to tackle and douse the flames," stated Mirase and Patra. Officials said that more than 50 water bodies are spread across the forests.

**EAST COAST RAILWAY**  
Tender No. a-T-M-KUR-AMC-CRANE-252-24  
**NAME OF WORK: ANNUAL MAINTENANCE CONTRACT OF HYDRAULIC AND PNEUMATIC SYSTEM (ALL SYSTEM EXCEPT MAIN ENGINE, AUXILIARY ENGINE & SLI SYSTEM) OF 140T BD CRANE / KHURDA ROAD FOR A PERIOD OF THREE YEARS.**  
Approximate Value: ₹17,70,000/-, EMD: ₹35,400/-, Tender Document Cost: ₹2,360/-, Period of Completion: 36 Months.  
Bidding Start Date: 07.05.2024  
Tender Closing Date and Time: At 15:30 Hrs. of 21.05.2024.  
Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.  
Complete information including e-Tender documents and corrigendum is available in website www.irps.gov.in  
Sr. Divl. Mechanical Engineer/ PR-69/P/24-25 Khurda Road

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Do join us to learn more about Mutual Funds.  
Date and Venue: Sunday, 5th May 2024; 6:30 p.m. onwards, at Hotel Leo Palace, Banspani Road, Joda.  
For registration, please contact: Debasish Panda, Mobile: 96686 34493.  
Registration is compulsory. The registration time will be from 9:30 am to 5:30 pm. No walk-ins will be allowed.  
An Investor Education and Awareness Initiative  
Visit https://www.hdfcfund.com/information/key-know-how to know more about the process to complete a one-time Know Your Customer (KYC) requirement to invest in Mutual Funds. Investors should only deal with registered Mutual Funds, details of which can be verified on the SEBI website (www.sebi.gov.in/intermediaries.html). For any queries, complaints & grievance redressal, investors may reach out to the AMC's and / or Investor Relations Officers. Additionally, investors may also lodge complaints directly with the AMC's, if they are unsatisfied with the resolutions given by AMC's they may raise complaint through the SCORES portal on https://scores.gov.in. SCORES portal facilitates investors to lodge complaint online with SEBI and subsequently view its status. In case the investor is not satisfied with the resolution of the complaints raised directly with the AMC's or through the SCORES portal, they may file any complaint on the Smart ODR on https://smartodr.in/login.  
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**Advertisement 2024 (June Batch)**  
**CCRAS Post Doctoral Fellowship Scheme (CCRAS PDF Scheme)**  
The Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS), an autonomous body of the Ministry of Ayush, Government of India, has initiated "CCRAS Post Doctoral Fellowship Scheme" with the approval of Ministry of Ayush to identify promising young researchers with innovative ideas and provide them with training and research opportunities in different multidisciplinary areas in the field of Ayurveda. The scheme aims at facilitating their transition from mentored to independent research career. CCRAS intends to offer ten (10) such fellowships every year to promising fresh PhD/PG degree holders of Ayurveda and Ph.D. holders of related science disciplines at reputed organizations like CSIR, ICMR, DBT, National Institutes, recognized Universities and National Institutions of Ayush etc. These fellowships will be allocated by Director General, CCRAS, depending upon the needs of the Institute/Centre. The Last Date of Application is 30th June, 2024 for June, 2024 batch.  
The eligible aspirants may visit the CCRAS PDF Portal (i.e. pdf.ccras.org.in) for the details of the CCRAS PDF Scheme, application form, undertaking and full advertisement including eligibility, age limit, tenure, remuneration, how to apply and mode of selection etc.  
Administrative Officer (Rectt.)  
CBC 17216/12/0002/2425



We find in others what is in us. If we always find mud around us, it proves that there is mud somewhere in us.

THE MOTHER



# Content Cacophony

Sometimes, the fulfillment of a promise feels like punishment. When the radio was invented more than 100 years ago, the German playwright Bertolt Brecht observed that its full potential could be explored only after it had become a communication tool, rather than merely a distribution channel. After all, there is a big difference between the few being able to speak to the many, and everyone being able to speak with everyone else.

Nowadays, digital technologies have indeed allowed everyone to speak to everyone. But they certainly have not fostered mutual understanding or public reason. On the contrary, open societies seem the least capable of making sensible use of this long-awaited opportunity. The last two decades have dashed many of the hopes that once came with the digital revolution. Instead of wider access to shared facts, we have fake news. Instead of conversation, we have trolling and shouting matches. Instead of creative diversity, we have new monopolies. Instead of democratic deliberation, we have shouting contests. Those who master the attention game may win it for a while, but they typically produce more noise than enlightenment. The cacophony of public debate grows, because digital platforms are designed to encourage and capitalise on dissonance.

The Reuters Institute's Digital News Report and other studies have repeatedly shown that those with extreme and fringe political views engage disproportionately with digital content. This is not surprising. Those who are more or less satisfied with the status quo, and well-adjusted to it, generally feel no need to air grievances publicly. Even the great philosopher Jürgen Habermas recently admitted that anger has often motivated his public interventions.

Citizens today do not convert their discontent into carefully considered political arguments, because it is easier simply to rant online. As a result, public attention is dominated by views representing the margins, and consensus feels further out of reach than ever.

Media operatives like Steve Bannon, Donald Trump's 2016 presidential-campaign strategist, have exploited this technologically driven phenomenon for their own ends. "The real opposition is the media," Bannon contends, "And the way to deal with them is to flood the zone with shit." Fill the public arena with enough nonsensical claims and statements, and eventually nobody will believe anything anymore. As more reputable news outlets get sucked into the maelstrom, they will lose credibility with at least some share of the public, leading to the fragmentation of the public sphere.

In her 2019 book, *The Death of Truth*, the literary critic Michiko Kakutani describes how right-wing populists have appropriated post-modern ideas to deny the very possibility of shared truths. Seizing on the argument that an individual's worldview is always ultimately subjective, they reject any attempt at discursive comparison, and embrace a public sphere in which the loudest megaphone wins.

Meanwhile, democratic forces in open societies have done too little to counter strategies of manipulation. At this point, anyone who wants to salvage a democratic consensus must first reconstruct the concept of the public square, and show how the diversity of our perceptions of the world is still fully compatible with devising a common plan for the future. Forging social consensus in pluralistic, increasingly globalised societies may be difficult, but it is necessary.

Understanding the structure of the state and the electoral system is not enough. Educational institutions must also teach students media literacy. In an "editorial society" where every citizen can potentially go public at any time, such training (both philosophical and technical) should be emphasised in school curricula.

Likewise, media policy should factor into any programme to defend and reinforce democracy, because public reasoning is a basic duty of citizenship. We must not accept the concentration of media power in fewer and fewer hands. We must not stand idly by as overbearing multi-billionaires buy and restructure major digital platforms on a whim, or as more "news deserts" (where objective, independent reporting is no longer economically viable) emerge.

The solution is to develop regulatory policies that acknowledge journalism as a public good that ought to be protected – even privileged. Since factual communication is central to democracy, it makes sense to create and support platforms that are organised on a non-profit basis and thus are insulated somewhat from the constraints and demands of the market. They can contribute to a public sphere largely shaped by private publishers, public broadcasters, and tech-driven platforms. With the right qualitative benchmarks, non-profit institutions can promote innovation and ensure that different constituencies' voices are heard.

Of course, journalism's public role changes over time. As the media scholar Jeff Jarvis points out, the task of mediation and moderation no longer refers solely to bringing together the major currents of thought. Journalists must also provide overviews and help citizens orient themselves in new forums such as social media. If a society is increasingly "over-newsed" and underinformed, journalists must aim to provide context and curation, rather than only adding to the pile of information.

We must recognise that innovation is as much a cultural and social phenomenon as it is a technological or economic one. That is a necessary first step toward fulfilling technology's promise of enlightenment. The fact that everyone can express themselves and inform themselves without hindrance could improve democracy, but only if we are prepared to debate about how we want to debate in the future.

The writer is Minister for Culture and Media in the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg.  
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## WISDOM CORNER

A child-like man is not a man whose development has been arrested; on the contrary, he is a man who has given himself a chance of continuing to develop long after most adults have muffled themselves in the cocoon of middle-aged habit and convention.  
ALDOUS HUXLEY

Never permit a dichotomy to rule your life, a dichotomy in which you hate what you do so you can have pleasure in your spare time. Look for a situation in which your work will give you as much happiness as your spare time.  
PABLO PICASSO

Only when you drink from the river of silence shall you indeed sing. And when you have reached the mountain top, then you shall begin to climb. And when the earth shall claim your limbs, then shall you truly dance.  
KAHLIL GIBRAN



Nikunja Bihari Sahu

**EVEN ANIMALS ARE NOT SPARED FROM THE WRATH OF THIS HUMAN INDUCED FURY**

The summer in our childhood village days in Odisha used to be pleasant and memorable. The cool refreshing southerly breezes of the evening, the cuckoo's melodious song in the meadows, cricket's melancholy tunes reverberating the quiet afternoon hours, the fragrance of mango buds swept away by the winds and people enjoying playing cards under moon-lit sky till late night - all revive the sweet memories of the old village life. These are now missing with scorching and harsh summers making outdoor life unbearable. This year, at the onset of the summer, temperature soared to over 40 degrees Celsius in most parts of the state promising a painful summer ahead. Last year, extreme and prolonged heatwave conditions swept across the whole world starting from Japan in the east to the US and Canada in the west encompassing Southern Europe, and North Africa breaking all previous records with temperatures in some parts of the world reaching as high as 47 degrees Celsius.

Global warming, which is emerging as perhaps the greatest environmental challenge of the twenty-first century, accounts for most temperature rises across the globe. According to IPCC, our planet has warmed by 0.6 degrees Celsius in the last century and it is projected that the Earth's mean temperature is likely to rise 2.4 to 4.8 degrees Celsius by the year 2100.

This has brought about drastic consequences to our weather and climate worldwide some of which are already becoming visible: melting of glaciers and rising of sea level, change in precipitation patterns, untimely monsoon onsets, increase in extreme weather conditions like floods, droughts, heatwaves, hurricanes and long term effects like lowering of agricultural yields, species extinction, increase of vector-borne diseases like dengue and malaria, and social conflicts over issues like water. One of the recent examples was Dubai. A city traditionally known for its dry and desert climate has now been witness to severe flooding due to heavy rains paralysing its drainage-less infrastructure.



**While carbon dioxide, a potential greenhouse gas, increased dramatically in our atmosphere by 11% since the Industrial Revolution, methane accounts for a whopping 149% rise**

This bizarre effect has gravely affected the lives and livelihoods of people around the world. People in the Maldives worry about relocating their families due to the sea level rise, farmers in Kansas struggle for bread as prolonged periods of drought ravaged their crops, fishermen in the Niger river wonder why their fishing nets have gone empty, children in New Jersey worry how they lost their homes to a super-storm and women in Bangladesh struggle to get fresh water due to more frequent flooding and cyclones: these are a few of the enormously many victims of global warming. Even animals are not spared from

the wrath of this human induced fury. The polar bear in the melting ice sheets of the Arctic, the Royal Bengal tigers in India's fragile mangrove forests of the Sundarbans, the right whale in the plankton-poor waters of the warming North Atlantic and the orangutan in Indonesian forests segmented by frequent bushfires and droughts are some of the survivors of this tell-tale story.

Intense heatwaves in 2003 took a toll of around 35,000 people in the whole of Europe including 15,000 lives in France alone. About 700 million people in India depending directly on climate-sensitive sectors such as agriculture, forests and fisheries for their livelihood will directly face the brunt of the consequences of climate change induced by global warming.

Global warming has proved to be very harsh to Odisha. Low pressure weather conditions and depressions are becoming regular incidents causing unpredictable rainfall patterns across the state much to the

woes of farmers. Rivers, which are the lifeline of the state's agriculture, have gone dry. Who can forget the scorching hot summer days of 1998 when hundreds of people died of heat-wave incidents and also the devastating Super Cyclone of 1999 that claimed thousands of lives in coastal Odisha. Frequent floods and droughts in the following years battered the lives of the people and shattered the economy of the state. The sea has also posed a serious threat to the state. The Bay of Bengal is advancing towards the coastal landscape at an alarming rate taking many villages and farmlands into its grip thereby seriously threatening the livelihood of the natives.

The world must take urgent action to cut down greenhouse gas emissions which are the main cause of global warming. While carbon dioxide, a potential greenhouse gas, increased dramatically in our atmosphere by 11% since the Industrial Revolution, methane accounts for a whopping 149% rise. Keeping these grave consequences in mind, world leaders have met at several forums in past to find a solution to the menace with the Rio Summit in 1992 serving as the launching pad. The Kyoto Protocol of 1995, the Copenhagen Accord of 2009, the Paris Agreement of 2015, the Glasgow Climate Pact of 2021 and the Dubai climate summit of 2023 have all failed to deliver any tangible result due to the non-cooperation of industrial nations to cut down their emissions. The world must find an immediate and appropriate solution to this problem to bring back the lost summer days with singing cuckoos and dancing crickets!

The writer is Education Officer, Regional Science Centre, Bhopal.

## SPECTRUM CULTURE

# The joyful journey of sea nomads



Sayan Chatterjee

**FOR CENTURIES, THE BAJAU PEOPLE HAVE NAVIGATED THE CERULEAN WATERS OF THE CORAL TRIANGLE, THEIR LIVES INTRICATELY INTERTWINED WITH THE EBB AND FLOW OF THE OCEAN**

The Sama-Bajau people, a unique indigenous ethnic group of Maritime Southeast Asia, are not your typical community. They are nomadic seafarers, a lifestyle that has been their hallmark for centuries. Their home is the vast expanse of the Sulu Archipelago, the Celebes Sea, and coastal areas of Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines.

The Sama-Bajau are known for their extraordinary seafaring skills, which they have honed over generations. They are often referred to as "sea gypsies" due to their maritime lifestyle, although some consider this term derogatory.

Their communities traditionally lived on houseboats known as lepa-lepa, though many now reside in stilt houses along coastal areas. Fishing and trading have been central to their way of life, and they are known for their expertise in free diving. They use traditional methods to catch fish and other marine resources without being aided by any buoyancy compensators.

The Sama-Bajau have a distinct language that belongs to the Austronesian language family. However, due to their nomadic lifestyle and interactions with neighbouring ethnic groups, many Sama-Bajau are multilingual, speaking languages such

as Malay, Filipino, or Indonesian in addition to their mother tongue.

While some Sama-Bajau communities continue their traditional way of life, others have integrated into mainstream society, engaging in various professions beyond fishing and seafaring. However, they still maintain a strong cultural identity rooted in their maritime heritage.

For centuries, the Bajau people have navigated the cerulean waters of the Coral Triangle, their lives intricately intertwined with the ebb and flow of the ocean. Yet, beyond their seafaring prowess lies a narrative of resilience, cultural vibrancy, and a profound connection to their marine environment that merits acknowledgement and celebration.

Hailing from the maritime regions of Southeast Asia, particularly in Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines, the Bajau are often considered sea nomads who have forged a unique existence shaped by the seas that cradle their homes. Their nomadic lifestyle, characterised by a profound intimacy with the ocean, has endowed them with unparalleled knowledge of marine ecosystems, navigation techniques, and sustainable fishing practices. From early childhood, Bajau individuals learn to dive free to astonishing depths, a skill honed through generations of tradition and necessity.

However, the Bajau's traditional way of life is increasingly threatened due to various factors, including overfishing, environmental degradation, and governmental policies restricting their mobility. Modernisation has brought opportunities and challenges as the younger generation grapples with balancing traditional practices with the demands of contemporary society. As they face these challenges, it is imperative to recognise and preserve the invaluable cultural heritage and ecological wisdom embodied by the Bajau people. Central to Bajau culture is their profound spiritual connection to the sea. For them, the ocean is not merely a source of sustenance but also a sacred realm inhabited by ancestral spirits. Rituals and ceremonies, such as the annual regatta festival, remind them of their spiritual bond with the marine environment and the importance of maintaining harmony with nature.

Moreover, the Bajau possess a rich oral tradition, with myths, legends, and folktales passed down through generations. These narratives entertain and impart invaluable lessons about navigation, survival, and community cohesion. Through storytelling, the Bajau cultivate a collective identity rooted in shared experiences and ancestral

wisdom, reinforcing their resilience in adversity.

Despite the myriad challenges confronting them, the Bajau people persevere, adapting to changing circumstances while steadfastly preserving their cultural heritage. Efforts to empower Bajau communities through education, healthcare, and sustainable development initiatives are essential in ensuring their continued well-being and autonomy. Furthermore, recognising their rights to land and sea and promoting inclusive governance mechanisms that incorporate their traditional knowledge are crucial steps toward safeguarding their way of life and fostering mutual respect and understanding.

As we reflect on the plight and perseverance of the Bajau people, let us heed the lessons they impart about resilience, sustainability, and the enduring bond between humanity and the natural world. In celebrating their cultural richness and ecological stewardship, we honour the Bajau's legacy and reaffirm our collective responsibility to protect and preserve the diversity of our planet's cultural and natural heritage for generations to come.

The writer is a Delhi-based, DCC-qualified independent contributor to print and online publications.

## Unnecessary rule

Sir, The Impact Player rule which was introduced in IPL last year, has its true power and domination in this season of the tournament. But the sad part of the rule is that it kills the ability of all-rounders. No doubt, innovation in cricket or for that matter in any sport is necessary. But, at the same time it is important to understand and innovate, and ensure that any rule is implemented only after judging the short and long-term benefits and drawbacks of the game. With the teams having the advantage of using an extra specialist batter and an extra bowler while batting and bowling respectively, the value of players who bring their two-dimensional skills to the table has largely reduced. While it remains to be seen how long the Impact Player rule can be sustained, the BCCI must keep in mind the repercussions it can have on Indian cricket in the longer run.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

## Polls amid heat

Sir, Odisha is boiling due to severe heatwave. From the last few days, the state has been witnessing the rise of temperatures. Many places in the state have mercury reaching above 40 degrees Celsius. People are facing the wrath of the scorching sun. At least two people have died due to sunstroke in the state. The Met department is also warning people to stay indoors unless there is an emergency. Odisha is having its Assembly and Lok Sabha elections from May 13 in four phases. Political parties and their leaders have started their campaigning. Political events are pulling large crowds. This may cause distress to the people as the heatwave can lead to serious health hazards. The Election Commission and the government should issue advisories regarding election rallies and events in daytime. Political parties need to adopt safety protocols during campaigning, rallies and events. It is also tough for the general public to stand in queues and vote. General elections in the months of April and May are becoming tough for everyone.

Deba Prasad Nayak, DHENKANAL

# 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)

Orissa POST  
B-15, Rasulgari Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

# Modi wants country without Dalits, backward communities: Mamata

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Tehatta, May 2:** West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Thursday accused the Narendra Modi government of attempting to marginalise the SCs, STs, and OBCs.

Speaking at a rally in support of TMC candidate Mahua Moitra at Tehatta in Nadia district, Banerjee criticised the BJP government's 'falsehoods' about citizenship benefits for marginalised communities, warning that the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) could jeopardise the rights of SCs, STs, and OBCs.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi is lying about the benefits of UCC that it will help everybody. Instead, if UCC is implemented, it will put at stake the existence of SCs, STs and OBCs. BJP will destroy the constitution. But rest assured, we will not let it happen," Banerjee said. The TMC chief said for the



past 10 years, the BJP has been spreading lies about Matuas and other backward castes getting citizenship through the CAA, which is a ploy to take away one's already existing bona fide citizenship rights and deport them to concentration camps. The Krishnanagar constituency has a large population of Matua population. She also said the UCC will

prevent different communities, tribes and sects from practicing their own customs and rituals.

The CM cautioned the electorate against BJP's ploy to inflate the voting figure after the actual date of polling by using the Election Commission.

She expressed bewilderment over the Election Commission's announcement of an increased poll percentage four days after the actual voting took place, stating that while she wasn't casting aspersions on the EC, she found it unfathomable.

Banerjee cautioned against BJP's tactics to manipulate voting figures and alleged threats by BJP leaders to IAS and IPS officers in West Bengal and vowed to resist any attempts to undermine the state's integrity.

"Intimidation, threat and pressure by the Narendra Modi government on state ministers, officials or people will not work in Bengal," she added.



Sandip Ray, son of Satyajit Ray, with wife Lalita Ray pays floral tribute to his father on his birthday anniversary at his residence in Kolkata, Thursday

PTI PHOTO

# Sandeshkhali case: Kolkata HC satisfied with CBI probe progress

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, May 2:** The Kolkata High Court Thursday expressed satisfaction with the progress of the CBI's probe into allegations of crimes against women and land grabbing in West Bengal's Sandeshkhali.

The court permitted the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to be added as a party to the case, following its application.

Chief Justice TS Sivagnanam, along with Justice Hiranmay Bhattacharyya, reviewed the CBI's report and granted the agency's request to keep the details confidential.

The court had directed the CBI to probe the allegations of crimes against women and land grabbing in Sandeshkhali and directed it to file a progress report Thursday.

The court, which is monitoring the investigation, had also directed the central agency to probe alleged illegal conversion of agricultural land into water bodies for pisciculture after conducting a thorough inspection of revenue records and physical inspection of land alleged to have been converted.

Holding that its presence will assist the court in the present case, the bench granted permission to NHRC to be added as party to the matter.

The court is hearing a suo motu petition and other PILs with regard to the incidents in Sandeshkhali.

Stating that there are over 900 allegations of land grabbing, the CBI sought the court's di-

rection to the state authorities for cooperation.

The court directed the state authorities to extend 'fullest co-operation' and said if there is any shortage of staff, appropriate authorities will deploy additional staff for the purpose and they will work in tandem with the CBI.

The court scheduled the next hearing for June 13, directing the CBI to submit a further progress report.

Noting that the state had moved a special leave petition before the Supreme Court on the matter, the division bench stated that the apex court has said that the pendency of the appeal cannot be used as a ground for any pause in the ongoing probe. The bench directed that the orders issued by this

court have to be scrupulously complied with.

Petitioner-lawyer Priyanka Tibrewal argued that despite filing affidavits detailing the horrifying incidents, some victims of sexual assault were hesitant to speak the truth due to fear. She had previously submitted several hundred complaints, encompassing allegations of sexual violence, land grabbing, assault and property destruction, to the court during an earlier hearing.

The court asked the CBI to take confidence-building measures in cases where the complainants seek adequate protection.

"As a premier investigating agency, they will have the entire wherewithal and the expertise to record the correct statement of the victims," the court said.

# 86.31% clear Class X board exams in Bengal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, May 2:** An estimated 86.31 per cent of over 9.12 lakh students who appeared for the West Bengal (WB) Class X state board examination this year cleared it, an education official said Thursday.

Among the students who cleared the exam, 4,03,900 are males and 5,08,698 females, 25 per cent more than the boys.

WB Board of Secondary Examination president Ramanuj Ganguly said the pass percentage was 86.15 per cent last year.

Chandrachur Sen, a student of Rambhola High School in Cooch Behar district, secured the first rank, scoring 693 marks (99 per cent). Samyapriyo Guru of Purulia Zilla School scored 692 marks (98.86 per cent), securing the second rank. The third position was shared by three people - Udayan Prasad of Balurghat High School, Puspita Basuri of New Integrated Government School (Ilambazar) and Nairit Ranjan Pal of Narendrapur Ramakrishna Mission - who scored 691 marks (98.71 per cent) each.

Students from Cooch Behar, Purulia, Dakshin Dinajpur, Birbhum, South and North 24 Parganas, Hooghly, Purba Bardhaman, Malda and Paschim Medinipur were among the top 10.

Among the districts, Kalimpong has the highest pass percentage of 96.26 followed by Purba Medinipur (95.49) and Kolkata (91.62). Among the candidates from Kolkata, Somsdatta Samanta of Kamala Girls School was among the top 10, securing 684 marks (97.71 per cent).

WB CM Mamata Banerjee congratulated the successful candidates. "My best wishes and congratulations to all the students who passed the secondary examinations. My congratulations to your parents and teachers. May your coming days be prosperous, I pray," she said on X.

# Uddhav offered CM's post after crisis in 2022: Shinde

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Nashik, May 2:** Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde Thursday claimed that Uddhav Thackeray had reached out to him and offered the chief minister's post after his rebellion plunged the Thackeray-led Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government in the state in a crisis in 2022.

He also termed as correct the claim made by deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis that Thackeray, then chief minister, had contacted the BJP leader too and offered the top post.

The Thackeray government collapsed in June 2022 after Shinde and the majority of Shiv Sena MLAs rebelled against the



party leadership.

"There is truth to the claim as they made these efforts when we decided to leave. They (Thackeray and his associates) also called me and offered the CM's post, but I had not taken the decision to be the chief minister then. We left because they had deviated

from Shiv Sena supremo late Balasaheb Thackeray's ideology," Shinde told reporters here.

He was replying to a question about Fadnavis's claim that Uddhav Thackeray had offered him the chief minister's post after Shinde rebelled and the MVA government was about to

fall. Thackeray had parted ways with the BJP earlier in 2019 and formed government with the NCP and Congress.

"They also made efforts in Delhi, saying the entire Shiv Sena will be with BJP and asked BJP leaders not to take only some people (Shinde and his supporters) in their fold. But by then, 50 MLAs were already with me. What Devendra ji has said has truth to it," Shinde said.

Asked for comment, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sachin Ahir questioned the time chosen by Shinde and Fadnavis to make these claims.

"They are making such statements after two years only to create confusion," he added.

# Train services hit on Mumbai's Harbour line; commuters suffer



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, May 2:** A day after an empty local train derailed near the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) here, services on the Harbour line were badly affected during the morning peak hours Thursday due to bunching of trains.

The Central Railway (CR) said it happened due to the imposition of speed restriction at 10 kmph for local trains at the crossover point (track changing point) close to the CSMT station - the spot where two incidents of derailment occurred in last three

days. "A speed restriction of 10 kmph was imposed at the crossover point where the derailment occurred just outside the CSMT. The delay of suburban services on Harbour line is as a result of it," CR's chief public relations officer Swapnil Nila said.

According to the CR official, the local trains on the route were running 25 to 30 minutes behind their usual schedule due to bunching of trains. The commuters, however, faced a delay of at least 45 to 50 minutes. A regular commuter Ramesh A said, "I caught the train from

Vashi station. After an hour, I had just reached Cotton Green station. From Mankhurd station, the train started moving at a snail's pace and there was no announcement about why trains were running late."

A railway official said the CR had replaced the crossover point after the derailment Monday. But an empty suburban local derailed at the same spot Wednesday afternoon while negotiating the point at 15 kmph during a trial. Hence, speed restriction of 10 kmph has been imposed at the crossover point.

The railway authorities conducted a five-hour block Wednesday night to address the problem, but the zonal railway has imposed the speed restriction as a precautionary measure.

Harbour line provides suburban local connectivity to Navi Mumbai and western parts of Mumbai from South Mumbai. Daily about 10 lakh commuters travel on the corridor.

# Modi on 2 day visit to Bengal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, May 2:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi will embark on a two-day visit to West Bengal (WB) from Thursday, during which he is scheduled to address several election rallies, a senior official said.

"The PM will arrive in Kolkata Thursday evening and spend the night at Raj Bhavan. Tight security arrangements have put in place in the city for the Prime Minister's visit," he added.

BJP sources said that Modi will address election rallies in support of party candidates in Krishnanagar, Bardhaman Purba and Bolpur Lok Sabha constituencies Friday.

Owing to the PM's visit, WB Governor CV Ananda Bose cut short his personal visit to his home state Kerala, an official said.

Meanwhile, Kolkata Traffic Police has decided to regulate vehicular movement on certain stretches in the city in view of the PM's visit.

# Export of oranges squeezed from 6,000 tonne to 100 tonne

IN THE BAKING-HOT FIELDS OF CENTRAL INDIA AROUND NAGPUR, ONION HAS HIT ORANGE HARD IN A MINI-TRADE WAR WHOSE BATTLE LINES WERE DRAWN THOUSANDS OF MILES AWAY. CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE, COTTON TOO HAS BECOME A CASUALTY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Katol, May 2:** Thousands of farmers in Maharashtra's Vidarbha region, famous for its oranges, are sitting on a surplus of the fruit, unable to sell it in its main export market, Bangladesh, because of a complex web of conflicting foreign trade policies, market forces and international trade dependencies.

Orange growers used to send 6,000 tonne of the fruit daily to Bangladesh until last year, but that trade reduced to a trickle after Dhaka increased its import duty on oranges from ₹20 per kilogram in 2019 to ₹88 per kilogram in November 2023. This raised the price of oranges in Bangladesh, making it uneconomical for local traders to buy from India.

"We barely send 100 tonne or five truckloads of oranges per day

now," Manoj Jawanjil, president of the Nagpuri Santra Farmers Producer Company, told PTI, as he walked through rows of orange trees in his orchard, about 60 kilometres west of Nagpur.

Farmers in Vidarbha believe that Bangladesh increased the import duty in retaliation after India banned the export of onion, a staple of local cuisine, to protect the domestic market. The ripple effect showed how intricately linked is global trade, where one action can impact tens of thousands of lives across a continent.

Late last month, the government relaxed the export ban on onions, which was imposed in December last year, allowing its shipments to Bangladesh, UAE, Bhutan, Bahrain, Mauritius and Sri Lanka. It is not clear if onion exports, particularly to



Bangladesh, will lead to its government reducing the import tax on oranges.

If it does, farmers from Maharashtra, the largest producer of oranges in the country, will get some relief for the next harvest in December.

it's not just oranges that have suffered.

The fluctuation in prices of cotton has also hit farmers of Vidarbha, so rich in the crop that the British colonial rulers set up a railway network in the late 19th century in the region solely to transport cotton bales to Bombay, for shipping onward to the textile mills of Manchester.

"I still have 130 quintals of cotton from last year's harvest. I could have sold it then for ₹8,500 per quintal. I held back hoping the price will go up, but the opposite happened," Manoj Khutate, a progressive farmer, told PTI, sitting under the shade of a massive tree on the edge of his friend Jawanjil's 40-acre orange orchard.

Khutate's worry is that cotton cannot be stored long as it starts yellowing with time, and the quality degrades. Currently,

cotton prices are in the range of ₹7,100-7,300 per quintal, which according to farmers does not cover the cost of cultivation.

"There is a huge difference in prices when we used to send oranges to Bangladesh and now. Things were smooth earlier," said a farmer.

The farmers are also pinning their hopes on a food processing plant, which is planned to come up at the Multimodal International Cargo Hub and Airport at Nagpur (MIHAN), a multi-product special economic zone.

Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal acknowledged in the Lok Sabha in December that the increase in import duty rates by Bangladesh has affected India's export of oranges, as the neighbouring nation is a major export destination for the citrus fruit.

# Mumbai school principal forced to resign over social media views

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, May 2:** The management of a reputed school in Mumbai has allegedly asked its principal to resign reportedly for liking social media posts on the issue of Palestine and the ongoing Hamas-Israel conflict, her aide said Thursday.

The aide of Parveen Shaikh, the principal of Somaiya School in the Vidyavihar area, said, she was called by the school management for a formal meeting and asked to resign allegedly over her comments and likes on social media platform X on the Hamas-Israel conflict and other issues. When contacted, Shaikh declined to comment on the issue.

The aide noted that Shaikh's work has been 'exemplary' and the management should take into account the fact that the school had received several awards, including academic excellence, under her leadership.



## '400 paar a joke, '300 paar' impossible for BJP: Tharoor



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 2: BJP's claim of '400 paar' is a joke, '300 paar' is impossible and even '200 paar' may be a challenge for it in the Lok Sabha polls, Congress leader Shashi Tharoor has said, asserting that it is a "foregone conclusion" the ruling party would lose its majority in the Lower House.

In an interaction with PTI editors at the agency's headquarters here, Tharoor also claimed the BJP will draw a blank in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, and will do worse than its 2019 performance in the South.

Tharoor, who was locked in a three-way contest with Union minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar and P Raveendran of CPI in Thiruvananthapuram where polling took place April 26, said he is looking at a "very comfortable win".

If he emerges victorious, it will be a fourth consecutive win for the author-politician from Thiruvananthapuram, who is the longest-serving MP from the constituency.

"I would say that right now it looks increasingly likely that

the BJP-NDA government will lose its majority. The BJP losing its majority seems to be a foregone conclusion," Tharoor said.

"This 400 paar is a joke, 300 paar is impossible and (even) 200 paar may be a challenge for them (BJP) to get the way things are going."

In Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, the BJP will get 'zero' seats, he claimed. In Telangana, they got a handful of seats and would struggle to hold on to those, Tharoor said and added that the BJP would not be able to replicate its good show in Karnataka.

In 2019, BJP won 25 out of 28 seats in Karnataka. In Telangana, it bagged four of 17 seats.

According to Tharoor, there is absolutely no doubt that the BJP is going to do worse than last time in the South.

"In the North, as I said, they did so well last time and it is impossible to replicate that. Both in the North and South they are coming down from where they were. How well we do and how well the INDIA bloc parties do is yet to be seen because after all 353 seats are yet to vote so there is still a big majority of the elec-

tion yet to happen," he said.

But all indications are that this is really an uphill struggle for the BJP and things are not going the government's way, he added.

"I ask objectively, as an Indian citizen, why should a young man who voted for the BJP in 2014 because he was promised a job, still vote for the BJP 10 years later when he still does not have a job," Tharoor said.

When all the economists are saying 80 per cent of India's population has seen a decline in its income in the last 10 years, why should these 80 per cent want to vote for the BJP that has put them in that predicament, Tharoor argued.

He said that in 2014, the BJP ran on economics, but it was a disastrous government economically, and in 2019 it ran on national security with Pulwama and Balakot being the predominant theme across northern India.

"They (BJP) can't run on economy this time because they mis-handled the economy and people don't have jobs and can't buy in the market what they could a few years ago. They can't run on national security because everyone knows that China has been nibbling away at our frontier and there are 26 out of 65 patrolling points that both armies used to patrol, which the Indian army no longer has access to now, and that is on Mr (Narendra) Modi's watch so how is he going to beat his chest about national security," he said.

"That leaves what... the 'Hindu Hriday Samrat' message, Ram mandir; the kind of inflammatory language we have been seeing and hearing from the PM and others, fear mongering about one community and attempting to polarise the election on religion. That tactic has really been over-used in the country and those voting along those lines are already voting for the BJP... it no longer appeals to neutral voters," Tharoor said.

## BJP will win all LS seats in Odisha, says Pradhan



AGENCIES

Sambalpur, May 2: BJP leader and Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, who filed his nomination from Sambalpur Lok Sabha seat Thursday, expressed confidence that his party will win not only the general elections but also the Assembly polls in the state.

Returning to the electoral fray after 15 years, 54-year-old Pradhan visited Samaleswari Temple here in the morning to seek blessings. He then participated in a two-hour-long road show from the temple to the DC office where he filed the nomination.

"There is a demand for change in Odisha and BJP is determined to win not only Lok Sabha polls but also the upcoming Assembly elections in the state. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given a clarion call of '400 paar' and I am confident that all 21 Lok Sabha seats in Odisha will be won by the BJP," he told PTI.

"What did the BJD government do for over 24 years in the state...even basic facilities like water and road are not available here. These are the election issues this time and people will vote accordingly," he added.

Waving at his supporters who were dancing to the tunes of Odia folk songs being performed by various groups during the road show, Pradhan exuded confidence about his victory from the seat.

Polling is scheduled in Sambalpur in the sixth phase of general elections May 25.

The high-profile Sambalpur constituency, which is the epicentre of western Odisha, is gearing up for a heated contest between Congress' Nagenra Pradhan, Dharmendra Pradhan and BJD's Pranab Prakash Das.

Nagenra Pradhan had won the constituency on a BJD ticket in 2014 polls.

Pradhan, who is a Cabinet minister in the Modi government, is contesting elections after a gap of 15 years. He had last contested elections in 2009 after the BJP-BJD alliance had ended. He lost the Assembly poll that year.

Pradhan was elected to the Odisha Assembly in 2000 and to the Lok Sabha from Deogarh seat in 2004.

He was elected to Rajya Sabha from Bihar in 2012 and again in 2018 from Madhya Pradesh.

Popularly known as the 'Ujjwala man', Pradhan is credited with being the longest serving Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas.

Pradhan, who hails from Talcher, was born June 26, 1969 in Odisha. He is the son of Debendra Pradhan who was also a minister of state in the Vajpayee government between 1999 and 2004.



BJD's Puri Lok Sabha candidate Arup Patnaik files nomination at Puri Collectorate



BJD's Bhubaneswar Lok Sabha nominee Manmath Routray files papers at Khurda Collectorate



BJP's Bhubaneswar Lok Sabha candidate Aparajita Sarangi files her papers at Khurda Collectorate



BJD's Aska Lok Sabha nominee Ranjita Sahu filing her nomination at Ganjam district Collectorate, Thursday



BJD candidate Niranjan Pujari files nomination for Sonepur Assembly seat

## Denied tickets, Patnaik, Khatua quit ruling BJD

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 2: Even though simultaneous elections in the state are drawing closer, ticket aspirants quitting parties continues unabated with two more leaders resigning from the ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD), Thursday.

According to sources, Anubhav Patnaik, who was aspiring for a BJD ticket from Khandapada Assembly seat Thursday resigned from the primary membership of the party as he was denied the ticket.

Anubhav took the step after BJD supremo Naveen Patnaik announced the name of Sabitri Pradhan as the MLA candidate for Khandapada seat. Political analysts said Anubhav was dis-

## Yadav shares meal with Dalit in Kalahandi



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhawaniapatna, May 2: With campaigning for the

upcoming elections in Odisha continues in full swing, big-wings of several political parties even ministers sharing

meals with common man has become a regular affair as Union Minister Bhupender Singh Yadav was seen having lunch with a Dalit man at Dangariguda village under Golamunda block of Kalahandi district, Wednesday.

Sources said after attending a merger meeting of BJP at Udesrung village, Yadav visited Dangariguda and had lunch at the residence of Gagan Mangaraj from Dalit community. BJP's Kalahandi Lok Sabha nominee Malavika Keshari Deo, former Kalahandi MP Arka Keshari Deo, BJP's Junagarh Assembly nominee Manoj Meher and other front-line leaders of the party also had lunch at Mangaraj's house.

The noble gesture by Yadav of having lunch in the house of a Dalit man was lauded by several locals while the development sent the chatters abuzz in Kalahandi district when hectic campaigning by the parties has raised the political temperature here.



satisfied with the decision and quit the party.

Similarly, BJD ticket aspirant for Nilagiri Assembly seat in Balasore district Santosh Khatua also resigned from the party. Khatua was also the vice-president of Balasore district BJD.

His resignation from primary membership of the party came after Naveen announced the name of Sukanta Nayak as the candidate for Nilagiri Assembly seat.

Sources said hundreds of supporters of Khatua also resigned from BJD, Thursday.

Khatua has sent the resignation letter to the party president through mail.

## Sundargarh: BJD bigwigs, except Archana Rekha, file papers

ROURKELA NOMINEE SARADA NAYAK SAYS BJD HAS USHERED IN DEVELOPMENT IN ROURKELA, WHICH WAS EARLIER TERMED AS A 'DEAD CITY'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, May 2: All the BJD candidates in Sundargarh district except for Archana Rekha Behera from Raghunathpali constituency have filed their nomination papers, even as the district is going to polls May 20. Sitting Rourkela MLA and Labour & ESI Minister Sarada Prasad Nayak filed his nomination for the high-profile Assembly constituency. Along with him others who also filed the nomination include Rohit Joseph Tirkey for Biramitrapur Assembly constituency and Anil Barua, son of former minister Mangala Kissan, for Rajgangpur Assembly seat.

Sources said Archana Rekha, wife of former minister Subrat Tarai, will file her nomina-

tion Friday.

Speaking to mediapersons after filing the nomination at the sub-collector's office, Sarada expressed his gratitude to all the residents of Rourkela for having shown confidence in him.

"The support for me is overwhelming as far as today's nomination rally is concerned. I'd requested all my cadres and supporters to refrain from stepping out during heatwave. But, look at the crowd. All the credit goes to honourable CM Naveen Patnaik."

The huge crowd for Sarada was visible as Rohit came much later.

He said, "My sole objective is to work for the development of Rourkela, which has given me everything. The term 'a dead city' that it earned has long gone



and thanks to our honourable CM for what he has done for Rourkela." Slamming the oppo-

sition, the Rourkela MLA said, "Though others are trying to take credit for the development

of the Steel City, it is BJD which has ushered in development here. All of us know who had named Rourkela a dead city. Development is a continuous process. There are many more things to be done for the city, and in the next five years I will try my very best to do as much as I can for Rourkela."

George Tirkey and Dilip Tirkey, who were there with former's son Rohit Joseph, also showed their solidarity with Sarada.

"We are the 'Team BJD' here in the district. We will try to ensure that our party candidates win everywhere," said Dilip Tirkey, former Indian Men's Hockey Team captain. The Hockey India president, who is also the MP candidate of BJD for Sundargarh seat, said, "Where ever I go, I find immense support for the

party and our honourable CM. There is no stopping for us."

George said, "My campaign for Rohit at Biramitrapur is over. Now we all have to focus on canvassing the voters for Dilip, Sarada bhai and others in the district. I am going to concentrate fully on the district now."

Also present on the occasion was newly appointed secretary of BJD Prasant Sethi, a close aide of Sarada and also the election coordinator of Naveen at Kantabanji.

On Archana Rekha's nomination, Raghunathpali MLA Subrat Tarai said, "There were some issues in the paperwork for nomination. So, we have decided to get all the papers ready and file the papers around 11am tomorrow (Friday)."

## of the day quote

I have never seen a prime minister earlier whose speeches were not based on facts and reality. He is satisfied with targeting me and Uddhav Thackeray

SHARAD PAWAR | CHIEF, NATIONALIST CONGRESS PARTY

The 'shehzade' (prince) of 'ghamandia' I Alliance started his election campaign with Bharat Jodo Yatra but on June 4 (counting day), it will end with a 'Congress Dhoondho Yatra'

AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

BJP converted Jammu and Kashmir into a prison. Nobody can talk freely here. Nobody is happy in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. Neither Dogra of Jammu nor Buddhist of Ladakh are happy, forget about the people of Kashmir, who are terrorised. There has been no development during BJP rule

MEHBOOBA MUFTI | PRESIDENT, PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PARTY

## SHORT TAKES

### Kerala closes schools, colleges

New Delhi: Kerala has closed all schools and colleges until Monday due to scorching temperatures, urging people in the coastal region to limit exposure to the sun and take care to prevent wildfires. With most parts of India reeling from high temperatures, the weather department has forecast an unusually high number of heatwave days for April to June, as the country stages a general election that has seen a low voter turnout. Heatwaves are rare in Kerala and data from the India Meteorological Department (IMD) shows that the state recorded five heatwave days in April.

### Deepfake of Yogi: Man held by STF

Noida: A man was arrested here by the Special Task Force (STF) of Uttar Pradesh Police for allegedly posting an AI-generated "deepfake" video of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, officials said Thursday. The video was used to spread misleading facts, strengthening anti-national elements, Additional Director General of Police (UP STF) Amitabh Yash said. "On May 1, an AI-generated deepfake video of the Uttar Pradesh chief minister went viral after it was posted on X from a handle. The video was used to spread misleading facts, strengthening anti-national elements," ADGP Yash said.

# Poor turnout, apathy in election a worry for Modi

REUTERS

New Delhi, May 2: A lower turnout so far in India's long general election has rattled Prime Minister Narendra Modi's campaign managers, raising into question whether his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its allies can achieve the landslide victory predicted by opinion polls just one month ago.

The lack of momentum has been partly blamed on apathy among party workers believing victory is assured and seems to have prompted Modi to change tack in his campaign speeches to try to fire up the Hindu majority, the party's support base, and get them out to voting stations, political analysts said.

The last major opinion poll had predicted that the BJP and its allies could win three-fourths of parliament's 543 seats at stake on the back of Modi's popularity, strong economic growth, handouts and the inauguration of a Hindu temple on a contested

## K'TAKA SEX SCANDAL CASE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shivamogga, May 2: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Thursday alleged that the BJP-JD(S) alliance candidate for Hassan Lok Sabha seat Prajwal Revanna had raped 400 women, and lashed out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for seeking votes for a "mass rapist" and sought his apology.

The Congress leader during his election rallies in the district headquarters towns of Shivamogga and Raichur also demanded that a case should be registered against Union Home Minister Amit Shah, claiming that he was aware of the activities of Prajwal and his father and former minister HD Revanna after a local BJP leader had flagged the issue.

Hundreds of explicit video clips allegedly involving the 33-year-old MP have gone viral in Hassan in recent days.

"This is not a sex scandal but mass rape. The Prime Minister should apologise to the mothers and sisters of India. Prajwal Revanna rapes 400 women and makes videos," Gandhi alleged.

"The Prime Minister supported the mass rapist on the stage. He (Modi) told Karnataka that if you voted for this rapist, it will help me," Gandhi alleged and added: "Every woman in Karnataka should know when the Prime Minister was asking for your vote, he was aware of what Prajwal did."



The BJP government is clandestinely snatching away reservation from Dalits, tribals and backward classes by eliminating government jobs through 'blind privatisation'

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

## AAP'S SIGNATURE CAMPAIGN

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Thursday launched a signature campaign against the arrest of party supremo and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. Two whiteboards were put up in Lajpat Nagar for people to write their messages for Kejriwal, who is currently lodged at Tihar Jail till May 7



## 'SPREADING LIES' BJP lodges complaint with EC against Cong

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 2: The BJP Thursday lodged a complaint with the Election Commission against the Congress, alleging that it is trying to create an "atmosphere of tension" in society and spreading lies that the Constitution will be changed.

Opposition parties have been alleging that the BJP is seeking more than 400 seats in the Lok Sabha elections as it wants to change the Constitution and end quotas for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes.

Union Minister Rajeesh Chandrasekhar, BJP national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi and party leader Om Pathak approached the commission with the complaint, in which the party also accused opposition INDIA bloc parties, including the Congress, of uploading and sharing deepfake videos.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has been attacking members of the bloc over a doctored video of Union Home Minister Amit Shah's speech going viral on social media.

The Delhi Police Sunday had registered an FIR after the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C), which is under the home ministry, filed a complaint in the doctored video case. It has, since then, summoned 22 people, including Congress leader and Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and Jharkhand Congress chief Rajesh Thakur.

# Rahul seeks PM apology



Gandhi also claimed that the Prime Minister knew about the sex scandal and could have got Prajwal arrested within seconds. But Modi allowed him to flee the country, he claimed.

Prajwal, grandson of former prime minister and JD(S) patriarch HD Deve Gowda, is facing allegations of sexually abusing women. The state government has set up a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the charges.

The now-suspended JD(S) leader had left for Germany after the voting in his constituency had concluded April 26. The JD(S) joined the NDA in September last year.

Gandhi said a BJP leader wrote a letter to Shah stating that Prajwal was raping women but

no action was taken. "If Amit Shah knew this, then the Prime Minister also knew it. Why is Modi protecting him (Prajwal), why is he promoting him and why is he seeking votes for him," the Congress leader asked.

The Congress leader also said that Shah allowed Prajwal to flee the country despite knowing about him. A case should be filed against Shah because, among the victims, there were minor girls below the age of 16 years, Gandhi claimed.

"All the agencies were with them, such as CBI, Customs, Immigration and the ED. The PM knew about it, he could have arrested him in a second, which he did not do and allowed him to

This is not a sex scandal but mass rape. The Prime Minister should apologise to the mothers and sisters of India. Prajwal Revanna rapes 400 women and makes videos

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

flee," Gandhi charged.

"The women of Karnataka know that you protected Prajwal Revanna because you wanted power and alliance. The PM and HM, the two people who control the nation, protected him," the former Congress president alleged.

"This is the difference between our and their (BJP) ideology. They can do anything for power. There is no limit. There is no meaning to the pains and sufferings of women," he said.

Gandhi said Modi has to answer to every woman in the country, why he protected Prajwal and why he was allowed to flee the country.

He said the Prime Minister now fears visiting Karnataka

and claimed, "He (Modi) has cancelled all the meetings and escaped. Dear Prime Minister, don't run away from Karnataka. Come here and tell the country about Prajwal Revanna."

He further alleged that every BJP leader was aware that Prajwal was a "mass rapist" and yet they supported him and the party formed an alliance with the JD(S).

"The PM has insulted every woman of India. The Prime Minister, Home Minister Amit Shah and all the BJP leaders should apologise to every woman of the country," he said, claiming that no leader in the world would have asked for votes for a "mass rapist".

## Revanna not given political clearance for Germany visit: Centre

New Delhi: Amid the political row over sex scandal-accused Janata Dal (Secular) MP Prajwal Revanna, the Ministry of External Affairs has said that he travelled to Germany on a diplomatic passport and no political clearance was either sought or given by the ministry. The Hassan MP had left for Germany Saturday, a day after voting for the Lok Sabha elections had taken place in the constituency. To a question on whether Revanna was travelling on a diplomatic passport and whether political clearance was given by the ministry, MEA Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said at the weekly media briefing Thursday, "No political clearance was either sought from or issued by the MEA in respect of the travel of the said MP to Germany. Obviously, no visa note was issued either. No visa is required for diplomatic passport holders to travel to Germany." "The ministry has also not issued any visa note for any other country for the said MP. He travelled on a diplomatic passport," he added.

### Revanna driver goes missing

In another development, the former driver of accused Prajwal Revanna, who had confessed that he had given the pen drive with the videos of the JD(S) leader sexually abusing women, to BJP leader Devaraja Gowda, has disappeared following a SIT notice. The driver Karthik had worked with Prajwal Revanna for 13 years and had fallen out with him a year ago over an alleged land deal.

## USCIRF biased entity with political agenda: India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 2: India Thursday blasted the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) for attempting to "interfere" in its electoral exercise and continuing to indulge in "propaganda" against the country, "masquerading" as part of an annual report.

In an unusually sharp reaction to the USCIRF's latest report that has criticised India for alleged violations of religious freedom, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said the organisation is known to be a "biased" entity



with a political agenda. "The US Commission on International Religious Freedom is known as a biased organisation with a political agenda. They continue to publish their propaganda on India masquerading as part of an annual report," Jaiswal said. "We really have no expecta-

tion that the USCIRF will even seek to understand India's diverse, pluralistic and democratic ethos," he added.

"Their efforts to interfere in the largest electoral exercise of the world will never succeed," Jaiswal said at his weekly media briefing.

In its latest annual report, the USCIRF has criticised India for alleged violations of religious freedom.

It has also renewed its recommendation to the US state department to declare India as a "Country of Particular Concern (CPC)" in view of the alleged violations of religious freedom.

## Low attendance in Delhi schools day after bomb scare

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 2: A day after around 200 schools received hoax bomb emails, educational institutions in the city witnessed a slightly lower attendance, even as principals revisited evacuation plans for such emergencies in the future.

Around 200 schools in Delhi-NCR Wednesday morning received a hoax bomb threat via email which led to widespread panic among parents and students, prompting authorities to suspend classes and ask parents to pick their wards from the

school. Many schools Thursday reopened to normalcy but attendance has taken a hit even in schools where the threat was not received, principals of some schools told PTI.

Jyoti Arora, principal of Mount Abu School, said she revisited the school's evacuation plan on each floor and also wrote to disaster management authorities to conduct mock drills and awareness activities for them.

She said that there was "slightly more absenteeism" than usual Thursday.

Schools now plan to issue a fresh advisory to parents asking them to send their children for classes and assuring them that all guidelines for handling bomb threats are being followed by the administration.

They said school premises are now properly sanitised and police are constantly monitoring the security and safety of students and staff.

However, some parents escorted their wards to the schools Thursday. Delhi Police made an appeal to people Thursday to not believe in audio messages that have sur-

facted on WhatsApp groups making false claims about the bomb threat.

### FIR LODGED

The intention of the bomb hoax emails received by over 100 Delhi schools was to "create mass panic and disturb public order," the Delhi Police says in an FIR registered by its Special Cell.

According to an official source, who has access to the FIR, at least 125 bomb threat calls were received from different schools from 5.47 am to 2.13 pm Wednesday.

getting minority Muslims and the opposition Congress party. "After the first phase, we saw a definite change of strategy by the PM...delivering Islamophobic kind of speeches," said Arati Jerath, a Delhi-based political commentator. "Obviously, he has now decided to polarise the campaign."

A total of 190 seats went to the polls April 19 and 27 with approximate voter turnout at about 66%, the Election Commission has said. The number was only slightly lower than the last election in 2019, although there was a drop of 5-8 percentage points in voting in the BJP and allied-rules states Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Rajasthan.

The BJP had been hoping for a high turnout, believing that would signal that its supporters had voted in force. Polling ends June 1 and votes will be counted June 4. The government bans the publication of exit polls until all voting is concluded.

## FROM THE COURT

### Sarpanches will be held accountable: HC on Rajasthan child marriages

Jajpur: The Rajasthan High Court has directed the state government to ensure that no child marriage takes place in the state, and said village heads and panchayat members will be held accountable if they are solemnised. The court's order came Wednesday ahead of the Akshay Tritiya festival May 10. Many child marriages are solemnised on Akshay Tritiya in Rajasthan. A division bench of the court, while hearing a PIL seeking the court's intervention to prevent child marriages, noted that despite of the Prohibition of Child Marriage act 2006 being in force, child marriages are still taking place in the state. The court said though there is a reduction in the number of child marriages due to efforts put in by the authorities, a lot still needs to be done. RP Singh, counsel for the petitioners, said a list was also provided to the court wherein details of child marriages scheduled in the state around Akshaya Tritiya was given.

### Keep sanitary pads at all NEET exam centres: Madras HC to testing agency

Chennai: The Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court has ordered the National Testing Agency (NTA) to make sanitary pads available near toilets at National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) examination centers across India. In a recent ruling, the court directed the testing agency to ensure that everyone appearing for the NEET exam May 5 should have easy access to toilets and sanitary pads. In the order, the court said, "Every examination centre must have suitable toilet facilities with water amenities. They must keep a minimum number of sanitary products near the toilets so that any girl who has come unprepared may use them. The girl candidates must be allowed the use of rest rooms when required." The directions come after a petition was filed by a 19-year-old who suffers from a medical condition that makes it difficult for her to control the urge to urinate. In the petition, the woman sought accommodations such as using an adult diaper and changing it whenever required during exam hours. She also alleged that the NTA did not respond to her requests.



### Can't devise policy in middle of polls: Delhi HC on deepfake videos

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court Thursday reposed its trust in the Election Commission of India (ECI) to deal with the issue of deepfake technologies being used in the Lok Sabha poll campaign, saying it cannot devise a policy in the middle of elections. The high court directed a lawyers' organisation to give a representation to the ECI on its plea seeking directions to the poll panel for formulation of guidelines to prevent the misuse of deepfake videos. The court also asked the ECI to expeditiously decide by May 6 the representation to be given by the petitioner, keeping in mind the urgency of the issue involved.



site in the Hindu majority country.

At the last election in 2019, the BJP won 303 seats and its allies won around 50 seats. Its slogan before this year's election began was "Ab ki baar, 400 paar" or "This time, above 400".

More than half a dozen BJP leaders and political analysts that Reuters spoke to said a lack

of momentum in the two initial phases of the seven-phase election have dampened hopes of a huge majority for the party, although they said it was still likely to retain power in the world's most populous nation.

What could be affected is the BJP's aim to get a two-thirds majority in the chamber, or 362 seats, which would let the party

The voting numbers were below expectations. Many voters have become lethargic as they are convinced about the victory of the party

GOPAL KRISHNA AGARWAL | NATIONAL SPOKESMAN, BJP

usher in far-reaching constitutional changes.

"The fall in polling turnout is mainly due to apathy among party workers and voters," said Sanjay Sharma, one of the members of the BJP's campaign committee in the northern state of Haryana. Some candidates were being affected by an anti-incumbency wave, he said, adding the party was facing a "tough fight" in the state where it won all ten parliamentary seats in 2019.

Modi himself has shifted in his campaign speeches from a focus on the administration's successes in his 10-year tenure to tar-

# international



We are constantly evaluating policy proposals to further support Palestinians who are family members of American citizens and may want to come to the United States  
KARINE JEAN-PIERRE | PRESS SECRETARY, WHITE HOUSE

## REBUILDING MAY TAKE 80 YRS

Rebuilding homes in the Gaza Strip could drag into the next century if the pace follows the trend of previous conflicts, according to a UN report. Nearly seven months of Israeli bombardment have caused billions of dollars in damage, leaving many of the crowded strip's high-rise concrete buildings reduced to heaps



## of the day quote

We have maintained strict financial discipline while taking unpopular decisions to facilitate economic recovery  
RANJITH SIYAMBALAPITIYA | STATE MINISTER OF FINANCE, SRI LANKA

Today's veto begs the question: Why? Why, if you are following the rules, would you not support a resolution that reaffirms them? What could you possibly be hiding? It's baffling. And it's a shame  
LINDA THOMAS-GREENFIELD | US AMBASSADOR

We are well aware of our constitutional limits and expect others to uphold the Constitution. Article 19 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan clearly defines the limits of freedom of speech and expression of opinion  
ASIM MUNIR | ARMY CHIEF GENERAL, PAKISTAN

## SHORT TAKES

### Missiles hit Odesa

**Kyiv:** Russia struck the southern Ukrainian port city of Odesa with ballistic missiles in a nighttime attack, injuring 14 people and starting a massive blaze, local officials and emergency services said. The third attack on the city in a week hit a sorting depot belonging to Ukraine's biggest private delivery company, Nova Poshta. No staff were injured, the company said, but the strike started a major fire. Six people were killed in a Russian missile strike on Odesa Monday, and two days later three people died there when the Kremlin's forces targeted civilian infrastructure.

### UN aid for Lebanon

**Beirut:** The European Union announced Thursday an aid package for Lebanon of 1 billion euros — about USD 1.06 billion — that will mostly go to strengthening border control to halt the flow of asylum seekers and migrants from the small, crisis-wracked country across the Mediterranean Sea to Cyprus and Italy. The deal follows other recent deals by the EU to provide funds to countries such as Egypt, Tunisia and Mauritania to fortify their borders.

### Former FM now PM

**Melbourne:** Solomon Islands lawmakers Thursday chose former Foreign Minister Jeremiah Manale as the new Prime Minister of the South Pacific island nation that has grown closer to China in recent years. The withdrawal of pro-Beijing former Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare from the contest to remain head of the government to make way for Manale as their party's candidate is an indication the country could follow a similar direction.

# Police move in to dismantle pro-Palestinian protest camp

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Los Angeles, May 2:** Police removed barricades and began dismantling a pro-Palestinian demonstrators' fortified encampment early Thursday at the University of California, Los Angeles, after hundreds of protesters defied orders to leave. Some people were detained, their hands were bound with zip ties.

The action came after officers spent hours threatening arrests over loudspeakers if people did not disperse. A crowd of more than 1,000 had gathered on campus, both inside a barricaded tent encampment and outside it, in support. Protesters and police shoved and scuffled as officers encountered resistance.

With police helicopters hovering, the sound of flash-bangs, which produce a bright light and a loud noise to disorient and stun people, pierced the air. Protesters chanted, "Where were you last night?" at the officers, in reference to Tuesday night, when counter-protesters attacked the encampment and the UCLA administration and campus police took hours to respond.

Tent encampments of protesters calling on universities to stop doing business with Israel or companies they say support the war in Gaza have spread across campuses nationwide in a student movement unlike any other this century. The ensuing police crackdowns echoed actions decades ago against a much larger protest movement protesting the Vietnam War.

California Highway Patrol officers poured into the campus by the hundreds early Thursday. Police methodically ripped apart the encampment's barricade of plywood, pallets, metal fences and trash dumpsters and made an opening toward dozens of tents of demonstrators. Officers also began to pull down canopies and tents.



The nationwide campus demonstrations began at Columbia April 17 to protest Israel's offensive in Gaza, which followed Hamas launching a deadly attack on southern Israel October 7

Israel and its supporters have branded the university protests antisemitic, while Israel's critics say it uses those allegations to silence opposition

Demonstrators rebuilt the makeshift barriers around their tents Wednesday while state and campus police watched. The law enforcement presence and continued warnings stood in contrast to the scene that unfolded the night before, when counter-demonstrators attacked the pro-Palestinian encampment, throwing traffic cones, releasing pepper spray and tearing down barriers.

Fighting continued for several hours before police stepped in, though no arrests were made. At least 15 protesters suffered injuries, and the tepid response by authorities drew criticism from political leaders as well as Muslim students and advocacy groups.

By Wednesday afternoon, a small city sprang up inside the reinforced encampment, full of hundreds of people and tents on the campus quad. Outside the encampment, a crowd of students, alumni and neighbors gathered on campus steps, joining in pro-Palestinian chants. A group of students holding signs and wearing T-shirts in support of Israel and Jewish people demonstrated nearby.

The Associated Press tallied at least 38 times since April 18 where arrests were made at campus protests across the US. More than 1,600 people have been arrested at 30 schools.

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# Indian biologist wins UK wildlife charity award

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**London, May 2:** A wildlife biologist from Assam has been honoured with a leading UK wildlife charity award for her conservation efforts of the endangered Greater Adjutant Stork and its wetland habitat.

Dr Purnima Devi Barman won the GBP 1,00,000 Whitley Gold Award from the Whitley Fund for Nature (WFN), which supports grassroots conservation leaders from around the world, at a Royal Geographical Society awards ceremony in London Wednesday evening.

Barman received the trophy from charity patron Princess Anne — the Princess Royal, the sister of King Charles III, in recognition of her conservation of the stork known locally as "Hargila" in Assamese.

"Their feathers, their intense blue eyes, the sounds of their beaks were my childhood friends," said Barman, a past winner of the Whitley Award in 2017 for her efforts. "I love everything about them, they are very inspiring. But everyone else seemed to hate them," she shared.

The Gold Award from WFN noted how the numbers of the Hargila — translating as "bone-swallower" — had dwindled to an estimated 450 birds in Northeast India before Barman's intervention. Changing attitudes and galvanising local people, primarily women, to safeguard nests, and working with her team at the local wildlife NGO Aaranyak, their numbers have now quadrupled to more than 1,800.

## CHINA HIGHWAY COLLAPSE

# Death toll jumps to 48 as 20 vehicles tumble down

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Beijing, May 2:** The death toll in the collapse of a section of a mountainside expressway in China's Guangdong province doubled to 48 Thursday, the official media reported, as more than 20 vehicles tumbled down a slope.

The disaster involving a large number of vehicles was caused Wednesday by a landslide at the Chayang section of the Meizhou-Dabu Expressway in Meizhou city on the first day of the five-day May Day holiday. The collapsed section of the expressway measures 17.9 metres long and covers an area of 184.3 square metres.

So far 48 people were killed and several others injured, state-run Xinhua news agency reported. The death toll was 24, Wednesday.

The collapse happened Wednesday early morning after a month of heavy rains in a mountainous part of southern Guangdong province. Vehicles fell down the slope and some caught fire, reports said.

Chinese President Xi Jinping has given "important instructions" on the rescue and disaster relief work following the fatal expressway collapse, the report said. Xi instructed that every effort be carried out for on-site rescue, and treatment of the injured. Efforts should be made to repair the damaged roads and restore traffic order as soon as possible, Xi said.

All regions and relevant departments must ensure the safety of people's lives and property and the overall social stability, he said.



Premier Li Qiang has also given instructions to spare no effort in rescuing the injured, carry out follow-up work, do everything possible to search and rescue trapped persons, and strictly guard against secondary risks.

Li emphasised that the ongoing May Day holiday is the peak of tourism prime time, accompanied by widespread rainfall in some areas, necessitating all-out efforts to prevent accidents and disasters.

The Ministry of Emergency Management, the Ministry of Transport and other relevant departments have dispatched working groups to the scene to conduct the rescue efforts.

# High Commission of India in SL dismisses 'unwarranted' reports

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Colombo, May 2:** The High Commission of India in Sri Lanka Thursday dismissed the local media reports and social media posts that blamed an "Indian company" for bungling the visa issuance at the Bandaranaike International Airport here, as "unwarranted".

The statement by the Indian High Commission came after Sri Lankan authorities claimed that they have taken back the running of the 'Visa on Arrival' counters at the Bandaranaike International Airport (BIA) from the Indian firm after the alleged incident Wednesday.

"We have seen reports and comments including in social media regarding Indian companies taking over visa issuance at Bandaranaike International Airport (BIA), Colombo," the High Commission of India said in a statement.

"The companies referred to in these reports are not India-based or Indian and are headquartered elsewhere. Any reference to India in this context is unwarranted," the statement said in response to media queries.

Earlier in the day, Sri Lankan immigration authorities claimed they had taken back control of the 'Visa on Arrival' counters at the Colombo International Airport.

"We took over the operation after the Indian company left. They were unable to carry out smooth operations which drew the ire of the passengers on arrival," Jayasinghe Bandara, a senior immigration department official, told PTI here.

The government of Sri Lanka had contracted the Indian company to run the 'Visa on Arrival' counters at the airport. The Indian firm officials were unable to carry out a smooth operation as they had not done a trial run of the busy operation, he said.

A video of the incident that went viral showed a Sri Lankan man shouting at the company officials for allegedly refusing the entry visa for his wife, a foreign national. The unidentified man claimed that an Indian national had no power to deny his right as a Sri Lankan national.

## SNIPPETS

### Heavy rains kill 10, leave 21 missing

**Rio de Janeiro:** Heavy rains in Brazil's southern Rio Grande do Sul state have killed at least 10 people and left 21 missing since Monday, the country's civil defense said Wednesday. An additional 11 people were injured and more than 3,300 were forced to leave their homes due to damage caused by the storms, the civil defense added. Operators reported electricity and water cuts across the state, and officials detailed numerous incidents of flooded roads, landslides and collapsed bridges as water levels of rivers and streams rose sharply. Authorities activated the Brazilian Air Force to assist stranded people. It deployed two helicopters for the rescue mission. The downpour started Monday and was expected to last through Friday, civil defense authorities said.

### 9 dead after unusual spike in overdoses

**Austin:** Authorities in Texas are investigating at least nine deaths this week in connection with an unusual spike of opioid overdoses in Austin that health officials are calling the city's worst overdose outbreak in nearly a decade. Emergency responders in the Texas capital typically field only two to three calls per day, said Steve White, assistant chief of the Austin-Travis County Emergency Medical Service. But at least 65 people required overdose treatment between Monday and Wednesday, said Darren Noak, a spokesman for the agency. Preliminary testing showed that all nine people who died had traces of fentanyl in their system and the majority had other drugs present too. According to Travis County Judge Andy Brown, it is the largest overdose outbreak in Austin since a synthetic drug referred to as K2 was distributed locally in 2015.

### Independent investigation approved

**Seoul:** South Korea's parliament Thursday approved special legislation mandating a new, independent investigation into the 2022 Halloween crush in Seoul that killed 159 people. The single-chamber National Assembly passed the bill by a 256-0 vote. It will become law after it is signed by conservative President Yoon Suk Yeol and promulgated by his government agency — steps that are considered formalities because the president and his ruling party already agreed on the legislation. The bill is meant to delve into the root cause of the crush, and look at how authorities handled the disaster and who should be blamed for it. The crush, one of the biggest peacetime disasters in South Korea, caused a nationwide outpouring of grief. The victims, who were mostly in their 20s and 30s, had gathered in Seoul's popular nightlife district of Itaewon for Halloween celebrations.



**VOICING THE NEEDS:** A man carries a poster during a protest to mark International Labour Day near the presidential palace in Manila, Philippines Wednesday. Hundreds of Filipino workers from various labour groups took to the streets to mark Labour Day and demand a wage increase and job security amid soaring food and oil prices

# Over 10k black cabbies take Uber to court

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**London, May 2:** A UK law firm said Thursday that it has filed a multi-million-pound group action in the city's High Court on behalf of 10,887 licensed London black cab drivers in their claim against Uber for alleged losses sustained as a result of "unlawful activities" in the city's taxi market.

Mishcon De Reya said its claim filed in the Commercial Court relates to actions taken by

the US-headquartered ride-hailing company dating back to 2012 under the private hire vehicle licence granted by Transport for London (TfL).

It is claimed their operating system did not comply with the requirements of the Private Hire Vehicles (London) Act 1988. Uber has denied the allegations and described the claim as "unfounded".

According to the claim, drivers of London's iconic black cabs will allege that Uber's operating

system did not comply with the requirements of the Act, that Uber knew this at all material times, and that in order to obtain its licence Uber "deliberately misled" TfL as to how that operating system worked.

The claimants further alleged that Uber's intention was to "gain market share unlawfully" and, by necessity, take business from existing black cab drivers. The value of the claim is estimated at around 250 million pounds.

# Over 40% of Americans reportedly see China as enemy

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Washington, May 2:** More than 40 per cent of Americans now label China as an enemy, up from a quarter two years ago and reaching the highest level in five years, according to an annual Pew Research Center survey released Wednesday.

Half of Americans think of China as a competitor, and only 6 per cent consider the country a partner, according to the report. The findings come as the Biden administration is seeking to stabilise US-China relations to avoid miscalculations that could result in clashes, while still trying to counter the world's second-largest economy on issues from Russia's war in Ukraine to Taiwan and human rights.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen have both recently visited China in the administration's latest effort to "responsibly" manage the competition with Beijing.

Despite those overtures, President Joe Biden has been competing with former President Donald Trump, the presumptive Republican nominee in November's election, on being tough on China.

The Pew report, which is drawn from an April 1-7 survey of a sample of 3,600 US adults, found that roughly half of Americans think limiting China's power and influence should be a top US foreign policy priority. Only 8 per cent don't think it should be a priority at all.



For the fifth year in a row, about eight in 10 Americans report an unfavourable view of China, the Pew report said. "Today, 81 per cent of US adults see the country unfavourably,

including 43 per cent who hold a very unfavourable opinion. Chinese President Xi Jinping receives similarly negative ratings," the report said. Beijing's human rights record,

About eight in 10 Americans say they have little or no confidence in Chinese President Xi Jinping to do the right thing regarding world affairs. About 10 per cent said they have never heard of him

American attitudes toward China have turned largely critical after the US launched a trade war against China in 2018 and since the emergence of COVID-19, which was first reported in China

Older Americans, conservative Republicans and those with a sour view of the US economy are more critical of China and more likely to consider the country an enemy

try, according to Pew's previous analyses. At the same time, the US government has been overt about competing with China on economic and diplomatic issues. Following that, 42 per cent of Americans say China is an enemy of the US, the highest level since 2021, when Pew began asking the question.

The share is much larger among Republicans and Republican-leaning independents, Pew said, with 59 per cent of them describing China as an enemy, compared with 28 per cent of Democrats and those leaning Democratic.

Pew said a nationally representative sample of 3,600 respondents filled out online surveys and that the margin of error was plus or minus 2.

## of the day quote

We are still looking at the books (for the fiscal) but as we stand today, we are going to see high double-digit growth rates on revenue, profit and users continue

**ANUBRATA BISWAS** | CEO, AIRTEL PAYMENTS BANK

The Groww Nifty Non-Cyclical Index fund is India's first index fund, which enables people to invest in the top stocks from consumer industries such as FMCG, Textiles, etc

**HARSH JAIN** | CO-FOUNDER AND COO, GROWW

We are delighted to strengthen our relationship with the State Bank of India through our project financing agreement

**VINEET MITTAL** | CHAIRMAN, AVAADA GROUP

## RESULTS CORNER

### Adani Ent net falls

**New Delhi:** Adani Enterprises Ltd, the flagship incubator of billionaire Gautam Adani's conglomerate, Thursday reported 37 per cent drop in March quarter net profit as cost of input materials more than doubled. Consolidated net profit of ₹450.58 crore in January-March 2023-24 is compared with ₹722.48 crore net profit in the same period last year and ₹1,888.45 crore earning in the preceding quarter, according to a BSE filing by the company. Operating as well as cost of input materials soared during the quarter. Meanwhile Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Limited (APSEZ) Thursday reported a 76.87 per cent jump in consolidated net profit to ₹2,014.77 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 2024. The country's largest integrated logistics player had clocked a profit of ₹1,139.07 crore in the corresponding period of the previous fiscal, the company said.

### Coal India net up

**New Delhi:** Coal behemoth CIL Thursday reported a 26.2 per cent rise in consolidated net profit to ₹8,682.20 crore for the March quarter. The company's consolidated net profit stood at ₹6,875.07 crore in the year-ago period, Coal India Ltd (CIL) said in a regulatory filing. Its consolidated income in the January-March period declined to ₹39,654.50 crore from ₹40,371.51 crore a year ago. CIL accounts for over 80 per cent of the country's domestic coal production. The PAT was ₹6,869 crore during the corresponding quarter of the previous fiscal year. The company's PAT for the entire 2023-24 touched ₹37,369 crore, logging a 17.8 per cent year-on-year growth. CIL's PAT during FY23 was ₹31,723 crore. The company's board recommended a final dividend of ₹5 per share for the financial year ended March 2024, subject to the nod from shareholders at the ensuing company's annual general meeting.

### Dabur profit rises

**New Delhi:** Homegrown FMCG major Dabur India Ltd Thursday reported a 16.55 per cent increase in its consolidated net profit to ₹341.22 crore for the fourth ended March 2024, helped by cost optimisation and expansion of the distribution network. The company had posted a net profit of ₹292.76 crore in the January-March quarter a year ago, Dabur India said in a regulatory filing. Its revenue from operations was up 5.11 per cent at ₹2,814.64 crore during the quarter under review compared with ₹2,677.80 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous fiscal. Dabur India's total expenses were at ₹2,490.43 crore, up 3.67 per cent in the March quarter.



It (India) is one of our growth markets and we see a huge opportunity for growth in India in the future. In India, nights booked grew by almost 30 per cent Year-on-Year in 2023 compared to 2022, which is a positive sign

**DAVE STEPHENSON** | CHIEF BUSINESS OFFICER, AIRBNB

### A350'S FIRST INT'L FLIGHT

Air India has commenced services with its A350 aircraft on the international route by operating the first Delhi-Dubai flight Wednesday and plans to fly the wide-body plane on more overseas routes in the coming months



# Stock markets rebound

RECORD GST COLLECTIONS, POSITIVE MANUFACTURING DATA PROPEL SHARES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, May 2:** Stock markets rebounded Thursday with benchmark Sensex closing higher by 128 points as record GST collections in April, positive manufacturing data, and foreign fund inflows boosted investor sentiment.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 128.33 points or 0.17 per cent to settle at 74,611.11 in a restricted trade. During the day, the index rose by 329.65 points or 0.44 per cent to a high of 74,812.43. The NSE Nifty rose by 43.35 points or 0.19 per cent to 22,648.20 as 29 of its constituents advanced and 21 declined.

From the Sensex basket, Power Grid, Asian Paints, Tata Motors, Tata Steel, NTPC, Sun Pharma, Mahindra & Mahindra, HDFC Bank, Tata Consultancy Services and JSW Steel were among the major gainers.

Kotak Mahindra Bank was the biggest loser, dropping 2.95 per cent after the bank announced the exit of its joint managing director KVS Manian. ICICI Bank dropped a little over 1 per cent. India's second-largest private lender rejected a media report that suggested that its MD and CEO was willing to step down.

Bharti Airtel, Axis Bank, Wipro and IndusInd Bank were among the laggards.

"Benchmark indices saw moderate gains, mirroring global trends after the US FED decided to maintain its interest rate, as widely accepted. The US central bank hinted at potential rate cuts while remaining cautious about sustaining the high inflation trend," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services said.



Trading in the markets remained lacklustre, closing marginally higher amid a blend of signals. Global cues presented a mixed picture, contributing to subdued sentiment, albeit with an overall positive undertone

**AJIT MISHRA** | SVP (RESEARCH), RELIGARE BROKING

The broader market largely traded range-bound, while positive commentary from the auto companies on recent volume numbers led the sector to outperform, Nair added.

Goods and Services Tax collections grew 12.4 per cent to a record high of ₹2.10 lakh crore in April, aided by strong economic momentum and increased domestic transactions and imports, the Finance Ministry said Wednesday.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.91 per cent and smallcap index advanced 0.29 per cent.

Among the indices, utilities rallied by 1.49 per cent, power by 1.47 per cent, services by 1.24 per cent, auto by 1.17 per cent, metal by 1.03 per cent, consumer discretionary by 0.82 per cent, energy by 0.61 per cent and healthcare by 0.31 per cent.

Teck, realty, telecommunication and bankex were the laggards.

In Asian markets, Hong Kong settled with gains while Seoul, Tokyo and Shanghai ended lower. European markets were trading on a mixed note. Wall Street ended mixed Wednesday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 1.02 per cent to \$84.29 a barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth ₹1,071.93 crore Tuesday, according to exchange data. Domestic equity markets were closed Wednesday on account of Maharashtra Day.

Snapping its two-day winning run, the BSE benchmark declined 188.50 points or 0.25 per cent to settle at 74,482.78 Tuesday. The NSE Nifty dipped 38.55 points or 0.17 per cent to finish at 22,604.85.

# HIGH BASE EFFECT PV sales kick off FY25 on flat note

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 2:** Passenger vehicle sales in India kicked off on a flat note in new fiscal 2024-25 with 3.38 lakh units sold in April, impacted by high base effect and muted demand due to the ongoing general elections.

Despatches of passenger vehicles from manufacturers to dealers were at 3,38,341 units in April 2024 as compared to 3,32,468 units in the same month last year, a growth of 1.77 per cent with major players Maruti Suzuki India, Hyundai and Tata Motors reporting marginal growth in their domestic wholesales.

The flat growth witnessed in April is due to the high base that the industry had last year, coupled with the impact of ongoing general elections, Maruti

Suzuki India Senior Executive Officer, Marketing & Sales, Partho Banerjee told reporters in a virtual interaction.

"We have started on a very high base this year...Right now the country is going through elections and there is a model code of conduct...During the elections the markets are a little muted. Once elections are over, I think we will be seeing a different market," he said.

He further said, "Till the month of June I think things will be more or less like this and after June maybe we will see revival in the market."

Maruti Suzuki's total domestic passenger vehicle sales were 1,37,952 units compared to 1,37,320 units in the year-ago period.

Similarly, Hyundai Motor India's domestic wholesales saw



The PV industry's growth seen in April was a reflection of what was estimated in beginning of 2024 of about an overall low single-digit growth. It is more because of the high base effect of the last two years and not necessarily a slowdown

**TARUN GARG** | COO, HYUNDAI MOTOR INDIA

an increase of 1 per cent to 50,201 units last month from 49,701 units in the year-ago period. Tata Motors reported a 2 per

## 97.76% of ₹2K notes returned

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, May 2:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Thursday said 97.76 per cent of the ₹2,000 denomination banknotes have returned to the banking system, and only ₹7,961 crore worth of the withdrawn notes are still with the public.

On May 19, 2023, the RBI announced the withdrawal of ₹2,000 denomination banknotes from circulation.

The total value of ₹2,000 banknotes in circulation, which was ₹3.56 lakh crore at the close of business May 19, 2023, when the withdrawal of the high value banknotes was announced, has declined to ₹7,961 crore at the close of business April 30, 2024, the Reserve Bank said in a statement.

"Thus, 97.76 per cent of the ₹2,000 banknotes in circulation as May 19, 2023, has since been returned," it said.

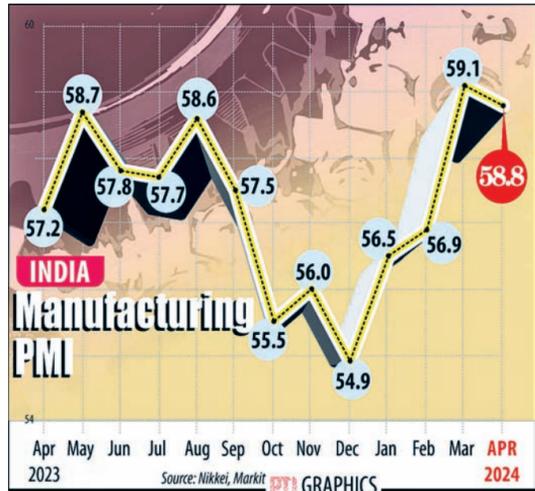


The ₹2,000 banknotes continue to be legal tender.

People can deposit and/or exchange ₹2,000 banknotes at 19 RBI offices across the country. People can also send ₹2,000 banknotes through India Post from any post office to any of the RBI Issue Offices for credit to their bank accounts in India.

The ₹2,000 banknotes were introduced in November 2016, following the demonetisation of the then-prevailing ₹1,000 and ₹500 banknotes.

# Manufacturing PMI moderates in April



Manufacturing sector activity sees 2nd-best improvement in operating conditions in three-and-a-half years

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 2:** India's manufacturing sector activity moderated in April, but still recorded the second fastest improvement in operating conditions in three-and-a-half years supported by buoyant demand, a monthly survey said Thursday.

The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) fell from 59.1 in March to 58.8 in April, signalling the second-best improvement in the health of the sector for three-and-a-half years.

In Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) parlance, a print above 50 means expansion while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

According to Pranjul Bhandari, Chief India Economist at HSBC, strong demand conditions which resulted in a further expansion of output, albeit slightly slower than in March.

Indian manufacturers reported robust demand for their goods in April, from domestic and external clients. Total new orders rose sharply, with the pace of expansion being the second strongest since the start of 2021, the report said.

Moreover, new export orders increased markedly in April, albeit at a softer rate than that seen for total sales, suggesting that the domestic market remained the main driver of growth.

MFG PMI FELL FROM 59.1 IN MARCH TO 58.8 IN APRIL. NEW EXPORT ORDERS INCREASED MARKEDLY IN APRIL

The survey further noted that Indian goods producers forecast higher output in the year ahead, relative to present levels. Moreover, business confidence strengthened in April on the back of expectations that demand will remain buoyant.

To fulfill current and expected improvements in demand, manufacturers hired additional staff at the start of the first fiscal quarter.

"Improvements in suppliers' delivery times contributed to increased purchasing activity. Additionally, a positive outlook for the year ahead prompted firms to expand their staffing levels," Bhandari said.

Amid reports of higher material and labour costs, Indian manufacturers increased their selling prices in April.

"On the price front, higher costs of raw materials and labour led to a modest uptick in input costs, but inflation remains below the historical average,"

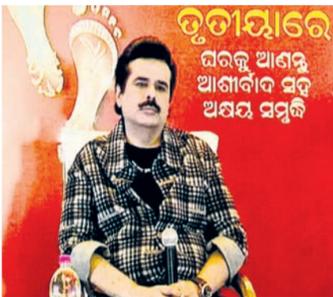
Bhandari said. However, firms passed these increases onto consumers through higher output charges, as demand remained resilient, resulting in improved margins, Bhandari added.

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

# Akshaya Tritiya: Lalchnd announces slew of offers

Bhubaneswar: Akshaya Tritiya is just around the corner and it is believed that purchasing new jewellery on this auspicious day can bring prosperity and happiness to one's household.

Lalchnd Jewellers, the largest and most trusted jewellery house in eastern India, has launched some mind-blowing offers to give customers a golden chance to buy from its finest collections of gold, diamond silver and platinum jewellery even as they usher divine blessings of prosperity and success into their lives. During the offer period, making charges (MC) on all HUID hallmarked gold will be ₹799/gram; on diamond jewellery, MC will be zero; and on silver ornaments it will be ₹13/gram only. The offer is valid till May 12. What's more, all Lalchnd stores have special offers for SBI card users. A cashback offer of up to ₹2,500 is available on a minimum purchase of ₹30,000. This offer is valid from May 5 to May 12. Furthermore, 100% gold exchange value is offered on BIS-hallmarked old gold at every Lalchnd showroom. Over the past few months, gold prices have been skyrocketing – but Odisha's homegrown jeweller Lalchnd has left no stone unturned to keep gold jewellery as affordable as possible for its customers. For instance, it offers the lowest MC compared to other jewellers nationwide. "We have historically offered only flat discounts across our entire jewellery range. There are no hidden costs or conditions attached. If you really want customers to trust you for a lifetime, you don't play these dirty games," said Sunjoy Hans, Founder Chairman of Lalchnd Group as he extended his heartiest congratulations to everyone on the auspicious occasion of Akshaya Tritiya.



# Services exports decline marginally in March to \$30bn

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, May 2:** India's services exports declined 1.3 per cent in March to \$30 billion while imports fell by 2.1 per cent to \$16.61 billion, showed Reserve Bank data released Thursday.

As per RBI's data on India's international trade in services, the trade surplus during March 2024 was \$13.4 billion.

Both exports and imports of services were in positive zone in the preceding two months.

According to the commerce ministry data, the services export during fiscal 2023-24 is estimated at \$339.62 billion and imports at \$177.56 billion.

The trade surplus or difference between exports and imports works out to be \$162 billion during the year.

Despite persistent global challenges, overall exports (merchandise and services) are estimated to reach \$776.68 billion in 2023-24 as compared to \$776.40 billion in 2022-23.

## CONTAMINATION CONCERNS

# India widens spices probe

INDIA IS THE WORLD'S BIGGEST EXPORTER, PRODUCER AND CONSUMER OF SPICES, AND ITS DOMESTIC MARKET FOR THE PRODUCTS WAS VALUED AT \$10.44 BILLION IN 2022

REUTERS

**Hyderabad, May 2:** India's food safety regulator said Thursday it had ordered testing and inspections at all companies making spice mixes, widening an investigation into the sector as global regulators look into suspected contamination in two popular local brands.

Hong Kong last month suspended sales of three spice blends made by India's MDH and an Everest spice mix for fish curry. Singapore ordered a recall of the same Everest mix as well, flagging high levels of ethylene oxide, which is unfit for human consumption and a cancer risk with long exposure.

MDH and Everest products are hugely popular in India and also sold in Europe, Asia and North America, and the companies have said they are safe. Still, US and Australian food authorities said they are gathering more information on the matter, and

India had already ordered testing of the two brands' products.

The Indian regulator has now ordered officials to conduct "extensive inspections, sampling and testing at all the manufacturing units", for powdered



spices, with a focus on those making curry powders and mixed spice blends for local and foreign sales.

"Each of the product sampled will be analysed for the compliance with quality and safety parameters," the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India said in a statement.

The agency added checks would also be made for any presence of ethylene oxide, whose use is banned in India, and "appropriate actions will be initiated as fit" after testing was completed.

Beyond MDH and Everest, other major manufacturers include Madhusudan Masala, NHC Foods and consumer giants Tata Consumer Products and ITC.

The Spices Board says India exported spice products worth \$4 billion in 2022-23.

The Global Trade Research Initiative, a New Delhi-based think tank, said in a report Wednesday that rising global scrutiny could put more than half of country's spice exports at risk.

If China decides to implement similar measures as other countries, Indian spice exports could see a "dramatic downturn", the report said.

# SRH pip RR in thriller

# INDIA SUFFER HEARTBREAK



FROM LEFT: Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Nitish Kumar Reddy and Heinrich Klaasen during SRH's match against RR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Hyderabad, May 2:** Bhuvneshwar Kumar did the star turn with a sensational final over as Sunrisers Hyderabad pulled off a heist, stunning Rajasthan Royals by just one run in a last-ball thriller to keep their IPL playoff hopes alive here Thursday.

Needing two to win off the last delivery, Bhuvneshwar (3/41) trapped Rovman Powell (27) with a full toss to leave RR stranded at 200/7 while chasing a target of 202.

Opting to bat, Nitish Kumar Reddy (76 n o, 42b, 3x4, 8x6) and Travis Head (58, 44b, 6x4, 3x6) produced explosive fifties, while Heinrich Klaassen made an un-

beaten 19-ball 42 (3x4, 3x6) to power SRH to 201/3.

Things were looking up when Bhuvneshwar removed Jos Buttler and Sanju Samson for ducks in the opening over to leave RR at 1/2. However, youngsters Yashasvi Jaiswal (67, 40b, 7x4, 2x6) and Riyan Parag (77, 49b, 8x4, 4x6) came up with counter-attacking fifties on way to a massive 134-run partnership to lay the foundation of the run-chase.

But once the duo was back in the hut, Shimron Hetmyar (13) hit a four and a six as it seemed like a regulation chase but T Natarajan (2/35) got rid of Hetmyar and then skipper Pat Cummins (2/34) removed Dhruv Jurel in the 19th over.

The sudden loss of wickets

gave SRH hope of a turnaround but Powell produced a six in the last ball of the 19th over to bring the equation down to 13 off six balls. The West Indian kept a calm head to bring it down to 2 off the last ball but Bhuvneshwar denied him the glory.

Following the win, SRH snapped their two-game losing streak and moved to the fourth spot with 12 points, same as KKR, LSG, while RR stayed at the top with 16 points.

Chasing the total, Jaiswal and Parag were dropped early in their innings and they capitalised on the reprieves to script a quick recovery. Parag broke the shackles in third over when he carted Bhuvneshwar for two fours and a six. Jaiswal then

blasted Marco Jansen for two boundaries after Cummins spilled a straight forward catch. Parag, who was dropped on 24 by Abhishek Sharma, hammered Cummins for another maximum, before carting Jansen for two more fours.

Cummins finally introduced spin into the attack but Jaiswal smashed Shahbaz Ahmed for a four to complete his fifty. Three balls later, Parag produced a reverse sweep four to reach his milestone in 32 balls. Jaiswal then played a Natarajan delivery onto the stumps, while two overs later Parag was holed out at long-on.

Earlier, Head, who was dropped by Parag in the first ball of the innings, forged a 96-run stand off 57 balls for the third wicket with Nitish, who also added another 70 off 32 balls with Klassen to take SRH across the 200-mark for the fifth time this season.

Playing his 300th game, Yuzvendra Chahal, who has been picked for the T20 World Cup, was on the firing line as he conceded 62 in his quota of four overs. Avesh Khan (2/39) produced the first breakthrough, having Abhishek (12) caught at deep midwicket. Sandeep Sharma (1/31) then claimed a first-ball wicket, removing Anmolpreet Singh (5) as SRH scored 37 for 2 in the powerplay, their lowest this IPL.

The spin duo of Chahal and R Ashwin (0/36), however, disappointed as the batters milked them for runs to set SRH on the road to recovery. The Australian, however, played the pacer onto his middle stump as SRH slipped to 131/3. New man Klassen then joined the party.

#### BRIEF SCORES

SRH 201/3 (Nitish Kumar Reddy 76 n o, Travis Head 58, Heinrich Klaassen 42 n o; Avesh Khan 2/39) beat RR 200/7 (Riyan Parag 77, Yashasvi Jaiswal 67; Bhuvneshwar Kumar 3/41, Pat Cummins 2/34, T Natarajan 2/35) by one run.

**Chengdu (China), May 2:** Lakshya Sen was the lone bright spot as the Indian men's team failed to defend its title after going down fighting 1-3 to China in the quarterfinals, while the women's side suffered a 0-3 loss to Japan to also end their campaign in the Thomas and Uber Cup Final here Thursday.

Two years after India claimed their maiden title at the World Men's Team Championships, the country's shuttlers endured a tough day in office as World No.9 HS Prannoy, World No.3 Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty and Dhruv Kapila and Sai Pratheek K failed to go the distance in their respective matches.

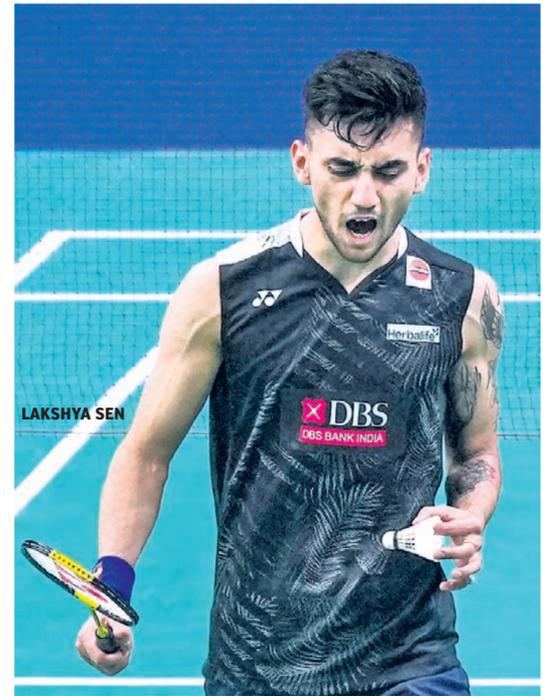
It was a rematch of the 2023 Asian Games team final which India lost 2-3 to sign off with a maiden silver. The Indian team had ended their group stage at the second spot after losing 1-4 to Indonesia late Wednesday, while the Chinese had an off day and the hosts seemed to be in better shape as they ticked all the boxes to come up trumps once again at the big stage.

A roaring start ended with a dampener for Prannoy as his spirited fight concluded with a 21-15, 11-21, 14-21 loss against world No. 2 Shi Yu Qi in a 66-minute clash which gave China a 1-0 lead.

For the second successive day, Satwik and Chirag had to walk back without logging a point for India after they were outmanoeuvred 15-21, 21-11, 12-21 by the World No.1 pair of Liang Wei Keng and Wang Chang as the visitors slipped to 0-2.

All eyes were on Lakshya Sen to keep India afloat, given his 6-3 head-to-head count against Li Shi Feng, and the 22-year-old from Almora lived up to the expectations, seeing off the World No.6 13-21, 21-8, 21-14 to pull one back.

However, Dhruv and Sai went down 10-21, 10-21 to World No.11 pair of Ren Xiang Yu and He Ji Ting to put paid to India's hopes.



LAKSHYA SEN

account of themselves in their singles matches.

World No.53 Chaliha showed once again that she has the wherewithal to trouble the top players during her narrow 10-21, 22-20, 15-21 loss to World No.11 Aya Ohori in a 67-minute contest.

The 20-year-old Isharani, ranked 83rd, too was up 14-11 and 9-7 in the first and second games before losing 15-21 12-21 to 2017 World Championships and former world No.1 Nozomi Okuhara.

In between, national champions Priya Konjengbam and Shrutika Mishra found a glimpse of what it would take to succeed at the highest level as they succumbed to an 8-21, 9-21 loss to World No.4 Nami Matsuyama and Chiharu Shida.

India had reached the semi-finals of the Uber Cup thrice in 1957, 2014 and 2016.

# KKR look to iron out flaws vs off-colour MI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, May 2:** Kolkata Knight Riders will look to iron out their flaws and get the better of a misfiring Mumbai Indians when the two teams, placed on the opposite ends of IPL points table spectrum, clash here Friday.

With six wins in nine games giving them 12 points and the second position in the IPL points table, a berth in the playoffs looks within the grasp of two-time winners KKR. But the Shreyas Iyer-led side will have to find consistency across departments and avoid any slips-ups in order to make it to the final four.

Each of their three losses have come in the last six games for KKR, who were at the receiving end of a record run chase by Punjab Kings but did well to bounce back with a seven-wicket thrashing of Delhi Capitals.

With the bat, KKR's requisite firepower in the ranks entwined with an ultra-aggressive approach has delivered the goods more often than not but it is their bowling which needs improvement.

Spotlight will definitely be on

**MATCHDAY**  
Indian Premier League  
**MI vs KKR**  
Time: 07:30 pm  
Telecast: Star Sports Network  
Stream: Jio Cinema

Rinku Singh, whose exclusion from India's main squad for the T20 World Cup, has triggered an outpouring of sympathy for the 26-year-old. The power-hitter has not got enough game time this season which probably tilted the scales against him.

For Mumbai Indians, the race to the IPL playoffs seems lost even though the five-time winners have five more games to play. Even if Mumbai Indians win each of these, they can only get to 16 points and somewhere in the middle of the points table — not necessarily challenging those who have been consistently good.

Mumbai Indians' under-fire skipper Hardik Pandya has neither dazzled with the ball nor the bat after a long injury lay-off, but the fact that he finds himself in the Indian side as vice-captain for the World Cup should motivate him to turn things around.

# India eves thrash Bangladesh



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Sylhet (Bangladesh), May 2:** A dominant India grabbed an unassailable 3-0 lead in the five-match women's T20I series as they pummeled Bangladesh by seven wickets in the third match here Thursday.

After their skipper Harmanpreet Kaur opted to field first looking at the cloud cover and a mild breeze, India's bowlers dished out another disciplined

performance to restrict Bangladesh to 117/8, which the visitors overhauled with nine balls to spare.

When they came to bat, openers Smriti Mandhana (47, 42b, 5x4, 1x6) and Shafali Verma (51, 38b, 8x4) put on 91 runs in just 12.1 overs to take India closer to a series win. Ritu Moni took a blinder off her bowling to dismiss Shafali while Nahida Akter accounted for Mandhana. But the damage was done by then.

Earlier, the decision to bowl first did not yield the desired result immediately, as Bangladesh raced to 44 for no loss in the powerplay. However, the Indian bowlers tightened the screws on the home team batters after the dismissal of Dilara Akter (39, 27b, 5x4). The hosts' brisk start was largely due to the batting of Akter.

Trailing 0-2 in the five-match series, Bangladesh looked determined to give a better account of themselves and keep the rubber alive, two days after being shot out for 119 at the same venue.

With the T20 World Cup around the corner, the objective is to finalise their middle-order, which has been having some difficulty. Bangladesh kept losing wickets at regular intervals with skipper Nigar Sultana (28) and Sobhana Mustary (15) being one of two batters to reach double digits. Radha Yadav (2/22) was again outstanding with the white cherry.

**BRIEF SCORES:** Bangladesh Women 117/8 (Dilara Akter 39, Nigar Sultana 28; Radha Yadav 2/22, Shreyanka Patil 1/24) lost to India 121/3 (Shafali Verma 51, Smriti Mandhana 47; Ritu Moni 1/10) by 7 wickets.

# SALIMA REPLACES SAVITA AS TEAM INDIA CAPTAIN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 2:** Midfielder Salima Tete Thursday replaced veteran goalkeeper Savita Punia as captain of the 24-strong Indian women's hockey squad for the Belgium and England legs of the FIH Pro League starting later this month. Navneet Kaur has been named her deputy for the tour.

"I am happy that I have been appointed to lead the team. It is a big responsibility and I am looking forward to this new role. We have a strong squad and it's a mix of experienced and young players," Salima was quoted as saying in a Hockey India press release.

Savita had captained India during the failed Olympic qualifying campaign and the pro league matches at home after that. Barring three changes, the squad was the same that took part in the Bhubaneswar and Rourkela legs of the Pro League in February this year.

The matches in Belgium will begin May 22 and end May 26, while the England leg will commence June 1 and conclude June 9. India will play against Argentina, and Belgium twice during the first leg, starting May 22 against Argentina.

During the London leg, the



team will take on Great Britain and Germany. India are currently placed sixth in the FIH Pro League table.

Salima was recently honoured with the prestigious Hockey India Balbir Singh Sr Award for Player of the Year in the women's category at the sixth Hockey India Annual Awards.

**The squad**  
Goalkeepers: Savita, Bichu Devi Kharibam; Defenders: Nikki Pradhan, Udita, Ishika Chaudhary, Monika, Jyoti Chhatr, Mahima Chaudhary; Midfielders: Salima Tete (C), Vaishnavi Vitthal Phalke, Navneet Kaur (VC), Neha, Jyoti, Baljeet Kaur; Manisha Chauhan, Lalremsiami; Forwards: Mumtaz Khan, Sangita Kumari, Deepika, Sharmila Devi, Preeti Dubey, Vandana Katariya, Sunelita Toppo, Deepika Soreng.

# Fullkrug seals Dortmund victory

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Dortmund (Germany), May 2:** Niclas Fullkrug scored and Borussia Dortmund earned a 1-0 win over Paris Saint-Germain in the first leg of their Champions League semifinal Wednesday.

Dortmund defender Nico Schlotterbeck sent a long pass over the top for Fullkrug to control brilliantly with his first touch before firing it past PSG goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma with his next in the 36th minute.

The win gives Dortmund a narrow advantage before the teams play again in the second leg in Paris next Tuesday, when the French champion will need to overturn the result if it's going to capture Europe's biggest prize before Kylian Mbappe leaves the club.

PSG is under pressure to finally win to the Champions



League to justify more than a decade of huge investment from its Qatari owners. Dortmund's win ensured that they qualify for the tournament next season and it gives the Bundesliga five teams in the expanded tournament. Dortmund are assured of finishing at least fifth.

PSG pushed hardest early in the second half, when Mbappe hit

the right post before Achraf Hakimi struck the left post. Gregor Kobel saved Mbappe's next effort and Dortmund survived the pressure.

The winner of the two-leg tie will play either Real Madrid or Bayern Munich in the final in London June 1. The old rivals drew 2-2 in their semifinal first leg in Munich Tuesday.

# Alcaraz loses to Rublev in quarterfinals

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Madrid, May 2:** Carlos Alcaraz's bid to win a third straight Madrid Open title ended with a three-set loss to Andrey Rublev in the quarterfinals. The second-seeded Spaniard got off to a good start but then was outplayed by the seventh-seeded Rublev, losing 4-6 6-3 6-2 at the Caja Magica centre court Wednesday.

Alcaraz, who had already struggled in a three-set win over Jan-Lennard Struff Tuesday, looked out of sorts and was mistake-prone toward the end.

It was his first tournament after missing Monte Carlo and Barcelona because of a right forearm injury. The 20-year-old Alcaraz had arrived here saying he would be happy to play three or four matches in the Spanish capital.

Already in a hole in the third



set, Alcaraz pressed the forearm during a stopover. He was wearing a long sleeve over the injured arm. Alcaraz plans to play in Rome to continue his preparation for the French Open later this month.

Alcaraz was trying to become the first player to win the clay-court tournament three straight times. He hadn't lost on Spanish soil since 2021. Rublev, seeking

his second ATP 1000 title after winning Monte Carlo last year, will play Taylor Fritz in the semifinals.

The 12th-seeded Fritz defeated 22nd-ranked Francisco Cerundolo 6-1, 3-6, 6-3. It was the 250th tour-level win for Fritz, who is the third American man to reach the Madrid semifinals and first since Robby Ginepri in 2005. Andre Agassi won the

Madrid title in 2002. Top-seeded Jannik Sinner withdrew because of a hip injury, saying he didn't want to risk making it worse.

#### SABALENKA ADVANCES

Defending champion Aryna Sabalenka defeated 17-year-old Mirra Andreeva for the second straight year in Madrid to reach the women's semifinals. The second-seeded Sabalenka didn't face a break point on her way to a 6-1 6-4 win in Wednesday's quarterfinals. She had beaten the teenage sensation in straight sets in the fourth round last year.

The two-time Australian Open champion has won 10 straight matches here and is trying to match Petra Kvitova's three titles in the Spanish capital. Sabalenka will next play fourth-seeded Elena Rybakina, who saved two match points en route to a 4-6, 7-6(7-4), 7-5 win over Yulia Putintseva.