



**Breaking the mold**  
Actor Sobhita Dhulipala discusses facing casual objectification, and advocates for embracing complexity over simplification

LEISURE | P2



**Conflict on cards**  
Russia's Foreign Ministry has said that NATO's military drills indicates that they are preparing for a potential conflict with Russia

INTERNATIONAL | P10



**Ban eased**  
The government Saturday lifted the ban on onion exports subject to a minimum export price of \$550 per tonne

BUSINESS | P11



**CSK take on PBKS**  
Chennai Super Kings look to avenge their loss against Punjab Kings in the previous match when they face them today

SPORTS | P12

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Lok Sabha

Vidhan Sabha

Published by: Dr. Sarmit Patra, General Secretary, Biju Janata Dal, Odisha.

## Congress Puri LS candidate returns ticket

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, May 4:** Congress candidate for the Puri Lok Sabha constituency Sucharita Mohanty has declined to contest the elections and returned the party ticket alleging lack of funding from the party.

Sucharita, daughter of former Congress MP Brajamohan Mohanty, in a mail to AICC general secretary (organisation) KC Venugopal Friday claimed that her campaign has been hit hard because the party has denied funding.

She alleged that AICC Odisha in-charge Ajoy Kumar "categorically" asked her to fight from her own resources.

"I was a salaried professional journalist who entered electoral politics 10 years ago. I have given everything to my campaign in Puri. I tried a public donation drive to support my campaign for progressive politics without much success so far," she said. "It is clear that only fund crunch is holding us back from a winning campaign in Puri. I regret that without party funding, it won't be possible to carry out the campaign in Puri. I, therefore, return the party ticket for the Puri Lok Sabha constituency herewith," she said in her mail to the AICC.

Reacting to the development, Kumar said, "Funds will be provided to a candidate when the candidate launches the campaign and seriously fights at the ground."

The party has already decided to change the Puri LS candidate and a proposal was submitted to the Congress high command, Kumar added.

## KASPAROV JOKE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 4:** Russian chess great Garry Kasparov hoped that his 'little joke' on Indian politics does not pass for 'advocacy or expertise' after his cheeky social media post on Congress MP Rahul Gandhi's love for the game went viral.

Within hours of asking Gandhi to "first win Rae Bareilly before challenging for the top", the 61-year-old said it was just a joke and should be seen as one.

"I very much hope my little joke does not pass for advocacy or expertise in Indian politics. But as an 'all-seeing monster with 1000 eyes,' as I was once described, I cannot fail to see a politician dabbling in my beloved game!" the former world champion, who retired in 2005, wrote in response to a post by actor Ranvir Shorey.

Shorey's comment appeared to be a dig at Gandhi's recent assertion that he was the best chess player among all Indian politicians. Kasparov gave the same reply to a few other accounts which commented on his original post.

The Congress recently shared a video of Gandhi playing chess on his mobile phone while on the Lok Sabha election campaign trail. The MP from Wayanad named Kasparov as his favourite chess player and drew parallels between the game and politics.



**SAVING ECOSYSTEMS:** School students pose with earthen pots filled with water before hanging them on trees as they participate in 'Save Birds' campaign, in Jammu, Saturday

# Opposition lies: Naveen

*Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Saturday termed the accusations made by the BJP that the state's linguistic and cultural identity are being undermined during the BJD rule as outright lies. The BJD supremo made a fervent appeal to the electorate to evaluate his performance on the basis of his work and not to get misled by the Opposition's malicious propaganda.*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Koraput/Nabarangpur, May 4:** Chief Minister and BJD president Naveen Patnaik Saturday alleged that the Opposition parties are spreading lies and shedding crocodile tears.

Addressing election rallies in tribal-dominated Koraput and Nabarangpur Lok Sabha constituencies, Patnaik asked the people whether they are happy



with his government.

Patnaik also asked the people whether he is a good person and whether welfare schemes beneficial for the poor and tribal people of the region are reaching them. The people responded by saying 'Yes' and shouted 'Naveen Patnaik Zindabad' slogans.

"If Naveen Patnaik is good, then bless him and vote in conch symbol," Patnaik told the gathering.

**IF NAVEEN PATNAIK IS GOOD, THEN BLESS HIM AND VOTE IN CONCH SYMBOL**

NAVEEN PATNAIK | BJD SUPREMO

ering. His close aide Kartik Pandian, BJD's Nabarangpur Lok Sabha candidate Pradeep Majhi, Koraput LS candidate Kausalya Hikaka and nominees of different Assembly seats were present at the meeting.

Both Pandian and Majhi came down heavily on the Opposition and alleged that BJP leaders were opposing several welfare schemes and also Srimandir Heritage Corridor Project.

The BJD leaders told the people about the state government's flagship schemes like school transformation, Mission Shakti, Kalia Yojana for farmers,

Mamata Yojana for pregnant women, renovation of temples, mosques, churches and improvement of place of worships of tribal people.

While launching his party's campaign for the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections on his home turf Hinjili April 24, Patnaik targeted the Opposition parties and accused them of 'obstructing' developmental works in the state.

"The decade 2024-34 will be a golden opportunity for youths. The youth budget will put emphasis on industrial investment and skill development. It will be the decade of Odisha. By 2036, Odisha will become the number one state," claimed Patnaik.

He also highlighted his government's transformational initiatives and said around 70 lakh women have become drivers of transformation in the state.

## 3 INDIANS HELD IN NIJAR KILLING

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Ottawa/New York, May 4:** The arrests made Friday by the Canadian police in connection with the killing of Khalistan separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar are Indian nationals, revealed authorities, Saturday.

The accused were identified as Karan Brar, 22, Kamalpreet Singh, 22, and Karanpreet Singh, 28, of Edmonton.

The three are believed to be members of an alleged hit squad tasked by the Government of India with the killing of Nijjar, 45, outside a gurdwara in Surrey, British Columbia, June 18, 2023.

"The investigation does not end here. We are aware that there are others out there that played a role in this homicide and we remain dedicated to identifying and arresting each one of them," Superintendent Mandeep Mooker, Officer in Charge of the Integrated Homicide Investigation Team said.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police Assistant Commissioner David Teboul said they are not able to make any comments about the nature of the evidence collected by the police.

The ties between India and Canada came under severe strain following Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's alle-

## 'India interferes in Canadian politics'

**OTTAWA:** Indian officials, including Canada-based proxies, engage in a range of activities that seek to influence Canadian communities and politicians to 'align' Ottawa's position with New Delhi's interests on key issues, particularly concerns over Khalistani separatists in Canada, an official probe has found. The findings in the interim report by Commissioner Marie-Josée Hogue, who is leading the independent public inquiry, found evidence of foreign interference in Canada's last two federal elections in 2019 and 2021 but the results of the votes were not affected and the electoral system was robust. India has previously rejected as 'baseless' the allegations of its interference in Canadian elections.

gations in September last year of the 'potential' involvement of Indian agents in the killing of Nijjar.

Meanwhile, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, who was in Odisha's Bhubaneswar Saturday, said what is happening in poll-bound Canada over the killing of Khalistan separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar is mostly due to their internal politics and nothing to do with India. **P3**

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



I wanted to know what he did for the country, but all he talked about was Muslims

## WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC
<b>Max Temp</b>	39.7°C	39.0°C
<b>Min Temp</b>	29.0°C	28.0°C
<b>Humidity</b>	69%	68%
<b>Rainfall</b>	Nil	Nil

## FORECAST

NO MAJOR CHANGE

## 1 jawan killed, 4 hurt in J&K terror attack

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jammu, May 4:** One soldier was killed and four were injured as terrorists ambushed an Indian Air Force convoy in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district Saturday, three weeks ahead of polling in Anantnag-Rajouri Lok Sabha constituency.

Officials said five security personnel were injured, two of them critically, when four terrorists opened fire on Indian Air Force (IAF) vehicles moving towards Sanai Top in Poonch's Surankot area in the evening.

One of the critically injured soldiers later succumbed at a military hospital during treatment, they said.

"An IAF vehicle convoy was attacked by militants near Shahsitar in Poonch. Cordon and search operations are underway presently in the area by local military units. The convoy has been secured, and further investigation is under progress,"

the IAF said in a post on X.

"In the ensuing gunfight with terrorists, the Air Warriors fought back by returning fire. In the process, five IAF personnel received bullet injuries, and were evacuated to the nearest military hospital for immediate medical attention. One Air Warrior succumbed to his injuries later," it said in another post.

The terror attack took place around 6:15 pm when the troops were returning to the air force station from Jaranwali.

The officials suspect the involvement of the same group of terrorists who ambushed troops in adjoining Budiaz December 21 last year, leaving four soldiers dead and three injured.

The border district of Poonch along with adjoining Rajouri has witnessed some major terrorist attacks over the past two years, signalling the return of terror activities to the region, which was once cleared of terrorism and remained peaceful between 2003 and 2021.

## Yoga makes official debut in Pak

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Islamabad, May 4:** After making global headlines, the ancient Indian physical, mental and spiritual practice of yoga has officially arrived in neighbouring Pakistan.

According to the official Facebook page of the Capital Development Authority (CDA), which is responsible for the upkeep of Islamabad, the Metropolitan Corporation of Islamabad has launched 'Free yoga classes in F-9 Park' in the capital.

"Many people have already joined in to kickstart their journey towards health and wellness," the CDA said. It also posted pictures of people taking part in the yoga exercises.

Recognising its universal appeal, the United Nations December 11, 2014 proclaimed June 21 as the International Day of Yoga (IDY). A draft resolution establishing the IDY was proposed by India and endorsed by a record 175 member states.



Yoga is normally linked with India and there are not many formal institutions in Pakistan to teach the skills. Though privately people like the physical part of Yoga exercises.

Many residents appreciated the move to organise Yoga classes with several people enquiring about the programme. A step at the official level to organise Yoga at the most promi-

nent park of Pakistani capital is a welcome move and may send a positive message across the border amidst a chill in bilateral ties over the Kashmir issue and cross-border terrorism.

"Good job I really appreciate your work CDA pls send the timing," Shahid Iqbal, a resident, commented. However, some criticised the CDA for failing to provide de-

cent residential facilities to the people of Islamabad and instead resorting to showcasing sideshows.

Ghulam Mustafa said in his comments that CDA failed to develop new sectors. "For God's sake concentrate on your core functions and develop the residential sectors you failed to develop during the last 35 years," he added.

# leisure



## SIA KEEN ON ADOPTING HUSBAND'S SURNAME

*Cheap Thrills* hitmaker Sia has decided to change her legal name and adopt the surname of her husband, Dan Bernad, to celebrate their first wedding anniversary. Sia wishes to change her name from 'Sia Kate Furler' to 'Sia Bernad', adopting the surname of her husband, Dan Bernad, reports *aceshowbiz.com*.

## BEYONCÉ TO FEATURE IN FRENCH DICTIONARY

Pop icon Beyoncé is all set to make her mark in French history, as she has earned a coveted spot in the latest edition of a French dictionary. The musician has been listed as a proper noun in the 2024 version of *Petit Larousse Illustré*, which was first published in 1905. Her name falls under the category of 'American singer of R&B and pop.'



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
The yogis have finally succeeded in impressing you. Was it a stint in a Art of Living course? Ganesh gives you the thumbs-up and suggests you join that music or dance class you have been wanting to. Generally a nice day, and success is on the cards.

**TAURUS**  
Today is a day of closure. You may find yourself on the winning side of things, says Ganesh. Pending projects will reach completion and you will achieve satisfaction and success in education. With a little extra effort, you can build a castle from stone. Ganesh wishes you a cheerful and colourful day.

**GEMINI**  
You will think about the issues faced by other people as well as about increasing your social standing and elevating your social esteem. It is an extremely profitable day for those in the retail business and hence make the most of it, says Ganesh.

**CANCER**  
There may not be many opportunities visible on the horizon today. And, chances are that you may end up getting embroiled in some complicated situations, without even a fault of yours. Relax! Given your people skills and lively spirits, you will be able to sail through.

**LEO**  
The discomfort similar to the fish-out-of-water syndrome will be a thing of the past, as today you will be quite flexible and would want to remain on the move, says Ganesh. So much so that you may even begin to feel bound by the environment in your office.

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

**LIBRA**  
Ganesh says that to gain future opportunities you may have to rely on past experience. You will tend to become possessive about things close to you. You will also have to deal with unpleasant situations where your integrity is questioned. All said and done your day will go good except for minor issues and your understanding attitude will be praise worth today.

**SCORPIO**  
It is very likely that the moment of victory is often preceded by a moment of peril; but that is not where the danger ends. In the heat of victory, arrogance and overconfidence can push you away from what you aimed for. So, it is important for you to learn when to stop in victory. Set a goal and stop when you reach there, says Ganesh.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Today will be a day for introspection, says Ganesh, as you try and find the root causes of your problems. But the job is only half-done: the rest will depend on the initiatives you may take to implement possible solutions to your problems. Overall, a day spent pondering. But act fast, advises Ganesh.

**CAPRICORN**  
You have meticulously planned every aspect of your plan and prepared the check list. The only thing left now to do is execution of that plan. Delays and obstacles, however, will block your path and will leave you disheartened. Don't doubt your abilities though. You have planned properly and have faith as those delays are not permanent, assures Ganesh.

**AQUARIUS**  
Don't let your emotions play a spoilsport in the important decisions of your life. The tendency to be sentimental when you need to be rational will become an obstacle in your path. Learn to curb this habit otherwise you may have to pay a heavy price, advises Ganesh.

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

### NATYADHARA: DAY IV



Artistes performing the play *Badhu Bidaya*, written by Panchanan Dash and directed by Parthasarathi Mohanty at an event organised by Odia Language Literature & Culture department and Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi at Bhanjakaala Mandap, Bhubaneswar, Saturday

### New Delhi: Actress Kareena Kapoor Khan was announced as UNICEF India's new national ambassador.

The *Golmaal 3* actress, who has been associated with UNICEF India since 2014, will support the not-for-profit organisation in furthering every child's right to early childhood development, health, education, and gender equality. "There are few things as important as the rights of children, the future generation of this world. I am honoured to continue my association with UNICEF now as India's National Ambassador." "I will strive to use my voice and influence for vulnerable children and their rights, especially around early childhood, education, and gender equality. Every child deserves a childhood, a fair chance, and a future," she added.

Besides Kareena, UNICEF India has also appointed its first-ever Youth Advocates, who are peer leaders and champions on issues like climate action, mental health, innovations, and girls in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). UNICEF India Representative Cynthia McCaffrey said she is delighted to welcome Kareena Kapoor Khan as the National Ambassador and said, "She has brought energy and impact through her support to several national and global campaigns. She joins as UNICEF India National Ambassador together with our four youth advocates for the UNICEF family. We look forward to working with her and the four youth advocates for child rights."



**Kareena appointed UNICEF ambassador**



### Sonali reveals being body shamed in the 90s

Mumbai: Actress Sonali Bendre, who is all set for her web show *The Broken News 2*, opened up about how producers called us too skinny in the 90s and wanted her to fatten up. In an interview, the actress spoke about the 90s trend and quipped that when she came into the industry, the heroines did not used to be skinny. This is the reason every producer was trying to fatten her up all the time. "They would just tell me to 'eat, eat, eat bahut patli hai (you're too skinny)'. They wanted curves," said the actress. The *Sarfarosh* actress further added that the producers and directors at that time wanted women who were curvaceous and voluptuous and who had curls in their hair. But contrary to all this, the actress was skinny and had straight black hair. Sonali also confirmed that most of the time, the stuff written about her link-ups, fights, etc. was not at all true. Having said that, the actress believes that it is a trend that is prevalent even today. She claimed that producers in the '90s used to sell such rumours to create buzz around their films. The actress concluded by saying that she found these things really strange.

## Sobhita: Don't want to be desensitised

Mumbai: Actress Sobhita Dhulipala has opened up on why she has reduced the amount of time she spends on the social media platform and also spoke about facing 'casual objectification'. On spending less time on Instagram, the *Ponniyin Selvan* actress said, "It's because I'm very sensitive. If I said I don't get affected by what people say, that'd be a lie. I do get affected by what people say, and I want to remain like that. I don't want to be desensitised. I want to feel everything. I'd rather be broken a million times than be callous. So limiting exposure is one way to address that." Talking about casual objectification, she said, "We're very good at reducing people to keywords. This is a 'hot person', this is a 'cute person', this is a 'funny person'. This endless desire to flatten out complexity and pool people into one bucket only serves as a PR narrative. It's actually quite oppressive for the person itself. I've been told so many times to be more 'palatable' or less 'unpredictable' and that continues to amuse me." On the work front, Sobhita was last seen in *Monkey Man*.



### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

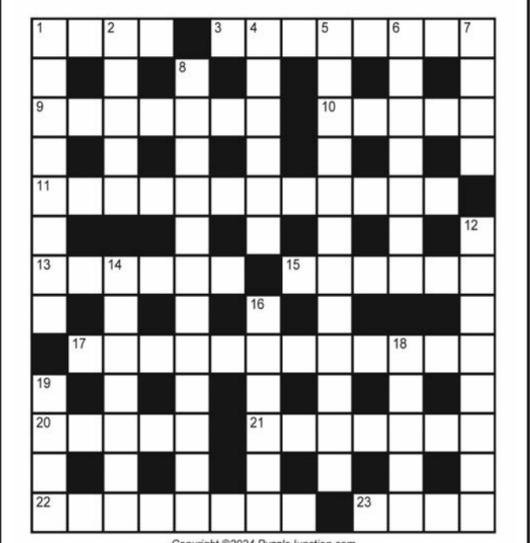


### BREVITY



### FUN post

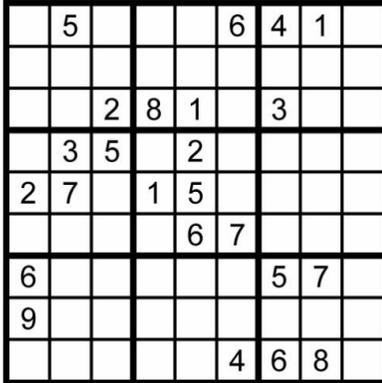
### CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Tilt to one side
  - 3 Loafing
  - 9 Prophet's claims
  - 10 Sang-froid
  - 11 Game fish (7,5)
  - 13 Jury's verdict
  - 15 Single-celled creature
  - 17 Weakness
  - 20 Intelligent ape
  - 21 Understand
  - 22 Tunes
  - 23 Blubbered
  - 6 Bon vivant
  - 7 Haggis ingredient
  - 8 Set a hidden snare (5-7)
  - 12 Window sash
  - 14 First
  - 16 Reluctant
  - 18 Old and feeble
  - 19 Con game

### 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

LOG IN

The third batch of timbers for the construction of chariots arrive in Puri from Ghumusar forests in Bhanjanagar, Saturday



**SUMMER HUES:** Women in colourful hats and cloths wrapped around their faces on a weekend shopping spree at a busy market place in Bhubaneswar on a sultry Saturday afternoon. PHOTO: BIKASH NAYAK

## HC declines to order casual labourer's reengagement

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, May 4:** The Orissa High Court has held that reengagement of a casual labourer cannot be ordered upon the expiry of a temporary scheme.

The observation came from a division bench of Chief Justice Chakradhari Sharan Singh and Justice MS Raman while hearing a plea filed by a man, who worked under the management of Horticulturist, Bhubaneswar on Nominal Muster Roll (NMR) basis from July 1, 1984 to February 28, 1990 under a verbal agreement, but was later terminated.

Claiming the termination of his service illegal, he initiated an industrial dispute in 1993. The state government referred



the matter to the Labour Court for adjudication.

The key issue framed by the Labour Court was whether the refusal of employment to the workman was legal and justified, and if not, what relief he was entitled to. The workman argued that he met the criteria for regular employment under the ID Act, the Live Law reported.

The management contended that the workman was engaged as a casual labourer under a

temporary scheme which ceased after its completion leading to the termination of his engagement. It argued that the workman was not a regular employee and thus not entitled to reinstatement.

The Labour Court held that the workman's claim for reinstatement was untenable. "Since the project ended, the workman was not entitled to relief under the ID Act," the court held.

Feeling aggrieved, the workman approached the HC challenging the Labour Court's order.

The HC held that no direction could be given for reengagement since the engagement was under a time-bound scheme. Hence, the HC held that the Labour Court's order was devoid of any illegality or perversity. Consequently, the HC dismissed the writ petition.

### CANADA DEVPTS

## Their internal politics: Jaishankar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, May 4:** External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar Saturday said what is happening in poll-bound Canada over the killing of Khalistan separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar is mostly due to their internal politics and it has nothing to do with India.

Jaishankar said this while replying to a question on why Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is criticizing India.

While interacting with senior journalists during a visit here, he also said the country needs a strong and active Prime Minister like Narendra Modi in order to bring further reforms in various sectors to make a 'Viksit Bharat (developed India)'.

"India's image globally is now actually much much higher than it had been ever... Canada is an exception. You see the different country heads are praising Bharat and its Prime Minister," the external affairs minister said.

He said a section of pro-Khalistan people are using Canada's democracy, creating a lobby and have become a vote bank.

The ruling party in Canada has no majority in Parliament and some parties depend on pro-Khalistan leaders, he said.

"We have convinced them several

times not to give visa, legitimacy or political space to such people which is causing problems for them (Canada), for us and also for our relationship," Jaishankar said.

But the Canadian government has not done anything, Jaishankar said, adding that India sought the extradition of 25 people, most of whom are pro-Khalistan, but they did not pay any heed.

The ties between India and Canada came under severe strain following Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegations in September last year of the 'potential' involvement of Indian agents in the killing of Nijjar. India has dismissed Trudeau's charges as 'absurd' and 'motivated'.

"Canada did not give any proof. They do not share any evidence with us in certain cases, police agencies also do not cooperate with us. It is their political compulsion in Canada to blame India. As election is coming in Canada, they indulge in vote bank politics," the external affairs minister said.

He said the Indian Prime Minister is regarded highly by many country heads.

"Recently, the prime minister of a Pacific country touched the feet of Modi as Boss. Even (US) President Biden wanted to know the secret of Modi's popularity," Jaishankar said.



## Stop illegal transportation of children: NCPDR to states

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, May 4:** The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPDR) has asked chief secretaries/administrators of all states and Union Territories to prevent illegal transportation of children.

In a letter issued to the chief secretaries/administrators, Friday, the NCPDR said that recently 95 children were rescued and it was found that they had been attending unregistered madrasas in Saharanpur District of Uttar Pradesh.

They disclosed that they were coerced into carrying bricks, cleaning toilets, and endured physical and mental abuse. Instead of attending formal

schools, these children were confined to the madrasa.

It appears that in the name of religious education, the children were deprived of their Fundamental Rights guaranteed under the Constitution and the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009.

Section 3 of the Act provides every child of the age of 6 to 14 years the right to free and compulsory education in a neighbourhood school till the completion of elementary education.

However, as per the reports, the children were not sent to any formal school and subsequently were devoid of their right to benefit from the entitlements given under the RTE Act,



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

2009, an official said.

On April 26 this year, these 95 children were rescued while allegedly being transported illegally from Bihar to Uttar Pradesh.

The Uttar Pradesh State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (UPSCPCR) rescued the children in Ayodhya and produced them before the Child Welfare Committee (CWC). Following counseling sessions, orders were issued to relocate these children to the Government Children's Home for Boys in Lucknow.

The commission said that instances where such religious institutions are found to be fundraising in the name of children and illegally transporting

them could potentially amount to child trafficking and may attract the provisions of Juvenile Justice Act, 2015, Section 370 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Section 370 of the IPC.

The NCPDR in its letter stated that whoever, for the purpose of exploitation, recruits, harbours, transfers or receives a person, commits the offence of trafficking.

In accordance with the mandate outlined in Section 13 (1) of the Commissions for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005, the commission recommends that states must ensure that all children in the age group of 6-14 years are enrolled in neighbourhood schools and receive formal education.

### Pirated NCERT books seized

**Bhubaneswar:** Around a month after the NCERT sounded a nation-wide alert over the proliferation of counterfeit and factually incorrect textbooks, the Commissionerate Police seized pirated council books worth over Rs 10 lakh from a bookstore in the Capital City, Saturday. According to reports, the police action came after some students lodged a complaint with the NCERT regarding the sale of duplicate books of the council in place of original ones in the City. Subsequently, NCERT officials, in the presence of a team of Commissionerate Police, conducted raids at Subham Book Store near Ravi Talkies Square here and seized the duplicate books. Afterwards, some other bookstores were also raided, reports stated. The NCERT said that these duplicate books had been procured from Kolkata.

## Boeing set to launch astronauts aboard new capsule Starliner

After years of delays and stumbles, Boeing is finally poised to launch astronauts to the International Space Station for NASA.

It's the first flight of Boeing's Starliner capsule with a crew on board, a pair of NASA pilots who will check out the spacecraft during the test drive and a weeklong stay at the space station.

NASA turned to US companies for astronaut rides after the space shuttles were retired. Elon Musk's SpaceX has made nine taxi trips for NASA since 2020, while Boeing has managed only a pair of unoccupied test flights.

Boeing program manager Mark Nappi wishes Starliner was further along. "There's no doubt about that, but we're here now."

The company's long-awaited astronaut demo is slated for liftoff Monday night.

Provided this tryout goes well, NASA will alternate between Boeing and SpaceX to get astronauts to and from the space station.

A look at the newest ride and its shakedown cruise:

### THE CAPSULE

White with black and blue trim, Boeing's Starliner capsule is about 10 feet (3 metre) tall and 15 feet (4.5 metre) in diameter. It can fit up to seven people, though NASA crews typically will number four. The company settled on the name Starliner nearly a decade ago, a twist on the name of Boeing's early Stratoliner and the current Dreamliner.

No one was aboard Boeing's two



previous Starliner test flights. The first, in 2019, was hit with software trouble so severe that its empty capsule couldn't reach the station until the second try in 2022. Then last summer, weak parachutes and flammable tape cropped up that needed to be fixed or removed.

### THE CREW

Veteran NASA astronauts Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams are retired Navy captains who spent months aboard the space station years ago. They joined the test flight after the original crew bowed out as the delays piled up. The duo has been involved in the capsule's development and insist Starliner is ready for prime time, otherwise they would not strap in for the launch.

### THE TEST FLIGHT

Starliner will blast off on United Launch Alliance's Atlas V rocket from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station. It will be the first time astronauts ride an Atlas since NASA's

Project Mercury, starting with John Glenn when he became the first American to orbit the Earth in 1962. Sixty-two years later, this will be the 100th launch of the Atlas V, which is used to hoist satellites as well as spacecraft.

### STARLINER VS. DRAGON

Both companies' capsules are designed to be autonomous and reusable. This Starliner is the same one that made the first test flight in 2019. Unlike the SpaceX Dragon, Starliner has traditional hand controls and switches alongside touchscreens and, according to the astronauts, is more like NASA's Orion capsules for moon missions. Wilmore and Williams briefly will take manual control to wring out the systems on their way to the space station.

NASA gave Boeing, a longtime space contractor, more than \$4 billion to develop the capsule, while SpaceX got \$2.6 billion. SpaceX already was in the station delivery business and merely refashioned its cargo capsule for crew. While SpaceX uses the boss' Teslas to get astronauts to the launch pad, Boeing will use a more traditional "astrovan" equipped with a video screen that Wilmore said will be playing "Top Gun: Maverick."

One big difference at flight's end: Starliner lands on the ground with cushioning airbags, while Dragon splashes into the sea.

### THE FUTURE

Boeing is committed to six Starliner trips for NASA after this one, which will take the company to the station's planned end in 2030.

**AMFI**

## MUTUAL FUND KYC *Aasaan Hai!*

**STEPS TO CHECK YOUR KYC STATUS**

- Visit any Mutual Fund's or Registrar & Transfer Agent's (RTA) Website where you have an investment.
- Check for "KYC Status" link.
- Enter your 10-digit PAN.
- Your KYC Status will be displayed as 'Validated / Registered / On-Hold / Rejected'.

### WHAT DOES EACH KYC STATUS IMPLY?

**KYC VALIDATED**

- Relax! You have to do nothing at all!
- You can do any transaction in any Mutual Fund, anytime.

**KYC REGISTERED**

- You can continue making transactions (like Purchases, Redemptions, Switches, SIPs, etc.) in all your existing Mutual Fund investments without any hassle.
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- You can get your KYC status changed to 'KYC Validated' by doing the KYC Update / KYC Modification process using PAN and Aadhaar from XML, Digi-locker or M-Aadhaar.
- Once your KYC status changes to Validated you can invest in any Mutual Fund of your choice without any requirement of re-KYC.

**KYC ON-HOLD/REJECTED**

- The KYC status on the Mutual Fund / RTA website, will show the reason for 'KYC On-Hold' / 'Rejected' status; it could be: Mobile or Email not validated / PAN is not linked with Aadhaar / Deficiency in the KYC documents, etc.
- You simply have to remediate the reason for KYC On-Hold / Rejected by following the steps given on the Mutual Fund Website. Once your KYC status changes to Registered / Validated you will be all set to start transacting, as per the KYC status.

The steps to resolve any KYC issues are easy and can be done from the comfort of your home in just a few minutes. In case of any difficulties, feel free to contact your Mutual Fund Distributor or the Mutual Fund's office / helpline (available on respective Mutual Fund's website) for further assistance.

## MUTUAL FUNDS *Sahi Hai*

Mutual Fund investments are subject to market risks, read all scheme related documents carefully.

# Police to probe woman's complaint against WB Gov

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, May 4:** Kolkata Police have constituted an inquiry team to probe a woman employee's allegation of sexual molestation by Governor C V Ananda Bose, a senior officer said Saturday.

The team as part of its investigation will speak to witnesses over the next few days and has requested the Raj Bhavan to share the CCTV footage, the officer said.

Under Article 361 of the Constitution, no criminal proceedings can be instituted against a Governor during his term in office.

"We have formed an inquiry team which will be speaking to some probable witnesses over



the next few days in this matter. We have also requested the Raj Bhavan to share the CCTV footage, in case they are available," the officer said.

When asked how the police could initiate a probe despite Constitutional immunity to the Governor, another senior police officer said that it's a regular practice to start an investiga-

tion after getting any complaint, especially from a woman.

"We have to investigate any complaint lodged by anybody. This is a regular practice and we are just following that. And if needed we may visit the spot (Raj Bhavan)," he told PTI.

A contractual woman employee of the Raj Bhavan Friday lodged a written complaint with the Kolkata Police alleging sexual molestation by the West Bengal Governor in the Raj Bhavan.

The Raj Bhavan has already issued a statement saying that Bose has ordered a ban on the entry of cops to the Raj Bhavan "in the guise of conducting unauthorised, illegitimate, sham and motivated investigations to placate political bosses during the election".



**POLL FEST:** Artists and officials during voters' awareness programme by Central Bureau of Communication regional office, under Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, organised at Esplanade Shopping Mall in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

PIC: BIKASH NAYAK

## Heat intensity reduces in east



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 4:** The intensity of the heat wave prevailing in east and parts of southern peninsular India came down slightly Saturday, with the weather office predicting relief from the scorching conditions in these regions after two days.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said heatwave to severe heatwave conditions prevailed in parts of Gangetic West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Odisha and Telangana, with maximum temperatures settling 3 to 5 degrees Celsius above normal in these regions.

The mercury settled above 44 degrees Celsius in at least 10 places in these states.

Maximum temperatures were recorded at 45.9 degrees Celsius in Kurnool (Andhra Pradesh), 45 degrees in Mahabubnagar (Telangana), 44 degrees in Odisha's Boudh, 43.5 degrees in Karur Paramathi (Tamil Nadu), 44.6 degrees in Nizamabad (Telangana), 45.4 in Andhra Pradesh's Cuddapah and 43.5 degrees in West Bengal's Kalaikunda.

The IMD said the ongoing heatwave spell in east and south peninsular India will continue until May 5-6 and abate thereafter.

Light to moderate rainfall and thunderstorms are predicted in Odisha, Gangetic West Bengal, Bihar and Jharkhand from May 5 to 9.

The MeT office Wednesday said above-normal maximum temperatures are likely over most parts of the country in May and a significantly high number of heatwave days expected over the northern plains, central region and adjoining areas of peninsular India. April witnessed record-smashing maximum temperatures in east, northeast and south peninsular India, prompting health warnings from government agencies and some states to suspend in-person classes in schools.

## SAI students take part in voter awareness event

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, May 4:** Students of SAI International Residential School (SIRS) here took part at an event on electoral awareness recently.

Facilitated by Chief Electoral Officer Nikunja Bihari Dhal, the event served as a platform for 32 Class XI and XII students to delve into the nuances of democratic processes.

The event "The Election - the Festival of Democracy" aimed at cultivating a robust understanding of voter motivation and awareness strategies among the youth. Through interactive sessions and engaging presentations, students were immersed in topics ranging from election fundamentals to the intricacies of Odisha's unique voting system.

A highlight of the event was the students' active participation and insightful queries, particularly regarding Form No-6 and the operational efficiency of



the Election Commission.

Additional Chief Electoral Officer N Thirumala Naik and ACEO Satrughna Kar led discussions on voting challenges, sparking innovative suggestions from the enthusiastic participants for enhancing online voting solutions. Deputy CEO Padmaja Dash and Deputy CEO Anamika Singh were also present in the meeting.

Emphasising the importance of fostering voting engagement, officials highlighted the significance of the students' role in

shaping India's democratic fabric, especially in addressing gender disparities in voter turnout observed in the state.

SAI International chairperson Silpi Sahoo said, "As educators, it's our duty to empower students with the knowledge and understanding of democratic principles. Engaging in electoral awareness programmes not only equips them with essential civic skills but also instills in them a profound sense of responsibility towards shaping a vibrant democracy."

## 20 platoon of police force for PM's visit

*According to state BJP, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to lead a roadshow in Bhubaneswar May 10*

PNN/ AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, May 4:** Police said elaborate security arrangements have been made in Bhubaneswar for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's latest visit. According to Bhubaneswar DCP Prateek Singh, the Commissionerate Police (CP) will deploy 20 platoons of police force including three DCPs, six additional DCP-rank cops, 10 additional DCP-rank officers

and 90 ASIs.

State BJP vice-president Golak Mohapatra said the PM is scheduled to arrive Sunday night. Confirming this, Singh said the PM will land at the Bhubaneswar airport at 9:30pm and then he will head to the Raj Bhavan where he will spend the night.

The PM is scheduled to address election rallies in Berhampur and Nabarangpur Monday. Berhampur, Nabarangpur, Kalahandi, and Koraput will go to the polls May 13, while Bhubaneswar will vote May 25.

Briefing the media, Singh said a three-tier security arrangement has been chalked out for PM's visit, which involve Special Protection Guard (SPGs) and

Special Crime Unit (SCU). The route from Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) to Raj Bhavan will be barricaded by bamboo fences on both sides.

The CP has alerted the officers to report any instances of suspicious activities or movement. The route for PM's visit has been designated as no-drone flying zone, he added. Meanwhile, party leader Aparajita Sarangi said that prime minister is likely to lead a roadshow in City May 10.

The roadshow will cover three Assembly segments in the City - Ekamra-Bhubaneswar, Bhubaneswar North and Bhubaneswar Central. It will begin at Fire Station Square around 9pm and culminate at Jayadev Vihar.

## Vellore Institute of Technology declares BTech entrance results

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, May 4:** Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT) declared the results of VIT Engineering Entrance Examination (VITEEE) recently. The entrance examination was conducted from April 19 to April 30 for students seeking admission in various BTech courses.

Rupinder Singh of Haryana secured first rank, Bhanu Mahesh Chakraborty of Rajasthan obtained second rank and A Vedaanth of Andhra Pradesh received third rank. Similarly, Aayushi Baid of Assam got fourth rank and Sanvi Singh from Uttar Pradesh secured fifth rank.

Abhiraj Ramakant Yadav from Maharashtra got sixth rank, Chaitanya Ramesh Bochere of Uttar Pradesh seventh, Vicky Kumar Singh of Uttar Pradesh eighth, Sohan Hazra of Himachal Pradesh ninth and Sahil of Bihar the tenth rank.



Applicants securing a rank within one lakh, are eligible to participate in the counselling in VIT-Vellore, VIT-Chennai, VIT-Andhra Pradesh (VIT-AP) and VIT-Bhopal. Rank wise counselling will be held in four phases, starting from May 7 till June 12.

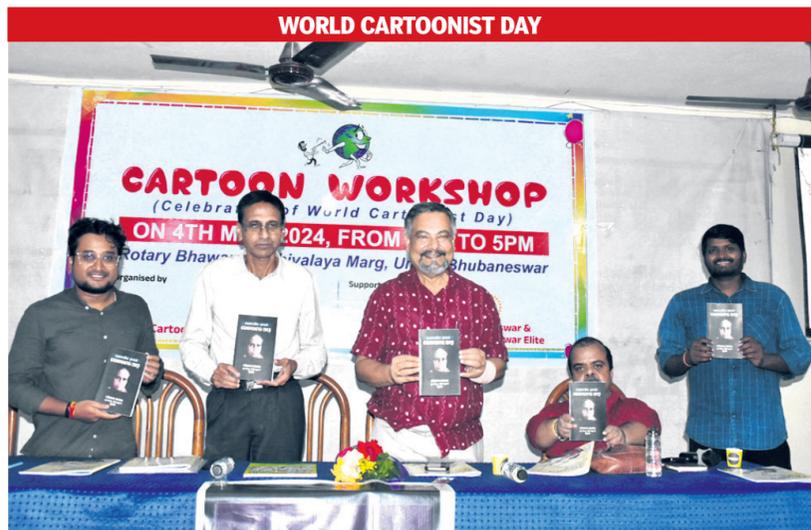
Candidates with ranks above one lakh are eligible for counselling in VIT-AP and VIT-Bhopal only. Phase 5 counselling for the same is scheduled from June 20 to 23. The classes are likely to commence from the second week of July.

Candidates who secured top ranks will be given scholarship for all four years. Students who

secured ranks within 1 to 10 will be given 100 per cent tuition fee waiver; 11 to 50 ranked 75 per cent; 51 to 100 will be given 50 per cent and from 101 to 500 will be given 25 per cent tuition fee waiver.

The district toppers (one boy and one girl) from all the districts of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh who studied in government-aided schools in rural areas, will be given 100 per cent tuition fee waiver and exemption from hostel as well as mess fees under the STARS (Support The Advancement of Rural Students) scheme.

Applications for various three year undergraduate programmes, four year BSc Hons (Agriculture), BArch, BDes (Industrial Design) and five-year integrated programmes are also open for application. Students can visit VIT website 'www.vit.ac.in' for more details.



Odisha Cartoon Academy, supported by Rotary Club organised a Cartoon Workshop on World Cartoonist Day in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

OP PHOTO

## Rising obesity, poor diets driving early onset of cancers

**O**besity, poor diet, and physical inactivity are driving the onset of several cancers including gallbladder, colon, kidney, and pancreas, according to a top health expert from the University of Sydney, Australia on Saturday.

Once known to affect the elderly, the last three decades have seen an enormous surge in early onset of cancer, occurring even before people turning 40 or 50.

Various studies have provided evidence that the cancer surge seen globally, including in India, is driven by an unhealthy lifestyle, including high consumption of junk food rich in sugar, salt, and fat combined with a lack of exercise, among others.

"Globally there has been a significant rise in some types of cancer in younger people. For

instance, in the 30 to 39-year-old age group in the period 1991 to 2021, the rate of gallbladder-cancers has increased by 200 per cent, uterine by 158 per cent, colorectal by 153 per cent, kidney by 89 per cent, and pancreas by 83 per cent," said Robyn Ward, Executive Dean and Pro Vice-Chancellor Medicine and Health at the University of Sydney, told IANS.

"The reasons proposed for this increase include obesity, poor diet, and physical inactivity," she added, noting that "young millennial adults are three times more likely to get cancer than the same age group born in the 1940s".

Who is more at risk? Robyn noted that "overall, the incidence is higher in men than women and men are more likely to die".

Cancer incidence does vary



by organ type, for example, prostate, lung, and colorectal cancer occur the most in males, while breast, lung, and colorectal cancer are predominant in females, the Professor noted.

What are the commonly occurring 'early' cancers? How to prevent it?

In the majority of cancers like

cervical, and colorectal, the chance of cure increases with early detection. But for some like brain cancer, early detection makes no difference.

The best proof of prevention

is cervical cancer and colorectal (bowel) cancer, said Robyn.

Cervical cancer is preventable through vaccination and treatable if detected early. Infection with specific strains of human papillomavirus (HPV) is the primary driver (95 per cent) of cervical cancer,

which is preventable by vaccination.

On the other hand, increasing screening national screening programmes for breast, cervical, and colorectal (colon) cancer can help boost

treatment as well as a decline in mortality rates. "For the right cancers, early screening will assist, for example cervical, bowel, and breast. But the current screening programmes for these population-based programmes are based on age not risk," the professor told IANS.

Some younger people may be at higher risk of cancer while elderly may not. So age-based screening programmes may not help, but modern technologies like genomics, big data, and artificial intelligence (AI) may play an important role.

"A huge opportunity with modern technologies like genomics, big data, and AI is to develop genetic stratification, incorporated with health records to develop risk-based screening. This helps create personalised screening programmes," she said.

IANS

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# Sarpanch's kin enlisted as labourers under MGNREGS

According to reports, the sarpanch's husband, son and daughter have been enrolled as labourers and also received wages under the rural job guarantee scheme



JOB FRAUD

lage play ground at Pateni. He has also been paid ₹5,385 towards wages. Later, Baikuntha and Subhasmita have been allotted 70 work days under various projects and Centre-sponsored Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) and Amrut Sarovar renovation works at Pateni village in 2023-24 FY.

As mentioned in the portal, they have been paid with ₹16,590 towards wages for working in the projects under the scheme. Similarly, Bikash Ranjan Nayak has again been allotted with 35 work days and given ₹8,295 towards wages in the 2023-24 FY. BJP's Scheduled Caste Morcha observer Ratnakar Tarai has questioned how the family members of a sarpanch could be enlisted in the scheme meant exclusively for poor labourers.

Moreover, how the son and daughter of the sarpanch, who are staying outside, could get job cards and work as labourers, he asked demanding a high-level probe to unravel the irregularities.

Tarai alleged the NMMS app has not been used properly to click the photographs of the enlisted labourers during implementation of various MGNREGS project works.

Efforts to contact sarpanch Kabita Nayak over phone for her comments on the issue proved unsuccessful as she did not respond to the questions and cut off the call. When contacted, BDO Tapan Mohapatra said a probe will be conducted into the allegations and action will be taken after receiving the probe report.

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Naugaon, May 4:** Irregularities continue to plague the implementation of Centre-sponsored Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) which aims to provide work to labourers in their own areas and check the migration problem.

As per sources, a woman sarpanch in Jagatsinghpur district was found to have enrolled the names of three of her family members as labourers under the scheme.

Notably, job card holders can apply for work under this scheme, following which the administration provides 100 days of work to the applicant labourers.

The Centre has given additional charge of programme officers (BDOs) and appointed assistant programme officers to supervise the scheme's implementation.

Moreover, Gram Rojgar Sevaks (GRS) and Gaon Sathis have also been appointed to ensure and oversee proper implementation of the scheme in the panchayat level. The Centre has also made

use of NMMS app mandatory to bring in transparency in the implementation of the scheme.

However, despite counter-measures, there have been irregularities galore in the implementation of the scheme. Kabita Nayak, the sarpanch of Shikhar gram panchayat under this block in Jagatsinghpur district, enlisting three of her family members as labourers under the scheme is a case in this point.

According to the MGNREGS portal, three of Nayak's family members have worked as labourers under the scheme in 2022-23 FY. According to available reports, Nayak's husband Baikuntha Nayak, son Bikash Ranjan Nayak and daughter Subhasmita Nayak have been enrolled as labourers under the rural job scheme.

Reports said Baikuntha and Subhasmita were allotted 14 work days in the renovation works of Amrut Sarovar at Pateni village in 2022-23 FY. They have also been paid ₹3,108 as wages for 14 work days.

Similarly, 25 work days have been allotted in the name of Bikash Ranjan Nayak in the renovation of Hura pond and the vil-

## Youth kills mom over delay in serving food

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Patana, May 4:** In a shocking incident, a youth allegedly killed his mother over trivial issue at Bhalupahadi Sahi of Khireitangiri panchayat under this block in Keonjhar district Friday night.

The deceased was identified as Gouri Naik, 54, wife of Ishwar Chandra Naik, and the accused as her son Surendra Naik.

Surendra as usual returned home in an inebriated condition Friday night and asked his mother to serve him food. However, as his mother delayed serving food for him, Surendra got furious and thrashed her mercilessly with a wooden plank killing her on the spot. Following the incident, the deceased's husband Ishwar lodged a written complaint against his son at Turumunga police station.

Acting on the complaint, Turumunga police reached the spot and recovered the body from the house Saturday morning. Police registered a case and sent the body to the district headquarters hospital at Keonjhar for post-mortem. Police also detained Surendra for questioning. The body was handed over to her family members after post-mortem.

The exact reason behind the gruesome murder will be ascertained after completion of investigation, said Champua SDPO Bijay Kumar Mallick.

## 3 including court staff arrested for job fraud

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Keonjhar, May 4:** The district police here Saturday arrested three persons including a court employee on charge of defrauding several jobless youths over ₹20 lakh on the pretext of providing them employment.

The accused persons were identified as Tulu Mallik, 35, of Marala village under Gop police limits in Puri district, and Jibanananda Samal, 40, and Jashwant Samal, 28, from Khathiasara village under Anandapur police limits in Keonjhar district. Tulu was working as a peon in the Ghasipura Gramin (Rural) Court before his arrest in the fraud. A case was registered in this connection and the three were produced in the court after their arrest Saturday.

Police arrested them from a lodge in Keonjhar town. Preliminary investigation indicated that the trio has cheated jobless youths of more than ₹20 lakh on the pretext of providing them employment, police said.

During the raid, police seized fake appointment letters and rubber stamps of various companies like Tata Memorial Hospital, Joda, District Mineral Foundation (DMF) and Apollo Pharmacy from their possession.

The matter came to the fore



after Chittaranjan Nayak, the head of a private security agency Safeend Secure Solutions Pvt. Ltd. of Cuttack lodged a complaint with police alleging that the three had taken ₹50,000 from him to grant the tender for appointment of security guards at the Keonjhar district headquarters hospital (DHH).

They informed Nayak that a tender for appointment of security guards at the Keonjhar DHH was to be floated soon and promised his help in getting the tender sanctioned in the name of his firm. However, he lodged a complaint at the Town PS after he failed to get any order for appointment of security guards in the hospital.

Police launched an investigation and nabbed the trio on the basis of their vehicles' registration numbers and CCTV footage. Further investigation is on to ascertain their involvement in other cases, said Ramakant Soy, IIC of Town PS.

## Acharya assumes charge as NSIC Chairman & MD

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** Subhansu Sekhar Acharya has assumed charge as the Chairman and Managing Director of NSIC, a Central public sector enterprise (PSE) under the Ministry of MSME. Prior to this, Acharya was the Chief General Manager of SIDBI. Acharya has over three decades of experience in MSME financing and development, startup innovation and incubation, micro finance, credit rating, financial inclusion etc. He was the CEO of India SME Technology Services Ltd. (ISTSL) and founding member of the country's first SME-centric Enterprise Rating Agency (SMERA Ltd.). He is the first Odia to have adorned this position. Born in Nuashasan village under Barchana block, Acharya was a recipient of the prestigious British Chevening Fellowship and has studied Sustainable Development at University of Bradford, UK. He had obtained his post graduate degree in Geology from Utkal University.

## 4 critical in honeybee attack during funeral

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jaleswar:** At least four persons were rendered critical and many others sustained minor injuries after they were attacked by a swarm of honeybees during a funeral at Demburia village under this block and police limits in Balasore district Saturday morning. As per reports, a person identified as Ananta Jena of Demburia village died Friday. His family members and other villagers had gone to the village cremation ground for the funeral Saturday morning, where a swarm of honeybees attacked them. Many villagers including the family members of the deceased ran hither and thither to save their lives leaving the body unattended. On the other hand, some others covered themselves in mosquito nets to avoid getting stung by the bees. Villagers then informed the fire brigade personnel and police about the incident. Later, the four critically injured were rescued and rushed to Jaleswar hospital in ambulance. As their condition deteriorated, they were reportedly shifted to district headquarters hospital at Balasore.

# Vedanta Lanjigarh for better energy efficiency

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Lanjigarh, May 4:** Vedanta Limited, Lanjigarh, India's premier producer of smelter grade alumina and a unit of Vedanta Aluminium, recently launched an advanced Energy Management System across its power plant. It will help monitor the energy performance parameters of 120 critical electrical assets, thereby enhancing energy efficiency levels in the plant. The initiative is a notable digitalisation effort that will result in enhanced functional optimisation and increased automation of the refinery operations.



tematic monitoring, analysis, control, and optimisation of critical assets. It is an integrated setup that monitors the optimal energy distribution and reliability of various critical equipment. It comes with trigger systems to check any unexpected deviations, while providing quality checks and energy

improvement recommendations, leading to overall energy efficiency. Leveraging a data-driven approach, the system is executed through a central database, ensuring end-to-end consolidation of the entire refinery's operations.

The alumina refining process has significant energy requirements, which are primarily fulfilled by a captive co-generation power plant. Implementing advanced, automated, and data-driven processes such as the Energy Management System increases operational efficiency and leads to significant GHG (Green House Gas) emissions reduction. Through its focus on the adoption of innovative and leading technologies, the company reaffirms its commitment to

achieve Net-Zero Carbon by 2050 or sooner, as part of its ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) goals.

Speaking on the occasion, Pranab Kumar Bhattacharyya, CEO - Alumina Business, Vedanta Ltd said, "Our pursuit of operations excellence is deeply rooted in a sustainable business model. Through initiatives such as Energy Management Systems, we are committed towards bolstering our energy efficiency. In an industry that requires an uninterrupted supply of energy, we are integrating cleaner and more sustainable energy systems to significantly reduce our carbon footprint, thereby shaping a prosperous and sustainable future for all."



**MUSICAL SYMPHONY:** Artistes of Chetana Kala Parishad in Sohela present a 'Duldul' performance using traditional musical instruments at Rengalipali Lok Mahotsav in Attabira NAC of Bargarh district, Saturday

## 2 boys drown, another rescued at Takeram dam

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rourkela, May 4:** Two youths drowned while another had a close shave while taking bath in Takeram dam on Brahmani river under Raghunathpali police limits near here, Saturday.

According to reports, the three boys -- Zareeb Khan, 19, Rajkumar Mahato, 19, and Bhabesh Prasad, 19 -- had been to the Takeram dam to take bath at around 1pm Saturday.

All the three are students of Municipal College in Rourkela. The spot where they were bathing has been marked as a dangerous zone as the depth of the reservoir is over 50 feet and the spot has a rocky riverbed underneath.

Fire personnel said they got the information at 3.45pm and soon rushed to the spot. They launched a search operation and fished out the body of Khan first and that of Mahato after one hour.

Bhabesh, somehow managed to get himself out of water and raised alarm after he noticed his two friends drowning. Locals tired to save them before alerting the fire personnel but in vain.

# FORCES ON HIGH ALERT AS MAOIST POSTERS SURFACE

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rourkela, May 4:** Maoist posters were Saturday found pasted on a tree and the wall of a school building barely a kilometre away from the state border in neighbouring Jharkhand.

The posters were found in Rela village under Goelkera PS limits. In the two posters written in 'Sadri', the local dialect, the ultras have threatened the politicians and industrialists of the area.

Following the discovery of the posters, security forces on either side of the interstate border have intensified their patrolling. The joint teams, both central and state, consisting of crack units were found in large numbers in those areas, locals said.

Interestingly, the posters did not seek to stop the locals from casting their votes. "This is a ploy on their part and appearance of such posters is common just prior to polling," said a CRPF officer who was involved in deep patrolling and did not want to be named.



A state police official, who had just returned after patrolling said, "The locals are with us. They know how much they are benefitting from our presence. Still such posters bring back memories of yesteryear and create a sense of panic. So, our sustained presence makes them feel better and confident also."

A lady from Birkeria area along the state border, who comes here to sell vegetables at Traffic Gate Market, said, "The security forces are always there for us. They are our friends. For their presence we feel confident. Even we dare to go back after selling our goods late in the evening, of course in a group."

केन्द्रीय पेट्रोसायन अभियांत्रिकी एवं प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान (सिपेट)  
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 Email: mcti@cipet.gov.in, cipetsat@gmail.com, www.cipet.gov.in

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**OBSERVER'S CONTACT DETAILS OF GANJAM DISTRICT**

Any complaints or grievances related to 19 - Aska P.C., 124 - Polasara A.C., 125 - K.S. Nagar A.C., 126 - Khallikote A.C., 131- Hinjili A.C., 128 - Aska A.C., 129 - Surada A.C., 130 - Sanakhemundi A.C. may contact to the below mentioned Mobile Nos./E-mail Id.

Sl. No.	Name of the Observer	Local Address	Contact No.	Email ID
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02	<b>GENERAL OBSERVER</b> Dr. (Ms.) Aarthi M, IAS 19 - Aska PC 124 - Polasara AC 125 - Kabisuryanagar AC 126 - Khallikote AC 131 - Hinjili AC	Suite No. 01 "A" - Class Circuit House, Gopalpur-on-Sea - 761002	8249712465	go19askapc@gmail.com
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04	<b>EXPENDITURE OBSERVER</b> Sri G. Elamurugu, IRS 19 - Aska PC	Room No 1, Dune Delight, The High Court Guest House, Gopalpur-on-Sea	9692529642	expobserver.askapc@gmail.com
05	<b>EXPENDITURE OBSERVER</b> Sri Maneesh Dudpuri, IRS (C&CE) 19 - Aska PC 124 - Polasara AC 125 - K.S. Nagar A.C. 126 - Khallikote AC 131 - Hinjili AC	Room No. 11, IAS Circuit House, Gopalpur-on-Sea	9692545997	m.dudpuri@gov.in
06	<b>EXPENDITURE OBSERVER</b> Sri Sunil Kishan Agawane, IRS 19 - Aska PC 128 - Aska AC 129 - Surada AC 130 - Sanakhemundi AC	Room No. 14, IAS Circuit House, Gopalpur-on-Sea	9692542739	eogangam@gmail.com

Collector-cum-Dist. Election Officer, Ganjam

Never grumble. All sorts of forces enter you when you grumble and they pull you down

THE MOTHER



## Arbitrary Laws

The primary function of Parliament is to legislate. When we elect people to the Lok Sabha we are choosing who will write and pass our laws. In India laws are now passed without debate, both at the Union and the state levels. This means that parties that have a majority and an ideology can legislate what they want without pushback. As we elect for the next five years let us look at many of the laws and amendments that we have been given in the previous decade.

1. Right to Information (Amendment) Act, 2019: This amendment gives the Union the powers to set the salaries and service conditions of information commissioners at Union as well as state levels. Instead of fixed terms, commissioners can be appointed on arbitrary conditions and salaries. India fell from second place in global RTI ratings in 2014 to 9th place.

2. The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Act, 2019: Before this amendment, UAPA only allowed organisations to be categorised as 'terrorist'. The State can now categorise any individual as a 'terrorist'. These individuals need not even have any affiliation with any of the 36 terrorist organisations mentioned in the law to be classified as terrorists and then jailed.

3. The Karnataka Education Act (1983) Order of 2022: In 2022, Karnataka banned Muslim women and girls from covering their heads in schools and colleges that had uniforms. Even in colleges which did not have a prescribed uniform, the covering of heads by Muslims was prohibited because 'clothes which disturb equality, integrity and public law and order should not be worn.' Sikhs were excluded from the order.

4. Maharashtra Animal Preservation (Amendment) Act, 2015:

After the Prime Minister's speeches against what he called the 'pink revolution', states began to criminalise the possession of beef. This began a series of violent attacks the media called beef lynchings. Someone accused of having a beef sandwich can be jailed five years. This first law began a series of copycat laws in other BJP states.

5. The Haryana Gauvansh Sanrakshan and Gausamvardhan Act, 2015: Possession of beef is punishable by up to five years in jail. The burden of proof is on the accused.

6. The Gujarat Animal Preservation (Amendment) Act, 2017: This law extended the punishment for cow slaughter to life in prison. No other economic crime attracts life. Minister of State for Home, Pradipsinh Jadeja, said the logic was to equal cow slaughter with murder.

7. Uttar Pradesh Recovery of Damage to Public and Private Property Act, 2020: Enacted after UP Police shot dead 21 people protesting against CAA, this law gives the government the power to set up tribunals to decide damages to any public or private property due to riots, hartals, bandhs, protests or public processions. All orders passed by the tribunals will be final and cannot be appealed before any court, under the law's section 22.

8. Uttarakhand Freedom of Religion Act, 2018: This is the first of seven state laws introduced and legislated by the BJP after the conspiracy theory of 'love jihad' began to be circulated. It criminalises marriages between Hindus and Muslims if conversion is involved. However, 'if any person comes back to his ancestral religion' then this shall not be deemed conversion. Those who change their faith without applying to the government 'in the prescribed pro-forma' and without the consent of the government after the police inquiry face jail.

9. Himachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act, 2019: Similar to Uttarakhand's Act, under this law the punishment for propagation (a fundamental right under Article 25) is seven years in jail.

10. Uttar Pradesh Vidhi Viruddh Dharma Samparivartan Pratishedh Adhyadesh, 2020: Similar to the previous laws, this one prohibits conversion except with government permission and 60 days' notice. Similar laws were passed by BJP governments in MP (Madhya Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act, 2021), Gujarat (Gujarat Freedom of Religion (Amendment) Act, 2021), Karnataka (The Karnataka Protection of Right to Freedom of Religion Act, 2022) and Haryana (The Haryana Prevention of Unlawful Conversion of Religious Act, 2022).

11. Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) Rules, 2017: This gives the Union and state governments the power to suspend, for any reason, mobile and internet services. India is the world's leader in internet shutdowns. Of 213 total global shutdowns in 2019, India accounted for 56 per cent (12 times more than the next nation, Venezuela). Of 155 global shutdowns in 2020, India accounted for 70 per cent.

12. The Gujarat Prohibition of Transfer of Immovable Property and Provision for Protection of Tenants from Eviction from Premises in Disturbed Areas Act, 2019 Amendment: This law bans Hindus and Muslims from buying or renting properties from each other without the government's permission. The government will determine if the sale of a property would lead to the likelihood of 'polarisation' or 'improper clustering' of people from a particular religion. It also gives the government the power to undo transactions, even if the buyer and seller make no appeal. In effect, even foreigners can lease and buy property in those parts of Gujarat's cities where Indian Muslims cannot.

It should be noted that some of these laws have remained even after the party that has legislated them in a state has been unseated. These laws have a long-term effect and have conditioned the police and bureaucrats and the judiciary to think of our society in a particular way.

They are a reflection of the sort of nation India has become and give us a glimpse into what more we can expect in the years to come after this election ends.



Arun Maira

In India laws are now passed without debate, both at the Union and the state levels. This means that parties that have a majority and an ideology can legislate what they want without pushback



Arun Maira

**LAWS BASED ON THE PRIMACY OF PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS ARE ANTITHETICAL TO HUMAN RIGHTS AND TO ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

The Supreme Court is raising fundamental questions about the rule of law in a democracy. In a true democracy, every human being, whether she or he has a crore or none, or a formal, higher education or not, has an equal vote with all others, and all voices must be heard while framing laws. In a good democracy, tribals who own no property, or even primary school education, must get justice when their rights, and the natural environment on which they depend for their livelihoods, and their lives, are trampled upon by corporations to improve economic efficiencies, their profits, and the country's GDP. Their well-being suffers while the GDP grows.

The Supreme Court has re-ignited a debate about capitalism versus socialism. Its curative intervention reversing the decision of an arbitration tribunal in the dispute between the privately owned Delhi Airport Metro Express Pvt. Ltd and the public sector Delhi Metro Rail Corporation, which was already reviewed by the Court before, has upset corporate lawyers. Meanwhile, a nine-bench of the Supreme Court is re-examining its 1978 interpretation of Constitutional rights to private versus public property.

In capitalist governance, each dollar gives an additional vote. In a democracy, every citizen, millionaire, or pauper, must have an equal vote. The conflict between capitalism and democracy is a conflict between two fundamental principles of governance: a conflict between property rights and human rights. The capitalist approach to PPPs (public-private partnerships) results in infrastructure which primarily serves the rich. It creates freeways, which common people riding on two-wheelers are forbidden to use, and which pedestrians cannot safely cross, to make travel quicker and safer for rich people. The rich resist tax increases to fund infrastructure for public use. They build gated communities for themselves, in which they pay for their own private services of security, and 24x7 power and water supply. They lose sight of the needs of people living outside their walls.

In capitalist economies natural capital is the property of its owner. Kings and landlords owned the land, the water and forests, and all fish and animals within their private estates. They also owned the produce of all human beings who lived and worked on their land as their serfs or their slaves. Owners who stayed on their lands and interacted with the people on it could see their forests and watch their crops grow and their workers sweat, and sense how the system worked. Absentee landlords did not care. They wanted their profits regardless of the damage to their lands by droughts and floods and suffer-

FOCUS DEMOCRACY

# JUSTICE FOR ALL



The conflict between capitalism and democracy is a conflict between two fundamental principles of governance: a conflict between property rights and human rights

It must be noted here that laws of inheritance of private property are founded on the primacy of property rights, rather than basic human rights.

The Court's recognition of a fundamental right of all citizens to be free from the adverse impacts of climate change (in a plea by environmentalists to protect the great Indian bustard from the encroachment of its natural habitat by companies building wind and solar farms for expanding India's capacity for renewable energy) is taking the law further into uncharted territory. Laws based on the primacy of private property rights are antithetical to human rights and to environmental sustainability.

In capitalist economies natural capital is the property of its owner. Kings and landlords owned the land, the water and forests, and all fish and animals within their private estates. They also owned the produce of all human beings who lived and worked on their land as their serfs or their slaves. Owners who stayed on their lands and interacted with the people on it could see their forests and watch their crops grow and their workers sweat, and sense how the system worked. Absentee landlords did not care. They wanted their profits regardless of the damage to their lands by droughts and floods and suffer-

ings of their workers. The development of commodity markets, in which animals, farm produce, timber, and minerals could be bought and sold with money and prices determined by traders, converted natural capital into financial capital. Financial markets created a new class of capitalists, even further removed from reality than absentee landlords, who gauge the condition of the world from charts of how prices move in commodity exchanges and stock markets. When labour went off the land into factories, workers were paid for the time they spent in factories and what they produced during that time. Their skills and labour became commodities purchasable for a price by owners of enterprises.

Property right is an ancient principle of economics and jurisprudence. Human rights were recognised much later with political movements, often violent to abolish slavery, and to pay fair wages and provide safe working conditions for their workers. Gig work is the 21st century way to convert labour into a commodity again: workers on demand, payment only for the work done, and no social security. Good for business owners, but bad for humans.

Good governance cannot be only a government of the people (elected by them), or for the people (providing them wel-

fare). It must be by the people too. The rule of law and speedy justice makes countries attractive for financial investors and for common citizens. However, investors and citizens have different needs, and therefore different interpretations of law. Good governance and justice for all requires those who govern to continuously listen to the people. Moreover, citizens with diverse needs must listen to each other to come to a consensus about the type of society they want to create for themselves. Courts and experts within their narrow specialisations cannot do this for them.

On top of the pyramid of democratic governance are constitutionally created institutions—presidents, elected assemblies, and courts. At the bottom is the open public sphere of the social media, civil society, protests on the streets, and petitions for justice from below to the institutions above. The public sphere has become more noisy and more divided with social media and on-line journals. The institutions on top are unable to understand and solve the many complex problems the public sphere demands that they must: climate injustice, concentration of power, inequitable growth, etc.

What democracy needs is a strong middle layer in the pyramid to hold democratic governance together. In the middle must be processes for democratic dialogues amongst citizens, in which they listen to each other's views, and begin a process of pre-digestion to convert their contentions into consensus. The over-loaded institutions on the top need this pre-digestion to enable them to understand the contours of the complex problems they are expected to find solutions for, and take decisions on behalf of all the people, that only they are constitutionally empowered to, which they seem unable to at present.

The writer is a former Member of the Planning Commission and author of several books, the latest is "Shaping the Future: A Guide for System Leaders".

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SPECTRUM SUSTAINABILITY

## Climate change is a health threat

It is widely believed that climate change is the single biggest threat to human health. A global temperature increase of 2° Celsius – a threshold that will likely be exceeded by the end of the century – could claim as many as one billion lives, with extreme weather events, heatwaves, droughts, flooding, infectious-disease outbreaks, and food shortages among the causes of death. But the situation may in fact be far worse, because the current forecasts fail to account for the inevitable increase in antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

Climate change could have a profound effect on AMR, as evidence increasingly indicates that adverse weather and rising temperatures can facilitate the emergence and spread of drug-resistant pathogens. But models seeking to gauge the health effects of climate change disregard the growing risk of drug resistance, as do policy responses to global warming – a massive oversight that will hinder our ability to treat infections and

keep people healthy.

Despite increasing the likelihood of extinction for nearly 11,000 species, a warmer planet could actually improve conditions for bacteria and fungi. Higher temperatures are associated with increased bacterial growth and infection rates, and can also put selective pressure on microbes to mutate and develop antibiotic resistance. One recent study in China found that each 1°C increase in air temperature was associated with a 14% increase in drug-resistant Klebsiella pneumoniae infections and a 6% increase in drug-resistant Pseudomonas aeruginosa infections.

Similarly, extreme weather, especially floods and droughts, will increase the spread of infectious diseases such as waterborne cholera and typhoid, as well as drug resistance. Such events often disrupt access to clean water and sanitation, making prevention and control of infection much more challenging. Moreover, urban density tends to accelerate the trans-

mission of pathogens. According to some estimates, the climate crisis could displace 1.2 billion people by 2050, likely resulting in ever more crowded cities.

AMR is already recognised as an escalating global crisis. In 2019, it was associated with nearly five million deaths, making drug resistance one of the world's biggest killers. The World Health Organisation has identified AMR as one of ten major threats to global health, alongside climate change, and world leaders are serious about addressing the problem, with a high-level meeting on AMR to be held on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in September.

The international community is severely underestimating the impact of climate change on people's health and our ability to treat them. To prepare for the mounting AMR crisis, we must increasingly rely on preventing and controlling infection, and, more importantly, ensure the judicious use of effective antibiotics. That will require developing new antibiotics, which is

often unattractive for pharmaceutical companies, and also making the right investments and establishing the right incentives so that existing antibiotics reach the people that need them.

Global policymakers must significantly increase funding for AMR research to ensure that they are ready to respond to new forms of drug resistance caused directly or indirectly by global warming. Doing so will require including AMR in climate-change contingencies and, more importantly, viewing drug resistance and rising temperatures as interconnected, rather than distinct, challenges, starting at the UN high-level meeting on AMR in September and this year's COP29 in Baku. Otherwise, the effectiveness of existing drugs will falter just when they are most needed.

The writer is Executive Director of the Global Antibiotic Research & Development Partnership.

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WISDOM CORNER

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

When you are discontent, you always want more, more, more. Your desire can never be satisfied. But when you practice contentment, you can say to yourself, 'Oh yes - I already have everything that I really need.'

DALAI LAMA

True self is non-self, the awareness that the self is made only of non-self elements. There's no separation between self and other, and everything is interconnected. Once you are aware of that you are no longer caught in the idea that you are a separate entity.

THICH NHAT HANH

## Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST are most welcome to contribute letters (200 words), articles and columns (between 750-1250 words). Contributors are requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: [edit@orissapost.com](mailto:edit@orissapost.com)

OrissaPOST

B-15, Rasulgari Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Water woes

Sir, This refers to "India's reservoirs report water shortage," Orissa Post, May 4. The latest data paints a stark picture of India's water crisis, with reservoirs across the country registering an alarming decline in their levels with a mere 28 per cent of their storage capacity. Insufficient rainfall, compounded by the El Nino phenomenon, has resulted in drought-like conditions. The prolonged dry spell has depleted water reserves, leaving many regions parched and vulnerable. The eastern and southern regions are bearing the brunt of this crisis as the rapid fall in water levels is exacerbated by a relentless heatwave. The consequences are dire, particularly for Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, where water shortage has assumed critical proportions. Bangalore is grappling with severe water scarcity, which is impacting everyday life and agricultural activities. Agriculture, a cornerstone of India's economy, is facing major disruptions, with an adverse effect on various crops. With nearly half of India's arable land dependent on monsoon rain, the upcoming rainy season can play a key role in alleviating the situation. Awareness campaigns to promote water conservation practices and prudent use of this precious resource must be stepped up. Swift and decisive action must be taken to avert a looming catastrophe and ensure a secure future for all.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Undervalued work

Sir, Domestic work in India remains one of the most undervalued and least regulated forms of employment. According to the Central government's e-Shram portal, 8.56 crore informal sector workers fall in the category of domestic workers. However, absence of other key parameters, such as their work conditions and average pay, leave domestic workers from any concrete policy that governs their well-being. Domestic workers often experience exploitation, poor recognition and a high degree of exposure to isolation and violence. There are no laws to deal with the specific problems that arise in this sphere of work. There is an urgent need for specific legislation on domestic work in India and it warrants a greater debate on the issue. Only then can we expect better inclusion of these workers into the 'economy' and assure dispensation of justice for this class of workers.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

# Baramati first major poll battle for Pawar clan rivals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Pune, May 4:** Baramati in Maharashtra's Pune district is one of the most keenly watched seats in the state in the ongoing Lok Sabha polls as it is for the first time that two members of the influential Pawar family are contesting against each other. Sharad Pawar's daughter and sitting MP Supriya Sule and nephew Ajit Pawar's wife Sunetra Pawar have been pitted against each other by the two factions of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) from the constituency that goes to polls May 7. This is also the first major electoral battle between the factions after the party split in July last year. In February, the Election Commission (EC) recognised the Ajit Pawar-led faction of the NCP as the official party and granted it the party's 'clock' symbol while allotting 'Nationalist Congress Party-Sharadchandra Pawar' as the party name for the group led by Sharad Pawar. With the constituency gearing up for polling in the third round of the seven-phase general elections, campaigning by the candidates has intensified as winning at the hustings has be-

come a matter of prestige for them in the home turf of the Pawars. While Sule, a Sansad Ratna awardee, is seeking a fourth term to the Lower House of Parliament, Sunetra Pawar, who is an office-bearer of various educational and industry bodies and has been active in the social sphere of Baramati, is contesting her maiden Lok Sabha election. The core part of the constituency comprises the rural region where voters hail mainly from an agricultural background. The fringe assembly segments under it, including Khadakwasla and areas like Hinjawadi, which houses the IT hub, Balewadi, Dhankwadi, Chandani Chowk, form its urban pockets. Political experts feel that so far, there was a set pattern of senior Pawar or Sule contesting the Lok Sabha elections and Ajit Pawar fighting the assembly polls from Baramati. "Now, it will be interesting to see whether the voters of Baramati will move away from this pattern. It will also be interesting to see whether Ajit Pawar is able to nullify the effect of the BJP's politics of splitting parties and the victim card played



by Sharad Pawar after losing his party's name and poll symbol to the Ajit Pawar group," political analyst Abhay Deshpande said. Pawar has been vocal against the EC's decision to give the NCP symbol and name to the Ajit Pawar group, and is reminding voters of who founded the party. Ajit Pawar, on the other hand, has been telling the electorate about the development works he carried out in the constituency and is sending a message that the politics of senior Pawar is a thing of the past

and that he is the future. Deshpande also said a narrative is being set by the BJP that the election in Baramati is not between Sunetra Pawar and Sule, but between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi. "It will be interesting to see whether the people of Baramati, who have traditionally stood by Sharad Pawar in Lok Sabha elections, would accept that argument," he said. Asked whether Prime Minister Modi's 'bhakti atma' (wandering soul) remark targeting

# AMU allays concerns over 'removal' of Indo-Islamic history topics

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Aligarh, May 4:** The Aligarh Muslim University Saturday allayed concerns over the 'removal' of certain topics on Indo-Islamic history from the syllabus for admission tests to Class 11. The Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), in an official note, also described as 'totally baseless' the allegations of "deliberate tampering of the syllabus with the object of diluting the character of the institution." The release, issued by the university's public relations office, said an erroneous impression is being created that the move to delete certain topics has been taken at the direction of new Vice-Chancellor Prof Naima Khatoon. Khatoon was appointed vice-chancellor April 22, becoming the first woman to hold the top post in more than 100 years. A controversy erupted after reports began to circulate on social media that the university administration was allegedly trying to introduce cer-

tain measures that would erode the institution's 'minority character' through the backdoor. The allegations were also published in local newspapers Friday. A senior university official told PTI, "The process of updating the syllabus is not something new. It has always been a practice to revise the syllabus from time to time, according to recommendations of the University Grants Commission." According to the press note, "For quite some time, the university has been aware that the syllabus for the Indo-Islamic history section was disproportionately large to the marks allotted in the test to this topic." The decision to delete certain topics was taken based on a report prepared by a committee formed for the subject, it added. The university also denied 'unverified reports' circulating on campus, suggesting that the number of seats for the Master of Arts (MA) Urdu course will be reduced in the upcoming academic session.

# Onion prices up at Lasalgaon market after export ban lifted



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Nashik, May 4:** Onion prices at the Lasalgaon market in Maharashtra's Nashik district went up by average ₹200 per quintal after the Union Government Saturday lifted the ban on exports. The Agriculture Produce Market Committee (APMC) at Lasalgaon is said to be the biggest wholesale onion market in India. The government earlier in the day lifted the ban on onion exports but imposed a minimum export price (MEP) of \$550 per tonne, amid ongoing Lok Sabha elections. Friday night, the government imposed a 40 per cent duty on export of onions. "There is some hike in the market. Average prices have increased by around ₹200 per quintal. Farmers will benefit from the decision, but the real impact will be known Monday when the market reopens," said Balasaheb

Kshirsagar, APMC chairman. Some 200 quintals of the bulb arrived at the APMC during the day, sources said. The prices were in the range of ₹801, ₹2,551 and ₹2,100 per quintal, depending on the quality, they added. A farmer at the market told a news channel that lifting of exports ban was a good decision, but it should remain in force for at least one year. The export duty will eat into onion growers' profits, another person said. "Who will pay for the losses we suffered due to the ban," a farmer asked. December 8, 2023, the government banned exports of onions from March 31, 2024. In March, the ban was extended till further orders. Farmers in Maharashtra had protested against the ban while Opposition Congress had also targeted the Narendra Modi government on the issue.

# RLD leader quits party over BJP ticket to Brij Bhushan's son

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Meerut, May 4:** National spokesperson of BJP ally Rashtriya Lok Dal Rohit Jakhar has resigned from the party in protest against the BJP giving a ticket to the son of incumbent MP Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, who is facing criminal charges of sexually harassing women wrestlers. "Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh is an accused in the sexual harassment case of women wrestlers. Giving tickets to his son is an insult to the women wrestlers. For me the honour of the country comes first," Jakhar told PTI Saturday. "I sent my resignation from the post of the national spokesperson and the primary membership of the Rashtriya Lok Dal to party president Jayant Choudhary Friday," the Jat leader added. Jakhar also said that he was not joining any political party but his struggle for social issues would continue as before. Jhakar is among the top leaders of the RLD and is also the state president of the National Jat Federation. He has been associated with the RLD and the farmers' movement for over a decade. The BJP Thursday named Karan Bhushan Singh as its Lok Sabha candidate from the Kaiserganj seat in Uttar Pradesh, replacing his father and former Wrestling Federation of India president Brij Bhushan Singh.

# 'Amazon of Aligarh': Google tribute to Hamida Banu



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 4:** It was on this day in 1954 when Hamida Banu defeated famed wrestler Baba Palhalwan in just one minute and 34 seconds. While Baba Palhalwan deemed it fit to retire from professional wrestling, Banu's career expanded to international arenas and her victories reported across the globe. Commemorating Banu's victory and to pay tribute to her as "India's first woman wrestler," Google Saturday put up a colourful doodle

on its homepage. Born into a family of wrestlers in the early 1900s near Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh, Banu grew up wrestling, winning over 300 competitions throughout her career that spanned the 1940s and 1950s at a time when women's participation in athletics was strongly discouraged. Banu, however, competed with men anyway, and issued an open challenge to all male wrestlers, wagering her hand in marriage to whoever defeats her, Google wrote in a post. Banu's success in international

matches gained her further acclaim. One of these matches was the one against Russian woman wrestler Vera Chistilin, who she defeated in under two minutes. Having made newspaper headlines for years, Banu came to be known as the 'Amazon of Aligarh'. The bouts she won, her diet, and her training regimen were widely covered. According to a BBC report, she weighed 108kg and was 5ft 3in tall. "Her daily diet included 5.6 litres of milk, 2.8 litres of soup, 1.8 litres of fruit juice, a fowl, nearly 1kg of mutton and almonds, half a kilo of butter, 6 eggs, two big loaves of bread, and two plates of biryani," the British media outlet reported. Reuters noted that she slept for nine hours and trained for six. A "trailblazer of her time," Banu not only fought fellow wrestlers but the norms of her times. "Hamida Banu was a trailblazer of her time, and her fearlessness is remembered throughout India and across the world. Outside of her sporting accomplishments, she will always be celebrated for staying true to herself," Google's note read.

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2.	SULIAPADA	Ganeswar Hansda / A/c No.: 546276110000040	Make- Atul, Model- Elite Passenger Engine No.- LM0703 Chassis No.- MCG43R4EHL2104014 Regd. No.: OD11Y8895 / O/s: ₹1.82 Lakh	₹ 52,500/- / ₹ 5,300/-	Task Enfo Solutions, C/o: S & D Stockyard, Soubhagya Ranjan Mohanty, At.: Sorubilla, Manchabanda, Budhikhamari, PIN- 756003 P.O.: Budhikhamari, PIN- 756003 Mob.: 6371500434
3.	PODA ASTIA	Bikasini Nayak / A/c No.: 551276210000101	Make- PIGCPL, Model- Atul Rik Plus BS-6 Engine No.- CMS22B06528 Chassis No.- MCG68R3CMB2203143 Regd. No.: OD11Z4190 / O/s: ₹2.46 Lakh	₹ 79,000/- / ₹ 7,900/-	Task Enfo Solutions, C/o: S & D Stockyard, Soubhagya Ranjan Mohanty, At.: Sorubilla, Manchabanda, Budhikhamari, PIN- 756003 P.O.: Budhikhamari, PIN- 756003 Mob.: 6371500434
4.	NORTH ODISHA UNIVERSITY	Kumuda Kumar Mohanty / A/c No.: 551060510000210	Make- Maruti Suzuki, Model- Wagon R LXI Engine No.- K12MN9112382, Chassis No.- MA3JMT81SMH536812, Regd. No.: OD 11 X 6388 / O/s: ₹5.27 Lakh	₹3,24,000/- / ₹ 33,000/-	Task Enfo Solutions, C/o: S & D Stockyard, Soubhagya Ranjan Mohanty, At.: Sorubilla, Manchabanda, Budhikhamari, PIN- 756003 P.O.: Budhikhamari, PIN- 756003 Mob.: 6371500434
5.	MANATRI	Dinabandhu Rout / A/c No.: 548560510000012	Make- Hyundai, Model- Xcent SX DSL, Engine No.- D3FBHM405175, Chassis No.- MALA841ELHM279547H, Regd. No.: OD01T 9955 / O/s: ₹1.52 Lakh	₹1,92,500/- / ₹ 19,500/-	Task Enfo Solutions, C/o: S & D Stockyard, Soubhagya Ranjan Mohanty, At.: Sorubilla, Manchabanda, Budhikhamari, PIN- 756003 P.O.: Budhikhamari, PIN- 756003 Mob.: 6371500434
6.	RAIRANGPUR	Shukdev Patra / A/c No.: 550372310000198	Make- Bajaj Auto Ltd, Model- Maxima Z Diesel, Engine No.- BHXLWM00746, Chassis No.- MD2B38AX1LWMO0686, Regd. No.: OD11T2687 / O/s: ₹1.56 Lakh	₹70,000/- / ₹ 7,000/-	Task Enfo Solutions, C/o: S & D Stockyard, Soubhagya Ranjan Mohanty, At.: Sorubilla, Manchabanda, Budhikhamari, PIN- 756003 P.O.: Budhikhamari, PIN- 756003 Mob.: 6371500434
7.	RAIRANGPUR	Nunaram Hansdah / A/c No.: 550376210000059	Make- Mahindra & Mahindra, Model- Mahindra 295 Super Turbo, Engine No.: RGSJU02132, Chassis No. (Trailer): ME291201314, Regd. No.: OD11A 3385 (Engine) & OD11A3386 (Trailer) / O/s: ₹1.46 Lakh	₹70,000/- / ₹ 7,000/-	Task Enfo Solutions, C/o: S & D Stockyard, Soubhagya Ranjan Mohanty, At.: Sorubilla, Manchabanda, Budhikhamari, PIN- 756003 P.O.: Budhikhamari, PIN- 756003 Mob.: 6371500434
8.	RAIRANGPUR	Jageswar Kandankel / A/c No.: 550372310000076	Make-New Holland, Model-New Holland 3037, Engine No.- D36965, Chassis No.- 4236967, Regd. No.: OD11A 2206 (Engine) & OD11A2207(Trailer) / O/s: ₹1.53 Lakh	₹1,40,000/- / ₹ 14,000/-	Task Enfo Solutions, C/o: S & D Stockyard, Soubhagya Ranjan Mohanty, At.: Sorubilla, Manchabanda, Budhikhamari, PIN- 756003 P.O.: Budhikhamari, PIN- 756003 Mob.: 6371500434
9.	RAIRANGPUR	Laxman Hansdah / A/c No.: 550372310000211	Make- M & M, Model- Bolero Pick Up FB PS 1.3T, Engine No.- TNN1J98680, Chassis No.-MA1Z2NTNKN1J88121, Regd. No.: OD11AA1499 / O/s: ₹7.58 Lakh	₹4,81,500/- / ₹ 48,500/-	Task Enfo Solutions, C/o: S & D Stockyard, Soubhagya Ranjan Mohanty, At.: Sorubilla, Manchabanda, Budhikhamari, PIN- 756003 P.O.: Budhikhamari, PIN- 756003 Mob.: 6371500434
10.	STATION BAZAAR	Binod Kumar Sharma / A/c No.: 548472310000016	Make- PIGCPL, Model- Passenger D3S Auto Engine No.- S6L8643505, Chassis No.- MBX0000ZFUL386097, Regd. No.: OD11H6376 / O/s: ₹1.78 Lakh	₹39,500/- / ₹ 4,000/-	Task Enfo Solutions, C/o: S & D Stockyard, Soubhagya Ranjan Mohanty, At.: Sorubilla, Manchabanda, Budhikhamari, PIN- 756003 P.O.: Budhikhamari, PIN- 756003 Mob.: 6371500434
11.	KARANJIA	Bismay Kumar Chhauasingh / A/c No.: 545472310000135	Make- Tata Motors, Model- Tata LPT 709 EX2/38 BS IV, Engine No.- 497TC41NPFY834379, Chassis No.- MAT506211K822928, Regd. No.: OD09R2966 / O/s: ₹11.62 Lakh	₹6,12,500/- / ₹ 62,000/-	Task Enfo Solutions, C/o: S & D Stockyard, Soubhagya Ranjan Mohanty, At.: Sorubilla, Manchabanda, Budhikhamari, PIN- 756003 P.O.: Budhikhamari, PIN- 756003 Mob.: 6371500434
12.	MANATRI	Jaya Chandra Jena / A/c No.: 548572310000036	Make- Atul, Model- GEM DV, Engine No.- A7G1110352, Chassis No.- MCG27P3DKG1758223, Regd. No.: OD11L4252 / O/s: ₹1.73 Lakh	₹48,500/- / ₹ 4,900/-	Task Enfo Solutions, C/o: S & D Stockyard, Soubhagya Ranjan Mohanty, At.: Sorubilla, Manchabanda, Budhikhamari, PIN- 756003 P.O.: Budhikhamari, PIN- 756003 Mob.: 6371500434
13.	PADHIA	Ghasiram Hansdah / A/c No.: 547260510000017	Make- FORD, Model- Eco Sport 1.5 Engine No.- HR69480, Chassis No.- MAJAXXMPKRAHR69480, Regd. No.: OD02AQ4748 / O/s: ₹2.50 Lakh	₹2,45,000/- / ₹ 25,000/-	Task Enfo Solutions, C/o: S & D Stockyard, Soubhagya Ranjan Mohanty, At.: Sorubilla, Manchabanda, Budhikhamari, PIN- 756003 P.O.: Budhikhamari, PIN- 756003 Mob.: 6371500434
14.	BARIPADA	Pradip Kumar Naik / A/c No.: 550160510000303	Make- Tata Motors, Model- Tiago XZ+ 1.2 RTN BS6, Engine No.- REVTRN08HXKKA9354, Chassis No.- MAT626362NKH73497, Regd. No.: OD11Z3981 / O/s: ₹6.20 Lakh	₹3,32,500/- / ₹ 33,000/-	Task Enfo Solutions, C/o: S & D Stockyard, Soubhagya Ranjan Mohanty, At.: Sorubilla, Manchabanda, Budhikhamari, PIN- 756003 P.O.: Budhikhamari, PIN- 756003 Mob.: 6371500434
15.	RANDIA	Manoj Kumar Jena / A/c No.: 535676210000008	Make- New Holland, Model- New Holland 3037, Engine No.- F62321, Chassis No.- NH6282451, Regd. No.: OD22B7487 (Engine), OD22B 7488 (Trailer) / O/s: ₹5.92 Lakh	₹1,40,000/- / ₹ 14,000/-	Task Enfo Solutions, C/o: S & D Stockyard, Soubhagya Ranjan Mohanty, At.: Sorubilla, Manchabanda, Budhikhamari, PIN- 756003 P.O.: Budhikhamari, PIN- 756003 Mob.: 6371500434
16.	BADAMPAHAR	Rajesh Kumar Mohanta / A/c No.: 550572310000069	Make- Tata Motors, Model- Tata LPT 4225 BSVI 10X2, Engine No.- B6.7BCA250D02102K64125465, Chassis No.- MAT793002L1K05116, Regd. No.: OD11T5021 / O/s: ₹29.93 Lakh	₹22,75,000/- / ₹ 2,28,000/-	Task Enfo Solutions, C/o: S & D Stockyard, Soubhagya Ranjan Mohanty, At.: Sorubilla, Manchabanda, Budhikhamari, PIN- 756003 P.O.: Budhikhamari, PIN- 756003 Mob.: 6371500434
17.	BANGIRIPOSI	Bhabani Shankar Mohanta / A/c No.: 545360510000007	Make- Ford India Pvt Ltd., Model- Ford Figo 1.4 TDCI ZXI, Engine No.- & Chassis No.- MAJ1XXMRJ1CY44854, Regd. No.: OD113558 / O/s: ₹0.29 Lakh	₹39,500/- / ₹ 4,000/-	Task Enfo Solutions, C/o: S & D Stockyard, Soubhagya Ranjan Mohanty, At.: Sorubilla, Manchabanda, Budhikhamari, PIN- 756003 P.O.: Budhikhamari, PIN- 756003 Mob.: 6371500434
Date of Auction: 22.05.2024 From 11.00 A.M. Auction Venue: SAMIL (Siram Automall India Ltd.), Nuapatna, Choudwar, Cuttack, Contact No.: Prabhat Kumar Dhal, Mob: 8658738320 & Wasim Bari, Mob: 7788932282					
<b>Terms and Conditions:</b> Interested bidders can inspect the vehicle at above mentioned parking yards from 06.05.2024, to 20.05.2024 from 10.00 A.M. to 5.00 P.M. Application & quotes to participate in the auction would be supplied by the SAMIL (Siram Automall India Ltd.). The application along with earnest money, mentioned against above vehicle to be submitted well before 21.05.2024. The EMD & other payments should be in form of DD and in the favour & payable of the Concerned Branch. The bidders are informed to be present at the venue positively. The successful bidder has to deposit 25% of bid amount within one day after bid is successful and the balance amount within 7 days failing which the money deposited by the successful bidder would be forfeited. The cost of transfer of ownership and statutory dues/all misc. charges, if any is to borne by the successful purchaser. Vehicle will be auctioned on "AS IS WHERE IS & AS IS WHAT IS" basis. However the Bank reserves the right to accept/reject/cancel the auction sale process of the vehicle at its own discretion at any point of time. There will be bidding in the auction and the highest bidder will be declared as successful bidder.					
Place: Baripada Date: 04.05.2024					
Zonal Manager Bank of India					



## 'Odisha needs energetic govt to partner with Modi admin'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, May 4:** External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar Saturday said that Odisha needs an energetic and committed government which will work like a partner with the Narendra Modi administration at the Centre.

The external affairs minister alleged in a press conference that the state is lagging behind in development even though it is rich in natural and human resources.

"Odisha has not developed as compared to the resources it has. Manufacturing has not developed much in the state. So, it needs an energetic and committed government which will work like a partner with the Modi Sarkar at the Centre," Jaishankar said.

Stating that the Modi government is providing all support and funding to Odisha, he



said, "The state has not made much progress in execution of central schemes like the PM Kisan scheme. The state has not implemented Ayushman Yojana." Odisha's culture was widely admired in the entire world when the Konark wheel was seen in the

G20 Summit that India hosted recently, the union minister said.

A replica of Konark Wheel from the Sun temple in Puri served as the backdrop of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's welcome handshake with G20 leaders as they arrived at the summit venue last year.

This shows how much respect and affection the Prime Minister has for Odisha and its rich culture, Jaishankar said.

G20 meetings were organised in different states, including Odisha, so that the states' tourism potential is boosted, he added.

He said that the Central government has provided ₹18 lakh crore to the state in terms of grants and tax devolution in the past 10 years.

Jaishankar said that the people of Odisha will vote to strengthen the hands of Prime Minister Modi this time for their speedy development.



BJP's Balasore Assembly nominee Manas Kumar Dutta presenting a 'Modi Guarantee Card' to a beneficiary during door-to-door campaign at Gokulpur village in Parakhi panchayat in Balasore, Saturday

## 17 crorepati in race for 4 LS seats

ADR SAID A TOTAL OF 37 CANDIDATES ARE IN THE FRAY FOR THE NABARANGPUR, BERHAMPUR, KORAPUT AND KALAHANDI LS CONSTITUENCIES, OF WHOM ONLY SEVEN ARE FEMALE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, May 4:** Of the 37 candidates in the fray for the four Lok Sabha seats in state going to the polls May 13, as many as 17 are crorepaties, according to a report.

The Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) said a total of 37 candidates are in the fray for the Nabarangpur, Berhampur, Koraput and Kalahandi Lok Sabha constituencies, of which 17 (46 per cent) candidates have declared their assets worth more than ₹1 crore.

The BJP and BJD candidates for the four Lok Sabha seats are crorepaties. Three Congress nominees, four independent candidates, one from Bharatiya Bikash Parishad and another from Naba Bharata Nirmana Seva Party



have also announced their properties worth over ₹1 crore, according to the ADR report.

With total assets of ₹41.89 crore, the BJP candidate for the Kalahandi LS seat, Malavika Devi is the richest candidate. She was followed by independent candidate for the Berhampur constituency, V Chandra Shekhar (Rs 28.70

crore) and Bharatiya Bikash Parishad nominee for Berhampur, Rajendra Dalabehera (Rs 10.30 crore).

As per the report, the SUCI(C) candidate for the Koraput MP seat, Pramila Pujari is the poorest candidate. Pujari declared that she has assets of only ₹20,625. Pradeep Kumar Panigrahy, the BJP nominee for Berhampur

Lok Sabha constituency, has the highest liabilities worth ₹3.82 crore.

Similarly, 14 (38 per cent) candidates have declared their educational qualification to be between Class V and XII passed, while 22 (59 per cent) candidates have declared they are graduates. One candidate has declared himself to be just literate.

Out of 37 candidates, only seven are female.

Besides, 10 (27 per cent) candidates have declared their age to be between 25 to 40 years while 23 (62 per cent) candidates are in the age group of 41 to 60 years. There are four (11 per cent) candidates whose age is between 61 and 70 years.

As many as seven (19 per cent) candidates have declared they have criminal cases pending against them, the report said.

## INDIA bloc PM will be first among equals: Tharoor

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 4:** Opposition parties, campaigning together or against each other, will join hands after the Lok Sabha polls, says Congress leader Shashi Tharoor, asserting that the people will get a prime minister who is first among equals and listens to others with an INDIA bloc coalition government.

Including the Trinamool Congress in his argument on opposition parties getting together after the "day of reckoning" June 4, Tharoor said in an interaction with PTI editors at the news agency's headquarters that a coalition government is nothing to be afraid of.

"The growth performance of the Indian economy has been better under such dispensations than under single party governments," he said.

In his view, this is an election for "change" and as of now the BJP has "lost its grip" on the narrative.

The Congress Working Committee (CWC) member also defended the party's decision to not attend the 'pran pratishtha' ceremony at the Ram temple in Ayodhya, saying it was right to turn down the invitation as it was "essentially a political platform for the greater glorification of Prime Minister Narendra Modi".

"It would have been a mistake in my view had we done it. As a purely political decision, it was the right one," he said during the freewheeling interaction.

Tharoor said it is true a coalition government functions very differently from a monolithic one-party government.

"Given Mr Modi's style, the personality cult built around



him, and the way the BJP has been ruling, I think it is fair to say that it (an INDIA bloc government) would be very unlike what we have seen in the last 10 years," he said, confident that the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) will form the next government.

The record and experience of the Indian public with coalition governments has been rather good, the former Union minister said.

"So, in many ways the advantage of a coalition is that there won't be any sort of autocratic tendencies whoever becomes prime minister... they will have to take into account the others. Frankly, it is the classic political theory of parliamentary systems of governance. Right now we are seeing a parliamentary system being run presidentially which is the worst of both the worlds," Tharoor argued.

"If you have a coalition government of the INDIA bloc, you are going to see, for the first time in a long while, a PM who is first among equals, who has to listen to others, take their point of view into account and who would have to be a good manager," he said.

"Mr (Atal Bihari) Vajpayee is considered in many ways an excellent example of that kind of consensus builder. He did not have a majority, far from it... he had 26 parties in his coalition but his government was able to deliver effective results and at the same time reassure Indians that they had a functioning government," Tharoor said.

The author-politician also hailed former prime minister Manmohan Singh's style of governance, saying he was able to pursue "very relentlessly" his economic goal and preside over the best growth period India has ever seen.



Congress national spokesperson Prabhat Kumar accompanied by party's Jagatsinghpur Lok Sabha nominee Rabindra Sethy and Paradip Assembly nominee Niranjan Nayak addressing a press meet on the upcoming general elections and role of Congress party in the construction of Paradip Port at Badapadia, Saturday

## Priyanka attacks Modi govt over Covid vaccine

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Davangere (K'taka), May 4:** Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra Saturday attacked the Narendra Modi government on the issue of Covid vaccine and claimed that many healthy youngsters who had taken the jab are getting heart attacks.

Drawing a link between the vaccines and the electoral bonds issue, Vadra alleged that they were manufactured by a company which gave the BJP a donation of ₹52 crore, while speaking at an election rally here. "Well-built and healthy youngsters are getting heart attacks, they are not ill, it happened because of the vaccine. All these vaccines were made by one company, which gave Modi ji ₹52 crore donation," she said, claiming that recently there was a report regarding this.

Charging the Central government with corruption, Vadra said, "The truth is that whether

it is through vaccines, or getting donations by raiding someone or booking a case against someone and later withdrawing it, there are several such examples. The truth is that this government is corrupt."

They brought out a scheme called the electoral bond scheme, through which they took donations from everyone. They took donations from those who built the bridge in Gujarat which collapsed, killing several people. They took donations from those who made the Covid vaccine, Vadra said.

Targeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi, she asked the crowd Did you all get vaccinated You remember whose photo was on the certificate of the vaccine Was there a photo of Modi ji's photo or not

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, and AICC General Secretary in-charge of Karnataka Randeep Singh Surjewala were among those present at the rally.



BJD's Aul Assembly nominee Pratap Keshari Deb attending a party workers' meet at Balarampur panchayat under Rajkanika block in Kendrapara district, Saturday

# national



In the third phase of elections on May 7, the public will throw BJP seven miles away. This phase is going to wipe them out. In the first two phases, the people have overturned the BJP and in the third, the people are going to wipe out these people

AKHILESH YADAV | PRESIDENT, SAMAJWADI PARTY

## AAP CAMPAIGN SONG GETS NOD

The Delhi CEO's office has approved AAP's Lok Sabha elections campaign song after the party made modifications to it, officials have said. AAP MLA Dilip Pandey, who penned and voiced the song, confirmed that the song was approved Friday



## of the day quote

The Congress has become bankrupt in terms of ideology, human resources. Nobody wants to stay with the Congress and there is no honour and respect for anyone in the party

JYOTIRADITYA SCINDIA | UNION MINISTER

All political parties in the country need your votes, but they do not want Muslim leadership. Major political parties have not fielded Muslim candidates in Maharashtra, and there are 11 states where candidature was not given to Muslims

IMTIAZ JALEEL | LEADER, AIMM

After two phases we can say these elections have taken away Modi's sleep. After two rounds, he is unable to sleep. Earlier, he used to be awake for 18 hours, now he is awake for 23 hours. After the third phase, he will stay awake all 24 hours

PAWAN KHERA | LEADER, CONGRESS

## FOURTH PHASE OF LS POLLS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 4: Out of the 1,710 candidates contesting in the fourth phase of the Lok Sabha polls, 21 per cent have declared criminal cases against themselves and 24 candidates have declared zero assets, as per the Association for Democratic Reforms report.

The ADR and The National Election Watch analysed the self-sworn affidavits of 1710 out of 1717 candidates, who are contesting in the Lok Sabha Elections 2024 Phase IV May 13.

## Over 20% candidates declare criminal cases

A total of 360 candidates have declared criminal cases against them. Emphasising the disparities amongst the financial backgrounds of the candidates with the richest candidate in the fray is Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani of Telugu Desam Party with assets over ₹5,700 crore.

Among the 360 candidates (21 per cent) with criminal cases, 17 candidates were convicted, 11 declared cases related to murder, 30 face charges of attempted murder and 50 candidates have criminal cases related to crimes against women, with 5 candi-

dates facing charges of rape, the data showed.

The ADR findings also shed light on the distribution of candidates with criminal backgrounds across major political parties.

Among the major parties, 3 out of 3 candidates from AIMM, 2 out of 3 candidates from Shiv Sena, 10 out of 17 candidates from BRS, 35 out of 61 candidates from Congress, 40 out of 70 candidates from BJP, 9 out of 17 candidates from TDP, 2 out of 4 candidates from BJD, 2 out of 4 candidates from RJD, 2 out of 4



candidates from Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray), 12 out of 25 candidates from YSRCP, 3 out of 8 candidates from All India Trinamool Congress and 7 out of 19 candidates from Samajwadi Party

have declared criminal cases against themselves.

In addition to criminal disclosures, the ADR report also highlights significant diversity amongst the candidates' financial backgrounds.

A total of 476 candidates out of 1710 are "crorepatis", with assets exceeding ₹1 crore, with Pemmasani being the richest. While, 24 candidates declared zero assets, the report showed.

In response to these findings, the ADR has proposed a series of reforms aimed at curbing the criminalisation of politics.

## Nuh gangrapes, double murder case: 4 convicts sentenced to death

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 4: A special CBI court in Haryana's Panchkula awarded the death sentence to four convicts in the 2016 Nuh gangrapes and double murder case

Saturday, officials said.

On April 10, the court had found Hemat Chouhan, Ayan Chauhan, Vinay and Jai Bhagwan guilty of double murder, gangrape and dacoity which took place in Haryana's Nuh on the intervening night of August 24-25, 2016.

The court also slapped a total fine of ₹8.20 lakh on the accused, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) said in a statement.

The accused had gang-raped two females, including a minor, at their home and thereafter looted ornaments and cash from their possession.

Due to the attack, one of the victims died along with his wife and others were grievously injured.

Haryana Police had filed a charge sheet against a different set of accused persons. The CBI took over the probe on the reference from the state government.

The agency had filed two charge sheets against the convicted accused January 24, 2018 and January 29, 2019 after a detailed probe during which it collected and analysed scientific and forensic evidences.

"On 10.04.2024, Trial Court had convicted aforementioned four accused persons under Section 120B, 302, 307, 376-D, 323, 459, 460 IPC and under Section 6 of POSCO Act 2012 and had fixed later dates for pronouncement of sentence. Detailed arguments were put forth on behalf of CBI praying for maximum punishment for the convicts," a CBI spokesperson said.

## ABDUCTION CASE

# Deve Gowda's son taken into custody

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, May 4: Karnataka JD(S) MLA HD Revanna was taken into custody Saturday by sleuths of the Special Investigation Team, minutes after a court here rejected his anticipatory bail plea in a kidnapping case, officials said.

The former Minister was picked up from the Padmanabhanagar residence of his father, JD(S) supreme and former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda here, and brought to the SIT office.

The case was registered against Revanna, a former minister and his confidant Sathish Babanna in Mysuru Thursday night for allegedly abducting a woman.

The case was registered on a complaint filed by the woman's son, who also alleged that his mother was sexually abused by Revanna's son and the BJP-JD(S) candidate for Hassan Lok Sabha seat Prajwal Revanna. Babanna has already been arrested in connection with the case.

The woman was allegedly abducted to prevent her from testifying against Prajwal, po-



lice sources said. Revanna was charged under Section 364(a) (kidnapping for ransom, etc), 365 (kidnapping or abducting with intent secretly and wrongfully to confine person) and 34 (the acts done by several persons in furtherance of common intention) of the Indian Penal Code.

On Saturday, police officials rescued the abducted woman from a farmhouse, allegedly belonging to an aide of Revanna at Kalenahalli village in Hunsur taluk of Mysuru district.

Explicit video clips allegedly involving the 33-year-old Prajwal, grandson of Deve Gowda, had started making the rounds in Hassan in recent days, following which the state government constituted a SIT to probe the sexual abuse allegations against the MP.

# 'Modi a shahanshaah'

## Priyanka Gandhi responds to Modi's 'shehzada' jibe for Rahul

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lakhani, May 4: Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra Saturday called Prime Minister Narendra Modi a 'shahanshaah' (king of king) who lives in a palace but is cut off from the public, responding to the PM's 'shehzada' jibe for her brother Rahul Gandhi.

Addressing a public rally at Lakhani in Gujarat's Banaskantha Lok Sabha constituency to canvass for her party candidate Geniben Thakor, she also accused Modi of using the people of Gujarat for power and then forgetting them.

"He calls my brother 'shehzada'. I would like to tell him that this shehzada walked for 4,000 kilometres from Kanyakumari to Kashmir to listen to your (people's) problems, met my brothers and sisters, farmers and labourers and asked how we can resolve their problems," she said.

Addressing a rally in Gujarat Thursday, PM Modi had targeted Congress MP Rahul Gandhi, saying Pakistan was eager to make the 'shehzada' of the grand old party India's next PM as the country's enemies want a weak government at the helm.

"On the other hand is your



Time has come for you to choose a new Prime Minister. Time has come for you to correct the politics of the country like you did in Karnataka. It's your responsibility to protect it

PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA | CONGRESS LEADER

'shahanshaah', Narendra Modiji. He lives in a palace. Have you ever seen him on TV? Clean clothes with not a single speck of dust, not a single stray hair strand. How will he ever understand your hard work, your farming? How will he understand your problems, that you are overburdened with inflation?" she said.

She said several BJP leaders have said on record that their government will change the Constitution if it returns to power.

## SHORT TAKES

### Kangana in soup

Shimla: BJP's Mandi Lok Sabha seat candidate Kangana Ranaut Saturday attacked the Congress, saying former prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru's father Motilal Nehru was the "Ambani" of his time but no one knew from where his wealth came from. Reacting to her remarks, the Congress filed a complaint with the Election Commission (EC), alleging that she has used "derogatory and insulting" remarks against senior leaders of the party and tried to compare "freedom fighter Motilal Nehru with one of the top businessmen of the country". "Motilal Nehru, the father of former prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru, was Ambani of his time but no one knows from where his wealth and property came from. He was close to the British, and from where he got the wealth is still a secret," she said while addressing a gathering at Himachal Pradesh's Sarkaghat assembly segment.

### Lovely joins BJP

New Delhi: Former Delhi Congress president Arvinder Singh Lovely joined the BJP Saturday along with a few other leaders, including former city government minister Raj Kumar Chauhan and former MLAs Neeraj Basoya and Naseeb Singh. All the former Congress leaders slammed the opposition party's alliance with the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in Delhi for the Lok Sabha polls as they joined the BJP in the presence of Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri and party general secretary Vinod Tawde. Lovely hailed the BJP leadership, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, for giving him and his colleagues the opportunity to join the party when they felt lost.

### Teen girl set on fire

Balrampur: A 13-year-old Dalit girl who was out to defecate was burned to death in a village here under the Haraiya Police Station jurisdiction, an officer said Saturday. Police are still to figure out how and why she was set on fire. Additional Superintendent of Police Yogesh Kumar said the girl had gone to a field near her village Friday evening to defecate. When she did not return for an hour, her family started searching for her. Meanwhile, some villagers told them that a nearby field had caught fire. When they reached the field they found the girl there, dead, the ASP said. Her charred body was sent for post mortem, the officer said, adding, police are probing the matter.

## SOCIAL CELEBRITIES

### ED files money laundering case against Elvish Yadav

Lucknow: The Enforcement Directorate has filed a money laundering case against YouTuber Siddharth Yadav alias Elvish Yadav and some others under the charge of suspected use of snake venom as a recreational drug in parties he hosted, official sources said Saturday. The central agency has pressed charges under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) after taking cognisance of a FIR and charge sheet filed by the Gautam Buddha Nagar (Noida) district police in Uttar Pradesh last month against him and other linked to him. The alleged generation of proceeds of crime and use of illicit funds for organising rave or recreational parties is under the scanner of the ED. Yadav and some others linked to the case will be questioned as part of the investigation, the sources said. Yadav was arrested on March 17 by the Noida Police in connection with its probe into suspected use of snake venom as a recreational drug in parties that were allegedly hosted by him. The 26-year-old YouTuber, also the winner of reality show Bigg Boss OTT 2, was booked under various sections of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, Wildlife Protection Act, and the Indian Penal Code (IPC) by the Noida police. Yadav was among the six people named in an FIR lodged at Noida's Sector 49 Police Station November 3 last year on a complaint from a representative of animal rights NGO People for Animals (PFA).

### She misbehaved: Cops on viral video of 'Vada Pav Girl'

New Delhi: The Delhi police responded to viral videos showing a vada pav seller being detained by police officials in Outer Delhi, saying that the seller was not arrested and no case has been registered against her. Chandrika Dixit, popularly known as "Vada Pav Girl", has been running a food stall in the Mongolpuri area for a few months, police said. A few days ago, the vada pav seller posted a video showing an altercation between her and locals while she was organising a community feast or bhandara near her stall. Police said that her stall was being run without permission from the municipal body and attracted a large number of customers as well as other online content creators. The crowd gathering at her stall led to traffic problems in the area, they said. Police said they received complaints from residents about a traffic jam in the area after she organised a bhandara on the roadside.

# Sandeshkhali video vindicates stand: TMC

Sting shows BJP man saying no rapes took place in Sandeshkhali, sparks slugfest

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, May 4: Trinamool Congress leader Abhishek Banerjee Saturday accused the BJP of orchestrating the Sandeshkhali episode and claimed a video vindicated the TMC's stand that the saffron party was behind the incidents.

Allegations of sexual abuse and land grab against TMC leaders have surfaced in Sandeshkhali in North 24 Parganas district.

"I never thought the politics of Bengal would stoop so low to get votes... We have been saying from day one that a shameless attempt was made to malign Bengal ahead of the elections," Banerjee told a press conference here.

The TMC earlier in the day released a video on social media,



The Sandeshkhali incidents were preplanned. The BJP had scripted it well. The truth has been exposed. I have been saying this for a long time. The cat is out of the bag

MAMATA BANERJEE | CM, WEST BENGAL

in which a man, claimed to be Gangadhar Kayl who is a BJP mandal president in Sandeshkhali, was heard saying that leader of the opposition in the West Bengal assembly "Suwendu Adhikari is behind the whole conspiracy".

PTI did not verify the authenticity of the video posted by the TMC.

While Adhikari said the video is doctored, Kayl lodged a complaint to the CBI alleging that it was a morphed and edited video.

In the press conference, Banerjee who is considered number two in the TMC, alleged that for creating grounds for imposition of Article 355 in Bengal, he orchestrated the entire incident in Sandeshkhali.

Banerjee asserted that the honour of Bengali women were compromised by such allegations in Sandeshkhali, which he believes are aimed at maligning the state.

He demanded that the BJP top leadership apologize for "ma-



Firefighters try to douse a fire after it broke out in the forest in Bageshwar, Saturday

PTI PHOTO

# Shah's fake video case: Police adds criminal conspiracy to FIR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 4: Criminal conspiracy charges have been added to the FIR registered in connection with the doctored video of Union Home Minister Amit Shah's speech, the Delhi Police said Saturday, a day after it arrested a

national coordinator of the Congress's social media team.

Arun Beereddy, a native of Telangana's Hyderabad, who handled the "Spirit of Congress" account on X, was arrested from Delhi Friday, police said. This is the first arrest made by the Delhi Police in the case.

<b>आईआरईएल (इंडिया) लिमिटेड IREL (India) Limited</b> Formerly Indian Rare Earths Limited. (A Government of India Undertaking) CIN: U15100MH1900CO000187 Website: www.irel.co.in ISO 9001: 2015, ISO 14001: 2015 & ISO 45001: 2018 Company	
<b>Ref: ADVT. No. 24-25/01 TENDER NOTICE</b> Date: 05.05.2024 IREL, OSCOM invites request for proposal for the following items/job descriptions.	
Bid No.	Job/Item Description
GEM/2024/B/4883205	Supply of Caustic Lye
GEM/2024/B/4885961	Design, Fabrication, Supply and Commissioning of 11 KV/433V unutilized substation.
GEM/2024/B/4886853	Engagement of EPCM (Engineering, Procurement and Construction) for implementation of an integrated Cargo Management System.
GEM/2024/B/4890244	Design, Fabrication, Supply, Erection and Commissioning of Electrostatic Precipitator (ESP) for Boiler.
GEM/2024/B/4889638	Design, Fabrication, Supply, Erection and Commissioning of Extraction Ventilation System.
Bidder may download tender document from <a href="http://irel.co.in">http://irel.co.in</a> , <a href="http://gem.gov.in">http://gem.gov.in</a> or <a href="https://procure.gov.in/procure/app">https://procure.gov.in/procure/app</a> . Any corrigendum / Extension to above tenders shall be hosted in above websites only. <b>CBC 48146/12/0001/2425</b>	
<b>Sd/- GM &amp; HEAD, MMD, OSCOM</b>	



In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, 'freedom of the press is a precious privilege that no country can forego.' On World Press Freedom Day, let's reaffirm our commitment to protecting journalists and media workers worldwide DENNIS FRANCIS | PRESIDENT, UNGA

WETTEST APRIL IN PAK

Pakistan recorded its wettest April since 1961, with more than double the usual rainfall for the month, the national weather centre said. The country experienced days of extreme weather in April that killed scores of people and destroyed property and farmland



of the day quote

When discussing juvenile justice, we have to recognise the vulnerabilities and unique needs of children embroiled in legal conflicts and ensure that our justice systems respond with empathy, rehabilitation, and opportunities for reintegration into society

BY CHANDRACHUD | CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA

The restoration of stability and economic development of Sri Lanka, which is at the strategic location in the Indian Ocean, is essential for the stability and prosperity of the entire Indo-Pacific region. Japan, as a friend, continues to support Sri Lanka

YOKO KAMIKAWA | MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, JAPAN

They (Imran Khan and his party) had tried to cause mutiny in the army May 9 (2023) and now they are begging for holding talks with the military establishment. There has been no such example of May 9 (attack on military installations) in the country's history

KHAWAJA ASIF | DEFENCE MINISTER, PAKISTAN

NATO drills indicate potential conflict on cards, says Russia

THE RUSSIA-THE WEST RELATION, ALREADY AT THEIR MOST HOSTILE IN DECADES AFTER CONFLICT WITH UKRAINE IN 2022, MAY GET WORSE

REUTERS

Moscow, May 4: NATO's four-month long military exercises near Russia's borders, known as Steadfast Defender, are proof the alliance is preparing for a potential conflict with Russia, a spokeswoman for Russia's Foreign Ministry said Saturday. The spokeswoman, Maria Zakharova, dismissed accusations by NATO this week that attacks on its member states, saying this was misleading "misinformation" aimed at distracting people from the alliance's activities.



Announcing the start of the drills - NATO's largest exercise since the Cold War - in January, NATO said 90,000 troops would take part, rehearsing how US troops could reinforce European allies in countries bordering Russia and on the alliance's eastern flank

Right now, NATO's largest exercise since the Cold War, Steadfast Defender, is taking place near Russia's borders. According to their scenario, coalition's actions against Russia are being practiced using all the instruments, including hybrid and conventional weapons

MARIA ZAKHAROVA | FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESWOMAN, RUSSIA

Russia puts Zelenskiy on wanted list: TASS

Moscow: Russia has opened a criminal case against Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy and put him on a wanted list, the state news agency TASS reported Saturday, citing the Interior Ministry's database. The entry it cited gave no further details. Russia has issued arrest warrants for a number of Ukrainian and other European politicians since the start of the conflict with Ukraine in February 2022.



Russian police in February put Estonian Prime Minister Kaja Kallas, Lithuania's culture minister and members of the previous Latvian parliament on a wanted list for destroying Soviet-era monuments

Russia also issued an arrest warrant for the International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor who last year prepared a warrant for President Vladimir Putin on war crimes charges

It was NATO that had waged a hybrid war with Russia by supporting Ukraine with arms, intelligence and finances, she said in a statement.

"Right now, NATO's largest exercise since the Cold War, Steadfast Defender, is taking place near Russia's borders. According to their scenario, coalition's actions against Russia are being practiced using all the instruments, including hybrid and conventional weapons," she said in a statement. "We have to admit that NATO is seriously preparing for a 'potential conflict' with us."

Relations between Russia and the West have been at their most hostile in decades following the start of Russia's military conflict in Ukraine in 2022.

Announcing the start of the drills in January, NATO said 90,000 troops would take part, rehearsing how US troops could

reinforce European allies in countries bordering Russia and on the alliance's eastern flank if a conflict were to flare up.

The drills, NATO's largest exercise since the Cold War, are set to run through May. Russia said at the time the drills marked an "irrevocable return" of the alliance to Cold War schemes.

SHORT TAKES

Death toll rises

Brasilia: The death toll from heavy rains in the southern Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul since April 29 has risen to 56 with 67 people still missing, the Civil Defense agency said Saturday. At least 281 municipalities were affected by the heavy rain and more than 32,000 people were displaced, according to the agency. Rising water levels in the state of Rio Grande do Sul were straining dams and threatening the metropolis of Porto Alegre, where authorities were scrambling to evacuate some neighborhoods that had been submerged. Governor Eduardo Leite has confirmed that this is "the biggest disaster in the state" and that Rio Grande do Sul is in a "state of war".

Six injured

Kharkiv: Russia launched an overnight drone attack on Ukraine's Kharkiv and Dnipro regions, injuring at least six people and hitting critical infrastructure, commercial and residential buildings, regional officials said Saturday. The Ukrainian Air Force said the Russian forces launched 13 Shahed drones targeting the regions in the northeast and centre of the country. The air defence units downed all the drones, the air force commander said. However, debris from the downed drones struck civilian targets in Kharkiv in the northeast, injuring four people and sparking a fire in an office building, the regional governor said.

Gaza to get aid

Fitzgerald (Georgia): On-the-ground preparations are on track in Gaza for humanitarian workers to be ready to deliver food, treatment for starving children and other urgent assistance by early or mid-May when the American military expects to finish building a floating pier to receive the shipments, a US Agency for International Development official said Friday. Ramping up the delivery of aid on a planned US-backed sea route will be gradual as aid groups test the distribution and security arrangements for relief workers, the USAID official told The Associated Press. With Israel restricting humanitarian aid, half of Gaza's 2.3 million people are at imminent risk of famine, international health officials say.

SNIPPETS

AI-powered fighter jet gets historic ride

California: With the midday sun blazing, an experimental orange and white F-16 fighter jet launched with a familiar roar that is a hallmark of US airpower. But the aerial combat that followed was unlike any other: This F-16 was controlled by artificial intelligence, not a human pilot. And riding in the front seat was Air Force Secretary Frank Kendall. AI marks one of the biggest advances in military aviation since the introduction of stealth in the early 1990s, and the Air Force has aggressively leaned in. The service is planning for an AI-enabled fleet of more than 1,000 unmanned warplanes to be operating by 2028. The AI-controlled F-16, called Vista, flew Kendall in lightning-fast maneuvers at more than 550 miles an hour that put pressure on his body at five times the force of gravity.

Flood, landslide kill 14 in Indonesia

Jakarta: A flood and a landslide hit Indonesia's Sulawesi island, killing 14 people, officials said Saturday. Torrential rain pounding the area since Thursday triggered a landslide in Luwu district in South Sulawesi province, said local rescue chief Mexianus Bekabel. Floods up to 3 meters (10 feet) have affected 13 sub-districts as water and mud covered the area. More than 1,000 houses were affected, with 42 of them swept off their foundations. A search and rescue team worked to evacuate residents using rubber boats and other vehicles.

Bomb kills 12 people in eastern Congo

Goma: Attacks on two camps for displaced people in eastern Congo's North Kivu province Friday killed at least 12 people, including children, according to local officials, an aid group and the United Nations. The UN said in a statement that bombs hit two camps for displaced people in Lac Vert and Mugunga, near the city of Goma, the provincial capital of North Kivu.



RIDING TO ENTERTAIN: Artists perform horse riding skill in the 'Historic ode to the horses', a traditional horse riding show at the Inner Mongolia Ethnic Minorities Cultural Sports Center during a five-day holiday for international labour day in Hohhot, north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. PHOTO

Global plastic treaty depends on production-cap

AGENCIES

Leeds, May 4: An international agreement to end plastic pollution is due to be sealed this year in Busan, South Korea. At the penultimate round of negotiations, held in Ottawa, Canada, Rwanda and Peru proposed a target to cut the weight of primary plastics produced worldwide by 40% by 2040, compared with 2025.

This is the first time that a limit on the production of plastic has been considered at the UN talks aiming to develop an international legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution. Of the potential mechanisms for tackling plastic pollution, a cap on plastic production was the most hotly debated, but one has not made it



into the draft text of the treaty - not yet, at least.

However, all efforts to scientifically model the extent of plastic pollution in the future as-

sume that restricting how much plastic the world makes each year will be necessary (among other measures) to curb its harmful presence in the environment.

No headway in Israel-Hamas cease-fire deal

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tel Aviv (Israel), May 4: A delegation of the Palestinian militant group Hamas was in Cairo Saturday as Egyptian state media reported "noticeable progress" in ongoing cease-fire talks with Israel while an Israeli official downplayed the prospects for a full end to the war.

Pressure has been mounting to reach a deal - Gaza's humanitarian crisis is dramatically escalating while Israel insists it will launch an offensive into Rafah, the territory's southernmost city.

The stakes are high to find a halt to the nearly seven-month-long war. More than one million Palestinians are sheltering in the city of Rafah, along the border with Egypt, many having fled northern Gaza where a top UN official says there is now a full-blown famine.

Egyptian and American mediators have reported signs of compromise in recent days but chances for a cease-fire deal remain entangled with the key question of whether Israel will accept an end to the war without reaching its stated goal of destroying Hamas.

Egyptian state Al-Qahera news said Saturday that a consensus has been reached over many of the disputed points. Hamas has called for a complete end to the war and withdrawal of all Israeli forces from Gaza. The war has killed more than 34,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's local health officials, caused widespread destruction and plunged the territory into an unprecedented humanitarian crisis.

A senior Israeli official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss ongoing negotiations, played down the prospects for a full end to the war. The official said Israel was committed to the Rafah invasion and told The Associated Press that it will not agree in any circumstance to end the war as part of a deal to release hostages.

Kamboj terms Panchayati Raj as 'direct democracy'

Panchayati Raj provides invaluable insights on advancing women's leadership, says India's envoy at the UN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

United Nations, May 4: Describing India's Panchayati Raj as a "sterling example" of direct democracy, India's envoy at the UN has said that women leaders breaking traditional barriers have revolutionised their communities and the country's experience provides invaluable insights on advancing and sustaining women's leadership.



India prides itself on a unique system of rural governance known as the Panchayati Raj, an emblem of decentralised power at the grassroots level, India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj said here Friday.

"Unlike municipal governance systems found elsewhere in the world, the Panchayati Raj is a sterling example of direct democracy that facilitates active participation from all residents of a Panchayat through the Gram Sabha or the assembly of all adult members of the community," she said.

Kamboj was addressing an event 'Localising the SDGs: Women in Local Governance in India Lead the Way' on the side-

lines of the 57th session of the Commission on Population and Development. The event was hosted by the Permanent Mission of India to the UN, Ministry of Panchayati Raj and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA).

At the event, Panchayat women leaders Neeru Yadav from Rajasthan, Kunuku Hema Kumari from Andhra Pradesh and Supriya Das Datta from Tripura highlighted their efforts towards women empowerment, education and climate action and shared lessons from their journeys to create successful impacts among communities.

The experiences, contribution and success stories of the three women champions in their areas elicited applause and appreciation from the audience at the event that included UN leaders, envoys, think tanks and community organisations.

Kamboj also highlighted that the inspiring narratives of the women Panchayat leaders are not devoid of challenges. "These women have continuously confronted and overcome the entrenched norms of patriarchy, and stereotypes. Through persistent systemic interventions and unwavering determination, they have risen as pivotal agents of change, challenging the status quo and advancing gender equality," she said.

Kamboj stressed that India's experience "provides invaluable insights and lessons on advancing and sustaining women's leadership". It underscores the critical need for supportive legal frameworks and policies that advocate for gender equality, robust capacity building initiatives to empower women with essential skills, and an environment that embraces diversity and inclusion.

She said that India's journey with the Panchayati Raj system is a "narrative of empowerment, inclusion and progress, particularly highlighting the strides made in women's leadership."

## of the day quote

We have been trying to convince the government that this land can be given to the paper industry on long-term lease. It will provide the desired quantity of wood not only to paper mills, but to several wood-based industries while generating a huge amount of rural employment

**PAWAN AGARWAL** | PRESIDENT, IPMA

This partnership with SJVN Ltd will witness the deployment of sustainable energy solutions from TPREL. It will go a long way in meeting the green energy objectives of SJVN Ltd

**DEEPESH NANDA** | CEO AND MD, TATA POWER RENEWABLE ENERGY

As we look forward to FY25, all businesses of the company are single-mindedly continuing to focus on satisfying the ever-evolving needs of our lifestyle consumers

**CK VENKATARAMAN** | MD, TITAN

## Q4 RESULTS

### JK Bank net shines

**Srinagar:** Jammu and Kashmir Bank Saturday reported its highest-ever annual profit at ₹1,767 crore for 2023-24. Its Managing Director and CEO Baldev Prakash said the net profit surged 48 per cent compared to the previous fiscal. "Beating its own highest-ever record of profits achieved only last year, the net profit surged in fiscal 2023-24 by 48 per cent to achieve its record profit figure of ₹1,767 crore," Prakash told PTI after the bank's annual results for FY 2023-24 were released bank here.

### NSE profit rises

**New Delhi:** The National Stock Exchange (NSE) reported a 20 per cent year-on-year increase in consolidated net profit at ₹2,488 crore for three months ended March 2024. The consolidated operating revenues stood at ₹4,625 crore for the January-March quarter of the financial year 2023-24, marking a surge of 34 per cent year-on-year, NSE said in a statement. Apart from trading, the total revenue was also supported by other revenue lines, including listing, index services, data services and co-location facility, the exchange added.

### Kotak net up 18%

**New Delhi:** Private sector lender Kotak Mahindra Bank Saturday reported an 18 per cent growth in standalone net profit at ₹4,133 crore for the quarter ended March 31, 2024. In the fourth quarter of 2022-23 fiscal, Kotak Bank had posted a profit of ₹3,496 crore. Total income rose to ₹15,285 crore in March quarter of financial year 2023-24, from ₹12,007 crore in the year-ago period. For the 2023-24 fiscal, net profit rose 26 per cent to ₹13,782 crore, from ₹10,939 crore in the 2022-23 fiscal.

### IDBI profit jumps

**New Delhi:** Private sector lender IDBI Bank Saturday reported a 44 per cent jump in net profit at ₹1,628 crore in the March quarter of financial year 2023-24. In comparison, the bank had posted a net profit of ₹1,133 crore in the year-ago period. Total income rose to ₹7,887 crore in the period under review, from ₹7,014 crore in the January-March period of fiscal year 2022-23. For the 2023-24 fiscal, net profit grew 55 per cent to an all-time high of ₹5,634 crore. In 2022-23, the profit was at ₹3,645 crore.



The choice of securities suggests this buyback is a liquidity redistribution exercise by the government as they have clear visibility on their shorter-term funds

**VIVEK KUMAR** | ECONOMIST, QUANTEO RESEARCH

### PAYTM COO BHAVESH GUPTA QUILTS

Paytm's parent company One97 Communications president and chief operating officer Bhavesh Gupta has resigned from the company, an official statement said Saturday. Gupta was steering the lending business, online and offline payments, and compliances, among others, at Paytm. Verticals, headed by him, were adversely impacted by the RBI's ban on Paytm Payments Bank (PPBL) from carrying on new transactions



# No ban on onion exports

GOVT IMPOSES MINIMUM EXPORT PRICE OF \$550/TONE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 4:** The government Saturday lifted the ban on onion exports subject to a minimum export price of \$550 per tonne, a decision that can help boost income of a large section of farmers and comes ahead of the Lok Sabha polls in key producing regions including Maharashtra.

The government has imposed a minimum export price (MEP) of \$550 per tonne (around ₹46 per kg) as well as 40 per cent export duty. Taking duty into account, the shipments will not be allowed below \$770 per tonne (around ₹64 per kg).

Consumer Affairs Secretary Nidhi Khare said the lifting of the ban would not lead to any price rise in retail markets.

"Prices will remain stable. If at all there is any increase, it should be very marginal," she said, while asserting that the government is committed to protect the interests of both consumers and farmers.

Earlier in the day, the director general of foreign trade (DGFT) said in a notification that "the export policy of onions is amended from prohibited to free subject to MEP of \$550 per metric tonne with immediate effect and until further orders." Last night, the finance ministry imposed a 40 per cent export duty.

The decision assumes importance as it comes before the crucial Lok Sabha polls in key onion belts like Nashik, Ahmednagar and Solapur in Maharashtra. Farmers of this region have been demanding a lifting of the ban so



The decision has been taken after considering the latest estimates of onion production in rabi season at 191 lakh tonne, which is comfortable. Availability and prices of onion in global markets were also factored in while taking this decision

**NIDHI KHARE** | SECRETARY, CONSUMER AFFAIRS

On December 8 last year, the Centre had banned onion exports in early December to control retail prices amid concerns over likely fall in production. During the last 4-5 years, the country annually exported between 17 lakh and 25 lakh tonne of onions

that they can get a better price for their produce.

Explaining the rationale behind the decision, Khare said the "ban on onion exports has been removed from today (Saturday) because the supply situation is comfortable and prices are stable in both mandies as well as retail markets."

The secretary said the monthly domestic demand of onion is around 17 lakh tonne.

"Lifting of the ban would also encourage the farmers to put more area under onions. The

monsoon forecast is above normal," Khare said.

The secretary noted that the decision has been taken after wider discussions with stakeholders. A high-level team also visited key onion producing belts in Maharashtra to assess the ground situation.

Khare also pointed out that the shelf life of onions is less and therefore a need was felt to export onions.

The secretary said that the government is procuring 5 lakh tonne of onions as buffer stock,

so that it can intervene in the market in case of price rise.

"We are continuously monitoring the prices of all essential food items. We will continue to keep a watch on the availability and price situation," she said.

A senior government official explained that there is an inter-ministerial committee (IMC) which reviews the prices, production, availability and exports of essential food items including onions.

"So do not think of this as an isolated instance of decision making by IMC," the official said, when asked whether the decision has been made in view of general elections.

The official said the IMC has been taking a series of steps in various commodities including wheat and rice to boost domestic supply and keep prices under check.

In March, the Union Agriculture Ministry released the data for onion production.

As per the data, onion production in 2023-24 (First Advance Estimates) is expected to be around 254.73 lakh tonne compared to around 302.08 lakh tonne last year. This is due to a decrease of 34.31 lakh tonne output in Maharashtra, 9.95 lakh tonne in Karnataka, 3.54 lakh tonne in Andhra Pradesh and 3.12 lakh tonne in Rajasthan.

Last month, in an official statement, the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution said the government has allowed export of 99,150 tonne of onion to six neighbouring countries of Bangladesh, UAE, Bhutan, Bahrain, Mauritius and Sri Lanka.

# RBI proposes tighter project finance rules

In the last credit cycle, project loans were seen to have led to a build-up of stress on bank books

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, May 4:** The Reserve Bank Friday proposed tighter rules to govern lending to projects under implementation.

The central bank's draft rules include a classification of the projects as per their phase and higher provisioning of up to 5 per cent during the construction phase, even if the asset is standard.

It can be noted that in the last credit cycle, project loans were seen to have led to a build-up of stress on bank books. The standard asset provisioning otherwise stands at 0.40 per cent.

Under the proposed norms, first announced in September 2023 and the details revealed Friday, a bank has to set aside 5 per cent of the exposure during the construction phase, which goes down as the project becomes operational.

Once the project reaches the 'Operational phase', the provisions can be reduced to 2.5 per cent of the funded outstanding and then further down to 1 per cent if certain conditions are met.

These include the project having a positive net operating cash flow that is sufficient to cover current repayment obligation to all lenders, and the total long-term debt of the project with the lenders has declined by at



I am more worried about the reputational impact than the financial impact. The financial impact will be relatively small

**ASHOK VASWANI** | MD & CEO, KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK

least 20 per cent from the outstanding at the time of achieving Date of Commencement of Commercial Operations, it said.

The proposed guidelines also spell out details on stress resolution, specify the criteria for upgrading accounts, and invoke recognition.

It expects lenders to maintain project-specific data in an electronic and easily accessible format. Lenders will update any change in the parameters of a project finance loan at the earliest but not later than 15 days from such change. The necessary system in this regard will be put in place within 3 months of the release of these directions, it said.

The public has been given time till June 15 to respond to the proposals.

## BIZ BUZZ

### PNB welcomes new zonal head, deputy

**Bhubaneswar:** A grand welcome ceremony was organised by All India Punjab National Bank Officers' Association (AIPNBOA), Bhubaneswar Zone under the leadership of Bailochan Sahoo, AGS to welcome the new zonal head of PNB, Bhubaneswar Zone Rajesh Kumar, GM and the new deputy zonal head Kshetrabashi Mishra, DGM. The new zonal head while addressing the gathering emphasised on maintaining the sustained business growth without compromising the guidelines of the bank in order to make significant contribution in the state's economy. The DZM echoed the same sentiments too. During this function, the Association felicitated N Khatai, AGM and PK Dalai, President of the Association who have superannuated recently. LK Mishra, Circle Head of Bhubaneswar Circle was also present and spoke on the occasion. The meeting was presided over by Roshan Kumar Ray, new president of the Association. Deepak Pradhan, circle secretary, Cuttack and Gour Kishore Mishra, circle president, Cuttack graced the occasion. The meeting ended with vote of thanks by Sanjog Kumar Dash.



### Raveena new brand ambassador of Monte Carlo Home

**New Delhi:** Monte Carlo Home, a premier brand renowned for its quality across all seasons, proudly announces its collaboration with Bollywood icon Raveena Tandon as its brand ambassador. This strategic partnership marks a significant step forward for Monte Carlo's newly introduced vertical, Monte Carlo Home, aimed at redefining luxury in home textiles. Recognising the burgeoning demand for superior home textile products, Monte Carlo identified an opportunity to set new standards in the industry. With the launch of Monte Carlo Home, the brand ventures into offering premium products that embody the essence of "home is where the heart belongs." The association with Raveena Tandon symbolizes Monte Carlo Home's commitment to excellence, elegance, and sophistication. As the face of the brand, Tandon epitomises originality and credibility, aligning perfectly with Monte Carlo Home's values.



## LOWEST FARE SEGMENT

# AI cuts cabin baggage allowance

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 4:** Loss-making Air India has reduced the free cabin baggage allowance to 15 kilogram from 20 kilogram for the lowest economy fare segment on domestic flights.

The changes have been made in the menu-based pricing model fare families that were introduced by the Tata Group-owned Air India last August, with the airline saying that a one-size-fits-all approach is no longer ideal.

There are three fare families - Comfort, Comfort Plus and Flex - that offer different levels of benefits and fare restrictions at various price points, an airline spokesperson said Saturday.

With effect from May 2, the free cabin baggage allowance for the 'Comfort' and 'Comfort Plus' categories has been reduced to 15 kg from 20 kg and 25 kg, respectively.

Prior to the introduction of the fare families concept, passengers on Air India's domestic flights were allowed to carry 25 kilograms of cabin baggage free of any additional charge.

"On domestic routes in Economy Class, both 'Comfort' and 'Comfort Plus' fare families



now provide 15 kg baggage allowance, while 'Flex' provides 25 kg allowance.

"The Business Class baggage allowance on domestic routes ranges from 25 kg to 35 kg. The free baggage allowance on international flights varies from market to market," the spokesperson said.

In other domestic airlines also, passengers are allowed to carry 15 kg of cabin baggage without additional charge.

The Air India spokesperson said the fare families are designed to let passengers choose the kind of fare and services that best suit their requirements, given that travellers today have varied preferences, and a one-size-fits-all approach is no longer ideal.

Elaborating on the proposi-

tion, the spokesperson said that for example, the price difference between 'Comfort Plus' and 'Flex' fares would typically be around ₹1,000 in a domestic sector like Delhi-Mumbai, with the 'Flex' fare providing the value of nearly ₹9,000, including 10 kilograms extra baggage and zero change or cancellation fees.

The introduction of fare families is in response to customer feedback and Air India's own comprehensive study. It is also benchmarked against the offerings of relevant competition in each of the markets we have introduced it in, the spokesperson added.

Tata Group has embarked on an ambitious plan to revive the fortunes of the loss-making Air India, which it had acquired from the government in 2022.

# Buffett retakes the stage as Berkshire preps to pass the baton

Investors are focused on how the conglomerate will evolve as it faces challenges including how best to grow without overpaying for acquisitions, whether to pay a dividend, and how to deploy \$167.6bn of cash

REUTERS

**Omaha, May 4:** Warren Buffett takes center stage in Omaha for Berkshire Hathaway's annual shareholder meeting Saturday, as investors size up his expected successor and get a better sense of how the conglomerate plans to grow and deploy cash.

The meeting is Buffett's 60th since he took over Berkshire in 1965. He has largely stopped appearing publicly to discuss the company, though he assured investors last November that he felt good but knew he was "playing in extra innings".

At a downtown arena, Buffett,

93, and Vice Chairman Greg Abel, 61, will answer about five hours of questions. Vice Chairman Ajit Jain, 72, will also join. Abel was designated Buffett's successor as chief executive in 2021.

"Buffett says it's hard to move the needle the way we used to," said Ted Bridges, who oversees \$10 billion including Berkshire stock at Bridges Trust in Omaha. "It would be interesting to hear how we're going to allocate capital and think about the next 10 years."

Indeed, Buffett has acknowledged the limitations posed by



Berkshire's size. "We have no possibility of eye-popping performance," he said in his February shareholder letter.

The shareholder meeting is also the first since Charlie Munger, Buffett's longtime friend, business partner and foil, died in November at age 99. Munger was known laconic

and acerbic comebacks to Buffett's often lengthy appraisals about Berkshire, the economy, Wall Street and life.

"It's going to be hard for Warren to not have Charlie there," said Paul Lountzis, president of Lountzis Asset Management, attending his 32nd Berkshire meeting.

### SUCCESSION TOP OF MIND

Berkshire is a \$862 billion conglomerate with dozens of businesses including the BNSF railroad, Geico car insurer, and a slew of industrial and retail operations, including familiar brands such as Dairy Queen and Fruit of the Loom.

It also owns well over \$300 billion of stocks, close to half of which is Apple.

Abel oversees Berkshire's non-insurance businesses and Jain oversees its insurance businesses. After Buffett is no longer in charge, his oldest son Howard is expected to become non-executive chairman, to help preserve Berkshire's culture.

Todd Combs, 53, and Ted Weschler, 61, who oversee some of Berkshire's stock investments, may take over more. Neither is slated to answer shareholder questions. Combs also run the

Geico car insurer.

"I want to see Warren's energy," said Steven Check, president of Check Capital Management, attending his 27th meeting. "It's good that Greg and Ajit will be out front. It wouldn't hurt to have Todd or Ted out front too."

During Saturday's questioning, Berkshire may be asked how the Federal Reserve's struggle to lower inflation weighs on consumer-oriented operations including the BNSF railroad.

Buffett may address major investments in Apple, Occidental Petroleum and five Japanese trading houses, and whether wildfire lawsuits have permanently damaged prospects for the Oregon utility PacifiCorp.

He might also reveal which financial services stock Berkshire been quietly buying in large quantities.

# MUMBAI CITY REIGN SUPREME

# Du Plessis fifty, bowlers lead RCB to win over GT



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, May 4:** Bipin Singh came to haunt Mohun Bagan once again as a gritty Mumbai City FC rode on the midfielder's strike to secure a stunning 3-1 comeback win and grab the ISL title for a second time in front of a partisan Salt Lake Stadium crowd here Saturday.

In front of 62,007-strong crowd, the home side roared into the lead with Jason Cummings (44th) strike at the stroke of half time. But the Islanders levelled things up when Jorge Pereyra Diaz

(53rd) silenced the crowd from Alberto Noguera's magnificent straight pass from the midfield.

Their moment of reckoning came in the 81st minute as Bipin came off the bench to score the decisive second goal to help Mumbai snatch the lead. It was Bipin's 90th minute strike that had helped Mumbai City FC win their maiden title in 2020-21 when they overturned an identical 1-0 lead to down Mohun Bagan 2-1.

Nine minutes were added to the second-half, and Mohun Bagan had enough time to bring on the equaliser but their for-

wards lacked the sting and the Islanders nailed the final nail in the coffin with a 90+7th minute strike by substitute Jakub Vojtus.

It also crushed Mohun Bagan's dream of becoming the first team to defend the ISL Cup and complete a rare double of winning the League Winners Shield and the title.

Sergio Lobera-coached Mumbai City FC had achieved the rare feat in their memorable 2020-21 season. But it was not a day for Mohun Bagan's shrewd 66-year-old Spaniard tactician Antonio Lopez Habas who appeared in a

record fourth ISL final.

Three weeks after the Islanders failed to defend the Shield going down to the same team 1-2 at the same venue, the Petr Kratky-coached side dished out a much-improved show right from the start.

They controlled the possession and initiated a flurry of attacks with Lallianzuala Chhangte in the thick of things. In the 30th minute, Chhangte whipped in a free-kick from an angle as it sailed over a scrambling Vishal Kaith, only to hit the crossbar and bounce out.

A couple of minutes later, Chhangte outpaced Subhasish Bose, receiving a through ball. Instead of shooting, he passed it back into the six-yard box, but there were no Mumbai men to tap the ball in.

Suddenly, Mohun Bagan lifted the atmosphere by storming into the lead. Liston Colaco played a precise pass to Dimitri Petratos who unleashed a thunderous strike from 40 yards out as Lachenpa flapped it back into the six yard box in a sloppy goal-keeping effort.

Cometh the hour, cometh the man, Mohun Bagan's chief marksman Jason Cummings sprang into action latching onto the loose ball and calmly chipped it over Phurba Lachenpa with his effortless left-footer. But the lead did not last long as Mumbai equalised soon after the break.

A special mention should go to Spaniard Alberto Noguera for his pinpoint accuracy in delivering a sublime pass from the midfield straight into the box. The Mohun Bagan defence was caught off guard by it as the Argentine forward seized the opportunity, effortlessly bypassing Manvir Singh without Anwar Ali to contend with. With a deft left-footed touch, Diaz calmly slotted the ball past Kaith.

Three years after he struck the winner in a close-door final at Margao, Bipin once again made the difference after he came on the field replacing Noguera in the 69th minute.

Chhangte dodged past Joni Kauko and took a weak shot, but Bipin's second attempt deflected off Hector Yuste and into the net, securing the decisive goal.

Jakub capitalised on Bipin's hold-up play, receiving the ball and calmly passing it to Vikram Pratap Singh, who then set up Bipin for a shot blocked by Anwar. However, Jakub pounced on the rebound and fired it past the fallen defender to seal the issue.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore, May 4:** Royal Challengers Bengaluru pressed the self-destruction button halfway but a blazing fifty by captain Faf du Plessis had enough torque in it to carry them to a four-wicket over Gujarat Titans in their IPL match here Saturday.

Du Plessis (64, 23b, 10x4, 3x6) and Kohli (42, 27b, 2x4, 4x6), who added 92 runs in just 35 balls for the opening wicket, were in prime touch as RCB moved past a frail target of 148, braving some nervy moments, most of it their own creation.

The win also lifted RCB to seventh place on the table with eight points from 11 matches, and kept their mathematical chances of making it to the playoffs alive.

Du Plessis and Kohli dealt in boundaries as the home side racked in 92 runs in powerplay that contained 10 fours and seven maximums. Both Du Plessis and Kohli were severe on all GT bowlers.

Du Plessis was in no mood to play the role of a sidekick as he raced to his fifty in just 18 balls before falling to Josh Little. RCB entered a phase of struggle from there as they lost last match centurion Will Jacks, Rajat Patidar, Glenn Maxwell and Cameron Green between the sixth and 10th overs for just 20 runs. Little

(4/45) and spinner Noor Ahmad (2/23) were the chief perpetrators as RCB slipped from 92/1 to 112/5.

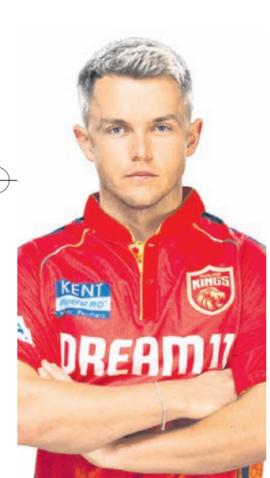
Ahmad soon ousted Kohli as RCB were 117/6 but Dinesh Karthik (21 n o) was cool under pressure as RCB notched their overall fourth and third win in a row of this season. Before RCB batters joined the party, their bowlers came up with an immaculate effort on a supportive pitch to bowl GT to a modest 147.

There were a couple of good partnerships - 61 between David Miller (30) and M Shahrulkhan (37) and 44 by Rahul Tewatia (35) and Rashid Khan (18) - but the Titans lacked that one big innings or a stand that could have given them a firmer grip on the match.

In fact, they seemed distinctly incapable of accelerating even in the powerplay as their top order batters struggled against RCB pacers, Mohammed Siraj (2/29) and Yash Dayal (2/21) who stuck to a wonderful length. Gujarat's powerplay score of 23/3 was the lowest in the segment this season.

**BRIEF SCORES:** GT 147 (M Shahrulkhan 37, Rahul Tewatia 35, David Miller 30; Yash Dayal 2/21, Vijaykumar Vyshak 2/23, Mohammed Siraj 2/29) lost to RCB 152/6 (Faf du Plessis 64, Virat Kohli 42; Josh Little 4/45, Noor Ahmad 2/23) by 4 wickets.

# CSK eye payback in 2nd successive clash vs PBKS



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Dharamsala, May 4:** Defending champions Chennai Super Kings will look to set their house in order and get back to winning ways when they face an upbeat yet unpredictable Punjab Kings for the second time in a row in the IPL here Sunday.

Just three days back, PBKS outclassed CSK by seven wickets at Chepauk, considered their fortress. The two losses in the last three games at home have put Chennai in a spot. They are placed fifth on the table with 10 points and the five-time champions will hope the change of venue would bring a change in fortune as well with just four games to go to seal their place in the knockout stage.

CSK's failure to push the pace in the middle overs against the spin duo of Harpreet Brar and Rahul Chahar saw them post a below-par score of 162/7. Their batting has become too dependent on skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad and six-hitting machine Shivam Dube and the moment one of them fails, it puts the pressure on others who have not been consistent in bailing out the team.

CSK have also been hampered by the health and fitness concerns of their pacers, including Deepak Chahar, who limped off holding his hamstring after bowling just two balls and is likely to miss the reverse clash against PBKS.

The absence of their front-line bowlers, Matheesha Pathirana (niggle) and Tushar

Deshpande (flu), also didn't help matters the other day. Add to that the dew factor which took the spinners out of the equation and PBKS romped home comfortably.

Punjab Kings, on the other hand, have seen a resurgence as they registered back-to-back wins to re-ignite their playoffs hopes. En route to their win over CSK, Punjab became the second team after Mumbai Indians to beat the defending champions five times in a row and they will fancy their chances.

Punjab remain an unpredictable side as although it notched up wins over Gujarat in Ahmedabad, Chennai at Chepauk and also chased down a T20 record score against KKR, they have struggled at home against RR, SRH and Gujarat.

With back-to-back wins, PBKS climbed to seventh spot with 8 points and will need to carry the momentum to salvage their slim hopes.

Interestingly, the first IPL match in Dharamsala was a clash between Chennai and Punjab in 2010. The venue of fun a lot of runs and dew remains a factor, making it an enticing contest.

**MATCHDAY**  
Indian Premier League  
PBKS vs CSK  
Time: 03:30 pm  
LSG vs KKR  
Time: 07:30 pm  
Telecast: Star Sports Network  
Stream: Jio Cinema

# Hardik looks flattened, under pressure: Formers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, May 4:** India vice-captain Hardik Pandya looks drained, flattened, under pressure and Mumbai Indians looks like a confused unit under him, reckons former cricketers Aaron Finch and Greame Smith as five-time champions continue to struggle in the IPL.

Pandya once again walked out to loud boos around the Wankhede Stadium here Friday during Mumbai Indians' yet another disappointing outing, which they lost by 24 runs to Kolkata Knight Riders.

Pandya lasted only two deliveries as Mumbai's batters once again cut a sorry figure on a two-paced track to succumb to their eighth defeat in 11 matches this season.

"He just looks really flattened at the moment, he looks really drained and someone who is feeling the pressure. I feel for him; I have been in that situation myself where everything that you're trying personally does-



n't seem to be working," Finch was quoted as saying by Star Sports.

"When the team isn't performing as well, that is a very difficult place to be. One thing where you're not performing and the team is winning - that is something you'd take as a captain. You bear all responsibility as captain for the team's per-

formance and that is an incredibly hard place to be, particularly in this competition where it's so brutal," Finch added.

South Africa's legendary captain Graeme Smith said MI have been a 'confused team' under Pandya with plenty of changes being made with the personnel. "Hardik has really struggled, he's looked like a man under

pressure. That has created a little turmoil in the air, who knows how that has affected the people. But even the batting lineup, they look like they're confused," he said.

"Tilak Varma and Naman Dhir were fighting in the middle order, Dhir was batting at No.3, and Hardik moving all over the place. They should have had Tilak at (No.) 3, Sky at (No.) 4, and Hardik batting at (No.) 5 throughout the season, with David at (No.) 6. Then, figure out your bowling units," he said.

"All over and all around, they've been a very confused team this season and it's been hugely disappointing from one of the mega franchises of the IPL. A lot of people in the MI fan-base and camp will be very sore," Smith added.

Former Australia vice-captain Shane Watson was also critical of Pandya's captaincy calls, saying MI allowed KKR back into the game by not deploying their best bowler when they were 57/5.

# ARSENAL KEEP UP PL TITLE PUSH WITH BOURNEMOUTH WIN

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**London, May 4:** Arsenal maintained their pursuit of the Premier League title with a 3-0 win over Bournemouth that lifted Mikel Arteta's team four points clear of second-place Manchester City Saturday.

City can reduce the gap back to a point by beating Wolverhampton Wanderers later and still has another game in hand.

Bukayo Saka converted a penalty in the 45th minute after a trip on Kai Havertz before Leandro Trossard and Declan Rice added second-half goals at Emirates Stadium to secure Arsenal's fourth straight victory in the league.

Arsenal, seeking their first league title since 2004, has two matches still to play - at Manchester United and home against Everton.

# England eves 'using AI' to select playing XI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**London, May 4:** England are using Artificial Intelligence (AI) while picking their playing eleven, women's Head coach Jon Lewis has revealed, saying the technology provided crucial feedback as far as match-ups are concerned and also helped them win T20 series against Australia.

Lewis said he got to know about the technology, powered by a London-based company PSI, while he was coaching the UP Warriorz in the inaugural edition of the Women's Premier League (WPL) in India in March 2023.

Interestingly, Steve Borthwick, the England Rugby Union coach who also manages rugby league team Wigan Warriors and English Football League One side Wigan Athletic have also used the same system, reported ESPNcricinfo.

The England head coach said

**I think it will help with borderline decisions in terms of selections and match-ups. Will it ever be at the front, the thing that selects the team? I would say, in my view, no. Other coaches may feel very differently, but it is really interesting**  
JON LEWIS



the AI system has successfully helped them take the eventual call of picking one player when two

in-form players with almost similar skillsets were up for selection in a game against Australia during the Women's Ashes last year.

"We are able to run simulated teams versus the simulated opposition to give us an idea about how those teams may match up against each other," Lewis was quoted as saying ESPNcricinfo. "I can send multiple different



lineups to the company and they run, I think it's about 250,000 simulations per team that I send with all the different permutations that could happen through

the game." "What I would say is it's not how we select the side, but it's one part of selection that we use to help understand what could possibly happen in the future. We used it very successfully in the Ashes last summer with match-ups against the Australian side," Lewis added.

Providing further insights to how the system has helped the England Women's side, Lewis said, "There was one selection in particular last year. We saw a real strength in Australia and we matched up our strength, our best bowlers, to that part of the game against Australia last year."

"That worked really, really well for us. That helped us win the T20 series in particular and that got us back in the Ashes," Lewis said, referring to England's 2-1 win over Australia. "The players were both players that I was thinking about picking. So it did help me with those selections and it turned out that it worked out really well," he said.

Lewis, however, admitted that traditional ways of selecting teams after monitoring players in their preparations could not be replaced but AI can only help in arrive at better decisions.