

**Bitter episode**  
 Actor Janhvi Kapoor shares her experience of dealing with media-objectification, including finding her pictures on inappropriate sites

LEISURE | P2

**China's space tourism**  
 Chinese company CAS Space announces that its 'space tourism vehicle' will first fly in 2027 and travel to the edge of space in 2028

INTERNATIONAL | P10

**Special trading session**  
 Equity benchmark indices close the special trading session on a firm note Saturday, extending their rally to the third day running

BUSINESS | P11

**Indian pair through**  
 Indian men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty marches into the Thailand Open badminton tournament final

SPORTS | P12

**Singapore seeing new Covid-19 wave**  
 PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Singapore, May 18: Island nation Singapore is seeing a new Covid-19 wave as the authorities recorded more than 25,900 cases from May 5 to 11 even as Health Minister Ong Ye Kung Saturday advised the wearing of masks again.

"We are at the beginning part of the wave where it is steadily rising," said Ong. "So, I would say the wave should peak in the next two to four weeks, which means between mid- and end of June," *The Straits Times* quoted the minister as saying.

The Ministry of Health (MoH) said the estimated number of Covid-19 cases in the week of May 5 to 11 rose to 25,900 cases, compared with 13,700 cases in the previous week. The average daily Covid-19 hospitalisations rose to about 250 from 181 the week before. The average daily ICU cases remained low at three cases, compared with two cases in the previous week.

## Kejriwal dares PM to arrest him

AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal appears to be on a roll. He is not just the foremost face of his party, the Opposition INDIA bloc also reportedly looks up to him to bolster its fortune in the north and stop BJP's surge. Putting his temporary release from jail to good use, the Delhi Chief Minister fired a fresh salvo at none other than Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Saturday. The 55-year-old has asked the PM to put him and his MLAs and MPs behind bars if he can, when they go to the BJP's party headquarters, Sunday. His challenge assumes significance as it came amid the arrest of his close aide, Bibhav Kumar, in connection with the latter's alleged assault on party MP Swati Maliwal, Saturday



He claimed that the AAP's 'fault' was that its government in Delhi built good schools, set up Mohalla Clinics, provided free treatment and ensured free round-the-clock power supply in the city which the BJP could not do.

Kejriwal, who was arrested in a money laundering case linked to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam, has been granted interim bail till June 1 by the Supreme Court.

He will have to surrender and go back to jail June 2, a day after the last phase of polling in the general elections.

### Maliwal attacker held; blackmail slur on BJP

NEW DELHI: Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's aide Bibhav Kumar was arrested Saturday in connection with the alleged assault on AAP MP Swati Maliwal, even as the party claimed she was 'blackmailed' by the BJP as she faces a corruption case. Kumar was picked up from the Chief Minister's residence by a Delhi Police team, a senior police officer said, a day after Maliwal recorded her statement before a magistrate at the Tis Hazari court. Maliwal has alleged that the CM's aide attacked her with full force, slapping her in the face and kicking her in the chest and abdomen May 13 when she had gone to meet the Chief Minister. P9

### Indians asked to stay indoors

mission asked Indian students in the city to stay indoors. EAM S Jaishankar advised the Indian students to stay in regular touch with the Indian embassy. "Monitoring the welfare of Indian students in Bishkek. Situation is reportedly calm now. Strongly advise students to stay in regular touch with the embassy," he said in a post on X.

**IRREGULAR by MANJUL**

How can a court question anyone for DELAYING something?

## 126 'crorepatis' in Phase III Assly polls; Sanatan tops

Bhubaneswar, May 18: One hundred and twenty six candidates in fray for the third phase of Assembly elections in the state are 'crorepatis'. BJD candidate from Champua Sanatan Mahakud is the richest with ₹227.67 crore assets.

Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Dhenkanal, Keonjhar, Puri and Sambalpur Lok Sabha constituencies along with 42 Assembly seats under these Lok Sabha segments will go to polls in the third phase May 25.

The Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) and Odisha Election Watch have analysed the affidavits of 381 out of 383 candidates, who are contesting for 42 MLA seats in Odisha.

In a report, the ADR said there are 126 (33 per cent) 'crorepati' candidates in fray. Independent candidate from Ghasipura, Soumya Ranjan Patnaik is the second richest candidate after he declared family assets to the tune of ₹122.86 crore.

The third place is held by the BJP candidate from Nayagarh, Pratyusha Rajeshwari Singh, who declared assets of her family totalling ₹120.56 crore.

### 102 companies of Central forces for law and order

Bhubaneswar: The Election Commission of India will deploy 102 companies of Central Armed Police Forces for the second phase of simultaneous Lok Sabha and Assembly polls in state May 20, an official said Saturday. Incidents of violence have been reported from Ganjam and Bolangir districts ahead of polling. Voting will be held in Aska, Bargarh, Bolangir, Kandhamal and Sundargarh LS seats and 35 Assembly constituencies Monday. CEO Nikunja Bihari Dhal said that the highest of 22 companies of forces would be deployed in Maoist-affected Kandhamal district, followed by Ganjam (20), Sundargarh (16), 14 each in Bargarh and Bolangir, five each in Jharsuguda and Boudh, four in Subarnapur and two in Nayagarh. P3

"The role of money power in our elections is evident from the fact that all major political parties give tickets to wealthy candidates. Among the major parties, 36 out of 42 candidates analysed from BJD, 29 are from Congress, 28 from BJP and four from AAP have declared assets valued more than ₹1 crore," the report said.

**MARKET WATCH**

INDEX	VALUE	VARIATION
SENSEX	74005.94	↑ 88.91
NIFTY	22502.00	↑ 35.90
DOLLAR	83.30	↓ ₹0.17
EURO	90.54	↓ ₹0.17
GOLD	₹73,750	↑ ₹39
SILVER	₹91,149	↑ ₹125

**WEATHER**

	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	39.2°C	37.6°C
Min Temp	28.1°C	27.0°C
Humidity	63%	70%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

FORECAST: PARTLY CLOUDY SKY

## Indian cult classic 'Manthan' breathes anew at Cannes

Cannes, May 18: A significant slice of Parallel Cinema history was under the spotlight at the 77th Cannes Film Festival Friday night. A restored 4K version of *Manthan* (The Churning), Shyam Benegal's 1976 film about the creation of India's first dairy cooperative in a Gujarat village, lit up the screen at Salle Bimuel.

Naseeruddin Shah, a key member of the film's cast, spoke ahead of the screening. "First and foremost, this show of *Manthan* is dedicated to Dr. Verghese Kurien," the veteran actor said. "It is also an occasion to recall Smita Patil, Girish Karnad,



Amrish Puri and music composer Vanraj Bhatia." The actor said that at a time when Hindi filmmakers would make only what they felt that the audience wanted to see, Shyam Benegal "found ways to speak about the truth of the times".

*Manthan*, funded with a contribution of ₹2 each

from half a million milk farmers, was a follow-up to Benegal's first two films, *Ankur* (1974) and *Nishant* (1976), which were earlier screened at Cannes competition section. It completed a timely and powerful trilogy on rural distress.

The movie was restored using a 35mm camera negative preserved at the National Film Archive of India. The sound was digitised from the 35mm release print in the possession of Film Heritage Foundation (FHF), which undertook the restoration project a year and a half ago. It was funded by the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation Ltd. The film was restored

under the aegis of FHF at Prasad Corporation's post-studios and the Bologna-based L'Immagine Ritrovata laboratory in association with Benegal and cinematographer Govind Nihalani.

Shivendra Singh Durgapur, speaking after Cannes Classics in-charge Gerald Duchaussoy introduced *Manthan*, said: "It is an extraordinary feeling to be here for the third year in a row."

Smita's son Prateik Babbar was on the stage to share his emotions while the late actor's sisters, Anita Patil Deshmukh and Manya Patil Seth, were in the audience. Also present at the screening of *Manthan* was Kurien's daughter, Nirmala Kurien.

**PRECAUTIONS AGAINST HEATSTROKE DURING POLL**  
 Elderly, sick persons & pregnant women are more prone to heat stroke

**SYMPTOMS OF HEATSTROKE**

- Severe sweating
- Reeling, nausea and vomiting
- Severe thirst
- Muscle cramp
- Fainting / Fits

**PRECAUTIONS**

- Prefer cool hours of morning/afternoon for going outside
- Drink enough water before going outdoors
- Use light colour loose cotton dress, umbrella & foot wear
- Avoid physical labour /long walking under sun
- Take rest in shade periodically

**HEATSTROKE TREATMENT**

- Shift the patient to an open and cool place, give ORS/salt-sugar solution/plain water
- Remove clothing as far as practicable
- Provide head bath and cold sponging
- Keep the patient under AC or fan
- If condition does not improve, shift to hospital

Health & Family Welfare Department, Odisha

# leisure



## STANDING OVATION FOR KINDS OF KINDNESS AT CANNES

The Emma Stone-starrer film *Kinds of Kindness*, directed by Greek filmmaker Yorgos Lanthimos, rocked the Cannes Film Festival with an anthology of stories about sex cults, cannibalism, and general debauchery. *Kinds of Kindness* received a 4.5-minute standing ovation with the director and his cast, reports *Variety*.

## JEREMY FELL ASLEEP ON SETS POST-RECOVERY

Actor Jeremy Renner returned to film *Mayor of Kingstown* after his horrific snowmobile accident, only to realise that some things would never be the same for him post-recovery. Once he got in front of the camera, Renner recalled falling asleep during takes in his first week back. "They go, 'And action!' And I was out," he said.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
You are likely to remain careful and watchful today, foretells Ganesh. And because you'll be invited to parties and other social events, your enthusiasm will remain buoyant. You will also strike the right balance between business and pleasure, says Ganesh.

**TAURUS**  
In all probability, you will discuss certain sacred issues with your beloved today, predicts Ganesh. In the evening, you will be possibly visiting holy places. You had better make up for the lost time to finish pending work in the afternoon. Think twice before you act, warns Ganesh.

**GEMINI**  
The idea of being with your family will keep you motivated throughout the day. In business, your inquisitive approach will do you a lot of good. In fact, you will have the proverbial Midas touch - whichever venture you put your hands on will turn into a glittering success.

**CANCER**  
Today, you will shift your entire focus on the problems plaguing your personal life, feels Ganesh. Your ability to nip a problem in the bud has helped you to have a good personal life so far. And today, you will have to use your skills to mend the strain in your relationship with your loved ones.

**LEO**  
Even slender shoulders gain the strength when the time comes to handle responsibilities. And so shall you, says Ganesh, as today brings with it an increased amount of responsibility. You may find yourself drained of all your energy by the end of it. After all, handling important tasks is a tough thing.

**VIRGO**  
A cocktail of business and pleasure is on the house today. Parties will run till dawn. You will also take the correct route to success by making important decisions. People will stand to gain if they involve you in their do, says Ganesh.

**LIBRA**  
"Efforts made are never in vain, even when they may seem otherwise". Let this be your motto for the day. Today may not seem to be the most productive day, especially when it comes to interviews. You may feel like the rook in the chess set - sometimes coming back to square one despite making many moves forward to the ultimate checkmate! So remember, persistence is the key, says Ganesh.

**SCORPIO**  
The day just went from bad to worse today, says Ganesh. Troubles are coming in faster and thicker than a locust swarm. But keep a leash on yourself, says Ganesh, and steer clear of it all. Take criticism in your stride today and pay attention to what is being said, not who is saying them.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Hedge your bets carefully, says Ganesh. Solving problems will come naturally to you. But, beware, as you may face the music from certain disgruntled individuals. Worry not, and keep the spring in your step.

**CAPRICORN**  
Ganesh can hear the wedding bells. There is all the likelihood that you will find your perfect match today and will let him/her know about your feelings, says Ganesh. Your family means the world to you and you will be more expressive about this today than you have been in the past few years.

**AQUARIUS**  
Meditate, and tune in to your inner sanctum. As you do this, you will realise you don't need others' advice all the time. Your boss will cooperate with you, while your loved ones will encourage you. An exciting date should close the day on a lovely note, says Ganesh.

**PISCES**  
A highly productive day awaits you. You will be driven to succeed, and filled with energy and enthusiasm to achieve your goals. Meetings with your superiors ought to yield some much anticipated results, says Ganesh.

## Sonali recalls becoming victim of sensationalism



Mumbai: Actress Sonali Bendre, who is returning as Ameena Qureshi in *The Broken News Season 2*, recently shared the valuable insights she gained from playing the role of a steadfast news editor in the series. Reflecting on her own journey in the film industry, she recalled being a victim of sensationalism.

When asked about the advisability of speaking the truth in today's world and the price one has to pay, the *Sarfarosh* actress told a newspaper agency, "As filmy as it might sound, there has always been a price to pay for speaking the truth. It is not new, but still, speaking the truth is very important. In this day and age, I feel it is easy to tell the truth, but the problem is that nobody is listening."

Reflecting on her own journey in the film industry, the actress recalled being a victim of sensational news. "I would lie if I said it hadn't happened. *The Broken News* gave me an insight into why it must have happened. I now understand that salacious news or gossip is sold because there is a demand for it. I can't blame the media anymore. It has been easy to blame the media, but they have their equations. It also depends on all of us in the audience to understand, are we asking for it, and is it what we are perpetuating?"

## Janhvi on being media-objectified



Mumbai: Actress Janhvi Kapoor is currently gearing up for the release of her next film, titled *Mr. & Mrs. Mahi* co-starring Rajkumar Rao. She recently revealed that she has been dealing with media-objectification since a tender age.

In a recent chat with Karan Johar, she was asked about the objectification she deals with daily. She responded, "This is an aspect I have been navigating for a long time. I think the first time I felt s\*\*t\*ulaised by the media was when I was 12 or 13. I went to an event with my mom and dad, and there were pictures of me in the media. At that time, social media was starting to boom, and I found pictures of myself on what seemed like a p\*\*nographic site. The boys in my school were looking at it and laughing."

The film is helmed by director Sharan Sharma and is presented by Zee Studios and Dharma Productions. It is produced by Karan Johar, Hiroo Yash Johar, Apoorva Mehta, and Zee Studios.

*Mr. & Mrs. Mahi* is slated to hit the big screens May 31.

## Sonakshi's stance on women-led films

Mumbai: Actress Sonakshi Sinha has stunned the audience with her performance in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's latest masterpiece, *Heeramandi*. With confidence in her craft, she asserts that with the right roles and directors, she can truly work wonders on screen.

In a recent interview, she spoke about her preference for women-led films over the past eight years, mentioning that she hasn't faced any obstacles because of this decision.

She told *PTI*, "I've worked with established and absolute newcomer directors because I believed in them. Everybody should be given a chance; I was also new at some point of time. If a director has a vision, and if I can help him execute that vision, I would love to work with them. If you give me the right roles and the right directors, I can do magic."

Sinha also shared that she seeks roles that push her limits and help her develop her skills. By taking on challenging roles that tested her abilities, she became a better actor. Looking back on her journey, the actress recognised that these experiences have played a significant role in shaping her into the artist she is today. Sonakshi highlighted that she has been choosing films with female leads for a while now, and she's really enjoying it. Whether these movies succeed or not hasn't discouraged her. It's been around seven to eight years since she started this journey, and she hasn't regretted it.

On the work front, Sonakshi has *Kakuda* and *Nikita Roy and The Book of Darkness* in her pipeline.

## Farah on children's choice of movies

Mumbai: Filmmaker-choreographer Farah Khan shared how kids love to watch entertaining films and don't want messages to be told all the time through films.

Farah, who was at the launch of the trailer for the upcoming film *Chhota Bheem and the Curse of Damsyaan*, shared her views on making more kid-friendly films.

The *Main Hoon Na* director said, "Whatever films I have made, it was loved by the kids. It doesn't need to be said to be a kid's-friendly film to invite kids to watch the film. Kids love entertainment. They do not want messages to be told. They have schools for that. So, the real challenge is to make entertaining films that children can watch."

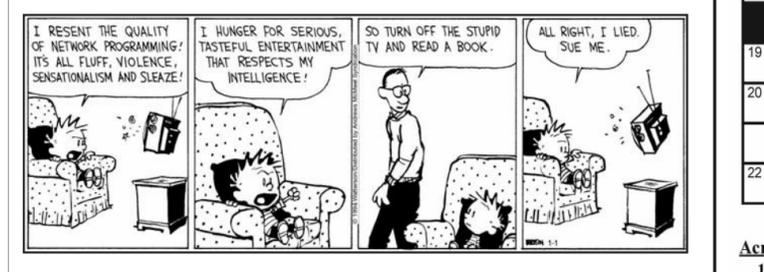
Talking about the trailer of *Chhota Bheem*, she added, "It is a fantastic trailer. We are all fans. Indian kids need a home-grown superhero. Otherwise, we are always taking them to watch English films like *Avengers* and *Harry Potter*. This is the first live-action film for kids. I want to congratulate the whole team for this film."

Directed by Rajiv Chilaka, the film stars Anupam Kher, Makarand Deshpande, and Navneet Kaur Dhillon and will be released May 31.

### PEANUTS



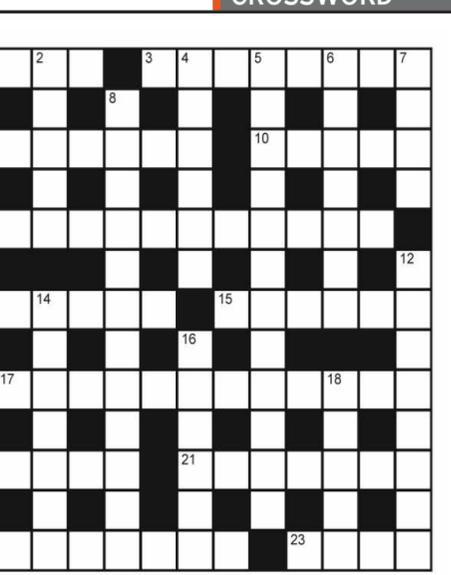
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



### FUN post CROSSWORD



- Across
- 1 Almanac tidbit
  - 3 Render again
  - 9 Jump suit, e.g.
  - 10 Evaluated, with "up"
  - 11 Money transporters (8,4)
  - 13 Frolic
  - 15 Already seen (4,2)
  - 17 Type of lightbulb
  - 20 Cover story?
  - 21 Musical instrument
  - 22 Special knives
  - 23 Vesicle
  - Down
  - 1 Vision enhancers on the road
  - 2 Ricochet
  - 4 Ultimatum word
  - 5 Down-and-out
  - 6 Polish folk dance
  - 7 Shipshape
  - 8 Condemnation
  - 12 Most remote
  - 14 Income from capital investment
  - 16 Correct
  - 18 Manicurist's board
  - 19 Souvlaki meat

### 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.

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

### SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

L	B	U	R	S	S
T	Y	C	O	O	N
N	L	A	D	O	Y
A	X	L	E	W	H
A	D	J	O	R	N
I	S	S	I	E	P
P	P	O	E	A	
T	E	R	R	I	F
R	O	F	I	T	N
E	S	T	A	T	E
E	R	R	E	D	A

SUDOKU

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

## SECURITY CHECK

An official inspects the security at the venue where Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address a gathering at Baliyatra Ground in Cuttack, Saturday



## CAMPAIGNING ENDS FOR PHASE II POLLS

# 79.69L to decide fate of 305 May 20

**Bhubaneswar, May 18:** Curtains came down Saturday on the high-decibel campaigning for the second phase polls in the state wherein over 79.69 lakh voters will decide the fate of 305 candidates in fray for five Lok Sabha and 35 Assembly seats May 20.

Voting will be held in Aska, Bargarh, Bolangir, Kandhamal and Sundargarh Lok Sabha segments and 35 Assembly constituencies falling under these Parliamentary seats spread over nine districts in western and southern Odisha, Monday.

According to Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Nikunja Bihari Dhal, a total of 79,69,887 voters, including 40,33,992 male and 39,35,044 female, are eligible to exercise their franchise at 9,162 polling stations.

Of the total electorate, nearly 24 per cent are aged below 30 years, he said, adding there were 975 women for every 1,000 men. Out of the 9,162, 1,541 are model polling stations, while 1,041 will be managed by all-woman personnel while 25 will be run by PwD officials.

Nearly 20 per cent of the 9,162 polling stations have been identified as critical, including those in Maoist-hit areas, he said.

A total of 265 MLA and 40 MP aspirants are in the fray, the CEO said, adding the EC has appointed 10 general observers, 15 expenditure observers and three police observers for this phase of the polls.

In 2019, Bargarh LS seat recorded 77.87 per cent turnout,



Officials leaving Sundargarh Government College for various polling booths ahead of the Phase II elections scheduled to be held Monday

PIC: MAUSAM NANDA

<b>79,69,887</b> TOTAL VOTERS, INCLUDING 40,33,992 MALE AND 39,35,044 FEMALE	<b>9,162</b> POLLING STATIONS, INCLUDING 1,541 MODEL POLLING STATIONS	<b>₹254CR</b> WORTH CASH, LIQUOR, DRUGS AND VALUABLE MATERIALS SEIZED SO FAR
<b>2,13,129</b> FIRST-TIME VOTERS (IN 18-19 AGE GROUP) AND 16,98,516 YOUTH VOTERS	<b>1,041</b> POLLING STATIONS TO BE MANAGED BY ALL-WOMAN PERSONNEL	

following Sundargarh (71.67), Bolangir (74.75), Kandhamal (72.90) and Aska (65.53), he said.

“With the IMD predicting heat-wave conditions May 20, adequate drinking water, ORS and essential medicines will be made available at each polling station. This apart, paramedics, ASHAs, ambulances and mobile health units will also be deployed,” he said.

An air ambulance will be kept on standby at Bolangir for exigencies. For any security-related emergency, one Indian Air Force helicopter will also be kept on standby, Dhal said.

The EC has so far seized cash, liquor, drugs and valuable materials worth ₹254 crore across Odisha during the polls, he added.

In the first phase of the election in Odisha, polling was held in four LS and 28 Assembly seats May 13 registering 75.68 per cent

turnout which sealed the fate of 243 Assembly candidates and 37 LS candidates.

The last day of electioneering saw candidates of all the major political parties and their leaders organising marathon election meetings, holding road-

shows and launching a door-to-door campaign to woo the voters.

Among the prominent candidates in the second phase of polls are BJD president and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, and his colleagues in the state government Bikram Keshari Arukha, Niranjan Pujari, PK Amat, Tukuni Sahu and Rita Sahu.

Former Union minister and Sundargarh's sitting MP Jual Oram, former Indian hockey captain Dilip Tirkey, former Union minister and hotelier Dilip Ray, and BJP's four-time Lok Sabha MP Sangeeta Singh Deo are also in the fray in this round of elections.

## 102 companies of Central forces

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, May 18:** The Election Commission of India (ECI) will deploy 102 companies of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) for the second phase of simultaneous Lok Sabha and Assembly polls in the state May 20, an official said Saturday.

Incidents of violence have been reported from Ganjam and Bolangir districts ahead of voting. Chief Electoral Officer Nikunja Bihari Dhal said that the highest of 22 companies of central forces would be deployed in Maoist-affected Kandhamal district, followed by Ganjam (20), Sundargarh (16), 14 each in Bargarh and Bolangir, five each in Jharsuguda and Boudh, four in Sonepur and two in Nayagarh.

One company of CAPF comprises around 100 personnel. So, 102 companies would amount to 10,200 personnel.

On pre-poll violence in Khallikote area of Ganjam district, where one BJP worker was killed, the CEO said, “It is a matter of concern. The police have registered a case and arrested some accused persons. They have launched a manhunt to nab the remaining accused.”

“The EC had taken a serious note of the violence and sought a report from the DGP, who has submitted it. I had called for a meeting with representatives of all the recognised political parties and informed them about the concern expressed by the EC, which has zero tolerance towards violence,” he said.

An additional DGP-rank officer has been deployed to look after the law and order situation in Aska Lok Sabha seat, under which Khallikote falls.

**POLL SECURITY**

## Don't use calcium carbide for fruit ripening: FSSAI



AGENCIES

**New Delhi, May 18:** Food regulator FSSAI has asked traders and food business operators not to use the banned product 'calcium carbide' for ripening of fruits.

In an official statement, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) said it has alerted traders/fruits handlers/Food Business Operators (FBOs) operating ripening chambers to strictly ensure compliance with the prohibition on calcium carbide for artificial ripening of fruits, particularly during the mango season.

FSSAI has also advised Food Safety Departments of states and UTs to remain vigilant and take serious action and deal stringently against person(s) indulging in such unlawful practices as per the provisions of the FSS Act, 2006, and rules/regulations made thereunder.

“Calcium carbide, commonly used for ripening fruits like mangoes, releases acetylene gas which contains harmful traces of arsenic and phosphorus. These substances, also known as ‘masala’, can cause serious health issues such as dizziness, frequent thirst, irritation, weakness, difficulty in swallowing, vomiting and skin ulcers,” FSSAI said.

Additionally, acetylene gas is equally hazardous to those handling it. “There are chances that calcium carbide may come in direct contact with fruits during

application and leave residues of arsenic and phosphorus on fruits,” the regulator said.

Due to these dangers, the use of calcium carbide for ripening fruits has been banned under the Regulation of the Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restrictions on Sales) Regulations, 2011.

This regulation explicitly states, “No person shall sell or offer or expose for sale or have in his premises for the purpose of sale under any description, fruits which have been artificially ripened by use of acetylene gas, commonly known as carbide gas.”

Considering the issue of rampant use of banned calcium carbide, FSSAI has permitted the use of ethylene gas as a safer alternative for fruit ripening in India.

Ethylene gas can be used at concentrations up to 100 ppm, depending upon the crop, variety and maturity.

Ethylene, a naturally occurring hormone in fruits, regulates the ripening process by initiating and controlling a series of chemical and biochemical activities.

The treatment of unripe fruits with ethylene gas triggers the natural ripening process until the fruit itself starts producing ethylene in substantial quantities.

Further, the Central Insecticides Board and Registration Committee (CIB and RC) approved Ethephon 39 per cent SL for the uniform ripening of mangoes and other fruits.

**Considering the issue of rampant use of banned calcium carbide, FSSAI has permitted the use of ethylene gas as a safer alternative for fruit ripening in India**

## Depression over Bay May 24: IMD

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, May 18:** A low-pressure area is likely to form over the southwest Bay of Bengal (BoB) around May 22 which will move initially northeasterly and concentrate into a depression over central parts of the BoB May 24, IMD said.

It said Friday's trough runs from south Chhattisgarh to the Comorin area and now runs from south Chhattisgarh to south interior Karnataka across Telangana and Rayalaseema at 3.1km above mean sea level.

Light to moderate rain or thundershower is likely to occur at a few places over the districts of south Odisha and one or two places over the districts of north Odisha in the next 24 hours, it said.

The IMD further said the maximum temperature is likely to gradually rise by 2-4 degrees Celsius in subsequent four to five days at many places over the districts of Odisha.

Meanwhile, light to moderate rainfall has occurred at a few places over the districts of south interior Odisha, at one or two



places over south coastal Odisha and north interior Odisha. At the same time, dry weather prevailed over the rest districts.

Maximum temperatures observed marked fall at one or two places over the districts of north interior Odisha, appreciable fall at a few places over the districts of north interior Odisha, and at one or two places over the districts of south interior Odisha.

There will be no large change elsewhere over the districts of Odisha. They were markedly below normal at a few places over the districts of interior Odisha.

The highest maximum temperature of 40.1 degrees Celsius was recorded at Chandbali and

the lowest minimum temperature of 21.4 degrees Celsius was recorded at Nuapada in the plains of Odisha.

The weatherman predicted that thunderstorms with lightning accompanied by gusty surface wind speed reaching 40-50 kmph are very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Koraput, Malkangiri, Kandhamal, Nabarangpur, Nuapada, Kalahandi, Rayagada, Gajapati, Ganjam, Puri and Bolangir.

Heavy Rainfall is very likely to occur in one or two places over the districts of Koraput, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Nuapada.

Thunderstorm with lightning accompanied by gusty surface wind speed reaching 30-40 kmph is very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Nayagarh, Cuttack, Khurda, Jagatsinghpur and Kendrapara.

However, hot and humid weather conditions are very likely to prevail at one or two places over the districts of Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara and Cuttack, the IMD said.

## Man convicted in fake currency case

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, May 18:** A local court in Titlagarh Saturday convicted a man in a fake currency case of 2023.

Convict Lingaraj Behera was sentenced to undergo rigorous imprisonment (RI) for five years for the offence under Section 489B of the IPC and three years imprisonment for the offence under Section 489C of the IPC.

Both punishments will run concurrently, the Assistant Sessions Court ordered.

According to the prosecution, a raid was conducted near Titlagarh bus stand February 1, 2023 when Behera, along with his associate Dharmu Rana, was nabbed dealing in fake currency notes after procuring the same from Jharkhand and Bihar.

While Behera was apprehended, Rana managed to escape.

During search, one printed

bag containing Fake Indian Currency Notes (FICNs) of ₹31,27,500 were recovered from the possession of Behera. After successful investigation, a chargesheet was submitted against the two under Sections 489A, 489B, 489C and 120B of the IPC.

During the trial, the prosecution examined nine witnesses and exhibited 21 documents.

The seized FICNs were sent to Bharatiya Reserve Bank Note Mudran (P) Ltd in West Bengal for chemical examination and opinion.

After examination it was confirmed that these are counterfeit notes.

Notably, STF is the specialised wing of Odisha Police to curb the organised crime in the state. FICN is also one of the focus areas of STF and it will continue its drive against such criminals.

STF sources said a non-bailable warrant has been obtained against Rana who is on the run.



**IN SYNC:** Artistes perform during the second day of 37th annual dance festival 'Nrutyambada' at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

PIC: BIKASH NAYAK

# City science centre attracts young minds



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, May 18:** A unit of the National Council of Science Museums (NCSM), Regional Science Centre organised a Summer Hobby Camp for students from Class I to Class XII here recently. The camp started May 6 will continue till June 7.

This initiative is aimed at developing interest among students in the field of science and technology, encouraging them to build up creativity and to promote experimentation and exploration through learning. The activities at the camp help in enriching the knowledge through hands on activities, demonstrations and games which will help them to learn the concept with ease.

The camp covers a wide arena of disciplines like robotics, hands on mathematics, science of photography, talk with nature, fun with water, colourful chemistry, life sciences, creative electronics, artificial intelli-

gence, performing arts and science drama.

To enhance the experiential learning during the camp, various professionals and some of the leading institutions in the City joined hands to provide exposure to the participants.

Notable names include Subash Chandra Raut, Shakti Nanda, Natya Chetna group, CV Raman Global University, Forum for River, Ocean Scientists and Technologists, Grow with Nature and many more.

The participants are involved in making science demonstration kits on robotics, computer programming to control robo arm movement, operating water boat, experimenting with sound waves.

RSC Bhubaneswar is the first regional level science centre in the state. Since its inception, the centre has been attracting a large number of visitors, especially school students, from all over the state and has been playing a key role in achieving the national goal 'Science education for all'.

# CID-CB's advisory on online investment fraud

**THE FRAUDSTERS, THE CRIME BRANCH OF ODISHA POLICE SAID, OPERATE BY FIRST INDUCING INDIVIDUALS TO JOIN WHATSAPP AND TELEGRAM GROUPS PROMISING HIGH RETURNS ON INVESTMENTS IN A SHORT DURATION**

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, May 18:** The CID-Crime Branch (CID-CB) of Odisha Police has issued an important advisory to protect citizens from falling prey to the rampant rise in online investment fraud cases in the state.

In a release issued here Saturday, the CID-CB said there has been a steep and concerning rise in cases of fraud through online investment apps, WhatsApp group links and Telegram group links. Many people, it said, have lost money by investing in such fake online schemes.

The fraudsters lure people with promises of high returns in a short time through investments in stock markets, shares, mutual funds and IPO allotments. However, most of these investors have lost their hard-



earned savings, the advisory said, adding that by exploiting the trust and greed of these people, online investment fraudsters have caused them devastating financial losses.

In 2023, a total of 22 investment fraud cases were registered by the CID-CB Cyber Crime Police Station, involving nearly ₹8.5 crore in fraudulent amounts. Alarmingly, within just four months of 2024, a total of 25 more cases have been registered, with fraud amounts totaling approximately ₹17 crore.

Though the Cyber Crime Wing of CID-CB has managed to arrest many of the criminals in the registered cases, only a small amount of money could be recovered compared to the losses incurred by victims, as the money has already been used by these criminals or, in some cases, siphoned off outside the country.

The fraudsters, the Crime Branch of Odisha Police said, op-

erate by first inducing individuals to join WhatsApp and Telegram groups promising high returns on investments in a short duration. These groups are populated by their gang members, who make innocent people believe they have profited from the suggested investments.

The fraudsters claim that the investments are made into SEBI-registered and verified companies using genuine photographs of industrialists or bankers to gain the victim's confidence. However, the investment platforms recommended are fraudulent, designed to display fake returns and wallet money, the CB said.

When the victims attempt to withdraw their funds, they are compelled to deposit more amounts for withdrawal, further pushing them into a cycle of fraud and financial losses.

The CID-CB said the accounts utilised by the fraudsters are often mule or hired, and the

funds received from victims are often converted into USD, then into bitcoins, and ultimately withdrawn at various locations outside the country, including Dubai, China, and Hong Kong. WhatsApp and Telegram channels used in these activities are often operated from locations such as Cambodia and Hong Kong.

It urged the public to exercise extreme caution when engaging in online investment activities and to carefully verify the authenticity of entities offering financial services.

In recent years, there has been a concerning increase in cases of investment fraud, with perpetrators often utilising WhatsApp or Telegram groups to carry out their scams. These groups often promise unrealistic returns and encourage individuals to deposit money into suggested accounts.

The CID-CB has appealed to citizens to spread the word among their family and friends, especially older people who might be lured by fraudsters into investing their hard-earned money and lifetime savings into such fake online investment groups.

The advisory said if citizens come across any suspicious online activities or become victims of cyber-related crimes, they should report such incidents promptly to the 1930 toll-free call center.

# Cash worth ₹8L seized

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Banki, May 18:** Acting on a tip off, Flying Squad Team (FST) seized an amount worth ₹8 lakh near Sunadei mundia area in Banki, Cuttack Saturday.

This is the highest seizure since the enforcement of model code of conduct, said Devi Prasad Mohanty, retiring officer, 88-Banki Assembly Constituency.

**According to the sources, around 6:30pm May 17 the FST team apprehended a man named Rajesh Kumar on suspicion**



**According to the sources, around 6:30pm May 17 the FST team apprehended a man named Rajesh Kumar on the ground of suspicion.** Subsequently, during the search, the hefty amount was found from his bike side box.

As the man was unable to produce any evidence with regards to why was he carrying the amount and give a satisfactory reason for it, the FST team seized the amount on ground of violations of model code of conduct.

# CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

I, Suryakanta Samal, Son of Jagabandhu Samal, At-Kanpur, P.O.- Maliancha, Dist.- Kendrapara sworn an affidavit on dtd 17.05.24, No.-1741 before Notary Public, Bhubaneswar, I hereby declare that Suryakanta Samal & Suryakant Samal is one and same person i.e. myself.

# LOST

Notice is hereby given to all concerned that one Balhidei Sahu @Balhi Sahu aged about 57yrs, W/o Late Kartik Sahu, Vill- Gurunthi, P.O.- Panditgaon, P.S.- Khallikote, Dist.- Ganjam has declared that my Original SALE DEED bearing Document No.- 2551/1988 of SRO, Khallikote has been lost in Khallikote. All concerned thereof having any claim over the said Document are required to file their claim within Fifteen days from the publication of this notice, failing which, it will be presumed that the property is free from encumbrances and any claim in respect of thereof against the applicant shall be void and ineffective.

I, Santoshini Mishra, W/o. Sitosh Kumar Panigrahi, R/o. P.S.-Balangir, Dist.- Balangir have purchased a land by virtue of a registered sale deed bearing E.Doc No.10312001159 dt.26.06.2020. That the original interim sale deed which was handed over to me vide RSD No. 663 dt.23.03.1998 has been lost somewhere while I was coming from Tahasil Office, Balangir. In spite of my thorough search I could not find the same. If anybody found the documents pls contact to Advocate Mr. Ashutosh Pattnaik, Mob. No.- 7008043907.



**HEAT EFFECT:** Srimandir Lion's Gate wears a deserted look as day temperatures soar in Puri, Saturday

OP PHOTO

# BJP leaders hold roadshows in coastal dists

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, May 18:** In a demonstration of collective leadership in Odisha, the opposition BJP Saturday held roadshows in coastal Balasore and Kendrapara Lok Sabha seats, attended by the state's top five leaders.

The BJP's state president Manmohan Samal, party's na-

tional vice-president Baijayant Panda, Bhubaneswar MP Aparajita Sarangi and Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan flew to Balasore from Bhubaneswar and joined Balasore MP and party candidate Pratap Sarangi.

The leaders held roadshows in Balasore and Kendrapara to show unity among them.

They showed people they were

fighting the elections to oust the Naveen Patnaik-led BJD government in Odisha.

The five leaders came down heavily on the BJD government and accused it of pushing the state's development 50 years back.

After the roadshows, the senior BJP leaders held discussions and chalked out strategies with party leaders, candidates and

workers on how to win both the Balasore and Kendrapara Lok Sabha seats, besides winning in all the Assembly seats under their jurisdictions.

"We hope that the party will perform very well in the ongoing elections. The roadshow was held to encourage our workers and leaders before the June 1 polls to be held in Balasore and Kendrapara," said Samal.

# India lost over 5 million farmland trees in five years

**M**ore than 50 lakh large farmland trees vanished between 2018 and 2022 in India, partly due to altered cultivation practices, revealing a 'concerning trajectory', new research published in the journal Nature Sustainability has found.

Researchers said that "an observable trend was emerging" wherein agroforestry systems are being replaced with paddy rice fields, even as a certain loss rate could be found to be natural.

Large and mature trees within these agroforestry fields are removed, and trees are now being cultivated within separate block plantations typically with lower ecological value, they said.

Block plantations, usually involving fewer species of trees, were found to have increased in numbers which some villagers from Telangana, Haryana, Maharashtra and other states confirmed via interviews.

The team, including researchers from the University of Copenhagen, Denmark, explained that the decision to remove trees is often driven by perceived low benefits of the trees, coupled with concerns that their shading effect, including that of Neem trees, may adversely affect crop yields.

Boosting crop yields also contributed to the expansion of paddy rice fields, further facilitated by water supply which was augmented by the establishment of new boreholes, the



authors said.

"This finding is particularly unsettling given the current emphasis on agroforestry as an essential natural climate solution, playing a crucial role in both climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies, as

well as for livelihoods and biodiversity," the authors wrote.

Agroforestry trees are a vital part of India's landscapes as they generate socio-ecological benefits, along with being a natural climate solution owing to their ability to absorb carbon

dioxide from the air.

However, despite their importance, the lack of robust monitoring mechanisms has contributed to an insufficient grasp of their distribution in relation to management practices, as well as their vulnerability to climate change and diseases, the researchers said.

For the study, the team used AI-based deep learning models for detecting individual non-forest trees for each year. By tracking the tree crown over the years, they then analysed the changes. Crowns of multiple trees together form a canopy.

The researchers mapped about 60 crore farmland trees, excluding block plantations, and tracked them over the past decade.

They found that around 11 per cent of the large trees, each having a crown size of 96 square metres and mapped in 2010/2011, had disappeared by 2018.

"Moreover, during the period 2018-2022, more than 5 million large farmland trees (about 67 square metres crown size) have vanished, due partly to altered cultivation practices, where trees within fields are perceived as detrimental to crop yields," the authors wrote.

The researchers clarified that while the findings may appear to contradict official reports and studies showing that tree cover has increased in recent years, they reported only gross losses and did not look at tree gains as a separate class.

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# Elections end, migration starts in Rayagada district



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rayagada, May 18:** There seems to be no let-up in migration from Rayagada as labourers from the district have again started migrating to their work places in other states to earn a livelihood after the first phase polling in the district ended, May 13.

According to reports, Rayagada district has turned into a hub for trafficking of thousands of labourers due to lack of work opportunities in the district.

Poverty is stated to be the main reason behind their migration. Middlemen taking advantage of their helplessness lure them with work and help them move to other states. However, these migrant workers are often subjected to harassment, violence, and discrimination during their stay at their destinations which force them to return home impoverished.

And also, once they reached their workplace, it becomes difficult for them to keep contact with their families while many go missing or die an untimely death during work due to lack of food or disease. This pushes them into uncertainties as they do not know when they will get an opportunity to return home.

The migrant labourers had come to their respective villages to cast their votes in on-going the elections. However, they have again started leaving for their

work places after culmination of the polls. People from various areas in the district were seen assembling at bus stands and railway stations for the last three days to board a bus or train to travel outside the state.

While some of them were seen getting into buses for Vizianagaram or Vishakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh, some others were found boarding trains to Tamil Nadu. Some others were seen catching trains for Gujarat, Kerala, Karnataka, or some other states. People are migrating to other states for work despite the presence of over 3,000 small, medium and large scale industries operating in these industries is stated to be another reason behind the large scale migration.

Sources said that these migrant labourers had come home before the election and casted votes to the candidates in the election held, May 13. However, in between all these brouhaha, none of the political parties or candidates spared a thought to stop their migration or promised to provide employment opportunities to these poor labourers.

As a result, the migrant labourers, including minors, have again started packing back for their work places in distant lands after elections.

Reports said that out of the 11 blocks in the district, Kalyansinghpur, Kashipur, Chandrapur and Gudari are account for the maximum migrations in the district. The migrant labourers belong to all age-groups including adult, minor boys and minor girls too.

Sources said that eight youths from Kantamal and Surugunja villages under Kashipur block left for work to Chalakudi town in Kerala. They were found waiting at Rayagada railway station to board a train for Vizianagaram where they will again board a train to Chalakudi in Kerala.

Many inhabitants from Talajhiri, Banteji, Sarambai, Mandijhola, Routhgati, Badamagur, Taladeska, Keshkeri, Chandagiri, Sindurghati, Chiliguda, Kantamal, Adatakiri, Baharduluki, Bhitarduluki, Padamajhi, Bariguda, Bhramarjhari, Siadimala and other villages under Kashipur block are now working as migrant labourers in Karnataka and Kerala.

Similarly, several residents of Belanguda, Jarpa, Bandiri, Katisur, Gendabaju, Khilundi, Raibiji, Guchhujaba in Chandrapur block and Polama, Siripur, Bhalumaska, Serigumma, Phulguda, Lakshmi Nagar, Talasaja, Bijaynagar villages in Kalyansinghpur block are now working in Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

When contacted, District Labour Officer Jasmine Sahu said that the Panchayatiraj department has been asked to keep details of the migrant labourers. "Funds have been allocated for this purpose, but there is no rule to stop people from migrating," she added.



**HONING SKILLS:** Kids learn swimming at Dr Jhasaketan Sahoo swimming pool in Sambalpur during a summer camp, Saturday

OP PHOTO

# Missing man's body fished out of reservoir

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Koraput, May 18:** The body of Suku Pradhani, a 35-year-old man who was missing since Thursday in a boat capsize incident at Jabagad river ghat under Bilaput panchayat and Nandapur block in Koraput district, was fished out by a team of Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force (ODRAF), Saturday, informed Nandapur Tahasildar, Anadi Charan Sahu.

According to reports, the fire brigade team from Nandapur could not trace the body of the missing person even after two



days of search. Following this, as per the order of the district Collector V Kreethi Vasan, an ODRAF team from Koraput was given the task of the operation.

An ODRAF team consisting of 10 members of 3rd battalion from Koraput, led by Habildar Mojesh Khara, reached the spot Saturday morning and fished

out the body of the missing youth Suku from the reservoir, informed the District Emergency department.

A pall of gloom descended on Jabagad village and nearby areas after the news spread. The block administration has provided an assistance of ₹2,000 under Harisachandra Sahayata Yagna to the deceased's family and the district administration has recommended providing another ₹4 lakh from the State Disaster Management Fund, informed an official from the District Emergency section, Koraput.

# 'RSW 2024' kicks off at NIT R

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rourkela, May 18:** The three-day Research Scholar Week (RSW) organised by the National Institute of Technology (NIT) Rourkela, titled 'RSW 2024' that kicked off Friday, will culminate May 19 at BB Auditorium. The event is being conducted to provide a platform to PhD scholars for presenting their research work.

Banshidhar Majhi, currently serving as the Vice Chancellor of VSSUT Burla, inaugurated the event as the Chief Guest. A total of 193 PhD students from NIT Rourkela are participating in the event to present their research work.

Pradip Chowdhury, in charge of RSW-2024 said, "This gathering of PhD students stands as a testament to our collective dedication to academic investigation, discovery, and intellectual growth."

Dean, academics and the chairman of RSW, Snehashish Chakraverty, while congratulating the scholars, stated, "In

1903, Marie Curie won the Nobel Prize in Physics for her research on radiation phenomena. However, choosing research as a career means embracing a life dedicated to problem-solving and being equipped to confront real-world complexities through an intellectual journey. RSW at NIT Rourkela serves as a platform for you to showcase your finest work."

Director in-charge, Chandan Kumar Sahoo also congratulated the research scholars. He appealed the students to consider entrepreneurial careers and urged them to focus on solving societal problems through their research endeavours.

Speaking virtually, the Director of NIT Rourkela, K. Umamaheshwar Rao, said, "I firmly believe that the research showcased during RSW 2024 will gain significant visibility. I commend your tireless efforts and dedication in advancing knowledge in science, engineering, humanities, and management."

In his keynote address, Banshidhar Majhi, a former pro-

fessor of CSE here congratulated the scholars and the team RSW. He said, "Research scholars are the primary stakeholders of the research ecosystem in any academic institution, which NIT Rourkela exemplifies since its inception. I recall that NIT Rourkela was the first among NITs to start an M.Tech (by research) program. Ten years ago, when I was serving as the Dean of Academics, we initiated Research Scholar Week to promote a scholarly culture among students."

During the inaugural session, a commemorative souvenir marking the occasion was released. Concluding the inaugural event, Associate Dean (Academic), Jyoti Prakash Kar, proposed the vote of thanks.

This year, a total of 193 abstracts were selected for presentation. On the concluding day, there will be oral presentations from the shortlisted candidates, followed by a prize distribution ceremony for the winners and the awarding of certificates to the volunteers.



**AWARENESS PROGRAMME:** Artistes participate in a voter's awareness programme organized by the Central Bureau of Communication and the district administration in Bhadrak, Saturday

# Man, son held for woman's murder

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Dhenkikote, May 18:** A woman was allegedly beaten to death by her neighbours following a fight over erection of a fence at Parabha Sahi, Khantagarh village under this police beat house limits in Keonjhar district, Friday night.

The deceased was identified as Kuntala Nayak, 55, wife of Banshidhar Nayak in the village. On being informed, police arrested a man and his son for the murder and launched a manhunt to nab the third accused. The accused were identified as Rabi Nayak and his son Mangulu Nayak in the village. Another of Rabi's son, Puria Nayak, who is also an accused in the case, is presently absconding.

The incident occurred when Banshidhar was putting up a fence around his house at around

5pm, Friday. In the meantime, Rabi reached the spot and picked up a fight with the couple. His son Mangulu and Puria also joined him and allegedly thrashed the couple. The panic-stricken couple fled from their house and took shelter in another person's house in the village, leaving the door open.

Later at night, the couple came to put a lock on the door when Rabi and his two sons allegedly hit Kuntala on the head with a stick. She died on the spot due to excessive bleeding. On being informed, Dhenkikote beat house police rushed to the spot, recovered the body and sent it for post-mortem. Ghatagaon SDPO Prabhat Tripathy also visited the crime scene. During investigation, police nabbed Mangulu from Dhenkikote market and his father from his residence.

# Fisherman electrocuted

**Khallikote:** A fisherman died after he reportedly got electrocuted while making a country made boat at Pathara Jetty on the shores of Chilika lake, under this police limits, in Ganjam district Friday evening, police said Saturday. The deceased fisherman has been identified as Dhruva Tahal, 35, a resident of Kandarapada village under Khallikote police station limits.

According to sources, while making a boat near Pathara jetty on the shores of Chilika lake Friday evening, Dhruva got electrocuted. He was rescued in an unconscious state and rushed to the Khallikote community health centre where doctors declared him dead. On being informed, as per the instructions of Bhejput police outpost in charge, Debasish Mishra, sub-inspector Bhakta Charan Mukhi reached the hospital Saturday morning. He took custody of the body and sent it to MKCG Medical College and Hospital at Berhampur for post-mortem. A case of unnatural death (No-12/24) has been registered at Khallikote police station in this regard.

# At 12, this cycling prodigy completed Firefox MTB Shimla

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rourkela, May 18:** At a tender age of 12 he is competing with people much elder to him in an arduous game like mountain terrain biking, and winning too.

Meet Tanush Kohli, 12, a Standard VI student of the Delhi Public School (DPS) here, who made the sport a passion ever since he turned eight when he first rode a cycle. "It just happened accidentally. We bought a small learner's cycle for him with stays on either side, like every family does for their children of that age. Little did we know that it was the beginning of his tryst with cycling before he graduated to much tougher Mountain Terrain Bikes (MTBs)," said Tanush's father Akhil Kohli, an



industrialist. Tanush, who is at present in New Delhi, recently participated in one of the challenging MTB cycling competitions of the country, Firefox MTB Shimla. "It consists of a 120 km stretch ride passing through the treacherous terrains of Himalayas. Tanush completed the path in two days time," said Akhil. The participants, who age between

10 and 50 years, had to complete 70 km on the first day, while the remaining 50 km was to be covered on the second day, he said.

"But many seasoned and older cyclists left the race half way through as the ride is very taxing. However, my son remained struck and completed the race without any problem. He was tired, but enjoyed the challenge," Akhil said. And on completing the race, Tanush received the 'finisher medal' from the organisers, he said.

Prior to that, Tanush had participated in various cycling events and competitions in Odisha and Bengaluru. "He won several prizes in Bengaluru. He is also participating in the 50 km category in Odisha," informed the boy's father. Usually, Tanush begins his day



**Research Scholars' Week** Celebrating Research and Innovation 17-19 May 2024

Format - C 7	
For Political parties to publish in the newspaper, social media platforms & website of the Party. Information regarding individuals with pending criminal cases, who have been selected as candidates, along with the reasons for such selection, as also as to why other individuals without criminal antecedent could not be selected as candidates :-	
(As per the Commission directions issued in pursuance of the order dated 13.02.2020 of the Honorable Supreme Court in Contempt Petition (C) No. 2192 of 2018 in WP(C) No. 536 of 2011.)	
Name of Political Party : <b>INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS.</b>	
Name of the State/UT : <b>ODISHA.</b>	
1. Name of the Constituency : <b>KHALLIKOTE</b> Assembly Constituency, No. - 126	
Name of Candidate : <b>CHITRASEN BEHERA</b>	
Sl. No.	
1.	Criminal Antecedents
a	Nature of Offences :-
b	Case No.
c	Name of the Court
d	Whether charged has been framed or not (YES/NO)
e	Date of conviction if any
f	Date of punishment undergone, if any
g	Any other information required to be given
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words.)

In the case of election to Council of States or election to Assembly Council by MLA mentioned the election concerned in place of name of constituency.

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Tender No.	81245314
Description of Materials :	DESKTOP COMPUTER, Quantity : 65 Nos.
Tender Closing Time and Date :	10.06.2024, 1500 Hrs.
Senior Divisional Materials Manager /	Khurda Road
PR-131/P/24-25	

EAST COAST RAILWAY	
1) E-Tender Notice No. ST-SBP-TENDER-2024-11, Dt. 10.05.2024	
NAME OF WORK :	ANNUAL REPAIR CONTRACT (ARC) OF DIGITAL AXLE COUNTER (SSD/AC, HASSD/AC) SYSTEM OF M/S G. G. TRONICS MAKE AT SAMBALPUR DIVISION FOR THREE (03) YEARS.
Tender Value in (₹) :	71,80,380.90, EMD (₹) : 1,43,600.00, Tender Document Cost: (₹) : 5,900.00
2) E-Tender Notice No. ST-SBP-TENDER-2024-12, Dt. 10.05.2024	
NAME OF WORK :	COMPREHENSIVE ANNUAL MAINTENANCE CONTRACT (CAMC) OF SMPs BASED POWER SUPPLY SYSTEM BY M/S STATCON ELECTRONICS INDIA LTD. AT 84 LOCATIONS OVER SAMBALPUR DIVISION FOR 3 (THREE) YEARS.
Tender Value in (₹) :	2,92,95,241.50, EMD (₹) : 2,96,500.00, Tender Document Cost: (₹) : 11,800.00
Date and time of closing of Tender : At 1100 Hrs. of 03.06.2024 (for Sl. No. 1), & At 1100 Hrs. of 04.06.2024 (for Sl. No. 2).	
No manual offers sent by Post / Courier / Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.	
Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-Tenders is available in website : <a href="https://www.ireps.gov.in">https://www.ireps.gov.in</a>	
Note : The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 15 (Fifteen) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / corrigendum issued for this tender.	
Divisional Railway Manager (S&T) /	Sambalpur
PR-124/P/24-25	

FOCUS POLITICS

# A VIEW FROM SOUTH



YSRCP wants to keep its space, Congress which won the recent Assembly elections in Telangana wants a greater share, while the BJP is hoping to make a dent

Now that the votes have been cast there is a lot of speculation about the results in the first week of June from the two Telugu speaking states of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. Will the BJP move beyond a few urban parts of Telangana or will the Congress keep its new stronghold? How far will Chandrababu Naidu, now in alliance with the BJP, get with Jagan Reddy's YSRCP, the BJP's former ally? The questions surround the fate of 17 Lok Sabha seats in Telangana and 25 in Andhra after old alliances have made way for newly forged ties in a battleground that Jagan Reddy has described as his "Kurukshetra." The YSRCP is contesting all 25 Lok Sabha seats and is also battling to retain Andhra where Assembly elections were simultaneously held.

The state was bifurcated in 2014 to form Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. For the last ten years the TRS under K Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR) has ruled Telangana. Originally an important member of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) led by Chandrababu Naidu, KCR rebelled because of his career not advancing rapidly and propagated the Telangana cause. The demand for Telangana has been around since the early 70s. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had doused the fire by making a Telangana man the chief minister of the undivided state of Andhra Pradesh. This was none other than PV Narasimha Rao who two decades later became the Prime Minister. But the old demand came up once again in 1990s as locals were troubled by NT Rama Rao's ideas of 'Andhrification'. This meant the import of Andhra culture into Telangana areas. The two areas were different in food habits and local cultures and even how they spoke Telugu.

KCR's plan for Telangana was successful because he was supported by the Congress, then the principal Opposition in the state. The Congress allowed the creation of the new state and tied up with TRS under KCR to consolidate their political position against Chandrababu Naidu who was part of the BJP-led NDA. But KCR even as he made of a show of aligning with the Congress ditched the party in the elections that followed the creation of Telangana in 2014. Incidentally KCR had successfully lobbied with the public to show he was the sole creator of Telangana and champion of its cause as he had fought hard for this including a fast unto death. He took advantage of the sentiment, winning 63 seats of the total 119 seats. The Congress came a poor second with 21 seats. He won again in 2019.

Once in power, KCR converted the Telangana government into his personal fiefdom ruling the state with son KT Rama Rao and nephew Harish Rao as important ministers. His daughter K Kavita became an MP and played a key role. Many of his ministers and important leaders were from his own Velama caste. A prosperous caste, the Velamas are not numerous. Even Velama businessmen were promoted. In his battle for Telangana, large sections of civil society had supported KCR. But once in power KCR cut himself off from these sections, losing his support base without realising it.

The new state required huge resources. How would Telangana get this? His son KT Rama Rao came up with the plan to intensify the commercialisation of Hyderabad. He stated so in 2014 when asked how he would find

resources for the newly created state. "We will expand Hyderabad so much that it - in a way - covers the entire state," he said. This expansion plan was initiated by predecessor N Chandrababu Naidu who had created the Hi-tech City and a global scale airport and brought in new investments in the education and IT sectors. The KCR regime went ahead with fancier real estate, buildings and a financial district coming up. All this led to land prices going up and brought in new investors from Bangalore and Mumbai among other places. A new metro rail by L&T covering large parts of the city was also initiated. Visitors from other metro cities were highly impressed. All this increased the revenues of the government which was spent in creating more roads, dams and irrigation works. But the government failed to keep effective control on the work of contractors. As a result, shoddy roads and irrigation led to public angst which could show up in the election results.

Andhra had been a bastion of Congress from the beginning. So much so that when ousted from the north just after the Emergency, the party maintained its position in Andhra. But the bifurcation demolished the Congress. The party drew a blank and many sitting Union ministers lost the election. Chandrababu Naidu who was earlier chief minister of united Andhra won the election. New Andhra had no capital and ear-

The writer is a senior journalist and author based in Hyderabad.

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Kingshuk Nag

**THE BJP MAKING AN EFFORT TO ENTER SOUTH INDIA RECENTLY TIED UP WITH TDP BREAKING ITS EARLIER UNWRITTEN ALLIANCE WITH YSRCP**



Aakar Patel

**In India, human rights defenders languish in detention for years without trial under various draconian laws including UAPA, with not a squeal from the NHRC**

To stand for the Truth in all circumstances, to declare it if necessary in the teeth of the worst opposition and to be ready to all you can for its sake, is the definition of heroism.

THE MOTHER



## Whither Human Rights

On 13 May this year, a headline was published which read: "UN-linked body defers NHRC-India accreditation for second year in a row." Beneath this was the line "The decision could now affect India's ability to vote at the Human Rights Council and some UNGA bodies."

NHRC stands for the National Human Rights Commission and this column is about why its accreditation was deferred. Last year, on 9 March, a group of non-governmental organisations (including mine) wrote to the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI), the UN-linked body. We told it to review India's accreditation status because the NHRC's lack of independence, pluralism, diversity, and accountability were contrary to United Nations principles on national institutions (called 'The Paris Principles').

Taking cognisance of our letter and other civil society submissions, the global body deferred NHRC's re-accreditation by 12 months after considering its failure to effectively discharge its mandates to respond to the escalating human rights violations in India. NHRC was also told to improve its processes and functions, but a year later this had not happened. This is what led to the second deferral of accreditation.

So what were the things contrary to the Paris Principles? First was a lack of independence. Both in the appointing of the NHRC's functionaries and its functioning. The chairperson and other members of the NHRC are appointed by the President based on the recommendation of a committee consisting of the Prime Minister, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Minister of Home Affairs, Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, and the Deputy Chairperson of the Rajya Sabha. However, since 2019 the post of the Opposition leader in the Lok Sabha has been vacant, leaving only a single Opposition voice in the selection committee.

After his retirement from the Supreme Court, Arun Mishra was made as chair on 31 May, 2021, despite strong disagreement by the lone Opposition voice in the selection committee. The second problem was that the NHRC has police officers investigate rights violations by the State including by the police. This is a conflict of interest, not independence from government interference. Despite this being pointed out in the 2023 review, the Modi government did not begin a legislative process to correct it or invite a consultation to begin it.

In November 2023, seven former IPS officers were appointed by the NHRC as special monitors. One of them, accused of corruption in 2018 while working as Special Director of CBI, India's federal investigation agency, was given the responsibility to oversee the thematic areas of terrorism, counterinsurgency, communal riots and violence. A former director of the national Intelligence Bureau was made a member of the commission.

India has been repeatedly told of concerns about the lack of diversity in the NHRC, and asked to have a "pluralistic balance in its composition and staff" by ensuring the representation of a diverse Indian society including, but not limited to religious or ethnic minorities. This of course was not done in this country where the prime minister rants against minorities constantly including in his elections speeches.

Yet another issue was NHRC's lack of effective engagement with civil society and human rights defenders in India. Towards this end the NHRC was asked to interpret its mandate in a "broad and purposive manner to promote a progressive definition of human rights" and told to address all human rights violations and ensure consistent follow up with State authorities. This may surprise those who have bought this government's framing of the matter where all those who oppose its violence are 'anti-nationals'. However, that is not how the world views it and proper democracies must engage with civil society.

In India, human rights defenders languish in detention for years without trial under various draconian laws including UAPA, with not a squeal from the NHRC. This includes those detained in connection with the Bhima Koregaon-Elgar Parishad case for more than five years; Kashmiri human rights defender Khurram Parvez who has been in detention since November 2021; and Umar Khalid. The NHRC has not taken any concrete steps to respond to the situation of the HRDs or intervene in a timely manner despite various UN special rapporteurs calling on Indian authorities to release these individuals. The NHRC has been next to useless on the issue of Manipur, Jammu and Kashmir, communal violence in Haryana and Uttarakhand and other ones that made the headlines. It has not covered itself in glory and the predicament it and the government find itself in is of their own making.

India holds an A rating currently and deferral of re-accreditation means its A rating is under threat. That further means that the NHRC stands to lose its voting position in the United Nations Human Rights Council and other bodies. This can only be corrected by doing the right thing, which nobody is stopping the government from doing.

All of us, including the signatories to that letter, want to see India accredited at the highest level on the global body. However, such an accreditation should be an honest one, reflective of a strong and independent human rights body in India committed in particular to responding to the rights violations by the State. It should not be an automatic right given to the self-appointed mother of democracy.

### WISDOM CORNER

There are two kinds of people one can call reasonable: those who serve God with all their heart because they know him, and those who seek him with all their heart because they do not know him. **BLAISE PASCAL**

Life is a series of experiences, each one of which makes us bigger, even though sometimes it is hard to realize this. For the world was built to develop character, and we must learn that the setbacks and grieves which we endure help us in our marching onward. **HENRY FORD**

Elegance is usually confused with superficiality, fashion, lack of depth. This is a serious mistake: human beings need to have elegance in their actions and in their posture because this word is synonymous with good taste, amiability, equilibrium and harmony. **PAULO COELHO**

### THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1536: Having been found guilty on charges of adultery, Anne Boleyn—the second wife of King Henry VIII of England and the mother of Queen Elizabeth I—was beheaded.
- 1571: Spanish explorer Miguel López de Legazpi established the city of Manila in the Philippines.
- 1643: During the Thirty Years' War, the French army—led by Louis II de Bourbon—defeated the Spanish in the Battle of Rocroi, ending Spain's military ascendancy in Europe.
- 1802: Napoleon created the Legion of Honour, the premier order of the French republic.

### SPECTRUM LEADERSHIP

# Mastering the art of pacing & leading

Leading refers to guiding or influencing individual or team members to achieve desired outcome. Most of us are conversant with this style which often involves inspiring, motivating, and setting an example for others to follow while pacing, on the other hand, involves matching or synchronising with someone else's behaviour, mood, or communication style. It's about being in harmony with the other person's pace, whether it's in a conversation, negotiation, or interaction. Both are important skills in communication and leadership, and understanding when to lead and when to pace can significantly contribute to the team's output.

When there is ambiguity or uncertainty, leading can provide clarity and direction. In emergencies, taking the lead from front can be crucial for quick decision-making and response. During early stages of a relationship or interaction, pacing allows us to establish rapport by mirroring the other person's behaviour, tone, or communication style.

In many cases, a combination of leading and pacing may be

necessary, depending on the dynamics of the situation and the individuals involved. Let us take the example in project management context - how a combination of these two approaches can be useful. Pacing and leading in project management involves understanding and influencing the psychological and emotional states of team members to enhance collaboration, productivity, and project success. Project managers can pace by observing and matching team members' communication styles, preferences, and working rhythms. This helps create a positive and supportive environment where team members feel understood and valued. During periods of change or uncertainty, pacing involves acknowledging team members' apprehensions and concerns. Project managers can then lead by providing reassurance, clarity, and support to navigate through the changes effectively. Pacing allows project managers to empathise with conflicting viewpoints and emotions within the team. By acknowledging and validating these feelings, project managers can

lead by facilitating constructive dialogue, finding common ground, and resolving conflicts collaboratively.

As the former CEO of PepsiCo, Indra Nooyi demonstrated exceptional pacing and leading skills. She paced by actively listening to consumers and stakeholders, understanding their evolving preferences and demands in the food and beverage industry. Nooyi also led by championing diversity and inclusion within PepsiCo, fostering a culture of innovation and collaboration.

Let us not forget Mahatma Gandhi, who led India to Independence from British rule through nonviolent resistance and civil disobedience. His unwavering commitment to his principles inspired millions to join the struggle for freedom and social justice. Gandhi deeply empathised with the struggles of the Indian people, especially the marginalised and oppressed. He paced his actions with the realities of their lives, understanding their hardships and empowering them to be agents of change in their own communities. The success rate of leaders

who follow a combination of leading and pacing approaches can vary depending on several factors, including the leader's effectiveness, the nature of the situation, and the context in which they operate. Leaders who can flexibly switch between leading and pacing based on the needs of the situation tend to be more successful. Effective communication is crucial for both leading and pacing. Leaders who can articulate a clear vision and direction while also actively listening to and understanding the perspectives of others tend to be more successful in rallying support and fostering collaboration.

Ultimately, the success of leaders who follow a leading and pacing approach is measured by the outcomes they achieve. Leaders who can effectively balance direction-setting with relationship-building tend to be more successful in achieving their goals while maintaining positive relationships with their stakeholders.

The writer is a senior human resource professional.



Debabrata Dash

**LEADERS WHO CAN FLEXIBLY SWITCH BETWEEN LEADING AND PACING BASED ON THE NEEDS OF THE SITUATION TEND TO BE MORE SUCCESSFUL**

### Climate challenge

Sir, This refers to "Climate change affecting 85% of Indians: Survey," Orissa POST, May 18. Home to over 1.4 billion people, India has the highest population in the world. India is also one of the fastest growing economies, but since it's still considered to be industrialising, India's exceptional development risks propelling global greenhouse gas emissions even higher. India is in a difficult position - it needs to nurture economic development that supports its 1.4 billion population and their growing economic aspirations, while also meeting global and national climate change targets. Since India is a developing country in the midst of rapid expansion. It's currently at a fork in the road and the decision as to which direction to take has the potential to impact not only its own future, but also the climate future of the world. If India chooses rapid expansion based on the quick and easy, and tried and tested coal-based energy system, it's hard to see how India can meet its climate targets. However, if it chooses to base its growing energy grid on renewable energy sources and low carbon options, it will provide an inspirational blueprint for other rapidly growing developing countries. However, it's not enough for India alone to take action. The actions of the Global North will play a role too. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA) India will need support from the Global North to the tune of \$1.4 trillion worth of investment. This is the only way India can realistically align its energy sector with global climate change targets.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

### Undignified remarks

Sir, This refers to "EC show-cause to BJP's Abhijit Gangopadhyay," Orissa POST, May 18. I am really at a loss how can a former judge of Calcutta High Court dare abuse a chief minister of the state in such in-temperate language. Justice Gangopadhyay has just forgotten that until recently, he was in the judiciary commanding respect from the people. Even for the sake of politics, he should not use improper, injudicious and undignified remarks against the head of a state. The Election Commission has rightly taken exceptions to his remarks and the people expect the Commission to not find any alibi for him.

Arun Gupta, KOLKATA

## 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)

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# LS polls: Sixth schedule, jobs key issues in Ladakh

*Buddhist-dominated Leh and Shia Muslim-majority Kargil have come together over four demands -- safeguards under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, statehood, reservation in jobs for locals and a separate public service commission and two Lok Sabha seats for the region*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Leh/Kargil, May 18:** As Ladakh votes to elect its MP for the first time since the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution, safeguards under the sixth schedule, statehood and employment are the key issues in the two distant districts of the constituency that is the largest in the country in terms of area.

Spread over more than 59,000 square kilometres -- around 40 times the size of Delhi -- the two districts of Leh and Kargil are divided by geography and religion. Buddhist-dominated Leh and Shia Muslim-majority Kargil have come together over four demands -- safeguards under the sixth schedule of the Constitution, statehood, reservation in jobs for locals and a separate public service commission and two Lok Sabha seats for the region.

After the abrogation of Article 370, Ladakh, which shares its border with both Pakistan and China, was carved out as a Union Territory without legislature. While Leh welcomed the move initially, people in Kargil were unhappy about the split. However, soon the concerns over safeguards for land and jobs took



over, and protests erupted.

Padma Stanzin, a student leader from Leh, said employment is a major concern as not a single recruitment on a gazetted post has taken place since 2019.

"We were assured of better employment opportunities but that has failed. Some government recruitment has taken place, but all for class-4 posts," Stanzin told PTI.

Similar concerns were raised by Nordon, a young woman from Leh who stressed that the sixth schedule is not just a political demand but that of the people.

"More than 90 per cent of the population here is tribal. Jobs are a major concern as Ladakh has one of the highest rates of unemployment in the country," she said. "Any party that promises to fulfil our demands will get our support," Nordon said.

The two main political parties in Ladakh are the BJP, which has fielded Leh Autonomous

Spread over more than 59,000 square, the two districts of Leh and Kargil are divided by geography and religion

The BJP's manifesto is silent on the sixth schedule and statehood, but Gyalson and other leaders of the party, during their campaign, have assured the locals that the talks will continue.

Locals say there is anger against the BJP for not keeping its word on the sixth schedule, which was promised in the run-up to the 2019 Lok Sabha polls as well as during the Leh hill council polls in 2020.

"We were assured safeguards, but nothing has happened so far. That is why we are demanding the sixth schedule so that our interests can be protected. For that a rally was held March 3 and then from March 6, Sonam Wangchuk sat on a fast," Stanzin said. A sit-in protest that started in Leh March 6 went on for 66 days and was suspended ahead of the election. Renowned educationist and social reformer Sonam Wangchuk had led the protest.

Mehdi Shah from Turtuk, one of the remotest villages of India,

says there is fear over losing the cultural identity as well as damage to the environment.

"There is a fear of losing our cultural identity and the fragile ecosystem being damaged if rampant development takes place. That is why the demand for the sixth schedule has become the main issue in this election," he said.

Haji Riyaz Ahmed, a septuagenarian who runs a shop in the Leh market, agrees that employment and livelihood are a major concern.

"Earlier, one could get a job after graduation. Now, even with a PhD, people are unable to get jobs. The employment that comes in the tourist season is temporary. Even in this market, there are only a few shops that belong to Ladakhis," he said.

He stressed that the focus should be on promoting cottage industry centred around local products like apricots, Leh berry and Pashmina. He also countered the Leh versus Kargil narrative and said the voters are focused on their demands for preserving their culture and environment.

More than 200 kilometres away in Kargil, people voice similar concerns. While they say the Union Territory status was the demand of Leh, the four-point demand is now the key issue.

Haji Mohammad Qasim says Article 370 is not an issue for them, but they want someone from Kargil to represent them this time. "Article 370 is not an issue. This time people want someone from Kargil to represent the constituency. Had the Congress fielded someone from here, we would have supported him. Now, we have an independent candidate and we are united in backing him," he said.

Fayaz Hojazi said employment and education opportunities are the main concern, along with the sixth schedule and statehood.

# Rousing welcome to Omar in Hizbul chief's village



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Soibugh, May 18:** Former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah received a rousing reception on Saturday from a large number of women when he reached this central Kashmir village, once a hotbed of militancy, on the last day of campaign for the fifth phase of Lok Sabha polls.

The women at the ancestral village of Syed Salahuddin, the Pakistan-based supreme commander of proscribed terror outfit Hizbul Mujahideen, welcomed him with traditional 'Wanwun' (folk songs) to express their love for their leader, who is the National Conference (NC) candidate from the Baramulla constituency.

The cavalcade of the NC vice president was showered with candies and flower petals by the enthusiastic supporters as he moved through the village in the Budgam district.

Seeking people's support, Abdullah said he will visit villages and interact with them to hear their issues sometime after the conclusion of the ongoing general elections.

He was on a roadshow on the last day of campaigning in the

Beerwah assembly segment which he won in the 2014 state elections.

The Baramulla parliamentary constituency is going to polls in the fifth phase May 20. The campaign for this phase of polls ended Saturday evening.

Besides Abdullah, there are 21 other candidates in the fray including former separatist Sajad Lone, who later became a minister, former MLA Sheikh Abdul Rashid alias 'Engineer Rashid', who is currently lodged in the Tihar jail, and the PDP's former Rajya Sabha member Fayaz Ahmad Mir.

As one of its residents emerged as the most wanted terrorist commander, the scene at the Soibugh village was altogether a different.

With the eruption of terrorism in the Valley in early 1990s and one of its residents emerging as the most wanted terrorist commander, the scene at the Soibugh village in previous elections was totally different than what is being seen in the 2024 polls.

Its residents, including men, women and children, danced on the road with the NC flags to welcome Abdullah, and raised slogans in his praise.

# With tiger on prowl, 36 villages put on alert

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhopal, May 18:** Forest authorities have sounded a red alert for 36 villages in Madhya Pradesh's Raisen district as a tiger is on the prowl after killing a 62-year-old man in the region close to the capital Bhopal, an official said Saturday.

The half-eaten body of the victim, Maniram Jatav, a resident of Neemkheda village, was found on Wednesday in the east range of the Raisen forest division, about 35 km from Bhopal district headquarters, the official said.

The big cat was seen moving around and changing its location frequently, he said.

The attack has caused panic among villages as such killings are unheard of in the forested areas around Bhopal.

"We are monitoring the movements of the big cat. A red alert was sounded Friday for 36 villages spread over 150 sq km. People have been asked not to venture into the forests till the animal is captured and the forest department intimates them," Raisen divisional forest officer (DFO) Vijay Kumar told PTI.

The red alert is issued when there is a threat to human life by a wild animal, he said.

At least 100 people, including forest officials and volunteers from the NGOs, Wildlife Conservation Trust and Tinsa Foundation, are monitoring the tiger's locations, he said.

There are 100 cameras installed in the area. Teams on foot and in vehicles and people

in a control room are analysing the footage to figure out the tiger's next move, the DFO said.

Tiger sightings were not new in the forests of the 36 villages, and such movements have been noticed in the region since 2017, he said.

"We believe the big cat entered the area from Mhow in Indore," he said.

Following the attack, residents of Neemkheda village are not stepping out of their houses alone or without a stick.

The DFO said a post-mortem confirmed that the deceased was killed by a tiger.

The victim had ventured into the forest to pluck tendu leaves used in beedis, he added.

Speaking on behalf of his wife, Pooja Jatav, who is the sarpanch of Neemkheda village, Purshottam Jatav said people in the area were not venturing out at night.

"About three months ago, a tiger killed some cattle in our village. We informed the forest officials and they promptly provided compensation," he said.

According to forest officials, the killer tiger might have ventured out of Ratapani Wildlife Sanctuary in the Obaidullahganj forest division of Raisen.

Ratapani was home to more than 60 big cats.

Since the Raisen district covers a large forest area, it is divided into the Raisen and Obaidullahganj forest divisions.

Madhya Pradesh has the highest number of 785 tigers in India, according to the latest official big cats count released last year.



# 300 rare weapons on display at BSF's Arms Museum in Indore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Indore, May 18:** Have you seen a gun that looks like a stick from the outside but is capable of killing someone when its trigger is pulled and the bullet hits the target?

At least three such 'stick guns' are on display at the Arms Museum of the Central School of Armament and Warfare Skills (CSWT) of the Border Security Force (BSF) in Madhya Pradesh's Indore.

Set up in 1967 based on the vision of BSF Director General K F Rustomjee, the museum is home to 300 rare weapons, officials said Friday on the eve of International Museum Day, observed May 18.

The museum's collection, sourced from different places, includes big weapons such as rocket launchers and machine guns of various sizes to mini pistols that can fit into one's palm, they said.

Talking to PTI, CSWT Inspector General BS Rawat said the museum displays weapons from the 14th century to the later



periods. "The museum gives you a glimpse of weapons used by man since the beginning and how they gradually evolved by the first and second World Wars," he said.

Rawat said the facility had also housed the pistol that freedom fighter Bhagat Singh used to kill British officer JP Saunders on December 17, 1928, in Lahore.

The semi-automatic pistol, developed by US-based weapons manufacturer Colts, was sent to Punjab in 2017 fol-

lowing the directions of the Union Home Ministry and is currently on display at a museum at Hussainiwala in Ferozepur district.

A portrait of this pistol is at the arms museum in honour of the martyred freedom fighter, he said.

The senior officer further said personnel who train at CSWT are introduced to these weapons to learn the shortcomings of the indigenous and foreign weapons of various periods.

# Focus on conservation of dwindling 'Noorjahan' mango trees

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Indore, May 18:** The authorities in Madhya Pradesh plan to renew efforts to multiply the number of rare 'Noorjahan' mango trees, which has shrunk to 10, in the Katthiwada area of Alirajpur district in the state, officials said.

Thought to be of Afghan origin, the Noorjahan mango variety is known for its big size, weighing between 3.5 kg and 4.5 kg.

"Scientific efforts should be intensified for the conservation of Noorjahan in Alirajpur district's Katthiwada area," said Indore Division Commissioner (Revenue) Deepak Singh during a meeting of the Horticulture Department here.

Expressing concern over the dwindling number of the mango



trees, mostly confined to the Alirajpur district, he instructed the forest department to pre-

pare new saplings of Noorjahan with the help of tissue culture. "Merely 10 fruit-bearing trees

of Noorjahan mangoes are left. We have not given up. We are trying to multiply their num-

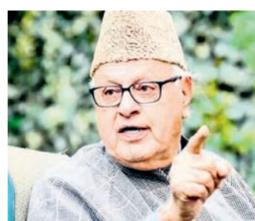
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Poonch/Jammu, May 18:** A National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi Saturday of dividing the people of the country on the basis of religion, saying his recent statements have even contradicted his own slogan of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas."

The former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister claimed that the hatred for Muslims has gone up ever since the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) assumed power at the Centre in 2014, while people are suffering due to inflation and growing unemployment.

"I have heard the (election) speeches of almost all prime ministers from Jawaharlal Nehru and except Modi, everyone always talked about uniting people as that is the guarantee for our success as a country," Abdullah said.

"His (Modi's) recent statements where he is talking about Muslims as outsiders, giving birth to more children, fright-



ening Hindus by claiming that their properties, including the mangalsutras of their women, will be taken and distributed among the minority community have no parallel. We Muslims only want our rights and have no intention to usurp the rights of others," he added, addressing a Lok Sabha poll rally in the Surankote area of Poonch district.

The rally was jointly organised by the NC and the Congress in support of Mian Altaf, the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) candidate from the Anantnag-Rajouri Lok Sabha constituency that is scheduled to go to polls on May 25.

ber to 200 in the next five years by plantation. We will not let this species become extinct," said Dr R K Yadav, head of Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Alirajpur.

He added that a few decades ago, the maximum weight of a Noorjahan mango used to be up to 4.5 kilograms, which has now reduced to between 3.5 and 3.8 kg.

Mango grower Shivraj Singh Jadhav, who owns three Noorjahan trees, said the yield is low this time.

"My three trees brought forth just 20 mangoes. Unseasonal rains and storms came as a cropper to the yield," said Jadhav.

He said his garden produced the heaviest "Noorjahan" of 3.8 kg that fetched him ₹2,000 last year. The Noorjahan variety tree blooms in January and mangoes are up for sale in June when they turn ripe, Jadhav added.



BJD's Aska Assembly nominee Manjula Swain participating in a road show in Aska town as campaigning comes to end, Saturday



Women workers of BJP leading a bike rally for party's Sambalpur Lok Sabha nominee Dharmendra Pradhan and Sambalpur Assembly nominee Jayanarayan Mishra at Sambalpur, Saturday



Former minister Sarat Rout and other Congress leaders appealing voters to vote for party's Sukinda Assembly nominee Bibhu Bhushan Rout at a press meet held at Danagadi Congress Bhawan in Jajpur district, Saturday

## 'Political tourists' should first focus on their own states: Naveen

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, May 18:** Lashing out at visiting Union ministers and chief ministers of BJP-ruled states, BJD chief Naveen Patnaik Saturday said that "political tourists" promising to make Odisha number one in the country should first concentrate on their own states.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and chief ministers of BJP-ruled Assam, Chhattisgarh and Haryana are campaigning for party candidates in Odisha, where simultaneous Lok Sabha and Assembly elections are underway. Taking a dig at his Assam counterpart Himanta Biswa Sarma, the Odisha CM said in a video message, "The per capita deficit (debt) of his state is double that of Odisha. He should really look into the matter in his own state. The people of Odisha are laughing at them."



"BJP CMs and Central ministers are coming to Odisha and promising to make it number one in the country. I think they should first concentrate on their own states," Patnaik said. Patnaik claimed such "political tourists" visit Odisha only during elections and then disappear and their speeches have no effect on the people of the state.

**Pradhan responds**  
Responding to the CM's "political tourist" jibe, Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan said, "How could the prime minister, Union home minister and BJP president be political tourists? He (Patnaik) could not arrange anyone to accompany him to campaigning, so he hired a person from Tamil Nadu."

## BJP wants to make India Opposition free: Pilot

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Balasure, May 18:** Accusing the BJP of engaging in vendetta politics, senior Congress leader Sachin Pilot Saturday alleged that the saffron party wants to make India "opposition free". Addressing an election rally in Balasure Lok Sabha constituency in favour of party candidate and former Union minister Srikanth Jena, Pilot accused the Narendra Modi government at the Centre of completely failing to check the prices of essential commodities, including fuel and cooking gas. "People across the country have made up their minds to change the Central government, which has failed to fulfill its



promises of 'acche din', he asserted. "BJP wants to make India opposition free. They have frozen the bank accounts of the Congress... two chief ministers were sent to jail," he said. Also, the credibility of major constitutional bodies is also at stake due to the autocratic style

of functioning, Pilot alleged. "Attempts are being made to weaken the judiciary, Election Commission and media... this pose a grave danger to democracy," he said. On the four phases of elections completed so far, Pilot claimed that the BJP is already on the back foot in several states in the north, including Rajasthan, where it is in power. The Congress leader also attacked the BJD government headed by Naveen Patnaik, calling it "non-performing" and alleged that "rampant corruption prevails in Odisha". He alleged that both BJD and BJP have "common interests" which were reflected in their past actions.

## '5 stations in Sundargarh to be made world class'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Rourkela/Bhubaneswar, May 18:** Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw Saturday said five stations falling under the Sundargarh Lok Sabha constituency will be redeveloped as world-class ones. Bimalgarh, Rajgangpur, Panposh, Rourkela and Hemgir are going to become world-class railway stations, he said while speaking to media persons during campaigning for BJP candidate in the Bonai Assembly segment. Asked about the status of the Talcher-Bimalgarh railway link, he said, "It will be completed soon. This year, ₹550 crore has been provided in the budget for the new railway line. The state government is not providing the



required land for this important link. But we are working on it." Over 28 km of the new railway line on the Talcher-Bimalgarh route has been completed. "The railway tracks have come up to Samal from Talcher and this year the link up to Khamar will be completed. From the Bimalgarh side, the work needs to be expedited but it depends on the availability of land," the railway minister said. Around 100 4G mobile towers have been set up in the Bonai

area, he added. "Odisha has got a special place in the PM's heart. Modi ji is always serious about Odisha's development and how the dreams of the Odias are fulfilled," Vaishnaw said. He exuded confidence that the BJP will form the government in Odisha in this election. The second round of the simultaneous elections to five Lok Sabha seats and 35 Assembly seats in Odisha will be held May 20. BJP leader and veteran Bollywood actress Hema Malini Saturday campaigned for Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and local MLA candidate Subash Panigrahi in Deogarh district. She also joined the campaigning trail in the Pallahara Assembly segment in the Dhenkanal district.

## Art 370 buried in 'kabristan': Modi

AGENCIES

**Sonapat (Haryana), May 18:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi Saturday kept up the attack on the Congress, saying it should forget the "dream" of bringing back Article 370 as it has been "buried" in the "kabristan (graveyard)". Addressing a rally at Gohana, his second of the day in Haryana after one at Ambala, Modi referred to the Lok Sabha polls as a "Kurukshetra (battle)" in which "there is development on one hand and 'vote jihad' on the other". Striking a chord with the locals, Modi referred to Gohana's famous "Matu Ram ki jalebi" to target the Opposition INDIA bloc, saying it has a formula of having five prime ministers in five years if they come to power. "Ask them is the prime minister's post our Matu Ram ki jalebi," he told the crowd. "In the 2024 'kurukshetra', there is development on one hand and 'vote jihad' on the other," he said. "I want to ask the people of Haryana... who will win?" He waited for the crowd to respond before saying, "Your reply

has decided 'Phir Ek Baar', and the crowd went, "Modi Sarkar." Modi said now the Congress is not even hiding its "desh-vidrohi agenda (anti-national agenda)". They are saying openly what Modi did in 10 years they will reverse it if they come to power, he said. But their "dream" of bringing Article 370 back will never be fulfilled, he added. "They are saying that we will restore Article 370 in Kashmir... This means once again a free run for terrorism and bloodshed in the Valley." "From the brave land of Haryana, I want to tell those associated with the Congress that only tricolour will fly in Kashmir now," he said. "Forget the dream of bringing back 370 in Kashmir. And if you try to do it "lene k dene padd jayenge' (you will pay very heavy price)," he said. "Dhara 370 ki deewar hamne kabristan me gaad di hai... We have buried the hurdle of Article 370 in the kabristan (graveyard)." Earlier at the Ambala poll rally too, Modi attacked the Congress and said it was his



"dhakad" (strong) government that removed the Article 370 impediment and as a result, Jammu and Kashmir is now moving on the path of progress. Back at Gohana in Sonapat, Modi said the Congress is out of power for 10 years and therefore they are jittery. They are remembering their old days when the "shahi parivar" used to run government with a remote control, he said, adding all government schemes used to be in the name of only one family and there was corruption too. During the Congress rule, he said, firing at the borders and ceasefire violations used to be in the headlines regularly. But under his government,

he said, the situation has changed even though the enemy is the same. It is not Modi, but the power of a vote of people which changed the situation, he added. Modi said he gave the soldiers, including the brave soldiers from Haryana, guarding the borders a free hand. The Congress and INDIA alliance are not able to digest these decisions, Modi said. "They cannot see this situation of Pakistan. Now people associated with the Congress have become Pakistan's spokespersons and are saying the neighbouring country has nuclear bomb." "Tell me, should India be scared of Pakistan?" he asked the gathering. "Ye Modi ka daur hai, hum ghar mein ghus ke marte hai (This is Modi's period, we hit the enemy inside its territory)." He railed against the Opposition INDIA bloc, calling it a gang of the corrupt, (Jamaat of ghotalebaaz). "They want power at any cost. And what is that cost? It is the country's security, stability and respect. And five prime ministers in five years. This is their formula to run the government," he said.

## Migration, irrigation main issues in Bolangir LS seat

PNN/AGENCIES

**Bolangir, May 18:** A member of the erstwhile royal family, a tribal and a film star are contesting from the Bolangir Lok Sabha constituency in western Odisha where migration and irrigation are major issues. The major issue in the Bolangir Lok Sabha constituency is migration and irrigation, said Narasingha Mishra sitting Congress MLA of the Bolangir Assembly segment. "The people from here migrate in large numbers as they are unable to get work here. Farmers also face difficulties due to lack of irrigation facilities. The CM recently inaugurated the Lower Suk Tel irrigation project but the water does not reach the tail end," Mishra said "blaming" the 24-year-old BJD government headed by Naveen Patnaik. The BJP has fielded its sitting MP Sangeeta Singhdeo, a member of the erstwhile Patna royal family in the district again from the seat. Sangeeta's husband KV Singhdeo is a veteran BJP leader.

The ruling Biju Janata Dal's (BJD) candidate is Surendra Singh Bhoi, a tribal, while the Congress nominee is Manoj Mishra, an Odia film actor. Sangeeta had won the Bolangir Lok Sabha constituency in 1998, 1999, 2004 and 2019. Members of the erstwhile Patna royal family in the district have won the Bolangir Lok Sabha seat since 1988. Sangeeta's brother-in-law Kalikesh Singhdeo who is with the BJD had won the seat in 2009 and 2014, but lost to Sangeeta in 2019 by a margin of 19,516 votes. Sangeeta's father-in-law Raj Raj Singhdeo had won the Bolangir Lok Sabha constituency for two consecutive terms in 1967 and 1971 as a Swatantra Party candidate. The Bolangir Lok Sabha constituency is important for the BJD as Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik is contesting from the Kantabanji Assembly segment which is one of the seven Assembly segments under this parliamentary constituency. The seven Assembly constituencies under Bolangir Lok Sabha seat are Birmaharajpur, Sonapur, Loisingha, Patnagarh,



Bolangir, Titlagarh and Kantabanji. Of the seven Assembly seats under Bolangir parliamentary constituency, Congress won two Assembly seats in 2019, BJD in four seats and BJP in one. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi's popularity will help me to sail through the elections. Being the lone woman candidates, the female voters are in my support. My priority is to arrange jobs for the youths and reduce the migration of people from Bolangir district. The people have blessed me four times and they will continue to do so this

time too," said Sangeeta. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah have addressed election rallies in Bolangir in support of saffron party candidate Sangeeta Singhdeo. BJD candidate Surendra Singh Bhoi claimed his victory is a foregone conclusion as Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik is a candidate from the Kantabanji Assembly segment in Bolangir district. "BJD government's several welfare schemes like Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY) and announcement of free elec-

tricity will fetch a good vote for me. This apart, I am also confident that tribals will vote for BJD's Conch symbol as I belonged to their community," said Singh Bhoi. During the campaign, the BJD leaders claimed that BJP is an "anti-tribal and anti-poor party". It stopped financial assistance for the KBK (Kalahandi-Bolangir-Koraput) region and also discontinued the Backward Region Grant Fund, which had aided people here to a large extent in the past. Manoj Mishra, the Congress candidate, a greenhorn in electoral politics, is optimistic about winning the seat. "People are fed up with the BJD and the BJP. They are also frustrated over the works of these royal family members. I will try to do it as a commoner," said Mishra, adding that people still believe in Congress in this part of the state. The Congress had won the Bolangir Lok Sabha constituency last time in 1996 polls. Bolangir which has over 18 lakh electorate will go to the polls May 20.

## BDO dares Jayadev to prove money distribution claims

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Hatadihi, May 18:** Congress candidate for Anandapur Assembly constituency, Jayadev Jena, Saturday alleged that BJD workers are using government vehicles to distribute money among women and self-help group members in Tanla village under K Balipal panchayat, and this block under the Assembly constituency, in Keonjhar district. He was speaking about an incident that said to have occurred at around 2 pm at the government meeting hall in Hatadihi where, according to Jena, the local BDO (Block Development Officer) was personally overseeing the distribution of money for BJD. "If the election is influenced in such a manner, it is going to have serious repercussions. After the election, Congress will fight back," said Jena in a video message which went viral on social media. Meanwhile, Hatadihi BDO

Soumyashree Panigrahi has dismissed the allegations and said she was surprised and saddened over the political candidate making unverified claims. "Jayadev is ranting like a mad man. I was in the Anandapur Sub-Collector's office for election training. How would I go to Tanla village and assist the BJD in distributing money for votes," she asked. "Jayadev is lying," she added. She also dared Jena to substantiate the allegations. "He should file a complaint with the Election Commission. During election time, he wants to create unnecessary hassles and unrest by telling lies," she alleged. Meanwhile, BJD MLA candidate Abhimanyu Sethi said due to the fear of losing, Congress MLA candidate Jayadev has resorted to lies. "It is part of a well-thought-out effort by Jayadev to mislead voters for electoral gains which can only be described as the actions of a coward," Sethi said.



# national

## of the day quote

Ram bhakt is a 'rashtira bhakt' who will serve the people of India and work for the country's progress. A Ram bhakt who paved the way for the construction of Ram temple can ensure respect for the people and the country as well as safety and security

YOGI ADITYANATH | UP CHIEF MINISTER

Savarkar is not an election issue, and Rahul has not spoken about him (lately). But Modi's speech was divisive and meant to instigate, polarise. I have never seen such a Prime Minister

SHARAD PAWAR | NCP (SP) CHIEF

Fearing defeat, the BJP MP from North East Delhi has now resorted to hooliganism. Remember, the Congress party is Gandhian, not Godse-wadi. Our identity is not of those who fear, but of those who fight for justice

JAIRAM RAMESH | CONGRESS GENERAL SECY

## X POST OF THE DAY

5 folks make about 1L each. The average income of the group is 1L. 6th person makes 1CR. The average income then becomes 17.5L. Now they're telling everyone that the group makes 17.5L. Everyone feels happy that everyone's happy and the 5th richest group.

## SHORT TAKES

### Emergency landing

**Trichirappalli (Tamil Nadu):** A Bangalore bound Air India Express flight with about 137 passengers made an "emergency landing," here following a technical glitch, sources at the airport said. The Thiruvananthapuram-Bangalore service suffered the glitch mid-air, following which it made the safe landing here, the sources added. All the passengers disembarked the flight and the technical crew was attending to the fault. An Air India Express spokesperson said the flight "was diverted to Trichirappalli due to a technical issue."

### Mishap claims two

**New Delhi:** Two men died after their motorcycle was hit by a speeding truck in Delhi's Kashmiri Gate area in the early hours of Saturday, police said. Piyush and Ankur were returning from Uttarakhand's Haridwar on the motorcycle when the accident happened. Their two friends were on another bike, they said. When they reached near Hanuman Mandir Flyover Ring Road, a truck coming from behind hit their two-wheeler, leaving Piyush and Ankur critically injured, an official said. The two youths were taken to a hospital where they were declared dead, police said.

### Rain fury in TN

**Chennai:** Parts of Tenkasi, Dindigul, Dharmapuri, Coimbatore, and Namakkal districts received sharp showers while Kanyakumari experienced incessant rain Saturday. The Public Works Department (PWD) officials are closely monitoring the inflows into the Pechipparai and Perunchani reservoirs in Kanyakumari district where the SDRF personnel have been stationed to meet any emergency arising out of the sudden inundation triggered by torrential rain, an official said.



**Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is roaming with the Constitution written by B R Ambedkar, which clearly states no reservation in the name of religion but the Congress party in Andhra Pradesh tried four times to give reservation on the basis of religion and similar attempts are being made in Karnataka**  
J P NADDA | BJP PRESIDENT

## RAISING CONCERNS

Nearly one in four Indians faced hacking attacks in the first quarter (January-March period) this year. In the quarterly data released by global security company Kaspersky, 22.9 per cent of web users in the country were attacked by web-borne threats and 20.1 per cent users were vulnerable to local threats



# Maliwal 'blackmailed' by BJP: AAP

Maliwal has alleged that the CM's aide attacked her with full force, slapping her in the face and kicking her in the chest and abdomen May 13 when she had gone to meet the Chief Minister



**The anticipatory bail plea of Bibhav Kumar has become infructuous as he has been arrested, a Delhi court observed**

a court and police will seek his custody for further interrogation," the officer said. Police said they have recorded the statement of at least 10 people, including security personnel and other staff at the Chief Minister's residence, who were present at the time of the alleged assault May 13. Earlier in the day, Bibhav Kumar wrote to police, saying that he is ready to cooperate in their investigation, but they should also consider his complaint against Maliwal. Kumar filed a police com-

**New Delhi, May 18:** Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's aide Bibhav Kumar was arrested Saturday in connection with the alleged assault on AAP MP Swati Maliwal, even as the party claimed she was 'blackmailed' by the BJP as she faces a corruption case. Kumar was picked up from the Chief Minister's residence by a Delhi Police team, a senior police officer said, a day after Maliwal recorded her statement before a magistrate at the Tis Hazari court. Maliwal has alleged that the CM's aide attacked her with full force, slapping her in the face and kicking her in the chest and abdomen May 13 when she had gone to meet the Chief Minister. A senior police officer said Kumar was arrested from the Chief Minister's residence Saturday. The officer said Kumar had gone there in the morning to meet Kejriwal. "He will be produced before

# Ch'garh: Man kills 5 of a family, hangs self

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Raipur, May 18:** A 32-year-old man allegedly murdered five members of a family including a married woman who had rejected his marriage proposal and her minor son before committing suicide in Chhattisgarh's Sarangarh-Bilaigarh district Saturday, police said.

The grisly incident took place in the wee hours at Thargaon village under Saliha police station limits, some 200 km from Raipur, district Superintendent of Police Pushkar Sharma told PTI. Those killed were identified as Hemlaj Sahu (55), his wife Jagmoti Sahu (50), their daughters Meera Sahu (30) and Mamta Sahu (35), and Meera's son Ayush (5). Accused Manoj Sahu, a resident of the same village, was found hanging in another room, the official said. After being alerted by locals, a police team rushed to the spot and sent the bodies for autopsy, the official said. As per preliminary information, Manoj, armed with an axe, entered the house and killed the victims when they were asleep and then hanged himself with a saree, the SP said. Manoj was a tailor by profession and had proposed marriage to Meera years ago but she had rejected the proposal, Sharma added. A case has been registered and further probe is underway, the SP said.



**JOYFUL MOOD:** A family takes a camel ride at a beach along the Bay of Bengal, at Velankanni in Nagapattinam district, Tamil Nadu

# Nine burnt to death as bus catches fire

The bus was carrying around 60 people, all residents of Punjab's Hoshiarpur and Ludhiana, who were returning from pilgrim towns of Mathura and Vrindavan



pitals, an official said. Deputy Commissioner, Nuh, Dhirendra Khadga said the forensic team of Madhuban will investigate the cause of the fire in the bus. Sub Divisional Magistrate Tauru Sanjeev Kumar has been appointed as the nodal officer to investigate this matter, he added. A local resident Vasin said that after noticing the fire, some people called out the driver asking him to stop the bus but he continued driving. He said he even chased the bus on a motorcycle but by then the fire had spread inside the bus. The locals also informed the police and fire department. Four fire tenders reached the spot and doused the fire, the police said, adding that of the nine people, who were killed in the incident, three are still to be identified. Those who have been identified include Shashi Sharma, Gautam Sharma, 12-year-old Jovita alias Khushi, all residents of Shalimar Nagar Hoshiarpur; Sunita Bhasin from Model Town Kamalpur; Darshan Lal of Jalandhar and Amar Rani from New Saini Enclave, Mohali, a senior police officer said.

**Gurugram, May 18:** Nine people, including five women and a 12-year-old girl, were burnt alive and 17 injured when a moving tourist bus caught fire near Dhulawat village in Haryana's Nuh district in the early hours Saturday, police said. The incident took place around 2 am on the Kundli-Manesar-Palwal (KMP) Expressway, they said. The bus was carrying around 60 people, all residents of Punjab's Hoshiarpur and Ludhiana, who were returning from pilgrim towns of Mathura and Vrindavan. All of them are relatives, the police said. The cause of the fire is said to be a short circuit in the AC box of the bus but it is yet to be ascertained, they said. The police said an FIR has been registered against the bus driver, who fled the scene after the incident, at Sadar Tauru police station. Of the 17 injured, 14 have been discharged from Nalhar medical college, Nuh, while three women are still undergoing treatment at different hos-

## SNIPPETS

### EC issues notices to BJP's West Bengal chief

**New Delhi:** The Election Commission Saturday issued two separate show-cause notices to West Bengal BJP chief Sukanta Majumdar for "misleading" advertisements targeting the state's ruling TMC. The poll watchdog has sought his response as to why the two advertisements should not be treated as violative of the model code of conduct and its advisory to political parties. Majumdar has been asked to respond by 5 pm May 21. According to the English transcript provided in the notices, one advertisement is titled "Trinamool is root cause of corruption" while the other is titled "Anti-Sanatan Trinamool". The Trinamool Congress (TMC) had approached the Election Commission against the advertisements.

### Ch'garh: Naxalite carrying bounty killed in encounter

**Sukma:** A Naxalite, who was wanted in connection with 16 cases and carried a bounty of ₹1 lakh on his head, was killed in an encounter with the police in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district Saturday, an official said. The gunfight took place around 6.30 am in the forest near Banjarpara village under Polampalli police station limits, where a team of police personnel was out on an anti-Naxal operation, the official said. The operation was launched Friday night based on inputs about the presence of senior Naxalites, including the secretary of the Konta area committee of Maoists, Vetti Mangdu, and area command-in-chief Hitesh, along with 15-20 cadres in forests of Tolnai, Tetrai, Banjarpara, and Arlampalli villages, he said. The exchange of fire lasted for about 20 to 25 minutes, following which Naxalites escaped into the dense forest after security personnel started zeroing in on them, the official said.

### No objection to action if Prajwal found guilty: Deve Gowda

**Bangalore:** Breaking his silence over the sexual abuse charges levelled against JDS MP Prajwal Revanna, party Supremo H D Deve Gowda Saturday said he has no objection to the action taken against his grandson if he is found guilty. He also said the cases against his son and JD(S) MLA H D Revanna, who is facing charges of sexual harassment and kidnap of a woman, were "created", but refrained from commenting further, as the matter was subjudice. Addressing reporters, Gowda, who turned 92 today, said, "... I don't want to comment on things that are going on in the court regarding Revanna. Prajwal Revanna has gone abroad, regarding that Kumaraswamy (Gowda's other son and state JD(S) chief) has on behalf of our family said it is the duty of the government to take action in accordance with the law of the land."

# Terrorists kill former sarpanch in Shopian

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Srinagar, May 18:** Terrorists killed a former sarpanch in J&K's Shopian district Saturday besides injuring a non-local tourist couple in Anantnag district. Officials said that terrorists fired at and injured a former sarpanch identified as Aijaz Ahmad Sheikh at Hurrpura village in Shopian district Saturday evening. "He was shifted to a hospital where he succumbed to his injuries. Terrorists also fired at a tourist couple from Jaipur identified as Tabriz and his wife Farha in the Yannar area of Anantnag district. The injured couple has been shifted to the hospital for treatment. The area has been cordoned off for searches," an official said in a statement. Anantnag and Shopian are part of the Anantnag-Rajouri Lok Sabha constituency which is scheduled to go to polls May 25.

# Heatwave in northwest India for next five days

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 18:** The extreme heat scorching large parts of northwest India will continue for another five days, with Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh predicted to bear the maximum impact. A brutal heatwave swept swathes of north India Friday, with the maximum temperature soaring to a scorching 47.4 degrees Celsius in southwest Delhi's Najafgarh, the highest this sea-

son in the country so far. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) Saturday predicted a severe heatwave over the plains of northwest India during the next five days and a heat wave over the east and central regions during the next three days. The Met office also issued a red warning for Delhi, Haryana, Punjab and west Rajasthan, stressing the need for "extreme care for vulnerable people". It issued an orange alert for east Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh



and Bihar and emphasised "high health concern" for vulnerable people, including infants, the elderly and those with chronic diseases. The Met office said high humidity could add to peo-

ple's inconvenience in Goa and sub-Himalayan West Bengal. The IMD also said warm night conditions are likely in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and west Rajasthan over the next two-three days. High night temperatures are considered dangerous because the body doesn't get a chance to cool down. Increasing nighttime heat is more common in cities because of the urban heat island effect, in which metro areas are significantly hotter than their surroundings.

# Matheran's popular toy train to don heritage steam engine look

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, May 18:** The iconic toy train that runs at Matheran, a hill station located around 100 km from Mumbai, will soon get a heritage makeover as the present diesel-run engine will be given the look of a steam engine of the past, officials said. The Central Railway (CR), which operates this narrow gauge train that passes through a difficult and steep mountainous terrain offering a picturesque view of a thickly wooded ridge and a valley, has decided to give a heritage look to it to revive the glorious past of this train, they said. But despite the new steam engine look, the train will con-

tinue to run on diesel, the officials added. "A special team of engineers and technicians have been working 24x7 at the Central Railway's workshop in Mumbai's Parel to create a model of the steam engine hood and make necessary changes to ensure smooth running of the engine by also maintaining the heritage look," CR's chief public relations officer Swapnil Nila said. The entire process of giving the heritage look involved a lot of technical processes, including the removal of hoods of the existing engine, manufacturing and fitting of the new heritage steam locomotive-like hood, modifications in the present diesel engine, fitting of steam vapour and sound producing system



and finally painting of the engine with the new heritage hood and decorating the same with stickers as per requirement, he said. "This initiative will not only enhance the overall experience

**The Neral-Matheran Light Railway, which is one amongst the few heritage mountain railways in India has completed 116 years with the first toy train service run by steam engine commencing in 1907**

work is likely to be completed next month. The Neral-Matheran Light Railway, which is one amongst the few heritage mountain railways in India has completed 116 years with the first toy train

service run by steam engine commencing in 1907. The Neral-Matheran railway's construction started in 1904 and the two feet gauge line finally opened to traffic three years later. This train that runs on a 21-km long stretch between Neral and Matheran is quite popular, especially among children. But the services remain shut between Neral station located at the foothills and Aman Lodge, during the monsoon, but shuttle services between Aman Lodge and Matheran continue even during that period. The CR has undertaken several infrastructural works in the Neral-Matheran section to ensure a safe and comfortable ride to the passengers.

# international

## of the day quote

Not too many more vibrant democracies in the world than India. And we applaud the Indian people for exercising, you know, their ability to vote, and to have a voice in their future government

JOHN KIRBY | NATIONAL SECURITY COMMUNICATIONS ADVISOR, WHITE HOUSE

If Russia loses the war it is a victory for the United States. It's a victory for the West, and they want to find a balance between the two. That's why I would like to see China involved in the peace summit

VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYI | PRESIDENT, UKRAINE

I want to reiterate Senegal's desire for self-determination, which is incompatible with the long-term presence of foreign military bases in Senegal

OUSMANE SONKO | PRIME MINISTER, SENEGAL

## SHORT TAKES

### Slovak PM stable

**Pezinok:** The man accused of attempting to assassinate Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico was ordered to remain behind bars Saturday as the nation's leader was in serious but stable condition after surviving multiple gunshot wounds, officials said. Prosecutors sought an order from Slovakia's Specialised Criminal Court to detain the suspect because of fear that he could escape or carry out other crimes, a court spokesperson said.

### New govt in Croatia

**Zagreb:** Croatian lawmakers Friday voted into office a new government that marks a tilt to the right in another European Union nation ahead of the 27-nation bloc's parliamentary election next month. Although it is still dominated by conservative Croatian Democratic Union, or HDZ, the new Croatian government now also includes hard-right Homeland Movement, a relatively new party that emerged as a kingmaker after an inconclusive parliamentary election in April. The new Cabinet of Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic, who started his third consecutive term in office, was approved in a 79-61 vote in the 151-member Sabor, or the Croatian assembly.

### Flash floods kill 50

**Islamabad:** Flash floods from heavy seasonal rains in the province of Ghor in western Afghanistan have killed at least 50 people, a Taliban official said Saturday, adding the death toll was based on preliminary reports and might rise. Dozens others remain missing, said Abdul Wahid Hamas, spokesman for Ghor's provincial governor. Last week, the UN food agency said the unusually heavy seasonal rains in Afghanistan have killed more than 300 people and destroyed thousands of houses, mostly in the northern province of Baghlan, which bore the brunt of floods May 10th.

### PIO charged for cheating in S'pore

**Singapore:** An Indian-origin man faces three counts of cheating by impersonating staff at the President's Office, the Ministry of National Development and Parliament. Prakash Paramasivam, 24, who appeared in the court May 17, allegedly posed as a Singapore Prison Service staff member to send emails to President Tharman Shanmugaratnam, National Development Minister Desmond Lee and to the Parliament.



A society without conflicts is a dead society. A society that hides conflicts is a suicidal society. A society that takes conflicts by the hand is a society of the future. The flaw of dictatorships is not admitting plurality

POPE FRANCIS | CATHOLIC CHURCH LEADER

## 15TH ANNIV OF PEACE

Sri Lanka Saturday marked the 15th anniversary of the end of the armed separatist campaign with Tamils holding a series of events throughout the former conflict zone in the north and east regions to remember their dear ones killed in the clashes



# China's space tourism debut by '28

TICKETS WILL COST 2MN TO 3MN YUAN (\$415,127) PER PERSON PER TRIP

REUTERS

**Beijing, May 18:** Chinese commercial space company CAS Space announced its "space tourism vehicle" will first fly in 2027 and travel to the edge of space in 2028, state media reported Friday.

The announcement comes just days after Jeff Bezos-backed Blue Origin announced that its New Shepard Rocket, which flies cargo and humans on short trips to the edge of space, would resume flights Sunday, ending a near two-year pause of crewed operations.

CAS Space said that its vehicle will include a tourist cabin that has four panoramic



windows and can carry seven passengers per flight. The company plans to arrange a launch every 100 hours from a newly-built aerospace theme park, with ten vehicles available to

take tourists to the edge of space in shifts.

Tickets will cost 2 million to 3 million yuan (\$415,127) per person per trip, state media said. Guangzhou-based CAS Space

was founded in 2018 and its second-largest shareholder is China's biggest state research institute, the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

China's space exploration program has recently narrowed the gap with the United States and could become the first country to return samples from the far side of the moon after it launched the Chang'e-6 mission earlier this month.

That launch attracted hordes of tourists to the launch site on China's island province of Hainan. Before blast-off tens of thousands of people gathered in different viewing spots near the launch site, causing long traffic jams.

## 4 Indians among 6 charged for visa fraud conspiracy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Washington, May 18:** Six individuals, including four Indian nationals, were Friday indicted by a federal court for staging armed robberies in Chicago and the suburbs so that the victims could apply for immigration visas reserved for certain crime victims in the United States.

According to an indictment unsealed in federal court in Chicago, the four individuals Bhikhabhai Patel, Nilesh Patel, Ravinaben Patel and Rajni Kumar Patel, arranged with Parth Nayi and Kewong Young to be "victims" of the staged robberies so that they could submit applications for U nonimmigrant status ("U-visa").

U-Visa is set aside for victims of certain crimes who have suffered mental or physical abuse and are helpful to law enforcement or government officials in an investigation or prosecution.

The indictment alleges that the four individuals paid Nayi thousands of dollars to participate in the scam.

During the staged robberies, individuals acting as robbers brandished what appeared to be firearms, approached the purported victims and demanded money and property, the indictment states.

Afterwards, some of the purported victims submitted forms to local law enforcement to obtain certification that they were victims of a qualifying crime and had been or would be helpful in the investigation, the indictment states.

Upon receiving certification, some of the purported victims then submitted fraudulent U-visa applications to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services predicated upon their alleged status as a robbery victim, the Department of Justice said in a statement.

Nayi, 26, Young, 31, Bhikhabhai Patel, 51, Nilesh Patel, 32, Ravinaben Patel, 23, and Rajnikumar Patel, 32, are charged with conspiracy to commit visa fraud.

# Georgian Prez vetoes 'foreign agents' bill

Critics see the bill as a test of whether the country stays on a path towards integration with Europe or pivots back towards Russia

AGENCIES

**Tbilisi, May 18:** Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili has announced that she has vetoed a draft law on foreign agents, Russia's state-run TASS news agency reported on Saturday.

Zourabichvili had said previously that she would veto the bill, which has sparked street protests, but her decision can be overridden by another vote in parliament, controlled by Georgia's ruling party and its allies.

"Today I vetoed a Russian law. This law is Russian in its essence and spirit," TASS quoted her as telling a briefing. "It contradicts our constitution and all European standards, therefore it represents an obstacle to our European path."

TASS quoted the president as saying her veto was legally competent, and that it would be handed over to parliament Saturday. "This law must be repealed," it quoted her as saying.

The ruling party, Georgian Dream, has a majority sufficient to override Zourabichvili's veto, and is widely expected to do so in the coming days. The Georgian government insists that the law is intended to promote transparency and curb what it deems harmful foreign influence in the country of 3.

Mass protests have swept through the Georgian capital



Today I vetoed a Russian law. This law is Russian in its essence and spirit. It contradicts our constitution and all European standards, therefore it represents an obstacle to our European path

SALOME ZOURABICHVILI | PRESIDENT, GEORGIA

Tbilisi over the past month since the first reading of the draft law was passed in parliament.

The law would require organisations receiving more than 20% of their funding from abroad to register as agents of foreign influence, imposing onerous disclosure requirements and punitive fines for violations.

The United States and the European Union have repeatedly warned the ruling Georgian Dream party to drop the bill, which protesters fear will harm the South Caucasus country's bid to join the EU.

# Ukraine may lose eastern bastion

Ukraine has roughly 1,000 km of frontlines to defend in the east, north and south as Russians advance on cities

REUTERS

**Donetsk Region, May 18:** For Ukrainian gun commander Oleksandr Kozachenko, the long-awaited US ammunition can't come fast enough as he and his comrades struggle to hold off relentless Russian attacks.

His unit's US-supplied M777 howitzer, which once hurled 100 shells a day at the encroaching enemy, is now often reduced to fewer than 10. "It's a luxury if we can fire 30 shells."

America says it's rushing ammunition and weapons to Ukraine following the delayed approval of a \$61 billion aid package by Congress last month. As of early May, though, two artillery units visited by Reuters on the eastern frontline said they were still waiting for a boost in deliveries and operating at a fraction of the rate they need to hold back the Russians.

Gunners with Kozachenko's 148th Separate Artillery Brigade and the 43rd Artillery Brigade, both in the Donetsk region, said they were desperate for more 155mm rounds for their Western cannons, which had given them an edge over Russia earlier in the war.

Resurgent Russian forces, which significantly outnumber and outgun the Ukrainian defenders, have been mounting multiple attacks across the eastern Donbas region in recent months and along the country's northeastern border last week.

The drive has marked an inflection point in the conflict spawned by Russia's full-



Russia has gained more territory in 2024 than it lost control of during Ukraine's much-hyped counteroffensive in the summer of 2023

PASI PAROINEN | ANALYST, BLACK BIRD GROUP

Russian gains brings front closer to key cities

Kostiantynivka, Kramatorsk, Sloviansk look vulnerable

Ukraine needs more US arms, ammo and more troops

Fighting in Kharkiv in north further stretches Kyiv

sistent delays in weapons supplies to Kyiv.

"Without a doubt, this will be a difficult period for the armed forces," said Palisa, adding that he believes the Kremlin wants to capture the entire Donbas industrial region by the end of this year.

## CITIES BRACE FOR RUSSIAN ADVANCE

Russian forces are gradually making inroads that could come to threaten several big cities in the east including Kostiantynivka, Druzhkivka, Kramatorsk and Sloviansk, which serve as key military hubs for Kyiv's war effort.

Some gains are striking fear in the heart of the hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians living in those Donetsk region cities as the enemy grinds ever closer.

Russian cannons are now easily within range of Kostiantynivka; the closest Russian position at the start of 2024 was about 20 km away, according to open-source maps that show shifting positions along the frontline. Now it is 14 km.

scale invasion more than two years ago.

Moscow's forces have claimed 654 sq km since the beginning of this year, outstripping the 414 sq km lost to Ukraine between June 1 and October 1 last year, Paroinen said. Russia has gained 222 sq km of territory since only May 2, he added.

Colonel Pavlo Palisa, whose 93rd Mechanised Brigade is fighting near the key strategic city of Chasiv Yar, said he believed Russia was preparing a major push to break Ukrainian lines in the east. This echoed the commander of Ukraine's ground forces who said last week he expected the war to enter a critical phase over the next two months as Moscow tries to exploit per-

## 'DANGER BEHIND BEAUTY'

THE SUN BLASTED OUT THE STRONGEST SOLAR FLARE SEEN IN YEARS TUESDAY

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

**Paris, May 18:** Tourists normally have to pay big money and brave cold climates for a chance to see an aurora, but last weekend many people around the world simply had to look up to see these colourful displays dance across the sky.

Usually banished to the poles of Earth, the auroras strayed as far as Mexico, southern Europe and South Africa on the evening of May 10, delighting skygazers and filling social media with images of exuberant pinks, greens and purples.

But for those charged with protecting Earth from powerful solar storms such as the one that caused the auroras, a threat lurks beneath the stunning colours.

"We need to understand that behind this beauty, there is danger," Quentin Verspieren, the European Space Agency's space safety pro-

gramme coordinator, told AFP. Mike Bettwy of the US Space Weather Prediction Center said that "we're focused on the more sinister potential impacts" of solar storms, such as taking out power grids and satellites, or exposing astronauts to dangerous levels of radiation.

The latest auroras were caused by the most powerful geomagnetic storm since the "Halloween Storms" of October 2003, which sparked blackouts in Sweden and damaged power infrastructure in South Africa.

There appears to have been less damage from the latest solar storms, though it often takes weeks for satellite companies to reveal problems, Bettwy said.

There were reports that some self-driving farm tractors in the United States stopped in their tracks when their GPS guidance systems went out due to the storm, he told AFP.

# More solar storms could be heading our way



'Definitely not over'

These strange effects are caused by massive explosions on the surface of the Sun that shoot out plasma, radiation and even magnetic fields at incredibly fast speeds born on the solar wind.

The recent activity has come from a sunspot cluster 17 times the size of Earth which has continued raging over the week.

The most famous example came in 1859 during the worst solar storm in recorded history, called the Carrington Event

The sunspot has been turning towards the edge of the Sun's disc, so activity is expected to die down in the short term as its outbursts aim away from our planet.

But in roughly two weeks the sunspot will swing back around, again turning its gaze towards Earth.

In the meantime, another sunspot is "coming into view

Solar activity is only just approaching the peak of its roughly 11-year cycle, so the odds of another major storm are highest between now and the end of next year

MIKE BETTWY | SPACE WEATHER PREDICTION CENTER, US

right now" which could trigger "major activity in the coming days", ESA space weather service coordinator Alexi Glover told AFP.

So the solar activity is "definitely not over", she added. It is difficult to predict how violent these sunspots could be or whether they could spark further auroras.

## What threat do solar storms pose?

Geomagnetic storms such as the recent one create a magnetic charge of voltage and current, "essentially overloading" things like satellites and power grids, according to Bettwy.

As well as stunning auroras, the storm caused sparks to fly off

of telegraph stations. The charge that originated from the Sun was so strong that some telegraphs worked without being plugged into a power source.

So what would happen if such a powerful geomagnetic storm struck Earth again?

Bettwy said most countries have improved their power grids, which should prevent prolonged outages like those that hit Sweden in 2003 or Canada in 1989.

Still, he suggested people have an emergency kit in case electricity is knocked out for a day or two. Fresh water might also help in case filtration plants go offline.

Astronauts are particularly at risk from radiation during extreme solar activity. Those on the International Space Station usually take the best shelter they can when a bad storm is expected. Bettwy said a massive solar storm could expose astronauts to an "unhealthy dose" of radiation, but he did not think it would be lethal.



Everybody talks about one company (US-based EV major Tesla), but we are expecting responses from many companies to that policy  
RAJESH KUMAR SINGH | SECRETARY, DPIIT

## IDFC-IDFC FIRST BANK MERGER

Shareholders and non-convertible debenture (NCD) holders of IDFC First Bank have approved a proposal to merge parent IDFC Ltd with the lender. The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) convened a meeting May 17 through video conferencing and other audio-visual means to consider and approve the composite scheme of amalgamation for IDFC First Bank



## of the day quote

India is on a mission to become the world's leading and the most sustainable producer of critical minerals  
PRIYA AGARWAL HEBBAR | CHAIRPERSON, HINDUSTAN ZINC

Many of the people currently engaged in the market do not understand them. The saccharisation of futures and options is something that we need to reconsider because financial literacy that is required for trading stocks is very different for trading futures and options  
V ANANTHA NAGESWARAN | CHIEF ECONOMIC ADVISOR

We continue to focus on strategic capital expenditure, maximising on the region's growth prospects and further enhance our market position in the South  
PUNEET DALMIA | MD & CEO, DALMIA BHARAT

## Q4 RESULTS

### Delhivery loss dips

**New Delhi:** Logistics company Delhivery has said its consolidated net loss narrowed to ₹68.4 crore in the March 2024 quarter, aided by higher income. It had posted a ₹158.6 crore net loss in the year-ago period, the company said in an exchange filing Friday. The company's total income in the quarter under review increased to ₹2,194.5 crore from ₹1,934.2 crore a year ago. Its expenses were ₹2,257.2 crore against ₹2,107.6 crore a year ago. For the full 2024 fiscal, the company's net loss declined to ₹259.2 crore from ₹1,007.7 crore in FY23.

### NHPC net declines

**New Delhi:** State-owned NHPC Ltd Friday reported an 18 per cent fall in consolidated net profit to ₹610.93 crore during the March quarter on account of decline in revenues. The company had reported a net profit of ₹745.27 crore in the year-ago period, the company said in an exchange filing. The company's revenue from operations reduced to ₹1,888.14 crore from ₹2,028.77 crore in the January-March period of the 2022-23 fiscal. NHPC's expenses were ₹1,393.67 crore from ₹1,545.48 crore a year ago.

### Vaghul no more

**Mumbai:** Veteran banker N Vaghul, who led the transformation of ICICI into a private sector lender, died Saturday afternoon due to health complications. He was 88. Vaghul took over the reins of ICICI, then a public finance institution, in 1985 and turned it into a universal bank during his 11-year stint at the helm with the help of a young team as the economy liberalised.

# D-St gains on spl session

The move was made to check equity and equity derivative segments' preparedness for handling major disruptions or failures at the primary site

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, May 18:** Equity benchmark indices closed the special trading session on a firm note Saturday, extending their rally to the third day running amid fresh foreign fund inflows.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 88.91 points or 0.12 per cent to end at 74,005.94. During the session, it jumped 245.73 points or 0.33 per cent to 74,162.76.

The NSE Nifty advanced 35.90 points or 0.16 per cent to 22,502.

The National Stock Exchange (NSE) and BSE May 7 said they will conduct a special trading session in the equity and equity derivative segments May 18 to check their preparedness for handling major disruptions or failures at the primary site.

The special live trading session will have an intra-day switchover from the Primary Site (PR) to the Disaster Recovery (DR) site.

## Nestle India shareholders vote against increase in royalty to Swiss parent

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 18:** Shareholders of FMCG firm Nestle India Ltd have rejected a proposal by the company to increase royalty payment to its parent firm.

Nestle India's board had last month approved increasing royalty payment to its parent firm Societe des Produits Nestle S.A (licensor) by 0.15 per cent per year for the next five years thereby enhancing it to 5.25 per cent of net sales.

It had proposed to start the 0.15 per cent per annum increase over the current royalty fee of 4.5 per cent from July 1, 2024. Subsequently, it had sought approval from its shareholders of the same as an ordinary resolution through a postal ballot.

In a regulatory filing, Nestle India said 57.18 per cent of the total votes were against the ordinary resolution and 42.82 per cent of the votes were in favour. The ordinary resolution, has not been passed due to lack of requisite majority of votes in favour of the resolution.

In 2013, Nestle India's board had approved an increase in royalty payment by 0.20 per cent per year over a period of five years to its parent firm, thereby enhancing it to 4.5 per cent of the sales.

On the other hand, the shareholders of Nestle India approved the special resolution for the appointment of Suneeta Reddy, Managing Director of Apollo Hospitals Enterprise Ltd, as an Additional Independent non-executive Director with effect from April 5, 2024, for a term of five consecutive years up to April 4, 2029, with requisite majority.



In separate circulars, the two exchanges said there will be two sessions -- the first from 9:15 am to 10:00 am from the PR, and the second from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm from the DR site.

Among the Sensex components, Nestle, Power Grid, Tata Motors, Tata Consultancy Services, HCL Technologies, Hindustan Unilever and State Bank of India were the major gainers.

JSW Steel, Mahindra & Mahindra, Maruti and Kotak Mahindra Bank were among the laggards.

Wall Street ended mostly higher Friday.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average has hit 40,000 for the first time, buoyed by optimism from a softer-than-expected April inflation report, which

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms reached an all-time peak of ₹4,12,36,791.05cr in the special trading session

has increased bets on a September rate cut by the Federal Reserve.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) turned buyers Friday after days of unabated outflows. They bought equities worth ₹1,616.79 crore Friday, according to exchange data.

"Dow Jones closing in record territory above 40,000 will continue to provide global support for equity markets. A significant trend now is the FIIs turning

## 'FDI norms in certain sectors may be eased'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 18:** India has recently relaxed foreign direct investment norms in the space sector and there is a possibility of further FDI liberalisation in certain other areas when the new government will come to power, a top official said Saturday.

Secretary in Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) Rajesh Kumar Singh said that in the last few years, India has liberalised FDI policy in many segments. India has one of the most lib-

## UNDER NEW GOVT

eral foreign direct investment (FDI) policies in the world and in fact more liberal than many Southeast Asian countries that the country is often compared with, he said.

Recently FDI norms were eased in the space sector and "it is quite possible that under a new government, we can attempt some further liberalisation of any pockets that are left and where some liberalisation is possible," Singh said here at CII's annual business summit.

The Lok Sabha elections are underway in the country and the counting is scheduled for June 4.

The government has eased FDI norms in the space sector by allowing 100 per cent overseas investment in making components for satellites, as part of efforts to attract overseas players and private companies into the segment.

FDI in India declined 13 per cent to \$32.03 billion in April-December 2023, dragged down by lower infusion in computer hardware and software, telecom, auto, and pharma sectors, according to the government data.

## REFINANCING PLANS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 18:** Softbank-backed OYO is set to refile its much-awaited IPO as the global travel tech player is close to finalising its refinancing plans to raise up to \$450 million via sale of dollar bonds, sources said.

JP Morgan is the likely lead banker for the refinancing through the sale of dollar bonds at an estimated interest rate of 9 to 10 per cent per annum, a source said.

In preparation for the refinancing, OYO has already moved its application with markets regulator SEBI to withdraw its current draft red herring prospectus (DRHP). The company intends to refile an updated version of the DRHP after the bond issuance.

Oravel Stays Ltd, OYO's parent company, had in November prepaid a significant chunk of its debt amounting to ₹1,620 crore through a buyback process. The buyback involved repurchasing

## OYO withdraws DRHP, to refile IPO



30 per cent of its outstanding Term Loan B of \$660 million. The move brought down its outstanding loan amount to around \$450 million.

A source closely involved in the company's IPO plans told PTI, "The refinancing will result in material changes to OYO's financial statements. Hence as per existing regulations, it will need to revise its filings with the regulator".

"Since the decision for refinancing is at an advanced stage,

it doesn't make sense to continue pursuing IPO approval with the current financials. So it's prudent to withdraw the current application," he added.

The refinancing will extend the repayment timeline to five years - versus the repayment of the remaining TLB due in 2026 - the source said.

The bond issuance would significantly lower the current effective interest rate of 14 per cent on its existing \$450 million Term Loan B (TLB) facility.

## Norway sovereign wealth fund excludes APSEZ

The Adani Group's port firm joins 14 other Indian cos facing similar action

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 18:** Norway's central bank has excluded Adani Group's port firm, APSEZ from its government pension fund over ethical concerns, making it the 15th Indian company to face such action with previous ones being the likes of ONGC, GAIL, NTPC and Vedanta.

Norges Bank, which manages the sovereign wealth fund, May 15 stated that it has decided to exclude Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone due to "unacceptable risk that the company contributes to serious violations of individuals' rights in situations of war or conflict."

APSEZ, which was on the central bank's watch list for possible exclusion from investment since March 2022, faced the action due to its business association with the armed forces in Myanmar. Sources however said the Adani group firm sold the Myanmar asset entirely in May last year, and there has been no incremental disclosures made regarding that asset, as the company has fully exited.

The Norwegian fund's Council of Ethics acknowledged APSEZ's May 2023 disclosure that it had sold its port-related operations in Myanmar to Solar Energy Ltd but said "no information on buyer is available, and APSEZ has stated that it cannot share any such information on the grounds of confidentiality."

"Lack of information means that the Council cannot establish whether APSEZ has links to the enterprise concerned. In a situation in which extremely serious norm violations are taking place, this constitutes an unacceptable risk that the Norwegian Government Pension Fund Global's (GPF) investments in APSEZ may breach its ethical guidelines," it added.

APSEZ joins more than a dozen Indian firms which had faced similar action over the past few years, according to information on the website of Norges Bank Investment Management.

The Norwegian bank had excluded ITC in January 2020 over production of tobacco. Similar action followed against Zuari Agro Chemicals in October 2013 over alleged human rights violations. Vedanta faced similar action in January 2014 over 'severe environmental damage'.

Coal India, NTPC, Reliance Power, Tata Power and three other power producers faced a similar action in April 2016 for production of coal or coal-based energy.

BHEL faced action in May 2017 and January 2023 over environmental damage and sales to states in armed conflicts. Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) was charged with serious violations of individuals' rights in situations of war or conflict when it faced similar action in September 2021. GAIL was charged with the same in April 2023.



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## Vi mulls rolling out 5G in six months

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 18:** Debt-ridden Vodafone Idea is planning to begin 5G rollout in six months in select cities and places where 5G device concentration is high, a senior company official said Friday.

Vodafone Idea CEO Akshaya Moondra said the company expects capital expenditure of the company to be in the range of ₹50,000-Rs 55,000 crore over the next three years with focus on expanding and strengthening 4G coverage.

"Our topmost priority is 4G coverage because that is to my mind the only reason why we continue to lose subscribers. That capex will be fairly accelerated. Rest of the investments in capacity growth will happen as the traffic grows. We expect that we should be rolling out 5G on a large scale from about six months from now. The main focus is going to be the main cities or other areas where there is a large concentration of 5G devices. We will make investments as the market evolves," Moondra said.

He said the company's investment will focus on expanding and strengthening coverage in 17 priority circles to be competitive.

VIL CEO said the company has been losing customers because of weak network coverage and the investment will help the company arrest customer churn.

VIL total customer base has declined 5.7 per cent to 21.3 crore from 22.6 crore in the March 2023 quarter. The company reported an increase in the share of post-paid customers of about 1.3 per cent on a year-on-year basis.

The 4G subscriber base of VIL increased to 12.63 crore from 12.26 crore on a year-on-year basis during the period under review.

# Bond traders hanker for short-term borrowing cuts

INDIA SAID THURSDAY IT WILL BUY BACK BONDS MATURING BETWEEN JUNE AND NOV OF 2024, INSTEAD OF THOSE MATURING BETWEEN NOV 2024 TO JAN 2025

REUTERS

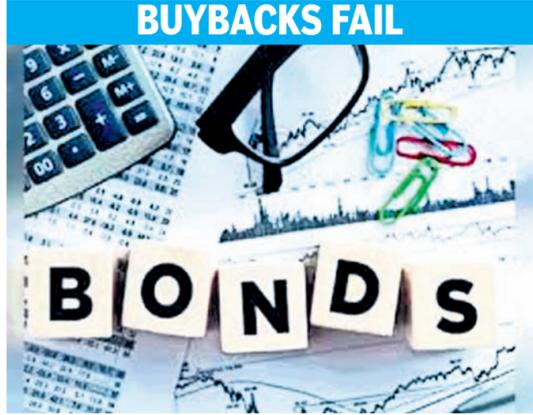
**Mumbai, May 18:** Most Indian bond traders are looking for a cut in the government's short-term borrowing as a better way to regulate banking system liquidity after two consecutive attempts to buy back debt failed, several traders said.

Government spending has been low due to an ongoing national election, leading to a build-up in the government's cash balances and a subsequent cash deficit in the banking sys-

tem. Liquidity deficit is expected to widen further in the next few days as there is an outflow of goods and services taxes.

New Delhi has cumulatively repurchased only ₹126 billion (\$1.51 billion) worth of bonds, far short of its offer to buy ₹1 trillion worth of securities over two auctions conducted so far in May.

Despite the lackluster outcome the government announced a third buyback to be held May 21, which five traders



said may see a "slightly better" results because of a change in the securities being offered.

India said Thursday it will buy back bonds maturing between June and November of

2024, instead of those maturing between November 2024 to January 2025.

"The change in securities would yield better results for sure", but would still be about half subscribed, a senior treasury official at a large private bank said requesting anonymity as he is not authorised to speak to media.

"Looking at the government's cash balance, some reduction in T-bill supply would be more impactful and meaningful," he added. The government is scheduled to borrow ₹220 billion every week through sale of T-bills, including ₹150 billion from 91-

day and 182-day papers, aggregating to ₹1.32 trillion till end of June. It has already borrowed ₹1.89 trillion in the first seven weeks of the fiscal year.

"Since buybacks are seeing limitations, the government can cancel around three 91-day and 182-day T-bill auction and that would lead to similar amount of cash management," said Soumyajit Niyogi, a director at India Ratings & Research.

India's banking system liquidity has stayed in a deficit for the last four weeks, coinciding with the start of the first phase of general elections, with average daily average deficit in May rising to ₹1.2 trillion.

Cancellation of T-bills is a better option for effective cash management for the government  
VIKAS GOEL | MD, PNB GILTS

# Satwik-Chirag pair in final

# RCB's ecstasy CSK's agony

Bengaluru sail into IPL playoffs marking a likely end to Dhoni era

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore, May 18:** Royal Challengers Bengaluru continued their fairytale run to grab the fourth and final playoff berth with a 27-run victory over defending champions Chennai Super Kings in their must-win last IPL league game here Saturday.

It was the sixth straight win for RCB, who first posted a solid 218/5 after being invited to bat and then restricted CSK to 191/7 to make it to the playoffs for the ninth time in 15 seasons.

RCB survived a scare as Ravindra Jadeja (42 n o, 22b, 3x4, 3x6) and MS Dhoni (25, 13b, 3x4, 1x6) had conjured up hopes of a turnaround after Rachin Ravindra's 61 (37b, 5x4, 3x6) but Yash Dayal (2/42) held his nerves in the final over to take the hosts home.

While it was ecstasy for RCB, the legion of fans of Dhoni sank into despair as it could potentially be the last time they witnessed their 'Thala' perform on a cricket field.

Down and out after losing seven out of their first eight games, RCB had weaved five wins on the trot to script a remarkable turnaround and give themselves a chance to make it to the final four.

Saturday, the hosts needed to win by at least 18 runs to book the final playoff berth and they did that in style with yet another impressive show at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium. The two teams finished at 14 points but RCB sneaked into the final four on the basis of a better net run-rate.

The equation was in favour of CSK when they began their run-



Yash Dayal bowled a brilliant final over; MS Dhoni (inset) plays a shot

chase as a 200-plus score would have sealed their place in the final four at the expense of RCB even if they had lost the game.

However, CSK lost skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad (0) and Daryl Mitchell (4) to be reduced to 19/2 in the third over. Ajinkya Rahane (33, 22b, 3x4, 1x6) and Ravindra steadied the innings with a 64-run stand but Lockie Ferguson broke the partnership as the former was holed out by Du Plessis and then the New Zealander was run out. Du Plessis then took a screamer to remove Mitchell Santner as CSK slipped to 129/6 in 15 overs.

With their backs to the wall, Jadeja and Dhoni added a whirlwind 61 off 27 balls to bring the equation down to 11 off five balls to qualify for the playoffs. With CSK needing 17 runs off the last six balls to qualify, Dayal bowled

the final over and he was straight away smashed for a six by Dhoni but the pacer came back strongly to dismiss the former CSK skipper and then conceded just one run to seal it for RCB.

Earlier, sent in to bat, RCB's top order, led by skipper Du Plessis (54, 39b, 3x4, 3x6), fired in unison. Virat Kohli (47, 29b, 3x4, 4x6), Rajat Patidar (41, 23b, 2x4, 4x6) and Cameron Green (38 n o, 17b, 3x4, 3x6) also went on a six-hitting spree to put RCB on solid ground.

**BRIEF SCORES:** RCB 218/5 (Faf du Plessis 54, Virat Kohli 47, Rajat Patidar 41, Cameron Green 38 n o; Shardul Thakur 2/61, Mitchell Santner 1/23) beat CSK 191/7 (Rachin Ravindra 61, Ravindra Jadeja 42 n o, Ajinkya Rahane 33, MS Dhoni 25; Yash Dayal 2/42, Cameron Green 1/18) by 27 runs.



then missed the Asia Championships due to an injury to Satwik. The Thomas Cup campaign was also not too fruitful as they lost a couple of narrow matches to top pairs. The final appearance will thus provide a major boost ahead of the Paris Olympics.

Satwik and Chirag were not really tested Saturday by Lu and Tang, who played well only in patches but lacked the aggression and accuracy to trouble the Indians, who were a cut above their rivals.

In the opening game, Satwik and Chirag were up 3-0 but the Taiwanese pair managed to make it 5-4 before they started

leaking points. Errors crept into their game as they went long a number of times, allowing the Indians to enter the break with an 11-7 lead.

Things didn't change after resumption as the Indians continued to gather point with their sharp placements. At 17-10, Chirag produced a power-packed smash as they gained nine game points when the Chinese went out twice.

The second game began on a close note as the two pairs moves 4-4 to 6-6. Satwik also produced an ambitious behind-the-back return only to spray it wide. Leading 9-7 for the first time in the match, Lu and Tang, however,

couldn't sustain the pressure as a fast and long rally ended at the nets for the Chinese.

With Lu and Tang continuing to find the going tough, it was 15-10 in favour of the Indians, who grabbed 8 match points when the Chinese made another soft error at the net. Chirag then stood at the front court and sealed it with a barrage of fast returns.

In the women's doubles, the fourth-seeded Indian pair of Tanisha Carsto and Ashwini Ponnappa lost 12-20, 20-22 to top seeds Jongkolphan Kititharakul and Rawinda Prajongjai of Thailand in the semifinals.

## Majority of India players to leave for WT20 May 25

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 18:** The majority of the Indian players along with the jumbo support staff will be flying out to New York May 25, with the rest leaving for the T20 World Cup (World T20/WT20) only after the May 26 IPL final.

Earlier, the members of teams failing to qualify for the playoffs were supposed to leave for New York May 21, two days after the final league game of the IPL May 19 but it has since been learnt that there has been some change in plans and now the first batch will leave May 25.

"The likes of skipper Rohit Sharma, Hardik Pandya, Suryakumar Yadav, Jasprit Bumrah, Rishabh Pant, Arshdeep Singh, Axar Patel are some of the players along with support staff who are expected to leave May 25," a BCCI source told PTI on the condition of anonymity.



"Earlier, departure date for first batch was May 21 but since India is playing only one warm-up game (vs Bangladesh June 1), the players will get to spend some extra days at home," the source added.

Only those players who are part of the IPL final will stay back and will leave for New York May 27. This will also give adequate time to the squad to reduce jet lag and have at least three to four quality net sessions before the Bangladesh warm-up game.

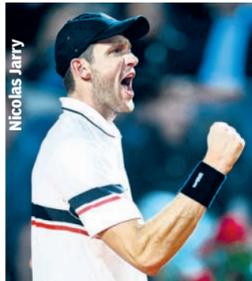
India will open their campaign against Ireland June 5 in New York, followed by the marquee clash against Pakistan June 9.

### THE SQUAD

Rohit Sharma (C), Hardik Pandya (vc), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Virat Kohli, Suryakumar Yadav, Rishabh Pant (wk), Sanju Samson (wk), Shivam Dube, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Arshdeep Singh, Jasprit Bumrah & Mohammed Siraj.

## German World No.5 comes from behind to beat Tabilo

# Zverev to face Jarry for Italian Open title



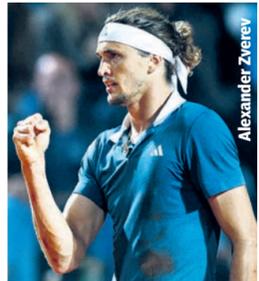
ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Rome, May 18:** For about an hour, Alexander Zverev had no answer to the rocket-like forehands and perfectly placed drop shots that Alejandro Tabilo kept producing on Rome's red clay.

The fifth-ranked Zverev kept patient, though, and took his chance when it came as he rallied to beat his unheralded Chilean opponent 1-6, 7-6(7-4), 6-2 Friday for a spot in the Italian Open final.

In Sunday's final, Zverev will face another Chilean, Nicolas Jarry, who beat Tommy Paul 6-3, 6-7(3-7), 6-3 on the American's 27th birthday. The 24th-ranked Jarry came back from a set down to eliminate Stefanos Tsitsipas in the quarterfinals and will be playing his first Masters Series final.

It was an appealing contrast



in styles between the big-serving 6-foot-7 (2.01 meter) Jarry, who goes for a lot of his shots, and the more defensive-minded Paul, who grinds it out and likes to make his opponents play longer points.

Zverev, the 2017 Rome champion, had the pinkie on his left hand bandaged following a fall in his previous match, after which he said his finger was "crooked." The German plays right-handed but uses a two-handed backhand. He said his pinkie was swollen and he was using painkillers.

It's Zverev's third final in Rome. He won in 2017 by beating Novak Djokovic in straight sets for his first Masters Series title. He lost to Rafael Nadal in the title match a year later. Rome is the last big wamup before the French Open starts May 26.

# Royals, Sunrisers aim for second spot

RAJASTHAN HOST TABLE TOPPERS KKR, WHILE HYDERABAD FACE PBKS AT HOME

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Guwahati, May 18:** Rajasthan Royals and Sunrisers Hyderabad will be aiming for second spot in the 10-team standing in their final league matches of IPL, Sunday.

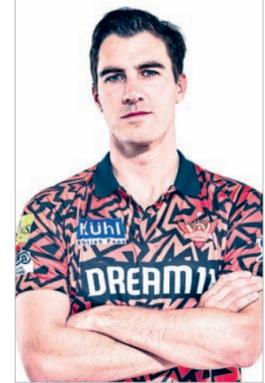
Royals will be desperate to snap their four-match losing streak when they meet table toppers Kolkata Knight Riders, while, high on confidence after making their first playoffs in three years, SRH too would be eager to qualify for the Qualifier 1 when they take on Punjab Kings.

Having secured the playoff berth with 16 points, Royals have started floundering at the business end of the tournament losing four matches on the trot.

Their batting flair has eluded them as they have not managed to cross the 150-mark in their last two matches, and with their star England opener Jos Buttler returning home for national duty, the Royals have big shoes to fill.

Their top three batters Yashasvi Jaiswal, skipper Sanju Samson and local hero Rryan Parag will have to shoulder additional responsibilities if they are to snap the losing streak and head to the playoffs finishing in top-two, that will give them two cracks to reach the final.

KKR (19 points), on the other hand, have already assured themselves a table top position after



**SRH's win over PBKS will not be enough for them getting the second spot. They will hope KKR beat RR in the second match of the day as a win will take SRH to 17 points, while a victory for RR means the Sanju Samson-led side will end their league campaign with 18 points. If RR-KKR game gets washed out, then the points of both the teams would be tied and it will all depend on net run-rate, and SRH (+0.406) are ahead of RR (+0.273) in this scenario**

a washout against Gujarat Titans in Ahmedabad in the previous round handed them one point. They will be high on confidence but at the same time they may have to guard against complacency.

There is also some rain forecast in Guwahati as conditions are likely to be on the slower side and in the last match between Royals and Kings the ball seemed to stop. SRh, who had finished in the

bottom rung in each of the last three editions of the IPL, came out all guns blazing this year to establish themselves as firm contenders for the title with their ultra-aggressive batting approach and skilful bowling.

The Pat Cummins-led side made it to the final-four a few nights back after their clash against Gujarat Titans in Hyderabad was washed out. Placed at the third spot with 15 points from 13 matches, SRH can reach a maximum of 17 points if they get the better of PBKS Sunday.

However, if the struggling Royals manage to beat table-toppers KKR in the last league match, the Sanju Samson-led side will overtake SRH to take the second spot with 18 points.

The third-placed Sunrisers have been somewhat unlucky in their last six outings, winning just two while three matches ended in defeats and one match was a washout.

### MATCHDAY

Indian Premier League

SRH vs PBKS

Time: 03:30 pm

RR vs KKR

Time: 07:30 pm

Telecast: Star Sports Network  
Stream: Jio Cinema

# Jaismine to vie for Paris berth in 57kg category

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 18:** Jaismine Lamboria will compete in the second Olympic boxing qualifiers in Thailand beginning May 24 after India was forced to surrender the women's 57kg category quota for the Paris Games owing to holder Parveen Hooda's international suspension.

Parveen was suspended for three whereabouts failures in 12 months. Parveen was handed a 22-month suspension by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) on Friday.

"Jaismine will compete at 2nd Olympic qualifiers in Thailand in the 57kg category after the suspension of quota winner Parveen by the International Testing Agency (ITA) for Whereabouts Failures Olympic qualifiers start from May 24," Boxing Federation of India said Saturday.

Jaismine had competed in 60kg in the first qualifiers and the Hangzhou Asian Games last



year. She had won a 60kg bronze medal in the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games.

In an unprecedented embarrassment for Indian boxing, the country was forced to surrender the women's 57kg category Olympic quota Friday owing to Parveen's suspension.

The 2022 World Championship bronze-medallist boxer, who fetched the Olympic quota with an Asian Games bronze last year,

failed to file her whereabouts in the period from April 2022 to March 2023 as per WADA rules. However, after discussion with the concerned agencies, Parveen's sanction has been back-dated and she has to now serve a 14-month suspension starting Friday.

In boxing, a quota is awarded to the country and not to the athlete. Three Indian boxers - Nikhat Zareen (50kg), Preeti

(54kg) and Lovlina Borgohain (75kg) - have already booked Olympic quotas for India so far.

### NIKHAT, MINAKSHI BAG GOLD

Reigning World Champion Nikhat and Minakshi clinched a gold each as the Indian team concluded their Elorda Cup campaign in Astana (Kazakhstan) with a best-ever tally of a whopping 12 medals Saturday.

Besides Nikhat and Minakshi's gold medals, Indian boxers won two silver and eight bronze to better their last edition's record of five medals.

Nikhat (52kg) continued her dominance in the prestigious tournament as she outclassed Zhazira Urakbayeva of Kazakhstan with a unanimous 5-0 scoreline to add yet another gold medal to her impressive resume.

Minakshi started the day for India with a bang when she defeated Uzbekistan's Rahmonova Saidahon 4-1 in the women's 48kg final to give India their first gold medal of the competition.

## SNIPPETS

### Odisha Postal beat BSNL in E-League Eliminator

**BHUBANESWAR:** Odisha Postal registered a comfortable 8-wicket victory over BSNL Saturday in the Eliminator round (40-over-a-side) of the E-League cricket tournament at KT Global School ground in Barunei. Odisha Postal invited BSNL to bat after winning the toss and the bowlers justified the decision as they bowl BSNL out for 174 in 39.1 overs. In response, Odisha Postal notched up the win reaching 178/2 in just 28.3 overs. The BSNL innings was off to a rollicking start with openers Subham Naik and Saideep Mohapatra putting on 72 runs in 12 overs. However, a stunning collapse saw BSNL were reduced to 88/6. Purushottam Pradhan held the lower order together with a resolute 42 but in the end it wasn't enough. Left-arm spinner Dhiraj Singh (4/36) was the pick of the bowlers for Odisha Postal. In reply, after losing the first wicket in the very first over, skipper Anurag Sarangi (71 n o) joined the other opener Sanjeeb Sahoo (59) stitching 88 runs for the second wicket before the latter's departure. Vikram Samal (42 n o) then joined Sarangi to take the team home comfortably.

### Sift, Niraj win in Olympic Selection Trials

**BHOPAL:** Sift Kaur Samra won her third women's 50m rifle 3 positions competition while Niraj Kumar emerged victorious in the men's event for a second time on the penultimate day of the Olympic Selection Trial (OST) 3 and 4 here Saturday. Sift shot 461.3 in the women's 3P trial 4 final to edge out Nischal by a point. Ashi Chouksey was third with 448.1. Shriyanka Sadangi and Anjum Moudgil were fourth and fifth respectively in the five-woman field. In the men's 3P, Niraj finished on top with a healthy 462.9, a whole 1.7 ahead of second-placed Chain Singh. Aishwary Tomar was third with 449.8, while Swapnil Kusale and Akhil Sheoran finished fourth and fifth respectively. The results confirmed Sift as the top finisher in women's 3P, considering three best scores out of the four trials.