



## Sanjana's disclosure

Known for fiercely guarding her personal life, actor Sanjana Sanghi spills beans on her dating life

LEISURE | P2



## SK picks Prez candidate

S Korea's conservative People Power Party picks former labour minister Kim Moon-soo as its candidate for the June 3 presidential election

INTERNATIONAL | P10



## Creator economy

India's creator economy can unlock \$125bn in direct ecosystem revenue by 2030, says a BCG report

BUSINESS | P11



## FC Goa triumph

FC Goa becomes the first team to win the Super Cup title twice with a 3-0 win over Jamshedpur FC in the final in Bhubaneswar

SPORTS | P12

# 3 dead as Cuttack bridge slab falls



**DEADLY FALL:** Three persons were killed while two more are battling for life after a crane mishap caused a large slab to fall during the construction of a new bridge over the Kathajodi River in Khan Nagar area of Cuttack, Saturday

**Cuttack, May 3:** At least three workers were killed after a crane collapsed during the construction of a new bridge over the Kathajodi River in Khan Nagar area causing a large concrete slab to fall on them, Saturday. Two others sustained critical injuries and are undergoing treatment at SCB Medical College and Hospital, police said.

The deceased have been identified as Shibashankar Pattanayak, Subash Chandra Bhakta, and Soumya Ranjan Mallik. The two critically injured workers — Bikal Jena and Arun Barik — remain in serious condition, doctors said.

According to officials, the construction was part of a project to extend the Khan Nagar Ring Road. The Public Works department had outsourced the work to a private contractor. At around 6 pm while work was underway, the crane malfunctioned as it was lifting a large slab meant to connect pier structures. The slab fell, trapping several workers below.

Witnesses said two cranes were being used to hoist the slab. One of them failed, leading to the collapse. Emergency crews used another crane to rescue the trapped workers, who were rushed to the hospital. Doctors declared three of them dead on arrival.

Approximately 40 to 50 workers were on-site at the time of the accident. Preliminary reports suggest a lack of proper safety measures may have contributed to the tragedy.

District Collector Dattatraya Bhausaheb Shinde, DCP Khilari Rishikesh Dnyanadeo, and Mayor Subash Singh visited the site and reviewed the situation. A police team has been deployed at the site, and the district administration has ordered an investigation into the incident.

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi has ordered an inquiry into the incident.

He also expressed grief over the deaths and wished a speedy recovery to the injured.

"The CM has also announced an ex-gratia of Rs 5 lakh from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund for the next of kin of the deceased. He has also announced free medical treatment to those injured in the accident and ordered an inquiry," the CMO said in a post on X.

Meanwhile, the Cuttack Mayor alleged that the mishap was an outcome of gross negligence on the part of the government

## Australia PM Albanese wins 2nd 3-year term

Melbourne: Anthony Albanese claimed victory as the first Australian prime minister to clinch a second consecutive three-year term in 21 years Saturday and suggested his government had increased its majority in the next Parliament by not modelling itself on US President Donald Trump's administration. "Australians have chosen to face global challenges the Australian way, looking after each other while building for the future," Albanese told supporters.

# Medical seats for sale at ₹30 lakh; 4 arrested

A day before the NEET-UG, 2025, the Commissionerate Police Saturday claimed to have busted an interstate racket involved in duping medical education aspirants of anything between ₹20-30 lakh for ensuring seats in top private medical colleges by making dummy candidates take the test. From the four arrested for the con act — two are from neighbouring Jharkhand and Bihar — the police have recovered bank cheques worth ₹90 lakh, ostensibly paid by candidates for sure shot success. Nevertheless, the incident came as a crude reminder of last year's NEET-UG paper leak scandal in which names of 16 students from Odisha had surfaced as beneficiaries during investigation

Commissionerate Police Saturday arrested four conduits of an interstate racket who were allegedly duping medical education aspirants with a promise to secure their admission in top private colleges by making dummy candidates appear the test. Addressing a presser to announce the detection, twin city police commissioner Suresh Dev Datta Singh said the activities of the racket spanned across three states — Jharkhand, Odisha and Bihar. Two four-wheelers, documents pertaining to the purchase of two plots of land in Arugul, a forged NRI certificate, and three bank cheques totalling ₹90 lakh have been seized from the foursome following their arrest.

respectively, Sunil and Rudra are from Odisha. The racket has been active for quite some time, he said. Giving details of the racket's modus operandi, Singh said, "The hoodlums, with help from a few local scouts, would procure the identification details of NEET aspirants. Once the admit cards were obtained on the basis of these details, they would share those with dummy candidates, who would sit for the test after forging admit card details." The commissioner said the syndicate charged each candidate anything between ₹20-30 lakh for the service. "The local scouts received ₹4-5 lakh as remuneration," he said. The syndicate was busted following a tip-off by a local informer in Jharkhand, leading to the arrest of Priyadarshi and Arvind. "The Jharkhand Police's information helped us nab Sunil and Rudra from their hideouts in the City," Singh added.

**Bhubaneswar, May 3:** In a major breakthrough on the eve of the NEET-UG 2025, the Special Crime Unit (SCU) of

## WAVES: Majhi seeks global recognition for local games

**Bhubaneswar, May 3:** Seeking global recognition for local games, chief minister Mohan Charan Majhi Saturday said Odisha will continue to ensure that indigenous sports get their rightful place on the world stage. Majhi said this in his keynote address at the WAVES (World Audio Visual & Entertainment Summit) 2025, held at the Jio World Centre in Mumbai, a CMO release said. Speaking at the special session titled 'Indigenous Sports - From India to the Global Stage,' the Chief Minister spotlighted the cultural, social, and global significance of India's traditional sports. "We will continue to work with the Government of India and global federations to ensure that indigenous sports get their rightful place on the world stage," Majhi said. Drawing from his own upbringing in Keonjhar, a tribal-dominated hinterland district of Odisha, the chief minister reflected on his early sporting experiences with 'kabaddi' and 'kho-kho'. "These



were more than games," he said, adding that they were expressions of teamwork, resilience, and identity rooted in the soil of our communities. Majhi informed the gathering that Odisha is the first state in India to establish a dedicated High-Performance Centre (HPC) for an indigenous sport like Kho Kho, in collaboration with a steel company. This landmark initiative redefines the narrative around traditional sports, recognising them as professional disciplines worthy of structured training, infrastructure, and innovation, he said and highlighted the success of Odisha Juggernauts. Odisha is the only state government-owned franchise in the Ultimate Kho Kho League, which won the league's inaugural season in 2022, he said.

## 'Jagannath Dham': SJTA begins probe

**Bhubaneswar, May 3:** As tensions rise over the West Bengal government's portrayal of a newly constructed temple in Digha as 'Jagannath Dham', the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) has launched an official probe into allegations that sacred wood from the Puri Jagannath Temple was secretly used to craft idols at the Digha shrine. State Law Minister Prithviraj Harichandan, who ordered the internal inquiry, said, "Our Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, who is currently touring Mumbai, will return to Bhubaneswar Sunday and raise the issue with his West Bengal counterpart, Mamata Banerjee. The people of Odisha do not accept the misuse of the title 'Jagannath Dham' by anyone. The term 'Dham' holds deep spiritual significance and cannot be used arbitrarily." Meanwhile, SJTA Chief Administrator Arabinda Padhee has begun an investigation into the alleged use of sacred wood from the Puri shrine to make the idols at the Digha temple.

## No Pak ships to enter Indian ports; postal services halted

**New Delhi, May 3:** India Saturday suspended all postal services from Pakistan and banned entry of Pakistani-flagged ships at Indian ports, in fresh punitive measures against Islamabad in view of the cross border linkages to the horrific Pahalgam terror attack. New Delhi's new measures came amid escalating tensions between the two countries following the deadly terror attack last week that killed 26 people. Besides banning entry of Pakistani ships into Indian ports, India also barred Indian ships from visiting Pakistani ports, according to the Directorate General of Shipping (DGS). The restrictions were put into place with immediate effect, officials said. "(The) government of India has decided to suspend exchange of all categories of inbound mail and parcels from

Pakistan through air and surface routes," an order issued by the Department of Posts that operates under the Ministry of Communication said. In a separate notification, the DGS, in exercise of power under Section 411 of the Merchant Shipping Act, banned Pakistani ships from entering Indian ports. "A ship bearing the flag of Pakistan shall not be allowed to visit any Indian port. An Indian flag ship shall not visit any ports of Pakistan," it said in the order. The new moves came a week-and-a-half after India announced a raft of punitive measures against Pakistan including suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty, shutting down of the only operation land border crossing at Attari and downgrading of diplomatic ties following the terror attack. In response, Pakistan shut its airspace to Indian airliners and suspended all trade with India.

# Backlash, praise over 'Pope Trump's' image

**Washington/New York, May 3:** US President Donald Trump has posted a seemingly AI-generated photo of himself in papal attire on his social media sparking a duelling backlash and praise, Newsweek said Saturday. The image, which was also posted from the White House's social media handle, prompted many social media users to call it 'cosplaying as the next Pope' comes days after Trump had jokingly said last week that he would be his own 'number one choice' for the next pope. In the Vatican, cardinals are set to begin May 7 the process to choose a successor to Pope Francis, who died April 21. The US president was among the world leaders who attended his funeral at St Peter's Square April 26. The president posted the pic-

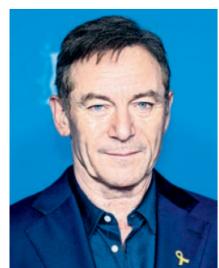
ture at 10:29 pm Friday, without a caption or comment. "The post immediately garnered positive and negative reaction online," Newsweek said adding, it reached out to the Vatican via email soon after. Earlier April 29, Trump told a television reporter: "I'd like to be pope. That would be my number one choice." When asked who should replace Francis, Trump said, "I have no preference," but added: "I must say, we have a cardinal that happens to be out of a place called New York who's very good, so we'll see what happens." Meanwhile, Trump's image went viral on social media with scores of users coming up with jokes, memes and criticism of the president. Reacting to the image posted on the White House's X account, Lepus (@LepusNox) was quick to point out how it was nei-

ther funny nor respectful. "As President of the United States, posting a picture of himself as Pope a few days after the Pope's death is neither funny, nor does it present statesmanship and respectful behaviour. Rather, it shows the boundless arrogance and childish behaviour of a man who believes he is above everything, can get away with anything and is the head of everyone." The newsportal quoted comedian Terrance K Williams's post on X, which said: "Pope Trump... Lol our President just posted this. He's trolling because he knows the media is going to flip out. Love it. Actually I love the sound of King Trump, the first of his name." Melanie D'Arrigo, executive director of the Campaign for New York Health and former Democratic congressional candidate, also took to X saying, "The guy who broke all 10

commandments is posting pictures of himself cosplaying as the next Pope." An X user, Average Aussie Egyptologist (Theresa Clarke) (@AUSegyptology) called it 'truly disgraceful' - an insult to the late Pope Francis. "I can take lots of jokes about religion, but this is truly disgraceful - an insult to the late Pope Francis. It is on Donald Trump's approved Instagram account. The man couldn't even follow the protocols advised by the Holy See, fell asleep during the funeral mass and now does this," she said.



# leisure



## JASON'S REVELATION ABOUT HARRY POTTER UNIVERSE

Actor Jason Isaacs, who played Lucius Malfoy, has revealed the most "nerve-racking" part of working on the *Harry Potter* movies. "The most nerve-racking is that all of the actors in the films were my heroes. They're people I queued up in the rain to watch on stage, mostly," the 61-year-old star said.

## PANETTIERE WAS IN NEED OF HER 4-YEAR ACTING HIATUS

Hollywood actress-singer Hayden Panettiere has shared that her four-year hiatus from acting was unplanned but was also desperately needed. The 35-year-old has revealed it was an unexpected break but she benefited massively from stepping back, and as a result, feels 'much more solid and grounded' in 'this crazy world.'



### FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com  
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**ARIES**  
You have to take care of your health, and at last you realise the importance of diet and exercise. However, today you may wish to eat something new, or try some different cuisine. Ganesh says go out with some old friends whom you have been neglecting of late.

**TAURUS**  
Be prepared for taking instant decisions and acting promptly on them. Today you are likely to meet several such situations Ganesh is pleased to see that you have the acumen and experience to deal with such contingencies. You will have no trouble finding the right solutions and seeing things through. Your exemplary managing skills will be noticed, appreciated and admired. Others are likely to come to you for consultation and advice.

**GEMINI**  
There is a likelihood of some household disturbance cropping up today. Your family members could make a lot of demands from you. You may feel angry because of your inability to meet all their needs and wants. Unexpected expenses are also indicated. You need to control your spending, says Ganesh.

**CANCER**  
Minor ailments like cough and cold may bother you, warns Ganesh. So avoid cold or sweet items. People admire your helpful nature. Take special care of your health, says Ganesh.

**LEO**  
You need to curb down on your expenses. You need to moderate the risks you take on in the share market. It is a good day for financial gains though. You need to understand the value of compromise, says Ganesh.

**VIRGO**  
In all likelihood you will indulge in some writing or artistic work, which will bring about wonderful results. As you are passionate about these things, you may convert them into your hobbies, if you are not involved in them as a professional. Ganesh gives you the green signal to enjoy the clout that you wield over others with your sweet words.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesh says that there are chances that today you might start some long-pending renovation project for your house. You may decorate your home with new painting and items. There may be guests over in the evening that will make you very happy. You may also go out for dinner with your family and friends or, more probably, with your sweetheart.

**SCORPIO**  
The one thing that we neglect the most about ourselves is health. But today you are unable to do that. Your health needs to be paid enough attention as you may be suffering from ailments. Try to regularise your routine along with healthy food and regular exercise, advises Ganesh.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Time to open up that can of confetti at the workplace today. Success never smelled sweeter. But you may bleed on the purchase front, says Ganesh, as in your revelry, you may just unknowingly end up shelling an extra buck or two on ordinary items.

**CAPRICORN**  
Your accomplishments may take you on cloud nine today. Success may come easily to you, but don't try your luck too much, advises Ganesh. Make the most of today as tomorrow may not be the same as today. You will be popular today, especially in your social circle as you'll impress everyone with your wit and humour.

**AQUARIUS**  
Today is the day to turn dreams into reality and how! With your talent, wit, and intelligence you will make a great impression on everyone's mind, feels Ganesh. Icing on the cake will be the cash inflow. You know your cards and you play them well to your advantage. There may be a catch though, keep yourself guarded, advises Ganesh.

**PISCES**  
Just as melting ice caps on faraway mountains can swell the oceans, concerted efforts you make now will have far-reaching beneficial consequences, says Ganesh. Do not be disheartened in the face of obstacles and keep soldiering on.

# Sonam at her candid best

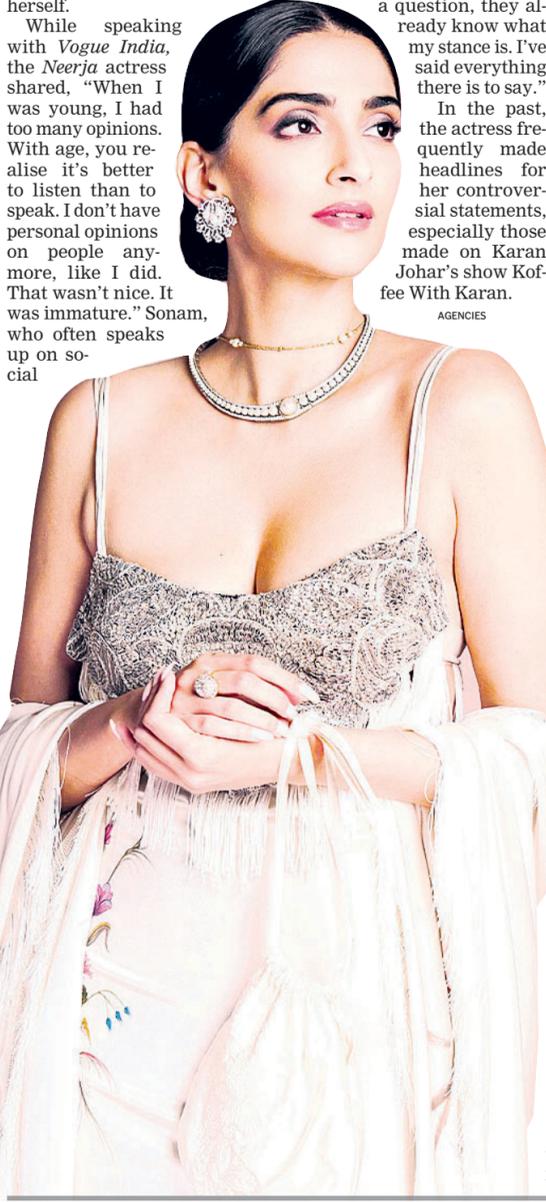
**MUMBAI:** Actress Sonam Kapoor recently shared that she no longer holds personal opinions about people as she once did. She admitted that when she was younger, she had too many opinions, which she now considers "immature." However, with age, she has come to realize that it's better to listen than to speak, and that some opinions are better kept to herself.

While speaking with *Vogue India*, the *Neerja* actress shared, "When I was young, I had too many opinions. With age, you realise it's better to listen than to speak. I don't have personal opinions on people anymore, like I did. That wasn't nice. It was immature." Sonam, who often speaks up on social

media about environmental and socio-political issues, said that she has always been clear about her beliefs, and that she doesn't give in to leading questions anymore for clickbait headlines.

She said, "I've been clear about my beliefs and I don't give in to leading questions anymore for clickbait headlines. If someone asks me a question, they already know what my stance is. I've said everything there is to say."

In the past, the actress frequently made headlines for her controversial statements, especially those made on Karan Johar's show *Koffee With Karan*.



**MUMBAI:** Actress Sanjana's ascent in the film industry wasn't born out of legacy, but a leap of faith. A classic outsider story, the Delhi girl who once didn't know the contours of Mumbai now calls it home — and the craft of acting, her oxygen.

In an age of paparazzi-fueled overshare, Sanjana has fiercely guarded her personal life. Ask her about that and she quips, "I'm a Virgo woman. We're fiercely secretive." Ask her about her dating life and she states, "I think your 20s are like a really adventurous journey of figuring out — what love is, what companionship is. And life has been colorful on that front. A few years ago, I just gotten out of a very long term relationship so things were sad at that point. Now I'm a little better." Ask her

## Sanjana opens up on her dating life

directly if she is single or not, and she says, "I'm definitely not single."

"Being an actor in the first place, or choosing to do this for the rest of my life was something I could never actually imagine growing up. It's been a journey of a lot of learning. I'm just in that process of falling deeper and deeper in love with the craft," says the actress best known for her hauntingly tender portrayal of Kizie Basu in *Dil Bechara*.



**MUMBAI:** Actor Saif Ali Khan has been engaging in impactful conversations about the potential of Indian cinema, cultural impact, and growing connectivity across global platforms during the ongoing WAVES Summit 2025.

Speaking with Ted Sarandos, Co-CEO of Netflix, Saif opened up about what kinds of films and content attract him the most.

The *Jewel Thief* actor stated, "I like historical films. Maybe films about other cultures, maybe Japanese. I am also very excited to see our culture on the big screens. *The Mahabharata* is the greatest story ever told, it's one of our great epics. I also like to watch massive war scenes, bringing life, history, and a past that is related to books. I would like to see that kind of atmosphere in movies. And I feel the long-form streaming format is just perfect for it."

Claiming that there is a lot of untapped talent in India, he added, "It's about collaborations and it's also about giving opportunities inside our country because there is so much untapped talent and that's the most exciting thing. I think this is a one-of-its-kind Summit, so we're all very excited to see what happens."



## SAIF'S FAVOURITE GENRE

# From a waiter's son to self-made star

**MUMBAI:** Bollywood is home to many stars who rose to fame through sheer determination, and one such actor is Suniel Shetty. Known for his charm and action-packed roles in the 1990s, Suniel carved a special place for himself in the film industry. Behind his success lies a story of struggle and inspiration. In an interview, he shared that his father, Veerappa Shetty, worked as a waiter in a hotel. Years later, Suniel fulfilled a dream by gifting his father the very same hotel. During the 2013 launch of his decoration showroom, he proudly



revealed that the hotel, located next to Four Seasons Hotel in Worli, held deep emotional value, as his father once worked there, before purchasing the building, in 1943. Suniel considers his father his real hero and credits him for instilling a strong work ethic. He says he never feels ashamed of any job, a lesson he learned from his father's life. Apart from acting, the *Mohra* star is a successful entrepreneur. He owns several hotels, restaurants, and boutiques, and runs a production house, Popcorn Entertainment. His net worth is estimated at Rs 125 crores. Born in a Tulu-speaking Bunt family in Mangalore, Suniel is married to Mana Shetty and has two children, Athiya and Ahan.

### PEANUTS



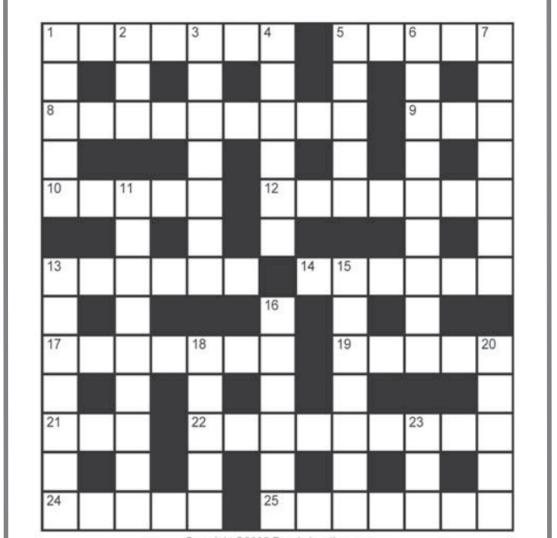
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



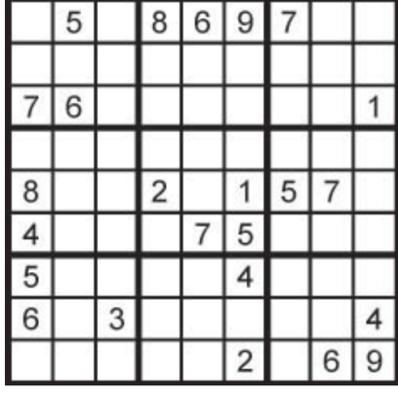
### CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Scourges of the sea
  - 5 Line from the heart
  - 8 Decorative designs
  - 9 Behold
  - 10 Woody plant
  - 12 Sweetened red wine
  - 13 Avoided
  - 14 Way off
  - 17 Bordelaise ingredient
  - 19 Cupid's projectile
  - 21 Gullible one
  - 22 Sommelier's tool
  - 24 Fills up
  - 25 Tranquillised
- Down**
- 1 Compote fruit
  - 2 Dead letters?
  - 3 Sewing need
  - 4 Court game
  - 5 Illegal firing
  - 6 Artificial lake
  - 7 Garden-variety (3,6)
  - 11 Star's walkway
  - 13 Stops
  - 15 Passed, as time
  - 16 Baby birds?
  - 18 Shoestrings
  - 20 Impressed
  - 23 Furrow

### SUDOKU

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



### SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown

## MAN GETS 20-YR RI FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT

**BHUBANESWAR:** A PCOS court here Saturday awarded a 20-year rigorous imprisonment (RI) to a 24-year-old man after holding him guilty of sexually assaulting a minor under Infocity police limits in the City in 2022. The court also slapped a penalty of Rs 5,000 on the convict, identified as Santosh Nayak of Kanas. Failure to pay the amount would entail additional three-month of jail term, special public prosecutor Rajib Sasmal said. According to the case details, Santosh and the victim were neighbours. It was August 31, 2022 when Santosh barged into the minor's house as her parents were away and sexually assaulted her. The court ordered Khurda District Legal Services Authority to pay ₹4 lakh to the victim.



## Governor urges citizens to embrace renewable energy

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, May 3:** In a strong push for environmental protection and sustainable living, Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati urged citizens to embrace green energy to reduce pollution, safeguard the planet and save much required foreign exchange by reducing import of crude oil.

Addressing a press conference at Raj Bhavan here Saturday, the Governor emphasised the importance of transitioning from traditional energy sources to renewable alternatives.

Since taking charge, he has initiated a transformative shift in the energy infrastructure of Raj Bhavan in the City. A 150 kilowatt solar power plant is already operational on the premises, with an additional 400 kilowatt set to be installed soon. This marks a significant step towards making the Governor's residence a net-zero energy campus. Furthering the green mission, a fleet of Made-in-India electric vehicles has been introduced—ranging from official cars to two-wheelers—signalling a decisive move towards sustainable mobility.

"Every ride now contributes to a quieter, cleaner, and more responsible tomorrow. It's more than a choice—it's the path we've chosen to follow," the Governor said, underlining the urgency of adopting eco-friendly practices. With this pioneering effort, Raj Bhavan is not only setting an example for government institutions across the country but also sending a clear message that sustainability begins at the top.



While interacting with the media, the Governor also highlighted major schemes introduced by the Centre to promote renewable energy.

He appreciated the state government for providing an additional subsidy under the PM Surya Ghar scheme, stating that it will encourage more people to adopt solar energy. He urged citizens across the state to take full advantage of such initiatives and actively transition to renewable sources of energy—not just for personal benefit, but for the greater good of the environment.

He also appealed to people to gradually shift away from petrol and diesel vehicles and adopt electric vehicles, highlighting that this transition is a crucial step toward reducing pollution, cutting dependence on fossil fuels, and supporting a cleaner, more sustainable future. Furthermore, he emphasised that charging electric vehicles with rooftop solar panels enables truly green mobility by eliminating the need for fossil fuels. "It also makes everyday

travel significantly more affordable," he noted.

He stated, "Now is the time to take action. These efforts aim to empower people and build a better, lasting future for the next generations." The Governor also called upon the media to play a proactive role in spreading awareness about renewable energy.

Deputy Chief Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo, who was present at the event, lauded the green initiatives undertaken by Raj Bhavan and highlighted various steps taken by the state government to promote renewable energy. He emphasised the importance of public participation in making Odisha a leader in sustainable development.

Energy department Principal Secretary Vishal Kumar Dev provided detailed insights into the ongoing government schemes and subsidy structures aimed at accelerating the adoption of renewable energy across Odisha.

Principal Secretary to Governor NBS Rajput, along with other senior officers of Raj Bhavan, was also present at the event.



**FOR A CAUSE:** Dharitri and Orissa POST Chief Executive Adyasha Satpathy with students of Ravenshaw University at an event organised by Ravenshaw Radio on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day, on the institution premises in Cuttack, Saturday  
PICS: RAJKISHORE MOHANTY

## 'Jagannath Dham' row deepens

SJTA begins probe into 'use' of sacred wood from Puri Srimandir to craft Digha idols

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, May 3:** As tensions rise over the West Bengal government's portrayal of a newly-constructed temple in Digha as 'Jagannath Dham', the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) has launched an official probe into allegations that sacred wood from Puri Srimandir was secretly used to craft idols at the Digha shrine.

State Law Minister Prithviraj Harichandan, who ordered the internal inquiry, said, "Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, who is currently touring Mumbai, will return to Bhubaneswar Sunday and raise the issue with his West Bengal counterpart, Mamata Banerjee. The people of Odisha do not accept the misuse of the title 'Jagannath Dham' by anyone. The term 'Dham' holds deep spiritual significance and cannot be used arbitrarily."

He added that the Odisha government has no objection to the construction of Jagannath temples across the country.

"But it is unacceptable for the Lord's devotees to recognise Digha as 'Jagannath Dham'. Moreover, I personally have reservations about allowing people from all religions to enter the Jagannath temple," Harichandan said.

Deputy Chief Minister Pravat Parida, without directly naming Mamata Banerjee, said, "Those who have misused Lord Jagannath's name have paid a heavy price in the past. Now,



someone [referring to Banerjee] is set to suffer."

Puri MP and BJP national spokesperson Sambit Patra also voiced strong opposition to the use of the 'Jagannath Dham' title for the Digha temple.

"There is only one Jagannath Dham in the world, and it is in Puri. One should know that there are four Dhams in the country, and Puri is one of them. There should be no doubt that no other place can be called Jagannath Dham. Shreeketra or Purusottama Kshetra exists only in Puri, where the Lord resides," Patra said.

Meanwhile, SJTA Chief Administrator Arabinda Padhee initiated a probe into the alleged use of sacred wood from Srimandir to make the idols at the Digha temple.

This follows a statement reportedly made by senior Puri servitor Ramakrushna Dasmohapatra to a Bengali news channel.

Local television channels

aired footage of Dasmohapatra speaking in Bengali, claiming he had brought idols of Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra, and Lord Jagannath made from stored sacred wood from Puri.

However, Dasmohapatra has denied the allegation, asserting that he crafted the idols from neem wood in Puri before transporting them to Digha.

As the controversy deepened, SJTA convened meetings with various Nijogs (servitor associations) of Srimandir.

In the first phase, Padhee held discussions with key functionaries—Deulakaran, Tadaukaran, and Pattajoshi Mohapatra. Further meetings will include the four Badagrahis (bodyguards of the deities during the Rath Yatra) and three chief carpenters who construct the chariots.

On Saturday, SJTA issued notices to the presidents and secretaries of all Sevayat Nijogs (servitor bodies) of Srimandir, seeking their views on the Digha

temple controversy. The servitor bodies were asked to submit their opinions by 5pm Sunday.

Ramkrushna Dasmohapatra, secretary of Daitapati Nijog and at the centre of the controversy for attending the Digha temple inauguration, has also been issued a notice to appear before the SJTA Sunday morning.

Meanwhile, Gajapati Dibyasingha Deb Saturday said appropriate steps would be taken regarding the use of the term 'Dham' by the West Bengal government for the recently inaugurated temple.

The Gajapati, who is the Chairman of Shree Jagannath Temple Managing Committee in Puri, said this while responding to a request by Padma awardee sand sculptor Sudarshan Pattnaik. He has urged the Gajapati to come forward and protect dignity of the Jagannath Dham.

"The act of the West Bengal Chief Minister has deeply hurt the religious sentiments of millions of Lord Jagannath's devotees around the world. According to our sacred scriptures (Shastras), there is only one organised Jagannath Dham, and it is in Puri. Using this revered title for any other location could cause religious confusion and goes against the long-standing spiritual traditions and cultural heritage of Hinduism," he said.

In addition to Dasmohapatra, around 56 other servitors from the Puri temple reportedly attended the consecration ceremony at the Digha temple.

## Mediation offers more holistic solution to disputes: CJI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 3:** Observing that mediation is not a 'lesser form of justice' but it's 'wiser form', Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sanjiv Khanna Saturday said mediation offers a more holistic solution to disputes as compared to courtroom adjudication.

Speaking at the National Conference on Exploring the Efficacy and Reach of Mediation, Khanna said that in courtroom adjudication, one party emerges the winner and the other the loser leading to relations becoming strained.

The CJI said mediation, on the other hand, can heal relations and the solutions offered by it are less traumatic and more humane.

"Court litigation and adjudication are, in a way, grim and shallow. At times, the root cause remains unaddressed and

the ailment and bane remain. The relationships are strained, if not broken. There is a winner, there is a loser," he said.

"Mediation does the opposite. It seeks to identify and remedy the root cause. It goes deeper into the issue, the cause of the misunderstanding. It addresses the primordial and underlying concerns that are the cause of the dispute," he said.

"It allows a more holistic solution that not only resolves the legal issue but goes beyond that. It heals and restores the relationship. This is true justice, not coerced and forced by what third parties dictate," he added.

The CJI said over the past two decades, mediation has played a critical role in resolving disputes.

"Between 2016 and early 2025, a staggering 7.57 lakh cases were settled through mediation. Yet, I must acknowledge,



mediation is yet to reach the villages. India, in one way, therefore, has been slow in arriving at mediation and understanding its importance," he pointed out.

"Our goal must be to show ev-

ery litigant, every citizen, every businessman and every person that mediation is not a lesser form of justice but a wiser form of it," he said.

Justice BR Gavai also spoke on the occasion and said when

**Court litigation and adjudication are, in a way, grim and shallow. At times, the root cause remains unaddressed and the ailment and bane remain. The relationships are strained, if not broken. There is a winner, there is a loser**

SANJIV KHANNA | CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA

individuals are given a safe place to communicate, hostility can give way to dialogue and confrontation can transform into cooperation.

"India has made a significant stride in integrating mediation into its legal system as a means to promote alternative dispute resolution and reduce the burden on courts. However, the true benefits of progressive legislation such as the Mediation Act, 2023, can only be realised if

we go beyond the law and work towards building a mediation mindset," Gavai said.

Justice Gavai said the culture of mediation is gradually evolving in India.

"Institutions such as NALSA have already taken a commendable step by conducting training programs in mediation and advanced commercial mediation for lawyers. However, to truly manifest mediation, we need to scale up and diversify these efforts. It is at this juncture that the establishment of the Mediation Association of India assumes critical significance," Gavai said.

President Droupadi Murmu, Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal, Attorney General R Venkataramani and Solicitor General Tushar Mehta were among the other dignitaries who spoke at the event.

## 1 yr in Odisha: BJP govt plans mega celebration

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, May 3:** The BJP-led government in Odisha has planned a series of programmes to highlight its achievements during its first year in power.

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi took the oath of office June 12, 2024.

A high-level meeting chaired by Principal Secretary of Housing & Urban Development and Commerce & Transport departments, Usha Padhee, discussed the roadmap for celebrating the completion of one year of the government, an official release said.

Senior officials from both departments actively participated in the deliberations.

During the meeting, Padhee underscored the importance of organising the celebrations in a meaningful, inclusive and impactful manner, showcasing the state government's achievements over the past year, the statement said.

She also emphasised that the proposed activities should reflect the administration's dedication to development, transparency, good governance, and public welfare.

A broad range of activities was proposed during the meeting, which included public outreach programmes across all 115 urban local bodies (ULBs), regional transport offices, and port areas to highlight key developmental milestones, exhibitions and multimedia campaigns to display success stories and transformative initiatives, foundation stone laying and inauguration ceremonies for major projects across sectors.

Padhee directed the officials to prepare sector-specific action plans and ensure maximum public participation in the planned activities. The meeting resolved to finalise a comprehensive calendar of events, ensuring close coordination among all departments and stakeholders.



# Prez backs legal role for village mediators

President Droupadi Murmu stresses the need to legally empower local mediators to resolve village disputes and ease the burden on higher courts



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 3: President Droupadi Murmu Saturday called for legally empowering mediators at the village level to resolve disputes locally, preventing them from escalating to higher courts. She was addressing the inaugural National Conference on Mediation held in the capital. Highlighting the critical gap between traditional village mediation practices and the modern legal framework, the President said, "In villages, people who resolve disputes—especially those related to family or land—may have social respect but lack legal authority. This undermines their ability to settle matters ef-

fectively." She emphasised that disputes often go unresolved at the grassroots because parties involved are aware that mediators hold no legal power, and thus do not accept their decisions. Murmu underlined the urgent need to create a robust mechanism that supports grassroots dispute resolution, ensuring that conflicts do not spiral and disturb the harmony of rural communities. "We need to strengthen local mediation systems to preserve peace and reduce the burden on formal courts," she said. The President also reflected

on the absence of a structured judicial mechanism extending from the village to the Supreme Court. "Despite our rich tradition of village mediation, modern systems have not formally integrated these into the judicial structure," she noted, suggesting this may have been due to oversight or lack of time. Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal also addressed the gathering, describing mediation as both a reform and a collective societal responsibility. He urged a shift from litigation to dialogue, saying, "More mediate, less litigate should be our guiding principle." He cited Indian epics, referencing Angad from the Ramayana and Lord Krishna from the Mahabharata, as ancient examples of mediators. Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna, along with CJI-designate Justice BR Gavai, also attended the event. CJI Khanna launched the Mediation Association of India, which is expected to facilitate the formation of the Mediation Council of India under the Mediation Act, 2023.



PRESS TRIBUTE: Excise, Law and Works Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan lights the ceremonial lamp at the World Press Freedom Day event organised by the Bhubaneswar Journalist Association at a City hotel, Saturday

# Radio Namaskar wins nat'l award

RESHMI YADAV, OP

Bhubaneswar, May 3: Radio Namaskar, Odisha's first community radio station, has once again been recognised for its remarkable contribution to community media and its efforts to make community radio sustainable. At the National Community Radio Sammelan held Saturday at the Jio Centre in Mumbai, the station was honoured

with the National Community Radio Award by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (MIB), marking its sixth such recognition. The award was presented by Union Minister of State for Information & Broadcasting, L Murugan during the WAVES event of the Sammelan. Founded in 2010 in Konark by the national development organisation Young India, Radio Namaskar has become a vital



platform for voicing grassroots issues. The station reaches over 700 villages in Puri district, serving a population of around 3 lakh people with its pro-people broadcasts. Programme head of Radio Namaskar and a respected

community media expert Andaz Aaron received the award on behalf of the station. The recognition highlights the station's ongoing dedication to community empowerment through communication, now reinforced by six National Community Radio Awards from MIB. In a notable development, Young India is also establishing the Asia Centre for Community Media at Radio Namaskar's Konark campus.

WEATHER BBSR CTC Max Temp 35.2° 34.6° Min Temp 24.6° 24.0° Humidity 73% 71% Rainfall Nil Nil FORECAST Partly Cloudy sky with possibility of rain or thundershower

# Governor flags PESA delay, seeks taskforce

Governor Kambhampati calls for coordination, timely reporting, and infrastructure focus in tribal areas



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, May 3: Expressing concern over the delay in framing rules for the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act or PESA Act in the state, Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati suggested the state government to constitute a high-level taskforce for effective implementation of key legislations. The Governor made the suggestion during a comprehensive review meeting of the ST and SC Development, Minorities and Backwards Classes Welfare department here Friday. Noting the involvement of multiple departments in implementing PESA Act and the Forest Rights Act (FRA), he said a dedicated taskforce led by the chief minister will help streamline coordination, enable joint planning, and resolve implementation challenges more effectively. Expressing concern over the delay in framing the rules for PESA, the governor

asked officials to expedite the process. He also emphasised the need to convene meetings of the Tribal Advisory Council twice a year, as mandated by the Constitution. He called for the timely submission of the department's annual report and underlined the importance of efficient fund utilisation. "If a target of 120 per cent utilisation is set, at least 100 per cent can realistically be achieved," he said. Drawing attention to infrastructure deficits in tribal regions, Kambhampati pointed out challenges in transporting equipment for mobile connectivity and stressed the need for targeted development. To better understand the situation on the ground, he said he would personally talk to project administrators to learn about the progress and problems in tribal areas.

# Rare pancreatic surgery saves migrant worker

After undergoing treatment in Qatar, a migrant worker's journey from coma to comeback has been remarkable

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 3: A 27-year-old migrant worker from Berhampur has defied the odds after undergoing life-saving treatment at Manipal Hospitals, Bhubaneswar. Rohit (name changed), who had moved to Qatar to secure a better future, experienced severe abdominal pain just three months into his job. He was diagnosed with necrotising pancreatitis and a pseudoaneurysm, both life-threatening conditions that led to his hospitalisation in Qatar for six months. Rohit's condition worsened and he slipped into a coma for three months, requiring multiple surgeries, including the removal of part of his pancreas and colon. He was left reliant on a tracheostomy, feeding tube, and stoma. As his insurance coverage ended, his family brought him back to India in search of further treatment. After unsuccessful treatments at various hospitals in Bhubaneswar, Rohit was referred to Manipal Hospitals, Bhubaneswar, where consul-



tant (GI & HPB Surgery) Jyotirmay Jena and his team took on the challenging case. Jena performed a complex, single-stage surgery to restore Rohit's health. The surgery included gastrostomy closure, removal of necrotised tissue, control of internal bleeding, and intestinal reconnection, all while reconstruct-

ing his abdominal wall for improved mobility. Just six weeks after the surgery, Rohit is out of danger and regaining strength, even preparing to return to work—a journey that seemed impossible only months ago. Hospital director Saktimaya Mohapatra said, "This case showcases the skill and compassion of our team in handling complex gastrointestinal conditions, restoring not only life but livelihoods for migrant workers like Rohit."

Rohit's condition worsened after six months in Qatar, leading to a coma and multiple surgeries. Six weeks post-surgery, Rohit is recovering well and preparing to resume work.

# Global temp may rise by 2.7°C by century's end

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 3: If the emission of greenhouse gases (GHGs) is not reduced urgently, the Earth's temperature may rise by 2.7 degrees Celsius by the end of the current century, warned Centre for Environment and Climate (CEC) director Sarat Chandra Sahu—an eminent meteorologist and researcher. According to him, the GHG emissions increased by 47 per cent and Carbon Dioxide emissions by 80 per cent between 1990 and 2020. Citing data from the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), Sahu noted that the Paris Agreement on climate change, adopted in 2015 was aimed to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius. However, current trends indicate that the temperature is

The concentration of Carbon Dioxide in the atmosphere has risen by 149 per cent compared to pre-industrial levels. This surge poses significant threats to human health, the planet's well-being, and the future of coming generations.

likely to exceed that threshold, he said. Sahu made these remarks while speaking at a two-day 'International Workshop on Water, Waste Management and Climate Change' organised by the CEC, in collaboration with Rivers of the World (ROW), USA here recently. He further stated that the concentration of Carbon Dioxide in the atmosphere has risen by 149 per cent compared to pre-industrial levels. This



surge poses significant threats to human health, the planet's well-being, and the future of coming generations.

While atmospheric Carbon Dioxide levels stood at 400 parts per million (ppm) in 2015, they had increased to 413.2 ppm by 2020.

Methane and Nitrous Oxide levels have also seen dramatic increases of 262 per cent and 123 per cent respectively, compared to their levels in 1750, when human activities began disrupting the Earth's natural balance. The WMO observed that Earth last experienced similar levels of Carbon Dioxide 3 to 5 million years ago, during which global temperatures rose by 2 to 3 degrees Celsius. However, the global population was not 7.8 billion at that time—underscoring the heightened danger posed by current GHG concentrations. "According to the latest findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the temperature may rise by 2.7 degrees Celsius by the end of the century if the increase in GHG emissions is not curtailed soon," Sahu warned. Sahu, a former Director of the India Meteorological De-

partment in Bhubaneswar, emphasised the growing concern over the link between airborne particulate matter and a wide range of adverse health effects, highlighting the urgent need for air quality improvement. He explained that Aerosols—tiny particles produced by human activity, industrial effluents, volcanic eruptions, forest fires, and natural phenomena—are ever-present in the air we breathe and are toxic to human health. "Aerosols, formed from both natural and anthropogenic processes, play a significant role in climate change," Sahu said. "An increase in air pollution from power plants, construction, and other activities leads to a rise in Aerosols, which can affect cloud formation and result in thicker clouds, ultimately causing a decrease in temperature," he added.

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# Student hangs self over poor scores in exam

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Champua, May 3:** A 15-year-old girl, who had recently appeared for the High School Certificate (HSC) exams, reportedly committed suicide over poor results in Shankarpur village under Champua police limits in Keonjhar district.

The deceased student has been identified as Truptimayee Mahanta, daughter of Kamal Mahanta and a student of Naradpur High School. She had appeared for this year's Class X board examination and secured 253 marks out of total 600. According to family members, she was distressed after learning that she had scored fewer marks than her peers. Though she had passed the exam, the marks were below her expectation.

The results were published Friday and Truptimayee came to know about her scores through a phone conversation with fellow students at her tuition class. Learning that her marks were significantly lower than those of her classmates, she reportedly



went into severe mental stress.

Truptimayee had dinner Friday night and slept as usual with her younger sister. However, the next morning, her grandfather found her hanging inside the room.

She had reportedly used a scarf to hang herself from a wooden beam of the thatched house. Her father, who has been bedridden for years due to illness, was unable to report the incident. Instead, her uncle, Sudarshan Mahanta, reported the incident at Champua police station.

Champua police recovered the body and sent it for post-mortem. Following the procedure, the body was handed over to the family. An unnatural death case (16/2025) has been registered, and an investigation is underway.

Champua police station Officer-in-Charge Debaki Nayak confirmed the development and said preliminary findings suggest that the girl took the extreme step due to mental stress stemming from poor scores.

The incident has cast a pall of gloom over the village.

# Woman strangles mother-in-law to death; 2 detained

*The woman's brother allegedly assisted her in committing the crime*

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Redhakhol, May 3:** A woman allegedly strangled her 55-year-old mother-in-law to death following a heated scuffle between the two at Kutasinga village under this police limits in Sambalpur district late Friday night.

The victim was identified as Labani Dehury, wife of Ganesh Dehury, and the accused daughter-in-law as Monalisa Dehury, 22, wife of Krushna Chandra Dehury in the village. The woman's brother Siddhant Nayak, 26, of Kushapali village allegedly assisted her in committing the murder.

Following the incident, Labani's husband Ganesh lodged a complaint at the Redhakhol police station. Police registered a case and detained Monalisa and her brother Siddhant for questioning.

The incident occurred after a heated argument broke out between Labani and Monalisa, who had a strained relationship since Monalisa's marriage to Labani's son, Krushna Chandra Dehury, two years ago. Krushna Chandra works at a company in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, while Ganesh is employed in Rourkela. Only Labani and Monalisa were living at home



at the time of the incident.

Neighbours alleged that a fight broke out Friday night between the two women and they informed Ganesh of the situation over phone. Ganesh rushed to his house Saturday morning and found Labani lying dead in the house, bleeding from the mouth. He immediately informed the police.

Redhakhol SDPO Prashant Kumar Meher and IIC Chandra Mohan Singh, accompanied by a scientific team, visited the spot and launched an investigation. The body was sent for post-mortem to the Redhakhol Sub-Divisional Hospital and later handed over to the family members for cremation.

A case (104/25) was registered under Sections 103(A), 265, and 3(5) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and further investigations were on, investigating officer Chittaranjan Meher said.

# Police crack double murder, nab one

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bargarh, May 3:** Police have cracked the double murder case that occurred Thursday in Baghapali village under Bheden police station and arrested Nepal alias Naama, 28, the son of one of the deceased Magha alias Madhusudan Bhue, 55. Bodies of two men had been found from a house in the village Thursday.

According to Bheden IIC Sushant Kumar Das, Nepal confessed during police interrogation that he killed Tarani Bag, 35, to avenge the murder of his father Magha. Tarani allegedly killed Magha following a dispute, prompting Nepal to retaliate.

Police have seized several weapons used in the crime, including a bamboo stick, a steel rod, a piece of wooden cot, and a knife. Nepal was produced in



court Saturday. As his bail plea was rejected, he was remanded to Bargarh sub-jail.

A murder case (100/25) has been registered against Nepal based on a complaint filed by Tarani's elder brother, Nityananda.

Sources said that a wedding ceremony was underway in Baghapali village on the day of the incident. Magha and his family were attending the event, as was Tarani. A verbal altercation broke out between the

two during the function, after which Tarani went to Magha's residence. There, he allegedly attacked Magha inside the house, killing him on the spot.

Upon learning about the attack on his father, Nepal rushed to the scene and launched a counterattack on Tarani, who also died at the spot. After confirming both deaths, Nepal fled from the village.

Later, police arrived at the scene and found both Magha and Tarani lying in pools of

blood inside the house. Acting swiftly, Bolangir SP J Abhilash (then in-charge of Bargarh), Bargarh Additional SP Indurekha Paschim Kabat, SD-PO Padarabinda Tripathi, and Bheden IIC Sushant Kumar Das reached the spot with a scientific team.

Both bodies were seized and sent to Bargarh hospital for post-mortem. After the autopsy, the bodies were returned to the village Friday. As Nepal was absconding, Magha's funeral rites were performed by his daughter Yajnaseni. Tarani's last rites were carried out by his nephew Rakesh.

Tarani was known to be a habitual offender and had an active arrest warrant against him. It is widely speculated that he had returned to the village on the day of the incident despite being on the run from the law.

# Defamation case registered against Raja Chakra's lawyer

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Balasure, May 3:** A defamation suit has been filed against senior advocate Sitanshu Mohan Dwivedi for reportedly making baseless allegations in connection with a multi-crore corruption case involving Gandhamardan Loading Agency and Transporting Co-operative Society Ltd.

BJP state president Manmohan Samal filed the defamation complaint Saturday before the SDJM court in Balasure (Case No. 25/25). The suit follows Dwivedi's recent remarks alleging that Samal's party workers had demanded ₹1.3 crore under the pretext of a "state head" to allow business operations to continue. Samal has dismissed the allegations as "false and malicious."

Dwivedi is the legal representative of BJD leader Soumyashankar alias Raja Chakra, a key accused in the ongoing investigation by the Crime Branch into financial misconduct.

Accompanying Samal at the court were several BJP leaders and legal professionals, including deputy chief whip and Remuna MLA Gobinda Chandra Das, district BJP president Ishwar Chandra Behera, former



district president Umakanta Mohapatra, Bar Association president Keshab Acharya, senior advocates Harekrushna Das, Lambodar Nayak, Bailochan Das, Ashish Ghosh, and Shobhana Mohanty, along with Om Prakash Ray from the Cuttack High Court.

Speaking to the media, Samal said, "About a month ago, Sitanshu Mohan Dwivedi levelled a baseless allegation against me. He claimed that my workers demanded ₹1.3 crore under the guise of a state head and threatened to halt business operations if the amount wasn't paid. These statements were made with malicious intent to tarnish my image and the reputation of the BJP in the state."

He said that the complaint was filed to counter a "fabricated and unfounded narrative," and stated, "If anyone has any allegations against me, show me the proof. These are completely baseless claims made solely for publicity or to defame me and the ruling party."

Samal also urged the media to verify the truthfulness of claims before publishing them, especially when political or reputational stakes are high.

The allegation has triggered political uproar across the state, particularly as it relates to a broader corruption case involving crores of rupees misappropriated by the co-operative society, in which Raja Chakra is reportedly the principal accused.

# Man sentenced to 20-yr RI for sodomising minor boy

**Baripada:** A local court in Mayurbhanj district Saturday sentenced a 25-year-old man to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment (RI) after finding him guilty of sexually assaulting a seven-year-old boy. The verdict was delivered by Judge Santosh Kumar Nayak of the Fast Track Special Court under POCSO Act. The court also imposed a fine of ₹50,000 on convict Raghunath Murmu, said Special Public Prosecutor Manaranjan Pattnaik. If the convict fails to pay the fine, he will remain in jail for another year, the court said. The court also directed Mayurbhanj District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Secretary to pay ₹1 lakh compensation to the victim's family. The judgment was based on the statement of the victim, five witnesses and medical report, Pattnaik said, adding that the incident took place January 12, 2025, when the child was alone in his house.

According to police, Murmu lured the child with chocolates and took him to a nearby forest where he sexually assaulted him.

# LIFE IMPRISONMENT FOR RAPE OF 6-YEAR-OLD

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rourkela, May 3:** The Fast Track (POCSO) Court here Saturday sentenced the accused in a 2019 child rape case to life imprisonment.

Judge P Surya Rao pronounced the verdict, ordering life imprisonment to the ac-

cused Altaf Hussein, 32, along with a fine of ₹2 lakh. In default of payment, the court ordered an additional one-year jail term. Furthermore, the court directed the government to provide ₹4 lakh in compensation to the survivor.

The case relates to Case No. 135/19 filed at Uditnagar police

station. Hussein, originally from Ukha Andar in Bardhaman district of West Bengal, had been residing in a rented house near the goods warehouse in Rourkela at the time of the incident. He was found guilty of raping a six-year-old girl from the neighbourhood.

The trial proceeded under the

Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and was conducted in a fast-track manner. The court examined statements of 16 government witnesses and one defence witness along with 24 documentary exhibits before delivering the judgment, Special Public Prosecutor Sudam Chandra Dash said.

# Blind school achieves 100% pass rate for 42nd year

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Berhampur, May 3:** The Red Cross School for the Blind in Ganjam district has again achieved 100 per cent pass percentage in the High School Certificate (HSC) examination, the results of which were announced Friday.

All 11 visually impaired students, including four girls, who appeared for the exam this year passed, principal Priya Ranjan Mahakuda said.

"Two boys secured A2 grades by scoring above 80 per cent, while two other students received B1 grade (over 70 per cent). Three students got B2 grade (over 60 per cent), and four secured C grade over 50 per cent," Mahakuda said.

Since its first batch in 1983, the residential school has consistently achieved a 100 per cent success rate in the matriculation examination.

"The teaching staff takes extra care of the students, which is a key reason behind our success," Mahakuda added.

Bikram Giri and Binayak Patra, who secured A2 grades, expressed their desire to pursue higher education.

"We want to pursue Plus II in college," they said. Earlier, students faced challenges in Plus II education due to the lack of



Braille textbooks. However, in the past three years, that gap has been addressed.

"We have been printing Braille textbooks for Plus II Arts students and supplying those to different institutes free of cost, as directed by the government," said Prakash Narayan Rath, manager of the government-run computerised Braille press. Three schools in Berhampur have also reported 100 per cent success rates.

While Saraswati Vidya Mandir at Nilakantha Nagar has achieved 100 per cent success rate for the last 33 years, Saraswati Sishu Vidya Mandir at Ramahari Nagar, Goshaninagan has been achieving 100 per cent results for the past 23 years.

"This year, all 363 students passed the HSC exam," Saraswati Vidya Mandir principal S

Mohan Rao said. Similarly, all 145 students from Sishu Vidya Mandir, Ramhari Nagar, passed the exam this year.

Principal Shakti Prasad Bisoi said, "Five students scored A1, 42 (A2), 44 (B1), 34 (B2) and 20 students secured C grade."

The school has been achieving 100 per cent results in HSC examinations since 2002. Sishu Vidya Mandir, Goshaninagan, also upheld its 23-year streak of perfect results.

Principal Narayan Panda said, "All 106 students who appeared this year have passed. Nine students got A1, 32 achieved A2, 29 received B1, and 27 earned B2 grades. Seven students secured C grades and two received D grades."

# Twin brothers become joint district toppers



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Malkangiri, May 3:** In an unusual yet inspiring incident, a pair of twin brothers from Malkangiri district has topped the district as both of them scored 560 out of the total 600 marks in the recently concluded Class X board exams. The results of the matriculation exam were declared by the Board of Secondary Education (BSE), Odisha Friday.

The twins were identified as Daniel Lenka and Dambaru Lenka, students of Saberi High School in Kalimela block of this district. Their coinci-

dental identical scores have left people abuzz in the district as well as the state.

Daniel said, "It's so surprising that we both have secured the same marks. We focused on consistency and practiced writing. We used to study for 7-8 hours daily to cover our syllabus and focused on revision."

He further said, "A designed class called 'Pride of Malyabanta Group' has helped us in our studies to achieve our goals as expert teachers used to guide us."

Daniel and Dambaru have expressed their aim of becoming doctors in future to develop the healthcare facilities in their district.

"There are a lot of people in our district who belong to the rural tribal belt and are unable to receive proper medical treatment. We want to contribute to the healthcare facilities to improve the lives of people in our district. That's why we want to be doctors," said Daniel and Dambaru.

## EAST COAST RAILWAY

File No. DRM/Engg/KUR/25-26/  
E-Tender/06, Dt. 28.04.2025  
(1) Tender No. e-Tender-estatekur-15-25, Dtd.: 23.04.2025  
**DESCRIPTION :** NEW WORKS, ADDITIONS AND ALTERATIONS TO THE EXISTING STRUCTURES, ALL ORDINARY REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE WORKS OF MISCELLANEOUS NATURE AND SUPPLIES EACH COSTING RS.5,00,000/- OR LESS IN THE SECTION CARRIAGE REPAIR WORKSHOP/ MANCHESWAR (WORK SHOP) UNDER SENIOR SECTION ENGINEER (WORKS) / CARRIAGE REPAIR WORKSHOP / MANCHESWAR FOR THE PERIOD UPTO 30.06.2026.  
Approx. Cost of the Work : ₹ 173.89 Lakh, EMD : ₹ 2,37,000/-

## EAST COAST RAILWAY

Tender No. 02-KUR-TRD-OT-2025-26  
**NAME OF WORK :** EXECUTION OF OHE MODIFICATION WORK IN CONNECTION WITH CONSTRUCTION OF THE PROPOSED ROAD OVER BRIDGE (ROB) IN LIEU OF LEVEL CROSSING NO. 182 AT KM. 42/24-6 IN BETWEEN STATIONS BARANG-BHUBANESWAR NEW ON HOWRAH-VISAKHAPATNAM MAIN LINE UNDER KHURDA ROAD DIVISION OF EAST COAST RAILWAY.  
Advised Value : ₹ 13,30,146.39, EMD: ₹ 26,600/-, Period of Completion : 180 Days.  
Bidding Start Date : 07.05.2025  
Tender Closing Date and Time : At 1300 Hrs. of 21.05.2025.  
Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.  
Complete information including e-Tender documents and corrigendum is available in website www.ireps.gov.in  
Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (TRD), Khurda Road  
PR-90/Q/25-26

## EAST COAST RAILWAY

1. Tender No. ELOP-T-03-2025  
**NAME OF WORK :** MAINTENANCE OF CREW LOBBY, NEELACHAL RUNNING ROOM & JAGANNATH RUNNING ROOM AT KHURDA ROAD INCLUDING PROVISION OF SUBSIDIZED MEALS FOR A PERIOD OF 02 YEARS.  
Advised Value : ₹ 4,75,15,544.67, EMD : ₹ 3,67,600/-, Tender Document Cost : ₹ 11,800/-

2. Tender No. ELOP-T-04-2025  
**NAME OF WORK :** MAINTENANCE OF CREW & TMR RUNNING ROOMS AND CREW LOBBY AT KENDUJHARGARH INCLUDING PROVISION OF SUBSIDIZED MEALS FOR A PERIOD OF 02 YEARS.  
Advised Value : ₹ 2,50,39,821.06, EMD : ₹ 2,75,200/-, Tender Document Cost : ₹ 11,800/-

3. Tender No. ELOP-T-05-2025  
**NAME OF WORK :** MAINTENANCE OF 16 BEDDED RUNNING ROOM AT KENDRAPARA (KENP) INCLUDING PROVISION OF SUBSIDIZED MEALS FOR A PERIOD OF 02 (TWO) YEARS.  
Advised Value : ₹ 57,49,112.20, EMD: ₹ 1,15,000/-, Tender Document Cost : ₹ 5,900/-  
Period of Completion : 730 Days (for all the Tenders).  
Bidding Start Date : 07.05.2025 (for Tender No. 1 & 2) and 08.05.2025 (for Tender No. 3).  
Tender Closing Date and Time: At 1645 Hrs. of 21.05.2025 (for Tender No. 1 & 2) and at 1030 Hrs. of 22.05.2025 (for Tender No. 3).  
Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.  
Complete information including e-Tender documents and corrigendum is available in website www.ireps.gov.in  
Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer(OP), Khurda Road  
PR-91/Q/25-26

4. Tender No. e-Tender-estatekur-12-25, Dtd.: 23.04.2025  
**DESCRIPTION :** NEW WORKS, ADDITIONS AND ALTERATIONS TO THE EXISTING STRUCTURES, ALL ORDINARY REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE WORKS OF MISCELLANEOUS NATURE AND SUPPLIES EACH COSTING RS. 5 LAKHS OR BELOW IN RAIL VIHAR COLONY UNDER THE SECTION OF SENIOR SECTION ENGINEER (WORKS) / CHANDRASEKHARPUR / WEST, BHUBANESWAR FOR THE YEAR ENDING 30TH JUNE -2026.  
Approx. Cost of the Work : ₹ 170.08 Lakh, EMD : ₹ 2,35,100/-  
Completion Period : 12 (Twelve) Months (for all SI. Nos.).  
Tender Closing Date and Time : At 1500 Hrs. of 14.05.2025 (for all the Tenders).  
No manual offers sent by Post / Courier/ Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on the firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.  
Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-Tender is available in website : www.ireps.gov.in  
Note : The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 10 (Ten) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / corrigenda issued for this tender. The tenderers/bidders must have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate and must be registered on IREPS Portal. Only registered tenderer/ bidder can participate on e-tendering.  
Divisional Railway Manager (Engg) / Khurda Road  
PR-87/Q/25-26

**MATRIC RESULTS**

**“If a religion is not universal, it cannot be eternal. A narrow religion, a sectarian religion, an exclusive religion can live only for a limited time and a limited purpose.”**



**SRI AUROBINDO**

## Hyphen in Geopolitics

Through the 1990s and up until fairly recently, India insisted on something called de-hyphenation. The hyphen referred to was the one in the term ‘Indo-Pak’, which is how the world saw South Asia. Neither country was seen from the outside without the shadow of the other.

American diplomats visiting India, like Robin Raphel, an official in the Clinton administration, would make it a point to visit Pakistan when visiting India to ‘balance’ the relationship. President Clinton himself when he visited India in March 2000 also stopped over in Pakistan for a few hours on his way back to assure Islamabad that it was not forgotten.

India chafed at hyphenation because it saw itself, legitimately, as the bigger power, the world’s largest democracy and in many ways similar to the West, as opposed to our terror-exporting, failed-state neighbour. Others did not always see it quite that way. The world was fixated on the hyphenation of Indo-Pak especially in 1998 when India under Atal Behari Vajpayee detonated nuclear devices in mid-May and then Pakistan under Nawaz Sharif also did the same on 28 May. The world was concerned about instability and recklessness and this was heightened with the Kargil War of 1999, which was not officially war — because war had not been declared by either nation — though over 1,000 soldiers were killed.

Pakistan and India fought in conventional fashion with artillery and air force on the unsaid assumption that escalation to nuclear exchange would not materialise, the first time that such a conflict between nuclear states had been witnessed in the world. The media and the public on both sides were mobilised with the sort of frenzy that we are familiar with. The world was alarmed and Clinton stepped in and forced Pakistan to pull back its forces from Kargil. Two things came after this which removed the hyphen. The first was the attack of 11 September 2001 which took down the World Trade Center towers, leading America to declare a war on terrorism. Karachi was required for the US invasion of Taliban-controlled Afghanistan and almost all of the fuel, ammunition and spares the US/NATO military needed were shipped through Pakistan, for a fee. Like Gen Zia-ul-Haq in 1979 after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Gen Pervez Musharraf suddenly found himself acceptable and his coup against Nawaz Sharif was overlooked.

India’s government was initially anxious, irritated and perhaps even jealous of all the attention Musharraf got on the global stage, but Vajpayee wisely stayed away from the adventure. The Americans coined the term ‘Af-Pak’. The Indo-Pak hyphen became blurred.

The second reason is best exemplified by the term ‘India Shining’, the advertising campaign launched on the assumption that India was the next China in terms of economic growth. In 2004, UPA minister Jairam Ramesh came up with the term ‘Chindia’ in the hope that “India and China could cooperate and work together to face challenges ahead.”

India wanted to be seen relative to its larger neighbour on the northeast and to de-hyphenate itself from the one on the northwest. The term Chindia did not stick, unfortunately. China’s spectacular rise meant that economically there was no contest. India showed some promise, but offered mostly bluster instead of performance.

Truth be told this flopping of Chindia was not necessarily all bad. You see, India’s annoyance at being clubbed with Pakistan was purely out of resentment. We wanted to be seen as being superior and not associated with the poor cousins. However, the reality was and is that India is most comfortable when in a match-up with Pakistan because that comes naturally to us, unlike dealing with China or even with Bangladesh.

The passion India shows in fora like the United Nations when our diplomats speak on Pakistan we do not display for other nations. The speeches we have presented, such as those by the late foreign minister Sushma Swaraj, ostensibly for the benefit of the General Assembly but actually aimed at a particular nation are a good example of this.

Taking on Pakistan is the position that is most satisfying and where the Indian establishment finds itself most comfortable. This is particularly true of India under the BJP, for whom Pakistan is the external manifestation of its primary enemy. Our ‘strategic affairs community’ including retired military officers is instinctively enthusiastic about prosecuting war against Pakistan as we can observe. Their unfiltered views on social media and TV debates are revealing.

Even the Indian public’s participation is at peak when it is mobilised against Pakistan. The scenes of Indians abroad screaming abuse and making gestures outside embassies might appear off-putting to some but are pleasing to the many.

We may not want the world to focus on Indo-Pak, but we certainly want to wallow in it. This is the paradox of Indo-Pak de-hyphenation. We are too important to want to be paired with Pakistan but too intensely connected to it to successfully detach ourselves.

The late scholar Stephen Cohen offered insight into this: “Structurally, the India-Pakistan relationship is toxic. It is a classic case of what I call a Paired Minority Conflict. In these situations both sides see themselves as vulnerable, threatened, encircled, and at risk. They have a minority or small-power complex, which also means that conventional morality does not apply to them” and that “Pakistan remains deeply embedded in Indian thinking.”

Cohen thought Sri Lanka (Sinhala v Tamil) and the Middle East contained similar relationships.

Cohen died in 2019 and the world for many years has not used the hyphen. But every so often events give us the opportunity to attach it ourselves.

### WISDOM CORNER

**“Things are as they are. Looking out into it the universe at night, we make no comparisons between right and wrong stars, nor between well and badly arranged constellations.”**

ALAN WATTS

**“We will be more successful in all our endeavors if we can let go of the habit of running all the time, and take little pauses to relax and re-center ourselves. And we’ll also have a lot more joy in living.”**

THICH NHAT HANH

**“To know yourself as the Being underneath the thinker, the stillness underneath the mental noise, the love and joy underneath the pain, is freedom, salvation, enlightenment.”**

ECKHART TOLLE

## FOCUS SUSTAINABILITY

# OCEAN’S TIPPING POINT

Since 1971, the ocean has absorbed more than 90 per cent of the excess heat caused by human-generated climate change, pushing it to the brink of collapse. The fact that the world is currently experiencing the largest coral-bleaching event on record is a warning sign of the dangers ahead. In fact, without urgent action, the ocean will soon cross a tipping point, threatening the extinction of marine life and millions of livelihoods.

Fish are a key source of protein for about 3.3 billion people. More than 270 million workers are employed in the tourism sector, making it one of the world’s largest industries, with seaside holiday destinations, such as the Bahamas and Seychelles, having a particularly high concentration of workers in tourism. Coral reefs alone provide goods and services valued at roughly \$2.7 trillion per year. Biodiversity collapse and climate-related disasters could cost trillions of dollars in lost productive capacity, and have wide-reaching consequences for public health, economic stability, and global security.

The international community has started to recognise the growing threats posed by ocean warming and acidification. The 2022 United Nations Biodiversity Conference (COP15) adopted the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, which sets the ambitious target of conserving at least 30 per cent of the world’s land and seas by 2030, with a focus on areas that offer important ecosystem services. This “30-by-30” pledge reflects scientific consensus on the minimum level of protection needed to halt and reverse biodiversity loss. But efforts to meet this target have so far fallen far short: only 17.6 per cent of land and 8.4 per cent of seas are currently protected,



**Increased investment in marine conservation would bring profound benefits: healthy oceans support resilient economies and communities by strengthening food and water security and generating sustainable livelihoods**

with the latter increasing by just 0.5 per cent since COP15.

Increased investment in marine conservation would bring profound benefits: healthy oceans support resilient economies and communities by strengthening food and water security and generating sustainable livelihoods. Without marine reserves, overfishing and other unsustainable extraction practices will continue to escalate, potentially leading to the collapse of fish stocks and the industries that depend on them. Moreover, pollution — from oil spills to industrial and plastic waste — will destroy marine habitats, creating a negative feedback loop.

One of the best ways to protect these ecosystems is by establishing and maintaining marine protected areas (MPAs) — often called the “national parks of the sea.” Indigenous peoples and coastal communities, in particular, should participate in the management and governance of MPAs. Their knowledge, cultural connections to nature, and traditional practices are essential

to preserve biodiversity and ecological connectivity.

Many countries lack the governance frameworks and financial resources to create or enforce MPAs. The High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People (HAC, of which I am director) can help here. This intergovernmental group of 120 countries, co-chaired by Costa Rica and France (with the United Kingdom as the oceans champion), was created to support member countries in their efforts to achieve the 30-by-30 target. The HAC has developed tools, expertise, and partnerships to help governments identify their needs, access resources, and implement effective solutions, whether through peer-to-peer exchanges, capacity-building workshops, or other avenues.

These efforts to mobilise new commitments and maintain momentum toward the 30-by-30 target are starting to bear fruit. Portugal approved legislation to create the largest MPA network in the North Atlantic Ocean, covering 287,000 square kilometers (111,000 square miles) — approximate-

ly 30 per cent of the ocean surrounding the Azores. The Dominican Republic became the first Caribbean country to achieve the 30 per cent protection target by designating a new MPA and expanding an existing sanctuary. And Australia has protected more than half of its ocean area by expanding two already-existing marine reserves around Heard Island and McDonald Islands. Other HAC members must follow their lead.

Of course, developing countries often lack the capacity to mobilise domestic resources. To address this problem, we just launched the rapid deployment mechanism, which offers small grants for the development and implementation of 30-by-30 plans, at the Our Ocean Conference in Busan, Korea. This mechanism will provide seed funding to HAC members to fast-track the establishment of new MPAs, enhance existing ones, and galvanise political support for ocean conservation.

Human well-being depends on a healthy ocean, and safeguarding at least 30 per cent of this critical ecosystem is the minimum requirement for ensuring a thriving future for people and planet alike. As we kick off a year of high-level decision-making on marine conservation, with this week’s Our Ocean Conference and both the United Nations Ocean Conference and the Blue Economy and Finance Forum in June, we must remember that preserving the world’s seas for current and future generations is our collective responsibility. Part of that responsibility is providing a lifeline for those countries that have the will, but not the resources, to act.

*The writer is Director of the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE*



Rita Maria El Zaghoul

**THE FACT THAT THE WORLD IS CURRENTLY EXPERIENCING THE LARGEST CORAL-BLEACHING EVENT ON RECORD IS A WARNING SIGN OF THE DANGERS AHEAD**



Aakar Patel

**We may not want the world to focus on Indo-Pak, but we certainly want to wallow in it. This is the paradox of Indo-Pak de-hyphenation. We are too important to want to be paired with Pakistan but too intensely connected to it to successfully detach ourselves**

### SPECTRUM NATION

## Caste is back with full rigour

Caste is back with rigour in a supposed casteless society envisaged at Independence. Even Babasaheb Bhim Rao Ambedkar was for a harmonious non-caste based constitutional society. His opposition to caste division was so vehement that he never wanted reservation even for the scheduled castes (SC), one that he belonged, now called Dalit. With utmost reluctance he agreed for 10-year job reservation for their supposed economic uplift.

The new trend of the Central government agreeing to order a caste-based census, since the last one in 1931, is the dynamics of the non-creation of jobs with the First Five Year Plan. Though it led to industrialisation of the country, it never could have enough jobs to keep the burgeoning numbers of youth engaged. The unemployment rate hovers now around 6 to 9 per cent as per estimates of CMIE. In February 2025 it was 7.9 per cent or 44.85 million jobless. Ambedkar had never envisioned that the Indian society and politician would turn that 10-year-term into an eternity. Nor anybody had ever dreamt that it would be the resurgence of caste society after 78 years of freedom. Ambedkar was

not alone. All of his compatriots — Mahatma Gandhi, Pt Jawaharlal Nehru, CR Rajagopalachari, the founding fathers, and who not in the Indian National Congress, were for a casteless society. Gandhi argued for the equal status of all occupations, challenging the traditional hierarchy within the varna system. Lakhs of families discarded their surnames in cosmopolitan Uttar Pradesh. And by mid 1960s, in many states like Uttar Pradesh even schools and colleges with caste tags were told to change the names. No wonder the Congress, as a party, and its leaders for their egalitarian views today are castigated for ignoring the “need for a census on caste basis.” Was the Congress alone? No. Even the propagator of “integral humanism”, Jan Sangh leader Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya, who met an unfortunate violent death in 1965, envisioned a casteless society as part of his philosophy. No wonder Jan Sangh’s successor Bharatiya Janata Party was neither in favour of Mandal Commission report implementation by the then Prime Minister VP Singh in 1989 nor agreed to a caste census till April 30, 2025.

What about a prominent socialist leader, Ram Manohar

Lohia, often quoted by caste census propagators? Lohia viewed the caste system as a major obstacle to social progress and equality, advocating for its abolition. Lohia emphasised the need for a “new caste policy” that promoted “horizontal solidarity” among marginalised groups, including Dalits, Adivasis, minorities, women, and the working class.

It started changing during the 1967 Lok Sabha and state Assembly elections. The emerging prosperous mid-segment castes, later called other backward castes, under Chaudhury Charan Singh, who defected from the Congress to lead the so-called first non-Congress government vocally demanded sharing of power and job reservations for the mid-segment castes. He emerged as a champion of the middle peasant communities across various castes in North India. His advocacy for the socio-economic upliftment of these communities laid the groundwork for the Mandal Commission.

Caste is taking deep roots again all over the country even in supposedly elite West Bengal or Kerala. Possibly India would do without religions but not castes. The fresh caste-based census transcends religions, like Is-

lam or Christianity, where caste formally does not exist.

The question stalking the people is how the various castes would have the benefit of numbers in terms of job quota. The country is losing on jobs with the abandonment of public sector units, freeze in job recruitments and lack of investment in the private sector. Even army jobs are short-term contracts like Agniveers.

The caste census could be an albatross with the ensuing Bihar elections. India faces a significant job scarcity, particularly for young graduates, with a notable skill gap hindering employment. A new report, India’s Graduate Skill Index 2025 by Mercer-Mettl, reveals that only 42.6 per cent of Indian graduates are considered employable, while 57.4 per cent struggle to find work.

If after the census the aspiring castes do not get jobs, it could lead to social tensions. The issue is not singular to the ruling party at the Centre. It engulfs all political parties. They must sit together, may consider reviving Planning Commission and create summary jobs. No alibi would satisfy the voters. Yes, days are critical for all. Would there be a solution?

INFA



Shivaji Sarkar

**IF AFTER THE CENSUS THE ASPIRING CASTES DO NOT GET JOBS, IT COULD LEAD TO SOCIAL TENSIONS**

### Hiding behind brothers

**Sir,** This refers to “Pak seeks pressure on India,” **OrissaPOST**, May 3. Once again, Pakistan is turning to so-called “brotherly countries” in a desperate bid to pressure India into de-escalation. This predictable tactic reeks of weakness and diplomatic bankruptcy. Rather than addressing its own internal instability, cross-border provocations, and sponsorship of terror networks, Islamabad chooses the easier route—playing victim and appealing for external interference. This manoeuvre is not about peace. It’s about avoiding accountability. By enlisting countries with shared religious or strategic interests, Pakistan hopes to isolate India on global platforms. But the world sees through this charade. India, a sovereign democracy with a strong global presence, has every right to defend its territorial integrity and citizens. International diplomacy is not a stage for emotional appeals or theatrical brotherhood; it is a forum for realpolitik. Pakistan must realise that no amount of hand-wringing or regional lobbying can substitute for genuine reform and responsible state behaviour. Until then, its calls for “de-escalation” will remain hollow, and its credibility further eroded. Peace cannot be begged from the world; it must be earned through consistent, lawful conduct.

**N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE**

### The laughter tonic

**Sir,** Life without laughter is like a flower without fragrance. Laughter can firmly put both physiology and psychology of a person in top gear. It is a line that separates laughter and pain, happiness and sadness, comedy and tragedy. For enjoying life and keeping vibrancy of life alive, nothing can beat laughter. Give a person the uncanny sense of humour, even the wry one, there is no way he will slip into grief. To keep apprehension, tension and depression at bay, to keep friendship and relation intact, to disentangle from a tricky and tight situation, the “laughter tonic” can help. Individuals’ intricate faculty to loosen their facial muscles, let out a guffaw and go gaga transcend learning, research and scholarship. The World Laughter Day observed on 4 May, was first observed in 1998 by India’s Madan Kataria, a physician and founder of Laughter Yoga.

**Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA**

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

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

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

# Cloud-seeding trials in Delhi may cost ₹1.5cr each: Official



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 3:** The Delhi Environment Department is likely to table in the next cabinet meeting a proposal to conduct cloud-seeding trials with each test estimated to cost around Rs 1.5 crore, according to a senior official. If the proposal is approved, the government is expected to transfer the funds directly to the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur, which will lead the initiative. "The entire operation - from planning to execution, including aircraft, chemicals and other logistical requirements - will be handled by IIT Kanpur. The government will only provide funding for the trials," a senior official privy to the development told PTI. Before tabling in the next cabinet meeting, the draft proposal will be sent to finance and legal departments, he said. He said the department is planning to conduct the first trial during peak summer at

**If the proposal is approved, the government is expected to transfer the funds directly to the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur, which will lead the initiative**

the outskirts of the national capital. Each trial, which will involve artificial rain through cloud-seeding, is expected to cost Rs 1.5 crore. After the initial test run, scientific evaluations will be conducted. The official said the decision to proceed with the experimental method comes after extensive studies and preparations undertaken by IIT Kanpur. "They have already worked on the technical aspects. If the proposal gets cabinet nod, no-objection certificates (NOC) will be sought from the 13 de-

partments whose permissions are required to conduct the trial," the official said. A total of 13 NOCs will be required from key agencies such as the Directorate General of Civil Aviation; Ministry of Defence; Ministry of Home Affairs; Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, and the Airports Authority of India. Earlier, in an interview with PTI, Delhi Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa confirmed that the proposal is in its final stages and will be tabled at the upcoming cabinet meeting. "Once approved, it will be shared with all relevant departments for no-objection certificates. We aim to conduct the first trial during peak summer on the outskirts of Delhi," Sirsa said. He added that the government is actively ramping up its pollution control measures using advanced technologies such as digitisation, artificial intelligence-based monitoring, and 24x7 surveillance at pollution hotspots.

"If everything goes without hurdles, we will consider cloud-seeding as a contingency option during critical pollution periods," Sirsa said. Air pollution in the national capital worsened during last winter and resulted in record air quality rankings, both in the country and globally. Last year, according to the Central Pollution Control Board, Delhi's Air Quality Index crossed the maximum limit and reached above 450, falling into the severe-plus category.



Youngsters play in the Ganga river to cool themselves during a hot summer afternoon, at Sangam in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh

# New housing projects in UP soon

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Lucknow, May 3:** New housing projects will be launched soon in 12 districts including Jhansi, Bareilly, Aligarh, Agra, Kanpur, Mathura, Lucknow, among others, the UP government said Saturday. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath was apprised of this during a high-level meeting with the Housing and Urban Planning Department here Saturday. "The CM was informed that under the Mukhyamantri Urban Expansion/New City Promotion Scheme, the approved projects will be launched in phases between

June and December 2025," an official statement said. Cities covered under the scheme are Jhansi, Bareilly, Aligarh, Saharanpur, Agra (Kakua), Kanpur (New Kanpur City Plan), Mathura (Transport Nagar), Moradabad (Didauzi), Bulandshahr, Ghaziabad, Meerut, and Lucknow. The CM directed the officials that all these projects must strictly adhere to timelines and maintain quality standards. Adityanath also directed officials to review the pending building map approval cases, stressing that repeated objections are inappropriate and the process must be streamlined for



single-instance resolution. He further instructed that all such pending cases must be resolved within a deadline.

He emphasized an integrated approach to urban planning, residential safety, infrastructure, and digital management. He also directed that the GIS-based master plans for cities, which are yet to be approved, must be sanctioned before the end of the current month. While discussing the progress of metro projects, the chief minister was informed that the construction of the 6.7 km underground section between Motijheel and Kanpur Central Station under the Kanpur Metro has been completed. Corridor 1 and 2 of the Kanpur Metro are scheduled for completion by the end of this year.

# Adityanath calls for timely resolution of public interest cases



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Lucknow, May 3:** Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath Saturday directed revenue department officials to fast-track the timely settlement of disputes and accelerate the digitisation of land records, describing them as key to public trust, investment and transparent governance. He emphasised a people-centric, tech-driven and accountable work culture in the department, according to an official statement. Adityanath instructed the officials to expedite the digitisation of remaining land records and prioritise uploading urban land data on the portal. He called for a user-friendly redesign of the revenue council

portal and the creation of an integrated dashboard - from lekhal to commissioner - for better monitoring and public benefit. He also laid stress on displaying the authorities' land-use data in 'khatauni (landholding record)' and simplifying the land-use change process under Section 80 to ensure greater transparency. "Emphasising the need for full automation of transfer cases, the chief minister highlighted its potential to provide citizens with timely justice and ease," according to the statement. "He also directed the implementation of technical intervention and transparency in the consolidation process, urging sensitivity in handling complex consolidation cases to avoid social disputes." Adityanath ordered that undisputed inheritance cases be resolved within 15 working days. He also instructed the mandatory resolution of all pending cases related to 'khatauni', Aadhaar seeding, farmer registry, measurement and 'khasra (plot details)' investigation within the set timeframe, with additional human resources allocation, as needed.

# 'Delhi Fire Services to undergo revamp'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 3:** The Delhi Fire Service (DFS) is up for a comprehensive audit and revamp aimed at improving its response time and efficiency in tackling fire emergencies and other situations requiring its deployment, officials said Friday. Lt Governor VK Saxena has approved a tripartite agreement involving the DFS, the Directorate General of Fire Services, Home Guard and Civil Defence, Government of India, and the National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG) for the audit and revamp, Raj Niwas officials said. The initiative was aimed at enhancing the Delhi Fire Services' prompt response time and efficiency in addressing fire emergencies and related services rendered by the Delhi government agency, they said. A proposal of the Delhi government's Home Department sought a thorough restructuring of the DFS to boost its service delivery and public safety, officials said. The proposal was discussed with the Director Generals of NCGG and Centre's Fire Services last year, they said. "Both the top officers expressed interest in collaborating with the Delhi Fire Services to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of its current operations and recommend improvements across operational, financial, institutional, and legislative dimensions," said a



**Lt Governor VK Saxena has approved a tripartite agreement involving the DFS, the Directorate General of Fire Services, Home Guard and Civil Defence, Government of India, and the National Centre for Good Governance for the audit and revamp**

Raj Niwas official. The three organisations involved with the initiative are likely to soon ink a memorandum of understanding. The plan is to modernise DFS infrastructure including fire fighting equipment, ensuring availability of all the necessary tools and resources to firefighters, regular training and capacity building to strengthen their skills, he said. The NCGG will focus on implementing good governance practices within the department, ensuring transparency, accountability, and responsiveness. Furthermore, the NCGG will work on re-engineering departmental processes to improve efficiency and

citizen-centricity, while also providing capacity-building programs for personnel, officials said. The Directorate General of Fire Services, Government of India, on the other hand, will prioritise the adoption of national standards and best practices in fire safety and prevention. It will be achieved through ensuring alignment with national policies and guidelines, they stated. The DFS personnel will also undergo training and capacity-building programmes focusing on the latest techniques and technologies in fire safety, and share resources and expertise of the Directorate General of Fire Services, they added.

# UP govt enhancing SHe-Box portal

*The enhanced digital platform will ensure swift and secure complaint redressal, thereby providing a safe and respectful work environment for women*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Lucknow, May 3:** The Uttar Pradesh government Saturday said it is strengthening the SHe-Box portal, a move that could curb workplace harassment of women. The enhanced digital platform will ensure swift and secure complaint redressal, thereby providing a safe and respectful work environment for women, it said in a statement. "Acting on the directives of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the formation of Internal Committees has been made mandatory across all government and private institutions in the state," the government said. It added that 84 departments have already constituted these committees and uploaded mandatory details on the SHe-Box portal. The framework is now in place across all 75 districts. "Any organisation with 10 or more employees is required to set up an Internal Committee comprising at least 50 per cent

women members, with a woman as the chair," it said, adding that the facility extends to private organisations as well. District Probation Officers are entrusted with the responsibility to monitor the campaign in the districts, while NGOs have been roped in to protect women in unorganised sectors, it said. The Women Welfare Department has mandated that every institution form an Internal Committee to register and resolve workplace harassment complaints promptly, it added. "Non-compliance will invite legal action. Each committee will include 4-5 members based on staff size. The initiative is being actively implemented with NGO support under departmental supervision," the government said. Anu Singh, Deputy Director and Nodal Officer of the Women and Child Development Department, said that the SHe-Box is a single-window online platform where any woman, whether in a government or private job, can file a complaint related to sexual harassment. "This includes unwanted physical contact, inappropriate gestures, offensive comments or any demand made in exchange for work," she said. "Once a complaint is submitted, it is sent directly to the concerned internal or local committee, which must resolve it within 90 days.

# UP launches WhatsApp chatbot for transport services

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Lucknow, May 3:** In a move to make government services more accessible and efficient, the Uttar Pradesh Transport Department has launched a 24x7 WhatsApp chatbot to offer key transport-related services directly to citizens, officials said Saturday. Vehicle registration services, driving licence details, challan status, and more can be accessed without standing in a queue at the RTO office by using the chatbot, they said. Launched Friday, the initiative is part of the state's push for digital transformation. The new service aims to ensure that citizens receive transpar-

- Vehicle registration services, driving licence details, challan status, and more can be accessed without standing in a queue at the RTO office by using the chatbot
- Launched Friday, the initiative is part of the state's push for digital transformation
- The new service aims to ensure that citizens receive transparent and timely support using a widely used platform



ent and timely support using a widely used platform. "This WhatsApp chatbot reflects our commitment to using technology for citizen welfare," Transport Commissioner Brajesh Narain Singh said. "It brings the department closer to the public and is a step towards transparent, efficient, and responsive governance," Singh added. He explained the chatbot

eliminates the need for citizens to stand in long queues or make repeated visits to RTO offices for routine queries and tasks. From checking challan details to renewing a driving licence,

everything can now be managed from the comfort of home using just a smartphone. The service is integrated with the central Vahan and Sarthi databases, ensuring that the information shared with users is real-time and authenticated. This guarantees accuracy and transparency, especially for services involving legal compliance or payment-related updates. To ensure inclusivity, the chatbot is available in multiple languages, allowing people speaking diverse languages to access and use the service with ease. "This feature is particularly helpful in a state as linguistically diverse as Uttar Pradesh," he said.

**OFFICE OF THE CHITRADA PANCHAYAT SAMITI : MORADA**  
At/P.O.-Chitrada, Dist.-Mayurbhanj, Odisha, Pin-757018  
E-Mail : ori-morada@gramsat.nic.in  
Advt. No. 02/PSM/2025 Dt : 16.01.2025

**Tender Call Notice**

No.1-65 : Sealed tenders (Percentage rate) are invited from the interested "C & D" Class Contractors registered with the Govt. for execution of Civil work under Panchayat Samiti, Morada, Mayurbhanj. The eligible criteria and the details of the tender documents which can be downloaded from the website [www.mayurbhanj.odisha.gov.in](http://www.mayurbhanj.odisha.gov.in) Interested bidders fulfilling the eligibility criteria may submit their proposals to the O/o: BDO Morada. Proposal (s) complete in all respect should reach the undersigned on or before 17.05.2025 up-to 01.00 P.M. through Regd. & Speed post and the same will be opened on 19.05.2025 at 11.00 A.M. in the Conference Hall of the Panchayat Samiti, Morada. The undersigned reserves the right to reject any or all the tender(s) without assigning any reason thereof.  
Sd./- Block Development Officer, Morada, Mayurbhanj  
OIPR-19371/11/0003/2526



Preparations are underway. The Cauvery aarti is not limited to Karnataka; we plan to incorporate cultural and religious traditions from Tamil Nadu and Kerala as well. We also discussed how many days a week it should be held and the format of the pooja rituals

D K SHIVAKUMAR | KARNATAKA DEPUTY CM

## FIR AGAINST SONU NIGAM

An FIR was registered at the Avalahalli Police Station in Bangalore Saturday against playback singer Sonu Nigam for allegedly hurting the sentiments of Kannadigas during a recent musical event in the city



## Girl contracts rabies despite vaccination; critical in hospital

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Thiruvananthapuram, May 3:** A seven-year-old girl who was mauled by a stray dog weeks ago has developed symptoms of rabies despite receiving vaccination, her family said Saturday.

As her condition worsened, the girl was shifted to the Sree Avittom Thirunal (SAT) Hospital in Thiruvananthapuram, where she is currently on ventilator support, they said. A native of Kunnicoode in the neighbouring Kollam district of Kerala, the girl was bitten on her elbow April 8, her mother told the media.

The incident comes just days after a six-year-old girl in Malappuram district died of rabies despite having received vaccination.

"Soon after she was bitten, we thoroughly washed her wounds and took her to the nearby family health centre, where she was administered an anti-rabies vaccine," the mother said.

She added that her daughter was then taken to the Punalur Taluk Hospital, where she received additional medications and vaccine doses.

# Punjab govt 'boycotts' BBMB meeting

Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan had chaired a high-level meeting Friday in Delhi and advised to carry out the BBMB's decision to release 4,500 cusecs of extra water from Bhakra dams to Haryana for the next eight days to meet the state's urgent water requirements

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chandigarh, May 3:** The stand-off between Punjab and Haryana over water sharing intensified Saturday as an all-party meeting in Haryana asked the AAP government in the neighbouring state to unconditionally release the water from Bhakra dam and the Punjab government skipped a Bhakra Beas Management Board meeting on the issue.

This came a day after an all-party meeting in Punjab backed the state government's refusal to release more water to BJP-ruled Haryana. Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan had chaired a high-level meeting Friday in Delhi and advised to carry out the BBMB's decision to release 4,500 cusecs of extra water from Bhakra dams to Haryana for the next eight days to meet the state's urgent water requirements.

The BBMB regulates water distribution from Bhakra, Pong and Ranjit Sagar dams and de-



cidates the annual quota of water supply to the three partnering states - Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan - for a yearly cycle from May 21 to May 21 each year.

The Board called a meeting Saturday evening to work out the modalities for the release of extra water to Haryana but the Punjab government sought an adjournment citing an Assembly session May 5 to discuss the water row.

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, after chairing the all-party meeting on Satur-

day, hit out at the Punjab government, saying not following the Board's direction to release water was "unconstitutional, inhuman" and an attack on the federal structure of the Constitution. He also suggested that the Punjab government's actions were linked to the defeat of the Aam Aadmi Party in Delhi. "The all-party meeting decided that the Mann government should release water immediately and unconditionally," Saini said at a press conference flanked by leaders from

various parties who attended the meet.

A resolution was passed at the meeting in which an appeal was made to the Punjab government that the decisions of Bhakra Beas Management Board's (BBMB) technical committee dated April 23 and April 30 should be implemented forthwith.

While vowing to protect the state's rights, Saini asserted that "our path is not of confrontation, but of cooperation" and urged the Bhagwant Mann government to "understand the pain of the neighbour". "They should immediately remove the inhuman, unconstitutional, illegal and inappropriate bar on the release of water. We resolve to ensure it and the construction of the SYL canal. We are ready to fight any legal battle," Saini said.

"They have cut drinking water. All parties have expressed a strong reaction to this. All parties said they will work unitedly to protect state's

interests, not just as Haryana political parties, but as Indians who have deep faith in federal structure and brotherhood," said Saini and urged the people of both states to maintain peace.

Among the leaders present in the meeting were Haryana's Water Resources and Irrigation Minister Shruti Choudhry, Agriculture Minister Shyam Singh Rana, Energy Minister Anil Vij, State BJP chief Mohan Lal Badoli, Congress's Bhupinder Singh Hooda, state Congress chief Udai Bhan, JJP's Dushyant Chautala, INLD's Rampal Majra and AAP's Sushil Gupta.

It seems that they are trying to avenge the people of Delhi and also trying to harass the Haryana people, he alleged.

The Bhagwant Mann government "is stopping Haryana's water in an unconstitutional manner. Mann has taken oath under the Constitution, but he is doing unconstitutional work," Saini alleged.

## Teen girl's body found hanging from tree in Delhi's Japanese Park

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 3:** A teenage girl was found hanging from a tree in Japanese Park in Delhi's Rohini area Saturday morning, an official said.

The deceased, believed to be between 14 and 16 years of age, has not been identified yet. Police said that prima facie, it appears to be a case of suicide.

"We are making efforts to identify her. A name was tattooed on her hands, which appears to be hers. We have sent out hue and cry notices," a senior police officer said.

"The body was discovered around 6.45 am when a passerby informed the Prashant Vihar police station about the incident. A police team rushed to the spot and found the girl hanging with a dupatta tied to a tree," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Rohini) Amit Goel said.

Her slippers were found lying near the base of the tree, indicating she may have taken them off before the act, he said.

No external injuries were noticed on the body at the spot, the DCP said.

The area was cordoned off and a crime team and a Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) team were called to examine the scene.

The body has been preserved at a hospital for post-mortem, police said.

A case has been registered and further investigation is on to ascertain the exact sequence of events, officials added.

## 6 killed, over 70 injured in Goa temple stampede

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



**Panaji, May 3:** Six persons including two women were killed and more than 70 sustained injuries after a stampede broke out during a temple festival at a village in North Goa district in the wee hours of Saturday, officials said.

The Goa government ordered a magisterial inquiry into the tragedy at Shirgao village, and also transferred five officials including the district collector and superintendent of police.

The stampede occurred at around 3 am when thousands of devotees thronged the narrow lanes leading to the temple of Goddess Sree Lairai Devi for an annual festival, police said.

The village is located 40 km away from Panaji. "At least 30,000 to 40,000 people had gathered, and some were standing on a slope. A few persons fell, causing others to tumble and fall on each other," Director General of Police Alok Kumar told PTI.

About 50 people fell on the slope, and the stampede was confined to that spot, he added. Thousands of devotees from Goa, Maharashtra and Karnataka attend the annual festival.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed anguish over the tragedy. "May the injured recover soon. The local admin-

istration is assisting those affected," the PM wrote on X.

Chief Minister Pramod Sawant visited the injured persons at the North Goa district hospital, and also visited the stampede site.

Health Minister Vishwajit Rane said nearly 80 people sustained injuries, with 13 admitted at the Goa Medical College and Hospital (GMC). Five of them were on ventilator support, while the remaining are in a specially-created emergency ward, he said. Six people, including two women, were brought dead to hospitals, Rane informed.

Chief Minister Sawant said a magisterial inquiry will be instituted to investigate the incident.

"In order to ensure free and fair inquiry, the government has transferred District Collector Sneha Gitte, Superintendent of Police (North) Akshat Kaushal, Deputy Superintendent of Police (Bicholim) Jivba Dalvi, Deputy Collector (Bicholim) Bhimnath Khorjuvkar and Police Inspector Dinesh Gadekar with immediate effect," Sawant told reporters at a press conference in the evening.

A fact-finding committee headed by Revenue Secretary Sandeep Jacques and including senior police officer Varsha Sharma, Director of Transport Parimal Abhishek and South Goa SP Tikam Singh Varma has been constituted. It will submit its report by Sunday morning, the CM said.

Earlier in the day, Sawant, in a post on X, said he had received a call from PM Modi who offered his full support.



People fishing in the Dal Lake in Srinagar

## Flight searched in SL for 'Pahalgam attack suspects'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Colombo, May 3:** Sri Lankan police Saturday searched a flight arriving here from Chennai after being tipped off that a suspect linked to the Pahalgam terror attack could be on board, a police spokesperson said.

A statement from the national carrier SriLankan Airlines said that its flight arrived at Colombo's Bandaranaike International Airport from Chennai at 11:59 am and underwent a comprehensive security inspection upon arrival. "The search was carried out in coordination with local authorities following an alert from the Chennai Area Control Centre regarding a suspect wanted in India who was believed to be on board", the statement said.

The aircraft was thoroughly inspected and subsequently



cleared for further operations, it said, adding, however, the next scheduled service to Singapore was delayed. "No one has been arrested by the Katunayake police after the search was conducted at the airport," police spokesperson and Senior Superintendent Buddhika Mananuga told PTI.

Katunayake police station is the local police point covering the general area of the international airport. Terrorists killed 26 people, mostly tourists, in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam on April 22.

Initially, Indian authorities identified five terrorists — including three Pakistani nationals — behind the massacre in Pahalgam. Citing "cross-border linkages" to the horrific attack, India has promised severe punishment to those involved in the strike. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on April 24 vowed to punish the terrorists behind the Pahalgam terror attack and those part of the conspiracy beyond their imagination, asserting that the country's enemies targeted not merely unarmed tourists but dared to attack India's soul.

In a high-level meeting with the top defence brass on April 29, Modi asserted that the armed forces have "complete operational freedom" to decide on the mode, targets and timing of India's response to the terror attack.

# Pak's missile test 'blatant' act of provocation: Sources

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 3:** India considers Pakistan's test launch of a ballistic missile Saturday amid escalating tensions between the two countries over the Pahalgam terror attack as a "blatant" act of "provocation", people familiar with the matter said.

The Pakistani military said it carried out the launch of the Abdali surface-to-surface ballistic missile that has a range of 450 km. It is learnt that Islamabad provided prior information to New Delhi about its plan to carry out the missile test as mandated under laid down obligations and norms.

"The launch was aimed at ensuring the operational readiness of troops and validating key technical param-

eters, including the missile's advanced navigation system and enhanced manoeuvrability features," the Pakistan army said in a statement. The missile launch was part of "Exercise INDUS", it said but did not provide any details about the exercise.

The people cited above described the missile test as a "blatant act of provocation". It is a "desperate attempt to whip up 'tensions' with India, they said.

There is no official reaction by India on the Pakistani missile test. Tensions between India and Pakistan are escalating following last week's dastardly terror attack in Pahalgam that claimed 26 lives.

Citing "cross-border linkages" to the horrific attack, India has promised severe punish-



ment to those involved in the strike. Many global powers including the US and European Union have called on both sides to de-escalate tensions while unequivocally condemning the terror strike.

The people cited above also said that Pakistan has been

frantically issuing naval warnings, ramping up naval drills in the Arabian Sea, and indulged in continuous ceasefire violations along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir since the April 22 terror attack.

India has already asserted that the "perpetrators, backers

There is no official reaction by India on the Pakistani missile test

Tensions between India and Pakistan are escalating following last week's dastardly terror attack in Pahalgam that claimed 26 lives

and planners" of the terror attack must be brought to justice. In a high-level meeting with the top defence brass, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Tuesday said the armed forces have "complete operational freedom" to decide on the mode, targets and timing of India's response to the terror attack, according to government sources.

The prime minister affirmed that it is a national resolve to deal a crushing blow to terrorism, they said after the meet-

ing. India April 23 announced a raft of punitive measures against Pakistan including suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty, shutting down of the only operation land border crossing at Attari and downgrading of diplomatic ties in view of cross-border links to the attack.

In response, Pakistan shut its airspace to Indian airliners and suspended all trade with India, including through third countries.

In fresh punitive measures, India imposed a complete ban on imports of all goods from Pakistan with immediate effect on the grounds of national security and public policy. New Delhi also suspended all postal services from Pakistan and banned entry of Pakistani-flagged ships at Indian ports.

# national



Farmers are sinking into debt, unable to recover input costs, while the government doesn't even look their way

## OMAR CALLS ON PM

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi Saturday and discussed various issues, including last week's terror attack in Pahalgam, officials said.



### of the day quote

India has plunged to 151 in the Global Press Freedom Index. Why? Because the BJP regime fears questions. It raids newsrooms, jails reporters, and silences those who expose corruption, rights violations, and its majoritarian agenda

I would like to thank everybody who made Amaravati construction relaunch by Prime Minister Narendra Modi a success

In fact, both parties are two sides of the same coin. However, due to public pressure and vote politics, the BJP has also had to bow before the people's demand for a caste census which is welcome

## PAHALGAM MASSACRE

# Intel warned about attack in Srinagar



On the Pahalgam attack, the officials said what is emerging was that two local terrorists had already mingled with the tourists and as soon as the first shots were fired, they herded the tourists to a food court complex, where two other terrorists, reportedly Pakistanis, fired and killed 26 of them

above said. However, they said the visit of the prime minister, earlier scheduled for April 19, was postponed due to adverse weather forecasts predicting high-speed winds in the Katra area.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Srinagar, May 3: Days before the deadly terror attack in Pahalgam, intelligence agencies had flagged the potential targeting of tourists especially those staying in hotels on the outskirts of Srinagar in the foothills of the Zabarwan range, officials in the know said Saturday.

This prompted a heightened security presence in these areas with top police brass camping in Srinagar to oversee combing operations around Dachigam, Nishat, and adjacent areas. These areas gained attention and security forces increased patrolling because of a terrorist attack on a construction site in Ganganagar, Sonamarg in October last year in which seven people including a doctor were killed.

The state and non-state actors sitting across the border never want the powerful visuals of flagging off the first train to get international attention and hence may have planned to overshadow the event with such barbaric killings, the officials said.

On the Pahalgam attack, the officials said what is emerging was that two local terrorists had already mingled with the tourists and as soon as the first shots were fired, they herded the tourists to a food court complex, where two other terrorists, reportedly Pakistanis, fired and killed 26 of them.

The aim of the attack seems to be creating fear among the citizens and possibly to lead to retribution attacks against Kashmiris elsewhere in the country, sources said.

But quick action by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who talked to top brass in New Delhi, prompted the directions being given to state governments to make sure the Kashmiri locals in their respective states were safe, they said. The officials have also reported a worrisome trend in the type of terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir following the recovery of advanced weaponry like M-series rifles, sniper rifles, and armour-piercing bullets from encounter locations more and more, which are suspected to be leftover weapons and ammunition of NATO troops in Afghanistan.

The authorities also warned against depending on the tourist arrivals in Jammu and Kashmir solely as a marker of peace and noted the case of former chief minister Ghulam Nabi Azad, who had used tourist arrivals as an index of normalcy in the past.

# DMK slams govt for misusing ED

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, May 3: Tamil Nadu's ruling DMK Saturday condemned the BJP-led Centre for what it called misuse of Central agencies like the Enforcement Directorate for "vendetta politics" and vowed to legally face it and also take the issue to the people's court.

In a meeting of the party's district secretaries, chaired by DMK President and Chief Minister MK Stalin, the Dravidian outfit adopted a resolution, which said: "This meeting of the district party secretaries strongly condemns the Union BJP government, which is creating an undeclared Emergency." It cited alleged abuse of power as the reason for such a scenario.

## POLITICAL VENDETTA



Income Tax and Enforcement Directorate in opposition-ruled states, including DMK helmed Tamil Nadu, the DMK claimed. Also, the Dravidian party alleged usurpation of "freedom of all autonomous institutions, including the judiciary," by the Union government. Addressing

the meeting, Stalin said the DMK had faced several trials in its pretty long journey and those who could not politically beat the party would attempt intimidation tactics. "Hence, let us politically face the BJP's threats," the party chief said. The meeting decided to hold

public meetings in as many as 1,244 locations across the state to highlight the achievements of the DMK regime led by CM Stalin during the past 4 years.

The resolution, further said while the CBI, ED and the tax department should function impartially, the BJP government made these institutions receive "flak" from courts for use of institutions for the sake of "political vendetta."

The DMK alleged that the Union government misused its agencies to intimidate parties such as the AIADMK to sign up for an alliance with the BJP. Tamil Nadu's ruling party underscored what it called the Delhi High Court and the Supreme Court reportedly censuring corruption in such central agencies.



A myna feeds its chicks, in Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh

## NEET PROBE

# NMC CANCELS ADMISSION OF 14 STUDENTS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 3: The National Medical Commission (NMC) has directed immediate suspension of 26 MBBS students found complicit in NEET-UG 2024 malpractices and cancelled admission of 14 students for the academic year 2024-25 for resorting to unfair means during the entrance exam, an official source said.

National Eligibility cum Entrance Test, or NEET, is a pan-India exam to be taken by aspirants to get admission into the country's medical colleges.

As part of the ongoing investigations by multiple agencies into the NEET-UG 2024 paper leak case, the National Testing Agency identified instances of unfair means and debarred 42 candidates for three years — 2024, 2025, 2026 — from taking the NEET-UG.

It also debarred nine candidates for 2025 and 2026 sessions. The candidature of 215 candidates who appeared in the NEET-UG 2024 exam has been put on hold pending an investigation, the source said. The action against the students has been initiated based on the findings of the Central Bureau of Investigation which is investigating the cases.

"Given the severity of these violations and their potential to undermine the credibility of the medical education system, the National Medical Commission has issued directives to the concerned medical colleges and institutions to immediately suspend the 26 MBBS students found to be complicit," the source said. The Commission stressed a "zero-tolerance" policy towards academic fraud and said it was committed to taking all measures to uphold integrity, transparency, and accountability in medical admissions. The directive comes ahead of the NEET-UG 2025 scheduled for May 4.

## POST OF THE DAY

Tax collection growing at 12% Stock Market growing at 12% Medical and education inflation growing at 14% Corruption growing at 100% Meanwhile, salary growing at 5%

## SHORT TAKES

### 38 goats killed in lightning strike

Ashok Nagar (MP): As many as 38 goats were killed in a lightning strike in Madhya Pradesh's Ashok Nagar district Saturday, police said. The incident occurred at Dungsara village under Naisarai police station limits, an official said. Naisarai police station in-charge Punit Dixit said that the weather suddenly changed in the afternoon with thunder and streaks of lightning in the sky. A bolt of lightning struck around 2 pm, killing 38 goats. These animals were sitting under a tree, he said.

### PM congratulates Anthony Albanese

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday congratulated Anthony Albanese on his resounding victory and re-election as prime minister of Australia, and said he looks forward to working with him to further deepen the India-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. Albanese has become the first Australian prime minister to win a second consecutive three-year term in 21 years. "Congratulations @AlboMP on your resounding victory and re-election as Prime Minister of Australia! This emphatic mandate indicates the enduring faith of the Australian people in your leadership," Modi said on X.

### Yellow alert issued in Delhi

New Delhi: Delhi is likely to witness a brief spell of rainfall, accompanied by thunderstorms, lightning and gusty winds, Saturday evening, the weather department said. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast gusty winds, reaching speeds of 40-50 kilometres per hour, for the capital, with a "yellow" alert - "Be Aware" -- in place, according to the IMD's colour code.

## CRPF jawan dismissed for hiding Pak marriage

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 3: The Central Reserve Police Force has dismissed from service its jawan Munir Ahmed for "concealing" his marriage with a Pakistani woman as his action was found to be detrimental to national security, official sources said Saturday.

The jawan was last posted with the 41st battalion of paramilitary CRPF, the lead internal security force of the country. He was "dismissed from service" under the rules that do not require conducting an enquiry, official sources told PTI.

"Munir Ahmed has been dismissed from service with immediate effect for concealing his marriage to a Pakistani national and knowingly harbouring her beyond the validity of her visa. His actions were found to be in violation of service conduct and detrimental to national security," CRPF spokesperson Deputy Inspector General (DIG) M Dhinakaran said.

Ahmed's marriage with Menal Khan came to light after India asked Pakistani nationals to leave the country as part of diplomatic measures taken in the wake of the Pahalgam terrorist attack in which 26 persons were killed.

# Congress seeks fresh elections in Manipur

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 3: The Congress Saturday targeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his silence and alleged failure to uphold "Rajdharma" in Manipur and demanded fresh elections in the strife-torn state.

The Opposition party also alleged the ground situation was far from normal despite the imposition of President's rule in Manipur.

More than 260 people have been killed, 1,500 injured and over 70,000 displaced since ethnic violence broke out between the Meiteis and the Kukis May 3, 2023.

President's rule was imposed in Manipur February 13 and the assembly put under suspended animation, days after N Biren Singh resigned as chief minister. The Manipur Assembly has a tenure till 2027. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said Modi, by not visiting Manipur even once during this time, had failed to uphold "Rajdharma".

In a post on X, he said Manipur was observing two years of violence without the prime minister setting foot on its soil. "Just two days ago, 25 people were injured in a violent clash



in Tamenglong district. More than 260 people have died. 68,000 people displaced and thousands are still living in relief camps," Kharge noted.

The leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha tagged the Prime Minister in his post and asked three "pointed questions". "Since January 2022, your last election rally in Manipur, you have made 44 foreign visits around the globe and 250 domestic visits across the nation, yet you have not spent a single second in Manipur. Why this apathy and disdain for the people of Manipur? Where is the political accountability?" the Congress chief asked. He questioned why the double-engine government failed in its constitutional duty to provide security and safety for its citizens.

# More kids find families as adoption landscape shifts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 3: Neeraj's (name changed) note to his mother was simple yet profound: "I love you Mom because you take me out to play."

Neeraj's words have been the culmination of a journey that began four years earlier, when he was born with a condition called "knock knees" and left at a Child Care Institution just a day old.

He was put up for adoption, and for years, families hesitated, often discouraged by his medical condition.

His story was one of waiting -- for the right family, waiting to be seen and chosen. Families came and went, but his diagnosis often led to the end of the

conversation. That was until 2021, when a couple saw him not as a problem to be solved, but as "their child."

Neeraj's journey is not an isolated one. In India, there has been a noticeable surge in adoption numbers over the past decade, with their number increasing from 3,677 in 2015-16 to 4,027 in 2018-19. While there was a dip during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the latest official data, there has been a continued positive trend, with record 4,515 child adoptions in FY 2024-25, the highest since 2015-16.

As of the current financial year, 420 children have already been adopted from the Orphan/Abandoned/Surrendered (OAS) category. Of these, 342 children



were adopted by Resident Indian (RI) parents, eight by Non-Resident Indians (NRI), six by Overseas Citizens of India (OCI), and 11 by foreigners. As of April 2025, there are 35,701 prospective adoptive parents (PAPs) registered

on CARA's CARINGS portal. Among these, 32,873 are Resident Indians waiting for OAS children, followed by 300 NRIs, 216 OCIs, and 319 foreign nationals. For relative and step-child adoptions, 1,934 in-country and 59 inter-country appli-

« In India, there has been a noticeable surge in adoption numbers over the past decade, with their number increasing from 3,677 in 2015-16 to 4,027 in 2018-19

« While there was a dip during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the latest official data, there has been a continued positive trend, with record 4,515 child adoptions in FY 2024-25, the highest since 2015-16

After a nurturing year, they sought legal adoption. Sukama was adopted just weeks before turning 18.

In Mizoram, a 15-year-old girl already bonded with her stepfather. Legal adoption was a race against time, initiated just days before her 18th birthday. But due to swift action by the authorities, the process from registration July 8 to the legal order July 25, 2024, took 16 days, making her legally a daughter before adulthood, an official who facilitated the process said.

At present, there are 35 State Adoption Resource Agencies (SARAs) coordinating efforts at the state level, alongside 719 Specialised Adoption Agencies (SAAs) that work directly with children in need of families.



Our stance is clear with regard to all nations whose representatives are visiting Russia on May 9 — we cannot guarantee what happens within the territory of the Russian Federation. Russia bears full responsibility for ensuring their safety

HEAT SINGES PAKISTAN

Pakistanis weathered their second hottest April in 65 years, the meteorological department said. A Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) official said that average temperatures soared well above historical norms last month. The average nationwide temperatures during April 2025 were 3.37 notches higher than the long-term norm



US reports 216 child deaths this flu season, most in 15 years

New York, May 3: More US children have died this flu season than at any time since the swine flu pandemic 15 years ago, according to a federal report released Friday.

The 216 pediatric deaths reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention eclipse the 207 reported last year. It's the most since the 2009-2010 H1N1 global flu pandemic.

It's a startlingly high number, given that the flu season is still going on. The final pediatric death tally for the 2023-2024 flu season wasn't counted until autumn. "This number that we have now is almost certainly an undercount, and one that — when the season is declared over, and they compile all the data — it's almost certain to go up," said Dr Sean O'Leary, of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

There are likely several contributors to this season's severity, but a big one is that fewer children are getting flu shots, added O'Leary, a University of Colorado pediatric infectious diseases specialist.

The flu vaccination rate for US children has plummeted from about 64 per cent five years ago to 49 per cent this season.

Historic win for Albanese

Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese wins second 3-year term, riding anti-Trump wave



Sydney, May 3: Australia's Anthony Albanese claimed a historic second term as prime minister Saturday in a dramatic comeback against once-reurgent conservatives that was powered by voters' concerns about the influence of US President Donald Trump.

Peter Dutton, leader of the conservative Liberal party, conceded defeat and the loss of his own seat - echoing the fate of Canada's conservatives and their leader whose election losses days earlier were also attributed to a Trump backlash.

Supporters at Labor's election party in Sydney cheered and hugged each other as Albanese claimed victory and said his party would form a majority government.

Albanese would be the first Australian prime minister to

win a consecutive term in two decades. He said Australians had voted for fairness and "the strength to show courage in adversity and kindness to those in need".

The Australian Electoral Commission website projected Labor would win 81 of 150 seats in the House of Representatives, increasing its majority in parliament, with 68% of the vote counted.

Dutton - whose Liberals had been leading in opinion polls as recently as February until he became dogged with comparisons to Trump - said he had phoned Albanese to congratulate him.

"We didn't do well enough during this campaign. That much is obvious tonight, and I accept full responsibility for that," Dutton said in a televised speech.

The former policeman with

- 'This is a win for the ages,' Labor treasurer says
Opposition leader Dutton loses seat, concedes defeat
His party, once poll leaders, dogged by Trump comparisons
Cost-of-living and Trump policies key voter issues

Our government will choose the Australian way, because we are proud of who we are and all that we have built together in this country. We do not need to beg or borrow or copy from anywhere else. We do not seek our inspiration from overseas. We find it right here in our values and in our people

ANTHONY ALBANESE | PM, AUSTRALIA

a reputation for being tough on crime and immigration said he had spoken to Labor's candidate in the seat of Dickson he had held for two decades, and congratulated her on her success.

"We have been defined by our opponents in this election which is not the true story of who we are" Dutton said, promising the party would rebuild.

TRUMP COMPARISONS

Cost-of-living pressures and concerns about Trump's volatile policies had been among the top issues on voters' minds,

opinion polls showed. "If you sling enough mud it will stick," said Liberal Senator for the Northern Territory Jacinta Price, whose comments that her party would "make Australia great again" had fuelled comparisons to Trump's own "Make America Great Again" slogan.

Earlier, as counting got underway, Labor Treasurer Jim Chalmers said the government had been "in all sorts of trouble" at the end of 2024 but got back into the contest because of Albanese's strong campaign performance, policies that addressed concerns about the cost of living, and the Trump effect.

As the results started emerging, he told ABC the projected victory was "a win for the ages". Albanese "has pulled off one of the great political victories since federation," he said.

The results were "absolutely unbelievable", Labor supporter Melinda Adderley, 54, said through her tears at the election party.

SK's conservatives pick hardline Moon-soo as Prez candidate



Seoul, May 3: South Korea's conservative People Power Party Saturday picked former labour minister Kim Moon-soo as its candidate for the June 3 presidential election, which was called after the removal of Yoon Suk Yeol over his failed attempt to impose martial law.

Kim will face liberal Democratic Party candidate Lee Jae-myung, who has led each

of the declared conservative candidates by large double-digit margins in polls.

Kim, 73, who was a labour activist in his university days but later turned hardline conservative, served as labour minister under Yoon and has pledged to implement business-friendly policies if elected.

He laid out a sweeping conservative vision for the country in his acceptance speech, vowing to take a hard line against North Korea and implement incentives for businesses and for innovation and science.

He also pledged to strengthen policies to support young workers and the underprivileged, recounting his experience as a labour and democracy activist while in university for which he was jailed and expelled from school. "I have never abandoned the weakest among us in the lowest of places," he said.

Prince Harry seeks family reconciliation



London: Prince Harry said that he wants to reconcile with his family after losing a court battle Friday over his publicly funded security that he said led his father, King Charles III, to stop talking to him.

"I would love reconciliation with my family. There's no point in continuing to fight anymore," Harry told the BBC. "I don't know how much longer my father has." But Harry took aim at Buckingham Palace officials after the court of appeal rejected a bid to restore his police protection detail that was stripped by a government committee when he stepped away from his royal duties and moved to the US. The Duke of Sussex said that he was devastated to lose the case that was a source of friction with his 76-year-old father, who is being treated for an undisclosed cancer. Harry has met with him once briefly since his diagnosis early last year. "He won't speak to me because of this security stuff," Harry said in the interview that aired three hours after the ruling. Harry, who is estranged from his family since departing the UK and writing a tell-all memoir with embarrassing details about the House of Windsor, said Friday's court verdict meant it would be impossible to safely bring his family back to the UK.

PAHALGAM ATTACK

Pakistan test-fires Abdali missile amid strained relations with India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, May 3: Pakistan Saturday conducted a successful training launch of the Abdali weapon system — a surface-to-surface missile with a range of 450 kms — amid heightened tensions with India following the Pahalgam terror attack.

The launch was aimed at ensuring the operational readiness of troops and validating key technical parameters, including the missile's advanced navigation system and enhanced manoeuvrability features," Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the media wing of the army, said in a statement.

The army said the missile launch was part of "Exercise INDUS" but gave no details about it. Pakistan's missile test-firing comes about 10 days after terrorists killed 26 people, mostly tourists, in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam April 22.

Initially, Indian authorities identified five terrorists — including three Pakistani nationals — behind the massacre in Pahalgam. Citing "cross-border linkages" to the horrific attack, India has promised severe punishment to those involved in the strike and took a raft of punitive measures.



Saturday's training launch was witnessed by the Commander Army Strategic Forces Command, senior officials from the Strategic Plans Divi-

sion, Army Strategic Forces Command, as well as scientists and engineers from Pakistan's strategic organisations.

President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and services chiefs extended their congratulations to the participating troops, scientists, and engineers.

They expressed complete confidence in the operational preparedness and technical proficiency of Pakistan's Strategic Forces to ensure credible minimum deterrence and safeguard national security against any aggression.

Pak defence minister warns India it would strike any structure built on Indus River

Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has warned India that it would strike any structure that is built on the Indus River in "violation of the Indus Waters Treaty", which was suspended following the Pahalgam terror attack. Ties between the two neighbouring countries plummeted following the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack that killed 26 people, mostly tourists. India, among other punitive actions, announced the suspension of the 1960 accord, which governs water sharing between the two countries. Speaking on a Geo News programme Friday, the defence minister said, "Certainly, if they attempt to build any kind of structure, we will strike it." Asif said that building any structure on the Indus River would be seen as "Indian aggression" against Pakistan. "Aggression is not just about firing cannons or bullets; it has many faces. One of those faces is [blocking or diverting water], which could lead to deaths due to hunger and thirst," he added. The defence minister said, "If they make any architectural attempt, then Pakistan will destroy that structure. "But for now, we are heading to forums available to us, starting from the IWT [Indus Waters Treaty]. We will pursue this matter."

World's tallest, smallest dogs meet up for playdate

Reginald, a 7-year-old Great Dane from Idaho, and Pearl, a chihuahua from Florida, are both certified winners in their respective height titles by Guinness World Records



Washington, May 3: A playdate between the world's tallest and smallest living dogs went the way of most dog park encounters despite the 3-foot (0.91-meter) height difference — lots of tail wagging, sniffing and scampering.

Reginald, a 7-year-old Great Dane from Idaho, and Pearl, a chihuahua from Florida, are both certified winners in their respective height titles by Guinness World Records. The fact that Reginald is the size of a small horse and Pearl is as small as an apple didn't stop them from getting along famously.

Both Millie and Pearl weighed 1 ounce (28.35 grams) at birth. "I was not expecting to once

again have the record," said Vanesa Semler of Orlando, Florida, owner of both tiny dogs. "That would be like unbelievable."

Reggie and measures in at a whopping 3-foot-3 (1 meter) — last month at his home in Idaho Falls. Even though Pearl loves dogs, even big dogs, Semler said she was anxious because of Reginald's size.

"For me, (it) was a huge, pleasant surprise from day one because Reggie is like Pearl, in bigger size," she said. "He is so gentle, so friendly."

Reggie, for his part, might have been more interested in the Guinness film crew that accompanied Pearl than the tiny dog herself.

"I would say he likes people a little bit more than he likes other dogs," said Sam Johnson Reiss, his owner.

Pearl's tiny size was also strange for the big boy.

ASSOCIATED PRESS



**It's time for India to create new stories that blend tradition and technology. Just as George Lucas drew inspiration from Indian epics for Star Wars, we can use technology to transform our cultural heritage into global franchises**  
KIRAN MAZUMDAR SHAW | BIONOC FOUNDER

## GOLD MELTING ATM

Hyderabad-based 'Gold-sikka' Saturday unveiled an AI-powered Gold Melting ATM offering users the ability to buy, sell, exchange, lease, digitise and monetise gold and gold jewellery.



## of the day quote

**The US clearly wants to decouple from China. US-China trade conflict is here to stay...**



There has been a long history of this sense within the United States that China has operated rather unfairly

ARVIND PANAGARIYA | 16TH FINANCE COMMISSION CHAIRMAN

**We remain the home of the creator economy. Over the last three years, we've paid out over ₹21,000 crore to creators and partners, media companies and music labels here in this market that creates the foundation for the great growth of the creator economy**



GAUTAM ANAND | VICE PRESIDENT, YOUTUBE ASIA PACIFIC

**India is a very favourable investment destination. People want to invest in India and normal people have diverted their savings to the markets such as Systematic Investment Plans**



CHARANJOT SINGH NANDA | ICICI PRESIDENT

## Q4 RESULTS CORNER

### SBI profit declines as margins fall

**Mumbai:** State Bank of India Saturday reported an 8.34 per cent decline in its consolidated net profit to ₹19,600 crore for the January-March quarter compared to ₹21,384 crore a year ago, impacted by a decline in net interest margins. On a standalone basis, the net profit of the country's largest lender declined to ₹18,642 crore in the March quarter from ₹20,698 crore in the year-ago period. The core net interest income of the bank increased 2.69 per cent to ₹42,775 crore despite a loan growth of over 12 per cent due to a lower net interest margin. NIM declined by 32 basis points year-on-year to 3.15 per cent.

### Indian Bank profit soars 32%

**New Delhi:** State-owned Indian Bank Saturday reported a 32 per cent jump in net profit to ₹2,956 crore for the March quarter of 2024-25, helped by a decline in bad loans and a rise in core income. The Chennai-based lender had earned a net profit of ₹2,247 crore in the year-ago period. During the quarter, the bank's total income increased to ₹18,599 crore from ₹16,887 crore a year ago, Indian Bank said in a regulatory filing. Interest income grew to ₹15,856 crore from ₹14,624 crore in the fourth quarter of the previous financial year. Net Interest Income (NII) in the quarter also improved to ₹6,389 crore from ₹6,015 crore in the same period a year ago.

### Kotak Mahindra Bank standalone profit falls

**New Delhi:** Private sector lender Kotak Mahindra Bank Saturday reported a 14 per cent fall in standalone profit to ₹3,552 crore for the January-March quarter of 2024-25 compared to ₹4,133 crore in the last quarter of 2023-24. The bank's total income increased to ₹16,712 crore in the quarter from ₹15,285 crore in the same period a year ago, Kotak Mahindra Bank said in a regulatory filing. During the quarter the bank earned interest income of ₹13,530 crore as against ₹12,307 crore in the same period a year ago. Net Interest Income (NII) rose to ₹7,284 crore, from ₹6,909 crore in Q4FY24, registering a modest increase of 5 per cent.

# Mobile, electronics makers to self-declare Repairability Index

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, May 3:** The government Saturday said that the committee constituted for the Framework on Repairability Index (RI) in mobile and electronic sector has submitted its report, to help consumers who witness issues while seeking repair for their devices.

The panel has submitted its report to Nidhi Khare, Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs. The committee's recommendations have been framed in alignment with the best global practices without causing any impediment to the industry with regard to innovation and ease of doing business.

The original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) are required to self-declare the Repairability Index based on a standard scoring criteria provided in the framework with no additional compliance burden, said Ministry of Consumer Affairs.

Further, the committee recommended that the Repairability Index should be displayed at the point of sale/purchase, E-commerce platforms and in form of QR code on packaged products to enable consumer to make informed choices.

In September 2024, the Department of Consumer Affairs constituted a committee under the chairmanship of Bharat Khara, Additional Secretary for developing the framework of the Repairability Index (RI). Repairability Index aims



to create an ecosystem where consumers choose options that align with the ethos of 'mindful utilisation' of their products over 'wasteful consumption'.

By empowering consumers with ease and hassle-free repair options, the Department said it is reaffirming its commitment to a self-reliant, sustainable, and consumer-friendly economy.

An analysis of grievances received at National Consumer Helpline (NCH) indicates that there has been significant rise in complaints in mobiles and tablets product category from 19,057 in 2022-2023 followed by 21,020 in 2023-2024 and further to 22,864 in 2024-2025, which also highlighted a pressing need to improve repair accessibility and ensure greater transparency of repair and post-sale service-related information to consumers.

Based on the deliberations, the committee identified smartphones and tablets as a product category for notification in the initial phase of Repairability Index in Mobile and Electronics Sector.

The committee actively engaged with a wide array of relevant stakeholders, including manufacturers, industry associations, consumer advocacy groups, and representatives of government.

"As India continues its rapid technological advancement and more and more consumers have access to a variety of consumer products, the need for robust after sales support and equitable repair practices is becoming increasingly crucial. For countless consumers, both in rural and urban areas, access to affordable repair options is fundamental," said the ministry.

# India-UK investment treaty lets companies sue govt

REUTERS

**London, May 3:** An investment treaty between Britain and India will contain a provision that allows companies to sue either government if they believe policy changes unfairly harm their investment or profits, two sources familiar with discussions told Reuters.

The Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) mechanism is aimed at protecting companies against possible unfair treatment under local laws, and will be included in an investment treaty that is expected to be struck alongside a free trade agreement shortly.

The mechanism has been criticised in recent years, including by Britain's previous Conservative government, for blocking efforts to fight climate change because fossil fuel producers can use it to protect their assets.

Britain has not included ISDS in any of the bilateral free trade deals it has struck since it left the European Union, though it is a feature of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) it has signed up to. India has also moved to limit ISDS in its treaties.

One of the sources said London had pushed for its inclusion in a deal with India as British businesses wanted reassurance that they would be treated fairly under the Indian

legal system.

The Indian government declined to give an immediate response to a question about the current talks.

A spokesperson for Britain's trade ministry declined to comment on the matter but said any deal needed guarantees for businesses that they would be treated fairly.

The two sources said government officials on Tuesday told a meeting of businesses interested in the deal that ISDS was included.

Britain has never lost an ISDS claim by a company but according to UN data, of 30 ISDS cases brought against India since 2003, 8 were brought by UK-based companies under a previous agreement.

"We are determined to improve access for UK businesses, ensure their fair treatment, cut tariffs, and make trade cheaper and easier," the UK trade ministry spokesperson said.

Britain's left-of-centre Labour Party won power last year, and has been keen to stress that it is now the party of business as it restarts various trade negotiations.

Britain and India have been locked in trade talks, on and off, since January 2022, and are expected to strike a full trade deal soon. The Indian Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal was in London earlier this week for late-stage talks, and returned Friday for further discussions.

# TPCODL's uninterrupted power for Rath Yatra

**Bhubaneswar:** TP Central Odisha Distribution Limited (TPCODL), a joint venture between Tata Power and the Government of Odisha, has announced comprehensive preparations to ensure uninterrupted power supply during the upcoming Rath Yatra in Puri.

To meet the anticipated peak demand of 74 MW in Puri Town, TPCODL has ramped up its infrastructure with an installed capacity of 170 MVA. Four 12.5/16 MVA Power Transformers have been deployed, ensuring N-2 redundancy for continuous power



flow throughout the festival.

A team of over 700 professionals will be on duty round-the-clock, backed by real-time

monitoring from the Power Distribution Technology Centre in Bhubaneswar. Preventive maintenance has been completed across substations, overhead lines, and underground cables, while mobile transformers, cranes, fault locators, and other critical equipment have been mobilized for emergency response.

"The Rath Yatra is not just a festival — it is an emotion that unites millions. We take immense pride in ensuring the city stays energised and safe," said Arvind Singh, CEO, TPCODL.

# Vedanta reaffirms safety with smart mining

**Bhubaneswar:** Leading the integration of advanced technologies to elevate safety standards across its mining operations, India's largest aluminium producer Vedanta reaffirms its steadfast commitment to the safety and well-being of mining workforce at its Jamkani coal mines in Odisha.

Vedanta Aluminium CEO Rajiv Kumar stated, "Safety and well-being of our workforce is a non-negotiable priority. On Coal Miners' Day, we are proud to lead AI and technology innovations that are redefining safety standards in mining and reflecting our commitment to building smart, secure and sustainable operations."

The CEO further stated that



Vedanta Aluminium's proactive adoption of AI and drone technologies underscores its commitment to creating a Zero-Harm culture and nurturing

a safe, future-ready workforce. These initiatives align with the Mines Act, 1952 which mandates robust safety, health and emergency response measures.

# India's creator economy can unlock \$125bn in revenue by 2030

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Mumbai, May 3:** Even as India's creator economy is rapidly transforming the digital landscape, it has the potential to unlock \$100-125 billion in direct ecosystem revenue in the next five years, according to a report released Saturday.

The report by the Boston Consulting Group (BCG), launched at the mega 'WAVES 2025' event here, showed that creators in the country today influence more than \$350 billion in consumer spending annually. The number is expected to triple to over \$1 trillion by

2030. At the same time, the creator ecosystem's direct revenues are projected to expand to \$100-125 billion in 2030 from the current \$20-25 billion.

"India's creator economy has the potential to significantly influence consumer spending, with creator-led spending set to account for 25-30 per cent of India's total consumer spend by 2030," said Vipin Gupta, Managing Director and Partner, BCG.

"What began as a Gen Z and metro-focused phenomenon is now resonating across age groups and smaller cities, unlocking new avenues of influ-



ence and engagement. Categories like fashion, beauty, and

entertainment are leading the charge, while emerging mone-

versifying with new consumer funded revenue streams gaining ground e.g. virtual gifting, live commerce and subscription.

Further, the report showed that short-form video dominates content consumption with comedy, movies, daily soaps, and fashion being the top genres.

It called on brands to adapt faster content creation, greater creative freedom, enable diversified targeting, always on outcome testing, and build specialised teams essential to win with creators.

Monetisation avenues are di-

# JLR restarts car exports to the US

REUTERS

**London, May 3:** Jaguar Land Rover has restarted shipments of vehicles to the United States after pausing them in the face of U.S. President Donald Trump's tariffs, London's Times newspaper reported Saturday.

The first shipments of JLR vehicles bound for the U.S. for almost a month left Britain on Wednesday, the report said.

JLR, which is owned by India's Tata Motors, did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment.

It said in April it would pause shipments of its Britain-made cars to the U.S. for a month as it considered how to mitigate the cost of Trump's 25% tariff on imported cars and light trucks, which came into effect on April 3.

Trump said Thursday he will soften the blow of his auto tariffs through an executive order mixing credits with relief from other levies on parts and materials.

British luxury carmaker Aston Martin's CEO Adrian Hallmark said Wednesday it would split the costs from U.S. tariffs between the company and its customers, and sell down its U.S. inventory while limiting shipments there.

Britain's car industry employs 200,000 people directly. The United States is the second-biggest importer of British-made cars after the European Union, with a near 20% share, data from industry body SMMT shows.

# Volatility to stay in stock markets due to geopolitical tensions

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Mumbai, May 3:** Benchmark indices ended with marginal gains in a highly volatile session May 2 and volatility is expected to stay elevated due to ongoing geopolitical tensions, developments related to tariffs, and the unfolding Q4 earnings season and major US economic data points, analysts said Saturday.

The Nifty Friday opened strong and surged to an intraday high of 24,589 in the first half of the session. However, profit booking at higher levels erased those gains, leaving the index to close nearly flat.

The Nifty finished the day up 12.50 points, or 0.05 per cent, at 24,346.70.

"For the week, the BSE Sensex gained 1.6 per cent, while the Nifty50 rose 1.2 per cent. The BSE Midcap index declined 0.4 per cent and the Smallcap index ended flat," said a note from Bajaj Broking Research.

Among sectoral performers, media, energy, IT, and oil & gas posted gains of 0.3-0.7 per cent. On the other hand, power, metal, telecom, pharma, realty, and consumer durables sectors saw losses ranging from 0.5 to 2 per cent.

According to Dhupesh Dhameja, Derivatives Research Analyst, SAMCO Securities, Nifty continues to display signs of hesitation at elevated levels, repeatedly getting knocked back from crucial resistance zones and producing intraday fake-outs, indicating a period of consolidation amid fading momentum.

# FC Goa crowned champions

THE GAURS RIDE BORJA'S BRACE TO WIN SECOND KALINGA SUPER CUP TITLE WITH 3-0 WIN OVER JAMSHEDPUR FC



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, May 3:** FC Goa Saturday became the first team to win the Super Cup title twice with a 3-0 win over Jamshedpur FC in the final here as they also booked a slot for the preliminary round in the AFC Champions League Two.

Borja Herrera (23rd and 51st minute) scored a brace while Dejan Drazic struck the other goal in the 72nd minute to complete a dominant win for the Goan club, which has India head coach Manolo Marquez at the helm of affairs.

FC Goa had earlier won the Super Cup title in 2019, and they will return to continental football after four years.

Their only appearance in Asia came in the 2021 AFC Champions League group

stage. The victory marked FC Goa's first trophy under Manolo, whose chapter at the club came to a perfect end.

The match was billed as a battle between FC Goa's attacking firepower and Jamshedpur's unbreached defence, yet by full-time, it was clear which team had stamped its authority.

Jamshedpur, known for their compact shape and counter-attacking style, who had also not conceded a single goal until the final, simply couldn't cope with FC Goa's expansive play.

While Jamshedpur did show some early promise with Javier Hernandez forcing a sharp save from Hrithik Tiwari in the third minute, the momentum quickly swung in FC Goa's favour.

With Aakash Sangwan and

Dejan Drazic tearing down the wings and Carl McHugh and Borja pulling the strings in midfield, FC Goa dominated both possession and territory.

The opening goal arrived in the 23rd minute. Sangwan made a blistering run down the left and unleashed a powerful drive that Albino Gomes could only parry. Borja was first to the rebound, his first shot was blocked, but he coolly slotted the second into the roof of the net.

Jamshedpur's best chance came late in the first half when Lazar Cirkovic's header rattled the crossbar, but their lack of attacking thrust was evident throughout.

FC Goa doubled their lead in the 51st minute in a moment of brilliance. Borja, picking the ball up near midfield, surged

forward and unleashed a ferocious 25-yard strike that arched into the top corner, leaving Gomes helpless.

Khalid Jamil's men from Jamshedpur tried to claw their way back with Jordan Murray setting up Javier Siverio, but the forward blasted over from close range.

The third and final goal came in the 71st minute and showcased FC Goa's poise and precision. McHugh dissected the defence with a perfectly weighted through ball, and Drazic latched on, rounded the keeper, and tapped home into an empty net.

The rains came towards the end of the match, and the mood turned celebratory as FC Goa players danced to cap off a fine performance and embrace their moment in history.

# RCB beat CSK in thriller

Shepherd-led RCB survive Mhatre's brilliant 94 to beat CSK by 2 runs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore, May 3:** Ayush Mhatre nearly upended Romero Shepherd's ferocious 14-ball fifty with a 94 of rare class but Royal Challengers Bengaluru bowlers kept their nerves in the death overs to carve an out-of-fire two-run win over Chennai Super Kings and get closer to IPL playoffs here Saturday.

Once the RCB piled a massive 213 for five, courtesy fifties of different hues by Virat Kohli (62, 33 balls), Jacob Bethell (55 off 33) and Shepherd (53 not out of 14, 4x4, 6x6), joint-second fastest in the IPL, CSK had a mountain to climb.

But they almost did the unthinkable, riding on 17-year-old Mhatre's 94 (48 balls; 9x4, 5x6), only to end up at 211 for five.

Mhatre had an astute partner in veteran Ravindra Jadeja (77 not out off 45 balls), as they together milked 114 runs for the third wicket.

The Mumbai lad began the innings by punishing seasoned pacer Bhuvneshwar Kumar for 26 runs in the Power Play segment and he never really let that tempo down.

With the win, RCB moved to the top of the IPL table with 16 points from 11 matches.

Mhatre brought into practice all the technical nous and batting cleverness that he learned from hours of net sessions at the famed Oval maidan in Mumbai to poleaxe a RCB bowling attack sans injured pacer Josh Hazlewood.

A lot of eyebrows were raised when Mhatre was picked as injury replacement of Rituraj Gaikwad ahead of Gujarat's Urvil Patel and Kerala's Salman Nizar.

But both CSK skipper Dho-



## IPL STANDINGS

TEAM	M	W	L	NRR	PTS
RCB	11	8	3	0.482	16
MI	11	7	4	1.274	14
GT	10	7	3	0.867	14
PBKS	10	6	3	0.199	13
DC	10	6	4	0.362	12
LSG	10	5	5	-0.325	10
KKR	10	4	5	0.271	9
RR	11	3	8	-0.780	6
SRH	10	3	7	-1.192	6
CSK	11	2	9	-1.117	4

But a rather tired-looking heave off Lungi Ngidi ended Mhatre's masterpiece as he lofted him straight to Krunal Pandya in the deep.

At that stage, CSK were 172 for two in 16.2 overs, needing 42 more runs for the victory.

Ngidi dismissed Dewald Brevis for nought to turn the tide in favour of RCB, as Yash Dayal had 15 runs to defend in the final over.

Dayal dismissed Dhoni to leave CSK to make 13 runs off three balls, which eventually became four runs in one ball. However, the left-arm pacer's full-length delivery allowed Shivam Dube to take only a single off the last ball.

However, the left-arm pacer's full-length delivery allowed Shivam Dube to take only a single off the last ball.

Earlier, Kohli and Bethel did the early running with well-crafted fifties before Shepherd exploded into action in the last 12 balls of the RCB innings. Kohli and Bethel raised 97 runs in just 9.5 overs for the opening wicket.

ni and coach Stephen Fleming had full confidence in Mhatre once they saw him at the team's selection nets ahead of this IPL, and he repaid their faith with dividends tonight.

Jadeja, a grizzled CSK veteran who got reprieves on 57 and 69, too, deserved a full set of compliments for staying with the young man at the other end, and guiding him through a tension-filled atmosphere.

## SHORT TAKES

### Rabada suspended over drug usage

**Johannesburg:** World's premier fast bowler Kagiso Rabada Saturday made a shocking revelation that he is serving a provisional suspension for using a banned recreational drug. The South African pacer had left IPL last month after playing two games for Gujarat Titans, citing personal reasons. Rabada, who will turn 30 later this month, issued a statement through South African Cricketers' Association (SACA).

### Jadhav bags air rifle gold

**New Delhi:** Reigning men's rifle 3-Positions national champion Kiran Ankush Jadhav extended his fine run of form, winning the 10m air rifle gold at the Kumar Surendra Singh Memorial Shooting Championship, here Saturday. The Navy marksman, who will be a part of the Indian team for the Munich World Cup next month, shot 251.5 over 24-shots, to finish ahead of two Army shooters, Vivek Sharma and Vishal Singh, at the Karni Singh Range. Vivek finished 1.4 points behind Kiran to take the silver while Vishal took the bronze, bowing out to Vivek in a shoot-off, after both were tied at 230.1 at the end of the 22nd shots.

## DOPING VIOLATIONS

### Long distance runners Hemraj, Anjali handed 4, 6-year bans

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 3:** Long distance runners Hemraj Gurjar and Anjali Kumari have been banned for four and six years respectively by the NADA's Anti-Doping Disciplinary Panel after they failed dope tests last year.

The 25-year-old Gujar, who had won a 5000m bronze in the 2023 National Inter-State Championships and gold in the National Cross Country Championships in 2023 and 2024, has been banned for four years beginning from April 20, the date of the decision.

Gujar had also represented the country in the World Athletics Cross Country Championships last year.

Last year, Gujar was handed provisional suspension by the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) after finding prohibited substance Darbeopetin (DEPO) in his dope sample.

Anjali's six-year ban period begins from March 31, according to the latest update on the



NADA website, which does not give further details.

She had also represented the country in the World Athletics Cross Country Championships last year.

Kabaddi player Manish Gulia, wrestlers Omkar Shankar Chougale and Divya Kakran, boxer Thokchom Yaisana Chanu and swimmer Vishal Grewal were handed four year bans by the ADDP of the NADA.

Powerlifter Amita Devi Kotwol and a minor track and field athlete were handed six-year bans, though the details are not known. Boxer Ayush Rai and 19-year-old Mishthi Kajla, who won a bronze in the 2024 Federation Cup U20 Championships, were handed bans for two years each.

# Eyes go down fighting vs Aussies

While India have not registered a win yet on the tour, the final game represents a big chance to rectify that Sunday

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, May 3:** The Indian Women's Hockey Team put up a spirited fight but lost 2-3 to Australia in the fourth game of their Australia tour, at the Perth Hockey Stadium Saturday.

Navneet Kaur (35') and Lalremsiami (59') were the scorers for India, while Australia struck through Grace Stewart (2'), Jade Smith (36'), and Greta Hayes (42') to edge a closely contested encounter.

In the first quarter, Australia struck first to take a 1-0 lead. The breakthrough came as early as the second minute when Grace Stewart found the back of the net. India worked hard to level the score in the remainder of the quarter but could not find the equaliser.

In the second quarter, India successfully defended an early penalty corner and withstood



another set-piece threat late in the period, keeping the deficit to a single goal at halftime.

India fought their way back into the contest in the third quarter, when Navneet successfully converted a penalty corner in the 35th minute to level the scores. The respite was brief as Australia responded immediately with Jade Smith's field

goal giving them the lead in the 36th minute. Australia won two more penalty corners, before Greta Hayes' 42nd minute goal extended their lead again.

India reduced the margin in the final quarter when Lalremsiami found the net late in the game, but Australia kept the Indian attack at bay to secure victory.

## INDIA WITHDRAWS

### Central Asian Volleyball tournament shifted from Pakistan to Uzbekistan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Karachi, May 3:** The Central Asian Volleyball tournament from which India has withdrawn in the aftermath of the terror attack in Pahalgam has been shifted from Islamabad to Tashkent in Uzbekistan, an official of the Pakistan federation said Saturday.

A senior official of Pakistan Volleyball Federation (PVF) said the Central Asia Volleyball Association (CAVA) has taken the decision to shift the event to Uzbekistan.

"It is a huge disappointment for Pakistan volleyball even though India had withdrawn. But we fully understand the CAVA's General Body's decision," the official said.

The scheduled dates of the tournament, to be contested among Pakistan, Iran, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, have not been changed.

# DE BRUYNE NOT FINISHED YET

### Man City climb to third place as the departing Belgian gives the team crucial win over Wolves

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Manchester, May 3:** Kevin De Bruyne scored and gave Manchester City a crucial but barely deserved 1-0 win over Wolverhampton Wanderers and a lift into third place in the Premier League Friday.

The Belgian is leaving City at the end of the season and still providing good memories thanks to his goal against a team that won its last six league encounters.

With three games left, City was a firm favourite to take one of the Champions League

## CHAMPIONS LEAGUE



places.

Slightly against the run of play, De Bruyne side-footed home a cut back from Jeremy Doku 10 minutes before half-time in his second-to-last appearance at Etihad Stadium.

Wolves will be aggrieved at

not taking something from the game but were undone by poor finishing and the City goalposts.

In the 22nd, Jean-Ricner Bellegarde opted to pass when it looked easier to shoot but Marshall Munetsi at full stretch could not get on the end of his

inviting cross.

Five minutes later, Rayan Ait-Nouri hit the post then saw his rebound cleared off the line by Josko Gvardiol.

The woodwork saved City again in the second half when a Matheus Cunha strike crashed off the post.

City coach Pep Guardiola, meanwhile, scotched rumors he's about to leave the club. He recently signed a contract extension until June 2027.

Guardiola said he will take a break from management when he leaves City but he told Sky Sports he did not know when that would be.

"I didn't say I'm leaving now, or the end of season, or the end of contract, I said when I finish my time here, be it one, two, three, four, five years," the Catalan said. "What I am saying is when I am finished here I will take a break."

## DEBUT SEASON

# Antonelli now youngest pole winner in F1 history

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Miami Gardens (Florida), May 3:** Kimi Antonelli became the youngest pole-winner of any Formula 1 event in history when the 18-year-old Mercedes driver won the top starting spot Friday for the sprint race ahead of the Miami Grand Prix.

Antonelli is in his first season in F1, where Mercedes hired him to replace seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton. Mercedes has great faith the Italian can deliver, and he did in qualifying for the second sprint race of the season.

He will start Saturday's sprint race alongside current F1 points



I am feeling over the moon, I did not expect this

KIMI ANTONELLI | F1 DRIVER

felt very confident going into qualifying. Really happy to get the first pole. It's going to be nice to start on the front row and see how we can do in the sprint."

Lando Norris, second in the standings, qualified third for McLaren and was followed by Max Verstappen, who arrived in Miami in time for Friday practice after skipping Thursday activities as he welcomed his first child with partner Kelly Piquet.