

India retaliates as Pak escalates



TRAILS OF DESTRUCTION: A resident inspects his house damaged by Pakistani artillery shelling while wife of Amarjeet Singh, 51, killed in Pakistani artillery shelling wails during cremation in Poonch, along the LoC in Kashmir, Thursday

New Delhi, May 8: Amid escalations with Pakistan, India launched a major attack at Karachi Port and Lahore late Thursday night. Several news reports claimed that explosions were heard in the southern Pakistan city of Karachi near the port and Lahore.

It is the first time after 1971 that the Indian Navy opened front against Pakistan. The Indian Navy reportedly launched missile strikes on key Pakistani naval bases, causing major destruction and panic along Pakistan's coastline.

This came after Pakistan military attempted to hit military stations in Jammu, Pathankot, Udhampur and some other locations with missiles and drones Thursday evening, which were neutralised by Indian armed forces.

After the Indian military foiled the Pakistani attempts, the defence ministry said India remains "fully prepared to defend its sovereignty and ensure the safety of its people".

"Military stations at Jammu, Pathankot and Udhampur were targeted by Pakistani-origin drones and missiles along the International Border in Jammu and Kashmir today," a defence ministry spokesperson said.

Military sources said missiles from Pakistan were also directed at Jammu's Satalwar, Samba, RS Pura and Arnia towns and that they were blocked by India's air defence systems.

A complete blackout was enforced in Akhnour, Kishtwar, Samba and other Jammu regions. Blackout was also imposed in Amritsar, Jalandhar and Gurdaspur in Punjab along with Bikaner and Jaisalmer in Rajasthan.

At least three Pakistan Air Force (PAF) jets, including an F-16 supersonic fighter, were shot down by Indian missiles.

The F-16 took off from the Sargodha air base in Pakistan, a key air force station of the PAF. Earlier, India foiled Pakistan military's attempts to attack 15 places in Northern and Western India using missiles and drones, and destroyed a Pakistani air defence system in Lahore.

The defence ministry said the Pakistani military attempted last night to target Awantipura, Srinagar, Jammu, Pathankot, Amritsar, Kapurthala, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Adampur, Bhatinda, Chandigarh, Nal, Phalodi, Uttarlai, and Bhuj.

These attempts were neutralised by the Integrated Counter Unmanned Aircraft System (Grid and Air Defence systems), it said.

The Pakistani attempt came after Indian armed forces early Wednesday carried out missile strikes on nine terror targets in PoK and Pakistan under Operation Sindoor.

The defence ministry said India called its anti-terror response as 'focused, measured and non-escalatory' and that Pakistani military establishments had not been targeted.

"It was also reiterated that any attack on military targets in India will invite a suitable response," it said.

"Today morning, Indian armed forces targeted air defence radars and systems at a number of locations in Pakistan. Indian response has been

Karachi Port hit as Indian Navy launches operations in Arabian Sea eyeing multiple Pak targets

India shoots down 3 Pak fighter jets in retaliatory action

Foreign Secy Vikram Misri dismisses Pak's claims that Indian jets had been downed

sectors in Jammu and Kashmir.

"Sixteen innocent lives have been lost, including three women and five children, due to Pakistani attack," the ministry said. Here too, India was compelled to respond to bring mortar and artillery fire from Pakistan to a halt, it said.

"Indian armed forces reiterate their commitment to non-escalation, provided it is respected by the Pakistani military," the ministry said.

In retaliation to the Pahalgam terror attack, Indian armed forces early Wednesday carried out the missile strikes on the terror targets including Bahawalpur, a stronghold of the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) terror group. Meanwhile, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri dismissed Pakistan's claims

S-400 & HARPY DRONES

India used S-400 missile defence system to neutralise 15 missiles fired by Pakistan at different cities late Wednesday night and early Thursday, and Israeli HARPY drones were then deployed to disable Pak air defence radars, including one in Lahore. Both the state-of-the-art devices proved their mettle.

S-400 missile defence system

The Russian-made S-400 missile defence system, dubbed by India as 'Sudharshan Chakra', can track inbound missiles from 600km away and can intercept these targets within a 400-km range. India and Russia had signed a deal worth Rs 35,000 crore for five squadrons of the S-400, of which three have been delivered and the other two are expected by 2026. All three that have been delivered have been operationalised by the Air Force; these have been deployed along the Pak and China borders.

HARPY drones

The Israel-made HARPY is designed to attack radar systems and is optimised to operate in a 'suppression of enemy air defences', or SEAD, role. It carries a high-explosive warhead and has a special radar that can autonomously seek and strike radiation-emitting, high-value targets. Specifically, it can track and eliminate targets within a designated area; it does this by locating frequencies and then strike from almost any direction, whether shallow or steep dive profiles. The HARPY operates in deep-strike, day-or-night missions for up to nine hours.

X blocks 8K accounts

New Delhi: Social media platform X said Thursday that it has started blocking 8,000 accounts in India following executive orders from the government. In a post on X's Global Government Affairs handle, it received executive orders from the Indian government requiring it to block over 8,000 accounts in the country. "The orders include demands to block access in India to accounts belonging to international news organisations and prominent X users. In most cases, the Indian government has not specified which posts from an account have violated India's local laws. For a significant number of accounts, we did not receive any evidence or justification to block the accounts," X said.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

Operation Sindoor? Sorry, taken—politicians trademarked it

Choice of de-escalation is with Pakistan: Misri

New Delhi: Pakistan only can decide if it wants to de-escalate tensions with India as New Delhi responded to the "original escalation" triggered through the barbaric Pahalgam terror strike, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said Thursday as tensions between the two sides soared.

The foreign secretary also cautioned Pakistan against using fabricated allegations of attack on the Neelum-Jhelum hydropower project in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir as a pretext for targeting Indian infrastructure of a similar nature, and said Islamabad will be responsible for the "consequences".

Misri made the remarks at a media briefing that came hours after the defence ministry said the armed forces foiled Pakistan military's attempts last night to target military installations in 15 cities in the northern and western parts of the country using missiles and drones.

The foreign secretary said any military action by Pakistan will be responded to with a firm approach.

"First of all, it is Pakistan that escalated April 22 (Pahalgam attack). We are only responding to that escalation. If there is an attempt at further escalation by Pakistan, it will be responded to in an appropriate domain," Misri said.

"And therefore, the choice is entirely that of Pakistan to make," he said, making it clear that the Pahalgam terror attack of April 22 that killed 26 civilians was the "original escalation."

The Pakistani attempt to target the Indian cities came after Indian armed forces early Wednesday carried out missile strikes on nine terror targets in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and Pakistan under Operation Sindoor in response to the Pahalgam strike.

The stringent measures were taken by Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Delhi, Gujarat, West Bengal and Bihar after India struck terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan Occupied Kashmir in retaliation for the April 22 Pahalgam massacre that killed 26 people.

Punjab shares a 532-km border with Pakistan, Rajasthan about 1,070 km and Gujarat around 506 km. West Bengal shares a 2,217-km border with Bangladesh.

In Punjab, the leave of all police personnel has been cancelled while the state government has shut schools in six border districts, officials said Thursday.

P9

LEAVE CANCELLED, SCHOOLS SHUT

Chandigarh/Jaipur: Amid escalating tensions between India and Pakistan, many states have announced the closure of schools, blackouts in border districts, and cancellation of leave of police personnel and administration officials.

The Secretary of State Marco Rubio Thursday spoke separately with Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Pakistani Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, emphasising the need for de-escalation and reiterated his calls for Pakistan to take concrete steps to end any support for terrorist groups.

In his call with Jaishankar, Rubio expressed US support for direct dialogue between India and Pakistan and encouraged continued efforts to improve communications.

A State Department statement by Spokesperson Tammy Bruce said, "The Secretary emphasised the need for immediate de-escalation." "Rubio reiterated his condolences for the horrific terrorist attack in Pahalgam and reaffirmed the United States' commitment to work with India in the fight against terrorism."

In a post on X, Jaishankar said, "Spoke with US @SecRubio this evening. Deeply appreciate US commitment to work with India in the fight against terrorism."

"Underlined India's targeted and measured response to

US urges de-escalation

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Stop streaming Pak-origin content, OTT platforms told

New Delhi: Amid rising tensions with Pakistan, the government Thursday advised OTT platforms and social media intermediaries operating in India to discontinue streaming of Pakistan-origin content, including web-series, films and podcasts with immediate effect.

The advisory by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting comes in the wake of strikes by Indian armed forces on terror sites in Pakistan to avenge the terrorist attack in Pahalgam April 22. "In the interest of national security, all OTT platforms, media streaming platforms and intermediaries operating in India are advised to discontinue the web-series, films, songs, podcasts and other streaming media content, whether made available on a subscription based model or otherwise, having its origins in Pakistan with immediate effect," the advisory said.

The ministry said that several terrorist attacks in India have been established to have cross-border linkages with Pakistan-based state and non-state actors.

SHORT TAKES

Helicopter crashes in Uttarakhand; 6 dead

Uttarkashi: A helicopter on way to the Gangotri temple crashed near Gangnani in Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand Thursday, killing six persons, including the pilot, and leaving one seriously injured, officials said. Five women pilgrims were among the dead. The private company helicopter, with seven persons on board, crashed over Rishikesh-Gangotri National Highway at around 8:45am and fell into a gorge about 200-250 metres deep, State Disaster Response Force said. The helicopter had left Sahastadhara helipad in Dehradun for Kharsali helipad. It was on way to Gangotri from there when it crashed, an official said. District Magistrate Meharban Singh Bisht said six people died on the spot. One of the helicopter occupants was seriously injured in the crash and has been identified as M Bhaskar, 51, from Andhra Pradesh. He has been airlifted to AIIMS, Rishikesh.

P8

City-Abu Dhabi flight service from June

Bhubaneswar: International flight service from Bhubaneswar to Abu Dhabi will commence from June this year, CMO said Thursday. The flight service will be launched under the Building Management of Aviation Assets and Network (B-MAAN) scheme. Indigo will run the flight service Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday every week from Biju Patnaik International Airport, it said. Abu Dhabi is the capital city of the United Arab Emirates. "From Temple City to Global Gateway! From June 2025, #Bhubaneswar will take flight to Abu Dhabi under the #BMAAN initiative--powered by the transformative #NewDestination-Policy," the CMO said on X. It will be a major stride toward connecting the state with the world--boosting tourism, trade, and global prospects for a 'viksit Odisha', it said. The chief minister has thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for steering this landmark aviation push.

P3

US Cardinal Robert Prevost elected new pope

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Vatican City, May 8: Robert Prevost, the Chicago-born missionary who spent his career ministering in Peru and took over the Vatican's powerful office of bishops, was elected the first pope from the United States in the history of the Catholic Church.

Prevost, a 69-year-old member of the Augustinian religious order, took the name Leo XIV.

In his first words as Pope Francis' successor, uttered from the loggia of St. Peter's Basilica, Leo said, "Peace be with you," and emphasised a message of peace, dialogue and missionary evangelisation. He wore the traditional red cape of the papacy —

a cape that Francis had eschewed on his election in 2013 — suggesting a return to some degree of tradition after Francis' unorthodox pontificate. Prevost had been a leading candidate for the papacy, but there had long been a taboo against a US pope, given the country's geopolitical power already wielded in the secular sphere. But Prevost was seemingly eligible because he's also a Peruvian citizen and lived for years in Peru, first as a missionary and then as an archbishop. Francis clearly had his eye

on Prevost and in many ways saw him as his heir apparent.

He sent Prevost to take over a complicated diocesan situation in Peru, then brought him to the Vatican in 2023 to serve as the powerful head of the office that vets bishop nominations from around the world, one of the most important jobs in the Catholic Church. And in January he elevated him into the senior ranks of cardinals. As a result, Prevost had a prominence going into the conclave that few other cardinals had.

The crowd in St. Peter's Square erupted in cheers when white smoke poured out of the Sistine Chapel on the second day of the conclave, the most geographically diverse in history. Priests made the sign of

the cross and nuns wept as the crowd shouted "Viva il papa!"

Waving flags from around the world, tens of thousands of people waited to learn who had won and were shocked when an hour later, the senior cardinal deacon appeared on the loggia and said "Habemus Papam!" and announced the winner was Prevost. He spoke to the crowd in Italian and Spanish, but not English. "Greetings ... to all of you, and in particular, to my beloved diocese of Chiclayo in Peru, where a faithful people have accompanied their bishop, shared their faith," he said in Spanish.

US President Donald Trump said it was "such an honour for our country" for the new pope to be American.

FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181*

ARIES

You feel lost and thoroughly depressed today. This will make you turn towards spirituality, says Ganesha. You will devote more time to meditation and will pray a lot. Despite the adverse circumstances, Ganesha says you will make a good deal of material headway.

TAURUS

Religious sentiments will be ruling your thoughts today, says Ganesha. This is a great day for making a trip to a temple or a popular religious destination. You should take your parents and other family members along on this auspicious journey. Your parents are sure to pray shower their love and blessings upon you and pray for your well being.

GEMINI

You will be afforded full co-operation by your relatives and friends. You will also be able to provide a solution to their problems by utilising your practical thinking. You will be influenced by your emotions while choosing between multiple alternatives. You need to carefully weigh the pros and cons of any decision you make today, says Ganesha.

CANCER

A shopping spree with your darling is likely to be the highlight of the day, even though you will be paying for almost everything. Though you have decided to be thrifty, you will have a change of heart and will more than return the favour with a sweet than-kyou 'return gift' in the evening.

LEO

You will pay serious attention to your work. You will feel that you have no option but to work hard. You will not be in the mood for socialising. This is only a temporary phase, hence there is no need to worry. You will be back to your usual gregarious self in no time at all, says Ganesha.

VIRGO

Ganesha advises you to quantify your worth in the spheres of emotions and sentiments. You will prepare yourself for everything, from games to peers to family. However, at the same time you will realise your shortcomings.

LIBRA

Ganesha says that today you shall be very careful in money matters. It is nothing to do with miserliness at all. When buying things you will be careful while spending money and will stick to your budget. On the other hand when you are out with your loved ones you will not think about holding back and will spend lavishly.

SCORPIO

You wish to make an image makeover in your office. You are tough and determined, and your work knows no limit when it comes to achieving your targets. You will love to brainstorm and give innovative ideas to colleagues and bosses. However, don't give away your best of ideas to anyone, advises Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS

Your far-sightedness and brilliance will not only impress your peers, but also help you to rope in big clients and huge projects. Cheers to that! Thanks to your systematic and disciplined approach, you are entitled to be the 'most desirable' employee of the company. Business may look forward to huge profits, predicts Ganesha.

CAPRICORN

Whatever field you are in, your career matters will top your priority list. You will put your personal life on the back burner for a while. This change of places will surely bring you great rewards as your performance will drastically improve and everyone will appreciate your efforts.

AQUARIUS

It's a day you may want to spend with yourself. But it may still not bring the desired peace and tranquility. An unpleasant situation may force you to deal with reality, says Ganesha. You now realise how much strength you derive from your devotion to God.

PISCES

You will find favourable conditions at work as you co-ordinate with your colleagues and seniors to tackle tough problems. You will be able to get the desirable results for all the effort you put in, in the office, says Ganesha. Those engaging in business will be able to make some strong and useful contacts today which will be handy in the future.



MICHAEL PITT CHARGED WITH SEXUAL ABUSE

Actor Michael Pitt, known for his TV roles on *Boardwalk Empire*, is accused of sexually assaulting his ex-girlfriend, choking her, and attacking her with a cinder block and a piece of lumber at his New York City home, according to a grand jury indictment.

MEGHANN FAHY TO LEAD BANQUET

Meghann Fahy, who starred in *The White Lotus* season two, will lead supernatural thriller film *Banquet*. Spanish filmmaker Galder Gaztelu-Urrutia of *The Platform* fame will direct the upcoming movie. In *Banquet*, Fahy will play Jenny Cochrane, a woman whose perfect life is shattered by the return of her estranged son.



Race to register the title begins!

Mumbai: Bollywood has long drawn inspiration from India's military history, turning real-life operations into powerful cinematic narratives. From *Border* to *Uri: The Surgical Strike* and *Shershaah*, filmmakers have shown how stories of courage and national security can stir patriotic emotions and deliver box office gold. Now, a new chapter may soon unfold on the big screen—Operation Sindoor.

Following reports of the recent military action, the film industry has swiftly responded. A viral Reddit thread revealed that multiple production houses are already in a race to register the title Operation Sindoor with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. A screenshot from the Controller General of Patents,

Designs and Trademarks website shows several applications for the name, highlighting the urgency among filmmakers to bring this real-life drama to celluloid. This trend isn't new—Bollywood often reacts to significant geopolitical developments with a surge in title claims and script pitches, hoping to capture the moment's national sentiment.

Historically, films rooted in India-Pakistan conflicts have combined action, emotion, and patriotism to great effect. With Operation Sindoor sparking immediate interest, it's clear that the tradition of turning battlefield heroics into cinematic milestones remains as strong—and commercially potent—as ever.

AGENCIES



Rajkummar shares fond memories of FTII

New Delhi: Rajkummar Rao has fond memories of featuring in Sonu Mohapatra's *Aaja Ve* music video when he was a first-year FTII student. And though he has made a name for himself as a versatile star, the actor says he is still the same boy who was thrilled to be in front of the camera for the first time. The song, released in 2006 as part of Mohapatra's album *Sona*, saw Rao

making an appearance as a strict school master in a vibrant rural setting only to later shake a leg with his students and fellow villagers.

"I'm still the same boy who was in that *Aaja Ve* song... I made him up like a pansy school teacher. He's a school teacher but I thought kuch to alag karte hain," Rao, 40, told this news agency.

And it wasn't just him in the video. Vijay Varma and Jaideep Ahlawat, Rao's batchmates from

Pune's Film and Television Institute of India, also appear as a barber and a sadhu, respectively.

"has almost all my batchmates. There's Jaideep and Vijay as well. There are a lot of people. The whole class was there because one of our seniors, Deepti, was shooting the video," Rao recalled.

PTI

Deepika's challenges

Mumbai: In a heartfelt interview, Bollywood icon Deepika Padukone opened up about the emotional and physical challenges she faced during her pregnancy, calling the journey to motherhood anything but easy. "I went through a lot in the eight, nine months of being pregnant," she shared, offering a rare glimpse into her deeply personal experience. Though she refrained from sharing medical specifics, her words reflected vulnerability and strength.

Deepika and her husband, actor Ranveer Singh, welcomed their daughter in early 2024. Choosing to keep the journey private, they revealed her name—Dua Padukone Singh—on Diwali, November 1, 2024. Accompanied by a tender image of their newborn's tiny feet wrapped in a salwar pyjama, the couple shared, "Dua: meaning a Prayer. Because She is the Answer to our Prayers."

The name received both admiration and curiosity for its poetic departure from tradition. Explaining the choice, Deepika said, "It felt like a beautiful summary of what she means to us." The couple waited until after birth to name her, allowing space for emotional connection.

As the industry showers love on the new arrival, Deepika continues to embrace motherhood away from the spotlight, cherishing every moment with their little angel.

AGENCIES



Shruti leaves fan mesmerised

Mumbai: Shruti Haasan recently surprised fans with a deeply personal musical moment, sharing an unreleased English track she wrote at the age of 20. In a heartfelt Instagram video, she performed the song on piano, offering an emotional glimpse into her younger self. The song, never officially recorded or widely performed, holds special meaning for the artist.

"Someone asked me recently 'what would you say to your young self' and I said that she got it right," Shruti captioned the post. "Wrote this when I was 20 and needed to revisit it again... I guess it was just for me—to remind myself through the years that—your mind is the love of your life."

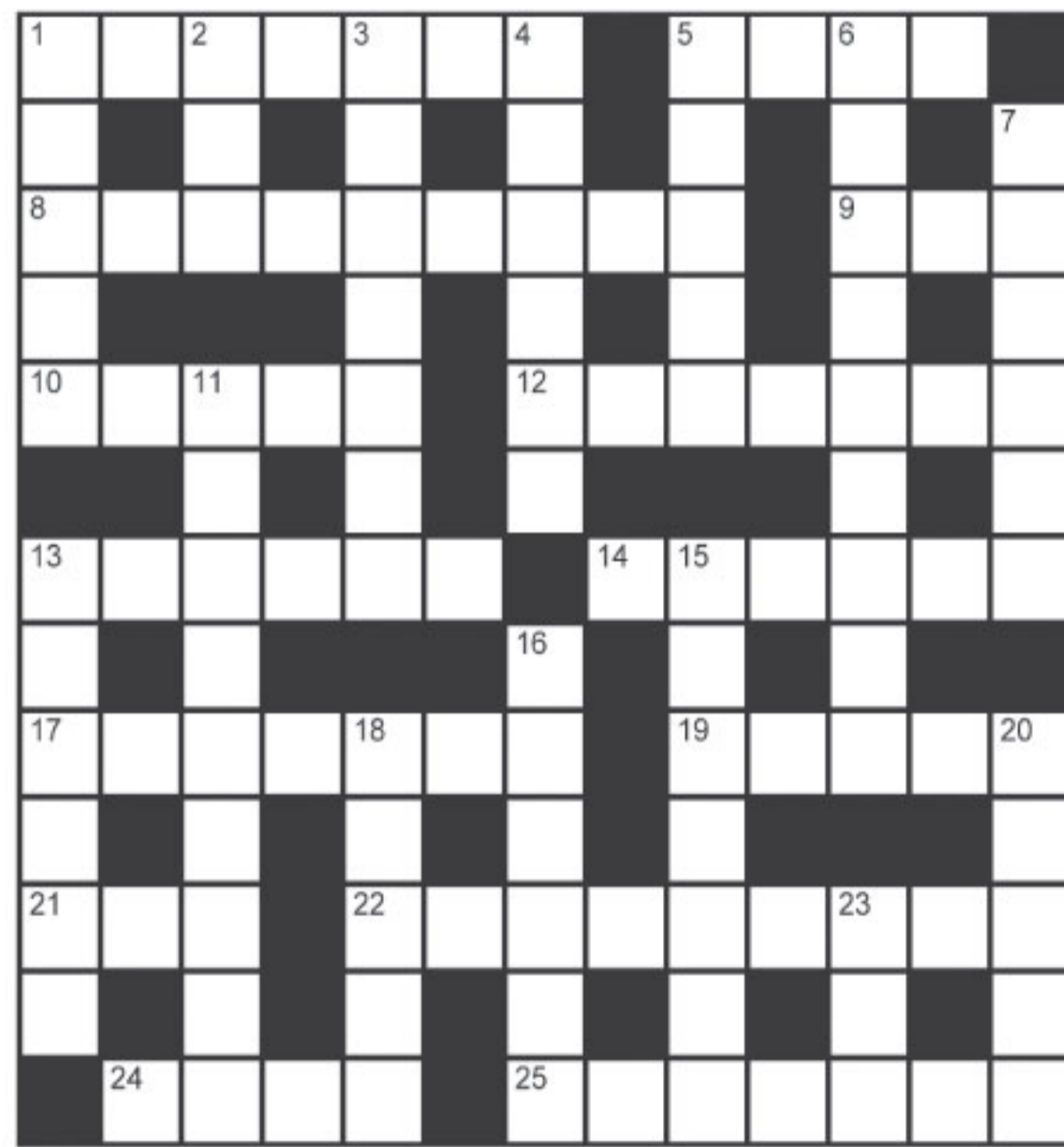
The post struck a chord with fans, who praised her vulnerability and the message of self-love. Known for her musical authenticity, Shruti often shares raw moments from her creative journey, but this track stood out for its emotional depth and introspective tone.

Beyond music, Shruti has a packed film schedule. She stars alongside Rajinikanth in *Coolie*, directed by Lokesh Kanagaraj, and is also set to make her international debut in *The Eye*, releasing later this year. Whether through music or cinema, Shruti continues to captivate with heartfelt expression.

AGENCIES

FUN
post

CROSSWORD



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Across

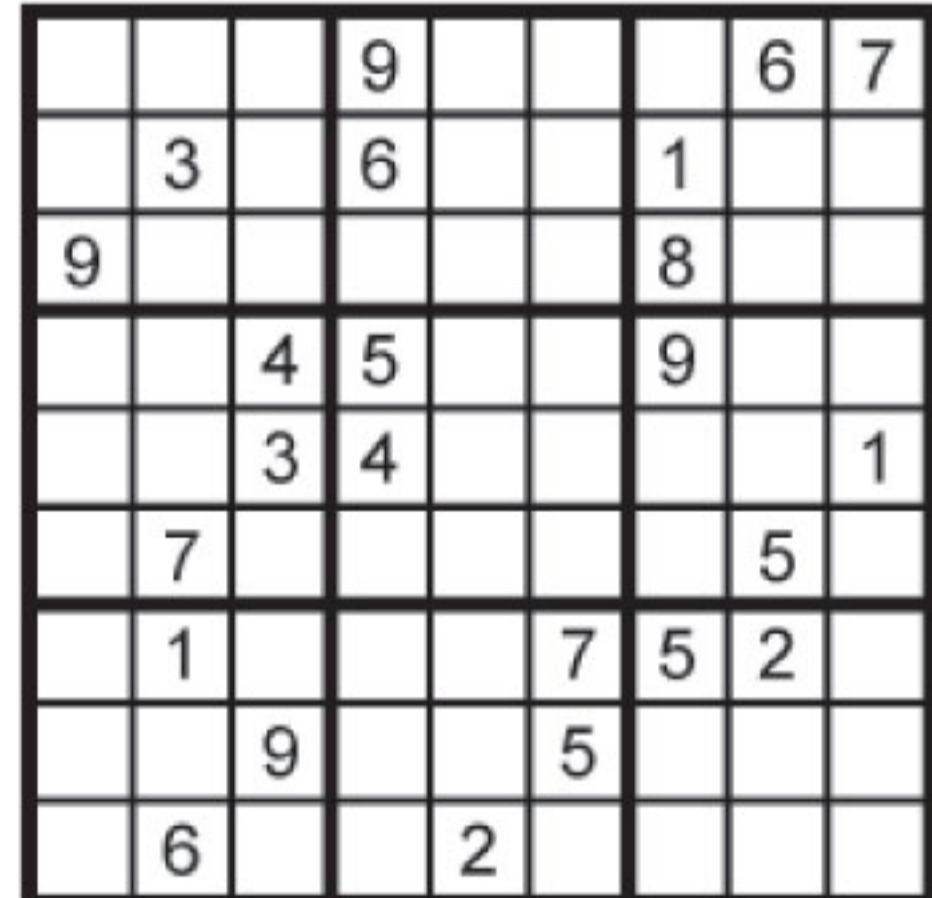
- Go-between
- Choir attire
- Sweepstakes
- Scrooge's cry
- High point
- Flags
- Curved shapes
- Risk
- Bitterness
- Fragrant wood
- Elevator part

Down

- Sachet scent
- Behave
- Apparition
- Creaks and shrieks
- Takes five
- Canadian inland sea (6,3)
- Distress signal
- Oil source
- Piano type (4,5)
- Pursued
- Oddball
- Togo locale
- Soft-finned fish
- Wears away
- Earthy colour
- Synthetic silklike fabric
- Quilting party

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

SUDOKU

S	A	H	A	R	A	T	R	A	U	M	A
Q	E	I	A	O	N	S					
U	R	N	P	U	B	L	I	M	P		
I	N	O	O	I	C	I					
D	W	A	R	F	R	A	N	C	O	U	R
F	T										
F	E	W	E	S	T						
I			P								
C	A	L	I	P	S	O	A	I	S	L	E
T	D	I	U	W	A	S					
I	N	D	E	X	C	H	A	B			
O	O	I	H	R	R	E					
N	U	G	G	E	T						
S	E	V	E	R	N						

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

Govt to start recruitment of VCs, faculty soon: Min

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 8: With the Supreme Court upholding the objections raised by the University Grants Commission (UGC) over the irregularities in the appointment of Vice Chancellors (VCs) and faculty members across universities in the state made by the previous BJD government, Higher Education Minister Suryabanshi Suraj Thursday said that these appointments will soon be made under the modified act.

“The verdict confirms that the Odisha University (Amendment) Act, 2020 introduced by the previous government was flawed and violated the UGC regulations. The lifting of the stay (on recruitments) will pave the way for the appointment process of Vice Chancellors and faculty members to resume under the framework of the Odisha University (Amendment) Act, 2024,” Suryabanshi said while welcoming the top court’s Wednesday ruling.

He said expeditious steps will now be taken to fill these posts lying vacant across universities in the state. The new Act was drafted by the state government last month to ensure compliance with the UGC



The minister stated that the judgement does away with the stagnation in the higher education recruitment process caused by the ‘historical’ error of the previous govt

guidelines.

On May 2022, the court had imposed a stay on the 2020 Act after the UGC had challenged it on the ground that it was in violation of the commission’s regulation 2018.

The minister further stated that the judgement does away with the stagnation in the higher education recruitment process caused by the ‘historical’ error of the previous government. “Our government is committed to the comprehensive development of education in the state. The new amendment law has been framed in alignment with UGC guidelines to strengthen the higher education system in Odisha,” he said.

He emphasised that after an overnight discussion in the state Assembly, the Bill was passed and received the Governor’s assent, leading to the enactment of the new law.

There are around 1,300 vacant faculty posts in the state universities.

Observing that the top court ruling ‘marks a new dawn in Odisha’s higher education landscape,’ Suryabanshi said priority will now be placed on ensuring university autonomy, preserving academic culture and accelerating the recruitment process. “The Odisha Universities (Amendment) Act, 2024 will serve as a milestone in strengthening the higher educational ecosystem of the state,” he said.

Man gets 1-year jail term in POCSO case

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 8: A fast track special court (FTSC) Thursday sentenced a 33-year-old man to one year imprisonment after convicting him in a POCSO case registered in 2019 for molesting a school girl in Laxmisagar police station area.

Additional Public Prosecutor (APP) Balamam Deo said the convict, Deepak Sahoo, a native of Cuttack district was convicted under Section 354 of IPC, along with Section 8 of POCSO. The court also slapped a penalty of ₹1,000 on the convict. Any failure to pay the fine would entail an additional jail-term of one-month, Deo said.

According to Deo, Deepak and the minor victim’s family live in the same neighborhood. The incident occurred August 21, 2019 when Deepak molested the victim in a secluded road near Sabar Sahi while she was going for her tuition classes. He also forced her to ride pillion on his motorcycle. When the minor resisted and screamed for help, Deepak pushed her and fled from the spot. Later, the minor informed her mother, who lodged a complaint with the Laxmisagar police.

During the trial, the court examined a total of 7 witnesses, and relevant documents before pronouncing the verdict, Deo added.

TOUGH TIME

Patients and attendants at SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack have a harrowing time due to sweltering heat Thursday



POLITICKLE by MANJUL



CM announces ₹68cr for Tara Tarini Temple facelift

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 8: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Thursday announced ₹68 crore for the redevelopment of the iconic Maa Tara Tarini Temple in Ganjam district.

During his visit to the historic shrine in the southern district, the Chief Minister offered prayers and reviewed developmental projects with the district administration. He announced that the Tara Tarini Temple would undergo extensive infrastructure revamp which includes ₹8 crore for essential facilities like safety, sanitation, modern cooking systems, and renovation of the 999 stone steps.

A lion’s share of ₹30 crore has been earmarked for construction of a large religious hall in front of the Singha Dwara (Lion’s Gate), development of picnic spots, strengthening of road infrastructure, security walls, signboards, and beautification of temple surroundings.

These apart, ₹25 crore will be spent on improving the riverfront along Rushikulya. Likewise, ₹5 crore will be set aside as a permanent deposit for maintenance of the temple and associated facilities.

Earlier in the day, the Chief Minister attended the centenary celebration of Gangadahani



Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi attended the centenary celebration of Gangadahani Government Higher Secondary School, hailing it as a pillar of knowledge and character in the region

Government Higher Secondary School, hailing it as a pillar of knowledge and character in the region. “For a century, this school has not just imparted education but instilled values. Each brick tells a story of strength,” he said while addressing the students and alumni.

He urged students to view education as a tool for nation-building and not just employment. “We want Buddha, not war. We want Jagannath, not Jihad,” he remarked, stressing the need for peace,

dignity, and responsible citizenship.

Majhi highlighted the state government’s emphasis on education, noting ₹31,000 crore allocation for school education in the current budget—an 18 per cent increase from the previous year. He also announced that over 50 century-old schools across Odisha would be restored as heritage institutions.

To students, he said, “There are no shortcuts to success—only hard work. Be the light that tears through darkness and inspires others.”

₹8.40cr fraud: 2 cyber crooks held from Kolkata

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 8: Odisha Police arrested two cyber fraudsters from Kolkata in connection with investment frauds to the tune of ₹8.40 crore, a senior Crime Branch (CB) official said Thursday.

In one incident, the victim, a 50-year-old individual from Purihata area in Cuttack, came in contact with a Whatsapp group, “C-51 ICICI Securities Official Stock” in October 2023.

After he joined the group, the cybercriminals persuaded him to invest in stocks and initial public offerings (IPOs) via fake apps (https://app.fiosh.com, https://bolsip.com), promising high returns against his investment.

The accused persons initially gave away small profits to gain his trust.

The victim was also later

offered a fake loan to invest in IPOs and shared another application.

Persuaded by the accused fraudsters, the complainant made further payments to get the loan.

When the victim found his overall returns against investments made by him had touched over ₹3 crore, he tried to withdraw the funds but failed due to a ‘Pending Review’ status.

The cyber fraudsters instead forced the complainant to repay a non-existent loan of ₹1.5 crore. Thus, he soon realised being fallen into the trap of cyber fraudsters.

The victim had deposited ₹2.36 crore between October 2023 and April 2024 in various accounts provided by the criminals.

Finding no other way, the complainant finally lodged a



complaint at the Cyber Crime Police Station of CB in Cuttack in April 2024.

Based on the complaint, the police had launched an investigation and arrested one of the accused Mohammed Zaki from Hyderabad in Telangana last year.

In this connection, the investigating team after analysing

the transaction details and other digital evidence, arrested another accused, Nikhil Jaiswal, 23, of Khiddipore area in Kolkata May 6, 2025.

The CB officials informed in a press statement that out of the total fraud amount of ₹2.36 crore was deposited in accused Jaiswal’s account.

The police have seized various incriminating articles such as a cellphone, SIM cards, screenshots of chats in WhatsApp, Aadhaar cards and a PAN card, bank passbooks, cheque books and debit cards.

In another instance, the CB also arrested one more accused, Tapas Halder, 28, from Kolkata for duping people on the pretext of investment fraud to a tune of ₹6.04 crore.

Earlier, one hotelier Ashok Nanda and his aide Jayarani Basak were arrested from West Bengal May 1, 2025.

Key govt websites in odisha hacked

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 8: Amid escalating tensions between India and Pakistan, reports claimed that several critical websites in the state have been hacked by Pakistani cybercriminals. According to sources, the cyber attackers targeted websites of state government departments and other institutions.

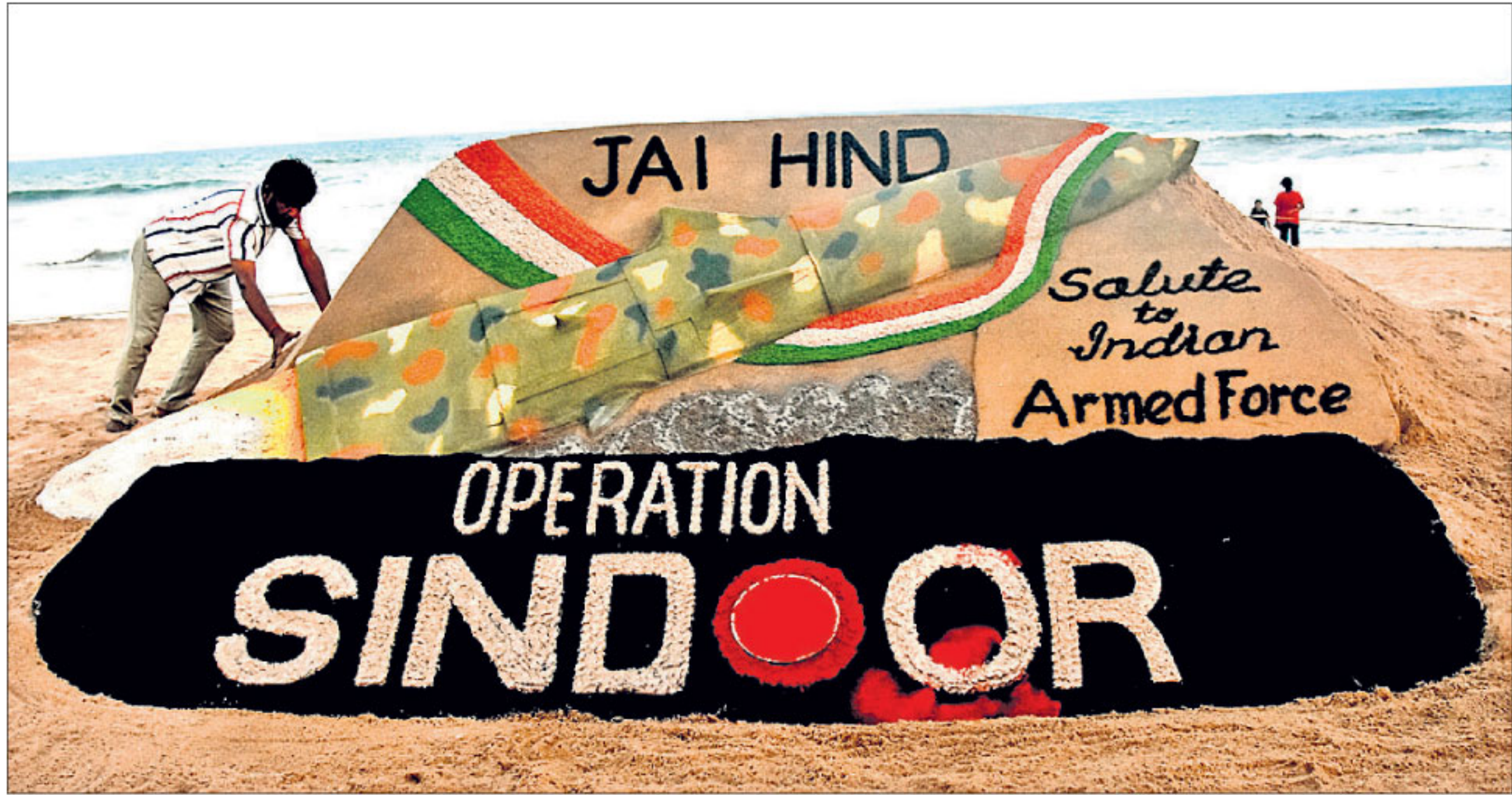
Following the incident, the state’s cyber security department and police have launched a thorough investigation. Sources indicate that the hackers attempted to gain unauthorised access to the websites’ databases, succeeding in some cases. However, it remains unclear whether any sensitive data was stolen.

The official website of Odisha Adarsha Vidyalaya (OAV) has been hacked, allegedly by the Pakistan Cyber Force, the reports said.

The site has been compromised since Wednesday, and it was reported to be completely blacked out Thursday. However, no response has been received from the School and Mass Education department regarding this issue.

Cybersecurity experts suggest that this could be an organised cyberattack, possibly orchestrated by a Pakistani hacker group.

In response, the state government has directed all government websites to strengthen their security measures further.



HAIL THE FORCES: Sand artist Sudasan Pattnaik works on his art on the theme ‘Operation Sindoor’ at Puri beach Thursday as tensions escalate between India and Pakistan following Pahalgaon terrorist attack in J&K April 22

OP PHOTO

Schools to face action for defying holiday directive

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 8: The state government has ordered stringent action against schools defying the summer holiday directive which was issued last month in the wake of intense heat wave conditions.

School and Mass Education department Additional Chief Secretary Durga Prasad Mohapatra, in a directive issued Thursday, urged all District Education Officers (DEOs) to

strictly enforce the government’s summer holiday order. “Despite clear instructions, some schools are reportedly continuing operations in violation of the directive,” Mohapatra stated in the letter.

In response to the extreme summer heat sweeping across the state, the Odisha government had declared holiday for all educational institutions from April 22, 2025. Thursday’s decision by the Higher Education department was prompted by



reports of non-compliance of the order by schools in several districts.

Mohapatra emphasised that all schools under the depart-

ment’s purview ‘must’ remain closed for the summer vacation as per the government’s announcement. “DEOs have been instructed to take immediate and stringent action against any institutions found flouting the rules,” he noted.

“The department is closely monitoring the situation and expects full cooperation from all educational authorities to safeguard the health and well-being of students and staff during this period of intense heat,” he added.

Bhub-Abu Dhabi flight from June

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 8: International flight service from Bhubaneswar to Abu Dhabi will commence from June this year, Chief Minister’s Office (CMO) said Thursday.

The flight service will be launched under the Building Management of Aviation Assets and Network (B-MAAN) scheme. Indigo will run the flight service Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday every week from Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA), it said.

Abu Dhabi is the capital city of the United Arab Emirates.

“From Temple City to Global Gateway! From June 2025, #Bhubaneswar will take flight to Abu Dhabi under the #BMAAN initiative—powered by the transformative #NewDestinationPolicy,” the CMO said on X.

It will be a major stride toward connecting the state with the world-boosting tourism, trade, and global prospects for a ‘Viksit Odisha’, it said.

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi has thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for steering this landmark aviation push.

The B-MAAN scheme and new destination policy is paving the way for enhanced air connectivity with more flights for Odisha, the CMO said.

While presenting the annual budget for the year 2025-26, Majhi had announced the launch of B-MAAN programme to strengthen aviation infrastructure in the state.

The comprehensive pro-

2 flights cancelled from City airport

Bhubaneswar: Two flights from Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) here were cancelled Thursday, officials said. Around 27 airports in various parts of the country are closed in the wake of Operation Sindoor, under which armed forces carried out strikes on terror targets in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir in retaliation to the Pahalgaon attack that claimed 26 lives last month. “The cancelled flights include one to Hindon in Ghaziabad and another to Chandigarh via Patna,” BPIA director Prasanna Pradhan said. While one flight was cancelled due to airspace restrictions in parts of northern and western India for national security reasons, the other was grounded due to “operational reasons”, he informed. The flight to Patna was cancelled for the second consecutive day by the operating airline, reportedly due to technical issues.

gramme envisions the modernisation and expansion of airports across the state to meet growing demand, including the establishment of a greenfield airport at Paradip. Under this initiative, the state has targeted to commence direct flight services to 10 new domestic destinations and three new international destinations, significantly enhancing the state’s air connectivity.

Under the Odisha New Destination Policy-2024, the government is providing financial assistance to bridge the gap between operational costs and expected revenue for air travel services.

An allocation of ₹382 crore has been made to support aviation infrastructure development and enhance air connectivity in Odisha.

WEATHER

BBSR

CTC

Max Temp

37.2°

37.2°

Min Temp

26.8°

26.0°

Humidity

75%

77%

Rainfall

Nil

Nil

FORECAST

Mostly sunny

MARKET WATCH		
INDEX	VARIATION	
SENSEX	80,334.81	▲ 411.97
NIFTY	24,273.80	▲ 140.60
DOLLAR	85.66	▲ 0.97
EURO	96.39	▲ 0.65
GOLD	₹96,973	▼ ₹92
SILVER	₹96,483	▲ ₹665

CLASSIFIED

LOST

Shyam Kumar Sharma lost his Degree Engineering Certificate, Marksheet and other documents. If anyone find then contact - 8280184200

AFFIDAVIT

I, P K Bhaskar, Son of P Krishna Reddy, PO : Sunabeda-2, Dist. : Koraput presently residing at Qtr. No. G-182, HAL Township, PO : Sunabeda-2, PS : Sunabeda, Dist. : Koraput (Odisha) working at HAL Koraput Division do hereby declared that by virtue of Affidavit dated : 06.05.2025 before the Notary Public, Sunabeda I have changed my name from P K Bhaskar to Panati Krishnareddy bhaskar in future and I will be known as Panati Krishnareddy Bhaskar in Official and all other purposes.

I, Gopinath Nayak son of late Braja Mohan Nayak permanent resident's of Sana Alubadi, Post-Dangolodi, PS-Seskal, Dist.-Rayagada, Odisha, on behalf of my minor daughter declares that by this Affidavit No.-5797, That now onwards my minor daughter shall be known as Anjali Nayak D/o of Gopinath Nayak for all purposes, instead of her previous name Jina Nayak.

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before Executive Magistrate, Bhadrak, dtd. 02.05.2025, I, Bhagabati Das, W/o- Bhagirathi Das, Vill/P.O.- Kiapada, P.S.- Basudevpur, Dist.- Bhadrak, PIN- 756165 declare that I have changed my name from Saraswati Das to Bhagabati Das. Henceforth, I shall be known as Bhagabati Das for all purposes.

Temperature set to rise by 2-3°C: IMD

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 8: Odisha is bracing for another wave of intense heat as the India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecasts a 2-3°C rise in daytime temperatures over the coming days. The warning follows an already hot spell, with many areas seeing high mercury levels.

The IMD has issued a yellow warning for heatwave-like conditions and hot, humid weather, which will remain in force until May 14. This alert comes after a brief period of relief last week, when isolated showers and thunderstorms brought down temperatures temporarily in some regions. However, with clear skies and a notable decline in nor'wester activity, temperatures are rising once again.

Thursday, Boudh topped the charts with a maximum temperature of 39.8°C, followed closely by Sambalpur (39.6°C), Bolangir (39.2°C), and Titlagarh (39°C). The Capital city Bhubaneswar, also recorded a discomforting 37.6°C, adding to the rising discomfort among residents.

Meteorologists have attributed the temperature spike to the absence of cloud cover, which is allowing direct solar radiation to heat the surface. While isolated thunderstorms accompanied by lightning and gusty winds are likely over districts such as Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Balasore, and the southern regions of Malkangiri and Koraput, these events are expected to be short-lived and will not significantly



reduce daytime heat.

Western Odisha, in particular, is expected to be the worst-affected zone, with conditions likely to deteriorate further from May 10. Meanwhile, coastal areas will continue to reel under hot and humid conditions, with minimal relief even during the night.

The IMD has also projected above-normal heatwave days across the state for the entire month of May, raising concerns about the health and well-being of vulnerable populations. Public health officials are urging citizens to avoid outdoor exposure during peak hours, stay well-hydrated, and wear appropriate clothing to prevent heat-related illnesses.

Special advisories are being prepared for schoolchildren, elderly citizens, outdoor workers, and others who may be at higher risk. A swell surge alert has also been issued for fishermen along the Odisha coast, particularly in Jagatsinghpur, Puri, and Kendrapara districts, and will remain in effect for the next five days.

Odisha seeks Central aid at kharif meet

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 8: Deputy Chief Minister and Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo represented Odisha at the National Conference on Agriculture – Kharif Abhiyan 2025, held Thursday at the Rashtriya Krishi Vigyan Kendra in New Delhi.

Addressing the gathering, Singh Deo urged the Centre to enhance support for pulses and oilseeds cultivation, revise guidelines under the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture, and integrate the PM-KISAN and CM-KISAN schemes. Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chou-



han, who chaired the conference, acknowledged Odisha's proposals and assured them due consideration.

The national-level conference brought together agriculture ministers from across the country to discuss preparations for the upcoming Kharif cropping season.

Singh Deo, accompanied by Principal Secretary Arabinda Kumar Padhee, showcased several initiatives by the Odisha government aimed at strengthening the agricultural sector. These included the Samrudha Krushak Yojana, which provides farmers an additional ₹800 over the Minimum Sup-

port Price, a new cold storage policy to boost post-harvest infrastructure, and the promotion of Farmer Producer Organisations through Agricultural Production Clusters.

He also outlined efforts to enhance seed quality, utilise rice fallow lands, and support higher education for farmers' children through the Krushi Vidyanidhi Yojana.

Emphasising the state's organic farming drive, Singh Deo highlighted the Balabhadra Jai vik Chasa Mission, which currently spans 16,600 hectares across eight districts. He cited the use of organic rice at the Puri Jagannath Temple under the Amruta Anna Yojana as a model for sustainable food sourcing.

City voices emerge as war buzz grows

MANOJ KUMAR JENA, OP

Bhubaneswar, May 8: Tensions between India and Pakistan have escalated following the recent military operation dubbed 'Operation Sindoor', sparking widespread debate both online and offline. The public remains divided—while some support decisive military action, others caution against the consequences of war.

In the midst of growing social media discourse, here's what residents of Bhubaneswar had to say:

Suparn Mishra, a first-year English literature student, said, "We support the Indian Army's efforts to eliminate terrorism. We don't want a full-scale war, but we must neutralise all terrorist groups operating from both India and Pakistan."

"War is the only option. Pakistan keeps sending terrorists, and we keep losing innocent lives. It's time for a permanent solution," opined Gargi Patnaik, a B.Tech student.

Echoing similar views, 48-year-old homemaker Padmini Sahoo stated, "We cannot keep losing lives to Pakistani terrorism. A strong response, even war, is necessary to deliver justice."

Economics professor Jogasankar Mahaprasadha offered a balanced view. "War has economic consequences, but national security must come first. If terrorism continues unchecked, the cost to innocent lives and national stability will be far greater."

Meanwhile, Sujit Mahapatra, founder of Bakul Foundation, highlighted the environmental

toll of war. "We worry about pollution during Diwali. Imagine real bombs destroying air, water, soil—and entire ecosystems. The trauma to nature would be immense."

Retired Colonel Sarat Mahapatra contextualised the military perspective. "No country seeks war. But Pakistan's actions—retaliating against Operation Sindoor by targeting 15 civilian locations—demand a strong response."

"Whether we go to war depends entirely on the situation. If attacked, we have every right to respond with equal force," he added.

As Operation Sindoor stirs national debate, the question of war remains a complex issue—balancing security, strategy, humanity, and long-term consequences.

Congress organises blood donation camp



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 8: In a show of solidarity towards the Indian soldiers, Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) Thursday organised a blood donation camp at its party office here to support the Army during the escalating tension between India and Pakistan and to honour their courage for successfully executing 'Op Sindoor'.

The event was attended by members of National Students' Union of India (NSUI) and party leaders, including OPCC president Bhakta Charan Das, former OPCC president Jayadev Jena, Suresh Kumar Routray, Nagendra Kumar Pradhan and others.

The event was attended by members of National Students' Union of India and senior party leaders

The event was inaugurated by Das, who expressed deep respect and support for the nation's armed forces. Speaking at the event, Das said, "Our brave soldiers serve our motherland under extremely challenging conditions. Their recent actions against Pakistan are commendable. This blood donation camp is a gesture to honour and support their sacrifices."

"I feel extremely proud of our army and whatever we do for them will always fall short. I am extremely happy to donate my blood and I'm thankful to Congress for this welcome initiative," said a volunteer, who donated blood at the camp.

Rail boost for Western Odisha

A total of 21 key stations to be modernised with world-class amenities under Amrit Scheme

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 8: In a major push to modernise railway infrastructure in Western Odisha, Indian Railways has launched a broad redevelopment drive under the Amrit Station Scheme. The initiative targets 21 key railway stations, aiming to transform them into modern, passenger-friendly hubs that enhance connectivity and comfort while supporting regional growth.

The upgraded stations will feature state-of-the-art amenities, including redesigned platforms, modern ticketing systems, spacious waiting areas, and improved sanitation. Additional enhancements such as free Wi-Fi, digital information boards, improved catering, and robust security systems underscore a focus on both technology and user convenience.

Stations selected for redevelopment include Rourkela, Sambalpur, Jharsuguda, Titlagarh, Bolangir, Bargarh Road, and several others, covering both major and regional stops. Accessibility will be prioritised through the installation of Foot Over Bridges (FOBs) with lifts and escalators, benefiting senior citizens, differently-abled passengers, and families.

Environmental sustainability is central to the project, with stations designed to incorporate renewable energy systems, water conservation techniques,



Stations to feature modern facilities, improved accessibility, and green infrastructure

Redevelopment aims to boost regional connectivity and enhance passenger experience

and modern waste management aligned with green building standards.

To reduce congestion, each station will have dedicated pick-up and drop-off zones along with improved parking infrastructure.

Officials confirmed that redevelopment will be executed in phases, with work set to begin soon. "This isn't just infrastructure—it's about better connections, more opportunities, and inclusive growth," said a senior official.

Apollo Hospitals hosts Cochlear Implant Prog

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 8: Apollo Hospitals, Bhubaneswar, successfully conducted its 'Cochlear Implant Programme' Thursday, aimed at transforming the lives of individuals—especially children—suffering from severe to profound hearing loss.

At a press conference during the event, senior medical professionals spoke about the programme's success and the life-changing impact of cochlear implant surgeries.

Hospital's chief operating officer and director of medical services Alok Srivastava said, "Our cochlear implant programme has helped patients, particularly children, regain their hearing and lead more interactive, fulfilling lives. We provide end-to-end care with advanced pre- and post-surgery support."

ENT and neck surgery consultant Suryakanta Pradhan explained that cochlear implants are sophisticated devices that bypass damaged parts of the ear to directly stimulate the auditory nerve, enabling hearing in cases where hearing aids are ineffective. "The surgery is safe and routinely performed," he added. Another senior ENT consultant Sanjeev Gupta emphasised Apollo's commitment to accessible, high-quality healthcare. "We performed our first cochlear implant surgery under full financial coverage in 2023 through the Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY)," he said.



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Rare Seahorse species found in ghost net at Dhamra

Study raises alarm over marine pollution, urges stronger conservation policies

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 8: In a worrying sign of escalating marine pollution, scientists have reported the first-ever sighting of a rare and vulnerable seahorse species, 'Hippocampus kelloggi', ensnared in a ghost net at Dhamra estuary. The discovery has sparked concerns about the unchecked dumping of abandoned fishing gear in waters and its devastating impact on marine biodiversity.

The rare specimen was found during routine ecological monitoring by a team of researchers, led by marine biologist Debash-

ish Mahapatra, along with Sangita Mishra, Sarada S Pati, and other collaborators.

The findings, recently published in the National Academy Science Letters, document the presence of the 'Kellogg's' seahorse—a species classified as 'Vulnerable' by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). "This is a major red flag," said Mahapatra. "Finding a 'Hippocampus Kelloggii' in a ghost net highlights not only the richness of biodiversity in the Dhamra region but also how seriously it is being threatened by human activities," he added. Ghost nets—known as ALD-



FG (Abandoned, Lost or Discarded Fishing Gear)—are one of the most lethal forms of marine

pollution. Globally, over 640,000 tonnes of such gear are lost to the oceans every year, posing grave

threats to marine life. These nets continue to trap and kill marine organisms long after they have been discarded, earning them the name 'ghost' nets. Seahorses are especially vulnerable, both due to their delicate physiology and the high demand for them in traditional medicine, ornamental trade, and the aquarium industry. Despite legal protections, illegal capture and trade persist in several parts of the world, including regions within the Indo-Pacific—a global hotspot for seahorse diversity.

The study emphasises that such incidents go beyond ecological concerns and have potential socio-economic consequences. "Fishing communities depend on healthy marine ecosystems. The continued presence of ghost

nets could severely disrupt local livelihoods," Mahapatra added.

The research team is calling for immediate policy interventions, including the removal and regulation of ghost nets, promotion of sustainable fishing practices, and strengthened marine conservation frameworks.

"This case is not just about one seahorse," said co-author Mishra. "It's a warning about the broader ecological collapse that may follow if marine pollution is not addressed urgently," he added.

The findings are expected to fuel ongoing policy discussions around India's coastal and marine biodiversity conservation, with experts urging the government and environmental bodies to act swiftly before more damage is done.

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Bidi makers in Kendrapara left high and dry

Among the 10,000 individuals in the district engaged in bidi-making, at least 8,000 are women and children

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, May 8: As many as 10,000 unorganised workers, mostly women and children, roll bidis in this district to make ends meet even as their struggles remain largely unnoticed.

Among the 10,000 individuals in the district engaged in bidi-making, at least 8,000 are women and children who have taken up the work out of financial necessity. However, prolonged exposure to the chemicals used in bidi production has led to widespread health issues such as chronic cough, tuberculosis (TB), fever, and respiratory problems among them. Yet, most of these workers lack access to adequate healthcare facilities.

Due to the unorganised nature of their work, these labour-



ers remain outside the reach of government welfare schemes. There is a growing demand in the area for a dedicated healthcare facility for bidi workers.

Trade Union leader Jagajiban Das noted that the district's economy does not have any major revenue-generating sources and nearly 51 per cent of families have male members who have migrated outside the district for employment. As a result, the burden of supporting families often falls on the women and children left behind, who turn to bidi-making

as a livelihood.

"More than 8,000 women and children are involved in this hazardous trade," Das said. "As they are not part of any organised labour group, they are excluded from government schemes meant for workers' welfare."

Srimati Patra of Dalhia village under Mahakalapara block said her family lives in poverty. In the absence of local industries or stable employment, her husband is forced to work at a spinning mill in Surat of Gujarat. Meanwhile, she and her

Bidi rollers have been suffering from various ailments, including TB and respiratory problems

Low earnings coupled with high medical expenses have disrupted the families' financial and social stability

children roll bidis after sourcing raw materials from local middlemen.

"We earn only Rs 100 even after rolling 1,000 bidis a day," Patra said, adding that she has also involved her daughter in this work to increase their earnings.

Sajeda Khatun of Dobandha village in Kendrapara block, who has been engaged in this work for nearly 10 years, said they will not get anything to eat if they don't roll bidis.

However, the bidi rollers' family members have been suffering from various ailments, including TB and respiratory problems. They have to travel nearly 20 km to the district headquarters hospital to get treatment. Proper medical care

eludes the bidi workers and their family members owing to absence of a dedicated healthcare facility.

Low earnings coupled with high medical expenses have disrupted the families' financial and social stability.

Another labour leader Gayadhar Dhal noted that bidi workers largely remain unorganised, and their hardships often go unnoticed by both administrative officials and political leaders. He demanded a separate healthcare facility for bidi workers and an increase in their wages.

When contacted, Additional District Magistrate Rabindra Mallik said that both the state government and the Centre have launched specific schemes to safeguard the interests of labourers. These schemes include financial assistance for healthcare, housing, and even education and marriage expenses for the workers' wards. He urged workers in this category to register their names with the district labour office to benefit from such schemes.

TPSODL flags 'unauthorised' structures near power lines

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Berhampur, May 8: In a step towards ensuring public safety, a power utility has issued 1,229 notices to individuals and establishments for alleged unauthorised constructions near overhead electricity distribution lines in eight southern districts of the state.

The notices were issued by the TP Southern Odisha Distribution Limited (TPSODL), a joint venture between Tata Power and the state government. As many as 655 notices, the highest, were served in Ganjam alone, followed by 160 in Koraput, 131 in Malkangiri, 104 in Gajapati, 83 in Nabarangpur, 55 in Rayagada and 38 in Boudh, an official said.

The notices mentioned that "unauthorised" constructions near electricity lines pose a "serious threat to life and property, and also hamper routine maintenance and emergency restoration work."

The power utility has taken

this step in accordance with the Electricity Act, 2003 and CEA Safety Regulations 2023, they said.

As per the Act, no building or structure is permitted under or near overhead lines without prior approval, which may result in disconnection of the power supply and appropriate legal action. TPSODL CEO Amit Kumar Garg said, "Safety of the public and our field teams is our topmost priority. These encroachments are hazardous and against the law. We are committed to enforcing compliance while educating citizens. We urge everyone to strictly avoid construction near electrical lines and to take necessary permissions beforehand."

Consumers who have received notices must act immediately to rectify the situation, and non-compliance may lead to enforcement of actions as prescribed under the Act, the notices said.

MAN KILLED IN LIGHTNING

POST NEWS NETWORK

Patana, May 8: A man was killed after lightning struck him during a thunderstorm at Nuakhaman village in Rajnagar panchayat under Patana block of Keonjhar district Wednesday night.

The deceased was identified as Ishwar Munda, 35, son of Lakshman Munda of Ragada village under Pandapada police limits. The incident occurred when he had gone to his in-laws' house at Nuakhaman village. A sudden thunderstorm lashed the area and he was standing under a tree at night when lightning struck him.

His kin rushed him to the district headquarters hospital where doctors pronounced him brought dead. Police registered a case and launched an investigation. The body was handed over to his family members after post-mortem.



'Want to join Army, confront Pakistani terrorists'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Balasure, May 8: Nine-year-old Tanuj Kumar Satpathy, who lost his father in the Pahalgam attack, Thursday said he wants to join the Indian Army and confront Pakistani terrorists.

Tanuj's father, Prashant Satpathy, was among the 26 people killed in the terror attack in Pahalgam in Jammu and Kashmir April 22.

Speaking to reporters at his house in Balasure district, Tanuj said if he gets the opportunity to meet PM Narendra Modi, he would tell him to ensure that no child like him becomes fatherless.

"I have decided to join the Army as it has avenged my father's death," he said as his mother, Priyadarshini Acharya, stood by his side.

"We have been watching the news since Wednesday morning, and it gives my mother and me immense satisfaction. We are proud of our Army," he said, referring to Operation Sindoor.



If I get an opportunity to meet PM Modi, I will tell him to ensure that no boy like me becomes fatherless. I now realise the value of a father to a son. I will also tell PM Modi to provide ample security in places like Pahalgam and not allow terrorists on Indian soil

TANUJ KUMAR SATPATHY / VICTIM'S SON

Tanuj said the Army has been with him and his mother since the beginning.

"Finally, they took revenge. Therefore, I will certainly join the Army. I will study with dedication so that I can get a place in the force, and will confront Pakistan and its terrorists," he said.

"If I get an opportunity to meet PM Modi, I will tell him to ensure that no boy like me becomes fatherless. I now realise

the value of a father to a son. I will also tell PM Modi to provide ample security in places like Pahalgam and not allow terrorists on Indian soil," he said.

Recounting the horror at Pahalgam, Tanuj said the terrorists shot his father while he was coming down from a hill.

"He fell immediately. My maa and I rushed towards him, and saw him bleeding from his head. When my maa asked whether he needed water, he said yes. I gave

him water," he recounted.

Asked whether the terrorists sought to know anything from his father before killing him, Tanuj said, "No, but I have seen them asking others about their religion."

He also remembered how he took care of his mother after the incident.

"There was no one from our family when the tragedy struck. My maa was not in a position to console me. She was utterly shattered, and I was the only help for her," he said.

Tanuj's mother, Priyadarshini, said she would do anything to fulfil her son's wish.

"If he wants to join the forces, I will prepare him that way. He needs the blessings of the people of India," she said.

However, Priyadarshini expressed concern over Tanuj's "sudden maturity".

"I am worried because he appears to have lost his childhood suddenly. He should get mature gradually and not suddenly. I hope god will bless him," she said.

Man critical in bee attack dies

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kundura, May 8: A 62-year-old physically disabled man, who was hospitalised in a critical condition following a honeybee attack, died at Bedhapaunshi village in Dangarpaunshi panchayat and this block in Koraput district Thursday. The deceased was identified as Lachhman Keuta.

The incident occurred last Sunday near a water tank in Bedhapaunshi village, where Keuta had gone to attend a local meeting. A swarm of bees, reportedly disturbed from a nearby hive, attacked Keuta and seven others. While the others recovered and returned home safely,

Keuta failed to flee owing to his physical disability and sustained critical injuries in the bee attack.

Lurales rushed him to the Kundura Community Health Center and later shifted him to the District Headquarters Hospital in Jeypore after his condition worsened. As his health condition showed no signs of improvement, he was referred to Saheed Laxman Nayak Medical College and Hospital at Koraput, where he succumbed during treatment.

Kundura police registered a case (11/25) over a complaint and handed over the body to his family members after a post-mortem examination.



Elephant herd camps in forest after calf's birth, triggers panic

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, May 8: A herd of 23 elephants has been camping in the Ukhunda forest beat under the Champua range of Keonjhar forest division for the past two days, causing panic among residents in nearby villages.

The jumbo herd has remained in the area since a female gave birth to a calf Tuesday. Local residents, fearful of the pachyderms straying into their settlements, have been spending sleepless nights armed with torches, sticks, and lathis to protect themselves and their property.

"The herd is holed up to protect the newborn calf and is not moving away. There is no cause for alarm. Additional forest personnel have been deployed to monitor the situation closely," said Dhanraj HD, Divisional Forest Officer of the Keonjhar forest division.

With the birth of the calf, the total number of elephants in the Keonjhar forest division has risen to 147. According to Forest department data, the population includes 45 calves, 32 tuskers, and 70 female elephants spread across various forest ranges. However, forest officials and local sources report that the herd has been damaging crops and houses in the region. In some instances, the elephants have attacked residents, leading to injuries and fatalities.



कार्यालय उप महानिरीक्षक

ग्रुप केन्द्र केन्द्रीय रिजर्व पुलिस बल, भुवनेश्वर (ओडिशा)

कन्ट्रोल रूम सम्पर्क संख्या - 0674-2558206/8895791455

ई-मेल: gcbbsr@crpf.gov.in/diggcbbsr@crpf.gov.in

सं.-एफ.चार-29/2025-26-मां.स्कूल-ग्रु.के.मु. दिनांक: 01.05.2025

विज्ञापन

सर्व साधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि ग्रुप केन्द्र, के.रि.पु.बल, भुवनेश्वर (ओडिशा) के सान्तेरी स्कूल में नर्सरी, एल.के.जी. एवं यू.के.जी. की कक्षाओं के बच्चों को शिषा प्रदान करने हेतु 11 माह के लिये 01 मुख्याध्यापिका, 08 अध्यापिका एवं 04 आया पद के लिये साक्षात्कार के आधार पर अस्थाई नियुक्ति की जाएगी। उपरोक्त पद पर नियुक्ति अवधि के दौरान मुख्यध्यापिका को राशि रुपये 16,000/- प्रतिमाह, अध्यापिका को राशि रुपये 12,000/- प्रतिमाह एवं आया को राशि रुपये 8,500/- प्रतिमाह की दर से मानदेय राशि का भुगतान किया जाएगा। आवेदन फॉर्म ग्रुप केन्द्र के.रि.पु.बल., भुवनेश्वर के कन्ट्रोल रूम से किसी भी कार्यालय में प्राप्त किये जा सकते हैं। इच्छुक योग्य उम्मीदवार योग्यता के अनुसार उक्त पदों पर नियुक्ति के लिए अपना आवेदन फॉर्म दिनांक 24.05.2025 को 1730 बजे तक ग्रुप केन्द्र, के.रि.पु.बल., भुवनेश्वर के कार्यालय में जमा कर सकते हैं। मुख्यध्यापिका पद हेतु आवेदन प्रस्तुत करने वाले उम्मीदवारों को दिनांक 27.05.2025 को 1100 बजे एवं अध्यापिका और आया के पद हेतु आवेदन प्रस्तुत करने वाले उम्मीदवारों को दिनांक 03.06.2025 को 1100 बजे कार्यालय उप महानिरीक्षक, ग्रुप केन्द्र, के.रि.पु.बल., भुवनेश्वर में साक्षात्कार के लिए उपस्थित होना होगा। इसके लिये आवेदन करने वाले उम्मीदवारों को अलग से पत्राचार द्वारा कोई सूचना नहीं दी जाएगी।

नोट: चयन प्रक्रिया निम्नलिखित प्राथमिकताओं के अनुरूप किया जाएगा:

(1) नर्सरी प्रशिक्षित अध्यापिका, जोकि मैट्रिक तथा ज्यादा पढ़े हुए हैं, अध्यापक ने नर्सरी प्रशिक्षण डिप्लोमा किसी मान्यता प्राप्त प्रशिक्षण संस्थान से प्राप्त किया हो तथा पूर्व अनुभव हो।

(2) दूसरी प्राथमिकता जे.बी.टी./प्रशिक्षित स्नातकों/प्रशिक्षित स्नातकोत्तर तथा अन्य प्रतिभाओं को दी जाएगी जैसे ड्राइंग, संगीत आदि।

(3) चयन प्रक्रिया तिथि-समय प्रशासनिक कारणों से कभी भी रद्द व संशोधित की जा सकती है।

(4) चयन के पश्चात् बिना कारण बताये नियुक्ति कभी भी रद्द की जा सकती है।

उप महानिरीक्षक

ग्रुप केन्द्र, केरिपुबल, भुवनेश्वर (ओडिशा)

Bank of India

बैंक ऑफ इंडिया

Bank of India

★

BOI

Zonal Office: Baripada

Bank Of India Building,

Lal Bazaar, In front of MKC School, PIN-757001

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (SARFAESI Act) read with proviso to Rule 9(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 to be held on 27.05.2025 from 11:00 AM to 05:00 PM

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Bank of India under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rules 8 & 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notice to the borrower, and the Authorised Officer has taken possession of the property described herein below. Offers are invited by the Authorised Officer under Sub-Rule 5 & 6 of Rule 8 of the said Rules by holding e-auction on 27.05.2025 from 11:00AM to 05:00PM. Public at large and Borrower and Guarantor in general are being informed that E-auction under SARFAESI Act in respect of under noted property will be conducted for sale on the terms & conditions under Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 and to following conditions for realization of debts due to Bank.

Date & Time of E-Auction: Dt.: 27.05.2025 from 11.00 A.M. to 05:00 P.M. with unlimited extension of 10 (Ten) minutes each.

Last date for submission of EMD & Documents: Dt. : 27.05.2025 from 11.00 A.M. to 03:00 P.M.

Date & Time of Inspection of Property: 26.05.2025, between 11.00 A.M. to 5.00 P.M.

For inspection please contact the Respective Branch Head or Recovery Department, Zonal Office, Baripada (Nischit, Mob.: 8895188144)

Sl. No.	BRANCH / Name & Address of the Borrower/Guarantor / Total Dues	Description of the Property	Reserve Price / EMD / Type of Possession
1.	BHADRAK BRANCH / Borrower: Mr. Sarat Kumar Jena, S/o: Baidhar Jena / Co-Borrower: Mrs. Bhanumati Jena, W/o: Mr. Sarat Kumar Jena, Both are At/P.O.: Dolasahi, Dist.: Bhadrak, PIN-756127 / Total Dues: Rs.Total Dues: Rs.10.07 Lakh with UCI plus further expenses thereon	Equitable Mortgage of Land & Building situated over Khata No.: 840/424, Plot No.: 929/3036, at Mouza: Dolasahi, Tahasil/SRO: Tihidi, Dist.: Bhadrak, standing in the name of Mr. Sarat Kumar Jena, S/o.: Baidhar Jena, admeasuring Area: Ac.0.040 Dec, Kissam: Gharabari, Bounded by North: Road, South: Plot No.: 927 & 928, East: Shiv Prasad Mallick, West: Vendor	₹ 20,54,000/- / ₹ 2,05,400/- / Symbolic

Terms and conditions of E-Auction

The sale shall be subject to the terms and conditions and provisions prescribed in the SARFAESI Act 2002 read with the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in <https://baanknet.com>

15 DAYS E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN TO BORROWER(S)/ GUARANTOR(S)/ MORTGAGOR(S)

This is also a 15 days sale notice to the Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s)/Mortgagor(s) of the aforesaid loan accounts for settlement of their outstanding dues with the bank and to participate in the public auction on the above mentioned date.

Place: Baripada

Date: 08.05.2025

Authorised Officer

Bank of India

Let all circumstances, all happenings in life be occasions, constantly renewed for learning more and ever more.

THE MOTHER



Risky Strategy

After months of sectarian violence, kidnappings, and cross-border clashes, the last thing Syria's fledgling government needs is a neighbour stoking tensions. But that is what Israel is doing, as it erects military bases in the countries' demilitarized "buffer zone," strikes military sites, and kills security officials – all part of a well-worn strategy of backing minority groups against Sunni majorities in the Arab world. But by pursuing it in Syria, Israel is risking strategic blowback.

Along with neighbouring Lebanon, Syria has the most diverse population in the Middle East. While Sunni Arabs comprise 65 per cent of the population, their majority is far smaller than in, say, Egypt (around 90 per cent). The remaining 35 per cent of Syria's population includes members of heretical Islamic offshoots, along with Sunni Kurds and Christians.

Managing this diversity has proved challenging for Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), which came to power after Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's ouster in December. Its cadres are drawn from al-Qaeda, which believes that Sunni Arabs should hold all the rights – and all the power – in the Islamic world. And while the HTS leadership has tempered its religious zeal, some of its foot soldiers have not.

In March, clashes between HTS and Assad's Alawi sect, a heretical Shia offshoot accounting for around 12 per cent of Syria's population, left more than 1,000 dead. The violence rattled Christians, who largely supported the toppled government. Meanwhile, groups loyal to Turkey have skirmished with the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces in the northeast.

But it is tensions with the Druze, another heterodox group, that are proving most vexing for Syria's young government. After a spurious audio recording attributed to a Druze leader blaspheming the Prophet Muhammad circulated on social media, masked gunmen descended on the Damascus suburb of Jaramana. After the melee drew in HTS security officials, Israel declared that it would protect the tiny sect. It has since targeted members of Syria's security forces who clashed with the Druze and mounted airstrikes near the presidential palace. Israel's machinations in Syria are nothing new. Within months of Israel's birth, senior foreign ministry officials mused about sponsoring a coup there, in order to strengthen their position in the 1948 Arab-Israeli war.

More broadly, Israel has often used support of minorities to undermine Sunni power. In Lebanon, it was the Christians. In 1955, Army Chief of Staff Moshe Dayan floated the idea of convincing a Christian military officer to "declare himself the savior of the Maronite [Christian] population," before invading Lebanon to help install a Christian regime that would ally itself with Israel.

In the 1970s, Prime Minister Menachem Begin – claiming that Israel had a "duty" to prevent the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) from committing "genocide" against Christians – supported a renegade Lebanese Christian sergeant-major, in the hopes of creating a buffer zone along Lebanon's southern border, where it could exert some control. In 1982, Israel invaded Lebanon, expelled the PLO, and installed a Christian president, Bashir Gemayel, soon assassinated by a member of the Syrian Social Nationalist Party.

Israel's efforts to undermine Sunni regimes have also entailed partnerships with Shia countries. Beginning in the 1960s, Israel worked with the Shah of Iran to support the besieged Iraqi Kurds in their fight against the central government. The resulting insurgency was so devastating that then-Iraqi Vice President Saddam Hussein ceded the Shatt al-Arab waterway to Iran, in exchange for its pledge to stop supporting the Kurds.

In light of this history, it is not surprising that Israeli leaders now seek to carve out a Druze enclave on the Syrian border, thereby creating a buffer between Israel and the Sunnis. Nor is it surprising that Israel has identified ambitious Druze figures eager to challenge both the central government and their own sect's traditional leadership.

This effort has broad support among Israeli politicians, from the prime minister to the opposition leader. In their view, a fractured Syria desperately attempting to put out regional and sectarian fires would lack the resources and capacity to threaten Israel.

But this vision is short-sighted. After all, upheaval and division could bring down the HTS government – and Israel might not like what replaces it. The Turks who back the group and support factions on the northern Syrian border may be persuaded to deploy troops deep inside the country. A resurgent Islamic State in Iraq and Syria could exploit the chaos of HTS's downfall to expand its influence, just as it did when the Syrian civil war erupted in 2011. After Gemayel's assassination in 1982, Hezbollah stepped into the breach in southern Lebanon. By 2000, Hezbollah had driven Israel from Lebanese territory, and in 2006 launched a devastating war that ended in a stalemate.

Following the Assad dynasty's collapse, Israel has attained near-supremacy in the Middle East. Destabilising a nascent government that has no desire to tangle with a stronger neighbour will do nothing to strengthen this position. On the contrary, a policy based on reflexive hubris risks paving the way for the emergence of a formidable new threat.

The writer is a former research fellow at New America and a former visiting fellow at the Brookings Institution.

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WISDOM CORNER

The wise man must remember that while he is a descendant of the past, he is a parent of the future.

HERBERT SPENCER

In three words I can sum up everything I've learned about life: it goes on.

ROBERT FROST

Hope is important because it can make the present moment less difficult to bear. If we believe that tomorrow will be better, we can bear a hardship today.

THICH NHAT HANH



Janardan Pati

FASCISM IS MORE THAN JUST A FORM OF AUTHORITARIAN RULE—IT IS A VIOLENT POLITICAL IDEOLOGY ROOTED IN THE INTERESTS OF FINANCE CAPITAL

Eighty years ago, on 9 May, 1945, the fascist forces of Nazi Germany were decisively defeated by the Red Army, marking a turning point in world history. This day, known as Victory Day, is celebrated globally as the end of fascist tyranny in Europe. Adolf Hitler, the infamous Nazi leader, was so overwhelmed by defeat that he committed suicide on 30 April, 1945, unwilling to face the consequences of his crimes.

Fascism is more than just a form of authoritarian rule—it is a violent political ideology rooted in the interests of finance capital. According to Bulgarian leader Georgi Dimitrov, "Fascism in not a form of state power, standing above both the classes - the proletariat and the bourgeoisie - as Otto Bauer has asserted. It is not the revolt of the petty bourgeoisie which has captured the state machinery, as British Socialist Brailsford declares. No, fascism is not power standing above class, nor govt. of the petty bourgeoisie or the lumpen proletariat over finance capital. Fascism is the power of finance capital itself. It is the organization of terrorist vengeance against the working class and the revolutionary section of the peasantry and the intelligentsia. In foreign policy, fascism is jingoism in its most brutal from, fermenting bestial hatred of other nations. The development of fascism and the fascist dictatorship itself assume different forms in different countries, according to historical, social and economic conditions and to the national peculiarities, and the international position of the given country."

It represents organised vengeance against workers, revolutionary peasants, and progressive intellectuals.



On the 80th anniversary of the victory over fascism, it is more important than ever to unite against the resurgence of this dangerous ideology

Internationally, fascism promotes extreme nationalism, racial hatred, and militarism.

Fascism took root in Italy and Germany in the aftermath of the Great Depression, which shook the capitalist world from 1929 to 1939. The crisis led to massive unemployment, widespread poverty, and economic collapse. In the US, unemployment reached 25%, and industrial production plummeted. This economic breakdown was driven by gross inequalities—where a small elite controlled vast wealth, while the majority suffered.

In response to the crisis, the ruling capitalist class in countries like Germany, Italy, and Japan sought to expand their territories and control global resources through fascist regimes. The aim was to plunder other nations to sustain their crumbling economies. Germany invaded Poland on 1 September, 1939, initiating the Second World War. The fascist alliance divided the world amongst themselves—Germany would take Europe (with the Soviet Union initially neutralised), Italy would dominate Africa, and Japan would control Asia.

The war escalated further on 22 June, 1941, when Hitler launched Operation Barbarossa—a surprise invasion of the

Soviet Union, violating the non-aggression pact between the two nations. Over 3.8 million Axis troops participated in this campaign, expecting to seize Moscow within six weeks. However, the Red Army crushed these ambitions.

The Soviet Union bore the brunt of the war, with over 27 million people killed—both military and civilian. This was the highest number of casualties suffered by any nation. Every Soviet family felt the loss. Meanwhile, Benito Mussolini, the Italian fascist leader, was captured and executed by Italian partisans on 28 April, 1945.

Soon after, Hitler, fearing capture by the advancing Red Army, committed suicide in his bunker on 30 April, 1945. That same day, Soviet forces raised the red flag over the Reichstag in Berlin. Germany officially surrendered on 7 May, 1945. Japan followed suit on 15 August, 1945, after the United States dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, killing and injuring hundreds of thousands. Though Japan's surrender ended the war, the bombings remain one of the most devastating acts in human history.

While fascist regimes in Germany and Italy were dismantled in 1945, the ideology itself persists. Fascism is deep-

ly rooted in ultra-reactionary and racist beliefs, particularly the idea of racial superiority. This theory has its origins in 18th-century Europe, where elites used it to justify privilege and inequality. In 1727, Count de Boulainvilliers of France wrote about French nobility as a distinct, superior race—a concept that laid ideological groundwork for future fascists.

Despite being discredited scientifically, racial theory reemerged throughout history, especially in feudal or semi-feudal societies. These theories were widely exploited during World War II across various European countries.

Today, fascist ideologies are resurfacing across the globe—in Germany, France, Bulgaria, Romania, Poland, Belgium, Italy, Spain, Ukraine, the USA, and India. We are witnessing a disturbing rise in racial hatred, religious persecution, and caste-based violence. In India, minority communities and marginalised groups are increasingly targeted.

Fascism cannot offer any real solution to society's problems. It is a temporary system, built on brutality, destruction, and oppression. Its survival depends on fear and violence, but it ultimately fails to sustain itself.

On the 80th anniversary of the victory over fascism, it is more important than ever to unite against the resurgence of this dangerous ideology. The working class, peasants, and intellectuals must form a broad anti-fascist front to resist and dismantle all fascist organizations and influences.

Only through unity, solidarity, and vigilance can we safeguard democracy, peace, and human dignity for future generations.

The writer is former Secretary and Central Committee member of CPI(M)

SPECTRUM SOCIETY

Caste census not enough

The decision to make a caste census is welcome but questions arise when and whether the survey would reflect the ground reality. Political analysts are of the opinion that the BJP has now changed its strategy and is trying to bring together OBC-Dalit-Muslim into its fold to consolidate the party's position, which is necessary at this juncture before the Bihar Assembly election and to retain power. Meanwhile, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has rightly demanded that the Centre provide the timeline by when the census would be carried out.

Calls for a national caste census crystallised after Nitish Kumar's JD(U), the ruling party in Bihar, published the results of a statewide caste survey. It is significant to note that the survey, released in October 2023, revealed that over 80 per cent of the state's population belongs to extremely backward classes.

Caste consciousness is evident in today's situation as even now in educated and liberal families, marriages of upper castes are generally avoided with lower castes. In rural and semi-urban ar-

reas, members of subaltern castes continue to suffer not just discrimination but also oppression based on their social status.

One may mention here that the last time a proper caste census was conducted was way back in 1931 by the colonial government. Since Independence, the oppression and neglect of lower castes continued. It is only in last few decades that caste mobilisation served to bring about some empowerment of subaltern groups. But caste politics could not deliver generalised economic well-being to the impoverished and deprived masses.

As is well known, the lower castes in the country, who mostly belong to the extremely backward sections, have been exploited for decades. The latest data available from National Crime Records Bureau of 2000 revealed that a total of 25,455 crimes against Dalits were committed; two Dalits were assaulted every hour, and in each day three Dalit women were raped, two Dalits were murdered, and two Dalit homes were set on fire. Even Amnesty International

documented a high number of sexual assaults against Dalit women, which were often committed by landlords, upper-caste villagers, and policemen, according to a study published in 2001.

Though the Constitution abolished untouchability, the oppressed status of Dalits and lower castes remains a reality. In rural India, they still live in secluded quarters, do the dirtiest work, and are not allowed to use the village well and other common facilities. Though there has been some progress over the last 60 years, the lower castes are still at the social and economic bottom of society.

The most important emphasis would obviously be on ensuring that Dalit and Adivasi children get proper education. But the tragedy is that the interior and tribal districts lack good schools, not to speak of colleges, and the government sadly refuses to address the anomaly. Moreover, scholarships for students who pass out from school have to be increased so as to ensure that children from subaltern families get the opportunity to get good education and stand up in life.

Just conducting a caste survey may not help. There is a need to evolve a comprehensive plan of action to uplift the condition of the extremely backward castes in a phased manner and for this, experts from various fields should be inducted to formulate the plan. The private sector should also be involved in this exercise.

There is need for balanced development which can ensure socio-economic equality that is being emphasised by social scientists the world over. To start with more funds must be allocated for welfare programmes aimed at the lower castes but recent figures indicate that, in many cases, the allocations have been curtailed. Along with this, the political will has to change as also the social outlook of the upper castes who have always looked down on their low caste brethren.

It goes without saying that real education obviously means that all humans, irrespective of caste, colour and religion, must be treated equally. How far the census would help the deprived sections, needs a close watch.

INFA

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

OrissaPOST
B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Stress on mediation

Sir, Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna, at a recent conference, laid stress on mediation as a "wiser" form of adjudication as compared to courtroom judgments. Egos of both parties stand to be satisfied, and no one is a loser in the justice process. Mediation, as against laborious trials and lengthy verdicts, has the potential to go to the origin of the dispute. No judgment can broadly provide a holistic touch to a case. On the contrary, mediation can encompass the whole gamut of a dispute. The art of communication has to be put to good use for a mediation exercise to reach its logical end. The Mediation Act, 2023 came into being on 15 September, 2023. It encourages institutional mediation besides being considered final and binding similar to court judgments. However, the Act warrants the mediation procedure to be completed within 120 days from the first appearance before a mediator. All in all, the mindset to mediate is crucial for mediation to flourish.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Data regulation

Sir, The recent regulations proposed by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) concerning lawful interception, geofencing, and data privacy for satellite telecom services appear to be a standard and anticipated security framework. While their timing shortly after a terrorist incident in Kashmir might raise eyebrows, the necessity of establishing robust security protocols before the widespread deployment of satellite networks is undeniable. Given the extensive reach of satellite communications, particularly into remote and strategically sensitive areas, the government's proactive stance on security is a prudent measure to safeguard national interests and infrastructure. The majority of prominent satellite operators poised to enter the Indian market, including Starlink, Kuiper, and Eutelsat OneWeb, have generally demonstrated an understanding of and alignment with the Indian government's security imperatives. Consequently, these global players are unlikely to encounter significant hurdles in adhering to the newly stipulated regulations. A potentially more contentious issue in the past has been the allocation of spectrum, with terrestrial and satellite networks holding divergent views on pricing structures.

Amarjeet Kumar, HAZARIBAGH

Stalin rejigs Cabinet for 2nd time in 15 days

With just a year left for the 2026 Assembly polls, the TN CM's decisive moves are widely seen as efforts to consolidate his leadership, neutralise criticisms from the AIADMK-led Opposition, and realign the party's public narrative

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, May 8: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, MK Stalin, Thursday reassigned key portfolios during a Cabinet reshuffle, signaling strategic adjustments within the ruling party ahead of the 2026 Assembly elections.

Senior Minister Duraimurugan, who also serves as the General Secretary of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), has been divested of the crucial Mines and Minerals portfolio.

The department will now be overseen by Minister S Raghupathy, who has been redesignated as the Minister for Natural Resources.

In turn, Duraimurugan has been allocated the Law portfolio while retaining his existing role as Minister for Water Resources.

An official communique from the Raj Bhavan confirmed the reshuffle, stating: "Based on the recommendation of the Chief Minister, the Law portfolio is allotted to Thiru Duraimurugan, Minister for Water Resources. Further, the portfolio of Mines and

EYE ON 2026 POLLS



Minerals is allotted to Thiru S. Raghupathy, who is designated as Minister for Natural Resources."

This reshuffle marks the second significant change in CM Stalin's Cabinet within a fortnight.

Recently, the Chief Minister removed senior Minister and



DMK Deputy General Secretary K Ponmudi from the Council of Ministers following some controversial remarks he made at a public event.

In another high-profile change, V Senthil Balaji, a powerful young minister, resigned from his post as Electricity Minister after the

Supreme Court issued an ultimatum threatening the cancellation of his bail in connection with the cash-for-jobs scam.

With just a year left for the 2026 Assembly polls, the Chief Minister's decisive moves are widely seen as efforts to consolidate his leadership, neutralise criticisms from the AIADMK-led Opposition, and realign the party's public narrative. By holding even senior party figures accountable, CM Stalin is sending a clear message of discipline and adaptability as the DMK gears up for a crucial electoral battle.

The reshuffle underscores CM Stalin's intent to refresh the government's image while maintaining stability, balancing generational leadership with veteran experience as the political climate intensifies ahead of the polls.

Palaniswami slams DMK govt on law & order, accuses it of failing TN people

AIADMK General Secretary and former Chief Minister, Edappadi K. Palaniswami (EPS) launched a scathing attack on the DMK government Thursday, accusing it of failing on multiple fronts as it completed four years in office. In a strongly-worded statement, Palaniswami said the recurrence of deaths due to illicit liquor — the second such tragedy in 13 years — was a grim testament to the "achievement" of the CM Stalin-led "Dravida Model" of government. He criticised the administration's inability to curb the production and sale of spurious alcohol, calling it a glaring example of negligence and poor governance. The AIADMK leader further alleged that law and order in Tamil Nadu had deteriorated under the DMK's watch, with increasing incidents of violence and crimes targeting women. "Tamil Nadu has been turned into a state where women cannot lead their lives safely — this, too, is being claimed as an achievement of the so-called Dravida Model government," he claimed. Raising concerns over the state's finances, Palaniswami warned that the growing debt burden was putting Tamil Nadu's economic stability at risk. He accused the government of mismanagement and pointed to an apparent lack of coordination between departments, leading to delays in the implementation of welfare schemes and critical infrastructure projects. "Despite repeatedly flagging these issues inside the Assembly and outside, the government has failed to take strong and firm measures. The DMK lacks the maturity and political will to correct its mistakes," Palaniswami alleged. Drawing a contrast with his own tenure, the AIADMK leader claimed that his administration had delivered numerous welfare schemes and development projects. "Can the Stalin model government point to a similar achievement?" he questioned, challenging the ruling party to account for its performance over the past four years. As the DMK marked four years in power, the Opposition sharpened its criticism, signaling a politically-charged atmosphere ahead of the next electoral battle.

Yamuna-cleaning plan needs reset, not money



The 22-kilometre stretch of the Yamuna between Wazirabad and Okhla in Delhi, less than 2% of the river's total length, accounts for 80% of its pollution load

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 8: Amid renewed efforts to clean the Yamuna in Delhi, a new analysis released Thursday said authorities need to rethink their strategy and stop the mixing of treated and untreated water in drains flowing into the river.

The analysis by Delhi-based think tank Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) said officials must ensure that tankers collecting faecal sludge from areas without sewer connections do not dump it into drains or the river.

CSE director general Sunita Narain said all such tankers should be fitted with GPS trackers to make sure the sludge is

taken to sewage treatment plants (STPs) for proper treatment and reuse. She added that untreated water from unserved areas should be treated near the river before being released.

Narain also said that one of the biggest problems in cleaning the Yamuna is the lack of clear data on the city's population, which makes it difficult to know if the current treatment capacity is sufficient.

The 22-kilometre stretch of the Yamuna between Wazirabad and Okhla in Delhi, less than 2 per cent of the river's total length, accounts for 80 per cent of its pollution load.

The main reasons for the pollution are untreated wastewa-

ter from unauthorised colonies and slum clusters and the poor quality of treated water from STPs and common effluent treatment plants (CETPs).

According to the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC), the city generates 3,600 million litres per day (MLD) of sewage. The 37 STPs in Delhi have a total capacity of 3,474 MLD, about 96 per cent of the sewage generated.

However, these plants are currently operating at only 80 per cent of their capacity, treating just 2,777 MLD. The remaining sewage flows untreated into the Yamuna.

Of the treated water, only around 1,960 MLD meets the required quality standards, that is, the biological oxygen demand (BOD) and total suspended solids (TSS) levels should be below 10 milligrams per litre.

Narain said the Delhi government spent more than ₹6,856 crore on Yamuna-cleaning projects between 2017 and 2022.

Despite this, the river remains polluted and dirty. Cleaning the Yamuna will take more than just money. It needs a new and improved plan, she said.

For areas not connected to the sewer system, Narain said the government does not need to invest in expensive pipelines, as managing faecal sludge through tankers is quicker and more affordable.

She also said that STP standards should be set with water reuse in mind, as large investments needed to upgrade the plants to meet the stricter discharge standards delays the cleaning work.

Chennai set to receive Krishna water from AP amid ongoing supply efforts

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, May 8: Chennai is expected to receive Krishna River water from Andhra Pradesh by the early hours of Friday, after a brief halt in supply due to repair work along the water canal.

According to officials from the Water Resources Department (WRD), the water released from the Kandaleru reservoir is likely to reach the Tamil Nadu border by Thursday evening or early Friday.

The supply was temporarily suspended by Andhra Pradesh authorities to carry out repair work on the sluice gate of the Kandaleru-Poondi (KP) canal near Kalahasti.

Krishna river is a crucial source for Chennai, particularly during peak summer months when demand for drinking water surges. The Poondi reservoir in Tiruvallur district, which stores Krishna water before transferring it to the Red Hills reservoir for city supply, had stopped receiving inflows from April 24. However, WRD officials confirmed that Andhra Pradesh resumed water release earlier this week as committed.



The Kandaleru reservoir currently holds nearly 44,000 thousand million cubic feet of water.

On Wednesday, the water discharge was increased to 1,170 cubic feet per second (cusecs) to ensure steady flow. "The canal bed is dry, causing slower water movement. Currently, water has reached the 70-km mark between Venkatagiri and Kalahasti and must travel another 82 km to reach the Tamil Nadu border at Uthukottai," a senior WRD official said.

Andhra Pradesh authorities have assured Tamil Nadu that they will increase the discharge further to speed up the flow.

The water released through the KP canal also caters to drinking and irrigation needs in Tirupati and Kalahasti before reaching Chennai.

The WRD estimates that about 500 cusecs will be received at the zero point of the KP canal at Uthukottai.

Since March 29, Krishna water has added 600 million cubic feet (mcf) to Chennai's reservoirs, boosting their storage capacity for nearly a month.

The WRD expects to continue receiving supplies until the end of June, helping fill key water bodies and maintain daily supply. Currently, Chennai Metro-water is supplying 1,087 million litres of water per day.

The five reservoirs in Tiruvallur district, which provide most of the city's drinking water, are at 64.4 per cent of their combined total capacity of 11,757 mcf.

The Veeranam tank in Cuddalore district is also supplementing the city's water distribution.

Remedial classes to be held in Delhi govt schools during summer vacation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 8: The Directorate of Education (DoE) has announced that remedial classes will be held for students of Classes IX, X and XII in all government schools during the summer vacation.

The DoE stated in a circular that regular school activities will remain suspended from May 11 to June 30, and remedial classes will be conducted from May 13 to May 31.

These sessions aim to strengthen students' core concepts and enhance their learning outcomes, it stated.



According to the circular, classes will be conducted in the morning hours. Divided into three one-hour periods, classes will run from 7.30 am to 10.30 am for students. In schools operating in double shifts, remedial classes will be held in separate wings to accommodate all students.

For Classes IX and X, Science and Mathematics will be taught daily. A third subject may be included based on the academic needs of students, as determined by the head of the school, it said.

School uniform will be mandatory during these sessions and student attendance must be recorded online. Parental consent is also required for student participation, it added.

The Directorate has asked teachers to focus on individual attention to students during the sessions. Library facilities will remain open for self-study and book issuance.

Guest and contract teachers may be engaged for remedial classes if regular teachers are unavailable. While staff leave during the summer break is generally not permitted, exceptions can be made with prior approval, it read.

District and zonal education officers have been directed to visit at least two schools daily to monitor the implementation of the programme, it added.

70-yr-old passes Class 12 exams, fulfilling lifelong dream

Raani's achievement stands as a testament to perseverance, inspiring many to pursue education at any age

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, May 8: In an inspiring story from Coimbatore, 70-year-old Raani has successfully cleared the Tamil Nadu Class 12 board examinations, proving that age is no barrier to learning or achieving.

Raani, who lives alone following the death of her husband, had always nurtured a desire to study further despite challenges thrown up by life.

This determination culminated Thursday when she passed the Higher Secondary Examination (HSE) with a total score of 346 out of 600 marks.

Breaking down her marks, Raani scored 89 in Tamil, 52 in

History, and 50 in English — an achievement that has drawn admiration from the community and beyond. Her accomplishment at the age of 70 grabbed spotlight after the announcement of the results of the Class 12 board exams on Thursday.

Raani's achievement stands as a testament to perseverance, inspiring many to pursue education at any age.

The state recorded an impressive overall pass percentage of 95.03 per cent, up 0.47 per cent from last year. Announcing the results, School Education Minister Anbil Mahesh Poyyamozhi said that out of the 7,92,494 students who appeared for the exams, 7,53,142 passed.

Ariyalur district topped the state with a pass percentage of 98.82 per cent, followed closely by Erode at 97.98 per cent. In government and government-aided schools, Ariyalur maintained its top position. Subject-wise, Science stream students achieved



a pass percentage of 96.90, while Commerce students recorded 92.68 per cent.

Notably, 9,536 students scored full marks in Computer Science.

Chemistry had 3,181 centum scorers, and Mathematics had 3,022. Students can access their results online at results.digilocker.gov.in and tnresults.nic.in, with results also being sent via SMS to registered mobile numbers.

Originally scheduled for May

9, the results were released a day early to ensure timely access.

This year's Class 12 examinations were held from March 3 to March 25 across 3,316 centers.

Class 11 exams took place from March 5 to March 27, and Class 10 exams were conducted from March 28 to April 15 across 4,113 centers.

Over 45,000 teachers were deployed for examination duties, while 4,800 flying squads monitored centers to curb malpractice.

A dedicated control room at the Directorate of Government Examinations (DGE) operated from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. on exam days to handle public and student queries.

Strict regulations banned mobile phones inside exam halls for both students and staff.

Last year, 7.72 lakh students took the Class 12 exams, with 3.93 lakh girls, 3.25 lakh boys, and one transgender student passing.

of the day quote

Important national actions like these should not be used for political gain by any party. We must ensure this remains a national effort

AKHILESH YADAV | SP PRESIDENT

Operation Sindoor executed by our armed forces under the leadership of Prime minister Narendra Modi was not against any country or religion

PRAMOD SAWANT | GOA CM

We wanted the PM to participate and briefly talk about the action against terrorism. We salute the jawans who have shown bravery

MALLIKARJUN KHARGE | CONGRESS PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

Saudi junior foreign minister in Delhi

New Delhi: Saudi Arabia's deputy foreign minister Adel al-Jubeir landed in Delhi Thursday to meet India's top leadership with a focus on de-escalating tensions between India and Pakistan. Al-Jubeir, on an unannounced visit to New Delhi, is learnt to have carried a message from the Saudi leadership. The Saudi minister held talks with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and discussed the situation that has developed since India's military strikes on terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir early Wednesday.

Brazilian Prez Lula dials PM Modi

New Delhi: Brazilian President Lula de Silva has conveyed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi his condolences on the loss of lives in the Pahalgam terror attack and expressed support and solidarity with India in its fight against terrorism.

Three Greyhound commandos killed

Hyderabad: Three commandos of the Greyhound, an elite anti-Naxal force of Telangana police, were killed and another was injured after Maoists triggered landmines and opened fire at police personnel in Mulugu district Thursday. The incident occurred under Wazeedu police station limits in the district at around 6 am when the police teams comprising Mulugu police and Greyhounds units were engaged in combing operations in the area, police said.

Five killed as tractor trolley falls into ditch

Kota (Rajasthan): Five people were killed on the spot and 18 others sustained injuries after a tractor trolley they were travelling in overturned and fell into a ditch along the state highway 29 at around 11.30 am Thursday. Three women and two girls aged around eight years died in the accident, which happened near Khatkad village under Raithal police station limits in Bundi district.

Soldier cremated

Palwal: The last rites of Lance Naik Dinesh Kumar Sharma (32), killed in cross-border shelling by Pakistani troops in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch sector, was held with full military honours at his native village in Haryana's Palwal district Thursday. Patriotic slogans such as 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' and 'Vande Matram' rent the air as locals rushed to have a glimpse of the son of the soil whose mortal remains reached the Nangla Mohammadpur Gulavad village by road.

We have issued alerts everywhere, because anything may happen anytime. We have taken precautions

SIDDARAMAIAH | KARNATAKA CM

BENGAL GOVT CANCELS LEAVES OF ALL EMPLOYEES

In view of the escalating tensions between India and Pakistan, the West Bengal government cancelled the leaves of all state government employees until further notice. A notification issued by the state finance department May 7 but circulated in the media Thursday cited the "current situation" as the reason behind the decision



SC raps Dubey for 'scandalous' remarks on judiciary, CJI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 8: The Supreme Court has rapped BJP MP Nishikant Dubey for his remarks against it and Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna, saying they tend to "scandalise" and lower the authority of apex court.

The top court, in a way, put an end to recent political debates as to who is supreme whether Parliament or the judiciary. "It is the Constitution that is higher than all of us. It is the Constitution which imposes limits and restrictions on the powers vested in the three organs.

The power of judicial review is conferred by the Constitution on the judiciary. Statutes are subject to judicial review to test their constitutionality as well as for judicial interpretation. Therefore, when the constitutional courts exercise their power of judicial review, they act within the framework of the Constitution," a bench of CJI and Justice Sanjay Kumar said.

The top court, which spared the lawmaker from the contempt proceedings by dismissing a PIL, made scathing observations against Dubey for his remarks against it and the CJI following the hearings on a batch of petitions challenging the validity of 2025 Waqf law.

NATIONAL HERALD CASE

Court defers hearing against Sonia, Rahul

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 8: A Delhi court Thursday deferred the hearing in the National Herald money laundering case involving Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi to May 21 and 22.

Special judge Vishal Gogne, after hearing the submissions of the Enforcement Directorate, noted that notices had been served upon all proposed accused persons in terms of its previous order.

The judge, however, said, "Since the notice has purportedly been served upon an alternative email ID upon the proposed accused 4 (Sam Pitroda) only today, it is appropriate that submissions on the aspect of cognisance are heard on the next date of hearing."

The judge posted the hearings May 21 and 22.

"Subramanian Swamy, who is the complainant in the proceedings relating to the predicate offence, has mentioned his presence and submitted that an application for being supplied with a copy of the present complain and documents shall be moved by him in due course," the court added. On May 2, the court issued notices to the Gandhis.

It also issued notice to Congress leader Pitroda and Suman Dubey, and "Young Indian", Dotex Merchandise Pvt Ltd and Sunil Bhandari. The judge said that their "right to be heard" was available at the time of cognisance of the chargesheet.

SC flags vacancies in HCs

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan said the Allahabad High Court with 2.7 lakh cases pending criminal appeals had a sanctioned strength of 160 judges but was only functioning with 79 judges at present

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 8: Observing Indian high courts have more than 7 lakh criminal appeals pending, the Supreme Court Thursday asked the Centre to expeditiously clear names for judges' appointments to mitigate issues of vacancies and pendency.

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan said the Allahabad High Court with 2.7 lakh cases pending criminal appeals had a sanctioned



strength of 160 judges but was only functioning with 79 judges at present.

"This is one aspect where the central government needs to act and ensure that recommendations of the collegium are cleared expeditiously. We hope and trust that the pending proposals will be cleared by the central government at the earliest," the bench said. Similarly, the Bombay High Court

with a sanctioned strength 94, was functioning with only 66 judges, it added.

The Calcutta High Court, it noted, was functioning with 44 judges opposed to the total strength of 72 judges. The bench observed the Delhi High Court currently had 41 judges against the prescribed 60 judges.

"It has a huge pendency of criminal appeals. Hence this

is an issue which will have to be handled at a different level," it added. The apex court said two days ago, recommendation of the Supreme Court collegium for appointment of high court judges was made public on the top court website. "Four recommendations of 2023 and 13 recommendations made in 2024 are pending with the Centre. The most recent recommendations made on September 24, 2024 are also pending," it said.

The top court was hearing a suo motu petition relating to delays marring bail processes and expeditious release of undertrials granted bail. The court passed the directions after examining suggestions from senior advocate and amicus curiae Liz Mathew.

The apex court noted as March 22, the total number of criminal appeals was 7,24,192. "Madhya Pradesh has pendency of 1,15,382 cases. Even in smaller states, pendency is high. Patna High Court has

pendency of 44,664; Punjab & Haryana High Court has 79, 326 and Rajasthan has pendency of over 56,000 pending cases. Bombay has pendency of 28,257. Chattisgarh more than 18,000 cases. Therefore, this a huge problem faced by all HCs," it said.

Aside from the suggestions on mitigating the pendency, the administrative side of the CJI prepared and approved a model action plan for reduction of arrears which was shared with all high courts.

Admitting adjournments were one of the main reasons behind the rising pendency, the top court said if high courts upon noting non cooperation by advocates appearing for the accused, should appoint a legal aid lawyer.

On the suggestion to appoint adhoc judges for hearing criminal appeals, the bench said the issue was being deliberated upon by chief justice of India with the government and it won't deal with it.

CASH ROW

CJI for impeachment of Justice Varma: Sources



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 8: Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sanjiv Khanna is learnt to have recommended to the Centre impeachment of Allahabad High Court judge Yashwant Varma following his indictment in the cash discovery row by a Supreme Court-appointed committee.

The CJI wrote to President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi and shared the report of the three-member committee along with the response received from Justice Varma.

The move assumes significance in the wake of the established in-house procedure which entails the CJI writing to President and PM for impeachment after their advice to the judge to resign is not complied with.

"Chief Justice of India, in terms of the in-house procedure, has written to President of India and the Prime Minister of India enclosing therewith copy of the three-member committee report dated May 3 along with the letter/response dated May 6 received from Justice Yashwant Varma," the apex court said in a statement.

The SC-appointed panel confirmed the cash discovery allegations against Justice Varma in its inquiry report, sources

previously said.

The three-member panel comprised Punjab and Haryana High Court Chief Justice Sheel Nagu, Himachal Pradesh High Court Chief Justice G S Sandhawalia and Justice Anu Sivaraman of the Karnataka High Court. The report was finalised on May 3.

Sources had also said the CJI nudged Justice Varma to step down in view of critical findings in the report, which was forwarded to the judge for his response in line with the principle of natural justice.

The panel analysed evidence and recorded the statements of over 50 people, including Delhi Police Commissioner Sanjay Arora and Delhi Fire Service chief who were among the first responders to the fire incident at Justice Varma's Lutyens' Delhi official residence at around 11.35 pm on March 14.

He was a judge of the Delhi High Court at that time.

The allegation was repeatedly denied by Justice Varma in his response to the Delhi High Court chief justice and to the apex court appointed panel.

The controversy was raised following a news report in the cash discovery row and led to several steps, including a preliminary inquiry by Delhi High Court Chief Justice D K Upadhyaya, judicial work being taken away from Justice Varma in the Delhi High Court, and later his transfer to the Allahabad High Court sans judicial work.

On March 24, the apex court collegium recommended the repatriation of Justice Varma to his parent Allahabad High Court.



BJP OBC Morcha workers in Patna celebrate Indian armed forces' missile strikes on terror targets in Pakistan and PoK under 'Operation Sindoor', in retaliation for the Pahalgam terror attack

PTI PHOTO

Helicopter crashes in Uttarakhand; 6 dead

AGENCIES

Uttarkashi, May 8: A helicopter on way to the Gangotri temple crashed near Gangnani in Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand Thursday, killing six persons, including the pilot, and leaving one seriously injured, officials said.

Five women pilgrims were among the dead.

The private company helicopter, with seven persons on board, crashed over Rishikesh-Gangotri National Highway at around 8:45am and fell into a gorge about 200-250 metres deep, State Disaster Response Force said.

The helicopter had left Sahasradhara helipad in Dehradun for Kharsali helipad. It was on way to Gangotri from there when it crashed, an official said. District Magistrate Meharban



Singh Bisht said six people died on the spot. One of the helicopter occupants was seriously injured in the crash and has been identified as M Bhaskar, 51, from Andhra Pradesh. He has been airlifted to AIIMS, Rishikesh.

Three on board the helicopter were from Mumbai, two from Andhra Pradesh and one each from Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat. Those killed were identified as Kala Chandrakant Soni, 61, Vijaya Reddy, 57, Ruchi Agrawal, 56, Radha Agrawal, 79, Vedvati Kumari, 48, and Capt Robin Singh, 60. Capt Singh hailed

from Gujarat.

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami expressed grief over the loss of lives in the accident.

The administration has been instructed to provide all possible help to the injured and investigate the accident, he said, adding he is constantly in touch with officials and monitoring the situation.

Officials said the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AIB) will probe the helicopter crash.

The helicopter belonged to AeroTrans Services Private Limited and the company's Bell helicopter was involved in the crash.

According to information available on aviation regulator DGCA's website, AeroTrans Services Private Limited has two Bell helicopters and one Cessna aircraft.

SC issues contempt notices to chief secretaries

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 8: Calling it a sorry state of affairs, the Supreme Court Thursday chided governments of Delhi and adjoining states of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan for not filling vacancies in their pollution control boards.

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan, therefore, issued contempt notices to the chief secretaries of Delhi, UP, Haryana and Rajasthan over the non-compliance of its August 2024 order asking them to fill the vacancies by April 30 this year. The top court pointed out 55 per cent posts were vacant in the Delhi pollution control committee and found it shocking that the body was "virtually defunct".

Issuing notices, the apex

court ordered the officials to explain why shouldn't they be punished under Contempt of Courts Act, 1971 for non compliance. While the Delhi chief secretary was directed to personally appear before court May 19, chief secretaries of other states were ordered to virtually appear July 18.

The bench said it had been passing drastic orders to prevent air pollution in the Delhi NCR region since 1985 whereas pollution control boards being statutory authorities played a crucial role in preventing pollution and enforcing laws. Various powers were given to them under the Environment Protection Act, Air Act and Water Act, it said.

The top court added, "In case of Uttar Pradesh, 45 per cent posts are vacant. In Delhi,

POLLUTION BOARD VACANCIES



almost 55 per cent posts are vacant. Therefore, we can safely

say that as far as Delhi is concerned, pollution control body

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan, therefore, issued contempt notices to the chief secretaries of Delhi, UP, Haryana and Rajasthan over the non-compliance of its August 2024 order asking them to fill the vacancies by April 30 this year

The top court pointed out 55 per cent posts were vacant in the Delhi pollution control committee and found it shocking that the body was "virtually defunct"

it is non functional."

For the last several years, the bench said, Delhi was grappling with increased air pollution. "On this background we are shocked to know that the pollution control committee of Delhi is virtually defunct as 55

per cent posts are empty. State of Haryana expressed difficulty that candidates are not available. Pollution Control Boards need not confine the recruitment process only to people of their state. It can be a pan India process," the court said.

Accusing Delhi, UP, Rajasthan and Haryana of "wilful default" for flouting its August 27, 2024 order, the court said, "We direct that notice of contempt will be issued to the chief secretaries of the above states." The chief secretaries, in turn, were ordered to show-cause why they should not be punished under the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971.

The apex court also took into account the 21 per cent vacant posts in Central Pollution Control Board and directed filling them by August, 2025.

NEWS IN NUTSHELL

Drones, UAVs banned in J&K and Ladakh



Leh: Authorities Thursday banned flying of drones and unmanned aerial vehicles by the general public and

tourists across Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh after the Indian Armed Forces foiled Pakistan's attempt to target Srinagar, Jammu, and Awantipura IAF stations with drones and missiles Wednesday night. An official said the Integrated Counter UAS Grid and Air Defence systems neutralised these attempts. Leh DM Santosh Sukhadeve Thursday prohibited drone and UAV flights in the region under Section 163 of the BNSS, even as restrictions were already in force in various J&K districts. The DM cited credible inputs and security concerns over the potential misuse of drones and UAVs by anti-social elements. Meanwhile, the All Ladakh Hotel and Guest House Association has announced a complimentary stay for stranded tourists due to the ongoing disruption of flights from Leh airport.

IndiGo suspends flights to Almaty, Tashkent till June 14



New Delhi: IndiGo has suspended its direct flights to Almaty and Tashkent till June 14 due to aircraft operational

range constraints, an airline official said Thursday. The country's largest airline, which has been operating daily flights to the two overseas cities from Delhi, had first suspended the services till May 7. After the closure of the Pakistan airspace from April 24 onwards, Indian airlines operating flights to the West have been taking longer routes and narrow-body planes might not operate non-stop for a long duration. IndiGo operates Airbus narrow-body aircraft to Almaty (Kazakhstan) and Tashkent (Uzbekistan). The official told PTI that the flights to Almaty and Tashkent have now been suspended till June 14.

Foreign airlines closely monitoring situation



New Delhi: Against the backdrop of escalating tensions between India and Pakistan as well as airspace curbs, foreign

airlines are closely monitoring the situation and most of them are avoiding the Pakistan airspace. India has closed its airspace for Pakistan airlines from April 30 while Pakistan barred Indian carriers from using its airspace. The developments followed the Pahalgalam terror attack that killed at least 26 people April 22. German major Lufthansa Group Thursday said it is continuing to monitor the current developments closely. "Due to the current situation, the airlines of the Lufthansa Group are avoiding the airspace of Pakistan until further notice. This will result in longer flight times on some routes to Asia, including, but not limited to, India."



PAC hails armed forces

Parliament's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) Thursday adopted a unanimous resolution congratulating the armed forces for pounding terror targets in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir under Operation Sindoor. PAC chairperson K C Venugopal said the resolution supporting and congratulating the armed forces for the operation was adopted in the first meeting of the newly-constituted panel for 2025-26. Separately, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Petroleum and Natural Gas also adopted a similar resolution. "The success of Operation Sindoor bears testimony to the courage, bravery and valour of our armed forces and the resolve and commitment of the Government of India to root out terrorism and terror-related infrastructure from our neighbourhood," it read. Referring to the PAC agenda for the next one year, he said members were of the view that people-related issues should be examined besides auditing paragraphs of CAG reports. India's armed forces destroyed nine terrorist infrastructures, including that of Jaish-e-Mohammad and Lashkar-e-Taiba, in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) in a 25-minute-long missile and drone strike early Wednesday.

Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan on high alert

AGENCIES

Amid escalating tensions between India and Pakistan, many states have announced the closure of schools, blackouts in border districts, and cancellation of leave of police personnel and administration officials.

Meanwhile, Indian air defence units successfully intercepted at least eight missiles fired by Pakistan towards the border areas of Jammu, including the strategically important Jammu Airport at Sattari Thursday evening, defence sources said here.

The stringent measures were taken by Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Delhi, Gujarat, West Bengal and Bihar after India struck terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan Occupied Kashmir in retaliation for the April 22 Pahalgalam massacre that killed 26 people.

Punjab shares a 532-km border with Pakistan, Rajasthan about 1,070 km and Gujarat around 506 km. West Bengal shares a 2,217-km border with Bangladesh. In Punjab, the leave of all police personnel has been cancelled while the state government has shut schools in six border districts, officials said Thursday.

"Leaves should be granted only in special circumstances



with the approval of the competent authority," an order issued by the DGP's office said. All schools in six border districts of Punjab -- Ferozepur, Pathankot, Fazilka, Amritsar, Gurdaspur and Tarn Taran -- have been shut until further orders. A blackout was enforced in several districts, including Pathankot, Amritsar, Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur, Mohali, and Gurdaspur in Punjab and the Union Territory Chandigarh on Thursday evening, officials said. "Punjab shares a 532-km border with Pakistan. Therefore, the role of the Punjab government becomes extremely crucial during any military tension. All districts near the

A high alert in Delhi, and all employees' leaves

HIGH ALERT SOUNDED IN DELHI

was sounded in city government were cancelled as hostilities ramped up between India and Pakistan, with several border areas, including Jammu, coming under cross-border shelling. District magistrates in the national capital are holding meetings with their subordinates to review health and disaster management preparedness in case of any emergency, officials said. "Police will stay alert and will keep active. Night vigil has been intensified. We will deploy extra force in every sensitive area," a police officer said. In a late evening order, the Delhi government's services department banned its employees from going on leave until further orders.

border have been placed on high alert," Punjab minister Aman Aroa said Wednesday

In neighbouring Haryana, the leave of state police personnel and those working in the health department has been cancelled till further orders. According to a communication to the civil surgeons of all the districts across Haryana, it

has been mentioned that all officials will have to remain present at their current places of posting and shall not leave the district headquarters. The Delhi government also cancelled leave of all its employees till further orders due to the escalating hostilities.

No leave will be granted to any official of Delhi government till

further orders given the prevailing situation and preparedness for any emergency, said an order issued late evening by the Services Department of the government.

All district magistrates in the national capital are holding meetings with their subordinates to review health and disaster management preparedness in case of any emergency situation, officials said. In Himachal Pradesh, which shares a border with Punjab, security has been beefed up in bordering districts, including Hamirpur, Una and Bilaspur.

With famous temples like Baba Balak Nath, Maa Chintpurni and Maa Naina Devi located in Hamirpur, Una, and Bilaspur districts, police have intensified security checks there, an official said. The Rajasthan government too has cancelled leave of administrative and police personnel deployed near the International Border and closed schools in five bordering districts.

With a high alert sounded in the border districts of western Rajasthan, a blackout has been instituted in these areas. Flying of drones and bursting of crackers have been banned in Bikaner and Sri Ganganagar. Government and private schools have been closed in Sri Ganganagar, Bikaner, Jodhpur, Jaisalmer and Barmer districts as a precautionary measure, officials said Thursday.

JEM HQS IN PAK

Breeding ground for fidayeens, depot for smuggled NATO arms

According to the officials, the Bahawalpur centre of JeM, spread over 15 acres, is run by de-facto chief Abdul Rauf Asgar and the area has residential houses of JeM founder Masood Azhar and other family members



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 8: The banned Jaish-e-Mohammed's terror group's two 'Markaz' (centres) -- its Bahawalpur headquarters and Narawal in Pakistan's Punjab -- functioned as a breeding ground for suicide attackers, had links with Palestine's Hamas and served as a facility for hoarding smuggled NATO arms from Afghanistan, officials said here Thursday. Both these centres located on the opposite ends of Pakistan's Punjab province were

among the nine targets hit by missiles launched by the Indian Air Force (IAF) in the early hours of Wednesday, in a strong retaliation to the Pahalgalam terror attack April 22, in which 25 tourists and a local guide were gunned down by terrorists.

According to the officials, the Bahawalpur centre of JeM, spread over 15 acres, is run by de-facto chief Abdul Rauf Asgar and the area has residential houses of JeM founder Masood Azhar and other family members.

Masood Azhar acknowl-

edged after the IAF strikes codenamed 'Operation Sindoor' that 10 members of his family and four close associates were killed in India's missile attack on the outfit's headquarters in Bahawalpur.

A statement attributed to Azhar said those killed in the attack on Jamia Masjid Subhan Allah in Bahawalpur included the JeM chief's elder sister and her husband, a nephew and his wife, another niece, and five children from his extended family. The Bahawalpur centre is notorious for hoarding arms and am-

munition left behind by the NATO forces in Afghanistan, the officials said.

They said Bahawalpur is often frequented by JeM commanders who were fighting in Afghanistan, and that Asgar purchases as well as smuggles consignments of weaponry, including M4 series rifles, through a network of criminals based in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which was earlier known as North West Frontier Province (NWFP).

Besides the M4 series, the arms and ammunition included sniper rifles, armour-piercing bullets, Night Vision Devices (NVD), and rifles fitted with NVD. About the centre in Narawal, the officials said the Markaz has been used for learning tactics from the Palestine Hamas group. The involvement of Hamas started in 2014 when one of the Jaish terrorists, Mohammed Adnan Ali, codenamed 'Doctor,' had imparted paraglider training to operatives of another group, Khalistan Tiger Force Ramandeep Singh alias Goldy, in Thailand.

100 terrorists, associates killed in strikes: Rajnath

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 8: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh told an all-party meeting Thursday that at least 100 hardcore terrorists and their associates were killed in Indian strikes on terror sites in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir (PoK) under the ongoing Operation Sindoor, sources said.

The meeting saw Opposition parties backing the government in the military action and hailing the armed forces, as leaders across the political spectrum projected a united front amid heightened tensions between the two neighbouring countries.

Chairing the meeting, Singh, in his briefing and then responding to points raised by the leaders of different parties, said India does not want escalation but will give a befitting reply to Pakistan if attacked, the sources added.

"In the moment of crisis, we are with the government," Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge told reporters after the meeting, a view reiterated by his party colleague and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and echoed by several other Opposition leaders.

Singh noted that it is an



emerging and evolving situation, declining to get into the details of the continuing Indian operation.

Kharge said, "The defence minister said this is a sensitive time and in the interest of the country, detailed questions are not to be asked as they pertain to defence secrets." The Congress chief, though, conveyed his disappointment over Prime Minister Narendra Modi not attending the all-party meeting.

A number of Opposition leaders, the sources said, referred to the Pakistani claim of downing Indian fighter jets and wondered if the government needed to counter such propaganda.

Gandhi and John Brittas of the CPI(M) suggested that a special session of Parliament should be convened, saying it would send out a message of united national resolve.

EAM Jaishankar speaks to Secretary Rubio, EU's Kallas

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 8: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar Thursday night spoke to US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and conveyed to him that India will firmly counter any attempts by Pakistan to escalate the situation.

The external affairs minister also had a phone conversation with EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Kaja Kallas. Following the phone conversation with Rubio, Jaishankar underlined India's targeted and measured response to cross-border terrorism.

"Spoke with US @SecRubio this evening. Deeply appreciate US commitment to work with India in the fight against terrorism," Jaishankar said in a social media post.

"Underlined India's targeted and measured response to cross-border terrorism. Will firmly counter any attempts at escalation," he said. The phone conversation came as tensions between India and Pakistan soared significantly following India's Operation Sindoor on early Wednesday and Pakistan's subsequent unsuccessful attempt to attack 15 Indian cities. US State Department Spokesperson Tammy Bruce said Rubio emphasised the need for immediate de-escalation. "He expressed US support for direct dialogue between India and Pakistan and encouraged continued efforts to improve communications," Bruce said.

PBKS-DC CLASH CALLED OFF MIDWAY AMID INDO-PAK MILITARY CONFLICT

IPL's continuation in doubt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

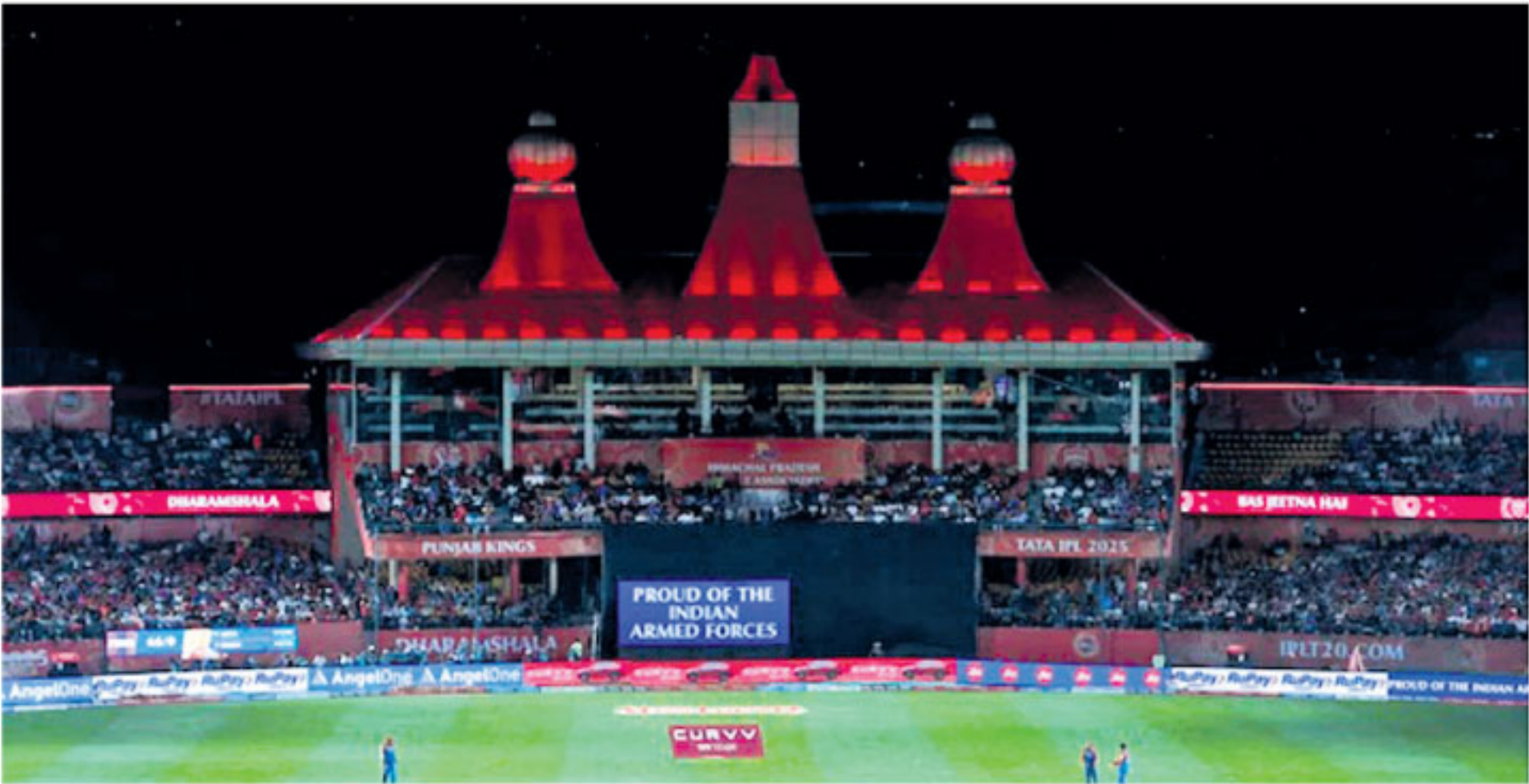
Dharamsala, May 8: The IPL jamboree was brought to a screeching halt here Thursday by air raid alerts in neighbouring cities, forcing the league's administrators to pause and review the "evolving" and escalating military confrontation between India and Pakistan that threatens to derail the current season.

The match between Punjab Kings and Delhi Capitals was cancelled midway following air raid alerts in Jammu and Pathankot, putting the entire league at risk of being called off.

"We are reviewing the situation right now. It is an evolving situation. We haven't received any directive from the government. Obviously the decision will be taken keeping all the logistics in mind," IPL chairman Arun Dhimal told PTI when asked whether the league will continue amid the conflict that started with a terror attack in Pahalgam on April 22.

The Punjab side was 122 for 1 in 10.1 overs when lights went out in the quaint hill town, attributed to floodlight failure at first. The game had started later than scheduled due to rain before the city went dark for some time.

The teams and the assembled fans were eventually evacuated from the stadium for their se-



curity. The picturesque ground can accommodate approximately 23,000 spectators and it was packed to about 80 per cent of its capacity at the time of evacuation.

"Players of both the teams are safely back in the hotel from the stadium. There is no blackout here at the moment. Hotel is under heavy security and we are waiting for BCCI's decision," a Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association source told PTI.

Several people raised anti-Pakistan slogans while on their way out of the stadium. Prabhsimran Singh was batting at 50 off 28 balls while his opening partner Priyansh Arya made 70 off 34 balls before getting

dismissed when proceedings came to a halt.

The players and support staff of both the teams will now be brought to Delhi aboard a special train from Pathankot, which is about 85km from Dharamsala. The teams will reach Pathankot by road.

Dharamsala's lone airport and the ones in neighbouring Kangra and Chandigarh are closed for operation right now as part of precautionary measures to thwart Pakistani attacks.

RCB-LSG match

With the cancellation of tonight's match, it is not clear whether the league will proceed any further and Dhimal evaded any clear response. But he did

confirm that Friday's match between Lucknow Super Giants and Royal Challengers Bengaluru in Lucknow is not threatened as of now.

"Yes it is on as of now but obviously it is an evolving situation and any decision will be taken keeping the best interest of all stakeholders in mind," he said.

However, reliable IPL sources have revealed that foreign recruits want to head home at the earliest.

India launched missile attacks on terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan Occupied Jammu and Kashmir a fortnight after the Pahalgam terror attack in which 26 people were killed.

PCB IN HUDDLE

Karachi: A Pakistan Super League (PSL) match was rescheduled, foreign players participating in the event weighed their options, while the PCB went into a huddle on whether to continue with it at all as the country's cricket schedule went haywire following India's military strikes across cities here. The PSL, a T20 league which follows the IPL format, features six franchises and is scheduled to wind up in Lahore May 18. It was currently in its Rawalpindi leg but tonight's match between Karachi Kings and Peshawar Zalmi has been rescheduled for an unspecified later date by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB). "The Pakistan Cricket Board, in consultation with all the stakeholders, has decided to reschedule tonight's HBL PSL X match between Peshawar Zalmi and Karachi Kings. The PCB will announce the revised date in due course," the cricket board said in a media statement. The Indian drone and missile strikes, which have targeted among others Lahore and Rawalpindi so far, are in retaliation to the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack in which 26 people were killed. Tonight's match aside, the league's future this season looks bleak at present with foreign players edgy about the security situation due to the military escalation between the two neighbours. A report said English players, who have signed up for the league, are "split on whether to remain in Pakistan and play cricket". "The England and Wales Cricket Board and Professional Cricketers Association held an emergency call on Wednesday morning to discuss the situation. At this stage players are not being advised to come home," it added. "While most players are currently intending to remain in Pakistan, Telegraph Sport understands several are exploring their options and could return home." Seven English players -- James Vince, Tom Curran, Sam Billings, Chris Jordan, David Willey, Luke Wood and Tom Kohler-Cadmore -- are playing in this year's PSL. England coaches Ravi Bopara and Alexandra Hartley are also involved in the ongoing league. Other high-profile stars competing in the PSL are David Warner (Karachi Kings), Jason Holder (Islamabad United), and Rassie van der Dussen (Islamabad United) among others. PSL CEO Salman Naseer met the overseas players in Rawalpindi and assured them that there was no cause to worry as the PCB is closely monitoring the situation.



Gukesh, Pragg play out draws in Superbet Chess

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bucharest (Romania), May 8: World champion D Gukesh played out a draw yet again despite showing promise, while R Praggnanandhaa also split points against Fabiano Caruana of United States in the second round of the Superbet Classics, a part of the grand chess tour here.

Gukesh, with his black pieces was, never in trouble against top Uzbek Grandmaster Nodirbek Abdusattorov.

It was an Italian opening wherein Gukesh equalised easily and had little trouble maintaining the equilibrium even as Abdusattorov seemed determined to cast a hole.

The players eventually arrived at a heavy piece endgame but in the end the pawn sacrifice by the Uzbek allowed Gukesh to equalise comfortably.

Praggnanadhaa also had an easy time with black against Caruana and both Indians now have an identical one point from their two games.



Jagat wins maiden doubles title at U16 CS7 Tennis Tournament



POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, May 8: Odisha's Jagat Jyoti Pati has claimed his maiden doubles title at the U16 CS7 Tennis Tournament Delhi.

Partnering with Tanish Bindal of Delhi, Jagat defeated Prakul Prasad of Delhi and Abhaynain of Delhi in the finals 9-7, showcasing his exceptional skills.

In a notable performance, Jagat lost in the singles quarterfinals to his doubles partner Tanish with a score of 6-4, 4-6, 7-10.

Currently ranked 280 in the boys under 16 category Jagat's achievement is a testament to his growing prowess in tennis.

A Class 10 student at DAV School, CDA Sector 6, Cuttack, Jagat credits his success to his parents, Biranchi Narayan Pati and Renubala Tripathy, both Deputy Superintendents of Police in the Odisha Police Department and his coach, Santosh Kumar Mallik.

KHELO INDIA YOUTH GAMES

E-SPORTS MAKES HISTORIC DEBUT

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Patna, May 8: The e-sports industry in India received a significant push with its inclusion as a demonstration sport in the seventh edition of the Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG) held in Bihar. Making a strong impression, the host state secured multiple top-three finishes across various events, underlining its emergence as a force in this rapidly growing domain.

A total of eight states participated in the demonstration event, competing in disciplines such as BGMI, Chess, Street Fighter 6 and eFootball. The event reflected India's accelerating journey toward recognising e-sports as a legitimate skill-based sport at par with traditional Olympic disciplines.

Among all categories, BGMI continues to hold the top spot as the most popular e-sport in India. Sixteen teams - two from each state - contested for top finishes at KIYG 2025.

Bihar's A and B teams claimed first and third places, respectively, while Tamil Nadu's A team was sandwiched between the two home sides.



In the e-football console event, Tamil Nadu's Arnab Rajiv Parikh emerged victorious, followed by Bihar's Tanav Raj in second and Maharashtra's Ronit Sagar Satam in third. Chess saw local talents dominate once again, with Rupesh B Ramchandra and Amrit Raunak finishing first and second, and Maharashtra's Mohit Kamlesh Thanvi completing the podium.

In Street Fighter 6, Telangana's Mandalapu Sreejesh claimed the top spot. He was trailed by Maharashtra's Parth Swapnil Pawar in second and Bihar's Rohit Kumar in third.

The e-football mobile category culminated in a thrilling final between Nagaland's Lamgouhao Kipgen and Arunachal Pradesh's Jipin Gongo, with the title heading to the Northeast. Maharashtra's Parth Varekar secured third place.

Supported by the Bihar state government and the Sports Authority of India (SAI), the Federation of Electronic Sports Associations of India (FEAI) formed the backbone of the event, which followed a nationwide qualification tournament April 25.

Praising the collaborative effort, FEAI founder Vaibhav



Dange said, "It's a great initiative and I must thank and give a shoutout to Sports Authority of India and Government of Bihar, its sports department and the entire team for including e-sports as part of the Khelo India movement, which FEAI has been successfully doing for the last few years."

Looking ahead, FEAI co-founder Abhishek Issar sees the debut of e-sports in Bihar as a crucial step toward global competition: "With the e-sports World Cup scheduled in 2027, the KIYG platform could help us identify more talents to prepare for the global showpiece event in Saudi Arabia."

PSG with Inter for Champions League glory

Paris Saint-Germain book UCL final ticket after 3-1 aggregate win over Gunners

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paris, May 8: It's a Champions League final few could have predicted.

No Real Madrid. No team from the mega-rich Premier League. No rejuvenated Barcelona. And no Harry Kane-inspired Bayern Munich.

Instead, it will be Paris Saint-Germain and Inter Milan facing off to be a somewhat unlikely winner of the biggest prize in club soccer.

Neither club was among the favorites when the new-look, 36-team league phase of the competition rolled out in September.

Indeed, PSG — without Kylian Mbappé and at the start of the post-galacticos era — guaranteed its place in the knockout stage only by winning its final game of the league phase.

Months later, however, PSG has been widely admired as perhaps the most stylish team in the competition after ending the title hopes of a succession of English opponents in its latest bid for its first European title.

Paris Saint-Germain clinched a place in the Champi-



ons League final as goals by Fabian Ruiz and Achraf Hakimi gave it a 2-1 win over Arsenal in the second leg of their last-four tie Wednesday, securing a 3-1 aggregate triumph.

Meanwhile, three-time champion Inter, another team lacking superstars but well-coached and with a never-say-die spirit, has gone under the radar once again like it did when reaching the final in 2023 and losing to Manchester City.

Munich's Allianz Arena will host the final May 31. It's the fifth time the German city has staged the European Cup's title match.

The first three — 1979, 1993, 1997 — were at Munich's previ-

ous home, Olympiastadion. The Allianz Arena was the host for Chelsea beating Bayern in a penalty shootout in 2012.

American rock band Linkin Park will play the pre-match show.

PRIZE MONEY

Real Madrid earned almost 139 million euros (\$154 million) from its title-winning campaign in the Champions League last season and this season's winner should get more.

Last year's prize fund of more than 2 billion euros (\$2.22 billion) rose by 25% this season in the expanded format featuring more teams (36, up from 32) and more games (eight instead of six in the first stage).

ROUTE TO THE FINAL

PSG became the third French team to reach the European Cup final on two occasions, after Reims (1956 and 59) and Marseille (1991 and '93). PSG's other time was in 2020, when losing to Bayern Munich 1-0 in Lisbon

Inter was a two-time European champion before PSG was even founded in 1970, after titles in 1964 and 1965, while the Italian team added a third European crown in 2010

So expect PSG or Inter earn at least 150 million euros (\$170 million) if the team winds up as champion.

These coffers can be further boosted across June and July, when both teams will be in the United States for the expanded 32-team Club World Cup. Winning that competition could net PSG or Inter more than \$100 million from the \$1 billion prize money fund.

The finalists have never met in the Champions League. That's a refreshing rarity for two big clubs who regularly compete in Europe.

Gill, Bumrah in race to succeed Rohit

REUTERS

New Delhi, May 8: Top order batter Shubman Gill and pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah are locked in a two-horse race to be India's next test captain following Rohit Sharma's exit.

Rohit, 38, was dropped from the fifth test in Sydney earlier this year after a prolonged run drought, and announced his retirement from test cricket Wednesday.

Bumrah, who captained India in Perth where they registered their only victory of the Australia series, is a popular choice but doubts linger given the injury risk for fast bowlers.

Former India captain Anil Kumble would like to see Bumrah captain India in their tour of England in June-July - with Gill as his deputy.

The five-test series kicks off India's new World Test Championship cycle.

"Maybe just for this series (against England) with Bumrah and then see how his fitness is," Kumble said. "I know it's not easy being a fast bowler. He's had injuries, he was on a break for a while after the Australia series and is only coming into action this IPL (Indian Premier League) but I'd still go with Bumrah."



It was a personal decision: Rajeev Shukla on Rohit's Test retirement

Rohit Sharma retiring from Test cricket was a personal decision and there was no pressure put on him by the BCCI to take that call, its vice-president Rajeev Shukla said Thursday. "As far as Rohit Sharma's retirement from Test cricket is concerned, he has made his own decision. "It is our policy that the players who take the decision of retirement — we do not put any pressure on them, nor do we suggest anything, nor do we say anything," Shukla told PTI Videos. Rohit is an undisputed white-ball great but he could not replicate that success in the 67 Tests he played, Shukla said his contribution to the five day game was immense. "The more we praise him, the less it is. He is a great batsman. The good thing is that he has not yet decided to retire from cricket (will play only ODIs). So we will definitely take advantage of his experience and talent," said Shukla.



"Every Indian would like to see Bumrah play all the test matches but his body may not allow it. Whenever that happens, the vice captain comes in and takes over."

The 31-year-old Bumrah's workload, however, is likely to tilt the balance in favour of

Gill, who has proved his leadership quality in the ongoing IPL where he has led Gujarat Titans to the top of the points table.

The 25-year-old Gill is seen as a long-term prospect having already been appointed as India's vice captain in both white-ball formats.