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India retaliates as Pak escalates

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 Satwari, Samba, RS Pura and Arnia towns and that they were blocked by India's air defence systems.

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



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

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

arachi Port hit as Indian Navy Naunches operations in Arabian Sea eying multiple Pak targets

India shoots down 3 Pak fighter jets in retaliatory action

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

in the same domain with the same intensity as Pakistan," the ministry said in a statement. "It has been reliably learnt that an air defence system at Lahore has been neutralised," it said.

The ministry said Pakistan has increased the intensity of its unprovoked firing across the LoC using mortars and heavy calibre artillery in areas in Kupwara, Baramulla, Uri, Poonch, Mendhar and Rajouri

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 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 & HARPY DRONES

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 operation alised by the Air Force; these have been deployed along the Pak and China borders.

The Israel-made HARPY is designed

HARPY drones

I 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.

that Indian jets were been downed. Late in the night, BSF foiled major infiltration bid along International Border in Jammu and Kashmir's Samba district.

Pak-origin content,

OTT platforms told

Stop streaming

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 sec-

retary also cau-

tioned Pakistan using fabricated alof legations 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 entire-

ly that of Pakistan to make," he said, making it clear that the Pahalgam terror attack of April 22 that killed 26 civilians was the "orig-

inal 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.

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 stringent measures

Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan

among

states on

high alert

taken were 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.

US urges de-escalation

New York: US 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

Rubio reiterated his condolences for the horrific terrorist attack in Pahalgam and reaffirmed the **United States' commitment** to work with India in the

TAMMY BRUCE | US SPOKESPERSON

fight against terrorism

cross-border terrorism. Will firmly counter any attempts at escalation," he said.

In his call with Sharif, Rubio again 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.

"The Secretary expressed sorrow for the reported loss of civilian lives in the current conflict. He reiterated his calls for Pakistan to take concrete steps to end any support for terrorist groups," the statement said.

During the call, Sharif reaffirmed Pakistan's resolve to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity at all costs, staterun Radio Pakistan reported.

Both Pakistan and the US agreed to remain in touch, the report added.

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 at tack 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, wheth-

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.

er made available on a subscrip-

tion based model or otherwise.

having its origins in Pakistan

TAKES SHORT

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 Sahastradhara 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, Rishi-

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.

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 mem-

ber 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 tra-

ditional 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.

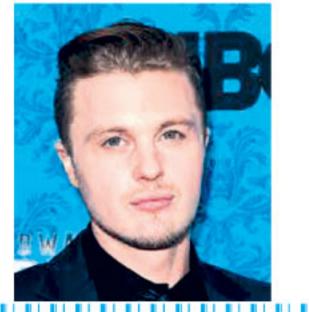
The crowd in St. Peter's Square erupted in cheers when white smoke poured out of the Sistine Chapel on the second day of the conclave, the most geographically diverse in history. Priests made the sign of

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.

leisure



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.



Shruti

leaves fan

mesmerised

Mumbai: Shruti Haasan recently sur-

prised fans with a deeply personal mu-

sical 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 record-

ed or widely performed, holds special

"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

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

expression.

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 cap-

tivate with heartfelt

AGENCIES

mind is the love of your life."

meaning for the artist.

FORTUNE **FORECAST**

Ganesha Speaks.com accuracy • reliability • trust

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 thoughyouwillbepayingforalmosteverything. Thoughyouhavedecidedtobethislavish outofsheerlove, yoursweetheart will morethanreturnthefavourwithasweatythankyou '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 onesyou 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. Youwill 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 yoursystematic 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 surelybring you great rewards as your performance will drastically improve and everyone will appreciate your efforts.

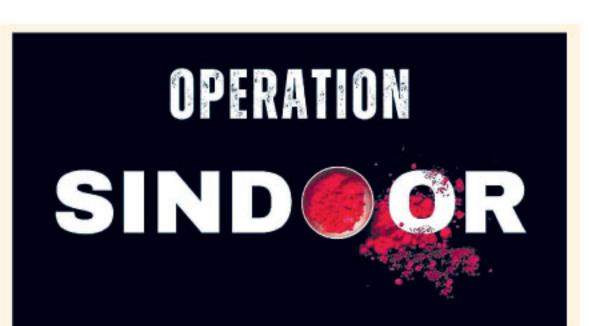
AQUARIUS

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

handy in the future.

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 todaywhich will be



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 strongand commercially potent as ever.

AGENCIES



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, ac-

tor Ranveer Singh, welcomed their daughter in early 2024. Choosing to keep the journey private, they revealed her name-Dua Padukone Singhon Diwali, Novem-2024. Ac-

companied

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.





HOW ABOUT A

MARSHMALLOW

New Delhi: Rajkummar

Rao has fond memories of featuring in Sona Mohapatra's Aaja Ve music video when he was a firstyear 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 bum *Sona*, saw Rao

I'LL BUILD THE FIRE ... YOU

GET YOURSELVES SOME

NICE LONG STICKS ..

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

FUN

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

"has almost all batchmates. my 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.

SUDOKU To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a

manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains



CALVIN AND HOBBES

PEANUTS

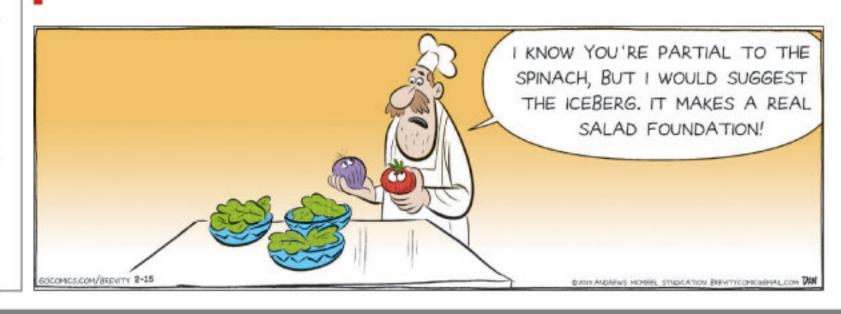
FOR OUR LAST NIGHT

OUT I'VE PLANNED

SOMETHING SPECIAL



BREVITY



12 16 22 25

CROSSWORD

Across

- 1 Go-between
- 5 Choir attire
- 8 Sweepstakes
- 9 Scrooge's cry
- 10 High point 12 Flags
- 13 Curved shapes
- 14 Risk
- 17 Bitterness
- 19 Fragrant wood
- 21 Elevator part

- 1 Sachet scent

shrieks

5 Takes five

Down

25 Oil source

2 Behave

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sea (6,3)

24 Distress signal

22 Canadian inland

- 3 Apparition 4 Creaks and

- 16 Wears away 18 Earthy colour

6 Piano type

(4,5)

7 Pursued

11 Oddball

fish

13 Togo locale

15 Soft-finned

- 20 Synthetic silklike fabric
- 23 Quilting party

SUDOKU

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

SAHARATTRAUMA O I C I R A N C O U R DWARF F E W E S T T U R N I N CALYPSO AISLE

9

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown

Govt to start recruitment of VCs, faculty soon: Min

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 expeditous 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.

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-yearold 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) Balaram 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 jailterm 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.

₹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 Purighat 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'

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



The minister further stated that the judgement does away

with the stagnation in the

higher education recruitment

process caused by the 'histori-

cal' error of the previous gov-

ernment. "Our government is

committed to the comprehen-

sive development of education

in the state. The new amend-

ment law has been framed in

alignment with UGC guide-

lines to strengthen the higher

education system in Odisha,"

overnight discussion in the

state Assembly, the Bill was

passed and received the Gov-

ernor's assent, leading to the

cant faculty posts in the state

There are around 1,300 va-

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 recruit-

ment process. "The Odisha

Universities (Amendment) Act,

2024 will serve as a milestone

in strengthening the higher

educational ecosystem of the

enactment of the new law.

He emphasised that after an

he said.

universities.

state," he said.

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 Haldar, 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.

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."

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.

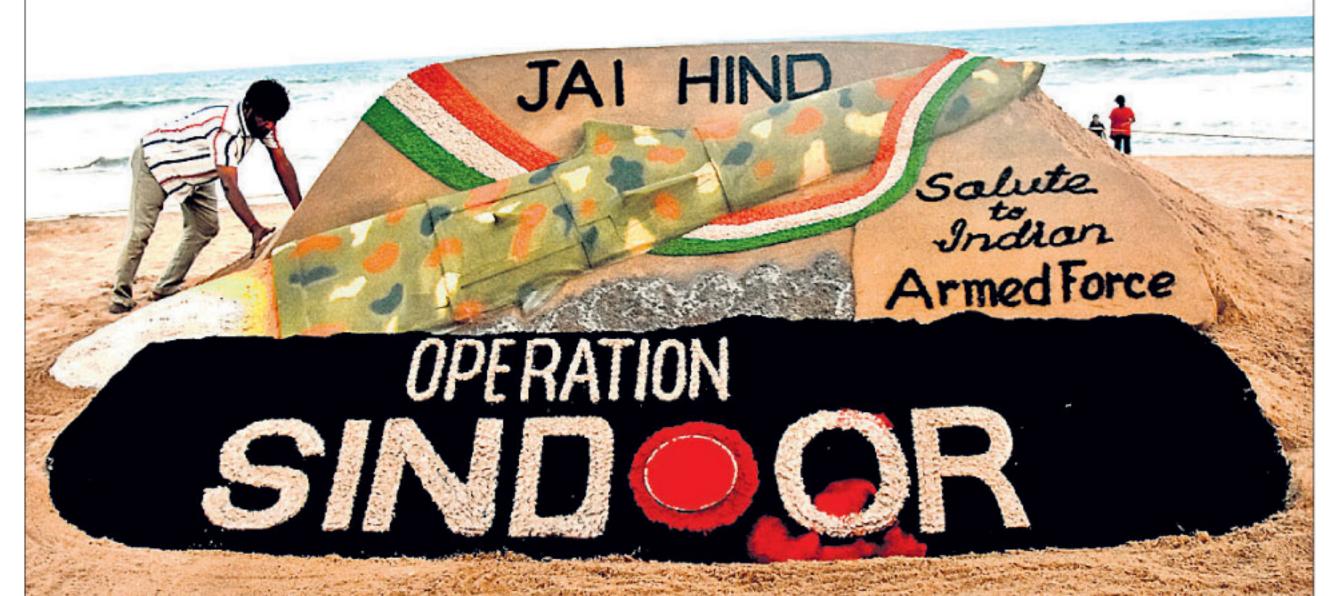
Following the incident, the state's cyber security department and police have launched a thorough investigation. Sources indicate that the hackers attempted to gain unauthorised access to the websites' databases, succeeding in some cases. However, it remains unclear whether any sensitive data was stolen.

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

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

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 Pahalgam 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 enhance ing 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.

Orissa POST

WEATHER

Max Temp 26.0° Min Temp Humidity

Rainfall **FORECAST** Mostly sunny



MARKET WATCH VARIATION INDEX SENSEX **80,334.81** 🔸 411.97 DOLLAR 0.97 **EURO** 0.65 g GOLD

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 shortlived 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 con-

ditions, 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 Jaivik 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 Misha, 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 Mahaprasastha 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.

filling lives. We provide end-to-

end care with advanced pre- and

ENT and neck surgery con-

sultant Suryakanta Pradhan ex-

plained that cochlear implants

are sophisticated devices that

bypass damaged parts of the

ear to directly stimulate the

auditory nerve, enabling hear-

ing in cases where hearing aids

are ineffective. "The surgery is

safe and routinely performed,"

he added. Another senior ENT

consultant Sanjeev Gupta em-

phasised Apollo's commitment

post-surgery support."

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 redevel-



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

← Redevelopment aims to boost regional connectivity and enhance passenger experience

opment 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,

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 cochle-

ar 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

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.



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 Kelloggi' 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 tonne 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 individ-

uals 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

Didi rollers have been suffering Dfrom various ailments, including TB and respiratory problems

ow 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

If I get an oppor-

tunity to meet

PM Modi, I will

tell him to en-

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me becomes father-

less. I now realise the

son. I will also tell PM

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TANUJ KUMAR SATPATHY | VICTIM'S SON

Pahalgam and not

allow terrorists on

Indian soil

Modi to provide ample

value of a father to a

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.

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

TPSODL flags 'unauthorised'

structures near power lines

As per the Act, no building or structure is permitted under or near overhead lines without prior approval, which may re-

sult 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 electri-

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.

cal lines and to take necessary

MAN KILLED IN LIGHTNING

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

village Ragada under Pandapada police limits. The incident occurred when he had gone to his in-laws' house at Nuakha-

man 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.

Kundura, May 8: A 62-year-old phys-

ically disabled man, who was hospi-

talised in a critical condition

following a honeybee at-

tack, died at Bedhapaunshi

village in Dangarpaunshi

panchayat and this block in

Koraput district Thursday.

The deceased was identified

The incident occurred last

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

Sunday near a water tank in

as Lachhman Keuta.

POST NEWS NETWORK

'Want to join Army, confront Pakistani terrorists'

Balasore, May 8: Nine-yearold 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 Balasore 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 Ar-

my 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.

Keuta failed to flee owing to his phys-

ical disability and sustained critical

Locals rushed him to the Kundura

lege and Hospital at Koraput, where

(11/25) over a complaint and handed

over the body to his family members

Kundura police registered a case

दी जाएगी।

he succumbed during treatment.

Community Health Cen-

ter and later shifted him

to the District Headquar-

ters Hospital in Jeypore

after his condition wors-

ened. As his health con-

dition showed no signs

of improvement, he was

referred to Saheed Lax-

man Navak Medical Col-

injuries in the bee attack.

Man critical in bee attack dies



Tanuj said the Army has been

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.

with him and his mother since

"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

कार्यालय उप महानिरीक्षक

कन्टोल रूम सम्पर्क संख्या - 0674-2558206/8895791455

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

विज्ञापन

सर्व साधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि ग्रुप केन्द्र, के.रि.पु.बल, भुवनेश्वर (ओडिशा) के

मॉन्टेसरी स्कूल में नर्सरी, एल.के.जी. एवं यू.के.जी. की कक्षाओं के बच्चों को शिक्षा प्रदान

करने हेत् 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 मुख्यध्याकि। को राशि रूपये 16,000/- प्रतिमाह, अध्यापिका को राशि रूपये 12,000/-

प्रतिमाह एवं आया को राशि रूपये 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 कार्यदिवस

में प्राप्त किय 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.प्.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 हेत्

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 सुचना नहीं

(1) नर्सरी प्रशिक्षित अध्यापकों, जोकि मैट्रिक तथा ज्यादा पढ़े हुए है, अध्यापक ने नर्सरी

(2) दसरी प्राथमिकता जे.बी.टी. /प्रशिक्षित स्नातकों /प्रशिक्षित स्नातकोत्तर तथा अन्य

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

उप महानिरीक्षक

ग्रप केन्द्र, केरिपुबल, भूवनेश्वर (ओडिशा)

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

प्रशिक्षण डिप्लोमा किसी मान्यता प्राप्त प्रशिक्षण संस्थान से प्राप्त किया हो तथा पूर्व

नोट: चयन प्रक्रिया निम्नलिखित प्राथमिकताओं के अनुरूप किया जाएगा:

प्रतिभाओं को दी जाएगी जैसे डाईग, संगीत आदि।

सं.-एफ.चार-29/2025-26-माँ,स्कुल-ग्रु.के.भ्.

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 ex-

pressed 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.

E-Tender/09, Dt. 02.05.2025 (1) Tender No. eTender-CenKUR-

05-2025, Dtd.: 25.04.2025 DESCRIPTION : SUPPLY OF WELDING PORTION FOR 60KG/60EI-R260/R-35 AND FOR COMBINATION JOINTS B' AT/SKV PROCESS (SINGLE SHO CRUCIBLE TECHNIQUE) AT SIT UNDER SENIOR DIVISIONAL ENGINEER (CENTRAL) SECTION OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION

Approx. Cost of the Work : ₹ 263.85 Lakh, EMD : ₹2,81,900/-

(2) Tender No. e-Tender-CENTKUR-36-2025, Dtd.: 30.04.2025

DESCRIPTION : NEW WORKS ADDITIONS AND ALTERATIONS TO THE EXISTING STRUCTURES, ALL ORDINARY REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE WORKS OF MISCELLANEOUS NATURE AND SUPPLIES EACH COSTING RS.5,00,000/- OR LESS II THE SECTION SADASIBPUR (EX) TALCHER AND TALCHER-SAMAI UNDER SENIOR SECTION ENGINEER (WORKS) / TALCHER FOR THI PERIOD UPTO 30.06.2026. Approx. Cost of the Work : ₹99.18 Lakh

EMD: ₹ 1,98,400/-(3) Tender No. e-Tender-CENTKUR-

37-2025, Dtd.: 30.04.2025 DESCRIPTION : NEW WORKS ADDITIONS AND ALTERATIONS TO THE EXISTING STRUCTURES, ALI ORDINARY REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE WORKS OF MISCELLANEOUS NATURE AND SUPPLIES EACH COSTING RS.5,00,000/- OR LESS I THE SECTION GURUDIJHATIA (IN) TO SADASIBPUR (IN) UNDER SENIOR SECTION ENGINEER (WORKS) DHENKANAL FOR THE PERIOD UPTO

Approx. Cost of the Work: ₹79.49 Lakh

30.06.2026

(4) Tender No. eTender-SouthKUR-27-2025, Dtd.: 30.04.2025 DESCRIPTION : FORMATION TREATMENT (TFTR) FOR 4.83 KMS I DIFFERENT PATCHES BETWEE KHURDA ROAD - PALASA SECTION OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION

Approx. Cost of the Work : ₹ 824.50 Lakh, EMD : ₹ 5,62,300/-

Completion Period : 12 (Twelve

Months (for all SI. Nos.) Tender Closing Date and Time: At 150

Hrs. of 21.05.2025 (for all the Tenders). No manual offers sent by Post / Courier Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders even if these are

submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any Complete information including e-tender ocuments of the above e-Tender

available in website : www.ireps.gov.in Note: The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 10 (Ten) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / corrigenda issued for this tender. The tenderers/bidders must have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate and must be registered on IREPS Portal. Only registered tenderer bidder can participate on e-tendering. Divisional Railway Manager (Engg)

PR-103/Q/25-26 Khurda Road

File No. DRM/Engg/KUR/25-26/E-Tender/12 Tender No. eTender-NorthKUR-45-2025,

Dtd. 02-05-2025 DESCRIPTION : NEW WORKS. ADDITIONS AND ALTERATIONS TO THE EXISTING STRUCTURES, ALI ORDINARY REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE WORKS OF MISCELLANEOUS NATURE AND SUPPLIES EACH COSTING Rs.5,00,000/- OR LESS IN THE SECTION FROM RANITAL (Ex) KM.287.471 TO

JAJPUR KEONJHAR ROAD (Ex) UNDER SENIOR SECTION ENGINEER WORKS)/BHADRAK FOR THE PERIOD UPTO 30.06.2026 Approx Cost of the Work (₹): 66.96 Lakhs.

EMD (₹): 1,33,900.00

Tender No. eTender-NorthKUR-46-2025 Dtd. 02-05-2025

DESCRIPTION: NEW WORKS ADDITIONS AND ALTERATIONS TO THE EXISTING STRUCTURES, ALL ORDINARY REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE WORKS OF MISCELLANEOUS NATURE AND SUPPLIES EACH COSTING Rs.5,00,000/- OR LESS IN THE SECTION FROM JAJPUR KEONJHAR ROAD (In TO JENAPUR (In) & JAKHAPURA TO DAITARI UNDER SENIOR SECTION ENGINEER (WORKS)/ JAJPUR KEONJHAR ROAD FOR THE PERIOD

Approx Cost of the Work (₹): 55.93 Lakhs. EMD (₹): 1,11,900.00

UPTO 30.06.2026

3) Tender No. eTender-southKUR-38-2025 Dtd. 30-04-2025 **DESCRIPTION: RENOVATION OF**

STATION MASTERS OFFICE AT KAIPADAR ROAD, TAPANG, NIRKARPUR, BHUSANDPUR GANGADHARPUR AND KHALLIKOT STATION OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION. Approx Cost of the Work (₹): 119.74 Lakhs

EMD (₹): 2,09,900.00 1) Tender No. eTender-southKUR-44-2025

Dtd. 01-05-2025 DESCRIPTION : PROPOSED MISCELLANEOUS REPAIRS TO LEVEL CROSSING APPROACH ROADS CIRCULATING AREA, COLONY ROADS SERVICE BUILDINGS AND PAINTING TO STEEL STRUCTURE FROM GANJAM (Ex) TO ICHCHAPURAM UNDER

THE JURISDICTION OF ASSISTANT DIVISIONAL ENGINEER / BRAHMAPUR OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION. Approx Cost of the Work (र): 204.30 Lakhs EMD (₹): 2,52,200.00

Completion period: 12 (Twelve) Months for all the tenders) Tender Closing Date and Time: At 1500 Hrs. of 23.05.2025 (for all the tenders).

No manual offers sent by Post / Courier. Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered rvalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.

Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-Tender is available n website: https://www.ireps.gov.in

Note: The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 10 (Ten days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / Corrigendum issued for this tender.

Divisional Railway Manager (Engg), Khurda Road

E- AUCTION

SALE NOTICE

recovered and returned home safely, after a post-mortem examination. Elephant herd camps in forest after calf's birth, triggers panic

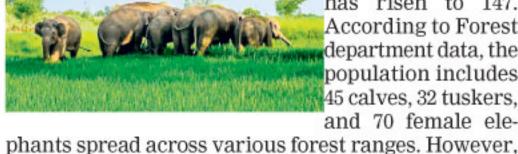
POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, May 8: A herd of 23 elephants has been camping in the Ukhunda forest beat under the Champua range of Keonihar 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 Keonihar forest division. With the birth of the calf, the total number of ele-

phants in the Keon-



jhar forest division has risen to 147. According to Forest department data, the population includes 45 calves, 32 tuskers, and 70 female ele-

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.

NOTIFICATION FOR APPOINTMENT OF STATION TICKET BOOKING AGENTS (STBA) No. C/SBP/STBA/NSG-6 Catg/Stn/03/25/01.

EAST COAST RAILWAY

Applications are invited for engagement of Station Ticket Booking Agents (STBA) to work throughout the day in all shifts for 03(Three) years or commission basis at 03 (Three) "NSG-6" Category stations over Sambalpur Division of East Coast Railway for issuing of Unreserved Tickets through "Unreserved Ticketing System" (UTS). Interested person fulfilling the stipulated conditions may apply in the prescribed format to Divisional Railway Manager (Commercial), Sambalpur Division. NAME OF THE STATIONS

"NSG-6" CATEGORY STATIONS (for a period of 03 years): (1) TUREKELA ROAD, (2) LAPANGA and (3) NARASINGHGARH

Applications for the above station duly filled in should reach to the office of the 2nd Floor, Divisional Railway Manager (Commercial), East Coast Railway, DRM Office Complex, Sambalpur Division, Post - Modipara, Dist-Sambalpur, Pin-768002 (Odisha) from 1100 hrs. on or before 30.05.2025. If the last day i.e 30.05.2025 happens to be or is declared to be holiday, applications will be received by the same time on the next working day.

Obtaining of Applications: 1000 Hrs. to 1800 Hrs. of 29.05.2025 Last Date and time of Submission/Dropping in Box: 1100 Hrs. of 30.05.2025 The Railway Administration reserves the right to accept or reject any application without assigning any reason.

For detailed terms and conditions, Commission and application format please visit our website www.eastcoastrail.indianrailways.gov.in & http://tenders.gov.in or contact Office of the Divisional Railway Manager (Commercial), East Coast Railways, DRM Office Complex, Sambalpur Division, Post-Modipara, Dist-Sambalpur, Pin-768002 PR-107/Q/25-26 Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager/Sambalpur

दिनांक: 01.05.2025

EAST COAST RAILWAY Tender No. 09-KUR-TRD-OT-2025-26 NAME OF WORK : EXECUTION OF

OHE MODIFICATION WORK IN CONNECTION WITH CONSTRUCTION OF THE PROPOSED ROAD OVER BRIDGE (ROB) AT KM 370/25-27 O NH-200 (NEW NH-53) IN BETWEEN HARIDASPUR (HDS) - DHANMANDAI (DNM) STATIONS ON KOLKATA CHENNAI MAIN LINE UNDER KHURDA ROAD DIVISION OF EAST COAST RAILWAY.

Advertised Value : ₹15,29,188.76 EMD: ₹30,600/-, Period of Completion Bidding Start Date: 13.05.2025

Tender Closing Date and Time At 1300 Hrs. of 27.05.2025.

Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Complete information including e-Tender documents and corrigendum is available

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (TRD)

n website www.ireps.gov.in

PR-102/Q/25-26

बैंक ऑफ इंडिया Bank of India

Bank of India Zonal Office: Baripada Bank Of India Building,

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

Khurda Road

E-Auction Sale Notice Under SARFAESI ACT, 2002 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)

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

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 Authorised Officer Date: 08.05.2025 Bank of India



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



THE MOTHER

Risky Strategy

fter 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 mem-

ber 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. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE

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

IS 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF VICTORY DAY

FIGHT AGAINST FASCISM

ighty 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 bourgeoise 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 deeply 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 globein 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 ul-

timately 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

Janardan Pati

FASCISM IS

MORE THAN

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AUTHORITARIAN

Barak Barfi

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SOCIETY

Caste census not enough



Dhurjati Mukherjee

CASTE **POLITICS COULD NOT DELIVER GENERALISED ECONOMIC WELL-BEING** TO THE **IMPOVERISHED AND DEPRIVED MASSES**

he 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 areas, 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

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

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.

vey 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

Just conducting a caste sur-

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.

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

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.

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



TWOSTATES





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 Rai 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

அரசு மாதிரிப் பல்

EYE ON 2026 POLLS



Minerals is allotted to Thiru S. Raghupathy, who is designated as Minister for Natural Resources." This reshuffle marks the he made at a public event.

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

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.

Yamuna-cleaning plan needs reset, not money ter from unauthorised colonies



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 unsewered 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 wastewaand slum clusters and the poor quality of treated water from STPs and common effluent treatment plants (CETPs).

According to the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DP-CC), 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 re-

mains polluted and dirty. Clean-

ing 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.

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.

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

▲ IADMK General Secretary and former Chief Minister, Edappadi K. Palaniswami (EPS) launched a Ascathing 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 Oopposition sharpened its criticism, signaling a politically-charged atmosphere ahead of the next electoral battle.

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.

500 cusecs will be received at the zero point of the KP canal at Uthukottai. Since March 29, Krishna wa-

ter has added 600 million cubic feet (mcft) 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 Metrowater 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 mcft. The Veeranam tank in Cudda-

lore district is also supplementing the city's water distribution.

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.

கறக கசடம

A statue of Thiruvalluvar after being unveiled by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin in the premises of the

new school and hostel building of the Government Model School, in Tiruchirappalli district

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 thresults.nic. in, with results also being sent via SMS to registered mobile numbers.

Originally scheduled for May

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 mo-

bile 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.

Nearly half of Delhi MLAs spent less than 50% of poll expense limit: ADR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 8: Of the 69 Delhi MLAs whose records were analysed, 31 (45 per cent) have declared election expenses amounting to less than 50 per cent of the permissible limit in their respective constituencies, according to poll rights body Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR).

The ADR said the average amount of money spent by the MLAs in the Assembly polls held in February is ₹20.79 lakh, which is 52 per cent of the expense limit.

"The party wise average election expenses shows that the average spending for 47 MLAs from BJP is ₹24.68 lakh (61.7 per cent of the expense limit) and for 22 MLAs from AAP, it is ₹12.48 lakh (31.2 per cent of the expense limit)," the report said.

It also highlighted that the top three highest-spend-



ing MLAs were all from the Bharativa Janata Party (BJP). Anil Kumar Sharma from R K Puram reported the highest expenditure at ₹31.91 lakh (80 per cent of the limit), followed closely by Parduyumn Singh Rajput from Dwarka at ₹31.44 lakh (79 per cent) and Ashish Sood from Janakpuri at ₹30.68 lakh (77 per cent).

The most frugal candidates were all from the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). Aaley Mohammed Igbal from Matia Mahal spent only ₹4.53 lakh (11 per cent), Veer Singh Dhingan from Seema Puri spent ₹6.5 lakh (16 per cent) and Virender Singh Kadian from Delhi Cantonment spent ₹6.54 lakh (16 per cent), the ADR said.

national



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

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





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



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.

SC flags vacancies in HCs

KARNATAKA CM

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

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,

on mitigating the 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.

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

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.

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

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 Sahastradhara 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

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 (AAIB) 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.

Court defers hearing

NATIONAL HERALD CASE

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 complaint 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 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 noncompliance 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 showcause 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



Delhi: IndiGo has suspended its direct flights to Almaty and Tashkent till une 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 narrowbody 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 Pahalgam 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."



Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan on high alert

mid 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 Satwari 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 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 2,217km 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

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 mili-

tary tension. All districts near the

ADelhi, and all

HIGH ALERT SOUNDED IN DELHI

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 has been mentioned that all offi-

alert," Punjab minister Aman Arora 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 official of Delhi government till

cials 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

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,

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 Narowal 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 Pahalgam 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 ammunition 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 Narowal, 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

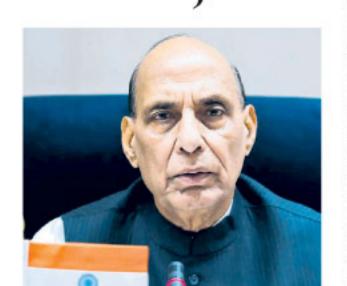
New Delhi, May 8: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh told an all-party meeting Thursday that at least 100 hardcore terrorists and their associates were killed in Indian strikes on terror sites in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir (PoK) under the ongoing Operation Sindoor, sources said.

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 at-

tending 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.

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.

The external affairs minister also

"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.

international



A new US-UK trade deal is a full and comprehensive one that will cement the relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom for many years to come

DONALD TRUMP

NK FIRES SHORT-RANGE MISSILES TOWARDS ITS EASTERN WATERS

North Korea fired what appeared to be multiple short-range ballistic missiles off its east coast, South Korea's military said Thursday, possibly to test the performance and stability of various projectiles intended for export



priceless, and war has no winners. History has taught us that no matter the driving reason or ide-

ology, military aggression against another country is an unjust crime that is bound to fail

LAI CHING-TE | PRESIDENT, TAIWAN

The doors to Brussels are the key to being able to give Albanians a European passport and allowing them

to benefit from the same rights as citizens of all other European countries

EDI RAMA PRIME MINISTER, ALBANIA



This one will be in the Amazon

LUIZ INACIO LULA DA SILVA PRESIDENT, BRAZIL

SHORT TAKES

Ukraine's parl ratifies minerals deal with US

Kyiv: Ukraine's parliament voted Thursday in favour of ratifying a minerals deal signed with the United States, an agreement Kyiv hopes will secure future military assistance from Washington in its fight to repel Russian troops. Despite misgivings by some Ukrainian lawmakers over whether the government had provided them with all the information on the deal and over some of its compromises, 338 voted in favour of ratifying the agreement, with none against.

123 vultures die in mass poisoning

Cape Town: At least 123 vultures died in South Africa's flagship national park after eating the carcass of an elephant that was poisoned by poachers with agricultural pesticides, park authorities and an animal conservation group said Thursday. Another 83 vultures that were rescued from the site and transported for treatment by helicopter or a special vulture ambulance were recovering. The mass poisoning was one of the worst seen in the famous Kruger National Park in northern South Africa, said SANParks, the national parks agency.

1 killed in Israeli strikes on Lebanon

Beirut: A series of Israeli airstrikes Thursday in southern Lebanon killed at one person and wounded eight others, the Lebanese Health Ministry said. The Israeli military said it bombed infrastructure belonging to the Hezbollah militant group that included weapons and tunnel shafts as part of an underground network. Israel accused Hezbollah of regrouping and maintaining its infrastructure in violation of a US-brokered ceasefire agreement in November that ended its war with Hezbollah.

Students held

in Gaza protest New York: Police officers in helmets streamed into Columbia University Wednesday evening to remove a group of mask-clad protesters who staged a Pro-Palestinian demonstration inside the school's main library. Videos shared on social media show a long line of NYPD officers entering the library hours after dozens of protesters pushed their way past campus security officers, raced into the building and then hung Palestinian flags and other banners on bookshelves in an ornate reading room.

3 killed in Indian drone attacks: Pak

The US Consulate in Lahore Thursday issued a security alert, directing all consulate personnel to shelter-in-place due to reports of drone explosions and possible airspace incursions in and near Lahore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad/Lahore, May 8: The Pakistan Army Thursday said three people were killed and eight others, including four soldiers, were injured in drone attacks and claimed that armed forces shot down several UAVs launched by India, as tension continued between the neighbours.

In New Delhi, Indian military officials said the Indian armed forces foiled attempts by the Pakistani military to engage a number of military targets in Northern and Western India last night and destroyed a Pakistani air defence system in Lahore.

Addressing a press conference with Army spokesman Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry. Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar accused India of attacking Pakistan with several drones.

He said Pakistan has so far limited its response. However, he warned that Pakistan keeps its right to respond.

Lt Gen Chaudhry claimed that drones were neutralised in Lahore, Gujranwala, Chakwal,



Bahawalpur, Miano, Karachi, Chhor, Rawalpindi, and Attock.

He claimed that 29 Israeli-made Harop drones were neutralised by the Pakistani Army's soft kill (technical) and hard kill (weapons).

"Three civilians were killed and eight others, including four army personnel, injured in these drone attacks," he said.

Dar claimed that one drone targeted the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium. An official told PTI that at least four drones hit the Lahore cantonment area.

The armed forces opened fire and played a siren, causing panic among the residents of Lahore's border areas and Defence House Authority, the official added. "No drone has crashed in Islamabad," Islamabad Deputy Commissioner Irfan Nawaz Memon said in a post on X.

The US Consulate in Lahore Thursday issued a security alert, directing all consulate personnel to shelter-in-place due to reports of drone explosions and possible airspace

incursions in and near Lahore. "US citizens who find themselves in an area of active conflict should leave if they can do so safely. If it is not safe to leave, they should shelter-inplace," it said.

Meanwhile, the Punjab government announced the closure of all educational institutions across the province till Sunday. The Maryam Nawaz government has also declared an emergency in all hospitals of the province, allocating 50 per cent of the total beds to meet any emergency in the wake of tensions between India and Pakistan. The authorities in Punjab have been directed to ensure availability of sufficient blood bags, along with an updated list of donors, adequate supplies of medicines, IV fluids, vaccines, surgical/disposables/ medical devices and gases.

Flight operations at Karachi Airport will remain suspended till midnight tonight due to operational reasons, the Pakistan Airports Authority said in a statement.

14 Pakistani soldiers killed in twin BLA attacks

Balochistan: At least 14 Pakistani army personnel were killed in two separate attacks carried out by the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) in Balochistan's Bolan and Kech regions, underscoring the intensifying insurgency in the troubled province. In the first operation, the BLA's Special **Tactical Operations Squad** (STOS) launched a remotecontrolled IED attack targeting a military convoy in the Shorkand area of Mach, Bolan district. The powerful explosion reportedly killed all 12 soldiers aboard, including Special Operations Commander Tarig Imran and Subedar Umar Faroog. The military vehicle was completely destroyed in the blast. In a separate incident later the same day, BLA fighters struck a Bomb Disposal Squad of the Pakistani Army in the Kulag Tigran area of Kech district, BLA spokesperson Jeeyand Baloch issued a statement taking responsibility for both attacks and lambasted the Pakistani army, labelling it a mercenary force.

Rubio urges India, Pak to de-escalate

Washington: Secretary of State Marco Rubio urged de-escalation and expressed support for direct dialogue in separate calls with Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar and Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Thursday, US State Department spokesperson Tammy Bruce said. New blasts rang out across the city of Jammu in Indian Kashmir late Thursday during what Indian military sources said they suspected was a Pakistani drone attack. Rubio, in both phone calls that took place before the latest blasts, "emphasized the need for immediate de-escalation," Bruce said in readouts of the calls. "He expressed US support for direct dialogue between India and Pakistan and encouraged continued efforts to improve communications," Bruce said.

Nikki Haley backs India's right to retaliate

New York: Indian-American Republican leader Nikki Haley Thursday said that India had "every right" to retaliate and defend itself after the Pahalgam terror attack, asserting that Pakistan does not get to play the "victim". India launched Operation Sindoor in retaliation for the terror attack in Pahalgam in Jammu and Kashmir in which 26 civilians were killed. Under the operation, India struck nine terror camps in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir with missiles and drones. "Terrorists launched an attack that killed dozens of Indian citizens. India had every right to retaliate and defend itself. Pakistan does not get to play the victim. No country gets a pass for supporting terrorist activity," Haley said in a post on X.

China urges India, Pak to show restraint, seeks de-escalation

Beijing: China Thursday urged India and Pakistan to exercise restraint and refrain from taking actions that may "further complicate" the situation, as it asked the two neighbours to act in the "larger interests

of peace and stability". During a media briefing here, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said that Beijing is concerned about the current developments. "We urge both sides to act in the larger interest of peace and stability, observe international law, including the UN Charter, remain calm, exercise restraint and refrain from taking actions that may further complicate the situation," he said without elaborating. "We stand ready to work with the rest of the international community to continue playing a constructive role in easing the current tensions," he added.

'FRIENDS OF STEEL'

Xi, Putin unite against US

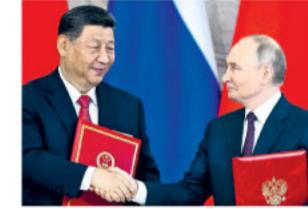
Moscow, May 8: Chinese President Xi Jinping told Russia's Vladimir Putin Thursday their two countries should be "friends of steel", as they pledged to raise cooperation to a new level and "decisively" counter the influence of the United States.

At talks in the Kremlin, the two leaders cast themselves as defenders of a new world order no longer dominated by the US.

In a lengthy joint statement, they said they would deepen relations in all areas, including military ties, and "strengthen coordination in order to decisively counter Washington's course of 'dual containment' of Russia and China".

The two countries said the Ukraine conflict could only be settled by removing its "root causes" - a phrase that Russia has frequently used when arguing that it was forced to go to war to prevent the prospect of Ukraine joining NATO. Ukraine and its Western allies say that was a false pretext for what they

call an imperial-style invasion. Xi is the most powerful of more than two dozen foreign leaders who are visiting Moscow this week to mark Thursday's 80th anniversary of the end of World War Two - a celebration of huge significance for Putin.



Leaders cast themselves as defenders of world order

Putin says they stand together against 'neo-Nazism'

In swipe at US, Xi says they will

counter 'bullying' Kremlin seeks boost from visit of

powerful ally

Xi is star guest at lavish World War Two commemorations

Xi's participation - and the joint statement aligning China with Russia's view of the conflict - provide Putin with an important boost as Russia comes under pressure from the United States to end the war.

Russia says it wants to repair relations with Washington, which sank to post-Cold War lows because of the conflict in Ukraine, and that it sees the potential for lucrative business deals. But talks have failed to produce a ceasefire and President Donald Trump has threatened to walk away, opens new tab unless there is clear progress.

Russia strikes Ukraine on first day of own ceasefire

Kyiv, May 8: Ukraine's foreign minister said Thursday Russia had repeatedly violated its own 3-day ceasefire hours after it began and called the initiative a "farce", while Moscow said Kyiv had continued fighting.

There was, though, a dropoff in combat activity after the ceasefire announced by Russian President Vladimir Putin came into force in the early hours of Thursday, with a respite in the drone and missile attacks that had rattled Ukrainian cities earlier this week.

"Predictably, Putin's 'Parade ceasefire' proves to be a farce,' Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha said on X, referring to the truce which coincides with a May 9 parade on Moscow's Red Square to commemorate the end of World War Two.

"Russian forces continue to attack across the entire frontline," Sybiha wrote, "From midnight to midday, Russia committed 734 ceasefire violations and 63 assault operations, 23 of which are still ongoing."

He said Kyiv was notifying the United States and European states about Russia's actions.

The Russian defence ministry, cited by Interfax news



remlin's three-day ceasefire

prosecutor says guided bombs kill one woman in north Ukraine

■ kraine says Russian assaults Uhave continued in east

oscow hosting China's Xi for World War Two anniversary

agency, said that Ukraine, in turn, had carried out 488 attacks on Russian targets and twice tried to break through the border in the Kursk region.

Ukraine has not committed to abide by the ceasefire, calling it a ruse by Putin to create the impression he wants to end the war, which began when Russia

launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Putin says he is committed to achieving peace.

Reuters journalists with a Ukrainian drone unit near the front in eastern Ukraine said a small Russian infantry raiding party had tried to advance Thursday, but been stopped by drones piloted by members of the unit.Ukrainian soldiers observed the clash on a live feed streamed onto monitors in their bunker.

"The infantry are still coming," said one of the soldiers in the unit, a 33-year-old who identified himself by his callsign, "Mikha."

Trump heralds 'breakthrough' deal with UK

London/Washington, May 8: US President Donald Trump and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer Thursday announced a "breakthrough deal" on trade that leaves in place a 10% tariff on goods imported from the UK while Britain agreed to lower its tariffs to 1.8% from 5.1% and provide greater access to US goods.

The agreement announced by Trump from the Oval Office marked the first since Trump triggered a global trade war with a barrage of levies on trading partners following his return to the White House in January. "It opens up a tremendous market for us," Trump said.

"This is a really fantastic, historic day," Starmer said by teleconference. The United States has been under pressure from investors to strike deals to de-escalate its tariff war after Trump's often chaotic policymaking upended global trade with friends and foe alike, threatening to stoke inflation and start a recession.

Top US officials have engaged in a flurry of meetings with trading partners since the president April 2 imposed a 10% tariff on most countries. along with higher rates for many trading partners that were then suspended for 90 days.

Dozens of Gaza communal kitchens shut as supply runs out

Cairo/Gaza, May 8: Dozens of community kitchens in Gaza shut their doors on Thursday due to a lack of supplies, closing off a lifeline used by hundreds of thousands of people in a further blow to efforts to combat growing hunger in the enclave.

The move followed hours after the US-based World Central Kitchen (WCK) charity announced that it had run out of the ingredients necessary to provide much-needed free meals and had been prevented by Israel from bringing in aid.

Amjad al-Shawa, director of the Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations Network (PNGO) in Gaza, told Reuters that most of the enclave's 170 community kitchens had shut

down after running out of stock due to Israel's continued blockade on Gaza. Shawa said the decision by the

WCK, announced late Wednesday, and the closure of community kitchens Thursday would cause a drop of between 400,000 to 500,000 free meals per day for the 2.3 million population. "Everyone in Gaza today is

hungry. The world must act now to save the people here," said Shawa, speaking to Reuters by phone from Gaza. "The remaining kitchens will

be closing soon. The hunger catastrophe is beyond words. People are losing their lone source of food," Shawa added. Those Gazans trying to cook

independently meanwhile com-

on the market is contaminated.

of nine from northern Gaza. plain that flour still available 'WE ARE HELPLESS'

"The flour is full of mites and sand. We sieve it three, four times, instead of once, so we can bake it," said Mohammad Abu Ayesh, a displaced father

Thursday said Israeli milihave been killed by Israel The Gaza health ministry

tary strikes across the enclave killed at least 105 people in the past 24 hours, in one of the biggest death tolls in a single day in two months. It added that more than 52,700 people children. You can't tolerate its

Most of Gaza's 170 community kitchens shut due to Israeli blockade

Move deals blow to efforts to stave off growing hunger

Flour is contaminated by mites and sand, Gazans say

World Central Kitchen halted operations after exhausting supplies

Severe food shortages affect over 2 million people in Gaza, says OCHA

since the war began October 7, 2023. The war began when Hamas killed 1,200 people and took 251 hostages, according to Israeli tallies.

"We don't want to eat from it, but we feed the children, for the

not eat it, we are forced to eat it against our will, we are helpless," he told Reuters. Israel has faced growing in-

smell, cattle and animals would

ternational pressure to lift an aid blockade that it imposed in March after the collapse of a US-backed ceasefire that had halted fighting for two months.

Israel has accused agencies. including the United Nations of allowing large quantities of aid to fall into the hands of Hamas militants, who it accuses of seizing supplies intended for civilians and using them for their own forces. Hamas denies the allegation and accuses Israel of using starvation as a weapon against the population, most of whom have been displaced at least once during the 19-monthold conflict.



Business



India a strong economic power, infrastructure is key... We have taken a decision to convert 25,000-30,000 km twolane highways in the country into four lanes for ₹8-10 lakh crore

NITIN GADKARI UNION MINISTER

To make

RIL WITHDRAWS 'OP SINDOOR' TRADEMARK APPLICATION

Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) withdrawn its trademark application for the term 'Operation Sindoor'- the codename for India's military strikes in Pakistan stating that it was inadvertently filed by a junior employee without authorisation. Reliance said it has no intention of trademarking the phrase which is a now a part of the national consciousness and a symbol Indian bravery.



We have a target of 1 crore households for **PM Surya Ghar** Yojana, out of which 51 lakh

applications have come in. Out of this, 12 lakh people have already received it and we are trying to complete our target of 1 crore households in next two years

JITENDRA SRIVASTAVA REC CHAIRMAN AND MD

While coal remains our mainstay in meeting India's expanding energy needs in the near term, our

plans include a proactive role in building a greener and more sustainable future. This is in consonance with our commitment to become the country's integrated energy provide

PM PRASAD | CIL CHAIRMAN

A greater focus on building high-performance compute infrastructure,

scalable power and cooling systems and efficient networking infrastructure, with a reconsideration of policy framework, can make India a hotspot for AI-powered data centre development in the coming years

NEHA AGGARWAL | PARTNER, DELOITTE INDIA

Q4 **RESULTS**

Ap profit falls

New Delhi: Asian paints(Ap) reported a 45 per cent decline in consolidated net profit to ₹700.83 crore for the March quarter due to muted demand and increased competitive intensity in the market. The company had logged a net profit of ₹1,275.30 crore in the January-March period last year, according to a regulatory filing by Asian Paints. Its revenue from operations slipped 4.25 per cent to ₹8,358.91 crore in the March 2025 quarter.

L&T profit rises

New Delhi: Infrastructure major Larsen & Toubro (L&T) Thursday reported a 25 per cent increase in consolidated profit after tax (PAT) to ₹5,497 crore for the quarter ended on March 31, 2025, on the back of higher revenues. The company had posted a PAT of ₹4,396 crore for the year-ago period, L&T said in a filing to BSE. Revenue from operations increased to ₹74,392.28 crore over ₹67,078.68 crore in the year-ago period,

Canara Bank profit surges

the filing said.

Mumbai: Canara Bank Thursday reported a 28 per cent jump in its consolidated net profit to ₹5.070 crore for the March quarter, helped by a dip in provisions and a rise in noncore income. The public sector bank had reported a net profit of ₹3,951 crore in the year-ago period. Its post-tax profit for FY25 rose to ₹17,540 crore from ₹15,279 crore in FY24. Despite 11 per cent loan growth, its core net interest income declined by 1.44 per cent to ₹9,442 crore in the reporting quarter, hit by a 0.25 per cent narrowing in the net interest margin to 2.80 per cent.

REC Ltd profit grows

New Delhi: State-owned REC Ltd Thursday reported 5.66 per cent rise in net profit to ₹4,309.98 crore for January-March quarter of FY25 driven by higher revenues. The power sector financier had posted a net profit of ₹4,079.09 crore in the January-March period of 2023-24. Total income increased to ₹15,348.37 crore in the fourth quarter of FY25 from ₹12,706.66 crore in the same period a year ago, according to an exchange filing by the company.

VOLATILE TRADE ₹5L-Cr wiped out ₹ slips steepest in two and a half yrs

Investor's wealth dips amid Indo-Pak tension and US tariff fears

CHANGE: -411.97 (-0.51%)

80,334.81

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 8: The stock market witnessed a bearish trend Thursday due to the ongoing tensions at India Pakistan border. Investors' wealth declined by ₹5 lakh crore. The BSE Sensex dropped by 411.97 points or 0.51 per cent to settle at 80,334.81. The NSE Nifty closed lower by 140.60 points or 0.58 per cent to 24,273.80

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed stocks has severely dipped to ₹4,18,50,596.04 crore (\$4.93 trillion). India neutralised a Pakistani air defence system in Lahore as tensions between the two sides mounted amid fears of a wider conflict.

From the Sensex firms, Eternal, Mahindra & Mahindra, Maruti, Bajaj Finance, Tata Steel, Asian Paints, Bharti Airtel, Bajaj Finsery, Power Grid and State Bank of India were in the decline list. However, HCL Technologies, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Axis Bank, Titan, Tata Motors, Infosys and Tata Consultancy Services were the gainers.

"The Indian equity market experienced profit-booking by the end of the trading day due to escalating tensions between India and Pakistan, marked by increased cross-border exchanges. The FOMC policy

BSE SENSEX

9:15 am

+1.05 %

+0.81 %

+0.80 %

+0.69 %

+0.21 %

Previous

80,746.78

HCL TECH

AXIS BANK

KOTAK BANK

TATA MOTORS

MAY 8, 2025

Today's Closing 80,334.81

drops by

24,273.80

TOP GAINERS •

-3.14 % -2.85 % TOP -2.04 % MARUTI -1.86 % **BAJAJ FINANCE** TATA STEEL -1.81 %

Pakistan Stock Exchange plunges by over 6%

Karachi: The Pakistan Stock Exchange plunged by over 6 per cent Thursday with trading halted for an hour after rumours of escalation in military action by India near Karachi. Although the rumours were unfounded, the benchmark KSE100 index tumbled 6,948.73 points, or 6.32 per cent, to 1,03,060.30, before the trading was halted. Trading resumed with Fatima Bucha of AKD Securities confirming the situation on the floor had calmed down a bit. "But the situation could get worse as investors are panicking due to the geopolitical situation," she said. "No one is sure what is going to happen and how and if Pakistan will respond to India's aggression." The downward trajectory of the index was largely driven by negative contributions from key stocks such as cement, energy, bank, and technology, which collectively dragged the index down. Meanwhile the government has taken measures to keep its foreign exchange reserves stabilised. It has imposed a 60-day ban on importing and exporting precious metals, jewellery, and gemstones from Thursday.

meeting provided little reassurance, as the FED expressed concerns that aggressive US tariffs could fuel inflation and raise unemployment," Vinod

Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

The BSE midcap gauge dropped 1.90 per cent and smallcap index declined 1.05 per cent.

Benchmark indices closed sharply amid escalating tensions

with the neighbouring country. Market traded in a narrow range till noon, before plunging lower on reports of further escalation in the tensions

SATISH CHANDRA ALURI | ANALYST, LEMONN MARKETS DESK

"Indian equities ended lower on Thursday, with the Nifty declining nearly 0.6 per cent to close at 24,274 amid a volatile session triggered by rising tensions between India and Pakistan," Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Research, Wealth Management, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd. said.

dices, realty dips 2.60 per cent, oil & gas 411.97 points to (1.98 per cent), auto close at 80,334.81 (1.92 per cent), power (1.86 per cent), Nifty plunges 140.60 points, close at utilities (1.85 per cent), commodities (1.67 per cent), consum-

Among sectoral in-

er discretionary (1.58 per cent) and services (1.57 per cent). IT and BSE Focused IT were

the only gainers. As many as 2.548 stocks declined while 1,349 advanced and 135 remained unchanged on the BSE.

Indian currency settles 81 paise lower at 85.58 vs dollar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

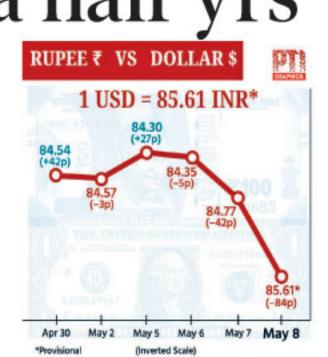
Mumbai, May 8: Rupee saw its steepest single-day fall in more than two-and-a-half years and settled 81 paise lower at 85.58 against the US dollar Thursday, weighed down by heightened geopolitical tensions between India and Pakistan. Forex traders said investors

resorted to risk aversion in the domestic markets after the Pakistani military attempted a number of military targets in northern and western India using drones and missiles that were neutralised by Indian defence system. Besides, heightened geopolit-

ical risks, positive US dollar index and a rise in crude oil prices also weighed on the rupee. At the interbank foreign

exchange, the domestic unit opened at 84.61 and moved between an intra-day high of 84.52 and a low of 85.77 against the greenback. The unit ended the session sharply lower at 85.58, registering a fall of 81 paise over its previous closing level.

This was rupee's steepest single-day fall since September 22, 2022, when it had closed with a



loss of 83 paise. On Wednesday. the rupee depreciated 42 paise to close at 84.77 against the US dollar, following India's military strikes against terrorist camps in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir. "We expect the rupee to trade

with a negative bias on the strong dollar and ongoing geopolitical tensions between India and Pakistan. Any further escalation may further pressurise the rupee. "However, FII inflows may support the rupee at lower levels. Traders may take cues from weekly unemployment claims data from the US USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of 85.20 to 86," said Anuj Choudhary – Research Analyst at Mirae Asset Sharekhan.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading higher by 0.46 per cent at 100.07.

India-Chile ink revised trade pact



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 8: India and Chile Thursday signed Terms of Reference (ToR) to negotiate a comprehensive free trade agreement. The two countries implemented a preferential trade agreement (PTA) in 2006 and are now planning to widen its scope for a comprehensive economic partnership agreement (CEPA).

An expanded PTA was subsequently signed in September 2016, and became effective from May 16, 2017.

To deepen their economic engagement, both sides expressed their intention to negotiate a CEPA to unlock the full potential of their trade and commercial relationship, boosting employment, facilitating investment promotion,

and cooperation and exports, the commerce ministry said. The CEPA aims to build up-

on the existing PTA between the two nations and seeks to encompass a broader range of sectors, including digital services, investment, promotion, and cooperation to boost MSME (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises), and critical minerals.

They emphasised the importance of enhancing the existing trade framework to unlock new opportunities for growth. In this spirit, the two leaders acknowledged the signing of the mutually agreed Terms of Reference (ToR) with a vision to establish a deeper economic integration.

India and Chile signed the ToR for a CEPA this morning, marking a significant advancement in their bilateral trade relations. The ToR were duly signed by Juan Angulo, Ambassador of Chile to India and Vimal Anand, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, and the Chief Negotiator for CEPA.

Both sides shared views on strengthening bilateral relations during the first round scheduled for May 26 to 30, 2025, in New Delhi.

Coal sector gets boost for monsoon

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 8: The country will not face any shortage of coal in the upcoming monsoon season, as the government is well prepared to meet the demand across various sectors, including the power sector, Coal Minister G Kishan Reddy said Thursday.

Coal production usually faces hindrances during the monsoon season. As a result the output from mines is lower, which consequently affects the dispatch to power plants.

"There will be no shortage (of coal) this monsoon as the ministry is fully ready...Coal stock for a month is ready with us... we will work with dedication to provide coal to the nation. We will not let the country grapple with coal shortages," the minister told reporters on the sidelines of an event here.

The minister took a meeting with all the PSUs Wednesday, and said that the government is committed to meet the demand for coal from various sectors, including power. He also stressed that there was no shortage of coal in the nation and added that coal imports have come down and will fur-



ther reduce in the coming days. The country's domestic coal production increased by 3.6 per cent to 81.57 million tonnes (MT) in April. India's domestic coal output was 78.71 MT in the corresponding month of the preceding fiscal.

"The overall coal production in India during April 2025 reached 81.57 MT (provisional), marking an increase over the 78.71 MT produced in the corresponding period of the previous year," the coal ministry had said in a statement.

Production from captive and other mines during the last month stood at 14.51 MT (provisional), registering an increase from 11.46 MT recorded in the same period a year ago.

This surge highlights the

growing contribution of captive mining to the country's overall coal output.

As on April 30, the coal stock

reached 125.76 MT in FY26 as compared to 102.41 MT during the corresponding period of the previous year. At Coal India Ltd (CIL) alone, the total coal stock stood at 105 MT in financial year 2025-26, marking a 22.10 per cent growth from 86.60 MT recorded in the same period last year.

The coal ministry remains committed to achieving sustainable growth, improving coal availability, and reducing dependence on imports. With the positive momentum, the coal sector continues to play a pivotal role in powering India's growth story.

TPCODL asks users to settle pending enforcement dues

Bhubaneswar: The Second National Lok Adalat of 2025 is scheduled to be held May10, 2025, under the aegis of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA). The Lok Adalat enables consumers to resolve pre-litigation enforcement cases through amicable. out-of-court settlements.

The Lok Adalat will be conducted under the jurisdiction of District Legal Services Authorities (DLSA) in Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur. Angul, and Nayagarh. It will cover enforcement cases related to inspections carried out between 30th June 2020 and 31st March 2024.

TPCODL urges all consumers with pending enforcement dues in these districts to participate in the Lok Adalat and settle their cases through applicable waivers and flexible payment options.

"The Lok Adalat serves an effective platform for the resolution of pending enforcement cases. We encourage all eligible consumers to come forward and avail this opportunity." said Arvind Singh, CEO, TPCODL.

Rural markets drive growth; metros drag volume

FMCG volume growth slows to 5.1% in first quater

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 8: The volume growth of India's FMCG industry has slowed down in the March quarter to 5.1 per cent, driven by increased consumer purchases of small-value packs, according to the latest report from data analytics firm NielsenIQ. Volume growth is slowing

across categories, and non-food segments are still outpacing food in the FMCG sector. The industry reported a volume growth of 6.1 per cent in the March quarter of 2024. Moreover, continuing the

trends from the last five consecutive quarters, the rural market, which is mainly a small economy pack units market, continued to grow faster than

the urban market. However, its growth has also slowed down. "In Q1 2025, rural consumer

demand grew at a slower pace

compared to Q1 2024, yet it remained four times faster than growth in urban areas, where consumption further decelerated. Rural markets continued to outperform urban counterparts across most regions of India,' it said.

The FMCG industry recorded higher unit growth than volume growth in the March quarter, indicating a consumer preference shift toward smaller pack sizes, according to the latest NielsenIQ FMCG quarterly snapshot. In addition, small players

 mostly unbranded - have gained ground, with double-digit volume growth, helped by the resurgence of the rural market, inflation, and changing market dynamics. Overall, the FMCG sector

reported an 11 per cent yearon-year growth for the March quarter, in which volume growth contributed 5.1 per cent along with a 5.6 per cent increase in prices. Besides sales volume through traditional trade,

which includes kirana and

neighbourhood shops, has in-

creased. In the metro market, quick-commerce also strength-

"Food consumption growth slowed to 4.9 per cent in Q1 2025 from 6 per cent in Q4 2024, primarily due to decreased volumes in staple categories like edible oils and Palm Oil, which saw price increases," it said. On a year-on-year basis food

ened its position.

consumption growth saw a slight improvement from 4.4 per cent in Q1, 2024. In the March quarter, the food sector reported 7.2 per cent



per cent of the corresponding period a year ago.

Similarly, the Home and personal care (HPC) categories experienced a consumption growth of 5.7 per cent in Q1 2025, driven by higher demand in rural areas. However, this growth is still lower than the 10.8 per cent volume growth in the corresponding quarter of the previous year.

While "Over-the-counter categories, such as rubefacients and analgesics, saw a 14 per

The FMCG sector is showing mixed signals --- while volume growth is slowing across categories, non-food segments are still outpacing food. Inflation is easing overall, but high edible oil prices are keeping

ROOSEVELT DSOUZA | HEAD OF CUSTOMER SUCCESS, FMCG, NIELSENIQ INDIA

staples expensive

cent growth in value sales in Q1 2025, driven by a 10.4 per cent increase in prices," the report said. E-commerce continues to strengthen its presence, significantly impacting the share of offline channels, including modern trade (such as malls) and traditional trade.

"This growth is largely volume-driven, supported by increasing online shopper penetration, more purchase occasions, and increasing basket sizes," it said.

In eight metros, e-com reported a 13 per cent increase in the top 8 metros (based on data collected from 72 categories), while its all-India urban

growth was at 5 per cent.

March quarter also witnessed "steady gains" for small manufacturers, which are leading the way in driving consumption, supported by steady volume growth in both Food and HPC categories, it said.

"In contrast, larger players are experiencing slower volume growth, which has halved compared to Q4 2024. Low base, rural growth, and easing out inflation are helping small players to outpace FMCG growth,' the report said.

Small FMCG manufacturers having a turnover below ₹100 crore per year reported a volume growth of 11.9 per cent, and mid players with a turnover between ₹100 to ₹1,000 crore reported a volume growth of 6.4 per cent. Large manufacturers up to ₹5,000 crore recorded a 5.3 per cent volume growth.

However, large FMCG makers, the giants with over ₹5,000 crore turnover, had 1.6 per cent volume growth, which is much lower than the 8.1 per cent volume growth. Though they still control 46 per cent of the sales.

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 Dhumal 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 evac-

"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 Dhumal 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.

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 Praggananandhaa 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 Abdusattrov 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 comfort-

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**



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.

boys under 16 category Jagat's achievement is a testament to his growing prowess in tennis. A Class 10 student at DAV

Currently ranked 280 in the

School, CDA Sector 6, Cuttack, Jagat credits his success to his parents, Biranchi Narayan Pati and RenubalaTripathy, 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

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 par-

ticipated 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.

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 Arnav 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, Telan-Bihar's A and B teams gana'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 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 Vaibhay

Compound archers in semis; recurve teams lose in Shanghai WC

PCB IN HUDDLE

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

terror attack in which 26 people were killed. Tonight's match aside,

players edgy about the security situation due to the military escalation

signed up for the league, are "split on whether to remain in Pakistan and

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

league. Other high-profile stars competing in the PSL are David Warner

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.

This Khelo India initiative

competitive sports to the

school and college level.

It not only enhances the

capabilities of the youth,

but also serves as a great

platform to scout talent.

VAIBHAV DANGE | FOUNDER, FEAI

move

Therefore, the inclusion of

e-sports is a very welcome

Dange said, "It's a great initia-

tive and I must thank and give

a shoutout to Sports Authority

of India and Government of Bi-

har, 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

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 pre-

pare for the global showpiece

event in Saudi Arabia."

the last few years."

has helped India take

(Karachi Kings), Jason Holder (Islamabad United), and Rassie van der

Ravi Bopara and Alexandra Hartley are also involved in the ongoing

between the two neighbours. A report said English players, who have

play cricket". "The England and Wales Cricket Board and Professional

the league's future this season looks bleak at present with foreign

and Rawalpindi so far, are in retaliation to the April 22 Pahalgam

drone and missile strikes, which have targetted among others Lahore

Karachi: A Pakistan Super League

foreign players participating in the

event weighed their options, while

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

(PSL) match was rescheduled,

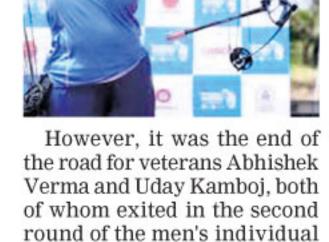
the PCB went into a huddle on



Yadav emerged as one of the standout performers of the day, reaching the men's compound semifinals after a tense quarterfinal shoot-off win over Denmark's Mathias Fullerton.

Locked at 147-147, the fourth-seeded Yadav held his nerve to edge the shoot-off 10*-10, by hitting his arrow closer to the centre. He will now face world No 1 Mike Schloesser of the Netherlands for a place in the final.

In the women's compound section, third-seeded Madhura continued her impressive comeback by upsetting multiple World Cup gold medallist and teammate Jyothi Surekha Vennam 142-141 in the quarterfinals. Competing in only her second World Cup since 2022, Madhura will take on Turkey's Hazal Burun in the semifinal, needing one more win to confirm her maiden World Cup medal.



compound competition. In the team event, the seventh-seeded Indian men's recurve trio of Dhiraj Bommadevara, Atanu Das and Tarundeep Rai lost the bronze medal match 3-5 to the USA earlier in

the day.

They narrowly lost the first set 56-57, with an arrow in the 8-ring proving costly. The American trio of Christian Stoddard, Brady Ellison and Jack Williams then took a commanding 4-0 lead after dominating the second set 56-52. The Indians faltered under pressure, shooting two arrows into the 7-ring and mixing two 9s and two 10s, including one X (closest to the centre).

PSG to clash 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 Ky-

lian 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.

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-

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.

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 follow-

ing 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

nohit 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.

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