

## Indian climber dies while descending from Everest



**Kathmandu:** A 45-year-old Indian climber died on Mt Everest after showing signs of altitude sickness while descending from the summit point of the world's highest peak, according to a media report Friday. The deceased has been identified as Subrata Ghosh from West Bengal. Ghosh is the second foreigner to die on the 8,848.86 metres-high Mt Everest this season. The Himalayan Times newspaper reported. Bodhraj Bhandari, Managing Director at Snowy Horizon Treks, said that Ghosh died just below the Hillary Step, near the summit point of Mt Everest Saturday, according to the paper.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Delivering pizza in Mumbai is tougher than being the PM. One needs to know at least 8 to 10 languages

# India to divert Indus water

Having put the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) with Pakistan in abeyance in the wake of the Pahalgam terrorist attack, India is now considering to expand the Ranbir canal on the Chenab and is also weighing other projects to divert the waters of the Indus, Chenab and Jhelum to three northern Indian states. The IWT is regarded as one of the most successful water-sharing agreements globally, having endured four wars. Under this treaty, India is primarily limited to developing low-impact hydropower projects on the three rivers designated to Pakistan: the Indus, Chenab, and Jhelum. In contrast, India has the freedom to use the waters of three other rivers—the Sutlej, Beas, and Ravi.



A view of the Uri-II hydroelectric project dam on the Jhelum River, which flows from Jammu & Kashmir into Pakistan occupied Kashmir, near Uri in Baramulla district

**New Delhi, May 16:** India is considering plans to dramatically increase the water it draws from a major river that feeds Pakistani farms downstream, as part of retaliatory action for the Pahalgam terrorist attack that claimed the lives of 26 tourists, Reuters reported. New Delhi has 'put in abeyance' its participation in the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960, which governs usage of the Indus river system in the wake of the terrorist attack. After suspending India's participation in the treaty, Prime Minister Narendra Modi ordered officials to expedite planning and execution of projects on the Chenab, Jhelum and Indus

rivers, three bodies of water in the Indus system that are designated primarily for Pakistan's use, six people told Reuters. One of the key plans under discussion involves doubling to 120km the length of the Ranbir canal on the Chenab, which runs through India to Pakistan's agricultural powerhouse of Punjab, two of the people said. The canal was built in the 19th century, long before the treaty was signed. India is permitted to draw a limited amount of water from the Chenab for irrigation, but an expanded canal would allow it to

divert 150 cubic metres of water per second, up from about 40 cubic metres currently, four people said, citing official discussions and documents they had seen. Modi said in a fiery speech this week that "water and blood cannot flow together," though he didn't refer to the treaty. Pakistan has had a preview of the kind of pressure it could face from India: Water at a key receiving point in Pakistan briefly fell by as much as 90% in early May after India started maintenance work on some Indus projects. Alongside the plans to ex-

pand Ranbir canal, India is also considering projects that would likely reduce the flow of water into Pakistan from rivers allocated to that country, according to two government documents seen by Reuters and interviews with five people familiar with the matter. One document, an undated note prepared by a government company for officials considering irrigation plans, suggests that water from the Indus, Chenab and Jhelum "potentially be distributed into rivers" in three northern Indian states.

# Lightning claims nine lives in state

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, May 16:** At least nine people, including six women, were killed and some others injured in separate incidents of lightning strikes across the state Friday amid thunderstorms, officials said. While three persons died in Koraput district, two each died in Jajpur and Ganjam districts, and one each in Dhenkanal and Gajapati districts, they said. Three women lost their lives and an elderly man was critically injured in a lightning strike at Paridiguda village in Laxmipur police station area in Koraput district Friday afternoon. According to sources, the victims, who were members of the same family, had taken shelter in a makeshift hut while working in the fields as heavy rain and strong winds swept through the area. A lightning struck the hut, killing three women on the spot, a police officer said.

The deceased have been identified as Brudhi Mandinga (60), her granddaughter Kasa Mandinga (18), and Ambika Kashi (35) of Kumbharguda village. Brudhi and Kasa Mandinga were residents of Paridiguda, he said. Another 65-year-old man, identified as Hingu Mandinga, sustained serious injuries and was rushed to Lakshimpur Community Health Centre, where he is currently undergoing treatment, the officer added.

Officials at the District Emergency Office said that financial assistance will be provided to the bereaved families as per the existing government guidelines. In Jajpur district, two boys were killed in lightning strikes as nor'wester rain lashed Dharmasala area. The deceased have been identified as Tare Hembrum (15) and Tukul Chatter (12) from Burusahi village in Jenapur police station area, he said. According to the villagers, the duo was standing on the verandah of a kuccha house as thunderstorms lashed the area in the evening. They died on the spot after lightning struck them during rainfall. Police sent the bodies to a hospital for autopsy. An unnatural death case has been registered in connection with the incident and further investigation is underway, the officer said. In Ganjam district, a Class VII student, Om Prakash Pradhan, was killed when he was struck by lightning in Barida village in Kabisuryanagar tehsil. A 23-year-old woman died in a similar incident while collecting mangoes from an orchard in Belaguntha area. In Dhenkanal, Surushi Bishwal (40) died after being struck by lightning at Kusunandia village under Dashipur panchayat. A woman died after being struck by lightning while she was unloading bricks from a tractor trailer in Mohana area of Gajapati.

## OPERATION SINDOOR

# ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ

### ପ୍ରଧାନମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ

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OIPR-15001/13/0659/2526

DADLS-23

# leisure



## EMILIA JONES TO STAR IN TONY

CODA actor Emilia Jones has become the latest addition to the star cast of *Tony*. Directed by Matt Johnson, the upcoming project from A24 is a biopic on chef and author Anthony Bourdain. Written by Todd Bartels and Lou Howe, Tony also stars Leo Woodall.

## CHRIS BROWN ARRESTED FOR ASSAULTING MUSIC PRODUCER

Singer Chris Brown was taken into police custody in Manchester, England, for allegedly hitting music producer Abe Diaw with a tequila bottle at a London nightclub back in 2023. The arrest comes weeks before the singer's Breezy Bowl XX Tour.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Today, you will turn an attentive ear to your inner voice. As a result, you will be able to execute all your plans with precision. Besides being cheerful, you will even take disappointments with a pinch of salt. Why just today, says Ganesha, you can have this rare quality for keeps.

**TAURUS**  
As a manager, you may be able to outclass your colleagues by a great margin, predicts Ganesha. You will soften your approach with time and move towards a more democratic style of decision-making rather than the arbitrary protocol that you are used to.

**GEMINI**  
You will receive unprecedented love and affection from all your friends and family member today. It is a good day to conduct important personal or professional meetings. A lot of joy and happiness awaits, says Ganesha.

**CANCER**  
You may donate to a charity organisation, for your mental happiness. On the job front, stick to your routine, rather than taking a new bold step, says Ganesha. A good day on the financial front.

**LEO**  
A fun-filled day awaits you. You will enjoy all the activities that you take up today. At the work-place too a progressive day awaits you. You will be worried about the fruits of your labour, but they are likely to be sweeter than you thought they will be, says Ganesha.

**VIRGO**  
You will pen down the things to be done today. However, Ganesha suggests that just making a note of them is not enough; you need to set practical goals according to priority. Moreover, Ganesha warns that items you mark on the top of the list will demand immediate action.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesha says that today you shall make your competitors and enemies envious of your success in business. Beware, as they shall try to hurt or put down your reputation in varied ways. Instead of having a fight with them you should try to be politically correct and take care of matters using your intelligence.

**SCORPIO**  
Negative thoughts are likely to surround you today, try to avoid it. You may feel lonely and left-out when the day begins. However, a long list of activities and responsibilities will keep you occupied throughout the day. There are possibilities that you may land up in tricky situations, but you have the knack of handling things gracefully.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Today is a curiously interesting day for you. While you are always well-groomed, today, you may take that extra bit of care to look best and attract a lot of praise for that too, especially from those glam hounds around you. That immaculate charm you are carrying today will enhance your business fortunes.

**CAPRICORN**  
A penny saved is a penny earned. Your strong belief in this will make you scrutinise your requirements and rearrange the priority list, so that you know where and how to utilise the resources. Your choice of friends will represent your approach and outlook towards life. Ganesha advises you to choose your friends wisely.

**AQUARIUS**  
There is nothing like having a good time with your brothers and sisters. Generally, you plan out your routine and activities by yourself, but it is a different day today. Your siblings will make plans for you and you will just go along with the flow, predicts Ganesha.

**PISCES**  
Some unknown fear could haunt you today. You will direct your energies to discovering the source of your worries and eliminate them. Lovers will find some precious time to cozy up with their partners. You will find yourself going out to the movies or to a concert. On the whole it will be a productive day for you, says Ganesha.

## Unrealistic beauty standards in showbiz

# Ananya bats for authenticity

**Mumbai:** Actress Ananya Panday recently opened up about the film industry's role in promoting unrealistic beauty standards, emphasising the importance of authenticity.

During a conversation with a YouTuber and social media influencer, Ananya revealed how she faced body shaming both for being too skinny and later for her natural curves, showing that women are constantly judged.

The *Call Me Bae* actress further stressed on how films have set an unrealistic beauty standard. She said, "I feel like it's our fault also, because we have set unrealistic beauty standards in the films that we've... You know, I, as an actress, feel like

sometimes I do put that messaging out there in the films that I've done or the songs that I've done that, oh, you're all beautiful, you wake up in the morning, and your hair's done, and it's not true."

"And you kind of have to balance that out somewhere. You have to talk about it, and you have to tell people that that's not the reality. We also don't look like that. And I try to balance that out, maybe, by not being like that when I'm, you know, off-camera," Ananya added.



## Rashmika's sunshine

**Mumbai:** Actress Rashmika Mandanna has disclosed the one thing that can brighten up her whole day.

According to the *Animal* actress, the right scent makes her go hmmm.

She took to her social media and posted a couple of jaw-dropping clicks in a red velvet dress. Rashmika looked captivating in messy hair, with huge hoop earrings.

For the makeup, the diva opted for a red-toned lip color, with matching eye shadow and blush.

We could also see Rashmika spraying herself with a good fragrance.

"Is it just me, or do you also agree that the right scent can brighten up your whole day? I don't know, it just makes me go hmmm... that's sooo nice!" Rashmika captioned the post.

In another update, Rashmika performed the mahurat clap for the upcoming film of rumoured beau Vijay Deverakonda's brother Anand Deverakonda's next titled, *Production No. 32* for now. He will be sharing the screen with Vaishnavi Chaitanya in his next.

Work-wise, Rashmika is currently occupied with *Thama*, co-starring Ayushmann Khurrana. The project is going to be a part of Maddock Films' successful horror-comedy universe consisting of *Stree*, *Stree2*, *Munjya*, and *Bhediya*. Rashmika's promising lineup further includes *Kubera*, *Pushpa 3*, *The Girlfriend*, and *Rainbow*.

## Malaika links dance with storytelling

**Mumbai:** Actress Malaika Arora, who has joined the panel of *Realme Hip Hop India Season 2*, strongly feels that dance is a powerful form of storytelling.

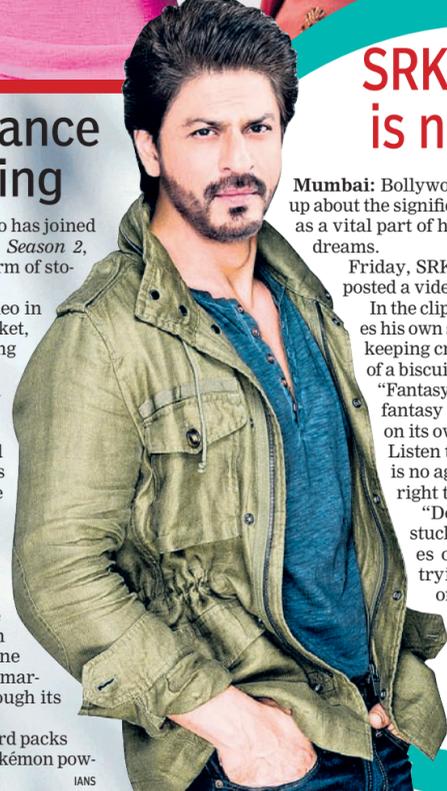
Amazon MX Player released an imaginative video in collaboration with Pokémon Trading Card Game Pocket, featuring Malaika, who has joined this season's judging panel for the first time.

Malaika said: "There's something truly magical about the world of Pokémon - the adventure, the action, the joy of discovery. Pair that with the energy of hip hop, and it just clicks. This was such a fun and imaginative concept to shoot, and it really captures how two different worlds can come together to create something unforgettable."

"I've always believed that dance is a powerful form of storytelling, and this one's for every kid who loves the world of Pokémon and every dancer chasing that stage," she added.

Amazon MX Player has added a fresh twist to the show with a first-of-a-kind, creative collaboration with Pokémon. The collaboration marks a milestone in the service's continued commitment to building marketing-first partnerships with marquee brands through its flagship IPs.

The video reimagines opening digital Pokémon card packs as a dramatic hip-hop dance battle, with signature Pokémon powers fuelling every move.



## SRK: Fantasy is necessary

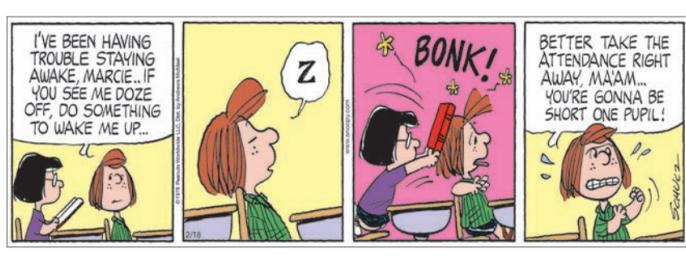
**Mumbai:** Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan opened up about the significance of fantasies in life, describing them as a vital part of human experience that goes beyond mere dreams.

Friday, SRK's close friend and filmmaker Farah Khan posted a video of the actor talking about his fantasies.

In the clip, the Pathaan actor shared that he, too, cherishes his own set of fantasies, highlighting their importance in keeping creativity and passion alive. In the video, as part of a biscuit commercial, Shah Rukh could be heard saying, "Fantasy, what do you think about fantasy? In my opinion, fantasy is one step ahead of dreams. Fantasy is dancing on its own. Dreams are incomplete; fantasy is complete. Listen to it to live, friend. Fantasy is necessary. There is no age for fantasy, no life stage. Every person has a right to fantasy. I too have some fantasies."

"Does anyone have any doubt? When you are stuck in traffic on the road, trapped in the clutches of the bosses, sitting at the study table, trying to wake up, or in the illogical logic of complicated relationships, you order the fantasy app's OTPM, fly the kite of thought with a rocket, go into fantasy and fight the aliens, or get stuck in some other universe." SRK added.

### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

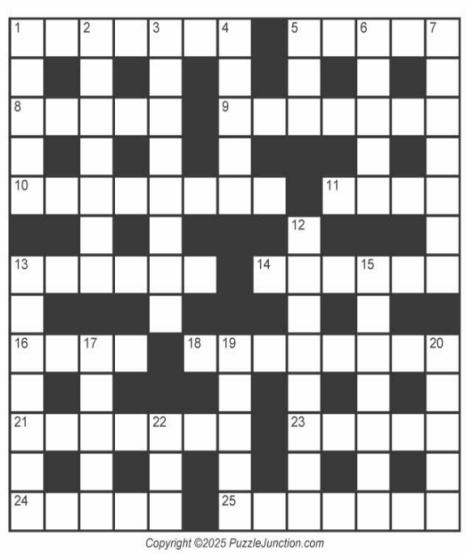


### BREVITY



### FUN POST

### CROSSWORD



- Copyright ©2025 PuzzleJunction.com
- Across**
- 1 Herring snacks
  - 5 Furious
  - 8 Humpback, e.g.
  - 9 Forceful
  - 10 Gulfweed, or the sea it inhabits
  - 11 Widespread
  - 13 Washday item
  - 14 Guiding light
  - 16 Verdant
  - 18 Fender bender
  - 21 Hotel sign
  - 23 Pocket change
  - 24 Out of practice
  - 25 Cinema
  - 6 Kind of ray
  - 7 Mexican peninsula
  - 12 Average
  - 13 Venezuelan statesman
  - 15 Pharmacy
  - 17 Factions
  - 19 Underground chamber
  - 20 Small sample
  - 22 Opponent's vote
- Down**
- 1 Fuzzy fruits
  - 2 Grassland
  - 3 Poshness
  - 4 Bubbly drinks
  - 5 Barley bristle

### SUDOKU

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

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

### SOLUTIONS

**CROSSWORD**

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

**SUDOKU**

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

The Nayapalli police Friday arrested a man for allegedly duping scores of aspirants from different parts of the state, including the City, to the tune of lakhs of rupees on the pretext of arranging them high-paying jobs. DCP Jagmohan Meena said the police have so far have received four complaints against Jharpada resident Sobhan Ranjan Behera wherein he had defrauded the unsuspecting job-seekers of around ₹60 lakh. "Our investigation is on. We suspect he had duped more people during his con operation in the past two years," Meena said, while appealing the victims to come forward and lodge complaints. Meena said Sobhan, who is in his early 40s, opened an employment consultancy firm, 'Sanjoga Consultancy', in Jharpada area in 2023. His lid was blown off when Boudh native Debabrata Karna lodged a complaint with the Nayapalli police March 23, 2025 alleging that he had paid Sobhan ₹6 lakh in 2023 for a plum job. However, later Sobhan kept avoiding him on flimsy reasons whenever he inquired about the job. DCP Meena said even when the police were investigating the complaint, another job-seeker Biswaranjan Dash approached the Mancheswar police Friday alleging that Sobhan had duped him of ₹15 lakh. "We also received two more similar complaints against Sobhan, totaling a fraud of around ₹39 lakh," Meena said. The DCP said in all these instances, Sobhan had followed the similar modus operandi in cheating the victims. The accused was booked under Sections 318 (4), 38, and 36 (3) of BNS following his arrest and produced before a local court for remand.

# downtown

# CM: OMC a symbol of economic growth



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, May 16:** Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Friday stated that the Odisha Mining Corporation (OMC) has emerged as a model profit-making public sector undertaking (PSU), not just within the state but across the country.

Speaking at the 70th Foundation Day celebrations of OMC here, Majhi described the corporation as a driving force behind Odisha's development.

He highlighted OMC's significant contribution to the economic prosperity of the state and its vital role in the overall economic growth of the nation.

The chief minister noted that OMC began its journey in the 1960s with a modest turnover of just ₹1 crore.

"Today, it has achieved a turnover of ₹23,600 crore for the financial year 2024-25—generated solely through the production and sale of minerals," the CM said.

He further emphasised that OMC now ranks among the top five mineral-producing companies in India.

Majhi outlined the state government's vision of transforming Odisha into a mixed economy, with a stronger focus on the manufacturing sector.

He pointed out that while the state

is rich in raw materials required for manufacturing, previous governments failed to capitalise on this industrial potential.

To support industrialisation, Majhi said, over 80 per cent of raw materials are now being supplied to industries operating within the state through a long-term linkage policy.

The chief minister also stressed the importance of labour in the state's progress, stating, "The backbone of our development is our working brothers and sisters. If the workers are empowered, Odisha will be empowered."

He expressed gratitude to the workforce for their contribution to the state's strength and prosperity and called for the deployment of more manpower alongside machinery at worksites.

As a part of the celebrations, Majhi reopened the Dubuna and Barbil iron ore mines, which have an annual production capacity of 3 million tonnes of iron ore and 0.05 million tonnes of manganese. The Dubuna mine itself holds reserves of 25.77 million tonnes of iron ore and 2.6 million tonnes of manganese.

Additionally, the chief minister inaugurated a 900 kw peak solar plant at OMC's Koinda mining area. He also launched four IT modules - Logistics Management System (LMS), OMC Fi-

nance Management System (OFMS), OMC Plot Land Utilisation System (OPLUS), and OMC Recruitment Management System (ORMS). "We should think of setting up some pellet plants to generate employment for the local youth. The OMC need not seek loans as it is a fund-rich PSU," Majhi said.

He also presented awards in three categories — Best Mining Area, Best Mine, and Safe Mine — for the years 2023-24 and 2024-25, recognising top-performing operational mines of OMC.

Highlighting the role of OMC in transforming the industrial sector of Odisha, Steel and Mines Minister Bibhuti Bhushan Jena said, "From today, 18 mines of OMC have become operational. It is not just about producing minerals but is laying the foundation of a strong and self-reliant Odisha. OMC is strengthening the economic growth of Odisha through advanced manufacturing and modern technology."

Development Commissioner Anu Garg said, "By properly utilising our natural resources, we have now come from a weak economy to a middle-income economy. OMC has been performing well for many years. However, we have to engage with new technologies in the process of sustainable development."

# 'Sindoor Yatra' in City

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, May 16:** Hundreds of women took out a 'Sindoor Yatra' here Friday evening to celebrate the success of Operation Sindoor carried out by the Indian armed forces.

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi took part in the procession after flagging it off at Master Canteen Square.

Holding national flags and placards praising Operation Sindoor, the participants, who include students, NCC cadets and Anganwadi workers, marched till RD Women's University here.

Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida, Speaker Surama Padhy, Development Commissioner Anu Garg and Priyadarshini Acharya, wife of Prasant Kumar Satpathy who was killed in the Pahalgam terror attack, participated in the procession.

"Operation Sindoor is not just a name, it is a unique convergence of the courage of the Indian army and our respect for women. We are remembering our brave soldiers through this padayatra," Majhi said.

When an Indian woman wears 'sindoor' on her forehead, she resolves that she will protect her husband and family as a strong shield against all obstacles, he said, adding that the colour of 'sindoor' is red, which is a symbol of victory and also a symbol of danger.

PM Narendra Modi has named this mission Operation Sindoor as the red colour indicates danger for the enemies and victory for the people of India, Majhi said. "Today's padayatra is not just a march,

**Operation Sindoor is not just a name, it is a unique convergence of the courage of the Indian army and our respect for women. We are remembering our brave soldiers through this padayatra**

MOHAN CHARAN MAJHI | CHIEF MINISTER

it is a demonstration of our dedication, courage and strength towards the motherland," the CM stated.

He also lauded Colonel Sofiya Qureshi and Wing Commander Vyomika Singh, who had briefed the media about Operation Sindoor, stating that both of them have become the symbols of women power of India.

"After removing their 'sindoor', the terrorists asked the women to go and tell it to Modi. Like a real father or a brother, PM Modi has given a reply to Pakistan, and they now know the value of 'sindoor'," Parida said.

Earlier in the day, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, Deputy Chief Minister KV Singh Deo, and Panchayati Raj Minister Rabinarayan Naik participated in a Tiranga rally in Sambalpur city. "Today, the world has witnessed the peak of India's military strength. Under the leadership of PM Narendra Modi, Operation Sindoor has redefined India's global image," Pradhan said.

Apart from Bhubaneswar and Sambalpur, such processions and Tiranga yatras were organised in various places across Odisha.

# Skill devpt, edu should go hand-in-hand: Governor

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, May 16:** Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati Friday said skill development and education should go hand-in-hand to create a globally competitive workforce.

To achieve this goal, the Governor said that there is a need for stronger collaboration between educational institutions and skill development centres.

He was speaking during the inauguration of the NSDC's (National Skill Development Corporation) international centre at the Skill Development Institute (SDI) in Bhubaneswar.

Referring to the National Education Policy, 2020, the Governor said that there is also a need to integrate skill training with higher education.

"In today's globalised world, building skills is essential for increasing productivity, driving economic growth, and empowering society," he said.

Kambhampati said that skill development should also include support for entrepreneurship. He added that institutions should not only impart technical skills but also guide students on how to start businesses, get funding, and find opportunities.

# Welfare board for transgenders in state

**Bhubaneswar:** Odisha government has set up the State Transgender Welfare Board to look into the rehabilitation and welfare of transgender persons, according to a notification. Around 30,000 transgender persons live in the state, officials said. The board has been formed in accordance with the provisions of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, said the notification issued by the Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SSEPD) department Thursday. The board, headed by SSEPD Minister Nityananda Gond, will have 12 members and monitor the implementation of schemes adopted for the transgender community, officials said.

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# Summer camps bring fun to children

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, May 16:** The sultry summer months, which often keep people indoors seeking cool comfort, also offer a valuable opportunity for students to explore new interests and develop skills beyond the regular academic curriculum through engaging summer camps.

In a bid to provide children a creative break from studies while helping them discover new hobbies and talents several schools, and other institutions, in the City organised enriching camps to offer students a blend of fun, learning, and creativity.

Mother's Public School in Unit I area here conducted 'Summer Camp 2025' for Class I to VIII students from May 1 to 15.

The camp's theme - Fun and Learn - was reflected in a variety of thoughtfully-planned activities.

"Yoga, aerobics, self-defense, horse riding, swimming, art and craft, origami, pottery, music, dance, storytelling and fitness sessions were among the activities at the camp. Special events like movie and magic show, water day at Wonderla, and sand art sessions were also organised," school sources said.

Coordinated by Satya Ranjan Swain (HOD of Physical Education) and supported by a team of dedicated teachers, the camp was held on the school campus and at nearby outdoor locations as well.

Parents appreciated the safe and energetic environment that helped children build confidence, teamwork, and leadership skills.

As the camp concluded, smiles on students' faces said it all - each child left with new skills, friendships, and cherished memories.

"It was heartening to see our students so engaged and happy," principal Poly Patnaik remarked.

ODM Public School in the City also

# 1.7L WhatsApp groups to aid home studies

**Bhubaneswar:** Around 1.7 lakh WhatsApp groups have been formed under the 'Odisha Summer Learning Programme' to support students studying at home during summer vacation.

According to official sources, over 11 lakh parents have joined these groups which were established under the supervision of teachers.

The programme is being implemented state-wide by the School and Mass Education department with the aim of keeping students from Classes I to VIII in government school schools engaged with their studies during the holidays.

Students are learning through creative educational materials. Teachers are regularly sending videos and learning resources to the respective class groups. Parents then use these materials to teach their children at home.

organised a 15-day summer camp on its campus that concluded Thursday with a grand ceremony.

On the opening ceremony, ODM Education Group chairman and founder Dr Satyabrata Minaketan highlighted the importance of nurturing hidden talents and emphasised reading and activity-based learning. Parents and teachers shared the belief that honouring children's interests lead to better performance and all-round development.

Divided into three sections, students of Class I to VIII enjoyed nature exploration, craft-making, games, and brainstorming exercises.

The camp concluded with a certificate distribution ceremony, where Dr Minaketan awarded meritorious students, recognising their achieve-

The programme covers all government schools in the state, targeting students from Classes I to VIII. Educational content is sent twice a week for students in Classes I to III, and three times a week for those in Classes V to VIII.

For Classes I to III, videos on Odia, Mathematics, and Environmental Science are shared, while for Classes IV and V, lessons in Odia, Mathematics, Environmental Science, and English are provided.

For Classes VI to VIII, videos of Environmental Science, Social Science, and English are provided.

Parents play an active role by guiding their children through the video lessons and activities. They also take photos of their children's completed work and share them in the groups, allowing teachers to monitor progress and provide feedback.

ments and enthusiasm.

Apart from Dr Minaketan, ODM Public School director Indumati Ray, CEO Swoyan Satyendu and teachers were present.

These apart, Empires Hotel in Bhubaneswar is also organising the fourth edition of 'Summer Scape' for kids everyday from 2pm to 7pm from May 17 to 25.

This year's events include a series of structured activities including music, dance, power yoga, art and crafts, magic shows, little master chef sessions, and grooming workshops.

Well known dancer and judge Gaurishankar Dash will grace the event as the honorary 'grand guru'. Along with him, experienced mentors and instructors from the City will also attend the camp.

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NATIONAL DENGUE DAY

Let's act together to eliminate dengue: CM



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 16: On the occasion of National Dengue Day Friday, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi appealed to the citizens to act together for eliminating dengue.

"Dengue can be deadly but its successful prevention is possible. On the occasion of 'National Dengue Day', let us raise awareness about the prevention of this disease, keep the environment clean and seek appropriate treatment if symptoms of the disease appear," said Health Minister Mukesh Mahaling.

Health and Family Welfare department observed the day at conference hall of Combined Health Directorate here Friday with an aim to enhance public awareness and promote effective dengue prevention strategies across the state.

Additional director of Vector Borne Diseases Pravarak Sahu welcomed participants and emphasised the importance of continued public health efforts under the National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme (NVBCP).

Speaking on the occasion,

Director of Public Health Nilakantha Mishra discussed the current epidemiological situation in the state, stressing the need for coordinated source reduction activities to curb the disease. He highlighted the role of widespread awareness in controlling dengue.

Awareness drive at AIIMS

AIIMS Bhubaneswar observed the day with a series of public awareness programmes at the OPD foyer, Friday. The initiative was aimed at educating public about dengue and promoting effective and preventive strategies to combat its spread.

The event was spearheaded by the department of General Medicine, with active participation from faculty and healthcare staffers. Informative pamphlets were distributed among patients and visitors, highlighting key facts about symptoms, transmission, and prevention of dengue.



As per the data released by the National Centre for Vector Borne Diseases Control (NCVDC), Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), a total of 12,043 dengue cases and six deaths were reported across the country till March 2025, with the highest number of cases in Tamil Nadu.

Speaking on the occasion, AIIMS Bhubaneswar Executive Director Ashutosh Biswas emphasised the urgent need to eliminate mosquito breeding sites, particularly during the monsoon season.

"Larvae can survive for a long time in stagnant or even clean water. It is crucial to eliminate water stagnation and maintain hygienic surroundings to prevent mosquito breeding. During the monsoon, using bed nets, mosquito repellents, and wearing full-sleeve clothing is essential to avoid mosquito bites," said Biswas.

Meanwhile, BMC has launched a comprehensive action plan to tackle dengue under the leadership of Commissioner RP Patil. Key measures include community sensitization through grassroots workers, school awareness campaigns, and meetings with corporators and medical officers. A 100-member volunteer force will conduct house-to-house surveys to identify and eliminate mosquito breeding sites. Intensive fogging and anti-larval activities will target hotspot areas.



ADDING FEATHER TO CAP: Odissi singer Guru Ramahari Das receives Guru Banamali Maharana Smruti Samman 2025 during a function organised by Mardala Academy, Bhubaneswar to mark the latter's birth anniversary at GKCM Odissi Research Centre in City Friday

Drive for dog sterilisation, rabies vax begins

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 16: In order to curb the rising stray dog population, and prevent safety and health related risks, Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) launched a comprehensive dog sterilisation and rabies vaccination programme here Friday.

City Mayor Sulochana Das inaugurated the drive in presence of dignitaries, including Health and Sanitation standing committee chairperson Biranchi Narayan Mahasupakar, Grievance and Social Justice chairperson Binayini Jena, additional commissioner Ratnakar Sahu, corporators Ramchandra Ransingh and Rashmi Ranjan Patasani, deputy commissioner Rashmirekha Pradhan, and representatives from the dog-catching agency.

To mark the commencement of the operation, a dog rescue vehicle was also flagged off from the BMC headquarters Friday.

According to 2019 dog census,



HIGHLIGHTS

ACCORDING TO 2019 DOG CENSUS, THE CAPITAL CITY HAD AN ESTIMATED 70,000 STRAY DOGS, A NUMBER THAT HAS REPORTEDLY INCREASED IN RECENT YEARS

A NEW STRAY DOG CENSUS WILL BE CARRIED OUT ACROSS ALL 67 WARDS OF THE CITY, WITH SUPPORT FROM 'SWACHHA SATHI' VOLUNTEERS, OVERSEEN BY BMC'S VETERINARY OFFICERS

the Capital city had an estimated 70,000 stray dogs, a number that has reportedly increased in recent years. With rising incidents of road accidents and dog bites, the risk of rabies infections has also grown,

prompting the corporation to take urgent action.

The sterilisation will be conducted at the Dog Sterilisation Centre, Mancheswar which is equipped with 250 kennels and five advanced operation the-

atres. All procedures will adhere to Animal Welfare Board of India's guidelines and 2023 Animal Birth Control Rules, covering ethical practices such as capturing dogs with nets, ensuring proper feeding, excluding sick animals from surgery, conducting sterilisations, and releasing dogs back to their original locations.

The responsibility for sterilisation has been entrusted to the 'Vets Society for Animal Welfare and Rural Development', a Hyderabad-based organisation. The society will sterilise approximately 2,000 stray dogs per month, with the programme planned to continue for three years.

As part of the initiative, a new stray dog census will be carried out across all 67 wards of the City, with support from 'Swachha Sathi' volunteers, overseen by BMC's veterinary officers.

The Mayor urged residents to cooperate with municipal staff and dog-catching teams to ensure the success of the initiative and enhance public safety.

CS thrust on sustainable solution to drainage issues

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 16: In a bid to tackle drainage issues plaguing several areas in the City, Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja Friday chaired a high-level meeting that focused on urgent and sustainable solutions to persistent waterlogging and drainage challenges, particularly during monsoon.

Key officials, including Housing and Urban Development department principal secretary Usha Padhee, Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Commissioner Rajesh Prava-

kar Patil and Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) vice president N Thirumala Naik attended the meeting and discussed both short-term and long-term plans for resolving the drainage crisis.

At the meeting, the BMC Commissioner presented a detailed overview of the City's drainage systems and stressed the need for better planning and execution of projects across various departments.

City's drainage network includes 15 main natural drains, spanning a total of 77.07km, with an extensive

internal drainage system stretching over 1,839km. However, the distribution of this network spans multiple government departments, creating coordination challenges. Of the total length of the drains, 1,380km falls under BMC, 360.22km is managed by Works department, 65.02km by Odisha Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (IDCO), and 34.43km by National Highways Authority of India.

Despite these efforts, several areas in the City continue to grapple with blockage and

waterlogging issues particularly in locations like ISKCON Temple Road, Cuttack Road, Ayurvedic Medical College Road near SUM Hospital, near City Women's College, AIIMS area, and regions such as Bhagwanpur, Forest Park, Laxmisagar, Naharkanta and Rudrapur.

An estimated expenditure of ₹300 crore has been proposed urgent drainage construction and repair works. These funds will be sourced from National Disaster Management Fund, the State Disaster Management Fund, and other state funds.

IIM-Sambalpur launches 2 UG courses

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 16: Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Sambalpur has launched two four-year undergraduate programmes in Data Science & Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Management & Public Policy, becoming the first such institute to offer these courses, according to institute Director Mahadeo Jaiswal.

These undergraduate programmes will have a flexible structure that allows students to gain a certificate after one year, a diploma after two years,

a degree after three years, and an honours degree after successfully completing four years, with multiple entry and exit points, Jaiswal told PTI.

The two courses are - Bachelor of Science in Management and Public Policy and Bachelor of Science in Data Science and Artificial Intelligence. IIM, Sambalpur will offer these courses from the 2025 academic session, a statement said.

The Bachelor of Science in Management and Public Policy programme is designed to meet national managerial aspirations in terms of sustainability, ESG

(Environmental, Social, and Governance), and community-led development. This programme aims to equip a new generation of change-makers to close the gap between policy and practice at the grassroots level. The Bachelor of Science in Data Science and AI is focused towards developing India's digital capability and global competitiveness. The programme, co-designed with industry leaders builds future ready skill set among young students and encourages the use of ethical AI, reaffirming the institution's pledge to innovation with integrity.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an Affidavit No. 6848 sworn before Executive Magistrate, Cuttack dated 23.04.2025 I Jessica Mullick, Resident of AT/PO : Odisso, Andeigoda, P.S : Kuakhia, Jajpur, PIN - 755008, declare that I have changed my mother's name from Banita Mullick to Binita Mullick and my father's name from Sisir Mullick to Shishir Kumar Mullick. Henceforth they shall be known as Binita Mullick and Shishir Kumar Mullick for all future purposes.

BJEM School felicitates Somesh for scoring 99.6%

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 16: The Buxi Jagabandhu English Medium (BJEM) School here Friday organised a special event to felicitate Somesh Pradhan, who secured an exceptional 498 out of 500 marks (99.6 per cent) in the CBSE Class X exams, the results of which were declared recently.

Born to Bhupesh Pradhan and Soumya Subhadarshini Roul, Somesh now eyes to fulfil his IIT dream. "My aim is to get into an IIT, and I'm currently preparing for JEE," he said.

Somesh credited his success to the unwavering guidance of his teachers, the constant support of his parents, and his disciplined approach to self-study. "I used to devote six hours a day to study, and I focused on consistent revision. I complete-



ly avoided distractions like social media and mobile phones," he said.

School Principal Sandhya Jena appreciated Somesh's hard work and dedication, stating, "He has brought laurels to the school, his family, the city, and the district with his stellar performance. We are immensely proud of him and wish him a bright and successful future," Jena said.

The school community, along with his teachers and peers, extended their heartfelt congratulations to Somesh for his remarkable accomplishment.

Manipal Hosp hosts health talk, camp for retired cops

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 15: Manipal Hospital Bhubaneswar, in collaboration with the Odisha Retired Police Officers' Welfare Association (ORPOWA) organised a health talk and screening camp at Traffic Police Station auditorium here recently. The event brought together nearly 150 retired police officers from across the state.

The session focused on three major health domains: Cardiology, Neurology, and Orthopaedics in order to raise awareness about age-related health issues, promote preventive care, and dispel common myths related to wellness in a sedentary lifestyle.

The event was addressed by ORPOWA president Suryamani Tripathy, along with additional commissioner of Twin City police Narasingha Bhol, DCP Tapan Kumar Mohanty, and



ACP Suchismita Das.

The event featured expert talks by senior consultants from the hospital, including interventional cardiologist consultant Dibya Ranjan Behera, orthopedics consultant Harekrishna Sahu and neurology associate consultant Amlan Tapan Mahapatra.

The experts shed light on some of the most common and critical ailments faced by the elderly, ranging from heart disease and joint pain to neuro-

logical concerns such as stroke and dementia.

Speaking at the event, Bhol said, "After a lifetime of service, health often takes a backseat. It's heartening to see Manipal Hospital offer genuine support, reminding us that our well-being remains a priority even after retirement."

ACP Das added, "In this digital age, rising cybercrimes call for greater awareness. Manipal Bhubaneswar's initiative is something we are thankful for, promoting both health and informed vigilance."

Hospital director Saktimaya Mohapatra said, "At Manipal Hospital Bhubaneswar, it's a privilege to care for those who served the state with dedication. This initiative reflects our commitment to proactive, preventive healthcare, empowering retired officers with the knowledge and tools for a healthier life post-retirement."

WEATHER table with columns for BBSR, CTC, Max Temp, Min Temp, Humidity, Rainfall, and FORECAST.

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# Teen girl, 2 'friends' kill woman who raised her



The deceased woman had adopted the girl after rescuing her from the roadside in Bhubaneswar when she was just 3 days old

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Berhampur, May 16:** A Class VIII girl student and her two male friends were arrested Friday in Gajapati district for allegedly murdering a woman who had adopted the girl after rescuing her from roadside when she was just three days old, a police officer said.

According to police, the girl and her friends smothered the woman — identified as 54-year-old Rajalaxmi Kar — at her rented house in Paralakhemundi town April 29.

The motive was allegedly her opposition to the girl's relationship with the two young men and to gain con-

— temple priest Ganesh Rath (21), Dinesh Sahu (20), both from Paralakhemundi, and the deceased's 13-year-old adopted daughter.

Police said Rajalaxmi had adopted the girl after rescuing her as an abandoned infant in Bhubaneswar.

After the girl got admission at Kendriya Vidyalaya in Paralakhemundi, the two shifted there and were staying in a rented house.

Recently, the girl developed a relationship with Rath and Sahu, which her mother opposed.

Rath allegedly instigated the girl to murder Rajalaxmi to seize her property and continue their relationship.

On the evening of April 29, the girl reportedly administered sleeping pills to Rajalaxmi.

Once she was unconscious, she smothered her two friends, who smothered the woman with pillows. They later took her to a hospital, where she was declared dead, police added.

Before the murder, the girl had given some of Rajalaxmi's gold ornaments to Rath, who pawned them at a private finance company for around ₹2.4 lakh.

He reportedly used the money to buy a motorcycle and travel across the state.

During investigation, police recovered three mobile phones containing incriminating Instagram chat messages, two pillows used in the murder, and around 30 grams of the looted gold ornaments, police added.

Following the discovery, Siba Prasad Mishra, the deceased's brother, lodged an FIR at Paralakhemundi police station last Wednesday.

A police investigation led to the arrest of the three accused

control of her property.

After committing the crime, the accused fabricated a story claiming Rajalaxmi had died of a heart attack.

The next day, April 30, they cremated her body in Bhubaneswar, where some of her relatives resided.

Due to Rajalaxmi's history of heart disease, her family, including her brother, believed the fabricated story, Gajapati SP Jatindra Kumar Panda said.

The truth came to light when the girl's uncle found her hidden mobile phone in Bhubaneswar, which contained Instagram Messenger chats with the two co-accused detailing their plan to murder Rajalaxmi and loot over 70 grams of gold ornaments along with ₹60,000 in cash.

# Massive Tiranga Yatra held in Sambalpur



HONOURING ARMED FORCES: Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, Deputy Chief Minister KV Singh Deo, and Panchayati Raj Minister Rabinarayan Naik lead a 'Tiranga Yatra' organised to pay tribute to the Indian Armed Forces following the successful Operation Sindoor, in Sambalpur, Friday

PNN & AGENCIES

**Sambalpur, May 16:** A massive 'Tiranga Yatra' (Tricolour rally) was held in Sambalpur city Friday in a show of solidarity with the Indian Armed Forces following Operation Sindoor, the recent counter-terror operation against Pakistan.

The rally, organised by Citizens for National Security, witnessed significant public participation and the presence of key political leaders, including Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, Deputy Chief Minister KV Singh Deo, and Panchayati Raj Minister Rabinarayan Naik.

The rally was held to honour

the bravery and success of the Indian Army and paramilitary forces in Operation Sindoor, launched in retaliation for the April 22 terrorist attack in Pahalgam, Jammu & Kashmir, which saw 26 innocent civilians killed.

In the operation, Indian forces targeted and destroyed multiple terror camps deep inside Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), marking a major success in India's counter-terror efforts.

The event at Sambalpur Friday commenced with a floral tribute to noted freedom fighter Veer Surendra Sai at his statue. The rally then proceeded from Jail Chhak to the

Shaheed Stambha (Martyrs' Pillar) at Kacheri Chhak, where participants paid homage to fallen soldiers.

The Tricolour march drew participation from a wide range of citizens, including members of political parties, social and cultural organisations, and volunteers.

Speaking at the event, Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said, "Today, the world has witnessed the peak of India's military strength. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Operation Sindoor has redefined India's global image."

He emphasised that for the first time, multiple terror

campus across Pakistan were completely dismantled, and even several air bases were destroyed in the operation. Over a hundred terrorists were reportedly eliminated.

Pradhan urged citizens across party lines to stand united with the Indian Army, saying it was time for every Indian to back the forces.

He also clarified that Operation Sindoor has not ended but is currently paused, indicating the possibility of future action.

He called upon the public to organise more such Tricolour rallies to boost the morale of the Indian Armed Forces and demonstrate national unity.

# India to be self-reliant soon in fighter jet making, says ex-chief designer of LCA Tejas

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Berhampur, May 16:** India will become self-reliant in making fighter jets in the next few years, said Kota Harinarayana, the former programme director and chief designer of India's Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas.

Harinarayana, the Padma Shri awardee, said the ecosystem of manufacturing of aircraft has been developed in the country.

The technology for the production of indigenous aircraft has also improved, and within a few years, India will make a series of fighter jets of all categories to address the need of the Indian Air Force (IAF), he said.

"I hope that in the next few years, India will make all fighter jets required for defence and will also start exporting these to our friendly countries," Harinarayana said.

The technology that the country had developed for Tejas has been carried forward from small- to medium-sized and unmanned aircraft, he said.

"Time will come, not very long, India will become the exporter of defence products. The country is now procuring some of these products from Russia and France," said the 82-year-old aviation scientist who was here to attend the convocation of a private university Thursday.



The wider use of Tejas by the IAF has proven the significance and importance of the indigenously built aircraft, he said.

India has shown its capabilities in the defence sector by successfully countering Pakistani attacks following the 'Operation Sindoor' that was launched against terror camps in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), he said.

The development and successful utilisation of defence products clearly showed the country's capabilities in the operation, which he termed as a first phase, said the former professor at the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

Harinarayana also hailed India's successful trial of 'Bhargavastra', an indigenous, budget-friendly counter-drone system, in Gopalpur in Ganjam district Wednesday.

# Vedanta motivates 'family-centric culture'

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jharsuguda, May 16:** Organising the latest edition of 'Proud Parents' in observance of the 'International Day of Families', India's largest aluminium producer Vedanta held a two-day-long annual event, exclusively, for the parents of its employees.

This was also in sync with the United Nations-designated theme for this year: Family-Oriented Policies for Sustainable Development.

Such an initiative was aimed at providing the special guests with a first-hand experience of its mega plant in Jharsuguda (one of the largest aluminium manufacturing operations in the world) along with encouraging a 'family-centric culture' among its diverse teams. The proud parents were given a guided tour of key units within the plant including the Carbon, Potline, Cast House and Power Plant areas.

Further, they were introduced to the ongoing community development projects undertaken by Vedanta in Jharsuguda which span over several areas including education, livelihood, healthcare, skill development and community infrastructure.

In his reactions, Vedanta Aluminium Chief Operating Officer (COO) Sunil Gupta stated, "We believe that a strong organisation is built on the foundation of strong families and robust community partnerships."

# 3 killed after car hits roadside tree in Koraput district

**Baipariguda:** Three people were killed and three others sustained critical injuries in a tragic car accident Friday morning along NH-326 near Goudaguda Chhak, approximately 2 km from Baipariguda, in Koraput district.

According to police, six persons — five from a family — were travelling from Nayagarh to a relative's home at Malkangiri to spend the summer vacation when the accident occurred. The driver of the car (OD02 BW 5148) lost control of the wheel and crashed into a roadside tree. Three occupants, including the driver, died on the spot, while three others were seriously injured. Emergency responders reached the site promptly, transporting the deceased and injured to Baipariguda hospital. Local police arrived at the scene, seized the vehicle, registered a case and sent the bodies for post-mortem examination.

# In a first, drone deployed by marine police for patrol

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rajnagar, May 16:** In a first, a drone has been deployed for the patrol operations of the Talachua Marine Police Station in Kendrapara district in an effort to strengthen coastal surveillance in an area frequently targeted by intruders.

According to police, most unauthorised entries occur via the region's waterways. The APJ Abdul Kalam missile testing centre is located near the Rajnagar coast, and following tensions with Pakistan, authorities have intensified waterborne patrolling.

The Talachua Marine Police Station has been conducting round-the-clock patrols, both during the day and at night. The drone, which arrived at the station Thursday, was deployed for the first time Friday during a

routine patrol.

Talachua is considered a hotspot for illegal Bangladeshi infiltrators, many of whom use the sea route to enter India. The drone is expected to enhance surveillance and help monitor the activities of suspected Bangladeshi nationals and other criminals.

Under the direction of Inspector in-Charge Bimal Kumar Mallik, police used the drone to monitor unidentified or suspicious boats and other objects during patrols along the coast.

The region has seen repeated unauthorised entries. About six months ago, three containers floated in from West Bengal and reached the restricted zone of the Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary. The containers went undetected despite ongoing patrols, raising concerns over the effectiveness of existing security measures.

# Geo-tagged in Gahirmatha, Olive Ridley turtle reaches Andhra coast via Sri Lanka

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kendrapara, May 16:** An Olive Ridley turtle, which was earlier tagged with a satellite-linked tracking device at Gahirmatha beach in Kendrapara district, has travelled around 1,000 kilometres in the sea in 51 days to reach the Andhra Pradesh coast, an official said Friday.

The turtle traversed the waters of Sri Lanka, Puducherry and Tamil Nadu before reaching the coast of the neighbouring Andhra Pradesh, he said.

The turtle navigated through the sea waters of Sri Lanka, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, and reached the Andhra Pradesh

coast in 51 days. It covered around 1,000 km, the official said.

The latest satellite tracking map of the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) has located one of the tagged turtles moving in the sea waters in Andhra Pradesh, and found that it has navigated around 1,000 km, said Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (PC-CF) Prem Kumar Jha.

A turtle, tagged with a tracking device in Odisha four years back, had earlier covered 3,500 km to lay eggs at a beach in Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra recently.

The Olive Ridley turtles turn up in millions for mass nesting along the Odisha coast every year. Gahirmatha beach off Bay

1,000 km in 51 days



of Bengal in Kendrapara district is acclaimed as the world's largest known nesting ground of these rare marine species.

The aquatic animals also turn up at the Rushikulya river mouth in Ganjam district and the Devi river mouth in Puri for mass nesting.

According to officials, around 3,000 turtles are tagged with a

tracking device annually.

Experts believed that at least one lakh turtles are required to be tagged for obtaining better information on their reproductive biology, movements and growth rates, migratory route and areas of foraging. The state Forest department had taken up the tagging exercise in 1999, and at least two tagged turtles then were sighted on the Sri Lanka coast.

Later, the tagging exercise was suspended. However, the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) resumed the exercise in 2021.

Between 2021 and 2024, around 12,000 turtles were tagged in Gahirmatha and Rushikulya river mouth nesting grounds, the officials said.

### EAST COAST RAILWAY

#### WALK-IN-INTERVIEW FOR ENGAGEMENT OF TEACHERS ON CONTRACT BASIS

Employment Notice No. ECoR/Pers/06/Engagement/Contract Teacher/200/25 Dated : 13.05.2025

It has been decided by the competent authority to conduct a WALK-IN-INTERVIEW for engagement of Teachers in Mixed Higher Secondary School/ Khurda Road on contract basis. The Khurda Road Railway Division is inviting applications from willing, eligible candidates for engagement as teachers (PGT, TGT, PET, PST, ART & CRAFT TEACHER, BALVATIKA TEACHER, LIBRARIAN) in the Mixed Higher Secondary School, Jatni.

| Grade                | No. of Required Teachers | Consolidated remuneration per month | Venue, date & time of interview  |
|----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| PGT (English Medium) | 03                       | ₹ 27,500/-                          | Date-03.06.2025 (Tuesday)<br>04.06.2025 (Wednesday)<br>05.06.2025 (Thursday) |
| TGT (English Medium) | 06                       | ₹ 26,250/-                          |  |
| TGT (Odia Medium)    | 08                       | ₹ 26,250/-                          |  |
| PET                  | 01                       | ₹ 26,250/-                          | Time-08:30 Hrs Onwards<br>Mixed Higher Secondary School, Khurda Road, Jatni  |
| PST                  | 01                       | ₹ 21,250/-                          |  |
| BALVATIKA TEACHER    | 01                       | ₹ 21,250/-                          |  |
| ART & CRAFT TEACHER  | 01                       | ₹ 21,250/-                          |  |
| LIBRARIAN            | 01                       | ₹ 26,250/-                          |  |

The Walk-in-Interview will be held on the above scheduled date according to Subject wise.

NB : For detailed terms & conditions, candidates may please refer to the official website [www.eastcoastrail.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.eastcoastrail.indianrailways.gov.in) About us Division Khurda Road Division Recruitment.

Sr. Divisional Personnel Officer / Khurda Road

PR-137/Q/25-26

#### PART-TIME ALL-AROUND COOK REQUIRED

We are looking for a skilled part-time cook who is experienced in all types of home cooking.

- Working Hours -  
5:30 PM to 7:30 PM  
Location : Home-based  
Salary : Based on experience

If interested, please send your biodata to  
**9438128790**

### EAST COAST RAILWAY

Tender Notice No. 10/ET/SBP/ENGG/2025-26, Dated : 10.05.2025

(1) e-Tender No. 14-eT-DENC-SBP-25

NAME OF WORK : EXECUTION OF BALANCE P.WAY WORK IN NEW COMMISSIONED SECTION BICHITPALLI - SONEPUR SECTION UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF DIVISIONAL ENGINEER/CENTRAL.

Approximate Cost of the Work : ₹ 1,32,97,361.96, Bid Security : ₹ 1,60,500/-

(2) e-Tender No. 05-eT-SDENW-SBP-25

NAME OF WORK : EXECUTION OF JUNGLE CUTTING AND DRAIN CLEANING WORKS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR UNDER JURISDICTION OF ASSISTANT DIVISIONAL ENGINEER / KANTABANJLI OF SAMBALPUR DIVISION.

Approximate Cost of the Work : ₹ 77,21,694.00, Bid Security : ₹ 1,54,500/-

(3) e-Tender No. 06-eT-SDENW-SBP-25

NAME OF WORK : EXECUTION OF JUNGLE CUTTING AND DRAIN CLEANING WORKS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR UNDER JURISDICTION OF ASSISTANT DIVISIONAL ENGINEER / MAHASAMUND OF SAMBALPUR DIVISION.

Approximate Cost of the Work : ₹ 80,36,927.02, Bid Security : ₹ 1,60,800/-

(4) e-Tender No. 06-eT-DENS-SBP-25

NAME OF WORK : EXECUTION OF JUNGLE CUTTING AND DRAIN CLEANING WORKS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR UNDER JURISDICTION OF ASSISTANT DIVISIONAL ENGINEER / TITLAGARH OF SAMBALPUR DIVISION.

Approximate Cost of the Work : ₹ 1,25,23,010.00, Bid Security : ₹ 2,12,700/-

(5) e-Tender No. 07-eT-DENS-SBP-25

NAME OF WORK : EXECUTION OF JUNGLE CUTTING AND DRAIN CLEANING WORKS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR UNDER JURISDICTION OF ASSISTANT DIVISIONAL ENGINEER / MUNIGUDA OF SAMBALPUR DIVISION.

Approximate Cost of the Work : ₹ 1,25,23,010.00, Bid Security : ₹ 2,12,700/-

Completion Period for the Work : 12 (Twelve) Months (for all SI. Nos.).

Tender Closing Date and Time : At 1500 Hrs on 06.06.2025 (for all the Tenders).

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

Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website : [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)

Note : The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 15 (Fifteen) 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./) Sambalpur

PR-134/Q/25-26

FOCUS CLIMATE FINANCE

# PICTURE IMPERFECT



**While not all wealthy economies are following in America's footsteps of withdrawing from Paris climate agreement, many – including Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, and the UK, as well as the European Union – are tightening their purse strings**

developing states, whose institutional capacity is already stretched thin. It does not help that keeping all these funds running costs money. The overhead of the Special Climate Change Fund, for example, represented more than half of its project commitments in 2019-21. This is hardly the best use of limited climate finance.

It is also worth noting that, while climate funds are generally supposed to raise “new and additional” financing, this has seldom happened. Instead, they tend to draw from a fixed pool of public funds for sustainable development, which include different climate-related projects and other critical priorities, such as health, education, and poverty reduction.

Far from creating yet another climate fund, delegates at COP30 should focus on streamlining climate finance. A handful of funds with harmonized standards and processes would be far better equipped to deliver efficient and accessible funding – and ensure that as few dollars as possible are wasted.

Experience suggests that such an effort might run up against considerable resistance. The CIFs were supposed to be a stopgap, to be wound down following the rise of the GCF. But in 2019, their governing committee scrapped the sunset clause, insisting – over the objections of experts and civil-society organizations – on their continued relevance.

Ensuring that future efforts to build a more efficient climate-finance architecture are not similarly thwarted will require powerful actors to bring their influence to bear. This is the kind of climate leadership the world needs from Brazil.

*The writer is a research associate in the Lowy Institute's Indo-Pacific Development Centre.*

©PROJECT SYNDICATE

**B**razil has announced plans to launch a \$125 billion fund for the protection of tropical forests. It is a key element of the country's plan to ensure the success of the next United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30), which Brazil will host. But, at a time when some of the world's richest economies are slashing their foreign-aid budgets, and the United States is turning its back on climate action altogether, does the world really need another climate fund?

Over the past three decades, more than 60 multilateral funds have emerged to raise financing for climate action in developing countries. Most are small and obscure, leaving around 19 sizable entities – including the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Adaptation Fund (AF), and Climate Investment Funds (CIFs) – that publicly report on their activities.

In theory, each entity serves a worthy purpose, and a few have gained some traction. In particular, the GCF has emerged as the second-largest multilateral provider of grant-based climate finance to the most vulnerable countries (after the World Bank). But, overall, their contributions are underwhelming. In 2021-22, the 19 funds tracked by the UN's Standing Committee on Finance delivered a mere \$3.7 billion – roughly \$195 million per fund. That is far less than the \$55.7 billion that multilateral development banks collectively provided for climate action, and nowhere near the trillions of dollars that developing economies need annually to close the climate-finance gap.

A key problem is that donors have not been stepping up to fund these entities. The US – the world's biggest economy and largest historical green-

house-gas emitter – committed to providing a measly \$17.5 million to the much-touted Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD), agreed at COP28 in Dubai. At COP29 in Baku, the AF fell well short of its \$300 million funding target, leaving it struggling to bankroll even the projects that are already in its pipeline.

Now, even these modest contributions are set to dry up. President Trump's administration has withdrawn the US from the Paris climate agreement, abandoned the FRLD and other funds, and dismantled the country's foreign-aid apparatus. While not all wealthy economies are following in America's footsteps, many – including Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom, as well as the European Union – are also tightening their purse strings.

Together with the US, these donors accounted for 69% of bilateral climate commitments to developing countries in 2021-22 and supplied 74% of contributions to climate funds since 2003. In other words, raising climate finance – always a

difficult task – is becoming a Herculean one, meaning that countries are going to have to figure out how to do more with less. The last thing the world needs is for this limited capital to be funneled into a fragmented, inefficient system composed of dozens of narrow climate funds.

Climate funds were created to address shortcomings of existing multilateral institutions like the World Bank. For example, they offer “direct access” funding to national and regional entities, thereby promoting country ownership and helping to build institutional capacity. Moreover, their smaller scale and larger numbers were supposed to foster healthy competition and give recipient countries more options.

But the fund landscape has become so crowded – with each entity possessing its own accreditation rules, approval processes, and compliance requirements – that recipients must navigate a bureaucratic maze to access any financing at all. All this red tape, which slows disbursements considerably, is especially burdensome for the most climate-vulnerable countries, such as small island



Georgia Hammersley

**CLIMATE FUNDS WERE CREATED TO ADDRESS SHORTCOMINGS OF EXISTING MULTILATERAL INSTITUTIONS LIKE THE WORLD BANK**



Grant, O Lord, may my heart be before Thee like a pure crystal, so that all of it may reflect Thee.

THE MOTHER

## Bureaucratic Foresight

**H**ostilities between India and Pakistan have ceased, for the moment, but when your neighbour has a history of lobbing more than just cricket metaphors across the fence, you'd better have a plan. India does. And it's not all missiles and meetings—it's bunkers.

Those underground shelters are scattered across Jammu and Kashmir, especially near the LoC. Built well before the current tensions reignited, these bunkers aren't just military prep—they're pure, no-nonsense civilian protection—a rare win for bureaucratic foresight.

Though of not much help in the Poonch region, as we discovered during the recent battle, babus say that civilians living along the border now have somewhere to run when the skies turn loud. These aren't luxury basements; they're reinforced, stocked-up life pods. And thanks to early safety drills, folks know exactly what to do when the sirens wail.

According to sources, these bunkers aren't just for conventional shelling. India's also got its own Cold War-style strategic shelters—massive, fortified command bunkers meant to survive the unthinkable: a nuclear strike. Not the kind of infrastructure you brag about at dinner, but exactly the kind you want quietly waiting in the wings.

The takeaway here? Sometimes security doesn't look like fighter jets and high-level talks. Sometimes, it's just a reinforced concrete room with supplies, a lock, and a plan. In a world that feels one bad headline away from chaos, these bunkers are a sobering reminder that real defence starts underground—and it's not just for the military anymore.

## IAS power play: A tale of two batches

While civil servants are competitive about reaching top administrative posts, there's also camaraderie among officers from the same batches. And nowhere is this more evident than in the subtle flexing between the 1989 and 1991 IAS batches.

Let's start with the 1989 batch. Not content with just holding high office, they've strategically planted themselves in the country's hot zones—Delhi and Jammu & Kashmir, for starters. Atal Dulloo manages the sensitive J&K terrain, while Dharmendra navigates the bureaucratic minefield that is Delhi. Add Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, MP, Bihar, and Karnataka to the mix, and you've got a batch that clearly didn't come to play—they came to control.

Now, the 1991 batch may not have Delhi or Srinagar, but they've spread themselves across seven states—an administrative juggernaut. From the polarised politics of Tamil Nadu and West Bengal to the election-bound buzz of Kerala and the strategic edges of Arunachal and Nagaland, the 1991 officers are navigating tough terrain, both politically and geographically.

So, who wins this round? The 1989 batch has a strategic edge, managing key Union Territories and border states with high-stakes implications. But the 1991 lot has gone wide, overseeing a broader slice of India's messy federalism.

Either way, one thing's clear: governance in India isn't just about policy—it's also about positioning. And sometimes, it takes a little batch rivalry to keep the bureaucratic engine humming.



**BABUDOM BYTES**  
Dilip Cherian

## AIS rules vs political will

Kerala's babudom has just served up a case study in how not to inspire public confidence. The state government's decision to extend the suspension of IAS officer N Prasanth till October 31, 2025, isn't just unusual, it's downright opaque.

Here's the twist: there were two meetings of the suspension review committee within two weeks. The first, on April 23, chaired by the outgoing Chief Secretary Sarada Muraleedharan, reportedly recommended lifting the suspension. The second, just days later, chaired by the new CS, A Jayathilak, who, incidentally, is known to be at loggerheads with Prasanth, recommended extending it. Guess which one the final government order conveniently ignored?

Spoiler alert: the one that didn't suit the script. Now, according to All India Services (AIS) rules, suspensions beyond six months need the Centre's green light. But in Prasanth's case, it's radio silence—no word on whether the Union government's nod was sought or received. That's a big deal. Ignoring statutory requirements isn't a procedural lapse; it's playing bureaucratic roulette.

At best, this is a mess of procedural ambiguity. At worst, it smells like vendetta dressed up as governance.

Civil servants aren't above the law, sure—but neither should the system that governs them be. If rules are to mean anything, the state has to walk the talk on due process. Right now, it looks like Kerala's government has opted for selective memory and creative silence instead.

*Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect*

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1792: Meeting on what is now Wall Street in New York City, 24 businessmen took the initial steps to forming the New York Stock Exchange.
- 1900: L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* was first published, and it became a classic of children's literature; the 1939 film adaptation is among the most beloved movies in American cinema.
- 1939: The first televised sporting event in the United States—a collegiate baseball game between Princeton and Columbia—aired on NBC.
- 1996: U.S. President Bill Clinton signed Megan's Law, which required that law-enforcement officials notify local schools, day-care centers, and residents of the presence of registered sex offenders in their communities.

## SPECTRUM INVESTMENT

# Finance lessons from Kohli's Test career

**V**irat Kohli's Test cricket journey is a masterclass not just in batting but in discipline, long-term planning, and managing pressure—qualities essential in the world of money and finance. As one of the most successful and consistent cricketers of modern times, Kohli's approach to his career offers numerous financial lessons for individuals aiming to build wealth, security, and stability. Let's delve into the core money and finance lessons one can learn from Kohli's Test career.

When Kohli started his Test career in 2011, he already had the backing of a solid ODI reputation. However, Test cricket required a different temperament—patience, adaptability, and resilience. Similarly, when starting your financial journey, quick gains (like T20 performances) might feel rewarding, but true financial success comes from long-term thinking. Investments like retirement funds, SIPs (Systematic Investment Plans), and real estate demand the same kind of patience and planning that Kohli showed during his overseas tours.

The lesson here is that wealth building is not a sprint

but a marathon. Avoid short-cuts and focus on steady, sustainable growth.

Kohli's Test journey is full of ups and downs—he failed initially in England in 2014 but returned stronger in 2018 with centuries in tough conditions. Similarly, markets fluctuate. Financial plans sometimes falter. The ability to adapt—by reviewing your portfolio, learning new strategies, or shifting investment focus—is crucial.

The lesson here is to be flexible with your financial strategies. Learn from mistakes and bounce back stronger.

Kohli's incredible fitness transformation in 2015 redefined his career. He became leaner, quicker, and more focused. That discipline translated into consistent runs, especially in the longer format. Likewise, financial discipline—saving regularly, avoiding unnecessary debt, sticking to a budget—yields long-term results regardless of how much you earn.

The lesson here is that income matters, but discipline decides success. Even small savings can grow with consistency. While Kohli may have been the lead performer, his success was often supported

by others—Pujara holding one end, Bumrah breaking partnerships, or Ashwin spinning magic. A good Test team thrives on balance. Similarly, your financial portfolio needs balance—investments in stocks, fixed deposits, gold, insurance, and emergency funds all play a role.

The lesson here is that one shouldn't rely on a single source of income or investment. Diversify to reduce risk.

Kohli's growth from a stroke-maker to a thinking batsman who could anchor innings shows his maturity. He adjusted his technique in overseas conditions and kept learning. The finance world is dynamic too—new tax laws, investment tools, or market trends emerge frequently. Staying informed and willing to evolve is necessary. The lesson here is to update one's financial knowledge. Learn about taxation, digital finance, and changing market patterns.

Kohli's ability to stay mentally strong even under criticism (especially during form slumps) shows emotional intelligence. In finance, downturns and unexpected expenses are inevitable. Financial resilience i.e. having an emergen-

cy fund, proper insurance, and mental calmness you bounce back from setbacks.

The lesson here is to build a financial cushion and prepare for the unexpected without panic.

Kohli is one of the most marketable athletes globally, and he smartly leveraged his brand to build wealth beyond cricket, through endorsements, fashion brands, and start-ups. For individuals, side income, freelancing, or investments outside your main job can be important sources of financial stability.

The lesson here is not to rely only on salary, but explore secondary income channels.

Virat Kohli's Test career is a journey of evolution, perseverance, and leadership. These same values, when applied to personal finance, can help you create a life of security, growth, and purpose. Whether you're a fan of cricket or not, there's no denying that Kohli's path offers valuable takeaways for every financial aspirant.

So, the next time one sees Kohli at the crease, one must think beyond the cover drives.

*The writer is the Founder and CEO of fintech startup 'Fincist'*



Sourajeet Pradhani

**WHETHER YOU'RE A FAN OF CRICKET OR NOT, THERE'S NO DENYING THAT KOHLI'S PATH OFFERS VALUABLE TAKEAWAYS FOR EVERY FINANCIAL ASPIRANT**

## Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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



## Prez's questions to SC

**Sir,** Though the President of India has questioned the authority of the Supreme Court in stipulating a timeline to decide on bills passed by the state Assemblies deciding matters relating to her and the Governors, she has conveniently forgotten that it was the Chief Justice of India who administered the oath of office to her to become the President. It is abundantly clear that even in the case of the President and the Governors, the SC can intervene and deliver justice to the affected if they are found to be misusing the limited constitutional powers vested in the gubernatorial positions they hold. Answers to most of the 14 questions raised by the President can be found in the 415-page verdict of April 8 passed by the learned judges. Aware that a petition seeking review of this judgment by Justice Pardiwala and Justice Mahadevan would not yield a positive outcome as it is to be considered by the same bench in chamber, the Union Government has invoked the President's rarely used powers under Article 143(1) of the Constitution, seeking the SC's opinion in the matter. One has no doubt that even the five-member constitutional bench that will be constituted to deliberate on the 14 questions raised by the President will go by the April 8 verdict, which has clarified all legal matters concerning the issue under question without any ambiguity.

Tharcus S Fernando, CHENNAI

## Sack Vijay Shah

**Sir,** The BJP took out a 'Tiranga Yatra' to celebrate the success of Operation Sindoor as well as to honour Col. Sofia Qureshi and Wing Commander Vyomika Singh. Post Vijay Shah's scurrilous remarks against the seasoned Army colonel, the BJP's top brass has been trying hard to save face and has not yet assured the nation that proportionate punishment will be meted out to the minister. It is evident that they are in a firefighting mode, to save one of their own. Taking out a 'Tiranga Yatra' under the given pretext is tantamount to insulting the Tiranga (national flag) itself. Instead of resorting to such theatrics, the BJP must immediately do what needs to be done—sack Vijay Shah and apologise unconditionally to Col. Sofia.

Avinash Godbole, DEWAS (MP)

# Sikkim celebrates 50th Statehood Day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Gangtok, May 16:** Sikkim celebrated its 50th Statehood Day Friday, with Governor Om Prakash Mathur and Chief Minister PS Tamang congratulating the people of the state on the occasion.

The day began with a Tiranga rally led by Tamang from MG Marg to Paljor Stadium.

Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi greeted people of Sikkim on its statehood day, lauding its strides in diverse sectors.

In a post on X, the PM said, "Warm greetings to the people of Sikkim on their Statehood Day! This year, the occasion is even more special as we mark the 50th anniversary of Sikkim's statehood!"

He added, "Sikkim is associated with serene beauty, rich cultural traditions and industrious people. It has made strides in diverse sectors. May the people of this beautiful state continue to prosper."

Enjoying protectorate status under the Union of India after the country's Independence in 1947, Sikkim joined India on this day in 1975 following a referendum, and the northeastern state has since made rapid strides on various socio-economic development parameters.

Speaking on the occasion, Tamang described the state's five-decade journey as one marked by resilience, inclusive growth and cultural preservation. "As we commemorate the golden jubilee, we reflect with reverence on the journey of the past five decades, a journey marked by resilience, inclusive



**Enjoying protectorate status under the Union of India after the country's Independence in 1947, Sikkim joined India on this day in 1975 following a referendum, and the northeastern state has since made rapid strides on various socio-economic development parameters**

**Warm greetings to the people of Sikkim on their Statehood Day! This year, the occasion is even more special as we mark the 50th anniversary of Sikkim's statehood!**

NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

**May 16, 1975, remains etched in the state's collective memory as a turning point when the people of Sikkim, through democratic will and vision, chose to become part of the Indian Union as its 22nd state**

LAKSHMAN PRASAD ACHARYA | GOVERNOR, SIKKIM

growth, cultural preservation and the collective spirit of our people," he said.

He reaffirmed the state's commitment to building a "Sunaulo Sikkim, Samridha Sikkim, ani Samarth Sikkim"—a golden, prosperous, and capable Sikkim—aligned with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of Viksit Bharat.

In his speech, Governor

Mathur said, "This golden jubilee is a tribute to the courage of our people, the wisdom of our leaders and the enduring partnership between Sikkim and the great Indian nation."

He said that May 16, 1975, remains etched in the state's collective memory as a turning point when the people of Sikkim, through democratic will and vision, chose to become

part of the Indian Union as its 22nd state.

"The Indian Union welcomed Sikkim with open arms and a promise of unwavering support," the governor said.

He said, "Sikkim stands ready as a strategic border state, a guardian of biodiversity and a pioneer in sustainability to contribute with all our strength, creativity and unity. Let our youth rise, let our economy flourish, let our heritage shine."

During the day, the Information and Public Relations Department released a magazine titled 'Sikkim Today - Festivals of Sikkim'. A major highlight of the programme was the launch of the Visit Sikkim mobile app by the Tourism department.

The Planning and Development department then unveiled a key policy document titled Integrated Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Strategies, along with a book titled 'Folk Tales of Sikkim'.

A documentary film celebrating Sikkim's 50 years of statehood was also premiered, followed by a Broadway-style show. Marathoner Shanti Ram Nepal, who covered 26 states in 71 days on foot, took part led a Run for Unity on the occasion.

The day's celebrations concluded with the finals of the Sikkim Premier League, held under floodlights at Paljor Stadium.

A performance by singer Lucky Ali was also a major highlight of the evening.

Meanwhile, Arunachal Pradesh Governor Lt Gen (Retd) KT Parnaik and Chief Minister Pema Khandu greeted the people of Sikkim on the occasion.

# Assam govt notifies policy against human trafficking, witch-hunting

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

*According to the policy, the vision is to create a state where all individuals are able to attain their full potential by living a life of equal worth, free from all kinds of abuse and participate equally in private and public life*

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Guwahati, May 16:** The Assam government Friday notified a state policy aimed at combating human trafficking and witch-hunting to ensure that all people can live a life of equal worth, free from all forms of abuse.

"The Assam State Policy to Combat Human Trafficking and End Witch-Hunting is now officially notified. A significant move to safeguard human rights and uphold dignity," the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said in a post on X.

The notification, issued by an order of the governor May 6, stated that the policy will come into effect from the date of its publication in the official gazette.

According to the policy, the vision is to create a state where all individuals are able to attain their full potential by living a life of equal worth, free from all kinds of abuse and participate equally in private and public life.

The policy's mission is to



"provide a safe and equal society wherein all individuals can claim their entitlements and access all services, lead a life free from all kinds of violence, experience an enhancement in their capabilities and exercise control over their life circumstances through convergence and synergies among all departments for promoting safety and security".

The policy acknowledged that human trafficking and witch-hunting are two crimes that disproportionately affect women and girls.

While human trafficking is an organised crime and is considered the fastest growing criminal enterprise, witch-hunting is mostly a social crime rooted in deep-seated regressive cultural practices, it said.

The state's geographical location, with borders with six other North Eastern states besides boundaries with Bangladesh and Bhutan, makes it a 'critical'

one, the policy added. The Assam Witch Hunting (Prohibition, Prevention and Protection) Act, 2018, deals with witch-hunting, making it a cognisable, non-bailable and non-compoundable offence, it added.

While cases of witch-hunting have visibly dipped after the enactment of this law, it has not been eradicated completely, with 32 cases registered between 2022-24 according to Assam Police data.

"In the above context, there is an urgent need to develop a well-designed comprehensive policy to cover all areas of intervention, ensuring prevention, protection and rehabilitation of survivors of trafficking and witch-hunting. Apart from ensuring the rights of the survivors, the area of preventing such crime and prosecuting culprits is also an area of urgent intervention," the policy stated.

# Heavy rains likely in northern Kerala districts next week

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



**Thiruvananthapuram, May 16:** The India Meteorological Department (IMD) Friday predicted very heavy rains in the northern districts of Kerala from next week.

The IMD issued an orange alert in Malappuram, Kozhikode, Wayanad, Kannur and Kasaragod districts for Monday.

It also issued an orange alert in Kozhikode, Wayanad, Kannur and Kasaragod districts for Tuesday.

Besides that, it also issued a yellow alert in six districts—Palakkad, Malappuram, Kozhikode, Wayanad, Kannur and Kasaragod—for Sunday (May 18).

Additionally, the IMD predicted thunderstorms and strong winds with a speed of 30 to 40 kmph at isolated places in Kerala from Friday to Tuesday.

An orange alert means very heavy rain of 11cm to 20cm, and a yellow alert means heavy rainfall between 6cm and 11cm.



Candidates appear for the Kerala state survey department test, at Shangumugham Beach, in Thiruvananthapuram, Friday

# ₹380cr package for farmers' welfare in Nagaland: Chouhan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kohima, May 16:** In a significant boost to Nagaland's agricultural sector, Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has announced a ₹380-crore package for farmers' welfare.

Chouhan, the Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, made the announcement during the inauguration of the Administrative-cum-Academic Block and Farmers' Fair at the College of Veterinary Sciences and Animal Husbandry at Jalukie in Peren district Thursday, a government statement said.

He urged the Nagaland government to draft a detailed agriculture development action plan to effectively utilise the funds and assured full support from the Centre for the state's overall agricultural progress.

Addressing students and farmers at the event, the Minister emphasised the need for a district-wise core team comprising students, Krishi Vigyan Kendras (VKVs), and university professors to regularly engage with local farmers.

These teams would help identify region-specific crop and livestock varieties suited to the unique agro-climatic zones of Nagaland, ultimately improving productivity and income, he said.



In his address, Governor La Ganesan described the ₹380-crore package as a key step toward transforming rural Nagaland. He highlighted the role of veterinary education in ensuring food security, healthy livestock and sustainable rural livelihoods.

Ganesan encouraged students to become changemakers in the field of veterinary and agricultural sciences, and to see themselves as contributors to Prime Minister Modi's vision of a Developed India by 2047.

Deputy Chief Minister TR Zeliang welcomed the financial support and reiterated the state's dependence on agriculture, with over 70 per cent of the population engaged in farming.

He highlighted the cultural significance of jhum cultivation, while also calling for modern scientific approaches to sustain traditional practices.

# Kerala to speed up legal action for Elston Estate workers' dues

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Thiruvananthapuram, May 16:** The Kerala government Friday decided to expedite legal proceedings to ensure retrenchment benefits are provided to the labourers of Elston Estate in Wayanad, which has been acquired for the rehabilitation of landslide survivors.

A ministerial meeting—attended by Revenue Minister K Rajan, Labour Minister V Sivankutty, and Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Welfare Minister OR Kelu—took the decision in this regard.

As per the discussions held at the meeting, the Advocate General has been directed to fast-track legal proceedings to secure retrenchment benefits for the Elston Estate labourers at the earliest, an official statement said.

The Advocate General had already informed the court that

over ₹5.97 crore is to be paid to the workers under various heads, and that revenue recovery is underway.

The court was also informed that the relevant department is collecting data on salary arrears of the estate workers, including wages and gratuity.

In addition to the ministers, senior officials, including Wayanad District Collector DR Megha Shree and Additional Labour Commissioner Sunil K M, attended the meeting.

The government had earlier, March 26, announced that labourers of Elston Estate in Wayanad would receive around ₹6 crore as relief assistance. Labour Minister V Sivankutty had stated that the management would provide payments under various heads, including provident fund arrears, bonuses, annual leave surrender, and more.

# Search on to spot tiger at Kalikavu

Teams with tranquiliser guns, kumki elephant deployed to spot tiger that killed Malappuram man

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Malappuram (Kerala), May 16:** Three teams of forest personnel equipped with tranquiliser guns and a kumki elephant were deployed Friday to spot and capture the tiger which has killed a rubber-tapping worker near Kalikavu, an official said.

Camera traps and cages were also set up to assist the teams in the mission. Another kumki elephant will be brought into the operation, he added.

Divisional Forest Officer, Nilambur South, Dhanik Lal said that each group of the search team comprises 20 forest personnel and a veterinarian.

"We will first confirm if the tiger is present in the area. Further steps will be taken thereafter. Two cages and cam-



era traps have been set up. The search operations commenced at 7am," the official said.

He said that another kumki elephant (trained captive

tusked) will be brought to the area to assist in the search operations.

Another senior forest official said that thermal drone camer-

as will also be deployed to look for the tiger.

Thursday, 45-year-old Gafoor was attacked and dragged into the forest by the tiger when he and a friend were going for rubber-tapping work.

Gafoor's badly mauled body was later found around 200 meters inside the forest, according to his friend and forest officials.

The incident had sparked a protest in the area. Protesters initially prevented the body from being removed till certain assurances were given by the authorities regarding compensation and a job to the victim's family and capture of the tiger.

They had also alleged lapses on the part of the forest department, claiming that no action was taken by it despite being informed about the presence of

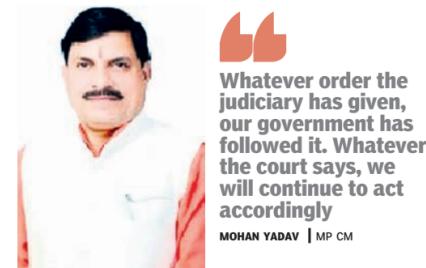
the tiger in the area for the past few months.

Similar allegations were also made by Congress MLA AP Anilkumar after visiting the area.

Subsequently, the forest officials informed that an enhanced compensation of ₹14 lakh would be provided to the family along with a job and said that steps were being taken to tranquilise and capture the tiger.

Convinced by the assurances, protesters allowed the victim's body to be removed from the area.

Later that same day, State Forest Minister AK Saseendran said that the Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) has been directed to investigate whether there were any lapses on the part of forest officials as claimed by the locals.



Whatever order the judiciary has given, our government has followed it. Whatever the court says, we will continue to act accordingly

MOHAN YADAV | MP CM

AADHAAR AUTHENTICATION SURPASSES 150BN TRANSACTIONS

In a significant feat, the total number of Aadhaar authentication transactions have crossed the 150 billion (15,011.82 crore) mark, the government said Friday. Moreover, the total number of eKYC transactions (37.3 crore) carried out during April is 39.7 per cent more than the numbers during the same period last year



of the day quote

We will seek the opinion of other state chief ministers and leaders and based on that, will take due steps



M K STALIN | TN CM

To our sisters and brothers in Sikkim, I send my best wishes on the golden jubilee of your Statehood



HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CM

26 people were killed in Kashmir (Pahalgam) by terrorists. Pakistan is the one which is helping and sheltering terrorists, and according to me, we got an opportunity and utilising it we should have taken more severe action against terrorists, and should have ensured that Pakistan does not help and cooperate with terrorists again, and terroris should have been destroyed



SIDDARAMAIAH | KARNATAKA CM

SHORT TAKES

2020 Delhi riots: Court acquits 11

New Delhi: A Delhi court has acquitted 11 men accused of arson and theft charges in a February 2020 riots' case for want of evidence. Additional Sessions Judge Pulastya Pramachala observed the two police witnesses who identified the accused persons in the case appeared to be "artificial eyewitnesses".

Punjab: NIA raids 15 places

New Delhi: Cracking down further on the activities of the banned Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) terrorist group, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) Friday searched 15 locations in Punjab in connection with the grenade attack on a police station in Gurdaspur. It was also found that BKI's operatives, based in various countries, were engaged in the criminal conspiracy.

Five militants held in Manipur

Imphal: Security forces have arrested five militants, belonging to various proscribed outfits, in three districts of Manipur, police said Friday. All the arrests were made Thursday in Imphal East, Imphal West and Thoubal districts, a senior officer said.

Delhi: Man found hanging from tree

New Delhi: A "mentally ill" man was found hanging from a tree near a taxi stand in the Sarojini Nagar area of southwest Delhi, police said Friday. The deceased has been identified as Ravindra Mehta (46), a native of Uttarakhand, he said. On Wednesday, police received a call regarding a man hanging from a tree at Tikona Park NDMC taxi stand. Police reached the spot and found Mehta hanging from a tree with a rope.

Nine-year-old girl raped by neighbour

Maharajganj (UP): A nine-year-old girl was allegedly raped by her neighbour in Maharajganj district's Nautanwa area, police said Friday. The incident occurred Thursday when the accused, identified as Hari Darshan, allegedly lured the girl from outside her home to his house under some pretext and then raped her, Atish Kumar Singh, additional superintendent of police, said.

OPERATION SINDOOR

'Pak rebuilding destroyed terror camps with IMF aid'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhuj (Gujarat), May 16: India Friday pressed the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to reconsider its \$1 billion assistance to Pakistan, saying Islamabad could use a large part of it to fund the terrorist infrastructure.

In an address to air warriors at Gujarat's Bhuj Air Force station, Singh confirmed use of the 'BrahMos' supersonic missiles in the Operation Sindoor and said the weapon showed Pakistan the "light of day in the darkness of night".

Sending a clear and firm message to Islamabad, the defence minister made it clear that the operation is not yet over as the current ceasefire means that India has kept Pakistan on "probation" on the basis of its behaviour.

Under Operation Sindoor, India early May 7 destroyed nine terror infrastructures in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied-Kashmir (PoK) in retaliation to the Pahalgam terror attack.

All subsequent retaliations by Pakistan were carried out under the operation. The two sides reached an understanding on cessation of hostilities May 10 after four days of confrontations.

In his remarks, Singh said Pakistan has again started trying to rebuild the terror infrastructure destroyed by India last week and that Islamabad will "spend the collected from the common citizens of Pakistan to pay around Rs 14 crore to Masood Azhar, the head of the terror outfit Jaish-e-Mohammad" and a



War for taking back PoK should be war of choice: Ex-DGMO

Military conflict with Pakistan after the Pahalgam terror attack has brought into focus the importance of drones in modern warfare, which along with space and cyberspace will write the new paradigm of future wars, a former Director General of Military Operations, who oversaw the Doklam crisis, has said. In an interview with PTI Videos Thursday, retired Lt Gen Anil Kumar Bhatt also expressed his displeasure at suggestions in social media by many warmongers who were unhappy with the conflict ending in four days on the grounds that it was an opportunity to reclaim Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

Cong accuses govt of 'double standards'

Accusing the government of adopting "double standards", the Congress said Friday that on one hand, it is taking the initiative of sending multi-party delegations abroad and on the other, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will reportedly meet only NDA chief Ministers next week to take "political mileage" from Operation Sindoor. The opposition party's attack on the government came after it asserted that it would definitely be a part of the delegations.

UN designated terrorist.

The Bhuj air force base was one of the military installations that Pakistan targeted during the four-day confrontation between the two militaries.

Singh cautioned against providing financial support to Pakistan saying any such assistance would be no less than terror funding.

In its board meeting in Washington May 9, the IMF cleared a \$1 billion tranche for Pakistan as part of its \$7-billion funding programme for the country.

The defence minister said

India would like the IMF to reconsider \$1 billion support to Pakistan and refrain from giving any kind of assistance in future.

He commended the "effective" role played by the Indian Air Force (IAF) in Operation Sindoor which he said is being appreciated by the world.

Lauding the air warriors for eliminating the terror camps in Pakistan and PoK in just 23 minutes, he said "when missiles were dropped inside the enemy territory, the world heard the echoes of India's valour and might."

SNIPPETS

Jobless teachers protest outside WB education HQ

KOLKATA: A day after a series of violent clashes broke out between agitating school teachers and police in and around the headquarters of the West Bengal Education Department in Salt Lake, protesters continued their demonstration outside the government complex Friday. The teachers, who lost their jobs following a recent Supreme Court order that cancelled thousands of appointments in government-aided schools due to irregularities in the recruitment process, assembled near the Bikash Bhavan compound and raised slogans against the West Bengal government.

Kuki groups in Manipur halt talks with Centre

GUWAHATI: The Kuki community from ethnic strife-torn Manipur Friday decided it will not hold talks with the Centre until a "substantive political dialogue" is initiated by the Union government with various stakeholders of their society. Several Kuki MLAs from Manipur, along with representatives of various civil society organisations (CSO) and Kuki militant groups that have signed Suspensions of Operation (SoO) agreements, held a closed-door meeting in Guwahati to discuss their future course of action with peace gradually returning to the state.

Cargo vessel sinks off Mangaluru, Coast Guard rescues 6

NEW DELHI: The Indian Coast Guard has rescued six crew members of a cargo vessel that sank about 60 nautical miles off Mangaluru on its way to Lakshadweep, officials said Friday. The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) also shared on X photographs of its ship 'Vikram', which was patrol and diverted for the search and rescue operation. "At 1215 hours May 14, the ICG received a distress alert from MT Epic Susui, a transiting vessel, reporting the sighting of a small boat adrift with six survivors onboard, approximately 52 nautical miles off the coast of Suratkal, Karnataka," a senior official said.



Indian Youth Congress (IYC) activists raise slogans during a protest over an FIR filed against Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi in Darbhanga for holding an event at Ambedkar Hostel, in New Delhi

ROHINGYA DEPORTATION

You come with fanciful ideas when nation facing difficult time: SC

A BENCH OF JUSTICES SURYA KANT AND N KOTISWAR SINGH ALSO QUESTIONED THE AUTHENTICITY OF MATERIALS PLACED BEFORE IT BY PETITIONER MOHD ISMAIL AND OTHERS AND REFUSED TO STAY ANY FURTHER DEPORTATION OF ROHINGYAS SAYING SIMILAR RELIEF WAS DENIED BY THE COURT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 16: The Supreme Court Friday rapped the petitioners who claimed 43 Rohingya refugees including women and children were dropped in the Andaman sea for deportation to Myanmar and said "when country is passing through a difficult time, you come out with fanciful ideas".

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh also questioned the authenticity of materials placed before it by petitioner Mohd Ismail and others and refused to stay any further deportation of Rohingyas saying similar relief was denied by the court. "When the country is passing through

a difficult time, you come out with such fanciful ideas," the bench told senior advocate Col-in Gonsalves, appearing for the petitioners.

It said the materials placed by petitioners appeared to be taken from social media and termed the averments of torture and deportation of Rohingyas by throwing them into sea as "mere allegations".

"Did anyone verify these phone calls that they originated from Myanmar? Earlier, we heard a case where calls were made from Jamtara in Jharkhand from phone numbers of US, UK and Canada," Justice Kant scoffed.

When Gonsalves tried to refer to the report of the United



Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner saying it had also taken note of the issue and started an inquiry into the matter, the bench said, "People sitting outside cannot dictate our

authorities and sovereignty." The bench, however, asked Gonsalves to serve the copy of the petition to the office of the attorney general and the solicitor general for the purpose of transmitting it to the

6 terrorists killed in 2 major operations



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Awantipora (J&K), May 16: Security forces turned the focus of their anti-terror operations to specific south Kashmir areas in the wake of the April 22 Pahalgam attack and eliminated six terrorists in the last three days, officials said Friday.

"The security agencies reviewed their strategy according to the situation in the wake of terror activities in the last one month and our intensified focus was on operations," V K Birdi, Inspector General of Police (IGP), Kashmir, said.

The IGP was addressing a press conference with General Officer Commanding, Victor Force, Major General Dhananjay Joshi and CRPF Inspector General Mitesh Jain at the headquarters of the Victor Force here in south Kashmir's Pulwama district.

Birdi said due to the intensified focus of various security agencies and the coordination between them, two successful operations were conducted and six terrorists killed in the last three days. He termed the elimination of the ultras "significant achievements". "These successful operations were possible because of the coordination and synergy among the

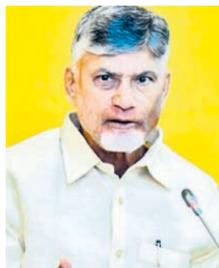
security and intelligence agencies. We are duty-bound to end any terror activity in Kashmir and we are always ready to stop such acts," the IGP said. The encounters took place in the Keller area of Shopian and Nadar area of Tral in Pulwama Tuesday and Thursday, respectively.

Three terrorists each were killed in the two operations. Major Joshi said immediately after the Pahalgam terror attack, which claimed 26 lives, the security forces designated several areas as focus areas.

About the Tral encounter, the GoC said the operation took place on a different terrain. Major Joshi asserted that the successful conduct of both operations shows that the security forces will find terrorists wherever they are and neutralise them.

Of the six slain terrorists, the most prominent was Shahid Kuttay, who was involved in major attacks, including one on a sarpanch in Shopian's Heerpora May 18 last year and a firing incident at the Danish Resort April 8 last year, in which two German tourists and a driver were injured, the officer said.

The neutralisation of both the modules has dealt a blow to terror outfits and will help stop their activities here, Major Joshi said.



Everyone must consider yoga a fundamental responsibility. Even after Yoga Day, regular practice must continue across the state. For a month, there must be widespread dialogue on yoga everywhere

SC SAYS NO TO FRESH PLEAS AGAINST WAQF LAW

The Supreme Court Friday refused to examine a couple of fresh pleas challenging the constitutional validity of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, saying everybody wants name in newspapers



of the day quote

Everyone must take a pledge that they will not use drugs or allow their sale in the villages. The police and the administration are there to support the people in this movement against drug abuse

The government's mandate spans five years, and it is unrealistic to expect a newly formed administration to transform the region overnight. The developmental setbacks our region has endured over the past decade cannot be reversed in mere moments; there is no magic solution

The role of the 'Collector' has evolved from being a revenue collector for the King during British times to becoming a District Development Commissioner in a welfare state

India plans to expose Pak globally

The exercise is aimed at presenting India's stance against Pakistan on terror comes in the wake of Operation Sindoor -- the Indian offensive against terror camps in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir following the April 22 terror attack in Pahalgam

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 16: As part of a major diplomatic offensive, the government will send several all-party delegations to different countries, starting next week, to expose Pakistan-sponsored terrorism on the world forum.

The exercise is aimed at presenting India's stance against Pakistan on terror comes in the wake of Operation Sindoor -- the Indian offensive against terror camps in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) following the April 22 terror attack in Pahalgam in which 26 people, mostly tourists, were killed.

Senior leaders, including MPs, of various parties from both the ruling and the opposition, have been sounded out by the government and some parties have also given their go-ahead to the presence of their members for the diplomatic exercise.

Sources said some former ministers would lead the delegations of MPs from different parties to a cluster of countries across the world.

While there was no clarity on the exact number of delegations or their members, some leaders



said more than 30 MPs could be included in the outreach exercise. The delegations will visit different countries for a period of 10 days. The MPs will visit different blocs of countries, as earmarked by the government.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) will brief the MPs before they depart. Among the parties whose MPs will be part of the delegation are the BJP, Congress, TMC, DMK, NCP (SP), JDU, BJD, Shiv Sena (UBT), CPI(M), and some others.

A leader of a party that has been sounded out for the exercise said they were told to be

ready to leave by May 22-23 for a period of 10 days and that the MEA would be in touch with them to provide the necessary details, including the itinerary.

Former Union minister Anurag Thakur and BJD MP from Odisha, Aparajita Sarangi, are among the ruling party members to be part of the delegations, the sources said.

Former Union ministers Ravi Shankar Prasad and Rajiv Pratap Rudy, BJD MPs Samik Bhattacharya and Brij Lal are also expected to be part of the delegations.

At least four MPs from the Congress, besides members of

other parties, have been tapped by the government about the diplomatic exercise.

Congress MPs included in the government's list are Shashi Tharoor, Manish Tewari, Salman Khurshid and Amar Singh, and the party has confirmed it would be a part of the delegations, the sources said.

The TMC's Sudip Bandyopadhyay, JDU's Sanjay Jha, BJD's Sasmit Patra, John Brittas of the CPI(M), Priyanka Chaturvedi of Shiv Sena (UBT), Supriya Sule of NCP (SP), the DMK's K Kanimozhi, AIMIM's Asaduddin Owaisi and AAP's Vikramjit Sawhney are also being tapped to be part of the delegations, the sources said.

While Khurshid, a former external affairs minister, has been asked to lead a delegation of seven MPs to south and southeast Asia, covering countries such as South Korea, Japan and Singapore, Baramati MP Sule is likely to lead a delegation to the Middle East and Africa, including the likes of Oman, Egypt, Kenya and South Africa, the sources said.

Congress leader Tewari is likely to lead a delegation to Europe or the Middle East and has been asked about his availability, the sources said.

Country, Army bowed at PM's feet: MP Deputy CM



The BJP leader later claimed his statement was "distorted" by the Opposition party, and he meant to say the people have bowed before the army after seeing its valour during the successful execution of Operation Sindoor

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jabalpur, May 16: Madhya Pradesh deputy Chief Minister Jagdish Devda Friday said the country, its army and soldiers have 'bowed down at the feet' of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, prompting the Congress to dub it an insult to the valour of the armed forces.

The BJP leader later claimed his statement was "distorted" by the Opposition party, and he meant to say the people have bowed before the army after seeing its valour during the successful execution of Operation Sindoor.

The controversy followed after another Madhya Pradesh minister, Vijay Shah, came under fire for remarks about Col Sofiya Qureshi who conducted media briefings on Operation Sindoor along with Wing Commander Vyomika Singh.

Devda, who is the finance minister of BJP-ruled Madhya Pradesh, was speaking at a function of Civil Defence volunteers in Jabalpur.

"We want to thank the prime minister. The entire country, its army and soldiers are 'natmastak' (with their heads bowed) at his feet. The entire country has bowed at his feet," he said.

Words are not enough to

praise the reply given to Pakistan through Operation Sindoor, the BJP leader said, adding, "Let's give a big round of applause to him (Modi)."

People were very angry after the Pahalgam attack where tourists were shot in front of women and children on the basis of religion, and they were distressed until the attack was avenged (through strikes on terror bases in Pakistan), he said. As Devda's potentially controversial remark followed the row over Vijay Shah's statement, Congress trained its guns on the BJP, accusing it of "constantly insulting the army".

Speaking to PTI in Indore hours later, Devda said he was hurt to see that his statement was being "distorted."

"What I meant was that during Operation Sindoor, the Indian Army displayed great valour, and the people of the country bow at its feet in respect," the deputy CM said.

Congress leaders were distorting his statement "out of jealousy", he said, adding that legal action should be taken against those who are misrepresenting it.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, meanwhile, said, "The constant insult of our army by BJP leaders is extremely shameful and unfortunate. First a minister of Madhya Pradesh made an indecent comment on women soldiers, and now their Deputy Chief Minister has grossly insulted the army."

The people of the entire country are proud of the valour of the army but the BJP people are "insulting" the army and instead of taking action against these leaders, the BJP is trying its best to save them, she alleged.

POST OF THE DAY



Actually what is unfortunate is that with your blind lust to try to score cheap publicity points & please some people sitting across the border, you refuse to acknowledge that the IWT has been one of the biggest historic betrayals of the interests of the people of J&K. I have always opposed this treaty & I will continue to do so. Opposing a blatantly unfair treaty is in no way, shape, size or form warmongering, it's about correcting a historic injustice that denied the people of J&K the right to use our water for ourselves.

@OmarAbdullah

India rises to 151st in World Press Freedom Index

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 16: India's ranking on the World Press Freedom Index improved to 151 among the 180 countries surveyed by Reporters Without Borders this year from 159 the previous year.

Finland, Estonia and the Netherlands take up the top three positions in the index that sought responses from more than 5,000 persons from across the world to finalise the rankings.

"We have surveyed 5,000 respondents across the world. It comprises a diverse set including policymakers, journalists and other stakeholders," Thibaut Bruttin, assistant director general of Reporters Without Borders, said at a press conference in Delhi.

While Bruttin refused to divulge the respondents' identities, he insisted that it was a diverse set representing different ideologies. India has nearly 900 privately-owned TV channels, half of which are dedicated to news.

Around 1,40,000 publications are published in more than 20 languages, including some 20,000 daily newspapers with a combined circulation of more than 390 million copies. Reporters Without Borders said.

Even in highly-ranked countries such as Australia (29th), Canada (21st) and Czechia (10th), media concentration is a cause for concern, Reporters Without Borders said.

SHORT TAKES

Rain, winds hit Delhi day after dust storm

New Delhi: A day after a dust storm hit Delhi, rain lashed many parts of the city amid strong winds and a cloudy sky Friday. Rain, accompanied by a light thunderstorm, lightning and gusty winds with a speed of 30 to 60 kilometres per hour, was reported from several areas, including Narela, Bawana, Burari, Rohini, Karawal Nagar, Delhi University, Mundka, Punjabi Bagh, Kashmiri Gate, Buddha Jayanti Park, ITO, Jafarpur, Najafgarh, Delhi Cantonment, Safdarjung, Lodi Road and parts of the National Capital Region (NCR).

Bihar govt hikes DA for its employees

Patna: The Bihar government announced a 2 percentage points increase in Dearness Allowance (DA) for its employees and pensioners Friday. The decision was taken at a meeting of the state cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. With this hike, employees and pensioners in the pay scale of the 7th Pay Commission will get DA and Dearness Relief (DR) of 55 per cent, Additional Chief Secretary (Cabinet Secretariat) S Siddharth said.

Stationary BEST bus catches fire

Mumbai: A stationary bus caught fire due to a gas leak at a bus station in the western suburbs here Friday morning, officials from the Brihanmumbai Electricity Supply and Transport Undertaking said. There was no report of injuries in the blaze that broke out at Marve bus station around 8 am, they said.



Young men cool off in a canal at Vrindavan on a hot summer day, in Mathura district, Uttar Pradesh

Pay 25% DA to state govt employees: SC to Bengal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 16: The Supreme Court Friday asked the West Bengal government to pay 25 per cent of the outstanding Dearness Allowance (DA) to its employees within the next three months.

A bench comprising Justices Sanjay Karol and Sandeep Mehta, which was hearing a plea of the West Bengal government against the Calcutta High Court order on the issue, asked the state government to pay the DA arrears for 2009 to 2019 within three months.

Around six lakh state employees would benefit from the



apex court's interim order. The state government, represented by senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, told the bench that the exchequer will have to bear a burden of Rs 10,000 crore.

The total outstanding DA dues, according to lawyers, is around 41,000 crore. The bench

has now fixed the plea for hearing in August.

The controversy began when a section of West Bengal government employees approached the Calcutta High Court, demanding DA at the same rate as their central government counterparts, along

with pending arrears.

In May 2022, the high court ruled in favour of the employees and instructed the state to align its DA with central rates.

However, the West Bengal government challenged the high court's verdict by filing an appeal in the Supreme Court in November 2022.

Since then, the state has implemented only marginal increases in DA, which have not kept pace with the central government's rates. As of April 2025, while central government employees receive 55 per cent DA, their West Bengal counterparts get only 18 per cent -- even after a recent 4 per cent hike.

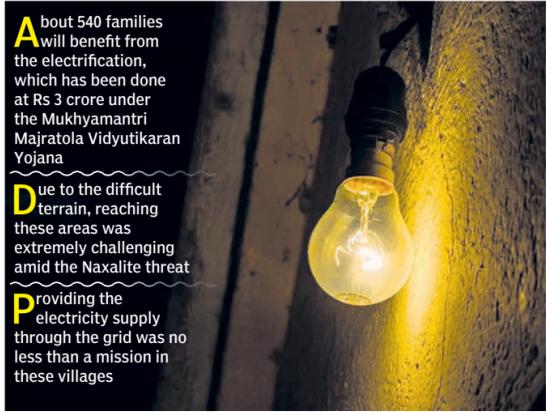
For the 1st time, 17 remote Naxal-hit villages get electricity

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Raipur, May 16: Seventeen villages nestled among nearly inaccessible mountains and dense forests in Naxal-hit Mohla-Manpur-Ambagarh Chowki district of Chhattisgarh have got electricity from the supply grid for the first time, officials said Friday.

About 540 families will benefit from the electrification, which has been done at Rs 3 crore under the Mukhyamantri Majratola Vidyutikaran Yojana, they said.

Due to the difficult terrain, reaching these areas was extremely challenging amid the Naxalite threat. Providing the electricity supply through the grid was no less than a mission in these villages, said an official statement. The villages had ac-



About 540 families will benefit from the electrification, which has been done at Rs 3 crore under the Mukhyamantri Majratola Vidyutikaran Yojana

Due to the difficult terrain, reaching these areas was extremely challenging amid the Naxalite threat

Providing the electricity supply through the grid was no less than a mission in these villages

Bodra, Bukmarka, Sambalpur, Gattegahan, Pugda, Amakodo, Petemeta, Tatekasa, Kundalkal, Raimanhora, Nainguda, Metatodke, Kohkatola, Edasmeta and Kunjakanhar -- after they were connected to the power grid recently, it said.

"In some villages, children danced, while in others, the elderly burst crackers to express their happiness as it was the moment they had waited for decades," it said.

Of the 540 families in these 17 villages, 275 have got electricity connections so far. The work to provide the power supply to the remaining households is underway, said an official.

Under the project, a 25 KVA transformer was installed in Teteekasa. For this purpose, a 45-km-long 11 KV line, 87 low-pressure poles and 17 trans-

formers have been installed, a state-run power company official said.

Securing a no objection certificate (NOC) from the forest department and transporting the equipment for laying the 11 KV line to these remote villages were challenging, he said, adding that the dedicated efforts of the technical team made it possible to complete the project.

"The priority of the government is to ensure the development of basic facilities in hyper-sensitive areas. Electricity will soon be provided to other villages in the region," he said.

Manpur-Mohla-Ambagarh Chowki district, located around 150 km from the capital Raipur, shares its borders with the Naxal-hit Bastar region of the state and Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra.

cess to solar power to light up bulbs, but faced maintenance issues. In many villages, solar panels got stolen, forcing chil-

dren to study under kerosene lamps, said officials. Celebrations broke out in the villages -- Katuljhora, Kattapar,

# international



It is the responsibility of government leaders to work to build harmonious and peaceful civil societies

POPE LEO XIV | CATHOLIC CHURCH LEADER

## BRAZIL CONFIRMS OUTBREAK OF AVIAN INFLUENZA

Brazil, the world's largest poultry exporter, confirmed its first outbreak of avian influenza on a commercial farm in a statement from the Agriculture Ministry Friday, raising the prospect of restrictions from trade partners



### of the day quote

They (Iran) have a proposal. More importantly, they know they have to move quickly or something bad—something bad's going to happen



DONALD TRUMP | PRESIDENT, US

may be able to escape tariffs on pharmaceutical exports to the United States even if Washington goes ahead with plans to introduce the sectoral tariff



GAN KIM YONG | DEPUTY PM, SINGAPORE

Our homes are being washed away by landslides. Floods and droughts arrive unexpectedly, yet we remain strong. Our emissions are low, but our contributions to environmental conservation are significant



KP SHARMA OLI | PM, NEPAL

## Ex-FBI chief under fire over '86 47' post on Trump

'86' is an American slang term meaning 'to throw out,' 'to get rid of,' or 'to refuse service to,' while 47 is code for the 47th US President

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, May 16: Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said Thursday that federal law enforcement is investigating a social media post made by former FBI Director James Comey that she and other Republicans claim is a call for violence against President Donald Trump.

In an Instagram post earlier in the day, Comey wrote "cool



shell formation on my beach walk" under a picture of seashells that appeared to form the shapes for "86 47."

Numerous Trump administration officials, including Noem, claimed that Comey was advocating for the assassination of Trump, the 47th president. "DHS and Secret Service is investigating this threat and

will respond appropriately," Noem wrote.

The post has since been deleted. Comey subsequently wrote, "I posted earlier a picture of some shells I saw today on a beach walk, which I assumed were a political message. I didn't realize some folks associate those numbers with violence."

### PEACE TALKS END

# European leaders rally behind Ukraine

Kyiv and Moscow fail to agree to a ceasefire at their first direct talks in three years, with Russia presenting conditions that a Ukrainian source said went beyond its previous demands

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tirana, May 16: European leaders have agreed with US President Donald Trump that Russia's position in ceasefire talks with Ukraine is unacceptable and they intend to coordinate a response, UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer said Friday.

Starmer spoke from Albania's capital, Tirana, where leaders of dozens of European countries were gathered for the European Political Community, or EPC, summit attended by Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

"We just had a meeting with President Zelenskyy and then a phone call with President Trump to discuss the developments in the negotiations today, and the Russian position is clearly unacceptable," Starmer told reporters.

"As a result of that meeting with President Zelenskyy, under discussion with President Trump, we are now closely aligning and coordinating our responses and will continue to do so," he said.

He said that the decision with Trump was also agreed on with the leaders of France, Germany and Poland. Russia and Ukraine held their first first direct peace talks since the early weeks of Moscow's full-scale invasion,



The diplomatic efforts that we have made so far have unfortunately failed because of Russia's lack of readiness to take the first steps in the right direction now

FRIEDRICH MERZ | CHANCELLOR, GERMANY

response." Macron added: "We will continue to coordinate with our European partners — the coalition of the willing — and the United States. There will be new contacts and feedback in the coming hours."

### The world must 'respond'

Earlier, Zelenskyy had said Ukraine is committed to ending the war, but urged dozens of European leaders to ramp up sanctions if Russian President Vladimir Putin continues to play for time in talks aimed at securing a truce.

"Ukraine is ready to take all realistic steps to end this war," Zelenskyy told leaders at the European summit. But he warned: "If it turns out that the Russian delegation really is just theatrical and can't deliver any results today, the world must respond."

That reaction, he said, should include "sanctions against Russia's energy sector and banks."

Some European leaders pressed for fresh sanctions. The European Union is likely to adopt a new round of measures as soon as Tuesday.

# Glacier grandeur meets peril at Argentina's Perito Moreno

Once a symbol of glacial stability, Argentina's Perito Moreno Glacier is now shedding massive ice blocks at an alarming rate. These powerful collapses reflect a deeper crisis, signaling the growing impact of climate change on Earth's frozen frontiers

REUTERS

Perito Moreno Glacier, May 16: The deep cracking sound bursting from within the ice signals the dramatic fall about to happen. Seconds later, a block of ice some 70 meters (230 ft) tall - the size of a 20-story building - collapses from the face of the Perito Moreno glacier into the aquamarine water below.

The sight has attracted visitors to Argentina's most famous glacier for years. Standing on platforms facing the ice, they wait for the next crack to split the cool Patagonian air.

But recently the size of the ice

chunks breaking off - a process called "calving" - has been starting to alarm local guides and glaciologists, already anxious at a prolonged retreat by Perito Moreno, which had bucked the trend in recent decades by maintaining its mass even as warmer climates spurred faster glacial melting worldwide.

"Ice calving events of this size haven't been very common at the Perito Moreno glacier over the past 20 years," said Pablo Quinteros, an official tourist guide at Los Glaciares National Park in the southern province of Santa Cruz.

"It's only in the last four to



### CLIMATE CHANGE

six years that we've started to see icebergs this big," he told Reuters during a visit in April.

The face of the glacier, which flows down from Andean peaks to end in the waters of Lake Argentina, had for decades held more or less steady, some years advancing and others retreating. But in the last five years, there's been a firmer retreat.

"It had been in more or less the same position for the past

80 years. And that's unusual," said Argentine glaciologist Lucas Ruiz with state science body CONICET, whose research focus is the future of Patagonian glaciers in the face of climate change. "However, since 2020, signs of retreat have begun to be seen in some parts of the Perito Moreno glacier's face."

He said that the glacier could rebound as it has done before, but that for the moment it was

The changes we are seeing today clearly show that this balance of forces... has been disrupted, and today the glacier is losing both in thickness and area

LUCAS RUIZ | GLACIOLOGIST, ARGENTINA

losing between one and two meters of water equivalent per year, which if not reversed could lead to a situation where the loss accelerates.

A state-backed 2024 report, co-authored by Ruiz and presented to Argentina's Congress, showed that while Perito Moreno's mass has been overall stable for half a century, the period since 2015 has seen the fastest and most prolonged loss of mass in 47 years, on average losing 0.85 meters per year.

Glaciers around the globe are disappearing faster than ever, with the last three-year period seeing the largest glacial mass loss on record, according to a

## Israeli strikes pound Gaza

REUTERS

Cairo, May 16: Israeli strikes on Gaza have killed more than 250 people since Thursday morning, local health authorities said Friday, one of the deadliest phases of bombardment since a truce collapsed in March, with a new ground offensive expected soon.

Friday's air and artillery strikes were focused on the northern section of the tiny, crowded enclave, where dozens of people including women and children were killed overnight, said Gaza Health Ministry spokesman Khalil al-Deqran.

Israel has intensified its bombardment and built up armoured forces along the border despite growing international pressure for it to resume ceasefire talks and end its blockade of Gaza, where warnings of famine are growing.



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said May 5 that Israel was planning an expanded, intensive offensive against Hamas as his security cabinet approved plans that could involve seizing the entire Gaza Strip and controlling aid.

An Israeli defence official said at the time that the operation would not be launched before Trump concluded his visit to the Middle East, which was expected to end Friday.

### FRESH COVID WAVE

# HK, S'pore on high alert

AGENCIES

Hong Kong, May 16: Years after the world battled the deadly Covid-19 pandemic, the virus appears to be resurging in parts of Asia. Health authorities in the densely populated financial hubs of Hong Kong and Singapore are raising alarms as Covid-19 infections surge sharply in these major cities, as per reports.

In Hong Kong, Covid-19 activity has reached a "quite high" level, according to Albert Au, head of the Communicable Disease Branch at the Center for Health Protection report cited. The percentage of respiratory samples testing positive for the virus is at its highest in a year.

Severe cases and deaths have also surged, with 31 fatalities reported in the week ending May 3. Rising viral loads in sewage and increased hospital visits further indicate significant community



spread. While case numbers have not yet matched previous pandemic peaks, the data signals an active resurgence.

Amid the rise, popular Hong Kong singer Eason Chan cancelled his scheduled performances in Taiwan after testing positive for Covid-19, according to a statement on the concert's official Weibo page.

Singapore's health ministry has reported a 28% jump in estimated cases, reaching 14,200 in the first week of May. Hospitalisations rose by around 30%

during the same period reported. This marks the country's first major Covid-19 update in nearly a year, triggered by the scale of the increase. Authorities link the rise to waning immunity, although they confirmed there is "no indication" that current variants are more contagious or severe than previous ones.

The spike is notable as it comes during the warmer months, challenging the pattern of respiratory viruses typically peaking in colder weather. Singapore now provides infection updates only during major surges and has urged high-risk groups to stay current on booster doses.

Elsewhere in Asia, Covid-19 trends are also rising. In China, test positivity rates in hospitals more than doubled over the five weeks leading up to May 4, according to the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

UNESCO report in March.

Ruiz said instruments his research team used to monitor the glacier had shown an increase in air temperature in the area of around 0.06 degrees Celsius per decade and precipitation decreasing, meaning less accumulation of snow and ice.

"The thing with Perito Moreno is that it took a while, so to speak, to feel the effects of climate change," Ruiz said. Now, however, the accumulation of ice at the top of the glacier was being outpaced by melting and calving at the bottom.

"It's insane. The most incredible thing I've ever seen," said Brazilian tourist Giovanna Machado on the deck of one of the boats, which have to be careful of sudden ice falls. Even in photos, you just can't grasp the immensity of it, and it's perfect. It's amazing. I think everyone should come here at least once in their lifetime."



**“We are essentially creating a full-stack brand analytics tool, an advanced tool that gives brands the ability to go a level deeper than just the basic performance, on Zepto, and derive insights that cannot just help them grow on the Zepto platform, but they can use it across all their businesses”**  
**AADIT PALICHA | CEO, ZEPTO**

**FOREX RESERVES JUMP \$4.5BN**

India's forex reserves jumped by \$4.553 billion to \$690.617 billion for the week ended May 9 on the back of a steep increase in gold assets, the RBI said Friday. In previous reporting week, the overall reserves had dropped by \$2.065 billion to \$686.064 billion. The reserves had touched an all-time high of \$704.885 billion in September 2024



**of the day** **QUOTE**

**We don't want to lose market share. So we are increasing our activities, whether it is in the rural areas, whether it is in the institutional sales areas or the pre-owned car sales. I would say that we have a very strong plan**  
**TARUN GARG | COO, HMIL**

**Gold prices remained volatile, hovering near USD 3,200 as markets reacted to potential trade agreements between the US and key partners such as the UK and China**  
**JATEEN TRIVEDI | VP, LKP SECURITIES**

**Rupee is expected in a narrow band of 85.25-75 with exporters expected to sell the upticks and importers to wait for medium term hedging... RBI may have been present yesterday (Thursday) at 85.75 levels**  
**ANIL KUMAR BHANSALI | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FINREX TREASURY ADVISORS**

**Air India urges govt to shun Indigo-Turkish airline deals**

REUTERS

**New Delhi, May 16:** Air India has lobbied government to halt rival Indigo's leasing tie-up with Turkish Airlines, citing business impact as well as security concerns sparked by Istanbul's support for Pakistan, according to a source and a document seen by Reuters.



**Air India worried about business impact due to Indigo's deals** | **Urged government to axe Indigo-Turkish Airlines partnership -source**  
**ANGER MOUNTING IN INDIA AGAINST TURKEY'S SUPPORT FOR PAKISTAN**

Amid growing public anger in India against Turkey's stance on Pakistan amid India-Pakistan conflict, Indians have been cancelling holidays. However, the Indian government Thursday revoked security clearance of Turkish ground handling service firm, Celebi, citing national security.

Since 2023, IndiGo has had a leasing arrangement with state-backed Turkish Airlines, which has provided two planes with pilots and some crew to IndiGo to operate on New Delhi- and Mumbai-to-Istanbul routes.

Air India has asked India's Civil Aviation ministry to disallow repeated extensions of the leasing deal, which must be renewed every six months, arguing it is benefiting Turkey and hurting India's aviation sector, according to the source and a document Air India submitted to some Indian government departments, seen by Reuters.

The aircraft leasing arrangement had led to a substantial increase in seat capacity to Turkey, boosting that country's tourism as well, the document said. Air India and Turkish Airlines, as well as India's aviation ministry, did not respond to Reuters queries.

In a statement, IndiGo said its partnership with Turkish Airlines, which also include a code share deal, "provides multiple benefits to Indian travelers", boosts aviation growth and jobs, and also "enabled IndiGo to build its presence in the long-haul markets in Europe and the USA." Indian aviation policies say the government can approve such leasing deals for six months in cases of "emergent" or "unforeseen" circumstances, but they can be extended.

The last extension for IndiGo for such leases is valid until May 31, and the carrier has already applied for an extension, said another source with direct knowledge. IndiGo, like Air India and other global airlines, has faced delivery delays due to supply chain disruptions affecting plane makers Boeing and Airbus.

**Celebi moves HC over 'vague' clearance pullout**

REUTERS

**New Delhi, May 16:** Turkey-based Celebi, provides airport ground handling in India, has filed a legal challenge in HC against New Delhi's decision to overturn its security clearance based on vague national security concerns were cited without reasoning.

Amid growing public anger in India about Turkey's stance on Pakistan in the India-Pakistan conflict, the Indian government Thursday revoked Celebi's security clearance in interest of national security.

In the court filing, Celebi asked the Delhi High Court to set aside that decision, arguing it would impact 3,791 jobs and investor confidence, and was issued without any warning to the company.

"Mere rhetoric of national security without elaborating upon in what manner is an entity a threat to national security is unsustainable in law," the company said in the filing (not issued in public).

India's government did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The case is likely to be heard Monday. In its filing, Celebi said that while its shareholders were registered in Turkey, but majority end control of the group is held by companies that do



not have Turkish incorporation or origin.

The Shiv Sena party, a key ally in Modi's government, had held protests against Celebi in Mumbai this week, demanding the city's airport sever ties with it.

Celebi in its filing said it was providing ground handling services at airports in New Delhi, Kerala, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Goa, and undergone to multiple background checks and security verifications by national security and intelligence agencies in India before commencing business here.

Meanwhile, Delhi Airport late Thursday posted on X (social media platform), "officially ended its association with Celebi" for ground handling and cargo operations.

**Singtel offloads 1.2% stake in Bharti Airtel**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 16:** Singtel (Southeast Asia's largest telecoms provider) Friday said it has sold about 1.2 per cent of its direct stake in Bharti Airtel for SGD 2 billion (roughly \$1.5 billion) in sync with its active capital management approach to optimise its asset portfolio and drive shareholder returns.

According to the bulk deal data available on the National Stock Exchange (NSE), Singtel's arm Pastel Ltd offloaded 7.10 crore shares or 1.2 per cent stake in Bharti Airtel. The shares were disposed of at an average price of ₹1,814.08 apiece, taking the aggregate transaction value to ₹12,879.96 crore. Following the sale of 1.2 per cent equity, Singtel will hold a 28.3 per cent stake in India's second-largest telecom operator Airtel.

The transaction was executed on a private placement basis to international and Indian institutional investors, including existing shareholders of Airtel, according to Singtel.

Singtel has sold approximately 1.2 per cent of its direct stake in regional associate Airtel today for SGD 2.0 billion as part of its active capital management approach to optimise its asset portfolio and drive shareholder returns sustainably, Singtel, said in a statement.

**Q4 RESULTS**

**Hyundai PAT slips**

**New Delhi:** Hyundai Motor India Friday reported a 4 per cent dip in its consolidated profit after tax to ₹1,614 crore for the fourth quarter ended on March 31, 2025, on account of lower sales in the domestic market. The automaker had posted a profit after tax (PAT) of ₹1,677 crore in the January-March period of 2023-24. Total revenue from operations rose to ₹17,940 crore for the period under review as compared with ₹17,671 crore in the year-ago period, said in a regulatory filing.

**BHEL net profit rises**

**New Delhi:** Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) Friday posted a 3 per cent rise in its consolidated net profit to ₹504.45 crore in March quarter compared to a year ago, mainly due to higher revenues from industry business. The company had reported a consolidated net profit of ₹489.62 crore in the quarter ended on March 31, 2024, it said in a regulatory filing. Total income rose to ₹9,142.64 crore in the fourth quarter against ₹8,416.84 crore in the same period a year ago.

**Emami profit surges**

**New Delhi:** Emami Ltd Friday reported 10.5 per cent increase in consolidated profit after tax to ₹162.17 crore for March quarter FY25, helped by a healthy volume growth in its core business. The company had posted a PAT of ₹146.75 crore for the January-March period a year ago, according to a regulatory filing from Emami.

**BLS International's PAT up**

**New Delhi:** BLS International Services Friday reported a consolidated Profit After Tax (PAT) of ₹145.2 crore for the quarter ended March, marking an increase of 69.9 per cent from ₹85.5 crore a year-ago period. During the quarter under review, its sales rose 54.74 per cent to ₹692.8 crore, as against ₹447.71 crore during the corresponding period last year, said in a regulatory filing.

**Eureka Forbes profit jumps**

**New Delhi:** Eureka Forbes Ltd Friday reported a twofold increase in its consolidated net profit to ₹49.48 crore in the March quarter of 2024-25. The company had posted a net profit of ₹21.38 crore in the January-March quarter a year ago, according to a regulatory filing.

**India's GDP growth down to 6.3%**

*UN lowers India's GDP by 6.3 per cent from 7.1 per cent in last year due to global heatwinds, but forecasts a strong growth momentum*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**United Nation, May 16:** India's economic growth forecast for 2025 has been revised downward to 6.3 per cent, and despite a projected moderation, the country remains one of the fastest-growing large economies, supported by resilient consumption and government spending, the United Nations has said.

The UN Thursday launched a report titled 'The World Economic Situation and Prospects of mid-2025'.

"India remains one of the fastest growing large economies, driven by strong private consumption and public investment, even as growth projections have been lowered to 6.3 per cent in 2025," Ingo Pitterle, Senior Economic Affairs Officer, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), said at a press briefing here.

The report covers the current situation of global economy global, marked by heightened trade tensions and elevated policy uncertainty. The recent surge in tariffs, driving the effective US tariff rate up steeply, threatens to raise production costs, disrupt global supply chains and amplify financial turbulence.



The report said that despite a projected moderation, India remains one of the fastest-growing large economies, supported by resilient consumption, and government spending.

"Resilient private consumption and strong public investment, alongside robust services exports, will support economic growth, while looming US tariffs weigh on merchandise exports, currently exempt sectors—such as pharmaceuticals, electronics, semiconductors, energy, and copper—could limit the economic impact, though these exemptions may not be permanent," the report said.

The 6.3 per cent growth projection for India in 2025 is slightly lower than the 6.6 per cent estimated in the UN World Economic Situation and Prospects 2025 published in January this year. GDP growth for India for 2026 is projected to be 6.4 per cent.

In India, unemployment remains largely stable amid steady economic conditions,

**“This is a downward revision of 0.4 percentage points each year, back from what we were expecting in January. Now this is not a recession, but the slowing down is affecting most countries and regions”**  
**SHANTANU MUKHERJEE | DIRECTOR, ECONOMY DIVISION, UN DESA**

though persistent gender disparities in employment underscore the need for greater inclusivity in workforce participation. The report added that in India, inflation is projected to slow from 4.9 per cent in 2024 to 4.3 per cent in 2025, staying within the central bank's target range.

Declining inflation has allowed most of the South Asian region's central banks to commence or continue monetary easing in 2025. The report noted that the Reserve Bank of India, had kept its policy rate steady

at 6.5 per cent since February 2023, began its easing cycle in February 2025. Meanwhile, governments in Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka are expected to continue fiscal consolidation and economic reforms under IMF-supported programs.

The report said that global GDP growth is now forecast at just 2.4 per cent in 2025, down from 2.9 per cent in 2024 and 0.4 percentage points below the January 2025 projection.

"It's been a nervous time for the global economy. In January this year, we were expecting two years of stable and since then, prospects have diminished, accompanied by significant volatility across various dimensions," Shantanu Mukherjee, Director, economy division, UN DESA.

He further said the global economic growth is forecast at 2.4% for 2025 and 2.5% for 2026. Uncertainty over trade and economic policies, combined with a volatile geopolitical landscape, is prompting businesses to delay or scale back critical investment decisions.

These developments are compounding existing challenges, including high debt levels and sluggish productivity growth, further undermining global growth prospects, the report said.

The report further said that the slowdown is broad-based, affecting both developed and developing economies. Growth in US is projected to decelerate significantly, from 2.8 per cent in 2024 to 1.6 per cent in 2025, with higher tariffs and policy uncertainty expected to weigh on private investment and consumption.

**PROFIT TAKING**

**Stock market ends low**



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, May 16:** Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty ended lower Friday due to profit-taking in IT shares and Bharti Airtel after a sharp rally in the previous session. The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 200.15 points or 0.24 per cent to settle at 82,330.59. During the day, it lost 383.79 points or 0.46 per cent to 82,146.95. The NSE Nifty dropped 42.30 points or 0.17 per cent to 25,019.80.

Bharti Airtel dropped by 2.81 per cent after Singtel sold about 1.2 per cent of its direct stake in the firm for around USD 1.5 billion in sync with its active capital management approach to optimise its asset portfolio and drive shareholder returns sustainably.

HCL Tech, State Bank of India, Infosys, Tech Mahindra, Tata Consultancy Services, Bajaj Finserv, Larsen & Toubro, Mahindra & Mahindra and Titan were also among the losers. However, Eterna, Hindustan Unilever, Asian Paints, ITC, Tata Motors and NTPC were among the gainers.

"Markets languished in negative territory throughout the trading session and ended weak due to selective profit-taking in IT, banking and metal shares.

"However, broader indices like mid and smallcap indices coupled with most sectoral stocks ending in positive territory shows that investors are cautiously optimistic on equities, despite global uncertainties," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

The BSE small cap gauge jumped 1.18 per cent and mid-cap index climbed 0.85 per cent.

Among sectors: Industries surged the most by 1.80 per cent, followed by realty (1.72 per cent), capital goods (1.63 per cent), utilities (1.44 per cent), power (1.37 per cent) and consumer discretionary (0.87 per cent) and sectors like IT, teck, BSE Focused IT, metal and bankex were the laggards.

On the weekly front, the BSE benchmark gauge jumped 2,876.12 points or 3.61 per cent, and the Nifty surged 1,011.8 points or 4.21 per cent.

**Petrol sales rise by 10%, diesel goes off the boil**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 16:** Petrol consumption spiked by 10 per cent in the first half of May as summer season travel led to a surge in demand for the fuel, according to provisional sales data of state-owned fuel retailers.

Petrol consumption rose to 1.5 million tonne during May 1-15 from 1.37 million tonne sales a year back. Its demand was up 10.5 per cent over consumption of 1.36 million tonne in May 1-15, 2023 and nearly 46 per cent higher than Covid-marred first fortnight of May 2021. Diesel sales were up 2 per

cent to 3.36 million tonne, the data of three state-owned fuel retailers, who control about 90 per cent of the fuel market, showed. The consumption of India's most used fuel has rebounded since last month; saw just 2 per cent growth in demand in fiscal year ended March 31, 2025.

In April, diesel consumption rose to 8.23 million tonne, up nearly 4 per cent over demand in the year-ago period. Between May 1 to 15, diesel sales were 2 per cent higher than 3.29 million tonne consumption in the same period last year. It was 1.3 per cent higher than May 1-15, 2023 and



16 per cent more than Covid-marred first fortnight of May 2021. Onset of summer triggers

rural demand for irrigation as well as for air-conditioners in urban areas Industry officials

said diesel had hit a slow lane in the last few months, leading to speculations about its future. The growth since April was on revival in consumption for electioneering a year back. Jet fuel (ATF) consumption growth slowed to 1.1 per cent to 3,27,900 tonne in May 1-15 as flight restrictions over some parts of northern and western India due to tensions with Pakistan dented demand.

ATF sales were 8.6 per cent higher than consumption in May 1-15, 2023 and 11 per cent more than first half of May 2021. Month-on-month, jet fuel consumption was down 5.8 per cent when compared with

3,48,100 tonne of April 1-15.

LPG continued to be in the fast lane with 10.4 per cent growth to 1.34 million tonne in the first fortnight of May, driven by Ujjawala connections. Since 2019, volumes equal to almost 5 months have been added in domestic cooking gas consumption.

Cooking gas sales were 10 per cent higher than 1.22 million tonne consumption of May 1-15, 2023 and 33 per cent more than 1.01 million tonne in the first half of May 2021. LPG sales were up 7.3 per cent when compared with 1.25 million tonne of April 1-15.

# Catalans crowned La Liga kings

BARCELONA CLINCH ITS 28TH SPANISH LEAGUE TITLE AS YAMAL'S STUNNING STRIKE SEALS DOMESTIC TREBLE



## Yamal's rise helps Barca move beyond the post-Messi era

When Lionel Messi left Barcelona it looked like a generation would have to go by before another player of his incredible talent would don the burgundy and blue. It turned out a couple of years was enough. Lamine Yamal cemented his status as the Next Big Thing in global soccer by excelling in a season that saw Barcelona finish with treble of domestic titles.

Defenders know what is coming when Yamal dips his head and starts his dribble from the right side

**I always try my best and today I was lucky it went in. I am very happy I could help the team and celebrate it**

LAMINE YAMAL

"We have a kid who can pull gold out of his boots," Raphinha said about Yamal. While he has dismissed comparisons to Messi, or any other player for that matter, it is impossible not to see flashes of the Argentine's majestic moves in his young feet,



across the edge of the area. They know he is seeking the sliver of space to get his fantastic left-foot curler off. But Espanyol's players — like so many others this season — could do nothing to stop him from whipping the ball into the top corner of the net 2-0

especially after the soccer planets aligned to put them together in a photo when Yamal was just a baby. They both terrorize defenses from the right flank of Barcelona's attack, cutting inside to put the ball on their prized left boot. But Yamal has his own talents.

His gliding moves are his own, as is his lithe, elastic body. And while Messi was perhaps a better finisher at this age, Yamal is just as good a dribbler and perhaps even a better passer. His ability to jink past double teams and score beautiful goals make the highlights, as do those exquisite crosses he makes with the outside edge of his boot to drop balls into the box.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Barcelona, May 16:** This was Lamine Yamal's season.

So it just had to be the teenage phenom who scored the decisive goal to clinch Barcelona's 28th Spanish league title.

And what a goal it was for the player who still wears dental braces and sports a new dyed-blond hairdo.

The 17-year-old struck the winner in Barcelona's 2-0 victory at crosstown rival Espanyol Thursday when he slid past two defenders outside the area and whipped one his now trademark left-footed curlers into the corner of the net.

It was a perfect culmination to Yamal's last 10 months.

After helping Spain win the European Championship last summer, Yamal excelled for Barcelona this campaign with his goals, dribbling and play-making as he confirmed his status as the next big star of global soccer. Along with Raphinha, Pedri and company, and Barcelona was unstoppable.

Fermin López ensured the win in stoppage time after

Espanyol was reduced to 10 men in the 80th when Leandro Cabrera received a direct red for hitting Yamal in the stomach while disputing a ball.

Barcelona won the title with two rounds remaining. It completed a domestic double with the Copa del Rey title — treble if you add the Spanish Super Cup — and reached the Champions League semifinals in a fantastic first season for coach Hansi Flick.

Flick's team virtually ended Madrid's title defense when it beat its top rival 4-3 Sunday, making it four of four clasico victories across all competitions this season.

Madrid's victory over Mallorca Wednesday prevented Barcelona from winning the title without playing. But the Catalan club needed just two points from its final three games of the season. Barcelona's players danced briefly on the field to celebrate while sprinklers doused them with water.

"You don't win a league every day and we have to enjoy this and give it the value it has," said Barcelona midfielder Pe-

dri after completing his 200th game for his club at age 22.

Lionel Messi posted a message on Instagram sending his "Congratulations" for his old team. Real Madrid also congratulated its fierce rival on X, while thousands of Barcelona fans gathered to celebrate in downtown Barcelona.

Flick leads the way Barcelona dominated the domestic competitions, winning 15 and drawing two of its league games in 2025. Toss in the cups, and the only tiny blemish was coming oh-so-close to reaching the Champions League final before it fell in gut-wrenching fashion at Inter Milan.

Looking back on his arrival in the summer, Flick said that he had instilled a "positive" attitude in his team and it had adapted well to his style of play that requires a high defensive line and all-in pressing.

"Barcelona has to win titles and three titles is really great," Flick said. "I suffered a bit after the game in Milan, but after winning three titles I am very happy and the club is too."

## Nair included in India 'A' squad for England tour

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, May 16:** Right-handed batter Karun Nair has made a return to the national reckoning after being included in the Abhimanyu Easwaran-led India 'A' squad for the upcoming tour of England, starting May 30.

India A are scheduled to play two games against England Lions (May 30-June 2 in Canterbury and June 6-9 in Northampton) and one intra-squad match against the senior India Test squad (June 13-16 in Beckenham).



While announcing the 18-man squad, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) added that Shubman Gill and B Sai Sudharsan will join the India 'A' squad ahead of the second match against England Lions, once IPL 2025 concludes June 3.

Nair, who scored a triple hundred against England in Chennai in December 2016, scored 863 runs at an average of 53.93 in Vidarbha's Ranji Trophy winning 2024/25 season and became the fourth-highest run-getter of the tournament.

He also featured for Northamptonshire in the Division 1 County Championships over the last two seasons - In 14 innings, he scored 736 runs at an average of 56.61, including hitting two centuries and highest score of 202 not out.

The performances of Nair and Easwaran will be of huge interest to the Indian team management and the Ajit Agarkar-led selection committee, as they look to fill the huge gaps in the batting order after the retirements of Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli.

## OFC extend Thoiba's contract until 2029

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, May 16:** Odisha FC announce that versatile defender Thoiba Singh Moirangthem has signed a long-term contract extension, committing his future to the club until 2029.

Thoiba, who joined the club at just 17 during the 2019-20 season, has grown into an important part of the squad over the years. From a promising teenager, he has developed into a reliable presence in defence. This season, he formed a solid partnership at the back alongside experienced defenders like Carlos Delgado and Mourtada Fall, holding his own and earning the trust of the team.

One of the standout moments of his 2023-24 ISL campaign came in the knockout clash against Kerala Blasters FC, where his intelligent pass to Roy Krishna helped set up a crucial equaliser, finished by Diego Mauricio.



His opening goal of the 2024-25 season came in the 2-2 draw against NorthEast United FC.

Thoiba's progress was further rewarded when he received his first call-up to the Indian national team - a proud milestone in his young career and for the club.

Odisha FC congratulated Thoiba on this well-deserved extension and wishes him continued success in his journey with the club.

## IPL resumes with RCB vs KKR clash

Royal Challengers Bengaluru are second on the table with 16 points while Kolkata Knight Riders are sixth on the table with 11 points

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore, May 16:** Brought to a halt by the recent India-Pakistan border tensions, the IPL will resume Saturday with Royal Challengers Bengaluru taking on Kolkata Knight Riders in a high-stakes contest where the spotlight will firmly be on Virat Kohli following his recent Test retirement.

The unexpected 10-day break has left both the RCB and the KKR with different goals to achieve and common challenges to hurdle over.

The RCB are second on the table with 16 points from 11 matches, and a win here can propel them to the playoffs.

KKR are sixth on the table with 11 points from 12 games, and a slip-up will evaporate the



defending champions' hopes of making the knockouts.

They are also faced with the challenging task of hitting the pre-break intensity straightaway at the Chinnaswamy stadium. The hosts are coming off a four-match winning streak while the tourists have managed to stitch two victories in three matches before the league came to a grinding

HIGH-STAKES CONTEST

halt. Questions remain on whether they can regain that competitive edge after a passage of uncertainty.

But RCB are better-placed to surmount these difficulties, and the sight of skipper Rajat Patidar batting rather fluently at nets might have soothed a lot of nerves.

Patidar had injured his finger during the home match

against Chennai Super Kings, forcing him to wear a splint.

The hosts also have most of their foreign recruits back in the hut after returning home in the wake of the Indo-Pak military face-off.

The likes of Phil Salt, Lungi Ngidi, Tim David, Liam Livingstone and Romario Shephard are available for this match and beyond.

The jarring notes will be the injury-enforced absence of Devdutt Padikkal and pacer Josh Hazlewood. RCB will also hope that Mayank Agarwal, who has replaced Padikkal in the line-up, will rise to the occasion.

Hazlewood has a shoulder injury and the franchise has not yet given clarity on his availability.

However, the loudest cheers will be reserved for Kohli, who announced his retirement from Test cricket earlier this week.

If social media calls are anything to go by, the faithfuls are planning to don the white jersey to honour a batter who lorded over the traditional format.

## Rohit Sharma Stand unveiled at iconic Wankhede

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Mumbai, May 16:** The Rohit Sharma Stand was unveiled at the iconic Wankhede Stadium Friday. Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis attended the Mumbai Cricket Association's (MCA) stand reveal ceremony as the name of one of India's most dangerous openers was etched in the arena.

The Wankhede has been Sharma's favourite hunting ground ever since he joined the domestic circuit in 2007. While speaking at the event, he expressed immense gratitude to all those involved with the event and admitted the honour is special considering the memories of his time at the arena.

"Firstly, I would like to thank everyone who has come here to make this event so special. What is going to happen today, I never dreamt of it. As a kid growing

up, wanting to play for Mumbai, for India, no one thinks about things like these. For me, it's like any other sportsman who wants to give their best. Serve the nation, the country, as much as possible. While doing that, you try and achieve a lot of things. A lot of milestones are created, but something like this is really special. Wankhede is such an iconic stadium, there are so many memories here," said Rohit at the event.

"For me to have my name amongst the greats of the game and the world's top political leaders, I cannot express what the feelings are. For that, I am really, really grateful, honoured, and very thankful to all MCA members, and not to forget the Apex Council Member. For me to be honoured while I am playing makes it special. I have retired from two formats, but I am still playing one for-



mat. It'll be a surreal feeling when I come here and play on the 21st against the Delhi Capitals, representing the Mumbai Indians. It'll be a very special

feeling," he added. Rohit, who recently retired from Test cricket, has been a stalwart of Mumbai cricket and has successfully captained In-

**I am so, so grateful for all the people in my life, for all that they have sacrificed. Of course, my team Mumbai Indians, are here, who are waiting for my speech to get over so they can start training**

ROHIT SHARMA

dia to successive ICC trophies with the T20 World Cup 2024 and Champions Trophy 2025 triumphs.

In the end, the India batter, who is now only representing the nation in the ODI format, said he was looking forward to the day he gets to represent the country at the venue and joked his Mumbai Indians

teammates, who were present at the ceremony, were waiting for his speech to get over.

"It will even be more special when India plays whichever team here, that'll make it even more special. To get this honour in front of my mom, dad, my brother and his wife, and my wife," added Sharma.

Rohit's wife, Ritika Sajdeh, who is often seen travelling with Rohit for tournaments and is known throughout the country as one of his biggest supporters, was visibly emotional at the event.

The opening batter has represented India since as early as 2007 and was a part of the side that won the 2007 T20 World Cup. He has represented the nation in 159 T20Is, 273 ODIs, and 67 Test matches. He brought down the curtains on his T20I career after the World Cup victory in Barbados last year.

MONKEY OFF HIS BACK

## Chopra breaches 90m mark but finishes 2nd



**With this throw, Neeraj joins the elite club of javelin throwers, which includes reigning Olympic gold medalist Arshad Nadeem, reaffirming his status as one of the sport's all-time greats**

AGENCIES

**Doha, May 16:** Neeraj Chopra finally breached the elusive 90m mark with a 90.23m throw but finished second behind Julian Weber of Germany in a dramatic men's javelin contest at the Doha leg of the prestigious Diamond League Meeting series here Friday.

Weber turned the tables and took the top spot with his final throw, measuring 91.06m.

The 27-year-old double Olympic medalist Indian sent his spear 90.23m in his third attempt to join a list of javelin throwers, led by his current coach Jan Zelezny of Czechia, who had recorded 90m-plus efforts.

He became the third Asian and 25th overall to achieve the feat. Olympic champion Arshad Nadeem (92.97m) of Pakistan and Chao-Tsun Cheng (91.36m) of Chinese Taipei are the two other Asians to have breached the coveted mark.

The 90m distance wasn't just about numbers. For years, the 90m mark had become a symbolic mountain for Chopra—a distance he came close to sev-

eral times, often finishing just short with throws in the high 88s and 89s.

Despite winning Olympic gold at Tokyo, World Championship gold in Budapest, and ruling the Diamond League, one question lingered: When will Neeraj breach 90 meters? That question has now been answered—with authority.

In front of a packed crowd and a competitive field that included world-class throwers, Chopra delivered when it mattered most.

The impact of the new coach, Jan Zelezny, was apparent as Neeraj finally crossed the finish line that he had attempted several times in the last few years. Chopra has recently appointed three-time Olympic gold medalist Zelezny of the Czech Republic as his coach, replacing Dr Klaus Bartonietz.

After a steady start in the first two attempts, he unleashed the big one in his third—his javelin slicing through the Doha night sky and landing beyond the hallowed mark. A roar erupted, not just from the crowd, but across social media and sports circles in India and beyond.

With this throw, Neeraj joins the elite club of 90+ javelin throwers, which includes reigning Olympic gold medalist Arshad Nadeem, reaffirming his status as one of the sport's all-time greats. The relief and joy were evident on his face—this was more than just a statistic; it was a personal milestone.