



Nora's modesty

During a charity concert, actor Nora Fatehi's heartfelt moments with her beloved fans touches hearts around the world

LEISURE | P2



UK sanctions Israel

The British government suspends free trade talks with Israel and issues new sanctions

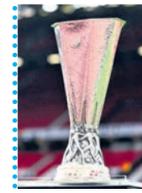
INTERNATIONAL | P10



Market crash

Investors' wealth erodes by ₹5.64 lakh crore as the benchmark Sensex tumbles 873 points

BUSINESS | P11



Europa League final

Manchester United and Tottenham Hotspur will face off in an all-English final of the UEFA Europa League at the San Mames Stadium in Bilbao Wednesday

SPORTS | P12

SHORT TAKES

IB chief's tenure extended again

New Delhi: Counter-terrorism expert Tapan Kumar Dekha was Tuesday given an additional one-year term till June 2026 as the chief of the Intelligence Bureau (IB), the second such extension for him. This comes amid the evolving security situation in the wake of India's strike May 7 on terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied-Kashmir in retaliation against last month's Pahalgam terrorist attack. Dekha, 62, a 1988-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of the Himachal Pradesh cadre, was in June 2022 appointed as the IB chief for two years. His term was extended by one year in June last year.

Munir promoted to Field Marshal rank

Islamabad: Pakistan government Tuesday decided to promote Army Chief General Asim Munir to the rank of Field Marshal for his role in the recent conflict with India, making him the second top military officer in the country's history to be elevated to the position. The decision to promote Gen Munir was taken at a cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, according to an official statement. Munir is the first army general since General Ayub Khan to be elevated to the highest military rank in Pakistan. General Khan was conferred the rank of Field Marshal in 1959.

CHSE Class XII exam results today

Bhubaneswar: The Council of Higher Secondary Education (CHSE), Odisha, will announce the Plus II (Class XII) examination results at 4 pm Wednesday. Results for Arts, Science, Commerce and Vocational streams will be declared simultaneously, according to an official statement issued Tuesday. Students can check their results through the official websites. Principals of higher secondary schools will be able to access the tabulation registers from SAMS e-Space an hour after the results are announced.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Please don't say, write, or even think anything sane or sensible. You might land in jail, professor



FLYING HIGH: A Border Security Force (BSF) personnel waves the tricolour during a retreat ceremony at the Attari-Wagah border, near Amritsar, Tuesday. The BSF has said the public flag-lowering retreat ceremony at three locations in Punjab along the Pakistan frontier will begin Wednesday, about two weeks after it was stopped following the Pahalgam terror attack

No fresh Covid case in state

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 20: Amid reports of the death of two Covid-infected patients in Maharashtra, the state Health department Tuesday said no fresh coronavirus case was reported in Odisha.

State Public Health Director Nilakantha Mishra said if anyone is found to be positive for the Covid infection, the sample of such a patient would be sent for genome sequencing to ascertain the variant of the virus.

"Till now, we have not detected any fresh Covid case. If we find such a patient, the sample will be sent for genome sequencing to determine its variant," he said. Health authorities in India are keeping an eye on reports of a rise in Covid-19 cases in Singapore and Hong Kong, even as official sources Monday asserted that the current coronavirus situation in the country was under control.

"However, people, especially those having co-morbidity, have to remain careful and take standard precautionary measures," Mishra advised. Civic-run KEM Hospital Monday clarified that the deaths of two patients at the medical facility in Mumbai were due to co-morbidities and not linked to Covid-19, as it advised people not to panic.

More power to ministers

Ahead of the celebrations of its first anniversary, the Mohan Charan Majhi-led BJP government in the state has re-structured the Cabinet meeting protocols, giving more powers to ministers and significantly curtailing powers of secretaries in the respective departments. Experts say the move has signalled the end of bureaucratic supremacy in governance which the state had witnessed during the over two-decades rule by the BJD dispensation wherein secretaries took centre stage in policy decisions. The corridors of power had then shifted from the Cabinet to a cabal of favoured bureaucrats, infamously referred to as the 3rd floor. By restoring the mandate and powers of the people's representatives, the Majhi government has not only aimed at upholding the norms of democracy, but also made the ministers more responsible and responsive.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 20: In a significant move, the Odisha government has curbed the powers of senior bureaucrats, particularly secretaries, in the functioning of Cabinet meetings. As per the new rules,

secretaries will no longer be allowed to sit in the Cabinet room during meetings. Only ministers will be permitted to present proposals related to their respective departments.

The government has also introduced a structured timeline for Cabinet proceedings. Accordingly, the meeting date must be finalised five days in advance, with the agenda finalised three days earlier. Relevant files are to reach the concerned ministers at least two days prior to the meeting. A directive outlining these new protocols has been issued to all departmental secretaries by the Parliamentary Affairs department.

It has been clearly stated that no proposal can be placed before the Cabinet without the Chief Minister's prior approval. In previous administrations, ministers often received Cabinet agendas at the last minute and were unaware of the proposals under discussion. This lack of transparency had become a norm. The new rules seek to reverse that pattern by reducing bureaucratic dominance over the Cabinet process.

As per the guidelines, ministers must now present the



proposals themselves. Secretaries will remain in an adjacent room during meetings, and may be called in only if necessary. The responsibility of executing Cabinet decisions promptly lies solely with the ministers. Furthermore, if the agenda is not submitted by 5pm, three working days prior to the meeting, it will not be considered. If that third day falls on a holiday, the agenda must be submitted a day earlier.

If inputs are required from a secretary regarding any proposal, they can provide their opinion beforehand. Otherwise, their presence in the Cabinet room is not required.

Revenue Minister Suresh Pujari welcomed the move, stating that Cabinet decorum

and protocol were often violated during the previous regime. "Only the minister concerned should present the departmental issue being discussed. The role of political leadership in a democracy must be honoured," he said.

BJD legislator Kalikesh Singh Deo criticised the move, accusing the government of focusing more on public relations than on actual governance. "Let the government stop marketing itself and start working for the people," he said.

It may be noted that during the previous BJD government, ministers often did not have access to the agenda even after Cabinet meetings began. Departmental secretaries would handle the entire process. A former minister, speaking on condition of anonymity, recalled how Cabinet meetings would conclude within the time it took to finish a cup of tea. "Barely five minutes were given for discussion on any agenda item," the former minister said.

The abrupt shift in procedure has sparked widespread political discussion in state circles, with many questioning the timing and intent behind the changes.

DOMESTIC ABUSE

SC: Assign officers for protection of women

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 20: The Supreme Court Tuesday directed all the states and Union Territories (UTs) to identify officers in the Department of Women and Child Development at the district and taluka levels and designate them as protection officers. A protection officer is an appointed individual tasked with ensuring the safety and well-being of victims of domestic violence.

A bench of Justices BV Nagarathna and Satish Chandra Sharma directed the chief secretaries of the states, UTs and the secretaries of the Women and Child/Social Welfare departments to coordinate and ensure the designation of officers as protection officers under the Domestic Violence Act.

"They shall also take steps to discharge their duties under Section 11 by giving wide publicity through media to promote awareness about the provisions of the Act, ensure effective coordination of services under the Act, and implement its provisions," it said. The bench directed for the exercise to be completed within six weeks from today in areas where protection officers weren't designated.

"The states shall ensure the availability of service providers, help groups, and shelter homes for distressed women.



The respondent states shall also identify shelter homes for this purpose," the top court added.

Underlining the right under the Legal Services Authorities Act, the bench ordered the member secretary of National Legal Services Authority to instruct all member secretaries of the state legal services authorities to spread awareness among women about their right to free legal aid and advice under the Domestic Violence Act. They shall also give adequate publicity to these provisions, the bench said.

"Needless to say, if any woman approaches for legal aid or advice, it shall be provided expeditiously, as the Act guarantees every woman the right to free legal assistance," it noted.

The top court's direction came on a plea filed by NGO 'We the Women of India' seeking to fill massive gaps in infrastructure under Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act across the country for providing effective legal aid to women survivors of abuse at matrimonial homes and creating shelter homes for them post lodging of complaints against husbands and in-laws.

Philanthropy: Ambani couple, Premji in Time's 100 list

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York, May 20: Billionaire industrialist Mukesh Ambani and Nita Ambani, former Wipro chairman Azim Premji and Zerodha co-founder Nikhil Kamath have been named Tuesday by Time magazine in its inaugural list of the 100 most influential people in philanthropy.

The TIME100 Most Influential People in Philanthropy 2025 list "tells the stories of how generous donors and leaders of foundations and non-profits are directing funding into the communities that need it most," according to the publication.

The list includes Mukesh and Nita Ambani who, Time said, gifted Rs 407 crore (about USD 48 million) in 2024, "placing them among the country's biggest donors." Noting that Mukesh and



Nita Ambani are "empowering millions", the Time profile said the billionaire philanthropist couple's "charitable initiatives are as varied and wide-ranging as the business empire that earned them an estimated USD 110 billion fortune."

It listed the initiatives taken by Mukesh and Nita Ambani, founder and chair of the Reliance

Foundation and a businesswoman in her own right, leads a number of the foundation's programmes.

On tech magnate Premji, Time said that today, he is better known as one of India's most generous philanthropists, directing his wealth to systematically improving India's public education system.

Premji was the first Indian

to sign the Giving Pledge and in 2013 endowed the foundation he launched nearly 25 years ago with over USD 29 billion in shares from his company, Wipro.

In addition to disbursing traditional grants—USD 109 million went to 940 organisations focused on education, health, and other areas in 2023-2024—the foundation works directly with teachers and rural child care workers via 59 field offices and 263 teacher learning centres throughout India, on educational programmes that have so far helped over 8 million children, Time said.

In August, the foundation also committed around USD 175 million to expand school meal coverage for more than 5 million children—all collectively reflecting Premji's philosophy, influenced by Mahatma Gandhi,

to regard "holding one's wealth in trusteeship, to be used for the betterment of society."

The list also includes co-founder of Zerodha Nikhil Kamath, who in 2023 at age 36 became the youngest Indian to sign the Giving Pledge. "By then, he had already donated millions to environmental and educational projects—and started his own offshoot initiative, the Young India Philanthropic Pledge (YIPP), which asks Indians under age 45 with fortunes over USD 100 million to commit to giving away at least 25 per cent of their wealth," Time said.

The list also includes legendary footballer David Beckham, billionaire philanthropist Warren Buffet, American philanthropist Melinda French Gates and Prince William and Catherine, Princess of Wales.

MONSOON LIKELY TO HIT KERALA IN 4-5 DAYS: IMD

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 20: The southwest monsoon is likely to reach Kerala in the next four-five days, much earlier than the usual date of June 1, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said Tuesday.

The weather department had earlier forecast that the monsoon would onset over Kerala by May 27.

If the monsoon arrives in Kerala as expected, it will be the earliest onset over the In-

dian mainland since 2009, when it began May 23, according to IMD data.

"Conditions are likely to become favourable for monsoon onset over Kerala during next 4-5 days," the IMD said in an update Tuesday afternoon.

Normally, the southwest monsoon makes its onset over Kerala by June 1 and covers the entire country by July 8. It starts retreating from north-west India around September 17 and withdraws completely by October 15.

leisure



BIEL ON BALANCING FAMILY, SPOTLIGHT

Actress Jessica Biel has opened up about parenting her two boys, and told why she finds it a "tricky balance" deciding how much of the showbiz life her children should see. The 43-year-old actress has sons Silas, 10, and four-year-old Phineas with her husband Justin Timberlake, 44.

WASHINGTON RECEIVES PALME D'OR AT CANNES

Hollywood icon Denzel Washington received a surprise Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2025 Cannes Film Festival. The 70-year-old actor was visibly moved as longtime collaborator Spike Lee presented him with the honorary Palme d'Or, honoring his remarkable contributions to cinema at the prestigious event held in Cannes, France.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Today, you need to access every bit of your mental agility. Quick and spontaneous decisions are the need of the hour. But a word of caution from Ganesha: take advice, as these decisions could have long-term implications, especially if they involve money.

TAURUS
Hoist the sails and prepare to leave port. Your sugar-coated words will seal business deals with ease, predicts Ganesha. The activity and action may slow down as the day progresses. Resist the urge to get sentimental as it could lead to conflicts that will haunt you in the days to come, warns Ganesha.

GEMINI
You will be seized by a desire to go on a trip with friends and family. This trip may have been some time in the planning as well. The day will be filled with fun and frolic and entertainment. Marital life will be blissful as well, says Ganesha.

CANCER
Though you work with dedication, you will be dejected as higher-ups do not fully appreciate your devotion. Don't take it to heart, says Ganesha, and suggests not to be sad. In the end, you will succeed with your firmness and boldness. By evening, you may have tense moments.

LEO
Your competitors will try to malign your reputation today. They will try to spoil your image and impression in front of others. You need to be courageous and nip their efforts in the bud. You need to delegate decision-making activities to others today. Your wrong decisions need to be buried by you, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
Ganesha says a turning point in life is important if you wish to understand it in a better way. You will excel in whatever you do today. Financial matters and relationships are on top of the priority list, but perhaps not in the same order. You will spend a lot of time praying to God.

LIBRA
Ganesha says that you will be a different person today, full of vigor and enthusiasm. You will be able to showcase your creative skills in your personal life and at the same time you will be able to go ahead in your chosen field and gain prestige too. You will have to make a decision about studying further in the field of higher education abroad.

SCORPIO
Elegance personified, you are loaded with compliments today. This may encourage you to do better work and have good equations with people. However, make sure your success does not go to your head and affect your work, warns Ganesha. Watch your words while communicating.

SAGITTARIUS
Conversation and interaction with like-minded people is going to make your day, says Ganesha. Shooting ideas, brainstorming and casual discussions may enlighten you today. Those around you will enjoy your company.

CAPRICORN
It is always easy to lose mental balance when going gets tough, but Ganesha advises you to hold on to your patience as it will help you reach your destination. Don't enter into war of words with anyone at work as the conflicts may harm you very badly. On personal front, you will open up to your partner, and make him/her feel how important he/she is for you.

AQUARIUS
Today, you will decide to clean up the pile of files on the desk at work. Also, you will do everything that it requires to lighten the burden. Ganesha advises you to plan out your career wisely and set targets for the future.

PISCES
You are not too much of a money-minded person. Planning your finances for the future may not really be your cup of tea. You take every day as it comes. However, you will have an epiphany of sorts today and decide to become more serious towards life. You will finally realize the value of planning for your finances. Do not disregard this, says Ganesha.



NORA'S humility

MUMBAI: Nora Fatehi captivated thousands during a recent charity concert in Kathmandu, delivering an electrifying performance under the starlit skies of Nepal. Known for her magnetic stage presence, Nora didn't just entertain—she connected, creating unforgettable memories with fans that quickly went viral. A standout moment came when local artist and longtime admirer Sushma Karki, known for performing Nora's songs, was invited on stage. The heartfelt gesture touched hearts globally. Sharing the moment online, Nora wrote, "Met one of my favourite talented fans in Nepal! It was truly a moment! So happy to be able to connect and give you your flowers."

Another emotional highlight saw Nora spot dancer Gaurav Sitoulaa in the crowd—a fan she had followed for years through the #DanceWithNora movement. Calling him up mid-show, she posted, "This fan moment was everything. I've been watching him dance to my songs for years on Insta and we finally meet! What a talent!" The charity concert became more than a show—it was a celebration of community, dance, and mutual admiration. As Nora's global footprint grows, with hits like *Snake* and roles in *Be Happy* and *The Royals*, this night in Kathmandu shone with authenticity and joy. AGENCIES

MUMBAI: Actress Chitrangda Singh is venturing into an out-and-out comedy for the first time with *Housefull 5* and said it is 'very difficult.'

"This is actually the absolute first time I'm doing comedy, and let me tell you, it is very difficult," Chitrangda said.

The actress added: "I genuinely believe it's harder to make people laugh than to make them cry."

She describes the genre as an entirely different skillset, one that demands precision.

"It's a different ball game altogether. You have to be so smooth that all your jokes and timing land perfectly. It's not just about delivering a funny line - it's about the energy, the pacing, the setup. Comedy is serious business."

While the film promises humour, Chitrangda hints that it's more than just a comedy film.

Chitrangda said: "You can expect me to do some comedy, yes - but the film is not just comedy. There are a lot of twists and turns. It's a very interesting script. The character is definitely going to surprise you."

Produced by Sajid Nadiadwala under the banner Nadiadwala Grandson Entertainment, *Housefull 5* is set to hit theaters worldwide June 6, 2025. IANS

'Comedy is serious business'



MUMBAI: Actress Raashii Khanna shared her latest behind-the-scenes glimpses from her upcoming project and said that some roles demand everything.

Raashii took to Instagram, where she shared a slew of images. In the photographs, the actress appeared bruised, bloodied, and intensely focused. She could be seen in a simple T-shirt and black pants, with the visible injuries on her nose and hand.

For the caption, she wrote: "Some roles don't ask. They demand. Your body. Your breath. Your bruises. And when you become the storm, you don't flinch at the thunder. Coming soon..."

Raashii has undergone rigorous physical training and stunt preparation for this project. Most recently, she took on the role of a determined journalist in *The Sabarmati Report*, a political drama film, based on true events, with direction by Ranjan Chandel, later replaced by Dheeraj Sarna.

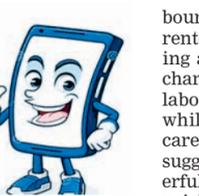
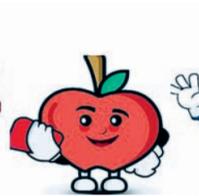
It is based on the Godhra train burning incident of 27 February 2002, involving Sabarmati Express train. It also stars Vikrant Massey and Riddhi Dogra. In other news, the actress recently featured in Farah Khan's YouTube vlog, where she shared she was initially 'not interested' for *Madras Cafe*, which marked her debut in cinema in 2013. IANS

Raashii: Some roles demand your body, breath, bruises

How an 'Apple' growing far away, is not making someone's day!

It may be the *Apple* of your eye (i), my eye (i) and many an Americans eye(i), err..... phone, but the apple-pie may not be so American after all! Data suggests that it happens to be almost 80% Chinese and close to 14% Indian as well. The above percentages on a pie-diagram would clearly represent the annual contribution by the respective countries in the making and assembling of

Apple's iPhones. Almost 80% of iPhones 'Sold in America' are literally 'Made in China' and the company hopes that by end of 2026, most of those 'Sold in America' would be 'Made in India', given the high tariffs imposed on China by *Big Boss*. Sweet dreams of 'Made in America' are a costly mind construct and constitute a pie in the sky. Allow me to serve up an anal-



ogy with a helping of...(what better!)....apples. Nonstop annual supply of apples for said

company's business has so far been met with harvest from their South-East Asian neigh-

bours' orchards that has been rented for the purpose. Growing apples in the family's orchards is associated with high labour costs somehow. So, while the neighbour 'can take care of themselves' indeed, as suggested by the head of a powerful state, they need thy good neighbour to grow and harvest their apples for them. It is perhaps in their best interest to 'eat humble pie' and

accede to this reality of the times. It did Newton and the world a ton of good when he questioned 'why the apple fell straight down from the tree?' It is however pointless to question "Why the apple tree grows outside America?"

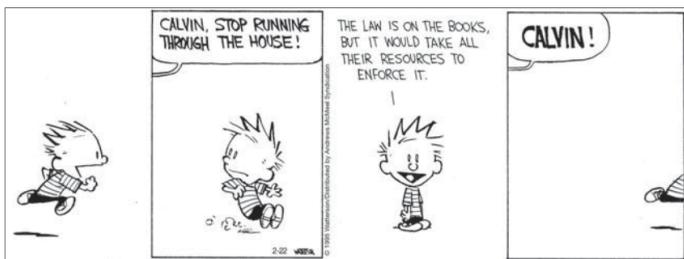
And while an apple a day keeps the doctor away; the days get better if the apples are grown far away (wink wink).

DR RACHNA RATH

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

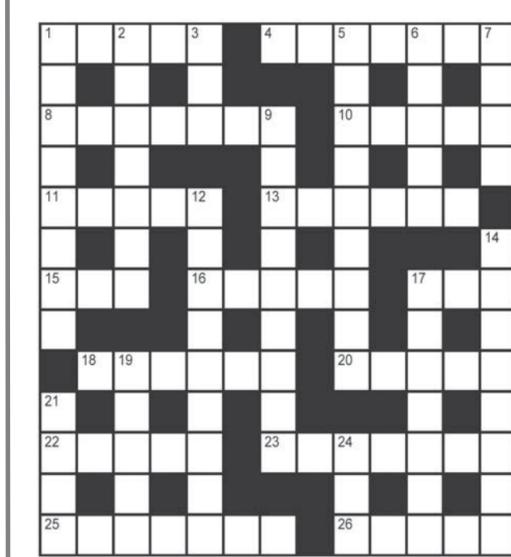


BREVITY



FUN POST

CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Young pigeon
 - 4 Billiards item (3,4)
 - 8 Egged on
 - 10 Take up space
 - 11 Despot's duration
 - 13 Euphrates tributary
 - 15 Food container
 - 16 Magic spell
 - 17 Shade of green
 - 18 Nose wiper
 - 20 Saltpetre
 - 22 La Scala offering
 - 23 Digit part
 - 25 Analysed
 - 26 Gazetteer
 - Down**
 - 1 Partition off
 - 2 Perfect
 - 3 Auction action
 - 5 Cone-bearing tree
 - 6 Excuse
 - 7 Running behind
 - 9 Wash day need
 - 12 Required
 - 14 Small graceful antelopes
 - 17 Booby trap
 - 19 Notions
 - 21 Divan
 - 24 Notable period

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.

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

SOLUTIONS

| | | | | | |
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| S | D | C | M | M | H |
| R | E | M | E | D | I |
| E | M | N | G | M | X |
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| A | S | C | O | T | J |
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| E | D | A | E | O | E |

CROSSWORD

SUDOKU

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown

IN SYNC

Artistes perform during 4th Padmavati Utsav 2025 organised by Sunaina Charitable Trust at Bhanjakala Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday



BOATING RITUAL: Deities enjoy a boat ride at Narendra tank as part of Chandan Yatra in Puri, Tuesday

PIC: YAGNESWAR MOHANTY

BJP bats for SEBC quota in medical, engineering

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, May 20: The ruling BJP in Odisha Tuesday said it is in favour of a quota for students of the socially and economically backward class (SEBC) in medical, engineering and other technical institutions in the state, and 11.25 per cent of seats would soon be reserved for them.

The state government's statement came a day before the Opposition BJD is scheduled to organise a dharna demanding 27 per cent reservation of seats for the SEBC students.

The state government last week announced a reservation of 11.25 per cent in undergraduate and postgraduate courses in general colleges for the SEBC students in the state. However, there was no such provision of quota in the medical, engineering and other technical institutions.

Addressing a press conference here, Odisha BJP president Manmohan Samal said that the party supports reservation of seats for SEBC students in medical and engineering courses.

"We have suggested that the state government make provision of 11.25 per cent reservation for SEBC students in medical, engineering, technical courses and also in school education," Samal told reporters.

He said that the party has taken up the matter with the state government and it will be implemented soon.

"SEBC students in Odisha will get 11.25 per cent quota in all types of courses," the BJP state president said. Samal also charged the BJD and the Congress with not implementing the reservation of seats for SEBC students in Odisha during their rule.

"The BJD and the Congress



I am happy that the state's BJP government has responded to the BJD's call for an agitation and is ready to make reservation for SEBCs in medical and engineering courses also. However, we demand a 27 per cent quota and not 11.25 per cent reservation for the SEBC students

ARUN KUMAR SAHOO
BJD MLA & FORMER MINISTER

Court against the reservation for backward classes.

"When the Mandal Commission report was presented in Parliament, Rajiv Gandhi, who was then the Leader of the Opposition, also opposed it. However, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi are taking one step after another for upliftment of the backward classes," the state BJP president said.

He said that the Modi government is set to conduct a caste-based census and the Majhi government is providing reservation in jobs and education to other backward classes.

"I call upon Opposition parties not to mislead people," he said.

Responding to Samal's statement, senior BJD MLA and former minister Arun Kumar Sahoo said, "I am happy that the state's BJP government has responded to the BJD's call for an agitation and is ready to make reservation for SEBCs in medical and engineering courses also.

However, we demand a 27 per cent quota and not 11.25 per cent reservation for the SEBC students."

Congress leader Srikant Jena also made a similar demand and pointed out that SEBCs constitute 54 per cent of the state's population and should get a proportionate reservation.

FIVE GET LIFE IMPRISONMENT FOR MURDER



AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 20: A local court here Tuesday awarded life imprisonment to five persons for murdering a man over old enmity between two families.

Sushant Nayak, a housekeeping staffer of the Central Horticultural Experiment Station (CHES), was hacked to death at a slum in Unit III area under Capital police station limits in the early hours of May 24, 2023, according to the prosecution.

The five convicts had chased Sushant while he was returning home and attacked him, leading to his death.

The verdict was delivered by Judge Bandana Kar of the Additional District Judge Court-2, Bhubaneswar.

The court also imposed a fine of Rs 25,000 on each of the five convicts - Sujit Nayak, Subash Nayak, Ajit Nayak, Bishal Nayak and Tikili Nayak.

In case of non-payment, they will have to serve an additional one year jail term, said Additional Public Prosecutor Sailla Kumar Pradhan.

The verdict was delivered after the court examined 18 witnesses, 16 exhibits, and 39 documents, he said.

State govt extends UG course admission deadline till June 1

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 20: The Odisha government Tuesday extended the online admission deadline for undergraduate (UG) courses in state-run colleges to June 1.

The decision was taken as the state Council of Higher Secondary Education (CHSE) is yet to declare the results of the Class XII final examinations. Also, the state government recently decided to provide 11.25 per cent reservation to SEBC students in undergraduate courses,

and eligible candidates are yet to get their certificates, officials said.

"The timeline for e-Admission into all (Plus III) Degree Higher Educational Institutions, including Self-Financing Colleges and Sanskrit Colleges of the state under SAMS, has been extended to 1st June 2025," the Higher Education (HE) department posted on X.

The earlier deadline was May 20. The HE department advised applicants in the Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC) category to obtain a

valid caste certificate from the competent authority and keep it ready for admission.

Earlier in the day, School and Mass Education (S&ME) Minister Nityananda Gond said the results of the Class XII final examinations will be announced in two days.

"We will also ensure that the students do not face any problem in admission into the degree courses," the S&ME Minister said.

A total of 3.91 lakh students had appeared for the examinations conducted by the CHSE.

Op Sindoor magnifies dignity of vibrant red mark

At a time when India resonates with pride following the successful execution of Operation Sindoor, a precise military campaign launched in response to the terrorist attack in Pahalgam April 22, there is a feeling that the mission has enhanced the dignity of 'sindoor' - the traditional red mark worn by married Hindu women. The Pahalgam attack claimed the lives of 25 Indians and one Nepali citizen. As a powerful retaliation, Indian Armed Forces launched a series of coordinated strikes on Pakistani terror camps on the night of May 6, delivering a strong message against terrorism. Patriotic fervour swept the country as citizens rallied to salute the armed forces. But beyond the strategic and military

achievement, Operation Sindoor has ignited a deeply emotional response, especially among women. Orissa POST correspondent Manoj Kumar Jena spoke to a cross-section of people who see the operation as a defence of dignity symbolised by 'sindoor'.

Jyoti Maharana, a homemaker, said, "This mission has increased the value of our 'sindoor'. The terrorists mindlessly killed innocent people, but now they know the power behind that symbolism."

Saipriya Mohanty, another housewife, said, "Now even the word 'sindoor' will evoke fear among terrorists. We apply it with renewed pride—as a mark of protection and resistance."

Pooja Satpathy, a software engineer from Bangalore, noted that the attack had shaken many



women's sense of safety. "Operation Sindoor erased that fear. It sent a message that our dignity will not be compromised."

Nikita Singh, a medical student, said, "The mission

mirrored the silent battles women fight every day. This isn't just about retaliation—it's about reclaiming dignity. Sindoor must stand for respect, not submission."

Kajal Sahoo, an advocate, remarked, "They tried to wipe the sindoor off our foreheads. Our forces responded by wiping out the perpetrators. This mission proved the strength behind our symbols."

Jayashree Patra of Odisha Congress hailed the operation as a bold and necessary step, lauding the diverse representation of women officers in the official briefing. "It showcased national unity and the growing role of women in defence," she remarked.

Underlining the cultural relevance, BJP state secretary **Kasturi Mishra** said, "In Hindu tradition, 'sindoor' signifies protection. After Operation Sindoor, the world understands the depth of that symbolism. It was not only a military victory but

also a celebration of women empowerment."

Retired Major General **Soumendra Dev Mohanty** put it succinctly: "Every soldier is duty-bound to protect the nation. When terrorists took innocent lives, the army fulfilled its 'dharma'. Operation Sindoor was more than a mission—it was a cultural and emotional assertion of strength. The attack on tourists was an attack on Bharat Mata. 'Sindoor' inspired our forces to strike back—not just with firepower, but with purpose."

To conclude, through this operation, India not only avenged an attack but also reaffirmed the value of its cultural symbols, turning 'sindoor' into a powerful metaphor for courage, protection, and resilience.

Polavaram row: BJD urges CM to fight for tribal rights

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 20: Opposition BJD Tuesday called upon Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi to prove his tribal identity and save the life and livelihood of the tribals in Malkangiri, who are facing inundation due to the Polavaram project of neighbouring Andhra Pradesh.

Addressing a press conference here, senior BJD leader Debi Prasad Mishra voiced concern over the "continued violations and unilateral progress" of the Polavaram project by the Andhra Pradesh government, allegedly with the active support of the Centre. The Polavaram project, situated on the Godavari river, is a multi-purpose project intended for irrigation, power generation, water supply, and river diversion.

It has become a controversial project with neighbouring states Odisha, Telangana and Chhattisgarh opposing it, fearing the submergence of land and villages.

The matter is currently pending with the Supreme Court, with petitions filed by Odisha, Chhattisgarh, and Telangana. The Central government has declared Polavaram a national project and sanctioned funds in this financial year's

Budget. The BJD leader asserted that Odisha's interests, particularly those of tribal communities in Malkangiri, must not be compromised.

"As we have a CM from the tribal community, he should come forward and save the life and livelihood of the tribals of Malkangiri district," Mishra said.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called a meeting May 28 to review the Polavaram project, but neither the Odisha CM nor ministers appear to be aware of it. This raises doubts about Odisha's representation and whether the state's interests will be defended effectively," he claimed. Majhi Monday said that he has no idea about Modi's proposed meeting with the CMs of the states involved.

Mishra said that the Polavaram project, originally approved with a discharge capacity of 36 lakh cusecs in 2006, was later unilaterally revised to 56 lakh cusecs, a clear violation of the Godavari Water Dispute Tribunal recommendations.

This revision, done without the consent of Odisha or other riparian states, raises serious concerns about potential submergence and displacement in Odisha, the BJD leader said.

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'Scientific innovation must drive state's health policy'



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 20: Emphasising the critical role of research in strengthening healthcare delivery and promoting social equity, Odisha's Health & Family Welfare Minister Mukesh Mahaling Tuesday said that scientific innovation must be central to the state's public health strategy.

The Minister made the remarks during his visit to the Institute of Life Sciences (ILS) in Bhubaneswar, where he expressed strong support for cutting-edge research aimed at addressing Odisha's healthcare

challenges.

Interacting with young researchers and faculty, Mahaling praised their efforts and underlined the growing need to align science and technology with health policy. "The work being carried out at ILS is not only commendable but vital for the future of healthcare in our state. The government is committed to supporting institutions that connect scientific research with community well-being," he said.

Mahaling was welcomed by ILS director Debasish Dash and senior faculty, who briefed him on the institute's mission,

research priorities, and its impact on public health. The Minister toured laboratories and held detailed discussions with scientists on various ongoing projects.

A key highlight of the visit was a presentation on the UM-MID Programme, a flagship initiative for the diagnosis and management of genetic disorders. The programme has already brought significant improvements in the tribal districts of Nabarangpur and Koraput, earning special appreciation from the Minister.

Mahaling was also updated on the institute's work in cancer biology and infectious disease research, being undertaken under the Biotechnology Research Innovation Council - ILS (BRIC-ILS). Researchers shared progress and future plans targeting urgent regional health needs.

The ILS termed the Minister's visit a morale booster for the scientific community and a reaffirmation of the state's commitment to research-driven healthcare development.



WARM WELCOME: ISRO Chairman V Narayanan being welcomed upon his arrival in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

PHOTO: MANORANJAN NISHRA

Guv highlights role of skilling in edu

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 20: Skill-based education must go hand in hand with traditional learning to improve employability and promote entrepreneurship, Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati said Tuesday during his visit to the Centurion University of Technology and Management (CUTM) at Ramachandrapur in Jatni. He was accompanied by First Lady Jayashree Kambhampati.

"Imparting skills has two key dimensions—enhancing employability and fostering entrepreneurship. The National Education Policy also stresses the integration of education and skilling," the Governor said while addressing faculty, students, and officials.

Praising CUTM for its innovative and sustainability-driven education model, the Governor lauded the university's focus on hands-on, experiential learning. He noted that such approaches are vital in equipping youth for a fast-changing world.



As part of the visit, the Governor toured several state-of-the-art facilities, including the Pollinators Paradise, Transformer Labs, Waste to Wealth Lab, WELL Wood Engineering Lab, Apparel & Textile Engineering Lab, Plumbing and Pipeline Engineering Labs, Maritime School Simulation & Applied Learning Lab, Electrical and Automotive Lab, and Allied Health School Labs.

He also interacted with a group of mid-career govern-

ment officials from Zimbabwe, currently undergoing electric vehicle (EV) skill training at the university.

Later, the Governor engaged with faculty members and the university's leadership team. Drawing from his recent visits to the World Skill Center and the Skill Development Institute, he highlighted the need for a collaborative model where institutions lacking in-house skill training can access resources from established skill centers.

Adventure tourism guidelines finalised

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 20: The Odisha government has finalised the Adventure Tourism Guidelines-2025 at a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi at Lok Seva Bhawan here Tuesday.

Aligning with the "Think India, Think Odisha" vision, the state aims to position itself as a leading adventure tourism destination in India. All 30 districts will be mapped to identify suitable locations for activities like rafting in Satkosia and hot air balloon rides over Hirakud.

The guidelines also focus on youth empowerment through training and certification in water, land, and air-based adventure sports. This move is expected to create significant employment opportunities.

To boost private participation a 'Go Adventure' portal will be launched. The CM emphasised that tourism will be developed alongside other key sectors to drive Odisha's overall growth.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

I, Satyajit Jena, S/o-Guman Charan Jena, Resident of Khadikusulabahali, PO-Nuagaon, Ps-Ramachandrapur, Dist.-Keonjhar, Pin-758021, Odisha declare by this Affidavit No.28 dtd.- 12.05.2025 that now onwards I shall be known as SATYAJEET JENA for all future purposes.

I, Anjali Mayee Jena, W/o-Guman Charan Jena, Resident of Khadikusulabahali, PO-Nuagaon, Ps-Ramachandrapur, Dist.-Keonjhar, Pin-758021, Odisha declare by this Affidavit No.29 dtd.- 12.05.2025 that now onwards I shall be known as ANJALI JENA for all future purposes.

By virtue of an Affidavit sworn before Notary Public, Sambalpur vide Affidavit No.808 on dated 19.05.2025, I, Pramita Sena resident of Govindtola, PA/PS-Dhanupali, Dist.-Sambalpur, PIN-768005 affirm that I am married with Rohit Kumar Sena and has been living together as married couple. Henceforth, I shall be known as Pramita Sena in all purposes.

I, Rakesh Agarwalla, S/o- Late Gobind Prasad Agarwalla, resident of Ward No.-11, At/p.o.: Karanjia, Dist.: Mayurbhanj, Pin-757037, Odisha declare by this affidavit No. 153, dtd. 20.01.2025 sworn before The Notary Public at Karanjia that now onwards I shall be known as Rakesh Kumar Agarwalla for all future purposes.

INDIA'S GLOBAL OUTREACH

Odisha leaders back anti-terror diplomacy

MANOJ KUMAR JENA, OP

Bhubaneswar, May 20: In a significant diplomatic move to counter Pakistan-sponsored terrorism and showcase national unity, the Central government has formed seven all-party delegations consisting of 51 prominent political leaders. These include sitting Members of Parliament, former ministers from various parties, and eight former ambassadors. Starting May 23, the delegations will travel to 32 countries to present India's stance and expose Pakistan's involvement in cross-border terrorism on the global stage.

This outreach, under the government's broader diplomatic strategy, aims to build international pressure on Pakistan while reinforcing global consensus on combating terrorism. The move has been widely welcomed by political leaders across India, including those from Odisha.

Biju Janata Dal (BJD) spokesperson Lenin Mohanty termed the initiative a strong assertion of national unity. "This is a resolute stand on

a non-negotiable issue like cross-border terrorism. It shows that the nation stands together to counter such threats and aims to strengthen international opinion against terror," he said.

CPI (M) state secretary Suresh Chandra Panigrahy also appreciated the government's step, stating that the party supports any effort taken in the national interest. "The Centre informed our Rajya Sabha leader about this engagement. We acknowledge the broader concern and are grateful to be included," he added.

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) state president Nishikanta Mohapatra pointed out previous lapses in foreign outreach. "During the war, Pakistan managed to gain some diplomatic support due to our communication gap. This all-party delegation is a step in the right direction to clarify our stand and isolate Pakistan globally for its open support to terrorism," he remarked.

However, the Congress party has not commented on the development so far.

Odisha faces rising heat risk across districts

Khurda, including Bhubaneswar, ranks among India's most heat-vulnerable districts in new national assessment

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi/Bhubaneswar, May 20: A new report released by the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) has raised serious concerns about Odisha's vulnerability to extreme heat.

According to the report, "How Extreme Heat is Impacting India: Assessing District-level Heat Risk," none of the districts in Odisha fall under the low or very low-risk categories. This places the entire state in the high heat risk bracket, underscoring the need for urgent climate-resilient planning and infrastructure.

Khurda district, which includes Capital city, has been identified as facing very high heat risk, while 13 other districts, including Cuttack, Balasore, Ganjam, Mayurbhanj, and Bargarh, are marked as high risk. Another 16 districts, such as Nuapada, Sundargarh, Kandhamal, Sambalpur, and



Kendrapara, are under moderate risk of extreme heat exposure.

Despite being in a danger zone, Odisha performs better than many other high-risk regions, the report noted. The state's higher green cover and robust water infrastructure—including lakes, rivers, and ponds—have played a key role in strengthening the resilience of communities to cope with soaring temperatures.

The report offers India's first comprehensive district-level

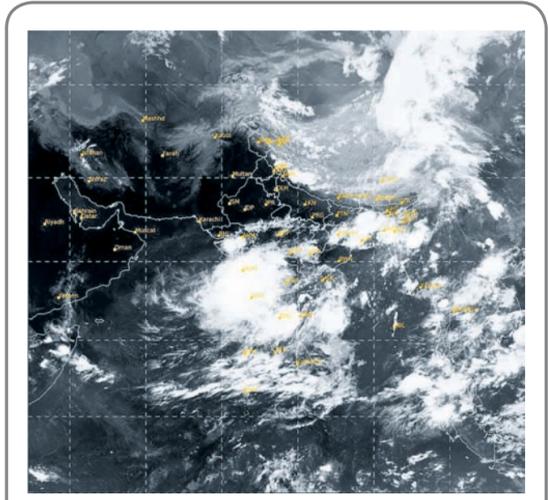
heat risk assessment, covering 734 districts using 35 indicators spanning climate trends, socio-economic vulnerability, and adaptive capacity. It reveals that 57 per cent of Indian districts, representing 76 per cent of the national population, are now exposed to high or very high heat risk.

Three alarming national trends are highlighted: a rise in very warm nights, an increase in humidity, and greater heat exposure in urban and economic hubs, including

Bhubaneswar. Warmer nights particularly threaten public health by preventing the body from recovering from daytime heat stress. Over the last decade, about 70 per cent of districts have seen at least five additional very warm nights per summer.

CEEW CEO Arunabha Ghosh remarked, "Heat stress is a present reality, not a future threat. Odisha's approach in integrating health and climate data into its planning can serve as a model for other states."

The report urges state governments to revise Heat Action Plans (HAPs) to include night-time heat, humidity stress, and local risk factors. With heatwaves now recognized under the State Disaster Mitigation Fund, states like Odisha have an opportunity to access targeted funds to build long-term heat resilience through cooling infrastructure, community awareness, and tailored action plans.



| WEATHER | | | |
|----------|-------|-------|-------------------|
| | BBSR | CTC | FORECAST |
| Max Temp | 38.7° | 36.2° | Partly cloudy sky |
| Min Temp | 27.4° | 24.5° | |
| Humidity | 64% | 84% | |
| Rainfall | Nil | 23.4 | |

Sanitation workers stage protest

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 20: Members of the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Workers Union, affiliated with the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), staged a protest Tuesday outside the BMC office, pressing for a hike in salaries and fulfillment of a long-standing charter of de-

mands. Carrying placards and banners, the sanitation workers raised slogans against the civic body, highlighting their years of service without adequate pay or job security.

The protesters, who serve in roles such as sweepers, drivers, loaders, grass cutters, trolley operators, and drain cleaners, alleged that despite working for the past 10 to 20 years, they have

been denied regular employment and are not paid in accordance with the Minimum Wages Act. They demanded equal pay for equal work and recognition of their skills and experience.

Their key demands include a monthly salary of ₹26,000, regularisation of employment, paid weekly holidays, earned and casual leave benefits, and other statutory entitlements.

| MARKET WATCH | | |
|--------------|----------|-----------|
| INDEX | | VARIATION |
| SENSEX | 81186.44 | ↓ 872.98 |
| NIFTY | 24683.90 | ↓ 261.55 |
| DOLLAR | 84.545 | ↑ 0.11 |
| EURO | 96.2960 | ↑ 0.29 |
| GOLD | ₹94,722 | ↑ ₹1425 |
| SILVER | ₹96,930 | ↑ ₹1477 |

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Consultancy agency gets extension despite chinks

DMF IMBROGLIO



POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar/Hatadihi, May 20: The District Mineral Foundation (DMF) Trust Board in Keonjhar district has not held a meeting since December 2022. During this period, several allegations have surfaced regarding misappropriation and misuse of crores of rupees in grants. However, no report has yet been submitted by the government of officials concerned.

Amid these allegations, another controversy has emerged about continued favouritism towards a particular consultancy agency despite multiple irregularities. The contract period for the firm was extended 20 days after its expiry even though serious allegations of irregularities remain unresolved.

According to reports, the firm Ernst and Yong LLP was appointed as the project management unit (PMU) for a period of three years through an agreement signed April 7, 2022. However, this agreement was never approved in a trust board meet-

ing, and no corresponding allocation was made. The contract was valued at approximately ₹17 crore and ended April 6, 2025.

However, no step was taken to appoint a new agency before the expiry of the contract. Instead, during an executive committee meeting held March 29, 2025, the contract of the firm was extended for three months till July 6, 2025. This finds mention in the meeting proceedings.

The DMF CEO informed the agency of the extension after a 20-day delay. However, as per Rule 6 of the Odisha DMF Rules, 2015, the executive committee does not have the authority to extend contract periods.

Moreover, no such executive committee meeting appears to have taken place as no video recording is available, and the meeting proceedings were reportedly signed by committee members without any deliberation. The meeting proceedings were written whimsically and the members were asked to sign on it.

Additionally, the issue regis-

ter was left blank and backdated, while the extension letter was handed over to the firm retroactively, raising serious questions about undue favouritism. The reasons behind this preferential treatment remain unclear.

Written complaints have been filed with the Chief Minister, the Chief Secretary, the General Administration and Public Grievances department (GAPG), Planning and Convergence department, as well as with the District Collector, seeking an investigation and necessary action.

Following the complaint, the GA&PG department has asked the district administration and the Chief Secretary's office has asked the Planning and Convergence department for a detailed report on the issue.

Sources also indicated that in 2019 and 2020 the same consultancy agency's salary and staff count were increased through executive committee resolutions, which are currently under review for violations of protocol. The repeated extension of benefits to the same agency has raised eyebrows.

Additional Secretary of Planning and Convergence department and convenor of the DMF state-level committee PK Mahakud confirmed that a detailed report has been sought following the complaints. "A thorough inquiry is underway, and necessary action will be taken based on findings," he said.



PROMOTING CULTURE:

A model representing Sambalpur tradition and culture installed at Lakshmi Talkies Square in Sambalpur Tuesday. Sambalpur films like 'Bhukha', 'Shalabudha' and 'Shalabudhara Badla', along with Shital Sasthi festival, have been artistically recreated

OP PHOTO

894 unmarried youths in Chhatrapur anaemic

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chhatrapur, May 20: A recent health survey conducted by Munispentha community health centre (CHC) under Chhatrapur block in Ganjam district has thrown up some startling revelations about the prevalence of anaemia in 894 unmarried youths of the district.

According to report, the survey aimed at assessing anaemia prevalence among the unmarried youths to reduce complications during childbirth and lower infant mortality rates has revealed that 894 unmarried young men and women are suffering from the blood related disorder.

Swadhin Rath, in charge of the CHC, emphasised that if either partner in a marriage is anaemic, it could have adverse effects on their children.



The minimum hemoglobin level is 13.5 gram per deciliter for men and 11.5 for women. Hemoglobin levels below these thresholds may lead to serious complications during pregnancy and can affect the newborn's health. About 15 per cent of women in the surveyed population were found to have symptoms of anaemia.

The survey, covering 16 sub-health centres in the block, found 894 unmarried men and women to be afflicted with anaemia. A breakup of these cases revealed 95 cases in Bad-

amadhapur, 60 in Bhikaripalli, 50 in Bipulingi, 88 in Baulagan, 95 in Chamakhandi, 39 in Chikalkhandi, 53 in Gobindpur, 66 in Kalipalli, 55 in Kanamana, 27 in Karatali, 103 in KTNPur, 68 in Nandapandapalli, 54 in Narasinghpur, 107 in Podapadar, 83 in Sundarpur and 61 in Tanganapalli sub-health centres.

The affected individuals have been given colour-coded health cards. Women have received pink health cards while it is sky blue for their male counterparts. These health cards document the anaemia status of

The individuals afflicted with anaemia have been given colour-coded health cards and provided with necessary medications

the afflicted unmarried men and women. Necessary medications have also been provided to them based on these records.

Rath said that ANMs, ASHA workers, other health staffers, and doctors are actively raising awareness among the youths on how anaemia eradication efforts can be effective. Follow-up testing will be conducted, and further action will be based on those results.

Berhampur woman scales 3 peaks in Nepal

MANOJ KUMAR JENA, OP

Bhubaneswar, May 20: Odia woman Madhusmita Patro from Berhampur has brought glory to the state by becoming the only female from the state to scale the challenging three peaks - Mount Mera, Mount Island and Mount Lobuche in Nepal.



Patro, a software engineer by profession, developed a passion for mountaineering from a very early age. The 30-year-old has previously scaled Kilimanjaro and Mount Elbrus too.

She climbed Mount Mera April 29, Mount Island May 5 and Lobuche May 9, according to reports.

Apart from scaling the three peaks, Patro successfully crossed two passes - Amphu Lapcha and Kongma La pass.

About her future adventures, Patro said, "My next target is to achieve a 7,000-metre peak and I'm looking forward to scale Mount Everest in 2027. Since I am a software engineer, it's very difficult to manage my job and passion at the same time. I avoid taking normal leaves. Instead, I save them for my mountaineering journey."

Patro further said, "Since mountaineering is a physically demanding journey, I train five to six hours every day. My family has always been supportive and my coach stands with me as pillar of strength in this journey."

QUINTUPLE MURDER IN SUNDARGARH

NHRC seeks report from DM, SP

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

Kendrapara, May 20: National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has sought an action-taken report (ATR) from Sundargarh District Magistrate and Superintendent of Police regarding the brutal murder of five members of a nomadic family.

The incident occurred on the night of October 29, 2024, in the district, where five members of a nomadic family were killed, and five others were allegedly kidnapped.

Acting on a petition filed by civil rights advocate Radhakanta Tripathy, the apex rights panel issued the order Monday. Tripathy alleged that the victims, part of a group of approximately 20 family members residing in tents in Karamdih village, were attacked while they were asleep. The family, seasonal visitors selling plastic mats, was reportedly targeted due to an illicit relationship involving one of the injured individuals.

The kidnapped persons re-

portedly include the injured man's second wife and four children.

The incident, according to the complaint, underscores the systemic marginalisation of Denotified and Nomadic Tribes (DNTs) and calls out the alleged inaction of both the Odisha government and Central authorities, framing it as a violation of human rights.

Tripathy urged the NHRC to conduct a thorough investigation, gather updated data, implement targeted policies, and ensure justice and protection of the rights of the DNT community.

"The allegations, prima facie, indicate serious violations of the human rights of the victims," observed the NHRC Bench, chaired by Priyank Kanoongo. The commission has taken cognizance of the matter under Section 12 of the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993.

The Registry has been directed to issue notices to Sundargarh District Magistrate and SP, instructing them to investigate the allegations and submit an ATR.

Investors abduct stock trader, held

Bhubaneswar: A group of investors allegedly abducted a share market trader from Cuttack after he failed to repay them their money, police said Tuesday. The stock trader, identified as Soumya Ranjan Behera, 31, was rescued from Kendrapara town Monday after a 12-hour-long operation. All seven kidnappers have been arrested, they said. Police Commissioner S Dev Datta Singh said Soumya was actively involved in share trading between 2019 and 2022, and had set up an office at Kharvelnagar in the Capital city. Lured by the promises of high returns in a short period, a large number of people had invested their money in the markets through him, Singh said. "However, due to a sudden and severe downturn in the market, Soumya incurred massive losses and was unable to repay the investors," the police commissioner said. No fraud has been detected so far in his business, he added. Those arrested belong to Kendrapara district, Singh said, adding that a car and four motorcycles were seized from them.

Newborn rescued from Deogarh forest



POST NEWS NETWORK

Deogarh, May 20: A newborn boy was rescued from a forest near Kasada village under Jamankira police limits in this district Monday morning.

According to reports, Sunita Nayak of the village heard the cries of a baby while collecting kendu leaves in the forest. She began a search and discovered the baby boy before bringing him home.

Later, she handed over the infant to her sister, Susmita Nayak, a resident of Mahulduma village under Kansara panchayat in Reamal police limits. Susmita, an issueless woman, expressed her strong desire to adopt the baby and started caring for him. However, Tuesday morning, a local informed the Childline officials on 1098 following which a

team from Child Protection Unit, under the direction of Deogarh district child protection officer (DCPO) Romeo Mohapatra, visited Mahulduma and took custody of the child.

The rescue team enquired about the incident and shifted the baby to Deogarh District Headquarters Hospital (DHH)

around 3pm. Sources said the infant, weighing 1.7kg, is being treated at special newborn care unit (SNCU) of the DHH where his condition is stable.

The DCPO said the baby will be handed over to Child Welfare Committee (CWC) as soon as his health condition improves. "If someone comes forward with valid documents to claim the child, custody will be transferred accordingly. Otherwise, the process for legal adoption of the child will begin, as per departmental protocols.

Meanwhile, unable to bear the pain of being separated from the infant, Susmita reportedly fainted at the hospital multiple times. She continued to express her wish to adopt the baby officially.

KESHAV MEMORIAL ENGINEERING COLLEGE
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2. Interested and eligible candidates may forward their resume on navalkindergarten@gmail.com by **03 Jun 25**. The eligibility criteria is as follows :-

| Ser | Essential Qualification |
|-----|--|
| (a) | (i) Age Limit , 21 to 50 years as on 01 Jul 25 (ii) 02 years Diploma in Nursery Teacher Education/Pre-School Education/Early Childhood Education programme or equivalent or B.Ed. completed as a regular course with at least 50% marks from a recognised University Institution |
| (b) | Desirable Qualification Good communication skills in English and ability to converse in Hindi |

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E-Tender No. MD/CH/BBS/LP 251001
DESCRIPTION OF WORK : "TO SUPPLY MEDICINES, SURGICAL ITEMS AND CONSUMABLES WHICH ARE NOT AVAILABLE IN THE STOCK OF CENTRAL HOSPITAL, EAST COAST RAILWAY, BHUBANESWAR & CSP HEALTH UNIT AS PER DAILY REQUIREMENT".

Approximate procurement value during the year 2024-25 : ₹ 65,00,000/-
EMD : ₹ 2,15,000/-, Validity of contract : 2 years + 6 months

E-Tender Closing Date and Time : 05.06.2025 (Thursday) at 1500 hrs.

Note : The prospective vendors / drug stores are advised to register in IREPS and visit the tender section on IREPS for detail information.
Website : www.ireps.gov.in

Medical Director/Central Hospital/ Bhubaneswar

EAST COAST RAILWAY
File No. DRM/Engg/KUR/25-26/
E-Tender/15, Dt. 05.05.2025
Tender No. e-Tender-SouthKUR-62-2025, Dtd.: 09.05.2025

DESCRIPTION: ASSESSMENT OF STRENGTH AND STRUCTURAL ADEQUACY OF FOUNDATION, PIER, ABUTMENT AND SUBSTRUCTURE ELEMENTS OF (46 NOS.) BRIDGES TO CATER THE LOAD OF PSC SLABS IN REPLACEMENT OF EXISTING PLATE GIRDER BRIDGE AS PER RDSO STANDARD OF 25T LOADING OVER THE KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.

Approx. Cost of the Work : ₹ 550.82 Lakh, EMD : ₹ 4,25,400.00, Completion Period : 180 Days.

Tender Closing Date and Time : At 1500 Hrs. of 30.05.2025.

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

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

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

Divisional Railway Manager (Engg) / Khurda Road
PR-144/Q/25-26

Bhadrak 'Palua Ladu' in race for GI tag

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhadrak, May 20: The district administration of Bhadrak has initiated steps to secure a Geographical Indication (GI) tag for 'Palua Ladu', a traditional sweetmeat known for its distinct flavour and artisanal preparation.

The move comes following a directive from District Collector Dilip Routray, who had instructed all departmental heads, tehsildars and block development officers (BDOs) to include 'Palua Ladu' in hospitality packets served during official meetings and events.

"Securing the GI tag will safeguard the cultural and



historical legacy of 'Palua Ladu' while providing Bhadrak a unique identity," Routray said. It will also boost the regional economy, encourage local sweet makers and showcase Odisha's

rich heritage on the global platform, he said.

'Palua Ladu' is cherished across the state and beyond for its rich taste and traditional preparation using simple,

time-honoured ingredients like 'palua' (arrowroot powder), semolina and sugar.

The initiative to obtain a GI tag is seen as a strategic effort to protect its authenticity, prevent imitation and promote the skills of Bhadrak's confectioners, an official said.

The district administration is working closely with local sweet makers and cultural organisations to compile historical and technical documentation needed for the GI tag application, he said.

"If the tag is granted, 'Palua Ladu' will join the state's other GI-tagged specialties like 'Rasagola' and 'Kandhamal Haldi', the official said.

Take Truth for your force; take Truth for your refuge.

THE MOTHER



Super Sunday Polls

It is not without reason that Sunday, 18 May, was regarded as an electoral "Super Sunday" when millions of voters across three European countries - Romania, Poland and Portugal decided the fortunes of candidates belonging to liberal, pro-European Union on the one hand and Far-Right, pro-Donald Trump parties on the other, vying with one another for their respective country's top posts.

There were widespread fears that the Far-Right would gain, particularly in Romania and Poland. But, after the ballots were counted it became clear that the Centrists held their ground in the two EU and NATO member nations bordering the war-ravaged Ukraine. This has come as a boost to the West and the EU must have heaved a deep sigh of relief that eurosceptic parties have been kept at bay, at least for now. Portugal's Centre-Right governing party also secured a parliamentary win, but it had to concede record gains to the Far-Right.

However, the signs are ominous for liberal forces since despite the Centrist parties' eventual victories, Far-Right populist forces continue to grow in all the three countries. This is the latest in a string of Far-Right surges in Europe. Last summer, EU elections saw a clear shift to the Right in the European Parliament, shaking up governments across the 27-member bloc. The mainstream political parties had to cede ground.

Romania's presidential election concluded with a clear victory for Centrist candidate Nicusor Dan, who secured 54 per cent of the vote against nationalist rival George Simion's 46 per cent. The closely watched contest recorded the highest voter turnout in 25 years as it has serious geopolitical implications for the EU. The election results show a dramatic comeback for Dan, the 55-year-old mayor of Bucharest, who trailed in the early stages but surged ahead in the final days of the ballot. Dan, a former mathematician, pledged to fight against corruption and rally behind the EU and NATO.

On the other hand, Simion, a Trump admirer, ran a campaign rooted in euroscepticism and nationalist rhetoric, pledging to stop military aid to Ukraine and overturn the ruling establishment in a style similar to Trump. His early lead raised fears among liberal segments of the population, but as results came in, it became clear that voters had opted for Dan's vision of a Centrist Romania. The elections were held after a previous vote in December had been annulled due to alleged Russian interference. Most Romanians feared that a win for the Far-Right Simion would mean Russian control of their country, while a victory for Dan would turn the country towards the EU and NATO. They did not want their country to suffer the plight of Ukraine invaded by Russia. The high turnout reflected the people's mood rejecting the rising Right-wing populism and reinforcing Romania's Western orientation in the midst of regional instability. No wonder among the first to congratulate Dan were Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

In Poland, Rafal Trzaskowski, a deputy leader of Prime Minister Donald Tusk's centrist Civic Platform (PO) party, won 31.1 per cent of the vote against the conservative Law and Justice (PiS) party's Karol Nawrocki's vote share of 29.1 per cent. It was a virtual referendum on Tusk's government. But, the fight is still on as the elections are poised for a second round. Social issues figured prominently during the campaign trail, with Nawrocki portraying himself as a guardian of conservative values, while Trzaskowski drew support from voters for his pledges to back abortion and LGBTQ rights. A Trzaskowski victory in the second round could enable Tusk's government to implement an agenda that includes rolling back judicial changes introduced by PiS that critics say have undermined the independence of the courts.

In Portugal, the parliamentary election saw the ruling Centre-Right Democratic Alliance (AD), led by Prime Minister Luis Montenegro, take 89 seats in the 230-seat parliament, well short of 116 needed for a majority. The party garnered 32.7 per cent of the vote. The Socialist Party (PS) and the Far-Right Chega finished in second place, both securing 58 seats. The Socialists suffered significant losses compared with the previous elections. With the results of several seats yet to be called, Chega might emerge as the main Opposition party. Chega, which ran on an anti-immigration platform, won a record 22.6 per cent of the vote, an impressive rise from the 1.3 per cent it had got in its debut election in 2019.

Even though the Far-Right parties in the three countries have failed to cause any major setback to the mainstream parties, the latter need to convince the electorate without any delay that their brand of politics is capable of tackling the ongoing cost of living crisis and the issue of migration. Otherwise, it is only a matter of time that the Far-Right could occupy the centre-stage of European politics.

WISDOM CORNER

Happiness must happen, and the same holds for success: you have to let it happen by not caring about it.

VIKTOR E. FRANKL

As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands, one for helping yourself, the other for helping others.

AUDREY HEPBURN

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

HERBERT SPENCER

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1844: French painter Henri Rousseau—the archetype of the modern naive artist, known for his richly coloured and meticulously detailed pictures of lush jungles, wild beasts, and exotic figures—was born in Laval.

1921: Soviet nuclear theoretical physicist and human rights advocate Andrey Sakharov, who won the 1975 Nobel Prize for Peace, was born in Moscow.

1932: American aviator Amelia Earhart became the first woman to pilot an airplane solo across the Atlantic Ocean.

1972: Michelangelo's Pietà, a sculpture depicting the Virgin Mary supporting the body of the dead Christ, was attacked and badly damaged in St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican City.

1991: Rajiv Gandhi, who served as India country's prime minister (1984-89), was assassinated in a suicide bombing attack.

LOL

FREE HAIRCUT

A man and a little boy entered a barbershop together. After the man received the full treatment - shave, shampoo, manicure, haircut, etc. - he placed the boy in the chair. "I'm goin' to buy a green tie to wear for the parade," he said. "I'll be back in a few minutes."

When the boy's haircut was completed and the man still hadn't returned, the barber said, "Looks like your daddy's forgotten all about you." "That wasn't my daddy," said the boy. "He just walked up, took me by the hand and said, 'Come on, son, we're gonna get a free haircut!'"



TRUMP DUMPS BIBI

FOCUS GEOPOLITICS

Israel's government decided last week to expand its military offensive against Hamas - an effort that, it notes, may include "seizing" Gaza. It is a brutal plan, devised in full awareness of its certain results, including the loss of the Israeli hostages who remain in Hamas's tunnels, the deepening of the humanitarian catastrophe faced by two million defenseless Palestinian civilians, and the erasure - rather than resolution - of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. But there is one thing Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu did not anticipate: the fracturing of his relationship with US President Donald Trump.

With his choice to drag an exhausted Israeli people and military into the indefinite occupation of Gaza, Netanyahu is sacrificing vital Israeli strategic interests, including the Israeli-Saudi normalization that seemed highly likely just a few years ago, as part of a grand US strategy for the Middle East. That is just fine with Netanyahu, who ultimately cares about only one thing: ensuring his government's survival.

Netanyahu long viewed Trump as the US president of his dreams, who would eliminate any daylight remaining between Israel and the United States, thereby strengthening Netanyahu's hold on power. But for all his unpredictability, Trump has remained steadfast about ending the era of US military entanglements in the Middle East. And nobody - not even a close ally - can make Trump do something he does not want to do.

Trump will do nothing to stop Israel from pursuing its forever war in Gaza, as long as it does not compromise American interests. (As a true friend of Israel, former President Joe Biden might have tried to save the country from itself.) But nor will Trump allow the US to be dragged into the effort.

Trump has also split with Netanyahu on Iran. Netanyahu persuaded Trump to withdraw in 2018 from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the nuclear deal that Iran, the US, and other world powers had concluded three



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years earlier. But as soon as Trump abandoned the JCPOA, Iran's race to the bomb was back on, and upon returning to the White House, he was faced with a US adversary that is rapidly approaching nuclear-power status. Netanyahu awaited the green light, which he believed was imminent, from the US to attack Iran's nuclear installations. Instead, Trump initiated negotiations with the Islamic Republic.

For Trump, striking a quick deal he can tout as a great victory always matters more than the agreement's substance. But he is surely feeling pressure to secure better terms than his political foil, former President Barack Obama, did in 2015. To that end, Trump is happy to wield the Israeli military threat as leverage in talks - the prospect of a US military offensive against Iran is less credible - but he will not tie his political fate to the worldview of Netanyahu and his theocratic-fascist allies.

And then there is Trump's handling of the Houthis, Iran's proxy in Yemen. Despite Israel's success in eroding the ring of Iranian proxies that surround it, the Houthis have

proved indomitable, repeatedly launching ballistic missiles at Israel. Early this month, one such Iran-supplied missile struck Israel's main airport, spurring most international airlines to suspend flights.

The US was firmly on Israel's side in confronting the Houthis, even carrying out its own airstrikes on Houthi-linked sites in Yemen in response to the group's attempts to disrupt traffic in the Red Sea. Then the Trump administration abruptly announced a ceasefire agreement: the Houthis would stop attacking ships in the Red Sea, in exchange for an end to US strikes. Israeli officials were "completely shocked."

Last week, Trump undertook a grand tour of the Middle East, but Israel was not on his itinerary. This trip was focused on trade and investment - and, as usual, moneymaking opportunities for himself, his family, and his friends. Deals were signed guaranteeing what the White House says is "over two trillion" dollars of Saudi, Qatari, and Emirati investment in the US and purchases of advanced American arms. Moreover, the US may

agree to help Saudi Arabia develop the commercial nuclear-energy program that it has long coveted (and that could serve as the first step toward developing nuclear weapons).

Until now, Israel's enduring understanding with previous American administrations was "no surprises" on matters of national security, and an ironclad commitment by the US to ensure Israel's military superiority in the region. Trump's moves in Iran and his arms deals with Gulf states mark a dramatic departure from this status quo. Israel was not consulted, and it is inconceivable that Israel's military edge could be maintained if such massive arms deals materialize. Israel had long been the central pillar of US foreign policy in the Middle East. Now it is Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. All the "credit" for this historic shift goes to Netanyahu.

Under the Biden administration, such deals were supposed to be linked to a grand strategic plan that included the normalization of Saudi-Israeli relations and the establishment of a NATO-like alliance in the Middle East, centered on an Israel committed to some form of Palestinian statehood. Such a deal could win broad support in the US Congress and open the way for a defense treaty with Saudi Arabia.

Such a grand deal would, however, almost certainly cost Netanyahu the support of the most extreme elements of his coalition. Since that is not an option for Netanyahu, Trump is moving on without him. There is too much money in the Gulf for Trump to concern himself with Israel's domestic politics.

Neither Trump nor the Gulf monarchs and emirs want wars, not even with Iran. Leaders in the Middle East, including the former al-Qaeda commander and Syria's president, Ahmed al-Sharaa, whom Trump met on this trip, want economic development, not conflict. They, too, have no patience for an Israeli prime minister who sees only threats where they see opportunities.

The writer is a former Israeli foreign minister.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

IN JEST THIS

Trying my best to have a 'good one'

The other day, as I was leaving a store with some items I had purchased, an employee said to me, "Have a good one!"

"Thank you," I responded, but I was a little confused. What was this "good one" I was supposed to have?

Was it a good afternoon? A good day? A good week? Perhaps it was a good year or even a good life.

Maybe the employee assumed I was a drinker and was wishing me a good beer. A good bottle of wine could also be what he was wishing for me. But perhaps he made no such assumptions and was merely wishing me a good cup of tea. I had, after all, just bought some tea for myself. But I had also bought some soap. Perhaps he was wishing me a good bath.

Whatever he was wishing me, why was he wishing me only one? Why couldn't he

have been a little generous and said, "Have a good several!" or "Have a good many!" Wouldn't I want to have many of something that was good?

Perhaps not. There are some things in life that are sufficient in quantities of one. They make you say, "One is enough! One is plenty!" This is the case, of course, with wives. If you have a good wife, you are set for life. You do not need two or three. One is more than most men can handle. It is a challenge to make one wife happy, so why would you attempt to make two or three happy? You would be better off trying something less challenging, like climbing Mount Everest.

Before you accuse me of being sexist, let me emphasize that the same applies to husbands. If you have a good husband, do you really need two or three? Keeping just one of them happy should be challenging enough. You do

not need more stress in your life, even if you suffer from low blood pressure.

I am thankful that no one, as far as I know, has ever wished two wives on me. I can't imagine going to the store and having two shopping lists texted to my phone.

Me: "What kind of cheese do you want? You need to be specific."

First wife: "That wasn't me. That was your second wife. I have lactose intolerance."

Me: "Sorry, I forgot. What kind of bread do you want?"

First wife: "That wasn't me either. I have gluten intolerance."

Me: "Sorry, I forgot. Can you ask her please?"

First wife: "Ask her yourself. I have second-wife intolerance."

Yes, having one good wife is more than enough, quite similar to having one good life. If you've had a good life, would

you really want to come back to Earth and take a chance on having a bad life? I wouldn't. Given a choice, I would opt out of any further lives. I'm too afraid of being born to the wrong parents, having the wrong siblings and being raised in the wrong religion. (Any religion that's too restrictive would be wrong for me.)

One good job is also enough. If you have a good job, you don't need a second or third job. But if it's a bad job, you may need another bad job to make ends meet.

Having two bad jobs may make you feel like you have one good job, but that's just an illusion. You might as well tell yourself that having two bad wives is the same as having one good wife.

If having a "good one" means having a good wife, a good job or a good life, I'm happy to have one. Just one is plenty, thank you.

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

Watery wake-up call

Sir, Once hailed as India's Silicon Valley, Bangalore now reels under the weight of incessant rains—not due to a natural disaster, but a man-made crisis. Roads resemble rivers, homes lie submerged, and life in this so-called global tech hub has ground to a halt. The culprits? Rampant encroachment of lakes, wetlands, and natural drainage corridors. Decades of unchecked urban sprawl has obstructed the city's ecological lifelines. Despite these recurring nightmares every monsoon, civic authorities remain in disarray—no coordination, no urgency, no accountability. Drainage projects stall, flood mitigation plans gather dust, and illegal constructions mushroom unchecked. This isn't incompetence—it's neglect. Bangalore cannot afford more watery wake-up calls. A robust and modern urban plan that factors in flood risk, climate resilience, and sustainable development is not optional—it's essential. The time for half-measures and excuses is over. The city needs decisive action now—not next year, not tomorrow. Because if the apathy continues, it won't just be homes and streets that drown—it'll be Bangalore's future.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Universal beverage

Sir, "If you cannot buy happiness then buy tea, that is almost the same." A universal drink, tea is the second most common beverage consumed globally after water. Everyday is a "tea day" though the United Nations (UN) observes International Tea Day on 21 May. For the top organisation, tea defines livelihood for many, and health for others. To everyone, however, cups of tea relieve the rich cultural heritage and diversity of countries. The UN has rededicated itself to fight poverty, eradicate hunger, and empower women via tea. It has appealed to nations to use tea as a tool for sustainable development. The tea industry is the principal source of income for economically backward and far-off nations. Expanding tea production in traditionally tea producing nations, arresting further decline of tea growth in tea importing countries and facing climate challenges are the UN's goals.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Maharashtra unveils housing policy

The State Housing Policy 2025 with the slogan "My Home -- My Right" will prove decisive in providing affordable, sustainable, inclusive residences for all sections of society, especially the economically weaker and low-income groups

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 20: The Maharashtra government Tuesday announced a new housing policy, which includes a comprehensive programme ranging from slum rehabilitation to redevelopment, with an investment of ₹70,000 crore besides focusing on low-income groups and affordability.

Talking to reporters after a cabinet meeting where the policy was approved, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said the policy focuses on housing for the common man with the motto "My Home - My Right".

He stressed the policy prioritises senior citizens, working women, students, industrial workers, journalists, persons with disabilities, and ex-servicemen.

The policy comprises a comprehensive programme from slum rehabilitation to redevelopment, with an investment of ₹70,000 crore.

The chief minister said affordable and inclusive housing for working women, senior citizens and students have been



considered, and issues of rental housing and creating land banks have been addressed.

"All stakeholders and schemes will be brought on a single portal, 'Maha Awaas'. Government land parcels will be mapped and made available for housing. Sustainability will be an important factor in housing and will be brought in with modern technology. This is for the first time since 2007 that a comprehensive and dynamic all-inclusive policy has been formulated," he maintained.

He said vertical slums and SRA (Slum Rehabilitation Authority) buildings are being

given incentives.

Fadnavis emphasised that the new policy takes into account the housing needs of urban and rural areas.

Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, who holds the housing portfolio, described the new policy as "revolutionary" and added it aims to provide affordable homes and give a major boost to the state's economy.

Speaking to reporters, Shinde said the path to affordable housing for common citizens and economically weaker sections in Maharashtra has been cleared through the policy.

The policy will transform ur-

ban development and the housing sector in the state. Flow of large-scale investments in the key sector will significantly boost Maharashtra's goal of becoming a \$1 trillion economy by 2032, the housing minister opined.

The State Housing Policy 2025 with the slogan "My Home - My Right" will prove decisive in providing affordable, sustainable, inclusive residences for all sections of society, especially the economically weaker and low-income groups, he said.

The state government has set a target of building 35 lakh homes by 2030 for these groups, with specific provisions designed to meet the unique needs of every segment.

A centralized state housing information portal will be developed using artificial intelligence. It will coordinate data on housing demand and supply, geo-tagging of housing units, fund distribution, district-wise land banks, and integration with platforms like MahaRERA, MahaBhulekh, and PM Gati Shakti, Shinde informed.

Recognizing the trend of rapid urbanization, all metropolitan region development authorities, not just corporations with populations over 10 lakh, have been instructed to implement inclusive housing schemes.

A dedicated self-redevelopment cell has been proposed to guide housing societies through planning, funding, developer selection, and execution. An initial fund of ₹2,000 crore will be allocated.

The policy emphasizes on transparency, real-time monitoring, and accountability through IT-based systems, ensuring tracking of beneficiaries, project progress, and fund management.

It aims to promote cluster redevelopment as a strategic approach. For slum rehabilitation schemes that haven't progressed, new developers will be selected under the policy through a transparent bidding process.

Shinde emphasised that delays will be avoided, and malpractices will be completely eliminated.

Rains continue to pound Bangalore



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, May 20: Heavy downpour in Bangalore for the past 36 hours threw life out of gear here Tuesday as well. People were seen walking through knee-deep water and traffic jams were reported in many places. The rain-related toll went up to five in the state, officials said.

Sai Layout in the city continued to resemble an island due to the torrential rains. Ground floor of the houses here were half-submerged and people were unable to come out. About 150 people were rescued and shifted to safe locations Monday, authorities said.

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMB) had arranged food and water for people in Sai Lay-

out. Residents complained that the civic agencies were least bothered about the sufferings of people residing in Sai Layout.

An orphanage in Hennur in the city also bore the brunt of the downpour.

The Fire and Rescue Department along with Disaster Response Force rescued the people in the orphanage as the place was filled with water.

Commuters had a harrowing time wading through the knee-deep water in many places, including near Manyata Tech Park, which houses offices of many multinational companies, and Silk Board Junction.

Many new potholes emerged in the city roads posing threat to motorists. Due to waterlogging, vehicles were stranded, leading to long traffic jams in many parts of the city.

Two people, including a 12-year-old, were electrocuted while trying to drain rainwater that had entered an apartment in the city, police said Tuesday.

According to Mico Layout Police, Manmohan Kamath (63), a resident of Madhuru Apartment in NS Palya near

BTM 2nd Stage, had tried to use a motorised pump to clear water out of his house Monday evening.

"When he connected the pump to a socket, there was a short circuit, leading to his electrocution," a police officer involved in the investigation said.

Dinesh (12), son of a Nepalese man employed at the apartment complex, was also electrocuted, police added.

The two were declared dead by doctors at a hospital. Unnatural Death Reports (UDRs) will be registered in both cases, the Station Head Officer confirmed.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Bangalore has received about 30 mm rain in the last 24 hours.

The city had recorded 105 mm rain on the intervening night of Sunday and Monday morning.

Rains are pounding several parts of Karnataka, especially south Karnataka, coastal

and Malnad region. The IMD has issued an orange alert for Bangalore and a yellow alert at various places across Karnataka Tuesday.

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

IMD Bangalore Centre Director N Puviarasu said they have issued an orange alert for Bangalore for the impact 8 cm to 10 cm that will likely affect the big city.

"The amount of rainfall we are receiving is nothing for rural areas. But because cities like Bangalore are concretised mostly, and thus blocking the outlets for water drainage, we have issued an orange alert so that authorities can prepare accordingly," he said.

According to the IMD statement, areas likely to be affected today are Bagalkot, Bangalore Urban, Bangalore Rural, Belgaum, Chikkaballapura, Dharwad, Gadag, Kolar, Koppal, Vijayanagara districts.

Residents complained that the civic agencies were least bothered about the sufferings of people residing in Sai Layout

GOLD SMUGGLING CASE Actress Ranya Rao, second accused Tarun Raju get bail

The bench has asked the Central government to file the objections within two weeks and adjourned the matter to June 3

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE



of hearing without fail.

They are further directed not to tamper or hamper the prosecution witnesses and to co-operate with the Investigating Officer's investigation.

Ranya Rao, the stepdaughter of senior police officer Ramchandra Rao, was arrested on March 3 for allegedly smuggling 14.2 kg of gold, valued at more than ₹12.56 crore.

Ranya Rao and the other two accused in the case are currently lodged at the Bengaluru Central Prison.

The Karnataka High Court directed the Union government to file its objections within two weeks in connection with the petition filed by Ranya Rao, challenging the invocation of the COFEPOSA Act against her in the gold smuggling case May 13.

The Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities Act, 1974 (COFEPOSA), has been invoked against Ranya Rao.

The Central Economic Intelligence Bureau (CEIB), a nodal agency under the Ministry of Finance, has invoked the COFEPOSA Act against the actress and other accused in the gold smuggling case as per the recommendation of the DRI, probing the case.

The court has granted bail to the second accused Tarun Raju by allowing his bail petition.

The accused have sought bail on the grounds of non-submission of the charge sheet against them by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) even after 60 days.

Considering the plea, the court has granted bail. The court has asked the accused not to leave the country without prior permission of the court. The matter has been adjourned to June 2.

Senior counsel Girish made submissions for Ranya Rao. The court has directed the accused persons to provide provide surety by two persons and also furnish a bond of ₹2 lakh each.

The court said that the applications filed by accused under the Section 187(3)(ii) of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita Act were allowed.

The court has directed Ranya Rao and Tarun Raju to appear before this court on all the dates

Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project completed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 20: With the launch of a 40 metre-long girder near Surat in Gujarat, 300 km of viaducts for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project has been completed, the National High Speed Rail Corporation (NHSRCL) said Tuesday.

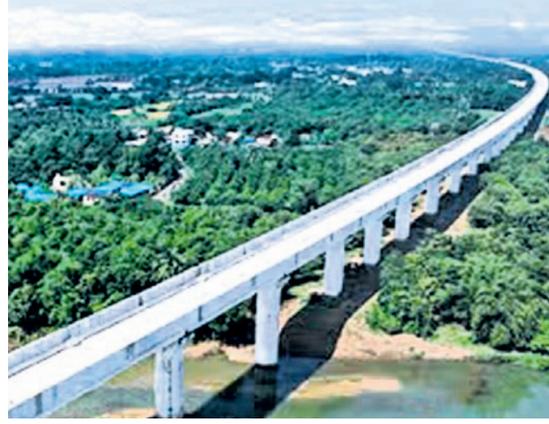
According to the NHSRCL, of the 300 km of the superstructure, 257.4 km is constructed through the Full Span Launching Method (FSLM), including 14 river bridges, 37.8 km through Span by Span (SBS), 0.9 km of steel bridges (10 spans ranging from 60 to 130 m in 7 bridges), 1.2 km PSC bridges (20 spans ranging from 40 to 80 metres in 5 bridges) and 2.7 km in station building.

Besides the viaducts, 383 km of pier work, 401 km of foundation and 326 km of girder casting has been completed for the 508-km bullet train project, the agency said.

FSLM has significantly accelerated construction, as full-span girder erection is up to 10 times faster than conventional segmental methods, NHSRCL said.

Each full-span box girder weighs 970 metric tonnes, and segmental girders are used selectively in locations where full-span installation is not feasible.

To facilitate construction, 27 dedicated casting yards were established along the corridor. Steel bridges are fabricated in seven workshops spread across



the country, three in Gujarat, one each in Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, and West Bengal, the NHSRCL said.

The agency said more than 3 lakh noise barriers have been installed along the viaducts to mitigate noise during operations. Track works over viaducts have also started, and around 157 track km of RC (reinforced concrete) track bed construction has been achieved so far in Gujarat.

It further said that thematic Bullet Train stations are also rapidly taking shape. These stations will be integrated with rail and road-based transport systems to provide seamless travel to passengers and will be equipped with state-of-the-art passenger amenities.

"The project has supported the use of indigenously

designed and manufactured equipment such as straddle carriers, launching gantries, bridge gantries, and girder transporters for construction," NHSRCL stated, adding that this marks a first for Indian infrastructure, showcasing India's growing capabilities in high-speed rail technology with the support from the Japanese government.

The total cost of the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail Corridor project is pegged at ₹1.08 lakh crore, and as per the shareholding pattern, the Government of India is to pay ₹10,000 crore to the NHSRCL, while the two states involved, Gujarat and Maharashtra, are to pay ₹5,000 crore each.

The rest is to be paid by Japan through a loan at 0.1 per cent interest.

Eminent astrophysicist, science writer Dr Jayant Narlikar passes away

A towering figure in Indian science, Dr Narlikar was widely known for his pioneering contributions to cosmology, his efforts to popularise science, and for setting up premier research institutions in the country

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pune, May 20: Dr Jayant Vishnu Narlikar, one of the most distinguished astrophysicists who was globally acclaimed for co-developing the Hoyle-Narlikar theory of gravity- an alternative to Einstein's general relativity- and popularising science among common people, passed away in Pune Tuesday.

He was 86, family sources said.

A towering figure in Indian science, Dr Narlikar was widely known for his pioneering contributions to cosmology, his efforts to popularise science, and for setting up premier research institutions in the country.

a professor and Head of the Mathematics Department.

He migrated to Cambridge for higher studies, becoming a Wrangler and Tyson Medallist in the Mathematical Tripos.

While in the United Kingdom, he and his doctoral adviser Fred Hoyle developed the famous Hoyle-Narlikar theory of gravity.

He returned to India to join the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (1972-1989), where, under his charge, the Theoretical Astrophysics Group expanded and acquired international standing.

In 1988, the UGC invited Dr Narlikar to set up the Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics as its Founder Director.

He held the directorship of IUCAA until his retirement in

2003. Under his direction, IUCAA has acquired a worldwide reputation as a centre of excellence in teaching and research in astronomy and astrophysics. He was an Emeritus Professor at IUCAA.

Besides his scientific research, Dr Narlikar was well-known as a science communicator through his books, articles, and radio/TV programmes.

Dr

Narlikar was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 1965 at the young age of 26.

In 2004, he was awarded the Padma Vibhushan, and the Maharashtra government honoured him with the state's highest civilian award, Maharashtra Bhushan, in 2011.

In 2014, the Sahitya Akademi, the premier literary body in India, selected his autobiography for its highest prize in regional language (Marathi) writing.

In a statement, IUCAA said that Dr Narlikar's passing marks the end of an extraordinary chapter in Indian science.

"Over the course of a remarkable career, he made groundbreaking contributions to cosmology, challenged prevailing scientific orthodoxy, and dedicated himself to making science accessible to the broader public. He was best known for co-developing the Hoyle-Narlikar theory of gravity- an alternative

to Einstein's general relativity- and for championing the steady-state theory of the universe, a bold counterpoint to the widely accepted Big Bang model," said the statement.

IUCAA said his vision for the institute, dubbed the "Eight-fold Way", emphasised excellence in astronomy research.

It also emphasised outreach to the University faculty, guidance to PhD students, access to the latest observational facilities for Indian astronomers as well as science outreach and education for school children and the wider public, it said.

Tributes poured in for Dr Narlikar from various sections of society.

President Droupadi Murmu said Dr. Narlikar has left an indelible mark through his body of work, which will inspire generations to come.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi termed Narlikar's passing a "monumental loss to the scientific community."

Thane MACT awards ₹8L compensation to woman injured in 2006 accident

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thane, May 20: The Motor Accident Claims Tribunal in Maharashtra's Thane district has awarded a compensation of ₹8 lakh to a woman who sustained injuries in an accident in 2006.

MACT chairman SB Agrawal awarded the compensation to the petitioner, Deepa Ramkrishnan, who suffered permanent partial disability in the accident when she was a student in February 2006.

A copy of the order dated May 9 was made available Monday.

Ramkrishnan's advocate, Baldev B Rajput, informed the tribunal that she was a pillion rider on a motorcycle when it collided with a tempo in Navi Mumbai February 25, 2006.

The woman sustained grievous injuries, including an open fracture to her right hand and wrist, requiring multiple hospitalisations and several surgeries.





Our country is grappling with a lot of problems. People do not have food or access to education. Why is this happening? It is because parties like the BJP, the Congress and others have only indulged in politics in the last 75 years

OVER 50 HELD IN ARUNACHAL FOR CHEATING IN RECRUITMENT EXAM

Over 50 people from Haryana were arrested in Arunachal Pradesh for allegedly cheating in a recruitment examination conducted by the Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS), police said Tuesday. They were arrested for allegedly using electronic devices to cheat in the examination, held Sunday, for the recruitment of lab assistants and junior secretariat assistants (JSA)



of the day quote

Delighted to inaugurate the Water Supply Scheme at Bakura, Ganderbal -- a vital project that will ensure clean and dependable drinking water for over 4,000 people



The CBI was unleashed by Modani to take over a television channel to make it their mouthpiece. The Income Tax Department was unleashed by Modani to take over the Krishnapatnam port. There are other such examples like, for instance, to take over cement companies



Despite being the largest and most resource-rich province of Pakistan, Balochistan remains its most neglected and underdeveloped region -- a contradiction that reflects decades of systematic economic and political exploitation



NIA, IB grill Haryana YouTuber

A senior Haryana Police officer in Hisar said the central agencies and military intelligence officials are also probing her travel details, as she had reportedly visited Pakistan, China and some other countries

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, May 20: The National Investigation Agency, Intelligence Bureau and military intelligence officials are questioning Haryana YouTuber Jyoti Malhotra, who was arrested recently on charges of spying for Pakistan, police said Tuesday.



A probe into the YouTuber's financial transactions and travel details is also underway, they said.

Hisar-based Jyoti (33), who ran the YouTube channel 'Travel with JO', was arrested from the New Aggarsain Extension May 16, and booked under the relevant sections of the Official Secrets Act and the BNS, police said. Jyoti was among 12 people who were arrested from Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh over the past two weeks on charges of espionage, with investigators pointing at an alleged Pakistan-linked spy network operating in north India.

A senior Haryana Police officer in Hisar said the central agencies and military intelligence officials are also probing her travel details, as she had reportedly visited Pakistan, China and some other countries.

An attempt is being made to draw a complete chain of events to see which countries she visited and in what sequence, the

officer said. Earlier, police said her known sources of income did not justify her foreign travels, adding that her financial transactions were also under scanner.

A forensic analysis of Jyoti's laptop is underway, police said, adding that they would also question those who were in touch with the YouTuber.

Hisar SP Shashank Kumar Sawan Sunday said that Pakistani intelligence operatives were developing Jyoti as an "asset".

She was allegedly in touch with a Pakistani official posted in the Pakistan High Commission in Delhi during the four-day military conflict between India and Pakistan that

followed the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack, the SP said. Sawan said while Jyoti did not have direct access to any information related to the military operations, she was directly in touch with Pakistani intelligence operatives (PIOs).

"This is modern warfare that is not just fought on the borders. We came across a new modus operandi wherein PIOs were trying to recruit some social media influencers," the SP said.

Sawan also said Jyoti went to Kashmir before the Pahalgam attack and visited Pakistan trying that, and police are trying to establish the "links" between these visits.

Jyoti, whose YouTube channel at present has 3.87 lakh sub-

Law grads need 3 years' practice for judicial exam

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 20: The Supreme Court Tuesday barred fresh law graduates from appearing in entry level judicial services examination, fixing a minimum three-year law practice criteria.



The top court also increased from 10 to 25 per cent the quota reserved for Limited Departmental Competitive Examination (LDCE) for promotion to higher judicial service or the cadre of district judge.

A bench comprising Chief Justice BR Gavai and Justices Augustine George Masih and K Vinod Chandran analysed the procedures related to filling of vacancies in higher judicial services and said raising the LDCE quota would have "no adverse impact on the administration of justice".

While 25 per cent posts in higher judiciary are filled by direct recruitment from the bar, 50 per cent of the total posts are filled by promotion on the basis of principle of merit-cum-seniority.

In the LDCE, the merit is the only criteria and judicial officers can become ADJs by clearing this irrespective of their experience or the seniority.

"All high courts and the state governments in the country shall amend the relevant service rules to the effect that the quota of reservation for LDCE for promotion from the cadre of

civil judge (senior division) to the higher judicial service is increased to 25%," the bench said.

The bench added, "Needless to state that all such recruitment processes which have been kept in abeyance, in view of the pendency of the present proceedings, shall proceed in accordance with the rules which were applicable on the date of advertisement/notification."

The verdict came on a plea filed by the All India Judges Association.

"All the high courts and the state governments in the country shall amend the relevant service rules to the effect that candidates desirous of appearing in the examination for the post of civil judge (junior division) must have practised for a minimum period of three years to be eligible for the said examination," it said.

The court said the experience of judicial service aspirants would be counted from the date on which provisional registration had been granted by the state bar council concerned.

POST OF THE DAY



Sudhir Chaudhary defamed Karnataka govt in 2023, Congress didn't punish him Anjana Om Kashyap misbehaved with Alok Sharma last month, Congress didn't punish her Now, Arnab Goswami has gone below belt to tarnish the image of Congress, there's no reason he should be roaming free after committing such crime. Do everything it takes but don't give him free pass. @INCIndia

SHORT TAKES

MP CM presents king cobra to Indore zoo

Indore: Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav Tuesday presented a male king cobra to the Kamala Nehru Zoological Park here. Yadav later chaired a cabinet meeting in the city. The chief minister released the king cobra, which was brought from the Peelikula Biological Park in Karnataka, in the snake park at the zoo. While Indore is not a natural habitat for this species, Yadav appreciated the enclosure set up by the zoo management for the cobra, said an official. The zoo already has a female king cobra. Special facilities have been created in the zoo to facilitate breeding, the official said.

Five Naxalites apprehended

Gadchiroli: Police in eastern Maharashtra's Gadchiroli district Tuesday arrested three women Naxalites and detained two minors who collectively carried a reward of ₹36 lakh on their heads, officials said. The district police had received intelligence about 50 to 60 Naxalites gathering in Binagunda Mauza in Bhamragadh area with a plan to attack police personnel.

6 killed in car-bus collision in Bengal

Kolkata: At least six people were killed in a collision between a car and a bus in West Bengal's Nadia district Tuesday, police said. The accident occurred around 7 am on the Krishnanagar-Karimpur state highway near Kanthalia area after the four-wheeler with six people on board collided head-on with the bus, a senior officer said.



Army personnel display the preparedness along the LoC, during a media tour, near Poonch, J&K, Tuesday

POSTS ON OPERATION SINDOOR

SC to hear Ashoka prof's arrest plea May 21

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 20: The Supreme Court would likely hear Wednesday a plea of Ashoka University's faculty Ali Khan Mahmudabad against his arrest for his social media posts over Operation Sindoor.

The top court's causelist shows a bench comprising Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar will be hearing the matter. Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the associate professor, mentioned the case for urgent hearing before

a bench headed by Chief Justice BR Gavai May 19.

Mahmudabad was arrested May 18 after two FIRs were lodged under stringent charges, including endangering sovereignty and integrity, for his social media posts over Operation Sindoor.

He was produced before a local court in Sonapat May 18 and was remanded in police custody for two days in a case registered on a complaint from the Haryana State Commission for Women (HSCW) filed a day before.

The Sonapat court remanded

him to judicial custody till May 27 after the completion of his police custody Tuesday.

The HSCW recently sent a notice to him questioning the remarks, though Mahmudabad maintained they were "misunderstood" and underscored his fundamental right to freedom of speech.

Haryana Police said the two FIRs were lodged at the Rai Police Station in Sonapat -- one based on a complaint from the chairperson of Haryana State Commission for Women, Renu Bhatia, and the other on the complaint of a village sarpanch.

Mehbooba urges declaration of shelled areas as 'war-hit' zones

Mehbooba Mufti also demanded that the families whose houses were destroyed in the shelling be provided ₹50 lakh each to support them in rebuilding their homes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



Srinagar, May 20: PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti Tuesday appealed to the government to declare areas affected by shelling from across the border in Jammu and Kashmir as "war-impacted zones" and give the status of martyr to those who lost lives in the skirmishes.

Addressing a press conference here, the former chief minister said she visited several areas near the Line of Control (LoC) and International Border to get a first-hand account of the impact on the lives of the people in the wake of shelling from across.

"I request that all these areas be declared as war-impacted zones, so that the work on their rehabilitation is taken up on war footing," the PDP president said.

She also demanded that the families whose houses were destroyed in the shelling be provided ₹50 lakh each to support them in rebuilding their homes.

"I also demand that the Government of India give the status of martyrs to all the people who lost their lives in this. This will give them respect as they were innocent, and their families will also get some benefits. Jobs should also be provided to the next of kin of the deceased," she added.

Mehbooba noted that the shelling has left a trail of destruction in several areas like Poonch, Uri, Tangdhar and some parts of Kupwara.

It has devastated families, destroyed houses, and other properties. Some people still haven't got even tents to live in, and are living under open sky, she said.

The PDP president claimed banks were refusing to provide insurance to those whose shops have been damaged.

"The government should intervene in this. Also, those

who have taken housing loans and their houses have been destroyed, their loans should be waived off," she said.

There are some areas like the area near the Brigade headquarters in Tangdhar where some nearby shops have suffered damage, but no one from the government has reached upto them, she added.

On the demands of building individual bunkers for people living in the affected areas, she said it does not feel right to demand such things in the 21st century in the first place when people should be demanding better schools and universities.

The Centre should think if it wants to keep the people thinking about war all the time, she said. War is not a solution and those advocating war, should come and live with their families in the border areas, she said.

Mizoram declared India's first fully literate state

Lalduhoma made the announcement in the presence of Union Minister of State for Education Jayant Chaudhary at a function in Mizoram University

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BASED ON PROJECTIONS FROM THE 2011 CENSUS DATA, SURVEYS WERE CONDUCTED, AND 3,026 ILLITERATES WERE IDENTIFIED. OUT OF THEM, 1,692 WERE FOUND TO BE POTENTIAL LEARNERS

Aizawl, May 20: Chief Minister Lalduhoma Tuesday declared Mizoram as the country's first fully literate state.

Lalduhoma made the announcement in the presence of Union Minister of State for Education Jayant Chaudhary at a function in Mizoram University (MZU).

"As we celebrate this achievement, we also renew our commitment to sustaining literacy through continuous education, digital access, and vocational skill training," the CM's Office quoted him as saying in a post on X. "Let us now aim higher: digital literacy, financial

literacy, and entrepreneurial skill for all Mizos," he added. Chaudhary congratulated the state government and the people for the achievement.

"Today, we proudly declared Mizoram as the first fully literate state under the visionary Ullas - Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram. Congratulations to the people of Mizoram and Hon'ble



CM @PuLalduhoma for this achievement," he posted on X. "Special thanks to Hon'ble

Education Minister Dr. Vanlalhlana for championing this cause. The Chief Minister was gracious in commending the work of previous State Governments as well in the remarkable journey of progress Mizoram has undertaken. May the North-east continue to lead the way in building a Shikshit, Kushal, and Atmanirbhar Bharat," he said.

As per the 2011 Census, the state had a literacy rate of 91.33 per cent, ranking third in the country.

Building on this foundation, the ULLAS -- Understanding of Lifelong Learning for All in Society -- and Nav Bharat Saksharta Karyakram

were implemented to identify and educate the remaining non-literate individuals, officials said.

Based on projections from the 2011 census data, surveys were conducted, and 3,026 illiterates were identified. Out of them, 1,692 were found to be potential learners.

A total of 292 volunteer teachers, among whom were students, educators, resource persons, and Cluster Resource Centre Coordinators, stepped forward to lead this mission, officials said.

The collective efforts, dedication, and community mobilisation have resulted in Mizoram achieving full literacy, they said.



Those who take part in violence do not want something good to happen to common people. If there is a riot, there will be vandalism, houses will be destroyed, and people will be killed

CUET-UG: ACCOUNTANCY RETEST OVER SYLLABUS ERROR

CUET-UG candidates who have appeared for the Accountancy paper between May 13 to 16 will get an option to take a retest after some out-of-syllabus questions were flagged, according to National Testing Agency (NTA) officials



of the day quote

Operation Sindoor is not over, it only remains suspended for the time being

It is rightly said that the transformation of a seed into a tree is culture and its rotting away is a distortion

Both under-go rigorous training, operate under intense pressure, and must take swift, critical decisions during emergencies.

YOGI ADITYANATH | CHIEF MINISTER, UTTAR PRADESH

SHORT TAKES

4 SSB jawans hurt as boulders fall on bridge

Pithoragarh: Four jawans of Sashstra Seema Bal (SSB) were injured when several big boulders fell on Elagad bridge on Tanakpur-Tawaghat highway here in Uttarakhand, while over 100 vehicles, including those carrying Adi Kailash Yatra pilgrims, were left stranded on both sides of the debris, officials said Tuesday.

Rajasthan transfers 4 IPS officers

Jaipur: Rajasthan government transferred four IPS officers Tuesday. According to an order issued by the Department of Personnel, Lokesh Sonwal, Superintendent of Police (SP), Special Operations Group, Jaipur has been posted as SP in Jhunjhunu. Balotra SP Harishchandra has been transferred to the same post in Hanumangarh.

7 die in lightning, drowning incidents

Bokaro (Jharkhand): At least seven people died due to incidents of lightning strike and drowning in Jharkhand's Bokaro district Tuesday, police said. Five people drowned in two areas of the district, while two others were killed after being struck by lightning, they said.

2 Bangladeshis get RI for trafficking Rohingyas

New Delhi: Two Bangladeshis were Tuesday sentenced to two years of rigorous imprisonment by an NIA special court in Chennai for being part of a syndicate trafficking Rohingyas into the country, officials said. The convicts, identified as Shahabuddin Hossain alias Md Sahab Uddin and Munna alias Noor Karim alias Nur Karim, have also been fined ₹11,000 by the NIA court, they said.

WAQF CASE HEARING

Strong grounds needed for interim relief: SC

Over 100 petitioners have moved the top court against the amendments, contending that they infringed upon the rights of Muslims



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 20: The Supreme Court Tuesday began hearing a batch of petitions challenging the constitutional validity of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, stating that any request for interim relief must be supported by a "strong and glaring" case due to the presumption of constitutionality attached to laws passed by Parliament.

A bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justice Augustine George Masih made this observation as senior advocate Kapil Sibal led arguments against the amended law, calling it a "complete departure from historical legal and constitutional principles" and an attempt to "capture waqf properties through a non-judicial process".

The bench focused initially on three key issues: the power to identify properties declared as waqf by courts, by usage, or by deed; the composition of waqf boards; and the provision that allows authorities to treat waqf properties as government land during inquiries by collectors.

sought to limit the scope of the hearing to these three issues, but this was opposed by Sibal and fellow senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi. They argued that the entire statute represented a systematic effort to expropriate waqf properties, and piecemeal consideration would be inappropriate.

Sibal argued the 2025 law enables the government to bypass judicial oversight and allows executive officers to strip properties of their waqf status, in violation of Islamic legal principles that state "once a waqf, always a waqf." He said the law's new provision under Section 3C empowers an officer to initiate an inquiry into whether a property is government land, during which the property is no longer considered waqf—allowing authorities to assume control without court intervention.

He also objected to changes in the composition of Central and State Waqf Boards, claiming they now allow a majority of non-Muslim members. Referring to Section 23, Sibal said even the CEO of a waqf board can be a non-Muslim. "This is an attempt to dilute community control," he said, adding

The bench focused initially on three key issues: the power to identify properties declared as waqf by courts, by usage, or by deed; the composition of waqf boards; and the provision that allows authorities to treat waqf properties as government land during inquiries by collectors

that management of religious endowments must remain within the faith.

Highlighting Section 3D, Sibal pointed out that properties declared as protected monuments under preservation laws would lose their waqf status. He contended this violates Articles 14, 25, and 26 of the Constitution, as it restricts religious practice and undermines equality.

Sibal also raised concern about the practicality of proving waqf status for historical properties where written deeds may not exist. He said waqf by user was recognized even without documentation in older laws, but now mutawallis (custodians) could face jail if they fail to provide records.

Senior advocate Rajeev Dhavan called the amendments an "attack on secularism and cultural autonomy," arguing that the law does not follow the doctrine of proportionality. Singhvi criticized the provision that only Muslims practicing for five years can create waqfs, calling it arbitrary and unique to Islam.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Jharkhand IAS officer arrested in excise scam

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ranchi, May 20: The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) Tuesday arrested senior Jharkhand IAS officer Vinay Kumar Choubey in a money laundering case linked to the alleged excise scam in the state, an official said.

Choubey was taken to Birsa Munda Central Jail at Hotwar here after a special court remanded him to judicial custody till June 3. He was arrested after hours of interrogation by the ACB, which has been inquiring into the allegation of irregularities in excise policy during his tenure as secretary of the excise department. The excise department's joint commissioner Gajendra Singh was also arrested and sent to jail in the same case.

Choubey, a 1999-batch IAS officer, had held several key posts, including Secretary to the CM. He is currently posted as Principal Secretary, Department of Panchayati Raj. The state government earlier gave permission to register an FIR against Choubey. An ACB team reached Choubey's residence in the morning and took him to the agency's headquarters here for interrogation.

Indian Army denies deployment of air defence guns at Golden Temple



The assertion came in the wake of reports that the Golden Temple management had allowed the Army to deploy the air defence guns within the shrine to counter potential drone and missile threats from Pakistan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Amritsar, May 20: The Army Tuesday said no air defence guns or any other air defence resource were deployed within the Golden Temple premises during Operation Sindoor.

The assertion came in the wake of reports that the Golden Temple management had allowed the Army to deploy the air defence guns within the shrine to counter potential drone and missile threats from Pakistan.

"Some media reports are circulating with respect to deployment of AD Guns in the Golden Temple. It is clarified that NO AD guns or any other AD resource was deployed within the premises of Sri Darbar Sahib Amritsar (Golden Temple)," an Army statement said.

Earlier, dismissing the reports, the additional head priest of the shrine and the apex religious body of Sikhs, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), said no permission was given to the Indian Army to deploy any air defence guns.

SGPC president Harjinder Singh Dhami also said that

while the administration contacted them only about switch off the lights during the blackout after recent escalation of tension between India and Pakistan, they fully cooperated in the interest of administrative responsibility while maintaining the sanctity of the ongoing 'maryada' (conduct).

Dhami said there was no contact from any Army official regarding the installation of air defence guns at Sri Harmandir Sahib, Dhami said. Harmandir Sahib's Head Granthi, Giani Ragbir Singh, also clarified that although he was on a foreign visit during the Operation Sindoor, there was no communication with him regarding any gun deployment, nor did any such incident occur at the Golden temple.

Additional head priest of the Golden Temple Giani Amarjeet Singh said it is not true that the Army was allowed to deploy air defence guns within the shrine to counter potential drone and missile threats from Pakistan.

Singh said this claim was shockingly untrue and outrightly rejected it. No permission for installing guns was ever given, he asserted. He clarified that the management of Harmandir Sahib had cooperated with the district administration's guidelines regarding the city-wide blackout by switching off exterior and upper lights of the complex within the specified time frame.

However, lights at locations where religious code of conduct is observed were kept on, and the sanctity of the religious place was maintained with full responsibility, he said.

Veteran nuclear scientist MR Srinivasan no more

In recognition of his outstanding contributions to India's nuclear energy program, Dr Srinivasan was awarded the Padma Vibhushan, one of the nation's highest civilian honors

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Udhagamandalam (Tamil Nadu), May 20: Veteran scientist and former Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, MR Srinivasan, who played a key role in the country's indigenous nuclear energy programme, died here Tuesday, his family said.

He was 95 and is survived by wife and daughter.

"We are deeply saddened to announce the passing of Dr M R Srinivasan, former Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission and Secretary, Department of Atomic Energy (DAE)," the family said in a statement.

It said Srinivasan joined the DAE in September 1955 and began his distinguished career working alongside Dr Homi Bhabha on the construction of the country's first nuclear re-



search reactor, Apsara, which achieved criticality a year later.

In 1959, he was appointed as the Principal Project Engineer for the construction of India's first atomic power station. "His leadership continued to shape the nation's nuclear program when, in 1967, he took charge as Chief Project Engineer of the

Madras Atomic Power Station (MAPS)," the statement said.

He held several key positions of national importance, such as the Director of the Power Projects Engineering Division, DAE, and Chairman of the Nuclear Power Board. "In these roles, he oversaw the planning, execution, and operation of all nuclear power projects across

the country."

"In 1987, he was appointed Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission and Secretary of the Department of Atomic Energy. That same year, he became the Founder-Chairman of the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL). Under his leadership, 18 nuclear power units were developed—seven of which were operational, seven under construction, and four in the planning stage," the statement added.

In recognition of his outstanding contributions to India's nuclear energy program, Dr Srinivasan was awarded the Padma Vibhushan, one of the nation's highest civilian honors.

District Collector Lakshmi Bhavya Tanneeru paid floral tributes to the mortal remains of Srinivasan.

BJP, Cong attack each other with 'Mir Jafar', 'Jaichand' barbs

The two parties traded barbs over their remarks on Operation Sindoor and also posted memes on social media, each suggesting that the other has betrayed the nation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 20: The war of words between Congress and BJP over their leaders' statements on the Indo-Pak conflict intensified Tuesday, with the ruling party calling Rahul Gandhi "modern age Mir Jafar" and the Opposition party describing External Affairs Minister S Jais-

hankar as "new age Jaichand".

The two parties traded barbs over their remarks on Operation Sindoor and also posted memes on social media, each suggesting that the other has betrayed the nation.

The Congress and Rahul Gandhi had attacked Jaishankar, alleging he had forewarned Pakistan about Operation Sindoor, and questioned how many planes India lost and how many terrorists escaped from their camps in Pakistan due to his "warning". After Gandhi's attack, the BJP's Amit Malviya put up memes on X - one showing half of the Congress leader's face blended with that of Pakistan Army chief Asim Munir and the caption "one agenda".

JAISHANKAR REMARKS ROW



"What's next for Rahul Gandhi? The Nishan-e-Pakistan?" Malviya asked in the post while accusing the Congress leader of echoing Pakistan's narrative.



"Rahul Gandhi is the new age Mir Jafar," Malviya, the BJP's IT department head, wrote on X, posting another meme showing the Congress leader asking Indian Army from behind a wall, "How many aircraft we lost", while standing on the back of

Pakistan Defence Minister Khawaja Asif who prods him to "ask loudly". "It is not surprising that Rahul Gandhi is speaking the language of Pakistan and its benefactors. He hasn't congratulated the Prime Minister on the flawless Operation Sindoor, which unmistakably showcases India's dominance."

"Instead, he repeatedly asks 'how many jets we lost' - a question that has already been addressed in the DGMO briefings. Curiously, he hasn't once inquired about how many Pakistani jets were shot down during the conflict, or how many were destroyed while parked in their hangars when Indian forces pounded Pakistani air bases," Malviya said in his post.

The Congress hit back with party leader Pawan Khera posting a meme apparently showing Jaishankar making a call to Pakistan with Prime Minister Modi by his side. "Jaishankar is the new age Jaichand?" Khera said in a post while sharing the image in which minister says, "Stay Safe Janab", while Modi asks him to "speak loudly".

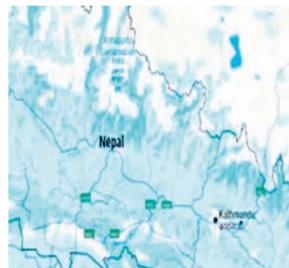
It is said Mir Jafar, who served as a commander in the Bengal army under Siraj ud-Daulah, had betrayed him during the Battle of Plassey, paving the way for British rule in India. Jaichand, a Rajput king, is known to have supported Muslim invader Muhammad Ghori against another Rajput ruler Prithviraj Chauhan.



It is good for all parties that the violence between India and Pakistan has not escalated further. DICK SCHOOF | DUTCH PRIME MINISTER

QUAKE JOLTS NEPAL

A 4.7 magnitude earthquake hit western Nepal's Kaski district Tuesday afternoon. The earthquake with its epicentre at Sinuwa area in Kaski district, about 250 kilometres from Kathmandu, was recorded at 1.59 pm, according to the National Earthquake Monitoring and Research Centre. Tremors were also felt in neighbouring districts, including Tanahu, Parvat and Baglung.



of the day quote

They say, we won't allow Iran to enrich uranium. That's way out of line. AYATOLLAH ALI KHAMENEI | IRAN'S SUPREME LEADER

The world is safer today thanks to the leadership, collaboration and commitment of our Member States to adopt the historic WHO Pandemic Agreement. DR TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS | WHO DIRECTOR-GENERAL

It seems that on occasions, we forget what are the essential elements that brought us together as Europeans, and we do suffer from some divergences and conflict. GIORGOS GERAPETRITIS | GREECE FOREIGN MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Indian dies after summiting Lhotse

Kathmandu: An Indian climber died after summiting Mt Lhotse, the world's fourth highest mountain in the Himalayas, according to a media report. Rakesh Bishnoi from Rajasthan breathed his last at Yellow Band near Camp IV after returning from the summit point on Lhotse Monday, The Himalayan Times newspaper reported. Bishnoi climbed Mt Lhotse after abandoning his Mt Everest bid Sunday, the paper quoted Nepalese climbing guides as saying. They said that he died near Yellow Band on descent. Efforts were underway to recover his body, the paper said. At 8,516 metres above sea level, Lhotse is the fourth-highest mountain on Earth, after Mount Everest, K2, and Kangchenjunga. Mount Lhotse is located in the Himalayas, straddling the border between Nepal and the Tibet Autonomous Region.

Drone strike kills 4 children in Pak

Peshawar: A suspected drone strike killed four children and wounded five others in Pakistan's restive northwest, prompting thousands of residents to stage a protest by placing the children's bodies on a main road to demand justice, local elders said Tuesday. It was unclear who was behind Monday's attack in Mir Ali, which has been a stronghold of Pakistani Taliban, and there was no comment from the army about the incident. The civilian casualties came amid ongoing military operations against the Pakistani Taliban, which have a strong presence in Mir Ali, a city in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The Pakistani Taliban, known as Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, are a separate insurgent group from the Afghan Taliban, and they often target troops in the region.

3 mine workers killed in China

Beijing: Water rushed into a coal mine in northwestern China's Gansu province, leaving three workers dead, official state news agency Xinhua reported Tuesday. There were 133 people working in the mine when the flooding happened Monday evening at a depth of about 610 metres. The report didn't provide any details on how the three victims died, but said that the bodies were found 18 hours after the flooding happened. The other 130 workers were evacuated to safety within an hour of the flooding at the Jingmei Energy Co mine in Gansu, a major coal-producing region.

UK sanctions Israel, suspends trade talks

International pressure has been building on Israel following a nearly three-month blockade of supplies into Gaza that led to famine warnings



London, May 20: The British government says it is suspending free trade negotiations with Israel and has levelled new sanctions targeting West Bank settlements as it criticises Israel's military actions in Gaza. Tuesday's actions came a day after the UK, France and Canada condemned Israel's handling of the war in Gaza and its actions in the occupied West Bank. Foreign Secretary David Lammy said the UK's existing trade agreement is in effect but the government can't continue discussions with an Israeli government pursuing what he called egregious policies in the West Bank and Gaza. Lammy said the persistent cycle of violence by extremist Israeli settlers in the West Bank

demanded action. "The Israeli government has a responsibility to intervene and halt these aggressive actions," Lammy said. "Their consistent failure to act is putting Palestinian communities and the two-state solution in peril." The announcement came after British Prime Minister Keir Starmer ramped up his criticism of Israel on Tuesday, saying the level of suffering by children in Gaza was "utterly intolerable" and repeated his

call for a ceasefire. "I want to put on record today that we're horrified by the escalation from Israel," Starmer told the UK's Parliament. His brief remarks followed a scathing joint condemnation he issued Monday with French President Emmanuel Macron and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney that marked one of the most significant criticisms by close allies of Israel's handling of the war in Gaza and its actions in the West Bank.

The three leaders threatened to take "concrete actions" if the government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu did not cease its renewed military offensive and significantly lift restrictions on humanitarian aid. Netanyahu said the statement was "a huge prize" for Hamas. Starmer repeated the trio's demand for a ceasefire, saying it was the only way to free the hostages Hamas still holds. He also called for increased shipments of humanitarian aid into Gaza, saying the basic quantity allowed by Israel is "utterly inadequate". "We must coordinate our response, because this war has gone on for far too long," Starmer said. "We cannot allow the people of Gaza to starve." International pressure has been building on Israel following a nearly three-month blockade of supplies into Gaza that led to famine warnings. Even the United States, a staunch ally of Israel, has voiced concerns over the growing hunger crisis. While Israel allowed trucks with baby food and desperately needed supplies to begin rolling into Gaza Monday, UN humanitarian chief Tom Fletcher described the volume of aid a "drop in the ocean of what is urgently needed."

Laura Loomer swipes at Trump from heart of MAGA



Washington, May 20: Laura Loomer once had to chain herself to a building to get attention. Not any longer. A far-right activist who has jockeyed her way up from on-line agitator to self-appointed presidential adviser, Loomer has long been one of President Donald Trump's most fervent supporters. She has recently found herself at odds with the White House, however, clashing with the administration over both policy and personnel choices that she views as counter to the MAGA movement. In the past few weeks, Loomer has criticized the new pope, mounted a campaign against Trump's pick for surgeon general, Casey Means, blasted his attorney general, Pam Bondi, and noisily objected to Trump's diplomatic efforts during his Middle East trip. If Loomer were just another online rabble-rouser, the friction likely would not matter. But with 1.6 million followers on X and her own weekly programme that draws thousands of viewers,

Loomer can claim she speaks for the MAGA faithful and, in turn, influence how they view the performance of the president and his administration. Loomer has said it's her job to keep Trump on track. She has flitted in and out of the president's inner circle and has claimed to be responsible for the firings of National Security Adviser Mike Waltz and other aides. "What makes her more dangerous than other people is that she clearly seems to have Trump's ear," said Peter Montgomery, who tracks conservative movements for the liberal advocacy group People For the American Way. Loomer did not respond to requests for comment for this story, but made clear how she views her role during her online video show earlier this month. "I'm not working for President Trump. I'm not getting paid by President Trump. I'm not in the Trump White House," Loomer said during her show. "I wasn't even on the Trump campaign. And yet, I feel like every single day, it's a full-time job just to make sure the president is protected and that he's receiving the information he needs to receive." Loomer met last month with Trump at the White House, after which Trump immediately fired several national security officials Loomer claimed were disloyal. Trump later denied that Loomer was the reason.



Wout van Aert of Belgium pedals past the Pisa's leaning Tower during the 10th stage of the Giro d'Italia cycling race, an individual time trial from Lucca to Pisa, Italy. AP PHOTO

Kyiv's allies hit Russia with fresh sanctions



Kyiv, May 20: Kyiv's European allies slapped new sanctions on Tuesday Moscow, a day after a phone call between US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin failed to produce a breakthrough on ending the 3-year-old war in Ukraine. "We have made clear again and again that we simply expect one thing from Russia now: namely, a ceasefire, unconditional and immediate," German Foreign Minister Johann Waidepohl said in announcing the sanctions. "We welcome the fact that Ukraine is still prepared to do this. We note with disappointment that Russia has not yet taken this decisive step, and we will have to react to this." Diplomatic efforts have seen little progress in halting the fighting, including Monday's phone call between Trump and Putin, and Friday's direct talks between Russian and Ukrainian delegations in Istanbul. In the phone call, Putin promised Trump that Russia is "ready to work with" Ukraine on a "memorandum" outlining the framework for "a possible

future peace treaty". "It appears that Putin has devised a way to offer Trump an interim, tangible outcome from Washington's peace efforts without making any real concessions," said Tatiana Stanovaya, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Russia Eurasia Centre, in a post on X. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on his Telegram channel that "it is obvious that Russia is trying to buy time to continue the war and occupation. We are working with partners to put pressure on the Russians to behave differently." The new European Union sanctions targeted almost 200 ships from Russia's "shadow fleet" illicitly transporting oil to skirt Western restrictions. It also imposed asset freezes and travel bans on several officials as well as on a number of Russian companies.

Musk to cut back on political spending



Washington, May 20: Elon Musk, the richest person in the world and a key financial supporter of President Donald Trump, said Tuesday that he'll be spending less on political campaigns. His decision, which he disclosed via videoconference during a Bloomberg forum in Doha, Qatar, could be a setback for Republicans before next year's midterm elections. It also speaks to his possible disenchantment with politics after his tumultuous experience with the Department of Government Efficiency, which has fallen far short of its goals for reducing federal spending. "I'm going to do a lot less in the future," Musk said. Asked why, he responded that "I think I've done enough." Musk spent at least USD 250 million supporting Trump in the presidential campaign, and even held some of his own campaign rallies. He also got involved in a Wisconsin Supreme Court race this year, although his preferred candidate lost.

Maori haka gains popularity among New Zealanders of all races

The haka was once viewed as a war dance, but that understanding has changed in New Zealand as it has been embraced in a range of celebratory, sombre and ceremonial settings



Wellington, May 20: The haka, a chanting dance of challenge, is sacred to New Zealand's Maori people but it's become a beloved cultural institution among New Zealanders of all races. Spine-tingling performances at sports events, funerals and graduations often go viral online, a non-partisan point of pride for the country abroad. But one haka performed in protest in New Zealand's Parliament by three legislators last November has provoked fierce division among lawmakers about whether it was an act of peaceful dissent, or disruptive and even intimidating to their opponents. A vote to approve unprecedented, lengthy bans from Parliament for the Maori party

lawmakers who enacted the protest was unexpectedly suspended Tuesday. Debate will resume in June, when it threatens to gridlock the legislative agenda until politicians from all parties reach consensus on what the punishment should be. Hundreds of protesters against the sanctions waited outside Parliament's front doors in New Zealand's capital, Wellington, Tuesday to greet the Maori party lawmakers with a haka when they emerged. The haka was once viewed as a war dance, but that understanding has changed in New Zealand as it has been embraced in a range of celebratory, sombre and ceremonial settings. It's an expression of Maori identity and while sacred, it can be performed by people of any race who are educated by Maori in

the words, movements and cultural protocols. Emotional haka have generated news headlines in the past year when performed by soldiers farewelling a New Zealander who died fighting in Ukraine, and in Paris by athletes from New Zealand's Olympic team. While the best-known haka is "ka mate," the chant often performed by the All Blacks rugby team before games, there are many variants. Last November's protest wasn't the first time a haka

enous rights, Hana-Rawhiti Maipi-Clarke - New Zealand's youngest parliamentarian, at 22 - tore up a copy of the law and began the haka, joined by two of her colleagues. The law, an attempt to rewrite New Zealand's founding treaty between Maori tribal leaders and the British crown, was widely unpopular and has since been defeated. But for six months, a committee of the lawmakers' peers have fought furiously about how - or whether - their protest of it should be punished. Usually there's agreement among parliamentarians about penalties for errant behaviour. But this episode polarized the committee considering the lawmakers' actions. Its report recommended Maipi-Clarke, who the committee said showed contrition in a letter, be suspended for seven days and her colleagues for 21 days. That's the harshest penalty ever assigned to New Zealand lawmakers; the previous record was three days.

Parliament Speaker Gerry Brownlee this month scheduled a rare, unlimited debate in Parliament until all parties could find consensus on the penalty, citing the severity of the proposed bans. But minutes after the debate began Tuesday, it was adjourned at the government's behest after they allowed the Maori party lawmakers to stay until after Thursday's budget was delivered. It permitted the government their budget week agenda and meant the Maori lawmakers - opponents of the government - wouldn't miss one of Parliament's most significant dates. But the debate about the bans will then resume. Opposition leader Chris Hipkins, the only opponent of the sanctions to speak before debate was suspended, cited episodes where lawmakers have brawled in Parliament and driven a tractor up the building's steps, but were not suspended, as evidence that the bans weren't fair.



In an export-challenged, environment-challenged, energy-challenged, and emissions-challenged world, the increased reliance on domestic growth levers requires ensuring the right balance of regulation and freedom
NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

SATCOM ROLLOUT WILL BE FASTEST IN INDIA
India appears poised to see the fastest rollout of the satcom network, with its market expected to surge nearly tenfold to USD 20 billion by 2028, Communications Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said Tuesday. Scindia noted regulator TRAI has given its views on norms for satcom spectrum, and the government to push forward the policy.



of the day **note**

Gold traded with a modest intraday loss on Tuesday. Ongoing optimism about the US-China trade truce, along with expectations for a ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine, continues to enhance positive risk sentiment and weaken the appeal of the safe-haven bullion
SAUMIL GANDHI | SENIOR ANALYST, HDFC SECURITIES

With the lack of major positive triggers and prevailing uncertainty over US fiscal stability, investors opted for profit-booking and adopted a cautious stance. Selling pressure was widespread as participants awaited more clarity on the India-US trade agreement
VINOD NAIR | HEAD RESEARCH, GEOJIT INVESTMENTS LIMITED

We have procured more than 290 lakh tonnes of wheat so far. Procurement operations are still undergoing. We may reach the figure of 320-325 lakh tones
PRALHAD JOSHI | UNION MINISTER

TURBULENT TIMES

Market crash wipes out ₹ 5.64L-cr

Uncertainty won over surety, as a huge sum of investor's wealth eroded overnight. Global concerns including Moody's downgrade of US credit rating, FIs and DIIs offloaded shares simultaneously, and interestingly the rising cases of COVID-19 made the market trend 'bearish'



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 20: Investors' wealth eroded by ₹5.64 lakh crore Tuesday as markets fell sharply, with the benchmark Sensex tumbling 873 points, dragged down by decline in blue-chips HDFC Bank, Reliance Industries and ICICI Bank. Retreating from early highs, the 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex tanked 872.98 points or 1.06 per cent to settle at 81,186.44. During the day, it dropped 905.72 points or 1.10 per cent to 81,153.70. The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms eroded by ₹5,64,594.68 crore to ₹4,38,03,259.51 crore (USD 5.13 trillion). Benchmark indices ended sharply lower Tuesday, as the Sensex and Nifty-50 fell notably

amid global jitters sparked by Moody's downgrade of the US credit rating. The sell-off was further intensified by FIIs turning net sellers and widespread profit-booking following a recent rally. HDFC Bank and Reliance Industries saw significant selling pressure, dragging the benchmarks lower. All major sectors also closed in red with losses, Satish Chandra Aluri, Analyst, Lemonn Markets Desk, said. The lack of fresh domestic triggers and lingering global uncertainty, especially concerning US fiscal stability has kept sentiment subdued, he added. From Sensex firms, Eternal dropped the most by 4.10 per cent. Maruti, Mahindra & Mahindra, UltraTech Cement, Power Grid, Nestle, Bajaj Finance, Hindustan Unilever and Asian Paints were also among the laggards. HDFC Bank dropped by 1.26 per cent and index major Reliance Industries declined by 1.13 per cent. Only Tata Steel, Infosys and ITC were the gainers. All sectoral indices ended lower. Auto declined 2.13 per cent, consumer discretionary (1.81 per cent), utilities (1.64 per cent), services (1.53 per cent), industrials (1.36 per cent) and telecommunication (1.35 per cent). As many as 2,531 stocks declined while 1,438 advanced and 135 remained unchanged on the BSE. The BSE mid cap gauge tanked 1.65 per cent and small cap index dropped 0.96 per cent. With the lack of major positive triggers and prevailing uncertainty, investors opted for profit-booking and adopted a cautious stance. Selling pressure was widespread as participants awaited more clarity on India-US trade agreement.

Key infra sectors' growth slows

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 20: The output of eight key infrastructure sectors slowed down to an eight-month low of 0.5 per cent in April due to contraction in the production of crude oil, refinery products and fertiliser. According to official data released Tuesday. Sectors like coal, crude oil, refinery products, natural gas, steel, cement, electricity and fertiliser expanded by 6.9 per cent in April 2024. In March this year, output of these sectors grew by 4.6 per cent. During the month under review, production of crude oil, refinery products and fertiliser recorded a negative growth. The previous low growth rate was recorded in August 2024, when these sectors expanded by (-) 1.5 per cent. The growth rate in the production of coal, natural gas, steel, and electricity moderated to 3.5 per cent, 0.4 per cent, 3 per cent, and one per cent, respectively, in April 2025. However, cement production rose by 6.7 per cent in April this year as against 0.2 per cent in the same month last year. Commenting on the data, Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist, ICRA Ltd, said the performance of the core sector "deteriorated significantly" in April. "Based on the tepid rise in the core sector and the performance of the other available high frequency indicators, ICRA expects the IIP (index of industrial production) growth to moderate sharply to about 1 per cent in April," she said. The eight core sectors contribute 40.27 per cent to the IIP, which measures overall industrial growth.

PHDCCI expects GDP over 6.5%



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 20: The industry is hopeful of a rate cut by the Reserve Bank, and expects India's economic growth at more than 6.5 per cent in the current financial year, PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI) CEO Ranjeet Mehta said Tuesday. He also outlined three major challenges faced by the country's micro small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), including access to affordable finance; technology and market access. "As far as rates are concerned, I think that RBI has definitely looked into it. They have reduced the repo rate. But we are, we are just waiting for the next RBI decision on this. And industry is hopeful that when inflation, we have seen the inflation data, which is within the zone of RBI, and we hope that there would be some kind of rate reduction in future, very soon," Mehta said. The next review meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee of the RBI is scheduled for June 4 to 6. Mehta also shared that PHDCCI has projected economic growth of over 6.5 per cent for the current fiscal ending March 31, 2026. He was speaking on the sidelines of an event to release the SME Market Sentiment Index, based on the survey conducted on 3,000 pan-India SME firms across various manufacturing units. The index suggests positive momentum in business activity for the period Q4 FY2025 (January-March) compared to the previous quarter Q3 FY2025 and a robust growth outlook for the next quarter (Q1 FY2026: April-June). The value of SME Business Activity Index (SME-BAI) ranges from 0 to 100, where 50 is the base value. The index above 50 reflects an expansion of manufacturing activities compared to previous quarter values below 50 reflect a contraction in business activity. The index value of 50 suggests no change compared to the previous quarter. The SME Business Activity Index (SME-BAI) recorded a robust 57.7 points, indicating significant expansion in manufacturing activities compared to the previous quarter. "The idea of SME market sentiment index is to know the real result of the government schemes; various initiatives that the government of India is taking to boost the manufacturing, to boost our export and to help MSMEs to hand hold them. Plus there are majorly three challenges that our MSME are facing. One is affordable finance easily, whether that is available or not. Number two is the technology ... and the third challenge that we identified is the market access. Many SMEs have made their products, but they do not have the means to find customers," Mehta said.

SHORT TAKES

Whirlpool India profit climbs

New Delhi: Whirlpool India Ltd Tuesday reported a 50.4 per cent jump in consolidated net profit at ₹119.47 crore in the fourth quarter ended March 2025 on the back of higher revenue and an exceptional item gain. The company had posted a consolidated net profit of ₹79.45 crore in the fourth quarter of preceding fiscal, Whirlpool of India Ltd said in a regulatory filing.

Max Healthcare profit after tax up

New Delhi: Max Healthcare Institute Ltd Tuesday reported a 21 per cent rise in profit after tax at ₹376 crore in the fourth quarter ended March 31, 2025 on the back of rise in revenues. The company had posted a profit after tax of ₹311 crore in the fourth quarter of the previous fiscal, Max Healthcare Institute Ltd said in a statement.

ACME Solar profit dips

New Delhi: ACME Solar Holdings has reported a more than 77 per cent dip in consolidated net profit to ₹122 crore for the March quarter. The company had clocked ₹532.3 crore net profits in Q4 FY24.

Pfizer net profit jumps

New Delhi: Pfizer Ltd has reported an 85 per cent jump in net profit at ₹330.94 crore in the fourth quarter ended March 2025, from completion of asset sale and transfer. The company had posted a net profit of ₹178.86 crore in the corresponding quarter of preceding fiscal, Pfizer Ltd said in a regulatory filing.

JK Tyre profit falls

New Delhi: JK Tyre & Industries Ltd Tuesday reported a 42.5 per cent decline in consolidated net profit at ₹98.66 crore in the fourth quarter ended March 2025. The company had posted a consolidated net profit of ₹171.66 crore in the corresponding quarter of preceding fiscal, said in a regulatory filing.

HONDA TO SKIP EV ROUTE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Tokyo, May 20: Honda said Tuesday electric vehicle sales were slowing in US, prompting the Japanese automaker to scrap its previous goal for EVs to be 30 per cent of its global vehicle sales by 2030. Instead of the initial plan to invest 10 trillion Yen (USD 69 billion) in an electrification strategy through the fiscal year ending in 2031, Honda is reducing that investment by 3 trillion Yen (USD 21 billion) to 7 trillion Yen (USD 48 billion). Honda Motor Co Chief Executive Toshihiro Mibe called the decisions a switch in the planned course, while stressing the long-term shift toward electrification remained unchanged, just pushed back in time. Mibe didn't mention US President Donald Trump. But Trump's policies on tariffs, as well as his lack of enthusiasm for electric vehicles, have Japanese automakers scrambling to adapt. "The environment surrounding the automobile industry is changing day by day. Uncertainty in the business environment is increasing, due particularly to the slowdown in the expansion of the EV market due to several factors, including changes in environmental regulations," Honda said in a statement.

SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

India, BRICS nations call for global energy security

Between demand and supply, there is always a reason to preserve. Energy is the need of the hour; hence India with other nations is highlighting the importance of sustainable use of energy for a better tomorrow



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 20: India along with BRICS countries has called for increased concessional and low-cost financing from developed nations to help emerging nations transition towards low-carbon energy usage. Union Minister for Power Manohar Lal is leading a delegation to attend the BRICS Energy Ministers' Meeting which began on May 19 in Brazil. Apart from India and Brazil, BRICS countries include Russia, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates. Affirming each country's right to determine its own energy transition path and pace, the ministers advocated efficient use of all energy sources and called for increased concessional and low-cost financing from developed nations to help emerging nations transition towards low-carbon energy usage. The energy ministers also highlighted the role of the New Development Bank (NDB) in promoting sustainable energy infrastructure, especially through local currency financing. At the Energy Ministers' meeting, the participants called for stronger partnerships, supported open, fair, and non-discriminatory international energy markets, and encouraged the use of local currencies in energy trade, the statement said. The ministers also advo-

ated for the adoption of fair, transparent, and consistent guidelines for assessing carbon intensity, energy classification, and mutual recognition of taxonomies and certifications. Underscoring energy security as vital for socio-economic development, they highlighted the importance of market stability, resilient infrastructure, diversified energy sources, and critical minerals for clean technologies. In his address, Lal underscored the vital role of fossil fuels in the global energy mix -- especially for developing countries -- and urged greater cooperation to promote their cleaner and efficient use through technologies such as coal gasification, carbon capture and storage, and green chemical innovations. BRICS energy ministers reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening energy security and advancing UN Sustainable Development Goal 7 (SDG 7), focusing on universal electricity access, clean cooking, and tackling energy poverty. They emphasised the need for just, inclusive, and balanced energy transitions in response to climate change, the statement said.

US tariff fickleness poses credit risk for debt issuers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 20: Moody's Ratings Tuesday said the uncertainties around US tariffs have negative credit consequences for debt issuers across emerging markets, including companies, governments and banks. "The on-again, off-again US tariffs and difficulty predicting US trade policy have negative credit consequences for debt issuers across emerging markets," Moody's said. Besides, geopolitics is an additional stress for emerging markets, including the flare-up of tensions between India and Pakistan. Exporters are most directly exposed to US tariff changes,

but most debt issuers face indirect effects, Moody's said, adding tariffs will reach a much bigger and varied group of debt issuers indirectly through slowing economic growth and, for many, commodity price declines, currency depreciation and investor risk aversion. "The raft of tariffs the US administration has announced, altered and paused this year has negative credit consequences for debt issuers across emerging markets, including companies, governments and banks," Moody's said. Companies that rely on exports to US are most exposed. But the wider effects of tariffs and trade uncertainty on con-



sumer, business and financial activity will affect most emerging market entities, even as tariff deals emerge, it added. In early April, US adminis-

10 per cent tariff with exemptions for some sectors and higher tariffs imposed previously for other sectors including steel and aluminum. The US also raised tariffs to 145 per cent on imports of most goods from China, prompting China to raise tariffs on US goods to 125 per cent -- both in addition to already existing tariffs. A month later, the US and China reached an agreement to lower some of the tariffs on each other for 90 days, effective May 14 to 30 per cent for US imports of Chinese goods and to 10 per cent for Chinese imports of some US goods. "This development in US-China trade talks will help reduce

some of the drag on global trade and improves the balance of risks around the global growth outlook," Moody's said. But, US tariffs on other key trading partners and sectoral tariffs are either in place or still to be negotiated, and trade uncertainty will continue to weigh on consumer and business confidence and on spending and investment decisions, it added. US has begun trade discussions with a number of countries, recently with China in May, just days after a separate deal with UK. "We expect conversations will open with other countries, but a complete reversal of tariff levels is unlikely," Moody's added.

EUROPA LEAGUE FINAL: MANCHESTER UNITED VS TOTTENHAM

ALL OR NOTHING



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bilbao, May 20: It's all or nothing when Manchester United and Tottenham meet in the Europa League final Wednesday.

For the winner of the all-English showdown in Bilbao there is the mother of all get-out-of-jail-free cards with entry to the Champions League.

For the loser, the abyss of no European soccer next year, the indignity of so many unwanted records broken, and uncertainty hanging over the futures of those who have presided over such a spectacular fall.

That's what's on the line at Estadio de San Mamés when two English soccer giants get one last shot at salvaging the season.

Seasons of woe

Long gone are the days when United dominated the Premier League and challenged the summit of European soccer on a regular basis. But even after 12 years without winning the English title, this season has represented a new low.

United is 16th out of 20 in the standings after a club-record 18 defeats in a single campaign since the Premier League began in 1992. It is also certain to register its worst-ever points total in the era, as well as its

lowest finish. "We know this season has been nowhere near good enough for this club and for our standards," United defender Harry Maguire says.

Tottenham is one place below United having lost 21 times in the league — also a club record in the modern era.

Spurs — Champions League runner-up in 2019 — are aiming for a first trophy since the 2008 English League Cup.

Champions League lifeline

It is rare that such a major final has so much riding on it beyond the trophy itself.

Neither team has looked capable of challenging for a top five position in the Premier League, which would secure Champions League qualification. But in a season when both teams occupy the last safe spots before relegation, they have a mind-boggling lifeline to the Champions League via the Europa League.

The Champions League offers the prestige of playing beside teams like Real Madrid and Barcelona, draws prospective signings, and comes with huge financial rewards.

Real Madrid earned almost \$154 million from winning the competition for a record-extending 15th time last season. Total prize money has

increased from \$2 billion last season to \$2.7 billion in this expanded season.

United, in particular, could do with some of that money at a time of job losses and cuts under new co-owner Jim Ratcliffe, while coach Ruben Amorim hopes to rebuild his squad in the offseason.

"We are supposed to be in the Champions League. Europa League here is not enough and you have that feeling here," Amorim says.

"The best way to help us get in the top in a few years is the Champions League — it's not (winning) the cup (Europa League)."

Trophy drought

While a return to the Champions League is also enticing for Tottenham, the chance to end its trophy barren run may be even more appealing.

Not even top class managers like Mauricio Pochettino, Jose Mourinho or Antonio Conte ended Spurs' wait for major silverware. It could be destiny that Ange Postecoglou is the man to end the drought, having boldly predicted early in the season that he always wins a trophy in his second year.

That was true at previous clubs Brisbane Roar, Yokoha-



ma F Marinos and Celtic — but it would be remarkable if he continued that run on the back of such a desperate campaign.

"It's not for the want of world-class players. This club has had world-class players," Postecoglou says. "It's not for the want of world-class managers. They've had world-class managers. It's something else that's going to change this club."

By contrast, United has continued to win trophies despite its failure to win the Premier League since former manager Alex Ferguson retired in 2013.

This could be the third straight year United ends the season with silverware after winning the 2023 League Cup and the 2024 FA Cup.

Under pressure

Amorim replaced Erik ten Hag as United coach in November but has not been able to turn its form around.

He's lost 14 of his 26 league games, including six of the last eight. While there has been no suggestion his job is under immediate threat, he has raised doubts about his position, admitting he is embarrassed by his team's form.

Postecoglou is two years into the job at Spurs and became the club's fourth permanent manager in four years when joining from Celtic in 2023.

A major trophy would put a different complexion on a season in which Spurs have dramatically fallen since he led them to a fifth-place finish in his first year.

He and Amorim have spoken of the similarities about their positions.

RR EXIT IPL WITH WIN; SURYAVANSHI SPARKLES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 20: Young Vaibhav Suryavanshi top-scored with a delightful 57 as Rajasthan Royals signed off from IPL 2025 with a six-wicket win over Chennai Super Kings at the Arun Jaitley Stadium Tuesday.

The result also means that CSK will now finish IPL 2025 at the bottom of the points table, unless they beat table-toppers Gujarat Titans by a big margin on Sunday. After pacers Akash Madhwal and Yuvraj Singh Chahal picked three-fers each to help RR restrict CSK to 187/8, Suryavanshi delighted everyone with his four boundaries and as many sixes to help RR complete the chase with 17 balls to spare, and bury their ghosts of faltering chases in the season.

Yashasvi Jaiswal began RR's chase with a gloved four off Khaleel Ahmed, before lofting Anshul Kamboj over cover-point for six. But after the ball stopped swinging, Jaiswal took Ahmed to cleaners via his cuts and lofts fetching him three fours and a six. But Jaiswal fell for 36 when he went across the line against a good length ball from Kamboj and lost his off-stump.

Sanju Samson and Vaibhav Suryavanshi were exquisite in their loft and leaning drive off Ahmed and Kamboj respectively, as RR ended power-play at 56/1. While Samson lofted Ravichandran Ashwin for a down the ground six, Suryavanshi thumped Noor Ahmad off back-foot for six, before muscling him for two boundaries, as 17 runs came off eighth over.

There was no stopping Suryavanshi as he thwacked Ravindra Jadeja for two sixes over long-on fence, before reaching his fifty by whacking Noor for six. After Samson slammed Matheesha Pathirana for two boundaries, he was foxed by a carrom ball from Ashwin and holed out to long-on.

Four balls later, Ashwin stuck again as Suryavanshi mistimed his hoick to back-



IPL STANDINGS

| TEAM | M | W | L | NRR | PTS |
|------|----|---|----|--------|-----|
| GT | 12 | 9 | 3 | 0.795 | 18 |
| RCB | 12 | 8 | 3 | 0.482 | 17 |
| PBKS | 12 | 8 | 3 | 0.389 | 17 |
| MI | 12 | 7 | 5 | 1.156 | 14 |
| DC | 12 | 6 | 5 | 0.260 | 13 |
| KKR | 13 | 5 | 6 | 0.193 | 12 |
| LSG | 12 | 5 | 7 | -0.506 | 10 |
| SRH | 12 | 4 | 7 | -1.005 | 9 |
| RR | 14 | 4 | 10 | -0.549 | 8 |
| CSK | 13 | 3 | 10 | -1.030 | 6 |

Ashwin for a six and four, before Jurel fittingly hit the winning maximum by smacking Pathirana over mid-wicket, and sign off from IPL 2025 on a high.

TODAY'S MATCH

Indian Premier League

VS

Time: 07:30 pm

Telecast: Star Sports Network
Stream: JioHotstar

Brief Scores: Chennai Super Kings 187/8 in 20 overs (Ayush Mhatre 43, Dewald Brevis 42; Akash Madhwal 3-29, Yuvraj Singh Chahal 3-47) lost to Rajasthan Royals 188/4 in 17.1 overs (Vaibhav Suryavanshi 57, Sanju Samson 41; Ravichandran Ashwin 2-41, Anshul Kamboj 1-2) by six wickets

HIL to start January 5

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Noida, May 20: The 2026 edition of the Hockey India League (HIL) will begin from January 5, the national federation's secretary general Bhola Nath Singh said here Tuesday.

The HIL, which was revived after a gap of seven years, was last held from December 28 to February 1 this year.

"The HIL window is fixed and the men's HIL will continue to be an eight-team competition but the women's HIL will be of six teams from four from next year. The venues are yet not decided but we are in consultation with all stakeholders and soon we will have an update," Singh said after a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between HI and Amity University Online Education.

Singh also refuted reports that some national and foreign players haven't got their dues from franchisees for their services in the last HIL.

"We will follow the guidelines of HIL, if a franchisee wants to keep the same set-up, they are free to do that. There is also a guideline that a franchise can keep their top 12 players and release rest for auction, then they will go into auction list. All dues of players are cleared, it's a false news," he said.

As per the MoU signed on Tuesday, hockey players of the country will get academic scholarships from Amity University to pursue any professional or undergraduate course. "The hockey players who want to study and build a career beyond the game can now do that because it's an online course. They can do the course from anywhere, while during national camp, or from abroad. It's a facility that Amity University has provided them," Singh said. For international players 100 per cent scholarships, for state and regional players, there is 50 per cent, and for upcoming players 30 per cent.

Carlsen forced into draw against 143,000 players

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Berlin, May 20: Norwegian chess grandmaster Magnus Carlsen was forced into a draw Monday by more than 143,000 people worldwide playing against him in a single, record-setting game.

Billed as "Magnus Carlsen vs. The World," the online match began April 4 on Chess.com, the world's largest chess website, and was the first-ever online freestyle game to feature a world champion.

The mega-match ended after Team World checked Carlsen's king a third time, a stunning outcome after Chess.com had predicted Carlsen would win by a wide margin.

Team World voted on each move and each side had 24 hours to make their play. Carlsen played the white pieces.

The world won on move 32 after checking Carlsen's king three times in the corner of the board where it could not

escape. The rule is called 'three-fold repetition' meaning all of the pieces on the board are in the exact same position three times to prompt a draw.

Carlsen, 34, became the world's top-ranked player in 2010 aged 19 and has won five World Championships. He achieved the highest-ever chess rating of 2882 in 2014 and has remained the undisputed world number one for more than a decade.

"Overall, the world' has played very, very sound chess from the start. Maybe not going for most enterprising options, but kind of keeping it more in vein with normal chess — which isn't always the best strategy, but it worked out well this time," Carlsen said in a statement Friday as Monday's draw seemed imminent.

Last year, Indian grandmaster Viswanathan Anand won his "vs. The World" match against nearly 70,000 players on Chess.com.

FIRST FROM FORCE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 20: Sub Inspector (SI) Geeta Samota has become the first CISF personnel to conquer the world's tallest peak Mount Everest in the 56-year-long history of the force, a spokesperson said Tuesday.

She summited the 8,849m tall mountain Monday.

"Geeta stood on the 'roof of the world', a triumphant moment symbolising not just a personal victory, but the incredible resilience and strength fostered within the CISF and the Indian nation," the spokesperson said in a statement.

The 35-year-old subordinate officer joined the paramilitary force in 2011 and is currently posted at the Udaipur airport unit of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF).

The mountaineer hails from

the Chak village in Rajasthan's Sikar district and had initially started as hockey player in her local college. Her upbringing was traditional in a house that had five daughters including her.

An injury led her to move away from hockey and upon joining the force she found CISF did not had a mountaineering team then and she saw an sporting and adventure opportunity here, the spokesperson said.

Samota went on to undertake specialised training in mountaineering and in 2019 she became the first woman from any Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) to scale Mount Satopanth (7,075m) in Uttarakhand and Mount Lohuche (6,119m) in Nepal, he said.

In early 2021, the CAPF contingent for a Mount Everest expedition of which Geeta was part, was unfortunately called off due to technical reasons.

Adriyan opens account with silver

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 20: Adriyan Karmakar opened India's account in the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) Junior World Cup in Suhl, Germany, with a silver on debut in the 50m rifle prone men junior event at the hallowed International Shooting Sport Centre ranges Tuesday.

The 20-year-old junior 3P national champion shot 626.7 after 60 shots to miss out on gold, won by Sweden's Jesper Johansson, by just 0.3. Griffin Lake (USA) won bronze with 624.6.

Adriyan, who has represented India juniors in the world championships before but never in a World Cup, shot confidently and was one of the earliest to finish. His effort was also a junior national record in the event. Among other Indians in the fray, 15-year-old Rohit Kanyan finished in 12th place with a score of 620.2, while Vedant Nitin Waghmare shot 614.4 to finish in 35th place.



India, which finished on top of two of the three ISSF junior events last year, has fielded the largest contingent of 57 shooters, who will be accompanied by 21 officials, including coaches and support staff.

Olympian Raiza Dhillon (skeet) and mixed team trap bronze medallist in the recently concluded Nicosia Shotgun World Cup, Sabeera Harris, will be among the most prominent names in the strong Indian side. Others include Naamya Kapoor, who was a junior world champion at 13, reigning

double junior world champion Divanshi (25m pistol), reigning junior world champion in the 25m pistol Mukesh Nellavalli, Asian junior champion Harmehar Lally (Skeet) and multiple junior ISSF medalists Shubham Bisla (air pistol) and Abhinav Chaudhary (air pistol), among others.

Suhl, a small city of no more than 40,000 residents right in the centre of Germany, has long been the driving force of the junior international shooting circuit and, as such, attracts the very best of the future stars in the sport.

CISF's SI Geeta Samota conquers Mt Everest



The 35-year-old subordinate officer joined the paramilitary force in 2011 and is currently posted at the Udaipur airport unit of the Central Industrial Security Force

Samota achieved this feat in a 'remarkable' span of just six months and 27 days, making her the fastest Indian woman to do so

She then set an ambitious goal—the 'Seven Summits' challenge, which involves climbing the highest peak on each of the seven continents.

Between 2021-2022, she summited four of these formidable peaks: Mount Kosciuszko (2,228m) in Australia, Mount Elbrus (5,642m) in Russia, Mount Kilimanjaro (5,895m) in Tanzania and Mount Aconcagua (6,961m) in Argentina. The CISF official achieved

this feat in a 'remarkable' span of just six months and 27 days, making her the fastest Indian woman to do so, he said.

Samota, the spokesperson said, also became the first and fastest woman to climb five peaks in Ladakh's Rupshu region in just three days, including three peaks over 6,000m and two over 5,000m.

The CISF director general and force members have extended their profound congratulations to Samota. "Her extraordinary journey and successful summit, shine as a beacon of inspiration for the youth of India and stand as a moment of immense pride for the entire CAPF's fraternity," he said. The about 2 lakh personnel strength force guards vital installations in the government and private domain including airports, nuclear power centres and historical monuments.