

Upper age limit for govt jobs now 42

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 28: The state Cabinet, led by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, approved five proposals, including the one to raise the upper age limit for various government services in Odisha to 42 years from the existing 32 years, Wednesday.

Briefing media, Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja said the state Cabinet has approved amendment to Odisha Civil Service (Fixation of Upper Age Limit) Rules, 1989, extending the upper age limit for government jobs in Odisha to 42 years.

“As per the provisions under rule 2 of Odisha Civil Service (Fixation of Upper Age Limit) Rules, 1989, the upper age limit for entry into government service is 32. However, numerous representations have been received from different quarters for enhancement of the upper age limit so as to enable overage aspirants to participate in the upcoming recruitment process,” Ahuja said.

In order to provide ample opportunity to those aspirants,

CABINET DECISIONS

the state Cabinet has approved the extension of the upper age limit for many government jobs to 42 years, Ahuja pointed out.

He added it will be further relaxed for ST/SC/SEBC/ women/ex-servicemen and PwDs candidates.

The state Cabinet also approved the Odisha Artificial Intelligence Policy – 2025.

“The approval marks a significant milestone in Odisha’s journey towards harnessing the transformative potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to improve governance, stimulate innovation, enhance data-driven decision making and enable inclusive socio-economic development,” a statement issued by the E&IT department said.

A key highlight of the policy is the creation of a dedicated Odisha AI Mission which will serve as the apex institutional mechanism to implement AI initiatives across departments, facilitate use of case development, coordinate pilot projects and provide support to public agencies, start-ups and academic institutions, it said.

The Cabinet gave it nod to the concession agreement to be signed between the state government and JSW Utkal Steel Limited for the development of a captive jetty at Jatadhar Muhan.

The Cabinet also approved development works at ‘Mahima Gadi’ and construction of ‘New Bhavya Sunya Mandap’ at Joranda in Dhenkanal. The project will be completed within 36 months, the Works department said.

Further, the proposal of the Health and Family Welfare department for creation of Odisha Ophthalmic Service (Methods of Recruitment and Conditions of Service) Rules, 2025 also got the Cabinet nod.

“It will provide job security and career advancement to eligible Ophthalmic Assistants,” the state government said.

Parcel bomb: Punjilal gets life imprisonment

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 28: Seven years after a ‘parcel bomb’ blast killed a newly-married software engineer and his grandmother, and left his wife grievously wounded in Bolangir’s Patnagarh, a court in the district Wednesday awarded life imprisonment to the accused, Punjilal Meher, after holding him guilty of the crime that sent shockwaves across the nation in 2018.

Patnagarh Additional District and Sessions Judge Sonali Patta-naik also imposed a total fine of ₹1,40,000 on Meher, 56, for multiple charges, government counsel Chittaranjan Kanungo said.

The court convicted Meher under Sections 302 (₹50,000 fine), 307 (₹20,000 fine) and 201 (₹10,000 fine) of the IPC and Sections 3 (₹50,000 fine) and 4 (₹10,000 fine) of the Explosive Substances Act, he said.

“Our submission was to treat it as a rarest of rare cases. However, the court did not observe it as a rarest of rare cases because all heinous crime cases cannot be treated like that,” Kanungo said, adding that Meher will remain behind bars for the rest of his life.

Arun Bothra, a senior police officer, who led the Crime Branch (CB) investigation into the case in 2018, said, “When we took over the case, there was no evidence, no eyewitness, nothing to lead the probe. There was no suspicion on Meher.”

The CB got clues from the anonymous letter sent to the Bolangir SP (by Meher), Bothra said. “We collected crucial evidence like the cover of the letter, soft copy of the letter, the printer used to print it, and adhesive used to seal the letter from Meher’s possession. All were scientifically matched and proved,” Bothra said.

Later, the accused narrated the entire episode and also demonstrated the bomb-making procedure before the police, Bothra said. “I feel satisfied after the accused was convicted by the court and justice has been served to the victims’ family,” Bothra, who is now serving as the ADG of Police, Railways and Coastal Security, said.

Rabindra Sahu – father of Soumya Sekhar Sahu who was killed in the bomb blast – said, “We have suffered an irreparable loss. We were praying for the death sentence. Still, we are satisfied with the judgment of the court.”

The motive, as revealed during the trial, was rooted in professional jealousy and a personal grudge. Meher, a lecturer at Jyoti Vikas College in Bhainsa, was the principal in-charge of the college for a few days before Soumya’s mother Sanjukta joined there as the new principal. Meher, who was reportedly furious over this, planned to teach the family a lesson and accordingly sent the bomb, disguised as a gift, to Soumya during his wedding, the police said.

The blast took place when Soumya, a software engineer in his 20s, opened the gift at their Patnagarh home February 23, 2018. Soumya and his grandmother Jemamani, 85, were killed in the blast. His wife, Reema, suffered critical injuries in the explosion.

Following a request by Reema and the family, the then CM, Naveen Patnaik, ordered a CB probe into the incident.

The CB took over the investigation March 23, 2018, and arrested Meher in April 2018. He is currently lodged in the Patnagarh sub-jail. The CB filed a chargesheet against Meher, saying revenge was the motive behind the crime.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Paddy MSP up by ₹69

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 28: The Centre Wednesday raised the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for paddy by 3 per cent (₹69) to ₹2,369 per quintal and for pulses and oilseeds by up to 9 per cent for the 2025-26 Kharif marketing season (KMS).

The Agriculture ministry’s proposal on MSP for the new Kharif season was approved in the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) chaired by the PM.

For the 2025-26 KMS, the support price for ‘common’ and ‘A grade’ varieties of paddy has been increased by ₹69 each to ₹2,369 per quintal and ₹2,389 per quintal, respectively.

Among other cereals, the support price of ragi has been raised by ₹596 to ₹4,886 per quintal, jowar by ₹328 to ₹3,699 per quintal (hybrid), maize by ₹175 to ₹2,400 per quintal and bajra by ₹150 to ₹2,775 per quintal for 2025-26.

Pulses’ MSP has been increased by up to 5.96 per cent, while that of oilseeds by up to 9 per cent from over the previous year to boost domestic pro-

duction and reduce the import dependency. The support price for tur has been increased by ₹450 to ₹8,000 per quintal, urad by Rs 400 to ₹7,400 per quintal and moong by ₹86 to ₹8,768 per quintal for the period.

Similarly, groundnut MSP has been raised by ₹480 to ₹7,263 per quintal, soyabean by Rs 436 to ₹5,329 per quintal, sunflower seeds by ₹441 to ₹7,721 per quintal for the period. Sesamum support rate has been increased by ₹579 per quintal to ₹9,846, while that of nigerseed by ₹820 per quintal to ₹9,537 for 2025-26.

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ARIES

No matter what you do, today you are not going to have your way. The times when you have been selfish are finished. Besides, you are likely to solicit trouble today. It may actually turn out to be good for you, says Ganesha, provided you change the focus of your actions.

TAURUS

Today you are likely to remain in an uncertain, indecisive frame of mind. You could, early morning, have an irresistible urge to take a holiday and go off on a long vacation with your friends and family members. After contacting everyone and getting them interested, you could have a change of mind and decide to get back to office and attend to the work in hand.

GEMINI

It is not too bright a day for reaping the rewards of your hard work. A deeply buried desire as well as your sentimental nature will be the cause for some mood swings today. You will be subject to mental stress on account of this. You need to improve your viewpoint on certain matters, says Ganesha.

CANCER

With Ganesha's grace you will reap an unexpected gain, and help, joy and excitement on the home front. You will be affectionate towards family members. Yet in afternoon, you may have mood change. Ganesha counsels you to be calm, or else you will lose peace of mind.

LEO

Whether you are an entrepreneur or an employee, you will spend more time at the office as compared to home. This is primarily because you will be full of energy and enthusiasm towards your work. Events will conspire to draw your attention towards work as well. You need to guard against taking financial risks, says Ganesha.

VIRGO

Like a goose mother, you will be intensely over-protective and will desire to be in reclusion. Matters of the heart will come to fruition faster than you could have imagined. Ganesha says you will at last overcome your tendency for procrastination, and it will be a fulfilling day.

LIBRA

Ganesha says today is a good day to start out with new ventures. You shall be interested in fine arts like drawing, classical music, dance etc as the artistic streak in your nature comes to the fore, and their pursuit shall make you happy. Ganesha wishes you luck and success in all your ventures

SCORPIO

You are the man who keeps his promises and that's rare. Besides fulfilling your seniors' expectations at work, you also manage to fulfil the desires of your family. Work while you work and play while you play, a neat line between the two will result in a happy life, says Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS

A typical trait, you are possessive about your belongings today, says Ganesha. You are easily able to meet your deadlines at work and submit the things on time. This will keep your energy levels intact. In a nutshell, a bright and beautiful day in store for you.

CAPRICORN

You are an idol for those who find it difficult to maintain a balance between personal and professional life. During the day, you will give importance to work rather than focusing on your passion, says Ganesha. You will, however, take some small breaks here and there to freshen up your mood.

AQUARIUS

The day promises to be filled with freshness. You will apply your mind and find solution to some of the complicated questions. You will now get the clarity about your paths and directions. Try to meet as many people as you can and build new relations, so that you can add a fresh perspective to your life.

PISCES

There is a high chance that you will get closer to someone who has hitherto only been an acquaintance. There is also a distinct possibility of love at first sight and yet at the same time Ganesha advises you to take one wary step at a time and not let the fast pace of relationships overwhelm you. The whirlwind of emotions may calm down around evening as you spend more time with just yourself.



JEREMY BOBB TO STAR IN THE STALEMATE

The *Continental* actor Jeremy Bobb has joined the star cast of the upcoming comedy film, titled *The Stalemate*. Alongside Bobb, actors Anthony Carrigan, Paul Sparks, Shea Whigham, Georgia Whigham and Tony Hale have boarded the project, according to the entertainment news outlet *Deadline*.

'CAN'T DO MOVIES LIKE THESE FOREVER'

Lindsay Lohan, who has been a part of three romantic comedies on Netflix back to back, says she wants to "think about other stuff" as she can't do the same projects forever. Lohan said she loved to make films of that genre, but can't make the same thing forever.



Deepika on being truthful

Mumbai: Amid the ongoing controversy with filmmaker Sandeep Reddy Vanga over *Spirit*, Bollywood star Deepika Padukone said that whenever she faces 'complicated situations,' she listens to her inner voice and stands by her decisions. The actress took to Instagram, where she shared a string of images from an event she attended in Stockholm. The actress looked drop-dead-gorgeous in a red voluminous floor sweeping gown and captioned it: "Hej from Stockholm!" However, it was her conversation with *Vogue Arabia*, which caught the attention of many. The portal shared a video of the actress talking about the event and also spoke about how she keeps herself 'balanced'.

Deepika in the video said: "I think what keeps me balanced is just being truthful, being authentic you know and whenever I'm faced with complicated situations or difficult situations... I think being able to listen to my inner voice and just make decisions and stand by decisions that really give me a lot of peace is when I feel most in equilibrium."

May 27, Sandeep in a cryptic post lashed out about leaking the story of his upcoming film *Spirit* and questioning whether this is what their feminism stands for.



Mumbai: Actress Sandeepa Dhar has decided to speak about the ground reality of the country when it comes to menstrual hygiene and gender equity.

Giving us all a reminder that even basic hygiene is still a privilege for a large population of the country, Sandeepa urged those with the means to act in order to make things better.

Sharing her views on the importance of menstrual hygiene, the diva said, "Let's normalise conversations around periods. Let's support initiatives that provide sanitary products and work towards menstrual equity."

According to Sandeepa, every small gesture can help us move closer to the goal - A packet of sanitary products, and one conversation can make all the difference.

"We owe it to our sisters, daughters, friends, and millions of girls who deserve better," Sandeepa went on to add.

It must be noted that in India, around 23 million girls are forced to leave school every year because of a lack of proper menstrual hygiene facilities.

Surprisingly, as little as 36% of menstruating women have access to safe sanitary products in the country, while the rest of the female population is forced to go through their menstrual cycle using unsafe alternatives such as old rags, ash, or hay, which can lead to some serious health issues.

Sandeepa for normalising period talks

New Delhi: In his more than 65-year film career, Kamal Haasan has done it all: acting, direction, scriptwriting, choreography and even makeup.

Anything left to do? Many things. But, he declares (without a hint of false modesty), that he stopped learning at some point. Oh! Why? 'Avarice,' he replies.

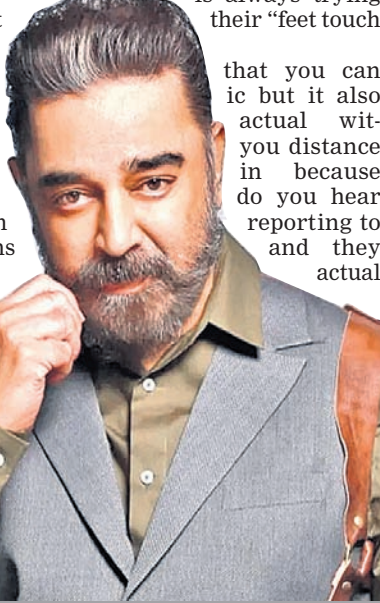
Greed for more money got in the way, he says. "I like money. I want it to come to me," Haasan told this news agency.

Stardom's evil partner is arrogance: Kamal

to carry them aloft and not let the ground".

"The beauty of cinema is reach a larger demographic takes you away from the nesting of your applause. So, yourself and arrogance sets you don't hear criticism, nor applause. It all comes through us, or when you meet your fans cheer you, but that's not the data," he said.

"Because of my work schedule, I stopped seeking more gurus. I think my avarice for money stopped me from learning. Otherwise, I would have learned more..." Haasan added.



Picking on pockets of different kinds....

In the post-operative period following any operation, especially for one where deep wound has been sustained, adequate *rest* and *care* are mandatory. Likewise, following Operation Sindoor, India is laying false narratives and speculation to REST apprising global pockets of the *new normal* and its stance on terrorism. It is relegating post-operative CARE in the hands of a competent team of 7 delegations, that are currently reaching out to global think tanks and policy makers as a *post-op mobilization exercise* to bust lies and set the record straight.

Unfolding in other ravaged pockets (land of no control... ert....LOnC)is 'Operation *Phekistaan*' with fake victory-stories *marshalled* from



oral-vestibular pockets of 5-star officers accompanied with fake framed war-mementoes to be hung in 'One Hell of (a) Shh-(f)ame', the *faux pas* hilariously, caught and well-fielded by social media

watch-dogs. Hong Kong University meanwhile is pocketing the opportunity of attracting the finest of global talent by placing unconditional open offers to Harvard students to pursue their education without disruption. Future of international students currently at Harvard is in a quagmire owing to Trump led 'Operation Harvard' that threatens to sever the institution's authorisation to enroll foreign students. Post-operative complications of this needlessly complex operation can nevertheless, *scar* the country's reputation.

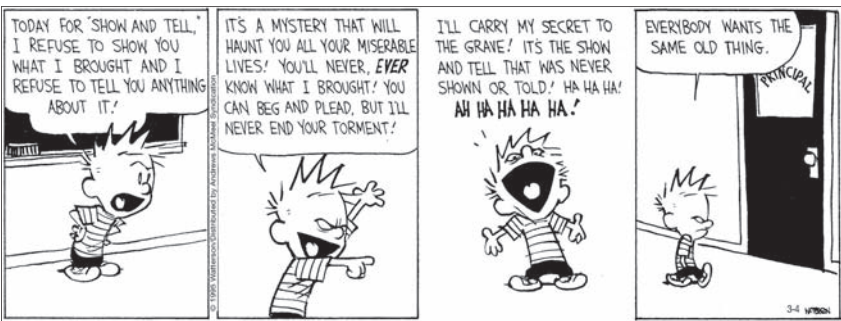
Closer home, anticipating raids and precision strikes into their trouser pockets and wallets as part of 'Operation Sabitri', spouses of Odia women largely surrendered pre-operatively, with handsome UPI transactions made to the feminine force and fury of nature on fructose-laden Sabitri fast.

DR RACHNA RATH

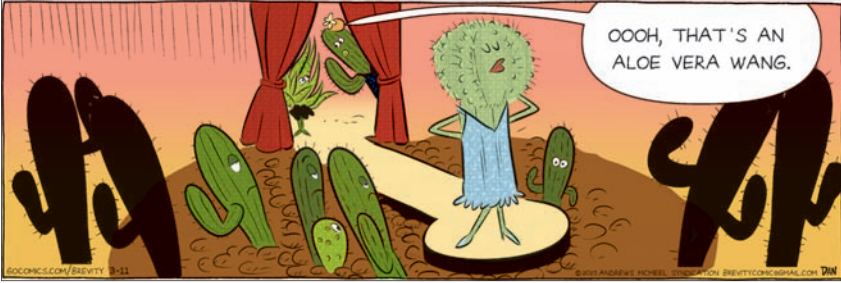
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD

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- Across

6 French brandy

8 Entrance

9 Dabbling duck

10 Perform in a theatre

11 Kind of vehicle (3-4)

13 Italian wine center

16 Sheepish look

18 Give it a go
- 21 Links rental (4,4)

23 Hands on a ship

25 Big gun

26 Modus operandi
- Down

1 Region

2 Fisherman

3 Milky gems

4 French pancakes
- 5 Volcano output

7 Cattle pen

12 Driving hazard

14 Mischievous one

15 Declares

17 Babe

19 Alibi

20 Mountain lakes

22 Viva-voce

24 Decorative pitcher

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

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.

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

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

G	A	M	B	R	E	L	S	C	A	M	P
A	E	E	U	W	B	L					
P	U	D	D	L	E	S	A	I	S	L	E
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SUDOKU

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

downtown

ANKUR kicks off in state

Anchored in the values of collaborative governance, ANKUR aligns with the national aspiration of 'Viksit Bharat @2047', while responding to Odisha's unique socio-economic and urban context

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 28: State government Wednesday launched ANKUR, a strategic initiative designed to catalyse urban growth across the state. On the occasion, the state's Housing and Urban Develop-



ment (H&UD) department signed MoUs with six leading organisations engaged in the urban development ecosystem in the presence of department minister Krushna Chandra Mahapatra. Speaking at the launch, Ma-

hapatra said, “ANKUR – Atal Network for Knowledge, Urbanisation and Reforms — represents a collective promise to build cities that are efficient, smart and above all, citizen-centric. This is a movement toward

a Viksit Odisha, co-authored by communities, institutions and the government alike.”

Department's Principal Secretary Usha Padhee said the genesis of ANKUR was not a single moment, but rather a series of reflections, conversations and collaborations.

"It was born out of a growing realisation within our department that the pace and complexity of urbanisation in Odisha required new thinking, new partnerships and new platforms," she added.

Over the past year, through internal consultations and engagements with experts, practitioners and institutions across the country and beyond, a vision began to take shape, she said, adding that ANKUR

emerged as an answer to those questions — a platform to co-create solutions, to institutionalise innovation and to sustain partnerships that can carry us through the next decade of urban growth.

As Odisha's urban population is projected to triple by 2036, ANKUR has been envisioned as a transformative platform to co-create resilient, livable and future-ready cities.

“ANKUR aligns with the national aspiration of Viksit Bharat @2047, while responding to Odisha’s unique socio-economic and urban context. It will strengthen four strategic pillars of urban development - capacity building, knowledge and research, implementation support and innovation,” Padhee said.

CM Majhi congratulates lifter Harshvardhan Sahu

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 28: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Wednesday extended heartfelt congratulations to young weightlifter Harshvardhan Sahu for being featured in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's monthly radio address 'Mann Ki Baat'. Sahu earned national recognition after winning gold and setting two new records at the 7th Khelo India Youth Games 2025 in Bihar.

Taking to his official X handle, CM Majhi wrote, "Heartiest congratulations to Odisha's young weightlifting champion, Master Harshvardhan Sahu, on earning national recognition in PM Shri Narendra Modi's 'Mann Ki



Baat'. His Khelo India gold medal and this prestigious mention make every Odia proud."

He further added that Harshvardhan's success reflects the vast potential of Odisha's youth in sports, affirming the state government's commitment to providing world-class training and infrastructure to nurture future champions.

Monsoon sets in over parts of Odisha: IMD



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, May 28: The southwest monsoon arrived in parts of Odisha Wednesday, around 13 days ahead of the normal time for its onset in the state, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

Several districts of Odisha have been receiving heavy rainfall since Tuesday. "Southwest monsoon has set in over Odisha, today. It covered entire Malkangiri & Koraput districts and some parts of Nabarangpur, Kalahandi, Rayagada and Gajapati districts of Odisha," the IMD said in a bulletin.

IMD Director General Mrutunjay Mohapatra had said Odisha is likely to experience above-average rainfall during the monsoon season from June to September.

“India, including Odisha, is likely to get rainfall at 106 per cent of the long-period average (LPA),” he said.

Odisha has already received 59-per cent above-normal rainfall in the pre-monsoon period from March to May, recording 188.9 mm compared to the average of 119.1 mm of rain during

the period, Met Department sources said.

Earlier, the IMD had issued an 'Orange' alert (be prepared to take action) in five districts – Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Cuttack, Koraput and Rayagada – where lightning and thunderstorms with gusty winds reaching speeds of 40-50 kmph are likely till May 30.

“The low-pressure area over North West Bay of Bengal off Odisha coast became well marked over the same region at 0530 hrs IST of today. It is likely to move slowly northwards and concentrate into a depression during the next 24 hours,” it said in another bulletin. Under the influence of the weather system, Odisha will experience heavy to very heavy rainfall till May 30, it said.

The IMD has also advised fishermen not to venture into the deep sea between May 29 and June 1. Meanwhile, the Odisha government has put all districts on alert keeping in view the IMD's forecast for heavy rain.

The Special Relief Commissioner's office has asked district officials to be prepared to face any eventuality in the wake of the inclement weather.

Delhi Police nabs key supplier of inter-state marijuana syndicate

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 28: Delhi Police has arrested a man from a remote Naxal-affected hilly region in Odisha for allegedly supplying large quantities of marijuana to an inter-state drug syndicate operating in the Delhi-NCR region, an official said Wednesday.



The accused, identified as Bhagirathi Padhan (27), a resident of Kandhamal district, is believed to be the key supplier for the syndicate that was earlier busted in March with the seizure of 120kg of marijuana, he said.

“Padhan ran a well-established supply chain of contraband cannabis from dense, Naxal-affected forest areas of Phulbani, where he also oversaw illegal cultivation,” Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime) Harsh Indora said. Acting on leads and

technical surveillance, the team traced the accused to the jurisdiction of Gochhapada police station in Kandhamal, Odisha, he added.

“The region is known for its difficult terrain and Naxal activity, which made the operation extremely challenging. After sustained efforts and local coordination, Padhan was arrested from the forested area,” the DCP said.

Police said Padhan had been a key figure in the supply network, which routed marijuana, locally referred to as 'Kanchan', to various parts of India.

His name emerged during the investigation of Harsh Pratap Singh and Ishan Singh, who were arrested earlier this year in connection with the seizure of 120kg of marijuana.

“Bhagirathi Padhan is not new to law enforcement. He was previously booked under the NDPS Act in 2017 in Odisha for similar offences,” the officer added.

The DCP said that efforts are ongoing to identify other links in the network and further dismantle the supply chain.

Ministry of Civil Aviation
Government of India

Boosting Bihar's Air Connectivity: One Milestone Achieved, Another Takes Shape....

Inauguration of

New Terminal Building,
Jayprakash Narayan International Airport, Patna

&

Foundation Stone laying of

New Civil Enclave, Bihta Airport

BENEFITS

- Expansive New Terminals to spruce up travel & tourism sectors; to benefit local art and artisans of the region and the rich cultural heritage of Bihar
- Strengthening education, health and hospitality sectors, thereby generating new employment opportunities for people of Bihar
- Boost to regional connectivity, driving economic growth and holistic development in the state

SALIENT FEATURES

New Terminal Building, Patna Airport

- New Terminal Building of 65,150 Sqm, six times bigger than existing terminal built at a cost of ₹1200 Crore, equipped to serve one crore passengers annually
- 64 Check-in counters, 16 X-BIS machines, five aerobridges, four baggage conveyor belts and Multi Level Car Parking with 1100 car parking slots
- Apron capable to park 11 aircraft at a time to enhance operational efficiency of the Airport

New Civil Enclave, Bihta Airport

- New Civil Enclave to be developed at a cost of ₹1413 Crore, on 68,000 Sqm area and equipped to serve 50 lakh passengers annually
- 64 check-in counters, 16 self-service kiosks, 14 X-BIS machines, six aerobridges and six baggage conveyor belts
- Apron designed to accommodate 10 aircraft, will aid direct connectivity

by

Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

in the august presence of

Arif Mohammed Khan
Governor, Bihar

Nitish Kumar
Chief Minister, Bihar

Rammohan Naidu Kinjarapu
Union Minister of Civil Aviation

Samrat Choudhary
Deputy Chief Minister, Bihar

Vijay Kumar Sinha
Deputy Chief Minister, Bihar

Murlidhar Mohol
Union Minister of State for Civil Aviation
and Cooperation

Ravi Shankar Prasad
Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha)

Misha Bharti
Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha)

Amarendra Dhari Singh
Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha)

Sanjiv Chaurasia
Member of Legislative Assembly

Bhai Virendra
Member of Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 29th May, 2025 | 04:30 PM | JPNI Airport, Patna, Bihar

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CBC 03111/15/0004/2526

Odisha revises vehicle hiring rates for officials

State government hikes monthly charges for vehicles used by ministers, officials and institutions after six year gap



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 28: The Odisha government has announced a comprehensive revision of monthly vehicle hiring charges for private vehicles used by ministers, senior officials, and various government offices across the state. This revision comes after a six-year gap, with the last update having been made in 2019.

According to an official notification issued by the Finance department, the revised rates will apply to different cate-

- Hiring rate for ministers and apex officers revised to ₹50,400 from ₹42,000
- Institutional transport charges set up to ₹90,000 based on vehicle seating capacity
- Light goods vehicles like TATA Ace and pickups to cost ₹33,500 to ₹42,000 per month

gories of officials and institutional transport vehicles used by government bodies. The new order supersedes previous provisions issued under FDOM No. 22924/F dated August 14, 2023, and FDOM No. 2477/F dated

January 29, 2024.

As per the updated rates, vehicles hired for Apex Scale Officers and Ministers will now be charged at ₹50,400 per month, up from the earlier rate of ₹42,000. For Collectors, Superintendents of Police, and equivalent ranks, the charges have been increased from ₹37,000 to ₹44,400. Similarly, vehicles used by Principal Secretaries, Commissioner-cum-Secretaries, and officers in equivalent positions will now cost ₹36,000 per month, compared to the previous ₹30,000.

The notification also outlines revised rates for institutional transport. Buses used by colleges, training institutes, and similar institutions will now be charged based on seating capacity: ₹58,500 for 15-seaters, ₹71,500 for 25-seaters, and ₹90,000 for 32-seater buses.

Additionally, the hiring rates for light goods vehicles such as TATA Ace (LGV) are set at ₹33,500, while Mahindra, Bolero, and Tata pickups will be charged at ₹42,000.

The government has also introduced minimum mileage requirements ranging from 6 to 17 km/litre depending on the vehicle type, to promote fuel efficiency and cost control.

Teachers seek urgent issue resolution

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 28: A seven-member delegation from the Odisha School and College Teachers and Employees Coordination Committee met Law Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan and School and Mass Education Minister Nityananda Gond Wednesday to press for resolution of several long-pending demands.

The delegation raised key issues including Grant-in-Aid (GIA) for 194 non-aided schools, improved service conditions and pension benefits for employees of newly-aided institutions, and full implementation of the 1994 GIA Rules. They also sought enforcement of Odisha High Court directives to bring all aided institutions under government control, correction of grade pay anomalies, and



urgent recruitment in newly-aided schools and colleges.

Minister Harichandan assured that a high-level meeting with Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi will be convened soon to find a lasting solution.

Teachers undergo training in e-content development

Bhubaneswar/New Delhi: The Directorate of Higher Secondary Education, Odisha, in collaboration with CIET-NCERT, is conducting a five-day training on e-content development under the PM e-Vidya initiative at NCERT, New Delhi. Forty Post Graduate Teachers from various Higher Secondary Schools across Odisha are participating. The programme, guided by Raghuram R Iyer, aligns with NEP 2020 and aims to enhance teachers' digital skills. Training covers scriptwriting, multimedia lesson design, interactive content, and digital platforms, led by CIET experts. Participants call it "insightful and transformative" for digital classroom teaching.

address grievances that have been pending for years.

Protest over Gadakana dumping yard intensifies

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 28: Braving rain, residents staged a protest at the Gadakana dumping yard Wednesday under the banner of 'Alia Gada Hatao, Sainik School Banchao', accusing the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) of failing to act on its promises.

Led by Bhubaneswar Unayan Parishad president Basudev Bhatt, the protesters held placards and raised slogans, demanding immediate removal of old waste and closure of the site. They claimed BMC Commissioner Rajesh Prabhakar Patil had promised to clear all waste within seven days, but no action has followed.

Plans to fill the site with soil and plant trees near the Dhirikuti slum remain unfulfilled. Protesters also criticised the underutilisation of the new solid waste processing unit at Palasuni, which can handle 150 tons of waste daily, while 350 metric tons continue to be dumped at Gadakana.

‘Officers must know welfare schemes’

Governor Kambhampati highlights key schemes like PM Mudra, Jan Dhan, Subhadara, and PMAY as lifelines for workers, women, SCs, STs, and PVTGs

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 28: Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati Wednesday urged trainee officers to gain thorough knowledge of all government welfare and development schemes to better serve the poor and vulnerable.

Addressing Assistant Labour Officer (ALO) and Additional District Welfare Officer (ADWO) trainees of the Gopabandhu Academy of Administration at Raj Bhavan, the Governor said officers should not limit themselves to schemes within their departments.

Citing major initiatives like PM Mudra Yojana, Jan Dhan Yojana, Subhadara Yojana,



and PM Awas Yojana, he said these benefit a wide range of people, including workers, women, SCs, STs, and Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).

He called for effective implementation of these schemes and suggested that the Academy compile a booklet of all major welfare schemes to help trainees serve the public better.

To ADWO trainees, he stressed their role in ensuring SC, ST, OBC, and minority communities receive benefits such

as scholarships, legal aid, compensation, and insurance.

Addressing ALO trainees, he highlighted their duty to safeguard workers' rights, enforce labour laws, and ensure workplace safety, especially in the unorganised sector. He also called for support for migrant workers.

A total of 90 trainees participated in the event, where the Governor personally interacted with each of them. Principal Secretary to the Governor, NBS Rajput, was present.

Crackdown on illegal water sports in Puri

AGENCIES

Puri, May 28: The Puri district administration Tuesday carried out the demolition of an unauthorised water sports facility that was operating illegally in the Baliapanda area of Puri beach.

The facility, operating under the name 'Sky Dive Adventure and Water Sports', had been offering speedboat rides and skydiving experiences to tourists without obtaining the necessary permissions or ensuring adequate safety measures. The crackdown comes in the wake of a recent mishap last Saturday, when a speedboat capsized, tossing all its passengers into the sea. Among those on board were Snehasis Ganguly, brother of cricketer Sourav Ganguly, and his wife, Arpita. Fortunately, both were promptly rescued by lifeguards and later returned safely to Kolkata.

In the aftermath of the incident, the district administration launched an inquiry, which revealed that the facility was operating without adequate safety measures for visitors.

Acting on the findings, officials demolished the unauthorised structure using a bulldozer.

AHILYABAI HOLKAR'S 300TH BIRTH ANNIV

Parida launches major infra, welfare projects

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 28: Ahilyabai Holkar, the 18th-century queen of Indore within the Maratha Empire and a beloved figure in Indian history, is known for her good governance, social welfare, and humanitarian work, as well as for her contributions to religious, educational, and cultural advancements. Although Holkar had a royal lineage, she became a people's queen and a symbol of women's empowerment. Several infrastructure and welfare projects were inaugurated recently in Nimapara to mark her 300th birth anniversary.

Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida visited the town on the occasion and addressed a gathering at a workshop held at the Nimapara Indoor Stadium. She also felicitated students who had performed well in various competitions and honoured several women for their notable contributions to society.

"People are a form of God, and

serving them is akin to worshipping God," Parida said. She called Ahilyabai an eternal source of inspiration, saying that it is a collective duty to dedicate to public service by following her ideals.

Later, the Deputy CM visited two schools under the Samagra Shiksha scheme of the School and Mass Education department. She laid the foundation stones for the construction of additional classrooms worth ₹18.33 lakhs at the Government Upper Primary School in Dhirapur under Terundia panchayat and another set of classrooms worth ₹18.33 lakhs at the Government Primary School in Arisandha under Nimapada block.

In the evening, Parida laid the foundation stone for the first phase of a much-awaited major concrete drain construction near the Ashram Chhak bridge under Nimapara NAC. The project, undertaken by the Puri Division of the Water Drainage Department, will be constructed at a cost exceeding ₹ 5 crore.

Vigilance nabs RI, aide taking ₹60K bribe

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dhenkanal, May 28: Odisha Vigilance Wednesday apprehended Revenue Inspector of Gandanali Circle under Hindol Tahasil in Dhenkanal Sashi Bhusan Behera, along with private individual Bishnu Ballav Khatua for accepting a ₹60,000 bribe in a mutation case. The duo was caught red-handed inside Behera's office while demanding and taking the bribe from a complainant.

Behera had allegedly been

delaying the complainant's applications related to four separate mutation cases and was demanding ₹15,000 for each case to furnish favourable reports. Despite repeated requests, the official insisted on the bribe, forcing the complainant to approach Vigilance authorities, citing harassment.

Acting on the complaint, Vigilance officials laid a trap and caught Behera and Khatua in the act. The entire bribe amount of ₹60,000 was recovered from their possession and

seized as evidence. Following the successful trap, simultaneous searches were launched at three locations linked to Behera to investigate potential possession of disproportionate assets. A formal case has been registered under Cuttack Vig-

ilance PS Case No. 13/2025, U/s 7 of the Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Act, 2018.

The investigation is currently underway, focusing on both accused—Behera, the government official, and Khatua, the private intermediary.

MARKET WATCH					
CURRENCY		BOURSES		COMMODITIES	
INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION
DOLLAR	85.37 ▲ 0.06	SENSEX	81312.32 ▼ 239.31	GOLD	₹95,183 ▲ ₹40.1
EURO	96.41 ▼ 0.25	NIFTY	24752.45 ▼ 73.75	SILVER	₹97,194 ▼ ₹281

‘Men must help end menstrual stigma’

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 28: Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida Wednesday said men must be educated to help break the stigma on menstrual health.

While inaugurating a conclave on 'Menstrual Health & Hygiene 2025', organised by IIT-Bhubaneswar here, Parida said, "Menstruation, a natural biological process, has long been shrouded in taboo, forcing generations of women to suffer in silence. It's time we break this silence, and initiatives like this conclave are key to driving change."

Highlighting the need for cultural transformation, she said, "The day sanitary napkins become part of a family's monthly grocery list or a brother's gift to his sister, we will witness real progress in women's empowerment. Men must also be educated on menstrual health to help break the stigma."

Access to safe menstrual solutions in workplaces and



educational institutions is essential, Parida said.

She further stressed the importance of sustainable use and disposal of menstrual products.

"Women and girls must be informed and empowered to claim their right to menstrual health and hygiene," the deputy chief minister added.

Project CARE (Campus Action for Reusable Essentials), an initiative to promote the use of reusable menstrual products among school-going girls and college-going women, was

launched on the occasion with the distribution of eco-friendly reusable menstrual pads to women from underserved communities. Parida also unveiled two sanitary napkin vending machines on the IIT campus.

"Through our Research and Entrepreneurship Park and the 100 Cube Startup initiative, we are advancing innovative, scalable solutions -- from biodegradable sanitary products to AI-powered health tools -- that address real societal needs," IIT Bhubaneswar director Shree-

pad Karmalkar said.

Stating that menstrual health is not just a women's issue, it's a societal imperative, Karmalkar highlighted that at IIT-Bhubaneswar, the provision of work from home for two days during periods has been made for PhD scholars.

William Hanlon Jr, chief of field office Unicef Odisha, stressed the importance of partnerships in breaking stigma and enabling access to menstrual hygiene products and education.

"Menstruation is not a curse. It is a completely natural process. It is life-affirming, and it deserves to be managed with safety, dignity, and pride," Hanlon said.

"As we commemorate Menstrual Hygiene Day 2025, let us pledge that no girl in Odisha, or anywhere, misses school, loses confidence, or suffers in silence because of menstruation. Let us create a future where periods are managed with pride, not shame," he added.

WEATHER			
	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	32.2°	31.4°	Generally cloudy sky with possibility of rain
Min Temp	26.6°	25.0°	
Humidity	75%	84%	
Rainfall	3.8mm	3.2mm	

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Severe staff crunch cripples healthcare in Kalahandi

Only 199 of the 606 sanctioned doctor posts in the district are currently filled, leaving 407 vacancies — a shortfall of nearly 67 per cent

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhawanipatna, May 28: Healthcare services in Kalahandi district are under severe strain due to a critical shortage of medical personnel, with more than two-thirds of doctor posts lying vacant and widespread staffing gaps across key healthcare roles.

According to official data, only 199 of the 606 sanctioned doctor posts in the district are currently filled, leaving 407 vacancies — a shortfall of nearly 67 per cent. The crisis spans across various health cadres, including Ayurvedic medical officers, nurses, community health officers (CHOs), pharmacists, laboratory technicians, and other frontline workers. Of the 55 sanctioned posts for Ayurvedic medical officers, only 41 are filled. In the nursing sector, just 239 of 356 staff nurse positions are currently occupied. Among CHOs, 186 of 199 positions are filled, leaving 13 vacant. Pharmacist posts are also understaffed, with only 76 pro-



fessionals employed out of 90 sanctioned. Male multi-purpose health supervisors (MPHS) number just 46 of the sanctioned 60, while only 17 female MPHS or lady health visitors (LHVs) are in place out of 46 — a shortfall of 14 and 29, respectively. Laboratory technicians are also in short supply, with only 29 of 55 posts filled. The ra-

diographer cadre fares slightly better, with 16 of 19 posts filled. Meanwhile, male multi-purpose health workers (MPHWs) are nearly at full strength, with 181 of 185 posts occupied. These critical staffing gaps were highlighted during a recent Zilla Parishad meeting, where Chief District Medical Officer Dr Minatilata Das expressed deep concern over the

operational disruptions caused by the acute shortages. Kalahandi district includes one district headquarters hospital, one sub-divisional hospital, 17 community health centres, 45 primary health centres, one urban PHC, four urban health and wellness centres, and 241 sub-health centres. Officials say the lack of staff is seriously undermining service delivery and administrative efficiency across these facilities. The growing crisis has sparked widespread public concern, with local residents and officials calling on the state government to urgently address the staff shortage and improve healthcare infrastructure in the district.

Massive search launched for explosives looted by Maoists

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar/Rourkela, May 28: The Odisha Police Wednesday intensified security along the interstate boundary with Jharkhand and launched a massive search operation in K Balang police station area in Sundargarh district a day after Maoists looted a huge quantity of explosive materials used in stone mining. DGP YB Khurania, IG (Operations) Deepak Kumar, DIG Brijesh Rai, DIG Himansu Lal and other senior officials reached K Balang police station area and reviewed the situation after Maoists looted 200 packets of gelatin sticks

which were being transported to a mine for blasting. Though the police search team located the truck which was hijacked by the Red rebels in a jungle area close to Saranda forest bordering Jharkhand, there was no trace of the explosives, a police officer said. The Sundargarh district police have registered a case with K Balang police station suspecting Maoist involvement in the incident. There has been no trace of the stolen explosives. But the police have indication regarding the involvement of Maoists in the incident, another officer said. The truck's driver told the police that the criminals took the name of Naxals.

4 killed, 10 hurt in separate accidents

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Baripada/Bhubaneswar, May 28: Four persons were killed and 10 others injured in two separate road accidents, police said Wednesday. The first incident took place when a Balasore-bound tractor with five labourers from Baripada collided with a truck on NH-18 near Chhuruni in Mayurbhanj district killing two on the spot and injuring three seriously, police said. After hitting the tractor, the truck fled, Sasmita Mohanto, IIC of Betnoti police station, said. The deceased were from Uttar Pradesh and Haryana. The injured were admitted to PRM Medical College and Hospital at Baripada. In another accident that took place at Gaundisar village under Model Police Station in Boudh district Tuesday night, two persons were killed and seven others were injured. The deceased were identified as Gajendra Mallick and his daughter Lipsa. The injured have been admitted to the district headquarters hospital (DHH), Boudh, police said. Meanwhile, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi expressed deep condolences and announced an ex gratia of Rs 4 lakh each from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) to the next of kin of the deceased.

Woman hacks hubby to death

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Berhampur, May 28: A 40-year-old man was hacked to death allegedly by his 35-year-old wife in Ganjam district over marital feud, police said Wednesday. The incident took place at Gopalpur in Beguniapada police station area in the district Tuesday night. Police recovered the body of the deceased, identified as Narayan Bhuyan, from his house Wednesday and sent it to MKCG Medical College and Hospital here for post-mortem examination, an officer said. The woman, a mother of two children, was detained and an axe and brick pieces used in the crime were seized, Purushottampur Sub-divisional Police Officer (SDPO) Deepak Kumar Mishra said. During preliminary investigation, it was found that the woman had pushed her husband after a heated exchange of words. When he fell down on the floor in the backyard of the house, she hit his head with a stone, he said. Then, she dragged him into the house and hacked him with an axe and hit him with bricks, Mishra said. Though the exact reason behind the brutal murder was yet to be ascertained, police suspected that the woman might have killed her husband as he doubted her character, he said. Police also suspect the involvement of other persons in the murder, the officer added.

37 wagons of freight train derail

POST NEWS NETWORK

Koraput/Nandapur, May 28: Train services were disrupted after over 37 wagons of an iron-ore laden freight train derailed at Kothavalasa-Kirandul (KK) rail line near Chimidipalli in Vishakhapatnam in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh Wednesday. The train line connects Kothavalasa in Andhra Pradesh with Kirandul in Chhattisgarh. As train services between Visakhapatnam and Koraput were disrupted as over half of the freight train's wagons remained stuck inside a tunnel. The train was on its way to Vijayawada after loading iron ores at Kirandul. According to officials, the freight train derailed between Araku (Andhra) and Tadara near the Kintipalli station. Many of the derailed wagons are stuck inside the tunnel, causing delays in the ongoing rescue and clearance operations. Sources said the train had over 59 wagons loaded with iron ores. Railway officials confirmed that the locomotive pilot and other staff on board are safe, but the track infrastructure has suffered significant damage. Train movement on the Visakhapatnam-Kirandul and Koraput route has been completely suspended until further notice. Relief and rescue teams, including per-



sonnel from the Visakhapatnam DRM division, are assessing the situation on site and working to remove the derailed wagons and repair the damaged track. The time needed for full restoration may vary due to the tunnel's location and extent of the damage. As a temporary measure, freight and passenger trains bound for Visakhapatnam via Koraput will be rerouted. Railway Protection Force (RPF) Intelligence Officer D Bag informed that every effort is being made to resume normal train services as quickly as possible.



Government of India

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment

Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), 5th Floor, Pt. Deendayal Antoyadaya Bhawan, CGO Complex, Lodhi Raod, New Delhi

INVITING ONLINE APPLICATIONS FOR NATIONAL AWARDS FOR EMPOWERMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES FOR THE YEAR- 2025

The Rashtriya Puraskar Portal for receiving applications/ nominations for National Awards for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, for the year 2025 are now open w.e.f. 15th May, 2025 to 15th July, 2025. The details are as under:


i. Applications/ Nominations may be filed on Rashtriya Puraskar Portal (www.awards.gov.in). ii. All Applications/Nominations for the National Awards for the year 2025 received upto 15th July, 2025 will be considered.

iii. Application for the year 2025 is to be submitted online on the Rashtriya Puraskar Portal (www.awards.gov.in) only. The nomination should contain all relevant details specified in the format available on the above portal including clearly bringing out the notable and inspiring achievements in narrative form. The supporting documents relating to the achievements should also be uploaded on the portal.

iv. **Application in physical form or any other form will not be accepted.**

v. For eligibility criteria and other details, Guidelines for National Awards for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities available on website of the Department (www.depwd.gov.in) as well as on the Rashtriya Puraskar Portal (www.awards.gov.in) may be referred to.

cbc 38117/11/0001/2526



भारतीय रिज़र्व बैंक

RESERVE BANK OF INDIA

www.rbi.org.in

Redressal of complaints against entities regulated by RBI

Reserve Bank – Integrated Ombudsman Scheme (RB-IOS)

- The Reserve Bank has mandated all its regulated entities to have a mechanism at their end to resolve the complaints received by them from their customers, which is considered as the Internal Grievance Redress Mechanism of regulated entities.
- The Reserve Bank has also put in place an expeditious and cost-free Alternate Grievance Redress Mechanism for resolution of customer complaints relating to deficiencies in services rendered by its regulated entities through the Reserve Bank – Integrated Ombudsman Scheme, 2021 (RB-IOS).
- Banks, Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFC), Payment System Participants (PSP) and Credit Information Companies (CIC) are considered as regulated entities under the Grievance Redress Mechanism.
- The RB-IOS adopts a “One Nation One Ombudsman” approach for all complaints against any regulated entities. It is therefore no longer necessary for a complainant to identify under which Ombudsman scheme/office, he/she should file a complaint with the Ombudsman.
- The complaints against regulated entities not covered under the RB-IOS are handled at Consumer Education and Protection Cells (CEPCs) for resolution.
- The list of regulated entities covered under the ambit of RB-IOS and CEPC can be accessed by visiting <https://cms.rbi.org.in>

What to do if you have a complaint?

You can lodge complaint against the regulated entity at its branch or through online in the grievance redressal portal or any other mode as mentioned in its website. Get acknowledgement or save the reference number of the complaint.

When to approach the RBI Ombudsman?

You can approach the RBI Ombudsman, in case:

- No reply is received from the regulated entity within 30 days** - Anytime within one year and 30 days from the date of your complaint to regulated entity.
- Reply received from the regulated entity is unsatisfactory** - Anytime within one year of receipt of reply from the concerned regulated entity.

Note:

- The complaint should contain all requisite details / information as per the complaint form prescribed in the RB-IOS.
- The complaint should not have been dealt with / pending with any other forum (like Courts) or dealt earlier by the RBI Ombudsman.
- Filing complaint directly with RBI Ombudsman, without approaching the regulated entity, may lead to its rejection.**

How to lodge a complaint with RBI?

Complaint against the regulated entity can be filed through any of the following modes:

- Online through the Complaint Management System (CMS) portal of RBI at <https://cms.rbi.org.in>
- Physical complaint (letter / post) in the form as specified in Annexure in the RB-IOS to “Centralized Receipt and Processing Centre, 4th floor, Reserve Bank of India Sector-17, Central Vista, Chandigarh – 160017”

How to know more about lodging a complaint with RBI?

For more information, you can approach RBI Contact Centre facility with Toll-free Number: 14448. The contact center with Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) is available 24x7, while the facility to connect to Contact Centre personnel is available from Monday to Saturday except National Holidays, between 8:00 AM to 10:00 PM for English, Hindi and ten regional languages (Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Odia, Punjabi, Telugu and Tamil).

For more information

Please Visit:
FAQs on RB- IOS, 2021 - https://www.rbi.org.in/scripts/FS_FAQs.aspx?fn=2745
Or
CMS Portal - <https://cms.rbi.org.in/>

FOCUS AMERICA

ONE BIG UGLY BILL



Once upon a time the US was basking in the glory of fiscal surplus, but is now facing problems of unfettered deficit and debt due to policy tax cuts for rich and corporates starting from the Reagan era to the present regime

On 22 May, the US House of Representatives passed a multi-trillion-dollar tax bill with a vote of 215 votes to 214 to materialise Trump’s tax cuts promise. The \$3.8 trillion “One Big Beautiful Bill” includes sweeping tax cuts implemented in Trump’s first term, and allocate billions of dollars to defence, immigration enforcement, and other administration priorities. It envisages social spending rollbacks, and over \$3 trillion in added deficits. The measure now moves to the Senate, which is expected to make significant changes.

The bill would extend most of the individual and estate provisions of Trump’s 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA), which are largely set to expire at the end of 2025. Those include increase of the standard deduction, a fixed dollar amount that reduces the income on which a person is taxed; lower income tax rates for most taxpayers; an increase in a tax credit that can be claimed for a dependent child; a deduction for privately held businesses; and a doubling of the amount that an individual can leave to their heirs upon death without incurring federal estate taxes. The bill also increased the child tax credit from \$1,000 to \$2,000 per child.

What is disquieting is that the major deductions will eventually go to the wealthiest Americans, who saw big savings after the tax cuts. The bill also seeks to make Trump’s 2017 tax cuts permanent. It may be noted that the 2017 TCJA lowered income tax rates for all individuals but more meaningfully for high-income earners. The top marginal tax rate was reduced to 37% from 39.6%. The bill established a 20% deduction for income through certain business entities, known as pass-through entities, including Limited Liability Companies (LLCs) and partnerships. It also doubled the estate and gift tax exemption from \$5.5 million to \$11.2

million per person, largely an aid to affluent families.

The TCJA also reduced the corporate tax rate to 21%, from 35%. A cut to the corporate tax rate has cost the federal government billions of dollars in lost revenue. According to an analysis from the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, from 2018 to 2021, the top corporations in the US saved a combined \$240bn in taxes after the cuts.

Trump had defended the corporate tax cut in 2017, saying that it will be “fantastic for the middle-income people and for jobs,” indicating that corporations will use their tax savings to invest in more workers and higher wages. But some economists say the tax cuts did little to help the middle class. Wage growth slowed in 2019, two years after the cuts were passed, and only modestly grew because of inflation and high demand for workers immediately after the pandemic. The corporate behemoths spent more of their savings on stock buybacks than ever before. Last year, Goldman Sachs estimated that stock buybacks will reach \$1 trillion this year for the first time ever as share repurchases grow.

According to House speaker, Mike Johnson the new bill

will “reduce spending and permanently lower taxes for families and job creators” and ultimately “make government work more efficiently and effectively for all Americans.” By contrast, its critics believe this bill is fiscally irresponsible and regressive and pushes the economy towards a disastrous and ruinous path. Democrats have universally criticised the bill, with the Senate minority leader, Chuck Schumer, disparaging it as a “cruel and dangerous scheme” that will particularly damage working-class families who will also be affected by Trump’s tariffs. Experts say the bill will make permanent huge tax cuts to the wealthy and cost the government \$4.6 trillion over the next 10 years.

Once upon a time the US was basking in the glory of fiscal surplus, but is now facing problems of unfettered deficit and debt due to policy tax cuts for rich and corporates starting from the Reagan era to the present regime. In 1981, the Reagan tax cut known as Reaganomics, or supply-side economics, was a huge failure. The top rate fell from 70% to 50%. The tax cut didn’t pay for itself. Reagan’s tax cut slashed revenues by 2.9% of GDP, according to the Committee for

a Responsible Federal Budget. That makes it the biggest tax cut since the introduction of the modern income tax in 1913, surpassing even the mammoth cuts passed after World War II (2.7% of GDP in 1945 and 1.9% in 1948).

Further, tax cuts initially enacted during Republican trifectas in the past 25 years slashed taxes disproportionately for the wealthy and profitable corporations, severely reducing federal revenues. These tax cuts have added \$10 trillion to the debt since their enactment and are responsible for 57% of the increase in the debt ratio since 2001, and more than 90% of the increase in the debt ratio if the one-time costs of bills responding to COVID-19 and the Great Recession are excluded. Eventually, the tax cuts are projected to grow to more than 100% of the increase.

When Donald J. Trump won presidential election last November, in an article in “The New York Times”, Damien Cave Catherine Porter and Neil MacFarquhar wrote that Trump’s triumph will fuel global concerns over four years of unpredictability. This is corroborated by Trump’s recent reciprocal tariff and tax cut plan. The real problem for the US is ballooning fiscal deficit and burgeoning debt. The US federal deficit in 2024 was \$1.8 trillion, equal to 6.4% of GDP while the federal debt reached \$36.2186 trillion with a debt-to-GDP ratio of 123%. In 2024, the US GDP was \$29.167.78 trillion. The US has hit the debt ceiling on certain occasions. The Treasury Department’s ability to borrow money to make payments on that debt has repeatedly run into a congressionally mandated limit on borrowing known as the debt ceiling. The recent tax cut proposal is not actually “One Big Beautiful Bill” but “One Big Ugly Bill” which will prove disastrous for the US economy.

The writer is an Odisha-based economist and columnist.



Santosh Kumar Mohapatra

THE 2017 TCJA LOWERED INCOME TAX RATES FOR ALL INDIVIDUALS BUT MORE MEANINGFULLY FOR HIGH-INCOME EARNERS



Adam Ezra Cohen

The people most affected by the Trump administration’s funding cuts are not tenured professors, but rather early-career scientists, postdoctoral researchers, and graduate students, very few of whom have any connection to campus activism



We must watch over our thoughts. A bad thought is the most dangerous of thieves.

THE MOTHER

Act of Self-Sabotage

Last week, I was among hundreds of researchers at Harvard University who received termination notices for our federal research grants. Mine was for a project to study electrical signaling between neurons in the brain. My lab’s research has led to progress in treatments for pain, epilepsy, and ALS (Lou Gehrig’s disease). We have been working to map the physiological basis of memory, enabling new ways to study Alzheimer’s disease. All our work is available for the public to see.

I am a long-time member of the Harvard community (18 years on the faculty, plus four years as an undergraduate), and I am visibly and proudly Jewish. The government’s decision to withhold federal funding in the name of combating antisemitism is wrong, bad for Jews everywhere, and terrible for the United States.

Yes, antisemitism on campus is real and must be confronted. Harvard’s recent report on the matter documents harrowing incidents of bias and harassment. But in my 22 years here, I have never personally encountered antisemitism. From many conversations with Jewish students and colleagues, I am confident that Harvard is and has been a welcoming and supportive home for the vast majority. The problem of antisemitism is serious but not systemic.

A proportionate and effective response requires local knowledge and nuanced leadership, exactly the sort that Harvard’s president, Alan Garber, provides. His Presidential Task Force on Combating Antisemitism and Anti-Israeli Bias, and the parallel Presidential Task Force on Combating Anti-Muslim, Anti-Arab, and Anti-Palestinian Bias, studied these problems extensively and provided strong recommendations that strike a thoughtful balance between the sometimes-competing demands of free speech and protections against harassment. Some are already being implemented.

By contrast, US President Donald Trump’s administration is seeking to destroy Harvard, and its assertion that it is doing so to combat antisemitism effectively pins the blame for the wreckage on the Jews. Whatever the administration’s intent, the effect is indistinguishable from genuine antisemitism.

The intent, apparently, is to turn antisemitism into a political weapon, associating it solely with the left and portraying the right as protectors of Jewish students, and hence America’s Jews. The government’s charges of antisemitism at Harvard and other universities have been supplemented with a litany of other accusations: that students are indoctrinated with leftist ideology; that academic standards have slipped; that Harvard’s faculty and students are firing fat off taxpayer dollars. Trump claimed “Harvard can no longer be considered even a decent place of learning.”

I invite any Trump administration official who thinks our academic standards have declined to sit for an exam in my class. If you can explain the quantum principles underlying the structure of the Periodic Table (like my 18-year-old freshmen can), then you can lecture me on academic standards. The notes for my graduate biophysics class are online. I challenge any reader to guess my political leanings from these notes (be careful, you might learn some physics while searching). My classes are the norm, not the exception.

Trump supporters argue that, given its \$53.2 billion endowment, Harvard doesn’t need federal money. But the opposite is true. The endowment has been subsidizing research costs by supporting graduate students, financing core facilities, and providing funds to help new researchers get started. This support provides additional leverage for taxpayer investments in science. Every dollar of my grants is scrutinized. There is no fat. Overhead charges to federal grants pay for compliance with federal regulations, safety standards, and lab infrastructure.

The Republican Party that Trump leads has long championed local control, limited government, and the free market – especially when it comes to education. For decades, US conservatives have fought for school choice, opposed federal overreach, and insisted that parents, teachers, and local communities – not federal bureaucrats – know best how to educate their children. These values should apply just as much to higher education as they do to primary and secondary schools. Yet today, some of the same voices calling for decentralization are applauding a heavy-handed federal effort to punish a private university, to dictate who gets to study and teach there, and to interfere in research funding decisions that have traditionally been merit-based and apolitical.

The federal government has no more business telling Harvard who it can admit or hire, or what its faculty can teach, than it does setting the curriculum at my kids’ public school. Students come to Harvard to learn; if we don’t deliver, they will go elsewhere. If Harvard faculty don’t produce valuable research, they will lose grants. The academic marketplace is self-correcting, and it is fiercely competitive. When government steps in to micromanage that system to score political points, it undermines the principles conservatives have defended for generations.

In the short term, the people most affected by the Trump administration’s funding cuts are not tenured professors, but rather early-career scientists, postdoctoral researchers, and graduate students, very few of whom have any connection to campus activism. In the long term, the US itself will be worse off, both because of the discoveries that don’t happen and because global leadership in science and technology will be ceded to China and other countries.

The US needs more research funding, not less. On May 15, researchers announced a breakthrough treatment for a baby who had an otherwise-fatal genetic condition – an advance based on discoveries first made at Harvard. Other Harvard researchers are working on advanced battery technologies, and mobility aids for stroke survivors and injured soldiers. Federal investment in science – at Harvard and other US universities – is an investment in a healthier, wealthier, and more secure future for Americans of all backgrounds and beliefs. Cutting it off is a wanton act of self-sabotage.

The writer is Professor of Chemistry and Physics at Harvard University.

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WISDOM CORNER

There are things known and there are things unknown, and in between are the doors of perception.

ALDOUS HUXLEY

For a man to conquer himself is the first and noblest of all victories.

PLATO

No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it’s not the same river and he’s not the same man.

HERACLITUS

SPECTRUM ECONOMY

Story behind RBI’s dividend bonanza



Shivaji Sarkar

THE EXCEPTIONAL SURPLUS DIVIDEND TRANSFER IS LARGELY A RESULT OF THE RBI’S AGGRESSIVE INTERVENTION IN THE FOREX MARKET

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has given a record ₹2.69 trillion dividend to the government against ₹2.1 trillion last year. This was reportedly fuelled by dollar sales and forex gains and growth in interest income amid the International Monetary Fund (IMF) projections that India will surpass Japan to become the world’s fourth-largest economy in 2025.

The RBI bonanza surpasses the Union Budget 2025 projections ₹2.56 lakh crore dividend earnings from Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs). It will help the government cut fiscal deficit and borrowings. It is the highest dividend paid since 2011-12, when it was a mere ₹15,009 crore and in 2013-14 it rose to ₹33,010 crore.

India has taken another major leap on the world stage, becoming the fourth-largest economy as its nominal GDP reaches \$4.187 trillion – edging past Japan’s \$4.186 trillion. According to the IMF’s World Eco-

nomics Outlook, India emerging as a dominant growth engine, is set to grow at 6.3% this year – below the earlier 6.5% estimate. In contrast, Japan’s growth outlook has been sharply downgraded to just 0.6%, down from 1.1% in January, weighed down by trade tensions and demographic headwinds.

There is a caveat in the dividend story. The RBI simultaneously announced a \$ 4.9 billion dip in forex reserves to \$ 685.7 billion from a record \$704 billion in September 2024. Since the peak reserves, the RBI sold a significant amount of dollars to ensure currency stability. The exceptional surplus dividend transfer is largely a result of the RBI’s aggressive intervention in the forex market. In fact, in January 2025, the RBI emerged as the largest seller of foreign exchange reserves among all Asian countries. With this transfer alone, actual receipts will far exceed the budgeted target—providing welcome

fiscal headroom ahead of the general elections.

This decline in reserves was primarily driven by a drop in gold reserves, offsetting a slight increase in foreign currency assets. The prices of gold have been on a global rally, with estimated 39.75% return in 2024-25, the highest in four decades. A declining dollar makes gold cheaper for non-US buyers, increasing demand and pushing prices up.

Between April 2024 and February 2025, gross dollar sales reached an unprecedented \$371.6 billion—more than double the \$153 billion sold in FY24. These large-scale interventions not only helped contain rupee volatility but also generated substantial forex trading gains, boosting the RBI’s surplus.

The central bank also earned more from its rupee-denominated securities. Its holdings in these securities rose by Rs 1.95 lakh crore to Rs 15.6 lakh crore by March 2025. While the fall in government

bond (G-sec) yields reduced mark-to-market gains, overall interest income continued to rise steadily.

The Contingent Risk Buffer (CRB), which acts as a safeguard against future risks, was maintained within a range of 7.5% to 4.5% of the RBI’s balance sheet, as recommended by the central board. The transferable surplus was calculated under the revised Economic Capital Framework (ECF), approved by the RBI’s Central Board during its meeting on 15 May, 2025.

An SBI report underscores the RBI’s cautious approach to financial risk. Though the final dividend payout is ₹2.7 trillion, the SBI estimates it could have exceeded ₹3.5 trillion if the central bank hadn’t increased its CRB. The CRB, which serves as a safeguard against future economic shocks, was maintained within the recommended range of 5.5% to 6.5% of the RBI’s balance sheet, as advised by the central board.

INFA

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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Shaping narratives

Sir, As India’s global profile continues to rise, the need for a more nuanced and expansive approach to international public diplomacy becomes increasingly urgent. Traditional state-to-state interactions, while foundational, are no longer sufficient in a world where narratives are shaped by a wide array of non-state actors and digital platforms. To genuinely influence global opinion, India must move beyond symbolic diplomacy and embrace a sustained engagement strategy that integrates professional communication with outreach to international media, academia, and civil society. This evolution demands a shift from transactional engagement to long-term relationship building, aligned with India’s broader strategic objectives and aspirations as a responsible global power. A central pillar of this strategy is proactive engagement with international media. Rather than responding reactively to unfavourable narratives, India should institutionalise mechanisms for regular briefings, timely dissemination of information, and facilitated access for foreign correspondents. High-level interactions with editors and global media houses can provide deeper context to India’s policies and developments, while trained diplomats and communicators skilled in digital diplomacy can ensure consistent and compelling messaging. Such efforts will not only improve narrative control but also establish India as a transparent and articulate global actor in the eyes of international audiences. Equally important is the cultivation of relationships within the global academic community.

Amarjeet Kumar, HAZARIBAGH

Honour for Nadal

Sir, As a lover of Tennis, I am in ecstasy learning that the French Tennis Federation has preferred a novel way to recognise Tennis legend Rafael Nadal. They have etched the foot print of Nadal in the Centre Court, Court Philippe - Chartier in Roland Garros which will remain there forever. What a thoughtful recognition to Nadal who with his magic racquet in his left hand has mesmerised millions of his fans all over the world! The legendary Nadal richly deserves this gift which will remain there forever, motivating the present as well as future tennis greats to follow the foot prints of Nadal who won a record 14 times in the French Open.

Tharcus S. Fernando, CHENNAI

UP water quality improves

As per a report by UPPCB, water quality in UP's rivers, reservoirs improved by nearly 70%



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, May 28: The water quality of rivers and reservoirs has improved by nearly 70 per cent in 2024 from 2023, the state government said citing a report by the Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board (UPPCB) Tuesday.

The UPPCB has undertaken a series of effective measures to enhance the water quality of rivers and reservoirs across the state, it said in a statement.

"As a result of these efforts, UPPCB's 2024 report reveals a significant 68.8 per cent improvement in water purity across Uttar Pradesh compared to 2023," it said.

This achievement reflects the success of sustained initiatives, stringent monitoring, and special campaigns led by the state government to combat water pollution.

The UPPCB conducted water quality tests at 176 locations

This achievement reflects the success of sustained initiatives, stringent monitoring, and special campaigns led by the state government to combat water pollution

throughout the state in 2024, recording notable improvements at 120 sites, a clear indication of the effectiveness of the state's pollution control strategies, it said.

Under flagship initiatives such as the Namami Gange Mission and the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Uttar Pradesh has ramped up its capacity for wastewater treatment, it said.

As of April 2025, a total of 152 Sewage Treatment Plants

(STPs) have been installed, of which 141 are fully operational and 126 are in compliance with the prescribed environmental standards. While 6 STPs are currently in the testing phase, 15 are expected to reach full operational capacity shortly, the government said.

"Despite this progress, challenges persist in certain regions. To address these issues, the government and local administration are working in tandem to ensure full compliance and improved water quality outcomes," it said.

In its commitment to enforcing environmental regulations, the UPPCB has taken strict action against non-compliant sewage treatment plants (STPs).

"Between October 2022 and April 2025, environmental fines totaling Rs 11.79 crore were imposed on erring STPs. However, only Rs 7.30 lakh has been recovered so far, prompting the board to focus on strengthening the penalty recovery mechanism," it added.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has placed special emphasis on the restoration and conservation of major rivers, such as the Ganga, Yamuna, and Gomti, as well as smaller water bodies, according to the statement.

"The government has not only expanded the capacity of STPs under the Namami Gange programme but also implemented strict regulations to control effluents discharged by industrial units," it added.



In this image released by @adgpi via X Wednesday, Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi with troops during a visit to the Babina Field Firing Range in Uttar Pradesh. The Army Chief witnessed cutting-edge demonstrations of indigenous UAS, Counter-UAS and Loitering Munitions

PTI PHOTO

Student held for post on Indo-Pak conflict released from Pune jail



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 28: A 19-year-old Pune student, arrested for a social media post concerning Indo-Pak hostilities, has been released from jail after the Bombay High Court granted her bail while rebuking the Maharashtra government for "ruining her life" and turning her into a "hardcore criminal".

The girl was released from the Yerwada Central Jail Tuesday night following the HC's order, as per her lawyer.

In a rebuke to both the state and her educational institution, the court in its order Tuesday also suspended the girl's rustication order issued by the Sinhgad Academy of Engineering. The student, originally from Jammu and Kashmir, moved to Pune in 2023 to pursue the Bachelor of Engineering (Information Technology) degree course from the Sinhgad Technical Education Society.

On May 7, the girl shared a post on Instagram from an account called 'Reformistan', which criticised the Indian government during the Indo-Pak hostilities amid Operation Sindoor.

Within two hours, she realised her mistake and deleted the post after receiving a bar-

rage of threats.

The Kondhwa police in Pune registered a First Information Report (FIR) against her on May 9 and she was arrested. The girl was later sent to judicial custody and was lodged at the Yerwada prison.

She then moved the HC through her lawyer Farhana Shah, challenging the rustication order and also sought quashing of the FIR and to be released on bail.

On Tuesday, the HC came down heavily on the government for its "absolutely shocking" and "radical" response to the girl's social media post.

The court ordered for the girl to be released forthwith so that she can appear for her ongoing semester exams.

Pursuant to the court order, the girl was released from jail at around 9.30 pm on Tuesday, Shah said.

The girl's family was present outside the jail at the time, the lawyer said.

The court had also directed the educational institution to provide the girl a hall ticket so that she could appear for the exams. It said the college shall, if necessary, provide security and arrange a separate class for her to appear for the exams.

The court also asked the police to ensure the girl is given adequate police protection when she goes to the college, considering the fear expressed by her. Shah said the girl would go to the college on Wednesday to take her hall ticket and finish other formalities so that she can appear for the remainder of her papers scheduled from Thursday (May 29 to June 3).

MONSOON MAYHEM



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 28: A barge engaged for the Coastal Road project work in Mumbai has drifted due to heavy rains and got stuck in mud near Mahim coast in the city, officials said Wednesday. Efforts were underway to refloat the barge during high tide, they said.

Heavy rains lashed Mumbai Monday due to which the barge started drifting the same night, an official said.

The barge, which was floating on the waves, got stuck in mud near the Hinduja Hospital at the Mahim coast, he said.

Authorities were making efforts with the help of experts to remove the stranded barge, the official said. Torrential rains Monday disrupted life in parts of the city, particularly in south Mumbai.

'No safety issue'

Water seepage inside the Acharya Atre Chowk station here occurred due to a "sudden kind of event" and it could not be prevented,

HEAVY RAINS LASH MUMBAI

More than 9K farmers, fishermen affected

Palghar: Unseasonal rainfall in the first week of May has affected more than 9,000 farmers and fishermen in Maharashtra's Palghar district, and administration has assessed the damages, an official said Tuesday. A comprehensive relief proposal was sent to the government for financial assistance from the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF), an official release by the district administration stated. As per the data shared by the administration, 2,124 houses and four huts were destroyed, while 2,120 houses suffered partial damages due to rains, and a proposal seeking Rs 1.2 crore has been submitted to the state government. More than 9,000 farmers and fishermen have suffered losses due to the rainfall on May 6 and 7, the release said. Crops on 537.68 hectares belonging to 1,923 farmers and 2162.79 hectares of fruit crops of 5,598 cultivators had been damaged in the unseasonal showers. A proposal seeking Rs 9.23 crore for affected farmers was submitted. Apart from this, 99 boats were partially damaged, and two boats were destroyed, it said. The administration has sought Rs 6.32 lakh from the SDRF for the affected fishermen.



olis Monday.

The incident raised concerns over passenger safety on the corridor and triggered a political slugfest as well.

Over 40 displaced birds, wild animals rescued

More than 40 wild creatures, mostly birds, were rescued in Mumbai and its surrounding districts in 48 hours following heavy rains in the region, an office-bearer of an animal welfare organisation said Tuesday. Birds and other creatures suffered injuries due to fractures, falls from nests, and displacement due to heavy rainfall and strong winds, Resqink Association for Wildlife Welfare (RAWW) founder-president Pawan Sharma said. From a peacock with a fractured wing to injured flamingos, more than 40 wild animals were rescued in coordination with the forest department in the last 48 hours in Mumbai, Thane, Raigad and Palghar districts with the early onset of monsoon, he said. "Our helplines are flooded with calls from across Mumbai and its surrounding districts for the rescue of injured and displaced animals. Our teams have been working day and night to rescue, treat, and rehabilitate them back into the wild," he said. The current rescue trend shows that more birds have been affected, followed by reptiles and mammals, Sharma said. People are requested to report any wildlife distress calls to the helplines of the forest department and to the volunteers of the nearest organisations working for the welfare of animals, he said. Heavy rains battered several places in Maharashtra, including Mumbai, Monday.

the Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation (MMRC) has said, asserting there is no safety issue with the underground Metro system.

In a video statement issued Tuesday night, MMRC Managing Director Ashwini Bhide said there is absolutely no safety issue as far as the underground Metro is concerned and

all standard operating procedures (SOPs) were followed after Monday morning's incident.

Water entered the Acharya Atre Chowk Metro station at Worli Naka in central Mumbai at the concourse and platform levels of the city's first underground Metro corridor, also known as the 'Aqua Line', when heavy rains lashed the metrop-

1,200 couples tie knot under mass marriage programme

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gorakhpur (UP), May 28: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath Tuesday said every person from the last rung of the society need to be uplifted to make India the biggest power in the world.

Addressing the Mukhyamantri Saamohik Vivaah Samaaroh - the mass marriage ceremony of 1,200 couples held at the premises of Hindustan Fertilizers and Chemicals Limited - Adityanath said, "To make India the biggest power in the world, we have to think about every person sitting at the last rung of the society. We have to bring a change in their lives. To bring about this change, the government has started programmes like Matru Vandana

Yojana, Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao Yojana, Kanya Sumangala Yojana and Ayushman Yojana. The mass marriage scheme is also a symbol of this progressive thinking."

The government has increased the expenditure per couple under the mass marriage scheme from Rs 51,000 to Rs 1 lakh from this year, a statement issued here said.

Speaking at the programme, Adityanath said the real government is the one that can go to people's house and solve their problems.

He said the mass marriage programme is a step after the Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao scheme. It is also an attack on social stereotypes like child marriage, polygamy and dow-



ry system.

"If we want to save the daughter, we have to educate her, we have to empower her. We will have to make all the arrangements to take the daughter forward," Adityanath said, adding that in 2017, the government started the Mukhyamantri

Kanya Sumangala Yojana for the education of the daughter from birth to graduation to end the suffering of the poor.

Under this, about 24 lakh girls from poor and deprived families of the state are being given an amount of Rs 25,000 for education from birth to gradu-

ation. The chief minister said that after the birth of a daughter, a fixed amount is deposited in her account as soon as she registers. A fixed amount is also given when the daughter turns one year old and is administered all the vaccines. After this, a fixed amount is sent to the account after the daughter enters Class 1, Class 6 and Class 9 and further on taking admission in ITI, diploma or other courses. Today this amount is becoming a support for the security of the daughter.

Adityanath said that today, poor parents do not worry about their daughters' marriage due to the Chief Minister's mass marriage scheme.

Apart from the chief minister, MLAs and other public rep-

resentatives also participated in the programme.

As many as 1,200 couples tied the sacred knot during the ceremony organised by the Social Welfare Department.

PANCHAYAT SAMITI OFFICE, DHENKANAL SADAR
A/PO/Dist.-Dhenkanal, Odisha-759001
Phone-0672-224485 e-Mail : ori-bdhenkanal@nic.in

No. 2444/Dt. 27.05.2025
Corrigendum : Regarding Extension of Tender submission date.
Reference : Tender Call Notice No. BDO/DHENKANAL SADAR/01/2025-26/
DT.06.05.2025
No.-127 : With reference to the above Tender Call No.01/2025-26/dt.06.05.2025, it is to inform to all prospective bidders that last date and time for bid submission for the invited tender has been extended as per detail given below.

Sl. No.	Bid Submission Last Date and Time	Extended Bid Submission Last date and Time
01	27 th May 2025 up to 1.00 P.M.	3 rd June 2025 up to 1.00 P.M.

The opening of the bid will be on 4th June 2025 at 10.00 A.M. All other terms and condition of the tender document will remain unchanged.

Sd/- Block Development Officer
Dhenkanal Sadar

OIPR-19433/11/0004/2526

SHORT TAKES

Raichur hosp preps for potential Covid-19 surge

Bangalore: Even with zero cases, districts like Raichur are getting ready, in case there is a Covid-19 flare up. PTI Videos visited the special ward that has been set up in RIMS hospital in Raichur Wednesday. “Our hospital is ready to take care of the Covid-infected patients. We have Block A and B, and beds are ready,” said Medical Superintendent of RIMS Hospital Arvind Sagar. Amid growing concerns over rising Covid-19 cases, Karnataka’s Chief Minister Siddaramaiah had directed authorities to be fully prepared to handle any future situation May 26.

Delhi Police reshuffle

New Delhi: The Delhi Police in a major reshuffle transferred 24 Indian Police Service (IPS) officers and 14 Delhi, Andaman and Nicobar Islands Police Service (DANIPS) officers, the LG office said Wednesday. According to the order issued by the office of Delhi Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena, several senior officers have been assigned new charges across units and ranges. David Lalringsanga (1995 batch) has been posted as Special Commissioner of Police, SPUWAC and SPUNER – Special Police Unit for Women and Children and Special Police Unit For North-Eastern Region.

OPERATION SINDOOR

TMC demands special session of Parliament

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 28: The Trinamool Congress (TMC) Wednesday demanded that a special session of Parliament be held in June, before the Monsoon session, to get the government to answer some urgent questions on Operation Sindoor.

The party also accused the ruling BJP of trying to politicise Operation Sindoor by holding political rallies.

Opposition parties have been demanding a special session of Parliament since the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack, which claimed 26 lives. The demand was also raised in an all-party meeting held to inform MPs about Operation Sindoor.



“We now believe that having given full support to the government, we are now supporting the demand first made by MP Kapil Sibal – that there must be a special session of Parliament. We demand that a special session be held in June, before the Monsoon session,” TMC Rajya Sabha deputy leader Sagarika Ghose said at a press conference here. “Now that overseas audiences have heard the Indian point of view, it is time that India and the citizens of India heard the government’s point of view. Let the government answer certain urgent questions which we have been raising in the national interest,” she said. The Monsoon session of Parliament is usually held in the third week of July.

TMC leaders also said opposition parties will come together to push for the demand for a special session of Parliament.

“We, the parties who are fighting the BJP, are working together and moving ahead together on the demand for a special session of Parliament,” TMC’s Parliamentary party leader in Rajya Sabha Derek O’Brien told reporters.

Congress, Samajwadi Party, Shiv Sena (UBT), RJD, Left parties, National Conference, JMM and AAP are among the parties that have raised the demand for a special session of Parliament.



The Padma Awards ceremony realises Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s vision to encourage people-led social transformations by honouring individuals who have quietly brought positive changes

AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

PM MODI ON FOUR-STATE TOUR

PM Modi to visit Sikkim, West Bengal, Bihar, and UP May 29-30 to launch development projects, marking his third term’s first anniversary with a busy two-day tour



COURT CORNER

Varsity student sexual assault: Court finds student guilty; verdict June 2

Chennai: A Mahila Court here Wednesday pronounced as guilty, A Gnanasekaran the biriyani vendor arrested in the sensational Anna University woman student sexual assault case, with the prosecution seeking “maximum punishment” for him. Holding that the prosecution has proved the case beyond reasonable doubt, the court found Gnanasekaran guilty of the charges framed against him in the sexual assault case that rocked Tamil Nadu in December 2024. Mahila Court Judge Rajalakshmi said she will pronounce the verdict in the case June 2. The government counsel later told reporters that the prosecution filed 11 charges against Gnanasekaran and proved all of them using documentary and forensic evidence.

2008 Mumbai attacks: Court seeks Tihar’s response on Rana’s plea

New Delhi: A Delhi court Wednesday directed Tihar jail authorities to file a response to jailed 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks accused Tahawwur Hussain Rana’s plea seeking permission to speak to his family members. Special Judge Chander Jit Singh issued notice to jail authorities on Rana’s plea and directed them to also file a status report in the matter by June 4, the next date of hearing. The 64-year-old Pakistani-origin Canadian businessman is currently in judicial custody. Rana, a close associate of 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks main conspirator David Coleman Headley alias Daaood Gilani, a US citizen, was brought to India after the US Supreme Court on April 4 dismissed his review plea against his extradition.

SC gives interim bail to 23-yr-old influencer in rape case

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Wednesday gave interim bail to a 23-year-old accused of raping a 40-year-old, noting that charges had not been framed even though he has been in jail for nine months. It also said the woman was “not a baby” and “a single hand can’t clap”. In scathing comments, a bench comprising Justices B V Nagarathna and Satish Chandra Sharma also asked how Delhi Police could file a rape case against the man, a social media influencer, when the woman had gone voluntarily with him. “A single hand can’t clap. On what basis have you filed case under Section 376 of IPC. She is not a baby. The woman is 40 years old.

SC extends Ashoka Univ prof’s bail

‘No impediment on Ashoka University professor’s right to speech but can’t comment on FIRs’

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 28: The Supreme Court Wednesday told Ashoka University professor Ali Khan Mahmudabad, accused of making contentious social media posts on Operation Sindoor, that there was no impediment on his right to speech and expression, but he can’t post anything online with respect to the cases against him.

A partial working day bench of Justices Surya Kant and Dipankar Datta refused to modify as of now, the interim bail condition imposed on him May 21 that he will not write any online post, article or make any oral speech related to either of the two online posts, which are subject matter of the investigation.

The top court had also restrained the professor from expressing any opinion in relation to the terrorist attack on Indian soil or the counter-response given by the Indian armed forces.

The bench said it is extending the interim bail granted to the professor and directed the SIT to furnish the investi-



gation report on the next date of hearing.

The top court made it clear that the subject matter of investigation was two FIRs lodged against the professor and asked the Haryana police not to go “left and right” in the investigation and seek the “devices”, which the cops said they would like to examine.

The bench also asked the Haryana police to apprise it

about their response to the NHRC notice on registration of FIR against the professor.

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) said it has taken “suo motu cognizance” of a media report in connection with the arrest May 21.

The rights panel has noted that “the report, which contains a gist of the allegations based on which he has been arrested, discloses, prima facie,

that the human rights and liberty of the said professor have been violated”.

The top court granted interim bail to the professor May 21, who was arrested for his contentious social media posts on Operation Sindoor, but refused to stay the investigation against him.

It had directed the setting up of a three-member SIT to look into the FIRs lodged against him.

Lokpal gives clean chit to former SEBI chief Madhabi Puri Buch

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 28: In a major relief for former SEBI chief Madhabi Puri Buch, anti-corruption ombudsman Lokpal Wednesday disposed of complaints against her based on a Hindenburg Research report, terming the charges as “presumptions and assumptions” not supported by any verifiable material.

The Lokpal said that the complaints alleging impropriety and conflict of interest, including the one by TMC MP Mahua Moitra, filed last year were essentially founded on the report “by a known short seller trader whose focus was to expose or corner Adani Group of Companies”.

In its report published August 10, 2024, Hindenburg Research alleged that Buch and her husband had stakes in obscure offshore funds used in the alleged money-siphoning scandal involving the Adani Group.

They had denied the allegations saying the short-seller was attacking the capital markets regulator’s credibility and attempting a character assassination. The Adani Group had also termed the allegations as malicious and manipulation of selective public information.

In its Wednesday order, the Lokpal “concluded that the allegations in the complaint(s) are more on presumptions and assumptions and not supported by any verifiable material and do not attract the ingredients of the offences... so as to direct an investigation therefor”.

Accordingly, these complaints are disposed of, said the order by a six-member bench headed by Lokpal chairperson Justice AM Khanwilkar.

‘WAR AGAINST TERROR’ We stand united with India: Panama



During the meeting Tuesday, the Congress MP presented the National Assembly President with a Kashmiri shawl, and she reciprocated with a warrior symbol

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Panama City, May 28: Panama has assured India of its support for the “war against terror” as an all-party delegation led by Congress MP Shashi Tharoor met National Assembly President Dana Castaneda here to convey New Delhi’s strong message of zero-tolerance for terrorism.

The delegation reached the Central American country Tuesday. It is one of the seven multi-party delegations India has tasked to visit 33 global capitals to reach out to the international community after the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack that left 26 people dead.

In an early Wednesday morning post on X, Tharoor said the delegation called on Castaneda, who was accompanied by senior members of Parliament Edwin Vergara and Julio de la Guardia, and “explained our mission to her and received strong assurances of understanding and support for India’s war against terror”.

During the meeting Tuesday, the Congress MP presented the National Assembly President

with a Kashmiri shawl, and she reciprocated with a warrior symbol.

“After I presented her with a Kashmiri shawl, from the place where terror had struck, the President reciprocated with a warrior symbol, urging India to fight on with determination. Greeted her colleague Kathy Bhikhu, who was born in Gujarat!,” Tharoor said.

Earlier, Tharoor signed the visitors’ book and visited the main hall of the National Assembly.

“A positive start to our Panama visit,” he posted on X along with some photographs of the event. The multi-party MPs’ delegation also visited the Indian Cultural Centre in Panama City and offered devotions at the temple there.

Earth’s average temperature for 2025-29 likely to exceed 1.5 deg C limit

The 1.5 degrees Celsius threshold is a target that countries agreed to at the Paris climate conference in 2015 to avoid the worst impacts of climate change

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 28: There is a 70 per cent chance that the average global temperature for the 2025-2029 period will exceed pre-industrial levels by more than 1.5 degrees Celsius, according to a new report published by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) Wednesday.

It also said that there is an 80 per cent chance that at least one of the next five years will

exceed 2024 as the warmest on record.

Besides being the hottest on record, 2024 was the first calendar year with a global mean temperature of more than 1.5 degrees Celsius above the 1850-1900 baseline, the period before human activities, such as burning fossil fuels, began significantly impacting the climate.

The 1.5 degrees Celsius threshold is a target that countries agreed to at the Paris climate conference in 2015 to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

A permanent breach of the 1.5-degree Celsius limit specified in the Paris Agreement refers to long-term warming over a 20 or 30-year period.

Countries are required to submit their next round of nationally determined contri-



butions (NDCs) or national climate plans for the 2031-2035 period to the UN climate change office this year. The collective aim of these climate plans is to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

The WMO report said that the average global mean near-sur-

face temperature for each year between 2025 and 2029 is expected to be between 1.2 and 1.9 degrees Celsius higher than it was between 1850 and 1900.

There is an 86 per cent chance that for at least one year during this period, the temperature will be more than 1.5

A permanent breach of the 1.5-degree Celsius limit specified in the Paris Agreement refers to long-term warming over a 20 or 30-year period

degrees higher than the 1850-1900 average.

The report also said there is a 70 per cent chance that the average temperature for the entire five-year period will be more than 1.5 degrees higher than the 1850-1900 average.

“We have just experienced the 10 warmest years on record. Unfortunately, this WMO report provides no sign of respite over the coming years and

this means that there will be a growing negative impact on our economies, our daily lives, our ecosystems and our planet,” said WMO Deputy Secretary-General Ko Barrett.

“Continued climate monitoring and prediction is essential to provide decision-makers with science-based tools and information to help us adapt,” she said.

The WMO said that in South Asia, recent years have been wetter than usual (except 2023) and this trend is expected to continue between 2025 and 2029, although some seasons might still be dry.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), India received above-normal rainfall during the monsoon season in four of the past five years.

REMARKS
ON COL
SOFIYA

SC closes HC case against Vijay Shah

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 28: The Supreme Court Wednesday ordered closure of proceedings before the Madhya Pradesh High Court against state minister Vijay Shah for his remarks against Indian Army officer Col Sofiya Qureshi, saying it is now looking into the matter.

A partial working day bench of Justices Surya Kant and Dipankar Datta asked for a status report from the special investigation team (SIT) that was constituted by the Madhya Pradesh government in compliance with the top court's earlier order.

The SC noted that the SIT has seized some devices and started its investigation.

The bench was informed by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta that parallel proceedings were going on before the high court against the minister.

The top court said that since it is now seized of the matter, the proceedings before the high court stand closed. The interim directions passed May 19, including the stay of arrest of Shah, stand extended, it said.



It posted the matter for further hearing in the second week of July.

The bench refused to allow any intervention in the matter, saying it does not want to politicise the issue.

The top court chided Shah and constituted a three-member SIT to probe the FIR lodged against him May 19.

Shah came under fire after a video, which was circulated widely, showed him allegedly making objectionable remarks against Col Qureshi, who gained nationwide prominence

along with another woman officer, Wing Commander Vyomika Singh, during the media briefings on Operation Sindoor.

The Madhya Pradesh High Court rebuked Shah for passing "scurrilous" remarks and using "language of the gutters" against Col Qureshi, and ordered police to file an FIR against him on the charge of promoting enmity and hatred.

After drawing severe condemnation, Shah expressed regret and said that he respects Col Qureshi more than his sister.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 28: The Congress Wednesday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to break his "silence" on the Trump administration's repeated claims on how the India-Pakistan "ceasefire" was brought about.

Congress general secretary in-charge Jairam Ramesh said, "The Prime Minister should let the country know whether it is true that the US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick filed a statement in the New York-based US Court of International Trade May 23rd, 2025 swearing that President Trump used his tariff power to broker a 'tenuous ceasefire' between India and Pakistan and bring about a 'fragile peace'."

There was no immediate reaction from the government on it but it has maintained that India-Pakistan understanding on cessation of hostilities was arrived at following direct negotiations between the two sides.

In a post on X, Ramesh further said, "Mr Lutnick follows

SERIES OF QUAKES STRIKE MANIPUR

A series of earthquakes struck Manipur Wednesday, the strongest one being 5.2 magnitude, according to the National Centre for Seismology. The earthquake of 5.2 magnitude struck Churachandpur district at 1.54 am, it said. A second one of 2.5 magnitude hit Noney district at 2.26 am, while a third one of 3.9 magnitude struck Churachandpur at 10.23 am, it added



US' REPEATED CLAIMS ABOUT INDIA-PAK CEASEFIRE

Break your silence: Cong to PM



Mr Lutnick follows in the footsteps of President Trump himself who made this assertion 8 times in 11 days in 3 different countries. The US Secretary of State Marco Rubio has echoed the same and also mentioned a 'neutral site' for talks between India and Pakistan

JAIRAM RAMESH | CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY IN-CHARGE

in the footsteps of President Trump himself who made this assertion 8 times in 11 days in 3 different countries. The US

Secretary of State Marco Rubio has echoed the same and also mentioned a 'neutral site' for talks between India and

Pakistan".

"Pradhan Mantri Chuppi To do (Break your silence, Prime Minister)," he added.

The US President has been repeatedly claiming that he helped settle the tensions between India and Pakistan.

India carried out precision strikes under Operation Sindoor on terror infrastructure early May 7 in response to the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack that killed 26 people. Following the Indian action, Pakistan attempted to attack Indian military bases May 8, 9 and 10. The Indian forces launched a fierce counter-attack on several Pakistani military installations.

India and Pakistan reached an understanding May 10 to end the military confrontation after four days of intense cross-border drone and missile strikes.

US President Donald Trump had claimed that India and Pakistan agreed to a full and immediate ceasefire after a long night of talks "mediated" by Washington May 10.

Veteran Akali leader Sukhdev Singh dies

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, May 28: Veteran Akali leader and former Union minister Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa died Wednesday evening following age-related health issues at a private hospital in Mohali. He was 89.

He is survived by his wife, a son and two daughters. According to a statement by the hospital, Dhindsa was admitted Tuesday in a critical condition. He was suffering from severe pneumonia and cardiac complications, compounded by age-related health issues.

"Despite the best efforts of the multidisciplinary medical team, he passed away at approximately 5:05 PM today due to cardiac arrhythmia and cardiac arrest," it said. Dhindsa's son Parminder Singh Dhindsa was the finance minister in the erstwhile Akali government. Sukhdev Dhindsa became Shiromani Akali Dal Lok Sabha MP from Sangrur in 2004. He was the Union minister of sports, chemicals and fertilizers in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government. Dhindsa was a Rajya Sabha MP from 1998 to 2004 and from 2010 to 2022. The Akali stalwart was given Padma Bhushan in 2019, but he then announced that he would return it in solidarity with farmers who were on protest against the now-repealed three fam laws.



Bags containing plastic granules from the cargo of MLC ELSA 3, a Liberian ship that capsized at Kochi outer harbour, washed ashore near the Vizhinjam International Seaport, in Thiruvananthapuram, Wednesday

PTI PHOTO

CABINET CLEARS FARM LOAN SUBSIDY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 28: The government Wednesday approved continuation of Modified Interest Subvention Scheme (MISS) for 2025-26 under which farmers get short-term credit at affordable rate through Kisan Credit card (KCC).

The decision regarding continuation of MISS for fiscal year 2025-26 with existing 1.5 per cent interest subvention was taken by the Union Cabinet, informed Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini

Vaishnav.

The continuation of the scheme will cost exchequer ₹15,640 crore.

MISS is a Central Sector Scheme aimed at ensuring the availability of short-term credit to farmers at an affordable interest rate through KCC.

Under MISS, farmers get short-term loans of up to ₹3 lakh through KCC at a subsidized interest rate of 7 per cent, with 1.5 per cent interest subvention provided to eligible lending institutions.

Additionally, farmers repay-

ing loans promptly are eligible for an incentive of up to 3 per cent as Prompt Repayment Incentive (PRI), effectively reducing their interest rate on KCC loans to 4 per cent.

For loans taken exclusively for animal husbandry or fisheries, the interest benefit is applicable up to ₹2 lakh.

An official release said that no changes have been proposed in the structure or other components of the scheme.

There are more than 7.75 crore of KCC accounts in the country.

The continuation of the support is critical to sustaining the flow of institutional credit to agriculture, which is vital for enhancing productivity and ensuring financial inclusion for small and marginal farmers, the release said.

Institutional credit disbursement through KCC increased from ₹4.26 lakh crore in 2014 to ₹10.05 lakh crore by December 2024.

Overall agricultural credit flow also rose from ₹7.3 lakh crore in 2013-14 to ₹25.49 lakh crore in 2023-24.

SHORT TAKES

2 killed as Bihar Police vehicle overturns

Patna: Two Bihar Police personnel were killed as their vehicle overturned in Madhya Pradesh's Ratlam district Wednesday, officials said. A policeman was also injured in the incident, which happened at 10 am, when a team of the Bihar Police's Special Task Force (STF) was on the way to Gujarat's Surat district to arrest some criminals, they said. "When their vehicle reached Ratlam, the driver suddenly lost control, following which it overturned. While Mukund Murari and Vikash Kumar died on the spot, Jeevdhari Kumar sustained injuries," a statement said.

4 militants held in Manipur

Imphal: Security forces have arrested four militants belonging to different proscribed outfits from Thoubal and Imphal West districts of Manipur, police said Wednesday. An active cadre of the banned Kangleipak Communist Party (PWG) was arrested from Yairipok Bishnunaha in Thoubal Tuesday, while two members of PREPAK were apprehended from Leirongthel Pitra in the district Monday, they said.

REUTERS

New Delhi, May 28: Global makers of surveillance gear have clashed with Indian regulators in recent weeks over contentious new security rules that require manufacturers of CCTV cameras to submit hardware, software and source code for assessment in government labs, official documents and company emails show.

The security-testing policy has sparked industry warnings of supply disruptions and added to a string of disputes between Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration and foreign companies over regulatory issues and what some perceive as protectionism.

New Delhi's approach is driven in part by its alarm about China's sophisticated surveillance capabilities, according to a top Indian official involved in the policymaking.

In 2021, Modi's then-junior IT minister told Parliament that 1 million cameras in government institutions were from Chinese companies and there were vulnerabilities with video data transferred to servers abroad.

Under the new requirements applicable from April, manufacturers such as China's Hikvision, Xiaomi and Dahua, South Korea's Hanwha, and Motorola Solutions of the US must submit cameras for testing by Indian government labs before they can sell them in the world's most populous nation. The policy applies to all internet-connected CCTV models made or imported since April 9.

"There's always an espionage risk," Gulshan Rai, India's cybersecurity chief from 2015 to 2019, told Reuters. "Anyone can operate and control internet-connected CCTV



cameras sitting in an adverse location. They need to be robust and secure."

Indian officials met April 3 with executives of 17 foreign and domestic makers of

surveillance gear, including Hanwha, Motorola, Bosch, Honeywell and Xiaomi, where many of the manufacturers said they weren't ready to meet the certification rules and lobbied unsuccessfully for a delay, according to the official minutes.

In rejecting the request, the government said India's policy "addresses a genuine security issue" and must be enforced, the minutes show.

India said in December the CCTV rules, which do not single out any country by name, aimed to "enhance the quality and cybersecurity of surveillance systems in the country."

This report is based on a Reuters review of dozens of documents, including records of meetings and emails between manufacturers and Indian IT ministry officials, and interviews with six people familiar with India's drive to scrutinise

the technology. The interactions haven't been previously reported.

Insufficient testing capacity, drawn-out factory inspections and government scrutiny of sensitive source code were among key issues camera makers said had delayed approvals and risked disrupting unspecified infrastructure and commercial projects.

"Millions of dollars will be lost from the industry, sending tremors through the market," Ajay Dubey, Hanwha's director for South Asia, told India's IT ministry in an email April 9.

The IT ministry and most of the companies identified by Reuters didn't respond to requests for comment about the discussions and the impact of the testing policy. The ministry told the executives April 3 that it may consider accrediting more testing labs.

international

of the day quote

We are ready to meet at the level of leaders. Both the American side knows this, and the Russian side knows this

VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY | UKRAINIAN PRESIDENT

There is a new kind of opposition to climate action. We are facing a discredit of climate policies. I don't think we are facing climate denial

ANDRÉ CORRÊA DO LAGO | BRAZILIAN DIPLOMAT

I was disappointed to see the massive spending bill, frankly... it increases the budget deficit, not just decreases it

ELON MUSK | TESLA CEO

SHORT TAKES

Israel strikes Sanaa airport

Deir al-Balah: The Israeli military said Wednesday it struck Yemen's Sanaa airport for the second time in a month targeting Houthi militants. The strike came after the Houthis have fired several missiles at Israel in recent days without causing casualties or damage. There were no immediate reports of casualties or damage in Sanaa. Israel last struck the airport in Sanaa on May 6, destroying the airport's terminal and leaving its runway riddled with craters.

5 wounded in mall shooting

Waterbury: A gunman shot and wounded five people at a Connecticut mall Tuesday, prompting an evacuation and a massive police response, with officials saying they are still searching for the suspect. Waterbury police chief Fernando Spagnolo said officers responded to the Brass Mill Centre for reports of a disturbance at around 4:40 pm (local time). He said all the victims were being treated at local hospitals, though he declined to elaborate on the extent of their injuries. Spagnolo said police believe the shooter is a man in his 20s who used a semiautomatic pistol. He said the suspect knew the victims and that the shooting was preceded by a dispute that quickly escalated. "We do not believe this was a random act of violence," Spagnolo said at a briefing outside the mall, adding that there is no further threat to the public. He credited the patrons and mall staff for sheltering in place and keeping safe during the shooting. "I think they mitigated a lot of what could have been a really bad incident here," Spagnolo said. "These acts occur. Unfortunately it's the society we live in at time. But we can't let it get us down."

Iran hangs man for spying for Israel

Tehran: Iran hanged a man convicted of spying for Israel, state media reported Wednesday. The report said Pedram Madani was hanged after the country's supreme court upheld a death sentence issued by a lower court. The official IRNA news agency said Madani visited Israel and met Mossad officers to convey classified information about buildings in Iran where "infrastructure" equipment was installed. The report did not elaborate but said Madani received foreign currency and cryptocurrency in return for the information. It said Madani also met Mossad officers at the Israeli embassy in Belgium. Israel's security agency had no immediate comment. Authorities arrested Madani, 41, in 2020.

Hamas Gaza chief Mohammed Sinwar eliminated: Netanyahu

REUTERS

Jerusalem, May 28: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Wednesday that Israel had eliminated Hamas Gaza chief Mohammad Sinwar, one of its most wanted targets and the younger brother of the deceased group's leader, Yahya Sinwar.

Mohammad Sinwar had been the target of an Israeli strike on a hospital in southern Gaza earlier this month and Netanyahu said on May 21 that it was likely he had been killed.

"We eliminated Mohammad Deif, (Ismail) Haniyeh, Yahya Sinwar and Mohammad Sinwar," Netanyahu said, confirming the death to the Israeli parliament, known as the Knesset.

"In the last two days we have been in a dramatic turn towards a complete defeat of Hamas," he said, adding that Israel was also "taking control of food distribution," a reference to a new aid distribution system in Gaza managed by a U.S.-backed group.

Hamas has yet to confirm Sinwar's death.

Sinwar was elevated to the top ranks of the Palestinian militant group last year after Israel killed his brother Yahya in combat.

Yahya Sinwar masterminded the October 2023 attack on Israel that triggered the war, now in its 20th month, and

Taiwan pledges to buy more US goods as 32% tariff looms

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Taipei, May 28: Taiwan's president Tuesday pledged to buy more American goods, including natural gas and oil, as the self-governing island seeks closer ties with the US while threatened with a 32% tariff from the Trump administration.

By purchasing more US products that also include weapons and agricultural goods, Taiwan would not only create "more balanced bilateral trade" with the US but also boost its energy autonomy and resilience, said Lai Ching-te, the island's leader, while hosting a US congressional delegation.

Lai also said the island would be willing to participate in US efforts to reindustrialise and lead the world in artificial intelligence.

Rep. Bruce Westerman, chair of the House Natural Resources Committee, told Lai that the US produces a lot of food and fibre and is "always looking for more friends to share that with."

REUTERS

Mexico City, May 28: Sol remembers her first kill for a Mexican cartel: a kidnapping she committed with a handful of other young recruits that twisted into torture and bled into murder. She was 12 years old. Sol had joined the drug cartel a few months earlier, recruited by someone she knew as she sold roses on the sidewalk outside a local bar. She started as a lookout, but rose fast.

The cartel liked her childish enthusiasm for learning new skills, her unquestioning loyalty, and perhaps most importantly, her status as a minor protected her from severe punishment if the cops ever caught her.

"I obeyed the boss blindly," Sol, now 20 years old, told Reuters, speaking from the rehabilitation center in central Mexico where she is trying to patch her life back together. "I thought they loved me."

Sol declined to say how many people she killed during her time in the cartel. She said she'd been addicted to methamphetamine from the age of

1 killed, 48 hurt as forces fire at aid site



Deir Al-Balah: At least one Palestinian was killed and 48 others wounded when forces opened fire on a crowd overrunning a new aid distribution site in the Gaza Strip set up by an Israeli and US-backed foundation, Gaza's Health Ministry said Wednesday. Crowds of Palestinians broke through the fences around the distribution site on Tuesday, and an Associated Press journalist heard Israeli tank and gun fire, and saw a military helicopter firing flares. It was not yet known whether the death and injuries were caused by Israeli forces, private contractors or others. The foundation said its military contractors had not fired on the crowd but "fell back" before resuming aid operations. Israel said its troops nearby had fired warning shots. Ajith Sunghay, head of the UN Human Rights Office for the Palestinian territories, had earlier told reporters in Geneva that 47 people were wounded, mostly by gunfire. In a separate development, Israel said it had carried out airstrikes Wednesday on the international airport in Yemen's capital, Sanaa, after Iran-backed Houthi rebels fired several missiles at the country in recent days, without causing casualties. The Israeli military said it destroyed aircraft used by the rebels. Israel last struck the airport in Sanaa on May 6, destroying the airport's terminal and leaving its runway riddled with craters. Some flights resumed to Sanaa on May 17. The distribution hub outside Gaza's southernmost city of Rafah was opened the day before by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, which has been slated by Israel to take over aid operations. The UN and other humanitarian organisations have rejected the new system, saying it won't be able to meet the needs of Gaza's 2.3 million people and allows Israel to use food as a weapon to control the population. They have also warned of the risk of friction between Israeli troops and people seeking supplies. Palestinians have become desperate for food after nearly three months of Israeli border closures pushed Gaza to the brink of famine.

was later named the overall leader of the group after Israel

killed his predecessor Ismail Haniyeh in Iran.

US, Russia clash in public as Ukraine war heats up

REUTERS

Moscow/Kyiv, May 28: The United States and Russia quarrelled in public Wednesday over the intensifying Ukraine war after U.S. President Donald Trump warned that President Vladimir Putin was "playing with fire" and Moscow massed 50,000 troops near a Ukrainian region.

While world leaders bicker over the prospects for peace, the deadliest conflict in Europe since World War Two is heating up fast: swarms of drones are being launched by both sides while Russia is advancing at key points along the front.

Trump, in a post on Truth Social, said that Putin was playing with fire and cautioned that "REALLY BAD" things would have happened already to Russia if it was not for Trump himself.

"What Vladimir Putin doesn't realize is that if it weren't for me, lots of really bad things would have already happened in Russia,



and I mean REALLY BAD. He's playing with fire." Trump said in a Truth Social post on Tuesday.

Top Russian security official Dmitry Medvedev, a former president, dismissed Trump's criticism. "Regarding Trump's words about Putin 'playing with fire' and 'really bad things' happening to Russia. I only know of one REALLY BAD thing — WWII. I hope Trump understands this!" Medvedev wrote in English on the social media platform X.

Trump's envoy, Keith Kellogg, on Wednesday quoted Medvedev's post and said it was reckless. "Stoking fears of WW III is an unfortunate, reckless comment... and unfitting of a world power," Kellogg said on X.

After speaking to Trump on May 19 for more than two hours, Putin said that he had agreed to work with Ukraine on a memorandum which would set out the contours of a peace accord including the timing of a ceasefire.



grooming young killers. Their experiences reveal the growing brutalization of Mexican society and the failure of President Claudia Sheinbaum and past governments to address not only the expanding territorial influence of the cartels but their extensive cultural hold too.

Mexico's presidency and interior ministry did not reply to requests for comment.

The news agency contacted active cartel members through

French surgeon gets 20 yrs jail term for raping 299 children

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paris, May 28: A 74-year-old paedophile and former surgeon who raped hundreds of victims over a period spanning more than two decades was given a maximum 20-year prison sentence Friday by a French court.

Joel Le Scouarnec was found guilty of raping and sexually assaulting 299 children.

Judges followed the public prosecutor's recommendations regarding the length of the sentence and the criminal court of Morbihan ordered that Le Scouarnec should serve at least two-thirds of the sentence before he can be eligible for release.

Le Scouarnec is already serving a 15-year prison sentence, for a conviction in 2020 for the rape and sexual assault of four children, including two nieces.

The new trial in Brittany, western France, began in February and laid bare a pattern of abuse between 1989 and 2014. Most of the victims were unconscious or sedated hospital patients at the time of the assaults. The average age was 11. Among the victims were 158 boys and 141 girls.

During the trial, advocacy groups have accused health authorities of inaction after they were notified as soon as 2005 of Le Scouarnec's conviction for possessing child pornography pictures. At the time, no measures were taken to suspend his medical license or limit his contact with children and Le Scouarnec continued his abuse in hospitals until his arrest in 2017.

BRAZIL SUES BYD

Brazilian prosecutors said Tuesday they are suing Chinese electric vehicle giant BYD and two of its contractors over allegations of using workers in slave-like labour conditions and engaging in international human trafficking



BNP stages massive rally demanding polls by Dec



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhaka, May 28: Former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) intensified pressure on the Muhammad Yunus-led interim government Wednesday as tens of thousands of youths staged a massive rally demanding elections by December.

"The national election must be held by December. Preparations must begin immediately," BNP's acting chairman Tarique Rahman said as he joined the rally through a virtual platform from London, where he currently lives.

He alleged the government's "delay tactics" in staging elections and push for "so-called reforms" were part of a broader plan to derail democratic processes.

"In the past, all caretaker governments held fair elections within three months. Today, it's been over 10 months and yet, the government has not even announced the date of the election," Rahman said.

The Chief Adviser Yunus-led interim government took charge after the toppling of the former premier Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League government's regime in August last year.

Tens of thousands of youths from across Bangladesh rallied in the capital in an apparent show of strength against the newly emerged student-led National Citizen Party, floated with Yunus' blessings.

The NCP, born out of last year's deadly student-led protests under a platform called Students Against Discrimination (SAD), insists elections must wait until key reforms are completed.

Yunus, currently on an official visit to Japan, reiterated on Wednesday that elections would be held between December this year and June next year, depending on the extent of reforms required.

Earlier this week, his advisory council, effectively the cabinet, issued a statement following an unscheduled closed-door meeting stating that the interim government was entrusted with three primary responsibilities-- "elections, reforms, and

justice".

The "justice" issue is related to the trial of deposed premier Hasina, who is now in India, and leaders of her now-disbanded Awami League party and the government, which was toppled by the student-led movement last year.

Senior BNP leader Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury told the party's youth rally that there was no scope to delay polls on the plea for reforms.

He said that even if political parties lacked consensus on reform issues as propagated, the next elected government would carry on the required reforms.

"If the justice process remains incomplete, BNP will take the responsibility to complete it," he said, expressing the party's strong confidence about its possible victory in the elections.

Another senior BNP leader Mirza Abbas said, "The (interim) government gave us nothing but disregard in the past nine months. We received nothing except neglect in these nine months".

"I want to say one thing — most (advisers/officials) of this government are not even citizens of this country. They are talking about doing many things today. I want to tell them, you don't need to do all this," Abbas said.

Last week, Army chief General Waker-Uz-Zaman also piled on the pressure by calling for elections by December and airing dissatisfaction over the political situation.

Zaman, along with the navy and air force chiefs, met Yunus last week and reportedly reiterated their call for an election by December this year to allow an elected government to take charge.

The next day, Zaman held a senior officers meeting at Dhaka Cantonment and said he was unaware of several strategic decisions despite the military's active role.

The military's reported discord with the interim government was followed by unrest in civil administration, as government employees continued their protests against a proposed law which would ease their termination.

How Mexico's cartels recruit kids and groom them into killers

REUTERS

Mexico City, May 28: Sol remembers her first kill for a Mexican cartel: a kidnapping she committed with a handful of other young recruits that twisted into torture and bled into murder. She was 12 years old. Sol had joined the drug cartel a few months earlier, recruited by someone she knew as she sold roses on the sidewalk outside a local bar. She started as a lookout, but rose fast.

The cartel liked her childish enthusiasm for learning new skills, her unquestioning loyalty, and perhaps most importantly, her status as a minor protected her from severe punishment if the cops ever caught her.

"I obeyed the boss blindly," Sol, now 20 years old, told Reuters, speaking from the rehabilitation center in central Mexico where she is trying to patch her life back together. "I thought they loved me."

Sol declined to say how many people she killed during her time in the cartel. She said she'd been addicted to methamphetamine from the age of

nine. When she was 16 she was arrested for kidnapping - her only criminal conviction - and spent three years in juvenile detention, according to her lawyer.

Reuters is withholding Sol's full name, and the names of the city where she worked and the cartel she joined, to protect her. The news agency was unable to independently verify the details of Sol's account, although psychologists at the center and her lawyer said they believed it was accurate.

Security experts say children like Sol are a casualty of a deliberate strategy by Mexican organized crime groups to recruit minors into their ranks by preying on their hunger for status and camaraderie.

In cartel slang they are known as 'pollitos de colores' or 'colorful chicks,' after the fluffy baby chicks sprayed with lurid toxic colors and sold at Mexican fairgrounds. They're cheap, burn bright, and don't live long.

Reuters spoke to 10 current and six former child assassins, as well as four senior cartel operatives, who said cartels are increasingly recruiting and

Facebook and TikTok. Many shared pictures of themselves holding rifles, one had a cap emblazoned with a cartoon chicken firing off automatic rounds - a reference to the 'colorful chicks.' They were aged between 14 and 17.

Most said they had been recruited by relatives or friends, joining principally out of a desire to belong to something. They usually came from homes wrecked by violence and drugs.

Many were already battling ad-

dictions of their own to drugs like cocaine or methamphetamine.

"You join with your death sentence already signed," said one 14-year-old child killer who has worked for a cartel for eight months, requesting anonymity to protect themselves. "But it's worth it," they said. Now they're no longer hungry and have a sense of family.

Although 15 security experts and those within the cartels say child recruitment is becoming more common, a lack of hard data makes the issue difficult to track.

The U.S. government's Bureau of International Labor Affairs estimates that some 30,000 children have joined criminal groups in Mexico. Advocacy groups say the number of vulnerable children prone to being recruited is as high as 200,000. It is not clear how these numbers have changed over time, though experts say child recruits are getting younger.

A Mexican government report into the cartel recruitment of children published last year found minors as young as six have joined organized crime

and also highlighted the growing use of technology, like video games and social media, to draw in young recruits.

The report said 70% of adolescents pulled into the cartels grew up surrounded by high levels of extreme violence.

In 2021, Mexican authorities intercepted three boys between the ages of 11 and 14 in the state of Oaxaca who they said were about to join a cartel after being recruited through the violent multiplayer game "Free Fire."

Mexico's National Guard has since issued guidelines on the safe use of video games, while a legislative proposal is currently before the Lower House seeking to criminalize the cultural glorification of crime in music, TV, and video games.

"We see more and more criminal groups co-opting ever younger children," said Dulce Leal, a director at Reinserta, an advocacy group focused on children who have been victims of organized crime. She said this trend has grown alongside the use of new technologies like video games with integrated chat messaging systems.

of the day

quote

India is becoming a global DC hotspot, fuelled by rapid digitalisation, data localisation norms and strong government support. As this growth trajectory continues, India's DC capacity is likely to cross 4,500 MW in the next 5-6 years, translating into a real estate footprint of 55 million sq ft

JATIN SHAH

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, COLLIERIES INDIA

GROWiT aims to transform agriculture by increasing yields, cutting input costs, and driving sustainable farming, positioning us as a comprehensive, one-stop solution for farmers

SAURABH AGARWAL

FOUNDER AND CEO, GROWIT

The doubling of our SCF (supply chain finance) business to Rs 350 crore and consistent performance of the overall portfolio indicate our disciplined approach and deep sector understanding

ANKUR BANSAL

MD, BLACKSOIL

SHORT TAKES

PepsiCo India sees profit at ₹883.4cr

New Delhi: PepsiCo India Holdings Pvt Ltd's consolidated revenue from operations stood at Rs 9,096.62 crore in 2024 and its profit at Rs 883.39 crore, the company said in a filing to the registrar of companies (RoC). Total consolidated income of PepsiCo India Holdings, which includes other income, was at Rs 9,268.04 crore in 2024. This is the full report for 12 months as PepsiCo had last year changed its financial year from April-March to January-December period. In 2023, it had filed results for nine months (from April to December) to implement the change. It had reported a consolidated revenue from operations at Rs 5,954.16 crore in the nine months ended in December 2023, while its profit stood at Rs 217.26 crore, according to the financial data accessed by the business intelligence platform Tofler.

Adani Ports plans debt mkt comeback

Mumbai: Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone, India's largest private port operator, plans a return to the domestic bond market after a 17-month hiatus in what could be its largest-ever rupee denominated debt issue, three merchant bankers said Wednesday. The company is set to raise as much as Rs 50 billion (\$583.57 million) through the sale of bonds maturing in 15 years and has invited bids from bankers and investors Thursday, the bankers, who did not want to be named because they are not authorised to speak to media said.

Hero FinCorp set to float ₹3,668 cr IPO

New Delhi: Hero FinCorp, the financial services division of two-wheeler manufacturer Hero MotoCorp, has received Sebi's go-ahead to float a Rs 3,668 crore Initial Public Offering (IPO), an update with the markets regulator showed Wednesday. The proposed IPO is a combination of fresh issue of equity shares worth Rs 2,100 crore and an Offer For Sale (OFS) of Rs 1,568 crore by investor shareholders, according to the Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP).

Achieving near-human reasoning capabilities, GenAI is not just another tech cycle, it is a civilisational shift

N CHANDRASEKARAN

CHAIRMAN, TATA SONS

JUNIPER GREEN TURNS PUBLIC IN RUN-UP TO IPO

In preparation for its initial public offering (IPO), renewable power producer Juniper Green Energy has transitioned from a private entity into a public company. The entity has been renamed from Juniper Green Energy Pvt Ltd to Juniper Green Energy Ltd, data with the Ministry of Corporate Affairs showed



INDIA STORY INTACT: WEF

CHIEF ECONOMISTS SEE GLOBAL GROWTH COMING UNDER STRAIN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 28: Chief economists from across the world are the most optimistic about a strong economic expansion in South Asia, with India looking set to be the primary engine of growth in 2025 and 2026, a new survey showed Wednesday.

The chief economists, however, warned of the overall global growth coming under strain from trade policy shocks and AI disruption, the World Economic Forum (WEF) said in its latest 'Chief Economists Outlook' report.

A majority of surveyed economists saw the current US economic policy as having a lasting global impact, with 87 per cent expecting it to delay strategic business decisions and heighten recession risks.

The global growth outlook was divided, with weak prospects in North America, resilience in Asia-Pacific and cautious optimism in Europe.

"The outlook for China remains muted, and the chief economists were divided over whether it will reach its target of 5 per cent GDP growth this year." "Optimism remains highest for South Asia, where 33 per cent expect strong or very strong growth this year," the WEF said.

The survey of chief economists from across the world in private and public sectors found that the growth outlook for South Asia has been robust despite a challenging global environment.

Among all regions, chief economists surveyed were most optimistic about South Asia's prospects, with one-third expecting strong or very strong growth for the remainder of



Polymakers and business leaders must respond to heightened uncertainty and trade tensions with greater coordination, strategic agility and investment in the growth potential of transformative technologies like artificial intelligence

SAADIA ZAHIDI | MD, WEF

2025. However, the region's immediate challenges intensified in early May with the outbreak of military exchanges between India and Pakistan.

Across the region, chief economists expected moderate to high inflation.

The report noted that India, South Asia's largest economy, looked set to be the primary engine of growth, with GDP expansion forecast by the IMF at 6.2 per cent for 2025 and 6.3 per cent in 2026.

Although the rerouting of Chinese exports is casting a shadow over the region's economic prospects, a recently concluded trade deal between India and the UK was another source of optimism, it said.

Globally, public debt concerns were seen mounting as defence spending rises, with 86 per cent of chief economists expecting increased government borrowing.

Artificial intelligence was expected to drive growth, but 47 per cent anticipated net job losses.

The global economic outlook has worsened since the start of the year, as rising economic nationalism and tariff volatility fuel uncertainty and risk stalling long-term decision-making, the report said.

According to the WEF, a strong majority (79 per cent) of surveyed economists view the current geoeconomic developments as signs of a significant structural shift for the global economy rather than a temporary disruption.

"Polymakers and business leaders must respond to heightened uncertainty and trade tensions with greater coordination, strategic agility and investment in the growth potential of transformative technologies like artificial intelligence," WEF Managing

Interim trade deal between India, US likely by June 25

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 28: With a team of US officials expecting to visit India next month for trade talks, there is a possibility that the two countries may agree on an interim trade pact by June 25, sources said.

"Talks are moving. Things are on track," they said.

India's chief negotiator, Special Secretary in the Department of Commerce Rajesh Agrawal, concluded his four-day visit to Washington last week. He held talks with his US counterpart on the proposed agreement.

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal was also in Washington last week to give an impetus to trade talks. He met with US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick twice during his visit.

Both sides are looking at an interim trade deal before the first tranche of the proposed bilateral trade agreement (BTA) as the USA's 26 per cent reciprocal tariff on India is sus-



ended till July 9 this year. It was imposed by the US April 2. However, Indian goods still attract the 10 per cent baseline tariff imposed by America.

In the interim trade deal, New Delhi is pushing for full exemption from the 26 per cent reciprocal tariff on domestic goods. Both countries have fixed a deadline to conclude the first phase of the proposed BTA by the fall (September-October) of this year.

The US remained India's largest trading partner for the fourth consecutive year in 2024-25, with bilateral trade valued at \$131.84 billion. The US accounts for about 18 per cent of India's total goods exports, 6.22 per cent in imports, and 10.73 per cent in the country's total merchandise trade.

Industrial production growth slips to 2.7%

The NSO data showed that the manufacturing sector's output growth slightly decelerated to 3.4 per cent in April 2025 from 4.2 per cent in the year-ago month

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 28: India's industrial production growth slowed to 2.7 per cent in April 2025 due to poor performance of manufacturing, mining and power sectors, according to official data released Wednesday.

The factory output, measured in terms of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), rose by 5.2 per cent in April 2024, the data showed. The National Statistics Office (NSO) also revised upwards industrial production growth for March to 3.9 per cent from the earlier estimate of 3 per cent released last month. The IIP growth was 2.7 in February also.

The NSO data showed that the manufacturing sector's output growth slightly decelerated to 3.4 per cent in April 2025 from 4.2 per cent in the year-ago month. Mining production contracted by 0.2 per cent as against a growth of 6.8 per cent a year ago.

Power output growth also slowed to 1 per cent in April



2025 against 10.2 per cent in the year-ago period. As per user-based classification, the capital goods segment growth accelerated to 20.3 per cent in April 2025 from 2.8 per cent in the year-ago period.

Consumer durables (or white goods production) grew 6.4 per cent during the reporting month against a growth of 10.5 per cent in April 2024. In April 2025, consumer non-durables output contracted 1.7 per cent compared to a decline

Benchmarks fall for second day in a row



Sensex sheds 239 pts on selling in FMCG, auto shares

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 28: Stock markets declined for the second straight day with benchmark Sensex falling by 239 points, dragged by FMCG major ITC after British multinational BAT Plc trimmed its ownership in the conglomerate.

The 30-share BSE barometer declined 239.31 points or 0.29 per cent to settle at 81,312.32. During the day, it lost 307.61 points or 0.37 per cent to 81,244.02.

The 50-issue NSE Nifty dropped 73.75 points or 0.30 per cent to 24,752.45.

Among Sensex stocks, ITC fell over 3 per cent after BAT Plc trimmed its ownership in the conglomerate by divesting a 2.5 per cent stake for Rs 12,927 crore (\$1.51 billion) through a block deal.

IndusInd Bank, Nestle, UltraTech Cement, Mahindra & Mahindra, Power Grid, Asian Paints, Sun Pharma and Tech Mahindra were also among the laggards.

Bajaj Finance, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, Adani Ports and HCL Tech were among

the gainers. In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi settled in the positive territory while Japan's Nikkei 225 index, Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng ended lower.

Markets in Europe were trading lower.

US markets ended sharply higher Tuesday. Nasdaq Composite jumped 2.47 per cent, S&P 500 surged 2.05 per cent and Dow Jones Industrial Average climbed 1.78 per cent.

"The domestic indices remained rangebound with a negative bias, primarily due to the lack of support from FIIs and prevailing premium valuations. A lingering concern over India-US trade relations following the end of the 90-day pause period continues to pose an external risk," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 348.45 crore Tuesday, according to exchange data.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.69 per cent to \$64.57 a barrel. On Tuesday, the BSE Sensex dropped 624.82 points or 0.76 per cent to settle at 81,551.63. The Nifty declined 174.95 points or 0.70 per cent to 24,826.20.

PayPal gets RBI nod to operate as cross-border payment aggregator

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 28: PayPal Payments Pvt Ltd (PayPal), the Indian subsidiary of PayPal Holdings Inc, has received in-principle approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to operate as a Payment Aggregator-Cross Border-Exports (PA-CB-E).

This marks a key milestone in PayPal's operations in India and its continued support for Indian small businesses, enabling secure cross-border payments to approximately 200 markets, the company said in a statement.

The approval comes as India's exports reached \$73.8 billion in April 2025, underscoring the increasing momentum in cross-border trade.

"The in-principle PA-CB-E approval by RBI is a significant milestone for PayPal. It reflects the strength of India's regulatory vision and the progress toward seamless, secure cross-border transactions. As India grows into a global export hub, PayPal remains committed to empowering Indian businesses with trusted digital payment solutions," Nath Parameswaran, Senior Director - Government Relations at PayPal India, said.

With a growing suite of localised offerings, such as PayPal Checkout, PayPal Invoicing and No-Code checkout tools, PayPal is focused on simplifying global selling for Indian small businesses.

PayPal has a track record of innovating at every major inflection point in commerce over the last 25 years, Abid Murshed, Head of Sales at PayPal India, said.

"We have been operating in India for more than a decade, enabling small businesses and freelancers to participate in global commerce through trusted and secure payment solutions. As trade dynamics shift, presenting new challenges and opportunities, we stand by our customers as they expand into new trade corridors and meet evolving global customer expectations," Murshed added.



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 28: Apple's iPhone 16 was the world's best-selling smartphone in Q1 2025 (January-March period), according to a new report released Wednesday.

This also marked the return of the iPhone series' base variant to the top spot in the first quarter after a gap of two years, according to Counterpoint Research's 'Global Handset Model Sales Tracker'.

Apple maintained its strong presence in the top-10 list, securing five spots for the fifth consecutive March quarter.

Meanwhile, Samsung featured one fewer model compared to the same period last year. While the top 10 smartphones' share in overall glob-

al sales remained stable, the low-end (less than \$100) smartphones in the top 10 saw an increase in their contribution, the report noted.

The iPhone 16 performed well in Japan and the Middle East and Africa (MEA), with Japan recording the highest

growth in base variant sales.

Improved economic conditions and revised subsidy regulations favoured Apple's pricing strategy and ecosystem, further strengthening its appeal in the Japanese market.

The iPhone 16 Pro Max and iPhone 16 Pro ranked second

and third in the list, respectively. Apple's iPhone 16e made a strong debut, securing the sixth spot in the global top-10 list for March 2025, its first full month of sales.

Despite a higher price compared to the SE 2022, the 16e is expected to outperform its predecessor during its first year. This success will be largely driven by its significant technological advancements and expanded feature set, said the report. Samsung's Galaxy S25 Ultra secured the seventh spot in Q1 2025, down from the fifth spot held by the S24 Ultra in Q1 2024.

This shift was primarily due to a shorter sales window for the S25 Ultra during the quarter. Despite the limited availability, the S25 series delivered

steady results, contributing one-fourth of Samsung's total smartphone sales in its active sales month.

With deeper Gemini integration, the S25 series also signals Samsung's shift toward a more agentic AI experience, enhancing user productivity and personalisation.

Xiaomi's Redmi 14C 4G was the only model outside of Apple and Samsung to make it to the global top-10 list. It achieved an impressive 43 per cent YoY growth over the Redmi 13C 4G, said the report.

Going forward, despite ongoing tariff tensions and broader market uncertainties, the share of the top 10 best-selling smartphone models is expected to remain relatively stable, the report added.

Erigaisi stuns Gukesh



Erigaisi hands world champion Gukesh second defeat in two days

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Stavanger (Norway), May 28: World champion D Gukesh finds himself in deep trouble as compatriot Arjun Erigaisi broke through his defences in the second round to move into joint lead, while Hikaru Nakamura stunned Magnus Carlsen in the Armageddon tie-break on an eventful day in Norway Chess here.

Labelled as the favourite in the six-player double round-robin 'Open' category, Gukesh is scraping the bottom of the points table having lost the opening two rounds.

World No 4 Indian Erigaisi has emerged the joint leader with American Grandmaster Nakamura on 4.5 points.

In an all-Indian tension-filled clash, Erigaisi, playing with white pieces, seized the early initiative but Gukesh's resilient defence created a somewhat equal endgame.

As the clock became a decisive factor, the position erupted into chaos before Erigaisi finally broke through to secure victory in a slugfest that lasted over four hours.

Erigaisi, who had also spoilt Gukesh's party at the Tata Steel Chess earlier this year by taking a game away from

World No 4 Indian Erigaisi has emerged the joint leader with American Grandmaster Nakamura on 4.5 points

him just when he looked set to win the title, again dealt a huge body blow to the teenage world champion -- who turns 19 on Thursday, beating him in 62 moves.

Erigaisi, playing here for the first time, forced Gukesh to resign after giving him a check with his knight.

The victory for the 21-year-old, who achieved his peak rating of 2801 making him the 15th highest-rated player in history and only the second Indian after Viswanathan Anand to ever to cross the 2800 threshold in December, had on Monday overcome Chinese GM Wei Yi in Armageddon to secure 1.5 points.

Erigaisi, who enjoys a stunning 6-0 record in Classical wins against Gukesh, was "surprised" why Gukesh took so much time in the initial moves to find himself under time pressure.

Just before the 17th move, Gukesh found himself behind his opponent on the clock by more than one hour.

"I'm a bit surprised Gukesh is thinking this early on...the way he played this c3 move quite early on, I think it's not known at the highest level or it is not popular," said Erigaisi.

He will play American GM Fabiano Caruana in Round 3, while Gukesh will hope for a revival against Nakamura, one of the best in rapid and blitz chess.

Carlson vs Nakamura
The much-anticipated clash between world No 1 Carlson and No 2 Nakamura began with a deceptively quiet classical game. The Norwegian defending champion emerged satisfied from the opening.

However, after a series of precise moves on both sides, the game dissolved into a draw. In the Armageddon, Carlson got a dangerous attack out of the opening and seemed to have everything under control.

However, Armageddon can be unpredictable, and after a mistake in the endgame Nakamura found a brilliant move, winning the game.

Humpy, Viashali lose

In the women's section, Ukrainian Anna Muzychuk claimed a convincing victory over two-time world rapid champion Koneru Humpy. The Ukrainian gained a structural advantage from the opening

and methodically increased the pressure.

However, both players made several mistakes in the endgame. Eventually, it was Koneru who made the last mistake, as a result of which Muzychuk won the game.

The other two women's games -- between R Vaishali Rameshbabu and China's Tingjie Lei, and Spanish-Iranian player Sarasadat Khademalsharieh vs Ju Wenjun, ended in draws.

Lei Tingjie and Wenjun Ju then won their Armageddon games, winning the extra half-point.

The tournament's scoring system gives three points to the winner in the Classical format. If the Classical game is drawn, the players gain one point each and then play for another half-point in Armageddon.

RESULTS

Open: Arjun Erigaisi (Ind - 4.5) bt D Gukesh (Ind - 0) Hikaru Nakamura (USA - 4.5) bt Magnus Carlsen (Nor - 4) in Armageddon; Wei Yi (Chn - 1) lost to Fabiano Caruana (USA - 3)

Women: Sarasadat Khademalsharieh (Esp -2) beat with Ju Wenjun (Chn - 2.5) in Armageddon; R Vaishali (Ind) lost to Lie Tingjie (Chn -3) in Armageddon; Anna Muzychuk (Ukr - 4.5) bt Koneru Humpy (Ind - 3)

Iyer's tact up vs RCB's flair in battle of equals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mullanpur (Chandigarh), May 28: Shreyas Iyer's inspiring leadership will face its toughest test yet when Punjab Kings host an equally upbeat Royal Challengers Bengaluru in Qualifier 1 of the Indian Premier League here Thursday.

Having earned the cushion of a top-two finish, one can expect both teams to have a no holds barred approach knowing they will get another shot at reaching the final even if they come up short on the opening night of the play-offs.

Punjab Kings find themselves in unfamiliar territory having made the play-offs for the first time since 2014 but they are not carrying the baggage of the past in the Iyer-Ricky Ponting (head coach) era.

RCB, on the other hand, are way too familiar with heart-

IPL PLAYOFFS

breaks of the knock-out stages and like every season, are hoping to end their title drought. In their own words, the job is only half done for both title contenders.

The Iyer-Ponting partnership has resulted in a stellar turnaround for Punjab Kings, who have finally cracked the consistency code after more than a decade of under-performance.

The combination has managed to get the best out of the players making them a well-oiled unit.

The opening duo of Prabhsimran Singh and rookie Priyansh Arya has laid the platform for the likes of Iyer and Josh Inglis to build.

Finisher Shashank Singh continues to improve his game with each passing season and more recently, Australian import Marcus Stoinis finding his range with the bat makes the batting look more formidable.

The concerns lie in the bowling department, especially after the departure of South African Marco Jansen, who has returned home for national duty.

Jansen bowled the crucial overs both in the powerplay and death and the team will certainly miss him on Thursday night.



Kyle Jamieson showed promise in his debut for the franchise but will need to bowl better upfront to make an impact. Batting all-rounder Azmatullah Omarzai could take Jansen's spot.

Leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal, who missed the last two games due to a finger injury, is expected to return for the big game and bowl alongside the ever accurate Harpreet Brar.

Arshdeep Singh has been the standout pacer for his longtime franchise, delivering in all phases of the game.

RCB too had injury concerns going into the business end of the tournament but they have been allayed to a good extent.

Pacer Josh Hazlewood is expected to regain full fitness and Tim David too would be available for selection, lending more balance to the side.

RCB have been branded as a top heavy outfit for years but that appears to be changing with the likes of Jitesh Sharma

realising their potential in the middle-order. Jitesh played the best innings of his IPL career on Tuesday night and his confidence will be sky high going into the play-offs.

It would be important from the team's point of view that Phil Salt is at his destructive best in the powerplay and Virat Kohli keeps batting like he has been through the season, racking up fifties with ridiculous ease.

RCB will take positives out of their win over Punjab Kings at this venue in the league stage. The pitch has been rather unpredictable with 200 scored only once in the first innings of the four games played here.

But Punjab Kings will have the belief of winning from the brink at their home ground having defended 111 against KKR last month.

The stakes will be high but both teams will treat the game as a stepping stone to their ultimate goal.

SHORT TAKES

Pugilists enter semis

Bangkok: Indian pugilists continued their strong showing at the fourth Thailand Open International Boxing Tournament, with Tamanna, Priya and Deepak assuring themselves of at least bronze medals by entering the semifinals here Wednesday. In the women's 51kg category, Tamanna put in a composed performance to beat Liu Yu-Shan of Chinese Taipei by unanimous decision. Priya (57kg) followed it up with a confident 5-0 win over South Korea's Park Ah-hyun, controlling the bout from start to finish. India fielded a 19-member strong contingent in the prestigious boxing tournament, held under the aegis of World Boxing-backed Asian Boxing, that has attracted talented boxers from powerhouses like China, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, South Korea, and host Thailand.

India beat Argentina

Rosario: Goalkeeper and captain Nidhi pulled off four consecutive saves as India edged past hosts Argentina 2-0 on shootout following a 1-1 deadlock in the Four Nations junior women's hockey tournament here. Kanika (44') scored India's lone goal during regulation time, while Lalrinpui and Lalhantluangi netted in the shootout to secure the victory in their third match of the tournament. Argentina got off to a strong start, with Milagros Del Valle (10') giving the home side the lead in the first quarter before India responded in the third quarter through Kanika's strike. India will take on Chile in their next fixture Friday.

Yamal extends contract

Barcelona: FC Barcelona and Lamine Yamal have reached an agreement for the renewal of his contract which will now tie him to the Club until June 30, 2031. The player signed his new contract Tuesday at the Club's offices in the presence of FC Barcelona president Joan Laporta, first vice president Rafa Yusta, and the Club's sporting director Anderson Luis de Souza "Deco", amongst others.

Asian Athletics Championships

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gumi (South Korea), May 28: India's 4x400m mixed relay team defended its gold with a domineering performance after four individual silvers and a bronze in varying events bolstered the country's overall tally to eight medals on a brilliant second day outing at the 26th Asian Athletics Championship here.

The Indian quartet of Rupal Chaudhary, Santhosh Kumar, Vishal TK and Subha Venkatesan won the top honours with a timing of 3:18.12sec. Of these, Rupal also claimed the individual women's 400m silver earlier in the day. Subha, on the other hand, was a part of the mixed team that claimed gold in the 2023 edition.

China, who finished a distant second with a time of 3:20.52s, and Sri Lanka, who clocked 3:21.95s to take third place, were

Mixed relay team runs to gold



both disqualified. The reasons for their disqualification have not been disclosed yet.

Due to the disqualifications, Kazakhstan (3:22.70s) and Korea (3:22.87s) clinched the silver and bronze medals respectively.

The largely US-based Tejaswin Shankar was among the sil-

ver-winners for India, finishing second in decathlon after accumulating a score of 7618 following the regulation 10 events. He ended behind China's Fei Xiang (7634) and ahead of Japan's Keisuke Okuda (7602). Praveen Chithravel also bagged a silver medal in men's triple jump with

a best effort of 16.90m.

Earlier, Rupal (400m) and Pooja (1500m) picked up silver medals, Yoonus Shah fetched a bronze in men's 1500m.

The mixed gold was India's second top finish after national record-holder Gulveer Singh's (10,000m) brilliance Tuesday.

Big surprise in sumo as it gets Japanese champion

Usually dominated by Mongolians, Onosato, the new grand champion is the first Japanese competitor to reach the top rank since 2017

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tokyo, May 28: Japan has a new sumo grand champion -- or yokozuna -- and the big news is he's Japanese.

Onosato, the new grand champion, weighs 191 kilograms (421 pounds) and he is the first Japanese competitor to reach the top rank since 2017. By comparison, the average weight of an NFL lineman is about 140 kilos, or just over 300 pounds.

The sport has recently been dominated by Mongolians and prior to Onosato, six of the previous seven yokozunas have been from Mongolia.

"I'll devote myself to training so that I will not disgrace the title of yokozuna," Onosato said Wednesday, dressed in a formal kimono and bowing as he sat on the floor. "I will aim to become a one-and-only yokozuna."

Onosato, whose real name is Daiki Nakamura, is only 24 and was promoted Wednesday to sumo's top rank by the Japan Sumo Association. Onosato was promoted by winning last week's Summer Grand Sumo Tournament, which came after he won another prestigious tournament in March.

Onosato is from Ishikawa prefecture, which was hit on

Jan. 1, 2024, by a devastating earthquake and tsunami that killed about 600 people in the prefecture



and caused widespread damage. Much of the destruction was centered on an area known as the Noto Peninsula.

"I will work hard as a yokozuna to encourage and cheer up the Ishikawa prefecture and the Noto region," he said.

He then added: "I determined that yokozuna should be my goal once I entered the world of sumo," he said. "It's not easy to achieve and I'm really delighted."

Sumo is regarded as Japan's national sport, or most sacred sport, and many of the ritual elements are connected to Shinto, Japan's indigenous religion. Sumo's origins date back

more than 1,000 years, and Japan is the only country where it is contested on a professional level.

The sport is highly regimented with many wrestlers living in communal training facilities where food and dress are controlled by ancient traditions.

Onosato's promotion will set up an instant rivalry with Mongolia-born Hoshoryu, who is the other wrestler in Japan to hold the yokozuna title.

The Japanese news agency Kyodo said the two sumo stars are due to meet in a tournament in July in the central city of Nagoya.