



NO LOOKING BACK

Actor Priyanka Chopra says she doesn't want to look back and comment on her husband's dating history

LEISURE P2



TOUGH TIMES FOR IMRAN

Pakistan's former Prime Minister Imran Khan sent to 8 days in custody by Islamabad court for graft

INTERNATIONAL P10



WRESTLERS' NEW DEMAND

Protesting wrestlers demand Narco test on WFI chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh under SC's supervision

SPORTS P12



People queue up to cast their votes during the bypoll at a booth in Kolabira block of Jharsuguda district

68% turnout in Jharsuguda bypoll

The bypoll was necessitated due to the murder of former Odisha Health Minister Naba Das who was shot dead January 29, this year

started at 7.00am and continued till 6.00pm in all 253 booths of the constituency. Before the polls began faulty EVMs and VVPATs were replaced, said chief electoral officer (CEO), Odisha, Nikunja Bihari Dhal. "Till 5.00 pm, a total of 1,51,035 voters had exercised their franchise. This is approximately 68.12 per cent of those eligible to vote. Among those who voted, 74,008 are males, 77,020 females and seven of other genders," Dhal informed. "Minor clashes were reported in three polling booths. However, no major disturbances were reported. Live webcasting was done in all 253 booths. The polling

was conducted smoothly in the constituency," the CEO informed. A total of nine candidates are in the fray including former Odisha Health Minister Naba Das's daughter Dipali Das (BJD). The other major contenders are Tankadhar Tripathy (BJP) and Tarun Pandey (Congress). A total of 1,814 police personnel (including 155 officers, 17 platoons of armed police, 323 constables and 205 home guards) and seven companies of CAPF were deployed for smooth conduct of the byelection. The counting of votes will be done May 13 and the results will be declared the same day.

Man kills lady doc in Kerala hospital

In the past, there have been many incidents of aggrieved relatives of patients manhandling doctors, but in this case it was the patient who attacked the doctor with murderous intentions

AGENCIES

Kollam/Thiruvananthapuram, May 10: A 23-year-old doctor was stabbed to death Wednesday at a taluk hospital in Kottarakkara locality of this district in Kerala allegedly by a man, a school teacher under suspension. The man identified as Sandeep, had been brought to the hospital by the police after being involved in a fight with his family members.

According to an officer of Kottarakkara police station, while a wound on the leg of Sandeep was being dressed by Dr Vandana Das, he suddenly attacked everyone standing there using a scissor and scalpel. The incident oc-



Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan condoled the death of the doctor and said the incident was 'shocking and extremely painful'. "Assaulting health workers in the line of duty is unacceptable. A thorough investigation will be conducted into the incident. The government will take strong action against attacks on doctors and health workers," Vijayan said in a statement. Both the Indian Medical Association (IMA) and Kerala Government Medical Officers' Association (KGMOA) doctors protested across the state against the incident. The murder kicked off a political row. Health Minister Veena George's statement before the media that the victim was a house surgeon and therefore, inexperienced and got scared when the attack occurred drew flak. The brunt of the attack was borne by the young doctor who was stabbed repeatedly. She was rushed to a private hospital in Thiruvananthapuram but could not be saved. Some of the police personnel were also injured as they tried to disarm Sandeep.

CPI(M) leader dies in bee attack

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nilagiri, May 10: Senior CPI(M) leader of Nilagiri area in Balasore district, Ramachandra Shaw, 72, died Wednesday after being bitten by a swarm of honeybees at Bankisahi village under Garadi panchayat. His grandson was also rendered critical due to the bee attack and is currently undergoing treatment at a hospital here. In a separate incident, 15 persons were injured after a swarm of bees stung them at Karanja village under Kalyansinghpur block in Rayagada district. Shaw was attacked by the bees when he was cleaning the backyard of his house and he set fire to dry leaves and other garbage materials. Incited by the smoke, the bees from a nearby hive attacked Shaw in swarms. Such was the ferocity of the stings, that Shaw collapsed on the spot. Hearing his screams, family members rushed to Shaw's rescue. However, the bees did not spare them either. Shaw's grandson was the worst sufferer. Family members rushed Shaw to a local health centre initially, but then shifted him to a hospital here. However, he succumbed to his injuries there. Shaw's body was brought to the CPI(M) office here where a number of leaders paid their last respects to the departed soul. Later, he was cremated at his native village.

India-Pak ODI WC tie at Chennai Oct 15

New Delhi: India will play their opening game of the 50 overs World Cup to be played later this year in the country against Australia as per news in a cricket-specific website. The blockbuster match of the tournament against Pakistan will be played at Chennai, October 15. The tournament will begin October 5 in Ahmedabad and will close at the same venue with the final being played November 19.

2 IAS officers get new responsibilities

Bhubaneswar: IAS officer Siddhartha Das has been appointed as the director of sports, a notification issued Wednesday by the General Administration and Public Grievance department said. In a similar development, IAS officer Deepankar Mohapatra has been appointed as the MD of Odisha Small Industries Corporation Ltd.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



It was part of undivided India, it is behaving like it's the 'aunt of democracy'

JD(S) SET TO PLAY KINGMAKER AGAIN

Exit polls by various agencies once more back JD(S) to bag a sizeable number of seats in Karnataka and have a say in government formation

AGENCIES

Bangalore, May 10: Some incidents of minor violence and arrests due to casting of false votes were reported, but overall the Karnataka Assembly elections went off peacefully with 66 per cent turnout recorded till 5.00pm Wednesday.

Most of the exit polls predicted a hung Assembly once again as had happened in the 2018. Some however, predicted that the Congress may win the maximum number of seats in the polls and a majority of the agencies pointed to decrease in the number of seats for the BJP. However, there was no clear majority for any single party. (See graphics)

According to the latest voter turnout for the polls to the 224-member Assembly, Ramanagara recorded the highest turnout of 78.22 per cent, while the lowest polling was from Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) South limits (parts of Bangalore city) at 48.63 per cent, election officials said.

The state is mainly witnessing a three-cornered contest between the ruling BJP, the Congress and former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda's Janata Dal (Secular).

Meanwhile in the only major incident of violence reported during the day, villagers of Masabinala in Vijayapura district stopped a poll duty vehicle carrying electronic voting machines (EVMs), manhandled an officer and damaged control and ballot units fol-

| Source | BJP | Cong | JD(S) | Other |
|------------------|-------|---------|-------|-------|
| ABP News-C Voter | 83-95 | 100-112 | 21-29 | 0-4 |
| Zee News | 79-94 | 103-118 | 25-33 | 2-5 |
| India TV-CNX | 80-90 | 110-120 | 20-24 | 0 |
| India Today-Axis | 62-80 | 122-140 | 20-25 | 1-3 |
| Times Now | 85 | 113 | 23 | 3 |
| TV9 Bharatvarsh | 88-98 | 99-109 | 21-26 | 0 |

lowing which 23 people were arrested, the Election Commission said.

Meanwhile, in Padmanabhanagar constituency, some youths armed with sticks attacked their political rivals in a polling booth at Papaiah Garden. In another incident a polling officer was taken into police custody after a woman complained that he cast her vote in favour of the BJP while helping her with the voting process. The incident occurred at a polling booth in Chittapur constituency in Kalaburgi district.

A total of 5.31 crore electors were eligible to cast their votes in 38,545 polling stations across the state, where 2,615 candidates are in fray.

Prominent among those who voted include former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, who is a Rajya Sabha member from Karnataka, Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai and former Chief Ministers BS Yediyurappa and DV Sadananda Gowda (both BJP) and Siddaramaiah and Jagadish Shettar (both Congress) and IT industry veteran NR Narayana Murthy and wife Sudha Murthy.

Incidentally Karnataka recorded a voter turnout of 72.36 per cent in the 2018 Assembly elections.

Trump guilty of sexually abusing writer

This is not the only time the former US president has been accused of rape. Suits have been filed by Jill Harth, Summer Zervos and Alva Johnson who have all accused Trump of sexually molesting them

AGENCIES

New York, May 10: Former US President Donald Trump sexually abused and defamed author and advice columnist E Jean Carroll in 1996, a Manhattan federal jury has found and awarded her USD 5 million for battery and defamation, a verdict that may hurt him in his 2024 bid to regain the White House.

The jury found that Trump sexually abused Carroll, holding him liable for battery charges but did not find that



Carroll proved he raped her. Carroll has alleged that Trump raped her in the Bergdorf Goodman department store in Manhattan. The jury verdict against

Trump comes just over a month after a grand jury in Manhattan indicted the 76-year-old, for his role in paying hush money to porn star Stormy Daniels.

Trump's attorney Joe Tacopina said outside the court that Trump will appeal the verdict and called it 'strange'. "This was a rape claim and the jury rejected it," he said.

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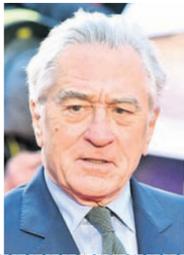
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leisure



DE NIRO WELCOMES 7TH CHILD MONTHS BEFORE 80TH B'DAY

Hollywood star Robert De Niro has revealed that he has become a father to his seventh child, just months before his 80th birthday. It, however, remains unclear who he has welcomed the baby with.

NIALL HORAN DESIRES DICAPRIO FOR BIOPIC

Irish singer Niall Horan of boy band *One Direction* stated that he would like Leonardo DiCaprio to play him. If a movie about the well-known boy band is ever made, Horan, 29, wants the 48-year-old Titanic star to play him because of their similarity, reports *aceshowbiz.com*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES
You will be very logical and rational today, as creativity is put on the back-burner. The situation at your workplace will be full of challenges, but you will take them head-on. Later, all the stress will be mitigated by the soothing touch of your loved ones, says Ganesha.

TAURUS
It will be an optimistic day with its share of day dreaming, says Ganesha. You will be submissive at work, giving in or blindly following the advice of your peers. Things at work may be tense and cause some trouble today afternoon, but they will be much more to your liking by nightfall as you return to the comfort of your beloved and your home.

GEMINI
Today will prove to be an emotional and engaging day for you, predicts Ganesha. Fortune will favour you, though your emotions may cloud your reasoning and slow down your progress. Your spare time will be spent on devising methods to make the best use of your knowledge.

CANCER
Today, you will use money to fulfil your needs. If there is anything that according to you needs changing, you will throw some money to get it changed. Your loved ones will celebrate your financial gains and spend some more of it in the process.

LEO
Maybe it is the weather, or just one of those days, but today, you are extremely prone to wild mood swings, says Ganesha. You must remember that nothing is permanent, except change. So go with the flow and do not get caught in the undercurrent of the changes that are taking place all around you.

VIRGO
Today you will find yourself overflowing with ideas. You have a soothing touch, and so you will be able to help many people, says Ganesha. You will be very considerate, and your mind-reading abilities will work wonders both for you and your loved ones.

LIBRA
Love is in the air, and passion lurks right around the corner. So keep your eyes and ears open, because you may soon find yourself entrapped in a passionate love episode. But the price of new love is always steep, and your beloved may burn a hole in your pocket. Still, with someone like that, you are always assured of getting good value for your money! So bring on the champagne and the caviar! Ganesha wishes you a splendid time ahead.

SCORPIO
You shall groom yourself all prim and proper today. The thought of how you look dominates your mind today. You are likely to capture the imagination of people – both at work and at social gathering. Cash will exit left, right and centre from your pockets on account of fun and entertainment.

SAGITTARIUS
Dark and gloomy shall be your temperament for most part of the day today. But the afternoon may just see the skies clearing. The apparent mood change, says Ganesha; will mainly be because of good news from abroad and business profits from your partner.

CAPRICORN
Certain revelations about a relationship will draw your attention; you will find it intriguing and will spend a good amount of time trying to solve the mystery, says Ganesha. Besides, your impressive communication power will help dissolve conflicts that may have risen because of misinterpretation.

AQUARIUS
You have managed to carve a niche for yourself. Today, you may see the tangible benefits of all your past hard work. But business rivals may poke and pinch; even your health may trouble you.

PISCES
You are unlikely to be your calm and lucid self today. You will likely catch yourself worrying unnecessarily and putting in more efforts than required at work. However, some leisure time will come your way in the evening wherein you will regain your usual perspective, says Ganesha.

PRIYANKA ON HUBBY'S DATING HISTORY

'I don't read my book backward'

Los Angeles: Actress Priyanka Chopra has said that she didn't pay attention to her man's past, with him previously being in high-profile romances with the likes of Selena Gomez, Miley Cyrus and Olivia Culpo.

Appearing on the podcast, she told host Alex Cooper: "I don't give a f*** who he's dated."

"We are talking about the future... I always say this - I don't read my book backward. I believe you go forward in the chapters," reports said.

The couple started dating in May 2018 - two months before he proposed and seven months before their wedding - but when they first came into each other's lives, Priyanka was hesitant.

She said: "I didn't even date Nick at that time because I was just, like, 'I need to know why I keep repeating my mistakes.'"

The Sucker hitmaker made the first move when he slid into his future wife's DMs with a very direct message.

She recalled: "Literally, his message was, 'I've been told we should meet'. How cocky? So sexy." She fired back with her own cheeky message, teasing: "My response to him was, 'Why don't you text me? My team can see my DMs.'"

Five years later, Priyanka now explains that Nick's support for her helps keep their relationship strong.



Aahana slams influencer hiring

Mumbai: Actress Aahana Kumra has voiced her concern over the growing trend of hiring individuals in the entertainment industry solely based on their social media following, rather than their acting abilities.

The *Lipstick Under My Burkha* actress finds this trend disheartening and believes it has left many aspiring actors confused about their future prospects.

She criticises the presence of Instagram influencers in prominent shows on major streaming platforms, emphasising that actors with talent and theatre experience are being overlooked because they lack a significant Instagram following.

"I'm sorry to say, most of the shows that are coming on the very big streaming platform feature Instagram influencers. How many actors are really on the platform? There are influencers who are influxing the acting space," Kumra retorts.

Kumra has taken matters into her own hands and is pursuing a career as a writer, aiming to create content that aligns with her creative vision. While she remains open to acting projects, Kumra is focused on exploring new opportunities and breaking free from typecasting.

'Time to act rather than complain'

After nearly 80 years of Netaji, asking for 'blood' to get freedom, yet another young Odia sought the same on his social media handle. But this time, the goal is to make Odia films shine on global platforms. Meet Sakti Jagdev, the debutant producer of *Phalguna Chaitra*, an upcoming movie that has been making the right noises across media. In a unique gesture, he also plans to share the film's profits among senior artistes, crew members and HIV victims. Ahead of movie's release, the techie-turned-filmmaker took some time off to have a breezy chat with Bijay Mandal of *Orissa POST*.

Excerpts:

■ What made you foray into filmmaking, an uncertain profession, especially in Odisha, while you were quite secure in your IT job in the Middle East?
Let me tell you that the job in Kuwait is still on, which is the source of my finances. The primary reason that pulled me to do this project was to do some action for the betterment of our culture and self respect. I felt it was high time to act rather than complain.

■ How far are you satisfied with

your choice as the movie is ready to hit the screens, and why?

I would say surely 50% on how the product has come out and embracing the appreciation from all around. There is still a lot more to do, as I feel there are areas we lack as an industry and project planning vs execution. I have some plans to implement in the near future, fingers crossed for the audience response.

■ What changes do you think your movie will bring about in Odia cinema?

I am hopeful that it will set a standard from making aspect. Secondly, it is setting up a channel through which good films in the future can have exposure to the overseas market. This has financial aspects as well, given that we have a really limited number of theatres in Odisha.

■ How do you manage your job overseas and

filmmaking?

I am considering this as another project at my office for which I give time after my office hours. As they say, no better result can be seen without hardship. I am just trying to give my best.

■ What will your next course of action be?

I am planning a grand project for 2025. I want to implement all my learnings from this project, and for sure there will be a lot of collaboration with other successful industries as well which I have started discussions with. Jay Jagannath.



Odia movie *Whispers of a Storm* receives shout out from UK PM

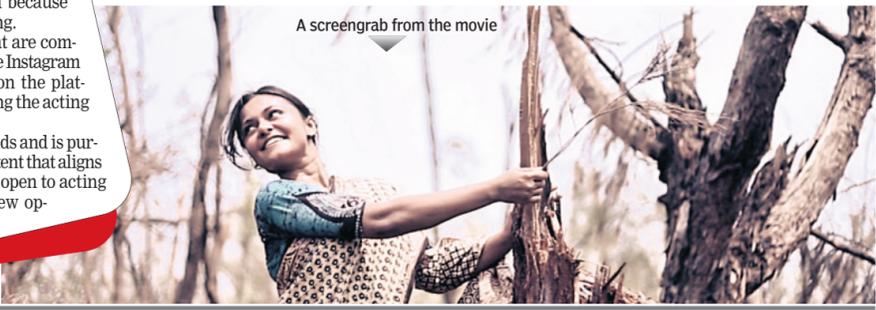
Bhubaneswar: As a matter of pride for the state, Odia feature film *Whispers of a Storm* received a shout-out from the UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak during his message to the ongoing UK Asian Film Festival.

The movie, which premiered in London May 9, got recognition when the Prime Minister expressed his wishes for the oldest-running Asian Film Festival in the world

and its accomplishments over the years.

Set against the backdrop of a village devastated by Cyclone Fani which hit the coastal belts of Odisha in 2019, the film revolves around a photographer attempting to capture the impact of the storm and how his interaction with affected people unravels how they came to terms with the loss of human lives in their own ways. Directed by National Award

and State Award winning film director Amartya Bhattacharyya and produced by Swastik Choudhury under the banner of Swastik Arthouse, in association with Dr. U T Rao and Filmstop Entertainment, the movie has Dipanwit Dashmohapatra, Swastik Choudhury, Priyanka Ghosh Roy, and Radha Krushna playing key roles. Kisaloy Roy and Sujoy Das have scored music and sound design, respectively. PNN



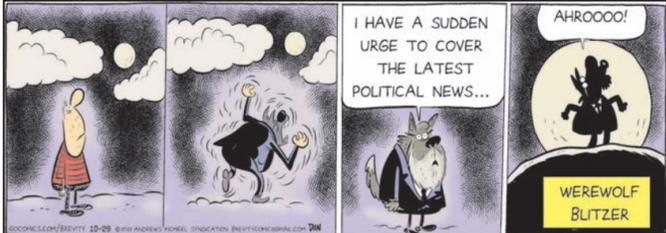
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

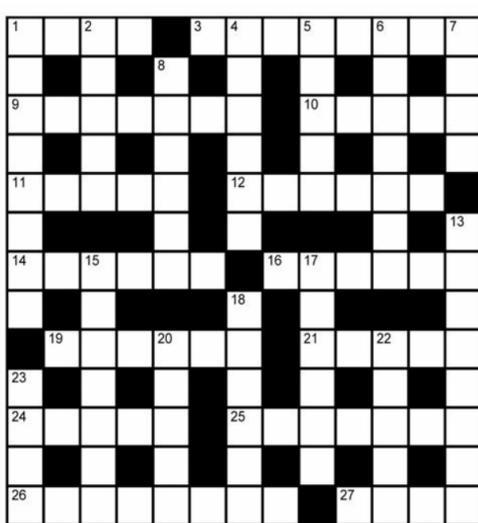


BREVITY



FUN post

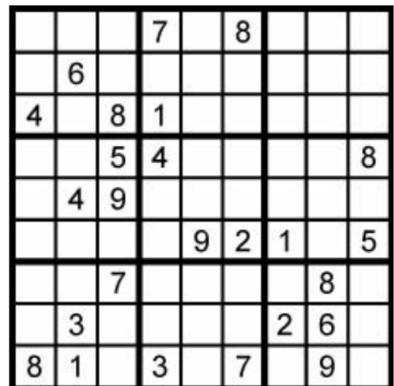
CROSSWORD



- Across
- 1 Frolic
 - 3 Flyer
 - 9 News report (5,2)
 - 10 Pull
 - 11 Raw fish
 - 12 Mock
 - 14 Hot house flower
 - 16 Entreaty
 - 19 Safe and sound
 - 21 Protective covering
 - 24 Tall timber tree of New Zealand
 - 25 Ballet dancer garb
 - 26 Dazzle
 - 27 Often used in making cameos
 - 6 Wash
 - 7 Garden tool
 - 8 Third sign of the Zodiac
 - 13 Traditional
 - 15 Carry on
 - 17 Superintendent, especially on a farm
 - 18 Delays
 - 20 Labor movement
 - 22 Discover
 - 23 Pod vegetable

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



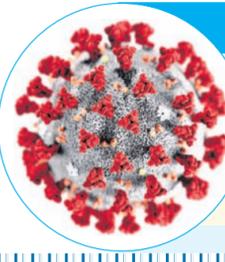
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



FOR SMOOTH YATRA

Rath Yatra-2023 Coordination Meeting was held under the chairmanship of Puri superintendent of police Kanwar Vishal Singh, Wednesday



COVID-19 TRACKER

| | INFECTED | RECOVERED | DEAD |
|--------|--------------|--------------|-----------|
| World | 68,80,23,743 | 66,04,47,700 | 68,72,446 |
| India | 4,49,74,909 | 4,44,21,781 | 5,31,722 |
| Odisha | 13,36,304 | 13,26,915 | 9,204 |

Modern infra at all high schools by Dec

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 10: All high schools will have modern infrastructure and advanced facilities under state's ambitious 5T High School Transformation Programme (HSTP) by December this year, said School and Mass Education (S&ME) department commissioner-cum-secretary Aswathy S, Wednesday.

Chairing the 40th Executive Council meeting of Mo School Abhiyan here, the S&ME commissioner-cum-secretary stressed on completion of the fourth phase HSTP before December 2023.

After successful implementation of first, second and third phase of HSTP, the fourth phase of HSTP will witness transformation of over 1,500 high schools in the state, she said.

"This will ensure that all high schools in Odisha are equipped with new smart classrooms, well-developed e-libraries, state-of-the-art laboratory-cum-interactive science centres, advanced sports infrastructure and child-friendly



The 40th Executive Council of Mo School Abhiyan approved proposals worth ₹529.56 crore for 30 districts

campuses," Aswathy pointed out.

According to her, high schools that have so far been transformed under the ambitious initiative have been delivering exemplary results. "Be it increased participation of students at national level sports and debate competitions or developed interest in exploring newer world of coding, the programme has given wings to the cognitive skills and athletic spirit of the budding minds," she added.

The meeting took stock of the implementation of 'school clubs' in all

state-run high schools, and held a discussion on the development of the Programme Framework for all club activities.

Official sources said Mo School Abhiyan will hold consultation meets with stakeholders and expert organisations to develop materials and framework for Kaushali, Kridangan, Jigyansa and Sahitya Srujani clubs.

The executive council approved proposals worth ₹529.56 crore for 30 districts.

Sources said in the last month, 7,358 alumni have joined hands with Mo School Abhiyan and contributed ₹6.66 crore for the development of their alma mater. "The alumni have contributed ₹2.04 crore in Balasore, ₹60 lakh in Ganjam, ₹48.13 lakh in Cuttack, ₹47.43 lakh in Bolangir and ₹38.87 lakh in Bhadrak," it was learnt.

And Mo School Abhiyan has received grants worth ₹165.05 crore from various CSR funds.

The approved funds will be spent for towards development of the 2,402 primary, upper primary and high schools across the state.



FOUNDATION DAY: Orissa High Court Chief Justice S Muralidhar (middle), other judges of the HC and guests attended a programme to celebrate 'One Year of the Centre for Judicial Archives' at Odisha Judicial Academy in Cuttack, Wednesday

Man found dead

BARANG: A 45-year-old man was found dead under suspicious circumstances near Patia passenger halt (PH) in Bhubaneswar, police said Wednesday. Police said they recovered the body of Bhaskar Sahoo, a daily wager, who hailed from Brahmapura under Banki police limits in Cuttack and had been residing with his wife at Pada Sahi under Nandankanan police limits here, police said.

Teacher crunch grips 49 pc schools in City slums: Study

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 10: Painting a bleak picture of the status of primary education in City schools, a study conducted by Bhubaneswar Bikash Sangathan (BBS) and voluntary outfit Atmashakti Trust has revealed that more than 49 per cent of government schools in the slum areas here are grappling with teachers' crunch.

The study "Status of school infrastructure in government schools", which was conducted in 135 schools, found that many schools in the slum areas here are not complying with Right To Education (RTE) norms.

According to the study, over 49.61 per cent (67) government schools in Bhubaneswar's slums face shortage of teachers against the sanctioned number as per RTE norms. Moreover, 58.50 per cent (79) schools surveyed do not have appropriate classrooms which has been affecting students' learning outcomes. The report also found that 11 per cent of such schools face water re-

VITAL STATS

- 58.50% SCHOOLS SURVEYED DO NOT HAVE APPROPRIATE CLASSROOMS, AFFECTING STUDENTS' LEARNING OUTCOMES
- 27.40% SCHOOLS DO NOT HAVE COMPUTERS, HINDERING STUDENTS' ACCESS TO IT SKILLS AND MORE ADVANCED VERSIONS OF LESSONS
- 11% SCHOOLS FACE WATER RELATED ISSUES WHILE 3 PER CENT OF SUCH SCHOOLS LACK ACCESS TO SAFE DRINKING WATER AND 5% HAVE DAMAGED WATER SOURCES

Likewise, 5.18 per cent schools need separate toilets for boys and girls while 2.22 per cent of school toilets need more water facilities, making them unusable.

The report also showed that 11.11 per cent schools lack playgrounds and 8.88 per cent don't have a boundary wall, which is crucial for student safety and wellbeing. The findings also reveal that 29.62 per cent schools lack a library, an essential resource for teaching and learning. Further, 27.40 per cent of surveyed schools do not have computers, hindering students' access to IT skills and more advanced versions of lessons. The report also found that 59.25 per cent schools need repair of existing infrastructure.

Members of Bhubaneswar Bikash Sangathan urged the government to implement a transparency board in schools to inform compliance with RTE norms. They also submitted a memorandum on survey findings in block education office, Bhubaneswar, Wednesday.

Naveen's Delhi visit sparks speculations

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, May 10: A day after meeting his Bihar counterpart Nitish Kumar, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Wednesday left for a four-day trip to the national capital, leading to speculations being bandied about in the state's political circles.

Though the Chief Minister's office said that Patnaik has a number of official engagements to meet Union ministers during his stay in Delhi, sources in the ruling BJD claimed that he may meet political leaders from other parties too.

He is scheduled to return to Odisha May 13,



Though BJD claimed it was maintaining equal distance from the BJP-led NDA and Congress-led UPA, the regional party often supported the saffron party on various issues and Bills

at sending a message to the BJP which has of late become an aggressive foe in Odisha ahead of the 2024 general elections.

Though the BJD officially claimed it was maintaining equal distance from both the BJP-led NDA and Congress-led UPA, the party has often supported the saffron party on various issues and bills.

ious issues and bills.

Congress legislature party leader Narasingha Mishra alleged Patnaik has all along supported the BJP central leadership. "Therefore, there is no fear of CBI or ED in Odisha."

BJP state president Manmohan Samal however claimed that BJD has all along pursued opportunistic politics.

"Patnaik was in alliance with BJP (2000-2009) due to compulsion," Samal said.

However, BJD vice-president Prasanna Acharya said the BJD all along works for the interest of Odisha alone. "Our politics are for the benefits of Odisha," he said.

Basa given addl charge of ASI DG

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, May 10: Union ministry of Culture Wednesday entrusted National Monument Authority (NMA) chairman Professor Kishore Kumar Basa additional charge of Director General of Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) with immediate effect for the next six months or till further orders.

The ministry issued a notification in this regard Wednesday and stated that Basa will hold the additional charge of DG ASI for the next six months or till regular posting is made.

A native of Mayurbhanj, Basa was the Vice-Chancellor of Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanjdeo University at Baripada. He was appointed chairman of National Monument Authority in November last year. Basa also served as the chairman of the Indian National Confederation and Academy of Anthropologists. He completed his BA degree from Utkal University and MA in History from Delhi University.



DAILY GRIND: Labourers pedalling to their workplaces in Capital city amid blistering heat, Wednesday

Mocha to bring heavy rain in Andamans

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Port Blair/Bhubaneswar, May 10: A cyclonic circulation in Bay of Bengal intensified into a deep depression near Port Blair in Andaman and Nicobar Islands and is likely to turn into a full blown cyclone, the IMD said.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD), which closely monitors the cyclonic storm, said it is likely to make landfall between Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh and Kyaukpou in Myanmar Sunday. A statement issued by GK Das, Director (Weather) at Regional Meteorological Centre, Kolkata, said, the deep depression will gradually intensify into a severe cyclonic storm May 11.

"On May 12, it will turn into a very severe cyclonic storm over the southeast and adjoining areas of central Bay of Bengal," it said. It will weaken slightly from May 13 and pass between the

coasts of Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh and Kyaukpou in Myanmar (Rakhine State) around forenoon of May 14 with maximum sustained wind speed of 110-120 kmph gusting to 130 kmph, the statement said.

Meanwhile, the fishermen of Andaman and Nicobar coasts have been advised not to venture into the sea till May 13.

Due to the cyclonic weather and in view of safety of passengers and vessels, the Directorate of Shipping Services in Port Blair has issued a notification which said, "It has been informed that Foreshore Sector and Harbour/Vehicle ferry services at Port Blair and out stations may get disrupted/suspended in short notice depending upon the weather condition. Therefore, the passengers, daily commuters and tourists have been advised to plan their journey suitably to avoid any inconvenience."

India among top 5 countries with highest preterm births: UN

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, May 10: India, Pakistan, Nigeria, China and Ethiopia together accounted for 45 per cent of all babies born early (before 37 weeks of pregnancy) in 2020, according to a new report released by UN agencies and partners Wednesday.

Raising alarm on a "silent emergency" of preterm birth, the report showed that an estimated 13.4 million babies were born pre-term in 2020, with nearly 1 million dying from preterm complications.

This is equivalent to around 1 in 10 babies born early worldwide. The report Born too soon: decade of action on preterm birth, produced by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Unicef together with PMNCH - the world's largest alliance for women, children, and adolescents - highlights long under-recognised problem of

preterm birth in its scale and severity, which is impeding progress in improving children's health and survival. Overall, it found that preterm birth rates have not changed in any region in the world in the past decade, with 152 million vulnerable babies born too soon from 2010 to 2020.

In 2020, Bangladesh had the highest estimated preterm birth rate (16.2 per cent), followed by Malawi (14.5 per cent) and Pakistan (14.4 per cent), India (13 per cent) and South Africa (13 per cent). Rates were also high in high-income countries, such as Greece (11.6 per cent) and the US (10.0 per cent).

Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa have the highest rates of preterm birth, and preterm babies in these regions face the highest mortality risk.

Together, these two regions ac-



count for more than 65 per cent of preterm births globally. "Ensuring quality care for these tiniest, most vulnerable babies and their families is absolutely imperative for improving child health and survival. Progress is also needed to help prevent preterm births - this means every woman must be able to access quality health services before and during pregnancy to identify and man-

BORN TOO SOON

| | |
|----|-------|
| BD | 16.2% |
| MA | 14.5% |
| PA | 14.4% |
| IN | 13% |
| SA | 13% |
| GR | 11.6% |
| US | 10% |

*PRETERM BIRTHS IN 2020

age risks," said Anshu Banerjee, Director for Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health and Ageing at WHO, in a statement.

Further, the report said that preterm birth is now the leading cause of child deaths, accounting for more than one in five of all deaths of children occurring before their fifth birthday.

Preterm survivors can face lifelong health consequences, with an increased likelihood of disability and developmental delays. Maternal health risks, such as adolescent pregnancy and pre-eclampsia, are also closely linked to preterm births.

Gaping inequalities related to race, ethnicity, income, and access to quality care determine the likelihood of preterm birth, death, and disability, even in high-income countries.

MARKET WATCH

| INDEX | VALUE | VARIATION |
|--------|----------|-----------|
| SENSEX | 61940.20 | ↓ 178.87 |
| NIFTY | 18315.10 | ↑ 49.15 |
| DOLLAR | 81.77 | ↑ ₹0.05 |
| EURO | 89.8530 | ↓ ₹0.12 |
| GOLD | ₹61,078 | ↓ ₹341 |
| SILVER | ₹76,633 | ↓ ₹823 |

WEATHER

| | BHUB | CTK |
|----------|--------|--------|
| MAX | 38.6°C | 39.0°C |
| MIN | 26.8°C | 26.5°C |
| Humidity | 79% | 74% |
| Rainfall | 0.0mm | 0.0mm |

Forecast: Light to moderate rain

Improving urban capacities through MUKTA: Vathanan

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 10: A one-day state level brainstorming workshop on "MUKTA goal-setting" was held Wednesday here. The programme was chaired by Housing & Urban Development Principal Secretary G Mathi Vathanan.

In his address, Vathanan said that the government of Odisha has been actively working towards improving urban capacities and resources through various means such as strengthening scheme implementation, process re-engineering, and developing robust progress monitoring mechanisms.

One of the key areas of reform concerns holistic organizational development work which aims to optimise and strengthen the capacities and capabilities of the people, including all the government functionaries and community partners who form the core of the Housing and Urban Development



One of the key areas of reform concerns holistic organisational development work which aims to optimise and strengthen the capacities and capabilities of the people

G MATHI VATHANAN | HOUSING & URBAN DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPAL SECRETARY

department, he added.

Vathanan told that Mukhyamantri Karma Tatpara Abhiyan (MUKTA) scheme is one of the flagship programmes of the state government which is adopting the reforms being taken under the organization development strand.

The prioritization of MUKTA's goals and how each stakeholder can contribute to their success was discussed in the workshop. Vathanan expressed confidence that each one of the stakeholders

will actively participate and share thoughts to further contribute to the agenda of mapping the roles of each stakeholder to the broader goals of MUKTA.

Among those who attended the workshop included Sangramjit Nayak, Director Municipal Administration, Sagarika Patnaik, Special Secretary, Durgesh Nandini Sahoo, Addl. Secretary, Sarada Prasad Panda, Joint Secretary and State Nodal Officer MUKTA, Sanjay Pramanik, OSD-Special Secretary and other departmental officers.



AT LORD'S SERVICE: Carpenters preparing the wheels for chariots at Rath Yard in Puri, Wednesday

OP PHOTO

Garima Scheme empowering 11K sanitation workers

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 10: Garima Scheme, a one-of-its-kind state-wide initiative, was launched by the state government in September 2020 to empower core sanitation workers who deal with human faecal waste. The core sanitation workers, working in open drain cleaning, desludging, sewerage network maintenance and operation & maintenance of faecal sludge treatment plants (FSTPs), community toilets (CTs), and public toilets (PTs), face several occupational risks as they come in close contact with faecal matter, which adversely impacts their health.

With the aim to ensure that all sanitation work is done in a safe and dignified manner, more than



11,000 sanitation workers have been recognized under the scheme till date. Urban Management Centre (UMC), which is a member

of National Faecal Sludge and Septage Management (NFSSM) alliance, has been providing technical support to the Housing &

Urban Development department for the implementation of the scheme. Garima Scheme was piloted in six cities, namely Bhubaneswar, Puri, Cuttack, Behrampur, Sambalpur and Rourkela.

In just two years, the scheme has been implemented in all 115 cities of Odisha showcasing the scheme's ability to rapidly scale up and create more impact.

Elaborating on the impact of the scheme, Housing and Urban Development Principal Secretary G Mathi Vathanan said, "Under the leadership of Chief Minister, Garima Scheme has been comprehensively addressing a wide variety of issues faced by the sanitation workers. To ensure the real on-ground issues are tackled, an advisory group, consist-

ing of experts and champions in the sanitation space, was set up and their suggestions formed the backbone of the scheme. Earlier sanitation workers were not included under any labour category. However, Garima Scheme has recognised them as skilled workers enabling recognition and dignity to their work."

Garima Scheme enabled the creation of India's first comprehensive digital database of sanitation workers. Through the scheme, Odisha has been the first state to recognize core sanitation workers as highly skilled and skilled workers. It has also resulted in the 33-50 per cent increase in the minimum wages of sanitation workers along with additional risk & hardship allowance of 15 per cent of the daily wages.

World Lupus Day observed in City



An awareness rally in City by Institute of Medical Sciences of Clinical Immunology and Rheumatology, IMS and SUM Hospital

OP PHOTO

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 10: World Lupus Day was observed at several hospitals and health institutions in the Capital city Wednesday.

A rally was organized from Master Canteen to Ram Mandir by Department of Clinical Immunology and Rheumatology, Institute of Medical Sciences and Sum Hospital. Similarly, Kalinga Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS) Bhubaneswar. He also called upon the patients to have faith in the doctors and never lose hope.

Prasanta Padhan, Rheumatologist of KIMS said, "Awareness on the autoimmune diseases should be more as even today people are not treating themselves with the experts and suffering." Associate Prof Sakir Ahmed said, "Communication with the patient is the most important for any chronic disease and asked the patients to talk freely without inhibition with their doctors."

Assistant Prof Debashish Maikap and postgraduate residents of the department and other staff members of KIMS and KIMS Super Speciality Hospital were present during the event.

leading normal lives.

"Treatment of Lupus and other autoimmune diseases vary from one patient to another. So one should not generalise and draw conclusions" said, Ramnath Misra, HoD, Clinical Immunology and Rheumatology, KIMS-Bhubaneswar. He also called upon the patients to have faith in the doctors and never lose hope.

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CONSULTATIVE WORKSHOP ON STATE BIOTECH POLICY

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 10: The Science and Technology Department successfully organised the consultative workshop on the new Biotechnology Policy of the state here Wednesday.

More than 50 participants from industry, academia, and government attended the workshop. All stakeholders emphasized more on strengthening the biotechnology ecosystem in terms of infrastructure and translational Research and Development (R&D) projects.

Science and Technology Minister Ashok Chandra Panda interacted with the delegates and participants while saying that Bio-marine technology sector should find place in the policy and linkage with Indian Institute of Oceanography be undertaken.

Many institutes have been roped in to take forward further research and upgradation in biotechnology. Besides, the state government has tied up with Utkal University and Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT) for the betterment of

Biotech sector in Odisha. While government of Odisha in its IPR-2022 has identified Biotechnology as a thrust sector, all eligible biotechnology ventures will be given adequate government handholding with support, stakeholders opined.

Besides, industry experts opined to focus on key potential areas such as marine biotechnology, biomedical engineering, diagnostics, bio-mineral processing, biodiversity to bring investment to the State. Academicians and government of India officials viewed a strong implementation framework, organisation structure, monitoring and evaluation framework, digital platform, feedback system and strengthening of inter-connected systems for better delivery of services and ease of governance. The policy will be ready for government approval in the next two months.

Bhaskar Sarma, Commissioner-Secretary, Science & Technology Department along with other senior officers of the department were present in the workshop.



GRACEFUL MOVES: Artistes perform at Abhinaya Sandhya cultural programme organised by Geeta Govinda Dance & Music Institute at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday

OP PHOTO

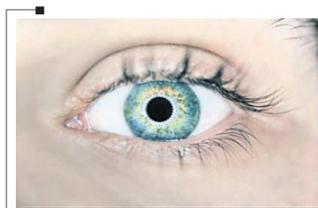
Study finds brain structures to help treat blindness

A team of international researchers, including from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi, has found evidence of brain structures that underlie sight recovery in people born blind, and may help treat the condition.

The team included 23 congenitally blind patients (aged 7-17 years) from Uttar Pradesh with dense bilateral cataracts, who received cataract surgery at different stages of adolescence.

The findings, published in the journal The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS), showed that improvements in visual functions are linked to changes in white matter pathways, which connect neurons in different brain regions.

The team studied many pathways, but only those involved in high-order visual functions, such as face recognition, were directly linked to the visual improvement.



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Researchers studied many pathways, but only those involved in high-order visual functions, such as face recognition, were directly linked to the visual improvement

The results suggest that sufficient plasticity remains in adolescence beyond the critical period for visual development, allowing patients to partially overcome abnormal visual development

Moreover, researchers saw that the patient's amount of change in late visual pathways, specifically the posterior callosal forceps, predicted the amount of behavioural improvement. This is a new result that identifies the location of brain changes responsible for behavioural improvement.

They also confirmed that cataract surgery has a greater impact on visual function and brain plasticity if received at younger age, but recovery is still possible even if the eye surgery is received later in adolescence.

The results suggest that sufficient plasticity remains in ado-

lescence beyond the critical period for visual development, allowing patients to partially overcome abnormal visual development and help localise the sites of neural change underlying recovery in blind teenagers.

There is therefore a window of time wider than previously thought, during which sight-recovery surgeries can be useful to improve visual perception by altering structural brain plasticity.

"There is a general notion known as 'critical period for sensory development' that kids who are born visually impaired (due to cataract) and continue in that same condition for a few months or years, can't get back their visual function later part of life, even if they get back their sight by miracle. But this appears not to be true in many cases," said Prof. Tapan K. Gandhi, Professor of AI, Department of Electrical Engineering at IIT Delhi.

"Current medical facilities can treat defects in lenses and corneas, and the brain can then begin to learn about the visual world," he said.

The research sheds light on the definition of the sites of neural change related to sight-recovery, which can guide the development of treatments that attempt to induce neural plasticity through behavioural and surgical interventions.

"The new insights uncovered by our team challenge accepted limitations of sight-recovery surgeries, creating an opportunity for the expanded use of these surgeries that will make many more cases of blindness treatable, worldwide," said Bas Rokers, director at Neuroimaging Centre at New York University- Abu Dhabi.

"Our work also offers evidence to support the call for the scientific community to reassess the critical period for visual development in adolescents," he added.

IANS

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Saffron eyes two LS seats as Central leaders tour Ganjam

Observers claim that BJP may slip to 2009 and 2014 situation if the Congress fields strong candidates in the next general election



POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, May 10: BJP has failed to open its account in Ganjam district after its erstwhile alliance partner BJD parted ways with it in 2008.

Now, the saffron party is trying to wrest the two Lok Sabha seats in Ganjam from the ruling BJD in the next general elections scheduled for 2024. The issue has acquired prominence due to the frequent visits of BJP leaders to the district, which have heat up the politics in the area.

Union Minister of State, Railways, Darshana Jardosh recently visited Ganjam district and reviewed the organisational status in some Assembly seats under Aska Lok Sabha segment. She held discussions with some frontline party leaders and workers, and shared some tips on the next general elections. During discussions, she particularly laid stress on attracting women voters towards the party.

Earlier, two Central leaders of BJP Mahila Morcha, Sanjita Dogra, the president of Jammu-Kashmir Mahila Morcha and Sadhvi Bhuta, the national executive member of the party, had visited Ganjam dis-

trict and toured various places of Aska and Berhampur Lok Sabha segments in last December. There they met only women leaders and workers of Mahila Morcha and held discussions with them.

The two leaders advised the women leaders and workers to strengthen the women's wing of the party. The two leaders also advised the party workers to sensitise women in rural areas about the women empowerment schemes of the Centre and the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana.

Darshana's visit was along similar lines with the visit of the two party leaders. Political analysts believe that the saffron party is eyeing to win the two Lok Sabha seats in the 2024 elections by creating a vote bank of women voters.

This has given rise to credence that BJP is only preparing a roadmap for the Lok Sabha elections and trying to assess its winning prospects from these two seats.

Reports said that the district has two Lok Sabha segments-Berhampur and Aska and 13 Assembly seats.

After severing of ties, BJP drew a blank in both the Lok Sabha and

Assembly elections in Ganjam district held in 2009, 2017 and 2019.

In the 1999 elections, BJD did not field any candidate from Berhampur Lok Sabha segment leaving the seat to BJP. BJP's candidate Anadi Sahu won from this Lok Sabha seat with support from BJD. The alliance politics also helped BJP candidate Rama Chandra Panda win from Chhatrapur Assembly seat in 2000 elections.

Later, Panda was elected as the deputy speaker of state Assembly as per power sharing formula between the two parties. BJP candidate Kishore Chandra Singhdeo also won from Sorada Assembly segment in 2004 elections.

After parting ways, BJP has been contesting on its own in 13 Assembly seats and two Lok Sabha seats in the last three general elections but failed to win even from a single seat. Chatters have been abuzz that lotus will not bloom in Ganjam district until and unless conch is blown.

On the other hand, BJP's vote share has increased in 2019 election in comparison with 2009 and 2014 elections. Observers claim that BJP has made this gain at the expense of Congress' weak organisational network and absence of a strong candidate.

The BJP party leaders are preparing to fight the next general elections in the name of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for which Central leaders of the party are frequently visiting the district to prepare the base work. Observers opine that BJP may slip to 2009 and 2014 situation if the Congress becomes active and fields strong candidates in the next general election.



DRAMA FEST: Students stage a play on the concluding evening of 15th State-level Drama Festival and 2nd Children's Drama Festival organised by Odisha Natak Samaroha Samiti at Biju Patnaik Sanskriti Bhawan in Berhampur, Wednesday

Mayurbhanj bandh call against power snag in Prez programme

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Baripada, May 10: A local outfit in Mayurbhanj district has called a 12-hour bandh May 15 to protest against the power disruption during President Droupadi Murmu's address at the convocation of Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanja Deo University.

Bhanja Sena in a statement Tuesday said it has given the strike call as the state government did not take action against those responsible for the blackout at the convocation, May 6.

It will also press for strict action against those responsible for the incident.

The dawn-to-dusk bandh will begin at 6am May 15 and will be ob-



served across Mayurbhanj district, leaders of the outfit said. Murmu hails from Rairangpur in Mayurbhanj and is considered the daughter of the soil. The outfit's president Kalinga Keshari Jena said the incident has shamed the entire district. "It is an insult to Murmu, who hails from Mayurbhanj district," Jena said.

Meanwhile, an employee of the university was suspended for the incident and a three-member committee was constituted to probe it, officials said.

The state government has also ordered a probe into the episode.

Governor Ganeshi Lal has also sought a report from the state chief secretary and the university vice-chancellor on the incident.

Vedanta Aluminium expands free mobile healthcare services

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jharsuguda, May 10: Vedanta Aluminium, India's largest producer of aluminium, has now extended its Mobile Health Vehicle (MHV) services to additional locations in Sundargarh district, helping make quality healthcare services accessible in more under-served areas of the state. Consisting of teams of doctors, nurses, pharmacists and expert medical technicians, Vedanta's MHV services are inclusive of preliminary medical consultations, blood tests, blood pressure monitoring, basic check-ups and essential medicines for common ail-



ments, all of which are provided completely free of cost. The villages in Sundargarh district now covered under the initiative are Jamkhani, Girisima, Jharpalam, Ghogarpalli, Bhogarakachar, Latapani, Rengalpani, Garjanjore, Mendra, Munderkhet, Bilaimunda Market and Luabahal.

The company's MHV initiative is expected to benefit over 18,000 people every year by providing doorstep access to primary healthcare consultations and medicines. Vedanta Aluminium also conducts regular health camps in the region, where residents of nearby villages and other areas in their vicinity can avail of basic services and consultation from qualified medical professionals. Besides mobile health services, the company also conducts cancer screening camps, health awareness sessions on common ailments, menstrual hygiene awareness sessions, mega health camps in partnership with government and other stakeholders, etc. for the wellbeing of local communities.

Speaking about the initiative, V Srikanth, CEO - Mines, Vedanta Aluminium, said, "Ensuring the total well-being of our local communities is a core facet of Vedanta Aluminium's developmental interventions in Odisha. We strive to promote improved health and hygiene practices within the regions where we operate. Our multi-pronged initiatives are aimed at bridging the healthcare gap in rural communities and ensuring a better quality of life overall."

Woman mastermind among 4 held for fraud

POST NEWS NETWORK

Polsara, May 10: Polsara Police Wednesday busted a job racket as it arrested four persons including the woman mastermind on charge of defrauding ₹56.50 lakh from a youth in 2021 on the pretext of getting him the contract for a canteen at a major government hospital in Bhubaneswar.

The mastermind was identified as Shailabala Mishra, a resident of Bhubaneswar, Polsara IIC Jeetendra Kumar Mallick said. Her accomplices - Narayan Pradhan, Jadumani Pradhan of Chirikipada Sasan village and Shibaram Goud, a native of Bhanjanagar currently residing at Bhubaneswar - were also arrested, he added.

Later, they were produced in the court and remanded to judicial custody after the magistrate rejected their bail pleas. It is alleged that Shailabala and her accomplices have defrauded over ₹1 crore alone from Chirikipada Sasan area under this police limit.

Later, another woman Archana Kumari Sahu of Nayagarh also came forward and lodged a complaint alleging Shailabala to have duped her of ₹6 lakh.

Police said that Shailabala with the help of her accomplices had promised a local youth Ranjan Kumar Sahu of Chirikipada Sasan village to help him get the contract of a canteen at a major government hospital in Bhubaneswar and took ₹56.50 lakh from him in this regard in 2021. However, Ranjan demanded payback as no help came from her even after months of wait.

After several demands, Shailabala returned only ₹5.50 lakh to the youth and assured to pay him the rest of the amount later.

However, the woman delayed in making payment and went on buying time. Left with no option, Ranjan visited the Polsara police station and lodged a complaint in this regard, May 8. Polsara IIC formed a special team and nabbed the woman from her Bhubaneswar residence.

2 TECHIES GET 2-YEAR JAIL FOR CORRUPTION

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, May 10: Keonjhar Special Vigilance Court in a judgement Wednesday sentenced two engineers to three years of imprisonment and ₹3,000 penalty each. In default, the duo will have to undergo two months additional jail term.

The errant engineers were identified as assistant engineer Sankarasa Behera and junior engineer Ashok Kumar Kar of Anandapur block in this district.

In the year 2004-05, an amount of ₹1 lakh was sanctioned from the MLALAD fund to complete a house constructed halfway by a contractor named Madan Mohan Mishra.

The engineer duo had falsely presented the full bill of the complete house despite it being half-built. In this regard, a corruption case was registered by the Vigilance department April 10, 2007.

After verification and hearing statements of 34 witnesses, Special Vigilance Judge Rasmata Dalei pronounced the judgement, said special public prosecutor Debadutta Biswal to mediapersons here, Wednesday.

Cash crops augment livelihood of tribal farmers in Sundargarh



POST NEWS NETWORK

Sundargarh, May 10: The government of Odisha lays special emphasis on augmentation of farmers' income in the state. In line with the same, the tribal farmers at Sundargarh grow pulses, oilseeds, other cash crops, fruits & vegetables, along with the cultivation of staple foodgrains.

Earlier, tribal farmers in the region used to cultivate crops using traditional methods. Now, a three-year programme has been taken up to help these farmers use advanced technical knowhow and increase yield. The programme has been made operational in 9 blocks under Integrated Tribal Development Agency, Sundargarh (ITDA).

Necessary support to farmers for

the same is being extended by ITDA Sundargarh as part of 'Mission Jeevika'.

"The aim is to support the life and livelihood of tribal people. Under Mission Jeevika, the tribal farmers grow various cash crops. ITDA provides support for cultivating 13 different types of crops. Once harvested, the farmers sell their produce in the local market earning a decent income," says Project Administrator ITDA Sundargarh, Ramkrishna Gond.

Under 'Mission Jeevika', farmers in the district are using modern methods of cultivation for 13 crops. Maize, millets, mustard, arhar, groundnut, brinjal, cauliflower, capsicum, chilli, watermelon, mushrooms etc are produced by the farmers. ITDA provides seeds and organic

manure to the farmers to cultivate the same.

The crops are cultivated across 9 blocks of Sundargarh in an area of 4,500 acres. Over 6 thousand beneficiaries have been enrolled as part of 'Mission Jeevika'. The crops, thus grown using organic methods, have a demand in the local market.

"Earlier, I used to grow watermelons using seeds bought from the market. But, from the past three years, we are getting quality seeds for cultivation from ITDA. By using organic manure, the harvest this year has been better as compared to the previous year," says Pabita Kisan, a woman farmer from Phulabari village in Bargaon block.

"I have grown capsicum on one acre of land following the advice of ITDA officials. Last year, my harvest helped me fetch over ₹50 thousand in the local market," shares Rabi Barla, a young farmer from the district.

Various steps are being taken by the state government to strengthen the economic status of tribal farmers. 'Mission Jeevika' programme is being run by the government of Odisha to provide various means of livelihood for tribal farmers in Sundargarh district.

EAST COAST RAILWAY
Tender Notice No. ST-OT-50KMPH-19-STN-318, Dated: 04.05.2023
Name of Work: EXECUTION OF INDOOR & OUTDOOR WORK FOR INCREASE IN SPEED FOR 50 KMPH OVER LOOP LINE OF 19 NOS. STATIONS (NTPC, BUDHAPANK, MERAMANDALI, HINDOL ROAD, SADASHIBAPUR, DHENKAMAL, JORANDA ROAD, MACHAPUR, GURUDIJHATIA, CHARBATIA, SALEGAON, NERGUNDI, KENDRAPARA ROAD, CUTTACK, KANDARPUR, RAGHUNATHPUR, GORAKHNATH, RAHAMA & BADABANDHA) OF KHURDAROAD DIVISION.
Tender Value (₹) ₹ 11,32,26,647/-, EMD ₹ 7,16,100/-
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Divisional Railway Manager (Signal & Telecom) Khurda Road PR-152/0/23-24

EAST COAST RAILWAY
Tender Notice No. SDCM-KUR/ITS & PRS-1/2281, Dated.04.05.2023
NAME OF WORK: ANNUAL MAINTENANCE SERVICE CONTRACT WORK OF SYSTEM PERIPHERALS UNDER PASSENGER RESERVATION SYSTEM (PRS), UNRESERVED TICKETING SYSTEM (UTS), NATIONAL TRAIN ENQUIRY SYSTEM (NTES) FOR A PERIOD OF TWO (02) YEARS OVER KHURDAROAD DIVISION.
Tender Value (₹) ₹ 19,88,020.52, EMD (₹) 39,800/-, Cost of Tender Document (₹) 2,950/-
Bidding Start Date: 12.05.2023, Date and time of closing of tender: At 11:00 hrs of 26.05.2023.
No manual offers sent by Post/Courier/ Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-Tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.
NOTE: The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 15 days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / corrigenda issued for this tender.
Complete information including e-tender documents is available in website http://www.ireps.gov.in
Sr.Divisional Commercial Manager/ Khurda Road PR-153/0/23-24

email- eerwss_kpt@rediffmail.com, Ph. No. 06852-250281 (Off), 06852-250680 (Res), Fax No.: 06852-251098
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, RWSS DIVISION, KORAPUT
Phone: 06852-250281 e-mail- eerwsskpt@rediffmail.com
1ST CORRIGENDUM TO TENDER CALL NOTICE NO.01/EE/RWSS/KPT 2023-24/15.04.2023
CORRIGENDUM No. 1543 Date:- 28.04.2023
No.O-130:- Due to some unavoidable circumstances the following alternations have been made in the time schedules of this office e-procurement NOTICE No. 01/EE/RWSS/KPT 2023-24/15.04.2023

| Sl. No. | TENDER CALL NOTICE NO. 01/EE/RWSS/KPT/2023-24/15.04.2023 | As per Scheduled | As per Rescheduled |
|---------|--|---|--|
| 1. | Availability of Bid document in the website | Dt. 29.04.2023 at 17.00 hours to 08.05.2023 up to 17.00 hours | Dt.12.05.2023 at 17.00 hours to 22.05.2023 up to 17.00 hours |
| 2. | Date of Seeking clarification. | During the Office hours of 29.04.2023 to 06.05.2023 | During the Office hours of 12.05.2023 to 20.05.2023 |
| 3. | Date of Opening of Bid. | Dt.10.05.2023 at 11.00 hours | Dt.23.05.2023 at 11.00 hours |

All other terms and conditions remain unaltered.
OIPR-25034/11/0006/2324 **Sd./- Executive Engineer, RWS&S, Koraput**

BORDER SECURITY FORCE
ATTENTION: ALL PENSIONERS OF BORDER SECURITY FORCE
BSF PENSION ADALAT
Ftr HQ BSF South Bengal BSF is organizing Pension Adalat to redress the grievances related to pension for pensioners residing in state of West Bengal, Jharkhand, Odisha, Bihar & Eastern States i.e. Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Sikkim, Tripura and Nagaland.
Date & time : 17th May 2023 from 0930 hrs. to 1700 hrs.
Venue : Ftr HQ BSF South Bengal, Plot No.-II/E/II, Action Area-II E, New Town, Rajarhat, Kolkata- 700161
2. Above pension adalat will be held through hybrid mode (Video Conference). BSF Pensioners / family pensioners in above mentioned States may either physically come to Frontier HQR, BSF, South Bengal (Kolkata) or may join through video conference. Pensioners / family pensioners may report to their nearest Sector HQRs of BSF, who will facilitate connection with Pension Adalat members through video conference system. BSF pensioners desirous of redressing their grievances related to their pension may provide their email ID, contact No. and address to e-mail ID sbftr@bsf.nic.in. For any queries, they may contact BSF SB help desk 14419 or Phone No. 033-29624419 (Extn. No.157). For further details please visit our website www.bsf.nic.in/ / @frontiersouthbengal.
3. No TA / DA is admissible to retirees / family pensioners who will attend the Pension Adalat.
cbc-19110/11/0028/2324

FOCUS EDUCATION

THE NEP CONUNDRUM



The NEP is clear on the destination but is silent regarding the journey. Probably, it jumps to definitive prescriptions without analysing why things went wrong or diagnosing what ails education in India

nised across institutes? It may create an administrative nightmare for the host institute(s). The moot question remains whether all universities have the internal capability to manage CBCS and transfer of credits seamlessly without inconveniencing the student. With so much disparity in academic standards among various Indian institutes, will they accept credits awarded by other institutions? It is suggested that the concerned department/institution should have a say in student's choice of courses/credits. Guidance and counselling services should be arranged for the teachers and students while choosing core papers. Care should be taken about the gap between institutes/universities regarding the quality of education and the availability of infrastructure thereof. Educators can use Learning Management System (LMS) with an integrated CBCS to help simplify every aspect of coursework, including assisting students in enrolling in courses, developing curricula, and calculating credits and assessment scores.

The intent of the policy seems to be ideal in many ways, but it is the implementation that is the key to success. Education, being on the concurrent list, needs support of respective state governments for enacting and implementing the same. Some states have opposed several key features of the NEP, including conducting common entrance examinations for all UGC courses and options for multiple exits in four-year degrees as it may lead to more dropouts and hamper the system. The three-language policy has also received flak, mainly from the Southern part of the country. Moreover, for the success of NEP, students and parents must be at the centre of the implementation plans and providing autonomy must not just be in letter, but also in spirit.

The writer is a management consultant and teaches at IISWBM. Views are personal.

there is an exit option at the end of every year in every institution, it will be almost impossible to design curricula suitable for students who exit and stay for completion. Terminating MPhil programmes could stifle research capabilities and motivation in universities where meaningful research is already a casualty.

In a bid to revamp higher education and bring all the universities and colleges under one umbrella of grading, learning, and standards within the country, the University Grants Commission (UGC) in 2014 came up with a scheme called Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) with the directive that all universities and other higher education institutions must adopt this programme from 2015 onwards. Under CBCS, the government has brought in the Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) framework, which will allow students to pursue up to 50% of a course from institutions other than the one with which they are enrolled. Although the initial ambit of ABC covered only the INIs (Institutions of National Importance), later it was amended to include any university or college, irrespective of ranking. There are

some advantages of ABC, especially for students who want to resume their studies after a break. And CBCS provides students the flexibility of choosing their credit subjects in a la carte manner rather than a thali approach and the suppleness of learning at their own pace, undertaking additional courses and acquiring even additional credits; this, in turn, can facilitate an interdisciplinary approach towards learning.

However, the modalities of CBCS leave a lot of questions to be answered from a student's perspective - a) will the mastery of a subject be not compromised if a student chooses only 50% core papers?; b) can a student physically attend courses in another institute even within the same city simultaneously?; c) if this indicates proliferation of online classes, will it not reduce the academic rigour?; d) is our education system mature enough to prepare students who can customise or design their own degrees?

It poses tricky questions for the service providers as well. Even within a university, we see irregularities of holding examinations and publishing the result; how will the evaluations be synchro-

India's crisis in education has grown with time and runs deep even after 75 years of Independence. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 recognised the symptoms of the malaise and proposed the revision and re-vamping of all aspects of the education structure, including its regulation and governance, to create a new system aligned with the aspirational goals of 21st century education. The global education development agenda reflected in Goal 4 (SDG4) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by India in 2015, seeks to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" by 2030.

The NEP is clear on the destination but is silent regarding the journey. Probably, it jumps to definitive prescriptions without analysing why things went wrong or diagnosing what ails education in India. The expected transformation cannot materialise unless we can create more equal socio-economic opportunities regarding access to education and change the culture of institutions in education, regulators, and governments. The pockets of excellence in the form of IITs, IIMs or IISc are enormous reservoirs of talent, knowledge and discipline, thanks to the Darwinian selection processes and subsequent evolution. But these are aberrations in the pan India perspective and are no consolation because universities provide educational opportunities for people at large that are the lifeblood of higher education.

NEP aims to universalise preschool to secondary level education with a 100% Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in school education by 2030 and 50% in higher education by 2035. The flexibility in length and structure of undergraduate degrees proposed by the NEP is problematic. If Bachelor's and Master's programmes can be either 3+2 or 4+1, the incompatibility will stop the mobility of students between universities. If



Subhasis Ray

EDUCATION, BEING ON THE CONCURRENT LIST, NEEDS SUPPORT OF RESPECTIVE STATE GOVERNMENTS



Ian Buruma

Far-right politicians often cite their support for Israel as proof that they are not anti-Semites. In fact, the openly fascist members of Israel's government have much more in common with figures like Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán than they do with diaspora Jews

The whole world yearns after freedom, yet each creature is in love with his chains; this is the first paradox and inextricable knot of our nature.

SRI AUROBINDO



Israel & Anti-Semites

When political leaders, and their admirers, claim that George Soros, the Hungarian-American-Jewish philanthropist, is pulling the strings of world affairs, we know that anti-Semitism is not far off. But the anti-Semitic nature of these claims has not stopped Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, former US President Donald Trump, and their followers from propagating them.

Both Orbán and Trump often point to their support for Israel as proof that they are not anti-Semites. "No president has done more for Israel than I have," Trump boasted in October last. Orbán, for his part, has cited Israel and Hungary as "models of successful conservative communities." But he has also said that Hungarians "do not want to become peoples of mixed race" - a statement more redolent of old-fashioned racism than of sympathy for the Jewish people.

In today's political environment, however, being pro-Israel and anti-Semitic is not a contradiction. In fact, Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and the even more radical members of his cabinet have a great deal in common with the right-wing nationalist figures in Europe and the United States with whom they have aligned.

After all, Israeli far-right extremists are, like Orbán, ethno-nationalists. National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, for example, views national identity in racial terms and has called for the expulsion of Palestinian-Israeli citizens suspected of "disloyalty" to the Jewish state. His main role model is Meir Kahane, the radical rabbi who likened co-existence with Palestinians to "co-existence with cancer."

Is it any wonder, then, that liberal Jews worldwide feel increasingly alienated from Israel under its current leadership? Democratic Congressman Jake Auchincloss said recently that his Jewish constituents differ on many issues but are united in their concern that Israel is headed toward "illiberal democracy." Even the staunchly pro-Zionist Anti-Defamation League has condemned the "Jewish racism" that characterises Israel's new government.

To be sure, some of these tensions can be attributed to political differences. The Israeli government rejects the liberal views many Jews in the diaspora hold. But the growing divide also reflects a deeper shift.

Throughout European history, ethnic nationalism has gone hand in hand with anti-Semitism and, in some respects, helped define it. Wilhelm II, the last German emperor, who was influenced by the fervent British anti-Semite Houston Stewart Chamberlain, denounced the US and Britain as "Jewified." Unlike those countries, which in Wilhelm's view were dominated by money and granted citizenship to anyone willing to pay, all true Germans were supposedly rooted in their native soil. Adolf Hitler, of course, shared this view.

While many European and American anti-Semites viewed Jews as natural Bolsheviks, suspicion toward Jewish people was not limited to the right. Joseph Stalin did not subscribe to "blood and soil" ideology, but still regarded Jews as "rootless cosmopolitans" whose loyalty was always in doubt.

Anti-Semites tended to associate Jewish cosmopolitanism with the multi-ethnic character of American society. This prejudice was frequently linked with anti-capitalism, as the pursuit of wealth was considered a trait typical of both Jews and Americans.

A recent political cartoon published in the Guardian is a perfect example of left-wing prejudice. The cartoon depicts Richard Sharp, the outgoing chairman of the BBC and an ex-Goldman Sachs banker, as a big-nosed, thick-lipped plutocrat carrying a box containing a squid spreading its slimy tentacles and a puppet of British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak. The message is unmistakable: Sharp, who is Jewish, is controlling Sunak behind the scenes.

Radical populism, mostly on the far right, but not excluding the extreme left, is partly a response to globalisation and the power of banks, multinational corporations, supranational institutions, and the free flow of capital. Widespread fear of being swept away by these global currents has reignited a yearning for leaders who promise to return power to the "native" people and eradicate the corrupt "globalist" elites.

Not too long ago, these globalist villains were commonly identified by radical populist leaders as Americans and Jews. Under the influence of Trump and his acolytes, however, the US itself has become a beacon for reactionaries worldwide, including Israel's current leaders.

Although the early Zionists sought to establish Israel as a Jewish homeland, it was never intended to be exclusive to Jews. The Jews who arrived in Israel and made it their home were not native to the land, and only Orthodox religious Jews believed that it was given to them by God. Kahane, who certainly believed that, was actually born in Brooklyn, New York (and in 1990 was assassinated in Manhattan). His view is largely shared by evangelical Christians in the US who believe that Jews are doomed unless they embrace Christianity when the Apocalypse finally strikes.

At last year's Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in Dallas, Texas, where he was a keynote speaker, Orbán met fan and fellow CPAC speaker Yishai Fleisher, the international spokesperson for the Jewish settlers in Hebron. After Fleisher tweeted a selfie with Orbán, he was asked about the Hungarian Prime Minister's alleged anti-Semitism, to which he responded that he did not care.

He was not a "Diaspora Jew," Fleisher said, but an Israeli. As a "fellow sovereign," he saw Orbán as an ally in the fight against "the globalist agenda which seeks to force open borders & erase national identities." The growing rift between Israel and the Jewish diaspora could not be better described.

In 1898, Theodor Herzl, the father of modern Zionism, met Wilhelm in Jerusalem, hoping to gain his support for a Jewish homeland. The Kaiser sat on his white horse. Herzl was standing. The Kaiser was not interested. But if he were alive today, standing in the same place, he might well be pleased by what he saw.

The writer is the author, most recently, of The Churchill Complex: The Curse of Being Special, From Winston and FDR to Trump and Brexit (Penguin, 2020).

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WISDOM CORNER

- Sometimes people don't want to hear the truth because they don't want their illusions destroyed. **FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE**
- Good decisions come from experience. Experience comes from making bad decisions. **MARK TWAIN**
- Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid. **ALBERT EINSTEIN**

SPECTRUM SOCIETY

Democracy & Hindu nationalism

Hindu nationalism has been a prominent force in Indian politics since 18th century. A critical look at Hindu nationalisms' early theoretical and philosophical iterations provide us with a picture radically different from the one which has been conjured up in contemporary political imaginations. As a philosophical school of thought, Hindu nationalism has had multiple streams within itself which are contradictory and antithetical to each other: This is largely due to the fact that the earliest iterations of Hindu nationalism came in reaction to and had explicit anti-colonial implications. The reformer Raja Rammohun Roy, for instance, advocated for the reconciliation of modernity with Hinduism while opposing the missionaries vigorously.

Though it is true that certain forms of Hindu nationalism reduce Hinduism to a monolith, it would still be a mistake to reduce Hindu nationalism itself to a codified monolith given the diversity and pluralities of thoughts that its adherents have propounded historically. The case of Lala Lajpat Rai is particularly helpful to illustrate this problem. Rai was a strong proponent of the Hindu nation, citing the resistance of "Hindu" Kingdom to Islamic invaders as a proof of the existence

of a common nationality. For Rai, Hindu nationalism existed alongside and peacefully with other nationalities i.e. Christian and Muslim nationalities. Rai primarily focused on uniting Hindus by reminding them of their common nationality. Rai emphasised on Hindu-Muslim unity as a foundation for swaraj or self-rule. This was not merely or even primarily a pragmatic decision to unite in order to oust the common enemy i.e. the British. On the contrary, Rai adopts it as a "fundamental doctrine" that Hindus and Muslims must abide by in post-Independent India as well.

This is in stark contrast to the contemporary manifestation of Hindu nationalism that the Sangh Parivar espouses. Unlike Rai, the Sangh Parivar's nationalism constitutes and emphasises on historical memory, constructed victimhood and humiliation by foreign invasions. For this strand of Hindu nationalists, colonialism primarily constitutes of the enduring hurt Hindus feel due to the centuries of "Muslim" rule before the British arrived. The most recent iteration of this argument, framed under the larger decolonial school of thought, terms the Muslim rule as "Middle-eastern coloniality." This shift could be traced back to 1920s when VD Savarkar implicitly

recognised the "fanatic hordes of Asia" as a larger threat/ "other" than the British.

The primary aim of Hindu nationalism is to ensure the retention of political power by the Hindus. As the political theorist Pratap Bhanu Mehta points out, this is done through the modern democratic obsession with numeral majority and the modern political project to build a Hindu identity that could transcend differences of caste and region. Thus, we witness the Hindu nationalists constantly emphasise on demography through propaganda on differential birth rate in communities and vulgar fantasies of organised Muslim men luring Hindu girls into marriages i.e. "Love Jihad."

There have been multiple instances of rising hate crimes under the present BJP government. These can be seen through the lynching of Muslims on suspicion of consuming beef by Hindu nationalist mobs as well as the State directly being involved in bulldozing of Muslim homes and property. Civil society members, including activists, authors and journalists, have been booked under draconian laws like sedition and UAPA. While all of these provide a good illustration of the manner in which India's democracy is being eroded, they do not tell us much about the

final form which it might take. In this regard, Mehta points out that the BJP seeks to create a "party-state" ala Communist China. The party becomes the only institution through which social mediation occurs. This does not necessarily mean that all forms of pluralism will be eradicated. However, the party will institutionalise, mediate and co-opt diversity into its own fold i.e. the Sangh. This process takes shape through what Mehta terms as "moral cretinism" i.e. all normal moral sensibilities are suspended and the other is denied its basic humanity and is reduced instead to a pure object of contempt and envy. Under the present regime, public discourse has become so partisan and reflective of moral cretinism that it is a rarity to witness any nuanced discourse even at the highest level. This takes a particularly virulent shape when combined with the sheer cult of personality surrounding the current Prime Minister. This attempt to homogenise presents a real threat to the pluralism and tolerance inherent in democracy.

The author is a writer and a student at the Jindal School of International Affairs. Views are personal.



Anwesh Satpathy

THIS ATTEMPT TO HOMOGENISE PRESENTS A REAL THREAT TO THE PLURALISM AND TOLERANCE INHERENT IN DEMOCRACY

Technological feats

Sir, National Technology Day in India, celebrated on May 11 each year, is a significant event that commemorates the country's technological achievements and emphasises the importance of science in our daily lives. It serves as a reminder of the remarkable progress made in technology and its profound impact on various aspects of our lives. The day holds special significance as it marks the anniversary of the Pokhran nuclear tests conducted in 1998. This event showcased India's advancements in the field of science and technology, making it a proud moment for the nation. National Technology Day provides an opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of Indian scientists, engineers, and researchers who have played a pivotal role in the growth and development of the country. The day highlights the transformative power of technology in different industries. It has revolutionised healthcare through advancements such as robotic surgeries, AI-assisted diagnostics, and telemedicine, improving treatment outcomes. **Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD**

Trapped energy

Sir, Global warming has trapped an explosive amount of energy in the Earth's atmosphere in the past half century - the equivalent of about 25 billion atomic bombs, a new study finds. In the paper, published April 17 in the journal Earth System Science Data, an international group of researchers estimated that, between 1971 and 2020, around 380 zettajoules - that is, 380,000,000,000,000,000,000 joules - of energy has been trapped by global warming. Such a big number is hard to put into context. But two researchers, who were not involved in the study, have put it into perspective by comparing the energy to that released by nukes. However, even then, the amount is still hard to wrap your head around. In an article for The Conversation, Andrew King, a climate scientist at the University of Melbourne in Australia, and Steven Sherwood, a climate scientist at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, calculated that 380 zettajoules is equivalent to around 25 billion times the energy released during the detonation of "Little Boy," the atomic bomb dropped in Hiroshima, Japan, on August 6, 1945. Even more mind-blowing, the energy absorbed by the planet during this time period likely equates to only around 60 per cent of total greenhouse gas emissions, so the actual number is even higher, King and Sherwood wrote. **Asit Mohanty, JAJPUR**

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST are most welcome to contribute letters (200 words), articles and columns (between 750-1250 words). Contributors are requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: edit@orissapost.com

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

national

of the day quote

Dear Karnataka, Reject Hatred!
Vote for development, prosperity & well-being of society and the people

K KAVITHA | BRS LEADER

It is a matter of pride for all of us that Bethune School has attained such pre-eminence in the country and the world. You will one day occupy the number one place among all schools in the world

MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CM

Sports tourism is our next activity in the tourism space. We will help organise sports events at the national level in the future as we will have the infrastructure ready after the National Games

PRAMOD SAWANT | GOA CHIEF MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

5 mowed to death in Gujarat bus stop

Gandhinagar: At least five people were killed and six others injured as a state-run bus ran over commuters waiting at a bus stop in Kalol town in Gujarat's Gandhinagar district Wednesday morning, officials said. The accident took place around 7.30 a.m. As per police, the state-run bus was hit by a speeding private bus from behind, leading to the accident. A complaint has been lodged against the driver of the private bus for reckless driving. Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel said: "It is very sad that innocent passengers lost their lives in the Kalol accident. I express my heartfelt condolences to the relatives of the deceased. I pray to God for the speedy recovery of the injured. The state government has given the families of the deceased Rs 4 lakh and the injured Rs 50,000."

Man booked for abusing PM Modi

Panaji: An FIR was registered against a man in South Goa for allegedly circulating voice clip abusing Prime Minister Narendra Modi and former Chief Minister Churchill Alemao over the Manipur violence issue, police said. A police officer told IANS that Wayne Coutinho from Benaulim Salcete in South Goa had lodged a complaint in this regard.

Two killed, many hurt as bus falls off bridge

Buldhana: Two women were killed and more than 20 passengers were injured when the private bus they were travelling in fell into a dry river after breaking off railings of the bridge in Buldhana district of Maharashtra, police said Wednesday. The accident occurred Tuesday night near Peth village in Chikhli taluka.

Inter state robber nabbed by police

New Delhi: The Special Cell of Delhi Police has arrested an inter-state robber involved in several burglaries in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, an official said on Wednesday. The accused identified as Asib (21), a resident of district Guna in Madhya Pradesh, was arrested from Naraina.

Tiger dies

Jaipur: A tiger was found dead Wednesday at Udaipur's Sajjargarh Biological Park, a day after it was shifted from Ranthambore reserve, a forest official said. The tiger, T-104, was declared a man-eater after it allegedly killed three people and was being kept in an enclosure.

SC to pronounce verdict on Maha political crisis today

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 10: The Supreme Court will Thursday pronounce its judgment on the political crisis in Maharashtra in connection with the rebellion by Shiv Sena leader Eknath Shinde and other MLAs, leading to the fall of Maha Vikas Aghadi government led by Uddhav Thackeray. On March 16, the court, after hearing submissions for nine days, reserved its judgment on a batch of cross-petitions of the groups headed by Uddhav Thackeray and Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde in connection with the issue. An announcement regarding the judgment was made by Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud Wednesday during the hearing on pleas related to legal sanction to same sex marriage.

On March 16, a five-judge constitution bench headed by Chief Justice Chandrachud and comprising Justices MR Shah, Krishna Murari, Hima Kohli and PS Narasimha, before reserving the verdict, shot a volley of questions at senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, representing the

Thackeray group. The Chief Justice asked Singhvi: "So, really the question is whether there was a valid exercise of power by the Governor to call for a trust vote? And what happens, if we come to a conclusion that there was no valid exercise of power by the Governor to call for a trust vote?" As Singhvi said everything falls, the bench said that everything falls on would be simple. The Chief Justice further queried: "Then, according to you, what, we reinstate the Uddhav Thackeray government? But you resigned." Singhvi said Thackeray's resignation and not facing the trust vote is irrelevant. The Chief Justice observed: "That is, the court being told to reinstate a government (which has resigned)." Singhvi said that it is a plausible way of looking at it but it is irrelevant, and asked the bench to give him an opportunity to explain his contention. At this juncture, Justice Shah said: "How can the court reinstate a Chief Minister who did not even face floor test?" Singhvi said the court is not reinstating anyone but it is restoring the status quo ante.



The Opposition should also be respected. I think that you (PM) will also move in this direction, then the ruling dispensation and the opposition will be able to serve the country with more vigour
ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CM

SCHOOL VAN CATCHES FIRE

Two students sustained burn injuries after their school van caught fire in Amethi district Wednesday. Six other children have also suffered minor injuries. The incident took place in the Sangrampur police circle of the district



BEATING THE HEAT: Young men bathe in a water body to beat the heat during a hot summer day in Guwahati, Assam

PTI PHOTO

Same sex couples can adopt kids: SC

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 10: The Supreme Court, hearing a clutch of pleas seeking legal validation for same-sex marriage, Wednesday said an individual in a homosexual relationship is not precluded from adopting a child under the law irrespective of marital status.

A five-judge constitution bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud posed several queries to the child rights body NCPDR, and Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA), a statutory body of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, on the contours of the right of an individual to adopt a child.

The queries of the top court, which is likely to reserve its verdict on the pleas Thursday, assume significance in the wake of vehement submissions by Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPDR) and CARA, that the welfare of the child to be given in adoption is paramount and can be granted to heterosexual couples only as the concept of gender may be "fluid" but not the mother.

"The law does recognise that you can adopt for variety of reasons. You may adopt even though you are capable of biological birth. You can adopt if you do not want to go for biological birth. There is no compulsion to have biological children. So, therefore the law does recognise the fact that there may be situations within this ideal of co-habiting family with father and mother of heterosexual gender..." said the court. The bench also comprises Justices S K Kaul, S R Bhat, Hima Kohli and P S Narasimha. "What we are asking you (CARA



THE CHIEF JUSTICE NOTED THAT THE LAW DOES RECOGNISE THAT ONE CAN ADOPT FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS AND "YOU CAN ADOPT EVEN IF YOU'RE CAPABLE OF BIOLOGICAL BIRTH. THERE'S NO COMPULSION OF HAVING A BIOLOGICAL BIRTH"

and NCPDR) really is something slightly different which is... Nonetheless our law recognises the right of a single individual to adopt. "And the question, therefore is whether the right of a single individual to adopt is not affected by the relationship which the single individual may otherwise have whether he/she is in a live-in relationship which is heterosexual or in a live-in relationship of the same sex so long as you are adopting as a single individual?" the bench asked. To this the law officer replied in the affirmative.

"An individual in a same-sex relationship is not precluded from adopting a child. We take that as CARA's position," the bench said. The bench asked whether he was seeking a declaration that the marriage between two heterosexuals is invalid under the Special Marriage Act (SMA) if it does not recognise same-sex marriage. "Your argument is that any notion of marriage as a social institution which excludes same-sex couples would be violative of the constitution preset. Their argument is that marriage is conventionally understood as a hetero-

The apex court made this observation while hearing a batch of pleas seeking legal sanction for same-sex marriage

The bench observed that one can be adopted child of just the male, it is an evolving scene

What remains central to this and unchanged is the welfare of the child, it added

sexual union. You are saying that in order to make it constitutionally compliant, read that social institution as also having within its fold same-sex unions. That's very different from what we did in the Navtej Johar judgement (decriminalising the gay sex)," it said.

Even if the petitioners are compelled to challenge the validity of the SMA, that would be postulated on the hypothesis that any statutory recognition of marriage as being confined to heterosexual man and woman is unconstitutional, the bench said.

The bench, which was hearing the submissions for the ninth day on the pleas seeking the top court's ratification of same-sex marriage, was told by the Centre that it has received responses from seven states on the issue. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, said the governments of Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and Assam have opposed the petitioners' contention seeking legal validation for such wedlock. He also referred to Tuesday's observations of the top court that it may issue a declaration on the right to marriage of same sex couples.

PM Modi to visit US next month

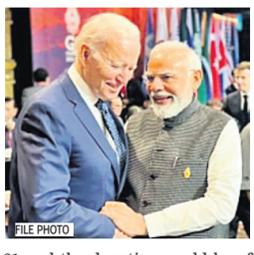
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 10: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will embark on a state visit to the US next month that will underscore the growing importance of the bilateral strategic ties and both sides will reflect on their vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Wednesday.

The MEA said Modi has been invited by President Joe Biden and First Lady Jill Biden and he will attend a state dinner June 22.

It said the visit offers a "valuable opportunity" for the two countries to further deepen their comprehensive and forward-looking global strategic partnership. Announcing the visit, the MEA, however, did not mention the duration of the trip.

People familiar with the preparation for the trip said exact details of the prime minister's schedule are being worked out, adding the visit is likely to start on June



21 and the duration could be of four days. It will be Modi's first state visit to the US after Biden became President. The prime minister visited Washington in September 2021 to attend the first in-person Quad Leaders Summit. Modi had a bilateral meeting with Biden during that visit.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will embark on an official state visit to the United States of America, which will include a state dinner on June 22 following an invitation from President Joseph Biden and First Lady Jill Biden," the MEA said in a statement.

Over 90% voting in Meghalaya's Sohiong



Voters wait in a long queue to cast their votes

PTI PHOTO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Rampur/Jalandhar, May 10: Bypolls held in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Odisha witnessed a moderate to high voter turnout Wednesday, while Meghalaya registered an impressive polling percentage of over 90.

According to the figures released by the Election Commission (EC) at 9 pm, a voter turnout of around 54 per cent was recorded in Jalandhar, while the Suar and Chhanbey Assembly seats in Uttar Pradesh registered a polling percentage of 44.95 and 39.51 respectively. The Sohiong Assembly seat in Meghalaya recorded a voter turnout of 91.87 per cent.

The polling was largely peaceful, EC officials said. The Jalandhar Lok Sabha seat fell vacant following the death of Congress MP Santokh Singh Chaudhary due to a cardiac arrest during the party's Bharat Jodo Yatra in January. It witnessed a four-cornered electoral battle involving the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), the Congress, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD).

Opposition party leaders accused the AAP of violating the Model Code of Conduct by deploying "outsiders" at several booths,

a charge denied by the ruling party. The Congress candidate, through her election agent, wrote a letter to the chief election commissioner, alleging that AAP leaders and workers came from outside the constituency for campaigning and were present in almost every village and ward. The Mayawati-led BSP did not contest the bypolls, while the Congress had fielded its candidate only in Chhanbey.

In the 2022 Assembly polls, Abdullah Azam Khan had defeated Haidar Ali Khan of the Apna Dal (Sonelal) from Suar by a margin of more than 61,000 votes. This time, the SP had fielded Anuradha Chauhan from the seat and Apna Dal (Sonelal) had nominated Shafeek Ahmed Ansari. A voter turnout of 91.87 per cent was recorded in the Sohiong bypoll in Meghalaya's East Khasi Hills district, with the polling process largely being peaceful. Chief Electoral Officer F R Kharkongor said. The official said no law-and-order issue was reported. There were some complaints regarding electronic voting machines (EVMs) at some polling stations and the machines were fixed, he added. Six candidates - all men - were in the fray. The counting of votes for all the bypolls will be taken up May 13.

New breathalyser test can 'sniff out' Covid in real-time

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 10: Scientists have developed a new laser-based breathalyser test powered by artificial intelligence (AI) that they say can detect Covid-19 in real-time with excellent accuracy.

The team from the University of Colorado (CU) Boulder in the US hopes that the frequency comb breathalyser—essentially using laser light to distinguish one molecule from another—could revolutionise medical diagnostics.

"Our results demonstrate the promise of breath analysis as an alternative, rapid, non-invasive test for Covid-19 and highlight its remarkable potential for diagnosing diverse conditions and disease states," said study first author Qizhong Liang, a PhD candidate at CU Boulder. "There is a real, foreseeable fu-

ture in which you could go to the doctor and have your breath measured along with your height and weight... Or you could blow into a mouthpiece integrated into your phone and get information about your health in real-time," said Jun Ye, adjunct professor at CU Boulder and senior author of the study published in the Journal of Breath Research.

Between May 2021 and January 2022, the research team collected breath samples from 170 CU Boulder students who had, in the previous 48 hours, taken a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test, either by submitting a saliva or a nasal sample. Half had tested positive, half negative. Overall, the process took less than one hour from collection to result.

When compared to PCR, the gold standard Covid-19 test, breathalyser results matched 85 per cent of



the time. For medical diagnostics, accuracy of 80 per cent or greater is considered "excellent".

The researchers noted that the accuracy would likely have been

higher if the breath and saliva/nasal swab samples were collected at the same time.

Unlike a nasal swab, the breathalyser is non-invasive. And unlike a

A BREATH SAMPLE IS PIPED IN THROUGH A TUBE AS LASERS FIRE INVISIBLE MID-INFRARED LIGHT AT IT AT THOUSANDS OF DIFFERENT FREQUENCIES

DOZENS OF TINY MIRRORS BOUNCE THE LIGHT BACK AND FORTH THROUGH THE MOLECULES SO MANY TIMES THAT THE LIGHT TRAVELS ABOUT 1.5 MILES

saliva sample, users are not asked to refrain from eating, drinking or smoking before using it, the researchers said.

The test doesn't require costly chemicals to break down the sample. And the test could, conceivably, be used on individuals who are not conscious, they said. The breathalyser test consists of a complex array of lasers and mirrors

about the size of a banquet table. A breath sample is piped in through a tube as lasers fire invisible mid-infrared light at it at thousands of different frequencies. Dozens of tiny mirrors bounce the light back and forth through the molecules so many times that the light travels about 1.5 miles.

Because each kind of molecule absorbs light differently, breath samples with a different molecular make-up cast distinct shadows.

The machine can distinguish between those different shadows or absorption patterns, boiling millions of data points down to—in the case of COVID—a simple positive or negative, in a matter of seconds.

The researchers are working to miniaturise such systems to a chip scale, allowing for what Liang imagines as "real-time, self-health monitoring on the go".

Civil society in Bengal divided over ban on 'The Kerala Story'



2 PILs challenge ban at Calcutta HC

Two public interest litigations (PILs) have been filed at the Calcutta High Court Wednesday challenging the West Bengal government's ban on the screening of 'The Kerala Story' in the state. Both the PILs have been filed before the division bench of Chief Justice TS Sivagnanam and Justice Hiranmay Bhattacharya. The development comes at a time when the movie's director Sudipto Sen has already approached the Supreme Court challenging the decision of the state government. The first PIL at the Calcutta High Court has been filed by one Anindya Sundar Das, who has claimed that the state government cannot ban the screening of the movie just by issuing a notification. He argued that this ban on screening is against the basic freedom of speech and hence should be withdrawn. The second PIL at the Calcutta High Court has been filed by another individual Debdatta Majhi, who has also appealed to the same division bench for cancelling the notification of the state government. He also challenged the manner in which the ban on screening of the movie was imposed. The division bench has admitted both the petitions.

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, May 10: The West Bengal government's decision to ban the screening of 'The Kerala Story' in the state seems to have divided the civil society.

Those who are against the ban cite three different logical premises on this count - the first being the justification of banning a film which has got clearance from the censor board, the second on the effectiveness of the ban in this age of OTT when shortly the film will be available on the OTT platform, and the third is that by banning the movie, the government has actually

increased the public craze for it.

On the other hand, those who are in support of the decision to ban the movie feel that considering the changed socio-cultural changes that West Bengal had gone through in the recent past, there was a risk in allowing the screening of the movie and hence the state government has done the right thing by not taking that risk.

According to the Association for Protection of Democratic Rights (APDR) General Secretary, Ranjit Sur, when the decision of the ban on screening was taken, already the movie had been screened in different multiplexes

of the state for four days.

"But there had not been a single report of law & order problems over screening the movie. The state government should have allowed the screening of the movie and let the people of the state decide whether they accept it or reject it. I do not think that by banning the screening of the movie, the state government has taken a revolutionary step against attempts to create communal divide. This is a pure political game keeping in mind polarisation of the vote bank," he said.

Senior counsel of the Calcutta High Court Kaushik Gupta said that such bans on screening of movies in cinema halls or multiplexes are useless in the current age of internet and OTTs.

"Already there are reports of the movie being leaked online. Very soon the movie will appear in one or more OTT platforms. How will the state government stop people from viewing that there? Rather, this ban will now encourage even those people, who otherwise might not have gone to watch the movie, to view the same," Gupta added.

Acclaimed painter Subhprasanna, otherwise known to be very close to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, disagrees with the state government's logic for banning the movie. According to him, he had always been against any forced opposition against any creative work. He said that when the censor board has cleared the screening of the movie, he does not find any logic on the ban enforced by the state government. "The people should have the freedom of accepting or rejecting the movie," he said.

Poet and educationist Subodh Sarkar, however, feels that the state government has done the right thing by banning the screen of the movie since it had enough elements to fuel tension. "To my opinion the state government has done the right thing by not allowing the sparks to turn into flames," he said.

UNESCO world heritage tag likely for Santiniketan

Visva-Bharati, which means communion of the world with India, was built by Tagore, the first Asian to win the Nobel Prize, in the twin towns of Santiniketan and Sriniketan in 1921

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Kolkata, May 10: Santiniketan - the place where Gurudev Rabindra Nath Tagore built Visva-Bharati over a century ago, has been recommended for inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage List by an international advisory body, Union Culture Minister G Kishan Reddy said.

India has been striving for long to get a UNESCO tag for this cultural site located in Bengal's Birbhum district.

"Great news for India on the

Jayanti of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore. Santiniketan in West Bengal has been recommended for inscription to the World Heritage List by ICOMOS, the advisory body to UNESCO World Heritage Centre," Reddy said in a late-night tweet Tuesday.

This furthers the vision of PM Narendra Modi to showcase our rich cultural heritage to the world. This will formally be announced in the World Heritage Committee meeting to be held at Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in September 2023, the minister said in his tweet.



The France-based International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) is an international non-governmental organisation that comprises professionals, experts, representatives from local authorities, companies and heritage organisations and is dedicated to the conservation and enhancement

of the architectural and landscape heritage around the world. The development has been hailed as a proud moment by the authorities of the university.

"To our knowledge Visva-Bharati is the first living university in India which will be bestowed with the honour," its spokesperson Mahua Bandyopadhyay told PTI Wednesday.

She said a top Archeological Survey of India official informed the university Tuesday about the recommendation by ICOSMOS, a UNESCO advisory body for the inscription of Visva-Bharati in the World Heritage List. To a question she replied, "This news coming on the birth anniversary of Gurudev (Rabindra Nath Tagore) should be a proud moment for Bengal and the country."



TRIBUTE TO TAGORE: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee pays tribute to poet Rabindranath Tagore during the 175th anniversary of Bethune Collegiate School, in Kolkata, Wednesday. The CM, on behalf of the Government of West Bengal, awarded Bethune Collegiate School the Banga Ratna Award. PTI PHOTO

Ahead of Bihar CM's Maha visit, MVA sees fresh war of words



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, May 10: Ahead of Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's visit to Mumbai Thursday for Opposition unity talks, a fresh war of words has erupted among the three Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) allies - Congress, Nationalist Congress Party and Shiv Sena (UBT).

This time, the scenario involves NCP supremo Sharad Pawar, Sena's (UBT) Sanjay Raut and Congress' Prithviraj Chavan with barbs and sparks being hurled at each other, almost appearing to throw the three-party alliance on the brink.

Raut's editorial comment that Pawar had failed to prepare an heir, though he checkmated the Bharatiya Janata Party's plans to split the NCP, rankled the Maratha strongman.

Pawar hit back hard in his characteristic soft style, dismissing Raut's contentions and saying the latter has little idea of what is going on in the NCP over next-gen leadership, and that all his party leaders are aware of how the party will move ahead.

Pawar's statement capped sharp reactions from Leader of Opposition Ajit Patil, veterans like Chhagan Bhuji and others against Raut's claims.

Bhuji went to the extent of

asking whether Raut implied that the NCP should walk out of the MVA, and made it clear that he (Raut) had no business saying such things.

Pawar also slammed Chavan's statements during the Karnataka poll campaign in which he called NCP a Team B of the BJP in the southern state.

"First let him check his own status in the party, whether it's A, B or C... Any colleague of his will reveal this in private," Pawar said in Satara Tuesday.

NCP national spokesperson Clyde Crasto termed Chavan as a BJP agent trying to create a rift among the MVA allies, and alleged that since even the Congress does not take him (Chavan) seriously, his utterances will not make any difference.

Attempting to soothe the ruffled feathers all around, state Congress President Nana Patole said that after the Karnataka Assembly election results are declared, the three partners will sit together and hammer out the seat-sharing formula for the 2024 Lok Sabha and Maharashtra Assembly elections.

The shaky developments came on the eve of the Karnataka Assembly elections Wednesday, and Nitish Kumar's meetings with Thackeray and Pawar Thursday.

Mumbai zoo gets a 'Croc Trail' with underwater viewing deck

Visitors can simultaneously get a magnificent view of the crocodiles and gharials prancing under the murky waters and being fed their favourite foods

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, May 10: The 162-year-old Veermata Jijabai Bhosle Botanical Garden & Zoological Museum launched a 'Crocodile Trail' with an underwater viewing deck, billed as the first of its kind in Asia, to view crocodiles and gharials, said officials.

The 'Croc Trail' - presently with three crocodiles and two gharials on the prowl - opened Sunday to chills and thrills among the first awe-struck viewers to the Byculla Zoo, as it is popularly known.

Spread over nearly one acre of water and greenery, the 'Croc Trail'



has separate enclosures for the crocodiles and gharials, and more shall be added here from other zoos in the country.

The highlight is the submerged deck in the lake from where the visitors can simultaneously get a magnificent view of the crocodiles and gharials prancing under the murky waters, akin to their natural surroundings in the wild, and being fed their favourite foods.

The 'Croc Trail' is the brainchild of BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation Administrator IS Chahal, Additional Municipal Commissioner Ashwini Bhide and Deputy Municipal Commissioner Kishore Gandhi and was under implementation for several months at the zoo, sprawling over 20 hectares

in south Mumbai.

The underwater glass deck enables the experience of a live aquarium and also has an elevated platform from which an upper view is available for the visitors to enjoy, said an official.

Presently, the zoo's chief attractions are the Humboldt Penguins colony, a first in India, bears, tigers, leopards, waterfowls and other animals that lure up to 35K visitors on weekends and 22K on weekdays.

Incidentally, many years ago, there was a small crocodile enclosure in the Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP), while a private adventurer operates a natural open Konkani Crocodile Safari in the River Vashist in Ratnagiri.

Minister's 'Macbeth' jibe as Guv refers to 'Hamlet'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, May 10: The Raj Bhavan and the state secretariat in West Bengal seem to be entering into a war of rhetoric involving English playwright William Shakespeare and the popular characters in his plays.

Just a day after Governor CB Ananda Bose said at a public function that he will not remain silent like 'Hamlet' in case there is a constitutional crisis in West Bengal, state Education Minister Bratya Basu Tuesday hurled a 'Macbeth' and 'Caesar' jibe at the constitutional head of the state.

"Rather, I feel the Governor is behaving more like Macbeth or Julius Caesar. He is trying to grab and monopolise authority. It is the state government which has always made attempts to move ahead through discussions," Basu told mediapersons Tuesday.

Basu said that while the state education department is always open for discussions with the Governor on the issue of re-

recruitment of vice-chancellors in state universities, the Governor has refused to engage in any kind of dialogue on this issue.

In several cases, he is trying to appoint vice-chancellors who do not have teaching experience of 10 years. He is breaking the rules. Our Chief Minister has already said that the Governor is trying to monopolise his authority and control over the state universities by bypassing the state education department. This is not the behaviour of Hamlet. Rather this is somewhat like the tragic character of Macbeth, who was brutally ambitious," Basu said.

The minister also drew the reference of Julius Caesar. The manner in which the Governor is always surrounded by the followers of BJP is somewhat like that of Julius Caesar, he said.

Political observers feel that the Governor's fresh caution of not remaining silent in case of constitutional crisis might open another round of tussle between the Raj Bhavan and the state secretariat.

A record 21,000-km 'long drive' along borders of India

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Pune, May 10: Creating a new record, a Pune couple and their friend - all software engineers-cum-adventure lovers - went on a 'long drive' in an SUV, covering a whopping 21,000 km in 70 days across the entire boundary of India, from east to west, north to south.

They are - Jaykumar Anadkat, his wife Pooja Padiya-Anadkat, both from Gujarat, and their friend Sonesh Mehra from Rajasthan, who are the co-founders of the adventure club, 'PlacesAroundPune'.

"We have done many activities like hiking, trekking, cycling, mountaineering, scuba-diving etc., but this time we wanted to do something unique and fulfilling. So we charted out this trip - #MapMyCountry - in our Tata Safari SUV, and we hope to make it to the record books, said Jaykumar, after the trio re-

turned home late Monday.

The trio, all aged 35, embarked on their journey February 27 from Magarpatta and returned to the same location May 8, zooming through 26 states, several Union Territories, 52 major cities and over 250 important travel destinations along the boundary and borders of India.

"We went around the country's periphery, all the border states and drew the India map through the car route, starting in a clockwise direction from Maharashtra," said Mehra.

From Maharashtra, they went to Gujarat (Dwarka and Koteswar temples in the extreme western parts of India), Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Himachal, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, the Northeastern states like Kaho in Arunachal Pradesh, the first village of India in the east, and Danushkodi



Rameshwaram and Kanyakumari as the southernmost tip.

"We touched six international borders - Pakistan, China, Nepal,

Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar. We learnt a lot about the different people of India, their cultures and lifestyles, the weather systems, the

abundant beauty of different parts of the country. It was a very enriching drive indeed," said Pooja.

The ultra-long drive took them from 45-degree Celsius in Rajasthan deserts to the -5-degree Celsius in snowy Kashmir, braving hailstorms in Himachal Pradesh and Nagaland, torrential rains in Assam, and the humid weather in the southern states. Though they carried suitable clothes, many a times they had to hunt for more locally in order to survive.

The trio recalls speeding through some of the wildest and densest forests akin to a jungle safari, off-roading, dusty dry desert sands, boat-rides in mangrove forests, traversing snowy mountains roads, or gingerly driving through bamboo bridges, over deep valleys and turbulent rivers in different parts of India, soaking in the first sunrise in the east and the colourful sunsets in the west and southern beaches.

national

of the day quote

If the intention is virtuous and there is a sense of doing service to society then such resolutions are taken and are also fulfilled

NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

Heavy floods hit the region last year, and many areas are still impacted by that. The people there are still suffering. In such circumstances, the situation turning like this is more dangerous

FAROOQ ABDULLAH | FORMER J&K CM

It is time for the BJP to announce zero house tax and road tax. At least that will give some respite to people. Making films tax free will benefit the filmmaker more than the common man

SHIVPAL YADAV | SENIOR SP LEADER

SHORT TAKES

Major fire in Kolkata building

Kolkata: A major fire broke out at the top floor of a multi-storied building close to the Raj Bhavan in the central part of the city Wednesday morning. The fire broke out at the terrace of the five-storied 'Saraf House', a commercial building, and two persons, including a firefighter, were injured, a senior officer of Kolkata Police said. The authorities pressed into service 15 fire tenders and one 55m hydraulic ladder to douse the fire and they succeeded in after almost nine hours.

Two terrorist associates held

Srinagar: Two terrorist associates linked with proscribed terror outfit LeT were arrested by a joint security forces team in Jammu and Kashmir's Sopore Wednesday, and arms and ammunition, including an IED, recovered from their possession, police said. Police said based on a specific input regarding presence of two suspected individuals near Saidpora Bypass area, a joint cordon and search operation was launched by the police, the army, and the CRPF.

4 dead in road mishap

Surajpur: Four persons, including two women, were killed and six others injured after a sports utility vehicle (SUV) they were travelling in collided with a truck in Chhattisgarh's Surajpur district Wednesday, officials said. Four of the injured persons are in serious condition, said a medical official. The victims, natives of Raghunathnagar police station area of neighbouring Balarampur district, were returning after attending a wedding in Latori village of Surajpur, they said.

Situation in strife-torn Manipur improving

At least 60 people have been killed and over 30,000 have been rendered homeless, of whom 26,000 have been evacuated to safer places outside their districts, while 4,000 remained in relief camps closer to their homes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Imphal, May 10: Firing by unknown militants in Manipur's Imphal East district left one Assam Rifles personnel injured Wednesday, while life in the violence-hit northeastern state continued to limp back to normal elsewhere with curfew being relaxed in 11 districts for six hours a day.

People sheltered in temporary camps also started returning home, a defence official said. At least 60 people were killed and over 30,000 rendered homeless in rioting which engulfed Manipur last week.

Of those who had to leave their homes, 26,000 have been evacuated outside their districts while 4,000 remained in relief camps close to their homes, Information and Public Relations Minister Sapam Ranjan Singh said. Soldiers on an area domination exercise were fired on by unknown militants at 11 am at Dolaithabi area in Imphal East district, Spear Corps of the Army said.

Various militant groups are known to have participated in the ethnic rioting that broke out between the majority Meitei and tribals - mostly from the Kuki and affiliated tribes - last week over a move to grant the majority community scheduled tribe status.

A total of 128 columns of the Indian Army and Assam Rifles or nearly 10,000 soldiers continued



Violent clashes broke out in the northeastern state after a 'Tribal Solidarity March' was organised in the 10 hill districts May 3 to protest against the Meitei community's demand for ST status

The clashes were preceded by tension over eviction of Kuki villagers from reserve forest land, which had led to a series of smaller agitations

Bishnupur, Churachandpur and Jiribam for six hours from 5 am, officials said. The Army is undertaking surveillance of areas not only in the hinterland but also along the India-Myanmar Border.

Meanwhile, Assam Rifles said the force has evacuated 1,229 people from Nagaland, who were stranded in Manipur. They include 47 Konyak tribe women from Yairipok in Thoubal district who were workers at a veneer factory there.

Inspector General of Assam Rifles (North) Maj Gen Vikas Lakhera said in Kohima that most of the people from Nagaland who were stranded have been rescued. He said that though no more calls were received on the helpline numbers, the lines are still open for those requiring help. Meiteis ac-

flag marches in the affected areas and undertook round-the-clock aerial surveillance using unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). Stranded people are now returning homes and getting reunited with their loved ones, it said.

Curfew was relaxed in 11 districts including Imphal West,

Govt to examine WhatsApp's breach of privacy: Minister

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 10: The government will investigate a claim that WhatsApp accessed the microphone of smartphone users while the phone was not in use, Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology Rajeev Chandrasekhar said Wednesday.

In a tweet, the minister said the government will examine the alleged breach of privacy even as the new Digital Personal Data Protection Bill was being readied.

This followed a claim that WhatsApp accessed a user's microphone while he was sleeping.

"WhatsApp has been using the microphone in the background, while I was asleep and since I woke up at 6 AM," Foad Dabiri, an engineering director at Twitter said on Saturday. "What's going on?" Replying to Dabiri's tweet, Chandrasekhar said, "This is an unacceptable breach and violation of privacy."

"We will be examining this immediately and will act on any violation of privacy even as the new Digital Personal Data Protection bill is being readied," he added. Dabiri's tweet went viral, attracting over 65 million views.



SHOW OF STRENGTH: Personnel of the Indian and Royal Thai Navy during the 35th edition of India-Thailand Coordinated Patrol (Indo-Thai CORPAT) along the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) in the Andaman Sea

Nitish, Tejashwi meet J'khand CM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ranchi, May 10: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar Wednesday met his Jharkhand counterpart Hemant Soren here and said their talks centred around forming a "united opposition" to defeat the BJP in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

Kumar along with deputy Tejashwi Yadav held a discussion with Soren for around one hour at the latter's residence here.

"Our talks centred around forming a united opposition and the result of the discussion will be visible in the upcoming 2024 Lok Sabha elections," Kumar told reporters after the meeting.

"We will oppose attempts by the Centre to make changes in history. We will also restore Hindu-Muslim unity," Kumar, the JD(U) leader,



said. The meeting is seen as part of Kumar's efforts to bring all non-NDA parties together to defeat the BJP in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The Bihar CM, who snapped ties with the BJP last year, vowing to defeat it in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, has toured many places and met political leaders of various hues as part of his "opposition unity drive". Kumar on Tuesday called on Odisha Chief Minister and

BJD leader Naveen Patnaik at his residence in Bhubaneswar and held a discussion with him for more than an hour.

Recently, he also held talks with West Bengal Chief Minister and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee and Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav. Kumar and Yadav had in April met Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge in Delhi in the presence of Rahul Gandhi and

BANDH AFFECTS NORMAL LIFE

Normal life was affected in the Arunachal Pradesh capital Wednesday, following a 72-hour bandh call given by a few individuals and groups, in protest against the paper leak scam of the state public service commission



ADANI-HINDENBURG ROW

Top court to hear matter on May 12



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 10: The Supreme Court will hear May 12 the pleas on the Adani-Hindenburg row and is likely to consider market regulator SEBI's application seeking a six-month extension to complete its probe into the allegations of stock price manipulation by the Adani group and lapses in regulatory disclosure.

The apex court had March 2 asked SEBI to probe within two months these allegations and had also set up a panel to look at providing protection to Indian investors after a damning report by US short seller Hindenburg wiped out more than USD 140 billion of the Indian conglomerate's market value.

As per the cause list uploaded on the apex court website, a bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices P S Narasimha and J B Pardiwala is scheduled to hear the pleas.

The hearing assumes significance in the wake of media reports that the six-member committee, headed by former apex court judge Justice A M Sapre, constituted for assessing the existing regulatory framework and making recommendations to strengthen the process, has submitted its report to the top court in a sealed cover.

Recently, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) moved the apex court seeking a six-month extension to complete its probe into allegations of stock price manipulation by the Adani group and lapses in regulatory disclosure.

In an application moved before the court, SEBI has submitted it

► Till now, four PILs have been filed in the top court on the issue including by lawyers M L Sharma and Vishal Tiwari and Congress leader Jaya Thakur

► Adani Group stocks had taken a beating on the bourses after Hindenburg Research made a litany of allegations, including those about fraudulent transactions and share-price manipulation, against the business conglomerate

► The Adani Group has dismissed the charges as lies, saying it complies with all laws and disclosure requirements

needs six more months for ascertaining possible violations related to "misrepresentation of financials, circumvention of regulations and/or fraudulent nature of transactions".

"Pass an order extending the time to conclude the investigation as directed by this Court by the common order dated March 2 by a period of 6 months or such other period as this court may deem fit and necessary in the facts and circumstances of the present case," the SEBI plea said.

One of the PIL petitioners, advocate Vishal Tiwari, has opposed the SEBI's plea, saying the market regulator has already got sufficient time to inspect, examine, collect and seize relevant documents.

The apex court, while defending the setting up of the committee, had said it was appropriate to have a panel of experts in order to protect Indian investors against the volatility of the kind which has been witnessed in the recent past.

Eight students die by suicide after failing in Intermediate exams

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad, May 10: Eight students have died by suicide since Tuesday after failing or scoring low marks to pass in the Intermediate exams.

The results of Intermediate first year and second year (11th and 12th classes) were declared Tuesday. P. Jhanvi (17) of Santosh Nagar area in Hyderabad hanged herself at her residence. She was upset after failing in the Intermediate second year examination. She was a student of MPC (Maths, Physics and Chemistry) at a private junior college. Another girl student ended her life in Vanasthalipuram. Gayatri hanged herself at her residence. She and her younger sister had appeared in the exam. Gayatri was upset as she had failed to clear the exam while her younger sister had passed.

Gautam Kumar of Khairatabad area also ended his life after failing in the exam. Saifabad police registered a case and shifted the body for autopsy. In Manikonda, a girl student jumped to death from the fifth floor of a building after failing in the exam. Shanta Kumari was a student of Intermediate first year at a government college in Raidurgam. Another student ended his life at Neredmet in Secunderabad. Upset after failing in the intermediate second year exam, he hanged himself at his house.

A student from Armoor who was studying at a private college in Hyderabad ended his life after failing in the exam. Meanwhile, a student from Mahabubabad district, who had committed suicide after appearing the exam due to fear of failure, has scored 892 out of 1,000 marks in Intermediate second year. Guguloth Krishna had ended his life April 10.

Cyclone Mocha: How and why cyclones are named

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 10: Cyclone Mocha, the latest tropical storm brewing in the Bay of Bengal, has been making headlines across India. But have you ever wondered how the cyclones get their names?

Weather forecasters give each tropical cyclone a name to avoid confusion, according to the World Meteorological Organisation. In general, tropical cyclones are named according to the rules at regional level.

For the Indian Ocean region, a formula for naming cyclones was agreed upon in 2004. Eight countries in the region - Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Thailand - all contributed a set of names, which are

assigned sequentially whenever a cyclonic storm develops.

The names are chosen to be easy to remember and pronounce, and they must not be offensive or controversial. They are also chosen from a variety of languages so that people from different regions can identify with them.

Cyclone Mocha, for example, is one of the names proposed by Yemen, based on a small fishing village in the country known for its coffee production.

The current list of names includes contributions from Bangladesh, Iran, Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.



The next name in line is "Biparjoy" suggested by Bangladesh. In recent years, the IMD has started to include names

of cultural significance in the list of names. For example, the name Amphan, which means sky in Thai, was used for a cyclone that hit

Weather forecasters give each tropical cyclone a name to avoid confusion, according to the World Meteorological Organisation

In general, tropical cyclones are named according to the rules at regional level

West Bengal in 2020.

The IMD's tradition of naming cyclones is a way of involving different countries in the region and creating a sense of community around the shared experience of tropical storms. Cyclone Mocha is just the latest example of this tradition, which helps to keep people safe and informed during times of crisis.

The naming system has evolved over time. In the early years of the practice, the names were chosen alphabetically, with one name as-

signed to each letter of the alphabet. However, this system was found to be confusing and difficult to remember, so the current system of pre-defined names was introduced.

In the Atlantic and Southern hemisphere (Indian Ocean and South Pacific), tropical cyclones receive names in alphabetical order, alternating between women and men's names.

In the Northern Indian Ocean, nations began using a new system for naming tropical cyclones in 2000. Names are listed alphabetically country-wise, and are neutral gender-wise. The name list is proposed by the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services of WMO Members of a specific region and approved by respective tropical cyclone regional bodies at their annual or biennial sessions.

international



I told congressional leaders that I'm prepared to begin a separate discussion about my budget, spending priorities, but not under the threat of default
JOE BIDEN | PRESIDENT, US

RARE DAY AT VATICAN

It was a rare day at the Vatican Wednesday as two popes shared the limelight in St Peter's Square - Pope Francis and His Holiness Pope Tawadros II of the Coptic Orthodox Church



of the day quote

We understand there is retaliation (from China), but we will not be intimidated, we will continue to do everything necessary to keep Canadians protected from foreign interference
JUSTIN TRUDEAU | PM, CANADA

The upcoming visit will affirm the deep and close partnership between the United States and India and the warm bonds of family and friendship that link Americans and Indians together
KARINE JEAN-PIERRE | PRESS SECRETARY, WHITE HOUSE

One needs to recognize that we are competitors and, sadly, increasingly also systemic rivals. Europe's stance toward China should be not decoupling, but de-risking, because it's about our security and freedom, too
ANNALENA BAERBOCK | FOREIGN MINISTER, GERMANY

SHORT TAKES

Iran executes 7

Paris: Iran executed seven men in two prisons outside Tehran on drugs and rape charges Wednesday, a rights group said, accelerating what activists describe as a hanging spree over the past two weeks. The United Nations had warned Tuesday of a "frighteningly" high number of executions in the country after a rare execution Monday of two men on blasphemy charges.

Wildfires kill 21

Moscow: The death toll from wildfires in Russia's Ural Mountains rose to 21 Tuesday, Russian state news agency Tass reported, citing local emergency service agencies. Wildfires have raged in the Kurgan region of the Urals and in Siberia all week. According to local authorities, most of the deaths occurred Sunday in the Kurgan province village of Yulduz, which is located on the border between the Ural Mountains and Siberia.

Cash to defectors

Bangkok: Myanmar's military government is urging people fighting against its rule to surrender their weapons, offering a cash reward if they do so along with the possibility of reduced sentences if they broke the law. The official announcement in Wednesday's edition of the Global New Light of Myanmar newspaper said people involved in major resistance organisations, including the People's Defense Forces, are "invited to return to the legal fold." The PDF are the armed wing of the pro-democracy movement that was organised after the army's 2021 takeover.

TOSHAKHANA CASE

Khan indicted; Pak burns

Arrest of the former cricket hero, and Pakistan's most popular politician, came at a precarious time for the country that is facing a shortage of foreign exchange



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, May 10: Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan was Wednesday sent on an eight-day remand to the anti-corruption watchdog while a sessions court indicted him in a separate graft case, amid violent protests that left at least seven people dead and prompted deployment of the army in three provinces.

The 70-year-old chairman of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was taken into custody by the paramilitary Rangers Tuesday on the orders of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) by barging into a room of the Islamabad High Court. On Wednesday, Khan was produced in the Anti-Corruption Court No 1 presided by judge Muhammad Bashir, the same judge who had convicted former premier Nawaz Sharif and his daughter Maryam in a corruption case of having properties in London. Judge Bashir reserved the judgment at the conclusion of arguments. Later on announcing the ver-

- KHAN SENT TO 8-DAY REMAND AMID VIOLENT STIRS
- COURT INDICTS EX-PM IN ANOTHER GRAFT CASE
- AT LEAST 7 HAVE DIED AND NEARLY 300 INJURED
- NEARLY 1K SUPPORTERS HAVE BEEN ARRESTED

I have not been to the washroom in 24 hours. I am afraid I will meet the same fate as Maqsood Chapparsi. They give [you] an injection, and [you] slowly die

IMRAN KHAN | FORMER PM, PAKISTAN

dict, the court handed over Khan for eight days to the NAB. At the start of the hearing, the NAB lawyers requested the court to grant a 14-day remand of Khan to probe the allegations against him in the Al-Qadir Trust case in which he is accused of looting Rs 50 billion of the national treasury. But Khan's lawyer opposed the plea and asked the judge to release him

ARMY WARNS AGITATORS

The Pakistan Army Wednesday warned former prime minister Imran Khan's supporters of "severe retaliation" in the wake of attacks on its installations, asserting that it will not allow anyone to take the law into their hands while describing May 9 as a "black chapter" in the country's history. Enraged over the arrest of their leader in a corruption case Tuesday, the supporters of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Khan stormed the General Headquarters of the Army. They set the residence of the Lahore Corps Commander on fire while attacking military vehicles and installations. "We will not allow anyone to take the law into their hands," the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the Army's media wing said in a terse statement. The ISPR said that on the one hand, these miscreants evoke the nation's emotions for achieving their "limited and selfish objectives" and on the other hand, they deceive people, continuing to highlight the army's importance. "This is an example of hypocrisy," it stated. The military's media wing said that "this group wearing a political cloak" has done what enemies could not do in 75 years, all "in the lust for power". May 9 will be remembered as a "black chapter" in history due to the protestors "targeting army property and installations" after the arrest of Khan, it said.

IMRAN SUPPORTERS ATTACK PM'S HOUSE

The supporters of former premier Imran Khan Wednesday attacked the Lahore residence of Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, police said. According to police, over 500 miscreants from Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party reached the Model Town Lahore residence of the prime minister in the early hours of Wednesday and set ablaze vehicles parked over there. "They also threw petrol bombs inside the premiere's house," a senior police officer of Punjab police told PTI Wednesday. The police official said only the guards were present at the prime minister's house when the miscreants attacked. They also set on fire a police post there. "As a heavy contingent of police reached there, the PTI protesters left," he said. Before reaching the prime minister's residence, the mob attacked the ruling PML-N Secretariat in Model Town, torching the vehicles parked over there. They also put the barriers there on fire. Police said that the protesters set on fire 14 government installations/buildings and 21 police vehicles in Punjab during the last two days -- Tuesday and Wednesday.

as the charges were fabricated. Separately, the District and Sessions Court indicted Khan in the Toshakhana case.

Judge Humayun Dilawar conducted the hearing in the makeshift court set up in the New Police Guest House along with the ATC No 1.

Khan was present in the court and pleaded not guilty when the charges were read. He also refused to sign the court documents, according to Geo News channel.

The case was filed last year by

the Election Commission of Pakistan and Khan had skipped several hearings in the past months. The charges are about the allegation that Khan concealed the proceeds of sale from the state gifts.

The New Police Guest House located in the high security premises of Police Lines Headquarters at Sector H-11/1 area of Islamabad was declared as a court for the purpose of hearing two cases against the former cricketer-turned-politician.

Russians flee Bakhmut outskirts, says Ukraine



REUTERS

Kyiv, May 10: A Ukrainian military unit said Wednesday it had routed a Russian infantry brigade from territory near Bakhmut, claiming to confirm an account by the head of Russia's Wagner private army that the Russian forces had fled.

Moscow has not commented on the reports from either side that its 72nd Separate Motor-rifle Brigade had abandoned its positions on the southwestern outskirts of Bakhmut.

A Russian brigade is typically formed of several thousand troops. The eastern Ukrainian city has been the primary target of Moscow's huge winter offensive and scene of the bloodiest ground combat in Europe since World War Two.

Russian mercenary boss Yevgeny Prigozhin, who has repeatedly accused Moscow's regular armed forces of failing to adequately support his private army that led the fight in Bakhmut, said Tuesday that the Russian brigade had abandoned its positions.

"Our army is fleeing. The 72nd Brigade pissed away three square km this morning, where I had lost around 500 men," Prigozhin said.

In a statement overnight, Ukraine's Third Separate Assault Brigade said: "It's official. Prigozhin's report about the flight of Russia's 72nd Independent Motorized Rifle Brigade from near Bakhmut and the '500 corpses' of

Scribe slain in Ukraine

Paris: Colleagues of Arman Soldin, the Agence France-Presse journalist slain in Ukraine, gathered solemnly at the press agency's Paris headquarters Wednesday, a day after his death, to remember the 32-year old. A widely broadcast photo of Soldin, pictured in protective gear and smiling broadly with a cat on his shoulder, has plucked at the heartstrings of the French nation. "Arman was so enthusiastic, so energetic, so alive that it seems unreal to be here and talk about it this morning," said Juliette Hollier-Larousse, the agency's deputy news director. Soldin, who was working as the Ukraine video coordinator, was killed during a Grad rocket attack near the eastern Ukrainian city of Bakhmut.



Russians left behind is true." "The Third Assault Brigade is grateful for the publicity about our success at the front."

Early on Wednesday the unit, formed from Ukraine's nationalist Azov Battalion, reposted a video of one of Azov's founders, Andriy Biletsky, who said his forces had "defeated" the Russian brigade.

MASS SHOOTINGS

Serbians surrender over 3K weapons

17 PEOPLE WERE KILLED IN TWO MASS SHOOTINGS



REUTERS

Belgrade, May 10: Serbians have surrendered more than 3,000 illegal weapons and parts in the first two days of a gun amnesty introduced after two mass shootings in which 17 people were killed, President Aleksandar Vucic said Wednesday. The amnesty was launched Monday after a 13-year-old schoolboy with two handguns allegedly killed eight pupils and a security guard. Six other pupils and a teacher were wounded.

He is now in custody and undergoing a psychological evaluation but cannot be held criminally responsible due to his young age. Police said

he had confessed to the shooting.

Last Thursday, a man brandishing an assault rifle and a pistol killed eight and wounded 14 people in two villages in central Serbia. A 21-year-old suspect is now in custody.

Vucic said people so far surrendered over 3,000 pieces of weaponry without specifying what kind.

In previous gun amnesties launched over past two decades, people handed over banned military-grade arms, hunting weapons, handguns, and also barrels, locking mechanisms and other parts.

Tens of thousands of rounds of ammunition have also been handed in. "That's good news, because there's so much less risk involved," Vucic said, speaking on television.

Under the terms of the amnesty, people are invited to hand over illegal weapons including military-grade, legally-owned arms they no longer want, ammunition, and ordnance, anonymously and without fear of prosecution.



People carry portraits of relatives who fought in World War II, during the Immortal Regiment march in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, May 9, marking the 78th anniversary of the end of World War II

PHONE HACKING TRIAL

DAILY MIRROR APOLOGISES TO PRINCE HARRY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, May 10: One of the UK's tabloid publishers, embroiled in legal proceedings over historic phone hacking allegations targeted at celebrities including Prince Harry, Wednesday "unreservedly apologised" for ordering the unlawful gathering of information.

The Mirror Group Newspapers (MGN), the publisher of 'Daily Mirror', released court documents at the start of a trial in the High Court in London to continue to deny phone hacking but admitted that there was "some evidence of the instruction of third parties to engage in other types of UIG (unlawful information gathering) in respect of each of the claimants".

Harry, the Duke of Sussex, is one of the claimants in a test case being heard in the High Court and is due to give evidence next month.

Lawyers representing the prince, the younger son of King Charles III, said he was subjected to the "most intrusive methods of obtaining personal information".

MGN denies any involvement in the case of one particular claimant in the hearing that is expected to last over six weeks. The company is represented by barrister Andrew Green, whose written arguments deny allegations of voicemail interception in the cases being examined during the trial.

"There is some evidence of the instruction of third parties to engage in other types of UIG in respect of each of the claimants. This apology is not made with the tactical objective of reducing damages, MGN accepts that an apology at this stage will not have that effect, but is made because such conduct should never have occurred," he said.

A previous hearing was told Harry's case is that 148 articles published between 1996 and 2010 included information that was allegedly obtained through methods including phone hacking. His lawyers argue that executives at the company knew about widespread phone hacking but failed to act.

1st babies born in UK using DNA from 3 people

ABOUT ONE IN 200 CHILDREN IN BRITAIN IS BORN WITH A MITOCHONDRIAL DISORDER

London, May 10: Britain's fertility regulator Wednesday confirmed the births of the UK's first babies created using an experimental technique combining DNA from three people, an effort to prevent the children from inheriting rare genetic diseases.

Britain's Human Fertilization and Embryology Authority said fewer than five babies have been born this way in the UK but did not provide further details to protect the families' identities.



than 1 per cent of the child created from this technique. "Mitochondrial donation treatment offers families with severe inherited mitochondrial illness the possibility of a healthy child," the UK fertility regulator said in a

statement Wednesday. The agency said it was still "early days" but it hoped the scientists involved, at Newcastle University, would soon publish details of the treatment.

Britain requires every woman undergoing the treatment to receive approval from the Human Fertilization and Embryology Authority. The regulator says that to be eligible, families must have no other available options for avoiding passing on genetic disease.

Many critics oppose the artificial reproduction techniques, arguing there are other ways for people to avoid passing on diseases to their children, such as egg donation or screening tests, and that the experimental methods have not yet been proven safe.

Others warn that tweaking the genetic code this way could be a slippery slope that eventually leads to designer babies for parents who not only want to avoid inherited diseases but to have taller, stronger, smarter or better-looking children.

Doctors in the U.S. Announced the birth of the world's first baby using the mitochondria donation technique in 2016, after the treatment was conducted in Mexico.

of the day quote

At GE HealthCare, we believe in the power of integrating the logic-driven world of software with the digital world of devices. We believe in solutions that are linked, responsive, and predictive

CHAITANYA SARAWATE | PRESIDENT AND CEO, GE HEALTHCARE SOUTH ASIA

Going ahead, continued economic reforms in India would further strengthen the economic fundamentals of the country to maintain steady economic growth trajectory in the coming months

SAKET DALMIA | PRESIDENT, PHD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

We improved on the quarter-on-quarter momentum. With our ongoing initiatives, we expect to have a good start in the coming year along with accelerating profits

MURUGAVEL JANAKIRAMAN | CHAIRMAN AND MD, MATRIMONY.COM

SHORT TAKES

JSW Infra to raise ₹2,800cr via IPO

New Delhi: JSW Group firm JSW Infrastructure is looking to raise up to ₹2,800 crore through the Initial Public Offering (IPO) route, sources said. The company has filled the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) with capital market regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) in this regard. JSW Infrastructure has filed DRHP to raise up to ₹2,800 crore through IPO route. The ports business of the JSW Group has filed the DRHP for its initial public offering with SEBI May 9, 2023, sources said. JSW Infrastructure will be the third company of the JSW Group to be listed on the bourses after JSW Energy and JSW Steel.

Bajaj Finance hikes FD rates by 40 bps

New Delhi: Bajaj Finance, the lending arm of Bajaj Finserv, Wednesday increased its fixed deposit (FD) rates by up to 40 basis points. Following the hike, 44 months special tenure for senior citizens will invite an interest rate of 8.60 per cent per annum. The new rates are revised higher by 40 basis points on deposits with maturities ranging from 36 months to 60 months, it said. Depositors below 60 years can earn up to 8.05 per cent per annum, while senior citizens can earn up to 8.30 per cent per annum, it said.

GCPL Q4 up 24.5%

New Delhi: FMCG major Godrej Consumer Products Ltd Wednesday reported a 24.47 per cent growth in its consolidated net profit to ₹452.14 crore in the fourth quarter ended March 31, 2023, led by volume growth. It had posted a net profit of ₹363.24 crore in the January-March quarter a year ago, said Godrej Consumer Products Ltd (GCPL) in a BSE filing. The revenue from the sale of products of the Godrej group FMCG arm was up 9.6 per cent at ₹3,172.21 crore during the quarter under review as against ₹2,894.15 crore in the corresponding period last fiscal.

L&T Q4 rises 10%

New Delhi: Engineering and construction giant Larsen & Toubro (L&T) Wednesday reported a 10 per cent rise in its consolidated net profit to ₹3,987 crore for the quarter ended in March 2023, helped by higher revenues. The company had posted a consolidated net profit of ₹3,621 crore in the year-ago period, the infrastructure major said in a filing to BSE.



From 10 largest in 2014, India today is 5th largest economy. Only Japan and Germany are ahead of us. We will become the 3rd largest by 2030

NARAYAN RANE | UNION MSME MINISTER

Cisco announces manufacturing in India

The company said it is targeting over \$1 billion in combined exports and domestic production

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 10: US network gear maker Cisco Wednesday announced manufacturing plans for Tamil Nadu, India, as its chairman and CEO Chuck Robbins asserted that the company is bullish about India market and its prospects.

Robbins, who is in India this week and currently on the Delhi leg of the multi-city visit, said that the energy in India is "incredible".

As the company announced its manufacturing plans for India, Robbins said Cisco will have the first products off the line in 12



India has made tons on progress on digitisation. The ambition of India is very clear and momentum I felt here is incredible

CHUCK ROBBINS | CHAIRMAN & CEO, CISCO

months, and will expand to a wider array of Made-in-India products over a period of time.

Cisco's manufacturing in India will be through its contract manufacturers and partners. The company did not comment on the quan-

tum of investments it will infuse. "We think, we should have first products off the line in about 12 months. We are starting with two of our highest volume products, one of our switches and one of our routers that are widely used in

NCLT admits Go First's insolvency resolution

THE MOVE WILL BOLSTER INDIA'S FOURTH-LARGEST CARRIER'S CHANCES OF GETTING BACK ON ITS FEET, BUT LESSORS ARE EXPECTED TO MOUNT LEGAL CHALLENGES TO REPOSSESS PLANES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 10: In a major relief to cash-strapped Go First, the National Company Law Tribunal Wednesday admitted its plea for voluntary insolvency resolution proceedings and imposed a moratorium on the airline's financial obligations that bars lessors from taking back aircraft.

The tribunal's ruling, which was reserved May 4, caps more than a week of uncertainty for the crisis-hit carrier, which has more than 7,000 employees on its rolls, and also comes against the backdrop of lessors moving to deregister at least 45 planes of the airline.

Besides, the Interim Resolution Professional (IRP) Abhilash Lal -- who will be in charge of the affairs of the airline as the board has been suspended -- has been directed not to retrench any employees.

Allowing the plea, a two-member NCLT bench said there is existence of unpaid debt and default committed by Go First above the limits under IBC. It has placed on record the demand notices issued by the creditors, which is not even disputed by its representing lessors.

Hence, it has no other option but to admit the present application "under Section 10 of the Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code (IBC)", said the NCLT bench headed by President Justice Ramlingam Sudhakar.

"Accordingly, the application of the corporate applicant (Go First



This is a historic and landmark judgement. It is also a perfect example in the context of revival of a viable business before it becomes unviable

KAUSHIK KHONA | GO FIRST CEO

MORATORIUM ON AIRLINE'S FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

NEW INTERIM RESOLUTION PROFESSIONAL APPOINTED TO RUN GO FIRST

AIRLINE HAS LIABILITIES WORTH ₹11,463 CRORE

admitted," said a 41-page NCLT order.

With liabilities worth ₹11,463 crore, the airline has sought voluntary insolvency resolution proceedings as well as an interim moratorium on its financial obligations under section 10 of IBC, which allows a company to approach NCLT for initiation of insolvency after default.

NCLT has also provided protection to the debt-ridden carrier by declaring a moratorium as per the provisions of IBC.

Following this moratorium, Go First is now protected from any suits or continuation of pending suits or proceedings against it, including the execution of any judgment, decree or order in any court of law, tribunal, or arbitration panel till the completion of the insolvency proceedings.

Moreover, it has also restrained on transfer, encumbrance, alienating, or disposing of its assets and any action to foreclose, recover or enforce any security interest created by it in respect of its property.

The insolvency tribunal has appointed Abhilash Lal as Interim Resolution Professional (IRP) as suggested by Go First and "directed to take charge of the CIRP of the cor-

SMBC Aviation moves NCLAT

Aircraft lessor SMBC Aviation Capital Ltd Wednesday moved the appellate tribunal NCLAT against the order passed by the NCLT earlier in the day allowing Go First's voluntary plea to initiate insolvency proceedings. SMBC Aviation Capital, formerly RBS Aviation Capital, is one of the world's largest aircraft leasing companies.

porate debtor with immediate effect".

"The IRP will ensure to take all necessary steps including the execution of the arbitral award to keep the corporate debtor as a going concern and run its services smoothly," it said.

NCLT further ordered the suspended board of directors and ex-management of Go First to "extend all necessary support and cooperation to the IRP and his team in keeping Go First 'a going concern' and running its operations/services smoothly". It also directed the suspended management "to deposit ₹5 crore with the IRP to meet the immediate expenses".

'NO ADANI SHELL FIRMS IN MAURITIUS'

In a boost to the embattled Adani Group, Mauritian Financial Services Minister Mahen Kumar Seeruttun has told the nation's Parliament that Hindenburg Research's allegations of the presence of 'shell' companies in the Island nation are 'false and baseless' and that Mauritius was in compliance with OECD-mandated tax rules



CHOPPY TRADE MARKETS END WITH GAINS



Global markets largely traded in negative as investors turned cautious ahead of the US inflation data for April which would provide some indication about the Federal Reserve's next course of action on the rate front

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 10: Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty closed with gains in highly choppy trade Wednesday following buying towards the end of the session in select oil, banking and auto shares as investors awaited key US inflation data for further cues.

The 30-share BSE Sensex rose by 178.87 points or 0.29 per cent to settle at 61,940.20 as 22 of its components advanced and eight declined. During the day, it hit a high of 61,974.35 and a low of 61,572.93. The broader NSE Nifty gained 49.15 points or 0.27 per cent to end at 18,315.10, posting gains for a third

day in a row. Among the Sensex firms, IndusInd Bank rose the most by 2.84 per cent. Power Grid, Tata Motors, Bajaj Finance, NTPC, HDFC Bank, Reliance Industries, Nestle and Kotak Mahindra Bank were the major gainers.

Infosys fell the most by 0.59 per cent. State Bank of India, Tata Steel, Hindustan Unilever and Titan were among the laggards.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge gained 0.34 per cent and smallcap index climbed 0.33 per cent. Among indices, realty jumped 0.96 per cent, oil & gas climbed 0.79 per cent, auto (0.73 per cent), energy (0.71 per cent) and utilities (0.51 per cent). Commodities, IT, telecommunication, metal and tech were the laggards.

In Asia, markets in Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong ended lower following overnight losses in the US markets. European equity markets were also trading lower. Meanwhile, global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 1.39 per cent to \$76.36 per barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net buyers Tuesday as they bought equities worth ₹1,942.19 crore, according to exchange data.

Govt further expands scope of money laundering law

The move is India's attempt to crackdown on black money and comes ahead of a regular assessment by the Financial Action Task Force later this year

REUTERS

New Delhi, May 10: The Indian government has expanded the scope of its money laundering law to also include individuals representing a company or acting as a director, according to a notification.

The amendment comes a week after the government brought in chartered accountants, company secretaries, and cost and work ac-



countants under its fold, requiring them to maintain records of all financial transactions they undertake for clients.

The government, in a gazette notification dated May 9, has expanded the scope of the law to include all individuals helping in the formation of a company, including those acting as a director, secretary or proxy nominee director. The law now also includes

individuals who provide the company with an office or correspondence address or act as a trustee, the notification said.

"The scope (of the money laundering law) has been widened to include every person representing another person for certain activities," said Rajat Mohan, a partner at tax consultancy firm AMRG & Associates.

This will make the law stricter, he said. The move is India's attempt to crackdown on black money and comes ahead of a regular assessment by the Financial Action Task Force later this year.

The FATF is a global money laundering and terrorism financing watchdog that will assess India's compliance with FATF's standards and identify areas of improvement.

Govt yet to accept report that calls for diesel 4Ws ban by '27

THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE HEADED BY FORMER OIL SECRETARY TARUN KAPOOR HAD ALSO SUGGESTED PHASING OUT MOTORCYCLES, SCOOTERS, AND THREE-WHEELERS WITH INTERNAL COMBUSTION ENGINES BY 2035

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 10: The government is yet to accept a report of the energy transition committee that recommended banning the use of diesel-powered four-wheelers in cities with over 10 lakh population and switch to electric and gas-fuelled vehicles by 2027, the oil ministry said.

"The suggestions of ETAC relate to multiple ministries & a range of stakeholders including states. Consultation with various stakeholders on the report are yet to be initiated. No decision has yet been taken on ETAC recommendations."

"Report of the Energy Transition Advisory Committee (ETAC) has been received by the MoPNG. The Govt of India is yet to accept ETAC report," the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG) said in a tweet.

There should be no diesel city buses addition in urban areas in about 10 years, the panel which submitted its report to the government in February this year, had said.

"India is committed to NetZero by 2070. ETAC has made wide ranging and forward looking recommendations for shift to LowCarbonEnergy. ETAC has a futuristic outlook," the ministry said.

"The suggestions of ETAC relate to multiple ministries & a range of stakeholders including states. Consultation with various stakeholders on the report are yet to be initiated. No decision has yet been taken on ETAC recommendations."

PUSH EV INDUSTRY

The panel had stated that EVs may be promoted as the optimal solution in preparing for phasing out internal combustion engine two/three-wheel vehicles by 2035. "In the intermediate period, policy support for ethanol-blended fuel with an increasing blend ratio



needs to be given."

It called for four-wheelers, including passenger cars and taxis, to partially shift to electric and partially to ethanol-blended petrol with almost 50 per cent share in each category. "Diesel-driven 4-wheelers may be

eliminated as soon as possible. Therefore, a ban on diesel-powered four-wheelers in all million-plus cities and all towns with high pollution has to be enforced in five years, i.e. by 2027," the report said. For transitioning to EVs, CNG as a transition fuel (up to 10-15

years) has been emphasised.

"Vehicles with flex-fuel capabilities and hybrids may be promoted in the short and medium terms. This can be done through the application of fiscal tools like taxation," it said.

To boost electric vehicle use in the country, the report said the government should consider a "targeted extension" of incentives given under the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric and Hybrid Vehicles scheme (FAME) to beyond March 31.

NET ZERO TARGET

The report favoured new registrations of only electric-powered city delivery vehicles from 2024 and suggested higher use of railways and gas-powered trucks for the movement of cargo. These steps will help India achieve the

goal of cutting its emissions to net zero by 2070.

Net-zero, or becoming carbon neutral, means not adding to the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

India is the world's fourth biggest emitter of carbon dioxide after China, the US and EU. But its huge population means its emissions per capita are much lower than other major world economies. India emitted 1.9 tonne of CO2 per head of population in 2019, compared with 15.5 tonne for the US and 12.5 tonne for Russia that year.

Towards net-zero, the government has set a target to get 50 per cent of the nation's energy from renewable resources by 2030, and by the same year to reduce total projected carbon emissions by one billion tonne.

CSK inch closer to playoffs



MS Dhoni and Ravindra Jadeja made crucial runs in death overs for CSK

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, May 10: MS Dhoni punished Khaleel Ahmed and then marshalled his bowling resources to perfection as Chennai Super Kings comprehensively beat Delhi Capitals by 27 runs to take a giant stride towards IPL playoffs, here Wednesday.

The talismanic skipper's couple of sixes in his 9-ball 20 helped CSK get to 167/8, which was at least 20 runs above-par on a tacky Chepauk track. The total was just what Dhoni needed to marshal his bowlers as Delhi Capitals were never in hunt after their batting mainstays David Warner (0), Phil Salt (17) and Mitchell Marsh (5) were out by the start of the fourth over.

In the end, DC managed only 140/8 and their struggles were real as the DC batters managed only seven boundaries and four over-boundaries.

The win took CSK to 15 points

and one win from two remaining games will certainly seal their place in the last four. As far as DC's campaign is concerned, it is almost curtains with 8 points from 11 games with seven defeats.

The Indian batters like Manish Pandey, Ripal Patel, Lalit Yadav or Aman Khan aren't good enough to ace easy chases on their own leave alone getting better of tough targets like this one on the day.

The two veterans Ravindra Jadeja (1/19) and Moeen Ali (0/16) tightened the noose around the DC batters in the middle overs when Pandey and Rilee Rossouw added 59 at less than run-a-ball. Pandey, especially after running Marsh out could have done better. Matheesa Pathirana (3/37) nailed his yorker perfectly to send the former India player packing.

Earlier Capitals bowlers came to the fore, keeping the CSK batters on the leash on a sluggish pitch before Dhoni and Jadeja (21, 16)



Deepak Chahar smiles after dismissing a DC batter, Wednesday

put pressure on DC bowlers at the back-end.

None of the CSK batters could go on and get a substantial score with Shivam Dube (25) being the highest score. There were 20s by Ruturaj Gaikwad (24), Ambati Rayudu (23) and Ajinkya Rahane (21).

Electing to bat after skipper Dhoni won the toss, the home team were pegged back by some fine bowling by the Capitals bowlers, especially left-arm spinner Axar Patel (2/27). Marsh (3/18) was the best bowler while Kuldeep Yadav (1/28) and Lalit (1/34) were the other wicket-takers.

The big-hitting Dube helped increase the CSK scoring rate which had been slowed down due to some good bowling. The second over bowled by Ishant Sharma yielded 16 runs as Gaikwad hit three boundaries.

In the third over, Conway swished at a delivery from Khaleel and the bowler seemed to think he heard a nick. However, the Capitals didn't

review it and later the replays showed a faint edge. Conway, however, did not make much of the 'life' as he was trapped LBW by Axar.

At the end of the powerplay, CSK were 49/1. Gaikwad was dismissed trying to up the pace, caught in the deep as Axar continued to stymie the Super Kings. Moeen could not force the pace and was sent back by Kuldeep.

There was no six hit by the CSK batters in the first 10 overs as the Capitals bowlers sought to put the squeeze on run-scoring. Rahane's innings was cut short on 21.

BRIEF SCORES

CSK 167/8 (Shivam Dube 25, Ruturaj Gaikwad 24, Ambati Rayudu 23, Ravindra Jadeja 21, Ajinkya Rahane 21, MS Dhoni 20; Mitchell Marsh 3/18, Axar Patel 2/27) beat DC 140/8 (Rilee Rossouw 35, Manish Pandey 27; Matheesa Pathirana 3/37, Deepak Chahar 2/28, Ravindra Jadeja 1/19) by 27 runs.

Resurgent Knight Riders take on struggling Rajasthan Royals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, May 10: A resurgent Kolkata Knight Riders will look for their third victory in a row in their fight for survival when they face a struggling Rajasthan Royals in the IPL here Thursday.

Facing must-win scenarios, the two-time champions showed tremendous resilience to bounce back into reckoning after their wins over Sunrisers Hyderabad and Punjab Kings, both in dramatic last-ball finishes.

The wins have not only boosted their sagging morale but also taken the side to sixth place from eighth on the points table. As things stand, four teams including KKR and Rajasthan Royals, are locked on 10 points in a mid-table traffic rush for the playoffs.

RR may be ahead on net run rate (NRR) but the equation could change quickly if KKR continue their winning run, as a victory for either side will take them into the top-four.

While KKR are high on confidence after two thrilling wins, the Royals would be at their lowest ebb after three defeats. The Royals had posted 200-plus totals but were done in by some baffling strategies in two of their three losses, which led to a must-win scenario for them as well.

In terms of key battles and team strategies, KKR would once again rely on Varun Chakravarty, who has been the central character in both their previous wins. At a time their seasoned slow bowler Sunil Narine is finding it difficult to get wickets, Chakravarty has emerged as



KKR's spin spearhead with 17 wickets so far this season.

With the KKR team management not bowling World Test Championship final-bound Shardul Thakur against PBKS, the pace department looked woefully short on experience.

Had it not been for the heroics of Rinku Singh and Andre Russell, the seam duo of Vaibhav Arora and Harshit Rana had almost lost the match after leaking 36 runs in the last two overs against PBKS. It remains to be seen if KKR utilise the services of a fit-again Shardul in the crunch match.

While KKR need to plug the gaps in the pace bowling department, the Royals must take a fresh look at their bowling strategy.

The biggest positive for KKR in their win over PBKS has been the return to form of the big-hitting Russell. While skipper Nitish



Rana has been the backbone of their batting, Rinku's emergence as a finisher is coming off well for the team.

From the Royals' perspective, the trio of Rana, Rinku and Russell would be their main threats. Their battle against the Royals' spin-bowling stalwarts Ravichandran Ashwin and Yuzvendra Chahal in the middle overs could prove to be decisive.



Wrestlers demand Narco test on Brij Bhushan under SC supervision



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 10: The protesting wrestlers Wednesday demanded lie-detector Narco Test on Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh under Supreme Court supervision after he claimed innocence to the allegations of sexual harassment.

Some of the country's top wrestlers, including Olympic medallists Bajrang Punia and Sakshi Malik and Asian Games gold winner Vinesh Phogat, have been protesting at Jantar Mantar here for more than a fortnight, demanding arrest of Singh for allegedly sexually harassing seven women wrestlers, including a minor.

"Those people speaking in favour of the WFI chief and saying that we are lying, I would say that Brij Bhushan should undergo a Narco Test under Supreme Court... And also the seven women wrestlers (who have alleged sexual harassment)," said Sakshi at a press conference here.

"Whoever is found guilty, hang them," she added.

The wrestlers did not, however, give clarity on how they are going to push for a Narco Test as, according to law, the consent of the accused is mandatory. Only after that can the investigating agencies proceed.

A day after Delhi police registered two FIRs against him April 28, Singh had claimed innocence and said he was ready "to face any kind of investigation."

Sakshi also made an appeal to the women of the country to come forward and support the wrestlers



like they did in 2012 when the Nirbhaya case happened. The wrestlers also decided to wear black armbands on Thursday as a mark of protest over the alleged inaction of the authorities.

Bajrang said contrary to public perception, the agitating wrestlers were not against national competitions taking place. He said if the competitions take place under the supervision of the Indian Olympic Association-appointed ad hoc panel, he would welcome them. "But if the WFI chief is involved in any way, we will oppose it," said Punia.

Asked if any official of the Sports Authority of India has so far approached the wrestlers, Punia said, "Look people are coming but we don't want assurances, because once we have taken their assurance and gone back only to return (after 3 months). This fight will continue till we don't get justice."

Punia also alleged that the Information Technology cell was trying to malign the image of the wrestlers. He, however, did not specify which Information Technology cell he was referring to.

"The entire IT cell is trying to malign the image of the wrestlers.

SUPPORTERS SWELL

Members of the Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU) and several khap panchayats arrived Wednesday as they continued to express solidarity with the wrestlers. Unlike Tuesday, when there was a dip in the number of supporters coming to the site, leaders of several organisations from Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan joined the protesting wrestlers bringing with them food and other commodities.

Sometimes you are making it look like a caste issue, sometimes a political issue etc... But let me say that you cannot suppress the truth. It will come out. It is taking time but truth will prevail," added Punia.

Vinesh also requested sponsors Tata Motors to investigate if the funds earmarked for wrestling (for last 5 years) was actually reaching the athletes.

Vinesh also expressed her apprehension on having a free and fair inquiry into the matter, saying Singh, because of his political stature as a BJP MP, would not allow that to happen.

Delhi court seeks report from police

A Delhi court Wednesday sought a status report from the Delhi Police over the sexual harassment case against Singh. The judge issued notice to Delhi Police on a plea moved by the protesting wrestlers, seeking monitoring of the investigation and recording of the statement of the alleged victims before the court. The court directed the police to file the report by May 12 when it will further hear the matter.

Indian troika assures Worlds medal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Tashkent, May 10: Boxers Deepak Bhorla (51kg), Mohammed Hussamudin (57kg) and Nishant Dev (71kg) scripted history as they ensured India of its best-ever haul of three medals by storming into the semifinals of the men's World Championships here Wednesday. The quarterfinal wins mean the three pugilists will take home at least a bronze medal each.

India's previous best show came in 2019 edition when Amit Panghal clinched an unprecedented silver and Manish Kaushik grabbed a bronze medal.

Kicking off the proceeding for India, Deepak defeated Nurzhigit Diushebaev of Kyrgyzstan by a 5-0 unanimous verdict to continue his scintillating run in the flyweight category, which will feature at the Paris Olympics.

Such was the Indian's domination that the referee was forced to give Diushebaev two standing counts in the latter stages of the bout. Fighting from a distance, Deepak looked for opportunities to land clean and accurate punches.



NISHANT DEV



MOHAMMED HUSSAMUDIN



DEEPAK BHORIA

Trailing 0-5, Diushebaev started the second round on an aggressive note but Deepak put up a solid defence and counter attacked with combination of punches. One such onslaught led the referee to give Diushebaev his first eight count.

Having taken the opening two rounds, Deepak was more defensive in the final three minutes. He boxed smartly, landing jabs whenever he got the opportunity.

Hussamudin then had to toil hard as he eked out a 4-3 split decision win in a close fight against J Diaz Ibanez of Bulgaria.

Hussamudin was involved in a messy bout that involved a lot of clinching. The first round was fought on even keel with Hussamudin edging past the Bulgarian fifth seed 3-2 in the quarterfinals.

As the seconds ticked by, Hussamudin became more confident and started dominating the proceedings. He landed heavy blows to take the final two rounds.

Nishant's performance was the cherry on the cake as he knocked out Cuba's Jorge Cuellar by an unanimous verdict. The 22-year-old, who is the reigning national

champion, was relentless and kept attacking the Cuban throughout the nine minutes.

Nishant, who made a quarterfinal exit in the last edition, was determined to not make a last eight exit again. He was quicker than his opponent and used that to land a flurry of punches on Cuellar's face. He also used body blows to tire out his opponent and book a place in the last four of the light middleweight category.

India has so far won a total of seven medals, including a silver, in the previous editions.

ODISHA FC PROFIT AS SETHU, KICKSTART PLAY OUT DRAW

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, May 10: Odisha FC profited from the draw between Sethu and Kickstart to rise a place in the Group B table of the Indian Women's League (IWL), with their 3-0 victory over Celtic Queens FC at the Shahibaug Police Stadium, Wednesday.

While the quarterfinalists from the group have been decided with one round of games yet to be played, the spot gained could prove to be huge in terms of the draw for the next round.

Odisha took the lead through Faustina Worwornyo's goal in the third minute of the game and from there on there was no stopping

them. Bannya Kabiraj doubled their lead in the first half added time, and S Lynda Kom put the game to bed in the dying seconds of the game.

In a top of the table clash, Sethu Madurai FC and Kickstart FC played out a goalless draw here. The result preserved Sethu's unbeaten run while breaking their perfect record so far and also kept Kickstart's five-match unbeaten streak alive. For the latter though, it came at the cost of dropping a place on the table.

Both sides were evenly matched throughout the match, both missing multiple opportunities to take the lead, and failing to apply the finishing touches.



Odia girl Swetarani bag gold in int'l wushu meet



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 10: Odisha's Swetarani Mahanta arrived in the capital city Wednesday after her splendid performance at the Moscow Wushu Star World Championship in Moscow, Russia May 3-8.

The 14-year-old from Barbil, Keonjhar, returned with a gold medal in the girls' junior category (below 48kg) in Wushu Sanda (combat fight). She defeated her opponents from Azerbaijan, Indonesia and Russia respectively en route to the yellow metal.

She won the right to represent

India in the event after bagging a gold for Odisha in the Khelo India Women's Wushu National League 2023, which had taken place in Jammu & Kashmir in February.

The Indian team won an impressive 17 medals, including 10 gold, four silver and three bronze, in the event. The team received a grand reception at New Delhi by Sports Authority of India on their arrival.

Officials and members of Wushu Association of Orissa and delegates from Directorate of Sports & Youth Services, Govt. Of Odisha were present at the Biju Patnaik International Airport to receive Swetarani.