

**Balancing act**

Actor Mrunal Thakur says she wants to strike a balance between Hindi and South Indian film industries

LEISURE | **P2**

**Gupta plea junked**

Czech Constitutional Court rejects a petition by Indian national Nikhil Gupta against his extradition to the US to face murder-for-hire charges

INTERNATIONAL | **P10**

**Fresh peaks**

Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty hit all-time peaks Thursday after RBI's highest-ever dividend announcement

BUSINESS | **P11**

**Record-breaking lift**

Odia lifter Preetismita Bhoi creates new clean and jerk world record at the IWF Youth World Championships in Peru

SPORTS | **P12**

**IRREGULAR** by MANJUL



I've just relocated here. I've heard people here have big hearts

BJD leader and party's key election strategist VK Pandian slammed Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma over the latter making 'disparaging comments' about Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik during BJP election rallies in the state. Calling Sarma a 'guest', Pandian, during a meeting in Nimapara, asked the Assam CM to learn the cultural ethos of Odisha and show respect towards Naveen, the colleague of his (Sarma's) 'guru's guru'. It is believed that Pandian's remarks came in response to Sarma's accusations made earlier during the day in Sambalpur that Naveen has been held 'hostage' by the 5T Chairman, who is leading the party as well as the government by proxy

SARMA: NAVEEN

BEHAVE LIKE A

HELD 'HOSTAGE'

GUEST: PANDIAN

**Sambalpur, May 23:** Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma Thursday claimed that his Odisha counterpart, Naveen Patnaik, is running the government under the instructions of BJD leader VK Pandian, who is calling the shots in the state by holding Naveen as 'hostage'.

During a poll campaign here, Sarma said elections this time is all about the dignity of Odisha.

Sarma alleged that Patnaik is always accompanied by Pandian and is "not free to move anywhere in the state without the 5T Chairman's approval".

"I am also the CM of a state. I can personally meet anyone and people can also meet me. The same is in the case of West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee. However, the Odisha CM cannot meet anyone personally. No one can also meet him alone as Pandian always stays

with him. One needs to find out whether Naveen babu himself is with Pandian or if Pandian is playing some game due to which Naveen babu cannot get out of his grip," Sarma alleged.

"If a CM, a constitutionally-elected CM, is in a hostage situation, it is not good for Odisha and the country as well," the Assam CM pointed out.

"I feel that the Chief Justice or a judge of the Orissa High Court, or the Governor should talk to Naveen babu alone to assess his well-being and ensure he is not under any duress," he suggested.

**Nimapara:** Launching a scathing attack on Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma for 'disrespecting' his Odisha counterpart, BJD leader and party supremo Naveen Patnaik's close confidant VK Pandian asked Sarma to learn the cultural ethos of Odisha, especially when he is a guest in the state, and desist from making any disparaging comments about Patnaik during his election speeches.

Addressing an election meeting at Nimapara, Pandian said several big leaders are coming to the state from outside and have

been disrespecting the CM with their rude utterances.

Pandian reminded the Assam CM that Naveen was a minister in Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's Cabinet.

"Naveen babu worked with the guru (Vajpayee) of your guru (Narendra Modi). He was a Cabinet minister in PM Vajpayee's Cabinet. Since Assam CM is a guest in Odisha, I will not tell him much. But I will pray Mahaprabhu (Lord Jagannath) to inculcate in him the right values so that he knows how to speak about a popular CM," Pandian said.

Pandian, BJD's chief election strategist, also asserted that Opposition parties are resorting to violence to influence the outcome of the elections while Naveen believes in peace.

"The CM has a special focus on the development of Nimapara," he added.

**Seven Naxals gunned down**

**Narayanpur, May 23:** Seven Naxalites were killed in an encounter with security personnel in a forest along Narayanpur-Bijapur inter-district border in Chhattisgarh Thursday, police said.

The gunfight broke out around 11am when a joint team of security personnel was out on an anti-Naxal operation and the intermittent firing was still underway, Narayanpur SP Prabhat Kumar said.

"Seven Naxalites in Maoist uniform have been gunned down in the exchange of fire so far," added the SP.

**8 die in Thane factory blast**

**Thane, May 23:** As many as eight persons were killed and more than 60 others injured following an explosion at a chemical factory in the district here in Maharashtra Thursday afternoon, officials said.

As a boiler exploded at Amudan Chemicals located in Phase II of Dombivli MIDC area around 1.40pm, the impact of the explosion and the resultant blaze affected adjacent factories and houses, they said.

The affected chemical factory produced food colours and uses peroxides that are highly reactive and unstable chemicals that can cause violent explosions under certain conditions, the NDRF said.

"Six men and two women were killed in the incident but their bodies were charred beyond recognition," said Yasin Tadv, chief of the Disaster Management Cell of the Thane Municipal Corporation.

As per the preliminary information, those killed were working in neighbouring factories, Maharashtra Industries Minister Uday Samant said.



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**AT LORD'S SERVICE:** Maharana servitors build a chariot wheel for the upcoming car festival of the sibling deities, at Rath Yard, in Puri, Thursday

**PHASE III CAMPAIGNING ENDS**

**94.48 lakh to decide fate of 447 May 25**

**Bhubaneswar, May 23:** Curtains came down Thursday on the high-decibel campaigning for the third phase of elections in the state wherein over 94.48 lakh voters will decide the fate of 447 candidates in fray for six Lok Sabha seats and 42 Assembly segments May 25.

Addressing media, Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) NB Dhal said the Election Commission will deploy 121 companies of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) for the polling in the state.

Polling will take place in six LS constituencies — Puri, Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Dhenkanal, Keonjhar, and Sambalpur — and 42 Assembly seats within their jurisdictions. Dhal said out of the over 94.48 lakh voters, approximately 21 per cent are youths aged 30 years or below.

Voting will take place in 10,551 polling stations, with about 2,000 designated as model polling stations. Over 2,000 polling stations have been identified as critical, with special security arrangements in place to ensure peaceful voting, Dhal added.

There are 383 MLA candidates — 339 men and 44 women — and 64 MP aspirants for May 25 election.

'Euclid' spies rogue planets in Milky Way

**Paris, May 23:** Astronomers have spotted dozens of rogue planets floating free from their stars after turning the Euclid space telescope to look at a distant region of the Milky Way, 'The Guardian' reported.

The wandering worlds were seen deep inside the Orion nebula, a giant cloud of dust and gas 1,500 light years away, and described in the first scientific results announced by Euclid mission researchers.

The European Space Agency (Esa) launched the 1bn (£851m) observatory last summer on a six-year mission to create a 3D map of the cosmos. Armed with its images, scientists hope to understand more about the mysterious 95 per cent of the universe that is unexplained.

According to as-

tronomers' theories, most of the universe is made up of dark matter, an invisible substance that clings around galaxies and behaves like a cosmic glue, and dark energy, which is said to drive the accelerating expansion of the universe.

The first wave of scientific results come from only 24 hours of observations, which revealed 11m objects in visible light and 5m in infrared. Along with

the rogue planets, the researchers describe new star clusters, dwarf galaxies and very distant, bright galaxies from the first billion years of the universe.

A flurry of new images from the same observations are the largest ever taken in space and demonstrate the stunning wide-field views that astronomers can expect from Euclid in the coming years. Among those released


Thursday is a breathtaking image of Messier 78, a vibrant star nursery shrouded in interstellar dust, that reveals complex filaments of gas and dust in unprecedented detail.

"I've been absolutely amazed at the images I've seen," said Prof Mark Cropper, the lead scientist on Euclid's VIS camera at UCL. "These are not just pretty pictures, these images are packed with new information."

One of the newly released images shows Abell 2390, a giant conglomeration of more than 50,000 Milky Way-like galaxies. Such galaxy clusters contain up to 10 trillion times as much mass as the sun, much of which is believed to be elusive dark matter.

Another image of the Abell 2764 galaxy cluster reveals hundreds of galaxies orbiting within a halo of dark matter.


DSPL-05




## PRECAUTIONS AGAINST HEATSTROKE DURING POLL

Elderly, sick persons & pregnant women are more prone to heat stroke


### SYMPTOMS OF HEATSTROKE




Severe sweating



Reeling, nausea and vomiting



Severe thirst



Muscle cramp



Fainting / Fits

### PRECAUTIONS




Prefer cool hours of morning/afternoon for going outside




Drink enough water before going outdoors



Use light colour loose cotton dress, umbrella & foot wear



Avoid physical labour /long walking under sun




Take rest in shade periodically

### HEATSTROKE TREATMENT




Shift the patient to an open and cool place, give ORS/salt-sugar solution/plain water



Remove clothing as far as practicable



Provide head bath and cold sponging



Keep the patient under AC or fan



If condition does not improve, shift to hospital

Health & Family Welfare Department, Odisha

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FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

Whip up some excitement in your life – put on your walking shoes and go explore some unknown destination, suggests Ganesha. Keep yourself busy, but take care not to overdo anything. Today, you will be the centre of attention in group activities.

TAURUS

You are likely to get extra passionate and fervent today, predicts Ganesha. If your logic prevails over your heart, things will probably change for better during the course of the day. It is high time that you set into motion the poignant side of your character, suggests Ganesha.

GEMINI

Bosses will assign new responsibilities to you, predicts Ganesha. Your daytime distress, however, will transform into jubilation by the end of the day's work, as you will be able to produce brilliant results. Ganesha advises you to delay bidding for tenders by a few days.

CANCER

You may be in one of your more frivolous moods today, foresees Ganesha. Gossip, fun, laughter and some harmless flirting shall make your day interesting, yet these are not the pastimes you usually enjoy. Hence, as the day rolls on, you shall find yourself to your reserved, reticent self concentrating hard on getting the work done to make way for the early evening gym/ driving class.

LEO

Your passionate and emotional nature contributes in a big way to your sudden outbursts of emotions, says Ganesha. Today, your anger may erupt abruptly. This makes it very likely for you to get carried away irrespective of your surroundings and circumstances, both at work and at home.

VIRGO

Stay clear of a coalition when it comes to business ventures, warns Ganesha. Alone, you can manage an entire stampede. By your own you are, by far, the best administrator of your department. Today, find yourself being the general and uniting people under your banner to achieve greater success, says Ganesha.

LIBRA

You never let a favour go unacknowledged, or let a ridicule pass by unanswered. So, it's time to settle those old accounts that are so important to you, feels Ganesha. This will increase chances of interesting developments that will continue to surprise you throughout the day.

SCORPIO

You shall probably realise the fact that seeing is believing. Learn to trust your own eyes more than what you hear. Don't get lost in the crowd, warns Ganesha. Strive to stand out and be in the spotlight, advises Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS

The day is bright and the seas are calm today. For a change, you shall spend time with your life partner and help them in household chores. Even routine jobs like cooking and cleaning will weave an intricate bond between you two.

CAPRICORN

A good day always begins with a good start. It will be a good day for you today as you will start the day with a positive attitude to life, says Ganesha. Your unremitting dedication and determination will not only put you ahead of others, but will also help you get an edge over them. If tiffs with your life partner are rife, you can expect a peaceful day, at least for today. But for those who have always been fortunate in this regard, your blissful married life will continue to bring you joy.

AQUARIUS

You are a polished diamond. Adversities come and go, yet you remain unruffled. Today, you manage to please your boss, and beloved, and that is a feat! It is yet another day of contentment. And in a cyclical process, this again rejuvenates you into giving your best, says Ganesha.

PISCES

Do not let your emotions influence your strategies in any way. Mixing business with sentiments is only for super spies. Keep a close check on your emotions and do not get carried away. Travel for business purposes is indicated, says Ganesha.



KATE TOOK A YEAR OFF FROM DATING

Actress Kate Hudson shared that she once took a year-long break from dating as per her therapist's recommendation. The actress said she decided to go through the process when she was thirty-something and she got off track during the process because she likes to flirt.

BLANCHETT GETS TROLLED AFTER CALLING HERSELF MIDDLE CLASS

Actress Cate Blanchett is getting mocked for calling herself middle class despite her estimated \$95 million fortune. The Oscar-winning actress made this statement during a United Nations press conference at the 2024 Cannes Film Festival.



Mrunal's balancing act

Mumbai: Actress Mrunal Thakur's Telugu debut, *Sita Ramam*, opened the doors of the South Indian film industry for her. The actress further shared that she wants to strike a balance between the two industries.

The *Jersey* actress, who was later seen in two Telugu films, *Hi Nanna* and *The Family Star*, said, "I am what I am because of my audience, and I could have a parallel career down South because of them. I want to do Hindi and Telugu films. It's all about striking a balance. South is where my heart is, and of course, Bollywood is home to me."

Ask her whether she's accustomed to living in Hyderabad, and she replies, "As a kid, I had changed around 11 schools, so for me, there is no such thing as cultural difference. It never takes time for me to adjust anywhere. Hyderabad offers me warmth, and in Mumbai, there's this feeling of belonging."

Talking about her fashion sense after walking the ramp at the Bombay Times Fashion Week, she said, "I would borrow my sister's frocks and feminine dresses, but at the same time, I had Bermuda shorts, dungarees, polo necks, and sweatshirts. I was into androgynous dressing while in school and college. So, there were two sides of me when it came to fashion. I am glad that I can carry the street wear and at the same time rock an Indian lehenga or any other ethnic outfit."

AGENCIES

Prabhas comes clean on wedding rumours

Mumbai: Actor Prabhas denies rumours of being in a relationship and getting married soon at the *Kalki 2898 AD* event, expressing concern for his female fans.

The *Baahubali* actor said, "I am not getting married soon because I don't want to hurt the feelings of my female fans." In the past, the actor was linked to his Adipurush co-star, Kriti Sanon; however, the couple did not accept or deny the rumours. Speaking about his character in the movie, Prabhas said, "He has (Nag Ashwin) been making me do crazy things. I thought I could come here and say hi to my darlings (fans) and push off, but our slim Nag (Ashwin) has planned several things. I am super excited about Bujji. It's been a great journey for three years, and I can't wait for everyone to experience it on the silver screen."

"Working with legendary actors like Amitabh Bachchan and Kamal Hassan was a golden opportunity. I am thankful to Kamal sir a lot since I used to ask my parents to get me clothes worn by Kamal in his movies," Prabhas shared at the event. Inspired by Hindu mythology, *Kalki 2898 AD* is all set to hit screens June 27. AGENCIES

Jacqueline on age inclusivity

Mumbai: Actress Jacqueline Fernandez, on the sidelines of the Cannes Film Festival, shared about her journey as an actor, the challenges she has faced and ageism.

"There has been increasing age inclusivity for women in the film industry, which is wonderful. When I was about to turn 30, an actor advised me to change my passport age, claiming women don't get film roles after 30. This was disappointing, but now women are getting roles at every age, which is amazing," said the *Kick* actress.

When asked about the one bad piece of advice she was given at the beginning of her career, the Sri Lankan model said, "Very, very early on in my career, I was at the gym. And I was explaining to this actor that, oh, you know, I have to go for this course. And I have to go to this class. And I'm training and dicing for this. And then I'm working out here. And he was like, 'Listen, just focus on looking good. And you'll be fine.' And I actually think that was one of the worst pieces of advice I ever got as someone who was trying to make it in the film industry."

She added, "Many people comment on physical appearance; I was often told to get a nose job, but I love my nose and never considered changing it."

AGENCIES

Shruti confirms breakup with Santanu Hazarika

Chennai: Actress Shruti Haasan confirmed her breakup with longtime boyfriend Santanu Hazarika. Addressing her relationship status for the first time, she revealed that she is currently single.

In a recent interaction with fans on Instagram, when asked about her personal life, the actress responded, "I don't enjoy answering such questions but I am entirely single, willing to mingle. Only working and enjoying my life. Enough?" This statement marks her first indirect admission of the end of her relationship with Santanu.

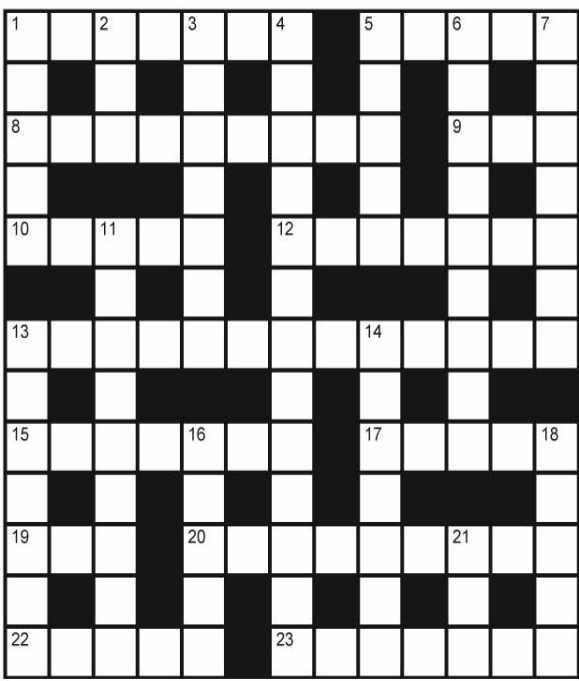
Haasan and Santanu had been together for some time, often sharing glimpses of their relationship on social media. However, the couple had been rumored to be living separately for about a month, fueling speculation about their relationship status. She has deleted the pictures of them on Instagram, which first led to the speculation that all is not well between the two.

On the work front, Shruti will next be seen in *Dacoit: A Love Story*.

AGENCIES

FUN post

CROSSWORD



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Across

- 1 Kind of measures
- 5 *The Boy Who Cried Wolf* writer
- 8 Aquarium denizens (3,6)
- 9 Sailor's assent
- 10 Informal language
- 12 All together (2,5)

- 13 Employment office handout
- 15 Type of pear
- 17 Croupiers' tools
- 19 Your (Fr.)
- 20 Faux
- 22 Mount Sinai name
- 23 Latticework

Down

- 1 Office stations
- 2 Camel hair fabric

- 3 Concept
- 4 Make-up maven
- 5 State in NE India
- 6 Laurel & Hardy comedy, e.g.
- 7 Antedate
- 11 Tap sites
- 13 Physics type
- 14 Tell tales
- 16 Nom de plume
- 18 \_\_\_ of time
- 21 Feverish

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

SUDOKU

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

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

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

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

SUDOKU

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



# downtown

## Phase V turnout at 62.2%; women outnumber men



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 23:** The voter turnout in the fifth phase of Lok Sabha polls held May 20 has now climbed to 62.2 per cent, the Election Commission said Thursday with women outnumbering men.

According to an EC statement, 61.48 per cent of the registered male voters turned up at the polling stations as compared to 63 per cent of female electors.

In phase 5, 49 seats across six states and two union territories went for polling where over 8.95 crore people, including 4.69 crore men, 4.26 crore women and 5409 third gender were eligible to

vote.

The participation of women in voting was higher as compared to men in Bihar, Jharkhand, Ladakh, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh.

The male-female turnout gap was wide in Bihar and Jharkhand. While in Bihar, the male turnout was 52.42 per cent, the female turnout was 61.58 per cent.

Similarly, in Jharkhand, the male turnout was registered at 58.08 per cent, while the female turnout was 68.65 per cent.

A maximum of 38.22 per cent of voters registered in the third gender category turned out to vote in West Bengal.

## Publishing polling booth-wise data will 'vitiate' electoral space: EC to SC



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 23:** The Election Commission has opposed in the Supreme Court an NGO's demand to upload polling station-wise voter turnout data on its website within 48 hours of the conclusion of polling for each phase of the Lok Sabha elections, contending it will "vitiate" the electoral space and cause "chaos" in the poll machinery in the midst of the general elections.

A vacation bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and Satish Chandra Sharma is scheduled to hear the plea of NGO Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) which has also sought direction to the poll panel that scanned legible copies of Form 17C Part-I (Account of Votes Recorded) of all polling stations be uploaded immediately after the polls.

In its counter affidavit, the poll panel said there is no legal mandate to provide Form 17C to any person other than the candidate or his agent.

It said that public posting of Form 17C - which gives the number of votes polled in a polling station - is not provided in the statutory framework and could lead to mischief and vitiation of the entire electoral space as it in-

creases the possibility of the images being morphed.

"The Petitioner is trying to create an entitlement when none exists in the law by way of filing an application in the middle of the election period. It is respectfully reiterated that for credible multiple practical reasons, the result as per the statutory mandate, is declared on the basis of the data contained in Form 17C at the time as prescribed under the statutory rule regime in existence," it said.

It further said that "indiscriminate disclosure" of polling station-wise voter turnout data and posting it on a website will cause chaos in the election machinery which is already in motion for the ongoing Lok Sabha elections.

The EC also dismissed as false and misleading the allegation that there was "5-6" per cent difference between the voter turnout data released on the day of the polling for the first two phases of the Lok Sabha elections and the press releases issued subsequently. The NGO claimed the final voter turnout data jumped sharply from the initial figures released by the poll panel.

The Election Commission's 225-page affidavit said, "It is submitted that if the reliefs sought by the petitioner is allowed, it will not only be in teeth of the aforesaid legal position but will also cause chaos in the election machinery which is already in motion for the ongoing General Elections to the Lok Sabha, 2024."

## Merlène's incredible migration to Odisha

**Bhubaneswar, May 23:** In a remarkable turn of events, bird-watchers in Odisha have successfully located a Whimbrel, named Merlène, which was satellite-tagged on Réunion Island in the southern Indian Ocean.

This discovery is part of an international effort to track and understand the migratory patterns of these extraordinary birds.

Merlène's journey began March 7 when she was equipped with a GPS tag at Réunion Island, her wintering site. After spending a month in Mauritius, she embarked on her northward pre-breeding migration, making significant stopovers in Socotra and the Indus River delta in Pakistan before arriving in India.

Chhattisgarh birdwatchers reported the sighting first May 20, generating excitement among ornithologists and bird enthusiasts worldwide. Merlène was



taking a stopover at a small pond north of Bhilai, enduring the extreme daytime temperatures of 48°C.

Now, the bird has crossed over to Odisha and has been

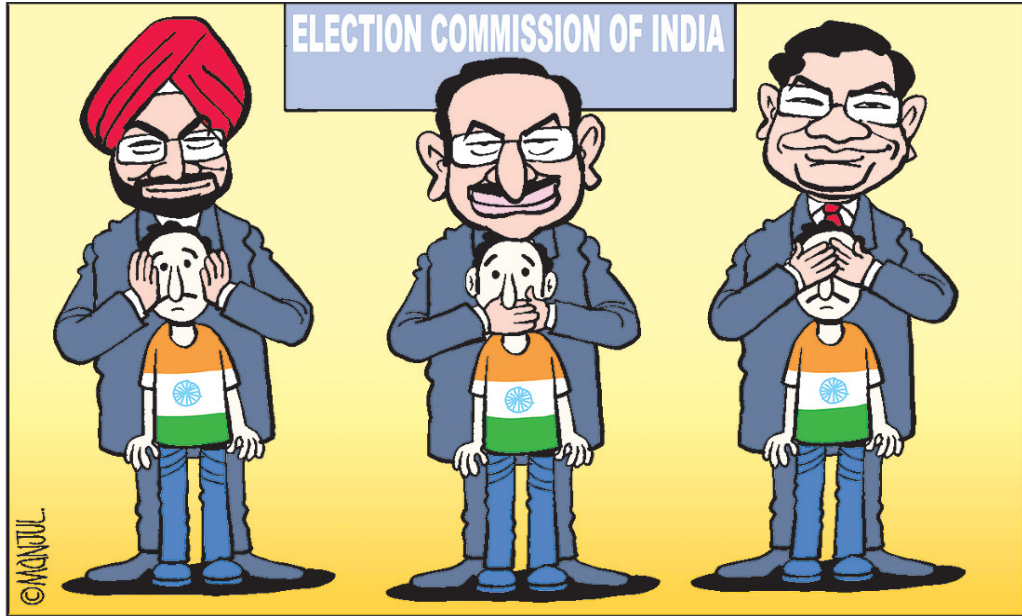
seen at the mouth of Rushikulya by local conservationist Rabindra Nath Sahu. The operation was coordinated by Bhubaneswar-based bird-watcher Panchami Manoo Ukil.



**POLL TIME:** Election officials head to their respective booths in Jatni and Khurda after collecting EVMs and poll materials from the dispersal centre at BJB college in Bhubaneswar, Thursday

OP PHOTO

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL



## Jyoti Prakash now BJD's Balasore dist president

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, May 23:** The ruling BJD in Odisha Thursday appointed former minister and Simulia MLA Jyoti Prakash Panigrahi as its Balasore district unit president.

Panigrahi's appointment comes after BJD did not accept his resignation from the primary membership of the party.

He was upset after BJD denied him a party ticket this time to contest from Simulia Assembly segment. The party nominated Subhasini Sahoo from Simulia.

In an official order signed by BJD president Naveen



Patnaik, the party said, "Jyoti Prakash Panigrahi is hereby appointed as the president of Balasore district unit and Aswini Kumar Patra is hereby appointed as the state general secretary, Biju Janata Dal, with immediate effect."

In a video message, Panigrahi

had said his late father Parshuram Panigrahi was associated with former chief minister Biju Patnaik for over 40 years and he also served the party for 10 years.

"My family will continue to serve the people of Khairia and Simulia. I also hope for your co-operation," he said.

In 2019, Panigrahi retained the Simulia Assembly seat by defeating Padmalochan Panda of the BJP. Subhasini Sahoo, the BJD nominee from Simulia, is the wife of Shashi Kumar Sahoo, who unsuccessfully contested the Assembly segment on a BJP ticket in 2014.

## Two candidates with zero assets in fray for Phase IV

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, May 23:** Two candidates in the fray in the fourth and final phase of Assembly elections in Odisha have declared zero assets in their affidavits, according to a report.

Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara and Jagatsinghpur Lok Sabha constituencies along with 42 Assembly segments falling under these parliamentary seats will go to polls in the last phase June 1.

The Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) and Odisha Election Watch have analysed the self-sworn affidavits of 394 candidates, who are contesting from 42 Assembly seats in Odisha.

Sanjay Kumar Das, an Independent candidate contesting from Dhamnagar Assembly segment, and Ambedkarite Party of India nominee from Korei constituency, Gopal Krushna Mohant, declared that they did not own any asset.

Several other candidates have declared that they own assets worth less than ₹10,000.

Independent candidate Benudhar Mohapatra is contesting from Udala Assembly seat with only ₹645 cash in hand. Another Independent nominee Jharanarani Jena, who is contesting from Basta constituency, has declared that

**Of the 394 MLA candidates contesting in the fourth phase, 96 have declared that they have criminal cases registered against themselves**

she has only ₹1,000. On the other hand, as many as 121 candidates (31 per cent of total nominees) in the fray in the fourth phase are 'crorepatis', with BJD candidate from Basta segment, Subasini Jena, being the richest with ₹135.17 crore assets, the report said.

BJD candidate from Simulia, Subasini Sahoo, is the second richest candidate with assets worth ₹91.75 crore. Congress nominee from Bhandaripokhari Assembly segment, Niranjan Patnaik, was in third place with total assets worth ₹86.58 crore.

Of the 394 MLA candidates contesting in the fourth phase, 96 have declared that they have criminal cases registered against themselves. A total of 149 candidates have declared their educational qualifications to be between Classes V and XII, while 220 nominees have educational qualifications of graduate or above. Moreover, 22 candidates are diploma holders and three candidates have declared themselves to be just literate.

## Man held for hurting in-laws



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, May 23:** The Airport police station here Thursday arrested a 34-year-old man who allegedly tortured his wife over dowry demands and assaulted his in-laws.

Two sharp weapons which were used in the attack have been recovered, said an officer at the police station. The accused has been identified as Sanjay Debanath, 34, a native of Kendrapara district. He has been residing at Kargil slum for the last 10 years. Sanjay and his wife are parents to two children, he added.

Speaking about the incident, IIC of Airport police station, Tusharkant Sethi said Sanjay as-

saulted and abused his wife over dowry issues, Wednesday afternoon. Protesting against such behavior, his wife left for his maternal house in a huff. This enraged Sanjay who later turned up at his in-law's home at night and hurled abuses at them. While they tried to pacify him, Sanjay, in a fit of rage, assaulted them with a sharp weapon. His father-in-law sustained deep injuries on his neck in the attack. When they tried to overpower him, he slipped off and fled from the spot, Sethi added.

The Airport police station later arrested Sanjay and booked him under Sections 498 (A), 294, 307 and 323 of IPC. He was produced before a local court Thursday for remand.



CYCLONIC STORM MAY STRIKE BENGAL COAST

3 districts likely to witness isolated heavy rains May 26



AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, May 23:** Three districts in north Odisha – Bhadrak, Balasore and Kendrapara – are likely to witness isolated heavy rainfall as the present low pressure area over southwest and adjoining west central Bay of Bengal (BoB) is turning into a severe cyclonic storm and will reach Bangladesh and West Bengal coasts.

Weather scientist at the Indian Meteorological Centre (IMD), Bhubaneswar, Umashankar Dash told **Orissa POST** Thursday that under the influence of the cyclone, which is unlikely to have landfall, isolated rainfall activities will also occur in Bhadrak, Balasore and Mayurbhanj districts May 27.

However, the cyclonic storm will have no impact on the Capital City where the sky is likely to remain overcast May 26.

In a bulletin, the IMD

weather with wind speed reaching 40-50 kmph gusting to 60 kmph is likely to prevail over central and adjoining south BoB May 23 which would become 50-60 kmph gusting to 70 kmph over central Bay of Bengal May 24.

The MeT sources said it would extend to adjoining areas of North BoB with gale wind speed reaching 60-70 kmph gusting to 80 kmph from May 25 morning.

It would further increase becoming 100-110 kmph gusting to 120 kmph over north BoB and 70-80 kmph gusting to 90 kmph over adjoining central BoB from May 26 morning for subsequent 24 hours.

The sea condition will be rough to very rough over central and adjoining south BoB from May 23 and over north BoB from May 24 evening. It would become high over central BoB from May 25 morning and high to very high over north BoB from May 25 evening till May 27 morning.

The sea will be rough to very rough along and off north Odisha coasts from May 25 evening till May 27 morning, the IMD said.

Fishermen have been advised not to venture into the south BoB till May 24, central BoB till May 26 and north BoB from May 24 onwards till May 27 morning.

The fishermen out at sea have been advised to return to the coast.



PAYING OBEISANCE: Children offer prayers at Buddha Mandir in Bhubaneswar on the occasion of Buddha Purnima, Thursday

OP PHOTO

WORLD TURTLE DAY

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Safeguard Olive Ridley turtles’ habitat: CM

**Bhubaneswar, May 23:** On World Turtle Day Thursday, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik called upon people to create a welcoming environment and a safe nesting cove for the endangered Olive Ridley turtles.

The CM said, “With our exemplary conservation efforts and sustained campaigns, Odisha coast has become a favourite destination for mass nesting these species.”

In Odisha the nesting sites of Olive Ridley turtles are located at Rushikulya river mouth in Ganjam district, Gahirmatha beach in Kendrapara and Devi river mouth in Puri. The mass nesting of turtles usually begins in March after the November-December mating season in deep sea. Every year lakhs of turtles visit the sites to lay eggs.

Odisha government had banned visitors from entering the nesting sites of Olive Ridley sea turtles along eastern coast of the state. Earlier, the state government had also clamped a seven-month ban on sea fishing from November to May within 20 km off the coast to ensure the safety of marine species including Olive Ridley turtles for their mating and



breeding. However, some experts alleged that many fishermen continue fishing activities without intervention from fisheries and forest officials.

This year the Olive Ridley turtles had already made their way to Odisha’s Gahirmatha beach for mass nesting. According to report, their arrival was delayed by a month, reportedly due to the unsteady sea and spells of unseasonal rain. The turtles chose the Gahirmatha Beach due to its unique topography that keeps the beach safe from erosion by waves. It is believed to be the world’s largest-known nesting ground of Olive Ridley turtles.

The female turtles invade

the Gahirmatha beach for nesting between February and March. Each turtle typically lays 120-150 eggs, in conical nests that are dug 1.5 feet deep. The nestling process takes place over three to 10 days. After laying the eggs, the female turtles return to the sea. The hatchlings emerge after 45 to 60 days and soon make their way to the ocean in the night as they follow the light reflected on the ocean’s surface.

All species of sea turtles in India, including the Olive Ridley turtles, are protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, which bans their hunting, domestication, or trade.

‘Will be happy to see an Odia IAS topper’

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, May 23:** In the Talk to Topper Seminar -2023, organised by Vajirao IAS Academy here Thursday UPSC Civil Services second topper Animesh Pradhan said he will be delighted to see an Odia guy securing top rank in UPSC examination next year.

Sharing his strategy to the aspirants he said, “These days, the reason does not matter whether you are living in Delhi or any native places, but perseverance, continuous effort and dedication towards the study is the key to success.”



The academy’s founder director Dilip Kumar felicitated Animesh on this occasion. Exhorting the students he said that there is no substitute to hard work and with proper guidance, right mentorship and relevant study materials will open doors to success.

“Vajirao IAS Academy is determined and putting all efforts possible to produce more and more civil servants from the soil of Odisha,” he said.

‘Rangavati Centre committed to promote Sambalpuri art globally’

**Bhubaneswar:** Taking a step ahead towards integrating art, culture into the educational framework, IIM-Sambalpur in association with the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), New Delhi organised a one-day seminar on “Unknown aspects of the Freedom Struggle; Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Management in Western parts of Odisha” at Rangavati Centre for Excellence in Culture and Sustainable Management recently. The objective of the seminar was to highlight the unknown aspects of the vibrant cultural heritage and folk traditions linked to sustainable management in western parts of Odisha. “At IIM Sambalpur, we are committed to integrating art and culture into our educational framework. The Rangavati Centre, dedicated towards promoting the globally renowned Sambalpuri art, is a testament to this commitment,” stated IIM-Sambalpur director Mahadeo Jaiswal.

MARKET WATCH		
INDEX		VARIATION
SENSEX	75418.04	196.98
NIFTY	22967.65	369.85
CURRENCY BOURSES		
DOLLAR	83.283	₹0.08
EURO	90.30	₹0.16
BULLION		
GOLD	₹71,841	₹205
SILVER	₹91,067	₹946

WEATHER		
	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	37.7°C	36.5°C
Min Temp	27.6°C	27.0°C
Humidity	64%	65%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
FORECAST		
PARTLY CLOUDY SKY		

Wonderla offers discount for voters

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, May 23:** As a step to spread awareness around the importance of voting, Wonderla Holidays Limited, India’s largest amusement park chain has announced that they will offer 15 per cent off on tickets to their Bhubaneswar Park for customers showing their voting mark.

The offer will be applicable for online and offline bookings from May 25 to June 3 at the Wonderla Bhubaneswar park. To avail the offer, inked finger will be verified at the park entrance.

Wonderla Bhubaneswar is the fourth addition to Wonderla’s esteemed portfolio, following Kochi, Bangalore, and Hyderabad. This venture represents Wonderla’s enduring commitment to delivering unparalleled entertainment experiences since its establishment in 2000.

Commenting on the initiative, Arun Chittilapilly, managing director, Wonderla Holidays Limited said, “Voting is not just a right but a responsibility that every citizen should uphold. At Wonderla, we are dedicated to



The offer will be applicable for online and offline bookings from May 25 to June 3 at the Wonderla Bhubaneswar park. To avail the offer, inked finger will be verified at the park entrance

supporting initiatives that motivate individuals to participate in the electoral process and exercise their voting rights.”

Wonderla encourages visitors to book their entry tickets in advance through their online website: <https://www.wonderla.com/> or reach out to 0674 – 6640300.

‘Oly’ to create voter awareness in City

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, May 23:** In a unique effort to raise awareness and encourage citizens to participate actively in the electoral process and cast their vote, the Government ITI Bhubaneswar, with efforts of the Collector and the Additional District Magistrate (ADM) of Khurda district, has unveiled a statue of a tortoise, named Oly at Capital High School here



Thursday.

The creative project spearheaded by 15 students from the Fitter and Welder trades department created the sculptor

from waste metal within a short span of fifteen days.

Principal of ITI Bhubaneswar Jeetamitra Satpathy said that Oly, the metal tortoise, serves

Epidurals cut risk of severe childbirth complications by 35%

An epidural during labour is associated with 35 per cent reduced risk from post-birth complications, new research published in the British Medical Journal (BMJ) has found.

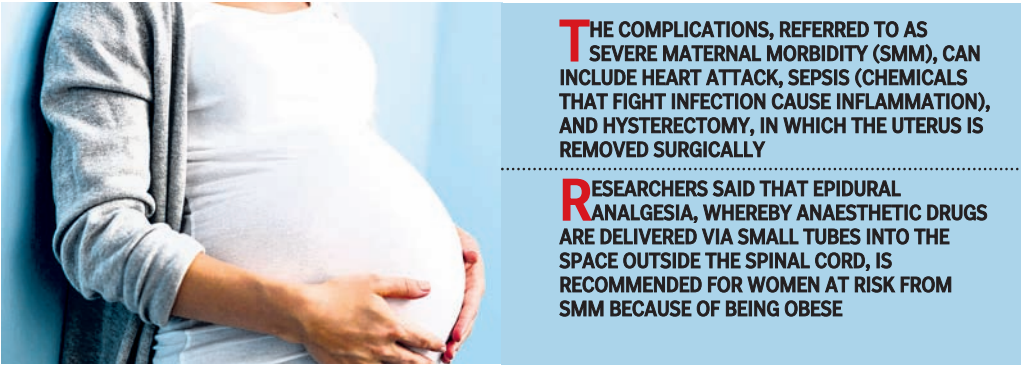
The complications, referred to as severe maternal morbidity (SMM), can include heart attack, sepsis (chemicals that fight infection cause inflammation), and hysterectomy, in which the uterus is removed surgically.

Researchers said that epidural analgesia, whereby anaesthetic drugs are delivered via small tubes into the

space outside the spinal cord, is recommended for women at risk from SMM because of being obese, while delivering more than one baby, or in premature delivery.

While previous studies have suggested that epidural analgesia in labour may reduce the risk of SMM, the researchers, including those at the University of Glasgow, said that evidence was limited.

For their study, the team used data from the Scottish National Health Service of more than 5.5 lakh mothers in labour, delivering vaginally or via unplanned caesarean



THE COMPLICATIONS, REFERRED TO AS SEVERE MATERNAL MORBIDITY (SMM), CAN INCLUDE HEART ATTACK, SEPSIS (CHEMICALS THAT FIGHT INFECTION CAUSE INFLAMMATION), AND HYSTERECTOMY, IN WHICH THE UTERUS IS REMOVED SURGICALLY

RESEARCHERS SAID THAT EPIDURAL ANALGESIA, WHEREBY ANAESTHETIC DRUGS ARE DELIVERED VIA SMALL TUBES INTO THE SPACE OUTSIDE THE SPINAL CORD, IS RECOMMENDED FOR WOMEN AT RISK FROM SMM BECAUSE OF BEING OBESE

section in the country between 2007 and 2019.

More than 1.25 lakh mothers of the 5.5 lakh (about 22 per

cent) were found to have had an epidural in labour and SMM was found to have occurred in 4.3 per 1000 births.

“Epidural analgesia during labour was associated with a 35 per cent reduction in SMM, and showed a more pronounced

effect in women with medical indications for epidural analgesia and with preterm births,” the authors wrote.

“This effect was more pronounced in specific groups, showing a 50 per cent risk reduction in women with pre-defined risk factors, and a 47 per cent reduction in those delivering prematurely,” they wrote.

The researchers suggested possible explanations for the risk reduction, which included blunted physical stress experienced by mothers during labour because of the anaesthesia.

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# Kendrapara plagued by Bangladeshi infiltration



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kendrapara, May 23:** Infiltration, mostly by illegal immigrants from Bangladesh, continues unabated through the porous 48-kilometre coastline in this district. This constant infiltration has sparked fear in the minds of the original residents of this district. Many of them feel that unless it is stopped, the illegal immigrants will soon outnumber the locals. Sources said that neither the district administration nor the Odisha government is taking any steps to prevent infiltration.

After the 2008 Mumbai attacks, the Union Home Ministry had directed all state governments to keep a tab on the infiltrators and identify them if they were found involved in any subversive activities. In the past, this district has been linked to terror

related activities on a couple of occasions. In 2018, officials of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) nabbed suspected terrorist Habibur Raheman from Tyendakura village under Patkura police limits.

Earlier in 2007, Mohammed Javed of Ranapada village under Town police limits was arrested from close to the India-Pakistan border in Rajasthan. He was released on bail, a year later. Sources meanwhile informed that Javed has been missing since 2010. The discovery and busting of a radio station inside Bhitarkanika National Park had also created panic among people.

Locals alleged that Bangladeshis are mostly using the coastline to enter the district. Senior inhabitant of this town, Ramesh Chandra Sutar said that the administration had identified 1,551 illegal

Bangladeshi nationals residing in the district in 2005. He added that since then the numbers have increased manifold. "The district administration has tried to deport illegal Bangladeshis. However, most of them have moved the local court and the cases are pending," stated Sutar.

Locals pointed out three marine police stations had been set up to protect the coastline along this district. However, the police stations are under-staffed and do not have the necessary equipment to prevent infiltration.

Social activist Amarbar Biswal said that illegal Bangladeshi nationals are dominating the local population. They are also facilitating the arrival of new Bangladeshis. Once a Bangladeshi arrives, the person is helped promptly. Documents to prove the person was born here and school and college education certificates are provided to the new arrival. Many of them have also enrolled their names in Vasundhara Yojana to get land and construct houses, Biswal pointed out. Another social activist Pratap Kumar Padhi pointed out that if in the near future, Kendrapara becomes a safe haven for terrorists, one should not be surprised.

When contacted, SDPO Debendra Mallick said the infrastructure of the three marine police stations is being upgraded. He added that new staff will be brought in to tackle infiltration.

# state



**HOLY RITUALS:** Servitors perform Chandan Yatra rituals in a pond on Sakaleswar Mahadev temple premises on the occasion of Baishakh Purnima near Srikrushna Saranpur village under Khallikote block in Ganjam district, Thursday

OP PHOTO

# 21 JUMBOS FOUND IN ROURKELA FOREST DIVISION

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rourkela, May 23:** The elephant census under Rourkela Forest division ended Thursday, officials said. They added that counting of elephants was undertaken in six ranges of this division.

"This year, the census was undertaken after seven years," informed Rourkela DFO, Jasobant Sethi. "A total of 21 elephants are staying in the division. Nine of them were found in Rajgangpur range and 12 in Lathitaka range. All of them were found in healthy condition," Sethi added.

Officials informed that out of

## ELEPHANT CENSUS



the nine elephants in Rajgangpur, three are males, four females and two are calves. In the Lathikata range, two males, four females and six calves were

found, they added.

The elephant census started May 21 and 250 Forest department staff were used for it. A number of teams comprising

three to four persons were formed to track down the elephants. A total of 44 platforms (machans) were set up at various locations of the two ranges, officials stated. They added that most of the platforms were set up close to water bodies.

"We had well-trained staff for conducting the census. They were assigned the task of approximately guessing the weight and height of the elephants and determine its gender. After the elephants disappeared from the vicinity of the platform, the staff came down to measure its hoofs," Sethi stated.

# Repolling underway in 2 booths of Kantamal Assembly segment



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Boudh, May 23:** Repolling was underway Thursday in two booths of Kantamal Assembly segment under the Kandhamal Lok Sabha constituency in Boudh district amid tight security, an official said.

The voting commenced at 7am at booth numbers 26 and 28 of the Assembly seat and continued till 4pm.

Repolling has been peaceful, the official said, adding that two magistrates have also been deployed on the spot to ensure free and fair elections.

The Election Commission ordered repolling, following allegations of rigging in the two booths during the second phase of simultaneous elections to five Lok Sabha seats and 35 Assembly segments in the state May 20.

# Remains of ancient urban civilisation found in Junagarh

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhawanipatna, May 23:** Remains of an ancient urban civilisation have been discovered in Junagarh, a town in Kalahandi district. Following the publication of a report in the international journal 'Heritage', the curiosity regarding the remains has increased considerably among intellectuals, historians, and the residents of Kalahandi.

The report states that senior researcher Lokesh Durga belonging to the History department of Delhi University and Professor Damayanti Bag from the History department of Rayagada Autonomous College were conducting a month-long survey of the land when they found the remains of the civilisation.

In their findings, the two researchers have stated that the remnants belong to the ancient and medieval periods. Various artefacts including pillars, statues, ruins of temples, idols of Hindu deities and earthenware



products have been found among the remains. According to the researchers, these products prove the existence of an ancient city during the medieval period in Junagarh.

The archaeological remains reflect the characteristics of an ancient urban civilisation, the research revealed. Features such

as advanced irrigation and water resource management, religious foundations, arts and culture, agriculture, political activities and commercial development contributed to transforming a settlement into a large community. The archaeological findings from Junagarh highlight these attributes.

In the early medieval period, Junagarh and its surrounding areas were renowned for the Chhakodi Bandha (120) and Nakodi Tota (180). The city's reservoirs like Ranibandha, Samiyabandha, Hiranila Bandha, Tala Bandha provide evidence of these structures.

The statues of Hindu deities in Bhairiguda and Samiyabandhapada are estimated to be remains from the fifth to the ninth centuries. Additionally, temples like Someshwar Temple, Dadhibamana Temple, Poda Mahadev Temple, Lankeshwari Temple and Kanaka Durga Temple exhibit the development of art and culture from the seventh to the 17th century.

In the early medieval period, Junagarh was known as 'Jenabalipatana'. The term 'Patana' identifies it as a trade centre. Hence, Junagarh was a well-known business and commercial hub. The archaeological remains from the city substantiate this claim.

# Filipino sailor dies at Paradip Port

**PARADIP:** A sailor from the Philippines died here after falling from the crane of a ship while cleaning at the Paradip Port, police said Thursday. The deceased has been identified as Azarcon Earl Wilhelm Curao (26). He was a part of the crew of 'MV Yukad', which is anchored at the Port to load coal, officials said. The sailor was brought ashore by a boat from the anchorage zone and taken to Paradip Port Hospital, an official said. However, despite prompt medical attention, Curao died upon arrival at the facility, he added. Another official pointed out that the deceased must have slipped while carrying out the cleaning work and fell from a height of around 40 feet. Babita Dehuri, the inspector in-charge of Marine police station in Nehru Bangla province, said an investigation is underway. The Philippine Embassy has been contacted, and arrangements are being made to repatriate Curao's body, police said.

# Labourer dies of asphyxiation while cleaning well

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Digapahandi, May 23:** A labourer died of asphyxiation while cleaning a well at Ganianal Ganeswarpur village under Siddheswar panchayat and this block in Ganjam district, Thursday.

The deceased was identified as Dibakar Sahu, a native of Narayanpur village under Sadar police limits in Berhampur. The incident has spread shockwaves in the area.

The tragedy struck when Dibakar and two associates were cleaning a well at a villager's residence at Ganeswarpur.

Dibakar descended into the well in order to clean the muck but failed to come outside. He did not respond when others outside the well called him.

Suspecting something amiss, his associates Durga Rout and Suresh Swain went inside the well and found Dibakar lying unconscious. They informed the Digapahandi fire personnel who rushed to the spot and rescued Dibakar from the well.

Fire personnel rushed him to Digapahandi community health centre (CHC) where he succumbed during treatment.

Digapahandi police registered a case of unnatural death and sent the body for post-mortem.



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Berhampur, May 23:** Doctors at MKCG Medical College and Hospital here have successfully conducted a surgery on a heart patient with electrophysiology (EP) method.

The EP method, a test performed to assess the electrical system or activity in a person's heart, is used to diagnose abnormal heartbeats or arrhythmia. The procedure is performed by inserting catheters and then wire electrodes, which measure electrical activity, into the heart

through the blood vessels and treatment is done through radio frequency. Notably, natural electrical impulses coordinate contractions of the different parts of the heart. This creates the heartbeat, or heart rhythm and keeps blood flowing the way it should.

The surgery was performed under the direct supervision of Professor Dr Chhabhi Satapathy, head of the Cardiology department in the hospital, and cardiology experts from Vishakhapatnam in the presence of all doctors and staff of

the department.

Speaking to mediapersons, Dr Satapathy said the surgery costs around Rs 2 lakh in the private hospitals. "The surgery being successfully performed at the MKCG Medical College and Hospital has brought glory for us," he added.

He said the costly procedure could be performed on patients suffering from abnormal heartbeats in future if the higher authorities provide them with the necessary equipment.

The heartbeat of a normal person ranges from 60 to 100 per minute but people having heart problems often experience abnormal heartbeats exceeding 150 per minute. The hospital has an EP machine to identify the disease but they lack some essential equipment to carry out the treatment. As a result, it was difficult to treat the heart patients on a regular basis and doctors at the hospital had to refer them to other hospitals.

Earlier, doctors at the Cardiology department in the hospital under the direct supervision of Dr Satapathy have performed complicated surgeries like intra-vascular ultrasound (IVUS), optical coherence tomography (OCT) and intra aortic balloon pump.

# 11 persons held for ivory trade

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rourkela, May 23:** Forest personnel here seized two pieces of ivory and nabbed 11 persons in this connection during a joint operation with police, Thursday.

The Forest personnel with the help of Bargaon police initially arrested seven persons - Rameshwar Nayak (51), a resident of Bargaon, Biraja Munda

During the operation two pieces of ivory weighing around 3 kg each were recovered and seized.

The accused were brought to the Banki forest range office for interrogation where they admitted their involvement in the illegal trade. During interrogation, they revealed that Jasobant Patra alias Susant (58) of Keonjhar and Bidyadhara Patra (48) of Karanjia in Mayurbhanj district were also involved in this illegal activity.

Following the confession, the duo was also nabbed and taken for interrogation.

All the above mentioned persons were involved in the illegal trade of ivory smuggling. They have been booked under Sections 9, 39, 44, and 49 B of Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972. A case (15/2024) has been registered in this connection at the Banki forest range office. Later, the accused persons were produced in the SDJM court at Bonai.

The accused persons will face jail terms ranging from a minimum of three to seven years and penalties up to Rs 1 lakh when convicted. Rourkela DFO Jasobant Sethi confirmed that further inquiry was going on to ascertain where the ivory was sourced from.



(40) and Suguda Hembram (34) of K Bolang, Khageswar Mohanta (40), Prakash Chandra Mahakud (39), Ramchandra Patra (61), Satyananda Patra (51), Pritikanta Mohanta (27) and Ranjan Mohanta (48) of Keonjhar.

Sources said all the 11 accused had gathered at the residence of Rameshwar Nayak and were hatching a plan to sell off the ivory. In the meanwhile, Forest personnel and police launched a joint raid and nabbed them.

**Regional Office**  
**Bank of Baroda**  
**(Sambalpur Region)**

**CORRIGENDUM**

With reference to our **Possession Notice** published in the "The Orissa Post" dated 21.05.2024, the Branch Name: Bolangir under Regional Stressed Assets Recovery Branch : Sambalpur address should be omitted. It is inadvertently published.

Place: Sambalpur      Authorised Officer  
Date: 23.05.2024      Bank of Baroda

**EAST COAST RAILWAY**

e-Tender Notice No.ETCECONIV  
BBS2024020, Dated: 17.05.2024

**Name of Work:** 3RD & 4TH LINE BETWEEN JARAPADA & TALCHER ROAD AND CONSTRUCTION OF NEW LINE BETWEEN ANGUL-BALRAM (MCR) INNER CORRIDOR PHASE-I DOUBLING 14 KMS): EXECUTION OF BALANCE EARTHWORK IN FORMATION, MINOR BRIDGES, MAJOR BRIDGES, PWAY LINKING WORKS, SUPPLY OF BALLAST, SIGNAL & TELECOM BUILDINGS, LEVEL CROSSING AND OTHER MISC. WORKS BETWEEN JARAPADA AND TALCHER ROAD EXCLUDING STATION YARDS IN CONNECTION WITH 3RD & 4TH LINE OF JARAPADA-BUDHAPANK PROJECT AND BETWEEN ANGUL & BALRAM INCLUDING YARDS OF MCR INNER CORRIDOR PHASE-I DOUBLING.

**Approx Cost of the work:** ₹33644.91 lakhs, EMD: ₹1,00,00,000/-, Completion Period of the work: 24 (Twenty Four) Months.

**Tender Closing Date & Time:** 18.06.2024, 1200 hrs.

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 rejected summarily without any consideration. Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-Tenders is available in website <http://www.regs.gov.in>

**Note:** The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website fifteen days before the date of closing of tender to note any Changes/ Corrigenda issued for this tender. The changes/ Corrigenda issued for the tender. The tenderers/bidders must have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate and must be registered or IREPS portal. Only registered tenderer/bidder can participate one-tendering.

The tenderers should read all instructions to the tenderers carefully and ensure compliance of all instructions including check lists, para 3.1 (additional checklist) of Tender form (Second sheet) Annexure-I of chapter 2 of Tender documents, submission of Annexure-B/G & G1 duly verified and signed by Chartered Accountant.


**Chief Administrative Officer (Con)/**  
**PR-18/CH/24-25      Bhubaneswar**



“

Delight is the secret. Learn of pure delight and thou shalt learn of God

SRI AUROBINDO



Potemkin Alliance

When four of the Indo-Pacific’s leading democracies – Australia, India, Japan, and the United States – revived the long-dormant Quad in 2017, their objective was clear: to create a strategic bulwark against Chinese expansionism and reinforce a stable regional balance of power. But the coalition is now adrift, and the security risks this poses should not be underestimated.

The Quad’s resurrection reflected a paradigm shift in US foreign policy. After decades of engagement with China, including aiding its economic rise, US policymakers – Democrats and Republicans alike – realised that America’s biggest trade partner had become its biggest strategic adversary, bent on replacing it as global hegemon. As US President Joe Biden indicated in his 2022 National Security Strategy, China is “the only competitor with both the intent to reshape the international order and, increasingly, the economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to advance that objective.”

Biden, like his predecessor, Donald Trump, viewed the Quad as an essential instrument to uphold a “free and open Indo-Pacific” – a concept formulated by the late Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzō. So, Biden elevated Quad discussions from the level of foreign ministers – who had been meeting annually since 2019 – to heads of state or government, initiating a flurry of leaders’ summits in 2021-23. But it has been more than a year since the Quad leaders last met, and with the US focused on the upcoming presidential election, their next summit is unlikely to be held before 2025.

The reason for this drop-off is simple: America’s priorities have changed. Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine – together with the hybrid war the West is waging in response, not to mention renewed conflict in the Middle East – has stymied US efforts to position the Indo-Pacific at the “heart” of its grand strategy. It is striking that the latest US foreign-assistance package provides \$60.8 billion for Ukraine but only \$8.1 billion for security in the Indo-Pacific, including Taiwan, on which China has set its sights.

With limited resources to dedicate to the Indo-Pacific, Biden seems to hope that he can prevent a war over Taiwan through personal diplomacy with Chinese President Xi Jinping. Last month, in a telephone call with his Chinese counterpart, he stressed the importance of maintaining peace across the Taiwan Strait.

Biden seems to believe that a more conciliatory approach toward China can also forestall the emergence of a comprehensive Sino-Russian alliance. The “no-limits partnership” between China and Russia, reaffirmed during Russian President Vladimir Putin’s recent visit to Beijing, is problematic enough; China already has undercut Western sanctions by providing an economic lifeline to Russia, in exchange for cheap energy and some of Russia’s most advanced military technologies, including air-defence and early-warning systems. A full military alliance, with China supporting the Kremlin’s war machine directly, would be America’s worst geopolitical nightmare.

The problem for Biden is that appeasing China and strengthening the Quad – which Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi has derided as the “Indo-Pacific version of NATO” – are fundamentally incompatible. It might not be a coincidence that the Quad leaders have not met since Biden sent a series of cabinet officials to Beijing and met with Xi in California last November.

In fact, Biden has lately shifted his focus to less provocative initiatives like the “Squad,” an emerging unofficial regional grouping involving Australia, Japan, and the Philippines – countries that already have mutual defense treaties with the US. But what good is an anti-China alliance without India? It is, after all, the only power that has truly locked horns with the People’s Liberation Army this century: the tense military standoff along the disputed Himalayan border, triggered by China’s stealthy territorial encroachments, has just entered its fifth year. Moreover, as the leading maritime power in the Indian Ocean, India must play a central role in checking China’s westward naval march from its new citadel, the South China Sea.

The US has also been touting its AUKUS security partnership with Australia and the United Kingdom. But this grouping will not be able to play a meaningful role in Indo-Pacific security until Australia is equipped with nuclear-powered submarines, and that will not happen for another decade.

So far, Biden’s overtures to China have yielded few positive results. On the contrary, Xi has lately intensified coercive pressure on Taiwan, and Chinese provocations in the South China Sea have been increasing. Unless the US changes its approach, it may well fail to deter China from attacking Taiwan or cementing a strategic axis with Russia, just as it failed to deter Russia from invading Ukraine.

To maintain security in the Indo-Pacific, there is no substitute for a strong Quad with a clear strategic mission. Rather than unraveling years of efforts to build a coherent and credible regional strategy, thereby enabling yet more Chinese expansionism, Biden and his fellow Quad leaders must get to work defining such a mission and then commit to pursuing it. Otherwise, the Quad risks becoming a kind of Potemkin grouping. The façade of an alliance will not fool China.

*The writer is Professor Emeritus of Strategic Studies at the New Delhi-based Center for Policy Research and Fellow at the Robert Bosch Academy in Berlin.*

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“

You have your way. I have my way. As for the right way, the correct way, and the only way, it does not exist

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

“

The doctor sees all the weakness of mankind; the lawyer all the wickedness, the theologian all the stupidity

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER

“

Self-pity is our worst enemy and if we yield to it, we can never do anything wise in this world

HELEN KELLER

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

■ 1830: The first line of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad opened with the maiden voyage of Peter Cooper’s locomotive Tom Thumb.

■ 1938: Carl Magee of Oklahoma was granted a U.S. patent for the first coin-controlled parking metre, which become ubiquitous on streets around the country.

■ 1941: American singer-songwriter Bob Dylan, who was hailed as the Shakespeare of his generation, was born in Duluth, Minnesota.

■ 1951: In the U.S. nuclear program, the fourth test of Operation Greenhouse was conducted, resulting in the first proof-of-principle test of a booster design in nuclear fission.



Arun Maira

THE SCIENTIFIC PARADIGM OF CLIMATE CHANGE HAS BECOME TOO NARROWLY FOCUSED ON CARBON CIRCULATION, CAPPING, AND PRICING



Brahma Chellaney

It might not be a coincidence that the Quad leaders have not met since Biden sent a series of cabinet officials to Beijing and met with Xi in California last November

SPECTRUM SELF-HELP

Losing the fight, but winning the war



Ashyashree Praharaj

COMPANIES THAT ADAPT TO CHANGING LANDSCAPES, EVEN AT THE COST OF SHORT-TERM PROFITABILITY, OFTEN EMERGE STRONGER

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](mailto:edit@orissapost.com)

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FOCUS SUSTAINABILITY

CHANGE FOR CLIMATE

A change in the paradigm of political power is essential for sustainable solutions for humanity’s existential problem of climate change

Global climate change is running ahead of solutions to mitigate it. Climate scientists are fixated on reducing carbon emissions to prevent further densification of the atmosphere’s carbon layer which is causing global warming. National governments have met 28 times since they first met in Berlin in 1995, most recently in the COP28 in Dubai in 2023. Every time they meet, climate scientists raise further alarms. Solutions are not keeping pace.

Why? Because modern climate science is an incomplete science. Climate scientists are overly focused on the physical and chemical system in which they want to improve the circulation of energy and materials. Whereas changes must be made simultaneously in the economic and political system to increase the circulation of wealth and power which are presently concentrated with the richest countries and the richest people.

The physics and chemistry of climate change is driven by Einstein’s formula,  $E=mc^2$ . Energy and materials in different forms can be converted into each other. Overall, the material and energy content of any closed system is in balance. In the last century, economic productivity and growth, and improvement of living standards, have become increasingly dependent on the use of carbon and hydrocarbon sources of energy which take eons to renew. Therefore, other sources of energy must be found and ways of reducing hydrocarbon use.

Changes in lifestyles and production systems are essential to reduce carbon emissions. Also, substitution of non-renewable with renewable energy, especially solar which brings new energy into the Earth’s system every day. Hydro and wind energy, which do not require any material to be converted into energy—only conversion of energy in one form to another—do not deplete the planet’s material resources. Nuclear energy, which derives energy from material, has great risks associated with disposal of toxic wastes. Hydrocarbon energy makes the atmosphere toxic; nuclear energy may make the ground toxic for centuries.

Physicists are not concerned with the distribution of wealth and power in social systems. Changes in forms of energy used in products and production systems require changes in economic structures. There will be winners and losers amongst industries and amongst nations too. The largest and most profitable industries, who are the greatest beneficiaries of the present paradigm, have the greatest political power. Resistance from countries, like the US, whose citizens are the most dependent on hydrocarbon dependent lifestyles, and who also have the largest industries dependent on the production and use of hydrocarbons, resist change in the paradigm the most.

Within countries, the richest people, who have the most energy dependent lifestyles, and have the largest houses and cars and most appliances, and who travel the most by air for work and leisure, do not feel an urgency to live in harmony with Nature. They can afford to buy more gadgets to reduce pollution and keep their homes cooler. Those gadgets require energy to run and for their production too. Thus, rich people with higher per capita incomes exert more pressure per capita than the poor on the Earth and its atmosphere, which are common resources which should be shared equitably. With greater privatisation of all industries, including banking and financial services, those who have more money call the tunes in public policy. More decision-making power in choosing technologies for climate change is with rich investors, who are least affected personally by climate change, and are more concerned with monetary returns on their investments. Products and solutions by the private sector for the poor require financial investors to extract profit from the bottom for returns on their investments. Thus, wealth continues to flow to the top of the pyramid. The rich get richer; inequalities in wealth and power increase; delaying further the discovery of equitable solutions for climate change.

The scientific paradigm of climate change has become too narrowly focused on carbon circulation, capping, and pricing. It must be broadened in at least four ways.

Firstly, it must be expanded even on the materials and energy side. The circulation of water in various forms on the planet must become more central in the climate model. Water is fundamental for all forms of life. Billions of people have been suffering and dying from scarcity of water and water pollution long before carbon became the overriding concern of climate science and policy in this century.

Secondly, scientists and technologists must understand the planet’s natural systems much better before proposing solutions for governments and investors to adopt. Nature’s hydrological infrastructure has been destroyed with concrete and steel infrastructure: hills with natural runoffs flattened and water channels and lakes covered to level land for urban development and highways; and big dams constructed for “scientifically” managing water storage and flow which have large and unintended consequences for environmental sustainability.

Thirdly, the world needs local system solutions cooperatively developed and implemented by communities to solve the global climate problem. Environmental problems are interlinked with livelihood and economic problems everywhere. However, these problems take different shapes in different places. Therefore, “one size-fits all” climate solutions will not be applicable everywhere. Solutions must be congruent with local realities, and local communities must resolve the give-and-take amongst themselves that systemic solutions always require.

Fourthly, those who produce wealth by their work must accumulate financial wealth themselves and not have to pass it to external investors. Wealth has been flowing upwards in the last few decades increasing inequalities.

A change in the paradigm of political power is essential for sustainable solutions for humanity’s existential problem of climate change. Climate solutions which may be technologically exciting and investor enriching will not change the paradigm of power. People at the bottom of the pyramid must accumulate more wealth and power. Cooperative forms of economic enterprises, in which local producers are also the owners, are required to ensure that wealth circulates locally and is reinvested for the community’s gain.

*The writer is a former Member of the Planning Commission and author of several books, the latest is “Shaping the Future: A Guide for System Leaders”*

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The concept of “losing the fight but winning the war” is not just a powerful strategic paradigm in military contexts. It finds relevance in various aspects of life, including business, sports, politics, and personal development, making it a concept of universal applicability. This strategy underscores the importance of long-term vision and the ability to endure short-term setbacks to achieve ultimate success.

In military history, this strategy is epitomised by numerous examples where tactical retreats and deliberate sacrifices have paved the way for strategic victories. One of the most renowned instances is the Battle of Marathon in 490 BCE, where the Greeks, under the command of Miltiades, initially appeared to be at a disadvantage against the numerically superior Persian forces. By strategically luring the Persians into a false sense of security, the Greeks launched a decisive counterattack that not only won the battle but also set the stage for future Greek victories. This principle is equally applicable in the business world.

Companies often face periods of financial loss or market share decline. However, those with a long-term vision understand that such phases can be leveraged to innovate, restructure, and ultimately outmanoeuvre competitors. Apple Inc., in the late 1990s, serves as a prime example. Facing near bankruptcy, Apple made a series of bold, risky decisions, including bringing back Steve Jobs and investing in developing new products like the iMac and iPod. These short-term sacrifices and strategic pivots led to Apple becoming one of the most valuable companies in the world.

Another quintessential example of this strategy can be Amazon’s growth trajectory. In its early years, Amazon consistently reported losses and reinvested its revenue into expanding infrastructure, developing technology, and entering new markets. Several critics questioned this approach, but Amazon’s leadership focused on long-term goals under Jeff Bezos. This strategy paid off, as Amazon eventually dominated e-commerce, cloud computing, and other sectors, transforming it into one of the most influential companies globally.

Netflix’s transition from DVD rentals to streaming is another case study of strategic sacrifice. When Netflix shifted its business model to streaming, it faced significant financial losses and customer backlash. However, this bold move positioned Netflix as a pioneer in the streaming industry, eventually leading to its current status as a leader in digital entertainment.

The automotive industry offers further insights into this strategy. Tesla, for instance, endured years of financial losses and production challenges as it focused on innovation and scaling its EV technology. Despite scepticism from industry experts and financial analysts, Tesla’s commitment to its long-term vision of sustainable transportation has paid off. Today, Tesla is a market leader in the EV sector.

A critical aspect of this strategy is the willingness to invest in R&D even when it doesn’t yield immediate returns.

Pharmaceutical companies, for example, often allocate significant resources to R&D, understanding that the path to a ground-breaking drug is fraught with failures and financial losses.

Moreover, this strategy involves understanding and anticipating market trends and consumer behaviour. Companies that adapt to changing landscapes, even at the cost of short-term profitability, often emerge stronger. The “losing the fight but winning the war” strategy emphasises the importance of maintaining a long-term perspective and the courage to endure short-term setbacks. Whether in military history, business or personal endeavours, this approach highlights the value of strategic patience, resilience, and the ability to adapt to changing circumstances. Success often requires sacrificing immediate wins for the greater goal, demonstrating that true victory lies not in the battles we lose but in the wars we ultimately win.

*The writer is a research scholar in Berhampur University.*

Wheels of justice

Sir, The International Court of Justice (ICJ) recently issued a provisional ruling on the Israel-Hamas conflict in response to South Africa’s claims that Israel is committing genocide in Gaza. The ICJ’s measures, voted on largely in favour, mandate Israel to prevent acts that could amount to genocide, preserve evidence, and allow international observers access to Gaza. The court underscored Israel’s obligations under the Genocide Convention, stressing the need to protect civilians and ensure humanitarian aid amidst ongoing hostilities. However, the enforcement of this ruling poses significant challenges as the ICJ lacks direct mechanisms to ensure compliance. Historically, Israel has ignored international rulings, such as the 2004 judgment against the separation wall in the West Bank. The ICJ’s decision highlights the importance of political and diplomatic pressure in enforcing international law, with the UN Security Council (UNSC) playing a crucial role despite past interventions often being hindered by political dynamics, particularly the US’ veto power supporting Israel. The ruling includes an obligation for Israel to report within one month on the measures taken to comply with the court’s orders, allowing for continuous monitoring and potential international actions if Israel is non-compliant. The ICJ’s decision is seen as a pivotal moment for reinforcing international norms and preventing further atrocities.

Amarjeet Kumar; HAZARIBAGH

Extreme politics

Sir, Late Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, a hardliner, has long been regarded as a prospective successor to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. He frequently criticised America and Israel and was on Washington’s tight blacklist for serious human rights breaches. He was very vocal about growing Iran’s nuclear power, despite US sanctions. Raisi held various key posts before becoming President of Iran in 2021, and many scandals have surrounded him. Specifically, he was accused of forcefully suppressing movements and opponents. He was known for taking extreme opinions in domestic politics. Raisi was one of the Iranian politicians at whose behest two of the harshest acts of repression took place. Iran enacted regulations regulating women’s dress and behaviour after Raisi was elected president. Iran’s hijab law has since been tightened

Abhijit Roy, JAMSHEDPUR



# Delhi labourers toil in ‘red hot’ conditions

THE NORTHWEST OF INDIA IS EXPERIENCING AN UNUSUALLY HOT SUMMER AND THE NATIONAL WEATHER OFFICE HAS FORECAST THREE TIMES THE USUAL NUMBER OF HEATWAVE DAYS THIS MAY. EXPERTS SAY CLIMATE CHANGE ADDS FUEL TO THE HEAT

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, May 23:** Working on a highway project in one of India’s hottest areas this summer, Banwari Singh handles iron bars that he says often turn “red hot”.

Temperatures hit 47.8 degrees Celsius (118 degrees Fahrenheit) last Sunday, among the highest recorded in India this year, in Najafgarh, an area on the outskirts of New Delhi where Singh works.

“This is among the hottest it has been in this area,” Singh, in checked trousers, a half-sleeved shirt, a bright orange safety vest and a hard-top hat, said.

“But we have no option. If we want to eat, we have to work whatever the conditions are,” said the 40-year-old, resting near a pillar he is helping to build.

The northwest of India is experiencing an unusually hot summer and the national weather office has forecast three times the usual number of heatwave days this May. Experts say climate change adds fuel to the heat.

Delhi shut schools earlier



Construction workers work to build a pillar at a construction site during a hot summer day in New Delhi. REUTERS

this week as temperatures rose. Voters in India’s national election face the prospect of queuing this weekend in the sweltering heat.

Singh and other labourers, who earn around 500 rupees to 700 rupees (\$6-\$8.4) a day, say

Delhi shut schools earlier this week as temperatures rose. Voters in India’s national election face the prospect of queuing this weekend in the sweltering heat

they dread the heat and some fall sick as a result of the hot conditions. Water is available for workers to douse themselves regularly to beat the heat and some buy cool drinks from a makeshift shop nearby.

The deputy project manager, Vinay Sahani, said the company provides water for workers, and sometimes lemonade, and asks workers to rest after noon when temperatures peak. Work can resume after sundown, he said. Sumit Goswami, 21, who had to take time off this week after a heat-related illness, said he has worked in hot conditions before.

“But this year it has become extreme,” he said. “Still, we have to continue because we have to support the family.”

With the peak power demand in Delhi making history – clocking in 8,000 Megawatts, the highest-ever figure – leaders of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) sought to turn it into a poll pitch, stating that since “there are no power outages in Delhi, the BJP wants to destroy the AAP.”



BJP workers stage a protest against West Bengal government at Bangal Bhawan in New Delhi

## Goa Forest department opposes Lantern Festival

THE ENTIRE STRETCH OF THE MORJIM BEACH IS A NESTING SITE OF OLIVE RIDLEY TURTLES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Panaji, May 23:** The Goa Forest department has taken a strong objection to a private festival near a turtle nesting site at Morjim beach in North Goa scheduled to be held May 25.

Latern Festival, also known as Glow Fest, is scheduled to be held Saturday at Morjim beach which is notified as a turtle nesting site. The festival, where people can participate in a lantern lighting ceremony, also features live music, dance performances



and other activities.

Deputy Conservator of Forest Prem Kumar, in a letter written to the secretary of the state environment department, has pointed out that the Goa forest department has a turtle hatch-

ery at the Morjim beach. “The entire stretch of the Morjim beach is a nesting site of Olive Ridley turtles,” the letter reads.

Kumar said that organising the festival will be a violation of rules and regulation of the Goa Coastal

Zone Management Authority.

“In this regard, letters have already been issued from the office of the Range Forest officer, Marine range, Wildlife and Eco-tourism (North), Goa to the Member Secretary, Goa Coastal Zone Management Authority and to the Police Inspector, Morjim,” he said.

“Necessary intervention from your office is solicited under applicable rules and regulations to maintain the sanctity of the turtle hatchery and the nesting sites at Morjim beach,” it added.

## MALIWAL ASSAULT CASE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 23:** The Delhi Police may not visit Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal’s residence Thursday to question his parents in connection with AAP Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal “assault” case, sources said.

Kejriwal Wednesday had said police were going to question his elderly and ill parents the next day. Kejriwal’s close aide Bibhav Kumar was arrested by police in the case.

Sources said police may visit his residence for questioning in the coming days but are not going there Thursday. They may also question Kejriwal in the coming days, sources said.

In a post on X in Hindi, Kejriwal said, “I am waiting for the police with my parents and

## Delhi cops defer questioning of Kejriwal’s parents: Sources



■ KEJRIWAL WEDNESDAY HAD SAID POLICE WERE GOING TO QUESTION HIS ELDERLY AND ILL PARENTS THE NEXT DAY

■ SOURCES SAID POLICE MAY VISIT HIS RESIDENCE FOR QUESTIONING IN THE COMING DAYS BUT ARE NOT GOING THERE THURSDAY

■ KEJRIWAL’S CLOSE AIDE BIBHAV KUMAR WAS ARRESTED BY POLICE IN THE CASE

■ THEY MAY ALSO QUESTION KEJRIWAL IN THE COMING DAYS, SOURCES SAID

wife. Yesterday the police called and asked for time to interrogate my parents. But they have not yet given any information about whether they will come or not.” The AAP accused the BJP of committing atrocities on Kejriwal’s parents through police.

“Ever since Arvind Kejriwal was granted bail, BJP has

freaked out. They are attacking and conspiring against Arvind Kejriwal and AAP. But today, after summoning the parents of Arvind Kejriwal for questioning by Delhi Police, they have crossed all the limits,” Atishi said.

Concurring, AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh said, “The BJP has stooped so low now

they are using Delhi Police to commit atrocities on Kejriwal’s ailing and elderly parents. His father is 84, cannot walk without support and even has hearing problems. His mother had returned from hospital two days before his arrest and he could not even meet her at that time. People will respond to this with their votes.”

## Flights diverted after lightning damages runway lights in Goa

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Panaji, May 23:** Six flights have been diverted after lightning struck the Manohar International Airport (MIA) in Goa and caused damage to the runway edge lights, an official said.

Lightning struck the airport, located at Mopa in North Goa, at around 5.15 pm Wednesday, a spokesperson of the MIA said in a statement.

“MIA took NOTAM (Notice to Airmen) up to 8 pm by which time the damaged lights were rectified to bring the airport operations to normalcy,” he said.



During NOTAM, six flights were diverted to nearby destinations, the official said.

“Inconvenience caused to the passengers is sincerely regretted. Such natural calamities are beyond human control,” he added.

Apart from the MIA, the coastal state has another airport at Dabolim in South Goa.

## Unsold housing inventory dips by 57 per cent in NCR



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Mumbai, May 23:** The unsold home inventory in Delhi-NCR declined by a massive 57 per cent in the last five years, from nearly 2 lakh units in the first quarter of 2018-end to around 86,420 units by Q1 2024, a report showed

Thursday.

Bangalore, Hyderabad and Chennai saw their collective unsold stock shrink by 11 per cent in the same period, according to Anarock Research.

In the last five years, Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) and Pune saw their cumulative unsold stock reduce by 8 per cent. Meanwhile, Kolkata saw its unsold inventory decline by 41 per cent in the period

ply additions of nearly 6.07 lakh units and 8.42 lakh units, respectively,” informed Santhosh Kumar, Vice Chairman, ANAROCK Group.

The relatively low decline of unsold inventory in South India is attributable to a massive new launch rate in Hyderabad, most notably over the last two years. The city saw its housing stock almost quadruple in the last five years.

However, Bangalore saw unsold inventory decline by 50 per cent in this period, the report noted.

“NCR’s upbeat performance also reflects renewed buyer confidence in the region,” said Kumar. Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act 2016 (RERA), Goods and Services Tax (GST) and the intervention of Alternate Investment Funds (AIFs) like the ‘SWAMIH’ fund have played a major role in this sentiment revival.

## TB medicines in stock, more supply in pipeline: Delhi HC told

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 23:** The Delhi High Court has closed the proceedings on a PIL concerning alleged non-availability of medicines in the Rajan Babu Institute of Pulmonary Medicine and Tuberculosis here after being informed that the current stock in the city would last for a few weeks and the rest of the supply is in the pipeline.



The Central government and Mission Director, Delhi State Health Mission filed affidavits in court detailing the stock position of the drugs in Delhi stores as well as their further supply.

In its PIL filed earlier this year, NGO Social Jurist had alleged that the sole ultrasound machine in the hospital was non-functional and essential medicines were unavailable for the last six months. Advocate Ashok Agarwal, appearing for the petitioner, had contended that amid concerns of short supply, poor patients were being forced to purchase medicines from outside.

## Stray dog attacks on Goa’s beaches on the rise

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Panaji, May 23:** A government-appointed lifesaving agency in Goa Thursday said several incidents of stray dogs attacking citizens have taken place in the state of late.

In separate incidents, three lifesavers of the agency were also attacked by packs of stray dogs on different beaches of the state, Drishti Marine Lifesavers, which has been given the task of lifeguarding the beaches, said



in a statement.

Two foreign nationals - a woman from Russia and Canada each - were bitten by stray dogs in two separate incidents on

Benaulim beach in April, while actor Rayya Labib sustained bruises after she was chased by stray dogs last week at Colva beach while holidaying in the state, a spokesman of the agency said.

There have also been reports of encounters between stray dogs and beachgoers recently, as earlier this month, a 24-year-old woman from Loutolim in the state was bitten six to seven times by the canines on the Benaulim beach, he said.

## BRAVING THE ODDS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Panaji, May 23:** Braving physical disabilities, cold weather and bad health, 30-year-old triple amputee Tinkesh Kaushik from Goa never lost his grit and mental strength as he set out on a trek to the Mount Everest Base Camp.

While the first day of preparation for the trek was grueling, Kaushik promised to himself that he will do it and then nothing could stop him or shake his determination.

Overcoming all odds, he reached the Everest Base Camp, located 17,598 feet above sea level, after a week-long journey and hoisted the national

Kaushik lost his both limbs below knees and a hand following an electrocution accident in Haryana when he was 9 years old

The amputee, who uses prosthetic limbs, moved to Goa a few years back and has been working as a fitness coach

tricolour there May 11, happy and proud to have set an example for others with disabilities.

“I found trekking to be challenging, but I said to myself that I have to do it, and I did it because of my mental strength,” Kaushik, who works as a fitness coach, said at a press conference here Wednesday.

## Triple amputee Tinkesh Kaushik conquers Everest base camp



PHOTO CREDIT: INSTAGRAM

With this, Kaushik has become the world’s first triple amputee to reach the Mount Everest Base Camp, Disability Rights Association of Goa

(DRAG) chief Avelino D’Souza claimed.

Kaushik lost his both limbs below knees and a hand following an electrocution acci-

dent in Haryana when he was 9 years old. The amputee, who uses prosthetic limbs, moved to Goa a few years back and has been working as a fitness coach.

The amputee said he initially thought the trek would be easy as he is a fitness coach but realised the challenges when he started preparing for it.

Kaushik said as he started work on the ground, it was very painful for him on the first day because of his level of amputation and prosthetic limbs.

He started the journey May 4 from Nepal, saying it was really challenging for him being a triple amputee, but he could finish the trek because of his

mental strength.

“I faced challenges a couple of times, my health was bad because of mountain sickness and my oxygen level dropped. I suffered from headache and vomiting, but I had the strong desire to complete the mission because I wanted to set an example for people with disabilities that if you have strong mental health, then you can certainly achieve it,” he said.

Kaushik said he felt proud that he went from Goa and did it.

“When I hoisted the flag at the Everest Base Camp, it was a really proud and emotional moment for me,” he said. Kaushik has made Goa proud with his achievements, D’Souza said.







of the day quote

Aid (to Gaza) is flowing from the pier. It is not flowing at a rate that any of us are happy with

JAKE SULLIVAN | NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER, US

We are going to put an Indian astronaut into the International Space Station this year. We promised when PM Narendra Modi came (to the US in 2023) that by the end of this year, we will do this and our mission is still on track to be able to go in space this year

ERIC GARCETTI | AMBASSADOR TO INDIA, US

The International Criminal Court prosecutor's request for an arrest warrant against Israel's Prime Minister is unacceptable and cannot be enforced in Hungary

GERGELY GULYAS | PM'S CHIEF OF STAFF, HUNGARY

SHORT TAKES

12 killed, 25 hurt in Israel attack

**Jerusalem:** The Israeli military said Thursday it has completed a two-day operation in the occupied West Bank that the Palestinian Health Ministry says killed 12 Palestinians and wounded 25. Rippling tensions from the Israel-Hamas war were also felt in the Red Sea, where a missile splashed down in the water near the crucial Bab el-Mandeb Strait Thursday, but caused no damage, and in Lebanon, where state-run National News Agency says an Israeli drone strike killed one person and wounded three school students who were passing nearby in a bus.

9 killed as wind blows away stage

**San Pedro Garza Garcia:** A strong gust of wind toppled the stage at a campaign rally Wednesday evening in the northern Mexican state of Nuevo Leon, killing at least nine people — including a child — and injuring 63, the state's governor said. The collapse occurred during an event attended by presidential long-shot candidate Jorge Álvarez Máynez, who ran to escape. Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador said he "sends a hug to family members, friends of the victims and political supporters".

1st trilateral talks in Seoul next week

**Seoul:** Media here reported Thursday that leaders of South Korea, China and Japan will meet next week here for their first trilateral talks since 2019. Yonhap news agency reported Thursday that the trilateral summit among South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, Chinese Premier Li Qiang and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida will take place in Seoul Monday. Other South Korean media have carried similar reports citing South Korea's presidential office. Since their inaugural stand-alone trilateral summit in 2008, the three Asian countries were supposed to hold such a meeting among their leaders each year.

Norway tightens entry of Russians

**Copenhagen:** Norway Thursday said it will further tighten its restrictions on the entry of people from Russia, saying those with tourist visas issued by Norway before regulations were tightened in 2022 or issued by another European country will be barred from entering the Scandinavian country as of next week. Justice Minister Emilie Enger Mehl said the tightening was a response to "Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine."



On July 5, either Sir Keir Starmer or I will be Prime Minister. Over the next few weeks, I will fight for every vote, I will earn your trust

RISHI SUNAK | PM, UK

PAK SIZZLES IN HEATWAVE

Doctors treated hundreds of victims of heatstroke at hospitals across Pakistan Thursday after an intense heatwave sent temperatures above normal levels due to climate change, officials said. Temperatures soared as high as 49 degrees Celsius (120 degrees Fahrenheit) the previous day in Mohenjo Daro



Thousands of journos forced to flee: UN  
UN investigator flags repression, threats and conflict behind sorrows of mediapersons

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**United Nations, May 23:** Thousands of journalists have fled their home countries in recent years to escape political repression, save their lives and escape conflict — but in exile they are often vulnerable to physical, digital and legal threats, a UN investigator said Wednesday. Irene Khan said in a report to the UN General Assembly that the number of journalists in exile has increased as the space for independent and critical media has been “shrinking in democratic countries where authoritarian trends are gaining ground”.

Today, she said, free, independent and diverse media supporting democracy and holding the powerful to account are either absent or severely constrained in over a third of the world's nations, where more than two-thirds of the global population lives.

Nepali woman now fastest to ascent Mount Everest



AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

**Kathmandu, May 23:** Nepali climber Phunjo Lama Thursday reached Everest's summit in 14 hours and 31 minutes, smashing the record for the world's fastest ascent of the mountain by a woman.

Climbers usually take days to reach the top of the 8,849-metre (29,000-foot) mountain, spending nights on its different camps to rest and acclimatise.

But Lama, who is in her thirties, shaved more than 11 hours off the previous best that had stood since 2021. It means she has reclaimed her own record.

“She started (from the base camp) at 15:52 May 22, summited 6:23 am May 23,” Khim Lal Gautam, chief of the tourism's department field office at the base camp, told AFP.

Earlier this month, when Lama was still at Everest's base camp, she said in a post on Facebook that she was “100 percent sure” she would reach the top of “the Mother Goddess”.

In 2018, Lama clinched the record for the fastest ascent by a woman by climbing Everest in 39 hours and six minutes.

That record was broken in 2021 by Ada Tsang Yin-hung from Hong Kong, who conquered the mountain in 25 hours and 50 minutes.

Nepali climber Lhakpa Gelu Sherpa holds the record for the fastest-ever ascent of Everest, reaching the summit in 10 hours and 56 minutes in 2003.



Exile thus becomes yet another way to silence critical voices — another form of press censorship

IRENE KHAN | UN INVESTIGATOR SAID WEDNESDAY

The UN independent investigator on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression said most journalists and some independent media outlets have

left their countries so they can report and investigate freely “without fear or favour”.

But Khan, a Bangladeshi lawyer who previously served as secretary general of Amnesty International, said exiled journalists often find themselves in precarious positions, facing threats against them and their

PANNUN MURDER BID

NO RELIEF FOR GUPTA

Czech Constitutional Court rejects Indian national Nikhil Gupta's petition against US extradition in Pannun assassination attempt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**London, May 23:** The Czech Constitutional Court has rejected a petition by Indian national Nikhil Gupta, detained in a prison in Prague, against his extradition to the US to face murder-for-hire charges in an alleged assassination attempt on a Khalistani extremist on American soil.

Gupta, 52, was charged by US federal prosecutors in an indictment unsealed in November last year with working with an Indian government employee in the foiled plot to kill Khalistani separatist Gurbatwant Singh Pannun, who holds dual American and Canadian citizenships, in the US.

Gupta was arrested in Prague, the Czech Republic June 30, 2023, and is being held there currently. The US government is seeking his extradition to America.

The Czech Constitutional Court heard a petition by Gupta against the extradition.

Gupta was charged by US federal prosecutors in an indictment unsealed in November last year



“The Constitutional Court did not find any circumstance for which declaring extradition admissible would lead to a violation of any of the constitutionally guaranteed fundamental rights and freedoms,” the court said in a statement Wednesday.

The court said it ruled that lower courts had given due consideration to aspects that may prevent extradition. It also rejected arguments that the case was political.

“For the complainant, this brings the proceedings before

the Czech courts to an end.”

The Constitutional Court said it has now confirmed the decision of the general courts on the admissibility of extradition, upholding the Municipal Court and The High Court's order.

The court also upheld the local court's decision to reject Gupta's request for release from pre-trial detention and did not accept compensation for detention in the form of a monetary guarantee, or in the form of a ban on travel abroad.

Before the Constitutional

BRIBERY CHARGES

Russia arrests another military official

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Moscow, May 23:** A deputy chief of the Russian military general staff has been arrested on charges of large-scale bribery, Russian news reports said Thursday, the latest in a series of bribery arrests of high-ranking military officials.

The arrest of Lt Gen Vadim Shamarin followed the arrest this week of Maj Gen Ivan Popov, a former top commander in Russia's offensive in Ukraine, also on bribery charges.

In April, Deputy Defence Minister Timur Ivanov was arrested for bribery. Ivanov was a close associate of Sergei Shoigu, whom President Vladimir Putin dismissed as defense minister soon after Putin's inauguration to a new term in May.



rested for bribery. Ivanov was a close associate of Sergei Shoigu, whom President Vladimir Putin dismissed as defense minister soon after Putin's inauguration to a new term in May.

Court, the applicant said courts did not examine all the essential circumstances that could become an obstacle to extradition, according to the statement.

A Czech high court in January ruled Gupta can be extradited to the US.

A final decision on whether to extradite Gupta will be made by Justice Minister Pavel Blazek.

The Washington Post, in April 2024, reported that Vikram Yadav, a Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) officer, was the Indian official behind the plot. The paper also said the then R&AW chief Samant Goel sanctioned the operation.

The Indian Ministry of External Affairs, however, dismissed the report, saying it makes “unwarranted and unsubstantiated imputations” to claim that Indian agents were involved in the plot to kill Pannun.

India has publicly said a high-level inquiry is looking into the evidence shared by the US in the alleged plot to kill Pannun.

‘Punishment’ drills

**Beijing:** A furious China launched “punishment” drills around Taiwan Thursday in what it said was a response to “separatist acts”, sending up heavily armed warplanes and staging mock attacks as state media denounced newly inaugurated President Lai Ching-te. The exercises, in the Taiwan Strait and around groups of Taiwan-controlled islands beside the Chinese coast, come just three days after Lai took office, a man Beijing detests as a “separatist”. China, which views democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory, denounced Lai's inauguration speech Monday, in which he urged it to stop its threats, saying the two sides of the strait were “not subordinate to each other”. On Tuesday, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi called Lai “disgraceful”. Lai has repeatedly offered talks with China but has been rebuffed. He says only Taiwan's people can decide their future, and rejects Beijing's sovereignty claims. The drills are being held in the Taiwan Strait, the north, south and east of Taiwan, as well as areas around the Taiwan-controlled islands of Kinmen, Matsu, Wugu and Dongyin, the command said in a statement, the first time China's exercises have included areas around these islands. Taiwan's defence ministry said 15 Chinese navy ships, 16 coast guard and 33 aircraft were involved, but no live fire drills were held in any areas close to Taiwan.



World Water Forum calls for integrated management

RECENT CATASTROPHIC EVENTS UNDERSCORE THE VULNERABILITY OF SOCIETIES TO WATER-RELATED HAZARDS, WHETHER FROM EXCESS OR SCARCITY

AGENCIES

**Bali, May 23:** Indonesian President Joko “Jokowi” Widodo officially opened the World Water Forum in Bali Tuesday, just as his country mourned dozens of victims of a “cold lava” mudslide from the Mount Merapi volcano, triggered by heavy rainfall.

Hundreds of people have been killed by historic floods in Brazil and East Africa and by flash floods in Afghanistan. Central America and southern Africa face extreme drought.

“These disasters once again show the vulnerability of society to the cascading impact of water-related hazards: either in the form of too much or too little,” World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Secretary-General Celeste Saulo said in a statement to the conference. “Better forecasts and risk management are pivotal to the success of Early Warnings for All.”

Asia is the region worst affected by weather, climate and



3.6bn people globally face inadequate access to water at least a month per year and this is expected to increase to over 5bn by 2050

water-related disasters. 80 percent of these were due to flood and storm events in 2023. There were more than 2,000 fatalities and nine million people directly affected.

At the same time, 3.6 billion people globally face inadequate access to water at least a month per year and this is expected to increase to more than 5 billion by 2050.

A ministerial declaration issued an urgent call for more efficient and integrated water resources management; more financing of climate change

adaptation and biodiversity and ecosystem loss; and accelerated progress towards the Sustainable Development Goal 6 on safe and affordable drinking water and sanitation for all.

The World Water Forum is held every three years. The theme this year is Water for Shared Prosperity. It brings together tens of thousands of participants from international institutions, academia, civil society and the private sector.

**EARLY WARNINGS** Celeste Saulo highlighted the growing momentum of Early Warnings for All at a series of high-level panels, including with Egypt's Minister of Water resources and Chair of the African Ministers Council on Water, Hani Sewilam, Indonesia's Minister of Public Works Basuki Hadimuljono, and Dwikorita Karnawati, head of the Indonesia's Meteorological, Climatological and Geophysical Agency (BMKG), which plays a key national, regional and global

role in flood and drought management programmes.

Early Warnings for All initially prioritises 30 countries for action, although many others are also targeted. WMO is working with partners to establish national early warning service roadmaps and coordination mechanisms.

**HYDROLOGY ACTION PLAN** WMO works to strengthen and integrate hydrological services to support climate change adaptation. A major obstacle is the lack of information about the currently available water resources, future availability, and demand.

Today, 60% of WMO Member States report declining capabilities in hydrological monitoring. Therefore, WMO has a wide-ranging Hydrology Action Plan, with eight long-term ambitions: **No Surprises by Floods:** Ensuring communities are not caught off guard by floods.

**Drought Preparedness:** Preparing everyone for drought conditions. **Support for Food Security:** Using

hydroclimate and meteorological data to bolster food security. High-Quality Data: Providing robust data to support scientific research.

**Scientific Basis for Hydrology:** Ensuring that operational hydrology is grounded in solid science.

**Knowledge of Water Resources:** Thoroughly understanding global water resources.

**Sustainable Development:** Supporting sustainable development with reliable hydrological information.

**Water Quality:** Ensuring comprehensive knowledge of water quality.

The forum underscores the critical role of operational hydrology and national meteorological and hydrological services in climate and water resilience. Partnerships and collaborative efforts are essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and building resilience in the face of a rapidly changing climate.



of the day quote

The Congress-ruled states including Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka have committed the crime and sin of robbing the rights of OBC by providing reservation to minorities from their shares

SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN | SENIOR BJP LEADER

Agniveer was opposed by the Army, yet the government thrust the scheme upon the Army, and that is wrong. Hence, the Agniveer scheme must be scrapped

P CHIDAMBARAM | SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER

Religion-based reservation is against the spirit of our Constitution. Only India-origin SC, ST and backward communities should get the benefit of reservation

YOGI ADITYANATH | UP CHIEF MINISTER

X POST OF THE DAY

SHOCKING This is not Hollywood shoot. This is not even Bollywood shoot. This is Uttarakhand, where Cops barged their police vehicle inside the ward of Rishikesh AIIMS. This state is ruled by Double engine BJP since 8yrs in a stretch.. Waah kya scene hai..

@MSHAH1002

SHORT TAKES

4 labourers buried alive

**Jharkhand:** At least four labourers, including a woman, were buried alive while digging a well in Jharkhand's Lohardaga district Thursday, police said. The incident took place around 11 am in Chitri Ambatoli village in Senha police station area, around 80 km from the state capital Ranchi, when the workers were digging a well under an MGNREGA project, a senior officer said. The police conducted a rescue operation but all the four labourers were found dead, he said.

Man killed as teen's motorcycle hits him

**Mumbai:** A 32-year-old man was killed after a minor in Mumbai's Mazgaon area allegedly hit him with his motorcycle Thursday morning. The victim has been identified as Irfan Nawab Ali Shaikh who got hit by a bike which was being driven by a minor aged 15. According to police, the victim was badly injured and was died during the treatment. Mumbai Police said that the minor has been sent to the juvenile home. Police has detained the minor along with his father and a case has been registered under section 304(2) of IPC and section 3,4 of Motor Vehicle Act.

Air India gives salary increments to staff

**New Delhi:** Air India Thursday announced annual salary increments for its staff, and also introduced an annual target performance bonus for pilots, according to sources. This is the first appraisal process after Tata Group took over the loss-making airline a little over two years ago. The quantum of monthly hike varies from ₹5,000 to ₹15,000 for pilots, depending on their experience and position. The annual target performance bonus for pilots can be up to ₹1.80 lakh, the sources said.



In this election, the fight is for safeguarding the Indian Constitution. It is not simply a book, our Constitution carries thousands of years of ideological heritage of Gandhi, Ambedkar and Nehru ji

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

HEAVY RAINS LASH KERALA

As Kerala reels under heavy pre-monsoon rains, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) Thursday revised the rain alerts and issued a red alert in Ernakulam and Thrissur districts in the state. A red alert indicates heavy to extremely heavy rain of over 20 cm in 24 hours



Campaigning ends for 6th phase of LS polls

Besides the national capital, polling for the sixth round of the marathon seven-phase elections will be held Saturday in 14 seats in Uttar Pradesh, all 10 seats of Haryana, eight seats each in Bihar and West Bengal, six seats in Odisha, four seats in Jharkhand and one seat in Jammu and Kashmir



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 23:** Campaigning ended Thursday for the penultimate phase of Lok Sabha elections in 58 constituencies across six states and two Union territories, including all the seven seats in Delhi.

Till now, voting has been completed in 25 states and Union territories and 428 constituencies out of 543. The last phase of polling is scheduled on June 1 and counting of votes will be taken up June 4.

Among the key contestants are Dharmendra Pradhan (BJP) from Sambalpur (Odisha), Manoj Tiwari (BJP) and Kanhaiya Kumar (Congress) from North East Delhi, Maneka Gandhi (BJP) from Sultanpur (Uttar Pradesh),

Mehbooba Mufti (PDP) from Anantnag-Rajouri (Jammu & Kashmir), Abhijit Gangopadhyay (BJP) from Tamluk (West Bengal), and BJP's Manohar Lal Khattar (Karnal, Haryana), Naveen Jindal (Kurukshetra) and Rao Inderjit Singh (Gurgaon).

With campaigning reaching fever pitch, the Election commission took exception to utterances of star campaigners and Wednesday directed the leaders of the ruling BJP to refrain from making speeches on religious and communal lines, and Opposition Congress from potentially divisive statements on the socioeconomic composition of the armed forces.

On the last day of campaigning, Prime Minister Narendra

Modi held a rally each in Punjab and Haryana.

The Congress's poll campaign was led by its chief Mallikarjun Kharge, senior leader Rahul Gandhi and Sachin Pilot among others. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who was released on interim bail till June 1, held roadshows in support of Congress' candidates while Pilot campaigned for AAP's South Delhi candidate Sahi Ram Pahlawan.

AAP's poll campaign got a shot in the arm with the release of Kejriwal from Tihar. While Kejriwal was in jail, his wife Sunita Kejriwal held roadshows for party candidates and senior party leaders Atishi, Saurabh Bharadwaj, Sanjay Singh, Gopal Rai held various jansabhas and outreach activities under the party's 'Jail Ka Jawab Vote Se' campaign.

Following his release, Kejriwal and Bhagwant Mann led roadshows in some constituencies while Sunita also joined her husband for poll meetings.

The alleged assault on AAP MP Swati Maliwal at Kejriwal's official residence has also become an poll issue with the BJP hitting out at the party for being "anti-women."

Delhi: Several colleges receive bomb threats

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 23:** Over a dozen colleges including Delhi University's prestigious Lady Sri Ram College, Hansraj College and Ramjas College received bomb threats Thursday but nothing suspicious was found after thorough searches, officials said, a day after a similar e-mail sent alarm bells ringing in the North Block.

A Delhi Fire Service (DFS) official said they first received a call at 4.38 pm about the bomb threat at the LSR College and two fire tenders were pressed into service. Later, other colleges also made the call to authorities.

The local police, a bomb disposal squad, a bomb detection team arrived at the LSR College along with a dog squad and conducted searches but nothing suspicious was found, the official said. LSR Principal Suman Sharma told PTI the entire campus has been sanitised. "We received the bomb threat e-mail in the afternoon today. Immediately, the police were informed and they sent a bomb (disposal) squad. The search operation went on for two-three hours and the entire campus has been sanitised," Sharma said.

A police officer said along with LSR over a dozen of other colleges in Delhi received a similar kind of threat as the sender - rizer111rizer@beeble.com - marked them in the CC of the e-mail with subject line "Bomb in the University".

The officer said the "beeble.com" is a Europe-based mailing service company, which was earlier used in sending similar kind of threats to schools and hospitals in Delhi and other parts of country.



Cdr S Karthikeyan of the Indian Navy, after successfully scaling Mount Everest with his daughter Kaamya Karthikeyan, a 16-year-old class XII student of Navy Children School, Mumbai

PTI

DEVE GOWDA WARNS PRAJWAL

Reacting to the Karnataka Chief Minister's second missive to the Prime Minister, Union minister Pralhad Joshi said there is a process to cancel the diplomatic passport of Prajwal, and asserted the Centre is ready to cooperate in bringing him back to the country

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore/New Delhi, May 23:** Trouble mounted Thursday for Prajwal Revanna, facing allegations of sexually abusing several women, with Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah writing to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the second time to cancel the diplomatic passport of the suspended JD (S) MP, and the MEA saying it was processing the request for revocation of his passport.

Meanwhile, former Prime Minister and Prajwal's grandfather Deve Gowda issued a "stern warning", asking his grandson to come home and face the matter legally, lest he should face his anger and that of the family members leading to his isolation.

Reacting to the Karnataka Chief Minister's second missive to the Prime Minister, Union minister Pralhad Joshi said there is a process to cancel the diplomatic passport of Prajwal, and asserted the Centre is ready to cooperate in bringing him back to the country.



In New Delhi, official sources said the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has received a letter from the Karnataka government seeking revocation of Revanna's diplomatic passport. "The MEA has received a letter from the Karnataka government for cancellation of diplomatic passport in respect of MP Prajwal Revanna. This is being processed," a source said.



The MEA's explanation came in the wake of Siddaramaiah's second missive to PM Modi on the issue, urging him to take "prompt and necessary" actions to cancel Prajwal's diplomatic passport.

In his letter to Modi, the chief minister said it was "shameful that Prajwal, a Member of Parliament from Hassan con-

stituency, who is also contesting for re-election in the present general elections, and who is the grandson of a former Prime Minister, fled the country, the 27th of April, 2024 to Germany using his diplomatic passport...shortly after news of his heinous actions emerged and just a few hours before the first FIR was filed against him."

The Chief Minister, who had written to the PM on May 1 on the subject, further said the Karnataka government has taken prompt action to meet the ends of justice by setting up a special team to probe the matter.

On his part, Deve Gowda said: "At this juncture, I can do only one thing; I can issue a stern warning to Prajwal and ask him to return from wherever he is and surrender before the police. He should subject himself to the legal process."

The 92-year-old veteran in a statement in Bengaluru also made it clear it was not an appeal but a warning.

Prajwal is facing charges of sexually abusing several women

Indian students shun UK varsities for Master's courses

ACCORDING TO UK HOME OFFICE DATA BASED ON THE OFFICE FOR NATIONAL STATISTICS (ONS) FIGURES, THERE WAS A 16 PER CENT DROP IN INDIAN STUDENT APPLICANTS OVER THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 2023 IN AN OVERALL 10 PER CENT FALL IN NET MIGRATION COMPARED TO 2022

AGENCIES

**London, May 23:** Indian students choosing the UK as their higher education destination have started registering a fall, with over 21,000 fewer Master's degree applicants than the previous year being registered in official statistics released in London Thursday.

While the figures will come as a welcome sign for British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak who has made curbing migration one of his key planks for a general election now set for

July 4, the student visa figures will worry universities who rely on overseas student fees. "There were 116,455 sponsored study visa grants to main applicants that are Indian nationals in the year ending March 2024, (26 per cent of the

total), 21,717 fewer than the previous year," the Home Office analysis reads.

"The majority (94,149, or 81 per cent) of Indian students come to the UK to study at Master's level, and the recent decrease in Indian students was driven by 21,800 fewer Indian nationals coming to study at Master's level," it notes.

The fall in numbers follows a visa clampdown on students being able to bring their family dependents, spouses or children, from earlier this year.

It comes at a time when university vice-chancellors and diaspora groups are lobbying the government not to safeguard the country's post-study work visa offer under the Graduate Route scheme.

In the year to March 2024, Indian nationals represented



the largest group of students granted visas on this route (64,372), representing almost half (46 per cent) of the grants.

This reaffirms previous statistics around this scheme, which offers a chance to gain work experience at the end of a degree and is seen as crucial to Indians choosing their higher education destination.

Thursday's data also revealed data under the new India Young Professionals Scheme, which

has a quota of 3,000 visas for young people annually and saw 2,105 grants to Indian nationals up to March this year.

According to the ONS, almost half of those immigrating to the UK for work-related reasons came from India or Nigeria, most commonly in the Health and Social Care sector, and Indians continued to top the tally of Skilled Worker visa grants.

The top five nationalities outside the European Union (EU)

for long-term immigration flows into the UK in the year ending December 2023 were Indian (250,000), Nigerian (141,000), Chinese (90,000), Pakistani (83,000) and Zimbabwean (36,000). Overall, the ONS data estimates about 1.22 million people came to the UK in 2023 and around 532,000 have left.

The ONS said: "Long-term net migration (the number of people immigrating minus the number emigrating) was provisionally estimated to be 685,000 in the year ending (YE) December 2023, compared with our updated estimate of 764,000 for the YE December 2022; while it is too early to say if this is the start of a new downward trend, emigration increased in 2023, while new Home Office data show visa applications have fallen in recent months."

15 dead in rain-related incidents in Tamil Nadu

**Chennai:** At least 15 people have died in Tamil Nadu between May 16 and May 22 in rain-related incidents, an official said Thursday. In a statement, the Tamil Nadu State Revenue and Disaster Management department said that three persons died in Krishnagiri, Salem and Cuddalore districts in the last 24 hours due to thunder, lightning and wall collapse. Also, 13 cattle deaths were reported while 40 houses and huts were damaged in various parts of the state. The statement mentioned that 4,385 hectares of crops have submerged in rain water. Tamil Nadu received an average of 1.58 cm of rain in the last 24 hours with Nilgiris recording the maximum rainfall of 6.15 cm. The weather department has issued an advisory to fishermen not to venture into the sea. An official said that 10 SDRF teams of 296 members have been stationed in Kanniyakumari, Coimbatore, Tirunelveli and Nilgiris districts. Tourists have been advised to take precautions and to avoid travelling till May 24 in the state.



of the day quote

The leather sector has a huge socio-economic benefit. The policy would help the industry in boosting exports and creating huge number of jobs

**R SELVAM** | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, COUNCIL FOR LEATHER EXPORTS

While only about 200 million of the 650 million Indians active on social media currently shop online, GenAI-powered conversational messaging platforms have the potential to bring the next 450 million consumers to e-commerce

**ARPAN SHETH** | PARTNER, BAIN & COMPANY

This partnership with MG Motor India to purchase around 3,000 electric cars, marks the beginning of an exciting journey for both organisations with a common goal of accelerating fleet electrification and achieving Net-zero emissions

**SANDEEP GAMBHIR** | CEO, VERTELO

SHORT TAKES

ITC net profit dips

**New Delhi:** Diversified entity ITC Ltd Thursday reported a marginal decline in consolidated net profit at ₹5,190.71 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 31, 2024 as consumption demand remained subdued. The company had logged a net profit of ₹5,242.59 crore in the same period of the previous fiscal, ITC said. Revenue from operations in the quarter was at ₹19,446.49 crore as against ₹19,058.29 crore in the year-ago period, up 2 per cent. Gross revenue from the sale of products stood at ₹19,291.40 crore, up 2.61 per cent YoY.

IndiGo profit jumps

**New Delhi:** InterGlobe Aviation, the parent of the country's largest airline IndiGo, Thursday reported more than doubling of profit after tax to ₹1,894.8 crore in the three months ended March 2024. The airline had a profit after tax of ₹919.2 crore in the year-ago period. In the fourth quarter of the last financial year, total income jumped to ₹18,505.1 crore from ₹14,600.1 crore.

IMFA PAT drops

**New Delhi:** Indian Metals and Ferro Alloys (IMFA) Ltd Thursday reported a marginal fall of 0.93 per cent in consolidated profit after tax to ₹63.57 crore for the March quarter, supported by higher income. It had clocked ₹64.17 crore Profit After Tax (PAT) in the year-ago period, the company said in an exchange filing. The company's total income rose to ₹711.51 crore, from ₹641.71 crore in January-March FY23.

Hosanna sees profit

**Bangalore:** Skincare firm Mamaearth's parent Honasa Consumer posted a profit in the fourth quarter as consumers stocked up on beauty and personal care products, with retailers doling out offers and discounts. The company, which sells personal care and makeup products, reported a consolidated net profit after tax of ₹304.8 million for the three months ended March 31, compared with a loss of ₹1.62 billion YoY.

CESC profit falls

**New Delhi:** CESC Ltd Thursday reported a 6.74 per cent fall in its consolidated profit to ₹415 crore for the March quarter, supported by higher income. It had clocked a net profit of ₹445 crore in the year-ago period, the power company said.



We are identifying 50 irradiation centres around the consuming areas. If we are successful, we will be able to store up to 1 lakh tonne of radiation-processed onions this

**NIDHI KHARE** | SECRETARY, CONSUMER AFFAIRS MINISTRY

Maldives to launch India's RuPay service

Over the last few years, multiple banks and payment companies from across various countries have partnered with NPCI International Payments Ltd, the international arm of NPCI, to accept UPI and RuPay in one form or the other

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Male, May 23:** Notwithstanding the turbulence in their bilateral ties, the Maldives will soon launch India's RuPay service, which a senior minister has said "will bolster the Maldivian Rufiyaa."

RuPay, a product of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), is the first of its global card payment network in India, with wide acceptance at ATMs, POS devices, and e-commerce websites across India.

Minister of Economic Development and Trade

Mohamed Saeed while announcing how both India and China have agreed to use local currency in bilateral trade, spoke about the upcoming launch of India's RuPay.

"The upcoming launch of India's RuPay service is anticipated to further bolster the Maldivian rufiyaa (MVR)," Saeed told state-run PSM News Wednesday. He also emphasised that "addressing the dollar issue and reinforcing the MVR is a top priority for the current administration."

However, there has been no announcement of any date for



the launch.

Last week, a news portal, CorporateMaldives.com, reported that Saeed conveyed that the card will be "formally utilised for transactions denominated in rupees within Maldivian territory."

"We are currently engaged in discussions with India to ex-

plore avenues for facilitating payments in rupees," the minister said.

An India-Maldives joint statement during the official visit of the then President of Maldives Ibrahim Mohamed Solih to India in August 2022 said: "The two leaders welcomed the ongoing work to operationalize the usage of Rupay Cards in Maldives and agreed to consider further measures to boost bilateral travel and tourism and economic inter-linkages."

Ever since the pro-China President Mohamed Muizzu assumed power last November, the relations between the Maldives and India have soured. The repatriation of 80 plus Indian military personnel manning three aviation platforms earlier this month from the archipelago nation at his insistence has left a bitter note on bilateral ties.

SEVERE HEAT WAVE

Peak power demand touches season's high

The peak power demand met or the highest supply in the day is recorded at 235.06 GW Wednesday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 23:** India's peak power demand hit the season's high of 235.06 GW Wednesday mainly due to excessive use of cooling appliances like air conditioners and coolers amid severe heat waves in most parts of the country.

According to the power ministry data, the peak power demand met or the highest supply in the day is recorded at 235.06 GW Wednesday, which is the maximum so far in the summer season this year.

Earlier this month, the power ministry projected a peak power demand of 235 GW during daytime and 225 GW during evening hours for May and 240 GW during daytime and 235 GW during evening hours for June 2024.

Besides the power ministry has also projected that peak power demand can hit the 260GW mark during this summer season.

The data shows peak power demand was 224.18GW in April 2024, when the country witnessed the onset of the summer season in various parts of the country. It was 221.82GW in March, 222.16GW in February and 223.51 GW in January.

During May, peak supply hit 233 GW May 6 and 233.80 GW May 21. It was 221.42 GW recorded in May 2023. Last week, the peak power supply touched 229.57 GW May 18, while it was around 226 GW May 15, 16 and 17.

The peak supply was 229.77 GW May 4 and 228.71GW May 20. The industry experts are of the view that power demand could soar further and can easily breach the all time high of 243.27 GW recorded in September 2023.

Earlier in March this year, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) projected that India is likely to experience a warmer summer and more heat-wave days this year, with El Nino conditions predicted to continue



at least until May.

From March to May, the above-normal number of heatwave days is likely over most parts of the country, except northeast India, the western Himalayan region, the southwest peninsula and the west coast, it stated.

According to the IMD report Thursday, the maximum temperatures were in the range of 44 to 47 degrees Celsius in many places over Rajasthan;

in some places in Gujarat state; in isolated places pockets over Haryana,

West Uttar Pradesh and West Madhya Pradesh; in the range of 40-44 degrees Celsius in many places of Punjab,

Delhi, East Madhya Pradesh, Vidharbha and Marathwada; in some parts of Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Telangana;

in isolated pockets of East Uttar Pradesh, interior Madhya Maharashtra and North Interior Karnataka.

The IMD, in its bulletin, said that heat wave to severe heat wave conditions are very likely in most pockets of West Rajasthan; in many/some pockets of Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, West Uttar Pradesh and East Rajasthan during May 23 to 26, in isolated pockets of Northwest Madhya Pradesh and Delhi during May 24 to 26.

The all-time high peak power demand of 243.27 GW was recorded in September 2023. The record is expected to be broken during this summer season

Stocks at new high

SENSEX, NIFTY HIT ALL-TIME PEAKS WEEKS AHEAD OF POLL RESULTS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, May 23:** With nearly a fortnight left for the results of Lok Sabha polls, benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty zoomed more than 1.6 per cent to close at lifetime high levels Thursday.

Regaining the 75,000 level, the BSE Sensex ended at an all-time peak of 75,418.04, up by 1,196.98 points or 1.61 per cent. During the day, it zoomed 1,278.85 points or 1.72 per cent to reach its all-time intra-day high of 75,499.91. The index logged its biggest single-day gain since January 29.

The NSE Nifty inched closer to the 23,000 mark during the day. The 50-issue index went up by 369.85 points or 1.64 per cent to 22,967.65. During the day, it jumped 395.8 points or 1.75 per cent to 22,993.60 -- its intra-day record peak.

Investors richer; mcap of BSE-listed cos shines

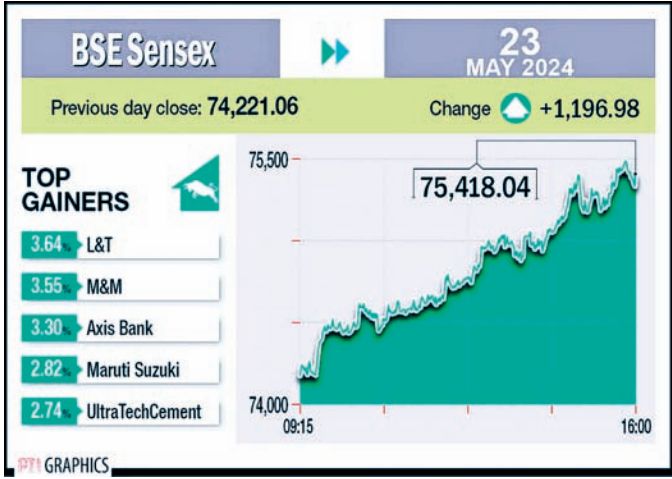
Investors' wealth Thursday went up by ₹4.28 lakh crore amid the ongoing optimistic trend in equities where the benchmark Sensex hit its lifetime peak. Investors' wealth went up by ₹4,28,602.18 crore with the market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies reaching an all-time high of ₹4,20,22,635.90 crore (\$5.05 trillion).

"Nifty shrugged off some of the uncertainty related to election results and hit a new high today," said Apurva Sheth, Head of Market Perspectives and Research, SAMCO Securities.

The results of the ongoing general elections will be declared June 4. The sixth and last phases of polls will be held May 25 and June 1 respectively.

Sheth also attributed the rally to a record dividend announced by RBI to the government and Prime Minister Narendra Modi exuding confidence about winning the elections.

Among the Sensex firms, Mahindra & Mahindra, Larsen



SENSEX ENDS AT 75,418.04, UP BY 1.61%  
NIFTY CLOSSES AT 22,967.65, UP BY 1.64%

**VK VUJAYAKUMAR** | CHIEF INVESTMENT STRATEGIST, GEJOIT FINANCIAL SERVICES

The Nifty hitting a new record is the market's message of political stability after the elections. The rally is healthy since it is led by fairly valued largecaps

& Toubro, Axis Bank, Maruti, UltraTech Cement, IndusInd Bank, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, Titan, Tata Consultancy Services and Reliance Industries were the major gainers.

Sun Pharma, PowerGrid and NTPC were the laggards.

The Reserve Bank of India will pay a record ₹2.1 lakh crore dividend to the government for the fiscal ended March 31, more than double of budgeted expectation, helping shore up revenue ahead of a new government taking office.

The RBI board, at its 608th

meeting Wednesday, approved the transfer of surplus, the central bank said in a statement.

Among the indices, auto climbed 2.28 per cent, capital goods by 2.13 per cent, bankex by 1.98 per cent, financial services by 1.64 per cent, services by 1.63 per cent, teck by 1.42 per cent, consumer discretionary by 1.19 per cent and IT by 1.18 per cent. Metal index emerged as the laggard.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) turned net buyers Thursday, buying equities worth ₹4,670.95 crore on net basis, according to exchange data.

NSE-listed companies' mcap surpasses \$5tn

The market capitalisation of listed companies on the NSE surpassed \$5 trillion (Rs 416.57 trillion) Thursday on a day when the Nifty 50 index touched an all-time high of 22,993.60. The Nifty 500 index also touched an all-time high of 21,505.25 Thursday indicating that growth in the equity market is not restricted to only the large capitalised stocks, a statement by NSE said. The journey of market capitalisation of listed companies from \$2 trillion (July 2017) to \$3 trillion (May 2021) took about 46 months, \$3 trillion to \$4 trillion (December 2023) took about 30 months and the latest \$1 trillion addition took only about 6 months, the exchange said. The top five companies by market capitalisation on the exchange are Reliance Industries, Tata Consultancy Services, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank and Bharti Airtel.

May biz growth robust as exports rise at record pace

REUTERS

**Bangalore, May 23:** Business activity in India expanded robustly in May, helped by the dominant services industry, according to a survey that also showed exports rising at a record pace and the sharpest job addition rate in nearly 18 years.

HSBC's flash India Composite purchasing managers' Index, compiled by S&P Global, rose slightly to 61.7 this month from April's final reading of 61.5, marking the 34th month above the 50-level separating growth from contraction.

The flash services PMI index rose to a four-month high of 61.4 this month from 60.8 in April and a preliminary manufacturing PMI showed strong growth, albeit slightly weaker than last

month. It dipped to 58.4 from 58.8.

Robust demand was supported by new business in the services industry, which grew at the fastest pace since January, as well as rising manufacturing output and new orders.

Strong international demand meant overall exports expanded at the fastest rate since the start of the series in September 2014. It is the second time export growth has set a new high this year.

That boosted business confidence for the coming 12 months, especially in the services sector where it was the strongest since May 2013. Optimism among manufacturers was the highest in over nine years.

The composite PMI ticked up further in May, recording the third strongest reading in close to 14 years, supported by a sharp acceleration in the service sector

**PRANJUL BHANDARI** | CHIEF INDIA ECONOMIST, HSBC

THE AIRLINE WILL LAUNCH A 'TAILOR-MADE BUSINESS PRODUCT', THE DETAILS OF WHICH WILL BE UNVEILED AROUND AUGUST THAT WILL ALSO MARK THE 18TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CARRIER

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 23:** After flying for nearly 18 years, the country's largest airline IndiGo Thursday announced it will introduce business class in flights this year; as the carrier seeks to provide more options for passengers amid rising economic growth.

The airline will launch a "tai-



Over the past 18 years, India's and IndiGo's growth stories have been closely interlinked. We believe as India gears up to become the third largest economy in the world, it's our privilege to provide the New India even more options to choose from as they travel business

**PIETER ELBERS** | CEO, INDIGO

lor-made business product", the details of which will be unveiled around August that will also mark the 18th anniversary of the carrier.

The latest announcement also comes less than a month after the profitable carrier said it would

buy 30 wide-body aircraft.

"In a groundbreaking move to redefine business travel in India, IndiGo, India's most preferred airline, announces the plan to launch a tailor-made business product for India's busiest and business routes,"



SHORT TAKES

Prathamesh shines

**Yecheon (South Korea):** Young compound archer Prathamesh Fuge advanced into the semifinals but the men's and women's recurve teams endured shock opening round losses in the World Cup Stage 2, here Thursday. Reigning Asian Games champion Jyothi Surekha Vennam also fell by the wayside, going down to Sara Lopez 142-145 in the compound women's individual quarters. The 21-year-old Fuge secured one of the top wins of his career when he shocked 2021 World Champion and World No. 6 Nico Wiener 146-145 to set up a semifinal clash against James Lutz of the USA.

Colts lose

**Breda (Netherlands):** The Indian men's and women's junior hockey teams suffered losses Thursday in their respective matches against Belgium here. Both teams lost by identical margins of 2-3 to their Belgian counterparts. While Binima Dhan (49th, 58th) scored a brace for the women's team, captain Rohit (44th, 57th) scored twice for the men's team.

Tough draw for Rafa

**Paris:** Rafael Nadal is in the French Open field, after all, and the 14-time champion will have a challenging first round match against Alexander Zverev. The draw was made Thursday. His match-up against the World No 4 Zverev is a rematch of their 2022 semifinal that ended when the latter tore ligaments in his right ankle. Nadal had been coy about whether he would compete Roland Garros after two seasons of off-and-on action because of injuries.

CSK optimistic

**Chennai:** CSK CEO Kasi Viswanathan said Thursday he is 'very, very hopeful' of former skipper MS Dhoni participating in IPL 2025 as a player. Dhoni, who led CSK to a record five IPL titles, stepped down as the skipper before the start of the ongoing season, handing the responsibilities to Ruturaj Gaikwad, who led the team to a fifth place finish. "I do not know. It is a question which only MS (Dhoni) can answer, but I am hopeful," Viswanathan said.

Odia lifter Preetismita sets new WR

COMPATRIOT JYOSHNA BAGS SILVER IN SAME EVENT

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, May 23:** Weightlifter Preetismita Bhoi from Odisha smashed the youth clean and jerk world record (WR) Wednesday evening in the women's 40kg category to win a gold medal at the IWF World Youth Championships in Lima, Peru. The 15-year-old bettered the existing record of 75kg by one kilogram and lifted 76kg. Preetismita lifted 57kg in snatch for a total effort of 133kg, finishing within two kilograms of the youth world record on total on the opening day of the competitions.

It was a 1-2 finish for India as another Odia lifter Jyoshna Sabar clinched the silver with a total effort of 125kg (56kg+69kg). Fatma Kolcak of Turkey finished third with a total lift of 120kg (55kg+65kg).

It was a good day for Indians at the competition as two more weightlifters finished on the



PREETISMITA BHOI



JYOSHNA SABAR

podium. Payal fetched a silver medal as she lifted a total of 147kg (65kg+82kg) in the women's 45kg event. She finished second behind Colombian Lawren Estrada 151kg (67kg+84kg), who claimed her second world title.

at the Odisha Weightlifting High Performance Centre at the Kalinga Stadium here. However, Preetismita did most of her training at the sub-centre in Dhenkanal. The HPC is supplemented by a network of over 40 grassroots weightlifting centres in the state that currently train over 500 athletes, playing a vital role in nurturing and developing talented weightlifters in Odisha.

Speaking on the success of the two girls, former Olympian and head coach of the weightlifting HPC, K Ravi Kumar said, "Today is a historic day for Odisha. We are very proud of both our lifters. Preetismita has been training very hard over the last few months and Jyoshna is coming back from foot surgery. We did think we might get a medal, but we did not expect our lifters to do so well. The success is proof of the rapid growth of weightlifting in Odisha."

Ashmita stuns World No. 10



Ashmita Chaliha picked up a stunning win Thursday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kuala Lumpur, May 23:** Two-time Olympic-medallist PV Sindhu survived a scare before prevailing over Korea's Sim Yu Jin but the highlight of the day was Ashmita Chaliha's stunning win over third seed Beiwen Zhang of the US in the second round of the Malaysia Masters badminton tournament here Thursday.

World No 15 Sindhu, a former World Champion, saw off Sim 21-13, 12-21, 21-14 in a 59-minute women's singles second round match to register her third win over the Korean. Later in the day, the 24-year-old Ashmita, ranked 53rd, sizzled her way to a 21-19, 16-21, 21-12 victory over World No.

10 Zhang to also storm into the quarterfinals of the Super 500 badminton tournament. The Guwahati shuttler will next square off against sixth seeded Chinese Zhang Yi Man, ranked 16th.

Ashmita has been in good touch in the recent past. The left-handed shuttler kept things in her grip as she opened up a 4-1 lead before taking an 11-10 cushion at the break. Beiwen managed to grab 14-13 lead and it was 17-17 at one stage but the Indian kept her nose ahead to win the opening game.

There was nothing to separate the two after the change of sides as they split the points till 8-8 when Beiwen moved ahead with three straight points. She kept the Indian at bay to take the match to the decider. In the third game, Ashmita came out all cylinders blazing as she jumped to 11-4 at the interval and then continued her victory march.

Sindhu was inconsistent throughout her match due to which she lost the second game. However, she was in control of proceedings in the first and third games and survived.

Yogesh fed up being 2nd best

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 23:** The wheelchair was an object of fascination for Yogesh Kathuniya, until at the tender age of nine years he was diagnosed with Guillain-Barré(GB) syndrome, a rare autoimmune disorder. Doctors told him that he wouldn't walk again and soon he was confined to a wheelchair. But within three years Yogesh started to walk again, thanks to his mother, Meena Devi, who learnt physiotherapy to treat her son.

Yogesh soon took to sport with gusto, finding his calling in para discus throw. The 27-year-old from Haryana secured Monday a silver medal in the men's F56 category discus throw with an effort of 41.80 metres at the World Para Athletics Championships in Kobe, Japan.

**"I am desperate to win gold. It has become a personal fight for me now. I have been collecting silver medals and I am fed up with winning those**

YOGESH KATHUNIYA

"I still get goosebumps when I think about those days. But I was fortunate to be among the one per cent who were able to walk. There are still a lot of neurological disorder issues which can't be cured," Yogesh stated here after his return.

"I walk with AFOs (ankle-foot orthosis) in both legs but I can't walk for long. In GB syndrome, there is muscle loss quickly, so I need to eat well, work out regularly. But I feel motivated thinking about it all because I am representing the country," he added.

Ponting rejects India's offer

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 23:** Australia great Ricky Ponting has revealed that he was approached for the soon-to-be-vacant India head coach position but he has declined the offer as it doesn't fit into his 'lifestyle' right now. He did not however, say whether the feelers for the Indian position came from the BCCI.

"...there were a few little one-on-one conversations during the IPL, just to get a level of interest from me as to whether I would do it (coach India)," Ponting was quoted as saying by the ICC website.

"I'd love to be a senior coach of a national team, but with the other things that I have in my life and wanting to have a bit of time at home... everyone knows if you



take a job working with the Indian team, you can't be involved in an IPL team, so it would take that out of it as well. Also, a national head coach is a 10 or 11-month of the year job, and as much as I'd like to do it, it just doesn't fit into my lifestyle right now and the things that I really enjoy doing," he added.

Ponting said he discussed the offer with his son and he seemed game for a move to India. "My family and my kids have spent the last five weeks over at the IPL with me and they come over

every year and I had a whisper to my son about it," he recalled.

"I said, 'Dad's been offered the Indian coaching job' and he said, 'Just take it dad, we would love to move over there for the next couple of years,'" Ponting quipped. "That's how much they love being over there and the culture of cricket in India, but right now it probably isn't the right time," Ponting added.

Some other high-profile names such as CSK head coach Stephen Fleming, LSG head coach Justin Langer and Kolkata Knight Riders mentor Gautam Gambhir have also been talked about as potential candidates for the position that Rahul Dravid will vacate after India's T20 World Cup campaign next month. The BCCI has set May 27 as the last date for submitting applications.

Atalanta win Europa League

AGENCIES

**Dublin, May 23:** Ademola Lookman scored a stunning hat-trick as Atalanta ended Bayer Leverkusen's 51-match unbeaten run to win the Europa League final 3-0 Wednesday here and claim their first trophy for 61 years. Lookman became the first player to score a hat-trick in a European final since 1975.

Atalanta's more purposeful play in the opening stages was rewarded after just 12 minutes. Davide Zappacosta got to the by-line and Lookman caught Exequiel Palacios napping to fire into the top corner at the back post. Another goal in the first half by Lookman ensured that it would be Atalanta's day.

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