



**Sam's struggles**

Actor Samantha Ruth Prabhu opens up about battling dark thoughts during the toughest phase of her life

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**Trump's Saudi deal**

US President Donald Trump secures \$600bn Saudi investment pledge as the kingdom welcomes him with grand reception

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**Retail inflation dips**

India's retail inflation records a six-year low of 3.16%, mainly due to subdued prices of vegetables, fruits, pulses, and other items

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**Uncertainty grips IPL**

BCCI stays tight-lipped on foreign players' return; franchises confirm their arrival

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CBSE: Girls outshine boys again

'Lakshman Rekha' for Pak



Students and faculty of SAI International School in Bhubaneswar in a euphoric mood following publication of CBSE results Tuesday

OP PHOTO

**Bhubaneswar, May 13:** Girls continued to outperform boys in the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) Class X and XII examinations this year, even as the state registered a pass percentage of 78.74 in Class XII and an impressive 92.40 per cent in Class X, according to the Board sources.

CBSE sources said Bhubaneswar region secured a pass percentage of 83.64 in Class XII, placing it 11th among CBSE regions across the country. In Class X, the region fared even better with a 92.64 per cent success rate, while ranking 12th nationally.

Like national level, girls in state also outperformed boys

in both the classes. Class XII results in state showed girls scoring a pass percentage of 80.77 as against boys with 77.05 per cent. In Class X, girls achieved 93.34 per cent while the success rate for boys stood at 91.57 per cent.

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi extended his congratulations to the students across the state, saying, "I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all the students who have successfully passed the Class X and XII examinations conducted by the CBSE. Regardless of the outcome, I encourage everyone to move forward with positivity and strong determination. Wishing all students great success and a bright future ahead."

**Number of students with above 90% dips**

**New Delhi:** Girls continued to outshine boys in CBSE exams for Classes X and XII nationally, while the number of candidates scoring above 90 per cent in both classes recorded a dip, according to Examination Controller Sanyam Bhardwaj. In Class 12, 1,11,544 candidates scored above 90%, while 24,867 candidates scored above 95%. Last year, 1.16 lakh students scored above 90% and 24,068 above 95% in Class XII. In Class X, over 1.99 lakh candidates scored above 90% marks, while 45,516 candidates scored above 95%.

**P8**

to all my young friends and their parents. This is a moment to rejoice and cherish the fruits of hard work, dedication and perseverance. Girls have yet again outshined boys, which is a strong reflection of an emerging Bharat where aspirations of young women are turning into accomplishments." Nationally, CBSE reported an 88.39% pass rate in Class XII and 93.66% in Class X, showing consistent improvement as compared to last year.

This year's examinations were aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, emphasising competency-based assessments and increased use of technology to improve accessibility and fairness in the evaluation process.

**Press Trust of India**


**New Delhi, May 13:** With an S-400 missile defence system in the backdrop, Prime Minister Narendra Modi sent a firm message Tuesday from Adampur Air Base to Pakistan: Not only have you failed to harm any of India's military installations but you will be annihilated if terrorism continues from your soil.

In his first speech to the armed forces since Operation Sindoor, Modi lauded the military for humbling Pakistan in the four-day engagement that resulted in the destruction of nine terror sites and damage to eight military installations.

"Aapne jo kiya wo abhutpurva, akalpnia aur adbhut hai (What you have achieved is unprecedented, unimaginable and amazing)," he said in an over 27-minute speech which echoed the message of his address to the nation on Monday night.

But the significance of the speech was immense. It was delivered from the Adampur base, merely 100 km from the Pakistan border, which Pakistan claimed to have destroyed along with S-400 missile launchers. India had rubbished the claims and TV cameras following Modi corroborated that.

"Operation Sindoor has



**MEA expels Pakistan official for espionage**

**New Delhi:** India Tuesday expelled a Pakistani official working at Pakistan High Commission for allegedly indulging in alleged espionage. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the official was indulging in activities not in keeping with his official status in India and that he has been given 24 hours to leave the country. India also issued a demarche to Pakistani Charge d' Affaires in New Delhi on the activities of the official. "The government of India has declared a Pakistani official, working at the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi, persona non grata for indulging in activities not in keeping with his official status in India," the MEA said.

siles hit our enemies, they hear 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai'," he said.

"The tales of your valour will be etched in history forever. I salute our Army, Air Force and Navy personnel," PM Modi said. The patrons of terrorism have realised that casting an evil eye on India will only mean their destruction, the prime minister said.

Adampur is India's second-largest air base and houses Rafale and Mig-29 squadrons. It has played an important role in 1965 and 1971 wars with Pakistan as well.

**JAJPUR: 2 KILLED, 1 INJURED IN BLAST**



**Press Trust of India**

**Jajpur, May 13:** Two persons were killed and another was seriously injured in an explosion in Jajpur district Tuesday, police said.

The incident took place in the afternoon close to a country-made liquor shop near National Highway-16 in Chhatia in Bairi police station area, an officer said.

Two persons were on a motorcycle while the injured person was nearby when the incident occurred.

It is suspected that the duo was carrying some explosive materials on the two-wheeler which suddenly exploded, causing the death of the motorists on the spot, Jajpur Sub-divisional Police Officer Laxmidhar Swain said.

The explosion was so intense that several severed body parts of the duo were found strewn at the spot of the incident.

The identity of deceased persons has not yet been ascertained as the bodies were completely damaged in the blast, Swain said.

A forensic team went to the spot to collect evidence, he said.

The injured man was shifted to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack for treatment, said Ansubala Das, inspector-in-charge of Bairi police station.

She said it was suspected that the explosive materials were being carried for catching fish in a pond. However, the details will be known after the investigation, she added.

**CM unveils ₹420cr projects**

**Press Trust of India**

**Baripada, May 13:** Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Tuesday launched development projects worth over ₹420.13 crore and pledged to set up industries worth ₹10,000 crore in Mayurbhanj district.

On the last day of his visit to Mayurbhanj, Majhi inaugurated altogether 133 projects worth over ₹328 crore and laid the foundation stones for 52 initiatives worth ₹91 crore.

The CM also announced the establishment of a Plus II college at Bisoi block headquarters, and said the mini stadium at Bisoi would be named after the legendary freedom fighter Dharanidhar Naik and his statue would be installed there.

Stating that the new projects would help the welfare of the tribal people in the district, Majhi said a new era of development will begin in several places like Rairangpur, Kusumi, Bijatsala, Bahalda, Jamda, and Tiring.

He said an investment of about ₹10,000 crore in the industrial sector will also generate employment for the local youths.

Referring to the projects he launched during the day, Majhi said that these will improve rural drinking water, piped water supply, school infrastructure, banking, health centres, road construction facilities, buildings and other government infrastructure and enrich tribal culture.

The Chief Minister also said that his government, during its first 11 months in office, has been fulfilling promises made before the 2024 Lok Sabha and Assembly elections.

**21 die in Punjab hooch tragedy**

**Press Trust of India**

**Chandigarh/Amritsar, May 13:** At least 21 people, mostly daily wagers, died and 10 others were hospitalised after allegedly drinking spurious liquor in Majitha in Punjab's Amritsar district, officials said on Tuesday.

Ten people, including the alleged kingpin, were arrested while Deputy Superintendent of Police (Majitha) Amolak Singh and Station House Officer of Majitha police station Avtar Singh were suspended for negligence, police said. Besides, two officers of the Excise department have also been suspended.

The AAP government drew flak for the tragedy, with the Opposition demanding the resignation of Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann. The state government said most of the culprits



have been arrested and vowed to ensure the strictest punishment for them. "These are not deaths, these are murders," said Mann, who visited the affected villages and consoled the families of the victims.

Probe revealed that methanol - a chemical used in industrial products - was procured in bulk online to prepare the toxic brew. Methanol is a light, colourless organic chemical compound which is poisonous when ingested and is illegally added to alcoholic beverages as a cheaper alternative to ethanol, which is the normal consumable alcohol.

Mann said his government will not spare anyone, however affluent they may be, for the heinous crime. He also announced compensation of ₹10 lakh for the family of every deceased and said that the state government will bear the entire expense of education of the children of the victim.

Two cases at police stations Majitha and Kathunangal in Amritsar Rural have been registered under sections 105 (culpable homicide not amounting to murder) and 103 (murder) of the BNS and relevant sections of the Excise Act and the SC/ST Act.

The deaths were reported in Bhangali, Patalpuri, Marari Kalan, Talwandi Khumman, Karnala, Bhangwan and Therawal villages, said officials.

**NCST seeks report on girl's rape in hostel**

**Agencies**

**Bhubaneswar, May 13:** The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) has issued a notice to the state government asking it to submit within seven days a detailed action-taken report on the alleged rape of a tribal girl at Guneipada ST/SC Girls' Hostel in Lamtaput block of Koraput district in April this year. The NCST issued the notice based on a complaint lodged by the Opposition BJD.

The notice was issued to the state's additional chief secretary of Home department, principal secretary of the ST and SC Development and Minorities and Backward Classes Welfare department and the director general of police May 9.

**P3**

**Sensex tanks 1,282 pts as IT shares trip**

**Press Trust of India**

**Mumbai, May 13:** Stock markets tumbled Tuesday with benchmark Sensex falling by 1,282 points due to profit-taking in IT, auto and private banking shares a day after a record rally.

The 30-share BSE barometer tanked 1,281.68 points or 1.55 per cent to settle at 81,148.22 with 25 of its constituents closing with losses and five with gains. During the day, it fell sharply by 1,386.21 points or 1.68 per cent to 81,043.69. The broader Nifty of NSE dropped 346.35 points or 1.39 per cent to 24,578.35.

From the Sensex firms, Infosys declined the most by 3.54%. Power Grid dropped 3.4%, Eternal by 3.38%, HCL Tech by 2.94%, TCS by 2.88% and Bharti Airtel by 2.74%. IndusInd Bank, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, NTPC, Maruti, Tata Motors, and M&M were also among the laggards.

Kardashian faces men who robbed her at gunpoint

**Paris, May 13:** Kim Kardashian said a silent prayer — for her sister, her best friend, her family — as a masked man pulled her toward him in a Paris hotel room in the 2016 jewellery heist that changed her life. Nearly a decade later, she returned to Paris to face the men who robbed her at gunpoint, but this time from the witness stand. "I was certain that was the moment that he was going to rape me," she told a Paris court Tuesday. "I absolutely did think I was going to die."

The last time Kardashian saw the men that police say robbed her, she was bound at gunpoint and left locked in a marble bathroom while masked assailants stole more than USD 6 million in jewellery.

Her testimony marked the emotional climax of a trial that has gripped France and reignited debates about fame, privacy and what it means to live — and nearly die — in public. The night in her suite during Fashion Week in 2016 forever altered her relationship to fame and safety.

Dressed in black and wearing dark sunglasses, Kardashian stood in the packed courtroom across from her mother, Kris Jenner. Her voice broke as she thanked French authorities for "allowing me to share my truth".

She told the court that the attackers arrived dressed as police officers, with the concierge in handcuffs. "I thought it was some sort of terrorist attack," she said.

She described how they tied her hands with zip ties, dragged



her to the bathtub and pointed a gun at her temple. One robber gestured toward her ring. "He said, Ring! Ring!" and he pointed to his hand."

French prosecutors say the men who orchestrated the

heist — most in their 60s and 70s — were part of a seasoned criminal ring that tracked Kardashian's movements through social media. Two of the defendants have admitted being at the scene. One claims he didn't know who she was.

Twelve suspects were originally charged. One has died. Another was excused due to illness. The French press dubbed the group les papy braqueurs — "the grandpa robbers" — but prosecutors insist they were no harmless retirees.

Kardashian, who once shared nearly every moment of her life online, later acknowledged the role that visibility played. "People were watching," she said in a 2021 interview. "They knew what I had. They knew where I was."

Earlier in the trial, Kardashian's childhood friend and then-stylist Simone Harouche recalled hearing her scream from upstairs: "I have babies and I need to live. That is what she kept on saying. Take everything. I need to live."

Harouche, who hid in a downstairs bathroom during the robbery, said she texted Kardashian's sister Kourtney and their bodyguard: "Something is very wrong." She later heard Kardashian hopping down the stairs with her ankles still bound. "She was beside herself," Harouche said. "She just was screaming."

Harouche testified that the robbery "forever" changed her friend's sense of freedom. "She now has a completely different lifestyle," she said. "In terms of security, she can't go alone, she doesn't go alone to places anymore. To lose your sense of freedom ... it's horrible."



# leisure

## FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Do something really exciting today – perhaps you could put on your trekking boots and explore unknown territories. Ganesha advises you to keep busy but not to go overboard. In group activities today, everybody will focus their attention on you.

**TAURUS**  
This day you are going to be particularly conscious of your beliefs and principles. You will be very proud and sensitive, and are not likely to brook any adverse comment or criticism. Anyone who dares to question or deride them will get a fitting response from you. Ganesha, however warns you to be more tolerant of others' views and beliefs. Intolerance, particularly in the form of sharp and acidic retorts, could alienate some important persons.

**GEMINI**  
You will be surrounded by conflicts today. However, you will come to realise within a short while the solutions required to troubleshoot your way out of your difficult circumstances. You will desire solitude and peace so much so that you will not find even your family members welcome company, says Ganesha.

**CANCER**  
What good is life if it doesn't involve great fun and merrymaking. Keeping this in mind, you will set about planning your day. There may be no stopping you as you go about your day having a blast at every possible moment. There will be no limit to your gregarious behaviour, says Ganesha.

**LEO**  
You will give importance to your work and your style of functioning to get a promotion in the office. You will also increase the amount of work you put in. While the fruits of your labour may not be immediately available to you, in a very short time you can expect to make more gains than you expected to.

**VIRGO**  
Ganesha advises you to keep your distance from partnership ventures. You are much better off all alone and have the ability to quell the stampede. Left to yourself, you are the best manager of your sphere of work. Ganesha says today you will garner the support of people by uniting them under you for achieving greater success.

**LIBRA**  
You will be drawn towards those of the opposite sex today says Ganesha. You will meet people who share the same wavelength that you do in the afternoon, and this will lead to a lot of interesting discussions. You will want to expand upon your knowledge of the world today and will be successful in your efforts.

**SCORPIO**  
Keep your eyes and ears open and believe in only what you see. Remember, believing in rumours may lead to ugly situations. Your efforts to be different and stand out would pay off well, predicts 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**  
You will be a live wire, today. With amazing exuberance you have completed mammoth tasks and have spread the energy around. It will give you tremendous job- satisfaction, foresees Ganesha. Everything seems well and good the personal front, too. Spending some quality time your spouse will relax your mind and keep you in an upbeat mood.

**AQUARIUS**  
You are a strong-willed person, and during the toughest of times you remain focused. A constant smile on your face and positive attitude will help you win the hearts and minds of people at work as well as at home. Such a feeling of contentment and happiness motivate you to do your best.

**PISCES**  
You will bump into an old friend or a distant relative today. This rendezvous may be with a person who you were close to long ago and it will warm your heart with nostalgia. You might contemplate taking a break from your daily grind to spend sometime to rekindle your childhood memories or visit your hometown. Don't let the nostalgia overwhelm you as it may make you ignore the tasks at hand and cost you heavily, suggests Ganesha.



## KRAVITZ, HOULT REUNITE FOR HOW TO ROB A BANK

Zoë Kravitz is joining the cast of *How To Rob A Bank*, the upcoming action film from director David Leitch at Amazon MGM Studios. The project sees her reuniting with *Mad Max: Fury Road* co-star Nicholas Hoult, who is already attached to the film.



## India's richest actor

**MUMBAI:** Earlier this year, *Esquire* magazine released its annual list of the world's richest actors, and among global powerhouses like Arnold Schwarzenegger and Tom Cruise stood a familiar Indian name—Shah Rukh Khan. With an estimated net worth of \$876.5 million (around ₹7500 crore), Shah Rukh ranks as the fourth-richest actor in the world and remains the undisputed richest actor in India.

Over the last three decades, Shah Rukh has not only ruled Indian cinema but has also built a business empire that puts him well ahead of his peers. He surpasses global stars like George Clooney, Robert De Niro, and Brad Pitt in net worth, and towers over Indian contemporaries such as Hrithik Roshan (₹3100 crore), Salman Khan (₹2900 crore), Akshay Kumar (₹2500 crore) and Aamir Khan (₹1900 crore). Even senior icons like Amitabh Bachchan and Chiranjeevi lag behind.

Interestingly, the only Indian actor remotely close to SRK's wealth is Juhi Chawla—his longtime friend and business partner—whose net worth stands at ₹4600 crore, making her India's richest actress.

On the work front, Shah Rukh was last seen in *Dunki*, following hits *Pathaan* and *Jawan*. He is currently working on *King*, alongside daughter Suhana Khan, slated for a 2026 release.

## TRIAL BEGINS ON SEAN 'DIDDY' COMBS CASE

The sex trafficking trial of rapper Sean 'Diddy' Combs began with jury swearing-in and opening statements. Prosecutor described Combs as a powerful figure who used his fame to rape, abuse, and assault people for decades, aided by bodyguards and employees who helped cover up his crimes.



## Alaya pushes her boundaries

**MUMBAI:** Actress Alaya F decided to push her fitness boundaries yet again as she performed a headstand on the paddleboard.

The *Freddy* actress nailed the headstand as she flaunted her perfect physique in a black two-piece. The diva was surrounded by water, with a beautiful backdrop, including greenery and hills.

"Someone jokingly said, "You should try a headstand on the paddleboard."

Two minutes later, I was upside down in the middle of a river while my friends and family hyped me up from the boat.@konkanexplorersindia."

The video garnered a lot of attention from netizens who penned comments such as, "That someone is always me and look at you go effortlessly on it", "Oh god... Is there anything you can't do?", "Well balance in water love you Alaya", and "Oh goodness!!

Bless Bless Bless Bless !! Have to show Samaya this", along with others.

Alaya keeps on shelling fitness goals with such inspiring videos on social media.

Back in February this year, Alaya shared a video of a yummy yet healthy breakfast smoothie on her Instagram.

On a professional front, Alaya was last seen in *Bade Miya Chote Miyan* which starred Akshay Kumar, Tiger Shroff, and Prithviraj Sukumaran in the lead. She was also a part of *Srikanth*, co-starring Rajkumar Rao.

IAN5

## SAMANTHA'S darkest phase

**MUMBAI:** Samantha Ruth Prabhu recently opened up about a dark phase in her life, describing it as a time when "nothing was working" and she was plagued by "the worst possible thoughts." Without explicitly naming her 2021 divorce from Naga Chaitanya or her diagnosis of Myositis, the actor shared how deeply lost she felt during that period.

In a candid interview, Samantha recalled hitting emotional rock bottom. "I remember thinking, 'I can't do this anymore.' I had the worst thoughts imaginable," she said. Though the thoughts were severe, she admitted, "I didn't have the courage to act on them. You need guts for that. I chickened out. Instead, I decided to build resilience."

Describing that

phase as a "never-ending abyss," Samantha revealed that it was not her success but her struggles that shaped her. "Now, when someone tells me they're going through a hard time, I encourage them to face it. There's always something to learn. My failures and hardships taught me more than my success ever did."

Following her divorce, Samantha was diagnosed with Myositis in 2022.

While Naga Chaitanya married Sobhita Dhulipala in December 2024, Samantha remains single, though she's rumoured to be dating filmmaker Raj Nidimoru.

AGENCIES



## Nitanshi to make Cannes debut

**MUMBAI:** After representing her film *Laapataa Ladies* as India's official entry at the 97th Academy Awards, the breakout star Nitanshi Goel is all set to make her debut at the prestigious Cannes 2025.

Nitanshi is the youngest actor to debut at Cannes and grace the red carpet for the global beauty brand, L'Oréal Paris, the official beauty partner of Cannes for the 28th year this time.

Sharing her excitement about her Cannes debut, Nitanshi said, "I came into this industry with aspirations of making things happen for me. From the incredible journey of *Laapataa Ladies* to now standing on the global stage at Cannes, I am getting closer to realising them. I am that girl who is representing every Indian

girl out there who dreams big and is ready to go and achieve them, come what may. Being able to represent those girls at a global stage is a moment of sheer happiness. By me being on the carpet, I wish to empower each female out there who is taking charge of their life, dreams, and career. It's an absolute honor."

Nitanshi gained widespread recognition with her debut movie *Laapataa Ladies*, co-starring Pratibha Ranta, Sparsh Shrivastava, Ravi Kishan, and Chhaya Kadam.

IAN5



## 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.

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

## SOLUTIONS

### CROSSWORD

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

### SUDOKU

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

## CROSSWORD

1		2		3		4		5		6		7
8								9				
								10				
13						15						
16												
17								18				
22								23				
24								25				

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- Across**

1 Common sense

5 Smile widely

8 Hazelnuts

9 Jewels

11 Ultimate degree

12 Llama relative

16 Comic's forte (5,2,6)

17 Sports venues

18 Psyches

22 Cousin of a mandolin
- 23 Green-eyed monster

24 Pub projectile

25 Imposing houses
- Down**

1 Yielding

2 Apple variety

3 Shoot the breeze (4,3,3)

4 Ballet wear

6 Lift
- 7 Slaughter

10 Sword lily (5-2-3)

13 Attacked

14 Aardvark

15 Away from the bow

19 Lyra's brightest star

20 Camera setting

21 Henna and others

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

## PEANUTS



## CALVIN AND HOBBS



## BREVITY









# Ahuja orders urgent steps on water crisis



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, May 13:** Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja chaired a secretary-level meeting at Kharavela Bhavan Tuesday to assess and discuss the implementation of various state government schemes for the fiscal year 2025-26. During the meeting, he directed officials to prioritise addressing the ongoing drinking water crisis, particularly in districts severely affected by the heatwave.

With temperatures soaring across the state, the Chief Secretary emphasised the urgent need for ensuring the effective operation of water kiosks in Bhubaneswar and other regions.

He instructed concerned departments to act swiftly in response to media reports highlighting the growing concerns over water shortages and to take immediate corrective measures.

The meeting also addressed the status of staff vacancies across various departments, with a strong recommendation for regular evaluations and prompt recruitment to ensure

smooth functioning.

In a bid to improve retirement-related services for government employees, a new feature has been integrated into the Janasunani Portal, enabling employees to access pension and benefits services with greater ease. Departments were also tasked with identifying and addressing any challenges users might face in navigating the portal and to provide the necessary support to resolve these issues.

In terms of long-term development, Ahuja urged greater interdepartmental collaboration to align efforts with the state's vision of a "Developed Odisha by 2036" and a "Developed India by 2047".

He underscored the critical role of collective decision-making and prompt action in realising these ambitious goals.

Additional Chief Secretary and Development Commissioner Anu Garg gave an update on district visits by senior officials, discussing their outcomes and follow-up actions. Notable progress was reported in the completion of infrastruc-

ture projects such as sports complexes, health centres, and hostels.

Recognising the increasing importance of data-driven decision-making, the Chief Secretary instructed all departments to appoint Data Officers and provide necessary training.

Further, the Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi has placed emphasis on expanding the role of Civil Defence Volunteers in disaster and emergency management. Additional Chief Secretary Satyabrata Sahu presented a status report on the deployment of these volunteers, recommending their increased participation in 12 high-risk districts, including those with dense industrial activity and high population concentrations.

The meeting also included updates on the preparations for the much-anticipated Puri Rath Yatra, with Shree Jagannath Temple Chief Administrator and Principal Secretary Aravind Kumar Padhee providing detailed insights into the logistics and arrangements for the festival.



CAPTIVATING SHOW: Artistes perform Odissi during 17th Anand Utsav organised at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

OP PHOTO

## Trio arrested for assault in Pahala



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, May 13:** Three men were arrested by Pahala Police Tuesday for allegedly assaulting a family in Pahala after their demands for a financial tip were refused. The accused, identified as Gouranga Samal (33) and brothers Jitendra Samal (25) and Lingaraj Samal (31), all history-sheeters with multiple criminal cases, are residents of Haridaspur.

**The Police have booked the trio under Sections 333, 109 (1), 351 (2), and 3 (5) of BNS**

According to Pahala Police Inspector-in-Charge Aswini Kumar Jena, the incident occurred after an altercation between the trio and the complainant, Laxmi Moharana, when she declined their request for money. The men reportedly threatened her and, Monday at around 11:20am, forcibly entered her home, assaulting her husband and father-in-law. When Laxmi objected, they physically assaulted her, pulling her hair and using obscene language before leaving.

Laxmi later filed a complaint with Pahala Police. The Police have booked the trio under Sections 333, 109 (1), 351 (2), and 3 (5) of BNS.

## Seva Diwas marks Gurudev's birthday

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, May 13:** Sri Sri University, located at Bidyadhar-pur-Godisahi, marked the 69th birthday of spiritual leader and humanitarian Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar Tuesday by observing it as Seva Diwas.

The celebration was filled with meaningful service activities carried out by students and staff to honour his teachings of compassion and selflessness.

As part of the initiative, members of the Rover and Ranger units, along with students' welfare department, distributed cooling drinks like pana and lemon sherbet to pedestrians, shopkeepers, and au-

to-rickshaw drivers. Students from the Sri Sri College of Nursing provided shaded water tents for passers-by to rest and cool off amid the summer heat.

In surrounding villages, the department of Health and Wellness offered osteopathy services, while the department of Agriculture distributed food at local old-age homes. A plastic-free drive by the university's Internal Quality Assurance Cell led to a thorough cleanup of plastic waste across campus.

A major health camp was also held in Dhurusia village under Athagarh block by the Sri Sri College of Ayurvedic Science and Research Hospital in

association with NCISM, New Delhi. The camp, focused on the TB Mukta Bharat Abhiyan, saw participation from over 50 patients. Local officials including BDO Akash Panda and ABDO Nava Katakia were present.

Essential supplies were distributed at the Anganwadi centre in Sandapur village, and drinking water was made available at multiple locations for animals and birds.

All activities were conducted under the guidance of Swami Satyachaitanya, director of Human Resources, with enthusiastic participation from all departments, making Seva Diwas a meaningful tribute to Gurudev.

## Man sets water stations for animals

MANOJ KUMAR JENA, OP

**Bhubaneswar, May 13:** As the City grapples with intense heat, Pratap Sahoo, a dedicated social worker, has taken it upon himself to install water stations across various parts of Bhubaneswar to help quench the thirst of birds and animals.

For over three decades, Sahoo has been setting up food and water stations for animals throughout the City. During the scorching summer months, he makes it a point to monitor and refill these stations regularly to ensure that wildlife has access to water.



"This heat is unbearable for humans, but for animals, it's even worse. Birds and animals struggle to find water as many natural sources dry up in the heat," said Sahoo. "I have personally installed hanging water stations and other types of water dispensers at about 40 locations around the City."

Sahoo continues, "Every morning, I visit these stations to refill them, and when storms or strong winds damage the stations, I repair them myself."

He emphasised the importance of compassion towards animals, pointing out that they cannot express their pain. Sahoo urged citizens to step up and help in any way they can—whether by feeding birds or stray animals. "Animals are an integral part of our nature, and it's our responsibility to care for them," he added.

## DPS Kalinga tops CBSE results



JAYADITYA PRATIHARI



SNEHASIS DAS

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, May 13:** Delhi Public School (DPS) Kalinga celebrated a remarkable academic achievement with 100 per cent results in the AISSE Class X CBSE Board Exams 2025.

Jayaditya Pratihari emerged as the Class X topper with 98.4 per cent, followed by Kunal Mishra with 98 per cent and Tanishka Mohta with 97.6 per cent. Several students scored a perfect 100 in subjects like Mathematics, General Science, Social Science, Sanskrit, Hindi, Odia, French, and Information Technology.

The school also excelled in the Class XII CBSE Board Exams across all three streams — Science, Commerce, and Humanities.

In the Science stream, Snehasis Das topped with 97.4 per cent, followed by Lakshya Khandelwal (96.6 per cent) and Ritesh Parija (96 per cent).

In Commerce, Samarth Khatri led with 97 per cent, with Radhika Fogla (96.6 per cent) and Diya Sethi (96.2 per cent) in second and third positions respectively. In Humanities, Anindita Panda secured the top spot with 97.6 per cent, followed by Nysa Patro (97.4 per cent) and Ritika Mohapatra (97.2 per cent).

Pro Vice-Chairperson Mala Mishra, Principal Suvarata Mukherjee, and Executive Trustee Sunaina Patro congratulated the students for their outstanding performance and hard work.

# State bar council serves notice on Archana Nag

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, May 13:** The Odisha State Bar Council has issued a show-cause notice to Archana Nag for allegedly concealing details of pending criminal cases in her application for a lawyer's license—a move that raises serious concerns about the integrity of her enrollment process.

Official sources revealed that Nag received her license May 10, 2025, under Enrollment No. O-184-2025. However, it was later found that she had marked "NO" in the section of the application form that inquires about ongoing criminal cases, despite several cases being active against her at the time.

The discrepancy came to light during a routine verifi-



cation of her application, originally submitted September 2, 2024. In the notice, Bar Council Secretary JK Samantasinghar stated that Nag had "intentionally suppressed the fact with regard to the pendency of criminal cases."

"You are hereby put to notice to show cause as to why appropriate action shall not be initiated against you in accordance with the law," the letter

read, warning that failure to respond within seven days of receipt will result in ex-parte proceedings. Sources within the Bar Council indicated that strict disciplinary action could follow if Nag fails to offer a satisfactory explanation. Legal experts note that suppression of such material facts could not only lead to revocation of her license but may also result in criminal proceedings.

Archana Nag, a controversial figure in Odisha, has been previously embroiled in high-profile legal cases, including allegations of blackmail and involvement in a honey trap scandal. This latest development could deal a severe blow to her legal career before it has even properly started.

## TEACHERS' TRANSFER

## MPs, MLAs empowered

*The one-time provision allows lawmakers to recommend teacher transfers to the district collector applicable only for the current educational year*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, May 13:** The state government Tuesday said the MPs and MLAs of the state can recommend up to 15 most deserving cases of transfer of teachers belonging to elementary and secondary schools in their constituencies.

This provision is a one-time measure, which is applicable only for the current educational year.

The lawmakers will recommend transfers to the district collector, who will forward them to the District Level Transfer

Committee (DLTC) for processing, according to an official letter sent to the Directors of Secondary and Elementary Education.

However, the legislators have to follow certain conditions, such as the recommendations cannot violate the principle of rationalisation, priority should be given to the teachers with urgent need, no teacher should be transferred from rural to urban areas, and this discretion is applicable for intra-district transfers only.

In cases where the parliamentary constituency covers more than one district, the proposals will be submitted to the Nodal Collector (Returning Officer of that constituency), the official said. "All the proposals should be submitted and disposed of during this transfer session (May 15 to June 15) only," the letter said.

WEATHER		
	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	40.4°	40.0°
Min Temp	27.2°	25.4°
Humidity	72%	74%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
<b>FORECAST</b> partly cloudy and light wind		

MARKET WATCH		
INDEX	VARIATION	
<b>BOURSES</b> <b>CURRENCY</b> <b>BOURSES</b>	SENSEX	81,148.22 ↓ 1281.68
	NIFTY	24,578.35 ↓ 346.35
	DOLLAR	85.13 ↑ 0.27
	EURO	95.31 ↑ 1.20
	GOLD	₹93,782 ↑ ₹834
<b>BOURSES</b> <b>CURRENCY</b> <b>BOURSES</b>	SILVER	₹96,750 ↑ ₹1350

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# CS visits Nagada villages, asks admin to gear up development

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jajpur, May 13:** State chief secretary Manoj Ahuja visited Nagada village in Jajpur district and talked to Juang tribal families to know about the progress of the development initiatives undertaken by the government in the area, officials said Tuesday.

Reports said Nagada is a cluster of hilly villages comprising Tala Nagada, Majhi Nagada and Upar Nagada villages under Chingudipal panchayat of Sukinda block in Jajpur district.

The existence of the village came to public knowledge after the media highlighted the death of over 20 children due to malnutrition in April 2016. Ahuja, then as the nodal officer of a task force, had visited the village. The visit of the Chief Secretary assumes significance as the cluster of hilly villages under Sukinda block of this district still paints a picture of neglect with the lifestyle of Juang tribals remaining unchanged even after so many years of the incident where many children died due to malnutrition

Accompanied by senior officials from various departments, including Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water secretary Girish SN and Jajpur district collector P Anvesha Reddy, the chief secretary visited the village Monday and talked to villagers and inspected key development initiatives.

Though a lot of development has been achieved since 2016,



still a lot many needs urgent attention, an official accompanying Ahuja said. He added that the chief secretary has issued directions to the district administration to expedite completion of house construction under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. "As only sixty per cent of the houses were completed in a span of three years, Ahuja issued directions to concerned officials to ensure early completion of the housing units," an official statement said. The state Information and Public Relations department in a post on X said: "Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja, during his visit to Jajpur district, visited Nagada under Sukinda block to review the actual situation and developmental works.

He inspected the under-construction houses in Centre sponsored Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, healthcare services, women and child development, and drinking water supply projects. He visited the Upper Nagada Anganwadi centre and reviewed

the ground zero situation."

During interactions with beneficiaries of the 'Mamata Yojana' (a programme for pregnant and lactating women), the chief secretary asked officials to include all eligible individuals who were previously left out. The chief secretary also inspected drinking water tanks and found their poor maintenance and asked the officials to stress on water conservation for the use of villagers during the summer.

Ahuja also asked the officials to expedite empowering farmers by allocating land ownership certificates under the Forest Rights Act. Similarly, he found very few students attending schools and asked the officials to improve student attendance rates.

The chief secretary during the visit found the village's tribal hostel closed for the last three years. He asked the District Welfare Officer (DWO) to make immediate arrangements for its reopening.

## Block chairman among three held for vandalism, abusing Banspal BDO

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Keonjhar, May 13:** The district police Tuesday arrested three persons, including the chairman of the Banspal block in Keonjhar district, on charge of abusing the BDO and ransacking and locking up the block office.

The accused were identified as Manas Dehuri, 38, block chairman and a resident of Khajurimundi village, Sukadev Mahakur, 50, of Kumundi (B) village and Padmalochan Arukh, 40, of Kanjipani village. All three have been produced in court, and further investigations are underway, according to a press release issued by Sadar SDPO Sudarshan Gangoi.

The incident occurred May 5 afternoon. when Banspal BDO Raja Ranjit Pratap Bal was holding a discussion with officials regarding the birth anniversary celebration of revolutionary leader late Dharnidhar Naik. During the meeting, block chairman Manas Dehuri along with Sukadev and Padmalochan allegedly barged inside the office and hurled abuses at the BDO.

The trio reportedly used abusive language, forced employees to vacate the premises through the rear gate after they locked up the main gate and vandalized furniture and glass partitions. Later, they fled the scene. The BDO later filed a complaint at the Nayakote police station.

Police registered a case-67/25 and launched an investigation led by Sub-Inspector Phuljames Tiga. A car (OD 09 D 7999) used by the accused was also seized.

# Ganjam police arrest 20, recover 8 pistols



**38 criminals have been arrested in last 10 days as part of a crime-free Ganjam drive: Southern Range IG**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Chhatrapur, May 13:** In the on-going anti-crime operation, the Ganjam district police have arrested 20 individuals allegedly involved in criminal activities and illegal possession of firearms. Authorities also seized eight pistols, 31 rounds of live ammunition, and 12 magazines from the arrested accused. The special drive is being led by Ganjam Superintendent of Police Suwendu Kumar Patra. Over the past 10 days, a total of 38 people have been taken into custody under the initiative which aims to make the district crime-free, according to Southern Range Inspector General (IG) Niti Shekhar.

During a press briefing at the district police headquarters in

Chhatrapur Tuesday, the IG hailed the efforts of local police and confirmed that the special operation will continue.

He said the arrested individuals are involved in multiple cases registered across several police stations, with some wanted by police in other parts of the country. One suspect, Raju Jena, had been on the run in connection with a case under Sarathana police in Surat, Gujarat. Another arrestee, Krushna Chandra Behera, was wanted by Rourkela police, he added.

Teams from Kotinada, Aska, Polasara and Hinjilicut police stations led the operations during the drive. Kotinada police arrested eight suspects and recovered four pistols, 18 live rounds, eight magazines, a car, a motorbike and nine mobile phones.

Among the suspects are Ramachandra Gouda from Jugudi village, Pintu Gouda from Lathi village, Raju Jena from Chhachina, Santosh Behera from Khandadeuli, Ganesh Nahak from Sodaka, Pintu Behera from Bhetanai, Rajesh Maharana from Upper Basti, and Pratap Kumar Jena from Pattanayak

Colony. Police confirmed the suspects face multiple criminal charges, including murder.

Aska police arrested five men suspected of planning a robbery at a gold jewellery shop, seizing one pistol, seven live rounds, two magazines, two motorbikes and seven mobile phones. The accused hailed from Purushottampur, Kodala, Kabisuryanagar, Aska and Krushnaprasad in Puri district. All have criminal records, police said.

In Hinjilicut, five people were arrested in connection with an attempted ATM heist at Pital Chowk. Officers recovered two pistols, three live rounds, two magazines and four mobile phones from their possession. The suspects are from Hinjilicut, Belgaon, Gangapur and Dharakote.

Polasara police arrested two men and seized a pistol and three live rounds. One of the suspects, Krushna Chandra Behera, was wanted in a case filed in Rourkela.

Cases have been registered under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and the Arms Act.

## 2 killed, 15 hurt as van overturns in Ganjam

**Bhanjanagar/Belaguntha:** In a tragic mishap, two persons including a minor were killed and 15 others injured when a Tata Ace van overturned near Kulangi village on the Sorada-Bhanjanagar main road in Ganjam district Tuesday. The deceased were identified as Badal Gouda, 15, of Baghalingi village and a woman Chandrama Gouda, 27, from Kesharpur village. According to sources, the vehicle was carrying more than 17 members of a family from Baghalingi village. They were on their way to Sanaborasingi Thakurani temple to offer a ritual feast as part of a religious vow. The accident occurred around 10am when the speeding vehicle lost control and hit a culvert near Kulangi under the Gangapur police limits, causing it to overturn. Police and local residents rushed to the scene upon receiving the news. RTO Shubhendu Ranjan Ray reached the site with ambulances and ensured the injured were transported to Bhanjanagar hospital for treatment. Doctors at the hospital declared Badal and Chandrama dead on arrival. Four critically injured individuals were referred to MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur for advanced care, while others are being treated at Bhanjanagar and nearby health centres. Sub-Collector Uma Shankar Behera visited Bhanjanagar hospital and instructed officials to provide proper medical care to all victims. Later in the day, Sorada MLA Nilamani Bisoi also visited the hospital to meet the injured persons and offer support to the affected families.

## OPERATION SINDOOR

PNN & AGENCIES

**Sambalpur, May 13:** The wife of an SSB jawan, who had to rush to the border, died at VSS Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (VIMSAR) in Burla of Sambalpur district while undergoing treatment for post-delivery complications following the birth to her child.

The 15-day girl child is now with her extended family in Jharsuguda district as arrangements were being made to bring the newborn's father back from the India-Bhutan border in Arunachal Pradesh.

"I express my condolence over the sad demise of the jawan's wife. We are making all arrangements to bring back the jawan so that he can attend the funeral of his wife," state Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari told reporters here.

The deceased was identified

## Wife of jawan, who rushed to border, dies after giving birth to baby girl



as Lipi Gand, 28, wife of Debaraj Gand, a jawan serving with the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB). The jawan is from Tengnamal village in Lakanpur block of Jharsuguda district.

Though the jawan was by his wife's side when she delivered the baby, he had to leave for duty a day after his daughter was born, after getting a call from the SSB, family members

said.

Lipi breathed her last Monday night at VIMSAR, Burla after delivering the child April 28. Soon after giving birth to the girl child, her condition became critical and she remained unconscious for the last 15 days, doctors said, adding she died due to multi-organ failure.

The minister said arrangements were being made to shift Lipi to Bhubaneswar on an air ambulance but she died Monday night.

"We have all sympathy for the jawan and his family," the minister said.

Pujari said that Debaraj has been informed and he is returning to Odisha.

"He will come to Guwahati from Arunachal Pradesh and take a flight to Kolkata and from there, come down to Jharsuguda. We expect him to reach Jharsuguda by 7pm Tuesday," the minister said.

# Two more trained sniffer dogs deployed in Similipal

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Baripada, May 13:** Two more newly trained sniffer dogs were deployed Sunday in the Similipal National Park to strengthen wildlife protection efforts.

The Forest Department has inducted these canines to the special units to aid in tracking poachers and seizing illegal hunting equipment, according to Similipal South Division Deputy Director Samrat Gouda.

The sniffer dogs, named Nanta (male) and Annika (female), recently completed their advanced training in Secunderabad, and have now joined the park's security operations. With this, the total number of sniffer dogs deployed in Similipal over the last three years has reached seven.

These dogs are part of a broader strategy to increase surveillance and law enforcement in sensitive and remote regions of the sanctuary, which has been under growing threat from poaching activities. The Forest Department has expressed confidence that their deployment will reinforce Similipal's anti-poaching operations.

Since Similipal was declared a national park, the government has implemented strict protection measures. Regular patrolling has been intensified, particularly in areas known to be hotspots for poaching. Similipal is a matter of pride for both



Mayurbhanj district and the state, as it is home to rare black tigers and elephants. Its ecological significance has earned it global recognition.

The National Tiger Conservation Authority has acknowledged Similipal as an ideal site for tiger population recovery. Consequently, tourism in the area has seen an increase, prompting more comprehensive security arrangements. To safeguard the park from poachers, timber smugglers, and fire hazards, the number of sniffer dogs continues to grow.

These dogs play a crucial role during forest raids by helping

forest officials swiftly locate suspects. In 2021, two German Shepherds — Drona (male) and Maya (female) — were deployed in Similipal. Following their successful integration, three more dogs were added in 2024: Leo (male) - a Belgian Shepherd; Khairi (female) - also a Belgian Shepherd; and Honey (female) - a German Shepherd.

Encouraged by the effectiveness of these units, the Forest department added Nanta and Annika Sunday. Both belong to the Belgian Malinois breed, known for their sharp tracking abilities and training in detecting wildlife contraband. These

dogs can identify poachers by following scent trails and tracking the smell of hunting gear. Annika, in particular, has received specialised training in locating animal carcasses.

The dogs are trained independently and later supervised by guide handlers. Their heightened sense of smell enables them to track human scent trails, locate dead wildlife, and uncover hidden hunting equipment. However, officials noted that scent detection becomes especially difficult during the monsoon due to heavy rains.

In the park's most inaccessible areas, patrolling is possible only on elephants. Conservationists believe that effective collaboration between Forest officials and sniffer dog squads can significantly reduce poaching.

The Central and state governments have given high priority to the protection of the tiger reserves in both the northern and southern divisions of Similipal. A year-round "Poacher-Free Similipal Operation" remains in effect.

Various protective measures — including watchtowers, an independent tiger protection force, deployment of retired army personnel, field staff, security assistants, dog squads, police officers, and a task force of Forest personnel — continue to ensure the sanctuary remains safe and secure.

## FMU to host 2-day lit fest

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Balasore, May 13:** Fakir Mohan University (FMU), known for its contributions to the promotion and development of language and literature in Odisha, is set to host a two-day literary festival from May 16 to 17 on its campus here.

The festival is being organised under the leadership of Vice Chancellor Santosh Kumar Tripathy, with active support from Bhaskar Behera, chairman of the Post Graduate Council, and Registrar Kukumina Das. Debashis Patra, head of the Department of Language and Literature, will serve as the coordinator.

The event will bring together more than 30 literary figures from diverse linguistic backgrounds, including Odia, Bengali, Assamese, Sanskrit, Urdu, Santali, and English. Writers, scholars, and researchers from Odisha, Assam, Jharkhand, West Bengal, and Thailand will participate in discussions and deliberations on a range of themes in literature and language studies.

Sessions and panel discussions will cover topics such as "The Present and Future of Short Stories", "Perspectives and Philosophy of Translation", "Poetry: Essence and Possibilities", "Lord Jagannath and Global Consciousness", "Agricultural Themes in Literature", "The Body of Literature and the Illusion of Cinema", and "My Language and the Future of My Literature".

More than 30 prominent literary personalities from across the country are expected to participate.

The university has begun preparations and logistical arrangements for the event. It has extended an open invitation to writers, storytellers, scholars, and researchers to take part and help make the festival a success.

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**Date: 13.05.2025, Place: Bhubaneswar** **Authorized Officer, Bank of Maharashtra**







# Maha approves policy to promote artificial sand

*Under the approved policy, aimed at reducing the ecological impact of natural sand mining, 50 M-Sand (artificial sand) units per district will be encouraged with industrial incentives*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, May 13:** Acknowledging the harmful impact of excessive natural sand excavation on the environment, the Maharashtra cabinet Tuesday approved the artificial sand (M-sand) Policy to provide a sustainable and alternative resource for the construction sector.

This decision is expected to bring significant transformation to the construction sector.

Under the approved policy, aimed at reducing the ecological impact of natural sand mining, 50 M-Sand (artificial sand) units per district will be encouraged with industrial incentives, a statement from the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) stated.

Each unit will receive a ₹200 per brass subsidy to promote sand production, the statement said. To address the environmental crisis caused by excessive excavation of natural sand and to provide a sustainable



and alternative resource for the construction sector, the state cabinet has approved a policy for the production and use of artificial sand (M-Sand) in a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, the CMO said.

The policy promotes the use of artificial sand in public construction projects.

Currently, a royalty of ₹600 per brass is charged for natural sand. Instead, a concessional royalty rate of ₹200 per brass has been approved for M-Sand to encourage its production and use, the CMO stated.

The government believes that artificial sand, manufactured from quarry waste and stones obtained through hill excavation using crushers, can be an alternative to natural sand.

The policy allows M-Sand units to operate with the permis-

sion of the district administration and the forest department. These units will have to comply with environmental regulations.

The CMO further said that government, semi-government, and public sector bodies have been directed to prioritise the use of M-Sand in their construction projects.

The government allows the use of only quality-certified M-Sand that meets the Bureau of Indian Standards (IS 383:2016) norms. The policy states that 50 individuals/institutions in each district will receive incentives from the industries department to set up M-Sand units. A concessional royalty rate of ₹200 per brass will be offered to M-Sand producing units.

The government believes that M-Sand units will generate local employment opportunities, reduce dependence on natural sand, and encourage environmental conservation.

These units will be monitored by new district-level committees. An independent monitoring system will ensure strict enforcement of the policy.

To encourage investment in M-Sand, the government will offer industrial promotion subsidies, interest concessions, waivers on electricity charges and stamp duty, and subsidies on electric tariffs, the statement said.



Students hail armed forces personnel for Operation Sindoor, in Bikaner, Rajasthan, Tuesday

PTI PHOTO

## Maha to introduce mobile vans to help street children

**Mobile squads will offer counselling to street children and their parents, enrol children in school and admit orphans and single-parent children into child care institutions**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, May 13:** The Maharashtra government would soon roll out mobile vans with teams of social workers to rehabilitate street children in cities by offering them facilities, such as medical check-up and counselling, besides encouraging them to pursue education.

The Maharashtra cabinet Tuesday gave its nod for the state-wide implementation of the scheme after a pilot project was successfully implemented in Mumbai city, Mumbai suburban, Thane, Pune, Nashik and Nagpur, said Women and Child Development Minister Aditi Tatkare.

"Denying street children their basic rights to education and health is social injustice. The 'Mobile Squad' initiative provides children with access to education, nutrition, medical care and social security," the minister told PTI.

Mobile squads will offer counselling to street children and their parents, enrol children in school and admit orphans and single-parent children into child care institutions.

The teams will also arrange medical screening and treatment, offer support for de-addiction, help children suffering from malnutrition or those with physical challenges, facilitate rehabilitation through local NGOs and professionals, make available therapy and vocational services for adolescents, and help children get access to various government schemes.

"During the pilot phase, the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) conducted a survey, which showed there were 70,000 street children in the six



districts we covered, including 37,000 in Mumbai alone. We reached 12,000 children, and 3,813 of them were provided with mobile van services including medical check-ups, Aadhaar enrolment, motivation towards education, school admissions and placement in anganwadi or residential schools as well as admission of orphaned children to children's homes," said Tatkare.

The cabinet Tuesday approved deployment of 31 mobile vans across 29 municipal corporations with a total budget of ₹8.06 crore. Out of 31 vans, three will be moving in Mumbai, the minister said.

In the next phase, the initiative will be extended to municipal councils and pilgrimage sites, she said, adding the

**The cabinet Tuesday approved deployment of 31 mobile vans across 29 municipal corporations with a total budget of ₹8.06 crore**

scheme provides an opportunity to transform street children's lives through education and rehabilitation.

A statement from the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said the services will be delivered through child-friendly vans managed by selected NGOs. Each van will include a counsellor, teacher, female staff and driver/caregiver. The

vans will be equipped with GPS tracking and CCTV cameras.

Social investigation reports will be prepared for each child, followed by a personalised rehabilitation plan.

Children will be enrolled in anganwadis or schools as per their age. Health check-ups, vaccinations, nutritional support, medical care, hygiene education and de-addiction efforts will also be included.

It is mandatory for NGOs under the scheme to ensure at least 20 per cent of identified children are enrolled in school every month.

Funds will be disbursed quarterly, with regular monitoring by District Women and Child Development Officers, the statement said.

## Dombivli teen passes SSC after father's death in Pahalgam attack

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Thane, May 13:** It was a bittersweet moment for Dhruv Hemant Joshi (16) when he scored an impressive 80 per cent marks in his Class 10 examination as the result came days after he lost his father in the Pahalgam terrorist attack.

The results of the examination conducted by the Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education were announced earlier in the day.

Hemant Joshi, Sanjay Lele and Atul Mone, residents of Dombivli near Mumbai, were among the 26 persons shot dead by terrorists in Pahalgam April 22.

Dhruv, a student of Omkar International School, was witness to the massacre.

"He and his family feel very sad that his father is not there to see his success," said a relative.

He wants to take admission in the science stream and wants to become a doctor, said his maternal uncle Mohit Bhawe.

## Rain, storm to likely to reduce in Rajasthan



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jaipur, May 13:** Storm accompanied by light rain was recorded at several places in Rajasthan in the last 24 hours due to the effect of western disturbance, a Met department spokesperson said.

Light to moderate rain was recorded with thunder at some places in the state Tuesday, including Sikar where 37 mm rain-fall was recorded till 8.30 am.

The highest maximum temperature was recorded at Bikaner at 42.5 degrees Celsius. The Met department also said the storm and rain activities is likely to decrease in some parts of western Rajasthan from Tuesday. The temperature may increase by 2-3 degrees Celsius, they said.

At the same time, in the border areas of Jodhpur in Bikaner division, the maximum temperature is likely to hit 44-45 degrees from May 14 and a new phase of 'heat wave' is likely to start at some places, the Met office said.

### PAK SIM CARDS BANNED IN SRI GANGANAGAR

## Schools reopen across several districts in Raj

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Jaipur, May 13:** Amid easing tensions, schools, colleges, universities, coaching institutes, and Anganwadi centres have reopened Tuesday in Jodhpur, Bikaner, Barmer, and Sri Ganganagar.

However, educational institutions in Jaisalmer remain closed. In Sri Ganganagar, while institutions reopened and the blackout was lifted, parents and students were confused early in the morning due to the last-minute announcement.

Attendance in schools was noticeably lower than usual. Meanwhile, Maharaja Ganga Singh University (Bikaner) has announced that its exams, previously postponed from May 9, will resume from May 15.

Examination Controller Rajaram Choyal confirmed that the revised schedule is available on the university's website. Further, as public life in Jodhpur appears normal with bustling markets and reopened institutions, Air India has cancelled all flights to and from Jodhpur Airport for May 13. In contrast, IndiGo Airlines has confirmed that its services to Delhi, Mumbai, Pune, Ahmedabad, Indore, and Bengaluru will continue as scheduled.

In Sri Ganganagar, markets were shut by 7 pm Monday as



part of a voluntary blackout appeal by the district administration. District Collector Manju has also imposed a ban on the use of Pakistani SIM cards across the district to curb cross-border communication threats. She has further withdrawn the order regarding holiday in government, non-government schools, colleges, universities, private coaching institutes and Anganwadi centres late at night.

According to the new order, all types of educational institutions in the district will be able to conduct regular educational activities from May 13.

Meanwhile, locals reported suspicious aerial activity in Jhunjhunu district Monday night. District Collector Ram-avatar Meena confirmed that, as a precautionary measure, a blackout was enforced in select areas. "The administration is fully alert. There is no need for anyone to panic," he assured, urging residents to remain calm and cooperate with safety protocols.

# Baiting may make tigers less afraid of humans, experts warn

*Once a private game reserve of the royal House of Jaipur, Ranthambore National Park and Tiger Reserve is one of the world's best known wilderness areas*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jaipur, May 13:** Wildlife experts have raised alarms after a forest ranger was fatally attacked by a tiger in Rajasthan's Ranthambore Tiger Reserve Sunday. The incident took place near Jogi Mahal, close to Zone-3, an area where authorities had been placing bait to support Tigress Arrowhead and her three cubs, as she was reportedly unable to hunt.

Experts fear this practice may have reduced the cubs' natural fear of humans. Repeated baiting from vehicles is believed to have conditioned the young tigers to associate humans with food. Preliminary findings suggest that one of Arrowhead's 20-month-old cubs may be responsible for both the recent fatality and the earlier killing of a 7-year-old boy near

the Trinetra Ganesh Temple April 16.

Despite earlier recommendations to relocate the cubs to a non-tourism zone after the first attack, no action was taken. A report on the latest incident has now been submitted to the forest department, and authorities are awaiting further instructions.

Wildlife expert Dinesh Verma Durani emphasized the importance of identifying the specific animal involved before taking relocation steps. "Only the tiger proven to be responsi-

### RANTHAMBORE ATTACK



ble should be moved," he said. According to official sources, the cub suspected in both at-

tacks is 'Kankati', Arrowhead's daughter.

Former honorary wildlife

warden Balendu Singh cautioned against excessive human interference in tiger habitats. "To a tiger, a walking human can resemble prey. People are generally safe inside vehicles, but stepping out increases risk," he explained. Singh also recommended limiting artificial waterholes and human-provided prey bases, stating that tigers have thrived for centuries without them.

He added that as the cubs mature, they will naturally disperse and form their own territories, which could help ease tiger density in the core tourism zones of the park.

In response to the incidents, safaris have been suspended in two of Ranthambore's ten zones, and public access to the Trinetra Ganesh Temple has been halted. The events have led to a wave of hotel booking

cancellations in the area.

Currently, around 15 tigers—including cubs—roam the 57 sq km zone around Jogi Mahal. Overall, Ranthambore is home to 72 tigers, making it one of India's most prominent tiger habitats.

Situated 14 km from Sawai Madhopur, Ranthambore was once a royal hunting ground. Now a leading national park, it is known for tiger sightings against a backdrop of ancient ruins, forests, and lakes. In addition to tigers, the reserve hosts sloth bears, leopards, hyenas, jackals, and other wildlife.

Tourism in the park is a major draw, especially for tiger safaris, which operate from October to June. The recent attacks, however, have reignited the debate on balancing conservation, tourism, and safety in India's premier tiger reserve.







# Military officer briefs foreign attaches

Defence attaches of several major countries who are part of many international groupings, as also of several Islamic countries attended the briefing

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, May 13:** A top officer of the Indian military Tuesday briefed defence attaches or their representatives from a large number of countries on the “successful conduct of Operation Sindoor”, officials said.

The briefing held at Manekshaw Centre in Delhi Cantonment, was done by Lt Gen D S Rana, Director General, Defence Intelligence Agency, and lasted about 30 minutes.

Defence attaches of several major countries who are part of many international groupings, as also of several Islamic countries attended the briefing, sources said. Defence attaches from Sweden, Nepal, the Philippines, Egypt, among other countries, also attended it. The Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff in a post on X, said, “Lt Gen DS Rana, Director General Defence Intelligence Agency #DG DIA briefed the Foreign Service Attaches of 70 nations on the successful



conduct of #OperationSindoor that has set #NewNormals in India-Pakistan relations, highlighting India’s demonstrated strength and national resolve through military superiority in the new-age warfare.”

Lt Gen Rana elaborated on “deliberate planning process” for selection of targets with “confirmed terror linkages”, officials said. The integrated, precise and prompt response by the Indian armed forces to achieve the stated objectives, executed through intense

multi-domain operations was also highlighted during the briefing, they said.

“Synergised Force application through jointness and integration achieved in #OpSindoor with demonstrated battle effectiveness of indigenous kinetic force multipliers was showcased to the #FSAs, while highlighting Technological Superiority of the Indian armed forces in niche non-kinetic domains of space, cyber and electronic warfare,” the Headquarters Integrated Defence

## Rajnath reviews security situation

**New Delhi:** Defence Minister Rajnath Singh Tuesday carried out a comprehensive review of the national security scenario along the frontier with Pakistan with the top military brass. The meeting was attended by Chief of Defence Staff Gen Anil Chauhan, Army Chief Gen Upendra Dwivedi, Navy Chief Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi, Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh and Vice Chief of the Air Staff Air Marshal Narmadeshwar Tiwari. The meeting reviewed the security situation along the Western frontier and related issues, officials said. It is learnt that Singh asked the military to maintain a high level of combat readiness to deal with any Pakistani military misadventure.

Staff said in its post. The DG, DIA also placed “credible record of the relentless anti-India misinformation campaign conducted by the adversary and its ramifications on regional peace and stability,” it said, using hashtags – “#OpSindoor #JusticeServed #ZeroToleranceForTerror”.

Many other foreign defence attaches PTI spoke to after the briefing echoed similar views. India launched Operation Sindoor May 7 to destroy nine terror infrastructures in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied-Kashmir in retaliation to the Pahalgam terror attack

## PAHALGAM TERROR ATTACK

# Cong seeks Kargil-style review from Modi govt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 13:** The Congress Tuesday asked if the Narendra Modi government would undertake an exercise on the Pahalgam terror attack similar to the one the Vajpayee government undertook by setting up a review committee immediately after the Kargil War.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh also took a swipe at External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, saying the normally “unquiet” minister’s silence on what US Secretary of State Marco Rubio stated on “US mediation” and on a “neutral site” for India-Pakistan talks was “very deafening”.

“The Indian who has spent the maximum time with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio is our dapper external affairs minister. Much was made in the media over the fact that he was the very first to meet Mr Rubio Jan 21, 2025, – just a day after President Trump’s inauguration,” Ramesh said on X.

Earlier, Ramesh said the party’s repeated demands for a Prime Minister Narendra



Modi-chaired all-party meeting and a special session of Parliament assumed even greater urgency and importance in light of the statements from Washington DC.

“Three days after the Kargil War ended, the Vajpayee government set up the Kargil Review Committee July 29, 1999. Its report was tabled in Parliament February 23, 2000, although sections of it have remained classified – as indeed they must,” he said.

“Will the Modi government now conduct a similar exercise on Pahalgam, notwithstanding the NIA (National Investigation Agency) probe?” Ramesh asked.

“Given the statements from Washington DC, the INC’s (Indian National Congress) repeated demands for an all-party meeting TO BE CHAIRED BY THE PM himself and for a special session of Parliament – which is now scheduled to meet at least two and a half months from now – assume even greater urgency and importance,” he said.

Ramesh’s remarks came a day after Trump reiterated his claim that his administration stopped a “nuclear conflict” between India and Pakistan, telling the south Asian neighbours that America would do a “lot of trade” with them if they ended hostilities.

“On Saturday (May 10), my administration helped broker a full and immediate ceasefire, I think, a permanent one between India and Pakistan, ending a dangerous conflict of two nations with lots of nuclear weapons,” Trump said at the start of a press conference in the White House Monday. He started the briefing by describing the events that took place over the previous few days in the Indian subcontinent.

# Tiranga yatras held across multiple states

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 13:** Tiranga yatras were taken out in different parts of the country under the aegis of the BJP to mark the success of Operation Sindoor carried out by the Indian armed forces in Pakistan and galvanise people against terrorism.

The 11-day long nationwide ‘tiranga yatra’ was launched after top BJP leaders, including Union ministers Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh and J P Nadda, who is also the party’s national president, had deliberations on the issue Sunday.



Nadda held meetings with BJP general secretaries, including Tarun Chugh, Vinod Tawde and Dushyant Gautam, Monday to finalise the exercise. Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, joined by her Cabinet colleagues, led a ‘Shaurya Samman Yatra’ down the Kartavya Path in the national capital to laud the armed forces for the success of Operation Sindoor.

Besides the BJP workers,

the ‘yatra’ was attended by the schoolchildren, who turned up in uniforms, the NCC cadets and civil defence volunteers. The procession witnessed the rallyists calling for Pakistan’s ‘purna sanhaar’ or extirpation and played patriotic songs.

“Sena ke samman mein, desh ka har nagrik maidan mein (In honour of army, every citizen of the country is on ground,” Delhi BJP said on X, posting a picture of the rally.

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini led a ‘tiranga yatra’ in Panchkula which saw participation of thousands of people, including women and children. Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu led a ‘tiranga yatra’ in Walong, a remote town in Anjaw district, to mark the success of the Indian armed forces in Operation Sindoor.

Joined by his Cabinet colleagues, local leaders and the army personnel, Khandu hailed the courage and determination of the Indian forces involved in Operation Sindoor. The ‘yatra’ showcased national pride and support for the armed forces’ unwavering commitment to safeguarding the country’s borders and sovereignty.

Bihar BJP president Dilip Jaiswal Tuesday said the party will launch a statewide ‘tiranga yatra’ Wednesday to celebrate the success of Operation Sindoor. Speaking to reporters in Patna, the BJP leader said it will be held across all divisions of the state Thursday and it will be organised at the block level from Friday.



A family member of BSF constable Deepak Chingakhm, who was martyred in the line of duty, mourns as his mortal remains are taken to his hometown in Imphal, Assam



A farm worker at a field, in Jammu. Normal activities were resumed in the area following a bilateral understanding between India and Pakistan



NCC cadets take part in the Tiranga Shaurya Samman Yatra from Kartavya Path to the National War Memorial in New Delhi



Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini takes part in the ‘Tiranga Yatra’, in Panchkula, Haryana

# India doubles defence budget in 11 yrs to boost armed forces

The collaboration between the government and private sector entities in India’s defence sector has driven advancements in arms and ammunition, aerospace, electronics, and naval technologies

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, May 13:** India’s annual defence budget has increased 2.6 times from Rs 2.53 lakh crore in 2013-14 to Rs 6.81 lakh crore in 2025-26 which reflects India’s steadfast commitment to enhancing national security, modernising its armed forces and bolstering military infrastructure, according to a Ministry of Defence statement.

“Strategic reforms, private sector participation and innovation have boosted indigenous manufacturing, making India self-reliant and a globally trusted defence exporter while strengthening national security and economic growth,” the statement added.

The collaboration between the government and private sector entities in India’s de-



fence sector has driven advancements in arms and ammunition, aerospace, electronics, and naval technologies. This collaboration has been supported by policies such as ‘Make in India’ and liberalised FDI norms, which have

enhanced domestic manufacturing capabilities, attracted international investments in defence innovation and driven notable growth in exports of military equipment, the report points out. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Monday

that the effectiveness of Made in India defence equipment was decisively proven during Operation Sindoor against Pakistan, in which terrorist hubs were wiped out with precision strikes and heavy damage was also caused to airbases deep inside enemy territory.

“The world is now witnessing the arrival of Made in India defence systems as a formidable force in 21st-century warfare, PM Modi said in his address to the nation.

He highlighted how this aggression exposed Pakistan’s vulnerabilities, as its drones and missiles crumbled like straw before India’s advanced air defence systems, which neutralised them in the sky.

PM Modi pointed out that Indian drones and missiles executed highly accurate strikes, severely damaging Pakistani airbases that it had long boasted about. Within the first three days of India’s response, Pakistan suffered

destruction far beyond its expectations.

Following India’s aggressive countermeasures, Pakistan began seeking ways to de-escalate, appealing to the global community for relief from rising tensions, he added.

PM Modi said Operation Sindoor has added a new dimension to the nation’s military prowess, highlighting India’s remarkable capability in both desert and mountainous warfare while also establishing superiority in New Age Warfare.

The Prime Minister was referring to the India-made Brahmos missiles that were used to destroy airbases and air defence systems in the heart of Pakistan.

The strength of India’s air defence ecosystem, built over the past 11 years, was effective in neutralising a wave of drone and missile attacks by Pakistan.

LIFE RETURNS TO NORMAL

Schools to reopen in all border districts today

**Chandigarh:** Schools in five Punjab districts bordering Pakistan will reopen Wednesday, officials said. Punjab shares a 553-kilometre border with Pakistan, spanning the districts of Amritsar, Tarn Taran, Pathankot, Fazilka, Ferozepur and Gurdaspur. While schools in Gurdaspur reopened Tuesday, authorities in the other five border districts said academic institutions would reopen Wednesday. The state government May 8 ordered the closure of academic institutions for three days as a military standoff between India and Pakistan soared. While schools in most districts reopened Monday, they remained shut in the six border districts and Sangrur. The district authorities in Pathankot, Tarn Taran and Amritsar Tuesday said all schools would reopen Wednesday. "Schools will open tomorrow (Wednesday) from 10:30 am to 2:30 pm," the Amritsar district administration said.

Srinagar back to routine after 6 days of unrest

**Srinagar:** Life in Srinagar city and elsewhere in the Kashmir Valley returned to normal as schools, colleges, universities, markets, transport, and other businesses started functioning normally Tuesday with the first flight landing at Srinagar airport after May 7, when the airfield was taken over by the Air Force. Except for the border areas of Uri, Tangdhar, Karnal and Gurez, schools opened normally throughout the Valley as the hustle and bustle of life returned to markets after six days of uncertainty. The suspended Haj flights are being resumed, and the pilgrims going to Saudi Arabia have been asked to report at the Haj House in the Bemina area of Srinagar at 6 a.m. Wednesday.



of the day

quote

We want to make sure congressional equities are respected and protected in this process



JOHN THUNE | MAJORITY LEADER OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE

François-Philippe Champagne retains his job as finance minister, while Dominic LeBlanc remains minister of US trade and inter-governmental trade at a time of trade war between Canada and the United States



MARK CARNEY | PRIME MINISTER, CANADA

Explained to me it was a moment to celebrate an event from the past. We cannot rewrite the history, and (we) fully understand that Serbia celebrates (its) liberation by Soviet troops



ANTONIO COSTA | EUROPEAN COUNCIL PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

Two Indian students killed in car accident

**New York:** Two Indian students have been killed in an accident in Pennsylvania after their car crashed into a tree and struck a bridge, officials said. Another passenger in the front seat of the vehicle was injured in the accident early Saturday morning and rushed to a local hospital, they said. “Deeply saddened to learn about the unfortunate road accident in which two Indian students from Cleveland State University, Manav Patel (20) and Saurav Prabhakar (23) lost their lives,” the Consulate General of India in New York said in a post on X Monday.

Germany bans largest ‘Reich citizen’ group

**Berlin:** The German government has banned the largest “Reich citizen” group, an extremist far-right organisation that calls itself the “Kingdom of Germany” and seeks to undermine the country’s democratic order. Four of its leaders were arrested. Since early Tuesday morning, hundreds of security forces in several states have been searching the association’s properties and the homes of leading members. “The members of this association have created a “counter-state” in our country and built up economic criminal structures,” Interior Minister Alexander Dobrindt said, adding that the members of the group underpinned their supposed claim to power with antisemitic conspiracy narratives — a behaviour that the country cannot tolerate.

Militia fighting rocks Libya’s capital; 7 killed

**Cairo:** Clashes between heavily armed militias rocked the Libyan capital, with gunfire and explosions heard across the city following the killing of a powerful warlord, officials said. At least six people were killed, they said. The hourslong clashes, which involved heavy weapons, took place Monday evening into the early hours of Tuesday and centred in Tripoli’s southern neighbourhood of Abu Salim, the officials said. The fighting stemmed from the killing of Abdel-Ghani al-Kikli, commander of the Stabilisation Support Authority, SSA, Monday by another rival militia, a senior government and health official said. The SSA is an umbrella group of militias that rose to become one of the most powerful groups in western Libya, which has a history of atrocities and rights abuses during the country’s long-running conflict.

Trump secures \$600bn Saudi investment pledge

REUTERS

**Riyadh, May 13:** US President Donald Trump secured a \$600 billion commitment from Saudi Arabia Tuesday to invest in the United States after the oil power rolled out the red carpet for him at the start of a tour of Gulf states.

Trump punched the air as he emerged from Air Force One to be greeted by Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who later signed an agreement with the president in Riyadh on energy, defence, mining and other areas.

Saudi Arabia’s investment commitment includes what the US described as the largest defence sales agreement between the allies, worth nearly \$142 billion.

Reuters reported in April the US was poised to offer the kingdom an arms package worth well over \$100 billion.

“I really believe we like each other a lot,” Trump said during a meeting with the crown prince, Saudi Arabia’s de facto ruler.

The US and Saudi Arabia had discussed Riyadh’s potential purchase of Lockheed F-35 jets, two sources briefed on discussions told Reuters, referring to a military aircraft that the kingdom is long thought to have been interested in.

It was not immediately clear whether those aircraft were covered in the deal announced Tuesday.

Trump, who is accompanied by US business leaders including billionaire Elon Musk, will go on from Riyadh to Qatar Wednesday and the United Ar-



- > Trump touring Saudi Arabia, Qatar and United Arab Emirates
- > Major investment expected from Gulf states
- > Trip comes amid global geopolitical tensions
- > Trump is not visiting Israel during the trip
- > Trump has more leverage after Iran was weakened by Gaza war

“As a result ... when Saudis and Americans join forces very good things happen, more often than not great things happen when those joint ventures happen,” he said before Trump’s arrival.

Trump called the Saudi crown prince a friend and said they have a good relationship, according to a pool report from the Wall Street Journal, adding that Saudi investment would help create jobs in the US.

ab Emirates Thursday.

He has not scheduled a stop in Israel, a decision that has raised questions about where the close ally stands in Washington’s priorities, and the focus of the trip is on investment rather than security matters in the Middle East.

“While energy remains a cornerstone of our relationship, the investments and business opportunities in the kingdom have expanded and multiplied many, many times over,” Saudi Investment Minister Khalid al-Falih told a US-Saudi investment forum.

US slashes tariff on small China parcels



REUTERS

**Hong Kong/Shanghai, May 13:** The United States will cut the “de minimis” tariff for low-value items imported from China, a White House executive order said Monday, further de-escalating a potentially damaging trade war between the world’s two largest economies.

The tariff relief, which affects big Chinese e-commerce players

including Shein and Temu, follows a deal between Beijing and Washington to unwind most of the duties imposed on each other’s goods since early April, after weekend talks in Geneva.

While their joint statement in Geneva didn’t mention the de minimis duties, the White House order released later said the levies will be reduced to 54% from 120% for items valued at up to \$800 sent from China via postal services, with a flat fee of \$100 to remain, starting from May 14.

Carriers can pay either the 54% or the \$100 fee per package, industry experts said. The logistics companies or freight forwarders collect those tariff fees from sellers in China in advance.

The de minimis exemption allowed items valued at up to \$800 and sent from China via postal service to previously enter the United States duty free and with minimal inspections.

Gaza population faces critical risk of famine

REUTERS

**Beirut, May 13:** Half a million people in the Gaza Strip face starvation, a global hunger monitor said Monday, saying the Israeli-blockaded enclave still confronts a critical risk of famine with a high risk of one occurring by the end of September.

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)’s latest report cited a significant deterioration in the situation since its last one in October, reflecting warnings from international agencies of an unfolding catastrophe in the small, densely populated Palestinian territory.

It forecast that 2.1 million people across Gaza - roughly the entire population - would likely experience high levels of acute food insecurity by the end of September, with 469,500



of them projected to likely hit “catastrophic” levels.

Israel has sealed off the Gaza Strip since early March when it resumed its devastating military campaign against militant group Hamas following the collapse of a ceasefire deal, during which thousands of aid trucks entered the enclave.

Israeli government spokesperson David Mencer said Monday the IPC had “constantly talked about famine; famine has never happened because of Israel’s efforts to get more aid in.”

Mencer reiterated Israel’s accusation that Hamas had caused hunger by stealing aid

Only through unity and cooperation can countries safeguard global peace and stability and promote world-wide development and prosperity

XI JINPING | PRESIDENT, CHINA



Balochistan appoints first Hindu woman Assistant Commissioner

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Karachi, May 13:** Kashish Chaudhary, a 25-year-old Pakistani Hindu woman, has made history by becoming the first female from the minority community in Balochistan to be appointed as Assistant Commissioner in the restive province.

Kashish, who hails from the remote town of Noshki in district Chagai in the province, qualified Balochistan Public Service Commission (BPSC) examination.

Kashish, accompanied by her father Girdhari Lal, met Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfaraz Bugti in Quetta Monday and told him that she would work for the empowerment of women and minorities, and the overall development of the province.

“It is a matter of great pride for me that my daughter has become an assistant commissioner due to her hard work and commitment,” Lal told the media.

Lal, a mid-level trader, said his daughter had always dreamed of studying and doing something for her women.

Chief Minister Bugti said it was a matter of pride for the nation when members of the minority communities got to key positions due to their hard work and effort.

“Kashish is a symbol of pride for the nation and Balochistan,” he said.



The full moon sets behind the St. Isaac’s Cathedral in St. Petersburg, Russia, early Tuesday

PTI PHOTO

KIM FORGIVES PARIS HEIST ACCUSED

Reality TV star Kim Kardashian told the alleged mastermind of a jewel heist in which she thought she was going to die that she forgives him, but that this took away none of the trauma from being held at gunpoint in her Paris hotel room in 2016



UN body finds Russia responsible for downing MH17 over Ukraine

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Melbourne, May 13:** The Council of the International Civil Aviation Organisation Tuesday found Russia responsible for shooting down Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 over Ukraine with the loss of 298 lives more than a decade ago, in a ruling that raises the prospect of victims’ families being paid compensation.

Russia has rejected the findings.

A Dutch-led international investigation concluded in 2016 that the Amsterdam-to-Kuala Lumpur airliner was shot down July 17, 2014, from Ukrainian territory held by separatist rebels using a Buk missile system delivered from Russia. Moscow denies any involvement in the MH17 tragedy.

The Netherlands and Australian governments brought the case against Moscow before the Montreal-based global aviation agency in 2022, and Tuesday welcomed the verdict.

The council found that Russia had violated the Convention on International Civil Aviation, known as the Chicago Convention, which requires that states “refrain from resorting to the use of weapons against civil aircraft in flight.”

It’s the first time that the council, which represents 193 member states, has decided a dispute between governments.

Dutch Foreign Minister Caspar Veldkamp said that the council would consider the question of reparations within weeks.

“In that context, the Netherlands and Australia are requesting that the ICAO Council



order the Russian Federation to enter into negotiations with the Netherlands and Australia, and that the Council facilitate this process,” Veldkamp said in a statement.

“The latter is important in order to ensure that the negotiations are conducted in good faith and according to specific timelines, and that they will yield actual results,” he added.

Dutch father Thomas Schansman, who lost his son in the disaster, said the ICAO decision makes it clear Russia was responsible for the tragedy and could lead to compensation, but that he and other relatives mostly want the country to acknowledge its culpability.

“Money cannot buy anything back,” he told The Associated Press.

Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong urged the council to move swiftly to “determine remedies.”

“We call on Russia to finally face up to its responsibility for its horrific act of violence and make reparations for its egregious conduct, as required under international law,” Wong said in a statement.

Singapore health authorities monitor rising COVID-19 cases

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Singapore, May 13:** Health authorities in Singapore said Tuesday they are monitoring the recent rise in COVID-19 infections, and there was no indication that variants of the virus circulating locally are more transmissible compared to the previous ones.

COVID-19 cases are estimated to have increased to 14,200 in the week of April 27 to May 3, 2025, compared to 11,100 cases in the previous week, the Ministry of Health (MOH) and Communicable Diseases Agency (CDA) said in a statement.

During the same period, average daily COVID-19 hospitalisations rose from 102 to 133, but the average daily cases in the Intensive Care Unit fell from three to two cases, the health authorities said, adding that hospitals are currently able to manage the increase in cases.

“The Ministry of Health (MOH) and Communicable Diseases Agency (CDA) are monitoring a recent increase in COVID-19 infections in Singapore. There is no indication that the variants circulating locally are more transmissible or cause more severe disease compared to previously circulating variants,” the statement said.

The authorities said that the increase in COVID-19 infections could be due to several factors, including waning population immunity, and expect periodic waves of the viral infection throughout the year, similar to other endemic respiratory diseases.

At present, ‘J.F.7’ and ‘NB.1.8’ – both descendants of the ‘JN.1’ variant – are the main variants of the COVID-19-causing virus circulating in Singapore. The variants together account for over two-thirds of the locally sequenced cases, the health authorities said.





# Business

## Quote of the day

Custom agreement with Russia provides huge opportunities to boost bilateral trade, currently valued at USD 11 billion across sectors like petroleum, gold, automotive, pharmaceuticals, and chemicals. We are aiming to increase the bilateral trade and make it little balanced by facilitating more exports from India

SC RALHAN | FIEO PRESIDENT

Smartworld will oversee development, construction, and customer service, while Tribeca leads design, marketing, sales, and quality control. The phenomenal response to Trump Residences is a testament to the aspiration for world-class living in India

PANKAJ BANSAL | FOUNDER, SMARTWORLD DEVELOPERS

India's latest WTO action comes at a delicate moment. New Delhi and Washington are exploring a broader free trade agreement, and this retaliation could cast a shadow over negotiations

AJAY SRIVASTAVA | FOUNDER, GTRI

## SHORT TAKES

### ABCL profit drops

**New Delhi:** Aditya Birla Capital Ltd (ABCL) Tuesday reported an over 30 per cent decline in consolidated net profit at ₹865 crore for three months ended March 31, 2025. The company had posted a net profit of ₹1,245.41 crore in the same quarter of the preceding fiscal year, said in a regulatory filing.

### TML profit declines

**New Delhi:** Tata Motors Tuesday reported a 51 per cent decline in consolidated net profit to ₹8,556 crore in the March quarter. The auto major had posted a consolidated net profit of ₹17,528 crore in the same quarter last fiscal year, said in a regulatory filing.

### Cipla profit rises

**New Delhi:** Drug major Cipla Tuesday reported 30 per cent increase in net profit; stands at 1,222 crore in the fourth quarter ended March 31, 2025 on account of higher sales in India, the US and Africa. The firm had reported a net profit of ₹939 crore for the January-March period a year ago. Total revenue from operations rose to ₹6,730 crore in the period under review as per regulatory filing.

### TCIL profit surges

**New Delhi:** Thomas Cook India Ltd has reported a 13.5 per cent rise in consolidated net profit at ₹66 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 31, 2025, mainly on account of growth in travel-related services. The company reported a net profit of ₹58.17 crore, in the year-ago period. Its income from operations rose to ₹2,022 crore during the quarter is under review.

### Bharti Airtel profit up

**New Delhi:** Bharti Airtel posted about fivefold jump in consolidated net profit to ₹11,022 crore in the March quarter; the company had posted net profit of ₹2,071.6 crore in the same period a year ago. The declared revenue from operations grew 27 per cent to ₹47,876.2 crore during the quarter under review from ₹37,599.1 crore in the March 2024 quarter, said in a regulatory filing.



IFFCO has invested around ₹2,000 crore since 2017 on its two new innovative products - nano liquid urea and nano liquid DAP, hopeful that farmers will adopt these key nutrients in a big way over the next 2-3 years

US AWASTHI | MD, IFFCO

## ₹ ENDS FLAT AGAINST \$

INR reversed early gains to settle flat at 85.36 against the US dollar Tuesday, as rising crude oil prices prompted importers to rise hedging amid weakness in Asian currencies. At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 84.70 and moved between the intra-day high of 84.62 and the low of 85.48 against the greenback. The unit ended the session flat at 85.36.



# Retail inflation hits 6-yr low

With inflation now at its lowest, India has not only reinforced macroeconomic stability, but also created an enabling environment for sustainable growth

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 13:** India's retail inflation, measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) recorded six-year low of 3.16 per cent in April mainly due to subdued prices of vegetables, fruits, pulses, and other protein-rich items, creating enough room for the Reserve Bank to go for another round of rate cut in the June monetary policy review. Earlier, CPI based inflation was 3.34 per cent in March and 4.83 per cent in April 2024. It was 3.15 per cent in July 2019.

NSO data showed a sharp decline of 91 basis points in food inflation in April 2025 in comparison to March 2025. The food inflation in April 2025 is the lowest since October 2021.

Food inflation in April was 1.78 per cent, lower than 2.69 per cent in the preceding month and 8.7 per cent in the year-ago month, showed data released by the National Statistics Office (NSO) Tuesday.

The Reserve Bank, which has been mandated to ensure inflation remains at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on either side, has slashed the key interest rate by 50 basis points in two tranches (February and April) as the price situation improved.

The central bank has projected the CPI inflation for the financial year 2025-26 at 4 per cent, with Q1 at 3.6 per cent; Q2 at 3.9 per cent; Q3 at 3.8 per cent; and Q4 at 4.4 per cent.

"The significant decline in headline inflation and food inflation during the month of April 2025 is mainly attributed to decline in inflation of vegetables, pulses and products, fruits, meat and fish, personal care and effects and cereals and products," NSO said.

There was a deflation in potato (12.7 per cent), tomato



- Urban Inflation: Headline inflation in urban areas saw a marginal rise to 3.43% in March, up from 3.32% in February. However, food inflation declined significantly from 3.15% to 2.48%
- Housing Inflation: For the urban sector, housing inflation rose slightly to 3.03% in March 2025 from 2.91% in February

- Fuel & Light: Inflation in this category rebounded to 1.48% in March from -1.33% in February, covering both rural and urban areas
- Education Inflation: A moderate increase was noted in education-related inflation, rising to 3.98% from 3.83% the previous month

(33.21 per cent), chicken (6.78 per cent), arhar , a variety in pulses (14.27)

We expect the RBI to opt in for a 25 bp cut in policy rates in view of the fragile global economic and geopolitical environment in the June 2025 monetary policy review. The cumulative rate cut in FY26 would depend on the pace of decline in inflation and evolving inflation-growth dynamics

PARAS JASRAI | AD, INDIA RATINGS AND RESEARCH

During April, inflation in mustard oil was at 19.6 per cent, refined oil (sunflower, soybean) at 23.75 per cent, apple at 17 per cent, and onion at 2.94 per cent.

The rural inflation was at 2.92 per cent in April 2025 compared to 3.25 per cent in the preceding month 2025. Urban inflation declined marginally from 3.43 per cent in March 2025 to 3.36 per cent in April.

According to the data, the highest inflation was in Kerala at 5.94 per cent while the lowest

was in Telangana at 1.26 per cent. Commenting on inflation data, Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist, ICRA Limited, said that average inflation is at 3.5 per cent in FY2026, with the prints for Q2 and Q3 sharply trailing the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) projections for these quarters, allowing for an additional 75 bps of rate cuts in this calendar year.

"A 25 bps rate cut appears forthcoming in the June 2025 policy, followed by easing of 25 bps each in the August and October 2025 policy reviews.

"If the GDP growth prints for Q4 FY2025 does not report ac-

# Trump order may impact Indian generics: Experts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 13:** The domestic generic drug makers are unlikely to be impacted by the US announcement of a 30 day deadline for companies to lower the cost of prescription medicines, industry experts say. The executive order inked by US President Donald Trump, which entails US health department to broker new prices for prescription drugs, is, however, likely to have an adverse impact on the innovator drug firms.

"The generics industry is unlikely to be impacted, as it operates on razor-thin margins. In US, the generics industry represents 90 per cent of prescription volumes while accounting for only 13 per cent of the market value," IPA Secretary General Sudarshan Jain said in a statement. The generics industry plays a pivotal role in ensuring medicines remain affordable and accessible, and further details on implementation mechanisms will bring more clarity, he added. The order emphasises that the cost of the

innovation should be shared equitably among all stakeholders.

"Innovator companies are expected to be affected, with a 30-day window to align their US prices with Most-Favoured-Nation (MFN) pricing," he added.

He further stated that the executive order seeks to balance innovation, access and overall healthcare costs. Research and development in life sciences demands long-term commitment, substantial investment, and carries high risk.

The IPA is a network of 23 leading Indian drug makers, most of whom are major exporters to US. India is the largest supplier of generic medicines with a 20 per cent share in the global supply by manufacturing 60,000 different generic brands across 60 therapeutic categories.

As per the fiscal year 2022 report on State of Pharmaceutical Quality published by USFDA, India boasts of more than 600 USFDA registered manufacturing sites, constituting nearly 12.5 per cent of all registered manufacturing sites operating outside US.

# Stocks slump over 1%; Sensex tanks 1,282 pts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, May 13:** Stock markets tumbled Tuesday with benchmark Sensex falling by 1,282 points due to profit-taking in IT and FMCG shares a day after a record rally.

The 30-share BSE barometer tanked 1,281.68 points or 1.55 per cent to settle at 81,148.22 with 25 of its constituents closing with losses and five with gains. During the day, it fell sharply by 1,386.21 points or 1.68 per cent to 81,043.69.

The broader Nifty of NSE dropped 346.35 points or 1.39 per cent to 24,578.35. From the Sensex firms, Infosys declined by 3.54 per cent. Power Grid, Eternal, HCL Tech, Tata Consultancy Services, Bharti Airtel, IndusInd Bank, NTPC and HDFC Bank were the losers.

Whereas, Sun Pharma, Adani Ports, Bajaj Finance, State Bank of India and Tech Mahindra were the gainers.

"The domestic market witnessed profit booking today, following yesterday's sharp rally. The relief-driven surge—fuelled by easing global and domestic risks, including a reduction in



trade war tensions and Indo-Pak geopolitical stress—appears to be taking a breather," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

Between ups and downs, Defence stocks continue to surge Tuesday, with Bharat Dynamics surging over 11 per cent. Shares of Bharat Dynamics zoomed 11.16 per cent, Axiscades Technologies surged 5 per cent, Data Patterns soared 4.05 per cent, Bharat Electronics jumped 4.01 per cent on the BSE.

HAL climbed 3.81 per cent,

# Goyal to lead US trade talks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 13:** Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal will lead a team of senior Indian officials to Washington starting May 17 for discussions with their US counterparts on the proposed bilateral trade agreement (BTA), an official said Tuesday.

During the visit, Goyal will hold meetings with US Trade Representative (USTR) Jamie-Son Greer and US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick on the agreement.

The four-day talks (May 17-20) come against the backdrop of both countries exploring the possibility of an interim trade arrangement in goods to secure "early mutual wins" ahead of finalising the first phase of the trade agreement by fall (September-October) this year.

The chief negotiators of both countries will hold meetings from May 19-22 to discuss main issues that will figure in the negotiations include market access, rules of origin, and non-tariff barriers.

These discussions, aim to take advantage of the 90 day tariff pause window to advance the talks. US has suspended the additional 26 per cent tariffs on India till July 9. It was announced on April 2 to bridge the widening trade deficit. However, the 10 per cent baseline tariff imposed on the countries will continue to remain in place.

To give impetus to the talks, India's Chief Negotiator for BTA Rajesh Agrawal, special secretary in the Department of Commerce, and Assistant US Trade Representative for South and Central Asia Brendan Lynch had last month held three-day talks in Washington.

To boost bilateral trade, India is seeking duty concessions for labour-intensive sectors like textiles, gems and jewellery, leather goods, garments, plastics, chemicals, shrimp, oil seeds, chemicals, grapes, and bananas in the proposed pact with America.

On the other hand, the US



wants duty concessions in sectors like certain industrial goods, automobiles (electric vehicles in particular), wines, petrochemical products, dairy, agriculture items such as apples, and tree nuts.

The terms of reference (ToRs) for the BTA have been finalised by India and US, which include around 19 chapters covering issues like tariffs, goods, services, rules of origin, non-tariff barriers, and customs facilitation.

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

With America, India had a trade surplus (the difference between imports and exports) of \$41.18 billion in goods in 2024-25. It was \$35.32 billion in 2023-24, \$27.7 billion in 2022-23, \$32.85 billion in 2021-22 and \$22.73 billion in 2020-21.

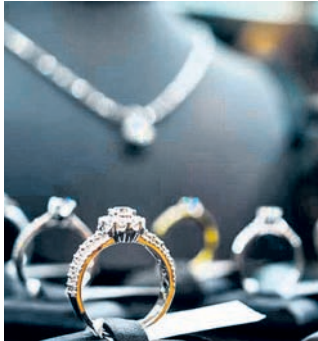
According to the 2025 National Trade Estimate (NTE) report on foreign trade barriers of US, India maintains various forms of non-tariff barriers such as banned or prohibited items that are denied entry into India (example tallow, fat, and oils of animal origin); items that require a non-automatic import licence (example certain livestock products, pharmaceuticals, certain chemicals, certain IT products); and items that are importable only by government trading monopolies and are subject to cabinet approval regarding import timing and quantity (example corn under a tariff-rate quota).

# Gems, jewellery exports dip by 4.62%: GJEPC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, May 13:** India's overall gems and jewellery exports dipped by 4.62 per cent to \$ 2,037.06 million in April, as compared to the same month of the previous financial year, according to the Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) data.

The country's total gems and jewellery exports stood at \$2,135.7 million in the same month of the previous year. The overall export of cut and polished diamonds declined by 6.12 per cent to \$1,108.74 million in April, compared to \$1,180.99 million last year. The total shipment of gold jewellery witnessed a dip of 5.41 per cent at \$684.51 million during the month under review, as compared to \$723.63 million for the same period of the previous year.



Gross export of 'Polished Lab Grown Diamonds' in April was almost flat with a growth of just 0.41 per cent at \$110.74 million, over \$110.29 million in the same month of FY25. Silver jewellery exports in April also declined by 12.03 per cent at \$38.3 million. Meanwhile, exports of 'Coloured Gemstones' witnessed a growth of 11.95 per cent at \$27.76 million, compared to \$24.8 million in the same period of the previous year.

# Gold surges ₹950 despite global stress

Trade talks push investors towards precious yellow metal worldwide; rising value by 1.3%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 13:** Gold price rallied by ₹950 to ₹97,500 per 10 gram in the national capital Tuesday amid firm trend in overseas markets, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal of 99.5 per cent purity jumped ₹1,000 to ₹97,100 per 10 gram.

Monday, gold of 99.9 per cent



and 99.5 per cent fell sharply by ₹3,400 each to ₹96,550 and ₹96,100 per 10 grams, respectively. Meanwhile, silver depreciated

₹250 to ₹99,450 per kg against the previous close of ₹99,700 per kg.

"Gold prices have risen again

after a sharp correction, as safe-haven demand eased following a pause in the US-China trade war," Abans Financial Services' Chief Executive Officer Chintan Mehta said.

The US agreed to cut tariffs on Chinese imports to 30 per cent from 145 per cent, while China reduced duties on US goods to 10 per cent from 125 per cent. This tariff relief brought some calm to global markets, leading to a rally in equities and a pullback in gold over the past two days, Mehta added.

"Gold fell over 3 per cent Monday, lowest closing in nearly two weeks. However, the metal

rebounded slightly on Tuesday, edging above USD 3,240 per ounce," Kaynat Chainwala, AVP of Commodity Research at Kotak Securities, said.

The safe-haven demand emerged amid reports of Israeli airstrikes on Houthi rebel positions in Yemen, she said.

Jateen Trivedi, VP research analyst, LKP Securities, said market participants are closely awaiting the US Consumer Price Index (CPI) data later in the day. The inflation print could influence the US Federal Reserve's interest rate outlook and, in turn, affect gold's trajectory, Triveni added.



# Foreign players likely to return

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 13: The BCCI and IPL franchises have ramped up pressure on foreign boards to ensure that their players return for the league's resumption May 17 despite some lingering safety concerns in the wake of India-Pakistan military hostilities.

The BCCI top brass has instructed IPL COO Hemang Amin to individually speak to the likes of Cricket Australia (CA) and England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) to allay the concerns that the players may have about returning to India.

All the 10 teams are involved in a lot of back and forth with their overseas recruits over their arrival plans in India a day after the IPL announced the revised schedule following necessary security clearances from the government.

The world's biggest T20 league was suspended May 9 due to an India-Pakistan military showdown, triggered by the April 22 terrorist attack in Pahalgam, south Kashmir. A day after its suspension, a ceasefire between the two countries was announced, paving the way for IPL's resumption.

"We have been speaking to the foreign boards individually while teams are directly dealing with their players. We expect majority of them to return," a BCCI official told PTI Tuesday.

CA has left it on the players to decide on their participation and in matters like these, the players' association has a role to play as well.

Team officials, on the other hand, told PTI that some of the foreign players remain anxious to return but majority of them should come back before the tournament resumes.

The world's biggest T20 league was suspended May 9 due to an India-Pakistan military showdown, triggered by the April 22 terrorist attack in Pahalgam, south Kashmir. A day after its suspension, a ceasefire between the two countries was announced, paving the way for IPL's resumption.



Sam Curran, Jamie Overton, Noor Ahmad and Matheesha Pathirana.

Afghanistan's Ahmad and Pathirana from Sri Lanka are set to join the team while there are doubts over the availability of their New Zealand players.

Stoinis unlikely to return;

The team is on course to reach its first play-off since 2014.

Ponting has already walked from a home-bound plane after the ceasefire announcement last week. The team's support staff, including Brad Haddin and

James Hopes, never left India. The players of Punjab Kings and Delhi Capitals made a rather anxious road and train journey from Dharamsala to Delhi after the May 8 game in the picturesque town was called off midway due to the air raid alerts in neighbouring border areas.

"The foreign players were scared at that time and understandably. So the BCCI showed the safety of the players is paramount by ensuring they all got back home safely."

"Now the situation has got better, the players should return. However, some of them still remain on the edge," said an IPL official.

Like CSK, Sun Risers Hyderabad are also eliminated from the competition but the franchise is expecting captain Pat Cummins and marauding batter Travis Head to return for the remaining three league games.

"We are confident that majority of foreign players will return including the captain," said a team official.

Delhi Capitals, who remain in contention for a top-four spot, contacted their overseas players Tuesday morning and are waiting to hear back from them. Australian pacer Mitchell Starc is among DC's key players.

"We hope that all of them return. We will know more by tomorrow," said a team official.

The IPL final originally scheduled for May 25 has been pushed back to June 3.

The World Test Championship final between Australia and South Africa is scheduled from June 11 at the Lord's, leaving very little turnaround time for the Australians and South Africans who decide to take part in the IPL play-offs.

## KIYG 2025

# RECORDS SHATTERED AS RUNNERS, LIFTERS DAZZLE

Sprinter Aditya Pisal, 400m runner Kadir Khan set records

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, May 13: Sprinter Aditya Pisal emerged the fastest athlete, clocking a record time, as Maharashtra continued to lead the medal tally at the Khelo India Youth Games here Tuesday.

On another sweltering day, Pisal clocked 10.62 seconds in 100m to erase the previous meet record of 10.63 seconds set by Sadanand Kumar in Panchkula in 2022.

Uttar Pradesh's Kadir Khan broke the 400m record twice inside 24 hours as KIYG saw a spate of good performances at the Patliputra Sports Complex.

Pisal ran a blistering race to win the showpiece event with Bihar's Prince Kumar, who timed 10.64 seconds to finish a close second while Maharashtra's Rudra Sachin Shini (10.78 seconds) won the bronze.

In his maiden KIYG, Kadir improved upon his 400m record of 47.67 seconds set on Monday on his way to winning gold in 47.34 seconds. Bihar's Piyush Raj (47.43) won the silver while Karnataka's Sayed Sabeer (47.50) took the bronze.

"I did not expect I would run so well. This was my first Khelo India Youth Games. Now my effort will be to improve upon my record in the next edition of the Games. I am happy that I achieved my personal best here," said Kadir.

In the boys' 1500m event, UP's Bablu Kumar won the gold in 3:56.36 seconds.

In the weightlifting competition in Rajgir, Uttar Pradesh's Tushar Chaudhary broke both the clean and jerk and total lift records held by Goldi Khan of



Himachal Pradesh set during the National Championships in Nagercoil in 2023.

Despite stiff competition from Tamil Nadu's R Kishore, who improved the snatch record twice and the overall lift record once, Chaudhary remained unperturbed and produced a superb performance to clinch gold. Chaudhary lifted 126kg in snatch and 163kg in clean and jerk, which was a 10kg improvement in his weight category. It was 7kg more than Goldi's overall total.

In girls' hockey, Odisha defeated Jharkhand 3-1 in shootout to win the gold after the match had ended in a 1-1 stalemate. Madhya Pradesh won the bronze medal.

In the men's hockey final, Haryana beat Uttar Pradesh 1-0. Punjab won the bronze medal.

Rajasthan cyclists won five of the six medals on offer in the 30km boys and 20km girls Time Trial.

Ramavatar Chhimpia from Nokha, Bikaner, who trains at the National Centre of Excellence Patiala, and Manju Choudhary, a farmer's daughter who moved from Barmer to

Bikaner to pursue cycling, won the boys' and girls' gold medals, respectively. In badminton, Uttarakhand's Anish Negi beat teammate Nishcal Chandan 21-10, 17-21, 21-16 for the boys' singles gold. The girls' singles gold went to Tanoo Chandra of Chhattisgarh.

Tanoo defeated Rishika Nandi of Delhi 21-17, 21-9. The boys' doubles gold went to Charan Ram Tippanna and Hari Krishan of Andhra Pradesh, while the girls' doubles title went to Gayatri Rawat and Mansa Rawat of Uttarakhand.

Haryana dominated the wrestling competitions in both U-17 boys and girls' categories winning four of the seven gold medals on offer on Tuesday. Naina successfully defending her 49kg KIYG crown. Her compatriots Rovind (65kg Greco-Roman), Harsh (51kg) and Arjun Ruhil (92kg) took home the yellow medal.

Uttar Pradesh's Shilpi and Aditya Gupta took home the gold in the girls' 61kg and boys' 55kg Greco-Roman categories, respectively. Maharashtra's Param Laxman emerged champion in the boys' 80kg Greco-Roman category.

## SHORT TAKES

### Dilbag Singh finishes 9th

**Jiangshan:** Indian weightlifter Dilbag Singh delivered a below-par performance, finishing ninth in the men's 96kg category at the Asian Championships here Tuesday. The 20-year-old from Punjab registered a total lift of 339kg -- 147kg in snatch and 192kg in clean and jerk. Dilbag, the reigning National Games champion, began with a solid 147kg lift in snatch but failed in his next two attempts at 152kg.

### Kirti Patel beats Dhairya Yadav

**Mumbai:** Woman Candidate Master (WCM) Kirti Patel gave a commanding performance to beat Dhairya Yadav in the All India Chess Masters FIDE Rating tournament here Tuesday. In other matches, Chris Isaiah outplayed Janhavi Soneji in a well-contested tie, while Darsh Shetty and Yash Kapadi won convincingly against Parv Hakani and Dhruv Patel respectively.

### PCB sacks Waqar, Misbah

**Lahore:** Pakistan Cricket Board Tuesday sacked all five mentors who were appointed with domestic teams during the inaugural edition of its Champions One-Day Cup, including former captains Waqar Younis and Misbah Ul Haq. Former skipper Sarfaraz Ahmed, Shoaib Malik and Saqlain Mushtaq were the other mentors who were assigned to each of the five competing teams in the 50-overs competition.

### Duo Bopanna-Pavlaasek out of Rome Masters

**Rome:** India's Rohan Bopanna and his Czech partner Adam Pavlaasek bowed out of the men's doubles event at the Rome Masters with a straight-set defeat against the British team of Joe Salisbury and Neal Skupski, here Tuesday. Bopanna and Pavlaasek lost the pre-quarterfinal 3-6 3-6 in one hour and eight minutes. With Bopanna's defeat, India's challenge has ended in the elite clay-court tournament.

### Lungi Ngidi returns to SA

**Johannesburg:** Fast bowler Lungi Ngidi returned to the squad for the first time since October last year as South Africa named a 15-member squad for the World Test Championship final against Australia, beginning at Lord's June 11.

## Srija, Praggnanandhaa maintain joint lead



SRIJA SESHADRI



R PRAGGNANANDHAA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Al Ain/ Bucharest, May 13:** Overnight sole leader Woman Grandmaster Srija Seshadri made sure she did not slip too much as she earned a hard-fought draw against the highest-ranked Indian woman player Vantika Agrawal to remain in joint lead after the seventh round of the Asian continental women's chess championship here Tuesday.

With her second draw in seven games, Srija took her tally to six points and is now sharing the lead with Mongolian Mungunzul Bat-Erdene, who put it across PV Nandhidhaa.

In the 'Open' section, things did not change much as the leader, Bardiya Daneshvar was held to a draw by Ivan Zemlyanskii of Russia, while the second-placed Indian Murali

Karthikeyan also drew with another Russian Sergei Lobanov.

It is strange why the Russians are playing in the Asian event for the first time but the decision seems to have likely been taken because they can no longer participate in European tournaments due to the conflict with Ukraine.

With two more rounds to come, the competition is wide open in the women's section, while Daneshvar seems to be on course for a gold medal triumph.

#### Superbet Chess Classics

Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa played out a draw with Poland's Duda Jan-Krzysztof to maintain joint lead with 3.5 points after the sixth round of Superbet Chess Classics, a part of the grand chess tour.

Playing the black side of an English opening, Praggnanand-

haa was subjected to some initial tactics by Duda but the Indian was quite up to task in not giving any free-way to the Polish opponent.

Duda showed his intent with a queen sacrifice for a rook and minor piece in the middle game and Praggnanandhaa was quick to realise that his chances were slim. The draw was the best result possible as neither player could make much progress.

Meanwhile, USA's Fabiano Caruana was seen trying hard to break through with a piece sacrifice against local hero Deac Bogdan-Daniel but it looked though he would have to settle for a draw as well.

The other overnight leader Maxime Vachier-Lagrave could do little with his white pieces either as drew very quickly with Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan.

# Standing upside-down from childhood brings Aavya into spotlight

AGENICES

**New Delhi, May 13:** Aavya Anan of Bihar, the youngest gymnast at the Khelo India Youth Games 2025, Bihar, decided to turn things, quite literally, upside down. Aavya's journey in gymnastics began with this peculiar habit: the little girl loved standing on her head, legs in the air, flipping and arching with joy in her living room.

It is interesting to hear the youngest Khelo India gymnast speak about finding her calling. "I didn't know Gymnastics is a sport," Aavya giggles. "I just liked staying upside down. My parents saw me doing arches and flips while I used to watch dance shows on television at home, and decided to introduce

me to Gymnastics"

Aavya's name means the first rays of the sun, and her mother believes that her daughter will shine on the Indian gymnastics firmament someday. A class 4 student, she has been training for just 18 months at the Rising Youth Gymnastics Academy in Patna, under the watchful eyes of coach Roshan Yadav. She won two gold medals and a silver medal in the 2025 State Championships.

"This is my first Khelo India Games and I'm keen on giving my best. I'm not thinking about defeating others, but I'm just focused on giving my best and not being nervous. If I don't win a medal now, I'll win the next time," Aavya said with the quiet confidence of a mature athlete. She is competing in Artistic



Gymnastics events here.

Coach Roshan Yadav, a former gymnast, believes she's a prodigy. "She is very talented, and her body structure is

built for gymnastics. She picks things up really quickly, trains long hours with great endurance," he said. "Despite being so young, she will give the more

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experienced gymnasts a run for their money."

Her determination is matched by the unwavering support of her parents, who stand out in a region where sports are often overlooked in favour of academics. "If my family hadn't supported me, I wouldn't be here. Many girls don't get this chance. But

my mom and dad told me, 'Do what you like. Make your own name,'" Aavya added.

Roshan is himself a product of the Khelo India Scheme and has been a trainee at the SAI National Centre of Excellence in Kolkata. He has now returned to Bihar and opened a Gymnastics centre. "I wanted to raise the standard of Gymnastics in Bihar. My name is Roshan, and with Aavya, Bihar will shine brighter in Gymnastics."

At the moment, the nine-year-old is paving a path for every little girl who dares to stand on her head and look at the world differently. Aavya's dream is simple yet powerful: "I want to be known as a Gymnastics girl! Not just in Bihar, but all over India."