

People will decide successor: Naveen

Breaking his protracted silence, BJD supremo and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Thursday decided to go to town over the issue of his political successor that has become a rallying point for the Opposition, especially the BJP, during the ongoing poll campaigns. Responding to a pointed question, during an interview to a leading news agency, if there is a succession plan in the regional party, Patnaik, 77, said his successor will be decided by the people of the state. In the backdrop of a narrative built by the saffron party over the issue, only the June 4 results will reveal if the 'belated' clarifications by the veteran leader has cut any ice among the electorates.



his successor, the CM, who is seeking his record sixth term in office, said, "I can't understand these exaggerations. You may have noticed that he's not contesting in the elections... He's not my successor and I see all of these as exaggerations of all sorts." Patnaik exuded confidence in BJD forming the government again in the state and the party winning a good majority of the Lok Sabha seats. "I see very handsome results in the state elections. We will form a solid government again in the state, and in Parliament, we will have a very good majority," he said. When asked if his party will extend issue-based support to the BJP, or the NDA, at the Centre if a situation arises, Patnaik said, "Let me clarify that I have never shown acrimony

towards anyone in public life. And when support is required, we will judge our appropriate position." To a question, whether he would be the CM for all five years if BJD comes to power after the elections, Patnaik said, "I certainly hope so." The BJD supremo dismissed 'concerns' expressed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his health, saying that he is perfectly fine. Patnaik said that if the PM was so concerned about his health, he would have called him and inquired instead of 'stating it loudly in a public meeting'. "If the Prime Minister was so concerned about my health, even recently, he said that I'm a good friend of his; all he needed was to pick up the telephone and inquire about my health instead of stating it loudly at a public meeting three times yesterday. My health is perfectly fine. As you can see, I've been campaigning for the last month all over the state," Patnaik said. Dismissing allegations made by BJP leaders that Pandian 'controlling the state', the CM said that these are ridiculous and hold no significance. Patnaik said such allegations stem from the BJP's increasing desperation due to their declining popularity both in the state and nationally. "I see it that they are getting more and more desperate, particularly as their popularity is waning in the country," he said.

AGENCIES
Bhubaneswar, May 30: Putting all speculations to rest, BJD supremo and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Thursday said the future of his party and his successor will be decided by the people of Odisha. In an interview to news agency ANI, when asked about succession plans within his party, Naveen said, "I have said repeatedly that the successor will be decided by the people of the state. That is the natural result of these things. They (people) see how the party is being run, and the party is being run for the service of the people of Odisha, and will continue to do so." When asked whether he was grooming his close confidant VK Pandian as



- 1 DIESEL, PETROL, GAS, PULSES, AND OTHER ESSENTIAL FOOD ITEMS PRICES SKYROCKETED**
- 2 FALSE PROMISES OF PROVIDING JOBS AND LOOTING CRORES OF RUPEES**
- 3 ROOTED IN CORRUPTION, LIKE THE VYAPAM SCAM AND MANY MORE**
- 4 LOOTING THE HARD-EARNED MONEY OF THE WORKING CLASS AND NATIONAL WEALTH TO BENEFIT CRONY CAPITALISTS**
- 5 TRIED TO OBSTRUCT THE STATE GOVERNMENT'S TRANSFORMATION WORK OF HERITAGE SITES IN PURI, BHUBANESWAR, SAMBALPUR, ETC.**
- 6 TRIED TO DESTROY FARMERS' LIVES WITH ANTI-FARMER LAWS**
- 7 GLORIFYING GOONS AND LEADERS INVOLVED IN ANTI-PEOPLE ACTIVITIES**
- 8 LANDS OF POOR AND TRIBAL PEOPLE GRABBED ILLEGALLY**
- 9 SOLD NATIONALLY OWNED COMPANIES FOR PENNIES**
- 10 SPREAD LIES, USED THE MEDIA FOR SELF-BENEFIT, AND PLAYED LOW-LEVEL POLITICS**

DSPL - 05

PRECAUTIONS AGAINST HEATSTROKE DURING POLL

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

SYMPTOMS OF HEATSTROKE

- Severe sweating
- Reeling, nausea and vomiting
- Severe thirst
- Muscle cramp
- Fainting / Fits

PRECAUTIONS

- Prefer cool hours of morning/afternoon for going outside
- Drink enough water before going outdoors
- Use light colour loose cotton dress, umbrella & foot wear
- Avoid physical labour /long walking under sun
- Take rest in shade periodically

HEATSTROKE TREATMENT

- Shift the patient to an open and cool place, give ORS/salt-sugar solution/plain water
- Remove clothing as far as practicable
- Provide head bath and cold sponging
- Keep the patient under AC or fan
- If condition does not improve, shift to hospital

Health & Family Welfare Department, Odisha

OIPR-10003/13/0011/2425

VOTE WISELY

VOTE FOR SANKHA TWICE

ONE VOTE FOR MP

ONE VOTE FOR MLA

PUBLISHED BY DR. SASMIT PATRA, GENERAL SECRETARY, BIJU JANATA DAL

leisure



SOFIA HIRED DIALECT COACH BUT IN VAIN

Columbian actress Sofia Vergara was once determined to get rid of her melodic accent, fearing her speech would limit opportunities. The *Bent* actress told People, "I hired a dialect coach to further my career, but it was a waste."

RARE BEAUTY ISN'T ABOUT MAKING MONEY: GOMEZ

Game of Thrones actress Selena Gomez has revealed that profit isn't the focus of her Rare Beauty brand. "I never wanted it to be about making a lot of money and that's it," said the 31-year-old star, who launched her cosmetics company in 2020, told *Time* magazine.



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ARIES

If you are a gadget freak, today you will have enough opportunity to flaunt your knowledge and impress everyone else. Students with a scientific bent of mind will excel in studies. Ganesha advises housewives to experiment with their own recipes, and not to worry about the oven - it will not burst.

TAURUS

This is not one of those easy and carefree days. You are in for a lot of mental anguish. The mental pressure you feel, you will realise, is of your own making. Unless you make radical changes in your basis outlook, mental tensions are likely to become an everyday affair.

GEMINI

Your desire to go travelling with your family members will receive an impetus today and you will set out to schedule your itinerary. It is a good time for travel and you will be able to more than satisfactorily execute your travel plans within your budget, says Ganesha.

CANCER

You will win over people with the gift of the gab. Your rhetoric will prove beneficial to you. You may get into an argument or have friction with someone in the in-laws' side. But keep your cool and face it bravely, so as to stave off mental depression.

LEO

Traders and businessmen will face heightened competition today. Financial losses are possible. It is not a good day for investments and speculations. Avoid heated discussions with people. Be cautious in all your dealings today, says Ganesha.

VIRGO

Give people a word of encouragement and motivate them to achieve bigger things, advises Ganesha. Don the thinker's cap and you may find yourself in contemplation. Criticism will hurt you, but be as unflappable as you can and proceed to your target, says Ganesha.

LIBRA

Ganesha says you will try to gain in-depth knowledge about new technological inventions in your spare time today. Some of you may have queries regarding higher education that you may be able to take up today and reach a conclusion about.

SCORPIO

You are quite vocal about your ambitious plans, says Ganesha. But, being too harsh on yourself or others for that matter may spoil your relationships with many people. Stay away from lengthy discussions to avoid any conflicts.

SAGITTARIUS

Being a part of all things bright and beautiful will remain the highpoint today, says Ganesha. You may don the hat of an activist and fight injustice and discrimination in the right spirits. Even if you are asked to conquer the world, you will be able to do it today, says Ganesha.

CAPRICORN

Today, you will not be in the right mood to work or produce expected results. Mounting work pressure may further dampen your self-confidence, foretells Ganesha. The dullness will vanish in the air by the evening and you will be back to your happy self. Are you wondering who will be responsible for this change? The answer is your friends and family members.

AQUARIUS

You spend a lot of time planning for a better future. Sure, it does minimize the chances of errors as you know possible obstacles in advance. But, the time you spend for calculations takes you away from the reality and you don't fully concentrate on what you have now. Learn to balance, advises Ganesha.

PISCES

You know how important money is and you will think about it all day. You will think less about expenses today and more about prosperity and fame today. Worry about family might increase and in return they will support you, says Ganesha.

'I'm a learner'

Mumbai: Actress Kriti Sanon enjoyed the success of her two recent releases, *Crew* and *Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya* recently said that everyone should pursue everything they want to do in their life. As kids, whenever somebody asks about ambition, everyone usually gives one answer, be it an actor, doctor, or teacher. She wonders why it is always just one; it should be more than that.

This belief led the actress to manage her career as an actor, producer, and entrepreneur. She added that she likes to be a newcomer every once in a while, learning new things. She calls herself a learner who is very curious as a person. She loves acting, but if she feels passionate about something else, she does that. Kriti loves experimenting with everything.

She completed a decade in the industry earlier this year, and she posted a video on her Instagram account with the caption, "It has been 10 years since my debut in the Hindi film industry! The best, most magical decade of my life so far! It feels like yesterday when I stepped on a film set for the very first time and felt... alive, like I was meant to be here." AGENCIES



Sanya starrer Mrs selected for NYIFF

Mumbai: The upcoming film *Mrs*, starring Sanya Malhotra in the lead, has been selected as the closing film for the 24th edition of the New York Indian Film Festival (NYIFF) and will be screened June 2.

Mrs, the Hindi remake of the acclaimed Malayalam film *The Great Indian Kitchen*, is a captivating account of a woman's strength and resilience.

Reacting to the news, Sanya said: "It is a proud moment for me that *Mrs* has been chosen as the closing film for NYIFF. Playing Richa, a character grappling with the delicate balance between tradition and ambition, was an immense honour and responsibility, given that it embodies the struggles of so many Indian women. Our endeavour to breathe life into this story has been incredibly rewarding, and I am eagerly awaiting to share it with the world."



Mrs has also secured nominations for Sanya in the Best Actress and Arati Kadav in the Best Director categories. IANS

Neena's thoughts on progressive women

Mumbai: Actress Neena Gupta's recent outing *Panchayat 3* released today, May 28, on OTT, and the third season is getting rave reviews from the audience. The actress, who delivered a solid performance in the role of Manju Devi in the series, recently shared her thoughts on how strong women are often portrayed on the silver screen.

Talking to this agency, Neena shared, "Progressive women are often pre-

sented as vamps or as negative characters onscreen."

She also cited her television show *Khandaan* as an example, where she played the role of a progressive woman, however, it was conceived as a negative character. "Bold characters don't work here. In movies, we see them as sati savitri," the actress said.

Neena further spoke about how the characters in the web series are inspired by real life, and that one can find women like Manju Devi around us. She stated that the character she plays is someone very satisfied with her household things, and has no ambition. "Pradhan is working on her behalf, people liked it and that's how women in India do it in rural or urban places. So, women relate to me, to Manju devi," she added.



Tamannaah shares her dream date

Mumbai: Actress Tamannaah Bhatia attended a press conference for her film *Aranmanai 4*. During a fun interaction with the media at the event, she revealed the actor she wants to go on a movie date with and also expressed her strong desire to work with him.

Reacting to the question of which B-town actor she would want to watch her horror comedy *Aranmanai 4* with, she started blushing and initially tried to ignore the question. The audience, expecting her to name her boyfriend and actor Vijay Varma, began cheering

loudly. The *Baahubali* actress said, "If whatever you say turns out to be true, then it would be delightful, so I should choose wisely".

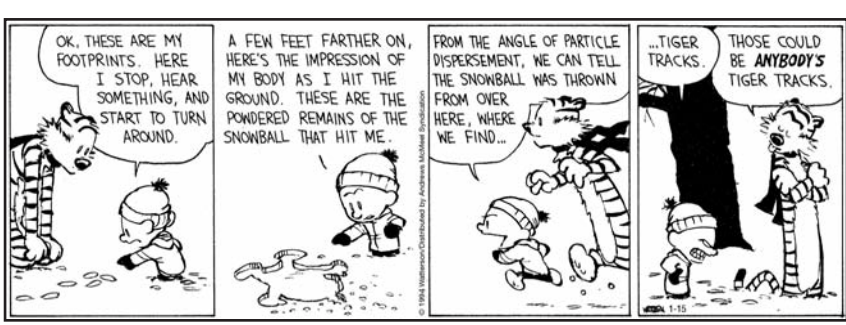
"I think I love Shah Rukh; I just love him, so I would love to do a film with Shah Rukh", she added.

The horror film serves as a continuation of *Aranmanai 3*, which came out in 2021 also features Raashii Khanna, Sundar C, and Santhosh Prathap in pivotal roles. AGENCIES

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

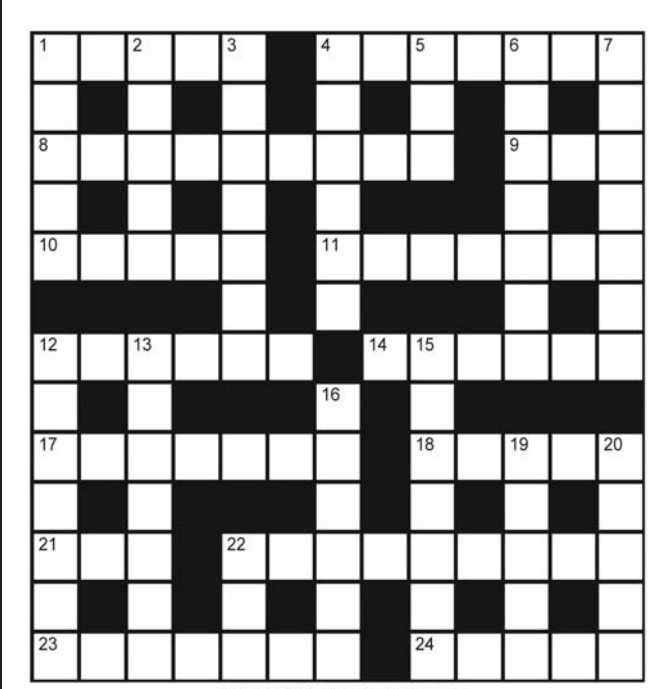


BREVITY



FUN post

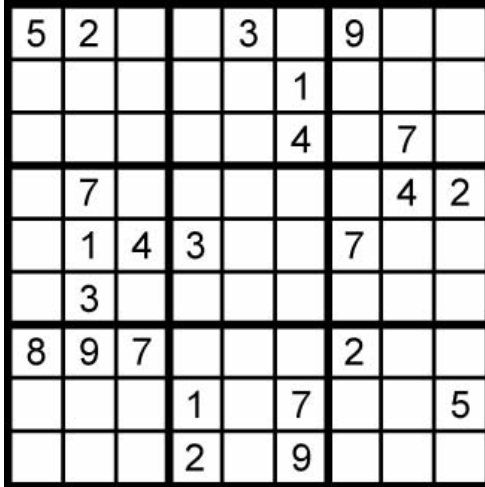
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Cat-like mammal
 - 4 Sweet treat
 - 8 Apprehensively
 - 9 Uncommon sense
 - 10 Part of a joint
 - 11 Sympathy
 - 12 Shellfish
 - 14 Lecherous goatmen
 - 17 Sitting room
 - 18 Fancy tie
 - 21 Ram's ma'am
 - 22 Acolytes
 - 23 Earnest
 - 24 Hard wood
 - Down**
 - 1 Vessel
 - 2 Female fox
 - 3 Vanquish
 - 4 Seal
 - 5 Word of possibility
 - 6 Astronaut's concern
 - 7 Tropical fruit trees
 - 12 Fish hawks
 - 13 Operating room figure
 - 15 Marine rock-clinger
 - 16 Lattice
 - 19 Doctrine
 - 20 Toothsome
 - 22 Retainer

SUDOKU

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

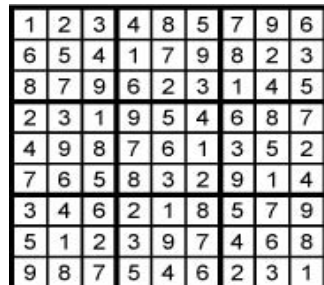


SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD

SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

'Heatwave' claims 10 lives in Rourkela

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, May 30: As many as 10 persons died in a span of six hours in the Steel City here reportedly due to intense heatwave conditions, Thursday.

Rourkela Government Hospital (RGH) director in-charge (DIC) Sudharani Pradhan told the media that the fatalities were reported at the hospital between 2pm and 8pm, Thursday.

She said while eight persons had died before they were admitted to RGH, the other two lost their lives during treatment. "Though the exact reasons behind the unnatural deaths are yet to be ascertained, we suspect those occurred due to the intense heatwave conditions prevailing at present," the DIC said.

Pradhan said the two patients, who were treated at the hospital, were running with very high temperature (103-104 degrees Fahrenheit) at the time of their admission.

"They might have died due to heatstroke while the clinical history of those received dead could not be studied," she said.

3 dead in Puri firecracker mishap; CM orders probe

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 30: At least three persons, including a minor, died and 33 others were injured after a stockpile of firecrackers exploded during Chandan Yatra in Puri, prompting Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik to order a high-level administrative probe into the mishap, Thursday.

According to a statement issued by the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), the inquiry will be conducted by the Revenue and Disaster Management department's Additional Chief Secretary, who is also the Special Relief Commissioner. Patnaik announced an ex-gratia of Rs 4 lakh from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund for the next of kin of each deceased.

Hundreds of people had gathered on the banks of Narendra Pond in the Holy City to witness



The rituals when the accident happened Wednesday night.

A group of devotees was celebrating the festival with crackers. Suddenly, a splinter from the burning crackers struck the stockpile, leading to the explosion, Puri SP Pinak Mishra said, adding, "Legal action will be taken against whoever found guilty."

Puri Collector Siddharth Shankar Swain said that the person, who was bursting the firecrackers, was also seriously injured and undergoing treatment in the ICU of a hospital.

Chief Secretary PK Jena,

Khurda Collector Chanchal Rana and Health department Commissioner-cum-Secretary Shalini Pandit visited different hospitals late Wednesday night to supervise the treatment of the injured people.

According to Pandit, the injured were admitted to various private and government hospitals in Puri, Cuttack and the Capital City here.

"One boy succumbed to his injuries at SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack, while two others died while undergoing treatment at private hospitals here in the wee hours of Thursday," Pandit said.

The CM visited a private hospital here to meet the injured persons in the morning.

Pandit said that the state government is bearing the treatment cost of all those injured in the accident.

HIGH-DECIBEL CAMPAIGN ENDS 99.61L to decide fate of 460 June 1

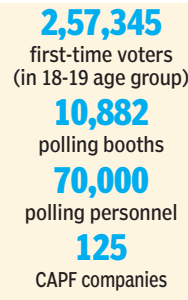
POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 30: Curtains came down Thursday on the high-decibel campaign for the final phase of elections in the state wherein over 99.61 lakh voters will decide the fate of 460 candidates in fray for six Lok Sabha seats and 42 Assembly segments under it June 1.

Six Parliamentary constituencies - Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara and Jagatsinghpur - and 42 Assembly segments under it will participate in the final electoral phase.

CEO NB Dhal said that 125 companies of CAPFs will be deployed for peaceful conduct of the June

1 elections. "There are a total of 460 candidates - 66 for six Lok Sabha and 394 for 42 Assembly seats - for the last phase polls," Dhal said. As many as 99,61,057 voters are eligible to exercise their franchise in the last phase of polls. Of the total voters, 50,88,076 are male and 48,72,981 are female. As many as 2,57,345 are first-time voters (in 18-19 age group), he said.



Elaborate arrangements, including operation of 14 women-managed booths, have been made across 10,882 polling centres to facilitate smooth voting, the CEO said. Over 70,000 polling personnel are slated to be engaged during the concluding phase.

Sensex, Nifty fall for 5th day in row

AGENCIES

Mumbai, May 30: Falling for the fifth day in a row, benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty tumbled nearly 1 per cent each Thursday due to heavy sell-off in metal, consumer durables and select IT shares amid the monthly expiry of derivatives contracts.

The 30-share BSE Sensex plunged by 617.30 points or 0.83 per cent to settle at 73,885.60.

The barometer hit the day's low of 73,668.73 due to selling in blue-chips. In the five days of fall, the barometer tanked 1,532 points or 2 per cent. The index has been on a downtrend since May 23 when it closed at its lifetime high level.

The NSE Nifty dropped by 216.05 points or 0.95 per cent to close at 22,488.65. The index has lost 479 points in the five sessions to Thursday. Analysts said investors remained cautious, ahead of the 2024 general election results, which are set to be announced next week. "The benchmark index is taking cues from the US market as treasury yields continue to climb following the stickiness of global inflation, delaying the central bank's interest rates cut policy," Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said.

From the Sensex pack, Tata Steel, Titan, Tech Mahindra, Wipro, Bajaj Finserv, Bajaj Finance, Nestle India, Tata Motors and JSW Steel were the biggest laggards. ICICI Bank, Axis Bank, HDFC Bank, State Bank of India and Kotak Mahindra Bank were the gainers.

Sensex and the NSE Nifty have experienced their fifth consecutive session of losses, resulting in investors losing nearly ₹10 lakh crore in market wealth. The BSE midcap gauge declined 1.21 per cent, while small-cap index plunged 1.33 per cent.

Monsoon reaches Kerala & North East

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 30: Southwest monsoon made an early onset over Kerala and the North East Thursday, setting the stage for the four-month rainy season crucial for country's agriculture-based economy.

Weather scientists said cyclone Remal, which ripped through West Bengal and Bangladesh Sunday, had pulled the monsoonal flow to the Bay of Bengal, which could be one of the reasons for early onset over the North East.



The weather office had May 15 announced the onset of monsoon over Kerala by May 31.

The simultaneous onset of monsoon over Kerala and the North East is quite rare and has happened on four occasions earlier - in 2017, 1997, 1995 and 1991.

The simultaneous onset of monsoon over Kerala and the North East is quite rare and has happened on four occasions earlier - in 2017, 1997, 1995 and 1991.

India Meteorological Department said. The weather office said southwest monsoon has also covered most parts of the North East including entire Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh and parts of Tripura, Meghalaya, and Assam.

Between 1971 and 2024, the earliest onset of monsoon over Kerala was in 1990 when the annual rains reached the coastal state May 18. The onset of monsoon over Kerala happened May 22 in 1999, and May 23 in 1974 and 2009.

Kerala has been receiving heavy rains for the past few days resulting in a surplus May rainfall, the weather office data showed.

The normal monsoon onset date for Kerala is June 1 and for Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Manipur and Assam is June 5.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



I didn't know Gandhi until they made a film on him. Before that, I knew only Godse

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STF arrests notorious brown sugar trafficker

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 30: The Special Task Force (STF) unit of Odisha Police arrested a notorious drug peddler from Mayurbhanj district Thursday.

The accused has been identified as SK Mohatab Ali alias Kati, 39, a resident of Baripada town in Mayurbhanj district. STF sources said that on the basis of intelligence input, a raid was conducted by a STF sleuths at Baripada with the help of Mayurbhanj district police May 29 and Ali was apprehended.

STF said February 21 last year, 302 grams of brown sugar and other incriminating materials were seized from the



- ♦ The accused has been identified as SK Mohatab Ali alias Kati, 39, a resident of Baripada town in Mayurbhanj district
- ♦ STF stated that 3.25 kg of brown sugar was seized from Ali's possession in 2020, eventually leading to his arrest
- ♦ Prior to which, Ali had been booked thrice by the cops in 2008 and 2015 in connection with a number of cases

possession of one accused, Khirasindhu Samal. However, Ali, the main supplier of brown sugar to Samal, managed to give police a slip.

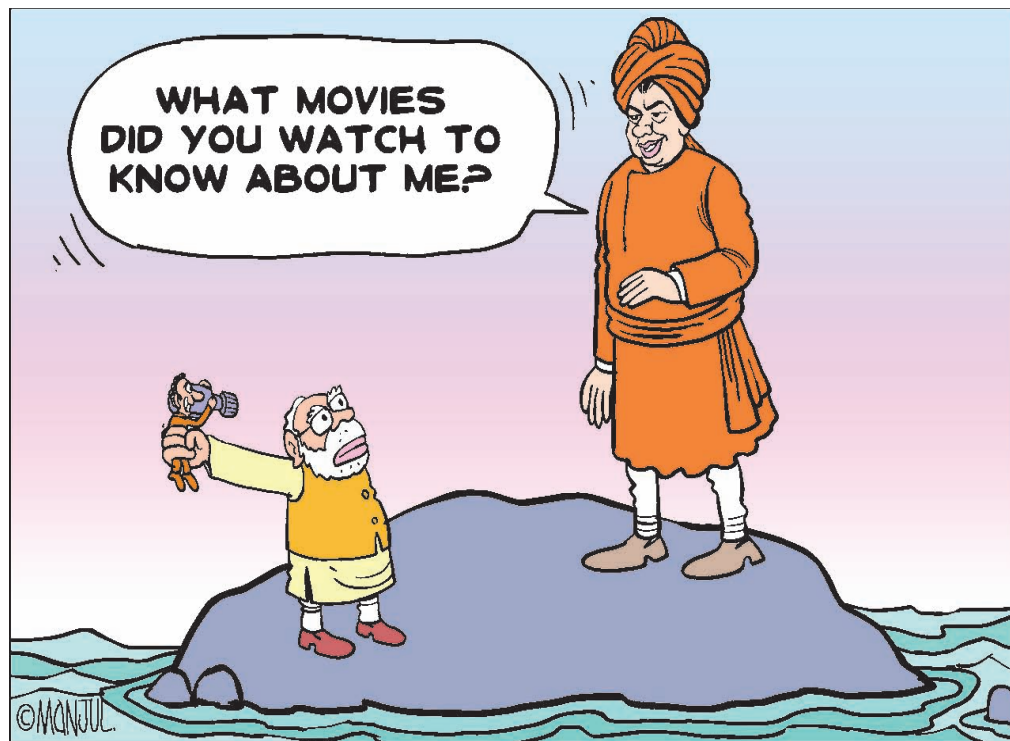
In addition, the STF stated that 3.25 kg of brown sugar was seized from Ali's possession in 2020, eventually leading to his arrest. However, he managed to secure a bail within two years of jail. Prior to which, he had been booked thrice by the cops in 2008 and 2015 in connection with a number of cases.

The STF has booked Ali under Section 21 (C) of IPC and 29 of the NDPS act. He was produced before the district court in Mayurbhanj for extra remand.

NAI organises talk on archaeological archives

Bhubaneswar: The eastern branch of National Archives of India (NAI) organised its second monthly talk programme titled "Importance of Archives for Archaeological Research: A Study on Archaeological Reporting in the Utkal Dipika" here Thursday. Kishore Kumar Basa, eminent researcher and former Vice-Chancellor of North Odisha University joined the event as the chief guest. During the session Basa said that all the archives are not digitised because of their sensitive nature. He further highlighted the reliability on Utkal Dipika for archaeological research which is essential in present day as it provides a reliable source and accurate data. On the occasion, assistant director of NAI, eastern branch Satyanarayan Mishra said that the newspapers available in the archives and Utkal Dipika are some of the major resources for research.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



'KIIT's initiatives on women empowerment praiseworthy'



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, May 30: The real power in any household belongs to ladies. In my country, women play a major role in society. I am happy to note that KISS also gives opportunities to young girls towards self-empowerment, Mongolian ambassador to India Ganbold Dambajay said while addressing the special convocation of KIIT Deemed to be University Thursday.

Lauding KIIT, KISS, and KIMS for their initiatives in empowering women, he encouraged the young graduates to conquer the world with their hard work and dedication towards society. A total of 665 candidates received their degrees in the ceremony. In medicine, 158 students were awarded DM, MD/MS and MBBS degrees. Similarly, 94 students were awarded BDS (Dental) and 96 MSc Nursing and BSc in Nursing degrees.

On this occasion, KIIT also awarded degrees to the international students including three PhD, 41 postgraduate and 273 undergraduate degrees.

KIIT Chancellor Ashok Parija credited the KIIT and KISS

founder Achyuta Samanta's tireless dedication as the driving force behind KIIT's success and urged the students to "embrace the challenge, be bold in your aspirations, and compassionate in your actions."

KIIT Pro Chancellor Subrata Kumar Acharya underscored the rapid strides the university has made, noting its position among the top 10 in the country by Times Higher Education.

Vice Chancellor Saranjit Singh highlighted the university's international collaborations, stating, "More than 20 MoUs have been signed with international universities, including a cluster of 22 US universities." He said that KIIT's TBI has won the Successful Incubator Award by Startup Odisha.

City IIT, ILS collaborate to develop tuberculosis vaccine

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, May 30: In a move towards emphasising on research and development of tuberculosis vaccine, two premier institutions— Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bhubaneswar and Institute of Life Sciences (ILS)—signed an MoU here Thursday.

The collaboration aims to bring excellence in technical education, particularly in the fields of biological sciences, molecular biology, and microbiology to improve the quality of academic practices.

The MoU was signed between Rajesh Roshan Dash, dean, Sponsored Research and Industrial Consultancy (In-Charge) of IIT Bhubaneswar and Debasis Dash, director of ILS. Shreepad Karmalkar director, IIT Bhubaneswar was present on the occasion.

Speaking at the event, Karmalkar said, "The collaboration will enhance the ecosystem for research in various



fields of life sciences, and help in treatment and cure of many diseases and natural ailments. IIT Bhubaneswar, as a technical knowledge provider, is looking forward to this association to foster innovation in this field."

Dash expressed his gratitude and said, "The MoU between the two premier institutions will not only bring transformation in research in the field of biological sciences but also help Odisha in creating a benchmark in this domain. The spe-

cial focus towards developing the vaccine for tuberculosis prevention will boost our efforts."

The faculty members from both the institutes will collaborate and train students in their individual areas of expertise, based on mutually agreed programmes. The institutes plan to work towards jointly organising symposia, colloquium, workshops, seminars, and conferences on different topics and conduct joint research projects.

Ashish Singh undergoes medical examination at AIIMS Bhubaneswar

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 30: Senior IPS officer Ashish Kumar Singh Thursday underwent a medical examination at the AIIMS here, as per directions of the Election Commission.

The poll panel had ordered a detailed examination of Singh, IG (CM Security) by a 'special medical board' constituted by the Director of AIIMS-Bhubaneswar.

The medical report of Singh, who has been on medical leave since May 4, should reach the commission latest by May 31, it had said in an order.

The 2010-batch IPS officer reached the AIIMS-Bhubaneswar around 8:30am and left the medical facility at 1pm, sources said.

Sources added that doctors at the hospital carried out ECG and ultrasound examinations on Singh and took his blood sample for analysis.



In view of conducting free and fair elections in the state, the EC had April 2 removed Singh from the post of IG-Central Range Police and ordered him to refrain from taking part in poll-related activities. Subsequently, the Odisha government appointed him as IG (CM Security).

The Odisha BJP had April 5 lodged a complaint against Singh with the EC, alleging that the IPS officer "continued to work in favour of the BJD".

Bhub-Kuala Lumpur direct flight by AirAsia

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, May 30: As part of continuous efforts to promote Malaysia as a preferable tourist destination, Tourism Malaysia, in collaboration with AirAsia announced direct flights between Bhubaneswar and Kuala Lumpur, recently.

With this strategic expansion, AirAsia aims to strengthen the air connectivity between India and Malaysia, offering more convenient travel options for tourists and fostering closer ties between the two nations. The new direct route will commence from

Bhubaneswar to Kuala Lumpur every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.

"We are delighted to partner with AirAsia to enhance accessibility for travellers from Bhubaneswar," said Noriah Jaafar, director, Tourism Malaysia-Mumbai. "These new direct flights underscore our commitment towards promoting tourism and strengthening bilateral relations between India and Malaysia. We are confident that these routes

will facilitate increased tourist arrivals, providing visitors with unforgettable experiences in our beautiful country," she added.

"We are excited to launch direct flights from Bhubaneswar to Kuala Lumpur. We look forward to welcoming travellers aboard our flights, showcasing the warmth and hospitality of Malaysia," said Jagjit Singh Oberoi, senior sales manager, AirAsia.

Travellers can now fly directly to Kuala Lumpur (visa free) without changing flight or layovers.



WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY

PNN & AGENCIES

Children are most vulnerable to thirdhand smoke pollutants that settle indoors when tobacco is smoked, said health experts Thursday, ahead of World No Tobacco Day. World No Tobacco Day is observed every year May 31 to raise awareness about the health risks of using tobacco.

Thirdhand smoke contains more than 250 residual chemicals including nicotine and cancer-causing substances such as formaldehyde, and naphthalene. It builds up on surfaces over time and can get embedded in clothing, furniture, drapes, bedding, and carpets.

"Children are most vulnerable to thirdhand smoke because they tend to touch surfaces, and

often their mouths, resulting in skin exposure and ingestion of these residues," Lancelot Mark Pinto, from PD Hinduja Hospital and MRC, Mumbai, told IANS.

"The only way to prevent such exposure is by completely banning indoor smoking, and insisting on keeping a radius outside buildings and homes smoke-free," added Lancelot, Consultant Pulmonologist and Epidemiologist at Hinduja.

Tobacco use remains a significant global public health concern, posing a threat to individuals' well-being and imposing substantial societal burdens. Despite widespread awareness of its detrimental effects, tobacco use continues to impose a heavy toll, with millions of lives lost annually to tobacco-related diseases.

Children most vulnerable to thirdhand smoke



- Thirdhand smoke contains more than 250 residual chemicals including nicotine and cancer-causing substances such as formaldehyde, and naphthalene
- It is a hidden danger, lingering in furniture, walls, and clothing long after a cigarette is extinguished. The residue can remain for weeks, months, or even years

Children are most vulnerable to thirdhand smoke because they tend to touch surfaces, and often their mouths, resulting in skin exposure and ingestion of these residues

LANCELOT MARK PINTO | PD HINDUJA HOSPITAL & MRC, MUMBAI

According to World Health Organisation (WHO), tobacco use is responsible for more than eight million deaths annually worldwide, making it one of the leading causes of preventable death. An anti drug activist from the state and managing director of Salaam Jeevan, Md Imran Ali said "The theme of World No Tobacco Day 2024 is 'Protecting children from tobacco industry interference'. Time has come to invest with the children to create a tobacco free society in near future. All educational institutions must aim for a tobacco free campus."

"Every day, almost 2,500 people die in India due to consumption of tobacco and smoking habit. India is also becoming the capital of oral cancer disease. Children are getting at-

tracted to tobacco products due to free availability of them in market," he quoted.

"The tobacco industry employs strategies to attract people by introducing new products like e-cigarettes, hookah, and small pouches. It also utilises social media platforms for advertising. Therefore, we urge governments and tobacco consumption control advocates to hold accountable of those responsible for the deadly impacts caused by the tobacco industry," Ali added.

Subashish Behera, a local dentist said, "The tobacco eating habits impact on our oral health and hygiene, significantly increasing the risk of oral cancer. It affects gum tissue cells which leads to gum recession, exposing the sensitive tooth and jaw bone loss."

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Tidal waves pose huge threat to Kendrapara



POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, May 30: Frequent ingress of tidal waves in sea-side villages of this district is posing serious threats to lives and properties of the residents. These waves are destroying farmlands and are also harming buildings and roads, locals informed Thursday. They stated that unless the embankments are strengthened the waves will cause major damages in future. The threat of tidal waves extends from Talachua panchayat in Rajnagar block to Batighar panchayat of Mahakalapada block. Locals said that the tidal waves have assumed threatening proportions and are affecting cultivation, the main source of income for people in this district. The situation is the same for Gajaria, Utikana, Keradagada, Padmanavapur, Gopalpur, Rajgarh, Gadadharpur and Baragaon areas. Locals said that the tidal waves may destroy the geo-tube wall built at Pentha coast under Mahakalapada sub-division.

habitats in these areas, April 2022. The district collector, concerned departmental officials, tehsildars and the BDOs of the areas were in the survey team. It then prepared a report. However, the findings have remained as a report only as nothing has been done to strengthen the coastline. The report also indicates that the officials of the district administration were aware of the problems that could develop due to weak embankments.

Sources said that nothing has been done due to the apathy of officials. They alleged that many of these officials are hand in gloves with contractors. The funds sanctioned for various projects have been used to for self-gratification, the sources added.

Locals Basant Kumar Hati from Rajnagar, Subhashis Sarangi of Rajkanika, Sunil Kumar Gantayat from Mahakalapada, environmentalists Hemant Kumar Rout and Radhakant Mohanty said that the office of the Coastal Embankment division has been functioning in Aul since October, 2004. The office is responsible for maintaining the 111.53km-long coastal embankment in Aul sub-division, 237.62km embankment in Mahakalapada, 302.12km embankment in Rajnagar and 93.20km embankment in Rajkanika sub-divisions.

When contacted, Subrat Das, superintendent engineer of the Coastal Embankment division said that tidal waves have become a threat due to climate change. He said that various projects have been undertaken to increase the heights of the embankments by four to six metres.

They informed that sometimes the waves rise 40 metres above the embankments and surge into the villages. Similarly, the embankments of Brahmani, Kharasrota, Gobari and Hansua rivers are also affected by the saline water of tidal waves, they added.

Residents of some of the areas informed that on the last full moon day, the Patasala river swelled up and overflowed due to tidal waves. In the process various varieties of crops were destroyed as the water flowed into farmlands.

Locals informed that the Odisha government set up an office of the Coastal Embankment department at Aul in 2004. The reason behind setting up of the office was to protect the 744.47km-long coastal embankment spread along Aul, Rajkanika, Rajnagar and Mahakalapada blocks in the district.

A joint administrative survey was conducted to assess the threats due to natural calamities and their impact on human



HEAT COVER: With temperatures soaring to 46.2 degree Celsius, people buy caps from roadside vendors at Kacheri Square in Sambalpur, Thursday. OP PHOTO

Despite summer, mango farmers reap profits

Odisha, according to the NHB, is the eighth largest producer of mangoes in India, with an annual production of 847.81 tonnes. This year, however, due to inadequate precipitation the size and quantity of the fruit got affected

DEBADURLLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

Bhubaneswar, May 30: This year, despite the prolonged spell of heatwave in the state, the mango farmers of Odisha are poised to earn more from the lower harvest of the fruit. In addition, farmers based in the rich mango-producing belts such as Gajapati, Rayagada, Dhenkanal and Puri districts have alluded to depleting levels of moisture owing to sparse rainfall, which brought down the production and sent the prices zooming in local markets. Weather experts claimed this year's summer, between mid-April and May, was the harshest in last two decades. With a total of 27 heatwave days and temperatures exceeding 40 degrees Celsius in more than 15 districts, the trees had frequent felling of mangoes. The weather conditions also had a negative impact on size, weight and quality of the fruits, they added.



Krushna Mohapatra, 58, who owns a 60-acre mango orchard in Kashipur block of Rayagada district, said production has been slashed to less than 50 per cent this year, in comparison to the previous one. His orchard grows mangoes such as Langda, Daseri, Amrapalli, Sundari and Akhuras. But what stands out among these varieties is Amrapali, Krushna added, saying that the variety is barely available this year due to lack of flowering in the trees. "Last year, there was an endless harvest of Amrapali variety in my farm; hence, it saw a regular supply to the market till June-end. However, this year we are selling Amrapali mangoes to traders at four times the normal price due to non-availability. Similarly, the Daseri variety is being sold at ₹40 to traders, a hike of ₹10 from the last year. This year, we are expecting to

harvest 500 baskets against the typical 2,000 baskets per year. The prices would go northwards due to lower supply and farmers would benefit the most out of it," he added. Odisha, according to the National Horticulture Board (NHB), is the eighth largest producer of mangoes in India, with an annual production of 847.81 tonnes. This year, however, due to inadequate precipitation the size and quantity of the fruit got affected, claimed an expert, adding the weight of Langda and Amrapali mangoes is now 150 gm against their original of 300 gm. Typically, mango, unlike other fruits, doesn't require high-volume of water or fertilizer supply. Hence, growing mangoes is regarded the best option by farmers as it involves less risk and high returns. Another farmer, Ajit Sahu of

Mohana block in Gajapati district, said this year he sold Langda at ₹40 per kilo against previous year's ₹30. In several places across Gajapati district, farmers have sold Langda at a profit of ₹15 against last year's price, while Amrapali variety has been sold at a profit of ₹30. Similarly, he added that last year around nine mangoes of Langda variety made up a kilo. In a sharp contrast, this year even 12 Langda mangoes struggle to weigh a kilo. "Hence we are bound to raise the price by ₹10 per kilo to incur profit," Ajit said.

At present, prices of Langda and Amrapali are quoted at ₹60 and ₹80 per kg compared to ₹45 and ₹90 in the corresponding period last year.

Putting these theories at bay, Assistant Director of Horticulture at Ekamra Kanan, Chittaranjan Sahoo said regular ploughing of fields and ensuring adequate presence of moisture are key factors to grow good quality mangoes. "If a tree fails to bear fruits during peak harvest seasons of April-May, then certainly it did not receive surplus nourishment in the form of good soil and water. Not every time, the harsh climatic conditions play a spoilsport in the growth of mangoes. Hence, it is necessary for farmers to build favourable micro-climate for mango trees for sustainable growth," he added.

OSOU gets new Vice-Chancellor

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 30: Shyam Sundar Pattnaik was appointed as the Vice-Chancellor of the Odisha State Open University (OSOU), Sambalpur by Governor and Chancellor Raghubar Das, Thursday.

Pattnaik will remain in office for a period of three years with effect from the date he assumes office as such, or until further orders, whichever is earlier, a notification issued by the Governor's office said.

59-year-old Pattnaik is presently serving as professor and head, Media Engineering Department at the National Institute of Technical Teachers' Training and Research (NITTTR), Chandigarh.

He has teaching experience of 33 years and authored 13 books, the notification added.

Man hacks father to death

POST NEWS NETWORK

Khajuripada, May 30: A man allegedly hacked his father to death over a petty family issue at Kakendri village under Sadar police limits in Kandhamal district, late Wednesday night.

The deceased was identified as Baruni Gonda, while the accused, Rohit Gonda, fled the scene after committing the murder. The matter came to light after the deceased's daughter, Kalpana, lodged a complaint with the Sadar police station, Thursday morning. A police team went to the spot, recovered the body and sent it for post-mortem. A case has been registered in this connection and efforts are on to nab the fleeing accused.

Police, quoting the FIR, said that the incident occurred Wednesday night after Baruni returned home in an inebriated condition. He allegedly picked up a fight with his daughter-in-law. When Rohit intervened, Baruni attacked him with an axe. During a scuffle that ensued, Rohit managed to snatch the axe from his father and hacked the latter to death, police said.

Man sentenced to life for murder, rape bid

Rourkela: Justice Mahendra K Sutradhar of the POCSCO court here sentenced Thursday a man to life imprisonment after convicting him of killing an 11-year-old girl. The man had tried to rape the girl and murdered her when he failed to do so. The convict has been identified as Sumit Minz, a resident of Kantabahal village in Sundargarh district. The gruesome incident took place February 10, 2017. The judge also slapped a fine of ₹20,000 on Sumit. Failure to pay the fine will mean an additional one year in prison, the judge said. During the trial, a total of 26 witnesses deposed before the court. According to police reports, the minor was playing with her friends when she was accosted by the convict. He took her to a desolate place and tried to rape her. However, when the girl screamed, he strangled her and the victim fell unconscious. Initially Sumit fled the spot, but later came back to the spot with a big knife. He stabbed the unconscious girl and beheaded her. Then he threw the body and the head at two different places inside a jungle nearby. The father of the victim lodged a police complaint following which Sumit was first detained and then arrested.

'WADI' project transforms innovative tribal farmer's life

FARMLANDS ONCE DECLARED UNPRODUCTIVE, HELPING OWNER EARN LAKHS THROUGH INTER-CROPPING

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sundargarh, May 30: In the remote village of Damposh, nestled within Gyanpali panchayat of Kutra block in Sundargarh district, a remarkable transformation in agriculture is underway, locals informed Thursday. They informed that Anugraha Bada, a 35-year-old tribal farmer, has not only transformed his own life, but also that of others, with innovative agricultural practices.

Anugraha's journey is a testament regarding the transformative power which agriculture possesses. Anugraha decided to become farmer since childhood,

his family members informed. Today, he earns over rupees five lakh annually by developing a mango orchard. He also grows watermelons and chillis on his four-acre farmland, they added. In FY 2023-24 his income stood at ₹5.2 lakh, they said.

This success story began in 2020 year when Anugraha, along with 17 other farmers from Damposh, embarked on a journey with the help of NGO 'SEWAK'. Supported by the district mineral foundation (DMF) and the Horticulture department, they launched the 'WADI' project, establishing a mango orchard on a combined 73 acres of land. 'WADI' is a NABARD-funded tribal de-



velopment programme (TDP) which aims at promoting sustainable livelihoods for tribal communities and enhancing their incomes. Incidentally 'WADI' means a 'small orchard' covering one or two acres. Once he embarked on the project, Anugraha received assistance from NABARD. He got wires for fencing his farmlands, solar pumps for irrigation and various other accessories. Recognising the potential of inter-cropping while the mango trees matured, 'SEWAK' provided him



training on cultivation of watermelon and chillies. Enthusiastic and determined, Anugraha seized this opportunity and in FY 2021-22, he earned approximately ₹2 lakh from inter-cropping for the first time. The income grew in successive years. In 2022-23, Anugraha earned ₹2.45 lakh rupees from watermelon cultivation and ₹2.05 lakh from chillies, totalling ₹4.5 lakh. The following fiscal, his total income from inter-cropping soared to ₹5.2 lakh. It is set to rise again as already he has earned ₹2.6 lakh by selling watermelons and has stored 65 quintals of chillies worth ₹10 lakh. Anugraha's success story is far from over.

Currently cultivating radish, he anticipates a harvest next week and plans to grow watermelons on three acres of land during the monsoons.

Reflecting on his journey, Anugraha expressed his gratitude to NABARD for helping him. "Three years ago, even though we had land, it was not being cultivated properly. The success I have achieved today is possible only because of the 'WADI' project and NABARD. I am eternally indebted to the Horticulture department, DMF and 'SEWAK' for truly changing the course of my life and providing a sustainable livelihood," Anugraha stated.

Lawyers protest against train delays

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, May 30: The Rourkela Bar Association here has submitted a written complaint addressed to DRM, Chakradharpur division protesting against the inordinate delays in arrival of trains in this city. The association's president Sadananda Sahu, vice-president Rajkishore Pradhan and other office-bearers handed over the letter Thursday to Rourkela Railway Station manager, Prabhush Dash.

It should be stated here that some of the regular trains frequented by passengers including Tapaswini Express, Rajya Rani Express, Rourkela-Bhubaneswar-Rourkela Inter-City Express, Samaleswari Express are always late. A few days back, the Inter-City Express from Bhubaneswar arrived here at 1.30am instead of its usual time of 9.00pm. As a result passengers had to suffer a lot. The story with the other trains mentioned above is no different, locals informed. Passengers stated that most of the times, trains coming here

get stuck at the Kalunga or Panposh stations for long durations. They added that instead of looking at the comfort of passengers, the Railways are more interested in providing smooth passage to good trains.

"If you are in one of these trains coming to Rourkela, be sure you will suffer," said a harried passenger.

"Railways really don't care about passenger comforts. If it had then such inordinate delays on a regular basis wouldn't have occurred. The delays are man-made and deliberate," alleged Sahu. "The irony is that no one is perturbed. We have given a letter to the DRM and if the situation does not improve, the association will adopt other means to press forward the demand," he added.

The delays are causing various other problems for passengers. Once it is late into the night, they are fleeced by drivers of auto-rickshaws and other vehicles. "I bought a train ticket for ₹250 to come to Rourkela. However, I then had to pay ₹500 to go home which is five kilometres from the station," a passenger said.

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1) Borrower: M/s. Aradhya Motors, Prop: Mr. Bighneshraj Patasani, S/o: Mr. Lingaraj Patasani / Guarantor: Mr. Lingaraj Patasani, S/o: Mr. Lokanath Patasani, Both are At: Nizigarh, P.O.: Badamba, Dist.: Cuttack, PIN-754031.		₹ 63,40,696.28 as on 24.04.2024 & ₹ 16,58,284.73 as on 06.05.2024 + Interest and other expenses thereon	1) All the hypothecated assets, viz. Current Assets including Stocks, Book Debts, Receivables, Consumable Stores & spares and Hypothecated Movable Plant & Machinery, 2) Residential Land and Building at Plot No.: 559/2405 and 559/2405/2964, Khata No.: 942/223 & 942/196, Mouza: Nizigarh, Tahasil: Badamba, Dist: Cuttack with Ground Floor and First Floor RCC Built up Area of 7500 Sq.ft. Each and Total extent of Land 10,890 Sq.ft. Bounded by North: Main Road, South: Sunamuhin Bandha (Pond), East: Paresh Kumar Mohanty, West: Road		1) 24.04.2024 & 2) 06.05.2024 / 20.05.2024
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We have every one of us a role to fulfil, a work to do, a place which we alone can occupy.

THE MOTHER

Protect Free Speech

“Foreign agent,” “undesirable,” “extremist.” For thousands of independent journalists trying to live and work in Russia, these words can be life-changing.

In April, Ilya Barabanov, the BBC’s Russian correspondent, was labeled a “foreign agent” by Russia’s justice ministry, effectively barring him from covering many aspects of civic life. Such designations obviously stifle press freedom, and they are often just the beginning. The arrests in April of Konstantin Gabov and Sergey Karelin, both accused of producing content for the YouTube channel of the late opposition leader Alexei Navalny, show that even being affiliated with a media outlet deemed “extremist” is enough to face imprisonment.

Barabanov has since left Russia, and he is not alone. Under relentless state pressure, independent news outlets across the country are shutting down. More than two years into Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Russian journalists are finding a new life in exile, with at least 93 media outlets now operating abroad.

Belarusian journalists face a similarly grim reality. State-owned media are controlled by President Aleksandr Lukashenko, and those working for any remaining independent outlets face censorship, violence, and arrest. Following the suppression of Belarus’ pro-democracy protests in 2020 and 2021, most of the country’s independent media have relocated to Poland and Lithuania.

This alarming trend is by no means limited to Eastern Europe. Rising authoritarianism, conflict, and threats to press freedom are driving a growing number of journalists worldwide to flee their home countries. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, the number of journalists seeking support for relocation increased by 227 per cent between 2020 and 2023, with most coming from Afghanistan, Iran, and Nicaragua.

In their new host countries, many exiled journalists focus on resuming their work. As half the planet’s population heads to the polls this year, these journalists are uniquely positioned to provide factual counternarratives to state-sponsored propaganda and report on electoral fraud, corruption, and human-rights abuses in their home countries with less fear of retribution than colleagues who stayed behind. They also serve as lifelines for refugee populations, offering crucial information about the situation back home and providing fellow émigrés with a platform to voice their concerns.

This year has already provided several inspiring examples. In the run-up to February’s elections in El Salvador, El Faro, an exiled media outlet based in Costa Rica, exposed numerous cases of electoral misconduct, gerrymandering, misuse of public funds, and inadequate oversight of the diaspora vote. Likewise, Meduza, a Russian outlet now headquartered in Riga, produced important coverage of the Kremlin’s use of electronic voting terminals to pressure civil servants to vote in March’s presidential election.

Journalists who flee repressive regimes also face myriad challenges in their host countries. Merely registering and restarting their operations often requires navigating complex licensing laws and regulations. And even when they succeed, gaining and retaining the trust of audiences back home can be an uphill struggle, as their websites and apps are blocked, and virtual private networks (VPNs) prove increasingly unreliable. Moreover, expatriate media outlets still maintain sources, freelancers, and staff in their home countries. The safety of these individuals is now more precarious than ever, owing to their affiliation with “tainted” organisations.

And those who leave face not only the trauma of fleeing one’s country and the stress of adjusting to an unfamiliar environment, but also “lawfare attacks” that abuse international legal mechanisms, extradition orders, and cyber or intellectual-property laws. This puts them within reach of the autocratic regimes they sought to escape.

This weaponization of law to restrict media freedom is a constantly evolving threat. A 2023 survey of nearly 500 journalists from 106 countries, conducted by the Thomson Reuters Foundation in collaboration with the Tow Center for Digital Journalism at Columbia University, found that nearly 50 per cent faced legal threats, including charges of defamation, espionage, cyber libel, financial crimes, and terrorism.

Exiled media outlets, which often lack the necessary financial resources or legal know-how to defend themselves in their new jurisdictions, are particularly vulnerable to such attacks. The Salvadoran government, for example, has launched a money laundering investigation against El Faro, a tactic similar to the one used by Guatemala to imprison José Rubén Zamora, the founder and editor of the newspaper elPeriódico, which was forced to close in May 2023.

Cyberattacks, from hacks to surveillance and online harassment campaigns, are similarly transnational. After reporting on Navalny’s death in February, Meduza faced the largest cyberattack in its history. The attackers disabled Meduza’s website, blocked its mirror servers, destroyed its crowdfunding channels, and hacked journalists’ accounts.

Throughout the Thomson Reuters Foundation’s 40-year history of helping independent media build operational and legal resilience to such existential threats, we have never seen a greater need for support. As exiled news outlets from South Sudan to Venezuela prepare to report on elections in their home countries, we are scaling up our operations, and others should do the same. Media organisations have a collective duty to combat these malicious assaults on free speech that are causing democratic backsliding around the world.

The writer is CEO of the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

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WISDOM CORNER

“Every man’s life ends the same way. It is only the details of how he lived and how he died that distinguish one man from another.”

ERNEST HEMINGWAY

“Our goals can only be reached through a vehicle of a plan, in which we must fervently believe, and upon which we must vigorously act. There is no other route to success.”

PABLO PICASSO

“I have learned silence from the talkative, toleration from the intolerant, and kindness from the unkind; yet, strange, I am ungrateful to those teachers.”

KAHILIL GIBRAN

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

■ **1902:** The South African War, or Boer War, came to a close with the signing of the Peace of Vereeniging.

■ **1962:** On this day in 1962, the State of Israel hanged German official Adolf Eichmann, who had escaped from a prison camp in 1946 and spent some 14 years in hiding, for his part in the Nazi extermination of Jews during World War II.

EDUCATION & CONSCIOUSNESS

FOCUS SOCIETY

Education stands on the twin pillars of essentialist and emancipatory consciousness.

Education, in terms of skills, qualifications, grades, marks, and employability, reflects the essentialist criteria of consciousness, which are crucial for meeting the everyday requirements of human life and ensuring a dignified living. It plays a vital role in helping individuals recover from poverty, homelessness, hunger, and illiteracy.



Bhabani Shankar Nayak

EDUCATION SHOULD AIM TO EMPOWER STUDENTS TO CHALLENGE OPPRESSIVE STRUCTURES AND WORK TOWARDS CREATING A MORE EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY

The emancipatory consciousness within education addresses these essential needs while also aspiring to higher goals. It aims to create a society free from all forms of exploitation, inequality, and discrimination, including those based on gender, race, caste, and other social divisions. By fostering critical thinking and promoting values of justice and equality, emancipatory education empowers individuals to challenge oppressive structures and work towards a more just and equitable world. This dual focus ensures that education not only equips people with the tools needed for personal survival and success but also nurtures a commitment to collective well-being and social transformation.

Mere qualifications defined by certificates do not foster emancipatory and egalitarian consciousness. While individuals may be educated in terms of formal credentials, their social and moral consciousness often falls to a low point in their everyday practice. Education, in many cases, breeds hypocrites of various kinds. Many educated and well-qualified individuals are reactionary and uncivilised in their behaviours, celebrating and upholding regressive values.

The number of such individuals and the prevalence of an essentialist trend within education are growing. Educational institutions, curriculum developers, and teachers have largely failed to instil emancipatory ideals within their learning and teaching practices. The



The focus on the essentialist aspects of education, such as skills development for employability, has been prioritised to meet the demands of the burgeoning techno-feudal markets and their capitalist masters

focus on the essentialist aspects of education, such as skills development for employability, has been prioritised to meet the demands of the burgeoning techno-feudal markets and their idle capitalist masters. These masters live off rent without producing any real social value or meaningful commodities for society.

As a result, the educational system increasingly caters to the needs of a techno-feudal economy, emphasising practical skills for economic survival while neglecting the development of critical thinking and social consciousness. This shift has contributed to a society where educational attainment does not necessarily translate to enlightened or progressive thought, but rather to the perpetuation of existing power structures and inequalities based on reactionary and immoral ideals.

In the age of techno-feudalism, the rent-seeking nature of various political, social, and cultural institutions, systems, and processes has become pervasive. This has fostered a culture where individuals, families, and religious denominations operate like rent-extracting machines in their most brutal form, devoid of accountability, responsibility,

and human concern. In these processes, relationships between and among individuals and various interpersonal interactions have become transactional, dominated by self-pleasure and self-preservation at every step of human life. This phenomenon has been accelerated by digital media, social media, and traditional celebrity culture, where an individual’s success and failure are determined by the power of money.

Many of these celebrities are school dropouts or have never attended an educational institution, yet they serve as brand ambassadors of techno-feudalism and its ideals in everyday consumerism, defined by both tangible and intangible commodity consumption. These celebrities, as purveyors of techno-feudal dreams, often celebrate low grades or failure in their school or college examinations as if they were achievements. In doing so, they leverage their celebrity status to undermine education and human consciousness grounded in science, reason, rationality, and secularism. This celebration of ignorance perpetuates a cycle where education and critical thinking are devalued, further entrenching the power of techno-feudal systems.

In such a context, it is crucial to revive the radical promises of education that can cultivate higher consciousness and skills for the progressive transformation of individuals and society based on solidarity, peace, and prosperity. Education must go beyond the mere acquisition of certificates and qualifications, striving instead to develop individuals who are not only skilled but also deeply aware of social justice and committed to positive change.

To achieve this, educational institutions, curriculum developers, and teachers need to integrate emancipatory ideals into their teaching practices. This means fostering critical thinking, encouraging empathy, and promoting values of equality and justice. Education should aim to empower students to challenge oppressive structures and work towards creating a more equitable and inclusive society.

Moreover, the curriculum should include diverse and decolonial perspectives and histories, teaching students to appreciate and respect differences while working together for common goals. Collaborative projects, community engagement, and service learning can be effective in instilling these values. By connecting theoretical knowledge with practical action, students can see the impact of their learning on real-world issues.

Ultimately, the goal is to create a holistic educational experience that prepares individuals not just for economic survival but for active and meaningful participation in society. This approach can help rebuild a sense of collective responsibility and foster a culture of solidarity, peace, and prosperity. By reviving the radical promises of education, people can work towards a future where learning is a powerful tool for social transformation and the betterment of all.

The writer teaches at the London Metropolitan University. Views are personal.

SPECTRUM CAPITAL MARKETS

The stock market & the ‘aam investor’



Debashish Mitra

THE RAPID RISE OF SHARES OF COMPANIES WITH INDIFFERENT PEDIGREE, ESPECIALLY THE SMALL CAPS, IS A CAUSE OF CONCERN

The recent record highs of the Indian stock market, on the back of significant retail or ‘aam investor’ participation has been the subject of much coverage, between encouragement and caution.

The recent relatively unprecedented comments on the stock market by the Home Minister, the Prime Minister and even the EAM shows that the government is aware of the importance of the stock market to the 130 million retail investors. The recent RBI bonanza of Rs 200,000 crore payout to the GoI, double the amount budgeted, drove the market to record new highs.

The rapid rise of shares of companies with indifferent pedigree, especially the small caps, is a cause of concern. Inexperienced individual investors being caught in the ‘froth’ of the market, being exploited by experienced operators, has been observed. To safeguard their investments, mutual funds (MFs) are being advocated as a solution.

TV audiences on popular shows including the recent IPL

are bombarded by advertisements to invest in MFs, the ‘mutual funds sahi hai’ campaign, endorsed by legendary cricketers, past and present. The SEBI chief recently encouraged young investors to invest in the SIP schemes of mutual funds, including suggesting the creation of small sachet packs akin to the ubiquitous shampoo sachets, made popular by a well known MNC, equal to a price of a trendy coffee, to expand participation.

This has led to the mutual funds sitting on over Rs 130,000 crore of investible funds, (ET 19 March, 2024), after having invested large sums over the last few months, holding up the market despite significant sales by FIIs in the same period.

In all this attention, one important aspect of the market seems to be ignored and is rarely covered. The value of the ownership of the GoI shares of listed PSUs. The current value of the holdings amount to over Rs 41 lakh crore, 10 per cent of the value of the BSE (see BSE data for April). A huge number: A

significant part of this value is contributed by defence, energy sector PSUs, and PSU banks. LIC and SBI alone, are currently valued at over Rs 13 lakhs crore. In all these PSUs, the GoI owns over 51 per cent, and in many an excess of 75 per cent.

The GoI owned ecosystem is an interesting closed loop. Taxes collected from all citizens (including GST and taxes on fuel) are used to give orders to PSUs. These in turn are produced at prices decided by the government. The profits lead to dividends, the majority of which goes to the GoI. These PSUs in turn are funded by PSU banks, who add to the same closed loop. The GoI is the customer, the producer, the borrower, the lender, and the tax collector.

If the GoI chooses to reduce its stake in the PSUs by half over the next five years, through block sales to domestic institutional investors (DIIs) and mutual funds, a significant sum of over Rs 20 lakh crore could flow into the government coffers. This could allow bold moves like cutting

the cost of fuel by say Rs 25 per litre, which will lead to a big drop in inflation, and a cascading effect to the benefit of all citizens. Importantly, enabling a quantum jump in programmes for the most needy billion plus, who are outside the stock market, especially in key areas like healthcare, education and climate change compatible infrastructure.

The mutual fund investment in PSUs in turn will enable the ‘aam investor’ to benefit significantly and safely, compared to the risky small cap segment.

The GoI will continue to have over 26 per cent ownership of these PSUs, so its corporate control will remain. Legislation where necessary can be introduced to ensure strategic national interests are not compromised.

“Less government and more governance,” in the stock market, on the above lines, will go a long way in progressing towards a ‘Viksit’ Bharat.

The writer is a researcher and agripreneur. Views are personal.

Strategically timed visit

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

Orissa POST
B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Sir, Emmanuel Macron’s state visit to Germany marks a significant event, being the first by a French president in 24 years. This trip underscores the importance of the Franco-German relationship in driving European Union policymaking, especially as the EU faces numerous challenges. The visit is timed strategically ahead of the European Parliament elections, aiming to present a united front and strengthen the ties between the EU’s two largest economies. The historical context of this visit highlights its rarity and symbolism. Over two decades have passed since the last such visit, indicating a deliberate move to reaffirm and potentially reset the bilateral relationship between France and Germany. This partnership has traditionally been the cornerstone of EU integration and policy coherence, and Macron’s visit seeks to solidify this foundation in an era of increased geopolitical and economic turbulence. The visit occurs at a critical moment, with Europe grappling with the Ukraine war, economic pressures, and geopolitical uncertainties, including the potential reelection of Donald Trump as US president. These factors contribute to the urgency of Macron and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz presenting a cohesive strategy to address these challenges. Their collaboration is pivotal for the stability and resilience of the EU. Overall, Macron’s visit to Germany is a pivotal moment for both nations and the EU. The outcomes of this visit will likely influence EU policies, reinforcing the significance of the Franco-German axis in shaping the future of the European Union.

Amarjeet Kumar, HAZARIBAGH

Anxiety of air travel

Sir, Recently, air travel has created a sense of fear among commuters – 39 flamingos dying in an Emirates plane crash, turbulence in the Singapore Airlines flight due to climate change and fire mishap in an Air India plane. Day by day such incidents are increasingly being reported. In this context, the authorities concerned should prioritise certain matters – ensure zero technical error of the aircraft, application of AI technology to predict flight route weather condition and ensure that the flight route is bird-free zone.

Nabnit Panigrahi, RAYAGADA

AI learning in Kerala schools begins this academic year

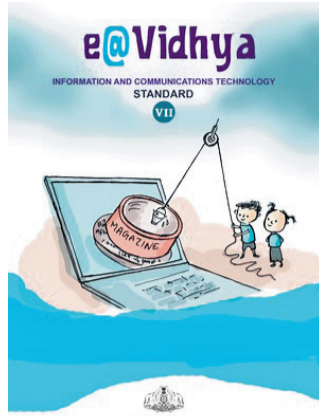
It is the first time in the country that all students in a class are getting an opportunity to learn AI uniformly

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, May 30: Kerala has decided to include Artificial Intelligence (AI) in school textbooks and as a result, over four lakh students in Class VII will study the nuances of AI in the new academic year beginning next month.

Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education (KITE), the technology arm of Department of General Education, will make available all the essential software for this in the laptops deployed in schools.

One of the activities in the 'Computer Vision' chapter will involve students creating their own AI programme that can



recognise human facial expressions. This programme will be able

Apart from Class VII, the new Academic Year will see new Information and Communication Technology (ICT) textbooks for Classes I, II and V in Malayalam, English, Tamil, and Kannada mediums

to identify up to seven different emotions on a person's face.

The curriculum framework emphasises the development of children's critical thinking, analytical skills, and problem-solving abilities, which are essential for their holistic development.

In this context, special emphasis has been placed on the development of logical thinking and programming skills in the ICT textbooks for the primary level. The 'PictoBlox' package, along with 'Scratch'

software that teaches visual programming, is introduced in the textbooks to enable students to practice programming, AI, robotics and similar things.

The new ICT textbooks for Classes I and III include FOSS (Free and Open-Source Software) based educational applications such as GCompris, eduActiv8, OmniTux, and TuxPaint which cover drawing, reading, language learning, numeracy, operations, and rhythm.

In addition to these, appli-

cations developed by KITE such as Traffic Signal through which children learn about traffic rules, and Waste Challenges which teaches waste disposal through gaming mode are also included in the ICT textbook.

Further, language labs are also featured in the new textbooks.

K Anvar Sadath who is the Chairman of ICT Textbook Committee and also the CEO of KITE said the that new ICT textbooks present practical ICT activities that nurture life skills while also helping in the study of other subjects and providing guidance on cyber safety and fake news identification.

FORCED EVICTION CASE Azam Khan gets 10 yrs jail, ₹14L fine

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Rampur (UP), May 30: A court here Thursday sentenced Samajwadi Party leader Mohammad Azam Khan to 10 years of imprisonment in an eight-year-old case of forcibly vacating a house and beating the owner.

The punishment was pronounced by the Special MP/MLA Court, which also imposed a fine of ₹14 lakh on the SP leader.

The court had Wednesday found Khan guilty in the case of forcefully evacuating, looting and demolishing a house in Durgapur.

Senior prosecution officer Shiv Prakash Pandey and prosecution officer Rakesh Kumar Morya said the case was registered by plaintiff Abrar in Thana Ganj in which he alleged that December 6, 2016, Ale Hasan and Barkat Ali Contractor entered his house, thrashed him and looted goods from the house. He had also alleged that the duo tried to kill him and demolish his house.

Khan is accused of conspiracy in this case. The file of former Circle Officer (CO) Ale Hasan was separated because his proceedings are stayed as per the order of the Allahabad High Court.

The special court's verdict was only in the case involving



Khan and Ali, who was sentenced to seven years of imprisonment and a fine of ₹6 lakh was also imposed on him. If Ali fails to pay this fine, he will have to undergo an additional punishment of 18 months of rigorous imprisonment, the court said.

Ali has been sentenced to seven years of imprisonment and a fine of ₹3 lakh under section 392, six years of imprisonment and ₹2 lakh fine under section 452, two years of imprisonment and ₹50,000 fine under section 504 and two years of imprisonment and ₹50,000 fine under section 506.

SP leader Khan is currently lodged in Sitapur jail following his conviction in different cases.

In 2022, he lost his Uttar Pradesh Assembly membership for three years following his conviction in a hate speech case.

LU, Copenhagen varsity ink MoU

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, May 30: Lucknow University students will now get an opportunity and exposure to work with expert faculty and researchers of the Department of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences of the University of Copenhagen, Denmark.

The two institutes have joined hands for academic collaboration to foster cooperation in education, research, and skill development.

LU spokesperson Durgesh Srivastava said, "The University of Copenhagen, founded in 1479, is one of the world's top universities, best known for producing 10 Nobel laureates, 37 Prime Ministers, and 34 Olympic medalists for Denmark. Study tours and joint research with such a prestigious institution will be an enriching experience for our students."

He said the memorandum of understanding (MoU) formalised between these institutions delineates a multifaceted approach aimed at enhancing education, research, and skill development endeavours.

The collaboration includes the exchange of both undergraduate and postgraduate students between the two universities and promises to enrich the academic experience by exposing students to diverse learning environments and methodologies.

Campaigning ends for 13 LS seats in UP

THE POLLING ON THESE SEATS WILL BE HELD JUNE 1, THE SEVENTH AND FINAL PHASE OF VOTING ACROSS THE COUNTRY. ALTOGETHER, UP SENDS 80 MPS TO THE PARLIAMENT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, May 30: Campaigning for 13 Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Varanasi, and a by-election for the state Assembly ended Thursday.

The polling on these seats will be held June 1, the seventh and final phase of voting across the country. Altogether, UP sends 80 MPs to the Parliament.

The Lok Sabha seats where polling will take place in this phase are Maharajganj, Gorakhpur, Kushinagar, Deoria, Bangaon (SC), Ghosi, Salempur, Ballia, Ghazipur, Chandauli, Varanasi, Mirzapur, and Robertsganj (SC), spread across 11 districts.

Besides PM Modi, the prominent candidates in this phase include Union minister and Apna Dal (S) leader Anupriya Patel from Mirzapur, former prime minister Chandrashekhar's son Neeraj Shekhar from Ballia, Mukhtar Ansari's brother Afzal Ansari from Ghazipur, Union minister Mahendra Nath Pandey from Chandauli, Union minister Pankaj Chaudhary from Maharajganj and Bhojpur actor Ravi Kishan from Gorakhpur.

PM Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and INDIA bloc leaders Rahul Gandhi

and Akhilesh Yadav campaigned aggressively in this phase.

The BJP tried to drive home its allegations that the INDIA bloc will bring in Muslim reservation and put a 'Babri lock' on Ayodhya's Ram temple.

The Opposition urged people to vote to "save the Constitution".

During the campaign, PM Modi said the INDIA bloc parties want to turn the country's majority community into "second-class citizens" and alleged that "jihadis" across the border are supporting the Samajwadi Party and the Congress.

Addressing a rally in Maharajganj and Ballia, Amit Shah slammed the SP over "power shortages" during its rule in the state, and said the supply was uninterrupted during Ramadan but not on Jannamashtami.

He said the elections presented before people a choice to select between those who constructed the Ram temple and those who opened fire at Ram bhakts, referring to an episode when SP's Mulayam Singh Yadav was the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi claimed in Varanasi that Modi will not become the next Prime Minister, calling it a "guarantee". Addressing a rally in PM Modi's constituency Varanasi, Gandhi said the contest there was not between a Prime



There are 144 candidates, including 10 women, in the fray for the Lok Sabha constituencies in this phase. Six candidates are contesting for the Duddhi (ST) Assembly by-election in Sonbhadra district

Ministerial candidate and Congress nominee Ajay Rai be-

cause Modi "will not return as Prime Minister". Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said the contest was between Ram bhakts and Ram drohis (anti-Ram), while SP chief Akhilesh Yadav urged people to "save the Constitution" and sought votes for the PDA - pichhde (backward), Dalit, alpsankhyak (minorities). There are 144 candidates, including 10 women, in the fray for the Lok Sabha constituencies in this phase. Six candidates are contesting for the Duddhi (ST) Assembly by-election in Sonbhadra district.

Child must receive support from both parents: HC

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kochi, May 30: A division bench of the Kerala High Court has said that it is in the best interest of the child to receive love and support from both parents unless proven that one parent is unworthy of custodial rights.

The court while considering a matrimonial appeal first interacted with the minor child (an 11-year-old girl) and found that she had no issues spending time with her father.

It then ruled, "While the court's duty and responsibility in custody disputes is to ensure that both parents maintain a healthy relationship with the child. Non-custodial parents should have sufficient visitation rights to



prevent the child from losing social, physical, and psychological contact with either parent. Only in extreme circumstances should one parent be denied contact, and reasons must be clearly stated if this occurs. Courts are responsible for defining the nature, manner, and specifics of

visitation rights to safeguard the child's continuous connection with both parents. The child's need for both parents' company takes precedence over the individual rights of the parents. In assessing custody, the court distinguishes between the child's wishes and what is genuinely in the child's best interest, taking into account all relevant circumstances," said the court.

The court thus upheld the Family Court's order of granting visitation and contact rights to the father of the girl besides affirming the overnight custody given to him, who is in the Merchant Navy, for a few days during vacations and during his leave.

Incidentally, it was the mother

of the child who approached the High Court after being upset by the Family Court's decision in the overnight custody rights given to the father, as she pointed out that the child's emotional and mental well-being will be affected by the execution of the Family Court's order.

But the child's father submitted that the daughter is entitled to the love, care and protection of both the parents and argued that the mother has no justifiable reasons to refuse custody rights to the father.

The High Court after going through all aspects pointed out that a child requires love, affection, and company of both parents, which is a basic human right for the child.



Deer on a hot summer day at Lucknow Zoo, Uttar Pradesh

PTI

Kerala govt decides to form more RRTs 'Over 46% young adults quit tobacco, UP leads'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, May 30: The Kerala government decided to constitute nine more Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) to mitigate human-wildlife conflicts in the state.

The decision was taken by a cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan

The decision was taken by a cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, a statement issued by his office said.

As part of implementing the decision, the Cabinet gave permission to create nine posts each of Section Forest Officer, Forest

HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICTS



Driver and Part-Time Sweeper in the Forest and Wildlife Department, the statement said.

The new RRTs are being formed at Palode in Thiruvananthapuram division, Thenmala in Punalur division,

Vandanpatal in Kottayam division, Kadalar in Mankulam division, Kothamangalam in Kothamangalam division, Palapilli in Chalakudy division, Kollengode in Nemmara division, Karuvarakundu in Nilambur South division and Mananthavady in North Wayanad division, it said.

The decision to set up additional RRTs comes in the wake of animal attacks in the state, especially in areas close to forests, by elephants and tigers that claimed a few lives earlier this year.

Besides this, the cabinet also decided to appoint Director General of Prosecutions T A Shaji as the State Public Prosecutor in the Kerala High Court for a period of three years from June 2, the statement said.

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 30: About 46.96 per cent of young adults, aged 18-24, have quit tobacco in India, according to a report Thursday by Vallabhbhai Patel Chest Institute (VPCI) based on a survey of calls received by the government's National Tobacco QuitLine Services (NTQLS).

World No Tobacco Day is observed every year May 31. The VPCI survey based on NTQLS data showed that the tobacco quitline recorded 1,44,938 quitters from 4,77,585 registered calls, with a total of 8.2 million calls hitting the interactive voice response (IVR) between May 2016 and April 2024.

A total of 46.96 per cent of registered calls to the NTQLS were from 18-24-year-olds, who also



had a 12th-grade education -- making them the largest group of quitters.

"This data highlights the growing awareness and determination among India's youth to combat tobacco addiction," the VPCI said.

Over 43 per cent reported to be self-employed, 75.85 per cent had no family history of tobacco use, while 68.63 per cent were found to use smokeless tobacco.

Further, the data showed that Uttar Pradesh led with 1,50,925 (31.6 per cent) calls and 29.68 per cent of quitters. In addition, 72.96 per cent of calls were made from individuals with 1-10 years of tobacco use, and 77.74 per cent have no history of alcohol use.

"The NTQLS provides free, confidential counselling and guidance to tobacco users across the country, empowering them to take charge of their health,"

said Dr. Raj Kumar, Director, Vallabhbhai Patel Chest Institute.

"Quitting tobacco is not just about willpower. We address the psychological and behavioural factors that contribute to addiction, offering strategies to manage cravings and overcome withdrawal symptoms," added Dr Raj, leading the Tobacco Cessation Clinic (TCC) at VPCI since November 2001.

Over the past 23 years, TCC at VPCI has organised 376 public awareness programmes, anti-tobacco campaigns, and seminars, reaching over 1.3 million people.

These initiatives have trained 57,243 doctors, benefited 44,652 students, and empowered 61,129 social workers, creating a ripple effect of awareness and education.



BJP workers take out a motorcycle rally in support of the saffron party's Balasore Assembly nominee Manas Kumar Dutta in Balasore, Thursday



CM Naveen Patnaik addressing an election meeting at Mato College ground, Chandbali in Bhadrak district as his trusted aide Kartik Pandian, BJD's Bhadrak Lok Sabha candidate Manjulata Mandal and Chandbali Assembly nominee Byomakesh Ray look on, Thursday

Triangular contest in Paradip Assembly seat

POST NEWS NETWORK

Paradip, May 30: The Assembly constituency here will witness a triangular contest as the candidates from three mainstream parties - BJD, BJP and Congress - are in for a battle of prestige, struggle and self respect, a report said.

The elections to Paradip Assembly constituency will be held in the Phase IV and final phase of polls in the state, June 1, campaigning for which has come to an end Thursday evening. Sources said the mainstream parties have plans to utilise the rest of the time available till Friday evening in making secret plans and last ditch efforts to win the voters' confidence.

This time, the voters of Paradip Assembly seat will elect a new MLA as none of the candidates in the fray has been elected before. Although a total of seven candidates are contesting the seat, the actual fight will be among BJD, BJD and Congress nominees.

While BJD has fielded Geetanjali Routray, wife of sitting MLA Sambit Routray and



GEETANJALI ROUTRAY



SAMPAD SWAIN



NIRANJAN NAYAK

daughter-in-law of former minister Damodar Rout, BJD has re-nominated Sampad Swain and Congress has picked its youth leader Niranjan Nayak.

Similarly, Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) has fielded Sujata Mallick while Chinmayee Sahani is contesting on CPI ticket. Moreover, two independent candidates - Anoj Rout and Krupasindhu Das - are also contesting the polls.

Chatters were abuzz that the candidates of BJD, BJD and Congress are fighting a battle of prestige, struggle and self-respect. The Assembly constituency

has 2,20,393 voters out of whom 1,04,854 are female and 1,15,500 male. The constituency has 39 third gender voters.

Political analysts opined that the constituency will witness triangular contest if the style of campaigning by the candidates of the three parties and the political atmosphere in the Assembly segment are any indication.

Winning the election has become a matter of dignity for BJD nominee Geetanjali Routray as her husband Sambit is the incumbent MLA. Moreover, being the daughter of former minister

Rout, winning the election has become all the more necessary for her.

"Dama babu's family members have been representing this constituency after Paradip was declared a new Assembly segment following delimitation exercise in 2009. After several disputes, BJD announced the name of Geetanjali as its nominee from this constituency by dropping the name of her husband," said an analyst.

There were multiple aspirants from this constituency including Paradip Municipality chairman Basant Biswal and turncoats

from Congress Bapi Sarkhel and his wife Monideepa Sarkhel.

BJD will retain its self-respect and dignity if Geetanjali wins from this constituency, the political analysts maintained.

Similarly, the election is a prestige battle for BJD nominee Sampad because he was fielded by the party in 2019 but Sambit had defeated him by a margin of 36,000 votes. Sampad has earned a special identity for himself by working hard to strengthen the organisation during last five years. Moreover, a possible undercurrent for BJP is helping him while the dissident BJD workers are also campaigning for him.

Congress candidate Niranjan came to notice after he put up some hoardings in the constituency in March this year. Sources said he has struggled hard to connect with the local voters and unite the party workers within a very short period of time after Bapi Sarkhel and his wife switched over to BJD. His behaviour and disciplined style of campaigning have earned him appreciation from the voters.

Mandela, Einstein inspired by Gandhiji, says Rahul



AGENCIES

Balasore, May 30: A day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that the world didn't know who Mahatma Gandhi was until the release of the movie 'Gandhi', Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Thursday said renowned figures like Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela, and Albert Einstein drew inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi.

He made these remarks during a political gathering in Balasore district during his last leg of campaign for the final phase of polls June 1.

Responding to Modi's assertion that the world only learned of understanding regarding Gandhi's legacy.

"Whose training is done in 'sakha' of RSS, they are followers of Godse; they do not know anything about Gandhiji. They do not know about the history of Hindustan, truth and violence. This is expected that the PM will tell that the world does not know anything about Gandhiji," he said.

He emphasised that people like Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela, and Einstein, along with various freedom movements, found inspiration in Gandhi's principles.

"Martin Luther King Jr., Mandelaji, Einstein and many others took inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi. Different movements, freedom movements

also took inspiration from Gandhiji. Children of India also get inspiration from Gandhiji," he added.

Rahul concluded by saying further comments on the matter were unnecessary.

"There is no need to make more comments (on the subject). Their world is in their sakha," he said.

'BJP has insulted Lord Jagannath'

Rahul Gandhi Thursday accused the BJP of insulting the people of Odisha as one of its leaders recently claimed that Lord Jagannath is a devotee of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Addressing an election rally in Simulia under Bhadrak Lok Sabha seat, he also vowed to save the Constitution of India and democracy in the country.

"The BJP has insulted every individual of Odisha as one of its leaders claimed that Lord Jagannath is a devotee of PM Modi," Gandhi said.

BJP's Puri Lok Sabha candidate Sambit Patra had recently made the remark.

Embroiled in a controversy over his "slip of the tongue" on Lord Jagannath, Patra apologised and announced that he would undertake a penance by observing fast for three days.

The Congress leader alleged that the BJP and its allies are united to destroy democracy and the Constitution of the country.

"No force on the earth can destroy our Constitution. You cannot even touch the Constitution by utilising all your forces," Rahul said in an apparent dig at the BJP.

Rahul, Priyanka notch up 107 & 108 rallies

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 30: In a campaign blitz to boost the Congress' chances in the Lok Sabha polls, former party president Rahul Gandhi and AICC general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra notched up a total of 107 and 108 public outreach programmes respectively, including rallies and roadshows.

Rahul campaigned for the Congress in Punjab on the last day of campaigning before the seventh phase of voting, while Priyanka Gandhi held a road show in Himachal Pradesh's Solan.

As curtains came down on the poll campaign, party sources said Rahul Gandhi participated in 107 rallies, roadshows, interactions and major campaign events.

Priyanka Gandhi also ran a spirited campaign by taking part in 108 public meetings and roadshows, they said, adding that she also gave more than 100 media bytes, one TV interview and five print interviews during her marathon election campaign.

Priyanka camped in Rae Bareilly and spearheaded the party's campaign there and in adjacent Amethi for about two weeks.

While Rahul contested from Rae Bareilly, the Congress had fielded Gandhi family's close aide KL Sharma from Amethi to take on the BJP's Smriti Irani.

Political observers said Priyanka took on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and countered his attacks on the Congress during her whirlwind campaign.

She campaigned in 16 states and one Union territory. Priyanka Gandhi also addressed two conferences of thousands of workers in Amethi and Rae Bareilly.

Rahul Gandhi also addressed some public meetings along with Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav in Uttar Pradesh and Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Tejashwi Yadav in Bihar and sought votes for the candidates of the INDIA bloc.

How successful the campaign blitz was will only be known June 4, when the poll results are scheduled to be declared.



CALL OF DUTY

Polling officials Thursday leave for their respective booths in Balasore ahead of the Phase IV elections in the state June 1

OP PHOTO

With 150 hrs' election speech, Modi's campaign sets new record

MODI'S MARATHON CAMPAIGN COMPRISES OF 206 PUBLIC RALLIES & ROADSHOWS AND 80 INTERVIEWS, OVER A PERIOD OF 75 DAYS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 30: Thursday (May 30) marks the culmination of about three-month long high-voltage campaign for 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The ruling BJP as well as Opposition under the banner of INDIA bloc mounted a high-pitched poll battle to win over the electorate with Sankalp Patra and Nyay Patra.

Moreover, the 2024 electioneering grabbed headlines, more for extensive campaigns by top leadership of parties rather than active mobilisation on the ground.

A comparative analysis of the election campaign at regular intervals also showed Prime Minister Narendra Modi leading all the way against political rivals. While PM Modi held four-five election rallies and road-

shows in a day, his rivals were seen doing just two-three poll events.

With canvassing coming to a close Thursday, PM Modi has set a sort of record in wooing the electorate with his 75-day extensive outreach programmes via election rallies, public events, roadshows and interviews with TV channels and news publications.

Modi's marathon campaign comprised of 206 public rallies and roadshows and 80 interviews, over a period of 75 days. The campaign for the 2024 Parliamentary elections kicked off March 16 and concluded May 30.

The series of campaign events, including election rallies and roadshows by the PM makes it an average of three events per day.

Breaking it down further, one gets to know that Modi spent close to more than 150 hours at the hustings in scorching heat and faced over 1,000 questions from media outlets either in the electoral arena or inside TV studios.

Taking into account that the PM spoke for about 45 minutes at each election rally, 206 rallies would mean (206 x 45 = 9,270 minutes) about 154.5 hours, for



which he addressed the electoral rallies.

Considering the volley of questions to Modi in multiple half-hour and one-hour interactions with TV channels and news publications, he must have faced more than 1,000 questions and shared his views on all topics, as demanded by the Opposition.

Such articulate interaction with the media and a wide-ranging campaign by PM Modi also left the Opposition flummoxed and flustered.

PM Modi's brisk and energetic campaigns took place across the country, with special em-

phasis on South India and saw him undertaking upto five events in a single day while doing four events on multiple days.

He is understood to have done five events in at least three days while managing four events in more than 22 days. His campaign gathered more pace in May, as he covered 96 events alone this month.

The Prime Minister's big focus has been the 'South Push', which also became the big talking point, this election. Four big states of the Hindi heartland with maximum number of Lok Sabha MPs stood high on Modi's list

of priorities, as he spent most of his time campaigning in these states.

PM Modi addressed maximum election rallies in Uttar Pradesh, the state which sends 80 MPs to Lok Sabha. The NDA won 64 seats in the state in 2019 polls and the BJP is hoping to raise its tally, this time.

Bihar (40 Lok Sabha seats) and Bengal (42 Lok Sabha seats) were other states which saw multiple election rallies and roadshows by the Prime Minister, as the party hopes to increase and consolidate its vote share as well as seats in these states.

PM Modi held 20 election events in Bihar and 18 in West Bengal. In Bihar, the BJP has vowed to win all 40 seats while looking to corner (West Bengal Chief Minister) Mamata Banerjee in her turf by claiming 24-30 seats in the state.

Maharashtra is the fourth state that saw repeated visits by the Prime Minister for election rallies. PM Modi almost doubled his election rallies and roadshows in the state, as compared to 2019 polls.

Notably, Maharashtra with 48 Lok Sabha seats has made for an interesting clash as all eyes are on how the breakaway factions

of Shiv Sena and NCP pose a challenge to the 'original' parties, helmed by party patriarchs.

PM Modi also led from the front in BJP's 'South Push' for 2024 elections and did at least 35 election events in five southern states, including Karnataka, Telangana and Tamil Nadu.

The BJP has been hoping to make deep inroads in Tamil Nadu and Kerala, making big gains in Karnataka while smelling an opportunity for the 'best ever show' in Telangana by tapping anti-incumbency sentiments.

Eastern India has been of high focus for the BJP.

PM Modi held 10 election rallies and roadshows in Odisha. This is another state where the BJP hopes to take the lion's share of seats and end the BJD's dominance.

Jharkhand saw 7 events of the Prime Minister with the latter taking every opportunity to hit hard at the 'rampant corruption' under JMM rule, including the mountains of cash recovered from its minister's aides.

Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh saw five and four election rallies each, while Gujarat, the home state of PM Modi, witnessed five campaign events.



“
We are going to the Supreme Court so that the court tells Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, from where Delhi's water comes, that Delhiites should get their rightful share of water. Apart from this, many emergency measures are being taken by the Delhi government
”
ATISHI MARLENA | WATER MINISTER

CBI TO PROBE BORDER VIOLENCE

The CBI has taken over investigation into the killing of five Meghalaya residents and one forest guard of Assam 18 months ago at the two states' disputed border after a truck allegedly laden with illegally felled timber was intercepted by Assam's forest guards



of the day quote

No Prime Minister in the past has uttered such hateful, unparliamentary and coarse terms, meant to target either a specific section of the society or the Opposition
MANMOHAN SINGH | FORMER PM

Frequent elections are not good for the country and efforts will be made to install the "one nation, one election" system in the next five years
RAJNATH SINGH | UNION MINISTER

No specific proposal for free trade agreement with Maldives has been made by India; if Maldives expresses interest, we will consider
RANDHIR JAISWAL | MEA SPOKESPERSON

X POST OF THE DAY

Dear Madam Finance Minister It's a Humble Request to Reconsider
• 18% GST on Insurance
• 28% GST on Air-Conditioners
• 28% GST on Cement
The Rates Should be Lower These Products are Not a Luxury For People
@RAVISUTANJANI

SHORT TAKES

PM begins 'dhyam'

Kanyakumari (Tamil Nadu): Prime Minister Narendra Modi began his 45-hour-long meditation at the famed Vivekananda Rock Memorial here Thursday evening. After arriving from nearby Thiruvananthapuram by a helicopter, Modi worshipped at the Bhagavathi Amman temple and reached the rock memorial by a ferry service and started meditation that is scheduled to go on till June 1. Clad in a dhoti and a white shawl, Modi prayed at the temple and circumambulated the 'garbhagriha'. Priests performed a special 'arthi' and he was given temple 'prasad' that included a shawl and a framed photograph of the presiding deity of the temple. Ahead of his departure June 1, Modi is likely to visit the Thiruvalluvar statue, next to the memorial.

300 vehicles gutted

New Delhi: At least 300 vehicles were gutted after a fire broke out at the Wazirabad Police Training Centre 'malkhana' (yard) in northeast Delhi, the Delhi Fire Services (DFS) officials said Thursday. No one was injured in the incident, they confirmed. A senior police officer said that about 125 four-wheelers and 175 two-wheelers were gutted.

5 get life term

Chaibasa (Jharkhand): A local court Thursday sentenced five persons to life imprisonment in connection with a three-and-a-half-year-old double murder case in Jharkhand's West Singhbhum district. The court of additional sessions judge-II sentenced Roya Rai Purty, alias Doli, Budham Tiriya, alias Lal, Bamun Tiriya, alias Motu, Raghunath, and Jaipal under Section 302 (murder)/34 IPC for the murders of Bishnu Purida and his wife Phurgun January 3, 2021, in Totetopa village under Noamundi police station, due to a land dispute. Additionally, the court imposed a fine of ₹10,000 on each of them.

KEJRIWAL BAIL PLEA

Delhi court seeks ED's response

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 30: A Delhi court Thursday issued notice to the ED on Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's plea seeking regular bail in a money laundering case related to the alleged excise scam.

Special Judge Kaveri Baweja, who initially directed the central probe agency to file its response to Kejriwal's plea by Saturday, later fixed the matter for June 7 after the Enforcement Directorate (ED) sought more time to respond.

The judge, however, directed the ED to file its response by Saturday on Kejriwal's another plea seeking interim bail for a week on medical grounds.

Kejriwal is currently out on interim bail, granted by the Supreme Court, in the case till June 1. The Supreme Court registry Wednesday refused urgent listing of Kejriwal's plea seeking extension of his interim bail by seven days for undergoing certain medical tests, saying since he was given liberty to move the trial court for regular bail, the plea was not maintainable.

The matter relates to the alleged corruption and money laundering in the formulation and execution of the Delhi government's now-scrapped excise policy for 2021-22.

22 killed as bus falls into gorge

THE BUS WAS CARRYING DEVOTEES FROM HARYANA'S KURUKSHETRA AND WAS HEADED TOWARDS SHIV KHORI IN THE POUNI AREA OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR'S REASI DISTRICT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, May 30: At least 22 people were killed and 57 injured after a bus carrying pilgrims skidded off the road and rolled down into a gorge in Jammu district Thursday, officials said.

The accident took place at the Tungi-Morh in the Chowki Chora belt of the district, the officials said, adding that the bus rolled around 150 feet down into the gorge.

A magisterial probe has been ordered into the incident, the Jammu district magistrate informed on X. He also said 22 people have lost their lives and 57 sustained injuries in the tragedy.

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor (LG) Manoj Sinha has expressed anguish at the loss of lives and announced an ex-gratia amount of ₹5 lakh each for the next of kin of the deceased. A police spokesperson said at about 12:35 pm, the bus bearing registration number UP81CT-4058 fell into the gorge.

The bus was carrying devotees from Haryana's Kurukshetra and was headed towards Shiv

Khori in the Pouni area of Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district. It had started its journey from Uttar Pradesh.

The bodies have been shifted to the Akhnoor sub-district hospital, the police spokesperson said, adding that the injured have been taken to the Government Medical College (GMC) hospital in Jammu.

One of the deceased women has been identified as Dharampati (42), the wife of Radhey Shyam from Aligarh in Uttar Pradesh, the officials said, adding that most of the victims are from Uttar Pradesh.

The Army, police and locals used ropes and made human chains to carry the bodies and the injured people uphill.

The Army used cranes to pull the bus out of the gorge and the operation is still on, the officials said. The injured, including six in a critical condition, were initially taken to the Akhnoor hospital for treatment. Subsequently, they were shifted to the GMC hospital in Jammu in ambulances, the officials said.

"More than 36 passengers have been brought to the GMC hospital.



Six of them are in a critical condition. Timely treatment is being given to the patients," principal of the hospital Dr Ashutosh Gupta said. The injured passengers said the accident took place when the driver was negotiating a blind curve and a speeding car was coming from the opposite direction. Those who sustained injuries in the incident said they had come for a pilgrimage to Shiv Khori.

Senior Superintendent of Police, Traffic, Faisal Qureshi, the transport commissioner, along with other officials, visited the spot and supervised the operation.

The SSP said it seems there was no overloading of passengers in the bus.

Divisional Commissioner Ramesh Kumar, SSP-Jammu and the deputy commissioner of Jammu visited the GMC hospital to inquire about the injured. The LG has expressed anguish

at the loss of lives in the accident. In a condolence message, Sinha said, "The bus accident in Akhnoor is heart-rending. I condole the loss of lives and pray to the almighty to give the bereaved families the strength to bear the irreparable loss. Praying for a speedy recovery of the injured. The administration is providing all possible assistance to the bereaved families and is also extending medical facilities to those who have been injured."

"An ex-gratia of ₹5 lakh to be given to the next of kin of each deceased and ₹50,000 for those injured in the tragic bus accident." This is the biggest accident in the region since a similar incident was reported from Doda on November 15, 2023, in which 39 people were killed and 19 injured when a bus carrying passengers skidded off the road and rolled down into a 300-foot gorge in the Trungal-Assar area of the district.

CHHOTA RAJAN GETS LIFE TERM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 30: A special court in Mumbai Thursday sentenced gangster Chhota Rajan to life imprisonment in the murder of hotelier Jaya Shetty here in 2001, over six years after he was handed a similar sentence in the killing of journalist J Dey.

Special judge for cases under the Maharashtra Control Of Organised Crime Act, AM Patil, held Rajan guilty under Indian Penal Code sections 302 (murder), 120B (criminal conspiracy) and provisions of MCOCA.

Following the conviction, the court sentenced the gangster, currently lodged at Tihar jail in Delhi, to rigorous imprisonment for life and imposed a fine of ₹16 lakh on him.

After Thursday's judgment, Rajan has been convicted in seven cases, including six in the city, special public prosecutor (SPP) Pradeep Gharat said. A special MCOCA court in 2018 had sentenced Rajan to life imprisonment in the murder of senior crime journalist J Dey.



Assam flood situation grim, 1.98 lakh affected

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, May 30: Assam's flood situation worsened Thursday with over 1.98 lakh people affected in nine districts, and one person drowning to death as the water level of major rivers rose following incessant rainfall in the aftermath of Cyclone Remal, officials said.

A person drowned to death in Hailakandi district, pushing the toll in the state to six due to floods and rain since Tuesday, while 18 others were injured.

Altogether 1,98,856 were affected in the districts of Nagaon, Karimganj, Hailakandi, West Karbi Anglong, Cachar, Hojai, Golaghat, Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao, according to an Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) report. Cachar is the worst affected district with 1,02,246 people reeling under flood waters, followed by 36,959 in Karimganj, 22,058 in Hojai and 14,308 in Hailakandi, among others, it said.

A total crop area of 3,238.8 hectares has also been washed away, while 2,34,535 animals have been impacted. Rivers Brahmaputra and Barak, along with its tributaries, are flowing above the danger mark at several places in the affected districts, the report said.

A total of 35,640 people have taken shelter in 110 relief camps

with the highest of 19,646 in Hojai, followed by 12,110 in Cachar, 2,060 in Hailakandi and 1,613 in Karimganj.

Life came to a standstill in the three districts of Assam's Barak Valley and Dima Hasao, while intermittent rainfall and thunderstorms have been reported from the other affected districts Thursday.

In Barak Valley's Karimganj, Cachar and Hailakandi districts, the Barak river and its tributaries Longai, Kushiara, Singla and Katakhal were flowing above the danger level at several locations, showing a rising trend, while four embankments were damaged in Karimganj.

In Silchar, which had witnessed devastating floods in 2022, several areas have been affected by water-logging with movement of people and traffic affected. In "severely-affected" Dima Hasao district, normal life has been impacted due to relentless rain, crippling road connectivity throughout the district, officials said. The Haflong-Silchar road has been completely cut off after a section was washed away near Harangajao, while the Haflong-Harangajao route is blocked by multiple landslides, they said.

Train services, cancelled or short-terminated due to landslides along the Haflong-Badarpur rail route, are yet to be restored



Agnikul Cosmos successfully launches AgniBaan rocket

New Delhi: Chennai-based space start-up Agnikul Cosmos Thursday successfully carried out a sub-orbital test-flight of its home-built 3D-printed semi-cryogenic rocket -- AgniBaan -- from its own launch pad at Sriharikota, making it India's second private entity to do so. After four unsuccessful attempts, the test flight of AgniBaan Sub-Orbital Technology Demonstrator (SOTeD) Thursday took place at 7.15 am without any live streaming and in the presence of fewer dignitaries at the Sriharikota launch pad located within ISRO's Satish Dhawan Space Centre.

No respite from searing heat

New Delhi: Maximum temperatures dipped slightly over large parts of northwest and central India Thursday but there was no respite from the searing heat as mercury remained above 47 degrees across Haryana, parts of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. The weather office said intensity of heat wave/severe heat wave has slightly reduced over some parts of northwest and adjoining central India.

Indian mother, son handed over to BSF after a year in Pak jail

Lahore: An Indian woman and her minor son, both victims of human trafficking, were handed over to Indian forces at the Wagah border after they completed their sentence of a little over one year for illegally entering Pakistan last year, a Pakistani official said Thursday. According to federal government officials, Wahida, a resident of Nagaon district in Assam, was arrested along with her son while illegally entering Pakistan from Afghanistan via the Chaman border last year. Wahida told the authorities here that she had been deceived by an Indian travel agent due to which she reached Pakistan.

Bomb scare: IndiGo derosters 6 crew members

New Delhi: IndiGo has derostered two pilots and four cabin crew members of the Delhi-Varanasi flight that saw 176 passengers being evacuated after a bomb threat earlier this week, according to sources. Following the bomb threat May 28, which later turned out to be a hoax, all the passengers were evacuated through emergency slides from the aircraft at the Delhi airport. One of the sources said the two pilots, who were from the lessor company, four IndiGo cabin crew members have been derostered.

Interfaith marriage invalid under Muslim law: MP HC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jabalpur, May 30: The Madhya Pradesh High Court has dismissed the plea of an interfaith couple seeking police protection and registration of their marriage with the observation that, as per Muslim law, the union of a Muslim man with a woman who is "an idolatress or a fire-worshipper" is not a valid wedding. "As per Mahomedan law, the marriage of a Muslim boy with a girl who is an idolatress or a

fire-worshipper is not a valid marriage. Even if the marriage is registered under Special Marriage Act, the marriage would be no more a valid marriage and it would be an irregular (fasid) marriage," a bench of HC comprising Justice G S Ahluwalia observed. "It is not the case of the petitioners that in case marriage is not performed, then they are still interested to live in a live-in relationship. It is also not the case of petitioners that petitioner No.1 would accept



Muslim religion. Under these circumstances, this court is of the considered opinion that no case is made out warranting interference," the bench's order of

Monday read. The court dismissed the petitions of Sarika Sen (23) and Safee Khan (23), both hailing from Anuppur district of Madhya

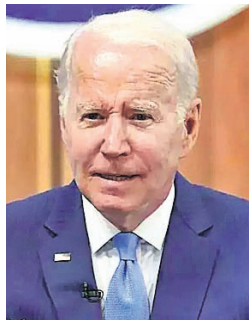
Pradesh. In their petition, Sen and Khan had sought direction from the court for police protection and registration of their marriage under the Special Marriage Act stating they will continue to follow their respective religions after marriage.

According to the petitioners' lawyer Dinesh Upadhyay, his clients had applied to the Anuppur district magistrate to get married in October.

"The hearing on it is on and the final order has not yet come. So the couple had moved the

High Court. In their plea, they stated that as they are going in for inter-religion marriage, the woman's parents were unhappy and against it," Upadhyay told reporters.

According to the petitioners, the woman's parents, their relatives and an outfit called Hindu Dharm Sena were mounting pressure on her and threatening the man with dire consequences and, thus, they were unable to attend the hearings to get married, Upadhyay said.



I'll be damned if I'm going to let Donald Trump turn America into a place of anger, resentment and hate. My question is a simple one: Are you with me?
JOE BIDEN | PRESIDENT, US

PANDA DIPLOMACY IS BACK

Beijing will return giant pandas to Washington's National Zoo by the end of the year, US First Lady Jill Biden and officials said in a surprise announcement signaling a new era of panda diplomacy between the two superpowers



of the day quote

As war is raging causing tremendous suffering, justice can't be absent and the two-state solution can't be shaken. War should not continue indefinitely
XI JINPING | PRESIDENT, CHINA

We do not rule out additional steps in the sphere of nuclear deterrence, because our command centres and the locations of our nuclear forces will be in range of American forward-based missiles
SERGEI LAVROV | FOREIGN MINISTER, RUSSIA

Deep divisions especially among the world's most powerful nations have significantly undermined what the United Nations can do to help nations move from conflict to peace
JEAN-PIERRE LACROIX | CHIEF, UN PEACEKEEPING

SHORT TAKES

6 scribes expelled

Dubai: Iran said Wednesday that Saudi Arabia expelled six members of a crew from its state television broadcaster after they had been detained for nearly a week in the kingdom ahead of the Hajj. Saudi Arabia said the men had been working in violation of the visas they received. The incident comes a year after Riyadh and Tehran reached a Chinese-mediated detente. However, there have been tensions for decades between the Sunni and Shiite powerhouses over the holy sites in the kingdom, particularly around the upcoming Hajj pilgrimage.

NK's missile mania

Seoul: North Korea Thursday fired a barrage of suspected ballistic missiles toward its eastern sea, according to South Korea's military, days after its attempt to launch a military reconnaissance satellite ended in failure but still drew strong condemnation from its rivals. South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said it detected the North firing around 10 projectiles that appeared to be short-range ballistic missiles from an area near its capital, Pyongyang. It said the suspected missiles flew around 350 kilometers before landing in waters off the North's eastern coast. It said the South Korean military has increased surveillance and vigilance and is closely sharing information with the United States and Japan.

PIO jailed for 3 yrs

Ottawa: An Indian immigration agent at the centre of a scam to cheat students from India by issuing fake college admission to procure Canadian visas has been sentenced to three years in jail after he pleaded guilty before a court in Vancouver to immigration offences, according to a media report. Brijesh Mishra, 37, was arrested after a Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) investigation tied him to dozens of fraudulent acceptance letters for Canadian colleges and universities that were provided to prospective international students from India between 2016 and 2020.

4 Pakistanis killed

Quetta: Iranian border guards opened fire at a vehicle carrying a group of Pakistanis, killing four people and wounding two others in a remote area in the southwest, Pakistani officials said Thursday. The incident happened near the border village of Mashkel in Baluchistan province Wednesday, local police said.

SUBVERSION CONSPIRACY

Hong Kong's democracy in danger

China-controlled Hong Kong convicts 14 pro-democracy activists in the city's biggest national security case

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hong Kong, May 30: A Hong Kong court Thursday convicted 14 pro-democracy activists in the city's biggest national security case under a law imposed by Beijing that has all but wiped out public dissent.

Those who were found guilty included former lawmakers Leung Kwok-hung, Lam Cheuk-ting, Helena Wong and Raymond Chan. But the three judges approved by the government to oversee the case acquitted former district councilors Lee Yue-shun and Lawrence Lau. Those convicted could face life in prison.

They were among 47 democracy advocates who were prosecuted in 2021 for their involvement in an unofficial primary election. Prosecutors had accused them of attempting to paralyse Hong Kong's government and topple the city's leader by securing the legislative majority necessary to indiscriminately veto budgets.

Observers said their subversion case illustrates how the security law is being used to crush



the political opposition following huge anti-government protests in 2019. But the Beijing and Hong Kong governments insist the law has helped bring back stability to the city and that judicial independence is being protected.

When Britain handed Hong Kong back to China in 1997, Beijing promised to retain the city's Western-style civil liberties for 50 years. However, since the introduction of the 2020 law, Hong Kong authorities have severely limited free speech and assembly under the rubric of maintaining national security. Many activists were arrested, silenced or forced into self-exile. Dozens of civil society groups disbanded.

The prosecution of the primary case involves pro-democracy activists across the spectrum. They include legal scholar

The convicts were among 47 democracy advocates who were prosecuted in 2021 for their involvement in an unofficial primary election

Benny Tai, former student leader Joshua Wong and a dozen former lawmakers including Leung Kwok-hung and Claudia Mo.

Thirty-one of them, including Tai, Wong and Mo, pleaded guilty to the charge of conspiracy to commit subversion. They have a better chance at shorter jail terms and will be sentenced at a later date.

The 16 others, including Leung, who pleaded not guilty and underwent a non-jury trial, were hearing their verdicts in the two-day case that started

Fourteen of 16 convicted of subversion conspiracy
Sentencing at a later date, life in prison possible

Singh honoured posthumously with UN medal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

United Nations, May 30: An Indian peacekeeper who lost his life serving under the UN flag is among the over 60 military, police and civilian peacekeepers honoured posthumously Thursday with a prestigious medal here for their service and supreme sacrifice in the line of duty.

Naik Dhnanjay Kumar Singh, who served with the UN Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO), was honoured posthumously with the Dag Hammarskjold medal during a solemn ceremony when the UN commemorated the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers. India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador, Ruchira Kamboj, received the medal from UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

India is the second largest contributor of uniformed personnel to UN Peacekeeping. It currently deploys more than 6,000 military and police personnel to the UN operations in Abyei, the Central African Republic, Cyprus, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lebanon, the Middle East, Somalia, South Sudan, and Western Sahara.

WHO emergencies team faces funding crunch

IN 2023, THE DEPARTMENT RESPONDED TO 72 EMERGENCIES. THEY INCLUDED EARTHQUAKES IN TURKEY AND SYRIA, CONFLICT IN SUDAN, UKRAINE AND GAZA, AND A LARGE GLOBAL CHOLERA OUTBREAK

REUTERS

London, May 30: The World Health Organization's emergencies department is facing "existential threats" as multiplying health crises have left it so short of cash that it needed emergency funds to pay staff salaries at the end of last year, an independent report said.

It will likely have to ask for funding again to cover salaries up to June, the document, released ahead of the WHO's annual meeting in Geneva this week, said.

The report, by an independent oversight committee, said that countries need to strengthen their own preparedness efforts and the WHO must improve the way it transfers responsibilities to national authorities to cope

Man behind world's largest ever cybercrime botnet arrested

Washington: An international law enforcement team has arrested a Chinese national and disrupted a major botnet that officials said he ran for nearly a decade, amassing at least \$99 million in profits by reselling access to criminals who used it for identity theft, child exploitation, and financial fraud, including pandemic relief scams. The US Department of Justice quoted FBI Director Christopher Wray as saying Wednesday that the "911 55" botnet, a network of malware-infected computers in nearly 200 countries, was likely the world's largest. Justice said in a news release that Yunhe Wang, 35, was arrested May 24. Wang was arrested in Singapore, and search warrants were executed there and in Thailand, the FBI's deputy assistant director for cyber operations, Brett Leatherman, said in a LinkedIn post. Authorities also seized \$29 million in cryptocurrency, Leatherman said. Cybercriminals used Wang's network of zombie residential computers to steal "billions of dollars from financial institutions, credit card issuers and account holders, and federal lending programs since 2014.



VIOLENT VOLCANO: An eruptive fissure spews lava and smoke from a volcano in Grindavik, Iceland. The volcano in southwestern Iceland erupted for the fifth time since December, spewing red lava that once again threatened the coastal town of Grindavik and led to the evacuation of the popular Blue Lagoon geothermal spa
PTI PHOTO

HEALTH CRISES MULTIPLY



with the increased demands. It also recommends new guidelines for the WHO's role in managing long-lasting humanitarian emergencies, rather than the acute disease outbreaks that

Last year, the emergencies programme had a "critical" funding gap of \$411mn, or around a third of its entire budget

the department also deals with. "More numerous natural disasters and conflicts in fragile states pose existential threats" to the performance of the emergencies programme, the document reads.

Without increased capacity in countries, the WHO's emergencies programme "will be

GLOBAL REACTIONS

The conviction marks a further deterioration of fundamental freedoms and democratic participation in Hong Kong
THE EUROPEAN UNION

We have consistently expressed strong objections to China on the systemic erosion of Hong Kong's rights and freedoms, and we will continue to do so
PENNY WONG | FOREIGN MINISTER, AUSTRALIA

No one should engage in illegal activities and try to escape justice under the pretext of democracy
MAO NING | FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON, CHINA

The most ruthless illustration yet of how Hong Kong's National Security Law is weaponised to silence dissent
SARAH BROOKS | AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Thursday. Dozens of residents lined up outside the police-guarded court building before 6 am to secure a seat in the public gallery. Some supporters who were among the first in the line came as early as Wednesday evening.

On Wednesday night, Lee Yue-shun, one of the accused, said Facebook that Thursday was like a special graduation ceremony for him, though graduation is usually about sharing happiness with families and friends.

"This perhaps best reflects the common helplessness of our generation," he said.

The July 2020 primary was meant to shortlist pro-democracy candidates who would then run in the official election. It drew an unexpectedly high turnout of 610,000 voters, representing over 13 per cent of the city's registered electorate.

The pro-democracy camp at that time hoped they could secure a legislative majority, which would allow them to press for the 2019 protest demands, including greater police accountability and democratic elections for the city leader.

But the government postponed the legislative election that would have followed the primary, citing public health risks during the coronavirus pandemic. The electoral laws were later overhauled, drastically reducing the public's ability to vote and increasing the number of pro-Beijing lawmakers making decisions for the city in the legislature.

Beijing also had criticised the vote as a challenge to the security law, which criminalises secession, subversion and collusion with foreign forces to intervene in the city's affairs as well as terrorism.

Int'l police operation takes down ransomware networks

The Hague: Police coordinated by the European Union's justice agency have taken down computer networks responsible for spreading ransomware via infected emails, in what they called the biggest ever international operation against the lucrative form of cybercrime. The European Union's judicial cooperation agency, Eurojust, said Thursday that police arrested four "high value" suspects, took down more than 100 servers and seized control of over 2,000 internet domains. The huge takedown this week involved coordinated raids in Germany, the Netherlands, France, Denmark, Ukraine, the United States and United Kingdom, Eurojust said. The operation followed a massive takedown in 2021 of a botnet called Emotet, Eurojust said. A botnet is a network of hijacked computers typically used for malicious activity. Dutch police said in a statement that the financial damage inflicted by the network on governments, companies and individual users is estimated to run to hundreds of millions of euros (dollars).

Israel seizes Gaza's border with Egypt

Israeli military has lifted a ban on the sale of food to Gaza from Israel and the occupied West Bank as its battlefield offensive chokes international aid

REUTERS

Cairo, May 30: Israeli forces have taken control of a buffer zone along the border between the Gaza Strip and Egypt, the country's military said Wednesday, giving Israel effective authority over the Palestinian territory's entire land border.

Israel also continued deadly raids on Rafah in southern Gaza despite an order from the International Court of Justice to end attacks on the city, where half of Gaza's 2.3 million people had previously taken refuge.

In a televised briefing, chief military spokesperson Daniel Hagari said Israeli forces had gained "operational" control over the "Philadelphi Corridor", using the Israeli military's code name for the 14 km-long corridor along the Gaza Strip's only border with Egypt.

"The Philadelphi Corridor served as an oxygen line for Hamas, which it regularly used to smuggle weapons into the area of the Gaza Strip," Hagari said. Hamas is the armed Palestinian group that governs the blockaded territory.

Hagari did not spell out what "operational" control referred to but an Israeli military official ear-

Indian peacekeeper receives UN award

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

United Nations, May 30: Major Radhika Sen, an Indian woman peacekeeper who served with the UN mission in Congo, was Thursday honoured with a prestigious military gender advocate award, with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres describing her as a true leader and role model.

Major Sen, who served with the UN Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), received the '2023 United Nations Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award' from Guterres during a ceremony here on the occasion of the International Day of UN Peacekeepers.



Major Sen served in the East of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) from March 2023 to April 2024 as the Commander of MONUSCO's Engagement Platoon for the Indian Rapid Deployment Battalion (INRDB), a UN press release said.

Born in Himachal Pradesh in 1993, Major Sen joined the Indian Army eight years ago. She graduated as a biotech engineer and was pursuing her Master's degree from IIT Bombay, when she decided to join the armed forces. She was deployed to MONUSCO in March 2023 as the Engagement Platoon Commander with the Indian Rapid Deployment Battalion and completed her tenure in April 2024.

Congratulating Major Sen for her service, Guterres said she is a true leader and role model. Her service was a true credit to the United Nations as a whole.

Major Sen is the second Indian peacekeeper to receive this award after Major Suman Gawani, who had served with the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and was honoured with the 2019 United Nations Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award.

India is currently the 11th largest contributor of women military peacekeepers to the United Nations with 124 now deployed. India has traditionally been among the largest troop and police contributing countries to UN peacekeeping missions.



lier said there were Israeli "boots on the ground" along parts of the corridor.

The border with Egypt along the southern edge was the Gaza Strip's only land border that Israel had not controlled directly.

Earlier Wednesday, Israel sent tanks on raids into Rafah. They had moved into the heart of Rafah for the first time Tuesday despite an order from the top United Nations court to immediately halt the assault on the city.

The World Court said Israel had not explained how it would keep evacuees from Rafah safe and provide food, water and medicine. Its ruling also called on Hamas to immediately and unconditionally release hostages taken from Israel October 7.

Palestinian health officials said 19 civilians had been killed in Israeli airstrikes and shelling across Gaza. Israel accuses Hamas militants of hiding among civilians, something Gaza's ruling Islamist group denies.

Around a million Palestinians who had taken shelter in Rafah at the southern end of the Gaza Strip have now fled after Israeli orders to evacuate, the UN agency for Palestinian refugees UNRWA reported Tuesday.

of the day quote

We are optimising our coated products mix to service the nation's requirements for indigenous Made In India superior quality zinc-magnesium-aluminium alloy coated steel

Lenders are investing heavily in digitising the secured loan journeys and customers are adapting to the digitisation at a rapid pace. We believe it's a great time to revolutionise the secured lending product experience for the customers working with the lending ecosystem

Although rooftop solar is off to a slow start, 2024 could be a breakout year if the government's residential rooftop programme with attractive incentives

SHORT TAKES

OYO's maiden profit

New Delhi: Travel tech platform OYO reported financial year 2023-24 as the maiden profitable fiscal with a net earning of nearly ₹100 crore, founder Ritesh Agarwal said Thursday. In a post on social media platform X, Agarwal said he sees growth ahead "not just in India" but also in OYO's other key markets of Nordics, South East Asia, the US and UK. "While a delighted customer or a hotel partner brings the biggest smile on my face, our first cut financials of FY24 have me humbled as well," Agarwal shared. "We had our maiden net profitable financial year at nearly ₹100 crore. This was our eighth consecutive quarter of a positive EBITDA and we also have a cash balance of around ₹1,000 crore," he added.

VIL, Netflix ink pact

New Delhi: Telecom operator Vodafone Idea Thursday announced its partnership with the global streaming giant, Netflix, as the telco looks to strengthen its entertainment play for customers. VIL has also promised to launch its postpaid offerings with Netflix, soon. In a release about the Netflix partnership, Vodafone Idea (VIL) said users will be able to enjoy world-class entertainment with the best streaming experience on any device of their choice -- mobile, television, or tablet.



I am delighted to open one of our largest employee campuses worldwide in India. This new investment underscores our dedication to accelerating our contribution to India's rapid growth

PETER HERWECK | CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC

INTERNET-BASED TRADING

Markets regulator Sebi Thursday significantly reduced the time taken by stock exchanges for granting approval to stock brokers for internet-based trading to seven days from the current 30 days. The move is aimed at facilitating ease of doing business



India to grow at 7% in FY25

ECONOMY SHOWED RESILIENCE IN FY24 DESPITE PERSISTENT HEADWINDS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 30: Indian economy is projected to grow at 7 per cent -- the fastest among major economies across the world -- in the current fiscal year, underpinned by a sustained strengthening of macroeconomic fundamentals, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said in its latest annual report Thursday.

While the central bank expected headline inflation to moderate further, it flagged risks to food inflation saying that it remains vulnerable to supply-side shocks.

The RBI's balance sheet size surged 11.08 per cent to ₹70.48 lakh crore (about \$845 billion) as of March 31, 2024. This was nearly 2.5 times that of Pakistan's entire GDP of close to \$340 billion.

The Indian economy, it said, expanded at a robust pace in 2023-24 (April 2023 to March 2024 financial year), with real GDP growth accelerating to 7.6 per cent from 7.0 per cent in the previous year -- the third consecutive year of 7 per cent or above growth pace.

The GDP growth is robust on the back of solid investment demand which is supported by healthy balance sheets of banks and corporates, the government's focus on capital expenditure and prudent monetary, regulatory

and fiscal policies, it said, adding the Indian economy is navigating the drag from an adverse global macroeconomic and financial environment. Also, MSPs for both kharif and rabi seasons 2023-24 ensured a minimum return of 50 per cent over cost of production for all crops, it said.

Indian economy, the report said, is well-placed to step up growth trajectory over the next decade in an environment of macroeconomic and financial stability.

"As headline inflation eases towards the target, it will spur consumption demand especially in rural areas," it said.

It further said the external sector's strength and buffers in the form of foreign exchange reserves will insulate domestic economic activity from global spillovers.

The report, however, added that geopolitical tensions, economic fragmentation, global financial market volatility, international commodity price movements and erratic weather



developments pose downside risks to the growth outlook and upside risks to the inflation outlook. "The real GDP growth for 2024-25 is projected at 7.0 per cent with risks evenly balanced," it said.

Balance sheet

On its finances, RBI said its balance sheet in FY23 (April 2022 to March 2023) stood at ₹63.44 lakh crore. With finances normalised to pre-pandemic level, RBI said its balance sheet increased to 24.1 per cent of India's GDP at end of March 2024 from 23.5 per cent a year back.

The central bank's income rose 17.04 per cent in FY24 while expenditure reduced by 56.3 per cent. This together with a jump in interest income from foreign securities led to RBI's surplus surging by 141.23 per cent to ₹2.11 lakh crore, which it transferred to the central government last week.

In addition, the RBI provided ₹42,820 crore towards the contingency fund in FY24.

The RBI saw a gain of ₹83,616 crore from foreign exchange

transactions during the year, while interest income from foreign securities rose to ₹65,328 crore, which allowed it to increase the size of its contingency fund.

The annual report is a statutory report of the RBI's central board of directors. The report covers the working and functions of the Reserve Bank of India for the April 2023-March 2024 period.

The annual report for 2023-24 said that the Indian economy is navigating the drag from an adverse global macroeconomic and financial environment.

The Indian economy, the report said, is well-placed to step up growth trajectory over the next decade in an environment of macroeconomic and financial stability.

"As headline inflation eases towards the target, it will spur consumption demand especially in rural areas," it said.

Headline inflation softened to 5.4 per cent during 2023-24 from 6.7 per cent, driven by the fall in core inflation -- consumer price index or CPI excluding food and fuel -- to 4.3 per cent from 6.1 per cent a year back.

According to RBI, the external sector's strength and buffers through foreign exchange reserves will insulate the local economic activity from global spillovers.

Investors flock to SGBs last fiscal

Investors bought ₹27,000 cr of sovereign gold bonds in FY24

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 30: Sovereign gold bonds have caught the fancy of investors who bought ₹27,031 crore worth of the bonds last fiscal, an amount more than four times invested in 2022-23 on the prospects of higher returns and tax benefits.

The bonds bought by investors represented a whopping 44.34 tonne of gold during 2023-24. In 2022-23, Sovereign Gold Bonds (SGBs) representing 12.26 tonne of gold were purchased for ₹6,551 crore.

"The aggregate sum raised during 2023-24 amounted to ₹27,031 crore (44.34 tonne)," said the annual report of Reserve Bank, which issues the bonds on behalf of the central government.

During the fiscal ended March 2024, the bonds were issued through four tranches. Since the inception of SGB scheme in November 2015, a total of ₹72,274 crore (146.96 tonne) has been raised through 67 tranches.

The price of 24 karat per 10 gram of gold has gone up from about ₹62,300 to ₹73,200 in one year.



SGBs are government securities denominated in grams of gold. They are substitutes for holding physical gold. These bonds are exempt from capital gains tax.

Besides, the bonds bear interest at the rate of 2.50 per cent (fixed rate) per annum on the amount of initial investment.

SGBs are issued in denominations of one gram of gold and in multiples thereof. Minimum investment should be one gram with a limit of 4 kg subscription for individuals, 4 kg for Hindu Undivided Family (HUF) and 20 kg for trusts and similar entities notified by the government from time to time per fiscal year (April -- March).

SGBs are sold through offices or branches of nationalised banks, Scheduled Private Banks, Scheduled Foreign Banks, designated Post Offices, Stock Holding Corporation of India Ltd. (SHCIL) and the authorised stock exchanges either directly or through their agents.

Peak power demand at all time of 250GW

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 30: India's peak power demand touched an all-time high of 250 GW Thursday, according to the power ministry.

In a significant achievement for India's power sector, the country met a record maximum power demand of 250 GW May 30, 2024, the ministry said in a statement.

Peak power demand was at a record high of 246GW Wednesday due to excessive use of cooling appliances like air conditioners and coolers.

Moreover, it said that all India non-solar demand met also touched an all-time high of 234.3 GW 29th May, reflecting the combined impact of weather-related loads and growing industrial and residential power consumption.

On 30th May, the Northern region also achieved a record demand met, reaching an all-time high of 86.7 GW, while the Western region also touched its maximum demand met of 74.8 GW.

Additionally, all-India thermal generation hit an all-time high, achieving a peak of 176 GW (ex-bus), especially during non-solar hours. A key contributor to this has been the strategic implementation of Section-11, which facilitated the maximization of generation from imported coal-based plants as well as gas based plants.

Sebi launches calculator to arrive at settlement amount

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 30: Capital markets regulator Sebi Thursday launched a beta version of the settlement calculator to simplify the process of arriving at the indicative settlement amount.

As part of the settlement mechanism, an alleged wrongdoer can settle a pending matter with Sebi without admission or denial of guilt by paying settlement charges.

"In order to simplify and provide more transparency in the process of arriving at the indicative settlement amount in terms of the parameters laid down in the Sebi (Settlement Proceedings) Regulations, 2018, Sebi has launched the settlement calculator (Beta version)," the regulator said.

Besides, a user-friendly guide video has been included in the settlement calculator for the ease of understanding the process of arriving at the indicative settlement amount.

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"In order to simplify and provide more transparency in the process of arriving at the indicative settlement amount in terms of the parameters laid down in the Sebi (Settlement Proceedings) Regulations, 2018, Sebi has launched the settlement calculator (Beta version)," the regulator said.

Foreign direct investment inflows fall 3% to \$44 billion in FY24

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 30: Foreign direct investment (FDI) equity inflows in India declined 3.49 per cent to \$44.42 billion in 2023-24 due to lower infusion in sectors such as services, computer hardware and software, telecom, auto and pharma, according to the government data.

FDI inflows stood at \$46.03 billion during 2022-23.



Inflows during January-March FY24, however, rose by 33.4 per cent to \$12.38 billion as against \$9.28 billion in the year-ago period.

The total FDI -- which includes equity inflows, reinvested earnings and other capital -- declined marginally by one per cent to \$70.95 billion during 2023-24 from \$71.35 billion in 2022-23, data from Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) showed.

In 2021-22, the country received the highest ever FDI inflows of \$84.83 billion.

During the last fiscal, FDI equity inflows decreased from major countries, including Mauritius, Singapore, the US, the UK, UAE, Cayman Islands, Germany, and Cyprus.

However, inflows increased from the Netherlands and Japan.

Sectorally, inflows contracted in services, computer software and hardware, trading, telecommunication, automobile, pharma and chemicals.

₹2,000 WITHDRAWN

Share of ₹500 notes jumps to 86.5%: RBI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 30: The share of ₹500 denomination currency notes in overall currency has jumped to 86.5 per cent at the end of March 2024, as against 77.1 per cent in the year-ago period, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said Thursday.

The central bank annual report attributed the surge primarily to the withdrawal of the ₹2,000 denomination notes announced in May 2023. Share of this denomination has reduced to 0.2 per cent from 10.8 per cent in the year-ago period.

Volume-wise, the ₹500 denomination was the highest at 5.16 lakh notes while ₹10 denomination came a distant second at 2.49 lakh as of March 31, 2024, as per data shared in an annual report.

The value and volume of bank notes in circulation increased 3.9 per cent and 7.8 per cent, respectively, in FY24 as compared with an increase of 7.8 per cent and 4.4 per cent, respectively, during the previous fiscal year, it said.

The growth in the number of bank notes in circulation in value terms is among the lowest in recent years.

On the ₹2,000 note withdrawal, it said about 89 per cent of notes under the denomination introduced following demonetization in 2016 had been around for over four years and were due for replacement, and were not commonly used for transactions, it said.

Reliance, Tata, SII on TIME's list of world's most influential firms

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 30: Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries and Tata Group have made it to the prestigious TIME's list of 100 World's Most Influential Companies of 2024. TIME called Reliance 'India's Juggernaut'.

This is the second time that Reliance has found its way into the TIME list. Jio Platforms, the firm that holds digital properties of the conglomerate, was included in the inaugural TIME 100 Most Influential Companies List of 2021.

Serum Institute of India (SII) is the other Indian company on the list.

TIME listed Reliance in the 'Titans' category (one of the five categories under which the companies were divided, other being Leaders, Disrupters, Innovators, and Pioneers).

Tata was listed in 'Titan's' category while Serum under 'Pioneers'.

"Reliance Industries was founded as a textile and polyester company 58 years ago by

Dhirubhai Ambani. Today the sprawling conglomerate -- which has aligned its growth with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for a 'self-reliant' India -- is the country's most valuable company, with a market capitalisation of more than \$200 billion," TIME said.

Now led by Dhirubhai's son Mukesh, the Mumbai-based company has ventures in energy, retail, and telecommunications, among others, and has made its chairman Asia's richest man, it said.

The publication went on to state that in February, Reliance came out on top in a fiercely competitive race to dominate India's burgeoning streaming market by striking a \$8.5 billion merger deal with Disney's India business.

"The deal will bring together more than 100 television channels and give the combined group around a 31 per cent share of India's streaming market compared to rivals Netflix and Amazon Prime with 8 per cent each," according to analytics



firm Comscore.

Reliance has revolutionised several economic sectors in the world's most populous country by making world-class products and services available at affordable prices with multiple innovations.

Under Mukesh Ambani, the firm's telecom arm Jio revolutionised India's digital landscape and drove digital inclusion on an unprecedented scale with the

most affordable mobile data tariffs in the world. It set up the world's largest single location refining complex.

Reliance Retail is ranked among the top 100 retailers globally and in FY24 it registered 1.06 billion footfalls across its 18,800+ stores (67 per cent of which are in small towns and villages).

Reliance is investing \$10 billion in building the most com-

prehensive ecosystem for new energy and new materials in India and has set an ambitious goal to reach net-zero carbon by 2035.

TIME described Serum as the world's biggest vaccine maker, churning out billions of vaccines. The company makes 3.5 billion doses every year, including for measles, polio, and most recently, HPV.

"Serum's CEO Adar Poonawalla says the company's success can largely be chalked up to its private ownership. Not being beholden to shareholders allows it to keep vaccine prices low (the R21 will cost USD 4 a shot)," the publication said.

Tata Group, it said, was founded in 1868 and has a vast portfolio extending from steel, software, watches, subsea cables, and chemicals, to salt, grains, air-conditioners, fashion, and hotels.

"But as rivals have aggressively courted new businesses, it struggled to keep up with stiff competition. In 2017, after over a century of family management, N Chandrasekaran took

over as chairman despite having no personal ties to the family -- highly unusual when India's business landscape is ruled by family succession plans," TIME said.

As chair, he has transformed the group by investing in tech manufacturing, AI, and semiconductor chips.

In 2023, it became the first Indian company to assemble iPhones, and is building another plant, it said, adding that in September, Tata announced a partnership with Nvidia to develop an AI cloud in India.

"And this year, it announced plans for the country's first major semiconductor manufacturing facility. The moves seem to be paying off: In February, Tata's combined market capitalisation reached a whopping \$365 billion, more than the entire economy of India's neighbour and rival, Pakistan," it added.

This is the fourth edition of annual TIME100 Most Influential Companies list, highlighting companies making an extraordinary impact around the world.

Doubles delight for India

SINDHU SQUANDERS LEAD AGAIN TO GO DOWN TO OLD ADVERSARY MARIN



DEADLY DUO: Teesa Jolly plays a shot while Gayatri Gopichand looks on during the match played Thursday PHOTO BY FX

Singapore, May 30: PV Sindhu suffered yet another setback against Carolina Marin, but the rising Indian women's doubles pair of Teesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand stunned World No.2 duo Baek Ha Na and Lee So Hee of South Korea to enter the quarterfinals at the Singapore Open badminton tournament here Thursday.

Sindhu blew away an 18-15 lead in the decider to go down to familiar rival Marin 21-13, 11-21, 20-22 in a thrilling women's singles last 16 match. It was

Sindhu's sixth loss on the trot against her arch-rival dating back from 2018.

However, the Commonwealth Games bronze medallist duo of Teesa and Gayatri kept the Indian flag flying by eliminating Baek and Lee 21-9, 14-21, 21-15 in close to one-hour battle. This was the World No. 30 Indian duo's maiden win from three meetings against the Korean pair.

The Baek-Lee duo was error prone as Teesa and Gayatri held a commanding 18-9 lead before taking the opening game without much fuss. But the Indians allowed the South

Koreans to bounce back, committing forced errors in the second game as the match went to the deciding third game.

The rival pairs exchanged some powerful smashes and were locked eight-all before the Indian duo took a slender two-point lead at the final mid-game break. They continued to play with aggression and reeled off five points in succession to make it 16-9 and seal a memorable win.

In men's singles, World No. 10 HS Prannoy, seeded eighth, lost to Kenta Nishimoto, ranked 11th in the world, of Japan 13-21, 21-14, 15-21 in a 45-minute match.

In women's singles, Sindhu, fresh from her runner-up finish at the Malaysia Masters last week, took the opening game against her Rio Olympics final nemesis, but the Spaniard bounced back to win in 68 minutes.

Having saved one match point, Sindhu committed a sloppy misjudgement of the shuttle on the backline to prolong her wait to five years and 11 months. Sindhu had last beaten Marin in the quarterfinals of the Malaysia Open June 29, 2018 and since then the Indian has endured six losses on the trot.

Facing each other for the first time in seven months after their heated Denmark Open semifinal clash, the double Olympic medallist Indian dominated the opening game against an error-prone Marin.

With a powerful body smash, Sindhu took a massive 11-6 lead and maintained her authority to extend it to 15-8. The third-seeded Marin tried to come back but Sindhu held her own and sealed the game comfortably.

But the Spaniard World No. 3 bounced back strongly in a lopsided second game. Sindhu committed too many errors and allowed Marin to restore parity. In the third game, Sindhu led 14-10 and 18-15. But the Indian lost her composure, allowing Marin to bounce back and get a match point at 19-20.

SIBLINGS DOMINATE AT NORWAY CHESS AS PRAGGNA'S SISTER, VAISHALI HEADS WOMEN'S SEGMENT

AGENCIES

PRAGGNA STUNS CARLSEN IN 'CLASSICAL' FORMAT



SIBLINGS DOMINATE AT NORWAY CHESS AS PRAGGNA'S SISTER, VAISHALI HEADS WOMEN'S SEGMENT

AGENCIES

Fabiano Caruana who scored his first victory in 'Classical' against reigning World Champion Ding Liren of China.

Carlsen, on three points, looks like a distant third for now in the updated standings but with each 'Classical' win worth three points, this might not hold for too long. Hikaru Nakamura of the US, Firoozja Alireza of France and Liren are all joint fourth currently on 2.5 points in the six-player double round-robin contest.

"I wish Magnus would take similar risks against us old folks," said Nakamura jokingly on Carlsen's choice of playing a risky battle against Praggnanandhaa.

It was a 'Sicilian Kann', an opening that does not find many favours in the elite chess circles, wherein Praggnanandhaa got an advantage through better space control right from the beginning.

The middle game saw Magnus' king stuck in the centre and the Indian super-talent capitalised with some deft manoeuvres after the minor pieces

were off the board.

Eventually, the king's vulnerability came into question as Praggnanandhaa posed some dangerous checkmate threats. The game lasted just 37 moves.

'Classical' chess, also known as slow chess, allows players significant amount of time to make their moves, usually at least one hour. Carlsen and Praggnanandhaa had drawn their previous three encounters in this format.

In the women's event, Praggnanandhaa's elder sister R Vaishali maintained her sole lead after getting past Anna Muzychuk of Norway in the 'Armageddon' game after drawing the 'Classical'.

Vaishali inched up to 5.5 points too and enjoys a full-point lead over women's World Champion Wenjun Ju of China who is sole second by a half point margin over compatriot Tingjie Lei.

Muzychuk, Pia Cramling of Sweden and Koneru Humpy share the fourth spot here on three points each.

SHORT TAKES

FC Goa decide to release Fernandes

Margao: Indian Super League side FC Goa said Thursday that midfielder Brandon Fernandes will leave the club after his contract ends this summer. The 29-year-old Fernandes, who joined FC Goa in 2017, netted 17 goals in 130 outings for the club. He was part of the teams that won the Indian Super Cup (2019), the ISL League Shield (2019-20) and the Durand Cup (2021). Fernandes is expected to join Mumbai City FC for the 2024-25 season.

Srabani, Ashok win gold in IGP

Bhubaneswar: Srabani Nanda and Ashok Dandasena, both from Odisha, bagged gold medals in their respective disciplines at the Indian Grand Prix (IGP) Athletics Championships in Chennai Thursday. Srabani won the gold in her favourite event, the 200 metres with a timing of 24.49 seconds leaving Dhaneshwari AT (25.06 seconds) of Karnataka way behind. In the men's 1,500 metres it was Dandasena all the way. He led the race from the start and emerged victorious with a time of 3 minutes 55.40 seconds. U Priyanshu of Uttarakhand finished second in the race followed by Adarsh Gopi of Kerala who finished third. Jabir MP from Kerala hogged the limelight by winning the 400 metres hurdles with a time of 49.94 seconds. The 27-year-old surged ahead at the final bend to post a sub-50 seconds time.

Bayern appoint Kompany as coach

Munich: Bayern Munich's long search to fill their vacant head coaching position is over with the German giants naming Vincent Kompany as manager in a shock move late Wednesday evening. The 38-year-old Belgian, a surprise choice, has penned a three-year deal at the Allianz Arena. Incidentally, last season was Bayern's first trophy-less one in 12 years. "I'm looking forward to the challenge of FC Bayern. It's a great honour to be able to work for this club. FC Bayern is an institution in international football," said Kompany in a club statement. "I'm now looking forward to the basics: working with the players, building a team. Once the basis is right, success will follow as everything will fall into place," he added.

Unprecedented security for India-Pakistan game



The Eisenhower Park Stadium

AGENCIES

New York, May 30: New York's Nassau County will have unprecedented security arrangements in place June 9 for the T20 World Cup clash between India and Pakistan, due to the threat of a terror attack even though state Governor Kathy Hochul insisted that it is not credible 'at this time'.

The Eisenhower Park Stadium at the Nassau County will host eight matches of the tournament-proper, including India's three outings. The Indians will also play a practice game against Bangladesh at the venue June 1.

Hochul said she has directed state police to elevate security measures to ensure safety of the crowds. "In preparation for the World Cup my team has been working with federal and local law enforcement to keep attendees safe. While there is no cred-

ible threat at this time, I've directed @nyspolice (NYPD) to elevate security measures and we'll continue to monitor as the event nears," Hochul said on X.

A report on CNN said that New York officials are putting safety precautions in place 'after terror group ISIS-K made a global threat earlier this year' against the World Cup.

Nassau County Police Commissioner Patrick Ryder said Wednesday that the event received an ISIS-K-linked threat in April. "That was followed by more specific threats on the India versus Pakistan game," Ryder was quoted as saying in the report.

"I can guarantee you this. This is the largest security we've ever had to do in this county's history, and I can also guarantee you this - the safest place to be in Nassau County June 9 will be inside that stadium," Ryder added.

Pant emotional on India return

AGENCIES

New York, May 30: It would be 527 days since his life-threatening accident when Rishabh Pant dons the India jersey June 5 at the Nassau County ground here for the opening T20 World Cup match against Ireland and he can't wait for it.

Pant wore the blue March 23 of Delhi Capitals while making an emotional comeback after the horrific car crash in 2022 but he is more eager to wear a different shade of blue - the 'India Blue' to be specific.

"Getting back on the field with an Indian jersey on is a different feeling altogether. This is something I missed a lot... Hopefully I (can) make it count and make it better from here," Pant told BCCI.TV on the sidelines of India's first net session Wednesday ahead of the warm-up game June 1 against Bangladesh.

Pant, who underwent an intense 15-month rehabilitation at the National Cricket Academy, had teammate Suryakumar Yadav for company during this interaction and recalled the time how his presence helped him cope with the loneliness of his injury management programme in the NCA.

"Seeing the team here and meeting them again, spending time, having fun with them, having a conversation with them, I really



enjoyed," a beaming Pant said.

Having scored 446 runs in 13 IPL games, Pant is slowly getting back into the groove. The leaner and fitter Pant looked in nice touch at the India nets at the Cantigue Park on the outskirts of this city.

Pant also spoke about the prospects of cricket gaining popularity in the USA going forward. He felt the T20 World Cup could be the start of an eventful chapter.

"We are used to playing in certain countries but this is a different prospect. It has opened up a different channel for sport because I feel cricket is growing around the world and... getting the exposure here would be nice for the game as well as USA

Playing for India is something I missed a lot. Hopefully from here on things will get better

RISHABH PANT

Cricket," Pant pointed out.

The wicketkeeper-batter spoke about the drop-in pitches that will be used during the tournament and also the bright sunshine that he and the rest of the team are getting used to.

"New pitches are there. I'm just getting used to the conditions. The sun is a little bit brighter here, so it will take some time for the players to adjust. Let's see how it goes," Pant concluded.

NFA 3rd Odisha team to qualify for IWL

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 30: Going down in the annals of Odisha football history as well as adding a glorious feather in its cap, Nita Football Academy (NFA) have been able to secure a ticket to compete in the 2024-25 season of the Indian Women's League (IWL). NFA achieved the glory by finishing as runners-up in the inaugural edition of the IWL-2, the second tier women's football league of the country, which concluded with the final round at Mapusa-based Duler Stadium in Goa, May 28, 2024, a release issued by the academy stated. NFA will be the third team from Odisha to feature in IWL. The other two teams are Odisha FC and Sports Odisha.

Both NFA and Sreebhumi Football Club (Kolkata) finished on top of the table with 10 points each. The goal difference for both the teams stood at 8-8. However, Sreebhumi FC were declared champions as they had won 3-1 the match played between both the sides. Despite the loss, NFA bounced back into the title race winning three of their last four matches and drawing one. NFA capped their last round campaign trouncing SAG Football Academy 8-1. Sikha Mallik spearheaded the NFA attack by scoring four goals. She had a tally of seven from all the games.

PB Athletics Centre emerge overall champs



Athletes of PB Athletics Coaching Centre pose with their trophies OP PHOTO

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, May 30: PB Athletics Coaching Centre emerged overall champions in the two-day Cuttack District Annual Athletics Meet which concluded Thursday at the Barabati Stadium here. This is the 15th time in succession that PB Athletics Coaching Centre has emerged champions in the meet. They finished with 465 points, enough to leave all the others way behind.

The meet was conducted with athletes of various age groups

taking part. PB Athletics Coaching Centre emerged winners in seven age groups. The segments are: Girls (up to 14 years), girls (up to 16 years), girls (up to 18 years), boys (up to 20 years), girls (up to 23 years), men and women. Among other teams who emerged winners in different age groups are: Sports Lovers Athletics Club (boys up to 14 years and boys up to 23 years), SAI Training Centre (boys up to 16 years), State Sports Hostel (boys up to 18 years) and Friends Club (girls up to 20 years).

Sachin, Sanjeet keep Olympics hopes alive

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangkok, May 30: India's Sachin Siwach (57kg) and Sanjeet Kumar (92kg) advanced another step towards Paris Olympic qualification as they registered convincing victories over their respective opponents to advance to their respective rounds of the Boxing World Qualifiers here Thursday.

Sachin started the proceedings for India with a clinical 5-0 win against Olympian Batuhan Ciftci of Turkey in the pre-quarterfinals and Sanjeet then saw off the challenge from Luis Sanchez of Venezuela with an identical margin in the round of 32.

In the 57kg category only three boxers will make cut for the Paris Olympics. Sachin, therefore, needs to win two more bouts to make the cut while Sanjeet, who got a bye in the round of 64, will have a similar target as all four semifinalists will qualify in his weight category.

Easy day for top players



Aryna Sabalenka thanks the crowd after her win Thursday PHOTO X

AGENCIES

Paris, May 30: Second seed Aryna Sabalenka kept her women's singles title aspirations on track with a fluent 6-2, 6-2 victory over Japan's Moyuka Uchijima at the French Open tennis tournament here Thursday. The Belarusian dominated the match completely and

never allowed her opponent to settle down. Sabalenka's power-packed shots kept the Japanese on the run all through the match.

In another match played Thursday, fourth seed Elena Rybakina had an easy workout on the courts as she stifled the challenge of Arantxa Rus 6-3, 6-4 in a match that lasted little over an hour.

In the men's segment, Alexander Zverev also had it easy against David Goffin winning 7-6 (7-4), 6-2, 6-2. Later in the day top-seeded and defending champion, Novak Djokovic mixed firepower with some delicate drop shots to cruise into the third round with a 6-4, 6-1, 6-2 win over Roberto Caraballes Baena.

In another match played late Wednesday evening, defending champion Iga Swiatek saved a match point to outlast fellow four-time Grand Slam winner Naomi Osaka 7-6 (7-1), 1-6, 7-5 in a breath-taking second round clash. World No.1 Swiatek trailed 2-5 in the final set but the Pole won the last five games of the match to keep her bid for a third successive Roland Garros title on track.

Swiatek is attempting to become only the fourth woman in the Open era to lift four Roland Garros titles and just the second - after Serena Williams - to complete the clay court treble of Madrid, Rome and French Open.