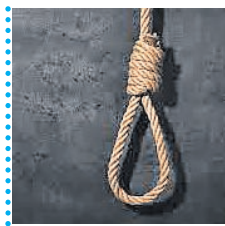




Shining star

Actress Deepika Padukone tops the IMDb list of Top 100 Most Viewed Indian Stars of the Last Decade

LEISURE | P2



Executions on the rise

The number of executions recorded worldwide last year jumps to the highest level since 2015

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Positive outlook

After a gap of about 10 years, S&P Global Ratings ups India's outlook to positive from stable on robust growth prospects for next three years

BUSINESS | P11



Bright start

Shuttler PV Sindhu starts well at the Singapore Open with an easy straight games win over Line Hojmark of Denmark

SPORTS | P12

VOLUME 14, ISSUE 59 | www.orissapost.com

BHUBANESWAR | THURSDAY MAY 30, 2024

12 PAGES | ₹5.00

SHORT TAKES

MONSOON LIKELY TO HIT KERALA TODAY

New Delhi: Spurred on by cyclone 'Remal', southwest monsoon is expected to hit the Kerala coast and parts of northeast by Thursday, a day ahead of the date forecast by the weather office. "Conditions continue to become favourable for the onset of the southwest monsoon over Kerala during the next 24 hours," the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said Wednesday.

TV CHANNEL IN SOUP FOR EXIT POLL SHOW

New Delhi: The Election Commission (EC) has directed the Chief Electoral Officer of Odisha to take immediate action against a private TV channel for telecasting exit poll results in the state, sources said Wednesday. They pointed out that exit polls are banned under Section 126A of Representation of the People Act, 1951 before the conclusion of elections in all phases. The seventh and last phase of the Lok Sabha polls will be held Saturday. The EC had notified the prohibited period from 7am of April 19 to 6:30pm of June 1 through an order issued March 28.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Well, he refused to give me an interview, citing my IQ... said it wasn't low enough



WHEEL OF FAITH: Blacksmith servitors fixing the hub of a chariot wheel on the occasion of 'Shrikhetre Bhaunri' in Puri, Wednesday

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, 73, during his last leg of visit to Odisha before the final phase of the elections raked up the 'health issues' of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and wondered whether there is a conspiracy behind the sudden deterioration of Naveen's health during the last one year. Modi also vowed to form a committee to inquire into the 77-year-old Chief Minister's medical history. However, Naveen retorted to the PM's jibe saying that he is in perfect health, and has been campaigning in the state for the last one month. The BJD supremo also said a number of BJP people from Odisha and Delhi are spreading lies about his health

Plot behind Naveen's worsening health: Modi

AGENCIES

Baripada/Balasure, May 29: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Wednesday promised that if the BJP forms the government in Odisha, it would constitute a committee to ascertain the reason behind the "sudden" deterioration of the health condition of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, hinting at a "conspiracy" behind it.

Modi asserted that after a gap of five decades, a full majority government would be formed at the Centre for the third consecutive term.

Addressing election rallies in Mayurbhanj and Balasure Lok Sabha seats in Odisha, he said, "The well-wishers of Naveen babu are worried over his deteriorating health condition. It has been worsening over the last one year. Is there a conspiracy behind this? Is the lobby that is currently running the Patnaik government on his behalf responsible for it?"

"If the BJP forms the government in Odisha after the



ongoing Assembly elections, it would constitute a committee to ascertain the reason behind the deterioration of Patnaik's health," Modi said.

Attacking the BJD government, he said, "Wherever you step in Odisha, there is natural wealth but the state remains poor because it was first looted by the Congress and then by the BJD for the last 25 years."

"People of Odisha know that voting for BJD would mean wasting their vote. They don't trust it anymore... you gave 25 years to the party, and it deceived you, looted you and kept you underdeveloped," the Prime Minister added.

I am in perfect health, campaigning: Naveen

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Wednesday retorted to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's jibe saying that he is in perfect health, and has been campaigning in the state for the last one month.

"He (Prime Minister Narendra Modi) has stated publicly earlier that I am his good friend. All he had to do was pick up a telephone and ask me about my health. But a number of BJP people from Odisha and Delhi are spreading rumours about my health. Let me assure the PM that I am in perfect health and I have been campaigning in our state for the last one month," Patnaik said.

The CM said, "Instead of concerning about the rumours about my health, you (Modi) should concentrate revision of coal royalty for our state and also our demand for special category state, which we have been making for years. This will benefit the people of Odisha."

Patnaik also posted on X that



"4.5 crore people of Odisha are my family. My dear mothers, the youth must give a proper response to this disrespect by voting on June 1st."

Patnaik's statement came hours after Modi in three back-to-back election rallies stated that the Odisha Chief Minister is not in a state to do his routine duties.

Meanwhile, replying to Modi's allegation that BJD failed to develop mineral-rich Odisha despite being in power for the last 25 years, senior BJD leader Kartik Pandian Wednesday said Odisha is rich in minerals but the Centre has been "grabbing" the major benefits from the minerals of the state.

Delhi bakes at record 52.9 degrees Celsius

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 29: Delhi's Mungeshpur Wednesday logged a maximum of 52.9 degrees Celsius, the highest ever temperature recorded in the city, even as the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said it is examining sensors and data of the area's weather station for any potential error.

The national capital and large swathes of north India have been reeling under heatwave conditions for the past few days, with at least three weather stations here - Mungeshpur, Narela and Najafgarh - recording nearly 50 degrees Celsius even Tuesday.

Delhi's primary weather station Safdarjung observatory Wednesday recorded a maximum temperature of 46.8 degrees Celsius, the highest in 79 years, according to IMD data. It was 46.7 degrees Celsius June 17, 1945.

On the temperature at Mungeshpur, the IMD, however, said it is examining sensors and data of the weather station for the area.

"The maximum temperature over Delhi-NCR varied from 45.2 degrees Celsius to 49.1 degrees Celsius in different parts of city. Mungeshpur reported 52.9 degrees Celsius as an outlier compared to other stations. It could be due to error in the sensor or the local factor. IMD is examining the data and sensors," the de-

SRC issues caution

Bhubaneswar: Even as severe heatwave conditions continued to grip Odisha Wednesday, with temperatures soaring to 46.3 degrees Celsius in Bolangir, Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) Satyabrata Sahu instructed all district Collectors to implement precautionary measures such as reviewing basic facilities at healthcare centres and ensuring sufficient staffing, especially at the grassroots level. The Health department was advised to assess the availability of doctors and health workers to address heat-related issues, particularly in coastal areas experiencing high humidity.

In a post on X, Minister of Earth Sciences Kiren Rijiju said, "It is not official yet. Temperature of 52.3 degrees Celsius in Delhi is very unlikely. Our senior officials in IMD have been asked to verify the news report. The official position will be stated soon."

Other areas of the city also sizzled with maximum temperatures recorded at 49.1 degrees Celsius in Najafgarh, 49 degrees Celsius at Pusa and 48.4 degrees Celsius at Narela, according to the data. The temperatures soared in the national capital as hot winds blew into the city from Rajasthan, said officials.

In the evening, there was a sudden change in weather, with drizzle in some parts of the city.

30 injured as crackers go off during Chandan Yatra

PNN & AGENCIES

Puri, May 29: More than 30 persons were injured, many of them critically, in a firecracker explosion during Chandan Yatra of Lord Jagannath and His siblings at Narenda Pond here Wednesday night.

Sources said hundreds of people had congregated near the pond to witness the water sports of the deities when the mishap took place.

"Huge quantities of firecrackers were kept near the pond. Some youths were bursting those one after the other. Suddenly, an explosion took place. Many people, including a few children, suffered severe burns in the explosion," they said.

While 10 of the injured are being treated at the district head-



quarters hospital (DHH) here, nearly 20 have been shifted to facilities like SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack, they pointed out.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik directed Chief Secretary PK Jena and the district administration to ensure proper treatment of the injured.

"All expenses for the treatment of the injured will be met from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund. I pray Lord Jagannath for the speedy recovery of the injured," Patnaik said.

MP man kills 8 of his family, hangs himself

AGENCIES

Chhindwara (MP), May 29: In a ghastly incident, a 'mentally disturbed' man allegedly hacked to death eight members of his joint family with an axe in Madhya Pradesh's Chhindwara district Wednesday before committing suicide by hanging himself, police said.

The incident took place at around 2:30am in Bodal Kachhar village and the reason behind it was not yet clear, they said.

The man, identified as Dinesh Sariyam, 26, who was "mentally disturbed", got married May 21, Superintendent of Police (SP) Manish Khatri told reporters.

He allegedly hacked to death his wife, mother, sister, brother, the latter's wife and three minor

children. The man later also attacked another nephew but he managed to escape from the spot, the official said.

A woman raised an alarm early in the morning following which police rushed to the spot and tried to search for the man, but he was later found hanging from a tree, Khatri said.

The bodies were sent for autopsy and the injured person was undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Chhindwara.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav expressed grief over the incident and directed minister Sampatiya Uikey to rush to Chhindwara and visit the other family members of the deceased. Prima facie, a probe suggested the man was mentally unstable, according to officials.

Women rush to open post office a/c in Bangalore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, May 29: An otherwise silent General Post Office here is witnessing an unprecedented rush of women hurrying to open India Post Payment Bank (IPPB) accounts, anticipating a monthly deposit of ₹8,500 into their accounts if the INDIA bloc comes to power at the Centre.

The elections are still in the process but women, largely from the minority communities sporting burqas, stood in long queues to open the account. Some of them believed that opening the IPPB account would ensure that they get ₹8,500 per month.

A woman said she stood in queue early in the morning itself. Another said everyone in her neighbourhood was saying that money would start coming from the day the account is opened, so



she too came to open an account. Most of the women PTI spoke to were from Shivajinagar, Chamarajpet and surrounding places in the city.

Talking to reporters, Chief Post Master of GPO, Bangalore HM Manjesh said people have been coming to the office to open IPPB accounts in the belief that

the Department of Posts would credit ₹2,000 or ₹8,500 into their accounts.

"Somebody has spread this rumour. The department will not pay any amount to them. However, this account can be used for any type of online transaction or even Direct Benefit (Transfer) scheme," Manjesh

clarified. He said that the department has already informed the customers about this. "We have displayed some posters also. In spite of that, customers are requesting that we open IPPB accounts for them."

There was such a rush that more counters were opened outside the GPO building, under the open sky, he added.

"Earlier we used to open 50 to 60 accounts in a counter. Now we have made separate arrangements. We have brought our postmen for this purpose and we are opening around 500 to 600 accounts regularly and sometimes even 1,000 accounts a day," Manjesh said.

According to sources in the department, this rush has been witnessed for the past three days. It is learnt that some Congress MLAs spread the rumours, be-

lieving which the women made a beeline for the GPO.

The MLAs said that the women will start getting money after June 4 "when the INDIA bloc will come to power".

The Congress has made a promise to launch the Mahalakshmi scheme under which ₹8,500 will be directly credited into the account of women heads of families belonging to Below Poverty Line (BPL) category every month. It is similar to the Gruha Lakshmi guarantee scheme started by the Karnataka government in which ₹2,000 is paid to women heads of BPL families.

Notably, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi had May 16 announced that women across the country will get ₹8,500 in their accounts from July, if the INDIA Alliance forms the government at the Centre.

leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com
accuracy • reliability • trust
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES
You will experience a profound connection with the cosmos today. And you will be very grateful to the almighty for showering his grace on you. Your love for your kith and kin deepens today, says Ganesh, and you will spend extravagantly on them.

TAURUS
Much to the disappointment and annoyance of your friends and associates, you are likely to act unduly possessive and self-centred about persons and objects, warns Ganesh. Be sure, your overprotective attitude is not likely to amuse anyone.

GEMINI
You will be more inclined towards religious teachings and rituals today. You will probably visit a place of worship and spend some time there and this will bring you mental peace and calm. However, you still need to do justice to your duties, says Ganesh.

CANCER
Today, you will put your heart and soul into whatever task you take up. But the results may not be too forthcoming. However, that should not be a reason for you to get dejected or anxious. You will get your due sooner or later. Also, spending some time with your loved ones will be quite gratifying emotionally.

LEO
You will need to keep from being agitated today. Let your spouse or business partner take critical decisions if you aren't in the right frame of mind. Decisions you take today may have to be rethought of later. Important meetings will proceed smoothly, but you will not be able to commit to any final conclusions or contracts.

VIRGO
Appreciate the things that people do and try your best to inspire them to achieve greater success, says Ganesh. Put on your thinking cap and contemplate seriously. Simply criticising others will only hurt you. Be as level-headed as you can and keep pegging on towards your targets.

LIBRA
Ganesh says you will try to attain prestige in society today. This prestige will come to you via the field of communication or by your own thought processes. In your free time you will be able to learn about various topics of interest to you. Ganesh wishes you all the very best in life.

SCORPIO
Till now you have experienced all the highs. Today you may come across the lows of the professional world. The equation between your boss, colleagues and you may get slightly disturbed. However, you will make it up by evening. Freshers may look for some career opportunities.

SAGITTARIUS
Upholding all that is right and just will be the high-point today. You will be in the right spirits to fight injustice and discrimination. The day promises to be as splendid as your will. Ganesh advises you to stand up and conquer all today.

CAPRICORN
Lack of confidence may leave you glum in the first half of the day, and to add to it, you will be loaded with work that you may have taken up from company other than the one employing you full time, says Ganesh. The sullen mood will turn jovial by evening, and you can expect to have a good time socialising with friends and relatives.

AQUARIUS
Your plate will be full with plenty of work, and you will have no clue about how to handle all the chaos. Patience and organisational skills, your best qualities will help you sail through these difficult times, assures Ganesh. You will successfully wind up the day at work and geared up to party later in the evening.

PISCES
Financial bearings will be at the fore front of your attention today, feels Ganesh. Bank accounts, stocks, loans and other such things will dominate your thoughts and words. Earning money will be your primary goal and you will focus on those methods that will be most profitable to you, today. Give work your best shot and punch in your 100% as Ganesh feels that you will reap the benefits of the effort you put in today.

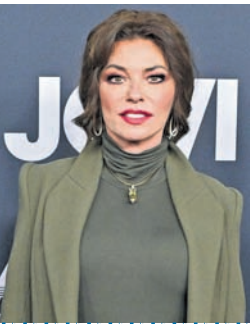


SCHEANA SHAY WANTS VALIDATION FROM FRIENDS

Reality star Scheana Shay has confessed to seeking validation from her friends. The *Vanderpump Rules* star has denied being jealous of Ariana Madix's recent run of success - but she has confessed to wanting validation from her friends and romantic partners.

I'M EMBRACING THE AGEING: SHANIA TWAIN

Country music star Shania Twain has revealed she doesn't worry about ageing and is fine with getting older. She told Extra: "I'm embracing the ageing. I'm fine with it. I don't have a choice. I can't change it. So I decided whatever I can't change, I need to have fun with."



Mumbai: Actress Raashii Khanna, who was recently seen in *Yodha* opposite Sidharth Malhotra, recently in an interview, shared that with right roles written for women, pay parity will no longer exist.

She said, "For that we also need filmmakers who believe in us, like Sundar sir and everybody else, who put an effort to put such a film on our shoulders. I think art and cinema should be beyond gender. It's high time we were treated like that. Films like *Article 370*, *Crew* and our film have only proven that women are as far ahead as men are. Even this conversation shouldn't exist in time. Everybody should be treated equally, and art should be judged by the way it's made and not by who is in it. That should go beyond gender, I feel."

However, she did accept that pay disparity exists and hopes that one day it won't. She added, "We should get better pay cheques in films, honestly, because there's a huge gap, and I hope that vanishes over time. It's a process and I am very proud of what has happened in Cannes as well, seeing those women is an amazing feeling because anybody who leads, paves the path for all of us."

On the work front, Raashii will be seen in *Aranmanai 4*.

AGENCIES

Raashii: Art should go beyond gender



DEEPIKA tops IMDb's 100 Most Viewed

Mumbai: Actress Deepika Padukone, who will be soon seen in *Singham Again* and *Kalki 2898 AD* has topped the IMDb list of Top 100 Most Viewed Indian Stars of the Last Decade.

Reacting to the news, the *Om Shanti Om* actress said, "I'm deeply grateful to be included in a list that captures the sentiment of a global audience. IMDb stands as a beacon of credibility, reflecting the true pulse of people's passion, interests and preferences."

She further mentioned: "This recognition is truly humbling and inspires me to continue connecting with and reciprocating the love I receive from audiences, both on and off the screen with authenticity and purpose."

The second spot is occupied by actor Shah Rukh Khan, third by Aishwarya Rai Bachchan. Alia Bhatt is on the fourth spot followed by the late actor Irrfan Khan.

Aamir Khan and Salman Khan, too find a place in the top 10. While Aamir is at number six, Salman holds the eighth spot, separated by the late actor Sushant Singh Rajput at number seven.

The list also includes Hrithik Roshan, Akshay Kumar, Katrina Kaif, Amitabh Bachchan, Samantha Ruth Prabhu, Kareena Kapoor, Nayanthara, Ajay Devgn, Triptii Dimri and others.

The Top 100 Most Viewed Indian Stars of the Last Decade on IMDb list is based on the IMDb weekly rankings from January 2014 through April 2024.

IAN S

Being an entrepreneur is daunting: Sonakshi

Mumbai: Actress Sonakshi Sinha, who has also stepped into the world of business with her nail label, said that being an entrepreneur is a bit more daunting as it doesn't come naturally to her.

Talking about what's more daunting, being an actress or being a business person, Sonakshi told IANS, "I think acting comes like second nature to me and it has always been like I

have learnt everything on the go but I never felt uncomfortable doing anything. Right now as an entrepreneur, that is something very new."

"I am again learning the ropes and I am involved as much as I can be. It's something really different for me. I really love it. I feel that is a bit more daunting than acting was for me because it doesn't come naturally."

The actress added that business is something I have to learn still and I think I am doing pretty well at that.

On the work front, Sonakshi was recently seen in *Heeramandi: the Diamond Bazaar*.

IAN S

'I always believe in being in moment'

For the actress, international events lead to some overwhelming moments amidst chaotic schedules. So, how does she keep calm and sail through the extravaganza? Sharing her tips and tricks, the Kick actress said, "I always believe in being in the moment. I don't miss even a second and absorb it all in. Secondly, just breathe... because I think sometimes we forget to do that and it just stresses us out. So, try and be relaxed. And thirdly, click as many pictures as you can so that when you return home you can go back in memory and watch it all over again."

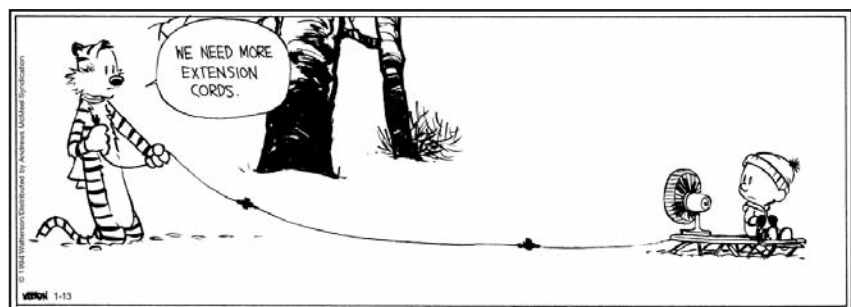
Known for her fashion sense, the actress always chooses comfort over fashion every time she hits the red carpet. She had said, "I always believe in comfort over fashion. If it is something that actually made me feel comfortable I would go with it and if there is something that made me even a tad bit uncomfortable then I would not."

AGENCIES

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

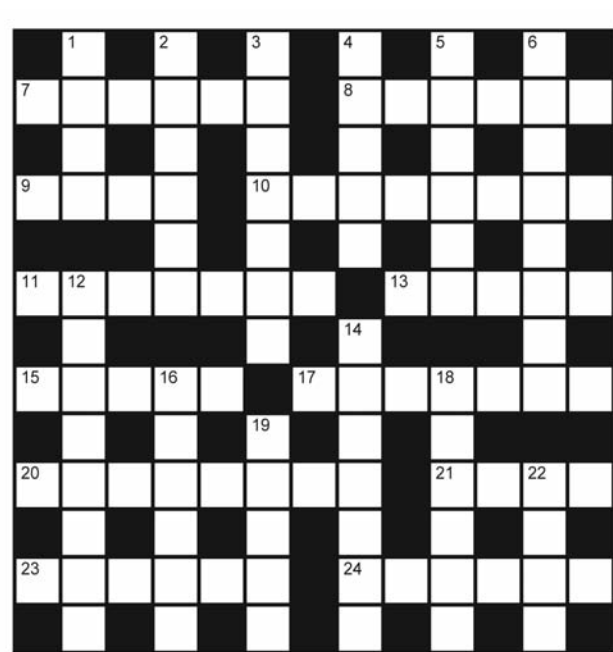


BREVITY



FUN post

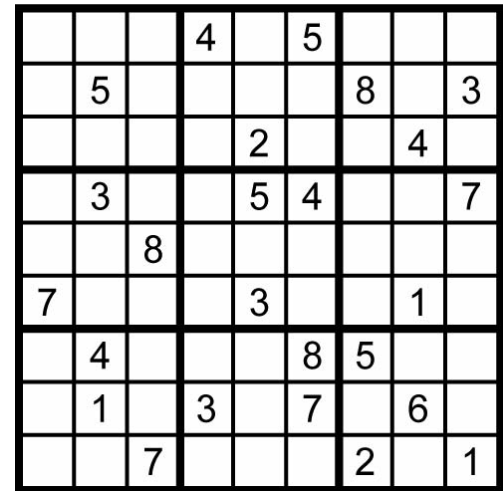
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Clunker
 - 8 Gully
 - 9 Package wrapper
 - 10 Dormancy
 - 11 Footrest
 - 13 Itinerant
 - 15 Spam medium (1-4)
 - 17 Give the sack
 - 20 Powerful
 - 21 Fill to the gills
 - 23 Pollen producer
 - 24 Indistinct
 - Down**
 - 1 Spanish wine
 - 2 Ravel classic
 - 3 Emblematic
 - 4 Chocolate source
 - 5 Like some mixed drinks
 - 6 Sketchy summary
 - 12 Urban centre in Mali
 - 14 Germ
 - 16 Worker's goal
 - 18 Place to view exhibits
 - 19 Spiral-horned antelope
 - 22 Like sour grapes

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.

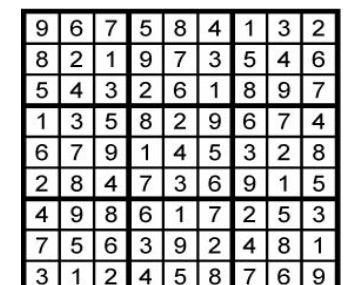


SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



A BJP delegation after submitting memorandum to the CEO in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday, alleging violation of mode code of conduct by BJD

downtown

Take measures to tackle heatwave conditions, SRC tells Collectors

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, May 29: As sweltering heatwave continued to grip Odisha, the state government Wednesday asked all district Collectors to take precautionary measures, such as reviewing basic facilities at healthcare centres and ensuring sufficient staffing, especially at the grassroots level, to tackle heat-related issues.

In a letter to all Collectors, Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) Satyabrata Sahu said the maximum day temperature would be more than 40 degrees Celsius at many places in the interior districts. The maximum temperature is likely to be above normal by 2 to 3 degrees Celsius in a few districts in coastal Odisha, he said.

As hot and high humid conditions will prevail over coastal Odisha during this week, the SRC has asked the Collectors to review the basic health facilities at the community health



centres, primary healthcare centres, sub-divisional and district headquarters hospitals to tackle heat-related problems.

Sahu has also advised the Health department to review the engagement of doctors and health workers working at the grassroots level.

According to the regional centre of the IMD here, Bolangir was the hottest place in the state for the day as it saw temperature reaching 46.3 degrees Celsius.

Sonepur recorded a temperature of 46.2 degrees Celsius, while Titlagarh and Jharsuguda logged 46 degrees Celsius.

Additionally, 16 other places recorded temperatures of 40 degrees Celsius or above, with

Sambalpur reaching 45.6 degrees, Boudh (45.3) and Hirakud (45.1). Bhubaneswar and Cuttack registered temperatures of 39.9 degrees and 38 degrees Celsius, respectively.

Heatwave to severe heatwave conditions would prevail in the districts of Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, Sonepur, Boudh, Kandhamal, Bolangir, Keonjhar, Angul, Sundargarh, Deogarh, Bargarh, Nuapada, and Kalahandi Thursday, the weather office said.

People in the districts of Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khurda, Nayagarh, Ganjam, Gajapati, and Dhenkanal would experience hot and humid weather condition Thursday, it said.

As election campaigning for the last phase of Lok Sabha and Assembly elections is set to end Thursday, the IMD advised people to take necessary precautions during rallies, especially in high humid and temperature areas.



BRIEF RELIEF: Attendants of patients at SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack take refuge under the tree as day temperature soars, Wednesday

Application for UG courses starts June 3 43% avg rise in assets of 324 MPs re-contesting in LS polls

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, May 29: Common Application Form (CAF) for admission into undergraduate (UG) courses in degree colleges, including self-financing colleges, for 2024-25 academic session under Student Academic Management System (SAMS) will be available online from June 3, the Higher Education (HE) department said, Wednesday.

Releasing the timeline, the HE department said students can apply for the UG courses by filling up the CAF online, through www.samsodisha.gov.in, by 11:45pm of June 17.

“Correction, if any, in the CAF can be done online between 11am of June 18 and 7pm of June 19,



2024,” it said. Publication of provisional allotment of seats for the first round will be done June 25.

Selection of college and online payment of admission fees can be done between 7pm of June 25 and 11:45pm of June 28.

“Applicants must report at al-

lotted institutions for taking admission (first round) between June 26 and 29, it said.

Publication of provisional allotment of seats for the second round will be done July 5. “Selection of college and online payment of admission fees can be done between 7pm of July 5

and 11:45pm of July 8,” it said. Applicants must report at allotted institutions for taking admission (second round) between 9am July 6 and 5pm of July 9.

Publication of provisional allotment of seats for the third round will be done 4pm of July 15. “The online payment of admission fees by the selected students can be done between July 15 and 18,” the HE department said.

The Council of Higher Secondary Education (Class XII) declared the Class XII results May 26. The pass percentage was 80.95 for Arts, 86.93 for Science and 82.27 for Commerce, with girls outperforming boys across all streams. The Vocational stream recorded a pass rate of 68.02.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 29: There has been an average increase of 43 per cent over the last five years in the assets of 324 MPs who have entered the poll fray again in this Lok Sabha election, according to an analysis by a poll rights body.

The average assets of these MPs in 2019 was around ₹21.55 crore while in the current electoral cycle, the average asset value has increased ‘significantly’ to ₹30.88 crore, marking an increase of ₹9.33 crore over the past five years, the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) said in a report.

It analysed the financial growth among Members of Parliament (MPs) re-contesting in the 2024 general elections. The counting of votes for the seven-phase polls will be taken up June 4.

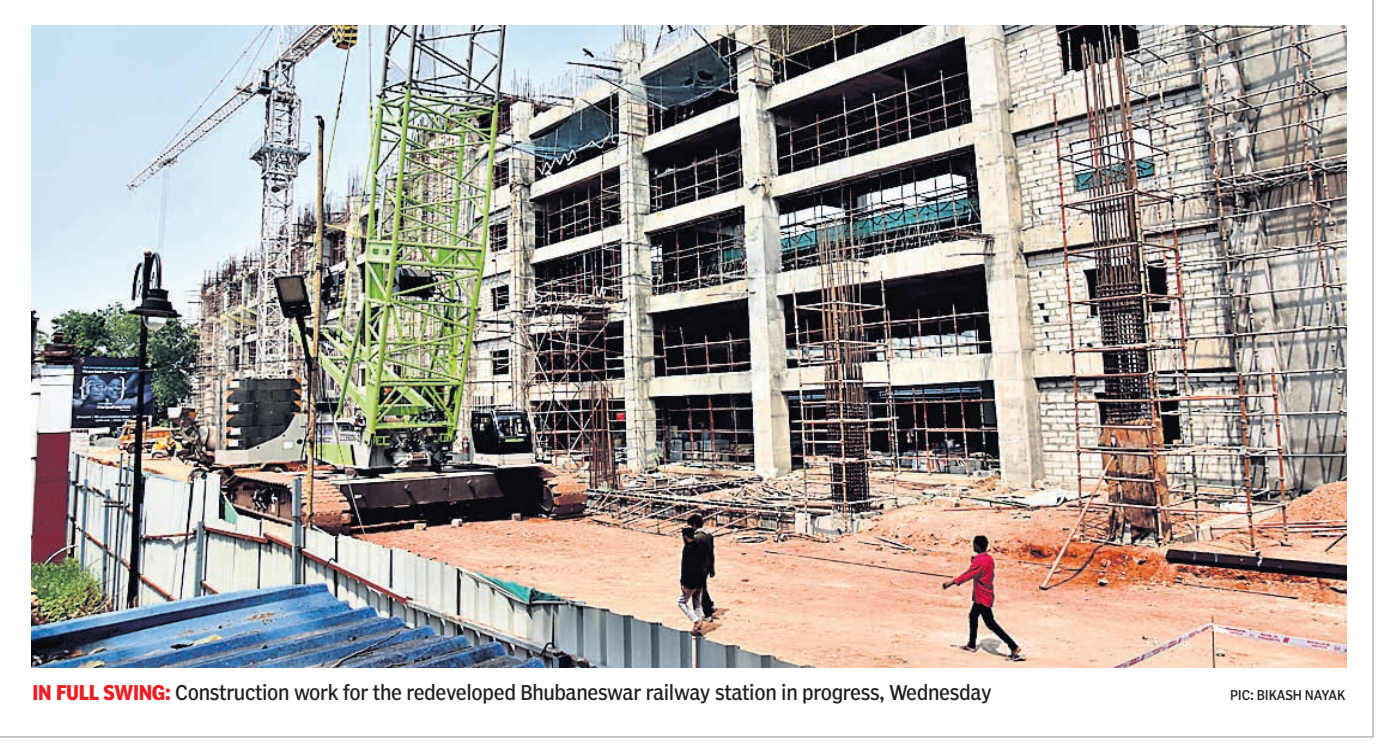
The percentage growth in assets for these 324 MPs between the 2019 and 2024 polls averages at 43 per cent, the ADR said.

The report said a comparative analysis of party-wise average assets between 2019 and 2024 further elucidates this trend. It said among the major parties, the Bharatiya Janata Party saw a 39.18 per cent increase in the average assets of its re-contesting 183 MPs (Rs 18.40 crore to ₹25.61 crore). It was 48.76 per cent for 36 Congress MPs (Rs 44.13 crore to ₹65.64 crore).

For re-contesting 10 MPs of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam it was 19.96 per cent (Rs 30.93 crore to ₹37.10 crore), 48.13 per cent for eight Shiv Sena MPs (Rs 19.77 crore to ₹29.28 crore), 20.53 per cent for five Samajwadi

The average assets of 324 re-contesting MPs in 2019 was around ₹21.55 crore while in the current electoral cycle, the average asset value has increased ‘significantly’ to ₹30.88 crore, marking an increase of ₹9.33 crore over the past five years, according to the ADR

Party MPs (₹20.56 crore to ₹24.78 crore) and 84.13 per cent for eight Yuva Jans Samika Ryth Congress Party MPs (₹28.66 crore to ₹52.78 crore). The report said the average increase in assets of 16 re-contesting MPs of the Trinamool Congress was 53.84 per cent (₹15.69 crore to ₹24.15 crore), 35.54 per cent for 11 Janata Dal (United) MPs (₹4.55 crore to ₹6.17 crore), 14.34 per cent for one Nationalist Congress Party MP (₹12 crore to ₹14 crore), 52.94 per cent for three Bharat Rashtra Samithi MPs (₹38 crore to ₹59 crore), 21.05 per cent for three NCP (Sharad Chandra Pawar) MPs (₹48 crore to ₹58 crore), 52.94 per cent for three Bharat Rashtra Samithi MPs (₹38 crore to ₹59 crore) and 317 per cent for one Janata Dal (Secular) MP (₹9 crore to ₹40 crore). The increase for re-contesting MPs of the Bahujan Samaj Party was 25.37 per cent (₹8.46 crore to ₹10.61 crore), 68.4 per cent for the Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) (₹7.01 crore to ₹11.80 crore), 184.02 per cent for the Biju Janata Dal (Rs 2.41 crore to ₹6.85 crore), 143.2 per cent for the Telugu Desam Party (₹18.90 crore to ₹45.97 crore), 104.9 per cent for the Indian Union Muslim League (₹13.07 crore to ₹26.78 crore) and 3000.51 per cent for the Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (₹4.78 lakh to ₹1.48 crore), the report said. It said the increase was 35.12 per cent for re-contesting MPs of the All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen (₹10.43 crore to ₹14.09 crore), 97.61 per cent for the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (₹85.40 lakh to ₹1.68 crore). It was 117.36 per cent for the Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi, the report said and added that the Shiromani Akali Dal (Amritsar) saw a slight decrease of three per cent in assets of re-contesting MPs.



IN FULL SWING: Construction work for the redeveloped Bhubaneswar railway station in progress, Wednesday

2 BIKE LIFTERS HELD IN CITY

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 29: The Capital police here Wednesday arrested two members of a bike lifting gang for theft of five motorcycles near Unit II market in the City.

Capital police inspector in-charge (IC) Sudhansu Bhusan Jena said they have arrested Narayan Badajena and Manoranjan Swain, residents of Malipada area, from Ganganagar area.

The police crackdown, the IIC said, came while investigating the theft of a motorcycle of Laxman Kumar Sahoo from Unit II market parking lot here, May 25.

Jena said the stolen motorcycles were recovered from the accused while they were planning to sell those to prospective buyers. “Efforts are on to arrest the other members of the bike lifting gang,” the IIC said.

How genes shape birdsong, even when birds grow up far from home

With the arrival of spring, a timeless ritual begins anew - male birds fill the air with song, seeking to attract mates and defend their territories from other competing males.

But there is a lot we still don't understand about how birds learn which sounds to sing. Our latest study offers new insights and suggests genes may play a more important role than scientists realised.

In nearly half of the world's bird species, young birds learn by imitating the songs of adults. As birds learn songs from one another, mistakes inevitably happen, leading to variation in songs between populations of the same species, similar to the formation of dialects in human languages.

Female birds usually prefer males that sing songs typical of the local population, as it may show that they are well adapted

to the nearby environment. Additionally, songs are crucial for defending territories. Male birds singing foreign songs often struggle to hold onto territories against local competitors.

This potential role as a mating and social barrier is why there has been a long-standing hypothesis that song differences can drive the formation of a new species.

However, scientists don't yet fully understand what happens to these song differences when birds move between populations. Imagine you're a local bird, and a newcomer arrives singing a foreign song. What's to stop you from learning this new song? If enough local birds learn the songs of newcomers, it could erase the song differences between populations, and thus the mating barrier.

But birds tend to only learn songs from their own species, even when they are exposed to

the birdsong of other species. This suggests that birds have genetic predispositions guiding them to learn only “appropriate” songs. So far, these genetic predispositions have only been shown to limit song learning from different species.

This raises an interesting possibility. Could these genetic predispositions also restrict song learning within the same species — and could it explain why some song differences are maintained across different populations of the same species?

There are a few lab-based studies that have explored this idea. But it has rarely been tested in the wild, where birds are exposed to songs from different populations and species.

That's why we wanted to see whether these lab results would hold true if we took the test into the field.

Into the wild

In the spring seasons of 2017-2019, we translocated eggs of pied flycatchers (a small migratory songbird that breeds widely

across Europe) from their nests in the Netherlands to a population in Sweden. We carefully transported these eggs to their new home, where they were placed in Swedish nests and eventually, raised by Swedish parents. Come winter, these translocated birds

fledged and made the long journey to their wintering grounds in Africa, along with their Dutch and Swedish counterparts. With the return of spring, they flew back to Sweden, now as adults with fully formed songs, ready to find potential mates.

We recorded the songs of these birds and compared them to the songs of their local Swedish environment where they were raised. We also compared them to songs of their ancestral Dutch population. Overall, songs of translocated males resembled songs of the Swedish population.

This came as no surprise, since we know that social learning plays a crucial role in song development for pied flycatchers. However, we discovered that translocated males did not just learn any Swedish song element — they learned those elements most similar to their ancestral Dutch population. This meant

their songs did not completely overlap with Swedish ones but resembled both Swedish and Dutch songs. This suggests that the translocated males are genetically predisposed to learn songs of their ancestral Dutch population.

These findings show how genetic differences within a species can effect cultural change. We think that as songs continue to diverge between these two populations, the genetic predispositions should also become more distinct. Eventually, birds from the local population may not recognise immigrants from other populations as part of their own species as regional variations tend to become more pronounced over time. This co-evolution between genes and songs may reduce the likelihood of birds from different populations mating with each other, driving the formation of new species.

THE CONVERSATION

Man held for molesting minor daughter makes suicide bid

DEBADURLLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

Bhubaneswar, May 29: In a shocking incident, a man accused of sexually assaulting his minor daughter reportedly made a suicide Wednesday attempt in the police station following his arrest in Bhubaneswar.

The accused was identified as Badal Das of Chadbali in Bhadrak district. He was residing at Santi Vihar area of Maitri Vihar in the Capital city.

IIC of Maitri Vihar police station, Mrutyunjay Swain said that Badal was arrested Tuesday night after his 15-year-old daughter along with his wife filed a police complaint alleging that he was touching the minor girl inappropriately and molesting her.

Swain said that Badal's daughter alleged that May 25, she was sleeping in her room with her parents and siblings when her father started touching her inappropriately. Initially, she did



The accused was identified as Badal Das of Chadbali in Bhadrak district. He was residing at Santi Vihar area of Maitri Vihar in the Capital city

not disclose the incident out of fear and shame but later confided in her mother after which the duo reported the matter to Maitri Vihar police.

Following the complaint, a case under POCSO Act was registered and probe initiated which revealed that accused Badal was committing sexual assault on his minor daughter. He was taken into custody after medical examination Tuesday night.

After reaching the police station, the accused reportedly requested the police to allow him

to attend the nature's call which he was allowed to do so. But he suddenly locked the toilet door from inside. On hearing a loud scream, police broke open the door and found the accused bleeding after inflicting injury on himself with a sharp object.

He was immediately rushed to Capital Hospital and later shifted to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack.

The police have booked Badal under Sections 309, 324 and 326 of IPC and Section 6 of POCSO ACT. He was produced before a local court Wednesday.



TRADITION RITUALS: The representative deity of Lord Sakhigopala, Madana Mohana during 'Bhaunri Khela' at Chandan pond in Sakhigopala, Puri, Wednesday

Conference on climate issues held at Colombia

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, May 29: A global coalition of people facing issues related to extractivism met at a six day-long conference, recently held at Finca in Colombia, which is regarded as a sacred place of indigenous communities of the country.

On the occasion, the global coalition declared its principles and objectives to fight against corporate capture and international financial institutions funding for fossil fuel production and extractive industrialisation practices, some of the pivotal reasons for climate change.

Participating in the conference, environmental activist and Green Nobel recipient, Prafulla Samantara from Odisha addressed the delegates about the resistance from the tribals in the state and the country against illegal mining and resource exploitation.

Samantara explained that the tribals are resisting mining of bauxite, coal and iron ores by corporate, mostly tribal hinterlands. "Every national government in the world has to have line of control on exploration of natural resources and there must be restriction on over consumption by the rich so that we all can adopt sustainable development means and fulfil the basic needs," he added.

Two new initiatives by Manipal Hospitals



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 29: Commemorating World Emergency Medicine Day, Manipal Hospitals Bhubaneswar, formerly AMRI Hospitals Bhubaneswar, recently unveiled two new initiatives - Manipal Advanced Response System (MARS) and Manipal Emergency Health Card (MEHC) - to ensure quality emergency medical services for the people in Odisha.

MARS, a first-of-its-kind emergency response system in the state, will have a comprehensive fleet of ambulances - road ambulances, air ambulances and bike ambulances. These state-of-the-art road ambulances are equipped with life-saving equipment including ventilators, defibrillators, monitors, built-in ECG machines, syringe pumps, and more, allowing for continuous monitoring and treatment of critical patients during transport.

People can access these life-sav-

ing services 24/7 by calling the dedicated MARS helpline 0674-6666666 for any emergency situation, including stroke, accident, cardiac arrest, trauma, and more, officials said.

The MEHC will offer people with prompt and personalised medical care during critical situations at a nominal annual fee of ₹4,999.

Joining the event as chief guest, DCP, Bhubaneswar, Prateek Singh said, "The launch of MARS and the Manipal Emergency Health Card by Manipal Hospitals is a landmark moment for emergency healthcare in Odisha. This initiative will ensure faster response times, improved care during transport, and a more accessible emergency care system for all residents."

Hospital director Saktimaya Mohapatra said, "MARS will ensure our expert care reaches patients faster, while the MEHC provides peace of mind, especially for families with elderly loved ones living in Odisha."

191 BJP, 143 Cong LS candidates face serious criminal cases: ADR

130 of the total BJP candidates in the poll fray have declared serious criminal cases, while for the Congress it is 88 candidates (27 per cent of the total candidates)

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 29: Out of the 440 BJP candidates contesting the Lok Sabha polls, 191 have declared criminal cases in their election affidavits, according to an analysis by a poll rights body. For the Congress, out of its 327 candidates, 143, or 44 per cent, have declared criminal cases, the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) said in a report based on data compiled from the affidavits on the Election Commission's website.

The cases, it said, include those related to murder, attempted murder, crimes against women and hate speech. The ADR said the data obtained from the poll panel's website reveals that a significant portion of candidates contesting in the elections have self-declared criminal cases against them.

The analysis presents a break-



down of candidates with declared criminal cases party-wise, it said.

The report stated that among the major parties, the Bharatiya Janata Party has 191 (43 per cent) of candidates who have declared criminal cases, while the Congress has 143 (44 per cent) of such candidates.

The report also delves into the number of candidates facing serious criminal cases. One hundred and thirty of the total BJP candidates in the poll fray have declared serious criminal cases, while for the Congress it is 88 candidates (27 per cent of the total candidates it has fielded), according to the report.

The Samajwadi Party has 71 candidates in the elections and 40 have declared criminal cases, with 30 of them named in serious crimes.

Thirty-three of the 52 candidates of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) have declared

criminal cases, with 18 facing serious charges, and in the Trinamool Congress, 20 of 48 candidates have declared criminal cases with 12 facing serious charges.

The state-wise analysis also provides insights into the prevalence of candidates with criminal backgrounds.

For instance, in Maharashtra, 266 of the 1,119 contesting candidates have declared criminal cases, with 183 names serious crimes. Tamil Nadu has 137 out of 945 candidates with criminal cases, with 83 facing serious charges.

In Uttar Pradesh, 213 out of 851 candidates have declared criminal cases against themselves with 179 of them being registered against serious offences.

In Telangana it is 104 of 524 candidates, 112 of 507 candidates in West Bengal and 115 of 496 candidates in Bihar. For Jharkhand it is 69 of 242 candidates, Odisha it is 52 of 207 candidates and Kerala it is 67 of 189 candidates.

In Punjab and Andhra Pradesh, 69 of 328 candidates and 88 of 450 candidates, respectively, have declared criminal cases. In Delhi, 25 of 162 candidates have declared criminal cases, the report stated.

Naveen leads mega roadshow in Nimapara

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, May 29: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik led a mega roadshow in Nimapara Wednesday.

A large number of people gathered on both sides of the road as Patnaik greeted them from a specially-designed bus. On the two-kilometer route, he was greeted by supporters holding cutouts of 'conch', the party's election symbol. The chief minister also delivered a brief speech, in which he assured the gathering of providing free electricity and extending the Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY) scheme to people of all sections.

"No electricity bill will come from July. All will be covered under BSKY. Mission Shakti members will get pensions," he said, urging the people to bless the BJD in the simultaneous elections to the state Assembly and Lok Sabha.

HC grants bail to activist Sharjeel in sedition case



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 29: More than four years after he was arrested, the Delhi High Court Wednesday granted bail to student activist Sharjeel Imam in connection with a 2020 communal riots case involving allegations of sedition and unlawful activities.

Sharjeel had assailed a trial court order refusing to release him even though he had undergone more than half of the maximum sentence that could be awarded to him, if convicted. He claimed he was entitled to bail under the criminal statute.

"Appeal is allowed," a bench of Justices Suresh Kumar Kait and Manoj Jain said after hearing the counsel for Sharjeel and the Delhi Police.

He will, however, stay behind bars as he has not been granted relief in the case involving alleged larger conspiracy behind the 2020 North East Delhi riots which left more than 50 people dead and hundreds of others injured.

According to the prosecution, Sharjeel made speeches at Jamia Millia Islamia December 13, 2019 and at the Aligarh Muslim University December 16, 2019 where he threatened to cut off Assam and the rest of the North East from the country.

Early air pollution exposure linked to poor mental health

Children exposed to air pollution could be at higher risk of experiencing mental health problems, including depression and psychosis, as youths, a new research has found.

The study examined the long-term effects of children being exposed to air and noise pollution while in mother's womb, early childhood and teenage.

The effects on three common mental health problems were analysed - anxiety, depression and psychosis, a mental state in which an individual loses touch with reality and can experience hallucinations.

Researchers, led by those at the University of Bristol, UK, found that for every 0.72 micrograms per cubic metre increase in PM2.5 pollutants in the air during pregnancy, the chances of experiencing psychosis increased by 11 per cent, while those of experiencing depression increased by 10 per cent.

For the same exposure during childhood, the chances of psychosis were found to increase by nine per cent.

The findings are published in The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)



Network Open.

"This is a major concern, because air pollution is now such a common exposure, and rates of mental health problems are increasing globally," the study said.

"Given that pollution is also a preventable exposure, interventions to reduce exposure,

such as low emissions zones, could potentially improve mental health," said lead author Joanne Newbury from the University of Bristol.

Exposure to pollution could be rapidly reduced by making targeted interventions available for vulnerable groups, including pregnant women and chil-

dren, Newbury said. For the study, the researchers analysed the data of over 9,000 participants from the children of the 90s birth cohort, founded in Bristol. The cohort includes more than 14,000 pregnant

■ The study examined the long-term effects of children being exposed to air and noise pollution while in mother's womb, early childhood and teenage

■ The research analysed effects on three common mental health problems - anxiety, depression and psychosis, a mental state in which an individual loses touch with reality and can experience hallucinations

Given that pollution is also a preventable exposure, interventions to reduce exposure, such as low emissions zones, could potentially improve mental health

JOANNE NEWBURY | LEAD AUTHOR FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL

PM2.5 levels during pregnancy and during childhood was associated with elevated odds for psychotic experiences. Pregnancy PM2.5 exposure was also associated with depression," the authors wrote.

Further, being exposed to higher noise pollution in childhood and teenage was linked with raising the chances of anxiety by 19 per cent and 22 per cent, respectively.

"Childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood are critical periods for the development of psychiatric disorders: worldwide, nearly two-thirds of those affected become unwell by the age of 25."


"Our findings add to a growing body of evidence - from different populations, locations, and using different study designs - suggesting a detrimental impact of air pollution (and potentially noise pollution) on mental health," said Newbury.

The findings, by themselves, do not prove cause-and-effect relationships. However, other recent studies have shown that areas with low emissions appear to positively impact mental health, the authors said.

FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS

Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur- 9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech-Tankapani Road-9861341488, Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookieman-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347, Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.

“ The first principle of true teaching is that nothing can be taught. **”**
SRI AUROBINDO



Tough On Trade

US President Joe Biden and his predecessor Donald Trump, the presumptive Republican nominee in November's presidential election, are competing to portray themselves as tough on trade and China. Biden has already imposed a 100% tariff on Chinese-made electric vehicles, and Trump has vowed to impose a 200% tariff on Chinese cars manufactured in Mexico, along with a range of other protectionist measures affecting steel, solar panels, semiconductors, and batteries. The European Union is likely to follow suit, albeit more cautiously.

Under President Xi Jinping, China is widely expected to respond with tit-for-tat tariffs rather than turn the other cheek, thus increasing the likelihood of a trade war that could significantly impede the green-energy transition and potentially lead to a broader geopolitical conflict.

What is often missing from the debate about the escalating rivalry between the United States and China is the perspective of other countries, especially larger developing economies. After all, these tariffs are not just protectionist but also discriminatory. If there is any truth to the joke that China is the only country in history with a comparative advantage in every industry, then targeting the world's most efficient exporter and supplier with protectionist measures could create lucrative opportunities for its competitors.

In analysing these developments, it is instructive to consider the free-trade agreements of the postwar period. These FTAs were a mirror image of today's discriminatory measures: while they reduced tariffs on imports from partner countries, effectively diverting trade away from third-country suppliers, today's tariffs are being imposed on imports from perceived adversaries like China, redirecting economic activity toward third-country suppliers considered allies.

The Biden administration's China trade policy, which US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan likened to "a small yard and a high fence" in 2023, could further weaken Chinese manufacturing. In fact, the higher the tariffs, the greater the competitive advantage third-country suppliers will gain over Chinese firms, particularly in large markets like the US and Europe.

To be sure, these gains will depend on the extent of US protectionism. If Sullivan's "small yard" grows larger, with US tariffs imposed not only on imported goods from China but also on goods from third countries that either use components produced in China or by Chinese firms located in these countries – the benefits to these third-country suppliers will be reduced. In the language of FTAs, rules of origin can be so restrictive on Chinese inputs that third countries gain less than they would otherwise.

In the first wave of discriminatory protectionism unleashed by Trump, the scope of protectionism was limited to direct imports from China. As a result, as documented by Aaditya Mattoo and others at the World Bank, third countries like Vietnam benefited significantly. This time, given bipartisan support in Washington for anti-China legislation, the scenario of a growing yard cannot be ruled out.

Broadly speaking, the countries affected by Western protectionism can be divided into two groups: those integrated into the Chinese supply chain, such as Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and South Korea, and those less dependent on it, like Mexico, India, Turkey, Brazil, Poland, and Hungary. The second group stands to gain more from US trade policies.

India offers a prime example. It has successfully attracted several Western firms exiting China since launching its "China Plus One" strategy in 2014. Notably, Apple has significantly expanded its iPhone manufacturing operations in India, and Tesla reportedly may follow suit. This shift presents India with an opportunity to revitalise its consistently underperforming manufacturing sector. To this end, the government is offering subsidies to attract foreign investment and offset disadvantages such as relatively poor infrastructure.

By increasing the returns on investing in India, current US trade policy could complement its own industrial policy. If India can establish a supply chain that is largely independent of China – a trend that is slowly underway in the electronics sector – it could gain a competitive advantage over China and countries linked to it.

Solar panels are a case in point. I recently visited an American-owned factory just outside of Chennai that produces solar panels for export to the US. This operation owes its success to Trump's tariffs on imported solar panels from China, which the Biden administration has maintained. Without these measures, Chinese manufacturers' efficiency and scale – helped by massive government subsidies – would have rendered India an unattractive investment destination. But India was able to seize the opportunity and increase its solar-panel exports.

More broadly, the greater the overlap between America's strategic interests and third countries' capabilities and comparative advantages, the more likely that discriminatory protectionism will be long-lasting and provide certainty to investors seeking to diversify away from a ruthlessly efficient China. In pharmaceuticals, for example, India has the capability to step in if the US decides to impose tariffs on Chinese drug manufacturers, which dominate the global production and export of active pharmaceutical ingredients.

But China's competitors should curb their enthusiasm. Discriminatory protectionism is currently confined to relatively sophisticated industries and is unlikely to extend to labour-intensive sectors like apparel and footwear, where poorer countries have a stronger comparative advantage.

More importantly, US and EU discriminatory protectionism is beneficial only in moderation. Should today's trade war escalate into a full-scale geopolitical conflict, any potential advantages would be negated by a broader economic downturn and increased uncertainty, which could have a chilling effect on global trade and investment. In this scenario, everyone would lose.

The writer is a senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics and a former Chief Economic Adviser to the Indian government. @PROJECTSYNDICATE

WISDOM CORNER

It's a funny thing about life; if you refuse to accept anything but the best, you very often get it.

W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM

Let others lead small lives, but not you. Let others argue over small things, but not you. Let others cry over small hurts, but not you. Let others leave their future in someone else's hands, but not you.

JIM ROHN

If you look for truth, you may find comfort in the end; if you look for comfort you will not get either comfort or truth only soft soap and wishful thinking to begin, and in the end, despair.

CS LEWIS

FOCUS INEQUALITY

TIME FOR TAX JUSTICE



Santosh Kumar Mohapatra

OUR SYSTEM IS RIGGED TO FAVOUR THE RICH ESPECIALLY AFTER THE INTRODUCTION OF NEO-LIBERALISM

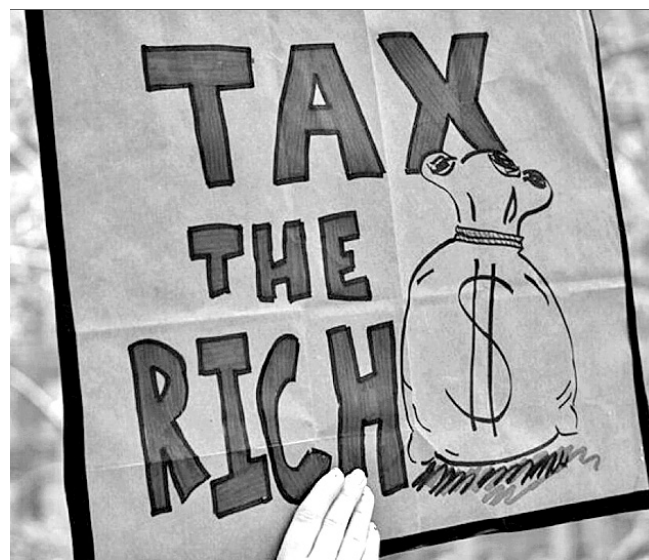
Amid the ongoing debate on wealth and inheritance tax, a new research paper titled "Proposals for a Wealth Tax Package to Tackle Extreme Inequalities in India" by a World Inequality Lab study released in the midst of 18th general elections in the country proposes a comprehensive tax package on the ultra-wealthy to tackle the massive concentration at the very top of the wealth distribution and create valuable fiscal space for enhanced crucial social sector investments.

The authors of this paper Nitin Kumar Bharti, New York University, Lucas Chancel, Harvard Kennedy School, Thomas Piketty and Anmol Somanchi, Paris School of Economics in their working paper titled "Income and Wealth Inequality in India, 1922-2023: The Rise of the Billionaire Raj," released on 20 March had said India's income inequality at 100-year high; worse than the colonial era.

The recent paper said that the taxation proposal needs to be accompanied by explicit redistributive policies to support the poor, lower castes, and middle classes. The paper noted that the taxation proposal needs to be extensively debated, with a consensus on specific details of the design emerging from a broader democratic debate on tax justice and wealth redistribution in India.

The paper proposes a 2% annual tax on wealth over ₹10 crore and a 33% inheritance tax on estates exceeding the same value alone would generate a massive 2.73% of GDP in revenues. This will raise enough resources to double the current public spending on education, which has stagnated at 2.9% of GDP over the past 15 years, well below the 6% target set by the National Education Policy 2020.

Under the moderate and ambitious variants, the paper introduces further progressivity in the tax schedules along with increase in tax rates to generate



A low tax-to-GDP ratio exacerbates debt problems and poses gargantuan challenges for the government to spend money on health, education, and other welfare measures

more resources. The paper says such taxation proposals are feasible as they are going to affect only 0.04% of adults, meaning, 99.96% of the population will remain unaffected by the tax. The top 0.04% (i.e. roughly those with net wealth exceeding ₹10 crore) alone hold over a quarter of the total wealth of the country. Their total wealth amounts to a whopping 125% of India's GDP.

A low tax-to-GDP ratio exacerbates debt problems and poses gargantuan challenges for the government to spend money on health, education, and other welfare measures. When tax-GDP ratio is low, India's tax system is regressive with the burden of tax falling on the poor more as more revenue is generated through indirect taxes like GST, VAT, and excise taxes. This needs to be reversed.

Our system is rigged to favour the rich especially after the introduction of neo-liberalism which is linked with the failed theories of Reaganomics and

Thatcherism. Reaganomics proposed that decreases in taxes, especially for corporations, stimulate economic growth. If the expenses of corporations are reduced, the savings then "trickle down" to the rest of the economy, spurring overall growth. Margaret Thatcher advocated privatisation and said that there is no alternative (TINA) to capitalism. But both the theories have failed as due to tax cuts, countries are dragged into the quagmire of debt trap while privatisation transfers national assets to private individuals.

On the other hand, some describe the imposition of higher tax on the rich as an act of "Robin Hood" - to rob the rich and pay the poor. Some economists cite Milton Friedman and Friedrich Hayek who argued that redistributive policies can stifle innovation and productivity. If individuals feel their efforts will be heavily taxed or redistributed, they may not be motivated enough to invest in

new ventures or improve productivity, leading to an economic slowdown.

By contrast, Oxford University Press says that giving poor children access to better education and paying for it by taxing the affluent is one way to reduce inequality while also fostering future growth and poverty reduction. A tax is designed to alter the distribution of income or wealth. But history has recorded that rulers have used taxation to redistribute in their own favour which has increased inequality. Hence there is a strong case for shifting resources from those at the top of the income scale to those at the bottom.

Both the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund support imposition of a wealth tax to counter rising global inequalities. A joint WB-IMF conference on 19 Oct., 2021 noted "the persistence in income inequality" and concluded that a "progressive tax policy is one of the prime tools for addressing such inequality." Secondly, a wealth tax is also meant to respond to social unrest and restiveness.

Nobody can become rich or accumulate wealth without support from the State. Today crony capitalism is rampant that helps the rich and corporate to amass wealth illegally. India's Constitution-makers haven't explicitly spoken of wealth redistribution. However, Article 39(b) and (c) in Part IV contain principles that are aimed at securing economic justice. They provide that ownership and control of material resources of the society should be distributed to serve the common good and that the operation of the economic system does not result in concentration of wealth to the common detriment. Hence economic justice through redistribution of wealth requires a profound re-orientation.

The writer is an Odisha-based economist and columnist

SPECTRUM JUSTICE

The imperative of speedy trials

In the realm of justice, time is not just a mere commodity; it is the essence of fairness and integrity. The concept of a speedy trial, both domestically and internationally, is not just a procedural formality but a constitutional right that safeguards the very essence of justice.

In the Indian context, the judiciary has played a pivotal role in recognising and upholding this right, ensuring that justice is not delayed, but served promptly. The right to a speedy trial, enshrined in Article 21 of the Constitution, emerged prominently in the landmark 1979 case of Husainara Khatoun v. Home Secretary, State of Bihar. The Supreme Court expanded the scope of fundamental rights, emphasising that this right begins with the arrest of the accused and continues through all stages of the legal process. Subsequent cases such as Kartar Singh v. State of Punjab reinforced this principle, highlighting that undue delays can prejudice the accused and violate their fundamental rights.

Internationally, various legal instruments recognise the importance of speedy trials. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and regional treaties such as the African Charter on Human Rights and People's Rights all guarantee the right to a fair and timely trial. Even in nations like the US, the UK, and Canada, constitutional provisions or common law principles ensure the right to a speedy trial.

A speedy trial is not just a matter of convenience; it is essential for the ends of justice. Delays in legal proceedings can have severe repercussions, leading to the erosion of evidence, fading memories, and prolonged suffering for both victims and accused. Justice delayed is indeed justice denied, as it undermines public confidence in the legal system and can perpetuate injustices.

The consequences of delayed trials are profound and far-reaching. For victims, delayed justice prolongs their trauma. On the other hand, accused individuals suffer prolonged uncertainty and deprivation of liberty, often facing stigma and hardship even before their guilt is established. Families are torn apart, livelihoods are lost, and faith in the legal system diminishes with each passing day of delay. Speedy trials indeed present a delicate balance between expediency and fairness in the pursuit of justice. While the swift resolution of legal matters is essential to prevent injustice from festering, it must not come at the cost of due process. The maxim "Justice hurried, justice buried" encapsulates this dilemma aptly, reminding us that rushed proceedings can lead to miscarriages of justice. The Supreme Court's decision in 2019 case to set aside a death penalty verdict in a rape and murder case serves as a stark illustration of this principle. In that case, the accused was convicted after a mere 12-day trial, during which he lacked proper legal representation. The appointed legal aid lawyer was given insufficient time to prepare a robust defense, undermining the accused's fundamental right to a fair trial. This highlights the

critical importance of striking a careful equilibrium between the expeditious dispensation of justice and the protection of individual rights, ensuring that no one is unjustly deprived of their liberty or subjected to undue harm.

In conclusion, the right to a speedy trial is not just a legal technicality; it is a cornerstone of justice and human rights. The imperative of ensuring justice in time through speedy trials is a cornerstone of any just society. While expedited proceedings are essential to prevent injustice, it's crucial to maintain a delicate balance with due process. The case of the Supreme Court setting aside the death penalty verdict due to a rushed trial underscores the need for such equilibrium. By upholding the right to a fair and timely trial, societies can foster trust in their legal systems and prevent the erosion of fundamental rights.

The writer is an independent thinker from Port Blair, Andaman and Nicobar Islands



Venkatesh Kumar Singh

SPEEDY TRIALS INDEED PRESENT A DELICATE BALANCE BETWEEN EXPEDIENCY AND FAIRNESS IN THE PURSUIT OF JUSTICE

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST

B-15, Rasulgari Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Trees to rescue

Sir, At a time when the whole India is gripped by a punishing heatwave, the value of growing trees assumes significance. Besides providing shade and shelter, trees do offer a lot of benefits. Trees can soothe and relax us, and help us connect with nature. Green is a calming and cool colour that helps your eyes quickly recover from strain. By planting and caring for trees, you help improve your surroundings, reduce pollution, lower energy costs, improve the appearance of your community and increase the value of your property. As part of Corporate Social Responsibility, companies need to take proactive steps in supporting green initiatives, which are now a part of global governance practices. These companies should go a step further by planting more trees in replacement of the trees often felled by both Central and state governments, citing reasons of "development." Said the renowned American writer and poet Kahlil Gibran, "Trees are poems that the earth writes upon the sky."

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

Education first

Sir, Right to education is a fundamental right that was brought into being through the 86th Constitutional Amendment in 2002. Every child is entitled to education and it is the duty of the government and the local bodies to ensure so. Article 21-A of the Constitution has declared that the state government shall provide free and compulsory education to all children in the 6-14 age group. But poor implementation of the rules has made sure that compulsory education is still a far cry. At the same time, government aided private schools are minting money by charging students excessively. As a rule of thumb, socio-economically challenged children opt for aided schools though gaining admission into unaided private schools is their dream. The government should also see to it that aided schools do not face scarcity of funds. The private educational institutions, that are expected to reserve 25 per cent of the seats to children of weaker sections, are not doing so much to the detriment of such students.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA



BJD's Rajnagar Assembly nominee Dhruva Charan Sahoo speaking at an election meeting in Talchua of Rajnagar block in Kendrapara district, Wednesday

'BJP design' behind EC action against IPS officers: Pandian

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 29: Terming as "unfortunate" the Election Commission (EC) action against two IPS officers working in Odisha CMO for interfering with polls, senior BJD leader VK Pandian Wednesday alleged it was done as per design of the BJP, which was unable to digest imminent defeat in elections in the state.



VK Pandian

The EC Tuesday suspended IPS officer DS Kutey and ordered the medical examination of another officer, Asish Singh, who has been on medical leave since May 4.

"It is very unfortunate that the ECI has taken action against some of the officers working in the CMO. I would say that those two officers are outstanding officers of Odisha and both of them have played a great role in controlling Naxalism in the state by risking their lives, be it Gajapati or Malkangiri. I think they have been awarded by the highest authorities of the country for their commitment, ded-

ication and sacrifice," Pandian told reporters at Balasore. Stating the action as unfortunate, he said, "It is as per the design of the BJP, which cannot digest imminent defeat in the hands of BJD. And it cannot stand against the popularity of Naveen babu (Patnaik)." He also accused the ECI of taking action against the two officers at the behest of local BJP leaders.

The ECI, in a letter to the Odisha CEO, said that 1997-batch IPS officer DS Kutey, who is presently working as the special secretary to the chief minister, be placed under suspension on the charge of interfering with the conduct of elections.

Kutey has been asked to report at the office of Resident Commissioner, Odisha at New Delhi Wednesday.

Similarly, Asish Singh, an IPS officer of 2010-batch who is presently working as IG (CM security), was asked to present himself for a detailed examination by a special medical board constituted by the director of AIIMS Bhubaneswar, not later than May 30. He has been on medical leave since May 4.

On the other hand, senior BJP leader and Cuttack Lok Sabha MP Bhartruhari Mahtab welcomed the decision of ECI and criticised Pandian for questioning the credibility of Election Commission of India.

Talking to newsmen here, Mahtab said it was not 'witch hunting' rather appropriate legal and disciplinary action taken against the two officers based on evidence.

Voting for the Assembly and Lok Sabha elections is being held simultaneously in Odisha in four phases from May 13 to June 1.

BHADRAK ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCY

MINORITY VOTERS HOLD KEY



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhadrak, May 29: Votes of the minority community will play a decisive role in the election to Bhadrak Assembly constituency under Bhadrak Lok Sabha segment as the seat is all set to witness a neck-to-neck triangular fight June 1.

The issue assumes significance due to presence of a sizeable population of minority community in Bhadrak. BJD has fielded former minister Prafulla Samal from this seat while the BJP nominee is Sitanshu Sekhar Mohapatra, the convener of Sahid Bhagat Sena in Bhadrak. Similarly, Congress has fielded Asit Patnaik, the son of former minister Jugal Kishore Patnaik from this seat.

Political analysts said that the Assembly constituency is going to witness a big fight with each party fielding strong candidate from this seat. They said the population of minority community is more in Bhadrak and the candidate, for whom the voters of minority community will vote, will win the seat. The seat is currently held by

BJD as the ruling party had won from this seat in 2019 election by trouncing its nearest BJP rival by over 33,000 votes. The Congress party was placed in the third position. Sources said that the



Congress candidate Asit Patnaik was vying for a BJD ticket but he joined Congress after the ruling party denied him a ticket. On the other hand, BJD changed its stance and changed its seating MLA Sanjiv Mallick from this seat and fielded him from Bhandaripokhari Assembly constituency. Instead, the BJD has fielded Bhandaripokhari MLA Prafulla Samal from this seat.

After getting the party ticket, Prafulla made a swift move and managed to induct the Bhadrak

Municipality chairperson Gulmakhi Habib and her husband Jahid Habib in BJD. He also managed to induct many BJP leaders into the BJD.

They included BJP nominee Pradip Nayak of 2019 election, BJD women's wing district president Harapriya Sahu and several sarpanches of the saffron party into the BJD. This has helped him strengthen the party from grassroots level.

On the other hand, the saffron party has fielded Sitanshu Sekhar Mohapatra, a noted social activist and convener of voluntary outfit Sahid Bhagat Sena as its candidate from this seat. Sitanshu is connected with several youths in the district through his Sahid Bhagat Sena which is going to help him in the election.

His whole family and members of Sahid Bhagat Sena are campaigning for him while Sitanshu has managed to induct former block chairperson and a strong BJD leader Malay Jena and several sarpanches into BJP.

Sitanshu's family has established themselves well in business in Bhadrak and he is fighting the election on the plank of Modi guarantee and welfare schemes of the Modi government. Chatters are abuzz that he will be able to give a strong fight to Prafulla Samal, the candidate of the ruling BJD.

It is hoped that the Assembly constituency will witness a big fight as all three parties have fielded strong candidates. Moreover, as the vote bank of BJD and Congress are from minority community, the casting of votes by the minority community will decide the outcome of the polls.

'BJP leaders project Modi as 11th avatar of Lord Vishnu'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Balasore/Bhadrak, May 29: Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge Wednesday claimed that BJP leaders were trying to project Prime Minister Modi the eleventh avatar of Lord Vishnu which the people of the country will not accept.

Kharge said this while addressing public meeting in support of the party candidate Srikant K Jena, contesting from Balasore Lok Sabha seat.

"In Hindu dharma, we have heard about 10 'avatars' (incarnation) of Lord Vishnu like Ram, Krishna, Baman, Parsuram and others. There is a bid to project Modi as the 11th avatar of Vishnu," the Congress chief said.

Kharge cited the instance as to how BJP leader Sambit Patra had described Lord Jagannath as a devotee of Modi.



Stating that BJP leaders are now making remarks against Naveen Patnaik on his health condition, Kharge advised Patnaik to maintain distance from the saffron party.

While launching a scathing attack on the BJP and Modi, Congress president asserted that if the saffron party returns to power, both democracy and the Constitution will be jeopardised.

Kharge emphasised, "In this

election, if you don't defeat the BJP, then both our Constitution and democracy will be at risk, along with your future."

He also highlighted concerns about the country's reservation policy for SC, ST, and OBCs being endangered if the BJP assumes power.

Kharge further criticised the current government, stating, "Under the present rule, youth are suffering the most.

Unemployment rates are high, and there is a crisis across the nation.

However, Modiji seems indifferent to these issues. His sole focus is on retaining power."

Kharge said nearly 30 lakh central government and over 1.60 lakh Odisha government posts are currently vacant.

Questioning Modi's unfulfilled promises, Kharge remarked, "Modi had pledged to deposit Rs 15 lakh in the bank accounts of every person by bringing back black money, doubling farmers' income, and providing two crore employment opportunities to youth each year. Where are these promises?"

The Congress president also expressed dismay over the handling of issues such as the unrest in Manipur, accusing Modi of neglecting the situation and prioritising his political interests instead.

Modi stops speech, asks doctors to treat man who faints at rally

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Baripada, May 29: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Wednesday stopped his speech midway and asked the medical team accompanying him to attend to a man who fainted in his poll rally in Baripada town on a hot and humid day.

The youth, identified as Dolagovinda Barik, a television journalist, was later taken to a hospital.

The maximum temperature in Baripada Wednesday was 39.5 degrees Celsius while humidity was 83 per cent, according to the Met department.

After seeing the man fainting, Modi stopped his speech and asked the crowd to create space for him to allow flow of air. The PM's doctors provided

first aid to Barik and shifted to the district headquarters hospital (DHH).

The man later recovered after being treated in the special ward



for heat wave patients, a doctor attending to him said. Barik thanked the Prime Minister for the gesture.

"Suddenly I could not see anything and fainted. I have not heard the PM asking his doctors to treat me. Later people told me that Modi ji was worried about my health condition," Barik said.

Does PM believe Lord Jagannath to be his devotee: Cong

MODI GOVT HAS RUINED RAILWAYS IN LAST 10 YEARS OF 'ANYAY KAAL': JAIRAM RAMESH

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 29: Raking up the BJP's Puri Lok Sabha candidate Sambit Patra's recent remarks that even Lord Jagannath is a devotee of Modi, the Congress Wednesday asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi if he believes Lord Jagannath to be his devotee.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said that Patra's remarks are deeply insulting to crores of Lord Jagannath's devotees across the world.

"The outgoing PM himself has claimed that he was not biologically born but sent to Earth by the Creator himself. Can he tell us where he claims to fit in the pantheon of Indian Gods? Does he truly believe Lord Jagannath to be his devotee," he asked.

As PM Modi campaigns in Odisha Wednesday, Ramesh in a post on X asked, "Today's ques-



tions for the outgoing PM in Odisha: Why has nothing changed after the horrific Balasore train accident? Does the outgoing PM believe Lord Jagannath to be his devotee? Will the Amarda airstrip ever be revived? What are BJP-BJD doing to tackle the heatwave and water crisis in Mayurbhanj?" Ramesh said that as Prime

Minister Narendra Modi visits Odisha to campaign for the Lok Sabha elections, one should remember that June 2 last year, one of the biggest train accidents of independent India took place there.

He said 293 people were killed and over a 1,000 injured in the horrific collision of three trains in Balasore last year, but three

never happens again," he asked. Ramesh said in the Modi government's tenure, the railways has struggled with high staff vacancies across the country.

On this unfortunate occasion, let us look at how the Modi government has ruined the Indian Railways in the last ten years of 'anyay kaal', he said in a thread of posts on X. Ramesh said the five major issues of railways are - ticket vasooli, anti-poor infrastructure priorities, lagging train speeds, callous attitude to passenger safety and deteriorating railways finances.

The Congress leader also asked when it was built during World War II, the Amarda airstrip had the longest runway in Asia.

Plans to revive the airport were first floated in 2021 and then approved in 2022 but no development has occurred till date, he claimed. "Why have the people of Odisha been left hanging," he questioned.

national



If PM Narendra Modi is going for 'prayashchit', then it is a good thing or if he is going to take inspiration from writings and speeches of Swami Vivekanand, even then it is good

KAPIL SIBAL | RAJYA SABHA MP

HEATWAVE: 50 STUDENTS UNWELL

At least 50 school students fainted in various schools in three districts of Bihar due to the extreme heatwave pushing up daytime temperatures in the state. The Opposition has questioned the state government on why schools are still open



of the day quote

Even in Himachal today, maximum cold stores are owned by Adani who decides the rate of apples and the fate of apple-growers

The black laws were repealed only after the protest of farmers who united against it. The black laws have been repealed but we need to remain alert. If BJP come back to power, they will bring a similar law to encroach the land of farmer and adivasis

Rahul is fulfilling the dream of Mahatma Gandhi who advocated for dissolving the Congress post-Independence in 1947, which Nehru did not listen to. But he is heading to it and finishing Congress

X POST OF THE DAY

#StandWithIsrael #Rafah_Land_Of_Terrorists The people who start this trend are the same people who abandon their parents on the streets when they grow old because they have no humanity. Dear world wake up and unite against Genocide. #AllEyesOnRafah #RafahOnFire #Rafah

SHORT TAKES

Two workers killed in mattress factory fire Raipur: Two women workers were charred to death after a fire broke out in a mattress manufacturing factory in Chhattisgarh's capital Raipur Wednesday, police said.

Mizoram landslides: Death toll rises to 29 Aizawl: The death toll in multiple landslides in Mizoram's Aizawl district mounted to 29 after four more bodies were recovered from various places, a police officer said Wednesday.

16 cars gutted in east Delhi New Delhi: Sixteen cars were gutted by a fire that broke out at a civic authority-run parking lot in east Delhi's Madhu Vihar area Wednesday, officials said.

MONSOON TO HIT KERALA TODAY: IMD



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 29: Spurred on by Cyclone Remal, southwest monsoon is expected to hit the Kerala coast and parts of north-east by Thursday, a day ahead of the date forecast by the weather office.

Conditions continue to become favourable for the onset of the southwest monsoon over Kerala during the next 24 hours, the India Meteorological Department said on Wednesday. On May 15, the weather office had announced the onset of monsoon over Kerala by May 31.

- The weather office May 15 had announced the onset of monsoon over Kerala by May 31
Weather scientists said that 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
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 Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Manipur, and Assam is June 5

critical for drinking water, apart from power generation across the country.

June and July are considered the most important monsoon months for agriculture because most of the sowing for the Kharif crop takes place during this period.

The conditions also continue to become favourable for further advance of Southwest Monsoon into some more parts of South Arabian Sea, remaining parts of Maldives, Comorin, Lakshadweep, southwest and central Bay of Bengal, northeast Bay of Bengal and some parts of Northeastern states during the same period," the IMD said.

The IMD declares onset of monsoon over Kerala if anytime after May 10 over 14 stations there and neighbouring areas receive 2.5 mm or more rainfall for two consecutive days, the Outgoing Longwave Radiation (OLR) is low, and the direction of the winds is south-westerly.

Monsoon is critical for India's agricultural landscape, with 52 per cent of the net cultivated area relying on it. It is also crucial for replenishing reservoirs

China enhances military support to Pakistan along LoC in Kashmir

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kupwara, May 29: Pakistan's key ally China has been actively bolstering the defence capabilities of the Pakistani army along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir over the past three years which includes the construction of steelhead bunkers and the provision of Unmanned Aerial and Combat Aerial Vehicles, officials said Wednesday.

Chinese assistance also extends to the installation of highly encrypted communication towers and the laying of underground fibre cables along the LoC.

Moreover, advanced radar systems of Chinese origin, such as the 'JY' and 'HGR' series, have been deployed to enhance medium and low altitude target detection capabilities, providing crucial intelligence support for army and air defence units, they said.

Additionally, the presence of the SH-15, a 155 mm truck-mounted howitzer gun manufactured by a Chinese firm, has been noticed at various locations along the LoC.

This move is seen as part of efforts to strengthen China's ties with Pakistan and safeguard Chinese investments in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, particularly related to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).



Though the presence of senior PLA officials at forward posts, as was detected in 2014, was not found, some intercepts suggested that Chinese troops and engineers were setting up infrastructure along the LoC, including building underground bunkers, officials said.

Chinese experts were engaged in tunnel construction in the Leepa Valley of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), signalling preparations for an all-weather road to connect with the Karakoram highway, they said.

This strategic move is linked to Beijing's ambitious 46-billion-dollar CPEC project, aiming to establish a direct route between Gwadar Port in Pakistan and Xinjiang province in China through the Karakoram highway, an area under the illegal occupation of China.

In 2007, a Chinese telecom company had taken over a

Cong attacks PM over remarks on Mahatma Gandhi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 29: The Congress Wednesday criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks that the "world did not know of Mahatma Gandhi till the film 'Gandhi' was made" and said those whose "ideological ancestors" were involved in Gandhi's assassination can never follow the path of truth shown by him.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said, "I don't know in which world the outgoing Prime Minister lives where Mahatma Gandhi was not recognised across the world before 1982. If anyone has destroyed the legacy of the Mahatma, it is the outgoing Prime Minister himself. His own government has destroyed Gandhian institutions in Varanasi, Delhi and Ahmedabad," the Congress leader alleged.

While the Indian Army has maintained silence on the matter, intelligence agencies are reportedly being kept informed of the developments. The continued presence of Chinese military personnel in the region has raised concerns, with India voicing objections to Chinese activities in Gilgit and Baltistan areas in the past.

Brij Bhushan son's car knocks 2 to death

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gonda (UP), May 29: Two cousins were killed and a woman was injured after being hit by an SUV that was allegedly part of the cavalcade of BJP's Kaiserganj candidate Karan Bhushan Singh here Wednesday. The car driver has been arrested, police said.

Karan Singh is the son of sitting Kaiserganj MP and former Wrestling Federation of India chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh. Police personnel have been deployed in the area to maintain law and order.

Station House Officer, Kernalganj, Nirbhay Narayan Singh said Rehan Khan (17) and Shehzad Khan (20) were travelling on a motorcycle when they were hit by the SUV near a school. Both of them died on the spot. The driver of the SUV that hit the

duo lost control of the vehicle and also hit Sita Devi (60) who was walking on the roadside, the SHO said.

The driver, Lav Kush Srivastava, has been arrested and his vehicle seized. The bodies were handed over to the family members of the deceased after the completion of formalities, police said. An FIR has been registered at the local police station under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Motor Vehicles Act in the matter, police said.

Sita Devi is undergoing treatment at the medical college, they said. There were four vehicles in the convoy of Karan Bhushan Singh, also the president of the Uttar Pradesh Wrestling Association, who was sitting in the first vehicle, said a police officer on condition of anonymity. The vehicle that hit the mo-



torcycle was at the end of the convoy. The speed of the vehicles in the convoy was above 100 kmph, said the officer who inspected the accident spot.

"The speed of the vehicle which went out of control after hitting the motorcycle can be estimated from the fact that more than a dozen cemented poles erected in fields along the road to keep out stray animals were badly damaged." "This vehicle was also

fined ₹2,000 for violating traffic rules December 21, 2023, and the penalty is yet to be paid. "Police escort" was written on the rear windscreen of the vehicle," the officer said.

The SUV's airbags deployed during the crash, keeping its passengers safe. The front of the car was badly damaged and one of its tyres was punctured after getting entangled in a barbed wire on the roadside, he said.

Woman ultra with bounty killed

Bijapur (Chhattisgarh): Two Naxalites, including a woman cadre involved in over a dozen murders and carrying a reward of ₹8 lakh, were killed in an encounter with security personnel in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district Wednesday, police said. The gunfight took place in the forest of Koranjed-Bandepara villages under Madded police station limits when a team of District Reserve Guard (DRG) was out on an anti-Naxal operation, Bijapur Superintendent of Police Jitendra Yadav said.

HC to hear Bibhav's plea friday

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court will hear Friday a plea by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's close aide Bibhav Kumar against his arrest for allegedly assaulting AAP Rajya Sabha MP Swati Malavi earlier this month. Kumar's bail plea was dismissed by a sessions court Monday. Kumar was arrested May 18 and he was sent to police custody for five days.

Four cops beaten up by Army men, FIR lodged

Srinagar: Four policemen were injured after they were allegedly beaten up by army personnel in Kupwara district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said Wednesday. A defence spokesperson, however, said "minor differences" between the cops and the army personnel have been resolved amicably. Police has lodged an FIR in the matter. Special police officers Rayees Khan, Imtiaz Malik and constables Saleem Mushtaq, Zahoor Ahmad - posted at Kupwara police station - were admitted to SKIMS Hospital at Soura late Tuesday night, officials said, adding their condition is stated to be stable.

Court rejects Prajwal's anticipatory bail plea

Bangalore: A Special Court here Wednesday rejected the anticipatory bail plea of suspended JD(S) leader Prajwal Revanna, who is facing allegations of sexually abusing several women, in a rape case. The special court for Elected Representative dismissed the bail application moved by his advocate Arun. According to official sources, Prajwal has booked a return flight ticket to Bengaluru from Munich May 30, and is expected to land in the city in the small hours of May 31. Prajwal, grandson of JD(S) supreme H D Deve Gowda, is accused in an alleged rape and sexual harassment case involving a 47-year-old woman.

CAA: Govt starts granting citizenship in three states

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 29: The Union government Wednesday started granting citizenship under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act in West Bengal, Haryana and Uttarakhand.

The CAA was enacted in December 2019 for granting Indian nationality to persecuted Hindu, Sikh, Jain, Buddhist, Parsi and Christian migrants from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan who came to India

on or before December 31, 2014. The applicants in West Bengal, Haryana and Uttarakhand were granted citizenship Wednesday by the respective State Empowered Committee, the Union Home Ministry said in a statement.

The first set of citizenship certificates after the notification of the Citizenship (Amendment) Rules, 2024, granted by the Empowered Committee, Delhi, were handed over to the applicants in New Delhi by the Union Home Secretary May 15.

Tattoos pose inherent risks of hepatitis, HIV and cancers

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 29: Love to get tattooed? Beware, the ink and needle used may raise your risk of getting diseases like Hepatitis B, C, HIV, and even cancers of the liver and blood, warned doctors Wednesday.

Tattoos have become very popular, especially among the youth, as a form of body art and a means of expressing their thoughts or passion. "The most obvious health concerns emanate from the use of possibly infected needles used to draw these tattoos in non-expert hands and the risk of contracting infections like Hepatitis B, C or even HIV," Suhail Qureshi, Additional Director and Unit Head - Medical Oncology, Fortis

Hospital Shalimar Bagh, told IANS.

In a recent study of 11,905 individuals, by researchers at Lund University in Sweden, tattooed individuals were found to have a higher risk of lymphoma. The risk of lymphoma was highest in individuals with less than two years since their first tattoo.

The risk associated with tattoo exposure seemed to be highest for large B-cell lymphoma and follicular lymphoma.

"This is because the tattoo ink, which may contain polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon (PAH) - a known carcinogen, is injected into the skin. The body treats it as a foreign object that should not be there, and the immune system gets activated. A large part of the ink is trans-



ported away from the skin, to the lymph nodes where it is deposited," Tushar Tayal, Consultant, Internal Medicine, CK Birla Hospital, Gurugram, told IANS.

Recently, Australia's Department of Health also sur-

In a recent study of 11,905 individuals, by researchers at Lund University in Sweden, tattooed individuals were found to have a higher risk of lymphoma

The risk of lymphoma was highest in individuals with less than two years since their first tattoo

The risk associated with tattoo exposure seemed to be highest for large B-cell lymphoma and follicular lymphoma

veyed the composition of tattoo inks and found a mismatch between the labelling and the contents.

They found PAHs in 20 per cent of the samples tested and in 83 per cent of the black inks. Other hazardous components

He explained that the "ink may get absorbed from the dermis (outer layer of the skin) into the lymphatic system of the body and may increase the risk of some other cancers like liver, urinary bladder as well as blood cancers like lymphoma and leukaemia".

The hazardous chemicals in the tattoo ink are primarily responsible for these dangerous ailments and until the time health care authorities strictly regulate the contents of such inks, this risk will always remain.

"While not all tattoo inks contain these cancer-causing chemicals, we need to exercise caution while getting a tattoo since in India, there are no regulatory frameworks that govern this," Suhail said.

international



Everything that we can see tells us that they are not moving into a major ground operation in population centres in the centre of Rafah
JOHN KIRBY | NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL SPOKESMAN, US

AFGHAN HUNGER CRISIS HITS KIDS
About 6.5 million children in Afghanistan were forecast to experience crisis levels of hunger in 2024, nongovernmental organization Save the Children said. Nearly 3 of 10 Afghan children will face crisis or emergency levels of hunger this year as the country feels the immediate impacts of floods, according to a report released late Tuesday by Save the Children



of the day quote

We will do whatever is necessary for as long as it is necessary to support Ukraine
EMMANUEL MACRON | PRESIDENT, FRANCE

The acquisition of military reconnaissance satellites is an essential task for our country to further strengthen our self-defense deterrence ... in the face of serious changes to our nation's security environment caused by US military maneuvers and various provocative acts
KIM JONG UN | LEADER, NORTH KOREA

We never invited the military to intervene in politics. But Imran Khan wants to talk to those who have the power to decide. Do you feel that those who have come to power through Form 47s have anything to offer? Holding talks with them would be fruitless
ARIF ALVI | FORMER PRESIDENT, PAKISTAN

SHORT TAKES

Death for bribes
Beijing: A Chinese court has handed down a rare death sentence to a former banker for accepting \$151 million in bribes. Bai Tianhui, former general manager of China Huarong International Holdings (CHIH), was sentenced to death by a court in Tianjin Tuesday, state-run Xinhua news agency reported Wednesday. He was also deprived of his political rights for life and all of his personal property was confiscated. His illegal gains will be recovered and turned over to the state treasury, according to the verdict of the No 2 Intermediate People's Court of Tianjin.

Ukraine gets \$1.23bn
Copenhagen: The Swedish government said Wednesday that it will donate military aid to Ukraine worth 13 billion Kronor (\$1.23 billion) in the largest help package Sweden has so far donated. "It consists of equipment that is at the top of Ukraine's priority list," Deputy Prime Minister Ebba Busch said. It included air defense, artillery ammunition and armored vehicles. Sweden's Defense Minister Pal Jonsson reiterated that the country has ruled out for now sending any Swedish-built JAS 39 Gripen jets to Ukraine, saying the focus on the Ukrainian side is on implementing the F-16 program.

2 more arrested in SL for ISIS links
Colombo: Sri Lankan police have arrested two more suspects allegedly linked to the Islamic State (ISIS) from the country's northwestern region, officials said Wednesday. The development comes days after the Gujarat Anti-Terrorist Squad arrested four Sri Lankans with links to ISIS at the airport in Ahmedabad. The four men had taken an Indigo flight out of Colombo to Chennai May 19. Sri Lankan security forces suspect that a 46-year-old man - identified as Osmand Gerrard - acted as their handler and facilitated their movement from Lanka to India.

Pak nabs 140 over attack on Christians
Lahore: Pakistan's Punjab police Wednesday claimed to have arrested a total of 140 suspects involved in attacking members of the Christian minority, their properties and police personnel on the issue of alleged desecration of the Quran. A charged mob led by radical Islamist Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) activists last week attacked the Christian community in Mujahid Colony.

Iran, ME fuel global executions rise

EXECUTIONS WORLDWIDE JUMPED LAST YEAR TO 1,153, THE HIGHEST SINCE 2015

ASSOCIATED PRESS
London, May 29: The number of executions recorded worldwide last year jumped to the highest level since 2015, with a sharp rise in Iran and across the Middle East, Amnesty International said in a report released Wednesday.

The human rights group said it recorded a total of 1,153 executions in 2023, a 30 per cent increase from 2022. Amnesty said the figure does not include thousands of death sentences believed to have been carried out in China, where data is not available due to state secrecy. The group said the spike in recorded executions was primarily driven by Iran, where authorities executed at least 853 people last year, compared to 576 in 2022. Those executed included 24 women and five people who were children at the time the crimes



were committed, Amnesty said, adding that the practice disproportionately affected Iran's Baluch minority. "The Iranian authorities showed complete disregard for human life and ramped up executions for drug-related offences, further highlighting the discriminatory impact of the death penalty on Iran's most marginalized and impoverished communities," Agnès Callamard, Amnesty's secretary general,

said in a statement. The group said China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Somalia and the United States were the five countries with the highest number of executions in 2023. The total number cited in Amnesty's annual report was the highest it recorded since 2015, when 1,634 people were known to have been executed. Callamard said progress faltered in the US, where executions rose from 18 to 24 and "a

GAZA-WIDE OFFENSIVE

Israeli tanks raid Rafah



Amid global condemnation regarding incessant killing in Rafah, Israel has now sent tanks to raid the scarred region

Wednesday that Israeli tanks had pushed into Tel Al-Sultan in western Rafah and Yibna and near Shaboura in the centre before retreating towards a buffer zone on the border with Egypt, in contrast with offensives elsewhere.

- ♦ GAZA FIGHTING TO LAST AT LEAST SEVEN MORE MONTHS
- ♦ ISRAEL CONTROLS THREE QUARTERS OF EGYPT-GAZA BORDER ZONE
- ♦ GAZA DEATH TOLL RISES BEYOND 36,000

in southern Gaza, without elaborating. Israel's public broadcaster Kan radio said they were hurt by an explosive device set off in a building in Rafah. Palestinian health officials said several people were wounded by Israeli fire in eastern Rafah and stores of aid were set ablaze. Residents said constant Israeli bombardment overnight destroyed many homes in the area, from where most people have fled after orders by Israel to evacuate.

REUTERS

Israel's military controlled three quarters of the buffer zone and aimed to control all of it to prevent Hamas smuggling in weapons, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's National Security Advisor Tzachi Hanegbi said. He expected fighting in Gaza to continue throughout 2024 at least, he said, signalling Israel was not ready to heed international calls to agree a ceasefire with the Hamas militants who run Gaza and exchange the hostages they hold for Palestinian prisoners. The armed wings of Hamas and its allies Islamic Jihad said they confronted the invading forces with anti-tank rockets and mortar bombs and blew up previously planted explosive devices.

The Israeli military said three soldiers were killed and three others badly wounded in combat

3RD ATTACK IN MONTH

Militants burn girls' school in Pakistan

ASSOCIATED PRESS
Dera Ismail Khan, May 29: A group of militants used kerosene to set fire to a girls' school in a former Pakistani Taliban stronghold, destroying furniture, computers and books, police said Wednesday, in the latest in a surge in such attacks.

No one was hurt in the overnight attack in North Waziristan in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, local police official Rehmat Ullah said. Two other girls' schools in the region were bombed earlier this month. No one has claimed responsibility for the attacks, but authorities suspect Islamic militants, who targeted girls' schools years ago, saying that women should not be educated.

Centuries old tradition: Colombia congress votes to ban bullfights

Bogota: Colombia's congress voted Tuesday to ban bullfights in the South American nation, delivering a serious blow to a centuries-old tradition that has inspired famous songs and novels but has become increasingly controversial in the countries where it is still practised. The bill approved by Colombia's congress calls for the banning of bullfights in a three-year span, making the tradition illegal by the start of 2028. The new law now needs to be signed by President Gustavo Petro, who has been a long-time opponent of these events. Bullfighting originated in the Iberian peninsula and is still legal in Spain, France, Portugal, Peru, Ecuador and Mexico, among other countries. In Colombia, where bullfights have been held since colonial times, less than two dozen municipalities continue to hold these events, although the annual bullfights in the city of Manizales still draw tens of thousands of spectators. It was once a popular event, broadcast live by multiple television networks. But the tradition has come under increased scrutiny as views change about animal welfare, and many find it unacceptable to see an animal suffer for entertainment's sake.



CONTROVERSIAL BILLS

Russia's wealthy elite may face higher income tax

Moscow: Russia's wealthy elite could face higher income taxes, according to a proposal the country's finance ministry floated Tuesday. The proposal, which would likely have to go through parliament for approval and subsequently a sign-off by President Vladimir Putin, comes as Russia continues to spend vast amounts of money on the military campaign in Ukraine. The proposal involves a progressive tax on personal incomes and represents a change of course from the current flat-rate tax that was credited with bringing order and improving tax collections after it was introduced in 2001. It envisages imposing a 13 per cent tax for incomes of up to 2.4 million rubles (\$27,000) a year. For annual incomes exceeding 50 million rubles (\$555,000), the increased taxes would affect only 3.2 per cent of Russia's working population, Finance Minister Anton Siluanov said on the ministry's website. The 2.4-million-ruble level is about three times higher than the country's average salary, he said in a commentary.



THE ABANDONMENT OF NORDIC NEUTRALITY

AS THE THIRD AND FIFTH LARGEST COUNTRIES IN THE EUROPEAN UNION, SWEDEN AND FINLAND HAVE SIGNIFICANTLY EXPANDED NATO'S INFLUENCE AND BROUGHT VALUABLE CAPABILITIES TO THE ORGANISATION



Russian President Vladimir Putin's attempt to curb NATO by invading Ukraine backfired, as evidenced by Finland's accession to the alliance in April 2023, which significantly increased NATO's border with Russia, followed by Sweden's membership in March 2024. As US President Joe Biden has said of Putin: "He thought he'd get the Finlandization of NATO; instead, he got the NATO-ization of Finland—and Sweden."

Finland's policy of nonalignment during the Cold War was primarily driven by the need for survival rather than principled beliefs, as it was coerced into neutrality by its dominant Soviet neighbour. On the other hand, Sweden's neutrality was deeply ingrained and rooted in ideology, as the country saw itself as the moral compass of the world, yet

it also had a strong affinity towards the West. Seizing the opportunity in 1994, just a few years after the Soviet Union's dissolution, both Sweden and Finland joined NATO's Partnership for Peace, a platform for security cooperation among member and non-member states. Consequently, these two nations now benefit from the protection provided by Article 5 of NATO's mutual defence clause. The abandonment of Nordic neutrality marks the end of the post-Cold War era in the northern region. As the third and fifth largest countries in the European Union, Sweden and Finland have significantly expanded NATO's influence and brought valuable capabilities to the organisation. While this membership represents a significant setback for Moscow, it also raises the risk of

potential escalation. Finnish neutrality emerged as a survival strategy after World War II. Between 1939 and 1945, Finland fought in three separate conflicts as its alliances shifted: a defensive war against the Soviet Union, an invasion of the Soviet Union with help from Nazi Germany, and then a war to drive out German troops, mostly from Finland's north. Afterward, Finland was made to surrender ten percent of its territory to the Soviet Union, as well as pay substantial war reparations. In 1948, as part of the Finno-Soviet Treaty the Finns formally relinquished their right to join any military alliance. Defeated and afraid, the leadership in Helsinki settled into a long period of uncritical neutrality toward, if not subservience to, the Kremlin. As the Cold War divided Europe, Finnish leaders used diplomatic acrobatics to position themselves between East and West. Without formally joining the process of European integration, Finland managed to build and retain strong economic links to Europe. In 1975, Helsinki even hosted the first meeting of what would become the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. The summit symbolized Finland's standing as a neutral meeting place where East and West could come together to craft a new security architecture for Europe. Russia's 2022 invasion of

Ukraine changed all that. Just weeks into the war, Finland's president at the time, Sauli Niinisto, met with NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg as well as with US, British, and French officials. Public support for joining NATO skyrocketed, from 42 percent before the war to 80 percent by September 2022. By the time Finland officially joined the alliance, a new foreign policy consensus had emerged. In January of this year, when Finns went to the polls to pick a new president, not one of the eight candidates criticized the decision to join NATO. Neutrality took a much different form in Sweden. If the Finns tended to be passive, reluctant to criticize either side in the Cold War, the Swedes prided themselves on their righteousness. In 1972, Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme compared the United States' bombardment of Hanoi to the Fascists' bombing of Guernica during the Spanish Civil War and to the Nazis' mass shooting of Jews at Babi Yar in Ukraine during World War II. "We should call

things by their proper names," he said in a fiery speech. "What is going on in Vietnam today is a form of torture." And when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979, the Swedes criticized that war as well—just as they had condemned the Warsaw Pact's invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the Red Army's incursion into Hungary in 1956. In some ways, Sweden's abandonment of neutrality has been even more dramatic than Finland's. Until last year, Sweden had practiced nonalignment for over two centuries, since the Kingdom of Sweden ceded Finland to the Russian Empire in 1809. Even now, the Swedish public's enthusiasm for NATO membership is muted relative to that of the Finns. In January, a national poll found that only 63 percent of Swedes approved of their government's decision to join the alliance. Still, most Swedes believe that the security environment fundamentally changed after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. A policy of nonalignment no longer offered sufficient assurance of future security; Article 5 did.

