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Lingayats, Dalits jostle for key posts

Bengaluru, May 19:

Multiple challenges, particularly with regard to cabinet formation, stare at Siddaramaiah as he takes over as the new chief minister of Karnataka, nudging out party colleague and state Congress president D K Shivakumar -- who will now be his deputy.

The first challenge that Siddaramaiah faces on being sworn in is putting in place a cabinet with the right combinations, balancing between representing all communities, re-

gions, factions, and old and new generations of legislators.

With the sanctioned strength of the Karnataka cabinet being 34, Siddaramaiah will have a tough task at hand, with too many aspirants for ministerial berths.

Senior Congress leader G Parameshwara on Thursday cautioned the party's central leadership saying if a DCM post is not given to a Dalit, there will be adverse reactions and it would spell trouble for the party.

Siddaramaiah K'taka's next CM

■ Shivakumar his only deputy

New Delhi, May 18 (PTI):

Ending days of suspense, the Congress on Thursday announced Siddaramaiah as the next chief minister of Karnataka and state party president D K Shivakumar as his only deputy in the soon-to-formed cabinet.

The two leaders, who were in a tight race for the top post, would take oath along with other ministers on May 20 and leaders of all like-minded parties will be invited for the swearing-in ceremony.

Announcing the decision taken by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge after hectic parleys ever since the party emerged victorious on May 13, General Secretary (Organisation) K C Venugopal said all leaders, including the top leadership, worked very hard to make Karnataka victory a reality. "We have decided on Siddaramaiah as



Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge with senior party leaders Siddaramaiah and DK Shivakumar during a meeting, in New Delhi, Thursday.

Sidda-DKS swearing-in to showcase Oppn CMs

Leaders of several like-minded opposition parties are likely to attend the swearing in ceremony of Karnataka chief minister-designate Siddaramaiah and deputy chief minister D K Shivakumar on Saturday in Bengaluru. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge has extended the invitation to several chief ministers and party leaders and personally invited them to the event. Kharge sent an invitation to Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren and he is likely to attend the swearing in. Kharge has also invited Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin, NCP chief Sharad Pawar, former Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav. Invitations have also been sent to National Conference chief Farooq Abdullah.

the chief minister of Karnataka. D K Shivakumar will be the

only deputy chief minister," he said. Shivakumar will also continue as the

Mamata to skip swearing-in

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who was invited to attend the swearing-in ceremony of Congress leader Siddaramaiah as the Karnataka CM, is likely to skip the event, a top source at the state secretariat said on Thursday. A representative of Banerjee will, however, be attending the programme, he added. "The CM is likely to skip the swearing-in-ceremony. She may be assigning someone to represent the state there," the bureaucrat told PTI.

JALTE HAI JISKE LIYE



ISRO getting ready for Chandrayaan-3 mission

■ In July 2nd week Bengaluru, May 18 (PTI):

If things go as planned, the Indian Space Research Organisation would launch its ambitious Chandrayaan-3 mission aimed at demonstrating critical technologies to land the spacecraft on the south pole of the moon in less than two months. Chandrayaan-3 mission carries

scientific instruments to study the thermo-physical properties of the lunar regolith, lunar seismicity, lunar surface plasma environment and elemental composition in the vicinity of the landing site. "Chandrayaan-3 mission is scheduled in July second week," a senior official of the Bengaluru-headquartered national space agency under the Department of Space told PTI on Thursday.

BRIEF



AAP leader Raghav Chadha and his fiancée and Bollywood actor Parineeti Chopra seek blessings of the Jathedar of the Akal Takht Sahib, Singh Sahib Giani Harpreet Singh Ji.

Inaugurate

■ **New Delhi:** Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud on Thursday inaugurated a training-cum-examination centre in the additional building complex of the Supreme Court. "The training cell of the Supreme Court conducts awareness and training programmes for its staff in e-filing, e-office and other skills along with induction training for newly appointed personnel and orientation training for promoted officers on a regular basis," a statement said.

Rescued

■ **Thane:** Police in Thane in Maharashtra rescued two Russian nationals who were allegedly forced into a sex racket, an official said on Thursday. A restaurant in Wagle Estate industrial area was raided following a tip off about a sex racket on Wednesday. Thane police's Anti Human Trafficking Cell (AHTC) senior inspector Mahesh Patil said.

Building collapse

■ **Jaipur:** A 20-year-old worker died and nine others were injured when a building under construction collapsed in Bharatpur district, police said on Thursday. The incident took place near Jhantli village under the Sikri police station area late Wednesday night, they said. The building belongs to a madrasa.

Weather
High 41 Low 28

MARKET
NIFTY 18,129.95
SENSEX 61,431.74

BULLION
GOLD 59,617
SILVER 71,996

PM flags off Odisha's first Vande Bharat

■ Launches railway projects worth Rs 8,200 cr Puri/ Howrah, May 18 (PTI):

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched railway projects worth Rs 8,200 crore in Odisha on Thursday and flagged off the state's first Vande Bharat Express that will connect Puri to West Bengal's Howrah.

Addressing the function through video-conferencing, Modi said new India is building its own technologies and reaching those to the different corners of the country. "The Vande Bharat Express will further strengthen the religious, cultural and spiritual connection between Howrah



PM Modi addresses the foundation stone laying of railway projects in Odisha, via video conferencing, from New Delhi, Thursday.

and Puri," he said. Fifteen Vande Bharat trains are operational in the country at present and those are boosting both connectivity and economy, Modi said.

"There was a time when new technologies and facilities used to remain limited to Delhi or the big cities. But now, India has chosen a new path. This new India

is making technologies on its own and reaching those to different corners of the country," he said, referring to the indigenously developed semi-highspeed train. The prime minister said that as the country celebrates the 'Amrit Kaal' of its Independence, it's time to further strengthen its unity.

20 private sector specialists to join govt departments

New Delhi, May 18 (PTI):

The Centre has decided to recruit 20 private sector specialists as joint secretaries, directors, and deputy secretaries on contract basis in its 12 departments, an official statement issued on Thursday said. This is the third such recruitment drive proposed to be undertaken by the Narendra Modi government. The Department of Personnel and Training has asked the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) to recruit such specialists through "lateral entry" -- that is appointment of private sector specialists in government departments.

SC gives nod for jallikattu, bullock cart and buffalo races

Chennai, May 18 (PTI):

The Supreme Court on Thursday upheld the validity of the amended act of Tamil Nadu allowing the bull-taming sport Jallikattu, with state political parties welcoming the verdict while animal rights activists expressed disappointment and insisted they will look for legal remedies.

The spectacle sport coinciding with the Tamil harvest festival Pongal in January draws national and international audience. The southern town of Madurai hosts jallikattu at Alanganallur, Palamedu

Animal rights groups see red

Animal rights groups expressed disappointment over the ruling. PETA India said it is exploring legal remedies to protect bulls after the SC upheld the validity of the amendment act. Animal rights groups, led by People for Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), had challenged these practices in the top court. PETA called on everyone to steer clear of "shameful spectacles" that exploit bulls and buffaloes as "we explore legal remedies to protect these long-suffering animals". Gauri Maulekhi, trustee of People for Animals (PFA), said Jallikattu, Kambala and other such practices are nothing but unnecessary suffering and pain for the animals.

and Avaniyapuram, where the raging bulls charge out of 'Vaadivasa' (the entry point) to take on the tamers who invest a lot of pride in subduing the beast. "Jallikattu" is also known as "eruthazhuvuthal". On Thursday, the apex court also showed the green flag to Maharashtra and Karnataka for their bullock-cart races and buffalo racing sport 'Kambala', respectively. A five-judge Constitution bench headed by Justice K M Joseph, which delivered a unanimous verdict, dealt with five questions referred to it by a two-judge bench of the apex court in 2018.

LAND-FOR-JOBS PMLA CASE

ED questions Rabri Devi for 5 hrs

New Delhi, May 18 (PTI):

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) questioned former Bihar chief minister Rabri Devi for about five hours and recorded her statement here on Thursday in a money laundering case linked to the alleged land-for-jobs scam, official sources said. She reached the office of the federal probe agency in central Delhi around 11 am and left around 6 pm. In between, she stepped out for about an hour for lunch. It was not immediately known if she had been summoned again. The sources said the statement of 68-year-old Rabri Devi, wife of RJD chief



Lalu Prasad, was recorded under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). Rabri Devi's children, including Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav, daughters Misa Bharti (RJD MP in Rajya Sabha), Chanda Yadav and Ragini Yadav, have also been questioned by the agency in the case over the last few months.

Meghwal assumes charge as Law Minister

New Delhi, May 18 (PTI):

Bureaucrat-turned-politician Arjun Ram Meghwal on Thursday assumed charge as the Minister of Law and Justice after Kiren Rijju was removed from the high-profile ministry in a surprise development, and made it clear that there was no confrontation with the judiciary. Rijju, whose brief stint in the Law Ministry saw frequent run-ins with the judiciary, has been given the earth sciences ministry. Soon after assuming office, Meghwal declared that there was no confrontation with the judiciary and that his priority would be to ensure speedy justice for all.



Arjun Ram Meghwal

'No confrontation with judiciary'

Soon after assuming office, Meghwal declared that there was no confrontation with the judiciary and that his priority would be to ensure speedy justice for all.

SC stays ban on 'The Kerala Story'

New Delhi, May 18 (PTI):

The Supreme Court on Thursday stayed the West Bengal government's order banning the screening of the film "The Kerala Story" and asked Tamil Nadu to ensure the safety of moviegoers after theatre owners decided to stop screening the film due to security concerns.

A bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud also directed the producer to put a disclaimer in the movie by 5 pm on May 20 on the claim that 32,000 Hindu and Christian women were converted to Islam. According to the apex court, the disclaimer should say that "there is no authenticated data to back up the suggestion on



figure of conversion and the film represents the fictionalised version". The bench, also comprising Justices P S Narasimha and J B Pardiwala, said it would like to watch the movie before proceeding to decide the pleas challenging the grant of CBFC certification. It said the petitions will be heard in the second week of July. The bench also took note of submissions that there was no ban on the film in Tamil Nadu and

Word of advice for producer...

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'If any issue arises, oppn should not blame us'

Kolkata: After the Supreme Court allowed the screening of 'The Kerala Story' in West Bengal, the TMC on Thursday said if any issue arises due to the showing of the film, the opposition should not blame the ruling party. The Trinamool Congress maintained that the ban on the screening of the film was imposed apprehending tensions among communities. Earlier in the day, the Supreme Court stayed the West Bengal government's order prohibiting the screening of 'The Kerala Story'. The apex court also said it is the duty of the state government to maintain law and order as the film has been granted certification by the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC).

asked the state government to ensure the safety and security of moviegoers. During the hearing, it

said that statutory provisions cannot be used to "put a premium on public intolerance".

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Vishujeet Yadav
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PHE Minister dedicates various development projects

**Central Chronicle News**

Bhilai, May 18: Public Health Engineering and Village Industries Minister Guru Rudra Kumar visited Jamul on Thursday. He graced the bhoomipujan and inauguration function as the chief guest at the programme organised in Purana Talab of

Ward 4. He performed the bhoomipujan and inauguration of various projects worth Rs 1.33 crore. On this occasion, he dedicated a Poclain tractor worth Rs 20 lakh, which will be used for city sanitation works in Jamul Nagar. Apart from this, on the demand of the local citi-



zens, he announced to dig bore wells for the Ward 4 and Dewangan Samaj; additional room construction at Bajrangbali Mandir on the banks of the pond; and an ambulance. Municipal Council Vice President Jamun Sunita Channevar, Vijay Jain, Bhagat Singh Sidhu, Councilors Khamman

Singh Thakur, Sanjay Deshkhara, Deepak Gupta Sarojini Chandrakar, Rampyari Verma, Dular Singh Sahu, Sabiha Karim Khan, Alderman Mannu Yadav, Draupadi Sahu, Durga Gajbe, Kailash Nahata, Heera Verma, Prakash Singh Thakur, Oni Mahilang and others were present.

Bhilai Steel Plant organises free health camp at Village Mahkakala

**Central Chronicle News**

Bhilai, May 18: Bhilai Steel Plant, conducts several public welfare activities as part of its organizational social responsibility towards the community in and around its areas of op-

erations. The Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Department of the plant organized a one-day free Health Camp at Model Steel Village, Mahkakala. The expert medical team from CSR department, comprising health

experts, Dr Isha Kujur, Pharmacist, Shashi Bhusan Roy, Rekha Dev for Blood-sugar and BP examination, Shambhu for registration volunteered their services for the camp. AK Soni, CSR Assistant, from the department was also

present during the Health Camp. A total of 35 villagers from Village Mahkakala, including 9 men, 21 women and 5 children availed health services at the day long Health Camp and free medicines were distributed to them.

242 people screened at special camp on World Hypertension Day

**Central Chronicle News**

Bhilai, May 18: On the occasion of World Hypertension Day, a health camp was organized at the Public Service Center of the Collectorate Complex. A total of 242 people were screened for blood pressure and blood sugar level. Many

of them were advised to improve their diet and exercise regularly to control high blood pressure. Along with this, every person whose age group is more than 30 years, they were advised to get their blood pressure/blood sugar checked at least once a year and to take medicines

under the guidance of a doctor. On the occasion of World Hypertension Day, Collector Pushpendra Kumar Meena, Bhilai Municipal Corporation Commissioner Rohit Vyas, District Panchayat Chief Executive Officer Ashwani Dewangan and District Chief Medical and Health Officer Dr JP Meshram motivated the general public for regular health check-up by getting them checked for high blood pressure. District Nodal Officer Dr RK Khandelwal, District NCD Advisor Kavita Chandrakar, IHCI Advisor Atul Shukla were present. The camp was conducted smoothly by the staff of UPHC/UHWC.

Newly elected District Panchayat President sworn in

**Central Chronicle News**

Bhilai, May 18: Pushpa Yadav, the newly elected President of District Panchayat Durg, took oath of the office on Wednesday. District Panchayat Chief Executive Officer Ashwani Dewangan administered the oath of office and secrecy. The swearing-in ceremony was organized in the presence of State Public Health Engineering

and Rural Industries Minister Guru Rudra Kumar. Vice President, District Panchayat Durg, Ashok Sahu and Jitendra Kumar Sahu, Shamshir Qureshi, Chandkala Manhar, Maya Belchandan, Akash Kumar Kurre, Yogita Chandakar, Harsha Lokmani Chandrakar, Monu Sahu and Sarpanchs of various gram Panchayats were present.

BJP revokes expulsion orders of rebel candidates

BJP Dist Prez urges them to work for the party

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, May 18: Durg District BJP President Jitendra Verma had sent a letter to the state organisation of Chhattisgarh with a recommendation to revoke the expulsion of BJP workers who contested as rebel candidates against the party in the civic body elections held at Durg Municipal Corporation, Ahiwara Municipal Council as well as Dhamdha, Utai, Patan Nagar Panchayats in the year 2019. Taking the recommendation into consideration, the State Disciplinary Committee

of the BJP and the Bharatiya Janata Party state leadership has revoked the expulsion / suspension orders of the rebel BJP workers of Durg district and reinstated their party membership. The names of workers to be reinstated as party members are Meena Singh, Kavita Tandi, Shyam Sharma, Gyaneshwar Tamarkar, Amar Bhoi, Rekha Lodha, Parvati Sahu, Dinesh Mishra, Mohanlal Keswani, Wasim Qureshi, Khilavan Matiara, Roshni Fatte Sahu, Mamta Dewangan,

Savita Poshan Sahu, Dashrath Lal Penderiya, Arun Kumar Singh, Anoop Soni and Padmavati Dewangan. District BJP President Jitendra Verma said that after ending the expulsion of the rebel BJP workers, they have been re-inducted into the mainstream of the party by the state BJP. He hoped that these workers will help strengthen the party and will contribute significantly by playing their active role and will put their full energy to establish the Bharatiya Janata Party government again in the state.

District level Ramayana Mandali competition on May 20

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, May 18: The state government is organizing Ramayana Mandali state level competition. To encourage the Ramayana Mandalis of the state, the Ramayana Mandali competition will be organized in three phases. Development block level in the first phase, district level in the second phase and state level competition is being organized in the third phase. State level Ramayana troupe competition will be organized from 27 to 29 in 2023 in district Raipur. At the state level, first, second and third place

winners will be given prize money of Rs 5 lakh, Rs 3 lakh and Rs 2 lakh respectively. Collector Pushpendra Kumar Meena has instructed the concerned officers to make all the preparations. In the first phase in the district, the competition is to be held at the development block level till May 18. In the second phase, the district level competition will be organized till May 20 and the district level winning mandali will be selected. Guidelines related to the event have been issued by the Culture Department of Chhattisgarh Government.

CICASA organises one day workshop on use of AI in CA profession

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, May 18: A one day seminar was organized by CICASA branch of ICAI Bhilai branch at CA Bhavan, Civic Centre. CA Alok Sethi was present as the keynote speaker in the seminar who gave important information to all CA students regarding Artificial Intelligence, Dynamic Dashboard and Chat GPT. He spoke on the use of technology in the profession of Chartered Accountant. Giving information about Chat GPT, the keynote speaker of the seminar, CA Alok Sethi said that it is an AI chatbot, which understands normal human language and can also perform tasks like detailed writing like humans. He told that the



ChatGPT model has been developed on the basis of Machine Learning Technique Reinforcement Learning from Human Feedback. CA Sethi told that we can use it in work like scheduling, reminder, helping students to solve questions, customer service for companies, especially in communication and report presentation, factual, philosophical,

emotional and mathematical needs. One can also get answers to questions. CA Alok Sethi explained that Excel Dashboard provides an overview of metrics and other data points at a single place. In simple terms, dashboards are visual representations of data. They are mostly made up of charts and graphs, thereby attracting the attention of the user. It

allows reports to be combined and moved, allowing users to decide which reports to include and where to place them. Branch Chairman CA Payal Naveen Jain, Vice Chairman Rahul Batra, Secretary CA Ankesh Sinha, Program Coordinator Soumita Majumdar and more than 100 CA students were present in the seminar.

Aadhaar seeding of bank account mandatory for post matric scholarship

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, May 18: The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, New Delhi provides scholarships to the students through Direct Benefit Transfer system under the Online Post Matric Scholarship Scheme for the year 2022-23. Under this scheme, the scholarship amount will be transferred to the students' account only after seeding the students' bank account numbers from Aadhaar and enabling NPCI mapping. Without bank account Aadhaar seeding, it is not possible to get the scholarship amount paid in the bank account of the students. Assistant Commissioner, Tribal

Development Durg has informed to all government and non-government colleges, universities, engineering colleges, medical colleges, nursing colleges, ITIs running in the district and the Principal/Institution Head of the Polytechnic College, Scholarship in-charge and the students of Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes, who have applied online for post matric scholarship conducted by the department, to get their Aadhaar seeding in their bank branch by May 24, 2023. After enabling Aadhaar seeding and NPCI mapping of the bank account, further procedure would be conducted to transfer the scholarship amount to the account.

Saaol Heart Centre ordered to stop operations

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, May 18: Collector Pushpendra Kumar Meena has issued orders to stop the operations of Saaol Heart Center, a private clinic operating in Nehru Nagar Bhilai, with immediate effect. On the instructions of the Collector, Chief Medical and Health Officer, Durg, instructed the Nodal Officer Dr RK Khandelwal to conduct an enquiry under the Nursing Home Act. During inquiry, it was found that Saaol Heart Center, Nehru Nagar Bhilai, is operating a clinic without registration under the Nursing Home Act. After investigation, it was found that Dr Rupesh Kumar Chandrakar, director of private clinic Saaol



Heart Center, was operating a private clinic without registration under the Nursing Home Act, as well as no documents related to registration in the Nursing Home Act, were found. It was a violation of the Nursing Home Act 2010 and 2013. Private clinic operator

Dr Rupesh Kumar Chandrakar has been punished with a fine of Rs 20,000 under the Nursing Home Act for violating the provisions of the license. He has been ordered to deposit the penalty in the office of the Chief Medical and Health Officer, Durg, within five days.

Durg University: 75% evaluation work of annual examinations completed

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, May 18: About 75 percent evaluation work of Hemchandra Yadav University's (Durg University) annual examination 2023 answer books has been completed. The Vice-Chancellor Dr Aruna Palta has given instructions to the officials of the Examination Department to get the remaining evaluation work done at a fast pace by expert professors. University's Deputy Registrar of Examinations Dr Rajmani Patel and Dean Student Welfare Dr Prashant Srivastava jointly informed that the total number of candidates in BA in annual examination 2023 is 74705, of which 33726 are regular and 40979 self-study students. Out of total 22044 students in B Com, 17471 appeared as regular students and 4573 as self-taught students. Out of total 33754 candidates in B Sc, there are regular 25230 and self-study 8524. A total of 32059 candidates have appeared in various other courses and postgraduate courses. Out of which 2442 are regular and 29617 are self-study. Thus

the total number of candidates appearing in the annual examinations are 162562. Dr Rajmani Patel told that the total answer books of the graduate level candidates are more than 10.40 lakh and 75 percent evaluation has been completed. As soon as the evaluation of these examinations is completed result will be declared. The university administration is making efforts to declare the results of the by the end of May. Similarly, the evaluation work of more than 1.5 lakh post graduate answer books is going on. The Vice-Chancellor Dr Palta also directed in the officers' meeting that along with declaring the results of the examinations, proper efforts should be made to provide mark sheets to the students soon. The examination admit cards for the semester examinations commencing from June 12 are being issued by the university soon on the portal. The student should download it and check it completely and if any error or discrepancy is found, the examination department of the university can be contacted within a week.

Free health camp in memory of Late Sudhakar Tiwari at SR Hospital today

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, May 18: To mark the death anniversary of late Sudhakar Tiwari, SR Hospital and Research Centre Chikhali Durg is organising a free health check-up camp on May 19, 2023, S. R. A free health check-up camp has been organized by the Hospital and Research Centre Chikhali Durg. The venue is the hospital premises and the camp will be from 11:00 hrs to 15:00 hrs. Senior doctor of the hospital Dr SP Kesarwani informed that doctors would provide free consultation to the patients in the camp. Sonography, colour doppler X-ray, eye test, dental test, eyeglass frame, blood pressure, blood sugar test will be done free of cost in the said camp.



Giving important information about the camp, Dr Vishwamitra Dayal said that Hydrocele Cataract Sterilization, Normal Delivery, Cesarean Delivery will be done free of cost in the camp on May 19. Patients will have to pay only for medicines and blood urine test. A special discount of 40% will be provided by the hospital management in blood urine test, as well as 15% discount will be

provided in medicines and 50% discount will be provided in MRI test and CT scan test. Sanjay Tiwari, Chairman of SR Hospital said that the aforesaid health check-up camp is being organized on the death anniversary of his father late Sudhakar Tiwari. The chairman has appealed to the people of the area to take advantage of the free health check-up camp.

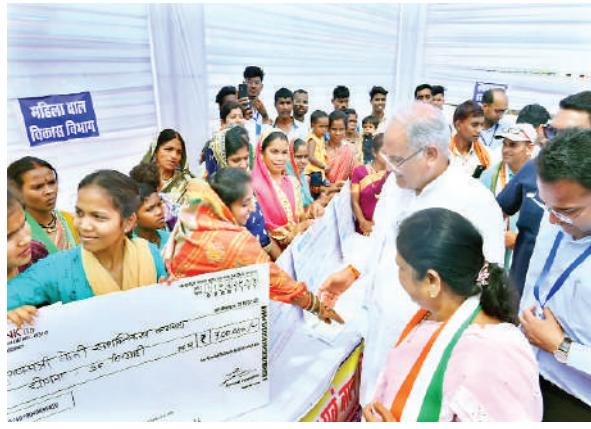
'Ch'garhiya Olympics to begin from 'Hareli Tihar': CM

- CM engages with citizens, gains valuable feedback during Bhent-Mulakat prog in Bhatgaon, Dhamtari Assembly Constituency
- Dedicates development works worth Rs 137 cr

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, May 18: Chhattisgarh is gearing up for an exciting event as the Chhattisgarhiya Olympics are set to begin during the upcoming Hareli Tihar. The announcement was made by Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel during his address at the state-wide 'Bhent Mulakat Abhiyan' program held in Bhatgaon, under the Dhamtari Assembly Constituency, on Wednesday. This significant sporting event promises to be a celebration of athleticism and unity.

The program provided an opportunity for the Chief Minister to connect with the people and gather valuable feedback on the



implementation of various welfare schemes by the state government. As part of his visit, Bhupesh Baghel inaugurated and laid stone for 154 development works worth a whopping Rs. 137 cr. This includes the inauguration of 28 projects worth Rs. 13.97 cr and the initiation of projects worth Rs. 123.63 cr.

Addressing the programme, the CM Baghel, stated that Mahatma Gandhi Horticulture University would commence in Patan Assembly Constituency on May 21, which is marked as the

death anniversary of former Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi. Beneficiaries of various NYAY schemes will receive the respective benefits of the schemes.

SHGs earn Rs. 6 lakh from selling vermicompost

Terina Sahu, a member of SHG, stated that her group has 10 members, all of them are actively participating in many livelihood activities. They are engaged in producing vermicompost and have earned Rs. 6 lakh from it. They have also earned



Rs. 56 thousand through 'Herbal medicine' and Rs. 75 thousand through poultry farming. She also stated that they will try to expand their activities further in the near future to increase their earnings.

Dorelal, a beneficiary of the 'Godhan NYAY Yojana', stated that he has sold dung worth Rs 1.5 lakh, which he collected from 'bardi' and streets, and bought a scooter with the money he earned.

Youth express gratitude for increasing vacancies in ITI

The Chief Minister also

engaged with the youth present at the event, expressing his concern for their employment prospects. He inquired about the distribution of Unemployment Allowance and discussed the recruitment of a large number of training officers for Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), for which a recent government advertisement was released.

The increase in vacancies for ITI posts to 920 was received with gratitude by the youth, including Tokeshwari Gajendra, who personally thanked the Chief Minister for the

opportunity.

Shubham Sahu, president of the Rajiv Yuva Mitran Club of Rudri village, expressed his happiness for the traditional games that he played in the Chhattisgarhiya Olympics.

The Chief Minister inquired about the reach of the 'Nili Gadi' (Mobile Medical Unit van) and re-

ceived unanimous confirmation of its accessibility. The villagers also informed the CM about the successful implementation of the 'Mukhyamantri Haat Bazar Clinic Yojana', with the Mobile Medical Unit van operating from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily, providing essential healthcare services to the community.

'I want to become your PA, is it possible?'- Priyanshi asked the CM

The event took an endearing turn when a student, Priyanshi Mishra, expressed her admiration for the Chief Minister and shared her aspiration to become his Personal Assistant. Mr. Baghel encouraged her to pursue a career in government service and appreciated her kind words. Priyanshi, who recently passed her 12th-grade examination, commended the quality education and facilities provided by the Swami Atmanand Schools, as well as their focus on sports and cultural activities. She also requested the Chief Minister to listen to songs performed by SAGES' students, which he graciously agreed to.

Balod Sanjari MLA Mrs. Sangeeta Sinha, Additional Chief Secretary Mrs. Renu G Pillai, Secretary to the Chief Minister Mr. Siddharth Komal Pardeshi, Divisional Commissioner Mr. Yashwant Kumar, IG Mr. Arif Sheikh, Collector Mr. Rituraj Raghuvanshi, SP Mr. Prashant Thakur and other officers were present.

Important announcements made by CM

- Swami Atmanand English Medium School to begin in Aamdi.
- The ITI of Gram Panchayat Bhatgaon will be named in honour of freedom fighter Lt. Manrakhan Dewangan.
- Tumrabhar and Devpur villages will soon have a new sub-health center.
- Mongaraghan will be home to the newly established District Co-operative Bank.
- Mauli Mata Temple of Gram Panchayat Bhatgaon will undergo renovation and various construction works.
- High School in Devpur village will be upgraded to a Higher Secondary School.
- Construction and repair work will take place at Swami Atmanand School.
- Bhatgaon Gauthan will acquire equipment for establishing a natural paint unit.
- Administrative approval has been granted for lining and repair work along Mahanadi Main Canal, spanning RD 390 to 1000 meters and RD 1000 meters to 15000 meters.
- The Bhoyna reservoir's dam and canals will undergo lining and development work for concrete structures.
- Repair work for gates and canals of Mongaraghan diversion is scheduled.

Ramayan performance groups to participate in Ch'garh's 'National Ramayana Festival'

- From all states and union territories
- CM Baghel extends invitations to Ramayana performance groups of Indian states and union territories
- City of Art and Culture, Raigarh to host the National Ramayana Festival which will be organized from June 1 to 3

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, May 18: The Chhattisgarh Government has extended an invitation to the tableaux performance groups from all states and union territories to participate in the National Ramayana Festival being organized for the first time in Chhattisgarh.

In a letter addressed to the Chief Ministers of all the states and the administrative heads of the Union Territories, Baghel has requested the participation of Ramayana 'tableau performance groups' in the National Ramayana Festival 2023 of Chhattisgarh which is scheduled to commence from 01 to 03 June 2023.

The Chief Minister has stated that the grandeur and dignity of the National Ramayana Festival will be elevated with the collective participation of the States and Union Territories. Baghel

further stated that the National Ramayana Festival will also feature enthralling dance-drama competitions based on the theme of Aranya-kand from Ramayan. Notably, the National Ramayana Festival is being organized at the historic Ramlila Maidan in Raigarh, known as renowned as Chhattisgarh's city of art and culture.

In the letter, Baghel has also written that the Government is dedicated towards the protection and promotion of the rich cultural and religious heritage of the state. Shri Ram and Ramayana are an integral part of our culture. As part of its continu-

ous efforts to preserve the heritage of Shri Ram, the Chhattisgarh government has restored and renovated the Mata Kaushalya temple and an annual Kaushalya Mahotsav is also being celebrated with a lot of enthusiasm.

Along with this, the state government is also doing extensive development work of tracking and arranging the places related to Shri Ram's exile journey and recognizing these milestone places as 'Ram Van Gaman Place'.

On the same lines, the first state level Ramayana Manas Mandali competition was organized by the state government from 08 April 2022 to 10 April 2022 in a town called Shivrimarayan in district

Janjgir-Champa and the second state level Ramayana Manas Mandali competition was organized in Rajim, Gariaband district from Feb 16-18, 2023 which also featured foreign cultural performing troupes from Vietnam and Sri Lanka.

Baghel, concluding the letter, emphasized that the National Ramayana Festival aims to preserve India's unique religious and cultural identity, which has united generations.

The participation of troupes from all states and union territories will enhance the collective spirit and magnificence of the festival, celebrating the richness of India's cultural heritage.

St Mary's English medium school students excel in CISCE Board Examination

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Jan 18: It was a pride moment for St. Mary's English Medium School to shine in city with outstanding performance of the students with 100% results in CISCE Board Examination - 2023.

In ISC (XII) Result: Samyak Jain student of Science and Janahvee Verma of Humanities stream stood first with 95.50%, Samyak Jain bagged crown of the city in Science stream. Janahvee Verma scored full marks in two individual subject i.e. Political Science & Physical Education.

In the same way Mansi Thakkar of Science stream secured second position with 94.25%, where as Abhijeet Sharma of Commerce and Jyoti



Dhruv of Humanities stood third with 93.25% and Prerna Naidu of Science stream stood as fourth with 91.25%.

In ICSE (X) Result: B Bhavna topped with 95.20%, Chanchal Sahu stood second with 94.40% and Vrinda Vadher as third with 91.40%. Aryan Sharma and Ishika Singh secured fourth and fifth position respectively. All over 26 students of ISC and

18 students of ICSE scored above 80% and all remaining students secured first division.

In this pride moment, the School Management expressed heartfelt congratulation to the students, staff and parents for their determination, perseverance and hard work. Management blessed the students abundantly and wished them for their future endeavors.

Lara holds Shift charge Engineer meet 2023

Central Chronicle News

Bilaspur (Lara), May 18: Arindam Sinha, ED (OS) inaugurated the Shift Charge Engineer's meet at Lara on 17th May 2023. Addressing the engineers, Sinha stressed on high operational efficiency and unit availability to meet real time energy demand. The meet will continue till 20th May 2023.

Shift charge engineers across all NTPC stations are participating in this to actualize the strategy to increase unit reliability and competency development of power units. Theme of this meet is "Redefining Strategies for Increasing Unit Reliability and Competency Development".



Core competency of NTPC is operational excellence. With increasing capacity and the leader in the power sector NTPC emerges as a Global Power company with its international presence.

Various issues related to the operation of power plants and new developments will be discussed and shared by the participants so that they can handle it and provide reliable power and contribute for national development.

On this occasion KS Naik, GM (OS), Akhilesh Singh, GM (O&M) NTPC Lara, Rajeev Ranjan, GM (FM), SK Roy, GM (Operation), Ravishankar, GM (Project) participants across NTPC were present.

'Rise from taxi business to a social reformer'

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, May 18: It was way back in 1985 when Kirti Vyas joined family taxi business under the banner of Vyas Travels and in 1988 applied for Passenger Sales Agent (PSA) of Air India started booking air tickets from 1990.

Carrying on both the taxi business and air ticket booking business with a moto of honesty, good intention and hard work which was received from late father, Kirti Vyas and his younger surged ahead in their work.

This business gave them an opportunity to be in touch with higher officials (both in government and private sector), big indus-



trialists and politicians.

By winning their trust in this business Vyas Travels continued to make a mark in the hearts of people. Holding the record highest air ticket sales in Central India, Vyas Travels is continuing successfully for 35 years and at present has an office-

Vyas Holidays at Marine Drive Telibandha.

Bring about a change in business pattern Vyas Holidays books all international air tickets, visa, holiday package and only biometric facility in Chhattisgarh for UK and Europe.

Having received awards

Honours talent...

Kirti Vyas recognizing talent felicitated Jharna Sahu, Class XII student of Veeer Shivaji School who stood sixth in merit list of CGBSE examination. Also Khusbhu Bijoura of the same school who is now collector was also felicitated on this occasion.

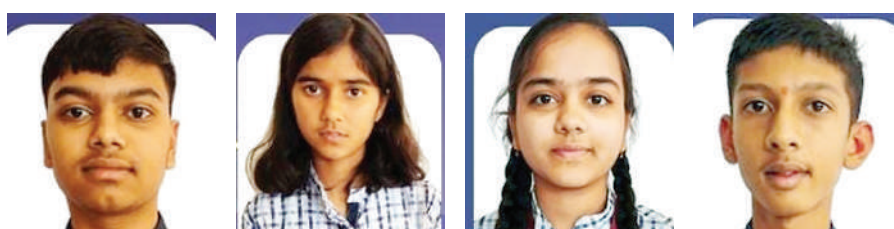
from different airlines companies for maximum ticket sales, Kirti Vyas is actively associated with many social organisations, educational institutions and charitable organisations. With a moto of service to mankind Kirti Vyas is gradually making his next generation learn the tricks of customer satisfaction.

100% results of Ashoka Public School

Central Chronicle News

Kawardha, May 17: Ashoka Public School of Kawardha is celebrating outstanding results of CBSE Year 2022-23 pupils at Ashoka Public School, Kawardha rose to the occasion again as they received their CBSE Class X results.

The school has attained an Overall, impressive 100% result of pupils appeared in CBSE Class X Examination with flying colours. Amongst other top headlines Master. Gitesh Dewangan, S/o Pawan Dewangan of Kawardha secured 84% while Aashi Jain D/o Mr. Jain of Kawardha acquiring 80% and Master Somesh Sinha obtaining 78% reflected his remarkable success. On the other hand many students secured 90% in respective subjects.



The School has another branch which is affiliated to Chhattisgarh State Board as well. This year's result is a benchmark for CG Board as well. Surbhai Sharma, Ayush Pandey and Mridul Vaishnav brought laurels to the school by getting 82, 79 and 77 percent marks in Class X results conducted by the state in the session 2022-23.

This year's results represent a remarkable transformation in the success of the Ashoka Public School in Kawardha as the students of this school appeared

first time with full syllabus and appearing in Central Board. The students performed above and beyond their expected levels, which opens the door to continue their studies at advanced level.

The new measure of Progress and Attainment were also very positive, showing that Ashoka Public School has firmly established itself as an academic option in Kawardha.

Principal Dr. K.L. Sikhwal while congratulating the students and their mentors said

that today's child is brighter and smarter than the child of the past. Thanks to the resources made available by the parents and teachers.

On the other hand Management of the school Chairman Mr. Pawan Dewangan said 'Every child deserves to be the best of what he is.

School is that integral part of society which is an instrument of achieving this goal. The goal of education in Ashoka Public School is to explore, enhance, encourage and inculcate such

learning and values that will benefit society with the presence of these individuals.

Ashoka Public School endeavors to augment the personality of each child and bring out inherent qualities through years of schooling which include such varied activities as sports, dance and music, arts, and expression which aid in the discovery of such talents said the Director of the school Sarika Dewangan.

Principal congratulated all teachers for their best efforts they put in throughout the year for the overall development of students. Principal also thanked the parents for their belief in the school and assured that the school will always be there for the overall development of its students, informs a press release issued by Dr. KL Sikhwal, Principal Ashoka Public School.

Baghel inaugurates Gadh Kalewa in village Achhota

- Of Dhamtari district, relished the taste of Chilla, Fara, Thethri, Khurmi
- Gadh Kalewa is also equipped with a Wi-Fi facility

Central Chronicle News

Dhamtari, May 18: Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel inaugurated Gadh Kalewa, located in the village of Achhota, during the Bhent-Mulakat program in Dhamtari district today. During his visit to Gadh Kalewa, the Chief Minister interacted and discussed the arrangements with the women of the self-help group. Members of the women's



self-help group informed the Chief Minister that Gadh Kalewa offers various dishes of Chhattisgarhi cuisine, such as Cheela, Fara, Thethari, Khurmi, Airsa, Chausela, Sohari, and other cuisines. Gadh Kalewa is a traditional restaurant that showcases the culture of Chhattisgarh and provides a vil-

lage ambiance. It features both indoor and outdoor seating arrangements, following an open-air concept. A significant portion of the establishment consists of open spaces where patrons can savor the delectable taste of Chhattisgarhi Cuisine. Customers will also have access to Wi-Fi facility at Gadh Kalewa.

BRIEF



BJP National President JP Nadda and Maharashtra Minister Mangal Prabhat Lodha during the 'Yuva Sanwad' program, organised by the skill development department of Government of Maharashtra, in Mumbai, Thursday.

Shot dead

New Delhi: A 30-year-old man was allegedly shot dead by an unknown assailant early on Thursday in central Delhi's Jama Masjid area, police said. The incident took place near the Ya-Rub-Chala De Hotel, they said.

Abandoned

Pathanamthitta: A newborn child was found abandoned in an uninhabited property in Thiruvalla in this district on Thursday morning, police said. After hearing its cries, locals conducted a search in the unoccupied property owned by Georgekutty and came across the hapless child there in the morning.

Suicide

Thiruvananthapuram: A 17-year-old boy lodged at a government observation home at Poojappura here allegedly died by suicide on May 13. According to an official of the observation home, the boy suffered from bipolar disorder and was brought there in December last year after being caught in connection with a theft case being investigated by the railway police.

Review

Jammu: Jammu and Kashmir Additional Director General of Police (ADGP) Mukesh Singh on Wednesday said anti-tunnelling and anti-drone exercises should be regularly conducted in districts along the International Border (IB) to thwart nefarious designs of anti-national elements.

Busted

Jammu: Security forces on Thursday busted a suspected terror hideout and seized explosive materials in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district, officials said. A search operation was launched by the 39 Rashtriya Rifles and the Special Operations Group in the district's Salani area during which the Army's sniffer dogs detected some suspicious improvised explosive devices (IED) and other materials from a hideout, the official sources said.

Collision

Shajapur: Four persons were killed and 14 others received injuries when a speeding private bus collided head-on with a truck near Maksi town in Madhya Pradesh's Shajapur district on Thursday morning, a police official said.

Roadblocks on NH to Imphal cleared

Trucks with essentials start rolling

Imphal, May 18 (PTI): The Assam Rifles cleared roadblocks set up by various organisations on national highway 37 and escorted truck columns carrying essential supplies to Imphal. Truck movement to the Imphal Valley stopped due to roadblocks and fear amongst transporters after clashes broke out in Manipur after a 'Tribal Solidarity March' was organised in the hill districts on May 3 to protest against the Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status. As movement of trucks stopped stock of essential supplies in the state started dwindling and was beginning to reach critical levels. Army and Assam Rifles stepped in to assure protection to vehicles carrying essential goods

from/to Imphal, a Defence spokesperson said. On May 15, a convoy of 28 vehicles including trucks, fuel tankers, JCBs, carrying rice, sugar, pulses and fuel moved under escort of CRPF and Manipur Police from Noney to Imphal. Prophylactic domination of the area was provided by Assam Rifles to ensure safe passage to the convoy which reached Imphal safely by afternoon. In addition, monitoring was also ensured through Unmanned Aerial Vehicles. Around 100 vehicles were moved on May 16 and 17. Security Forces are committed to restore normalcy and the commencement of movement of the vehicles on NH 37 is another step towards normalcy in Manipur, the Defence Spokesperson said.

Clashes broke out in Manipur after a 'Tribal Solidarity March' was organised in the hill districts on May 3 to protest against the Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status. The violence was preceded by tension over the eviction of Kuki villagers from reserve forest land, which had led to a series of smaller agitations. Meiteis account for about 53 per cent of Manipur's population and live mostly in the Imphal Valley. Tribals — Nagas and Kukis — constitute another 40 per cent of the population and reside in the hill districts. The ethnic clashes claimed over 70 lives and some 10,000 army and para-military personnel had to be deployed to bring back normalcy in the northeastern state.

NADDA OFFERS PRAYERS



BJP National President JP Nadda during his visit to offer prayers at the Siddhivinayak temple in Mumbai, Thursday.

30K applications for admission to 12K seats

In Jharkhand govt Schools of Excellence

Ranchi, May 18 (PTI): About 30,000 applications have been received for admission to 12,000 seats in 80 Jharkhand government-run Schools of Excellence so far, an official said on Thursday. Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren on May 2 had inaugurated 80 government Schools of Excellence, as part of an academic reform to provide quality English-medium education at par with private schools to children going to government schools. "Against the total number of 12,146 available seats for admissions to Schools of Excellence (SoEs) a whopping number of approximately 30,000 applications have been received across the

state by the school management till May 17. The number of applications is 246 per cent higher than the total seats," an official said. Maximum number of applications have been received from Deoghar at 3,247, Lohardaga at 2,254, Giridih at 1,708, Palamu at 2,322 and Ramgarh at 1,489. In view of the demand of the parents, the deadline for submission of applications in Schools of Excellence (SoEs) has been extended till May 25. Earlier, the government had fixed the date for application from May 2 to May 15. The selection test will be held on May 30 while the first merit list will be published on June 7 and admissions as per the merit

list will start from Jun 12. These 80 district-level Schools of Excellence are part of the government's aim to provide quality education opportunities to 15 lakh school children studying in government schools including plans to set up 325 block level schools and 4,091 gram panchayat level model schools across the state in the second phase. Last month, at least 10 students of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) in Khunti district, a part of a government project to reduce gender disparities in rural areas and among disadvantaged communities, had qualified in the JEE (Mains). Online training of Principals of 80 Schools of Excellence has been given

by the National Center for School Leadership in two phases. The training of Principals of 80 Schools of Excellence has also been completed in two phases by the Azim Premji Foundation. In January, training was imparted by IIMs for capacity building of principals. All students in these 80 Schools of Excellence will be imparted vocational training for 11 trades, the government had earlier announced. These include Agriculture, IT, ITES, apparel and make-up and home furnishing, media and entertainment, automotive, tourism and hospitality, beauty and wellness, multi-skilling, electronics and hardware, retail and healthcare.

'Second round of border talks with Assam soon'

Shillong, May 18 (PTI): Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma said he is likely to meet his Assam counterpart Himanta Biswa Sarma next week in Guwahati for the second round of border talks. Speaking to reporters, Sangma Wednesday said the logistics were being worked out for the meeting, which is likely to be held on May 24. This would be the first meeting for the second round of border talks between the two states, aimed at resolving the remaining six areas of differences, he said. Sangma said he has been in touch with Sarma over the skirmishes that have been taking place at



Conrad K Sangma

the villages located in the disputed Block I and Block II at the inter-state border. "We have already decided to visit both Block I and II to send a message of peace and restraint from both sides," he said. Last week, two huts were set on fire at Khanduli village in Block I.

UP govt to train youths

Lucknow, May 18 (PTI): The Uttar Pradesh government will launch a 5G technology training programme under its Skill Development Mission to train youths in new and future employable technologies, an official said here on Thursday. Under the programme, the government will train the youths and make also arrangements for their employment. According to the proposal, at least 1,000 youths have to be trained and given jobs under this programme in eight months. The programme is likely to be started shortly in five districts among Lucknow, Kanpur; Gautam Buddha Nagar, Moradabad, Agra, Gorakhpur, Varanasi and Prayagraj, he said.

'Will try to get back Shivaji's sword from UK next month'

Mumbai, May 18 (PTI): Maharashtra Minister for Cultural Affairs Sudhir Mungantiwar on Wednesday said he would visit the UK next month and try to bring back a sword and metal claws used by warrior king Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in the 17th century. The metal claws or 'wagh nakh' is a weapon designed to fit over the knuckles or be concealed under and against the palm. It consists of four or five curved blades affixed to a crossbar. This weapon was used by Shivaji Maharaj to kill Afzal Khan, the general of the Adil Shahi dynasty of Bijapur Sultanate. "I had a discussion with



Sudhir Mungantiwar

the British deputy high commissioner earlier on making available the 'Jagdamba' sword and 'wagh nakh' here. We are signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) regarding the same," Mungantiwar said. The minister had held a meeting with Alan Gemmell, British Deputy

High Commissioner for Western India and Imogen Stone, Deputy Head, Political and Bilateral Affairs on April 16. "We are celebrating the 350th anniversary of the coronation of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. More than 100 events will be held in the state to commemorate the occasion starting from June 2 this year. Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, descendants of Shivaji Maharaj and others will be invited for the event," he said. Mungantiwar said he would visit the UK in June and try to take the matter further with the finalisation of the MoU and to decide the further course of action.

Gondia, May 18 (PTI): Wildlife lovers have reasons to cheer as a tigress has given birth to four cubs in the Navegaon Nagzira Tiger Reserve (NNTR) in Maharashtra's Gondia district, officials said. Besides, two more tigresses from the Bramhapuri range (in Chandrapur district) are expected to be released in the NNTR soon, they said. Of late, tigress T-4 has been seen moving around with four cubs born in a single litter; NNTR's field director Jayaram Gowda R said. It is a good sign as the tiger population in the reserve will go up further, he said.

Tigress gives birth to 4 cubs

In Navegaon Nagzira Tiger Reserve



Four tiger cubs, who were born at the Navegaon Nagzira Tiger Reserve (NNTR), in Maharashtra's Gondia district.

The cubs are believed to be four to five months old, an official said. Currently, the NNTR has 12 to 17 tigers, as per the recent All India Tiger Estimation report. The forest department has also brought two tigresses from the

Bramhapuri range and they would be released in the NNTR soon, the official said. With the sighting of T-4 with four cubs and translocation of two big cats on cards, there would be new challenges before the NNTR management, honorary wildlife warden Sawan Bahekar said. The authorities have to ensure protection of the cubs and also regularly monitor movement of the two new felines to be released in the reserve, he said. "There may be some conflict situation and natural threats. The management also requires to make efforts to prevent any man-made threat for the felines.

WATERLOGGED STREET



A man wades through a waterlogged road with his two-wheeler following rainfall, in Guwahati, Thursday.

BJP's Ambala MP Rattan Lal Kataria dies

Haryana announces one day state mourning

Chandigarh, May 18 (PTI): Former Union minister and the BJP's Ambala MP Rattan Lal Kataria passed away on Thursday after a brief illness here. He was 71. Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, senior leaders from the BJP and parties across the spectrum expressed condolences at Kataria's demise. Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed anguish at the death of Kataria and said he made a rich contribution towards public service and social justice. Kataria was admitted to the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research here after initial com-



plaints of pneumonia. Later, he developed other health complications and he remained in the hospital for treatment, an aide told PTI. For the past few days, he had been running a fever. His health deteriorated further on Wednesday, he said and added that Kataria died around 3.30

am. Kataria is survived by his wife, two daughters and a son. His last rites will be held at Manimajra in the afternoon. Kataria served as minister of state in the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti and the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment from May 2019 till July 2021. He was elected to the Lok Sabha from Ambala in 1999, 2014 and 2019. A prominent Dalit face of the BJP, Kataria served as the party's Haryana unit chief from 2000 to 2003. He was also a minister in the Haryana government. As a child artiste, Kataria had received an award the then-Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru.

BRIEF

US court approves extradition of 26/11 Mumbai attack accused Tahawwur Rana to India

New York, May 18 (PTI):

In a significant legal victory for India, a US court has approved the extradition of Pakistani-origin Canadian businessman Tahawwur Rana to India where he is sought for his involvement in the horrific 2008 Mumbai terror attacks. The ruling comes just over a month before Prime Minister Narendra Modi travels to the US on his first state visit at the invitation of President Joe Biden. He will be hosted by President Biden and First Lady Jill Biden for a state dinner at the White House on June 22. US Magistrate Judge Jacqueline Chooljian of the District

Court of the Central District of California issued a 48-page order dated May 16, which was released Wednesday, saying 62-year-old Rana "should be extradited to India" under the extradition treaty between India and the United States. "The court has reviewed and considered all of the documents submitted in support of and in opposition to the request and has considered the arguments presented at the hearing. "Based on such review and consideration and for the reasons discussed herein, the court makes the findings set forth below, and certifies to the Secretary of State of the

United States the extraditability of Rana on the charged offences that are the subject of the request," the court order said. Rana, who is currently in the federal lockup in downtown Los Angeles, can appeal in the Circuit Court, which will likely affirm the district court order. Under US law, Secretary of State is the authority who decides whether to surrender the fugitive. The order noted that the court cannot certify Rana's extradition unless there is probable cause to believe he committed the offences for which extradition is sought. Citing its reasoning in detail, the order states: "Accordingly, the court finds there is

probable cause to believe Rana committed the charged offences as to which extradition has been sought and should be extradited to India under the extradition Treaty between the United States and India." India had filed a complaint on June 10, 2020 seeking the provisional arrest of Rana with a view towards extradition. The Biden administration had supported and approved the extradition of Rana to India. In response to a question, a State Department spokesperson told PTI that "we refer you to the Department of Justice for specifics on this case."

CYCLONE RELIEF



Indian and Myanmar's officials onboard INS Shivalik after three Indian Navy ships carrying relief material reached cyclone-affected Myanmar as part of Operation Karuna, in Yangon, Thursday.

Countries like Australia, India and Lanka helping to search for 39 crew of sunken Chinese fishing vessel

Beijing, May 18 (PTI): China on Thursday said Australia, India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, the Philippines and the Philippines have extended emergency help to it in the search and rescue of a Chinese fishing vessel with 39 crew members onboard that sank in the Indian Ocean. A spokesperson for the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) told the Chinese state-run Xinhua news agency on Thursday that based on drift modelling, a remote 12,000 square km zone has been identified to search for the vessel. A Chinese deep-sea fishing vessel Lupeng Yuanyu 028 capsized on Tuesday in the central Indian Ocean, which has so far left 39 peo-

ple on board missing, including 17 Chinese mariners, 17 Indonesian mariners and five Philippine mariners. None of the crew has yet been found. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told the media here on Thursday that "as we speak, the search and rescue operation is still underway". He said the rescue operation has drawn close attention from across the region. "Countries such as Australia, India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, the Philippines and the Philippines have extended emergency assistance and sent sympathies for the Chinese boat and crew", he said, providing an update about the search operations.

UK PM Sunak clinches 'historic' Hiroshima Accord on Japan visit



British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, center right, and his wife Akshata Murty disembark their plane as they arrive at the airport, in Tokyo, Japan, ahead of the G-7 Summit, Thursday.

London, May 18 (PTI):

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and his wife Akshata Murty arrived in Japan on Thursday for the G7 Summit, on the sidelines of which he clinched a new so-called

"Hiroshima Accord" for greater UK-Japan economic, security and technology collaboration. This new UK-Japan global strategic partnership is being seen as a counterbalance to Chinese dominance in the region and also includes a

Biden consults with Kishida ahead of Group of Seven summit

Hiroshima, May 18 (AP):

President Joe Biden arrived in Japan on Thursday and greeted Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida by saying, "When our countries stand together, we stand stronger" a sign of how the economic and national security alliance between the two countries has grown.



President Joe Biden, left, shakes hands with Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida ahead of a bilateral meeting in Hiroshima, Japan, Thursday.

The US president began his remarks by noting that Kishida said during a January Washington visit that the world faced one of the "most complex" security environments in recent history. "I couldn't agree with you more," Biden said. "We very much welcome that the cooperation has evolved in leaps and

bounds," Kishida told Biden about Japan's relationship with the US in their meeting ahead of the Group of Seven summit that begins Friday. The

Kishida family's home city of Hiroshima will host the gathering of major industrialised nations known at the G-7. The setting of Hiroshima, where the US

dropped the first nuclear bomb in 1945 during World War II, carries newfound resonance. The US, Japan and their allies are strategising on how to deal with Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine as well as concerns about the increased cadence of North Korea's ballistic missile tests and Iran's nuclear programme. Biden is appearing on the world stage while trying to manage a divide back in the US on how to raise the debt limit. He opted to cut short what was supposed to be an eight-day trip to Asia, so he can return to Washington to try to avoid a potentially catastrophic default in June that could ripple across the global economy.

Indian-origin police officer becomes highest-ranking South Asian woman in NYPD

New York, May 18 (PTI): Captain Pratima Bhullar Maldonado, an Indian-origin police officer, has become the highest-ranking South Asian woman in the New York Police Department, after her recent promotion to the rank of Captain.

of my life in this precinct when I was growing up," Maldonado said. South Richmond Hill is home to one of the largest Sikh communities in the country. "Going to the same Gurdwara that I did as a child, and now as a captain, I love it," Maldonado said as she visited the gurdwara. She told CBS 2 her new role will help with community policing.

Maldonado runs the 102nd Police Precinct in South Richmond Hill, Queens. She was promoted to the rank of Captain last month, CBS News reported on Monday. The mother of four was born in Punjab and lived there until she was 9 before moving to Queens in New York. "It feels like coming home. I spent more than 25 years

There are language barriers, people who can't speak the language, English is a second language. I've seen that firsthand growing up here," she said.

Russia fires 30 cruise missiles at Ukrainian targets

Kyiv, May 18 (AP): Russia fired 30 cruise missiles against different parts of Ukraine early Thursday in the latest nighttime test of Ukrainian air defences, which shot down 29 of them, officials said.

spokesperson for the region's military administration. Loud explosions were heard in Kyiv as the Kremlin's forces targeted the capital for the ninth time this month in a clear escalation after weeks of lull and ahead of a much-anticipated Ukrainian counteroffensive using newly supplied advanced Western weapons. Debris fell on two Kyiv districts, starting a fire at a garage complex.

राज्य नोडल एजेंसी आयुष्मान भारत डिजिटल मिशन. द्वितीय तल, पुराना नर्सिंग हॉस्टल, जी.के.एस. मकान के पीछे, रायपुर, छत्तीसगढ़, दूरभाष नं. 0771.4095198. सोसायटी पंजी. क्रमांक-122202023363. संचालक (एडमिन) आयुष्मान भारत डिजिटल मिशन छत्तीसगढ़. S-37052/2

कार्यालय, नगर पालिक निगम, भिलाई, जिला-दुर्ग. जॉन क्रमांक- 05. E mail:- zonefivebhlal@gmail.com. क्र.सो.क.सि./जोन क्र. 5/2023/452/86. भिलाई, दिनांक 17/05/2023. ई-निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना. आयुक्त नगर पालिक निगम भिलाई द्वारा एकीकृत पंजीयन प्रणाली अंतर्गत सखम श्रेणी में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों निम्नलिखित निर्माण कार्य हेतु ई-निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है:-

Israel deploys heavy police presence ahead of contentious Jerusalem march

Jerusalem, May 18 (AP): Israel deployed over 2,000 police on Thursday for a march by flag-waving Jewish nationalists through the main Palestinian thoroughfare in Jerusalem's Old City, a contentious event that comes as tensions are already running high.

Police arrest, charge man in connection with hostel fire

Wellington, May 18 (AP): New Zealand police said on Thursday they had arrested a man and charged him with two counts of arson in connection with the fire at a Wellington hostel that killed at least six people. Police said the investigation is ongoing and they could file more serious charges in relation to the deaths at the scene. Earlier, police said they had launched a homicide investigation. Police Inspector Dion Bennett said Thursday they are

confident they're not seeking anybody else in connection with the fire. The suspect, who was not immediately named by police, is scheduled to make his first appearance Friday at the Wellington District Court. Earlier, police removed the first two bodies from the Loafers Lodge hostel and said they planned to remove the next two on Friday. Bennett said it's possible they could find more victims as officers continue their scene examination.

कार्यालय नगर पालिक निगम भिलाईपुर (छ.ग.) द्वितीय ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना. क्र. 65/न.पा.नि./सीबीए/2023-24. दिनांक 18/05/2023. एकीकृत पंजीयन प्रणाली अंतर्गत सखम श्रेणी में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से निम्नलिखित निर्माण कार्य हेतु ऑनलाईन (Online) निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है:-

GOVERNMENT OF CHHATTISGARH, WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT. OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, WATER RESOURCES DIVISION No. 1 AMBIKAPUR, DISTT. SURGUJA (C.G.)

e-Procurement Tender Notice. eProcurement Portal: https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in (FIRST-CALL). NIT NO. 01/SAC/ 2023-24 DATED - 16.05.2023 Online Tenders are invited for the following works up to 06.06.2023. (17.30 hours IST).

Table with 4 columns: G.No., System Tender No., Name of Work, Probable amount of contract. Includes items like CONSTRUCTION OF SOHAGA LIFT IRRIGATION SCHEME AT GHUNGHTTA RIVER.

The details can be viewed & downloaded online directly from the Govt. of Chhattisgarh Integrated e-Procurement portal (https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in) from dated 23.05.2023 at 17.31 hours (IST) onwards. Note: All eligible/interested contractors/bidders are mandated to get enrolled on the integrated e-Procurement portal (https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in) and get approval on specific vendor class from PWD under centralized contractor/ supplier registration in order to download the tender documents and participate in the subsequent bidding process.

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER WATER RESOURCES DIVISION No. 1, AMBIKAPUR (C.G.) For, Chief Engineer Hasdeo Ganga Basin, W.R. Deptt. Ambikapur, Surguja (C.G.)

Government of India Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances. Inviting new name and logo for Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS). Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) is an online platform available to the citizens 24x7 to lodge their grievances to the public authorities on any subject related to service delivery. It is a single portal connected to all the Ministries/Departments of Government of India and States. CPGRAMS is also accessible to the citizens through standalone mobile application downloadable through Google Play store and mobile application integrated with UMANG.



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NCB's Integrity at Stake

Rebuilding Trust in the Wake of the Wankhede Scandal

The recent revelations surrounding Indian Revenue Service officer Sameer Wankhede have sent shockwaves through the nation. According to the FIR registered by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Wankhede and his associates allegedly demanded a staggering Rs 25 crore bribe to spare Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan's son, Aryan Khan, from being implicated in the 2021 drugs-on-cruise case. The FIR further exposes the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) team's alleged misconduct during the raid on the cruise ship, allowing the drug suppliers and possessors to escape unpunished. This tainted officer, who previously held the position of NCB's Zonal Director in Mumbai, is also under scrutiny for possessing disproportionate assets and providing misleading information regarding his expenditures on foreign trips. The CBI's decision to book Wankhede and others comes after an investigation conducted by a Special Enquiry Team (SET), led by a Deputy Director General of the NCB. The SET's report has laid bare the brazen attempts made by Wankhede to extort crores of rupees from Aryan's family. This sordid saga has severely tarnished the credibility of the NCB, the pivotal agency responsible for enforcing drug laws in India and collaborating with international bodies such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. In light of these distressing revelations, numerous pertinent questions arise: Did Wankhede's superiors turn a blind eye to his misconduct? Were some of them complicit in his illegal activities? Which politicians provided the patronage that emboldened him to commit these offenses? For the NCB, entrusted with the crucial task of detecting and disrupting organized drug trafficking groups, it is imperative to swiftly address the lapses within its ranks. A comprehensive investigation into the Wankhede case is indispensable to rectify the course and restore public faith. Sending a resolute message of zero tolerance for corruption can serve as a deterrent to both domestic and international drug cartels. Furthermore, the bureau must prioritize capturing the major players in the drug trade. By realigning its priorities, the NCB can make a substantial impact on the ground and bring about meaningful change. In order to restore public trust and uphold its integrity, the NCB must take immediate action to address the allegations against Wankhede and any potential complicity among his superiors. This includes a thorough internal investigation, followed by appropriate disciplinary measures and legal consequences if found guilty. Transparency and accountability must be the guiding principles during this process. Additionally, the NCB should focus its resources on dismantling major drug cartels and disrupting their operations. By targeting the root causes and major players in the drug trade, the bureau can have a more significant impact on curbing drug trafficking and safeguarding society. This requires enhanced intelligence-gathering, coordination with international agencies, and a proactive approach to identifying and apprehending high-profile drug traffickers. Moreover, there is a pressing need for systemic reforms within the NCB to prevent such instances of corruption in the future. Strengthening internal oversight mechanisms, implementing rigorous ethics training programs, and fostering a culture of integrity are essential steps to ensure the bureau operates with utmost professionalism and accountability. The Wankhede scandal serves as a wake-up call for the NCB and the larger law enforcement community. It highlights the critical importance of maintaining the highest standards of ethics and integrity within our institutions. By taking swift and decisive action, the NCB can demonstrate its commitment to upholding justice, eradicating corruption, and effectively combating the drug menace.

CULTURAL PROCESSION

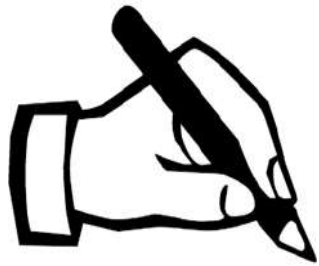


A man dressed as a Kathakali artist participates in a cultural procession as part of the 58th state conference of the Kerala Secretariat Association, in Thiruvananthapuram, Thursday.

Humans Are Responsible For 99% Of The Endangered Species



PROF. SUNIL GOYAL



National Endangered Species Day was created on 19th May (third Friday) to keep us aware of how fragile the existence of some animals, plants, and insects is and, most importantly, reminds us to take the time to learn about why it's so important to protect endangered species from any further harm. It's so important to educate ourselves on what endangered species mean to our planet to better protect those species of Earth and support the populations of the non-endangered species that remain.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) currently lists over 35,000 species as threatened. IUCN has assessed 134,425 species, which means that over 25% of the assessed species assessed have been listed as threatened. Their current goal is to assess 160,000 species globally. IUCN lists around 10% of the endangered species as critically endangered. Over 3,400 of the species on the IUCN Red List are listed as critically endangered. Critically endangered species are also considered to be "probably extinct", but further evidence is required to prove the species is extinct. Some critically endangered species may be extinct in the wild but still exist in captivity. Humans are di-

rectly responsible for a huge jump in the rate of species endangerment and extinction. According to WWF, species are becoming extinct at a rate at least 100-1,000 times higher than what occurs in nature without human involvement or intervention. Humans impact ecosystems through farming and development, limiting the places that many species can safely live. Hunting and the introduction of non-native species have also proven to be detrimental to native wildlife populations. Almost 99% of endangered species today were put in that position by humans. The fact that around 99% of the species alive that are endangered were made endangered by humans is shocking. Whether through pollution, climate change, land development, hunting, or other ways, humans are a direct cause of why each of these species ended up in the position of being endangered. North and Central America are home to some of the most critically endangered species that have been made endangered by human activities. Of the species that have become critically endangered, multiple species are native to North and Central America. This includes hammerhead sharks, macaws, some species of bumblebees, North Atlantic right whales, Vaquita dol-

phins, and red wolves. IUCN is working toward better resources for tracking species reintroductions and recoveries. In 2021, IUCN introduced its Green Status of Species proposition. In their words, this initiative aims to create a global standard for measuring species recovery and assessing conservation impact. This initiative will allow for better monitoring of how successful species are after being reintroduced into the natural environments they have been extirpated from.

The number of threatened species is increasing. But while animals like critically endangered orangutans or humpback dolphins are getting a lot of attention, the number of threatened mammals has not been rising as fast as in other animal classes. The number of threatened mammals (defined by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources as species listed as either critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable on the Red List) increased by only 22 percent between 2007 and 2022. During the same time period, the number of endangered insects rose by 276 percent, the number of endangered molluscs (a class including snails, slugs, mussels, squid and worms) rose by 145 percent, while endangered fish species increased by 196 percent and the number of endangered reptiles even rose by 336 percent. While the reasons for the endangerment of insects and fish are well known, less is written about threats to reptiles and molluscs. According to the IUCN, many reptile species are concentrated in rainforest regions and are therefore threatened by deforestation. Furthermore, the species are particularly sensitive to environmental changes, including climate change. With molluscs, endangered species are mainly those

who live on land and in freshwater. They are threatened by habitat destruction or are being pushed out by invasive species, according to the American Institute of Biological Sciences. The IUCN updates its Red List several times a year. In the latest version for 2022, 16,900 animal species were listed as threatened - more than double the number of 2007.

The World Wildlife Federation (WWF) has shown progress in supporting endangered species populations via the promotion of policy changes, legislation, and education that support ending wildlife crime. Through partnerships with companies and governments and active lobbying and education, WWF has shown progress toward eliminating wildlife crimes, like poaching and the ivory trade. Thanks to their efforts, governments and citizens are becoming empowered to protect some of the most at-risk wildlife left in the world, including African elephants, fin whales, and multiple species of sea turtles. We have a responsibility to our planet to support conservation and make choices that protect the species living here. Otherwise, we will continue to lose species at alarming rates. With every species we lose, more and more species become at risk. The more we lose, the more we risk, and the more we risk, the more we lose. The cycle will continue without everyone's efforts to sustain and improve what we have.

(Author is an Eminent Social Scientist, Columnist, and presently posted as Dean and Chairman of Board of Studies at Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University of Social Sciences, Dr. Ambedkar Nagar (MHOW), Madhya Pradesh. Email gasspub@gmail.com. Views are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Safety Negligence Exposed

The tragic incident in Malappuram that resulted in the loss of 22 lives has brought to light serious lapses on the part of the state maritime board. The absence of proper safety equipment is deeply concerning and reflects poorly on the responsible authorities. Despite numerous previous incidents, the matter of safety seems to be treated with negligence. Such lackadaisical attitude and carelessness will only contribute to further loss of lives. Urgent and sincere attention must be given to address these issues and prioritize the safety of individuals involved in maritime activities. It is imperative that the necessary measures are taken to prevent future mishaps and safeguard the lives of those at sea.

Manoj Kumar, Raipur

Hijacked Wrestlers' Protest

The ongoing protest by wrestlers at Jantar Mantar has regrettably been taken over by politicians and their followers. It is important to remember that our country is governed by the rule of law and the Constitution, rather than the desires of any specific community or group. As the authorities have filed FIRs and initiated an investigation into allegations of sexual harassment, it is crucial to allow the legal process to unfold. Let the law take its course and ensure a fair and impartial examination of the allegations. It is essential to uphold the principles of justice and maintain the integrity of our legal system.

Sam Dizosa, New Delhi

Urgent Need

India's battle against drug trafficking has reached alarming proportions, with a surge in sea-based smuggling operations. Despite the government's ambitious goal of achieving a drug-free nation by 2047, the current situation paints a starkly different picture. The root cause lies in the fact that individuals rarely choose addiction willingly; instead, they turn to drugs as a coping mechanism due to the challenges life presents. The heart-wrenching reality is that vulnerable youth are falling prey to this menace. To combat this crisis effectively, the government must prioritize the enhancement of socio-economic conditions and job creation, offering a glimmer of hope for a brighter future.

MK Nair, Raipur

Balancing Access and Risks

The Debate over Children's Smartphone Use

In today's digital age, many parents struggle with the question of when to allow their children to have their own smartphones. With concerns about the cognitive and social impacts of early technology access, parents worry about their children's exposure to addictive social media, cyberbullying, and inappropriate content. A new global study on the impact of growing up with smartphones confirms the downside of an early digital embrace and highlights the need for comprehensive solutions to address these risks. According to the study, which examined the mental well-being of those aged 18 to 24 years in relation to the age at which they first got their own smartphone or tablet, delaying ownership of such a device could result in better mental health. Suicidal thoughts, aggression, detachment, and hallucinations declined most significantly with the older age of first smartphone ownership for females, and to a lesser degree for males. However, researchers note that it may be more important to study what children are doing with technology, as the issue is not with smartphones themselves, but with their use, which is largely focused on social media. This focus on social media has raised concerns about Big Tech's reluctance to implement safeguards. Last year, a survey found that smartphone use among Indian children in the age group of 10-14 years was seven percent above the international average. In 2021, Facebook's own research highlighted mental health issues among teenage girls attributed to the Instagram app. These findings underscore the need for stronger guardrails to protect young users. While the responsibility for children's smartphone use falls largely on parents, there is also a need for broader action. Governments, schools, and tech companies all have a role to play in promoting responsible digital citizenship and protecting children from the risks of early technology exposure. This can include initiatives like age-appropriate digital literacy programs, parental controls, and stronger regulatory frameworks. Ultimately, the decision of when to allow children to have their own smartphones is a difficult one that requires careful consideration. However, the findings of this study provide important insights into the risks of early access to technology and the need for comprehensive solutions to address these risks. By working together, parents, educators, and policymakers can create a safer, more responsible digital environment for our children.

Combating Hypertension: Unveiling the Silent Killer Through Awareness and Healthy Living



Dr. Krishna Kumar, Vepakomma

Hypertension, often referred to as the silent killer, is a medical condition characterized by persistently high blood pressure levels. It poses a significant risk for cardiovascular diseases such as heart attacks, strokes, and heart failure. Unfortunately, hypertension often goes undiagnosed, leading to adverse health outcomes. The prevalence of hypertension is alarming, affecting approximately 4 in 10 adults over the age of 25, with an additional 1 in 5 individuals

having prehypertension. According to global health survey reports, hypertension has been the leading cause of death and disability-adjusted life years since 1990. It is projected that the number of people with hypertension will increase by 15-20%, reaching close to 150 crores by 2025.

World Hypertension Day is an important annual event that highlights the significance of cardiovascular health and the need to prevent, detect, and manage hypertension. Celebrated on May 17th each year, it serves as a reminder of the impact of high blood pressure on individuals and communities worldwide. The theme for World Hypertension Day 2023 is "Measure Your Blood Pressure Accurately, Control It, Live Longer." This theme aims to combat low awareness rates, particularly in low to middle income areas, and emphasizes the importance of accurate blood pressure measurement methods. By raising awareness, promoting healthy lifestyle choices, and encouraging

regular blood pressure monitoring, we can work towards reducing the burden of hypertension-related complications.

Hypertension is a global public health epidemic, with India facing a significant challenge due to its widespread prevalence. In India, approximately one in four men and one in five women have hypertension, totaling over a billion people affected by the condition. This condition extends beyond India, affecting people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and income levels worldwide. It is a growing concern, particularly as individuals age. If left untreated, hypertension can lead to severe cardiovascular disorders, including myocardial infarction, stroke, and heart failure.

It is crucial to regularly monitor blood pressure to prevent the growing menace of high blood pressure and associated diseases. Stress, obesity, poor dietary habits, and a sedentary lifestyle are some of the main reasons behind hypertension, especially

among young people. The age bracket affected by hypertension has widened, making it essential to raise awareness about this health issue.

Hypertension is often called the silent killer because it can silently harm the body for years without noticeable symptoms. It can run in families and tends to affect men more than women. In recent years, lifestyle changes in urban areas, such as desk jobs, unhealthy eating habits, increased alcohol and cigarette consumption, and rising stress levels, have contributed to hypertension among younger individuals.

Raising awareness about hypertension and promoting healthy lifestyle choices empowers individuals to take control of their blood pressure and reduce the risk of complications. Regular exercise, a balanced diet, and an active lifestyle play a crucial role in managing hypertension and maintaining overall heart health. Together, we can combat this widespread health issue and work towards a

healthier future.

The good news is that hypertension can be effectively managed through simple lifestyle changes. By incorporating regular exercise, adopting a nutritious diet, and avoiding a sedentary and unhealthy lifestyle, individuals can control their blood pressure and improve their overall well-being.

It is important to note that hypertension is a manageable condition that can be controlled through lifestyle modifications and, in some cases, minor medical intervention. World Hypertension Day serves as a platform to raise awareness about the significance of early detection, accurate measurement, and effective management of hypertension. By making informed decisions and embracing a healthier lifestyle, individuals and communities can reduce the impact of hypertension and strive for better health outcomes.

Professor & Principal (Retd.), F4 Classic Avenue, Rajeev Nagar, Hyderabad. Views are professional

BRIEF

Food delivery



New Delhi: On-demand convenience platform Swiggy's food delivery business has turned profitable, making it one of the very few global players in the sector to achieve such a feat in less than nine years since inception, company CEO and Co-founder Sriharsha Majety said on Thursday. Bullish on India's journey of eating out and food delivery, Majety, in a blog-post, said, Swiggy is "very sanguine about the growth potential over the next two decades" and would continue to drive further growth in food delivery. "Our sharp focus on innovation, coupled with strong execution has led to yet another milestone. As of March 2023, Swiggy's food delivery business has turned profitable (after factoring in all corporate costs; excluding employee stock option costs)," he wrote.

Budget presentation



Gangtok: Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang on Wednesday presented a budget of Rs 12,146.5 crore for the 2023-24 fiscal, with focus on skilling youths and boosting essential civic facilities. Tamang said that against the gross expenditure provision of Rs 12,146.5 crore, there will be a net outgo of Rs 11,806.5 crore in the current fiscal year. Highlighting the salient features of the budget, he said the state government has decided to clear pending liabilities of the previous dispensation. Sikkim has allocated adequate funds for the Skilled Youth Start-Up Scheme in order to enable the youth to become self-reliant and independent, the chief minister said.

Convergence



New Delhi: Labour Minister Bhupender Yadav has stressed upon the importance of the convergence among different organisations under the Ministry of Labour and Employment, a release said. Yadav at the concluding session of a two-day event at Noida said that synergy among all the organizations of the Ministry at the grass-roots level will help in bringing about a holistic approach towards welfare of the labour in the country.

DPIIT takes up startup taxation issue with FinMin: Secretary

New Delhi, May 18:



The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has taken up the taxation issue of startups with the finance ministry, a top government official has said. "Startup India does provide such policy advocacy, particularly on the taxation issue. We have been taking that particular issue that many startups are worried about funding from non-residents...and the initial valuation of the startup, how that tax is calculated. We have taken it up," DPIIT Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh said here at an industry interaction.

Post the amendments proposed in the Finance

Bill, concerns have been raised over the methodology of calculation of fair market value under the two different laws. The Finance Act, 2023, has amended Section 56(2)(viib) of the I-T Act, thereby bringing overseas investment in unlisted startups, under the tax net. The Income Tax de-

partment is expected to soon come out with certain draft rules to specify the class of investors and norms of valuation of foreign investment in unlisted companies. The modification in valuation rules is needed as I-T Act and FEMA provide different methodologies for calculating the FMV of shares of unlisted companies. The startup and venture capital industry has sought exemption for certain overseas investor classes. However, no tax would be levied on investments in startups, which meet the prescribed norms and are recognised by the DPIIT. Further, the secretary suggested the captains of the industry to mentor startups in a struc-

tured manner. On a question related to delay in getting manufacturing licenses to defence units, he said that the defence industry and some other strategic sectors are few segments where license permit raj remains. "And the fact that you still have to run around (to get a license) that way shows why the license permit raj has to be dismantled... In this sector, we have found significant delays. Even in my own department, I have seen cases taking several months for the issue of licenses," he said, adding one of the reasons is that it requires clearance from the home ministry which tends to take time, particularly, the security clearances.

India's customs duties on most items low: Piyush Goyal

New Delhi, May 18:



The Customs duties of India are "very" often misconstrued to be high on most items but in reality, they are low, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has said. He said that the duties on technological items that are helping the Indian economy grow are very low. Actual applied rates of tariffs are lower than the agreed bound rates at WTO (World Trade Organization), Goyal told reporters on Tuesday after the 1st India-EU Trade & Technology Council (TTC) meeting in Brussels, Belgium.

Goyal said that the TTC is helpful as it is supplementing the free trade agreement negotiations and the agreement

will make India-EU relationship the defining partnership of the century. "India's tariffs are very often misconstrued to be very high on most items, raw materials, intermediates but in reality the duties are very low," he said. Goyal also said that India is engaging with the EU on Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) as it is not the EU's intention to create a barrier to trade but to find a way forward towards sustainability as

part of collective efforts. He stressed that India and the EU are working together to find the right solution to the CBAM issue. On the trade agreement with the EU, he said that the negotiations are progressing well. Goyal also held a bilateral meeting with the European Commissioner for Internal Trade, Thierry Breton. On the suggestion of Breton for exploring engagement in the space sector, Goyal informed that India is amongst the major powers in the space sector and that both sides can have deeper engagements in the sector.

Breton informed that the EU is working on new Digital Services Act to which Goyal said that both sides can collaborate further given India's status as an IT giant.

Dwarka Expressway will be completed in next 3-4 months: Nitin Gadkari

New Delhi, May 18:



Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari with Union MoS for Road Transport and Highways VK Singh, Delhi Lt. Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena and others during his visit to inspect the construction work of Dwarka Expressway, in Gurugram, Thursday, May 18.

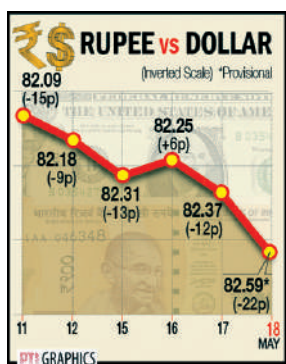
Dwarka Expressway, India's first elevated urban expressway, being constructed at an estimated cost of Rs 10,000 crore, as part of the Delhi decongestion plan, will be completed in the next 3-4 months, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said on Thursday. The Expressway will be completed in four packages, he added. The road transport minister said Dwarka Expressway will have a fully-automated tolling system and the entire project will be equipped with an intelligent transportation system (ITS). Dwarka Expressway starts near Shiv Murti on NH-8 and terminates near Kherki Daula Toll plaza on NH-8. The total length of Dwarka Expressway is 29 km, out of which 18.9 km length

falls in Haryana, while the remaining 10.1 km is in Delhi. It will provide connectivity to Indira Gandhi International Airport from Dwarka side through Dwarka Expressway. In ad-

dition the proposed Dwarka Expressway would provide direct access to upcoming India International Convention Centre in sector 25 of Dwarka.

Rupee falls 22 paise to close at 82.59 against US dollar

Mumbai, May 18:



The rupee fell 22 paise to close at 82.59 (provisional) against the US currency on Thursday, weighed down by a strong greenback in the overseas market and a negative trend in domestic equities.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 82.36 against the dollar, and finally settled at 82.59 (provisional), down 22 paise from its previous close. During the day, the rupee touched a high of 82.35 and a low of 82.66 against the greenback. On Wednesday, the rupee had settled at 82.37 against the dollar.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, rose 0.21 per cent to 103.10. Brent

crude futures, the global oil benchmark, advanced 0.66 per cent to USD 76.45 per barrel. Anuj Choudhary - Research Analyst, Sharekhan by BNP Paribas said the rupee depreciated as the US Dollar rose to a seven-week high amid optimism over debt ceiling talks. Overnight gains in crude oil prices also weighed on the domestic currency.

Markets give up intra-day gains; fall for 3rd day

Mumbai, May 18:



Equity benchmark indices pared their intra-day gains and ended lower on Thursday, pulled down by index majors ITC and State Bank of India after their fourth quarter earnings failed to cheer investors. After trading in the green for most part of the day, the 30-share BSE Sensex declined 128.90 points or 0.21 per cent to settle at 61,431.74. During the day, it hit a high of 61,955.90 and a low of 61,349.34. The NSE Nifty fell 51.80 points or 0.28 per cent to end at 18,129.95. Among the Sensex firms, ITC, SBI, Titan, Power Grid, Larsen & Toubro, Tata Motors, Hindustan Unilever and UltraTech Cement were the major

laggards. Shares of ITC fell 2 per cent even as the company reported a 22.66 per cent rise in consolidated net profit at Rs 5,225.02 crore in the fourth quarter ended March 2023. SBI declined 1.77 per cent despite the country's largest bank reporting an 83 per cent jump in net profit at Rs 16,694.51 crore for the fourth quarter of 2022-23

fiscal on higher interest income and low provisioning. Bajaj Finance, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, Asian Paints, HCL Technologies, HDFC and HDFC Bank were among the biggest gainers.

In Asia, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong markets ended in the green. European markets were also trading higher. The US market had ended with significant gains on Wednesday. On Wednesday, optimistic US President Joe Biden declared that he is confident the US will avoid an unprecedented and potentially catastrophic debt default, saying talks with congressional Republicans have been productive.

Bank of Baroda Q4 net profit zooms 168 pc; sets aside Rs 500 cr for Go First exposure

Mumbai, May 18:

State-owned Bank of Baroda on Tuesday reported a 168 per cent jump in its March quarter net profit at Rs 4,775 crore, helped by decline in money set aside for loan losses.

The lender's net profit for the full financial year 2022-23 also nearly doubled to Rs 14,110 crore. In the reporting quarter, its core net interest income grew 33.8 per cent to Rs 11,525 crore, aided by a growth in advances of nearly 19 per cent and an expansion in the net interest margin (NIM) to 3.53 per cent against 3.07 per cent in the year-ago period. The bank's fee income stood at Rs 1,714 crore, up 4.6 per cent from the year-ago period's Rs 1,638 crore.

Its managing director and chief executive Sanjiv Chadha told reporters that he was himself surprised with the higher NIMs, and will aim to protect the 3.5 per cent level in FY24.

The bank is aiming for a loan growth of 13-14 per cent in FY24, which will include 11-13 per cent growth in the corporate advances, officials said. In the fourth quarter of FY23, the bank's overall provisions for bad debts decreased by 94 per cent to Rs 320 crore as against Rs 5,200 crore in the year-ago period. Chadha said the credit cost for FY23 came at 0.5 per cent, much below the 1 per cent expectation, and the bank will strive to keep it under 1 per cent in the long term as well.

Amway launches Artistry Skin Nutrition

New Delhi, May 18:



Advancing towards its philosophy of delivering nutrients for the skin, Amway India, one of the leading FMCG Direct Selling companies in the nation, has launched an exclusive range that transcends the skincare needs of all. The Balancing and Hydrating ranges introduced by Artistry Skin Nutrition™ showcases a distinctive blend of ingredients that collaborate to balance and hydrate the skin, providing a refreshing and youthful appearance. Enriched with plant-based botanicals from Nutrilite™ farms, the Hydrating and Balancing ranges are clinically tested with a skincare line,

with no animal testing and free from parabens, phthalates, sulfate surfactants and animal derived ingredients. Powered by cutting-edge skin science these ranges are infused with exclusive Skincare Complex that boosts skin's natural defense system by 350% to help delay the visible signs of aging.

Automobile dealers' body seeks cut in GST on two-wheelers from 28 pc to 18 pc

New Delhi, May 18:



Automobile dealers' body FADA on Thursday sought a cut in GST on two-wheelers from 28 per cent to 18 per cent, saying the segment being essential for millions should not be categorised as luxury item. The industry body said it has appealed to the finance minister, chair of the GST Council, all GST Council members, the ministry of heavy industries, which supervises the automobile sector, and the ministry of road transport & highways. This timely and decisive intervention would help in making two-wheelers more affordable, reviving demand and reinvigorating an industry that has seen a significant slump in

sales over the past few years, the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) said in a statement. "The two-wheeler industry is at a critical juncture, grappling with unprecedented challenges such as rising inflation, stringent emission norms and the post Covid-19 effects. Now is the opportune moment for the GST

Council to reduce the GST rate on two-wheelers, making them more accessible for the common man," FADA President Manish Raj Singhania said in a statement. The tax cut will provide the much-needed boost to the industry, help in generating employment opportunities and fostering India's overall economic growth, he added.

OPPO announces the launch of F23 5G

Mumbai, May 18:



OPPO, the leading global smart devices brand, announces the launch of its latest smartphone, the OPPO F23 5G. The device will be available at Rs 24,999, from May 18, 2023 at 12AM, through the OPPO Store, on Amazon, and at mainline retail outlets. Recent research by OPPO & Counterpoint indicated that 3 out of 4 people in India have Nomophobia--the fear of being left without a phone--triggered mostly by low/dead battery. The study also revealed that 46% of respondents charge their phones twice daily, 92% use power-saving mode to deal with battery discharge issues, and 60% of smartphone users will buy a new phone if their current one does not have a good battery. Damyant Khanoria, Chief

Marketing Officer, OPPO, said, "At OPPO, we understand that nomophobia, or the fear of being without a mobile phone or being unable to use it, is a real concern for many smartphone users. With the OPPO F23 5G, we're proud to offer innovative technologies like Battery Health Engine and SuperVOOC fast charging, which provides reliable and convenient battery performance for a seamless experience. So, you can focus on enjoying the things you love to do with your phone without worrying about its battery life."



Mrunal Thakur gears up to make her grand Cannes Film Festival debut

Actress Mrunal Thakur is all set to attend and make her much awaited debut at the prestigious Cannes Film Festival and will be in the French Riviera from May 17-19.

Talking about her Cannes debut, Mrunal said: "I am thrilled to be attending the Cannes Film Festival for the first time. It is an honour to represent Grey Goose at such a prestigious platform."

"I am looking forward to interacting with global filmmakers, exploring new opportunities, and showcasing the talent that Indian cinema has to offer."

Mrunal is currently filming for her next major south project, 'Nani 30', and will soon be seen in the lead role in films including 'Pooja Meri Jaan', 'Pippa' and 'Lust Stories 2'.

Niharika NM to be at Cannes again: I must be doing something right with my work

Content creator Niharika NM is all set to attend the prestigious Cannes Film Festival for the second time in a row. Walking multiple carpets, the influencer will be exclusively showcasing the designs of one of India's leading designers.

Niharika plans to showcase her high-octane fashion prowess at the film festival. The creator will be exclusively wearing designs from one of India's leading fashion designers whose ensembles created quite an uproar at the Oscars 2023.

Along with this, after styling Niharika for her debut on 'Koffee With Karan', celebrated fashion stylist, Anaita Shroff Adajania will be once again styling the creator for one of the red carpet looks.

Niharika will be seen attending multiple red carpets flaunting the ace designer's empowering designs, aligning right with the vision of the creator. With the likes of Anushka Sharma, Manushi Chhillar, Aditi Rao Hydari, and Vijay Varma among others, Niharika will be one of the few Indian content creators to walk the red carpets in the French Riviera.

Commenting on being a part of the Cannes Film Festival for the



second time, Niharika said: "The first time I went to the Cannes Film Festival, it was a surreal feeling. It was almost like I was dreaming. However, this year makes me believe that I must be doing something right with my work that's been acknowledged twice in a row."

"It is a big opportunity for me and also adds the responsibility to keep up the good work so that I get more chances to represent my country at a global level. I am grateful to the film festival organisers and I hope to be a part of it for the years to come."

Actress Mandakini talks about her Bollywood debut

This Sunday, The Kapil Sharma Show on Sony Entertainment Television will host the divas of the 80's - Sangeeta Bijlani, Varsha Usgaonkar, and Mandakini. Celebrating this bygone era with a lot of galore, this episode promises to take you down the memory lane as the yesteryear actors will share lesser-known anecdotes about their life and career in Bollywood with Kapil's atrangi parivaar.

Amidst a fun conversation, curious host Kapil Sharma will be seen asking Mandakini about how she landed her debut film in Raj Kapoor's directorial 'Ram Teri Ganga Maaili'. Talking about being lucky, Mandakini will share, "It's a very long story, and I'm not sure how to summarise it, but as soon as we met, I got the film. It was something I never imagined. After the auditions, I went back home because the screen test was over and there was no response. But then he (Raj Kapoor) searched for me through various sources, he called his distributors and looked for me in Meerut. But they did find me, and that's how I got my first film. It felt like the role was meant for me and was waiting for me."

Tune in to watch The

Kapil Sharma Show every Saturday and Sunday at 9:30 PM only on Sony Entertainment Television



TV actors' summer skincare secrets revealed!

The summer season has arrived, and with it comes the opportunity to soak up the sun and enjoy the sand. However, taking care of our skin is important to prevent it from becoming oily, dull, or tanned. To ensure that our skin remains healthy, glowing, and hydrated throughout the summer, &TV artists share their secret skincare routines. These include Neha Joshi (Yashoda, Doosri Maa), Kamna Pathak (Rajesh, Happu Ki Ultan Paltan), and Vidisha Srivastava (Anita Bhabi, Bhabiji Ghar Par Hai). Vidisha Srivastava, aka Anita Bhabi from Bhabiji Ghar Par Hai, shares, "Summertime can be tough on our skin, and with all the heat and sweat, it's important to keep it clean and fuss-



free. That's why I like to use my kind of skincare routine. My go-to remedy for a clean and clear com-

plexion is a simple yet effective face scrub with two tablespoons of sea salt, one tablespoon of fresh lemon juice, and a few drops of olive oil. I apply this scrub to my face at least twice weekly to remove excess dirt and oil, leaving my skin refreshed and rejuvenated. But that's not all! After much sun exposure, I turn to another trusty remedy - washing my face with buttermilk. Not only does it relieve burning skin, but it also lightens the tan, as curd has natural bleaching properties. And don't forget to exfoliate your lips and neck for a complete summer skincare routine! So, there you have it, my secret to clean and healthy skin during the hot summer months. Give it a try, and have a happy, glowing summer!"

World TV premiere of 'Blurr' on May 20

This weekend, get ready to hold your breath and experience a nail-biting thriller as Tapsee Pannu's Blurr is set to have its World Television Premiere this Saturday at 9:30 p.m. on &Pictures. Directed by Ajay Bahl, who has earlier helmed Section 375, Blurr marks Tapsee's first production venture. The film also features a young energetic cast of Gulshan Devaiah and Abhilash Thapliyal.

An official remake of the Spanish film Julia's Eyes, Blurr revolves around Gayatri, portrayed by Tapsee, struggling to solve the mystery behind the death of her visually impaired twin sister, Gautami. It's a race against time for Gayatri as she starts losing her own vision. Will she be able to identify her twin sister's murderer? Or will she perish while being chased? Is there someone of her own who has betrayed her? Blurr takes its viewers on an unpredictable roller coaster trip. The narrative makes surprising turns along with spine-tingling suspense making sure to keep the audience on their toes.

Throughout the movie, Tapsee's performance is nuanced and layered, allowing the audience to see different sides of her character as the story unfolds. Gulshan, who plays Tapsee's husband in the film, is subtle yet powerful, which is a testament to his acting abilities. Abhilash surpasses expecta-



tions whilst portraying his edgy-eccentric character. Waqt se ladkar, kya Gayatri dhund payegi killer? Watch the world television premiere of Blurr this Saturday 9.30pm only on &Pictures.

No energy to be glammed up for my first post as a mother, says Gauahar Khan

Actress Gauahar Khan has shared the first picture with her newborn baby and said that she did not have the energy to glam up for her maiden picture as a mother.

Gauahar took to Instagram, where she shared a picture of herself in an au naturale look. In the image, she is seen holding her newborn son as she smiles for a selfie.

She wrote: "So it's past 12 a.m., past 1 day of my first Mother's Day as a New MoM, n yes I didn't have the energy to be glammed up for my first post as a Mother too, but boy, am I grateful!!!!!! Alhamdulillah, for everything!!!!!! Soooooo special for me. Just holding my baby is my best gift from Allah! Allahumma baarik fihi."

"Every year I wrote a post for all the mothers who have impacted my life, but the most special thing about 2023 Mother's Day for me was my Mom wishing me happy Mother's Day beta!!!!"

It was last week, when Gauahar and her husband Zaid Darbar announced the birth of their first child.

Gauahar shared a post: "Allahumma baarik fihi," she captioned the post.

Her post read: "It's a Boy As salaam u alaikum beautiful world, says our bundle of joy. Arrived 10th of May 2023 to make us realise what happiness truly means. Our blessed boy thanks everyone for their love and prayers. Grateful and giggling new parents Zaid and Gauahar."

Gauahar and Zaid got married in December 2020.



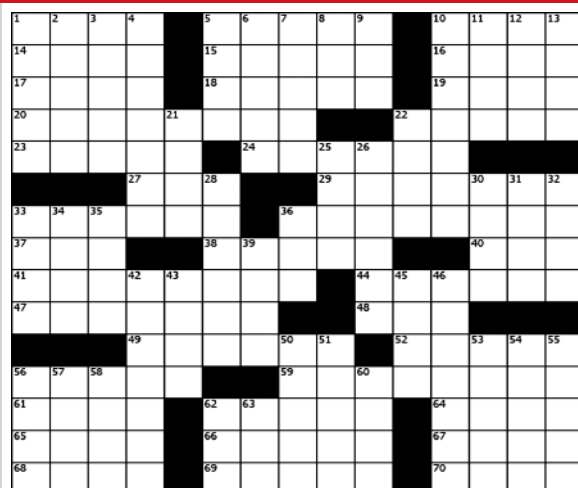
Payal Dev's 'Kam Toh Nahi' is a tale of a bitter-sweet love

Playback singer Payal Dev, who is known for 'Genda Phool', released her new single titled 'Kam Toh Nahi' on Tuesday. The song, which has been composed and sung by her, also features Digangana Suryavanshi and Rohit Purohit. Penned by Kunaal Verma, the music video of the track directed by Video Brains has been shot extensively in Goa at some picturesque locations and showcases a forgotten bitter-sweet love between the leads. Talking about the song, Payal Dev said: "Kam Toh Nahi' is a soulful heartbreak song and I feel everyone who has experienced the emotion will relate to it. It's a genre my fans enjoy listening to and I hope they like this track."



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ACROSS

- Model
- Swiftness
- Does sums
- Chooses
- Pseudonym
- Zip
- Terminals (abbr.)
- Big
- Almost closed
- Tedious

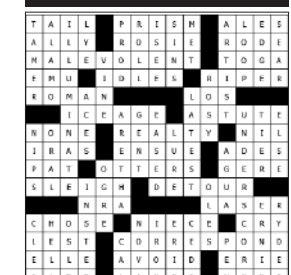
DOWN

- Mails
- Vision related
- Gaze steadily
- Perfume
- Angel's aura
- Texas shrine
- Warning horn
- Children's game
- Vane letters
- Flowering bushes
- vu
- Mild oath
- Bruised
- Agitate
- Earnest request
- RBI, e.g.
- Apprehend
- Concur
- Horn sound

- Continental or Delta
- Tit for
- US rail service
- Large trucks
- Insensitive
- Open-minded
- Deficiency
- Dote on
- Pharaoh's river
- Southern veggie
- Highway divisions
- Over again
- Young adult
- Notions
- Rents

- Engrave with acid
- Escort
- Machu Picchu dweller
- Hero shop
- Malicious look
- Perch
- Operator
- Juneau native
- Edges
- Soothe
- Unending
- Make up for
- "M*A*S*H" locale
- Bangor's state
- Small bay
- Hearty soups
- Curdle
- Lawn tool
- Farm unit
- Not so much
- Baba
- Mom's man

SOLUTION 648



'70 women go missing from Maha every day'

● **Raises security concerns with Fadnavis**

Aurangabad, May 18 (PTI): Leader of Opposition in the Maharashtra Legislative Council Ambadas Danve has claimed that 70 women/girls go missing from the state every day and has asked the government to take steps for the safety and security of women. In a letter written on Wednesday to Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, who also holds the home department charge, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Danve said it has



Ambadas Danve

come to light that from January to March this, more than 5,510 women and girls have gone missing from the state. Giving details, he said 1,600 went missing in January, 1,810 in February and 2,200 in March. "The graph of missing girls and women

is growing in state," Danve claimed. Maharashtra is known as one of the leading states for women's security. The government should initiate steps immediately for the safety and security of women in the state, he said. Notably, Maharashtra State Commission for Women chairperson Rupali Chakankar recently asked the state home department to set up a panel to find out women missing from the state and submit a report every fortnight on its progress. It is a serious matter that women and girls were going missing from the state, Chakankar said.

SC grants bail to man accused in NDPS case

On medical grounds

New Delhi, May 18 (PTI): The Supreme Court has granted interim bail to a man accused in a case lodged under the anti-narcotics law, noting that he is on ventilator support.

A bench of Justices Krishna Murari and Sanjay Kumar took into account the medical condition of the man and also noted that he has been in jail for more than one year and seven months.

The bench said it took into consideration the medical condition of the petitioner who, although discharged, was on ventilator support.

"...Because of the non-availability of advanced proper medical treatment in jail and considering the fact that the petitioner has been in incarceration for more than one year and seven months, we are inclined to release the petitioner on bail," the bench said.

PUBLIC FELICITATION



BJP Bihar President Samrat Chaudhary with party MP Sushil Kumar Modi and party leaders Ram Chandra Prasad Singh and Vijay Kumar Sinha being garlanded by supporters during a felicitation function, in Patna, Thursday.

Bihar Caste Survey

SC refuses to overturn suspension

New Delhi, May 18 (PTI): The Supreme Court on Thursday refused to stay the Patna High Court order which halted the caste survey being conducted by the Bihar government. A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Rajesh Bindal said it would have to examine if the exercise being carried out is a census in garb of survey. "We are making it clear, this is not a case where we can grant you interim relief," the bench said. The apex court noted that the high court had posted the hearing of the main petition on July 3. "We direct that this petition be listed on July 14. If for any reason, the hearing of the writ petition does not commence before the next date, we will hear further submission canvassed by the senior counsel for the petitioner (Bihar)," the bench said. In an appeal filed before the top court against the May 4 order of the high court, the Bihar government had said the stay will adversely affect the entire exercise.

'Only JPC probe will reveal full truth of the Modani scam'



Jairam Ramesh

New Delhi, May 18 (PTI): The Congress on Thursday said only a Joint Parliamentary Committee probe into the Adani issue will reveal "the full truth of the Modani scam". Senior leader Jairam Ramesh, in a tweet, cited a news report that has alleged a "cover up".

The Congress has been alleging that the money of LIC policyholders has been invested in the Adani Group. It has also claimed that LIC share prices have declined drastically since the Hindenburg Research report, which alleged stock price manipulation by the Adani Group, came out.

The Adani Group has denied the allegations.

Sharing the link to a news report on Twitter, Ramesh said it is an "expose of the anatomy of a Modani cover-up".

Citing the report, he said, "Hire a tiny accounting firm to audit gigantic companies. Get auditors to make identical 'qualified opinions', the minimum needed to comply with the law, without saying why or how it affects investors."

"Claim an 'independent review' has been done by an unnamed law firm but without disclosing any details. Avoid a forensic audit at all costs that could expose what actually happened. No one is any wiser as to how you used related-party transactions to launder money and inflate earnings."

"This is why we need a JPC. Everything will be investigated, the full truth of the Modani scam will be revealed," Ramesh added. The Congress has been demanding a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) probe into the Adani issue and even stalled proceedings in both Houses of Parliament during the Budget Session.

On Wednesday, Ramesh had expressed concern over the 35 per cent decline in the market capitalisation of LIC and blamed "Modani" for the steep decline.

"Exactly a year ago today, LIC was listed in the stock market. Its market capitalisation then stood at Rs 5.48 lakh crore. Today, this is down to Rs 3.59 lakh crore — a fall of a whopping 35 per cent," the AICC general secretary said on Twitter. "There is only one reason for this steep fall — Modani," he added.

'Metamorphosis of Janata Parivar man into Congress' CM for second time'

Bengaluru, May 18 (PTI):

For a man rooted in 'Janata Parivar' for two-and-a-half-decades and once known for strident anti-Congress stance, it has been a remarkable turnaround for Siddaramaiah, who is now all set to be sworn in as Karnataka's Chief Minister for the second time, after consolidating his position in the grand old party.

From early 1980s to 2005, Siddaramaiah, who comes from a poor farmer's family, was a die-hard anti-Congressman, but his ouster from JD(S) of former Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda, brought him to political cross-roads, and made him join the very party he had opposed.

For his patience and persistence, the seasoned politician known for his bluntness, Siddaramaiah, realised his life-time ambition and went on to become the Chief Minister from the Congress party in 2013. Those qualities have once again catapulted the nine time MLA, to the same position now, after a



Siddaramaiah

gap of five years, as he has been re-elected as the leader of the Congress Legislature Party, to lead the party's government in the state for the second time. The 75-year-old Congress leader, who made no secret of his ambition to occupy the post of Chief Minister one last time, will be finally signing off on a "high", as he has already declared that the recently held Assembly polls to be his last. Siddaramaiah has the credit of successively edging out Congress' heavyweights from the

race to become the Chief Minister. While it is state Congress President D K Shivakumar now, it was M Mallikarjun Kharge (now the AICC President and the then Union Labour and Employment Minister) in 2013.

After the fractured verdict in 2004, the Congress and JD(S) formed a coalition government, with Siddaramaiah, then in JD(S), being made Deputy Chief Minister with Congress' N Dharam Singh becoming Chief Minister. Siddaramaiah holds the grudge that he had the opportunity to become Chief Minister, but Gowda scuttled his prospects. Following this, in 2005, Siddaramaiah, a Kuruba — the third largest caste in Karnataka — chose to position himself as a backward classes leader, by spearheading AHINDA (Kannada acronym for minorities, backward classes and Dalits) conventions, coincidentally at a time when Deve Gowda's son H D Kumaraswamy was seen as a rising star of the party.

From Kilimanjaro to Everest, a government employee's pursuit to climb highest peaks

New Delhi, May 18 (PTI):

Some years back, he did not even think of having a passport or visiting foreign shores. And last year, 36-year-old Shaikh Hassan Khan from Kerala scaled Mount Everest and in 2021, he climbed Kilimanjaro.

Now, he is on a mission to climb the highest mountains across the world and is set to climb Denali, the highest peak in North America, this month.

"My aim is to make India proud, hoist the Indian flag in the highest mountains, spread the message of unity as well as make people aware about climate change," Khan told PTI in an inter-



Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan with mountaineer Shaikh Hassan Khan, in New Delhi.

view. A native of Pandalam in Kerala, he is a state government employee and gives lectures on mountaineering when ever invited by various entities. When the bug of mountaineering passed bit Khan in 2017-18 period, family and people close to

him never believed that one can chase such a wild dream — that of climbing the highest peaks.

After much effort, Khan said he convinced his family, later enrolled for a short-term mountaineering course and the expedition to Kilimanjaro, the highest peak in Africa, happened. His dreams began facing financial hurdles but that did not stop him from aiming for Mount Everest.

By taking loans, borrowing money from friends, and pledging gold, he pooled the money for the Mount Everest expedition, Khan said.

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Lingayats, Dalits jostle for key posts

Bengaluru, May 19: Multiple challenges, particularly with regard to cabinet formation, stare at Siddaramaiah as he takes over as the new chief minister of Karnataka, nudging out party colleague and state Congress president D K Shivakumar -- who will now be his deputy.

The first challenge that Siddaramaiah faces on being sworn in is putting in place a cabinet with the right combinations, balancing between representing all communities, regions, factions, and old and new generations of legislators.

With the sanctioned strength of the Karnataka cabinet being 34, Siddaramaiah will have a tough task at hand, with too many aspirants for ministerial berths.

Senior Congress leader G Parameshwara on Thursday cautioned the party's central leadership saying if a DCM post is not given to a Dalit, there will be adverse reactions and it would spell trouble for the party.

Siddaramaiah K'taka's next CM

■ **Shivakumar his only deputy**

New Delhi, May 18 (PTI):

Ending days of suspense, the Congress on Thursday announced Siddaramaiah as the next chief minister of Karnataka and state party president D K Shivakumar as his only deputy in the soon-to-be formed cabinet.

The two leaders, who were in a tight race for the top post, would take oath along with other ministers on May 20 and leaders of all like-minded parties will be invited for the swearing-in ceremony.

Announcing the decision taken by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge after hectic parleys ever since the party emerged victorious on May 13, General Secretary (Organisation) K C Venugopal said all leaders, including the top leadership, worked very hard to make Karnataka victory a reality. "We have decided on Siddaramaiah as



Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge with senior party leaders Siddaramaiah and DK Shivakumar during a meeting, in New Delhi, Thursday.

Sidda-DKS swearing-in to showcase Oppn CMs

Leaders of several like-minded opposition parties are likely to attend the swearing in ceremony of Karnataka chief minister-designate Siddaramaiah and deputy chief minister D K Shivakumar on Saturday in Bengaluru. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge has extended the invitation to several chief ministers and party leaders and personally invited them to the event. Kharge sent an invitation to Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren and he is likely to attend the swearing in. Kharge has also invited Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin, NCP chief Sharad Pawar, former Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and Deputy Chief Minister Tejaswi Yadav. Invitations have also been sent to National Conference chief Farooq Abdullah.

the chief minister of Karnataka. D K Shivakumar will be the

only deputy chief minister," he said. Shivakumar will also continue as the

Mamata to skip swearing-in

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who was invited to attend the swearing-in ceremony of Congress leader Siddaramaiah as the Karnataka CM, is likely to skip the event, a top source at the state secretariat said on Thursday. A representative of Banerjee will, however, be attending the programme, he added. "The CM is likely to skip the swearing-in-ceremony. She may be assigning someone to represent the state there," the bureaucrat told PTI.



ISRO getting ready for Chandrayaan-3 mission

■ **In July 2nd week**

Bengaluru, May 18 (PTI):

If things go as planned, the Indian Space Research Organisation would launch its ambitious Chandrayaan-3 mission aimed at demonstrating critical technologies to land the spacecraft on the south pole of the moon in less than two months. Chandrayaan-3 mission carries scientific instruments to study the thermo-physical properties of the lunar regolith, lunar seismicity, lunar surface plasma environment and elemental composition in the vicinity of the landing site. "Chandrayaan-3 mission is scheduled in July second week," a senior official of the Bengaluru-headquartered national space agency under the Department of Space told PTI on Thursday.

BRIEF



AAP leader Raghav Chadha and his fiancée and Bollywood actor Parineeti Chopra seek blessings of the Jathedar of the Akal Takht Sahib, Singh Sahib Giani Harpreet Singh Ji.

Inaugurate

■ **New Delhi:** Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud on Thursday inaugurated a training-cum-examination centre in the additional building complex of the Supreme Court. "The training cell of the Supreme Court conducts awareness and training programmes for its staff in e-filing, e-office and other skills along with induction training for newly appointed personnel and orientation training for promoted officers on a regular basis," a statement said.

Rescued

■ **Thane:** Police in Thane in Maharashtra rescued two Russian nationals who were allegedly forced into a sex racket, an official said on Thursday. A restaurant in Wagle Estate industrial area was raided following a tip off about a sex racket on Wednesday. Thane police's Anti Human Trafficking Cell (AHTC) senior inspector Mahesh Patil said.

Building collapse

■ **Jaipur:** A 20-year-old worker died and nine others were injured when a building under construction collapsed in Bharatpur district, police said on Thursday. The incident took place near Jhantli village under the Sikri police station area late Wednesday night, they said. The building belongs to a madrasa.

PM flags off Odisha's first Vande Bharat

■ **Launches railway projects worth Rs 8,200 cr**

Puri/Howrah, May 18 (PTI):

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched railway projects worth Rs 8,200 crore in Odisha on Thursday and flagged off the state's first Vande Bharat Express that will connect Puri to West Bengal's Howrah.

Addressing the function through video-conferencing, Modi said new India is building its own technologies and reaching those to the different corners of the country. "The Vande Bharat Express will further strengthen the religious, cultural and spiritual connection between Howrah



PM Modi addresses the foundation stone laying of railway projects in Odisha, via video conferencing, from New Delhi, Thursday.

and Puri," he said. Fifteen Vande Bharat trains are operational in the country at present and those are boosting both connectivity and economy, Modi said. "There was a time when new technologies and facilities used to remain limited to Delhi or the big cities. But now, India has chosen a new path. This new India is making technologies on its own and reaching those to different corners of the country," he said, referring to the indigenously developed semi-highspeed train. The prime minister said that as the country celebrates the 'Amrit Kaal' of its Independence, it's time to further strengthen its unity.

20 private sector specialists to join govt departments

New Delhi, May 18 (PTI):

The Centre has decided to recruit 20 private sector specialists as joint secretaries, directors, and deputy secretaries on contract basis in its 12 departments, an official statement issued on Thursday said. This is the third such recruitment drive proposed to be undertaken by the Narendra Modi government. The Department of Personnel and Training has asked the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) to recruit such specialists through "lateral entry" -- that is appointment of private sector specialists in government departments.

SC gives nod for jallikattu, bullock cart and buffalo races

Chennai, May 18 (PTI):

The Supreme Court on Thursday upheld the validity of the amended act of Tamil Nadu allowing the bull-taming sport Jallikattu, with state political parties welcoming the verdict while animal rights activists expressed disappointment and insisted they will look for legal remedies. The spectacle sport coinciding with the Tamil harvest festival Pongal in January draws national and international audience. The southern town of Madurai hosts jallikattu at Alanganallur, Palamedu and Avaniyapuram, where the raging bulls charge out of 'Vaadivasa' (the entry point) to take on the tamers who invest a lot of pride in subduing the beast. "Jallikattu" is also known as "eruthazhuvuthal". On Thursday, the apex court also showed the green flag to Maharashtra and Karnataka for their bullock-cart races and buffalo racing sport 'Kambala', respectively. A five-judge Constitution bench headed by Justice K M Joseph, which delivered a unanimous verdict, dealt with five questions referred to it by a two-judge bench of the apex court in 2018.

LAND-FOR-JOBS PMLA CASE

ED questions Rabri Devi for 5 hrs

New Delhi, May 18 (PTI):

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) questioned former Bihar chief minister Rabri Devi for about five hours and recorded her statement here on Thursday in a money laundering case linked to the alleged land-for-jobs scam, official sources said. She reached the office of the federal probe agency in central Delhi around 11 am and left around 6 pm. In between, she stepped out for about an hour for lunch. It was not immediately known if she had been summoned again. The sources said the statement of 68-year-old Rabri Devi, wife of RJD chief



Lalu Prasad, was recorded under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). Rabri Devi's children, including Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Tejaswi Yadav, daughters Misa Bharti (RJD MP in Rajya Sabha), Chanda Yadav and Ragini Yadav, have also been questioned by the agency in the case over the last few months.

Meghwal assumes charge as Law Minister

New Delhi, May 18 (PTI):

Bureaucrat-turned-politician Arjun Ram Meghwal on Thursday assumed charge as the Minister of Law and Justice after Kiren Rijju was removed from the high-profile ministry in a surprise development, and made it clear that there was no confrontation with the judiciary. Rijju, whose brief stint in the Law Ministry saw frequent run-ins with the judiciary, has been given the earth sciences ministry. Soon after assuming office, Meghwal declared that there was no confrontation with the judiciary and that his priority would be to ensure speedy justice for all.



Arjun Ram Meghwal

'No confrontation with judiciary'

Soon after assuming office, Meghwal declared that there was no confrontation with the judiciary and that his priority would be to ensure speedy justice for all.

SC stays ban on 'The Kerala Story'

New Delhi, May 18 (PTI):

The Supreme Court on Thursday stayed the West Bengal government's order banning the screening of the film "The Kerala Story" and asked Tamil Nadu to ensure the safety of moviegoers after theatre owners decided to stop screening the film due to security concerns.

A bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud also directed the producer to put a disclaimer in the movie by 5 pm on May 20 on the claim that 32,000 Hindu and Christian women were converted to Islam. According to the apex court, the disclaimer should say that "there is no authenticated data to back up the suggestion on



figure of conversion and the film represents the fictionalised version". The bench, also comprising Justices P S Narasimha and J B Pardiwala, said it would like to watch the movie before proceeding to decide the pleas challenging the grant of CBF certification. It said the petitions will be heard in the second week of July. The bench also took note of submissions that there was no ban on the film in Tamil Nadu and

Word of advice for producer...

A bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud also directed the producer to put a disclaimer in the movie by 5 pm on May 20 on the claim that 32,000 Hindu and Christian women were converted to Islam. According to the apex court, the disclaimer should say that "there is no authenticated data to back up the suggestion on figure of conversion and the film represents the fictionalised version".

'If any issue arises, oppn should not blame us'

Kolkata: After the Supreme Court allowed the screening of 'The Kerala Story' in West Bengal, the TMC on Thursday said if any issue arises due to the showing of the film, the opposition should not blame the ruling party. The Trinamool Congress maintained that the ban on the screening of the film was imposed apprehending tensions among communities. Earlier in the day, the Supreme Court stayed the West Bengal government's order prohibiting the screening of 'The Kerala Story'. The apex court also said it is the duty of the state government to maintain law and order as the film has been granted certification by the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC).

asked the state government to ensure the safety and security of moviegoers. During the hearing, it said that statutory provisions cannot be used to "put a premium on public intolerance".

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PHE Minister dedicates various development projects

**Central Chronicle News**

Bhilai, May 18: Public Health Engineering and Village Industries Minister Guru Rudra Kumar visited Jamul on Thursday. He graced the bhoomipujan and inauguration function as the chief guest at the programme organised in Purana Talab of

Ward 4. He performed the bhoomipujan and inauguration of various projects worth Rs 1.33 crore. On this occasion, he dedicated a Poclain tractor worth Rs 20 lakh, which will be used for city sanitation works in Jamul Nagar. Apart from this, on the demand of the local citi-



zens, he announced to dig bore wells for the Ward 4 and Dewangan Samaj; additional room construction at Bajrangbali Mandir on the banks of the pond; and an ambulance. Municipal Council Vice President Jamun Sunita Channewar, Vijay Jain, Bhagat Singh Sidhu, Councilors Khamman

Singh Thakur, Sanjay Deshlahra, Deepak Gupta Sarojini Chandrakar, Rampyari Verma, Dular Singh Sahu, Sabiha Karim Khan, Alderman Mannu Yadav, Draupadi Sahu, Durga Gajbe, Kailash Nahata, Heera Verma, Prakash Singh Thakur, Oni Mahilang and others were present.

Bhilai Steel Plant organises free health camp at Village Mahkakala

**Central Chronicle News**

Bhilai, May 18: Bhilai Steel Plant, conducts several public welfare activities as part of its organizational social responsibility towards the community in and around its areas of op-

erations. The Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Department of the plant organized a one-day free Health Camp at Model Steel Village, Mahkakala. The expert medical team from CSR department, comprising health

experts, Dr Isha Kujur, Pharmacist, Shashi Bhusan Roy, Rekha Dev for registration volunteered their services for the camp. AK Soni, CSR Assistant, from the department was also

present during the Health Camp. A total of 35 villagers from Village Mahkakala, including 9 men, 21 women and 5 children availed health services at the day long Health Camp and free medicines were distributed to them.

242 people screened at special camp on World Hypertension Day

**Central Chronicle News**

Bhilai, May 18: On the occasion of World Hypertension Day, a health camp was organized at the Public Service Center of the Collectorate Complex. A total of 242 people were screened for blood pressure and blood sugar level. Many

of them were advised to improve their diet and exercise regularly to control high blood pressure. Along with this, every person whose age group is more than 30 years, they were advised to get their blood pressure/blood sugar checked at least once a year and to take medicines

under the guidance of a doctor. On the occasion of World Hypertension Day, Collector Pushpendra Kumar Meena, Bhilai Municipal Corporation Commissioner Rohit Vyas, District Panchayat Chief Executive Officer Ashwani Dewangan and District Chief Medical and Health Officer Dr JP Meshram motivated the general public for regular health check-up by getting them checked for high blood pressure. District Nodal Officer Dr RK Khandelwal, District NCD Advisor Kavita Chandrakar, IHCI Advisor Atul Shukla were present. The camp was conducted smoothly by the staff of UPHC/UHWC.

Newly elected District Panchayat President sworn in

**Central Chronicle News**

Bhilai, May 18: Pushpa Yadav, the newly elected President of District Panchayat Durg, took oath of the office on Wednesday. District Panchayat Chief Executive Officer Ashwani Dewangan administered the oath of office and secrecy. The swearing-in ceremony was organized in the presence of State Public Health Engineering

and Rural Industries Minister Guru Rudra Kumar. Vice President, District Panchayat Durg, Ashok Sahu and Jitendra Kumar Sahu, Shamshir Qureshi, Chandkala Manhar, Maya Belchandan, Akash Kumar Kurre, Yogita Chandakar, Harsha Lokmani Chandrakar, Monu Sahu and Sarpanchs of various gram Panchayats were present.

BJP revokes expulsion orders of rebel candidates

BJP Dist Prez urges them to work for the party**Central Chronicle News**

Bhilai, May 18: Durg District BJP President Jitendra Verma had sent a letter to the state organisation of Chhattisgarh with a recommendation to revoke the expulsion of BJP workers who contested as rebel candidates against the party in the civic body elections held at Durg Municipal Corporation, Ahiwara Municipal Council as well as Dhamdha, Utai, Patan Nagar Panchayats in the year 2019. Taking the recommendation into consideration, the State Disciplinary Committee

of the BJP and the Bharatiya Janata Party state leadership has revoked the expulsion / suspension orders of the rebel BJP workers of Durg district and reinstated their party membership. The names of workers to be reinstated as party members are Meena Singh, Kavita Tandi, Shyam Sharma, Gyaneshwar Tamarkar, Amar Bhoi, Rekha Lodha, Parvati Sahu, Dinesh Mishra, Mohanlal Keswani, Wasim Qureshi, Khilavan Matiara, Roshni Fatte Sahu, Mamta Dewangan,

Savita Poshan Sahu, Dashrath Lal Penderiya, Arun Kumar Singh, Anoop Soni and Padmavati Dewangan. District BJP President Jitendra Verma said that after ending the expulsion of the rebel BJP workers, they have been re-inducted into the mainstream of the party by the state BJP. He hoped that these workers will help strengthen the party and will contribute significantly by playing their active role and will put their full energy to establish the Bharatiya Janata Party government again in the state.

District level Ramayana Mandali competition on May 20

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, May 18: The state government is organizing Ramayana Mandali state level competition. To encourage the Ramayana Mandalis of the state, the Ramayana Mandali competition will be organized in three phases. Development block level in the first phase, district level in the second phase and state level competition is being organized in the third phase. State level Ramayana troupe competition will be organized from 27 to 29 in 2023 in district Raipur. At the state level, first, second and third place

winners will be given prize money of Rs 5 lakh, Rs 3 lakh and Rs 2 lakh respectively. Collector Pushpendra Kumar Meena has instructed the concerned officers to make all the preparations. In the first phase in the district, the competition is to be held at the development block level till May 18. In the second phase, the district level competition will be organized till May 20 and the district level winning mandali will be selected. Guidelines related to the event have been issued by the Culture Department of Chhattisgarh Government.

CICASA organises one day workshop on use of AI in CA profession

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, May 18: A one day seminar was organized by CICASA branch of ICAI Bhilai branch at CA Bhavan, Civic Centre. CA Alok Sethi was present as the keynote speaker in the seminar who gave important information to all CA students regarding Artificial Intelligence, Dynamic Dashboard and Chat GPT. He spoke on the use of technology in the profession of Chartered Accountant. Giving information about Chat GPT, the keynote speaker of the seminar, CA Alok Sethi said that it is an AI chatbot, which understands normal human language and can also perform tasks like detailed writing like humans. He told that the



ChatGPT model has been developed on the basis of Machine Learning Technique Reinforcement Learning from Human Feedback. CA Sethi told that we can use it in work like scheduling, reminder, helping students to solve questions, customer service for companies, especially in communication and report presentation, factual, philosophical,

emotional and mathematical needs. One can also get answers to questions. CA Alok Sethi explained that Excel Dashboard provides an overview of metrics and other data points at a single place. In simple terms, dashboards are visual representations of data. They are mostly made up of charts and graphs, thereby attracting the attention of the user. It

allows reports to be combined and moved, allowing users to decide which reports to include and where to place them. Branch Chairman CA Payal Naveen Jain, Vice Chairman Rahul Batra, Secretary CA Ankesh Sinha, Program Coordinator Soumita Majumdar and more than 100 CA students were present in the seminar.

Aadhaar seeding of bank account mandatory for post matric scholarship

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, May 18: The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, New Delhi provides scholarships to the students through Direct Benefit Transfer system under the Online Post Matric Scholarship Scheme for the year 2022-23. Under this scheme, the scholarship amount will be transferred to the students' account only after seeding the students' bank account numbers from Aadhaar and enabling NPCI mapping. Without bank account Aadhaar seeding, it is not possible to get the scholarship amount paid in the bank account of the students. Assistant Commissioner, Tribal

Development Durg has informed to all government and non-government colleges, universities, engineering colleges, medical colleges, nursing colleges, ITIs running in the district and the Principal/Institution Head of the Polytechnic College, Scholarship in-charge and the students of Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes, who have applied online for post matric scholarship conducted by the department, to get their Aadhaar seeding in their bank branch by May 24, 2023. After enabling Aadhaar seeding and NPCI mapping of the bank account, further procedure would be conducted to transfer the scholarship amount to the account.

Saaol Heart Centre ordered to stop operations

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, May 18: Collector Pushpendra Kumar Meena has issued orders to stop the operations of Saaol Heart Center, a private clinic operating in Nehru Nagar Bhilai, with immediate effect. On the instructions of the Collector, Chief Medical and Health Officer, Durg, instructed the Nodal Officer Dr RK Khandelwal to conduct an enquiry under the Nursing Home Act. During inquiry, it was found that Saaol Heart Center, Nehru Nagar Bhilai, is operating a clinic without registration under the Nursing Home Act. After investigation, it was found that Dr Rupesh Kumar Chandrakar, director of private clinic Saaol



Heart Center, was operating a private clinic without registration under the Nursing Home Act, as well as no documents related to registration in the Nursing Home Act were found. It was a violation of the Nursing Home Act 2010 and 2013. Private clinic operator

Dr Rupesh Kumar Chandrakar has been punished with a fine of Rs 20,000 under the Nursing Home Act for violating the provisions of the license. He has been ordered to deposit the penalty in the office of the Chief Medical and Health Officer, Durg, within five days.

Durg University: 75% evaluation work of annual examinations completed

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, May 18: About 75 percent evaluation work of Hemchand Yadav University's (Durg University) annual examination 2023 answer books has been completed. The Vice-Chancellor Dr Aruna Palta has given instructions to the officials of the Examination Department to get the remaining evaluation work done at a fast pace by expert professors. University's Deputy Registrar of Examinations Dr Rajmani Patel and Dean Student Welfare Dr Prashant Srivastava jointly informed that the total number of candidates in BA in annual examination 2023 is 74705, of which 33726 are regular and 40979 self-study students. Out of total 22044 students in B Com, 17471 appeared as regular students and 4573 as self-taught students. Out of total 33754 candidates in B Sc, there are regular 25230 and self-study 8524. A total of 32059 candidates have appeared in various other courses and postgraduate courses. Out of which 2442 are regular and 29617 are self-study. Thus

the total number of candidates appearing in the annual examinations are 162562. Dr Rajmani Patel told that the total answer books of the graduate level candidates are more than 10.40 lakh and 75 percent evaluation has been completed. As soon as the evaluation of these examinations is completed result will be declared. The university administration is making efforts to declare the results of the by the end of May. Similarly, the evaluation work of more than 1.5 lakh post graduate answer books is going on. The Vice-Chancellor Dr Palta also directed in the officers' meeting that along with declaring the results of the examinations, proper efforts should be made to provide mark sheets to the students soon. The examination admit cards for the semester examinations commencing from June 12 are being issued by the university soon on the portal. The student should download it and check it completely and if any error or discrepancy is found, the examination department of the university can be contacted within a week.

Free health camp in memory of Late Sudhakar Tiwari at SR Hospital today

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, May 18: To mark the death anniversary of late Sudhakar Tiwari, SR Hospital and Research Centre Chikhali Durg is organising a free health check-up camp on May 19, 2023, S. R. A free health check-up camp has been organized by the Hospital and Research Centre Chikhali Durg. The venue is the hospital premises and the camp will be from 11:00 hrs to 15:00 hrs. Senior doctor of the hospital Dr SP Kesarwani informed that doctors would provide free consultation to the patients in the camp. Sonography, colour doppler X-ray, eye test, dental test, eyeglass frame, blood pressure, blood sugar test will be done free of cost in the said camp.



Giving important information about the camp, Dr Vishwamitra Dayal said that Hydrocele Cataract Sterilization, Normal Delivery, Cesarean Delivery will be done free of cost in the camp on May 19. Patients will have to pay only for medicines and blood urine test. A special discount of 40% will be provided by the hospital management in blood urine test, as well as 15% discount will be

provided in medicines and 50% discount will be provided in MRI test and CT scan test. Sanjay Tiwari, Chairman of SR Hospital said that the aforesaid health check-up camp is being organized on the death anniversary of his father late Sudhakar Tiwari. The chairman has appealed to the people of the area to take advantage of the free health check-up camp.

Cong to form its govt for second time in state: Markam

● Based upon its organisational strength and govt's works

Raipur, May 18:

PCC Chief Mohan Markam said that Congress would once again form its government in 2023 VS polls. After the 'Bharose ka Sammelan' and divisional sammelans, the party would strengthen its party workers through VS-level sammelans and would impart training to them on its policies and schemes and send them among general public. The party's preparations at booth-level has

been completed and with strength of Congress organisation and the public welfare works of the state government, the opposition has become utter failure.

In a statement made to the press, PCC State President Mohan Markam said that in the coming elections, the Congress government's works and public welfare policies would be its ace. BJP just does not have any issues to face the Congress party. He charged that BJP just wants to do politics on imaginary and wayward issues and due to which it is distancing itself from the public.



After the two-third majority of public in 2018 elections, the confidence of the people towards Congress has increased and in the next 5 by-polls, urban body polls and Panchayat polls, the people have openly ousted BJP. There is lot of help-

lessness among BJP workers and Congress workers are with double the enthusiasm. Further in the statement, Markam said that in the coming elections, Congress has long list of pro-public achievements, then be it Rajiv Gandhi Kissan Nyay Yojana, Godhan Nyay Yojana, Rajiv Gandhi Krishi Mazdoor Nyay Yojana, which has changed the face of Chhattisgarh. The government has list of 90% completion of points from its election manifesto, which the government has fulfilled and BJP has no issues in hand. Mohan Markam citing the

achievements of last four years of Baghel government said that it has done variety of works in the field of health, employment and legal rights. It has opened 300 closed schools in Maoist dominated tribal areas of Bastar and worked with confidence and on safety policies of tribals. We have also returned the 4200 acre land of 1707 tribal families from 10 village taken by Raman Singh's government and likewise have taken many pro-tribal, farmers, poor, youth, women-centric decisions, strengthening their economy and standard of living.

One nabbed from auto-gang for stealing Rs 1 lakh

● From two who came to purchase hardware from Bhilai to Raipur

Raipur, May 18:

The auto-gang has once again become active in the capital city and the police succeeded in nabbing one of the accused from the gang while trying to clear Rs 1 lakh from a passenger. The accused by becoming friendly with co-passengers and involving them in some discussions used to steal the cash or ornaments and then they were dropped mid-way itself. In this case the police has nabbed one from Bhilai. The complainant Ramkumar Kaiwart filed a complaint in



Moudhapara thana that he came to Raipur along with his relative Ramvilas Kaiwart to purchase some hardware with cash of Rs 1.80 lakh. He made a purchase of around Rs 80000 from a plastic shop in Golebazar and left to purchase hardware item from Sharda Chowk in an auto. During this there was already a person sitting in the auto. After covering some distance the auto driver stopped his vehicle and asked them to get

down. On alighting from the auto, the complainant found that his cash of Rs 1 lakh is missing and filed a complaint. It was based upon the complaint, the capital police disclosed about the Bhilai-Gang and nabbed one Salim Manihar alias Monu and also recovered cash of Rs 15000 from the accused. In this another accomplice is absconding and a case under section 379 was filed against the accused.

TRAFFIC CONGESTION



With digging work for laying of pipelines and others going on every nook and corner of city, people are made to face lots of inconvenience at Fire-brigade chowk, near Motibagh here on Thursday.

ALL FOR COMPENSATION APPOINTMENT

Man kills parents, grandmother, burns their bodies

Mahasamund, May 18:

A 24-year-old man allegedly killed his parents and grandmother and burnt their bodies in Chhattisgarh's Mahasamund district, police said on Thursday. Accused Udit Bhoi (24), who was held on Wednesday, is a drug addict and allegedly carried out the killings after being refused money by his father, an official said. "The incident took place last week in Putka village under Singhoda police station limits. On May 12, Udit had lodged a complaint claiming his father Prabhat Bhoi (53), mother Jharna (47) and grand-

mother Sulochana (75) had gone missing after going to Raipur on May 8 for medical purposes," Mahasamund Superintendent of Police Dharmendra Singh said. "During our probe, some residents informed us Udit had purchased a bed, almirah, air conditioner, mobile phone and other materials after his family members went missing. He had asked some villagers about the procedure of getting a job on compassionate grounds. All this raised suspicion," Singh said. Udit's younger brother, who is an MMBS student in a college in Raipur, reached Putka and found



ashes in the vegetable garden in the house's backyard as well as blood stains on the walls and bone fragments, after which he called police, the official said. "The accused initially tried to mislead the probe but then confessed that he

used to be scolded often by his parents for his addiction and other undesirable habits. On May 7, he had an argument with his father over money," the SP said. "In the early hours of May 8, Udit bludgeoned his parents and grandmother to death with a hockey stick, burnt the bodies using wood logs and sanitiser and then sent messages to relatives from his father's phone to show all was well," he said. The accused was booked under Indian Penal Code sections 302 (murder) and 201 (causing disappearance of evidence of offence), the SP said.

Debate, youth parliament organised on impact of personal behaviour and habits



Raipur, May 18: Under the joint auspices of Kalinga University, Nava Raipur and Chhattisgarh Environment Protection Board, a debate and youth parliament was organised on the impact of personal behavior and habits on environment and climate change in Kalinga University campus. The program was inaugurated by the Vice-Chancellor of Kalinga University, Dr. R.K. Sridhar. At the beginning of the competition, all the students and teachers were administered the oath of environmental protection. On this occasion, Vice Chancellor Dr. Sridhar called upon the youth to come forward to save na-

ture. Senior Scientific Officer Dr. Anita Sawant said that at present we need to change our lifestyle and make it environment friendly. Environment Board Public Relations Officer, Amar Prakash Sawant said that we should avoid using plastic polythene and use cloth or jute bags. A total of 30 students from Kalinga University, Amity University, IIT, Nava Raipur, Pt. Ravi Shankar University, Mahendra Karma University and Bhilai Institute of Technology participated. Out of these 10 students will be selected and sent to New Delhi for East Zone competition, where this competition will be held on June 01 and 02.

ABVP workers break barricading on way to gherao CM House

Raipur, May 18:

Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) workers today tried to gherao CM House in Raipur in protest against alleged irregularities in PSC recruitment. The agitating ABVP workers scuffled with the police after breaking barricading on being prevented by the police from gheraoing the CM House. All ABVP workers were stopped near Budhatalab on their way to CM House. After breaking the barricading, the ABVP workers moved forward but police stopped them and arrested some of them. Alleging irregularities in the CGPSC 2021 results they said that children of Congress leaders and officers were selected in the PSC. Congress terms protest as frustration BJP

Allege irregularities in CGPSC



people Registering strong objection to baseless allegations and statements of BJP leaders on the PSC selection list in the state, State Congress Committee spokesperson Surendra Verma said that the Chhattisgarh State Public Service Commission is a constitutional agency and it is an autonomous body. It has always been priority of Congress government to maintain impartiality and credibility of

the constitutional institutions in accordance with their dignity, he said adding that there has never been any interference of the state government in recruitment, examination and selection process. According to him political use of constitutional institutions, central investigative agencies and even the Raj Bhavan is the character of the Bharatiya Janata Party.

'Review of tribal and rural based health research projects'

Raipur, May 18: The 4th review meeting of Local Research Advisory Committee (LRAC) of Model Rural Health Research Unit (MRHRU) under the mentorship of I.C.M.R. - NIRTH Jabalpur was held yesterday in the Conference Hall of Community Medicine Department of Pt. J.N.M. Medical College, Raipur. This important review meeting was presided over by Chairman LRAC Dr. Arvind Neral, where all five running research projects were analysed and reviewed. Director of mentor ICMR Jabalpur, Dr. Aparup Das informed that how ICMR is initiating, helping and funding the research projects related to tribal and rural health issues. He said that the establishment of well-equipped research institute of MRHRU in Chhattisgarh at Jheet, Patan Block of Durg District is almost in final stage. Dr. Tanu Anand,

● By Pt. J.N.M. Medical College under I.C.M.R.

Scientist E of ICMR New-Delhi joined this meeting virtually and made preliminary welcome remarks. Dean Medical College Raipur Dr. Tripti Nagaria and Scientist Dr. Neha Singh have submitted a new research project to study fetomaternal outcome of pregnant women exposed to nicotine (tobacco in any form). Committee has asked to submit this project after incorporating few suggestions. Dr. Jayanti R. Ghatge, Additional Prof. AIIMS Raipur is working as Principle Investigator in a research project to compare prevalence of New Life Style Medical Problem- Metabolic Syndrome in tribal and non-tribal population of Chhattisgarh. Dr. Nirmal



Verma, Professor of Community Medicine and Dr. Shubhra Agrawal Gupta, Associate Professor have presented report on progress done in their research focussed on "Assessment of health-related quality of life of individuals with Sickle Cell Disease attending Community Health Centre, Jheet. Dr. Kamlesh Jain, Professor Community Medicine gave presentation on his research project based on Epidemiology

and Co-morbidity in Chronic Kidney Disease in Devbhog and Mainpur Blocks of Gariyaband District. Dr. L.V.K.S. Bhaskar, Professor at Guru Ghasidas University Bilaspur is working in a research project to find out Molecular Epidemiology and Correlation between Sickle Cell Disease and Malaria in Patan Block Durg. Deputy Director D.H.S. Dr. Dharmendra Gahwai is trying to find "Psychological burden of Covid-19 in population of

Jheet" in his research. In his absence, Scientist Dr. Ravindra of ICMR informed the progress of this project. Dr. Arvind Neral Chairman of LRAC has expressed satisfaction on the work and progress of all these research projects and expected that all principal investigators will complete these project by the end of July 2023. Co-chairperson of LRAC, Dr. Illi Mahapatra, Dr. Jyoti Jaiswal, Professor Obs./Gynae, Dr. Surbhi Dubey Associate Professor Psychiatry and P.G. Students were present. In this meeting members felt the need of Pre-natal Diagnostic facilities to diagnose hereditary diseases including Sickle Cell Disease during pregnancy for prevention of these diseases in next generations. Dr. Ravindra proposed vote of thanks, informs a press release issued by Dr. Arvind Neral, Chairman, LRAC.

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1

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'Ch'garhiya Olympics to begin from 'Hareli Tihar': CM

- CM engages with citizens, gains valuable feedback during Bhent-Mulakat prog in Bhatgaon, Dhamtari Assembly Constituency
- Dedicates development works worth Rs 137 cr



implementation of various welfare schemes by the state government. As part of his visit, Bhupesh Baghel inaugurated and laid stone for 154 development works worth a whopping Rs. 137 cr. This includes the inauguration of 28 projects worth Rs. 13.97 cr and the initiation of projects worth Rs. 123.63 cr.

Addressing the programme, the CM Baghel, stated that Mahatma Gandhi Horticulture University would commence in Patan Assembly Constituency on May 21, which is marked as the

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, May 18: Chhattisgarh is gearing up for an exciting event as the Chhattisgarhiya Olympics are set to begin during the upcoming Hareli Tihar. The announcement was made by Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel during his address at the state-wide 'Bhent Mulakat Abhiyan' program held in Bhatgaon, under the Dhamtari Assembly Constituency, on Wednesday. This significant sporting event promises to be a celebration of athleticism and unity.

The program provided an opportunity for the Chief Minister to connect with the people and gather valuable feedback on the



death anniversary of former Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi. Beneficiaries of various NYAY schemes will receive the respective benefits of the schemes.

SHGs earn Rs. 6 lakh from selling vermicompost

Terina Sahu, a member of SHG, stated that her group has 10 members, all of them are actively participating in many livelihood activities. They are engaged in producing vermicompost and have earned Rs. 6 lakh from it. They have also earned

Rs. 56 thousand through 'Herbal medicine' and Rs. 75 thousand through poultry farming. She also stated that they will try to expand their activities further in the near future to increase their earnings. Dorelal, a beneficiary of the 'Godhan NYAY Yojana', stated that he has sold dung worth Rs 1.5 lakh, which he collected from 'bardi' and streets, and bought a scooter with the money he earned.

Youth express gratitude for increasing vacancies in ITI

The Chief Minister also

opportunity.

Shubham Sahu, president of the Rajiv Yuva Mitan Club of Rudri village, expressed his happiness for the traditional games that he played in the Chhattisgarhiya Olympics.

The Chief Minister inquired about the reach of the 'Nili Gadi' (Mobile Medical Unit van) and re-

ceived unanimous confirmation of its accessibility. The villagers also informed the CM about the successful implementation of the 'Mukhyamantri Haat Bazar Clinic Yojana', with the Mobile Medical Unit van operating from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily, providing essential healthcare services to the community.

'I want to become your PA, is it possible?'- Priyanshi asked the CM

The event took an endearing turn when a student, Priyanshi Mishra, expressed her admiration for the Chief Minister and shared her aspiration to become his Personal Assistant. Mr. Baghel encouraged her to pursue a career in government service and appreciated her kind words. Priyanshi, who recently passed her 12th-grade examination, commended the quality education and facilities provided by the Swami Atmanand Schools, as well as their focus on sports and cultural activities. She also requested the Chief Minister to listen to songs performed by SAGES' students, which he graciously agreed to.

Balod Sanjari MLA Mrs. Sangeeta Sinha, Additional Chief Secretary Mrs. Renu G Pillai, Secretary to the Chief Minister Mr. Siddharth Komal Pardeshi, Divisional Commissioner Mr. Yashwant Kumar, IG Mr. Arif Sheikh, Collector Mr. Rituraj Raghuvanshi, SP Mr. Prashant Thakur and other officers were present.

Important announcements made by CM

- Swami Atmanand English Medium School to begin in Aamdi.
- The ITI of Gram Panchayat Bhatgaon will be named in honour of freedom fighter Lt. Manrakhan Dewangan.
- Tumrabhar and Devpur villages will soon have a new sub-health center.
- Mongaraghan will be home to the newly established District Co-operative Bank.
- Mauli Mata Temple of Gram Panchayat Bhatgaon will undergo renovation and various construction works.
- High School in Devpur village will be upgraded to a Higher Secondary School.
- Construction and repair work will take place at Swami Atmanand School.
- Bhatgaon Gauthan will acquire equipment for establishing a natural paint unit.
- Administrative approval has been granted for lining and repair work along Mahanadi Main Canal, spanning RD 390 to 1000 meters and RD 1000 meters to 15000 meters.
- The Bhoyna reservoir's dam and canals will undergo lining and development work for concrete structures.
- Repair work for gates and canals of Mongaraghan diversion is scheduled.

Ramayan performance groups to participate in Ch'garh's 'National Ramayana Festival'

- From all states and union territories
- CM Baghel extends invitations to Ramayana performance groups of Indian states and union Territories
- City of Art and Culture, Raigarh to host the National Ramayana Festival which will be organized from June 1 to 3

ries to participate in the National Ramayana Festival being organized for the first time in Chhattisgarh.

In a letter addressed to the Chief Ministers of all the states and the administrative heads of the Union Territories, Baghel has requested the participation of Ramayana 'tableau performance groups' in the National Ramayana Festival 2023 of Chhattisgarh which is scheduled to commence from 01 to 03 June 2023.

The Chief Minister has stated that the grandeur and dignity of the National Ramayana Festival will be elevated with the collective participation of the States and Union Territories. Baghel

further stated that the National Ramayana Festival will also feature enthralling dance-drama competitions based on the theme of Aranya-kand from Ramayan. Notably, the National Ramayana Festival is being organized at the historic Ramlila Maidan in Raigarh, known as renowned as Chhattisgarh's city of art and culture.

In the letter, Baghel has also written that the Government is dedicated towards the protection and promotion of the rich cultural and religious heritage of the state. Shri Ram and Ramayana are an integral part of our culture.

As part of its continu-

ous efforts to preserve the heritage of Shri Ram, the Chhattisgarh government has restored and renovated the Mata Kaushalya temple and an annual Kaushalya Mahotsav is also being celebrated with a lot of enthusiasm.

Along with this, the state government is also doing extensive development work of tracking and arranging the places related to Shri Ram's exile journey and recognizing these milestone places as 'Ram Van Gaman Place'.

On the same lines, the first state level Ramayana Manas Mandali competition was organized by the state government from 08 April 2022 to 10 April 2022 in a town called Shivrinarayan in district

Janjgir-Champa and the second state level Ramayana Manas Mandali competition was organized in Rajim, Gariaband district from Feb 16-18, 2023 which also featured foreign cultural performing troupes from Vietnam and Sri Lanka.

Baghel, concluding the letter, emphasized that the National Ramayana Festival aims to preserve India's unique religious and cultural identity, which has united generations.

The participation of troupes from all states and union territories will enhance the collective spirit and magnificence of the festival, celebrating the richness of India's cultural heritage.

St Mary's English medium school students excel in CISCE Board Examination

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Jan 18: It was a pride moment for St. Mary's English Medium School to shine in city with outstanding performance of the students with 100% results in CISCE Board Examination - 2023.

In ISC (XII) Result: Samyak Jain student of Science and Janahvee Verma of Humanities stream stood first with 95.50%, Samyak Jain bagged crown of the city in Science stream. Janahvee Verma scored full marks in two individual subject i.e. Political Science & Physical Education.

In the same way Mansi Thakkar of Science stream secured second position with 94.25%, where as Abhijeet Sharma of Commerce and Jyoti



Dhruv of Humanities stood third with 93.25% and Prerna Naidu of Science stream stood as fourth with 91.25%. **In ICSE (X) Result:** B Bhavna topped with 95.20%, Chanchal Sahu stood second with 94.40% and Vrinda Vadher as third with 91.40%. Aryan Sharma and Ishika Singh secured fourth and fifth position respectively. All over 26 students of ISC and 18 students of ICSE scored above 80% and all remaining students secured first division. In this pride moment, the School Management expressed heartfelt congratulation to the students, staff and parents for their determination, perseverance and hard work. Management blessed the students abundantly and wished them for their future endeavors.

Lara holds Shift charge Engineer meet 2023

Central Chronicle News

Bilaspur (Lara), May 18: Arindam Sinha, ED (OS) inaugurated the Shift Charge Engineer's meet at Lara on 17th May 2023. Addressing the engineers, Sinha stressed on high operational efficiency and unit availability to meet real time energy demand. The meet will continue till 20th May 2023.

Shift charge engineers across all NTPC stations are participating in this to actualize the strategy to increase unit reliability and competency development of power units. Theme of this meet is "Redefining Strategies for Increasing Unit Reliability and Competency Development".



Core competency of NTPC is operational excellence. With increasing capacity and the leader in the power sector NTPC emerges as a Global Power company with its international presence.

Various issues related to the operation of power plants and new developments will be discussed and shared by the participants so that they can handle it and provide reliable power and contribute for national development.

On this occasion KS Naik, GM (OS), Akhilesh Singh, GM (O&M) NTPC Lara, Rajeev Ranjan, GM (FM), SK Roy, GM (Operation), Ravishankar, GM (Project) participants across NTPC were present.

'Rise from taxi business to a social reformer'

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, May 18: It was way back in 1985 when Kirti Vyas joined family taxi business under the banner of Vyas Travels and in 1988 applied for Passenger Sales Agent (PSA) of Air India started booking air tickets from 1990.

Carrying on both the taxi business and air ticket booking business with a moto of honesty, good intention and hard work which was received from late father, Kirti Vyas and his younger surged ahead in their work.

This business gave them an opportunity to be in touch with higher officials (both in government and private sector), big indus-



trialists and politicians. By winning their trust in this business Vyas Travels continued to make a mark in the hearts of people. Holding the record highest air ticket sales in Central India, Vyas Travels is continuing successfully for 35 years and at present has an office-

Vyas Holidays at Marine Drive Telibandha. Bring about a change in business pattern Vyas Holidays books all international air tickets, visa, holiday package and only biometric facility in Chhattisgarh for UK and Europe. Having received awards

Honours talent...

Kirti Vyas recognizing talent felicitated Jharna Sahu, Class XII student of Veeer Shivaji School who stood sixth in merit list of CBSE examination. Also Khusbhu Bijoura of the same school who is now collector was also felicitated on this occasion.

from different airlines companies for maximum ticket sales, Kirti Vyas is actively associated with many social organisations, educational institutions and charitable organisations. With a moto of service to mankind Kirti Vyas is gradually making his next generation learn the tricks of customer satisfaction.

100% results of Ashoka Public School

Central Chronicle News

Kawardha, May 17: Ashoka Public School of Kawardha is celebrating outstanding results of CBSE Year 2022-23 pupils at Ashoka Public School, Kawardha rose to the occasion again as they received their CBSE Class X results.

The school has attained an Overall, impressive 100% result of pupils appeared in CBSE Class X Examination with flying colours. Amongst other top headlines Master. Gitesh Dewangan, S/o Pawan Dewangan of Kawardha secured 84% while Aashi Jain D/o Mr. Jain of Kawardha acquiring 80% and Master Somesh Sinha obtaining 78% reflected his remarkable success. On the other hand many students secured 90% in respective subjects.



The School has another branch which is affiliated to Chhattisgarh State Board as well. This year's result is a benchmark for CG Board as well. Surbhai Sharma, Ayush Pandey and Mridul Vaishnav brought laurels to the school by getting 82, 79 and 77 percent marks in Class X results conducted by the state in the session 2022-23.

This year's results represent a remarkable transformation in the success of the Ashoka Public School in Kawardha as the students of this school appeared

first time with full syllabus and appearing in Central Board. The students performed above and beyond their expected levels, which opens the door to continue their studies at advanced level.

The new measure of Progress and Attainment were also very positive, showing that Ashoka Public School has firmly established itself as an academic option in Kawardha.

Principal Dr. K.L. Sikhwal while congratulating the students and their mentors said

that today's child is brighter and smarter than the child of the past. Thanks to the resources made available by the parents and teachers.

On the other hand Management of the school Chairman Mr. Pawan Dewangan said 'Every child deserves to be the best of what he is.

School is that integral part of society which is an instrument of achieving this goal. The goal of education in Ashoka Public School is to explore, enhance, encourage and inculcate such

learning and values that will benefit society with the presence of these individuals.

Ashoka Public School endeavors to augment the personality of each child and bring out inherent qualities through years of schooling which include such varied activities as sports, dance and music, arts, and expression which aid in the discovery of such talents said the Director of the school Sarika Dewangan.

Principal congratulated all teachers for their best efforts they put in throughout the year for the overall development of students. Principal also thanked the parents for their belief in the school and assured that the school will always be there for the overall development of its students, informs a press release issued by Dr. KL Sikhwal, Principal Ashoka Public School.

Baghel inaugurates Gadha Kalewa in village Achhota

- Of Dhamtari district, relished the taste of Chilla, Fara, Thethri, Khurmi
- Gadha Kalewa is also equipped with a Wi-Fi facility

Central Chronicle News

Dhamtari, May 18: Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel inaugurated Gadha Kalewa, located in the village of Achhota, during the Bhent-Mulakat program in Dhamtari district today. During his visit to Gadha Kalewa, the Chief Minister interacted and discussed the arrangements with the women of the self-help group. Members of the women's



self-help group informed the Chief Minister that Gadha Kalewa offers various dishes of Chhattisgarhi cuisine, such as Cheela, Fara, Thethari, Khurmi, Ainsa, Chausela, Sohari, and other cuisines. Gadha Kalewa is a traditional restaurant that showcases the culture of Chhattisgarh and provides a vil-

lage ambiance. It features both indoor and outdoor seating arrangements, following an open-air concept. A significant portion of the establishment consists of open spaces where patrons can savor the delectable taste of Chhattisgarhi Cuisine. Customers will also have access to Wi-Fi facility at Gadha Kalewa.

BRIEF

Roadblocks on NH to Imphal cleared

Trucks with essentials start rolling

Imphal, May 18 (PTI):

The Assam Rifles cleared roadblocks set up by various organisations on national highway 37 and escorted truck columns carrying essential supplies to Imphal.

Truck movement to the Imphal Valley stopped due to roadblocks and fear amongst transporters after clashes broke out in Manipur after a 'Tribal Solidarity March' was organised in the hill districts on May 3 to protest against the Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status.

As movement of trucks stopped stock of essential supplies in the state started dwindling and was beginning to reach critical levels. Army and Assam Rifles stepped in to assure protection to vehicles carrying essential goods

from/to Imphal, a Defence spokesperson said.

On May 15, a convoy of 28 vehicles including trucks, fuel tankers, JCBs, carrying rice, sugar, pulses and fuel moved under escort of CRPF and Manipur Police from Noney to Imphal. Prophylactic domination of the area was provided by Assam Rifles to ensure safe passage to the convoy which reached Imphal safely by afternoon. In addition, monitoring was also ensured through Unmanned Aerial Vehicles.

Around 100 vehicles were moved on May 16 and 17. Security Forces are committed to restore normalcy and the commencement of movement of the vehicles on NH 37 is another step towards normalcy in Manipur, the Defence Spokesperson said.

Clashes broke out in Manipur after a 'Tribal Solidarity March' was organised in the hill districts on May 3 to protest against the Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status.

The violence was preceded by tension over the eviction of Kuki villagers from reserve forest land, which had led to a series of smaller agitations.

Meiteis account for about 53 per cent of Manipur's population and live mostly in the Imphal Valley. Tribals — Nagas and Kukis — constitute another 40 per cent of the population and reside in the hill districts.

The ethnic clashes claimed over 70 lives and some 10,000 army and para-military personnel had to be deployed to bring back normalcy in the northeastern state.

30K applications for admission to 12K seats

In Jharkhand govt Schools of Excellence

Ranchi, May 18 (PTI):

About 30,000 applications have been received for admission to 12,000 seats in 80 Jharkhand government-run Schools of Excellence so far, an official said on Thursday.

Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren on May 2 had inaugurated 80 government Schools of Excellence, as part of an academic reform to provide quality English-medium education at par with private schools to children going to government schools. "Against the total number of 12,146 available seats for admissions to Schools of Excellence (SoEs) a whopping number of approximately 30,000 applications have been received across the

state by the school management till May 17. The number of applications is 246 per cent higher than the total seats," an official said. Maximum number of applications have been received from Deoghar at 3,247, Lohardaga at 2,254, Giridih at 1,708, Palamu at 2,322 and Ramgarh at 1,489.

In view of the demand of the parents, the deadline for submission of applications in Schools of Excellence (SoEs) has been extended till May 25.

Earlier, the government had fixed the date for application from May 2 to May 15.

The selection test will be held on May 30 while the first merit list will be published on June 7 and admissions as per the merit

list will start from Jun 12.

These 80 district-level Schools of Excellence are part of the government's aim to provide quality education opportunities to 15 lakh school children studying in government schools including plans to set up 325 block level schools and 4,091 gram panchayat level model schools across the state in the second phase.

Last month, at least 10 students of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) in Khunti district, a part of a government project to reduce gender disparities in rural areas and among disadvantaged communities, had qualified in the JEE (Mains). Online training of Principals of 80 Schools of Excellence has been given

NADDA OFFERS PRAYERS



BJP National President JP Nadda during his visit to offer prayers at the Siddhivinayak temple in Mumbai, Thursday.

'Will try to get back Shivaji's sword from UK next month'

Mumbai, May 18 (PTI):

Maharashtra Minister for Cultural Affairs Sudhir Mungantiwar on Wednesday said he would visit the UK next month and try to bring back a sword and metal claws used by warrior king Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in the 17th century. The metal claws or 'wagh nakh' is a weapon designed to fit over the knuckles or be concealed under and against the palm.

It consists of four or five curved blades affixed to a crossbar. This weapon was used by Shivaji Maharaj to kill Afzal Khan, the general of the Adil Shahi dynasty of Bijapur Sultanate. "I had a discussion with



Sudhir Mungantiwar

the British deputy high commissioner earlier on making available the 'Jagdamba' sword and 'wagh nakh' here. We are signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) regarding the same," Mungantiwar said.

The minister had held a meeting with Alan Gemmill, British Deputy

High Commissioner for Western India and Imogen Stone, Deputy Head, Political and Bilateral Affairs on April 16.

"We are celebrating the 350th anniversary of the coronation of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. More than 100 events will be held in the state to commemorate the occasion starting from June 2 this year: Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, descendants of Shivaji Maharaj and others will be invited for the event," he said. Mungantiwar said he would visit the UK in June and try to take the matter further with the finalisation of the MoU and to decide the further course of action.

'Second round of border talks with Assam soon'

Shillong, May 18 (PTI):

Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma said he is likely to meet his Assam counterpart Himanta Biswa Sarma next week in Guwahati for the second round of border talks.

Speaking to reporters, Sangma Wednesday said the logistics were being worked out for the meeting, which is likely to be held on May 24.

This would be the first meeting for the second round of border talks between the two states, aimed at resolving the remaining six areas of differences, he said.

Sangma said he has been in touch with Sarma over the skirmishes that have been taking place at



Conrad K Sangma

the villages located in the disputed Block I and Block II at the inter-state border.

"We have already decided to visit both Block I and II to send a message of peace and restraint from both sides," he said. Last week, two huts were set on fire at Khanduli village in Block I.

UP govt to train youths

Lucknow, May 18 (PTI):

The Uttar Pradesh government will launch a 5G technology training programme under its Skill Development Mission to train youths in new and future employable technologies, an official said here on Thursday.

Under the programme, the government will train the youths and make also arrangements for their employment.

According to the proposal, at least 1,000 youths have to be trained and given jobs under this programme in eight months.

The programme is likely to be started shortly in five districts among Lucknow, Kanpur; Gautam Buddha Nagar, Moradabad, Agra, Gorakhpur, Varanasi and Prayagraj, he said.

Tigress gives birth to 4 cubs

In Navegaon Nagzira Tiger Reserve

Gondia, May 18 (PTI):

Wildlife lovers have reasons to cheer as a tigress has given birth to four cubs in the Navegaon Nagzira Tiger Reserve (NNTR) in Maharashtra's Gondia district, officials said.

Besides, two more tigresses from the Bramhapuri range (in Chandrapur district) are expected to be released in the NNTR soon, they said.

Of late, tigress T-4 has been seen moving around with four cubs born in a single litter; NNTR's field director Jayaram Gowda R said.

It is a good sign as the tiger population in the reserve will go up further, he said.



Four tiger cubs, who were born at the Navegaon Nagzira Tiger Reserve (NNTR), in Maharashtra's Gondia district.

The cubs are believed to be four to five months old, an official said.

Currently, the NNTR has 12 to 17 tigers, as per

the recent All India Tiger Estimation report.

The forest department has also brought two tigresses from the

Bramhapuri range and they would be released in the NNTR soon, the official said.

With the sighting of T-4 with four cubs and translocation of two big cats on cards, there would be new challenges before the NNTR management, honorary wildlife warden Sawan Bahekar said.

The authorities have to ensure protection of the cubs and also regularly monitor movement of the two new felines to be released in the reserve, he said.

"There may be some conflict situation and natural threats. The management also requires to make efforts to prevent any man-made threat for the felines.

WATERLOGGED STREET



A man wades through a waterlogged road with his two-wheeler following rainfall, in Guwahati, Thursday.

BJP's Ambala MP Rattan Lal Kataria dies

Haryana announces one day state mourning

Chandigarh, May 18 (PTI):

Former Union minister and the BJP's Ambala MP Rattan Lal Kataria passed away on Thursday after a brief illness here. He was 71.

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, senior leaders from the BJP and parties across the spectrum expressed condolences at Kataria's demise.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed anguish at the death of Kataria and said he made a rich contribution towards public service and social justice.

Kataria was admitted to the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research here after initial com-



plaints of pneumonia. Later, he developed other health complications and he remained in the hospital for treatment, an aide told PTI.

For the past few days, he had been running a fever. His health deteriorated further on Wednesday, he said and added that Kataria died around 3.30

am. Kataria is survived by his wife, two daughters and a son. His last rites will be held at Manimajra in the afternoon.

Kataria served as minister of state in the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti and the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment from May 2019 till July 2021.

He was elected to the Lok Sabha from Ambala in 1999, 2014 and 2019.

A prominent Dalit face of the BJP, Kataria served as the party's Haryana unit chief from 2000 to 2003. He was also a minister in the Haryana government.

As a child artiste, Kataria had received an award the then-Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru.

Collision

Shajapur: Four persons were killed and 14 others received injuries when a speeding private bus collided head-on with a truck near Maksi town in Madhya Pradesh's Shajapur district on Thursday morning, a police official said.

Review

Jammu: Jammu and Kashmir Additional Director General of Police (ADGP) Mukesh Singh on Wednesday said anti-tunnelling and anti-drone exercises should be regularly conducted in districts along the International Border (IB) to thwart nefarious designs of anti-national elements.

Busted

Jammu: Security forces on Thursday busted a suspected terror hideout and seized explosive materials in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district, officials said. A search operation was launched by the 39 Rashtriya Rifles and the Special Operations Group in the district's Salani area during which the Army's sniffer dogs detected some suspicious improvised explosive devices (IED) and other materials from a hideout, the official sources said.

BRIEF

US court approves extradition of 26/11 Mumbai attack accused Tahawwur Rana to India

New York, May 18 (PTI):

In a significant legal victory for India, a US court has approved the extradition of Pakistani-origin Canadian businessman Tahawwur Rana to India where he is sought for his involvement in the horrific 2008 Mumbai terror attacks. The ruling comes just over a month before Prime Minister Narendra Modi travels to the US on his first state visit at the invitation of President Joe Biden. He will be hosted by President Biden and First Lady Jill Biden for a state dinner at the White House on June 22. US Magistrate Judge Jacqueline Chooljian of the District

Court of the Central District of California issued a 48-page order dated May 16, which was released Wednesday, saying 62-year-old Rana "should be extradited to India" under the extradition treaty between India and the United States. "The court has reviewed and considered all of the documents submitted in support of and in opposition to the request and has considered the arguments presented at the hearing. "Based on such review and consideration and for the reasons discussed herein, the court makes the findings set forth below, and certifies to the Secretary of State of the

United States the extraditability of Rana on the charged offences that are the subject of the request," the court order said. Rana, who is currently in the federal lockup in downtown Los Angeles, can appeal in the Circuit Court, which will likely affirm the district court order. Under US law, Secretary of State is the authority who decides whether to surrender the fugitive. The order noted that the court cannot certify Rana's extradition unless there is probable cause to believe he committed the offences for which extradition is sought. Citing its reasoning in detail, the order states: "Accordingly, the court finds there is

probable cause to believe Rana committed the charged offences as to which extradition has been sought and should be extradited to India under the extradition Treaty between the United States and India." India had filed a complaint on June 10, 2020 seeking the provisional arrest of Rana with a view towards extradition. The Biden administration had supported and approved the extradition of Rana to India. In response to a question, a State Department spokesperson told PTI that "we refer you to the Department of Justice for specifics on this case."

CYCLONE RELIEF



Indian and Myanmar's officials onboard INS Shivalik after three Indian Navy ships carrying relief material reached cyclone-affected Myanmar as part of Operation Karuna, in Yangon, Thursday.

A Catholic priest conducts a commemoration for those who died in the final stages of Sri Lanka's civil war as ethnic Sinhala nationalists shouting anti Tamil slogans and showing placards attempt to disrupt the commemoration in Colombo, Sri Lanka, Thursday.

Climber rescued

Kathmandu: An 84-year-old climber attempting to become the oldest person to summit all the world's highest peaks was rescued Thursday from a mountain in Nepal where he was injured. Spanish climber Carlos Sorria was attempting to scale Mount Dhaulagiri but was hurt on his way to the top. He was flown from the mountain by a rescue helicopter and brought to a hospital in Kathmandu for treatment.

Turkish runoff

Ankara: President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's main challenger in Turkey's presidential race shifted gear and adopted a more nationalist and hard-line stance on Thursday, vowing to send back millions of refugees if he is elected and rejecting any possibility of negotiating for peace with Kurdish militants. Voters in Turkey will head back to the polls on May 28 for a runoff election after neither Erdogan nor his rival, Kemal Kilicdaroglu, won more than 50 per cent of the votes in Sunday's first round.

Water rights

Tehran: Iran's president warned Afghanistan's Taliban rulers on Thursday not to violate water rights of the Iranian people over their shared Helmand River, the state-run IRNA news agency reported. President Ebrahim Raisi said his government is determined to defend Iran's water rights. "We will not allow the rights of our people to be violated," he said and warned the Taliban to take his words seriously, emphasizing the importance of Helmand River, which flows from Afghanistan into Iran.

Surveillance drones

Manila: Australia will provide surveillance drones and other high-tech gear to the Philippine coast guard and is considering whether to take part in joint patrols in the disputed South China Sea, Australia Foreign Minister Penny Wong said on Thursday. Wong, who held talks in Manila with her counterpart, Enrique Manalo, also thanked the Philippine government for its help in the discovery of a ship that sank during World War II in the northern Philippines, killing nearly a thousand Australians "in a very sad chapter in our history."

Countries like Australia, India and Lanka helping to search for 39 crew of sunken Chinese fishing vessel

Beijing, May 18 (PTI): China on Thursday said Australia, India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, the Maldives and the Philippines have extended emergency help to it in the search and rescue of a Chinese fishing vessel with 39 crew members onboard that sank in the Indian Ocean. A spokesperson for the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) told the Chinese state-run Xinhua news agency on Thursday that based on drift modelling, a remote 12,000 square km zone has been identified to search for the vessel. A Chinese deep-sea fishing vessel Lupeng Yuanyu 028 capsized on Tuesday in the central Indian Ocean, which has so far left 39 peo-

ple on board missing, including 17 Chinese mariners, 17 Indonesian mariners and five Philippine mariners. None of the crew has yet been found. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told the media here on Thursday that "as we speak, the search and rescue operation is still underway". He said the rescue operation has drawn close attention from across the region. "Countries such as Australia, India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, the Maldives and the Philippines have extended emergency assistance and sent sympathies for the Chinese boat and crew", he said, providing an update about the search operations.

UK PM Sunak clinches 'historic' Hiroshima Accord on Japan visit



British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, center right, and his wife Akshata Murty disembark their plane as they arrive at the airport, in Tokyo, Japan, ahead of the G-7 Summit, Thursday.

London, May 18 (PTI):

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and his wife Akshata Murty arrived in Japan on Thursday for the G7 Summit, on the sidelines of which he clinched a new so-called

"Hiroshima Accord" for greater UK-Japan economic, security and technology collaboration. This new UK-Japan global strategic partnership is being seen as a counterbalance to Chinese dominance in the region and also includes a

Biden consults with Kishida ahead of Group of Seven summit

Hiroshima, May 18 (AP):

President Joe Biden arrived in Japan on Thursday and greeted Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida by saying, "When our countries stand together, we stand stronger" a sign of how the economic and national security alliance between the two countries has grown.



President Joe Biden, left, shakes hands with Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida ahead of a bilateral meeting in Hiroshima, Japan, Thursday.

The US president began his remarks by noting that Kishida said during a January Washington visit that the world faced one of the "most complex" security environments in recent history. "I couldn't agree with you more," Biden said. "We very much welcome that the cooperation has evolved in leaps and

bounds," Kishida told Biden about Japan's relationship with the US in their meeting ahead of the Group of Seven summit that begins Friday. The

Kishida family's home city of Hiroshima will host the gathering of major industrialised nations known as the G-7. The setting of Hiroshima, where the US

dropped the first nuclear bomb in 1945 during World War II, carries newfound resonance. The US, Japan and their allies are strategising on how to deal with Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine as well as concerns about the increased cadence of North Korea's ballistic missile tests and Iran's nuclear programme. Biden is appearing on the world stage while trying to manage a divide back in the US on how to raise the debt limit. He opted to cut short what was supposed to be an eight-day trip to Asia, so he can return to Washington to try to avoid a potentially catastrophic default in June that could ripple across the global economy.

Indian-origin police officer becomes highest-ranking South Asian woman in NYPD

New York, May 18 (PTI): Captain Pratima Bhullar Maldonado, an Indian-origin police officer, has become the highest-ranking South Asian woman in the New York Police Department, after her recent promotion to the rank of Captain. Maldonado runs the 102nd Police Precinct in South Richmond Hill, Queens. She was promoted to the rank of Captain last month, CBS News reported on Monday.

of my life in this precinct when I was growing up," Maldonado said. South Richmond Hill is home to one of the largest Sikh communities in the country. "Going to the same Gurdwara that I did as a child, and now as a captain, I love it," Maldonado said as she visited the gurdwara. She told CBS 2 her new role will help with community policing. "There are language barriers, people who can't speak the language, English is a second language. I've seen that firsthand growing up here," she said.

The mother of four was born in Punjab and lived there until she was 9 before moving to Queens in New York. "It feels like coming home. I spent more than 25 years

Russia fires 30 cruise missiles at Ukrainian targets

Kyiv, May 18 (AP): Russia fired 30 cruise missiles against different parts of Ukraine early Thursday in the latest nighttime test of Ukrainian air defences, which shot down 29 of them, officials said. One person died and two were wounded by a Russian missile that got through and struck an industrial building in the southern region of Odesa, according to Serhiy Bratchuk, a

spokesperson for the region's military administration. Loud explosions were heard in Kyiv as the Kremlin's forces targeted the capital for the ninth time this month in a clear escalation after weeks of lull and ahead of a much-anticipated Ukrainian counteroffensive using newly supplied advanced Western weapons. Debris fell on two Kyiv districts, starting a fire at a garage complex.

Israel deploys heavy police presence ahead of contentious Jerusalem march

Jerusalem, May 18 (AP): Israel deployed over 2,000 police on Thursday for a march by flag-waving Jewish nationalists through the main Palestinian thoroughfare in Jerusalem's Old City, a contentious event that comes as tensions are already running high. Authorities say the beefed up security is a determined effort to ensure the march passes without violence. Police have decided to allow the thousands of marchers to take the traditional route through the Old City's Damascus Gate despite an uptick in Israeli-Palestinian violence over the past year and heavy fighting between Israel and Palestinian militants in Gaza last week.

Early Thursday, hundreds of Jews came to a sensitive Jerusalem site holy to both Jews and Muslims as part of the day's activities, visits the Palestinians view as provocative.

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कार्यालय, नगर पालिक निगम, भिलाई, जिला-दुर्ग. जॉन क्रमांक- 05. E mail:- zonefivebhlal@gmail.com. क्र.सो.क.सि./जोन क्र. 5/2023/452/86. भिलाई, दिनांक 17/05/2023. ई-निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना. आयुक्त नगर पालिक निगम भिलाई द्वारा एकीकृत पंजीयन प्रणाली अंतर्गत सखम श्रेणी में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों निम्नलिखित निर्माण कार्य हेतु ई-निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है:-

कार्यालय नगर पालिक निगम भिलाईपुर (छ.ग.) द्वितीय ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना. क्र. 65/न.पा.नि./सीवरेज/2023-24. दिनांक 18/05/2023. एकीकृत पंजीयन प्रणाली अंतर्गत सखम श्रेणी में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से निम्नलिखित निर्माण कार्य हेतु ऑनलाईन (Online) निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है:-

GOVERNMENT OF CHHATTISGARH, WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT. OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, WATER RESOURCES DIVISION No. 1 AMBIKAPUR, DISTT. SURGUJA (C.G.). e-Procurement Tender Notice. eProcurement Portal: https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in (FIRST-CALL). NIT NO. 01/SAC/ 2023-24 DATED - 16.05.2023 Online Tenders are invited for the following works up to 06.06.2023. (17.30 hours IST).

Government of India. Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions. Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances. Inviting new name and logo for Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS). Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) is an online platform available to the citizens 24x7 to lodge their grievances to the public authorities on any subject related to service delivery. It is a single portal connected to all the Ministries/Departments of Government of India and States. CPGRAMS is also accessible to the citizens through standalone mobile application downloadable through Google Play store and mobile application integrated with UMANG.



CENTRAL Chronicle

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NCB's Integrity at Stake

Rebuilding Trust in the Wake of the Wankhede Scandal

The recent revelations surrounding Indian Revenue Service officer Sameer Wankhede have sent shockwaves through the nation. According to the FIR registered by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Wankhede and his associates allegedly demanded a staggering Rs 25 crore bribe to spare Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan's son, Aryan Khan, from being implicated in the 2021 drugs-on-cruise case. The FIR further exposes the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) team's alleged misconduct during the raid on the cruise ship, allowing the drug suppliers and possessors to escape unpunished. This tainted officer, who previously held the position of NCB's Zonal Director in Mumbai, is also under scrutiny for possessing disproportionate assets and providing misleading information regarding his expenditures on foreign trips. The CBI's decision to book Wankhede and others comes after an investigation conducted by a Special Enquiry Team (SET), led by a Deputy Director General of the NCB. The SET's report has laid bare the brazen attempts made by Wankhede to extort crores of rupees from Aryan's family. This sordid saga has severely tarnished the credibility of the NCB, the pivotal agency responsible for enforcing drug laws in India and collaborating with international bodies such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. In light of these distressing revelations, numerous pertinent questions arise: Did Wankhede's superiors turn a blind eye to his misconduct? Were some of them complicit in his illegal activities? Which politicians provided the patronage that emboldened him to commit these offenses? For the NCB, entrusted with the crucial task of detecting and disrupting organized drug trafficking groups, it is imperative to swiftly address the lapses within its ranks. A comprehensive investigation into the Wankhede case is indispensable to rectify the course and restore public faith. Sending a resolute message of zero tolerance for corruption can serve as a deterrent to both domestic and international drug cartels. Furthermore, the bureau must prioritize capturing the major players in the drug trade. By realigning its priorities, the NCB can make a substantial impact on the ground and bring about meaningful change. In order to restore public trust and uphold its integrity, the NCB must take immediate action to address the allegations against Wankhede and any potential complicity among his superiors. This includes a thorough internal investigation, followed by appropriate disciplinary measures and legal consequences if found guilty. Transparency and accountability must be the guiding principles during this process. Additionally, the NCB should focus its resources on dismantling major drug cartels and disrupting their operations. By targeting the root causes and major players in the drug trade, the bureau can have a more significant impact on curbing drug trafficking and safeguarding society. This requires enhanced intelligence-gathering, coordination with international agencies, and a proactive approach to identifying and apprehending high-profile drug traffickers. Moreover, there is a pressing need for systemic reforms within the NCB to prevent such instances of corruption in the future. Strengthening internal oversight mechanisms, implementing rigorous ethics training programs, and fostering a culture of integrity are essential steps to ensure the bureau operates with utmost professionalism and accountability. The Wankhede scandal serves as a wake-up call for the NCB and the larger law enforcement community. It highlights the critical importance of maintaining the highest standards of ethics and integrity within our institutions. By taking swift and decisive action, the NCB can demonstrate its commitment to upholding justice, eradicating corruption, and effectively combating the drug menace.

Balancing Access and Risks

The Debate over Children's Smartphone Use

In today's digital age, many parents struggle with the question of when to allow their children to have their own smartphones. With concerns about the cognitive and social impacts of early technology access, parents worry about their children's exposure to addictive social media, cyberbullying, and inappropriate content. A new global study on the impact of growing up with smartphones confirms the downside of an early digital embrace and highlights the need for comprehensive solutions to address these risks. According to the study, which examined the mental well-being of those aged 18 to 24 years in relation to the age at which they first got their own smartphone or tablet, delaying ownership of such a device could result in better mental health. Suicidal thoughts, aggression, detachment, and hallucinations declined most significantly with the older age of first smartphone ownership for females, and to a lesser degree for males. However, researchers note that it may be more important to study what children are doing with technology, as the issue is not with smartphones themselves, but with their use, which is largely focused on social media. This focus on social media has raised concerns about Big Tech's reluctance to implement safeguards. Last year, a survey found that smartphone use among Indian children in the age group of 10-14 years was seven percent above the international average. In 2021, Facebook's own research highlighted mental health issues among teenage girls attributed to the Instagram app. These findings underscore the need for stronger guardrails to protect young users. While the responsibility for children's smartphone use falls largely on parents, there is also a need for broader action. Governments, schools, and tech companies all have a role to play in promoting responsible digital citizenship and protecting children from the risks of early technology exposure. This can include initiatives like age-appropriate digital literacy programs, parental controls, and stronger regulatory frameworks. Ultimately, the decision of when to allow children to have their own smartphones is a difficult one that requires careful consideration. However, the findings of this study provide important insights into the risks of early access to technology and the need for comprehensive solutions to address these risks. By working together, parents, educators, and policymakers can create a safer, more responsible digital environment for our children.

Central Chronicle invites articles, write-ups, and comments on a wide range of issues for our editorial page. Submissions should be between 800-900 words in length. In addition, we welcome letters to the editor for this page. While letters may be edited for clarity, we aim to preserve the integrity of the original message, and ask that they be kept to around 50-60 words. Submissions can be sent via email@editorcentralchronicle@gmail.com.

CULTURAL PROCESSION



A man dressed as a Kathakali artist participates in a cultural procession as part of the 58th state conference of the Kerala Secretariat Association, in Thiruvananthapuram, Thursday.

Humans Are Responsible For 99% Of The Endangered Species

**PROF. SUNIL GOYAL**

National Endangered Species Day was created on 19th May (third Friday) to keep us aware of how fragile the existence of some animals, plants, and insects is and, most importantly, reminds us to take the time to learn about why it's so important to protect endangered species from any further harm. It's so important to educate ourselves on what endangered species mean to our planet to better protect those species of Earth and support the populations of the non-endangered species that remain.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) currently lists over 35,000 species as threatened. IUCN has assessed 134,425 species, which means that over 25% of the assessed species assessed have been listed as threatened. Their current goal is to assess 160,000 species globally. IUCN lists around 10% of the endangered species as critically endangered. Over 3,400 of the species on the IUCN Red List are listed as critically endangered. Critically endangered species are also considered to be "probably extinct", but further evidence is required to prove the species is extinct. Some critically endangered species may be extinct in the wild but still exist in captivity. Humans are di-

rectly responsible for a huge jump in the rate of species endangerment and extinction. According to WWF, species are becoming extinct at a rate at least 100-1,000 times higher than what occurs in nature without human involvement or intervention. Humans impact ecosystems through farming and development, limiting the places that many species can safely live. Hunting and the introduction of non-native species have also proven to be detrimental to native wildlife populations. Almost 99% of endangered species today were put in that position by humans. The fact that around 99% of the species alive that are endangered were made endangered by humans is shocking. Whether through pollution, climate change, land development, hunting, or other ways, humans were a direct cause of why each of these species ended up in the position of being endangered. North and Central America are home to some of the most critically endangered species that have been made endangered by human activities. Of the species that have become critically endangered, multiple species are native to North and Central America. This includes hammerhead sharks, macaws, some species of bumblebees, North Atlantic right whales, Vaquita dol-

phins, and red wolves. IUCN is working toward better resources for tracking species reintroductions and recoveries. In 2021, IUCN introduced its Green Status of Species proposition. In their words, this initiative aims to create a global standard for measuring species recovery and assessing conservation impact. This initiative will allow for better monitoring of how successful species are after being reintroduced into the natural environments they have been extirpated from.

The number of threatened species is increasing. But while animals like critically endangered orangutans or humpback dolphins are getting a lot of attention, the number of threatened mammals has not been rising as fast as in other animal classes. The number of threatened mammals (defined by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources as species listed as either critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable on the Red List) increased by only 22 percent between 2007 and 2022. During the same time period, the number of endangered insects rose by 276 percent, the number of endangered molluscs (a class including snails, slugs, mussels, squid and worms) rose by 145 percent, while endangered fish species increased by 196 percent and the number of endangered reptiles even rose by 336 percent. While the reasons for the endangerment of insects and fish are well known, less is written about threats to reptiles and molluscs. According to the IUCN, many reptile species are concentrated in rainforest regions and are therefore threatened by deforestation. Furthermore, the species are particularly sensitive to environmental changes, including climate change. With molluscs, endangered species are mainly those

who live on land and in freshwater. They are threatened by habitat destruction or are being pushed out by invasive species, according to the American Institute of Biological Sciences. The IUCN updates its Red List several times a year. In the latest version for 2022, 16,900 animal species were listed as threatened - more than double the number of 2007.

The World Wildlife Federation (WWF) has shown progress in supporting endangered species populations via the promotion of policy changes, legislation, and education that support ending wildlife crime. Through partnerships with companies and governments and active lobbying and education, WWF has shown progress toward eliminating wildlife crimes, like poaching and the ivory trade. Thanks to their efforts, governments and citizens are becoming empowered to protect some of the most at-risk wildlife left in the world, including African elephants, fin whales, and multiple species of sea turtles. We have a responsibility to our planet to support conservation and make choices that protect the species living here. Otherwise, we will continue to lose species at alarming rates. With every species we lose, more and more species become at risk. The more we lose, the more we risk, and the more we risk, the more we lose. The cycle will continue without everyone's efforts to sustain and improve what we have.

(Author is an Eminent Social Scientist, Columnist, and presently posted as Dean and Chairman of Board of Studies at Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University of Social Sciences, Dr. Ambedkar Nagar (MHOW), Madhya Pradesh. Email gasspub@gmail.com. Views are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Safety Negligence Exposed

The tragic incident in Malappuram that resulted in the loss of 22 lives has brought to light serious lapses on the part of the state maritime board. The absence of proper safety equipment is deeply concerning and reflects poorly on the responsible authorities. Despite numerous previous incidents, the matter of safety seems to be treated with negligence. Such lackadaisical attitude and carelessness will only contribute to further loss of lives. Urgent and sincere attention must be given to address these issues and prioritize the safety of individuals involved in maritime activities. It is imperative that the necessary measures are taken to prevent future mishaps and safeguard the lives of those at sea.

Manoj Kumar, Raipur

Hijacked Wrestlers' Protest

The ongoing protest by wrestlers at Jantar Mantar has regrettably been taken over by politicians and their followers. It is important to remember that our country is governed by the rule of law and the Constitution, rather than the desires of any specific community or group. As the authorities have filed FIRs and initiated an investigation into allegations of sexual harassment, it is crucial to allow the legal process to unfold. Let the law take its course and ensure a fair and impartial examination of the allegations. It is essential to uphold the principles of justice and maintain the integrity of our legal system.

Sam Dizosa, New Delhi

Urgent Need

India's battle against drug trafficking has reached alarming proportions, with a surge in sea-based smuggling operations. Despite the government's ambitious goal of achieving a drug-free nation by 2047, the current situation paints a starkly different picture. The root cause lies in the fact that individuals rarely choose addiction willingly; instead, they turn to drugs as a coping mechanism due to the challenges life presents. The heart-wrenching reality is that vulnerable youth are falling prey to this menace. To combat this crisis effectively, the government must prioritize the enhancement of socio-economic conditions and job creation, offering a glimmer of hope for a brighter future.

MK Nair, Raipur

Combating Hypertension: Unveiling the Silent Killer Through Awareness and Healthy Living

**Dr. Krishna Kumar, Vepakomma**

Hypertension, often referred to as the silent killer, is a medical condition characterized by persistently high blood pressure levels. It poses a significant risk for cardiovascular diseases such as heart attacks, strokes, and heart failure. Unfortunately, hypertension often goes undiagnosed, leading to adverse health outcomes. The prevalence of hypertension is alarming, affecting approximately 4 in 10 adults over the age of 25, with an additional 1 in 5 individuals

having prehypertension. According to global health survey reports, hypertension has been the leading cause of death and disability-adjusted life years since 1990. It is projected that the number of people with hypertension will increase by 15-20%, reaching close to 150 crores by 2025.

World Hypertension Day is an important annual event that highlights the significance of cardiovascular health and the need to prevent, detect, and manage hypertension. Celebrated on May 17th each year, it serves as a reminder of the impact of high blood pressure on individuals and communities worldwide. The theme for World Hypertension Day 2023 is "Measure Your Blood Pressure Accurately, Control It, Live Longer." This theme aims to combat low awareness rates, particularly in low to middle income areas, and emphasizes the importance of accurate blood pressure measurement methods. By raising awareness, promoting healthy lifestyle choices, and encouraging

regular blood pressure monitoring, we can work towards reducing the burden of hypertension-related complications.

Hypertension is a global public health epidemic, with India facing a significant challenge due to its widespread prevalence. In India, approximately one in four men and one in five women have hypertension, totaling over a billion people affected by the condition. This condition extends beyond India, affecting people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and income levels worldwide. It is a growing concern, particularly as individuals age. If left untreated, hypertension can lead to severe cardiovascular disorders, including myocardial infarction, stroke, and heart failure.

It is crucial to regularly monitor blood pressure to prevent the growing menace of high blood pressure and associated diseases. Stress, obesity, poor dietary habits, and a sedentary lifestyle are some of the main reasons behind hypertension, especially

among young people. The age bracket affected by hypertension has widened, making it essential to raise awareness about this health issue.

Hypertension is often called the silent killer because it can silently harm the body for years without noticeable symptoms. It can run in families and tends to affect men more than women. In recent years, lifestyle changes in urban areas, such as desk jobs, unhealthy eating habits, increased alcohol and cigarette consumption, and rising stress levels, have contributed to hypertension among younger individuals.

Raising awareness about hypertension and promoting healthy lifestyle choices empowers individuals to take control of their blood pressure and reduce the risk of complications. Regular exercise, a balanced diet, and an active lifestyle play a crucial role in managing hypertension and maintaining overall heart health. Together, we can combat this widespread health issue and work towards a

healthier future.

The good news is that hypertension can be effectively managed through simple lifestyle changes. By incorporating regular exercise, adopting a nutritious diet, and avoiding a sedentary and unhealthy lifestyle, individuals can control their blood pressure and improve their overall well-being.

It is important to note that hypertension is a manageable condition that can be controlled through lifestyle modifications and, in some cases, minor medical intervention. World Hypertension Day serves as a platform to raise awareness about the significance of early detection, accurate measurement, and effective management of hypertension. By making informed decisions and embracing a healthier lifestyle, individuals and communities can reduce the impact of hypertension and strive for better health outcomes.

Professor & Principal (Retd.), F4 Classic Avenue, Rajeev Nagar, Hyderabad. Views are professional

BRIEF

Food delivery



New Delhi: On-demand convenience platform Swiggy's food delivery business has turned profitable, making it one of the very few global players in the sector to achieve such a feat in less than nine years since inception, company CEO and Co-founder Sriharsha Majety said on Thursday. Bullish on India's journey of eating out and food delivery, Majety, in a blog-post, said, Swiggy is "very sanguine about the growth potential over the next two decades" and would continue to drive further growth in food delivery. "Our sharp focus on innovation, coupled with strong execution has led to yet another milestone. As of March 2023, Swiggy's food delivery business has turned profitable (after factoring in all corporate costs; excluding employee stock option costs)," he wrote.

Budget presentation



Gangtok: Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang on Wednesday presented a budget of Rs 12,146.5 crore for the 2023-24 fiscal, with focus on skilling youths and boosting essential civic facilities. Tamang said that against the gross expenditure provision of Rs 12,146.5 crore, there will be a net outgo of Rs 11,806.5 crore in the current fiscal year. Highlighting the salient features of the budget, he said the state government has decided to clear pending liabilities of the previous dispensation. Sikkim has allocated adequate funds for the Skilled Youth Start-Up Scheme in order to enable the youth to become self-reliant and independent, the chief minister said.

Convergence



New Delhi: Labour Minister Bhupender Yadav has stressed upon the importance of the convergence among different organisations under the Ministry of Labour and Employment, a release said. Yadav at the concluding session of a two-day event at Noida said that synergy among all the organizations of the Ministry at the grass-roots level will help in bringing about a holistic approach towards welfare of the labour in the country.

DPIIT takes up startup taxation issue with FinMin: Secretary

New Delhi, May 18:

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has taken up the taxation issue of startups with the finance ministry, a top government official has said. "Startup India does provide such policy advocacy, particularly on the taxation issue. We have been taking that particular issue that many startups are worried about funding from non-residents...and the initial valuation of the startup, how that tax is calculated. We have taken it up," DPIIT Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh said here at an industry interaction.

Post the amendments proposed in the Finance



Bill, concerns have been raised over the methodology of calculation of fair market value under the two different laws. The Finance Act, 2023, has amended Section 56(2)(viib) of the I-T Act, thereby bringing overseas investment in unlisted startups, under the tax net. The Income Tax de-

partment is expected to soon come out with certain draft rules to specify the class of investors and norms of valuation of foreign investment in unlisted companies. The modification in valuation rules is needed as I-T Act and FEMA provide different methodologies for calculating the FMV of shares of unlisted companies. The startup and venture capital industry has sought exemption for certain overseas investor classes. However, no tax would be levied on investments in startups, which meet the prescribed norms and are recognised by the DPIIT. Further, the secretary suggested the captains of the industry to mentor startups in a struc-

tured manner. On a question related to delay in getting manufacturing licenses to defence units, he said that the defence industry and some other strategic sectors are few segments where license permit raj remains. "And the fact that you still have to run around (to get a license) that way shows why the license permit raj has to be dismantled... In this sector, we have found significant delays. Even in my own department, I have seen cases taking several months for the issue of licenses," he said, adding one of the reasons is that it requires clearance from the home ministry which tends to take time, particularly, the security clearances.

India's customs duties on most items low: Piyush Goyal

New Delhi, May 18:

The Customs duties of India are "very" often misconstrued to be high on most items but in reality, they are low, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has said. He said that the duties on technological items that are helping the Indian economy grow are very low. Actual applied rates of tariffs are lower than the agreed bound rates at WTO (World Trade Organization), Goyal told reporters on Tuesday after the 1st India-EU Trade & Technology Council (TTC) meeting in Brussels, Belgium.

Goyal said that the TTC is helpful as it is supplementing the free trade agreement negotiations and the agreement



will make India-EU relationship the defining partnership of the century. "India's tariffs are very often misconstrued to be very high on most items, raw materials, intermediates but in reality the duties are very low," he said. Goyal also said that India is engaging with the EU on Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) as it is not the EU's intention to create a barrier to trade but to find a way forward towards sustainability as

part of collective efforts. He stressed that India and the EU are working together to find the right solution to the CBAM issue. On the trade agreement with the EU, he said that the negotiations are progressing well. Goyal also held a bilateral meeting with the European Commissioner for Internal Trade, Thierry Breton. On the suggestion of Breton for exploring engagement in the space sector, Goyal informed that India is amongst the major powers in the space sector and that both sides can have deeper engagements in the sector.

Breton informed that the EU is working on new Digital Services Act to which Goyal said that both sides can collaborate further given India's status as an IT giant.

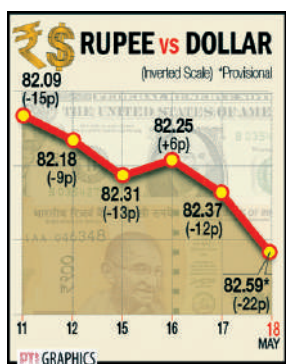
Rupee falls 22 paise to close at 82.59 against US dollar

Mumbai, May 18:

The rupee fell 22 paise to close at 82.59 (provisional) against the US currency on Thursday, weighed down by a strong greenback in the overseas market and a negative trend in domestic equities.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 82.36 against the dollar, and finally settled at 82.59 (provisional), down 22 paise from its previous close. During the day, the rupee touched a high of 82.35 and a low of 82.66 against the greenback. On Wednesday, the rupee had settled at 82.37 against the dollar.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, rose 0.21 per cent to 103.10. Brent



crude futures, the global oil benchmark, advanced 0.66 per cent to USD 76.45 per barrel. Anuj Choudhary - Research Analyst, Sharekhan by BNP Paribas said the rupee depreciated as the US Dollar rose to a seven-week high amid optimism over debt ceiling talks. Overnight gains in crude oil prices also weighed on the domestic currency.

Amway launches Artistry Skin Nutrition

New Delhi, May 18:

Advancing towards its philosophy of delivering nutrients for the skin, Amway India, one of the leading FMCG Direct Selling companies in the nation, has launched an exclusive range that transcends the skincare needs of all. The Balancing and Hydrating ranges introduced by Artistry Skin Nutrition™ showcases a distinctive blend of ingredients that collaborate to balance and hydrate the skin, providing a refreshing and youthful appearance. Enriched with plant-based botanicals from Nutrilite™ farms, the Hydrating and Balancing ranges are clinically tested with a skin care line,



with no animal testing and free from parabens, phthalates, sulfate surfactants and animal derived ingredients. Powered by cutting-edge skin science these ranges are infused with exclusive Skincare Complex that boosts skin's natural defense system by 350% to help delay the visible signs of aging.

Markets give up intra-day gains; fall for 3rd day

Mumbai, May 18:

Equity benchmark indices pared their intra-day gains and ended lower on Thursday, pulled down by index majors ITC and State Bank of India after their fourth quarter earnings failed to cheer investors. After trading in the green for most part of the day, the 30-share BSE Sensex declined 128.90 points or 0.21 per cent to settle at 61,431.74. During the day, it hit a high of 61,955.90 and a low of 61,349.34. The NSE Nifty fell 51.80 points or 0.28 per cent to end at 18,129.95. Among the Sensex firms, ITC, SBI, Titan, Power Grid, Larsen & Toubro, Tata Motors, Hindustan Unilever and UltraTech Cement were the major



laggards. Shares of ITC fell 2 per cent even as the company reported a 22.66 per cent rise in consolidated net profit at Rs 5,225.02 crore in the fourth quarter ended March 2023. SBI declined 1.77 per cent despite the country's largest bank reporting an 83 per cent jump in net profit at Rs 16,694.51 crore for the fourth quarter of 2022-23

Automobile dealers' body seeks cut in GST on two-wheelers from 28 pc to 18 pc

New Delhi, May 18:

Automobile dealers' body FADA on Thursday sought a cut in GST on two-wheelers from 28 per cent to 18 per cent, saying the segment being essential for millions should not be categorised as luxury item. The industry body said it has appealed to the finance minister, chair of the GST Council, all GST Council members, the ministry of heavy industries, which supervises the automobile sector, and the ministry of road transport & highways. This timely and decisive intervention would help in making two-wheelers more affordable, reviving demand and reinvigorating an industry that has seen a significant slump in



sales over the past few years, the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) said in a statement. "The two-wheeler industry is at a critical juncture, grappling with unprecedented challenges such as rising inflation, stringent emission norms and the post Covid-19 effects. Now is the opportune moment for the GST

Govt to bring new scheme for distributed renewable energy application, says RK Singh

New Delhi, May 18:

Union Power Minister RK Singh said the government will bring a scheme for promoting distributed solar and wind energy applications. Distributed solar or wind energy is not connected to the grid and provides power supply generated through these clean sources in a particular area.

Grid-scale solar and wind energy are connected with the inter-state power transmission system. "We came out with a scheme for solar street lights, rooftop solar...we need to expand this scheme...we are coming out with a new scheme for distributed (solar, wind) applications. That means we want to expand this," Singh said while addressing the National Summit



on Powering Sustainable Livelihoods here organised by Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) and Villgro Innovations Foundation's Powering Livelihoods initiative.

The minister explained that there is already a lot of work happening on the ground and the new scheme could benefit lakhs of families across the country. "We will, however, need large scale-manufacturing and standardising of distributed applications of renewable ener-

gy to lower prices and expand the sector. We have seen the potential of grid-scale solar power. India will scale up distributed applications of renewable energy for livelihoods," he said.

Just like India has a large programme on rooftop solar and solar irrigation, the country will create a large programme for DRE (distributed renewable energy) livelihoods, the minister explained. The minister also said that the peak power demand touched a record level of 221 GW on Wednesday. The minister said that "today, the (power) demand touched 221GW. That is the largest level (of power demand). The (power) demand has been growing at 10 per cent. Last year, it was eight per cent.

Dwarka Expressway will be completed in next 3-4 months: Nitin Gadkari

New Delhi, May 18:

Dwarka Expressway, India's first elevated urban expressway, being constructed at an estimated cost of Rs 10,000 crore, as part of the Delhi decongestion plan, will be completed in the next 3-4 months, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said on Thursday.

The Expressway will be completed in four packages, he added. The road transport minister said Dwarka Expressway will have a fully-automated tolling system and the entire project will be equipped with an intelligent transportation system (ITS). Dwarka Expressway starts near Shiv Murti on NH-8 and terminates near Kherki Daula Toll plaza on NH-8. The total length of Dwarka Expressway is 29 km, out of which 18.9 km length



Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari with Union MoS for Road Transport and Highways VK Singh, Delhi Lt. Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena and others during his visit to inspect the construction work of Dwarka Expressway, in Gurugram, Thursday, May 18.

falls in Haryana, while the remaining 10.1 km is in Delhi. It will provide connectivity to Indira Gandhi International Airport from Dwarka side through Dwarka Expressway. In ad-

Coal production grows 8.5 pc to 73 MT in Apr: Coal Ministry

Despatch rise 11.66 pc to 80.35 MT

New Delhi, May 18:

India's coal production rose by 8.5 per cent to 73.14 million tonnes (MT) during April 2023, according to the ministry of coal. In April 2022, the country's overall coal production was at 67.20 MT, as per the ministry data. India achieved 94.89 per cent of the 77.08 MT production target for April 2023, the data showed. Coal India along with its subsidiaries produced 57.57 MT coal, up 7.67 per cent over 53.47 MT in April 2022. The coal production of Singareni Collieries Company Ltd (SCL) rose by 4.77 per cent to 5.57 MT, from 5.32 MT in the same month a year ago. While the production from other captive mines was at 10 MT, against 8.41 MT in April 2022, registering a rise of 18.93 per cent.

Bank of Baroda Q4 net profit zooms 168 pc; sets aside Rs 500 cr for Go First exposure

Mumbai, May 18:

State-owned Bank of Baroda on Tuesday reported a 168 per cent jump in its March quarter net profit at Rs 4,775 crore, helped by decline in money set aside for loan losses.

The lender's net profit for the full financial year 2022-23 also nearly doubled to Rs 14,110 crore. In the reporting quarter, its core net interest income grew 33.8 per cent to Rs 11,525 crore, aided by a growth in advances of nearly 19 per cent and an expansion in the net interest margin (NIM) to 3.53 per cent against 3.07 per cent in the year-ago period. The bank's fee income stood at Rs 1,714 crore, up 4.6 per cent from the year-ago period's Rs 1,638 crore.

Its managing director and chief executive Sanjiv Chadha told reporters that he was himself surprised with the higher NIMs, and will aim to protect the 3.5 per cent level in FY24.

The bank is aiming for a loan growth of 13-14 per cent in FY24, which will include 11-13 per cent growth in the corporate advances, officials said. In the fourth quarter of FY23, the bank's overall provisions for bad debts decreased by 94 per cent to Rs 320 crore as against Rs 5,200 crore in the year-ago period. Chadha said the credit cost for FY23 came at 0.5 per cent, much below the 1 per cent expectation, and the bank will strive to keep it under 1 per cent in the long term as well.

OPPO announces the launch of F23 5G

Mumbai, May 18:

OPPO, the leading global smart devices brand, announces the launch of its latest smartphone, the OPPO F23 5G. The device will be available at Rs 24,999, from May 18, 2023 at 12AM, through the OPPO Store, on Amazon, and at mainline retail outlets. Recent research by OPPO & Counterpoint indicated that 3 out of 4 people in India have Nomophobia--the fear of being left without a phone--triggered mostly by low/dead battery. The study also revealed that 46% of respondents charge their phones twice daily, 92% use power-saving mode to deal with battery discharge issues, and 60% of smartphone users will buy a new phone if their current one does not have a good battery. Damyant Khanoria, Chief



Marketing Officer, OPPO, said, "At OPPO, we understand that nomophobia, or the fear of being without a mobile phone or being unable to use it, is a real concern for many smartphone users. With the OPPO F23 5G, we're proud to offer innovative technologies like Battery Health Engine and SuperVOOC fast charging, which provides reliable and convenient battery performance for a seamless experience. So, you can focus on enjoying the things you love to do with your phone without worrying about its battery life."



Mrunal Thakur gears up to make her grand Cannes Film Festival debut

Actress Mrunal Thakur is all set to attend and make her much awaited debut at the prestigious Cannes Film Festival and will be in the French Riviera from May 17-19.

Talking about her Cannes debut, Mrunal said: "I am thrilled to be attending the Cannes Film Festival for the first time. It is an honour to represent Grey Goose at such a prestigious platform."

"I am looking forward to interacting with global filmmakers, exploring new opportunities, and showcasing the talent that Indian cinema has to offer."

Mrunal is currently filming for her next major south project, 'Nani 30', and will soon be seen in the lead role in films including 'Pooja Meri Jaan', 'Pippa' and 'Lust Stories 2'.

Niharika NM to be at Cannes again: I must be doing something right with my work

Content creator Niharika NM is all set to attend the prestigious Cannes Film Festival for the second time in a row. Walking multiple carpets, the influencer will be exclusively showcasing the designs of one of India's leading designers.

Niharika plans to showcase her high-octane fashion prowess at the film festival. The creator will be exclusively wearing designs from one of India's leading fashion designers whose ensembles created quite an uproar at the Oscars 2023.

Along with this, after styling Niharika for her debut on 'Koffee With Karan', celebrated fashion stylist, Anaita Shroff Adajania will be once again styling the creator for one of the red carpet looks.

Niharika will be seen attending multiple red carpets flaunting the ace designer's empowering designs, aligning right with the vision of the creator. With the likes of Anushka Sharma, Manushi Chhillar, Aditi Rao Hydari, and Vijay Varma among others, Niharika will be one of the few Indian content creators to walk the red carpets in the French Riviera.

Commenting on being a part of the Cannes Film Festival for the



second time, Niharika said: "The first time I went to the Cannes Film Festival, it was a surreal feeling. It was almost like I was dreaming. However, this year makes me believe that I must be doing something right with my work that's been acknowledged twice in a row."

"It is a big opportunity for me and also adds the responsibility to keep up the good work so that I get more chances to represent my country at a global level. I am grateful to the film festival organisers and I hope to be a part of it for the years to come."

Actress Mandakini talks about her Bollywood debut

This Sunday, The Kapil Sharma Show on Sony Entertainment Television will host the divas of the 80's - Sangeeta Bijlani, Varsha Usgaonkar, and Mandakini. Celebrating this bygone era with a lot of galore, this episode promises to take you down the memory lane as the yesteryear actors will share lesser-known anecdotes about their life and career in Bollywood with Kapil's atrangi parivaar.

Amidst a fun conversation, curious host Kapil Sharma will be seen asking Mandakini about how she landed her debut film in Raj Kapoor's directorial 'Ram Teri Ganga Maaili'. Talking about being lucky, Mandakini will share, "It's a very long story, and I'm not sure how to summarise it, but as soon as we met, I got the film. It was something I never imagined. After the auditions, I went back home because the screen test was over and there was no response. But then he (Raj Kapoor) searched for me through various sources, he called his distributors and looked for me in Meerut. But they did find me, and that's how I got my first film. It felt like the role was meant for me and was waiting for me."

Tune in to watch The

Kapil Sharma Show every Saturday and Sunday at 9:30 PM only on Sony Entertainment Television



TV actors' summer skincare secrets revealed!

The summer season has arrived, and with it comes the opportunity to soak up the sun and enjoy the sand. However, taking care of our skin is important to prevent it from becoming oily, dull, or tanned. To ensure that our skin remains healthy, glowing, and hydrated throughout the summer, &TV artists share their secret skincare routines. These include Neha Joshi (Yashoda, Doosri Maa), Kamna Pathak (Rajesh, Happu Ki Ultan Paltan), and Vidisha Srivastava (Anita Bhabi, Bhabiji Ghar Par Hai). Vidisha Srivastava, aka Anita Bhabi from Bhabiji Ghar Par Hai, shares, "Summertime can be tough on our skin, and with all the heat and sweat, it's important to keep it clean and fussy-



free. That's why I like to use my kind of skincare routine. My go-to remedy for a clean and clear com-

plexion is a simple yet effective face scrub with two tablespoons of sea salt, one tablespoon of fresh lemon juice, and a few drops of olive oil. I apply this scrub to my face at least twice weekly to remove excess dirt and oil, leaving my skin refreshed and rejuvenated. But that's not all! After much sun exposure, I turn to another trusty remedy - washing my face with buttermilk. Not only does it relieve burning skin, but it also lightens the tan, as curd has natural bleaching properties. And don't forget to exfoliate your lips and neck for a complete summer skincare routine! So, there you have it, my secret to clean and healthy skin during the hot summer months. Give it a try, and have a happy, glowing summer!"

World TV premiere of 'Blurr' on May 20

This weekend, get ready to hold your breath and experience a nail-biting thriller as Tapsee Pannu's Blurr is set to have its World Television Premiere this Saturday at 9:30 p.m. on &Pictures. Directed by Ajay Bahl, who has earlier helmed Section 375, Blurr marks Tapsee's first production venture. The film also features a young energetic cast of Gulshan Devaiah and Abhilash Thapliyal.

An official remake of the Spanish film Julia's Eyes, Blurr revolves around Gayatri, portrayed by Tapsee, struggling to solve the mystery behind the death of her visually impaired twin sister, Gautami. It's a race against time for Gayatri as she starts losing her own vision. Will she be able to identify her twin sister's murderer? Or will she perish while being chased? Is there someone of her own who has betrayed her? Blurr takes its viewers on an unpredictable roller coaster trip. The narrative makes surprising turns along with spine-tingling suspense making sure to keep the audience on their toes.

Throughout the movie, Tapsee's performance is nuanced and layered, allowing the audience to see different sides of her character as the story unfolds. Gulshan, who plays Tapsee's husband in the film, is subtle yet powerful, which is a testament to his acting abilities. Abhilash surpasses expecta-



tions whilst portraying his edgy-eccentric character. Waqt se ladkar, kya Gayatri dhund payegi killer? Watch the world television premiere of Blurr this Saturday 9.30pm only on &Pictures.

No energy to be glammed up for my first post as a mother, says Gauahar Khan

Actress Gauahar Khan has shared the first picture with her newborn baby and said that she did not have the energy to glam up for her maiden picture as a mother.

Gauahar took to Instagram, where she shared a picture of herself in an au naturale look. In the image, she is seen holding her newborn son as she smiles for a selfie.

She wrote: "So it's past 12 a.m., past 1 day of my first Mother's Day as a New MoM, n yes I didn't have the energy to be glammed up for my first post as a Mother too, but boy, am I grateful!!!!!! Alhamdulillah, for everything!!!!!! Soooooo special for me. Just holding my baby is my best gift from Allah! Allahumma baarik fihi."

"Every year I wrote a post for all the mothers who have impacted my life, but the most special thing about 2023 Mother's Day for me was my Mom wishing me happy Mother's Day beta!!!!"

It was last week, when Gauahar and her husband Zaid Darbar announced the birth of their first child.

Gauahar shared a post: "Allahumma baarik fihi," she captioned the post.

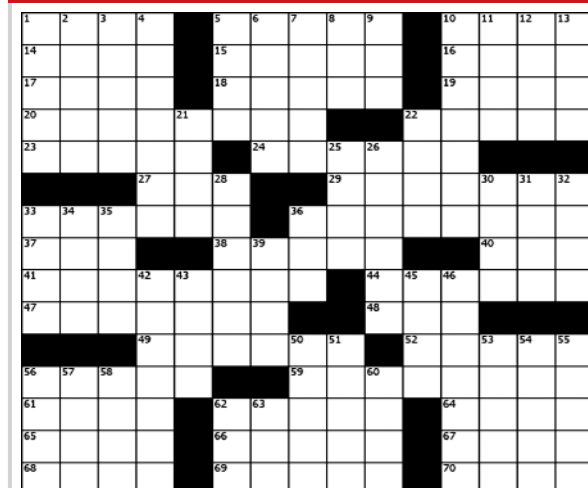
Her post read: "It's a Boy As salaam u alaikum beautiful world, says our bundle of joy. Arrived 10th of May 2023 to make us realise what happiness truly means. Our blessed boy thanks everyone for their love and prayers. Grateful and giggling new parents Zaid and Gauahar."

Gauahar and Zaid got married in December 2020.



CROSSWORD

649



ACROSS

- Model
- Swiftness
- Does sums
- Chooses
- Pseudonym
- Zip
- Terminals (abbr.)
- Big
- Almost closed
- Tedious
- Batter's place
- Fragrance
- Marked down in price (2 wds.)
- Undercover gp.
- Gave medical aid to
- Loafers
- Florida city
- Once called
- Group of rooms
- Sept. follower
- Most transparent
- Boil

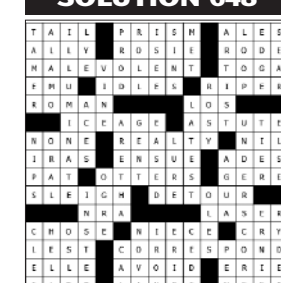
- Continental or Delta
- Tit for
- US rail service
- Large trucks
- Insensitive
- Open-minded
- Deficiency
- Dote on
- Pharaoh's river
- Southern veggie
- Highway divisions
- Over again
- Young adult
- Notions
- Rents

DOWN

- Mails
- Vision related
- Gaze steadily
- Perfume
- Angel's aura
- Texas shrine
- Warning horn
- Children's game
- Vane letters
- Flowering bushes
- vu
- Mild oath
- Bruised
- Agitate
- Earnest request
- RBI, e.g.
- Apprehend
- Concur
- Horn sound

- Engrave with acid
- Escort
- Machu Picchu dweller
- Hero shop
- Malicious look
- Perch
- Operator
- Juneau native
- Edges
- Soothe
- Unending
- Make up for
- "M*A*S*H" locale
- Bangor's state
- Small bay
- Hearty soups
- Curdle
- Lawn tool
- Farm unit
- Not so much
- Baba
- Mom's man

SOLUTION 648



'70 women go missing from Maha every day'

● **Raises security concerns with Fadnavis**

Aurangabad, May 18 (PTI): Leader of Opposition in the Maharashtra Legislative Council Ambadas Danve has claimed that 70 women/girls go missing from the state every day and has asked the government to take steps for the safety and security of women. In a letter written on Wednesday to Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, who also holds the home department charge, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Danve said it has



Ambadas Danve

come to light that from January to March this, more than 5,510 women and girls have gone missing from the state. Giving details, he said 1,600 went missing in January, 1,810 in February and 2,200 in March. "The graph of missing girls and women

is growing in state," Danve claimed. Maharashtra is known as one of the leading states for women's security. The government should initiate steps immediately for the safety and security of women in the state, he said. Notably, Maharashtra State Commission for Women chairperson Rupali Chakankar recently asked the state home department to set up a panel to find out women missing from the state and submit a report every fortnight on its progress. It is a serious matter that women and girls were going missing from the state, Chakankar said.

SC grants bail to man accused in NDPS case

On medical grounds

New Delhi, May 18 (PTI): The Supreme Court has granted interim bail to a man accused in a case lodged under the anti-narcotics law, noting that he is on ventilator support.

A bench of Justices Krishna Murari and Sanjay Kumar took into account the medical condition of the man and also noted that he has been in jail for more than one year and seven months.

The bench said it took into consideration the medical condition of the petitioner who, although discharged, was on ventilator support.

"...Because of the non-availability of advanced proper medical treatment in jail and considering the fact that the petitioner has been in incarceration for more than one year and seven months, we are inclined to release the petitioner on bail," the bench said.

PUBLIC FELICITATION



BJP Bihar President Samrat Chaudhary with party MP Sushil Kumar Modi and party leaders Ram Chandra Prasad Singh and Vijay Kumar Sinha being garlanded by supporters during a felicitation function, in Patna, Thursday.

Bihar Caste Survey

SC refuses to overturn suspension

New Delhi, May 18 (PTI): The Supreme Court on Thursday refused to stay the Patna High Court order which halted the caste survey being conducted by the Bihar government. A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Rajesh Bindal said it would have to examine if the exercise being carried out is a census in garb of survey. "We are making it clear, this is not a case where we can grant you interim relief," the bench said. The apex court noted that the high court had posted the hearing of the main petition on July 3. "We direct that this petition be listed on July 14. If for any reason, the hearing of the writ petition does not commence before the next date, we will hear further submission canvassed by the senior counsel for the petitioner (Bihar)," the bench said. In an appeal filed before the top court against the May 4 order of the high court, the Bihar government had said the stay will adversely affect the entire exercise.

'Only JPC probe will reveal full truth of the Modani scam'



Jairam Ramesh

New Delhi, May 18 (PTI): The Congress on Thursday said only a Joint Parliamentary Committee probe into the Adani issue will reveal "the full truth of the Modani scam". Senior leader Jairam Ramesh, in a tweet, cited a news report that has alleged a "cover up".

The Congress has been alleging that the money of LIC policyholders has been invested in the Adani Group. It has also claimed that LIC share prices have declined drastically since the Hindenburg Research report, which alleged stock price manipulation by the Adani Group, came out.

The Adani Group has denied the allegations.

Sharing the link to a news report on Twitter, Ramesh said it is an "expose of the anatomy of a Modani cover-up".

Citing the report, he said, "Hire a tiny accounting firm to audit gigantic companies. Get auditors to make identical 'qualified opinions', the minimum needed to comply with the law, without saying why or how it affects investors."

"Claim an 'independent review' has been done by an unnamed law firm but without disclosing any details. Avoid a forensic audit at all costs that could expose what actually happened. No one is any wiser as to how you used related-party transactions to launder money and inflate earnings."

"This is why we need a JPC. Everything will be investigated, the full truth of the Modani scam will be revealed," Ramesh added. The Congress has been demanding a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) probe into the Adani issue and even stalled proceedings in both Houses of Parliament during the Budget Session.

On Wednesday, Ramesh had expressed concern over the 35 per cent decline in the market capitalisation of LIC and blamed "Modani" for the steep decline.

"Exactly a year ago today, LIC was listed in the stock market. Its market capitalisation then stood at Rs 5.48 lakh crore. Today, this is down to Rs 3.59 lakh crore — a fall of a whopping 35 per cent," the AICC general secretary said on Twitter. "There is only one reason for this steep fall — Modani," he added.

'Metamorphosis of Janata Parivar man into Congress' CM for second time'

Bengaluru, May 18 (PTI):

For a man rooted in 'Janata Parivar' for two-and-a-half-decades and once known for strident anti-Congress stance, it has been a remarkable turnaround for Siddaramaiah, who is now all set to be sworn in as Karnataka's Chief Minister for the second time, after consolidating his position in the grand old party.

From early 1980s to 2005, Siddaramaiah, who comes from a poor farmer's family, was a die-hard anti-Congressman, but his ouster from JD(S) of former Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda, brought him to political cross-roads, and made him join the very party he had opposed.

For his patience and persistence, the seasoned politician known for his bluntness, Siddaramaiah, realised his life-time ambition and went on to become the Chief Minister from the Congress party in 2013. Those qualities have once again catapulted the nine time MLA, to the same position now, after a



Siddaramaiah

gap of five years, as he has been re-elected as the leader of the Congress Legislature Party, to lead the party's government in the state for the second time. The 75-year-old Congress leader, who made no secret of his ambition to occupy the post of Chief Minister one last time, will be finally signing off on a "high", as he has already declared that the recently held Assembly polls to be his last. Siddaramaiah has the credit of successively edging out Congress' heavyweights from the

race to become the Chief Minister. While it is state Congress President D K Shivakumar now, it was M Mallikarjun Kharge (now the AICC President and the then Union Labour and Employment Minister) in 2013.

After the fractured verdict in 2004, the Congress and JD(S) formed a coalition government, with Siddaramaiah, then in JD(S), being made Deputy Chief Minister with Congress' N Dharam Singh becoming Chief Minister. Siddaramaiah holds the grudge that he had the opportunity to become Chief Minister, but Gowda scuttled his prospects. Following this, in 2005, Siddaramaiah, a Kuruba — the third largest caste in Karnataka — chose to position himself as a backward classes leader, by spearheading AHINDA (Kannada acronym for minorities, backward classes and Dalits) conventions, coincidentally at a time when Deve Gowda's son H D Kumaraswamy was seen as a rising star of the party.

From Kilimanjaro to Everest, a government employee's pursuit to climb highest peaks

New Delhi, May 18 (PTI):

Some years back, he did not even think of having a passport or visiting foreign shores. And last year, 36-year-old Shaikh Hassan Khan from Kerala scaled Mount Everest and in 2021, he climbed Kilimanjaro.

Now, he is on a mission to climb the highest mountains across the world and is set to climb Denali, the highest peak in North America, this month.

"My aim is to make India proud, hoist the Indian flag in the highest mountains, spread the message of unity as well as make people aware about climate change," Khan told PTI in an inter-



Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan with mountaineer Shaikh Hassan Khan, in New Delhi.

view. A native of Pandalam in Kerala, he is a state government employee and gives lectures on mountaineering when ever invited by various entities. When the bug of mountaineering passed bit Khan in 2017-18 period, family and people close to

him never believed that one can chase such a wild dream — that of climbing the highest peaks.

After much effort, Khan said he convinced his family, later enrolled for a short-term mountaineering course and the expedition to Kilimanjaro, the highest peak in Africa, happened. His dreams began facing financial hurdles but that did not stop him from aiming for Mount Everest.

By taking loans, borrowing money from friends, and pledging gold, he pooled the money for the Mount Everest expedition, Khan said.

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