



Sam Pitroda resigns

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Congress leader Sam Pitroda on Wednesday resigned as the Chairman of the Indian Overseas Congress (IOC) after his controversial remarks spurred the BJP to label the party "racist". Congress general secretary Jairam

Ramesh said on X that party chief Mallikarjun Kharge has accepted Pitroda's decision.

"Mr Sam Pitroda has decided to step down as Chairman of the Indian Overseas Congress of his own accord. The Congress President has accepted his decision," Ramesh said in his post.

| OBSERVATION |

Cohabitation, stigma in Indian culture: High Court

Institution of marriage no longer controls the people as it did in the past.

Press Trust of India

BILASPUR: Live-in relationship is an "imported philosophy" and against the "expectations of Indian tenets", the Chhattisgarh High Court has observed, holding that the institution of marriage no longer controls the people as it did in the past.

The division bench of justices Goutam Bhaduri and Sanjay S Agrawal made the observation while dismissing an appeal of a man seeking custody of a child born from his live-in relationship with a 36-year-old woman.

The HC said that "live-in relationship which is followed in certain sect of the society still continues as a stigma in the Indian culture as it is an imported philosophy con-



A view of Chhattisgarh High Court.

HIGHLIGHT

● HC did not hand over child's custody to father as claimed.

trary to the general expectations of Indian tenets".

The order was passed on April 30 and a copy was made available recently.

In his plea, Abdul



woman from a different faith and she gave birth to a child.

He moved the HC, located in the state's Bilaspur district, after a family court in Dantewada in December last year rejected his plea for the child's custody, he said.

As per the HC's order, Siddiqui in his petition said he was in a live-in

relationship with the woman for three years and asked if it has struck a 'sauda' (deal).

Since his Rafale issue got grounded, he started chanting about 'five industrialists'. Then he started saying Ambani-Adani.



Live-in relationship is against the expectations of Indian tenets

Goutam Bhaduri
Justice HC

Man injured in attack by Naxalites

NARAYANPUR: A man was critically injured after Naxalites attacked him with sharp-edged weapons in Narayanpur district of Chhattisgarh on Wednesday, police said. The incident took place in a forest adjacent to Rohtad village under Chhotodongar police station limits, a police official here said. On being alerted about it, a team of the District Reserve Guard along with the local police rushed to the spot and found the man in a critical condition with injuries on his head.

'Why overnight silence?'

Press Trust of India

PM if Cong received "tempo loads of black money" from the two businessmen.

HYDERABAD: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday for the first time during the Lok Sabha elections accused the Congress of having a nexus with "Ambani and Adani", and asked if the party has received "tempo loads of black money" from the two businessmen for its leader Rahul Gandhi to



stop "abusing" them. In what appeared to be changing the narrative on the issue that was until now used by the Congress to attack Modi and his government at the Centre, the Prime Minister also demanded that the party should

FACTFILE

● Cong president Kharge claimed that Modi's chair is 'shaking'.

explain to people why it has stopped raising the 'Ambani-Adani' issue as its 'Shehzada' used to do for the past five years and asked if it has struck a 'sauda' (deal).

Since his Rafale issue got grounded, he started chanting about 'five industrialists'. Then he started saying Ambani-Adani.

| 'WRINKLES ACHE HAIN' |

Un-ironed cloth fights climate change

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Nearly 1,25,000 kg of carbon emission can be saved every Monday through the 'Wrinkles Acche Hain', an initiative under which CSIR workforce can now wear un-ironed clothes on Mondays, Prof Chetan Singh Solanki of IIT Bombay said.

However, the CSIR, has clarified that no circular or official order has



NUMBER

200
● Not ironing one pair of clothes, 200 g of carbon emission is saved.

been issued by the CSIR HQ to its labs asking the staff to refrain from wearing ironed clothes. "To put the record straight, during the Earth Day

Celebrations on April 23, 2024, Prof. Chetan Solanki from IIT-Bombay, after installing the climate clock at CSIR-HQ, had in his speech expressed his

view on these lines," the CSIR said in a post.

The 'Wrinkles Acche Hain' initiative aims to remind everyone about saving energy, protecting the environment, and spreading awareness about climate change. Chetan Singh Solanki, founder of the Energy Swaraj Movement, said, "We are saving nearly 1,25,000 kg of carbon emission every Monday.

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Raipur



Solve drinking water problem and repair solar dual pumps and handpumps.
Anurag Pandey
Collector Bijapur

Briefs

BEST OF THE REST

CONDOLENCES

CM expresses deep condolences on demise of three labourers

RAIPUR: Due to felling of building under construction in Bachupalli area of Hyderabad in AP, a total of 7 persons of Odisha, including 3 from Jangir-Champa of Chhattisgarh have died and on which CM Vishnu Deo Sai has expressed condolences.

In his message on social media on 'X', CM Sai said that he received news about death of 7 labourers of Odisha, including three from Chhattisgarh due to collapse of building under construction in Bachupalli area of Hyderabad. He prayed for peace to the departed soul and expressed grief towards the family members of deceased. During this period of grief, the Chhattisgarh government stands with them. He gave instructions to the Collector Jangir-Champa to collect information from local administration of Hyderabad and collect information.

OBJECTION

CGPA objects to merger of 751 SAGEMS into PM Shri Schools in state

RAIPUR: Congress government started Swamy Atmanand English Medium Schools in 2020 and Hindi Medium Schools in 2022 in the state. Presently there are total 751 Swamy Atmanand Schools existing all over the state and in which around 5 lakh children are registered and 14000 teachers are posted. It is by closing the Government Hindi medium schools, the Government changed it into Swamy Atmanand English Medium School and now it is learnt that the new government is planning to change the names of these Atmanand Schools to PMSHri Schools and on which the CG Parents' Association has raised objections.



Voters exercised their franchise in capital city on Tuesday morning.

Around 8 lakh voters did not exercise their franchise !

Around 8 lakh voters did not exercised their franchise and in four VS seats of Raipur LS, around 4.92 lakh voters did not cast their votes

Central Chronicle News

RAIPUR: In the third leg of polling for LS 2024, even after intensive voter awareness campaign in Raipur Lok Sabha constituency, the polling percentage could not be increased to that level, as it was expected this time. Till late at night the final polling percentage closed at 65.99%. As per the estimated figures, out of total 23.75 lakh voters in Raipur Lok Sabha constituency, around 8.50 lakh voters have not exercised their franchise on Tuesday. This include 1.48 lakh voters form Raipur (Rural)VS ; 94000 from Raipur (North) VS

and 1.14 lakh from Raipur (South) VS; and 1.35 lakh voters of Raipur (West) VS area.

It is notable here that in the last Vidhan Sabha elections 2023 and the 2019 Lok Sabha polls of 2019 also, around 7 lakh voters have not come out of their houses, despite increase in the number of voters. In the Vidha Sabha polls held few months back , there was 68.40% polling in the 9 seats.

As the sun kept rising in capital city Raipur, the enthusiasm of voters started reducing and it appears that the day-long polling in capital city was indirectly related to the

HIGHLIGHT

● As per the estimated figures, out of total 23.75 lakh voters in Raipur Lok Sabha constituency, around 8.50 lakh voters have not exercised their franchise on Tuesday.

● In Raipur Lok Sabha area, compared to last VS polls, this year also the polling percentage was less, whereas in the year 2019, the polling percentage was the same.

movement of Sun. In the year 2019, in Raipur seat, 66% polling was recorded

in Lok Sabha polls and the same in 2023 Vidhan Sabha was 68.40%. In Raipur Lok Sabha area, compared to last VS polls, this year also the polling percentage was less, whereas in the year 2019, the polling percentage was the same.

If one takes a look at the polling figures of 9 seats of Raipur LS, then the polling percentage in two VS seats of Raipur (North) and Raipur (West) in 2019 was far behind compared to that of this year. In Raipur (North), this difference was 2.78% less of polling and in Raipur (West) VS also it was 55.94% polling. The yesterday's polling increased

to just 56.36% and which compared to 2019 polling is 0.79% less.

There was sitting arrangements for the voters in all the polling centres and it provided big relief to senior citizens waiting for their turn. Apart from this the polling centres were with all the basic amenities like drinking water and fans and ramps to take those on wheelchair. There was separate queue of voters for male and females and in case of large queue of male voters, they were sent in ratio of 3:1 inside the polling booth. The polling went off smoothly in all the polling centres in the capital city.

MLA Raipur (rural) hails Green Army initiative

RAIPUR: To save Gajraj dam, Green Army Chhattisgarh performed prayers and recital of 'mantras' to 'Pupil' and 'Burgad' tree and performed 'havan-pujan'. On this occasion MLA Raipur (Rural) Motilal Sahu was specially present. It is notable here that Green Army has launched campaign since 9 Nov 2020 and carried out foot-march from Budha Garden gae to Gajraj Dam and staged dharna for 11 days at Hind Sporting Ground and conducted plantation of 1000 'Pupil' trees. The struggle of Green Army for saving Gajraj Dam is continuing for last 7 yrs. PK Sahu and President Green Army Amitabh Dubey gave information about the programme and the efforts made for last 7 yrs to save Gajraj Dam.

Inter-state ganja peddler from Odisha arrested

Central Chronicle News
An accused with 16 kg 'Ganja' was nabbed from Raipur Railway station, No. 7.

RAIPUR: A ganja peddler was arrested with 16 kg of ganja at Raipur Railway Station platform-7. According to information available the Narcotics team formed under the Anti-Crime and Cyber Unit received a tip-off that a person possessing ganja was standing near Raipur Railway Station No. 07, Gudhiyari under Gudhiyari police station area and was planning to go somewhere.

The information was verified by ASP City Lakhan Patle, ASP Crime Sandeep Mittal, CSP Urla



Accused nabbed with 16 kg 'Ganja' in his possession from platform No. 7.

FACTFILE

● When the team members searched the bag kept with him, they found 16 ganja worth lakhs hidden inside it.

Mani Shankar Chandra and DSP Crime Sanjay Singh. Accordingly the Anti Crime and Cyber Unit in-charge and Police Station Incharge Gudhiyari arrested the said person described by the informer.

During interrogation, the person revealed his name to be Brindaban Nurnaka resident of Rayagada, Orissa. When the team members searched the bag kept with him, they found ganja in it. Team members arrested Brindaban and seized 16 kg 441 grams along with cash of Rs. 1,000 and 1 mobile phone used in the incident, worth about Rs 2,63,000/- and registered crime number 370 against him in police station Gudhiyari. An offense under Section 20B Narcotics Act was registered and action was taken.

The action has been taken under a special anti-drug campaign 'Nijaat Abhiyan' being run by the Raipur Police.

MEETING PEOPLE

Collector talks to villagers of Baiga tribes

Central Chronicle News

KAWARDHA: Collector Janmajay Mahobe conducted tour of villages Pauni, Tilaibhat, Kanavani, Chirpani in Pandaria block on Tuesday and took information about basic amenities with the Baiga dominated villages and villagers. During the inspection the areas where there was drink-

ing water problem, he directed the officers.

The officers from Forest department and Janpad Panchayat were asked to conduct survey of small and big nullahs in the forest areas near these villages and to stop the flow of water use 'nullah badhan' and 'boulders' and sand bags and make work plan for it. Seeing the summer season, Collector

Find out ways & means to avoid seasonal diseases and its prevention, solve drinking water problem.

Janmajay Mahobe
Collector Kawardha

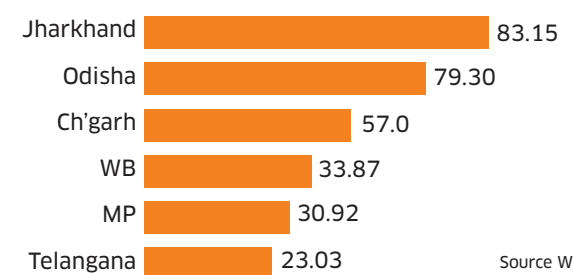


directed to put a check on seasonal diseases and ways and means for its prevention. Collector during visit to Maharani Tola and Kanhakhera of Gram Panchayat Kandavani, saw the proposed construction of dwelling huts for Baiga tribes and got apprised about the problems being faced in bringing and transportation of building materials.

The Day's NUMBERS

Coal reserves (in billion tonnes)

WHAT ARE THE LARGEST COAL PRODUCER STATES IN INDIA?



AWARD NTPC Lara awarded for Environmental Preservation by AIF

BILASPUR: NTPC Lara station has been awarded the "Diamond award" for its efforts taken for preservation of the environment by Apex India Foundation. In the environmental preservation category by thermal power stations, NTPC Lara is the only station to receive this award since the last three consecutive years. It is to mention that NTPC Lara station is laced with environment friendly super critical technology. Its efficiency is 40.5% from other subcritical plants.

Due to high efficiency this plant requires less coal for electricity production. With less coal consumption this plant generates less greenhouse gases in comparison to traditional plants. Besides new technology, NTPC Lara takes various measures for the preservation of the environment. Afforestation with Miyawaki technology has been implemented inside Maitree Nagar township and open areas of surrounding villages.

HEALTH CHECK-UP AM/NS India organizes successful free health check-up camp



KIRANDUL: AM/NS India, through its Kirandul facility, conducted a commendable initiative by organizing a free health check-up camp in the Samalwar Gram Panchayat of Hiroli sub-center. The camp, aimed at providing vital healthcare services to rural communities, offered free pathological tests, primary treatments, and distribution of essential medications. Approximately 123 rural residents availed themselves of the health benefits provided during the camp, underscoring the significant impact of such initiatives in addressing healthcare accessibility challenges in remote areas.

Raipur News

Cong is going to face further misery in this election: Sai

Hits back at Sonia's statement, says she has no issue

Central Chronicle News

RAIPUR: Hitting back at the statement of former Congress National President Sonia Gandhi on the issues including unemployment, Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai said that in fact she did not have any issue. Congress is going to face further misery in this election, he said while talking to the reporters at police ground here before his departure to Odisha for next phase of campaigning in Lok Sabha elections.

Sai also replied to the question raised by Digvijay Singh on EVM saying that whenever they (Congressmen) lose, they blame EVMs and when they win, they do not ask questions. 'They turn around and come back to it', he said.

Talking on the third phase of elections Sai said that voting had been good in Chhattisgarh. The third phase of elections in the form of great festival of democracy has ended in Chhattisgarh. Noting that there has been good turnout he said 'the way we have toured the entire state we can say with confidence that our party is winning all the seats. We have taken feedback



Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai talked to the reporters before his departure to Odisha.

from all sides'.

Earlier in the morning he wrote in X post that BJP's entire election campaign focused on vision of 'Viksit Bharat' (developed India) whereas Congress leaders like Bhupesh Baghel, Dr Mahant sans issues made lies and bad language as their aim.

The Chief Minister further wrote that such people continuously tried to spread confusion over Constitution and reservation besides making fake videos go viral.

No matter how much mud Congress spreads, lotus will bloom

The Chief Minister wrote in his social media post X that Congressmen spread rumours over scrapping of schemes being run under 'Modi's Guarantee' by BJP government. No matter how much mud the Congressmen spread, only the lotus will bloom.

The more they spread mud, more lotus blossomed. People of state kept responding to every

HIGHLIGHT

• Such was the extent of their hatred that they did not desist from even making racial remarks like ridiculing the food habits of the tribals, he wrote.

such act. After completion of three phases out of seven and completion

of voting on all seats in Chhattisgarh, three things are completely clear- Narendra Modi will become the Prime Minister again, BJP candidates will win all the 11 Lok Sabha seats of Chhattisgarh by a huge margin and credibility of Congress, which is already struggling with the crisis of confidence, will be reduced to zero.

Crossing river, trekking hill voters reach polling booths

Central Chronicle News

Enthusiastic voters reached polling booths trekking steep hilly paths, crossing a river and even on a horse to cast their votes in remote areas of the tribal-dominated Balrampur district.

BALRAMPUR: Balrampur district falls under the Surguja Lok Sabha constituency which was among seven seats where polling was held in third and last phase of Lok Sabha elections in the state. The Surguja Lok Sabha recorded 74.59 per cent voting, as per the Turnout application.

Voters, belonging to Pahadi Korva, a particularly vulnerable tribal group, including Rajesh, Madan, Sukhu, Gopal and Nandlal, crossed a river to exercise their franchise at a polling booth in village panchayat Amera under the Samri assembly constituency, a government official said.

Similarly, electors, including Lakhna Nagesia, Sahu, Phulsai and Kalesh of Bachwar village under the Ramanujan assembly constituency walked through hilly terrain for about two hours covering 8 kms to reach a polling booth and cast their vote, he said.

A voter, Parimal Dey,

reached a polling booth in Sagarpur village under the Ramanujan assembly seat on a horse, the official said. Dey is a cattle rearer who owns 150 goats. Two hyper sensitive polling booths -- Chunchuna and Pundag -- located in a Naxal-affected area of the district which shares border with Jharkhand, also recorded significant turnout, he said. The two booths are located in the Samri assembly constituency.

FASTFACTS

• The Surguja Lok Sabha recorded 74.59 per cent voting, as per the Turnout application.

• A voter, Parimal Dey, reached a polling booth in Sagarpur village under the Ramanujan assembly seat on a horse.

"Special security arrangements were put in place in this area to ensure peaceful voting. Voters of Chunchuna and Pundag ensured their participation in the great festival of democracy braving Naxalite threat," he said. The Chunchuna polling booth has 767 voters and it recorded 84.35 per cent turnout, while Pundag has 595 electors and it registered a turnout of 72.44 per cent till 5 pm, the official added.

NEWSLINE

JAGGI MURDER CASE

Firoz Siddiqui appears in Raipur court to seek bail



RAIPUR: Firoz Siddiqui, who was convicted by the High Court in the famous Jaggi murder case of Chhattisgarh, has got a big relief. On the orders of the Supreme Court, he was brought to Raipur Court, where he presented two bonds and two sureties. In fact, Firoz Siddiqui had filed an SLP petition in the Supreme Court against the sentence in the Jaggi murder case, on which the Supreme Court, while giving him the benefit of bail, allowed him to get bail from the district court along with two sureties.

EXAM RESULTS

CGBSE 10th, 12th exam results to be out today

RAIPUR: The wait for the results of 10th and 12th examinations conducted by Chhattisgarh Board of Secondary Education (CGBSE) is over. CGBSE has released the notification regarding the board exam results. According to the notification the results will be declared on 9th May. Board Secretary Pushpa Sahu said that the results of class 10th and 12th will be released on May 9 at 12.30 pm in the board office. Students of class 10th and 12th can check their exam results on the official website of CGBSE cgbse.nic.in or results.cg.nic.in.

Fire breaks out in a textile shop

RAIGARH: A massive fire broke out in a textile shop located near the main intersection of the city on Wednesday afternoon in the district. As soon as information about the incident was received, immediate efforts were made to control the fire with the help of fire vehicles. The reasons for the incident could not be known. According to the information, a sudden fire broke out in Amit Jeans shop located at Subhash Chowk on Wednesday afternoon. When people nearby saw the smoke coming out along with the flames, they immediately informed the fire brigade.

In such a situation, efforts were started to extinguish the fire with the help of fire vehicles and after about an hour of hard work the fire was brought under control. The cause of the fire is still not known and the damage is yet to be assessed.

Rly porters caught red-handed consuming alcohol

Central Chronicle News

Sr DCM instructed them not to repeat such actions in the future.

RAIPUR: At Raipur railway station on May 6, 2024, between 9:30 and 10:00 am, Senior Divisional Commercial Manager Avadhesh Kumar Trivedi conducted a surprise inspection in disguise. During the inspection, he examined the station premises and found that porters were consuming alcohol in the rest area.

Upon this, the Sr DCM expressed strong disapproval and instructed them not to repeat such actions in the future.

Porter Billa, number 165, Subhash Nirmalkar, admitted in writing that he and his colleagues were indeed consuming



Porters being questioned by authorities.

FASTFACTS

• Porter pledged not to repeat such action in future.

• Sr DCM cautioned staff against irregularity at workplace.

alcohol. Along with Subhash Nirmalkar, Bhuvan

Sahu, Arun Nirmalkar, and Jharad Prasad were also found drinking together. In order to prevent such incidents in the future, he also instructed the relevant railway staff and collected a fine from porter number 165, Billa.

During the inspection, it was observed that the staff in the cloak room were performing their

duties efficiently, behaving politely with passengers, and no overcharging was found at the stalls.

Senior Divisional Commercial Manager Avadhesh Kumar Trivedi has cautioned all passengers that if any irregular activities are noticed at the station, they should immediately lodge their complaint on the railway helpline number 139.

AWARENESS

Thalassaemia Awareness by MMI Narayana Hosp

Central Chronicle News

RAIPUR: On occasion of World Thalassaemia Day, MMI Narayana Hospital passed on a message to people with an objective to create awareness about Thalassaemia. It is one of the serious diseases in which a human body faces problems in developing Red Blood Cells (RBCs) and due to which the body has to struggle a lot to survive. The symptoms related

to Thalassaemia include tiredness, breathlessness, feeling cold, giddiness and yellowishness in the skin. During this period of illness, one should get regular check-up done and take up necessary treatment as per medical advice.

Senior Consultant (Internal Medicine) MMI Narayana Hospital (NHMMI) Dr Mukesh Kumar Sharma believes that the modern treatment facility is looking



To control Thalassaemia, we always supports time-bound medical examination, treatment and all possible assistance.

Dr Mukesh Kumar Sharma
Senior Consultant NHMMI

after facilities and management of Thalassaemia. The Blood Bank Centre of NHMMI is available with different components of Blood and recently two successful Bone Marrow transplants have been done here. The treatment can be different for each person, but in order to make the blood flow normal, ideas can be taken to increase the blood flow and how to improve upon blood production in the body.



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Election observers made a commendable contribution in the peaceful, smooth and successful voting

Richa Prakash Chaudhary
(Collector, Durg)

'SVEEP played a vital role in increasing voting percentage'

Collector and DEO expressed gratitude to all the voters and officials for the smooth voting.

Central Chronicle News

BHILAI: After the peaceful and smooth conduct of polling in the district, Collector and District Election Officer Richa Prakash Chaudhary has expressed gratitude towards all the officers, employees, security personnel and citizens of the district. She said that the SVEEP program has played an important role in increasing the voting percentage in the district. The last Lok Sabha elections had recorded 71.68 percent voting while the current Lok Sabha elections registered 73.68 percent voting. Voting has increased by about 2 percent. She said that a large number of officers and employees were deployed to conduct the voting, who performed their duties with commitment and dedication to ensure a smooth conduct of polling. She added that the security personnel also discharged their responsibilities very well. Despite the scorching heat, the citizens of the district expressed their faith in democracy by enthusiastically participating in the voting. The people cooperated in the election process and exercised

s.no.	ac	Electors				Voters				%			
		male	female	others	total	male	female	others	total	male	female	others	total
1	62- Patan	107430	108844	0	216274	89029	88265	0	177294	82.87%	81.09%	0.00%	81.98%
2	63- Durg Rural	108747	109872	5	218624	83091	82835	2	165928	76.41%	75.39%	40.00%	75.90%
3	64- Durg City	112830	118053	22	230905	78629	80750	7	159386	69.69%	68.40%	31.82%	69.03%
4	65- Bhilai Nagar	81874	81855	3	163732	53237	52070	2	105309	65.02%	63.61%	66.67%	64.32%
5	66- Vaishali Nagar	125353	125671	10	251034	85407	85055	6	170468	68.13%	67.68%	60.00%	67.91%
6	67- Ahiwara	116548	118814	10	235372	89713	87227	2	176942	76.98%	73.41%	20.00%	75.18%
7	68- Saja	127186	126239	3	253428	100393	97125	0	197518	78.93%	76.94%	0.00%	77.94%
8	69- Bemetara	124722	125176	0	249898	96736	95259	0	191995	77.56%	76.10%	0.00%	76.83%
9	70- Navagarh	137310	133836	1	271147	99432	95987	1	195420	72.41%	71.72%	100.00%	72.07%
Grand Total		1042000	1048360	54	2090414	775667	764573	20	1540260	74.44%	72.93%	37.04%	73.68%

Final voter turnout record issued by the district election office

their franchise. New voters also took part enthusiastically in exercising their franchise for the first time. There was an active participation of women, senior citizens and people with disabilities (PwDs). Voting participation by Scout-Guides, NCC and NSS students was commendable. She further said that the election work could not have been done smoothly without the cooperation of the vehicle drivers engaged in other tasks of transporting the polling parties.

Final polling data released; two percent hike recorded

After compiling the data from all the polling booths, the District Election Office issued the final chart of polling which shows a two percent hike in voting percentage over the last parliamentary election.

According to the final data, 73.68 percent voting has been recorded. Patan (62) Assembly Constituency recorded the high-

HIGHLIGHT

● Durg seat records 73.68 voter turnout

● Two percent hike over previous LS election

est 81.98 percent voter turnout, Durg Rural (63) registered 75.90 percent, Durg city (64) recorded

69.03 percent, Bhilai city (65) witnessed 64.32 percent voting, Vaishalinagar (66) recorded 67.91 percent; Ahiwara (67) recorded 75.18 percent voting; Saja (partial 68) recorded 77.94 percent voting; Bemetara (partial 69) recorded 76.83 percent voting while Navagarh (70) assembly constituency recorded 72.07 percent voting.

ACB-EOW raids residence of liquor baron in Nehru Nagar

Central Chronicle News

The raid was conducted at the residence of liquor baron and hotel owner Trilok Singh Dhillon alias Pappu Dhillon in connection with the alleged liquor scam of Chhattisgarh.



BHILAI: Chhattisgarh Anti-Corruption Bureau / Economic Offence Wing conducted a raid at the residence of liquor baron and hotel owner Trilok Singh Dhillon alias Pappu Dhillon on Wednesday in connection with the alleged liquor scam of Chhattisgarh. The officials of ACB - EOW reached the lavish bungalow of Pappu Dhillon in Nehru Nagar (East) early morning on Wednesday. Some officials reportedly conducted searches at the residence of Vijay Bhatia; a close aide of former CM. Bhatia's bungalow is also located in Nehru Nagar (east).

It needs to be mentioned here that Trilok

Singh Bhatia is presently in EOW Remand. During the previous raids, Trilok Singh Dhillon was not present at his residence. Hence, the ACB-EOW had sealed some almirahs and rooms of his bungalow. After his arrest recently, the ACB-EOW took him on remand for questioning. Later on Wednesday, Trilok Singh Dhillon was brought to his res-

FASTFACTS

● ACB-EOW sleuths reportedly opened the sealed rooms and almirahs for searching in the presence of on remand Dhillon

● The sleuths at the raid venue did not share any information with media persons

idence in Nehru Nagar (East) Bhilai so that the searches could be done in his presence. The ACB-EOW sleuths reportedly opened the sealed rooms and almirahs for searching in presence of the accused. Police personnel were deployed at all the gates of the bungalow and nobody was allowed to leave or enter. The EOW sleuths at the raid venue did not share any information with media persons.

GRATITUDE

Dist Admin thanks Election Observers



BHILAI: Polling for the parliamentary elections in Durg constituency was conducted in the third phase of voting on May 07. The election observers made a commendable contribution in the peaceful, smooth and successful voting. On the behalf of the district administration, Collector and District Election Officer Richa Prakash Chaudhary expressed gratitude towards General Observer ShrikeshLathkar and Expenditure Observer Prasanna V Pattanasetti. Collector Chaudhary presented mementos to the observers and thanked them for their guidance in the voting process. ADM Arvind Ekka, District Panchayat CEO Ashwini Kumar Dewangan, Deputy District Election Officer and Additional Collector Bajrang Dubey were also present.

ACCIDENT

Female polling staff killed in hit and run accident

BHILAI: A female teacher deployed on election duty met with an accident while returning home after depositing the EVM in the wee hours of Wednesday. She was moving towards Raipur on her scooter on Wednesday morning. She suffered fatal injuries after being hit by an unknown vehicle. According to information, the deceased was Madhu Banjare, a resident of Raipur. She was positioned as Lecturer (LB) at Government High School in Girihola. She was deployed in the election duty and was the part of a polling party which conducted election in Vaishali nagar. Madhu and her team deposited the EVM at the Strong Room late at night on Tuesday.

VIGIL

Vigil increased to prevent child marriages on Akshaya Tritiya

BHILAI: On the occasion of Akshaya Tritiya, child marriages are conducted due to misconceptions in the urban and rural areas. To completely ban child marriage in the district, a joint team of Women and Child Development Department, Police Department, Panchayat Level Child Protection Committee, Child Line has been formed by the district administration. WCD District Program Officer said that under the Child Marriage Prohibition Act 2006, marriage of a boy below 21 years of age and a girl below 18 years of age is prohibited. If a man below 21 years of age marries a girl below 18 years of age, he can be punished with rigorous imprisonment up to 02 years or a fine which can be up to Rs 1 lakh or both. Any person who arranges, performs or assists a child marriage can be punished.

Multi-task Workers of St Thomas College honoured

Central Chronicle News

The Multi-Task workers of the institution were felicitated for their sincerity, dedication and efforts in the day to day functioning of college.

BHILAI: The PG Department of Economics of St Thomas College Bhilai celebrated International Labour Day. The Chief Guest of the program was Rt Rev Thomas Ramban Vice President St Thomas Mission Bhilai. The programme was graced by the College Administrator Rev Father Dr Joshi Varghese, Principal Dr MG Roymon.

At the outset Head of the Department of Economics and Coordinator of the programme Dr Aparna Ghosh heartily welcomed the Chief Guest, Class IV Employ-

ees, and everyone present at the programme.

Chief guest and Principal highly appreciated the Multi-Task workers of the institution for their sincerity, dedication and efforts in the day to day functioning of college.

Class IV employees were honoured and felicitated with Refreshment and Gift as a token of love. Multi-task workers also felt very proud to accept this honour from the college.

The day was marked to give respect and love to all the supporting staff. Bhimanshu Sahu of MA 4th semester student proposed a vote of thanks, the programme was conducted by Aparna Dutta.

Dr Kiran Das Faculty of Economics was also present. Faculties from different Departments along with students actively participated in the programme.

Youth cuts off tongue at village Thanaud

BHILAI: In a shocking incident, a youth cut his tongue with a knife at village Thanaud of Anjora Police Station limits on Wednesday. According to information, the villagers saw Rajeshwar Nishad (37) sitting near the pond at village Thanaud on Wednesday morning. It appeared that he was chanting some mantras. When the villagers came closer, they realised that Rajeshwar had cut off his tongue, placed it on a stone. Locals immediately rushed him to the hospital.

Locals informed that Rajeshwar worked as a labourer and often chanted some mantras. His second wife is deaf and dumb and he loves her a lot. It is suspected that Rajeshwar sacrificed his tongue due to religious madness for fulfilment of some wish.

Sealed EVMs stored in Strong Room at SSPU campus

Central Chronicle News

Strong room sealed at around 06:00 hrs in the presence of General Observers and District Election Officer.

BHILAI: Under the Lok Sabha Elections 2024, the third phase of voting was successfully completed on Tuesday in Lok Sabha constituency Durg (07). After successful voting, the polling parties reached the strong room till late night to safely deposit the EVMs and VVPATs. The sealed Electronic Voting Machines and VVPATs were stored in the strong room of Shri Shankaracharya Professional University, Junwani Bhilai. Security personnel have been deployed to guard the strong room. Also, the strong rooms are being



Sealed strong room at SSPU campus in Junwani.

FASTFACTS

● Central Armed Forces to guard the strong room 24x7

● Strong rooms are being monitored through CCTV cameras

monitored through CCTV cameras. As per the standard guidelines, a three-

tier security cover has been deployed at the strong room. The inner and middle layer will be guarded by the central forces while the state forces will assist in the outer layer. The Central Armed Forces will monitor and guard the strong room round the clock. Till the counting day, the strong room will be under the security and surveil-

lance of special forces. The strong room was sealed at around 06:00 hrs on Wednesday in the presence of General Observers ShrikeshLathkar (IAS) and SB Shettenavar (IAS) and Collector and District Election Officer Richa Prakash Choudhary. Representatives of the candidates, ADM Arvind Ekka, and other officials were present.

SOCIAL SERVICE |

HYU: NSS volunteers offer remarkable service during voting

Central Chronicle News

BHILAI: NSS volunteers of various colleges under Hemchand Yadav University, Durg presented an example of remarkable social service at various polling stations set up by the district administration in the context of the Lok Sabha elections held the other day.

The NSS Coordinator of the University, Dr RP Agarwal informed that before the polling date,

Vice Chancellor Dr Aruna Palta and Chhattisgarh State NSS Officer, Dr Neeta Bajpai had directed all NSS officers and volunteers to provide all possible help to the elderly, sick and other voters coming to vote for Lok Sabha elections, which in turn was conveyed to all the NSS units.

In compliance with this, on the polling day NSS volunteers were seen assisting the disabled and elderly people coming at



the polling stations near Durg-Bhilai. They helped in taking the elderly to the booth with the help of wheelchairs and also provided clean drinking water just like family members. After voting also volunteers dropped them back to their vehicles. Praising the spirit of cooperation shown by the NSS volunteers during voting, Registrar, Bhupendra Kuldeep, Dean Student Welfare, Dr Prashant Srivastava said that these

“NSS volunteers of various colleges under the University, presented an example of remarkable social service”

Dr Aruna Palta
Vice Chancellor, HYU

Battle'24



"None of the members of the INDIA bloc support Congress leader Sam Pitroda's alleged racist remarks."

Sanjay Singh
AAP Rajya Sabha MP

Priyanka Gandhi In Road Show



Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi responding to the people during a road-show for Lok Sabha elections, in Rae Bareilly, Wednesday.

Briefs

BEST OF THE REST

POLL DUTY Constable on election duty dies of cardiac arrest in Mumbai

MUMBAI: A 38-year-old police constable died of a cardiac arrest on Wednesday while he was on election duty at Dadar in central Mumbai, an official said. The incident occurred at 7.40 am and the victim was identified as Vilas Yadav, a resident of Dombivli in neighbouring Thane district, he said. Yadav, who was attached to the Shivaji Park police station in central Mumbai, was posted on duty at a strong room (where electronic voting machines or EVMs are stored) for the last couple of days. "This morning, he went for duty at the D'Silva High School strong room, where he was part of a flying squad. But after reaching the spot, he started feeling uneasy, following which he was rushed to a private hospital," he said. He was declared dead on arrival at the medical facility, the official said.

ELECTION Tripura CM to campaign for BJP candidates in West Bengal



AGARTALA: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha will campaign for BJP candidates in the Lok Sabha elections in West Bengal, an official said on Wednesday. Around 14 Tripura BJP leaders including state BJP president Rajib Bhattacharjee are engaged in election work in West Bengal. "Chief Minister Manik Saha is scheduled to leave for Kolkata on May 9 to address a BJP election rally at North Kolkata on the following day in favour of party candidate Tapas Roy.

Majority of Indian Americans support a 3rd term for PM Modi

Indian diaspora in USA feel proud that India is rising. Growing at a much faster rate India will overtake Japan by the end of this year to become the fourth largest economy

Press Trust Of India

SANTA CLARA: Majority of Indian Americans favour a third term for Prime Minister Narendra Modi as his government's policies are transforming India, an influential community leader has said. Indians are part of the deep economic growth of the United States and they've been working hard to contribute to the economic growth, Indian-American Democratic fundraiser Ajay Jain Bhatnagar said, underlining that when they see similar economic growth happening back in India, they feel very proud of it. "I think the majority

of Indian Americans want Prime Minister Modi to come back. It's a sense of pride for them that when India shines, they shine," Bhatnagar told PTI in an interview. "They feel proud that India is rising, India is growing. India has been growing at almost a much faster rate of economic growth, six to seven per cent. When I'm reading the statistics, it says that it'll overtake Japan by the end of this year to become the fourth largest economy. And maybe by 2027, India would be the third largest economy behind the US and China," he said. Observing that a majority of Indian Americans

HIGHLIGHT

● Majority of Indian Americans favour a third term for Prime Minister Narendra Modi as his government's policies are transforming India, an influential community leader

● In the last 10 years... the current Modi government has eliminated the terrorist threats or incidents of terrorism happening in the country.

favour Modi for a third term, Bhatnagar said the government's policies are transforming India,

whether in commerce or small businesses or large businesses rail-ways development or road infrastructure. "So continue this growth, I think it's important that the community rightfully feels that Prime Minister Modi and his team should be reelected and India should continue on the success story," Bhatnagar said.

People in India, he observed, are doing more cashless transactions than the US or many European countries combined. People have access to health insurance. People have access to better life insurance, he said.

"Prime Minister Modi... has been very good in reaching out and connecting with the diaspora, whether it was in 2014 or 2019 or recently in 2023 when President Biden hosted the state dinner, there were over 4,500 Indian Americans in the South Lawn of the White House. They loved being there and the respect India received as a global leader," he said. "This whole community is so emotionally connected with India. The people who have come from India, they're very much more emotionally connected than the second generation who has been born here.

HUGE POLLING IN ASSAM

81.71 per cent voter turnout recorded in 4 LS seats in Assam



GUWAHATI: An estimated 81.71 per cent of the 81.49 lakh eligible voters exercised their franchise in the elections held in four Lok Sabha constituencies in Assam on May 7, officials said on Wednesday. The final polling percentage could be further revised as compilation of figures are yet to be completed, an official said. Polling in all the three phases in Assam was peaceful with no repoll held in the first two phases and none announced so far for the third.

Dhubri recorded the highest polling percentage of 86.80 per cent, followed by Barpeta with 81.02 per cent, Kokrajhar with 80.44 per cent and Guwahati

the lowest at 75.67 per cent. There are 47 candidates in the fray in the final phase. A total of 81,49,091 voters, including 41,00,544 men, 40,48,436 women and 111 of the third gender, were eligible to exercise their franchise in 9,516 polling stations. The prominent candidates in the fray are AIUDF Chief Badruddin Ajmal, seeking a fourth successive term from Dhubri, and his rival and sitting Congress MLA Rakibul Hussain, eight-time Asom Gana Parishad MLA and former minister Phanibhushan Choudhury and sitting CPI(M) MLA Manoranjan Talukdar and Congress candidate Deep Bayan from Barpeta.

Sachin Pilot appointed AICC observer for North East Delhi seat

NEW DELHI: The Congress on Monday appointed party general secretary Sachin Pilot as AICC observer for the North East Delhi Lok Sabha seat from where former JNU students union president Kanhaiya Kumar is contesting against sitting MP Manoj Tiwari of BJP. The party also appointed Chaudhary Birender Singh as AICC observer for the North West Delhi seat and CP Joshi for the Chandni Chowk constituency. While Congress leader Udit Raj is contesting from North West Delhi, party leader J P Agarwal is in the fray from Chandni Chowk. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge also approved a proposal of the appointment of Harish Chaudhary as AICC special observer to Punjab for the general elections, with immediate effect.

| MODI ON SAM PITRODA |

Modi slams Cong over Sam Pitroda's 'skin colour' remarks

Press Trust Of India

Targeting Pitroda, Modi asserted that the countrymen would not tolerate insult on the basis of skin colour. He blamed, Congress also sought to defeat of President Droupadi Murmu in the presidential poll on the same ground.

WARANGAL: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday attacked the Congress over its party leader Sam Pitroda's alleged comments over skin colour and asserted that the countrymen would not tolerate insult on the basis of skin colour. Hitting out at top Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, Modi said



FACTFILE

● Pitroda's alleged comments that people in the East in India resembled the Chinese, while those from the South looked like Africans, had kicked up a row.

he has now understood that the national party

hzada' for this game of skin colour," he asked. Pitroda's alleged comments that people in the East in India resembled the Chinese, while those from the South looked like Africans, had kicked up a row.

"I am angry today. If anyone abuses me, I don't get angry. I can tolerate that. But, the philosopher of 'shehzada' gave such a big abuse which has filled me with anger," Modi said.

Referring to Rahul Gandhi showing Constitution in his election rallies, he asked whether those who dance by keeping Constitution on their head were insulting the countrymen on the basis of skin colour.

| RJD LEADER VOWS |

Will thwart NDA govt's attempt to change Constitution

Press Trust Of India

RANCHI: Alleging that the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre is trying to "change" the Constitution of the country and "snatch reservation quota" from SC, ST and OBC categories, RJD leader Tejaswi Yadav on Wednesday asserted that such an attempt will be thwarted by his party. He also accused Prime

Minister Narendra Modi of meting out "step-motherly treatment to Jharkhand".

"PM Modi and BJP-led NDA want to change the Constitution of India but I promise no one can change our Constitution and snatch our reservation. We will thwart such an attempt," the former Bihar deputy chief minister said at a rally in Palamu's Chhatrapur in favour

● "PM Modi and BJP-led NDA want to change the Constitution of India but I promise no one can change it o."

Tejaswi Yadav
RJD Leader



of INDIA bloc candidate Mamta Bhuiyan. He alleged that PM Modi was "spreading lies" in the last 10 years and "did not fulfil any of his promises such as checking price rise, providing jobs and eliminating black money". "PM Modi is the manufacturer, distributor and wholesaler of lies. He sold LIC, ports, airports and assets of the nation," the RJD leader alleged.

The Day's NUMBERS

VICE PRESIDENTS OF INDIA WITH MAXIMUM & MINIMUM TENURE

S Radhakishanan	10 yrs
Md Hamid Ansari	10 yrs
Shankar Dayal Sharma	9 yrs 10 months
R Venkat Raman	8 yrs
VV Giri	2 years

Source: Agencies

'AAP GEARS UP CAMPAIGN Cong complains over 'fake' letter with Rahul's 'duplicate' signature

KOLKATA: The Congress on Monday registered a complaint with the Election Commission, alleging that the TMC duplicated the signature of Rahul Gandhi and issued a "fake" letter to "confuse" voters ahead of polling in West Bengal's Maldaha Dakshin Lok Sabha constituency. The "fake" letter surfaced days after the police declared a video clip of Congress' Baharampur candidate Adhir Chowdhury, urging people to "vote for the BJP", as "manipulated" to gain "political advantage".

"This is to inform you that the signature of Rahul Gandhi has been fixed and duplicated by miscreants of TMC, and a fake statement has been printed by them using Bengali language to spread false information amongst the electors of eight-Maldaha Dakshin Parliament constituency, which is against the model code of conduct in the Lok Sabha elections," a leader of the state Congress said in the complaint.

HP TO GET FOURTH WOMAN MP Himachal: Only 3 women elected to Lok Sabha till date



SHIMLA: Only three women have made it to the Lok Sabha from Himachal Pradesh in the past 72 years and this time, just two are in the fray. Women constitute almost 49 per cent of the total voters in the state. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Chandresh Kumari and Pratibha Singh, the three successful candidates till now belonged to royal families. Only the BJP and the BSP have nominated women candidates for the June 1 elections for the four Lok Sabha seats in the state. While the BJP has fielded actor Kangana Ranaut from Mandi, Rekha Rani is contesting on a BSP ticket from Kangra.

For polling admn
arrangement, security
is necessary

Ajit Vasant
Collector Korba



Chhattisgarh



Felling of trees is going on indiscriminately in the forest area of Pandaria Corporation sub-forest division on Badora road

Permission for felling of trees in forests of CGFDC

Along with firewood, teak timber trees are also being cut, which are sold to the city's builders and this all together is causing imbalance in forest ecosystem in nearby villages

Central Chronicle News

PANDARIA: Trees reportedly falling under area of Forest Development Corporation under Pandariya forest region is being felled with permission by wood gatherers. Interestingly felling was going on even during the previous Congress government, whereas even after the change in power, cutting of trees is continuing in these forests.

The felling of trees is going on indiscriminately in the forest area of Pandaria Corporation sub-forest division on Badora road and 150 to 200 trees are being

cut every day, which are transported to local hotels and other units by local wood cutters.

Along with firewood, teak timber trees are also being cut, which are sold to the city's builders and this all together is causing imbalance in forest ecosystem with many animals venturing out of the wild to nearby villages.

Meanwhile Pitambar Sahu, SDO of Forest Development Corporation, informed that action will be taken following the code of conduct and also said that continuous action will be taken against the felling. But as per sources

HIGHLIGHT

● 150 to 200 trees are being cut every day, which are transported to local hotels and other units by local wood cutters

● Near Kranti Reservoir, of the region about 13 acres of forest of Forest Development Corporation was cut and a farm was built

no action has been taken even after one year of notice and Forest Development Corporation officials have given free rein to encroachment and felling in the forest area. As per information, near

Kranti Reservoir, of the region about 13 acres of forest of Forest Development Corporation was cut and a farm was built, and two seasons of harvest was cut after which the Department issued notice for evacuation, but no eviction action has been taken on the encroachment and this has encouraged more people to encroach upon forest land.

It is said that when action is taken against encroachers and wood smugglers, calls for pulling back the action is given, however the officers are taking advantage of it and the forests are being cut down merci-

lessly. Also the employees of the forest department do not live in the forest area, due to which wood smugglers and encroachers are fearless.

Though quarters have been made in the forest area for the employees to live, they abstain from residing in the quarters falling into ruins.

At the same time, employees are not seen in their beat duty in forest area to curb felling and neither does the corporation officials and the employees, including the officers, receive calls when informed about the felling.

Briefs

BEST OF THE REST

SUMMER CAMP

Summer sports training camp to begin from May 16

JAGDALPUR: Summer sports training camp is being organized from 16th May at various sports grounds of the city. The said 21-day summer sports training camp is organized every year during summer vacation. The objective of the training camp is to attract more and more boys and girls to the sports grounds during vacations and to awaken interest in sports among them. During the camp, players will be provided training through senior players and exercise teachers from local sports associations. In which the visiting players will be informed about the intricacies of the game. Hockey training centers at Pandariya and Chondimetwara. Volleyball in Mardoom, Priyadarshini Stadium and Madpal. Basketball, Handball, Football, Badminton, Judo-Karate at Priyadarshini Stadium.

WATER CRISIS

City facing water crisis due to drying up of Amner, Pipariya rivers

KHAIRAGARH: The city is facing water scarcity due to drying up of Amner, Pipariya and Muska rivers and to solve this problem, Khairagarh's Shadow MLA Vikrant Singh was continuously receiving complaints of falling water level and water problems from rural areas including the city. To solve the problem, Mr. Singh immediately contacted KCG Collector Chandrakant Verma and Executive Engineer of Water Resources Department on phone and informed about Rani Rashmi Devi Reservoir (Chhindari Dam) and discussed release of water. After discussion, administrative preparations are being made to release water from the reservoir.



Illegal sand mining

Authorities enable rampant sand mafia in Bijapur



BIJAPUR: The incidents of illegal sand mining are surging across Bijapur district, leading to a massive revenue loss amounting to lakhs of rupees for the state exchequer. Brazen illegal sand extraction activities are being carried out in broad daylight from the Chinta Vagu river flowing near Poshanpalli village, but the Mineral Department has turned a blind eye to this grave issue.

In a startling revelation, some tractor drivers disclosed that they are excavating sand from the river without any pit passes. They revealed that for every tractor-load, village residents are paid Rs 200 by the tractor owners,

while the tractor owners themselves receive Rs 1,100 per trip from contractor. When Pushpendra Tiwari, the clerk present at the Ekalavya Residential School premises, was questioned about the matter, he said that tractor drivers are arbitrarily unloading the sand within the school compound of their own volition.

On the other hand, when a senior official from the Mineral Department was contacted over the phone regarding this serious issue, their indifferent attitude came to the fore. The official merely stated, "I will have to inspect the site myself before commenting on the matter."

80.16 percent voting in Baikunthpur Assembly

KOREA: Under Baikunthpur assembly constituency number 03, in 228 polling stations, 80.16 percent voting was reported. The number of male voters is 85 thousand 132, and the number of female voters is 85 thousand 639 and third gender voters are 6. In this way the total number of voters is 1 lakh 70 thousand 777. According to the information received, till 7 pm, 81.41 percent male voters voted, while 78.93 percent female voters voted. Whereas in Sonhat Assembly (partial), 18 thousand 231 male voters and 18 thousand 321 female voters were registered in 78 polling stations. Of these, 15 thousand 945 male voters and 15 thousand 934 female voters voted.

Regarding this matter, the farmers are worried on the fact that once again they have to take the services of money lenders.

BAAZAR-ATARIA: There is resentment among the farmers of the region due to discussions of giving agricultural loan provided by the Service Cooperative Society to the farming community through the DCCB in two different instalments. As per information, in undivided Rajnandgaon district, farmer loans for both Rabi crop and Kharif crop were given in lump sum during the Kharif season, but for

RESENTMENT AMONG FARMERS

Farmers raise demand for loan in a single installment



Farmers express concerned over new decision on loan.

FACTFILE

● The farmers were able to expand their farming in a better way and also successfully complete the necessary programs

the past few days, there are discussions about farmers getting loan for only one season. The farmers have opined that they have been taking loan through the society for a long time and they are repaying the loan reg-

ularly on time, but due to the news of new orders coming from the administration, the farmers may have to face huge problems, as they have a limit of Rs 25,000 per acre for Rabi and Kharif crops together.

WATER CRISIS

Navagaon Anicut dry causing water scarcity

Central Chronicle News

RAJIM: Navagaon Anicut, which has completed in 2015, has become a mere showpiece now, as it is completely dry, causing water scarcity in the region. The Anicut was constructed by the state government by spending crores of rupees so that there is water supply for four-five months of sum-

mer and the people of the area do not have to face water problems, but for the purpose it was built for seems to be far away. It is noteworthy that as long as this anicut remains filled with water, the water level of dozens of villages including Navapara city of Raipur district, dozens of villages of Dhamtari district and the country's

Three districts benefit from this Anicut, but not enough attention is paid.

Farmer

famous pilgrimage city Rajim located in Gariaband district remains the



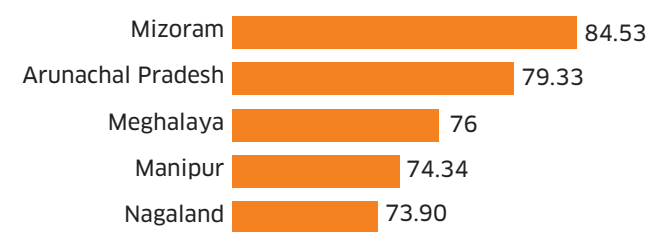
same, but as soon as it empties, the groundwater level falls rapidly. In

the month of February, Rajim gate was closed 3 days before the start of Kumbh Mela, when water was seen in abundance and when the fair ended on Mahashivratri and due to the dominance of the sand mafia, the gates were opened again. The water gushed out rapidly and this mini reservoir dried up, which remains to be dry till today.

The Day's NUMBERS

17 states/UT's have above 33% of the geographical area under forest cover

WHICH ARE THE TOP 10 FOREST STATES IN INDIA?



Source: Statista

DRY DAY

Dry day declared in Nagarnar area

JAGDALPUR: Collector and District Magistrate Vijay Dayaram K. On the provisions of the Public Representation Act 1951 and the recommendation of the Commission, under the Chhattisgarh Excise Act 1915, the voting of Koraput and Navrangpur districts of the border state of Orissa on the due date of 13 May 2024, Foreign Liquor Shop Nagarnar and FL 07 Sainik Canteen Commandant 201 of Bastar district. Battalion CRPF Karanpur, Commandant 204 Battalion CRPF Karanpur and Commandant 206 Battalion CRPF Karanpur during the period 48 hours before the scheduled end of polling i.e. from 5 pm on 11 May 2024 to 5 pm on 13 May 2024 and counting date on 4 June. A dry day has been declared so that the entire day will be closed. During the said period, sale, serving, transportation and possession of foreign liquor shops in Nagarnar and FL 07 Sainik Canteen of Commandant 201 Battalion will be completely prohibited in Bastar district.

WELCOME

Collector welcomes polling team



KOREA: On the return of the polling team after completing the process of fair voting in the district, Collector and District Election Officer Vinay Kumar Langoth congratulated the first polling team by presenting a bouquet to them in the Ramanuj Vidyalaya campus and congratulated them for better conduct of the elections. The members of the team appointed at Nignohar polling station number 137, a remote forest area of the district, first reached the Ramanuja Vidyalaya campus. The presiding officer of this team, Harishankar Sahu and his appointees in the team, Puran Lal, Sayeed Anwar Khan and Shivbalak Kewat were felicitated.

Korea voters make 3rd phase of Lok Sabha polls a triumph

Despite challenging weather conditions, voters stood steadfastly in queues at all 306 polling stations.

Central Chronicle News

KOREA: The third phase of the Lok Sabha Elections 2024 witnessed the people of Korea district within the Korba Parliamentary Constituency No. 04 turn out in large numbers to celebrate the festival of democracy. Despite challenging weather conditions, voters stood steadfastly in queues at all 306 polling stations across the district.

Collector and District Election Officer Vinay Kumar Langeh confirmed that the polling began smoothly and on time following the mandatory mock poll. Health workers provided ORS solutions at stations like Sangwari, Adarsh, Yuva, and Divyang to ensure voter wellbeing, while wheelchairs were available to assist the disabled.

A particularly inspiring moment was when 90-year-old Katwari Ram of Chehra Para Ward 2 cast his vote in Baikunthpur Assembly Constituency. His example of commitment at such an advanced age served as a beacon of passion and civic duty for others.

In Sonhat, 70-year-old Kailasho Bai and 73-year-old Kishun Rajwade at



Voters exercised their franchise on the polling day here on Tuesday.

Polling Station 192 shared smiles as they completed their civic duty. At Station 203 Kachar, scout students exemplified service by ensuring disabled voters reached the polling booths safely.

Meanwhile, a family of five women, including mother-in-law Ranu Rajwade and her daughters-in-law, voted together at Station 118 Cher. Ranu encouraged others to exercise their right to vote, emphasizing its role in national development.

Collector Langeh champions secure voting in Korea

Collector Langeh, accompanied by his wife Dr. Ekta Langeh, stood in line at Station 131 Odgi and urged citizens to participate. Rajkumar, who flew from Mumbai following a personal appeal, also fulfilled his commitment. Under the Election Commission's supervision, 153 polling stations were monitored via CCTV, ensuring seam-

HIGHLIGHT

- Collector Langeh, along with Dr. Ekta Langeh encouraged voters.
- CCTV surveillance ensured seamless, secure voting, as presiding officers and sector supervisors maintained peace.

less, secure voting. Collector Langeh and CEO Dr. Ashutosh Chaturvedi maintained constant vigilance, supporting presiding officers and sector supervisors in maintaining peace.

Overall, the third phase proved a testament to Korea's democratic spirit, with voters united in their determination to make their voices heard.

Vibrant turnout despite heat and rain in Mungeli

Central Chronicle News

Mungeli voters turned out in large numbers despite scorching heat and rain, maintaining high enthusiasm.

MUNGELI: The voting process unfolded peacefully and smoothly in Mungeli district, with the scorching heat and intermittent rain failing to dampen the voters' enthusiasm. Despite challenging weather conditions, voters remained determined, many shielding themselves with umbrellas as they stood in line. The process was executed flawlessly, thanks to over 2,600 election staff across 663 polling stations. Out of the 598,633 registered voters in the district, 66%—approximately 395,000 people—cast their votes.

Polling stations across the three constituencies operated efficiently from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Constituency No. 27 (Mungeli) had 279 stations, Constituency No. 29 (Bilha) had 120 stations, and Constituency No. 26 (Lormi) had 264 stations. Collector and District Election Officer Rahul Dev supervised the election process, which saw 67.14% turnout in Mungeli, 63% in Lormi, and 68.43% across 118 polling stations in Bilha. Security arrangements

at each polling station were robust. Police patrol teams made frequent rounds to ensure security, while forces were deployed at every station to guarantee a peaceful electoral process. The tight cooperation between election staff and the police ensured that every voter could cast their ballot without fear or disruption.

As the voting hours drew to a close, election staff collected polling

FASTFACTS

- Over 66% of registered voters cast their ballots across 663 polling stations, reflecting strong participation.
- Robust security ensured a peaceful and smooth election process, earning praise from the election officer.

materials and swiftly secured them in the strong room. The meticulous handling of the ballot materials and their prompt transport to secure storage reflected the commitment of the entire team. The administration, with the support of the security forces and election staff, worked diligently to ensure the elections were fair, accessible, and hassle-free.

NEWSLINE

EXAM SUCCESS

Anunay Beck excels with 87.25% in ISC exams



ANWARI: Anunay Beck, a Class 12 student at St. Xavier's Senior Secondary School, achieved remarkable success in the ISC Board exams of 2024, securing 87.25% marks and ranking first in the commerce stream. Hailing from Indira Nagar, Kurud, Anunay is the son of Anima Beck, a lecturer, and Vijay Beck, a CISF officer. His outstanding performance has brought pride to his family and the entire school community. The school, relatives, and many others have showered Anunay with congratulations and best wishes for his future endeavors. His academic achievement highlights the dedication and determination he put into his studies, setting an inspiring example for his peers.

WEATHER RELIEF

Sudden storm brings welcome relief

PANDRIYA: On Tuesday afternoon, the weather in Pandariya and surrounding areas shifted dramatically. Temperatures that soared to 43°C by 2 p.m. dipped to a cooler 33°C after a strong thunderstorm and an hour of heavy rain around 4 p.m. The storm provided much-needed relief from the oppressive heat. Before the rain, streets were empty, with people venturing out only for urgent errands due to the scorching heat. However, the downpour brought immediate respite and cooled the atmosphere. The storm, which lasted for more than an hour, promises to provide relief from the heat for a few days. Despite the welcomed change, strong winds caused power outages and toppled trees in several areas.

EXAM RESULTS

ABC school celebrates stellar annual exam results



KHARORA: ABC Public School in Saragaon announced outstanding results for its annual exams, achieving a 100% success rate among students from nursery to class nine. All top-performing students were recognized with scholar caps. High scorers included Arpit Kumar (Nursery, 99.38%), Navya Verma (PP-1, 98.5%), Lakshya Sahu (PP-2, 99.5%), Namami Singh (Class 1, 97.5%), Mishika Sahu (Class 2, 98%), Ayushi Verma (Class 3, 92%), Aashni Ogr (Class 4, 93%), Aditya Verma (Class 5, 97%), Vinay Kumar (Class 6, 77%), Ayush Nayak (Class 7, 89%), Ansh Mishra and Gargi Devangan (Class 8, 93%), and Ritika Dhiwar (Class 9, 97%).

Joint task force sought to curb illegal mining

Central Chronicle News

A coordinated effort is needed as district officials unite to tackle illegal sand mining activities.

FINGESHWAR: Due to the unique positioning of Fingeshwar Development Block's sand mines, which straddle the Raipur and Mahasamund district borders, officials are facing challenges in curbing illegal mining. A joint team comprising officials from the three districts is being demanded to effectively combat this issue.

Sub Divisional Officer Revenue Mahasamund, Umesh Sahu, has taken action against illegal sand excavation and transport near the Chingarud and Bamhani sand mines, both bordering the Hathkhaj mine in Rajim. These actions, enforced under

the State Panchayat Act 1993 and the Minor Mineral Rules 1996, serve to prevent further loss of government property within the Gram Panchayat limits.

Sahu highlighted that illegal mining frequently occurs in Hathkhaj's sand ghat, with unauthorized excavation in the adjoining areas of Chingarud and Bamhani. Legal sand mining operates in Hathkhaj, but illegal miners take advantage of the overlapping district borders, evading action by moving into the neighboring Gariaband and Mahasamund districts.

Recently, illegal miners engaged in conflicts within the Hathkhaj mine, exploiting the porous borders. The villagers disclosed that Hathkhaj also connects to Raipur's Kumhari region, enabling sand miners to evade detection by crossing borders.

Katgi voters brave heat to cast their votes

KATGI: In Adarsh Gram Panchayat Katgi, voters arrived steadily throughout the day to cast their votes despite the scorching heat. From 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., a stream of voters lined up to fulfill their democratic duty. The voting hall was meticulously decorated like a bride by Sunita Dewangan, wife of Sarpanch Yogendra (Vimal) Dewangan, who made special arrangements for the hot conditions.

Voters were welcomed with cold water, lemon water, glucose drinks, sweet water, and coolers to ensure a refreshing breeze. Tricycles were also arranged for the elderly and people with disabilities, ensuring smooth access to polling booths. Villagers praised the thoughtful arrangements, remarking that such decoration and care were unprecedented.

Arang voters show zeal amid scorching heat

LS ELECTIONS |

Central Chronicle News

Arang voters braved the heat with zeal, ensuring strong voter turnout.

ARANG: Despite the scorching heat, voters in Arang displayed remarkable enthusiasm for democracy on Tuesday. Seniors, women, youth, and people with disabilities turned out in droves to cast their votes at the region's 250 polling stations, determined to achieve 100% voter turnout.

Selfie zones became centers of attraction at polling stations like Adarsh, Sangwari, Paragaon, Bodra, Goinda, and others. Stations adorned with festive decorations welcomed voters with tilak, sandalwood, and bouquets at the entrance. Additional conveniences



Despite scorching heat the voter turned-out in large number in Arang.

FASTFACTS

- Selfie zones at polling stations boosted engagement with festive decorations and refreshments.
- Officials ensured comfort with shaded waiting rooms, health check-ups, and voter assistance.

such as ORS solutions, lemonade, soft water, fans, and cool air ensured a comfortable environment. District Election Officer Collector Dr. Gaurav Kumar Singh praised these efforts, which were overseen by Assistant Returning Officer Pushendra Sharma, Tehsildar Sita Shukla, and CEO Kumar Singh Lahare. The election

team, including Block Education Officer Nihali Prasad Kurre and others, provided vital support, while SDM Arang expressed gratitude for their dedication. A stand-out moment was when 85-year-old Rajpurohit Pandit Ramsahay Sharma arrived at the station with his grandson, Avinash Sharma, to cast his vote.

WATER CRISIS |

Villagers in Charbhatha struggle amid severe water crisis

KHAIRAGARH: Villagers in Charbhatha, under the Khairagarh district, are facing a dire water crisis, yearning for every drop. With the village's hand pumps dried up, the Gram Panchayat has proposed sourcing water from a private bore to meet the basic needs of the community. Despite the Public Health Engineering (PHE) department constructing a water tank four years ago at a signifi-

cant cost, water has yet to reach a single household. The bore meant to fill the tank has failed due to the drastically lowered water table. This has left the tank unused, offering no relief to the 1,800 residents struggling with water scarcity.

Villagers report that of the 23 hand pumps in Charbhatha, only three still function, and two of these deliver water unsuitable for drinking. The remaining 20 pumps and three



The residents of Charbhatha forced with lot of shortcomings.

borewells have become unusable. Bore mining has been attempted five times in the past five years but has yet to provide any success. With the water level plunging to 400-500 feet, villagers must rely on a private bore that can only supply enough drinking water. Other needs, including sanitation, are largely unmet.

A resident, Dhaneshwari Bai, described walking long distances for water, pleading for

We face a significant water problem and must walk far daily, urging immediate government help.

Kamlesh Kumar Sahu
Resident Charbhatha

government assistance. Parvati Sahu echoed the sentiment, lamenting the

lack of clean water for daily tasks.

When asked about the water crisis, a woman burst into tears, sharing that she walks half a kilometer to fetch drinking water. She urged the government to arrange for water tankers to alleviate their suffering.

Kamlesh Kumar Sahu, another resident, stressed the urgency, calling on officials to act quickly before the water problem worsens.



QUOTE FROM THE QUOTABLE
Facts are facts and will not disappear on account of your likes.

[Jawaharlal Nehru]

| OUR VIEW |

Third phase of voting signals high turnout and crucial trends

As the third phase of the Lok Sabha elections wraps up, the political climate is charged with speculation. The electoral fate of candidates in 284 constituencies is now locked in EVMs, and the completion of voting across 93 seats on May 7, has set a clear trend for the remaining phases. The focus now shifts to the forthcoming phases, with each party vying to maximize its share of seats. The third phase of voting, covering 93 Lok Sabha seats across 12 states and union territories, unfolded largely peacefully. The Election Commission ensured robust arrangements for fair and orderly polling. For the Congress, there was little to lose in this phase, whereas the BJP faced the challenge of retaining its previous victories to secure a third consecutive term in power. With more than half of the Lok Sabha seats now decided, the central question looms: Who will hold the upper hand in these first three phases? Prominent political veterans had their fates decided in this crucial phase. Key figures like Shivraj Singh Chauhan in Madhya Pradesh's Vidisha, Jyotiraditya Scindia from Guna Shivpuri, and Digvijay Singh in Rajgarh were among those who contested. High-profile constituencies such as Korba and Raipur in Chhattisgarh, where Saroj Pandey and Brijmohan Agarwal competed, also drew considerable attention. Additionally, the electoral future of Akshay Yadav, Dimple Yadav, and Aditya Yadav from the Mulayam family in Uttar Pradesh now rests in the electronic voting machines. The critical question remains how the parties and their alliances will strategize to secure a decisive majority. The INDI alliance has struggled to gain enough momentum for a simple majority, while the BJP and its NDA alliance seem poised to achieve a comfortable win, despite potential seat losses in some states. However, the BJP could offset these losses with gains in states where it did not win any seats in 2019. Speculation continues to swirl until the final results reveal the true outcome of this intense electoral contest.

| GUEST VIEW |

Risks and benefits of allopathic vaccines: A rational perspective

In the wake of concerns surrounding Covid vaccine side effects, it's essential to maintain a balanced view. While allopathic medicines, including vaccines, do carry risks, they also offer significant benefits. Recent discussions about vaccine side effects should not overshadow their lifesaving potential. Take, for instance, the rare Thrombosis Thrombocytopenia Syndrome associated with AstraZeneca's vaccine; while alarming, it's crucial to remember that all medications, including vaccines, come with potential side effects. India's robust vaccination efforts during the pandemic underscore the importance of vaccines in public health. Despite rare adverse events, extensive clinical data and real-world evidence consistently support the safety and efficacy of vaccines like Covishield. Newton's third law reminds us that every action has a reaction, emphasizing the importance of weighing risks against benefits. While vaccine hesitancy persists, it's crucial to combat misinformation with facts. Government agencies must address concerns transparently to maintain public trust.



Yash Pal Ralhan

The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (PCA Act), 1960, represents a legislative commitment to safeguarding animal welfare in India. The Act underscores the importance of preventing unnecessary pain and suffering to animals. Notably, it encompasses various forms of cruelty, such as killing or seriously mistreating animals. However, it recognizes exceptions where euthanasia is required to alleviate an animal's suffering. The establishment of the Animal Welfare Board of India in 1962 under Section 4 of the Act further solidifies the legislative intent of protecting animals.

The Act specifies punishments for causing unnecessary cruelty to animals, defining different categories and forms of cruelty. For a first-time offense, fines range between ten and fifty rupees. Repeat offenders, if their subsequent offense occurs within three years of the prior incident, face a minimum fine of twenty-five rupees. In more serious cases, fines

can extend to one hundred rupees, or offenders could face imprisonment for up to three months. The Act also includes guidelines for animal experimentation for scientific purposes and addresses issues concerning performing animals.

Despite its comprehensive provisions, the Act has often been criticized for its weak penalties and poor implementation. Many offenses under the PCA Act are bailable and non-cognizable, limiting the police's ability to investigate without express permission. The fines prescribed are minimal and outdated, remaining unchanged since the PCA Act of 1890. Courts have significant discretion in choosing between imprisonment and fines, allowing perpetrators to escape with small penalties for egregious cruelty.

The Act's lack of provisions for community service as a punitive measure is also problematic. Offenders could potentially benefit from rehabilitative experiences, such as volunteering at animal shelters. However, the absence



Dr. Satyawan Saurabh

Poet, freelance journalist and columnist, All India Radio and TV panelist

of such measures allows many perpetrators to avoid meaningful reform. Proposed amendments to the PCA Act aim to address these issues by introducing higher fines, longer imprisonment terms, and new cognizable offenses. Additionally, the concept of five fundamental freedoms for animals has been integrated to ensure comprehensive protection.

India's constitutional framework, through Articles 14 and 21, upholds the principles of equality and the right to life for individuals. Article 48 prohibits the slaughter of cows and other milch cattle, while Article 48A advocates for environmental protection and wildlife conservation. Although these provisions are primarily aimed at safeguarding human rights, the courts have expanded the concept of "life" to include the intrinsic value of animal life. Thus, the right to a clean environment has implications for animal welfare.

While the draft bill remains a work in progress, it is a significant step toward strength-

ening animal welfare legislation in India. However, even with improved penalties, some extreme forms of cruelty could still attract only nominal fines. Recognizing this challenge, it remains crucial for the amended Act to ensure more robust enforcement and penalties. India's efforts to legislate non-violence and protect animals could set an exemplary standard worldwide. As the country has emphasized non-violence historically, the onus lies on its legal framework to bring these ideals to fruition through a more effective PCA Act.

Ultimately, although the Constitution prioritizes human rights, animals should be treated with intrinsic value, respect, and dignity. The PCA Act, while rooted in protecting human interests, is crucial in promoting an environment where animals receive fair treatment. The evolving understanding of "life" in the constitutional context underscores the importance of considering animal welfare as a societal imperative.

Putin begins fifth term with more power

Already in office for nearly 25 years, he is the longest-serving leader after Josef Stalin, now in his fifth term Putin holds more power than ever. *By Emma Burrows*



Vladimir Putin waves during his inauguration ceremony as Russian president in the Grand Kremlin Palace in Moscow, Russia

Vladimir Putin began his fifth term as Russia's leader on Tuesday, during an extravagant inauguration ceremony inside Moscow's Grand Kremlin Palace. This six-year term extends Putin's rule until 2030, further strengthening his grip on power after eliminating political opposition, instigating a destructive war in Ukraine, and consolidating his control. Already the longest-serving leader since Josef Stalin, Putin's new tenure allows him to potentially run again under recent constitutional amendments.

In front of carefully selected dignitaries, Putin placed his hand on the Russian Constitution and vowed to protect it. Since succeeding Boris Yeltsin in 1999, Putin has radically reshaped Russia, transforming it from a fragile economy into a state now perceived as a global security threat. His 2022 invasion of Ukraine, which has become Europe's largest conflict since World War II, has turned Russia into a pariah state under significant Western sanctions. As a result, Putin has sought support from other isolated regimes like China, Iran, and North Korea. The question

remains how Putin will use his next six years in office to shape Russia's trajectory at home and abroad. In Ukraine, Russian forces are advancing using scorched-earth tactics while Kyiv grapples with ammunition shortages and high casualties. Despite significant losses on both sides, Russia is making gradual progress. Meanwhile, Ukraine has struck Russian soil with drone and missile attacks, particularly in border regions. In a speech this past February, Putin reiterated his

commitment to fulfilling Moscow's objectives in Ukraine and safeguarding Russia's "sovereignty and security."

Shortly after his reelection in March, Putin warned of a potential confrontation with NATO and expressed his desire to establish a buffer zone in Ukraine to defend against cross-border attacks.

Domestically, Putin's popularity hinges on promises to improve Russians' living standards. In 2018, he vowed to elevate Russia among the world's top five economies

and make it "modern and dynamic." However, the economy has pivoted to a wartime stance, prioritizing defense spending. Analysts predict that Putin may now enact unpopular measures like tax hikes and greater military conscription to fund the war. At the beginning of each new term, the government is dissolved to allow Putin to appoint a fresh prime minister and cabinet. This reshuffle is particularly significant for the Defence Ministry, where Sergei Shoigu

has faced scrutiny over his handling of the war. Criticism reached a peak with Yevgeny Prigozhin, head of the Wagner Group, condemning Shoigu for ammunition shortages, leading to Prigozhin's brief uprising in June, which posed a significant threat to Putin's rule. Prigozhin's death in a plane crash two months later secured Shoigu's position, but Deputy Defence Minister Timur Ivanov was recently detained on bribery charges amidst rampant corruption allegations.

Despite the speculation around Shoigu's fate, any reshuffle would be risky given the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. Meanwhile, Putin has intensified his repression of dissent with unprecedented ferocity. Opposition leader Alexei Navalny, Putin's most significant critic, died in an Arctic penal colony in February. Other prominent critics have fled the country or been imprisoned.

Strict laws threaten long prison sentences for those who criticize the military, while the Kremlin has targeted independent media, rights groups, and LGBTQ+ activists for not adhering to Putin's emphasis on "traditional family values."

YOUR LETTERS

Reach out to Maldives

Following President Mohammed Muizzu's parliamentary election victory in Maldives, his pro-China stance and anti-India rhetoric persist, impacting bilateral relations. With tourism vital to Maldives' economy, India aims to navigate tensions adeptly. Balancing overt concerns with nuanced diplomacy, India seeks to leverage its dehyphenation policy to foster regional stability. Maldives, transitioning to democracy, presents both opportunities and challenges for India's strategic engagement.

Dr. Ganapathi Bhat, Akola

Punish Prajwal severely

Member of Parliament Prajwal Revanna's egregious actions against women demand universal condemnation. Prompt and severe punishment is imperative to deter such crimes. Regrettably, prior instances, like the women wrestlers' protest, were disregarded for too long. The government must act decisively to curb such atrocities. With elections looming, Prajwal Revanna must be held accountable; cancelling his passport could have prevented his escape to Germany. Justice must prevail to safeguard women's rights and safety.

KL Rao, Visakhapatnam

Send your articles (600-650 words) and letters (70-80 words) for this page on: editorcentralchronicle@gmail.com
The letters can be edited or rewritten for clarity.

Business



Rebutting allegations by the Congress party and its leader Rahul Gandhi that state-owned companies are in a disarray

Nirmala Sitharaman
Finance Minister

Event to promote solar energy



Berlin's state economy minister Franziska Giffey poses for a photo in front of solar panels during an event to promote solar energy, on May 8 in Berlin.

BizBriefs

BEST OF THE REST

NEW LAUNCH

BASF reiterates its commitment for Indian farmers with its chemistry

MUMBAI: Piercing and sucking pests pose a significant threat to agricultural crops in India, causing extensive damage amounting to 35 to 40% loss in the productivity and yield of the produce. Farmers in India can now manage this challenge with Efficon, a new BASF insecticide launched today. Efficon is powered by BASF's new active ingredient, Axalion in a specialized formulation. With its unique mode of action, Efficon Insecticide is among the first compounds in the market introduced under the new IRAC group 36 which represents a totally new class of insecticides (Group 36 – pyridazine) which has no known cross-resistance with existing products in the market, making it a superior insecticide resistance management tool. Efficon Insecticide was first launched in Australia in 2023. India is one of the earliest countries in the world to obtain this new novel chemistry that will help support farmers manage tough sucking pests. **PTI**

INDICATORS

Tata Power net up 11 pc to Rs 1,046 cr in Q4, declares 200pc dividend

NEW DELHI: Tata Power on Wednesday posted an 11 per cent rise in its consolidated net profit to Rs 1,046 crore in the March quarter compared to the year-ago period mainly on the back of higher revenues. The consolidated profit stood at Rs 939 crore in the quarter ended on March 31, 2023, a BSE filing showed. Total income of the company rose to Rs 16,463.94 crore in the quarter from Rs 13,325.30 crore in the same period a year ago.

The consolidated net profit in the fiscal year 2023-24 rose to a record Rs 4,280 crore from Rs 3,810 crore in the year-ago period, the company said in a statement.

Total income increased to Rs 63,272.32 crore in FY24 from Rs 56,547.10 crore in 2022-23. According to the statement the company's market capitalisation has surpassed Rs 1.4 lakh crore. **PTI**

How the markets behave today?

Sensex drops 45 points in highly volatile trade, Bajaj Finance, Bajaj Finserv and ICICI major laggards



MUMBAI: Benchmark Sensex slipped by 45 points in highly volatile trade on Wednesday due to selling in private bank and IT shares amid weak Asian markets and continuous foreign fund outflows. Declining for the second straight session, the 30-share BSE Sensex fell 45.46 points or 0.06 per cent to settle at 73,466.39. During the day, it declined by 437.93 points or 0.59 per cent to 73,073.92.

The NSE Nifty remained unchanged at 22,302.50. From the Sensex basket, Asian Paints, UltraTech Cement, Hindustan Unilever, HDFC Bank, HCL

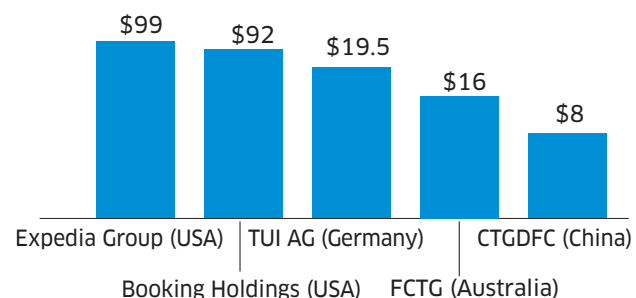
Technologies, Bajaj Finance, Bajaj Finserv and ICICI Bank were the major laggards. On the other hand, Tata Motors, Power Grid, NTPC, Larsen & Toubro and Maruti were among the gainers.

"The Indian market echoed subdued investor sentiments akin to those of its Asian peers, and on worries about declining voter turnout. Despite domestic Q4 earnings largely meeting estimates, the earnings landscape appears to be moderating," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services said. **PTI**

The Day's NUMBERS

In 2024, some of the leading travel companies globally, ranked by their share of worldwide sales.

HERE ARE TOP 5 TRAVEL COMPANIES BY GLOBAL SALES. MONEY IN BILLIONS.



TRADING GOLD FUTURES

Leading refiner begins gold futures trading on India INX

NEW DELHI: BSE's arm India International Exchange (India INX) on Wednesday said India's leading gold refiner, which brings in up to 20 per cent of the country's gold, has started trading gold futures on its platform. This suggests that India INX, set up at GIFT City (Gujarat International Finance Tec-City), is becoming the main place for Indian jewellers and gold importers to hedge against the risk in gold prices. "Today, one of India's top gold refineries, which brings in 15 per cent to 20 per cent of the country's gold, has started trading gold futures to hedge against gold price volatility," India INX said in a statement.

However, the bourse did not disclose the name of the refiner. In December 2022, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) allowed Indian companies (except individuals) to manage their gold price risk on recognised exchanges within the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC). **PTI**

BULLION

Gold falls Rs 150; silver slumps Rs 300 amid a decline in global markets



NEW DELHI: Gold prices fell by Rs 150 to Rs 72,300 per 10 grams in the national capital on Wednesday amid a decline in precious metal rates in the global markets, according to HDFC Securities. The yellow metal had ended at Rs 72,450 per 10 grams in the previous session. Silver prices also slumped Rs 300 to Rs 84,700 per kg. It had finished at Rs 85,000 per kg in the previous close. "Spot gold prices (24 carats) in the Delhi markets are trading at Rs 72,300 per 10 grams, down by Rs 150 against the previous close," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. **PTI**

CEA predicts high possibility of 8% GDP growth in FY24

Chief Economic Adviser V. Anantha Nageswaran predicts an 8% GDP growth rate for FY24, citing strong economic performance in the first three quarters.

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Chief Economic Adviser V Anantha Nageswaran on Wednesday said there was a high possibility of GDP growth touching 8 per cent in FY24 on the back of robust growth registered during the three quarters of the financial year ended March 2024.

India's gross domestic product (GDP) grew 8.4 per cent in the third

quarter ended December 2023. In the second quarter, the GDP growth was 7.6 per cent while 7.8 per cent in the first quarter.

"The IMF has projected a growth rate of 7.8 per cent for FY24. But if you look at the trajectory of growth in the first three quarters, obviously, the possibility that the growth rate touches 8 per cent is quite high," he said at an event organised by NCAER here. This is

higher than RBI's estimate of 7.5 per cent growth for the Indian economy in 2023-24. For the ongoing financial year, he said, the International Monetary Fund has an estimate of 6.8 per cent but the Reserve Bank of India expects a 7 per cent GDP growth for FY25.

"If that materialises, of course, it will be the fourth consecutive year after COVID starting from FY22 that the economy

NUMBER

8.0

● CEA forecasts 8% GDP growth in FY24, higher than the RBI's 7.5% estimate.

● Robust GDP growth relies on favorable monsoon distribution, supporting steady economic expansion.

will have grown at 7 per cent or more. The RBI forecasts of 7 per cent for FY25 turns out to be either correct or even underestimate, then it would be the fourth consecutive year of 7 or higher growth rate," he said. However, he said, a lot would depend on how the monsoon shapes up. Although the expectations are that there will be an above-normal monsoon, spatial and temporal distribution will matter.

will have grown at 7 per cent or more. The RBI forecasts of 7 per cent for FY25 turns out to be either correct or even underestimate, then it would be the fourth consecutive year of 7 or higher growth rate," he said. However, he said, a lot would depend on how the monsoon shapes up. Although the expectations are that there will be an above-normal monsoon, spatial and temporal distribution will matter.

| STEEL DEMAND |

India's steel demand expected to grow exponentially: Nagendra

Press Trust Of India

Steel demand in India is projected to grow 10% annually, driven by a booming infrastructure sector.

NEW DELHI: India's steel demand is anticipated to sustain a robust growth trajectory, with projections estimating a 10% annual increase over the coming years. This optimistic outlook, driven by the government's extensive focus on infrastructure development, was highlighted by Steel Secretary Nagendra Nath Sinha during the 'CII Conference on Future Ready and Green Manufacturing' in New Delhi.

Sinha emphasized the government's strategic emphasis on infrastructure as a significant driver of steel consumption. "The domestic



FACTFILE

● Government's focus on infrastructure, the domestic steel demand will grow in double-digits.

● India's steel consumption surged to 136 million tonnes in FY24, with infrastructure projects driving this double-digit growth trend.

steel demand has been growing in double digits due to increased infra-

structure activities, and we anticipate this trend to persist," he stated. "In the financial year 2023-24, demand rose by 13-14% year-on-year, and we expect future demand to continue at a 10% growth rate."

According to recent data, crude steel production increased to approximately 145 million tonnes (MnT) in FY 2023-24, up from 127 MnT in the previous fiscal year. Consumption figures also reflected this surge, reaching

136 MnT in FY 2023-24 compared to 120 MnT in 2022-23.

This consistent growth is linked to infrastructure projects, including roads, bridges, and urban development, which heavily depend on steel. Additionally, government initiatives like Make in India and Atmanirbhar Bharat are fueling industrial expansion, further bolstering steel demand. The government remains committed to ensuring sustainable growth in the steel sector, encouraging environmentally friendly practices alongside expansion. This conference also stressed the importance of adopting green manufacturing techniques, ensuring that India's burgeoning steel industry maintains global standards in sustainability.

| UPI ECOSYSTEM |

RBI Gov Das discusses ways to scale up UPI ecosystem

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI: Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das on Wednesday discussed with banks and other stakeholders ways to scale up the UPI ecosystem, expand products and foster innovative payment solutions. UPI (Unified Payments Interface) is an instant real-time payment system developed by the National Pay-

ments Corporation of India (NPCI) to facilitate inter-bank transactions through mobile phones. Das held a meeting on Wednesday with major stakeholders in the UPI ecosystem - banks, NPCI, third-party application providers and technology service providers - to discuss potential strategies for further expanding the reach of UPI, RBI said in a statement. "There



There were wide-ranging discussions on various aspects to widen and deepen the adoption and usage of UPI

Shaktikanta Das
RBI Governor

were wide-ranging discussions on various aspects to widen and deepen the adoption and usage of UPI. The stakeholders shared their valuable inputs and suggestions," it said. The discussions broadly covered strategies for scaling up UPI infrastructure and expanding product portfolio, and challenges being encountered by the ecosystem.



INDIA bloc will vanish after LS poll results
Pramod Sawant
Goa CM



CBI arrests 4 for trafficking Indians to Russia-Ukraine war zone.

Ukraine War Trafficking: CBI arrests four accused

CBI had busted a major racket of travel agents that was luring Indian youths with opportunities in Russia but pushed them in the war zone after seizing their passports.

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: The CBI has arrested four people including a contractual translator in the Russian Defence Ministry for their alleged involvement in the human trafficking network that pushed Indians into the Russia-Ukraine war zone, officials said Tuesday.

The agency arrested two recruiters, Arun and Yesudas Junior alias Priyan, from Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala on Tuesday, while two other accused, Nijil Jobi Bensam, a contractual employee in Russian Defence Ministry, and Anthony Michael Elangovan, a resident of Mumbai, were arrested on April 24.

Bensam and Elangovan are in judicial custody, the CBI said in a late night statement.

"Accused Nijil Jobi Bensam was working in the Russian defence Ministry on contract basis as Translator and was one of the key member of the network operating in Russia for facilitating recruitment of Indian nationals in Russian Army," an official in the know of development said.

Michael Anthony was facilitating his co-accused Faisal Baba based in Dubai and others based in Russia in getting the

HIGHLIGHT

● Victims lured with high-paying jobs, made to fight for Russia.

● CBI filed case in March, raids carried out in seven cities.

visa processing done in Chennai and booking the air tickets for victims to go to Russia, the CBI statement said.

Arun and Yesudas Junior alias Priyan, arrested on Tuesday, were the main recruiters of Indian nationals belonging to Kerala and Tamil Nadu for Russian Army, he said.

The official said some

more arrests could be made.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had busted a major racket of travel agents that was luring Indian youths with opportunities in Russia but pushed them in the Russia-Ukraine war zone after confiscating their passports, the official said.

The central probe agency's FIR has listed 17 visa consultancy companies with their owners and agents spread across India, the person said.

The agency has booked them under the Indian Penal Code sections related to criminal conspiracy, cheating, and

human trafficking.

The CBI has alleged that the accused through their agents trafficked Indian nationals to Russia on the pretext of getting them jobs related to the Russian army, security guards and helpers, for a better life and education, and a huge amount was charged from them.

The agents also duped students by facilitating their admissions in dubious private universities in Russia, instead of government or public universities, by offering discounted fees, and visa extensions.

The students were ultimately left "at the mercy" of local agents, it said.

Builder's staff member kidnapped; 2 booked

PALGHAR: Police have registered a case against two persons for allegedly kidnapping a 19-year-old man working at a builder's office, beating him up and giving him electric shocks in Maharashtra's Palghar town, an official said. One of the accused used to seek 'protection money' from the builder.

On Monday, the accused went to the office of the builder and demanded Rs 25,000, the official from Palghar police station said. The builder, who was at home, refused to fulfil the demand following which the accused allegedly kidnapped a staff member of the former, he said. When the builder later reached his office, he found the staff member crying. The victim told him that the accused person and another unidentified man allegedly kidnapped him.

DRDO collaborates with IIT for AI-driven surveillance

Press Trust Of India

9 sanctioned projects of the DRDO were handed over to IIT Bhubaneswar.

BHUBANESWAR: Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) will collaborate with Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bhubaneswar for artificial intelligence (AI) driven surveillance and other projects, officials said. A meeting was held between DRDO and IIT Bhubaneswar officials here on Tuesday. Binay Das, director general (DG) of Electronics and Communication Systems (ECS) cluster, DRDO, and many senior scientists and officials of both institutions were present in the meeting.

During the meeting, nine sanctioned projects of the ECS Cluster of DRDO were handed over to IIT Bhubaneswar while another 7 projects are in



IIT Bhubaneswar and DRDO collaboration kick-off meeting.

FACTFILE

● This collaboration will enhance the sustainability of defence research prog.

process to be sanctioned with Rs 18 crore funding. IIT Bhubaneswar will work on the sanctioned projects, which would be beneficial in electronics warfare, AI-driven surveillance, power systems, radar systems etc, officials said. S R Samantary, head of the School of Electrical sciences of

IIT said the collaboration of IIT Bhubaneswar and DRDO will contribute to the emerging research and development need of defence applications, creating a platform for 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat'.

This form of collaboration will enhance the sustainability of defence research programmes.

Classifieds

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AstraZeneca drops COVID vaccine

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: UK-based pharmaceutical major AstraZeneca has started global withdrawal of its COVID-19 vaccine, which was provided in India as 'Covishield' in partnership with Serum Institute of India, days after it admitted to rare side effects of blood clotting



and low platelet counts. The withdrawal has been initiated due to a surplus of available updated vaccines since the pandemic, the company said in a statement. AstraZeneca had partnered with Oxford University to develop the COVID-19 vaccine, which was sold in India as Covishield and as Vaxzevria in Europe.

Briefs

BEST OF THE REST

PRECAUTION

Odisha restricts use of drone during PM Narendra Modi's visit

BHUBANESWAR: The Odisha government has restricted the use of drones during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Odisha and asked concerned district collectors to declare the venues as 'no drone zone' and 'no flying zone'. The Director Intelligence of Odisha Police has written a letter to the Director of Information and Public Relations to disseminate the information to media organisations, play and signage at all the venues as a security measure. "Flying drones by media personnel, organisers, and event management teams should be strictly prohibited near the vicinity of the VVIP," said the order. The DCP of Bhubaneswar, SPs of Kandhamal, Baragarh, and Bolangir to restrict the flying of drones near the vicinity of the prime minister's upcoming visit to the state and to take action against the defaulters. **PTI**

CAMP

Summer Camp-2024 kicked off in PPL DAV Public School Paradeep



PARADIP: DAV Public School, PPL, Paradeep kicked off the Summer Camp-2024 in the premises of the school today with elation keeping up the theme of Unplug, Explore & Grow.

The Summer Camp was inaugurated by the Chief Guest Palaniswamy Veluswamy, CMO, PPL, Paradeep-cum-Chairman, SMC, DAV Public School in the presence of the Guest of Honour, Sumit Senapati, CGM(HR & IR). **PTI**

BOOK RELEASE

'Unmasked': Artist Nandita Chaudhuri's book blends art, poetry relies on graphic metaphors



NEW DELHI: A compendium of poems and paintings, new book, "Unmasked: Reflections in Brush & Ink" by artist-poet Nandita Chaudhuri, relies on graphic metaphors to convey a common thread of human behaviour.

The book, published by Mapin, is touted to be a unique blend of art and poetry, inviting readers into the author's world of "colourful dreams to open new windows of imagination".

"I'm not bound by a medium and prefer using multimedia to bring out my most passionate, deeply profound and perceptive thoughts to life. The paintings and sculptures in my book 'Unmasked' reveal these thoughts, and

the nuances of human behavior and connection with the universe at large," said the author in a statement. Chaudhuri, a British multidisciplinary artist of Indian origin, works across canvas, digital film, installation and print, blurring boundaries between media. Her works find place in the permanent collections of various museums, global hotel chains and private collectors. According to the publishers, an interplay of narratives throughout the book enables a storyline that depicts the object and the crevices within. "Together, they create a unique multi-layered sensory experience, conveying deep introspection with incredible synergy," they added. **PTI**

The Day's NUMBERS

INDIAN STATES WITH FOREST COVER (IN SQUARE KM)

MADHYA	94689
ARUNACHAL	83743
MAHARASHTRA	61,907.68
ODISHA	61,204.17
CHHATTISGARH	59772
KARNATAKA	43,782

Source: Statista

MISHAP

2 vendors held as man dies after eating 'chicken shawarma' at their stall

MMUMBAI: Police have arrested two vendors following the death of a 19-year-old man after eating 'chicken shawarma' bought from their stall in Mumbai, an official said.

The deceased, identified as Prathamesh Bhokse, bought the food item from the stall of the accused in Trombay area on May 3, the official said on Tuesday.

On May 4, Bhokse suffered from stomach ache and vomiting and went to a municipal hospital nearby to get medical treatment.

He later again felt unwell following which his family members took him to the civic-run KEM Hospital on May 5. A doctor treated him and sent him home, the official from Trombay police station said.

As the man continued to be unwell, he was on Sunday evening again taken to the KEM Hospital where a doctor examined him and admitted him. **PTI**

CONSPIRACY

BJP has plans to break BJD, after elections, alleges V K Pandian



BHUBANESWAR: BJD leader and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's close aide V K Pandian on Wednesday alleged that the opposition BJP is not fighting elections in Odisha to win polls but to increase its seat number with an intention to break the Biju Janata Dal after elections. This was stated by the bureaucrat turned politician while meeting a group of television channel journalists at Gopalpur in Ganjam district on Wednesday. "They (BJP) had a slogan of securing 120 assembly seats in 2014 but failed. I do not know their target for 2019. **PTI**

Air Express cancels flights as crew reports sick

Airline is engaging with the cabin crew members to understand the reasons for reporting sick.

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Air India Express has cancelled more than 90 flights and scores of flights have been delayed as a section of cabin crew members have reported sick to protest against the alleged mismanagement at the Tata Group-owned airline, sources said on Wednesday.

The airline, which is in the process of merging AIX Connect (formerly AirAsia India) with itself, is to operate 360 daily flights during the summer schedule that started in the last week of March.

An Air India Express spokesperson said the airline is engaging with the cabin crew members to understand the reasons for reporting sick and also apologised for the flight disruptions.

Discontent has been brewing among a section of the cabin crew at the low-cost carrier for some time now, especially after the start of the merger process. The sources on Wednesday told PTI that more than 200 cabin crew are believed to have reported sick to protest against the alleged mismanagement at the airline. The cabin crew shortage has resulted in the cancellation of at least more than 80 flights since Tuesday night and scores of flights were delayed. Flight disruptions are happening at



Cabin crew shortage cancelled more than 90 flights.

various airports, including Kochi, Calicut and Bangalore, they added.

The sources also said there was chaos at some airports due to the sudden cancellation of flights, including to overseas destinations.

"A section of our cabin crew has reported sick at the last minute, starting last night, resulting in flight delays and cancellations. While we are engaging with the crew to understand the reasons behind these occurrences, our teams are actively addressing this issue to minimise any inconvenience caused to our guests as a result," the Air India Express spokesperson said in a statement.

Apologising to the customers for the "unexpected disruption", the spokesperson said those impacted by the cancellations will be offered a full refund or complimentary rescheduling to another date.

'Railways laid on an average 7.41 km tracks daily in 10 years'

NEW DELHI: The Indian Railways has laid on an average 7.41 km of tracks, which include new line construction as well as doubling, tripling and gauge conversion of existing lines in the past ten years, a response of an application under the Right to Information Act from the Railways Ministry revealed.

According to data provided by the ministry, it laid a total of 27057.7 kms of railway tracks in ten years from 2014-15 to 2023-24 which covers construction of new lines, doubling as well as tripling of existing lines and conversion from meter gauge to broad gauge.

"When I calculate the data, the daily average work in ten years comes around 7.41 km," said Madhya Pradesh-based Chandra Shekhar Gaur, who had filed the application.

HIGHLIGHT

● 27057.7 kms of rly tracks laid in ten years.

● Rly is adding about 15 km of new tracks every day

work in ten years comes around 7.41 km," said Madhya Pradesh-based Chandra Shekhar Gaur, who had filed the application.

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw during recent press briefings said the Indian Railways is currently adding about 15 km of new tracks every day.

"Last year, the Railways added 5,200 km of new tracks which is equivalent to the entire network of Switzerland. This year we are add-

ing 5,500 kms. From 4 km per day in 2014, we are now adding about 15 km per day of the new tracks," Vaishnaw said during a press conference in the Rail Bhawan on February 2, 2024.

The RTI response shows that in 2022-23, the Railways laid 3,901 km total tracks, including new (473 km), doubling (3185.53 km) and gauge conversion (242.2).

The Indian Railways' website, which shows such statistics, hasn't been updated as it still shows data up to 2021-22.

The officials say that 2022-23 can be seen as an unprecedented year for the Railways as it laid the highest kms of tracks ever in its history.

Off-leash dog bites minor girl inside Noida society lift

Press Trust Of India

The incident took place at the Lotus 300 society in Sector 107 on May 3 and a video of the episode surfaced on social media.

NOIDA: A minor girl was bitten by a dog inside a lift of a posh group housing society in Noida, with city residents seeking penalties on owners for allowing off-leash canines in common areas of societies.

The incident took place at the Lotus 300 society in Sector 107 on May 3 and a purported video of the episode surfaced on social media on Wednesday.

In the video, the around 10-year-old girl is seen inside a lift alone. When the doors open, an off-leash pet dog enters and bites her on her right arm. Soon, the dog's owner follows and takes the canine away.

The petrified girl, visibly in pain, is seen shaking her hand vigorously as she frantically presses the lift button to close its doors. Moments later, the dog returns but fails to enter as the elevator doors shut just in time.

There were sharp reactions to the video, with people expressing anguish over the incident.

Responding to the PTI Video on X, Rajiva Singh, president of the Noida Federation of Apartment Owners Association

(NOFAA), said, "Strict enforcement needed. Heavy penalties on dog owners if they can't keep the pet on a leash in common areas of the society."

Another X user Ishan Joshi wrote, "Oh dear, just look at her! Without face cap/mask and leash, dogs should not be strictly allowed in public places or such common areas."

Some social media users even called for jailing the dog's owner.

FASTFACTS

● People expressed anguish over the incident.

● Some even called for jailing the dog's owner.

One of them objected to the use of the word "attack" and suggested that "humans need classroom lectures on Animal Welfare Laws! Especially Noida's unaware and reckless citizens".

In January this year, the owner of a German Shepherd dog was booked by police after it bit a domestic help at the Galaxy Royal Society in the Gaur City 2 area of Noida Extension, also known as Greater Noida (West). In October last year, a retired IAS officer was assaulted by a group of residents in the posh Parx Laureate society of Noida's Sector 108 after an argument broke out between them when he objected to sharing the lift with a dog.

Association

NEWSLINE

PALAKKAD

Tusker kills news channel cameraman

In a shocking incident, a cameraman of a leading Malayalam news channel was killed in a wild elephant attack while reporting in this north Kerala district on Wednesday.

A V Mukesh (34), working with Mathrubhumi News, was seriously injured in the elephant attack when he and the reporter were capturing visuals of the movement of the strayed elephant herd, channel sources said.

The tragedy struck the hapless cameraman when he was shooting the visuals of jumbos crossing a river in a place located between Malambuzha and Kanjikode.

BHAWANIPATNA

Poverty to be removed in next 10-15 years

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday claimed that poverty would be completely eradicated from India in the next 10-15 years and this is 'Modi Ki guarantee'. Singh said this while addressing the BJP's 'Vijay Sankalp' rally here in the district headquarters town of Kalahandi.

"Though Congress leaders beginning from Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru to Indira Gandhi and Manmohan Singh all have promised to end poverty, all of them have failed. However our Prime Minister Narendra Modi has started the process to end poverty," he said.

Kerala SSLC exam: Pass percentage at 99.69 per cent

Press Trust Of India

In order to ensure the structural safety of the existing premises, the State PWD will forthwith conduct a safety audit and apprise it on the next hearing of the steps taken.

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: A pass percentage of 99.69 per cent was registered in the Class 10 Secondary School Leaving Certificate examinations in Kerala for the academic year 2023-24, General Education Minister V Sivankutty said on Wednesday.

A total of 4,25,563 students cleared the examination for an overall pass percentage of 99.69

per cent, he told a press conference here while announcing the results. There is a slight decline of 0.01 per cent in the total pass percentage this time compared to the 99.7 per cent in the previous year.

The minister said as many as 4,27,153 children appeared for the SSLC examinations in 2,970 centres across Kerala and in the Gulf region this time.

This year, 71,831 students secured A+ in all subjects compared to the 68,604 in the previous academic year.

Sivankutty said Kottayam revenue district reported the highest pass percentage (99.92 per cent) while Thiruvananthapuram had the lowest (99.08 per cent).

90 % clear WB class 12 board exam

KOLKATA: The West Bengal Council of Higher Education on Wednesday announced the results of the Class 12 examination with nearly 90 per cent of the students clearing the examination.

West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Education President Chiranjib Bhattacharya told a press conference that the pass percentage in this year's class 12 examination was 89.98. He said among the districts Purba Medinipur district topped the list of successful candidates with 95.77 per cent.

Cong' manifesto 'represents' Muslim League

GORAKHPUR: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday said the Congress manifesto is like a "new version of the Muslim League".

Indian Bank Branch - Dhaneli (Chhattisgarh) POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property) Under Rules-8(1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002

IDBI BANK POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property) Branch: Samta Colony, 104-R.B. Towers, Samta Colony, Raipur (C.G.)-492001

NAME CHANGE IT IS INFORMED TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC, THAT I ATIT AGRAWAL S/O. MR. SATYANARAYAN AGRAWAL, RESIDENT OF HOUSE NO. E-18, ANANDAM WORLD CITY, KACHNA, GAD COLONY, MAIN ROAD, KACHNA, RAIPUR (C.G.) HAVE CHANGED THE SPELLING OF MY NAME TO ATEET AGRAWAL S/O. MR. SATYANARAYAN AGRAWAL, SO IN FUTURE I SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED BY MY NEW NAME THAT IS ATEET AGRAWAL S/O. MR. SATYANARAYAN AGRAWAL, IN ALL GOVERNMENT AND OTHER DOCUMENTS.

SBI State Bank of India DEMAND NOTICE A notice is hereby given that the following Borrower(s) (Borrower) and (Co-borrower) have defaulted in repayment of principal and interest of the loans facility obtained by them from the Bank and the loans have been classified as Non Performing Assets (NPA). The notices were issued to them under Section 13(2) of Securitization and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 on their last known address, but they have been returned un-served and as such they are hereby informed by way of this public notice.

SBI State Bank of India Tender Invitation Notice For Vehicle Sales The vehicle seized by our branch are proposed to be sold by tender on the basis of "As is where is".

I listen to a lot of music by RahatFateh Ali Sahab. I really like him a lot. His voice has magic, and I always thought that I would want to work with him, and luckily it happened.
Priyanka ChaharChoudhary
 Actress



& Glitters

O.T.T Watch



Freedom at Midnight: A host of global stars

'Freedom at Midnight' boasts a global cast, featuring talents like Luke McGibney and Andrew Cullum. McGibney portrays Lord Louis Mountbatten, emphasizing the complexity of his pivotal role during India's historic transition.



Abhishek enters Housefull 5

Abhishek Bachchan returns to the Housefull franchise, adding excitement to the upcoming Housefull 5. With filming set to begin in the UK, fans anticipate another hilarious adventure, blending Bachchan's comic timing with Akshay Kumar's.



Brady Roast: NFL star embraces humor with grace

Tom Brady's Netflix roast featured comedians and former teammates poking fun at the NFL star, with jokes ranging from his ex-wife to his relationship with Bill Belichick. Despite some tense moments, Brady embraced the humor, proving he can take a joke.



Pulitzer Honorees: Phillips & Booth

Jayne Anne Phillips' "Night Watch" and Eboni Booth's "Primary Trust" among Pulitzer winners. Phillips' novel explores a mother-daughter saga set in a West Virginia asylum, while Booth's drama follows a Black bookstore worker's unexpected journey.



Shatner open to reprise role

William Shatner, famed for Admiral Kirk in 'Star Trek', expresses openness to reprising the iconic role, stressing the need for genuine narrative purpose, deeming the idea intriguing for potential future involvement in the franchise.

CLOSE UP

Glamorous Gala: Alia Bhatt shines in Sabyasachi saree

Actor Alia Bhatt has won the hearts of many with her Met Gala 2024 look in a Sabyasachi saree. Internet showered their praises on the diva while calling her the 'best dressed.'

Central Chronicle News

Alia attends the MET Gala in a Sabyasachi saree that required the 'collective effort' of 163 individuals.

Alia Bhatt's arrival at the prestigious MET Gala was nothing short of spectacular, as she adorned herself in a breathtaking saree meticulously crafted by the esteemed Indian designer Sabyasachi Mukherjee. This stunning ensemble, a fusion of tradition and innovation, was not merely a garment; it was a testament to the artistry and dedication of 163 skilled artisans who poured their hearts and souls into its creation, investing a staggering 1965-man hours. As Alia graced the red carpet, her presence exuded elegance and grace, each intricate detail of the saree telling a story of meticulous craftsmanship and attention to detail. The color palette, carefully curated to pay homage to nature's timeless allure, danced in harmony with the theme of the evening, captivating onlookers and photographers alike with its ethereal beauty.



Alia Bhatt attends met gala celebrating the opening of the 'Sleeping Beauties'



Her gratitude for collective effort

Acknowledging the collaborative effort behind her resplendent attire, Alia expressed heartfelt gratitude to her team of artisans and collaborators, whose unwavering commitment and exceptional skill brought her vision to life. Their tireless dedication and meticulous craftsmanship trans-

formed mere fabric into a masterpiece, embodying the essence of creativity and artistry that defines the MET Gala. As she stood amidst the glitz and glamour of the event, Alia's attire served not only as a symbol of her personal style but also as a testament to the power of teamwork and collective inspiration.

HOLLYWOOD

Dua Lipa's ascendancy: From meme to music royalty

Central Chronicle News

Dua Lipa's rise to stardom has been nothing short of meteoric, but behind the glitz and glamour lies a tale of resilience in the face of adversity. In a recent interview, the pop sensation opened up about a moment that left her feeling vulnerable: a viral meme capturing her dance moves at the 2017 Brit Awards. Despite her Grammy win and chart-topping hits, Lipa found herself at the mercy of internet mockery, with her confidence taking a hit. However, Lipa didn't let the criticism

dim her sparkle. Instead, she turned it into fuel for her fire, channeling her frustrations into her music. The release of her album

HIGHLIGHT

● DuaLipa recently shared how a viral meme from a 2017 concert left her feeling humiliated and affected her early career.

"Future Nostalgia" marked a turning point, catapulting her back into the spotlight with its infectious beats and empowering lyrics. But it was her electrifying performance at the MTV



Europe Music Awards that truly silenced the naysayers, proving once and for all that she's more than just a meme.

In a world where social media can amplify both praise and criticism, Lipa's journey serves as a beacon of hope for aspiring artists everywhere. Her ability to rise above the noise and come out stronger on the other side is a testament to her unwavering spirit and determination. As she continues to break boundaries and defy expectations, one thing is clear: Dua Lipa is here to stay, and she's not letting anyone dim her shine.

CineBriefs

BEST OF THE REST

Web series

Superman's revival: Gunn and Coreswet's iconic suit unveiled

James Gunn and David Coreswet unveil the new Superman suit, complete with the iconic S curl and trunks. Last seen in "Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice," the S curl returns, bringing nostalgia for fans. Gunn's social media post teased the first live-action look, signaling a return to tradition. The inclusion of trunks, a nod to Superman's roots, has sparked both excitement and debate among fans. The star-studded cast, including Rachel Brosnahan, Nicholas Hoult, and Milly Alcock, promises an epic superhero saga.

Bollywood hot pair

Vijay Varma celebrates Tamannaah's Aranmanai success



Actor Vijay Varma recently celebrated girlfriend Tamannaah's film Aranmanai's box office success with a heartfelt shoutout. The horror comedy, starring Tamannaah, has garnered 10 crore since its release. Varma took to Instagram to congratulate Tamannaah, sharing, "Congratulations on the fabulous response, @tamannaahspeaks! Keep killing it." Tamannaah reciprocated the love with three red heart emojis. The couple was spotted on a movie date in Mumbai, both exuding joy as they exited the theatre. Dating rumors between Tamannaah and Varma sparked in 2022 after they attended a concert together and later confirmed their relationship.



Fashion

Janhvi Kapoor stuns as a golden goddess

Janhvi Kapoor dazzles in a golden ensemble, accentuated by a regal tiara, radiating goddess-like elegance. Her Instagram post, captioned "In the garden of Eden," garnered praise from fans, with one commenting, "Beauty on duty."-Janhvi's glamorous makeup features glossy brown lips and golden eyeshadow, complementing her soft curls. Apart from her fashion escapades, Janhvi is gearing up for various film projects, including 'Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari' with Varun Dhawan and 'Mr. & Mrs. Mahi' alongside Rajkumar Rao.

Trending on Insta

@nargisfakhri

Nargis Fakhri: Embracing nature's healing powers

Nargis Fakhri dreams of living in the woods, finding solace and healing in nature's embrace, as she shares her serene trekking adventure on Instagram.





Art & Culture

INTERIORS

Cinco de Mayo: Celebrating Mexican American Culture

Embracing Heritage: Vibrant Parades, Delicious Cuisine, and Lively Music Await Across America

Cinco de Mayo 2024 brings forth a spirited celebration of Mexican American culture across the United States, resonating with vibrant music, tantalizing cuisine, and jubilant festivities. Originating in the 1800s in California, the holiday holds deep significance for communities nationwide, serving as a testament to resilience and cultural pride. Despite its historical roots commemorating the Mexican victory over French forces at the Battle of Puebla in 1862, Cinco de Mayo has evolved into a beloved occasion marked by colorful parades, lively street food, and captivating mariachi performances. As the nation gears up for this year's festivities, cities like San Jose and San Francisco in California prepare for



Folklorico dancers from the group Viva Mexico perform their routine during a Cinco de Mayo celebration.



HIGHLIGHT

• This year's Cinco de Mayo celebrations in the U.S. include parades, festivals, and special events with a focus on Mexican culture and cuisine.

bustling parades and festivals, showcasing the rich tapestry of Mexican American heritage.

Meanwhile, in Texas, El Paso's outdoor market promises a blend of live music, car shows, and culinary delights, while New Orleans readies itself for two days of revelry at Fat City Park, complete with live bands and a taco-eating contest. Across the country, bars and restaurants join in the celebration, offering specials on Mexican cuisine and all-day happy hours, with even New York City offering a unique dining experience aboard a floating Mexican restaurant cruising the Hudson River. Through music, food, and festivities, Cinco de Mayo serves as a vibrant tribute to the cultural diversity that enriches the fabric of American society, uniting communities in a shared celebration of heritage and tradition.

Cultural Hues

Unlocking life's depths: 'The Book of You' and the wisdom of a Hundred Ravens



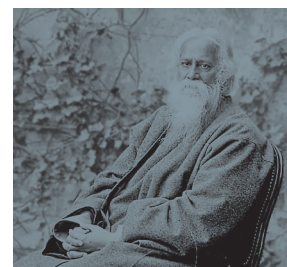
"The Book of You as Told by a Hundred Ravens" by businessman Manoj Jain intertwines prose and art to probe karma, the human psyche, and universal questions. Jain invites readers to journey through the depths of personal growth and interconnectedness. Featuring conceptual artwork, the book offers a unique exploration of life's intricacies. Through a poignant tale of an old man and a young boy's compassion for ravens, Jain illuminates timeless wisdom accessible to all.

Klimt's rediscovered portrait sets auction record



Gustav Klimt's long-lost portrait, "Bildnis Fraulein Lieser," reappears after a century, fetching 30 million euros at Austrian auction, setting a new record. Questions arise about its provenance, linking it to a Nazi trader. Despite concerns, it's acquired by Hong Kong gallery HomeArt, marking a significant moment in art history. As investigations continue, the painting's journey unveils a complex narrative spanning decades.

Saluting a literary luminary: Celebrating Rabindranath Tagore



As Rabindranath Tagore's Jayanti approaches in 2024, the date raises intrigue: May 7 or May 9? Born in Kolkata on May 7, 1861, Tagore's legacy as a poet, playwright, and philosopher is celebrated with fervor, showcasing his profound impact on literature and culture. Join the festivities, honoring his 163rd birth anniversary, and delve into the timeless wisdom of his words.

French bakers set record with 461-foot baguette



French bakers reclaim world's longest baguette title, crafting a 461-foot masterpiece donated to feed the homeless. A 143.53-meter-long creation, made by an 18-member team in Suresnes, France, surpasses Italy's record. The symbolic feat celebrates French gastronomy and artisanal tradition, showcasing the spirit of collective sportsmanship and generosity. Mayor Guillaume Boudy praises the bakers' dedication, highlighting the importance of communal sharing in their city's culture.

Deciphering the brain's navigation secrets



A groundbreaking study has pinpointed brain activity responsible for navigation and orientation, unveiling an internal 'neural compass.' Led by researchers at the University of Birmingham, UK, the findings shed light on conditions like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's, where navigation skills are frequently affected, offering new insights into treatment avenues.

Serbian archaeologists uncover 7,000-year-old settlement



A recent geophysical survey near the Tamiš River revealed a late Neolithic settlement covering over 27 acres, a rarity in the Serbian Banat region. Artifacts suggest it was inhabited by the Vina culture, with traces of the Banat

The timeless majesty of the African Baobab: A tree that defies centuries

In Tamil Nadu's Rajapalayam, a towering baobab stands, its hollow trunk bearing witness to millennia. This magnificent African baobab tree, capable of living up to 3,000 years, embodies resilience and endurance. Meanwhile, the invasive Prosopis juliflora disrupts ecosystems, deepening water scarcity woes. From the baobab's longevity to the ecological challenges posed by invaders, we confront nature's intricacies. Our choices today sculpt the landscapes of tomorrow, urging us to tread with reverence in the evolving realm of environmental stewardship.



MASTERPIECE

Prado Museum showcases rare Caravaggio masterpiece



A long-lost painting suspected to be by Caravaggio, halted from auction in Spain in 2021, has been confirmed as a genuine work by the Italian master. The painting, titled "Ecce Homo," will go on display at Spain's Prado Museum from May 27 until October. Experts consider it one of Caravaggio's masterpieces, offering a glimpse into the artist's captivating style and historical significance. Don't miss this rare opportunity to witness Caravaggio's brilliance firsthand.

| LEGACY |

Astitva Grameen Hastshilp thrives on a global stage exporting from Chhattisgarh to America

HIGHLIGHT

• Deeply rooted in the ethos of rural women empowerment and sustainable livelihoods, we are not just exporting handicrafts; but also hope, opportunity and the promise of a brighter for rural communities.

guided by a vision of 'Upskilling-to-Self-Reliance' created exquisite wooden tea coasters that found their way from rustic villages to homes across the seas, all the way to the United States of America.

At the core of this inspiring journey is Astitva Grameen Hastshilp, a grassroots initiative



A grassroots initiative for rural women dedicated to create economic opportunities, propel skills development, preserve traditional art, and harness social impact.

for rural women dedicated to creating economic opportunities, propelling skills development, preserving traditional art, and harnessing social impact. But Astitva Grameen Hastshilp is more than just a producer of indigenous artifacts; it is a catalyst for change in marginalized communities. Through training, capacity building, and market linkages, it empowers rural women to transform their talent into sustainable livelihoods and gain access to international markets. In the process, women also acquire knowledge about foreign exchange, currency conversion, financials, banking transactions, and freight shipping.

Central Chronicle News

Astitva Foundation Chhattisgarh, deeply rooted in the ethos of rural community upliftment and sustainable livelihoods, is not just exporting handicrafts to America. With each shipment that leaves villages of Chhattisgarh bound for distant shores, we are exporting hope, opportunity, and the promise of a brighter future for rural communities around the world. In the heartlands of rural Chhattisgarh, where the rhythm of life beats to the pulse of tradition, a remarkable story of women empowerment and social entrepreneurship is unfolding. A group of rural women artisans



Jaiswal has got very good chance of breaking my records.

Brian Lara
WI great

Neeraj to compete in India for first time in 3 years



Neeraj Chopra confirmed his participation in the National Federation Cup. | Photo: PTI

Chopra's last domestic appearance was at the same competition in March 2021, where he clinched gold with an impressive throw of 87.80 meters.

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Neeraj Chopra, the reigning Olympic and world champion in javelin, is set to compete in India for the first time in three years, with his participation confirmed for the National Federation Cup, taking place from May 12 to 15 in Bhubaneswar. The Athletics Federation of India (AFI) announced Chopra's

entry, noting that he will travel to India from Doha after kicking off his season in the first leg of the prestigious Diamond League series on May 10. In addition to Chopra, the 28-year-old Kishore Kumar Jena, who won silver at the Hangzhou Asian Games while Chopra claimed gold, will also participate in the Doha Diamond League. Chopra's coach, Klaus Bartonietz, con-

HIGHLIGHT

● As per entries @ Neeraj_chopra1 and Kishore Kumar Jena will compete in domestic competition starting May 12 in Bhubaneswar.

firmed that his star athlete would indeed compete at the Bhubaneswar event.

Chopra's last domes-

tic appearance was at the same competition in March 2021, where he clinched gold with an impressive throw of 87.80 meters. Since then, he has amassed a slew of accolades, including a historic Olympic gold at the Tokyo Games, the Diamond League championship title in 2022, and the world champion title in 2023. He also defended his Asian Games gold in China and has won three

individual legs of the Diamond League. His success at the 2022 World Championships earned him a silver medal. Despite his remarkable achievements, the 26-year-old superstar remains driven by a significant milestone that still eludes him: the elusive 90-meter mark. His personal best and national record currently stand at 89.94 meters, just shy of this symbolic distance.

Paul Stirling to lead Ireland at T20 World Cup

DUBLIN: Veteran opening batter Paul Stirling was on Wednesday named Ireland skipper in their 15-member squad for the upcoming T20 World Cup in West Indies and USA. Besides Stirling, the experienced faces in their squad are Andrew Balbirnie and George Dockrell as Ireland begin their campaign against India in their Group A fixture in New York on June 5. Pakistan, Canada and hosts USA are the three other teams of the group. Ireland's batting lineup features Harry Tector, Lorcan Tucker, Ross Adair, and Curtis Campher. Left-arm seamer Josh Little and Mark Adair will lead the pace attack, which also has the options of Graham Hume, Campher, Barry McCarthy and Craig Young.

"As always, Kuldeep delivered. The way our bowlers executed at the back end was the main positive," DC skipper Rishabh Pant said.

NEW DELHI: Delhi Capitals left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav, who returned match-winning figures of 2/25 against Rajasthan Royals, said his bowling approach to Donovan Ferreira was the key to his side's 20-run win in the IPL here.

Kuldeep gave the twin blows in the crucial 18th over to virtually end the hopes of Rajasthan Royals' chase of 222.

Rajasthan needed 41



from last three overs with the big hitting South African Ferreira at the crease but Kuldeep dismissed him in the first ball of his final over.

"I have played against him (Ferreira) in South Africa and I knew he was a back foot player and wanted to stay a little full and quick and got him out first ball," Kuldeep said at the presentation

ceremony after being adjudged player-of-the-match.

"It is very important to bowl on a good length and that's the main challenge when I bowl in the death overs. I bowled a couple of seam-up deliveries to read what the batters are doing. Just the length matters for me and that was the plan," he said.

FACTFILE

● Kuldeep gave the twin blows in the crucial 18th over to virtually end the hopes of Rajasthan Royals' chase.

Bowling at the death was a concern for DC but skipper Rishabh Pant was a happy man after their show on Tuesday.

"As always, Kuldeep delivered. The way our bowlers executed at the back end was the main positive and it was really good to see. We will try to learn from every game," Pant said.

Rajasthan Royals skipper Sanju Samson said Tristan Stubbs's 20-ball 41 at the death proved to be difference as they ended up giving away "10 runs extra".

| INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE |

Important to bowl on good length at death: Kuldeep

Press Trust of India

Briefs

BEST OF THE REST

ASIAN OPEN PICKLEBALL

Indian team bags three gold, two bronze in Asian Open Pickleball

NEW DELHI: India put up a dominant show to return with three gold and two bronze medals at the Asian Open Pickleball Championship in Vietnam. In the mixed doubles intermediate 35+ category, Sachin Pahwa and Priyanka Chhabra bagged the gold medal after a thrilling 11-9, 5-11, 11-9 win over Ruben Hellberg and Chitlada Hemasee. Continuing the winning streak, Isha Lakhani and Pei Chuan Kao emerged victorious in the women's doubles open category with a commanding 15-7, 15-3 win against Dang Kim Ngan and Tyak K. In the men's doubles event, Aniket Patel and Rohit Patil overcame Nik Alessandro Isagan and Lester Ga in a hard-fought match to claim the gold medal. They won 5-11, 11-6, 11-8. Vijay Menon secured a bronze medal by defeating Yu Hsuan Cher in the men's singles advance 35+ category. **PTI**

SOCCER

May 25: A Day of Celebration for soccer fans worldwide

UNITED NATIONS: Soccer fans around the world will now have a day to celebrate the world's most popular sport every year - May 25. The United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution Tuesday proclaiming May 25 as World Football Day. The sport is called football outside of the United States. The day marks the 100th anniversary of the first international soccer tournament in history with the representation of all regions which took place on May 25, 1924 during the summer Olympic games held in Paris, according to the resolution.

The 193-member General Assembly adopted the resolution by consensus with a bang of the gavel by its president, Dennis Francis, to applause from diplomats in the assembly chamber. It was co-sponsored by more than 160 countries. **PTI**

SUPERBET RAPID AND BLITZ

Gukesh, Arjun, and Praggnanandhaa set to shine in Superbet Rapid and Blitz



WARSAW: Fresh from his historic triumph at the Candidates' tournament, Indian Grandmaster D Gukesh will compete in the Superbet Rapid and Blitz chess tournament which begins here on Wednesday.

A part of the Grand Chess tour, the event will also see GM R Praggnanandhaa in action for the first time since the Candidates while world number seven Erigaise Arjun is the other Indian in the 10-player field for the tournament which will have nine rounds of rapid and 18 rounds of blitz to decide the winner.

The tournament favourite is none other than world number one Magnus Carlsen of Norway who starts as the top seed. The four players who have signed up for the entire tour are Gukesh, Praggnanandhaa, Anish Giri of Holland and Nodirbek Abdusattarov of Uzbekistan. All of them will take part in four out of five events out of which two will be classical and remaining three will be rapid and blitz. Set to play four out of five events in the tour, Gukesh looks like one of the tour favourites. **PTI**

The Day's NUMBERS

PRO KABADDI 2024 TOP RAIDERS

Raid points	Player	Points
125	Pawan Sehrawat BB	125
110	Naveen Kumar Dabang DC	110
104	Arjun Deshwal JP	104
98	Maninder Singh WB	98
92	Siddharth Desai TG	92

GOLDEN BALL TROPHY

Maradona's World Cup Golden Ball trophy had mysteriously disappeared

PARIS: Diego Maradona's Golden Ball trophy from the 1986 World Cup has resurfaced. The award, which had been missing for decades, will be auctioned in Paris next month, the Aguttes house said. Maradona, who died in 2020 at age 60, was awarded the trophy for his scintillating play at the tournament, where he captained Argentina in its 3-2 win over West Germany in the final in Mexico City. Before that, he scored the controversial "Hand of God" goal and the "Goal of the Century" in a 2-1 win over England in the quarterfinals. The auction house said it expects the trophy "to fetch millions due to its uniqueness. Maradona received the award - given to the tournament's best player - at a ceremony at the Lido cabaret on the Champs-Élysées in 1986. It subsequently disappeared, giving rise to rumors. Some say it was lost during a wild poker game, or sold to pay off debts, Aguttes said. **PTI**

TENNIS

Andy Murray to return from ankle injury at Geneva Open



GENEVA: Three-time Grand Slam champion Andy Murray is set to return from his ankle injury at the Geneva Open this month. Tournament organizers announced Wednesday they had given the 36-year-old Murray a wild-card entry for the clay-court event that starts May 18. Murray damaged ligaments in his left ankle during a match at the Miami Open last month. He opted against surgery. The former No. 1 has only played sparingly since having hip surgery in 2018 and has said he will probably retire after this summer. **PTI**

| ASIAN TENNIS FEDERATION |

Polskiy urges Asia's best: Prioritize regional events

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Determined to change the face of Asian tennis in his tenure, Yuriy Polskiy, the youngest ATF President, has exhorted the best players from the region to compete in Asian events before travelling abroad and has set his sights on developing the game in smaller tennis-playing

nations such as Nepal, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Syria.

The 36-year-old Polskiy had won the Asian Tennis Federation (ATF) presidential elections in December last year on the back of reforms in his home country Kazakhstan and wants to use his trouble-shooting experience to help nations struggling to



Asia's strong players need to compete in their own events which should help upcoming players with exposure and learning, and a robust Asian tour and programme for U14 players with considerable financial support is the need of the hour. Asia has only six players in the world's top-100 and it worries Polskiy.

popularise the game. Polskiy is clear that



Asian tennis needs the participation of the best Asian players in Asian tournaments.

Yuriy Polskiy
ATF President

Sports News



Borussia Dortmund's Mats Hummels scores their first goal past Paris St Germain's Gianluigi Donnarumma.

CL: Hummels fires clinical Dortmund into final

Press Trust of India

Dortmund were clinical as Hummels headed home from Julian Brandt's corner five minutes after the interval to double the German side's advantage over the two legs.

PARIS: Borussia Dortmund showed great composure to reach their third Champions League final after Mats

Hummels' second-half goal earned the visitors a 1-0 victory against misfiring Paris St Germain for a deserved 2-0 aggregate win.

Hummels headed home from a corner five minutes into the second half to send the Germans, who won the title in 1997, into their first final in Europe's top club competition since 2013. Luis Enrique's PSG hit the wood-

work four times but failed to find the net as Kylian Mbappe, widely expected to leave at the end of the season, was a shadow of his usual brilliant self.

The visitors were composed and held firm. Their confidence grew and they had their first opportunity through Julian Ryerson, whose shot hit the side netting. Dortmund had a better chance in the

HIGHLIGHT

• They will meet either 14-times champions Real Madrid or Bayern Munich, who clash at the Bernabeu on Wednesday after a 2-2 draw in the first leg, in the June 1 showdown at Wembley.

35th when, after a sharp counter attack following a woeful Mbappe miss, Gianluigi Donnarumma pulled off a brilliant

save to deny Karim Adeyemi.

Luis Enrique's side stepped up a gear after the break with Warren Zaire Emery's shot hitting the outside of the post after Mbappe's attempt was deflected into his path by Ramos.

Ramos's shot on the turn then went just over and Nuno Mendes's 25-metre missile hit the post as PSG reacted swiftly.

Mbappe trudges off another Champions League dream

PARIS: Kylian Mbappe leaned forward with his head bowed and hands on his thighs. Another Champions League dream with Paris Saint-Germain was over, ruined by the ruthless efficiency of a Borussia Dortmund team that stopped him scoring in

HIGHLIGHT

• PSG coach Luis Enrique consoled Mbappé, and then his star striker trudged off the field.

both legs of their Champions League semifinal and recorded a 1-0 win

in each. "We always want to win at PSG, we feel sad," Mbappé said after Tuesday's defeat. "We should have scored. We had the chances to score (and) when you don't, when you're not efficient at both ends, it's difficult to go through."

[OLYMPIC DEBUT]

I've hit energy-saving mode: Nikhat Zareen

By Poonam Mehra

Zareen believes activities that might sound like leisure to many, are actually legitimate ways to ensure that she has a calm frame of mind ahead of the Games beginning in Paris.



Nikhat Zareen gestures.

HIGHLIGHT

• The 27-year-old from Hyderabad is a former junior world champion. She won consecutive senior world titles in 2022 and 2023.

yourself and the people around you also have expectations. It all adds up to the overall weight you feel on your mind.

"You cope with it by working hard, keeping your focus and having a calm mind, basically not allow yourself to be distracted. So, I am off social media, and I also

try to keep my distance from people in general," she revealed. "Basically, I have hit energy saving mode, indulge my sweet tooth on cheat days, do grocery shopping, listen to music, it helps me stay calm. Also, I watch movies or Netflix shows. I am watching 'Heeramandi' right now, it's quite interesting," she said.

A believer in destiny, Zareen said she could have been an Olympian in Tokyo itself. She had lost a bitter selection trial to six-time world champion M C Mary Kom, who went on to qualify for the Games.

Japan bowl out Mongolia for 12 runs

SANO (JAPAN): Seven months after they made their international debut at the Asian Games, Mongolia capped an ignominious milestone when they were bowled out for 12, the second lowest score in T20 International history in a match against hosts Japan here on Wednesday.

In response to Japan's imposing 217 for 7 after the hosts elected to bat, Mongolia were folded in 8.2 overs, etching their name in the annals of infamy with the second lowest score in T20I history after Isle of Man's 10 all out against Spain in on February 26, 2023. For Japan, 17-year-old left-arm seamer Kazuma Kato-Stafford returned with 5 for 7 from his 3.2 overs, while Abdul Samad (2/4) and Makoto Taniyama (2/0) bagged two each in the match held at the Sano International Cricket Ground. Tur Sumaya (4 off 11) was the top-scorer for Mongolia, while opener Namsrai Bat-yalalt faced a maximum 12 deliveries.

46 balls. He's proven his worth time and again... Throughout the tournament, he's been a master blaster, handling both spin and pace with finesse," Hayden told a news channel.

Samson, who is the captain of Rajasthan Royals, has taken the second wicketkeeper's slot in the Indian team for the T20 World Cup starting June 1 in the Americas.

[FRENCH OPEN]

Things are happening: Rafael Nadal

Press Trust of India

ROME: Rafael Nadal's clay-court form is slowly rounding into shape. Not that nearly invincible shape that the tennis world grew accustomed to over the past two decades.

But a shape that the 22-time Grand Slam champion is starting to feel good about as he prepares to play what will likely be his final French Open.

"It's a good moment, even if the results are not what (they) used to be," Nadal said at the Italian Open on Wednesday. "But I am increasing my feeling, my level. ... I want to keep going."

The 37-year-old Nadal, who has indicated that this will be his final year



Rafael Nadal, of Spain, talks to journalists during a press conference.

on tour, has played only nine matches this year after missing nearly all of 2023 due to a hip injury that required surgery. But he's coming off his most encouraging performance of the year, having put together three straight wins at the Madrid Open Before

Madrid, he won only one match in Barcelona. "The line is going up, without a doubt," Nadal said, making a gesture with his hand to demonstrate his improvement.

"Happy to be today where I am because one month ago for me was almost impossible to

HIGHLIGHT

• Nadal's opening match in Rome is scheduled for Thursday against Belgian qualifier Zizou Bergs, who is ranked No. 108.

think that I will be able to play in Barcelona, then in Madrid, and now being here in Rome. ... Things are happening.

"All the matches are tough for me today and difficult and more unpredictable than what the matches used to be for me, especially on clay," Nadal added.

"I accept that role. I accept that challenge. I am excited about the way that I can be able to play if I keep working the proper way and my body allows me.

[HAYDEN PRAISES SAMSON'S IPL PERFORMANCE]

Masterful handling draws acclaim

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Former Australian opener Mathew Hayden is mighty impressed with the IPL performance of Sanju Samson and has lauded the T20 World Cup-bound power-hitter for "handling both spin and pace with finesse".

Samson was in his elements on Tuesday when he nearly guided Rajasthan Royals to a



Samson has proven his worth time and again

Mathew Hayden
Former Australian

win over Delhi Capitals with his 86-run knock here. The visitors eventually fell short by 20 runs. He is currently

third on the top-scorers chart with 471 runs in 11 matches so far. "Sanju Samson was batting like a dream, scoring 86 off

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Highlight

Russia's invasion of Ukraine can't be solved by rewarding Moscow's aggression

Sergio Mattarella
President, Italy

Vladimir Putin attends a prayer service



Russian President Vladimir Putin, center, attends a prayer service conducted by Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and all Russia, left, following an inauguration ceremony at the Kremlin's Annunciation Cathedral in Moscow, Russia. PTI

PAK-AFGHAN-TALIBAN

Taliban reject claims of Afghan involvement in recent attacks in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: The Taliban on Wednesday rejected claims of Afghan involvement in recent attacks in Pakistan, calling it "irresponsible and far from the reality".

Pakistan's military said Tuesday a suicide bombing that killed five Chinese engineers and a Pakistani driver in March was planned in neighbouring Afghanistan and that the bomber was an Afghan citizen. Maj. Gen. Ahmad Sharif, a spokesman for Paki-

stan's army, has said that four men behind the March 26 attack in Bisham, a district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, had been arrested.

Enayatullah Khawarazmi, a spokesman for the Taliban's Ministry of Defence, said in a statement on Wednesday that "blaming Afghanistan for such incidents is a failed attempt to divert attention from the truth of the matter and we strongly reject it".

Briefs

BEST OF THE REST

US-IMMIGRATION-MEXICO-PERU

Mexico tightens travel rules on Peruvians in a show of visa diplomacy

BOULEVARD (US): Julia Paredes believed her move to the United States might be now or never. Mexico was days from requiring visas for Peruvian visitors. If she didn't act quickly, she would have to make a far more perilous, surreptitious journey over land to settle with her sister in Dallas. Mexico began requiring visas for Peruvians on Monday in response to a major influx of migrants from the South American country, after identical moves for Venezuelans, Ecuadorians and Brazilians. It effectively eliminated the option of flying to a Mexican city near the US border, as Paredes, 45, did just before it was too late. "I had to treat it as an emergency," said Paredes, who worked serving lunch to miners in Arequipa, Peru, and borrowed money to fly to Mexico's Tijuana, across from San Diego. PTI

MARITIME EXERCISE

Indian Navy to hold maritime exercise with Singapore Navy



SINGAPORE: The Indian Navy is looking forward to further enhancing its operability with the Singapore Navy and understanding of each other's operational philosophy by holding joint maritime exercises, Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet Read Admiral Rajesh Dhankhar has said. He said the navies of the two countries are planning to hold the 31st edition of the Singapore-India Maritime Bilateral Exercise which will be held at Visakhapatnam in fourth quarter of this year. PTI

Israel says it reopened Gaza crossing after a rocket attack

Workers fled during an incursion by an Israeli tank brigade on Tuesday that captured the nearby Rafah crossing between Gaza and Egypt, which remains closed.

Press Trust Of India

JERUSALEM: The Israeli military said on Wednesday that it has reopened the Kerem Shalom crossing into Gaza, a key terminal for the entry of humanitarian aid that was closed over the weekend after a Hamas rocket attack killed four Israeli soldiers nearby.

But the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees said no aid has

yet entered and there is no one to receive it on the Palestinian side.

Workers fled during an incursion by an Israeli tank brigade on Tuesday that captured the nearby Rafah crossing between Gaza and Egypt, which remains closed. That limited incursion did not appear to be the start of the full-scale invasion of Rafah that Israel has repeatedly promised. But the prolonged closure of

HIGHLIGHT

● The US says it is concerned over fate of around 1.3 million Palestinians crammed into Rafah, most of whom fled fighting elsewhere.

● Israel says Rafah is Hamas' last stronghold and that a wider offensive is needed to dismantle group's military.

the two main crossings could exacerbate the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, where the UN says a "full-blown famine" is already underway in the north. The United States paused a shipment of bombs to Israel last week over concerns that Israel was approaching a decision on launching a full-scale assault on Rafah, in a further widening of divisions between the two close allies.

The US says it is concerned over the fate of around 1.3 million Palestinians crammed into Rafah, most of whom fled fighting elsewhere.

Israel says Rafah is Hamas' last stronghold and that a wider offensive there is needed to dismantle the group's military and governing capabilities. Israel has linked the threatened Rafah operation to the fate of those negotiations.

EMERGENCY-LANDING

Cargo plane makes an emergency landing at Istanbul Airport after front landing gear fails

ISTANBUL: A cargo aircraft made an emergency landing at Istanbul Airport on Wednesday after its front landing gear failed. A video on social media showed the Boeing 767 belonging to FedEx Express using the back landing gear and then dipping its nose with the front portion of the fuselage.

The plane was on the last leg of its flight from Paris to Istanbul when the pilots realized the front landing gear failed to open, state-run Anadolu Agency said. No one was injured and



the crew safely evacuated the aircraft, said Abdulkadir Uraloglu, Turkiye's transportation and infrastructure minister. The runway where the plane landed was closed off while the aircraft was being removed, he said. PTI

SINGAPORE-AIR FORCE-CRASH

Singapore Air Force F-16 jet crashes after takeoff

Press Trust Of India

A Singapore Air Force F-16 jet crashed during takeoff at a military airbase, the Ministry of Defence said on Wednesday. The plane experienced "an issue" during take-off at about 12.35 pm, it added.



The pilot successfully ejected and the plane crashed thereafter.

SINGAPORE: "The pilot successfully ejected and plane crashed thereafter within Tengah Air Base," Ministry of Defence said. "The pilot is conscious and able to walk. He is receiving medical attention. No other personnel are hurt." The ministry said investigations are ongoing, adding that it will provide updates on incident as soon as

they become available. Singapore has operated the F-16 for more than 30 years. In May 2004, an RSAF F-16C aircraft crashed during a night training mission in the US state of Arizona, killing the 25-year-old Singaporean pilot who was initially reported missing.

A board of inquiry concluded that the inci-

FASTFACTS

● In May 2004, an RSAF F-16C aircraft crashed during a night training mission in the US state of Arizona, killing the 25-year-old Singaporean pilot who was initially reported missing.

dent was due to human factors, saying the pilot could have experienced gravity-induced loss of consciousness or spatial disorientation, which resulted in his inability to recover the aircraft from an inverted position. Singapore's F-16 fleet was recently upgraded to improve their capabilities and keep them operationally ready until the mid-2030s.

These improvements include the Active Electronically Scanned Array Radar which allows the F-16 to track and engage multiple targets from farther away, as well as an all-weather, ground-attack capability that enables it to strike targets with more capable precision munitions.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-ATTACK

Russia attacks Ukrainian energy facilities

KYIV: Russia launched aerial attacks on energy facilities throughout Ukraine early Wednesday, targeting seven regions with more than 50 missiles as well as drones, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said. The attacks also damaged the railway station and tracks in the city of Kherson, across the Dnieper River from Russian-held territory, and injured two people in Brovary, adjacent to the capital Kyiv, officials said.

Russia consistently targets Ukraine's energy infrastructure. There was a major aerial attack



on energy facilities on April 27 and another a week earlier. In a social media post, Zelenskyy noted that Wednesday's attacks occurred on the day that Ukraine observes the end of European fighting in World War II. "Massive missile attack by Nazi Putin on the Day

of Remembrance and Victory over Nazism in the Second World War," Zelenskyy said. "The whole world should clearly understand who is who; The whole world has no right to give Nazism another chance." National electrical grid operator

Ukrenergo said facilities were hit in the Vinnytsia, Zaporizhzhia, Kirovohrad, Poltava and Ivano-Frankivsk regions.

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