

Western Times

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News Brief

Cong candidate from Puri returns ticket citing lack of funds

Bhubaneswar, May 4 (IANS) In a development that has left the cash-strapped Congress red-faced, the party's candidate for Puri Lok Sabha constituency Sucharita Mohanty, has declined to contest the election, citing lack of funding from the party.

"It is clear that only a fund crunch is holding us back from a winning campaign in Puri. I regret that without party funding, it won't be possible to carry out the campaign in Puri. I, therefore, return the INC ticket for the Puri Parliamentary Constituency herewith.

Mother charged with murder for throwing newborn

Kochi, May 4 (IANS) Twenty-four hours after a newborn was flung out the fifth floor of an apartment in Kochi, the police have registered murder charges against the infant's 23-year-old 'mother', who admitted to killing the child.

The woman, who lives with her parents in the apartment, delivered a child early on Friday morning in her bathroom. She confessed that she was jittery and when her mother knocked the door of her room, she packed the newborn in a courier cover and threw it on the road.

The police have now registered murder charges against the woman, who is presently under medical attention. On Friday morning, Kerala woke up to a piece of shocking news with TV channels airing a CCTV clip showing the infant, wrapped in a plastic packet, falling from an apartment in Kochi.

J&K Police registers FIR against 'scandalous communication'

Srinagar, May 4 (IANS) J&K Police on Friday registered an FIR on the complaints received from senior women functionaries against an alleged scandalous communication being circulated in WhatsApp groups.

Police said that it had received a series of complaints from senior women functionaries holding public office, along with other supporting material, alleging therein that for the last few days, a scurrilous communication has been circulated on various social media platforms (WhatsApp etc) with baseless, scandalous, and derogatory allegations aimed at harming the reputation and integrity of not only these female public figures but public institutions and government organisations.

K'taka CM chairs SIT meeting

Bengaluru, May 4 (IANS) Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Saturday chaired a meeting of the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the sex video scandal involving sitting JD-S MP and NDA candidate from Hassan, Prajwal Revanna, the grandson of H.D. Deve Gowda. According to an official statement issued by the CM's office, Siddaramaiah has asked the SIT to take measures to arrest Prajwal Revanna at the earliest. He also directed the officers to initiate "ruthless" and "stringent" action against those involved in the sex scandal. The CM also warned the officials that any delay or negligence in the probe will not be tolerated.

Govt lifts ban on onion exports

New Delhi, May 4 (IANS) The Government on Saturday lifted the ban on onion exports after about half a year, according to a notification from the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT).

"The export policy of onions is amended from 'prohibited to free' subject to a minimum export price of \$550 per metric ton with immediate effect and until further orders," the DGFT notification states.

The move forms part of the government's balancing act to assure farmers a higher price as well as keep inflation in check so that consumers are not hit.

On April 27, the Government allowed the export of 99,150 metric tonnes of onion to six neighbouring countries -- Bangladesh, UAE, Bhutan, Bahrain, Mauritius and Sri Lanka.

On December 8, 2023, the government banned the export of onions from

March 31 this year. The ban was imposed to ensure adequate domestic availability and keep prices in check as the outputs of both the Kharif and Rabi crops in 2023-24 are estimated to be lower as compared to the previous year and demand has increased in the international market. The National Cooperative Exports Limited (NCEL), the agency for export of onion to these countries, sourced the domestic onions to be exported through e-platform at L1 prices and supplied to the agencies nominated by the government of the destination country at the negotiated rate on 100 per cent advance payment basis, according to the Food Ministry.

The offer rate of NCEL to the buyers takes into account the prevailing prices in the destination market and also international and domestic markets. The quotas allocated for

export to the six countries are being supplied as per requisition made by these destination countries.

As the largest producer of onion in the country, Maharashtra is the major supplier of onions sourced by NCEL for export.

The Government had also allowed the export of 2000 metric tonnes (MT) of white onion cultivated especially for export markets in the Middle East and some European countries. Being purely export-oriented, the production cost of the white onion is higher than other onions due to higher seed cost, adoption of good agricultural practice (GAP) and compliance with strict maximum residue limits (MRL) requirements. The procurement target for onion buffer out of Rabi-2024 under the Price Stabilisation Fund (PSF) of the Department of Consumer Affairs has been fixed at 5 lakh tons this year.



GUMLA, Prime Minister Narendra Modi waving supporters at an election campaign rally in favour of BJP Lohardaga Candidate Sameer Oraon and BJP Khunti Candidate Arjun Munda in Sisai, Gumla, Jharkhand on Saturday. UNI

CM, Dy CM obsessed with 'pen drive', forgotten about guarantees: BJP chief

Hubballi, (Karnataka), May 4 (IANS) Commenting on the sex video scandal involving JD-S MP Prajwal Revanna, Karnataka BJP President B.Y. Vijayendra slammed Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy CM D.K. Shivakumar on Saturday for "forgetting about the guarantees and talking only about a pen drive containing obscene videos".

Speaking to reporters here, Vijayendra said the Karnataka government seems to be obsessed with the pen drive.

"Our stand on Prajwal Revanna is clear. There is no question of the BJP standing with the accused. No one can escape the clutches of the law. A Special Investigation Team

(SIT) has been formed to probe the matter, so there is no question of supporting Prajwal Revanna," Vijayendra said.

"But, the state government seems to have forgotten about its guarantees and that is why it is only talking about the sex scandal. Even the people of the state are saying that the Congress is using the scandal as a political weapon," he added.

Last Tuesday, the JD-S suspended Prajwal Revanna, the sitting party MP and Lok Sabha candidate from Hassan, after the Congress government in Karnataka formed a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the allegations of sexual abuse against him.

Prajwal Revanna is the grandson of former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda.

Vijayendra also said that the sex scandal episode will not impact the results of the ongoing Lok Sabha elections as people are determined to elect Narendra Modi as the Prime Minister for a third term. "Incidents like this should not occur, it is a shameful matter. Also, allegations that I knew about the case from before are baseless. I had no knowledge about this case," Vijayendra said. "Going by the developments in the case, it is clear that Congress had information about the pen drive containing obscene videos from before.

President Murmu reaches Shimla for five-day visit

Shimla, May 4 (IANS) President Droupadi Murmu on Saturday reached Shimla for a five-day visit. She was received by Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla and Chief Minister Sukhinder Singh Sukhu at Kalyani helipad in Charabra, near here, during her arrival.

The President will be staying at Rashtrapati Niwas in Charabra. On May 6, she will attend the seventh convocation of the Central University of Himachal Pradesh in Dharamsala. On May 7, she will witness a cultural programme at the Gaiety Heritage Cultural Complex here. Later, she will also be attending a dinner hosted by the Governor at Raj Bhawan.

Priyanka blasts BJP over paper leaks, unemployment crisis

Banaskantha, May 4 (IANS) Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi on Saturday lambasted the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) over paper leaks and the unemployment crisis, in Gujarat's Banaskantha.

While addressing Nyay Sankalp Sabha, she targeted the BJP on issues of education, employment, and governance. Gandhi

expressed concern over the state of education in Gujarat, particularly highlighting the prevalence of paper leaks in exams.

She stated, "In Gujarat, there are mostly private schools. Labourers and farmers want their children to have employment and they work and take loans to get their children educated. Eventually, when the

child goes to take exams, papers are leaked. The children have to wait for years, and the future looks uncertain. Leak pe leak...in Gujarat. In 10 years of the BJP government, there have been more than 14 paper leaks. There are 30,000 vacancies in the central government."

Addressing the pressing issue of unemployment, Gandhi criticised the lack of job creation under the current government. She said, "In 10 years, the government didn't give employment, and that's why today we are at the peak of unemployment. More than 17 crore youth do not have jobs. All policies are for the benefit of the rich people." She outlined plans for an apprenticeship programme and financial support for youth post-education, emphasising the need to support small and medium enterprises. Challenging the status quo, Gandhi called for leadership accountability and the return to a time when public scrutiny was valued. She urged, "Bring back the times when people ask questions to leaders, like in the times of Sardar Patel and Mahatma Gandhi." In the 2019 general elections, BJP's Parbhat Patel won in this constituency with an impressive 6,79,108 votes. Congress' Parthibhai Bhatol stood second with 3,10,812 votes, while Independent candidate Thakor Sardarji clinched the third position with 48,634 votes.



BANASKANTHA, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi addressing a public meeting Nyay Sankalp Sabha, in Banaskantha, Gujarat on Saturday. UNI

BMC-IMD alert: High swell spring-tide waves to hit Mumbai in next 36 hrs

Mumbai, May 4 (IANS) High swell waves measuring 4.24 metres shall lash the Mumbai coastal areas in the next 36 hours, the BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) said in an alert based on the IMD's advisory, here on Saturday.

Accordingly, on Saturday afternoon (May 4) the low tide waves would be around 1.40 metres tall (2.36 pm), and the subsequent high tide waves shall be 4.08 metres high (9.09 pm).

On Sunday (May 5), the low tide waves shall be 1.05 metres high (03.30 am), followed by the high tide with waves of 4.04 metres height (09.50 am). On Sunday, the low tide measurement would be 1.32 metre (3.35 pm) and the subsequent high tide the waves shall be the highest at 4.24 metres (9.56 pm).

The BMC has called upon citizens, tourists, or weekend picnickers to avoid going to the beach-

es, shores or sea-fronts and cooperate with all the concerned agencies, as the coastal and low-lying areas may experience high surges due to the tall waves in the Arabian Sea.

Accordingly, the sea levels are expected to rise by an average of half to 1.5 metres during the high tide and spring tide phases, and even fisherfolks have been advised to exercise utmost caution, and

keep their boats safely moored away from the shores to avoid damage or collision.

The BMC Commissioner Bhushan Gagrani has directed all the city wards and concerned agencies, as well as the Mumbai Police and Mumbai Fire Brigade plus life guards, beach security personnel and others to coordinate and be ready for any emergencies.

Missing BSF officer traced in Jammu

Jammu, May 4 (IANS) Officials said on Saturday that a missing border security force (BSF) officer was traced in Jammu.

Officials said that information was received on Friday by Domana police station in Jammu about the disappearance of assistant sub-inspector (ASI) Parmanand Hembram of the 7th Battalion of BSF in the city. "A report was filed and a swift operation was started to trace the officer. "With technical assistance and human intervention, the missing person was traced.

"After completing all legal formalities, he has been handed over to his unit," officials said.

Death toll from Indonesia's flooding, landslides rises to 15

Jakarta, May 4 (IANS) The death toll in the flooding and landslides in Indonesia's South Sulawesi province has risen to 15, an official from the country's disaster agency said on Saturday.

The natural disasters, which were triggered by heavy downpours, had occurred since Friday in Luwu regency, Spokesman of the National Disaster Management and Mitigation Agency Abdul Muhari said.

Consequently, more than 1,800 houses and mosques had been submerged by the waters by up to three meters, and a total of 103 houses were destroyed, the spokesman said. Xinhua news agency reported.

Moreover, 115 people were forced to flee home and take shelter in their relatives' houses or mosques located on safer grounds, he said in a statement.

Rahul's Raebareli move will be 'suicidal', says ex-Congman Pramod Krishnam

New Delhi, May 4 (IANS) Former Congress leader Acharya Pramod Krishnam, reacted to Rahul Gandhi's Raebareli move on expected lines and said that the Congress leader developed cold feet and hence quit the Amethi Lok Sabha seat.

He also added that this move would prove 'suicidal' for the former Congress president as this would send a wrong message to party workers as well as the electorate.

"Rahul Gandhi used to tell others don't fret, don't be afraid, today he himself has panicked and picked Raebareli over Amethi, over the fear of defeat," Krishnam said, speaking to IANS.

The Kalki Dham

Peethadhishwar further said public perception means a lot in politics. Congress workers were hopeful of Rahul throwing his candidature in Amethi, even at the last minute but that didn't happen.

"Never in the history of Congress, the Gandhis gave up their family bastions. From Sanjay Gandhi to Indira Gandhi, all lost elections but they didn't leave their seat. This is for the first time that Rahul Gandhi has abandoned the Amethi constituency," he said.

He further stated that this gives the impression that Rahul Gandhi has got frightened and run away from Amethi.

Acharya said that when public perception changes, everything changes.

"I think Rahul's decision will prove suicidal. At every public meeting and forum, he asks and calls upon party workers not to get intimidated in the face of adversity but himself opted out of the electoral race in Amethi," he said.

This will send a message that the top Congress leader who should

have taken the challenge head-on got intimidated by BJP candidate Smriti Irani and left a crucial family pocket borough.

He further said that if Rahul chose to give up Amethi, he should have picked up a fight from Varanasi, the biggest Lok

Sabha constituency and given a direct challenge to PM Modi.

When questioned whether this was part of the strategy, as claimed by the party, he said that this was not a strategy but a conspiracy to 'drown' the Gandhi siblings.

'Shahenshah lives in castle': Priyanka Gandhi's retort on Rahul being dubbed 'Shehzada'

New Delhi, May 4 (IANS) Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Saturday returned fire amidst the volley of slurs and onslaught against Rahul Gandhi by the BJP top leadership and trained guns at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for calling him 'Shehzada' at multiple election rallies.

"He calls my brother Shehzada but he is the one who crossed past the country from Kanyakumari to Kashmir and covered a 4000 km distance on foot. During the way, he met my brothers, sisters and farmers and understood their problems in person. On the other hand, Shahenshah Narendra Modi lives

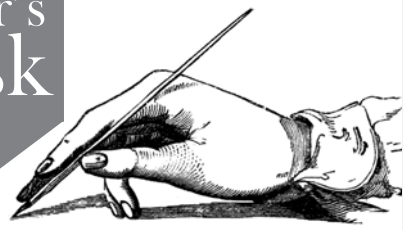
in a castle," said Priyanka at a poll rally in Gujarat's Banaskantha.

"Have you seen him on Television, he looks clean and tidy, his clothes have no spot or blemish, how can he understand your problems and daily travails," Priyanka asked the crowd, in a further jibe at the Prime Minister. Priyanka was addressing the Nyay Sankalp Sabha in Banaskantha, Gujarat on Saturday. "Modi ji lives in his own castle. He is surrounded by those in power, all are scared of him. Nobody dissents against him and those who raise voices against him are silenced," Priyanka said at the public gathering.



NEW DELHI, AAP candidate for Lok Sabha elections Somnath Bharti on his way to file his nomination, in New Delhi on Saturday. UNI

From Editor's Desk



Long, dry spell: Drought conditions could cause food inflation

Low water levels in reservoirs frame post-election challenge. Food inflation must be contained

At 50.43 billion cubic metres (BCM), water levels in 150 major reservoirs of the country are just 28.2 per cent of their full storage capacity.

While the current focus may be on elections, that may well change one month from now, when all eyes will be on the monsoon.

Last year's not-so-good southwest monsoon as the also post-monsoon and winter season rains — courtesy of El Niño — have affected the country's agricultural production.

Wheat procurement, too, has been sluggish, with some 21 mt bought so far and expected to only reach 26-28 mt, as against an original target of 35 mt.

Thankfully, El Niño seems to be signing off, with most global models indicating it to weaken to a "neutral" phase by June and even developing into a La Niña during the second half of the four-month monsoon season (June-September).



New Delhi, May 4 (IANS) A team of scientists has found how the bacteria Escherichia coli, or E. coli can cause urinary tract infections (UTIs) in healthy people.

Women are more prone to UTIs than men and almost half of them are affected at some point in their lives with uncomfortable and often painful symptoms.

Study shows how E. coli causes urinary tract infections

urination and blood in the urine. It can also lead to serious infections in the kidney causing back pain, nausea, vomiting and fever.

The study published in the journal PNAS examined how E. coli uses host nutrients to reproduce at an extraordinarily rapid pace during an infection.

The team from the University of Michigan in the US used mouse models to decode the bacteria's mechanism.

They identified bacterial genes that may be important for establish-

ing infection by looking at mutant strains that were not as good at replicating in the mouse models.

The team found a group of genes controlling transport systems, which if inhibited can help stop the rapid growth of E. coli.

"When bacteria need something to grow, say an amino acid, they can get it in two ways," said Harry Mobley, Professor of Microbiology and Immunology at the University's Medical School

"They can make it itself, or they can steal it from their host using

what we call a transport system," he added.

Further, the team also found a type of transporter called ABC (for ATP-binding cassette) that is essential for infection.

"Many bacteria strains lacking these nutrient import systems were defective for growth on bladder and kidney," the team said.

The findings open avenues for the development of new therapeutics -- which is especially important in an era of increasing antibiotic resistance.--IANS

Heatwave plays spoilsport in Telugu states as campaign enters final leg

Hyderabad/Vijayawada, May 4 (IANS) With just a week left for campaigning to end, the searing heat wave gripping both Telangana and Andhra Pradesh is impacting the canvassing by the political parties.

Leaders of the main parties and the candidates are having a tough time running the campaign with maximum temperature at few places in Andhra Pradesh crossing 47 degree Celsius.

The heat wave has already claimed a few lives in both the Telugu states. The forecast by the Meteorological office shows that there will be no relief from the intense heatwave conditions in the next one week.

Health authorities in both states have already issued an advisory to people to avoid exposure to sun, especially between 12 noon and 3 p.m. However, the impact of the heat is seen from as early as 10 a.m. with the blazing sun forcing many to remain indoors and these conditions are continuing till 5 p.m.

The maximum temperature is breaking a new record every day in Andhra Pradesh. It reached 47.7 degrees Celsius in a couple of places in Nandyal district on Friday. A few places in Prakasam and YSR Kadapa districts also recorded a maximum temperature of more than 47 degrees.

The scorching heat has left the contestants hardly few hours to conduct their campaign. They are seen touring their constituencies in the morning to reach out to voters. They undertake padyatras during the morning hours or in the evening.

The parties are also facing a huge challenge in mobilising people for the public meetings of

their top leaders. This is also forcing parties to cut down on the number of meetings, rallies and roadshows.

Simultaneous elections to the 175-member Andhra Pradesh Assembly and 25 Lok Sabha seats are scheduled on May 13. The same



day polling will be held in all 19 Lok Sabha constituencies in Telangana.

It's a race against time for national leaders and star campaigners of Congress and BJP. They are seen rushing from one public meeting to the other.

The parties are arranging large tents at the public meetings to protect the audience from the scorching sun.

In Telangana, the maximum temperature at a few places has crossed 46 degrees Celsius. The scorching heat has forced the parties to alter their campaign plans.

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy is addressing 3-4 public meetings in a day. He is flying by helicopter to crisscross the constituencies.

Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) leader K. Chandrasekhar Rao confines his campaign to evening hours.

Currently, on bus yatra, the former chief minister addresses one or two public meetings daily.

Konda Vishweshwar Reddy, the BJP candidate from Chevella constituency who has been campaigning in the constituency for nearly two months, told IANS that in view of the heatwave conditions, he is starting early for campaigning. Covering villages in the constituency spread over rural segments in Ranga Reddy district abutting Hyderabad is a daunting task for the contestants.

Vishweshwar Reddy suffered dehydration during the campaigning in Tandur segment a few days ago. "I had taken plenty of water but still had this problem. Drinking a lot of water also results in dehydration as it flushes out salt from the body," said the BJP leader.

He now carries water mixed with Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS) as a precautionary measure. Some leaders are carrying out their campaigns with hardly any break. In Hyderabad, AIMIM

president and sitting MP Asaduddin Owaisi begins his "paidal daura" at 8 a.m. and this continues till 2 p.m. After a one-hour break, he resumes his visit at 3 p.m. covering lanes and by-lanes in the old city.

His brother and AIMIM leader in Telangana Assembly Akbaruddin Owaisi also walks through various areas in the constituency during the day. The Owaisi brothers then address two public meetings each between 7 p.m. and 10 p.m.

BJP candidate from Hyderabad K. Madhavi Latha is undertaking padyatras in the morning and evening to avoid the heat during day time.

The blazing sun has dampened the enthusiasm among party cadres as they are finding it difficult to mobilise people for public meetings. However, the paucity of time has left key campaigners with no option but to carry on the campaign.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, who is leading the YSR Congress Party campaign, is covering 2-3 districts every day as part of his bus yatra.

Ex-Haryana CM Khattar faces litmus test ahead of double elections in Karnal

Karnal, May 4 (IANS) BJP veteran Manohar Lal Khattar, who as the Haryana Chief Minister advocated simultaneous Assembly and general elections in the state, is facing a litmus test in his main support base Karnal, where Assembly by-poll and Lok Sabha elections will be held simultaneously on May 25.

Party insiders say that Khattar not only has to ensure the victory of his 'protege' and successor CM Nayab Saini in the bypoll, but also win his maiden Lok Sabha battle to script BJP's hat-trick in Karnal, which is spread over nine Assembly segments.

The by-election was necessitated after the resignation of Khattar as the Chief Minister on March 13.

An RSS man with a clean image, Khattar, who believes in the principles of 'Ram Rajya' to run affairs, has been a popular Chief Minister for two terms and belongs to the Punjabi community in a state whose politics is dominated by Jats.

A day after resigning as the Chief Minister on March 13, he was nominated by the BJP as its Lok Sabha candidate from Karnal.

His Assembly seat fell vacant with his resignation. Now CM Saini is contesting the seat in the bypoll to remain a member of the Assembly for a period of around four months before Haryana goes to the

polls. Khattar, a two-time legislator from Karnal, replaced sitting BJP MP Sanjay Bhatia, who defeated Congress' Kuldeep Sharma by 656,142 votes in 2019. Bhatia, who secured 70 per cent votes, was the second among the MPs with highest winning margins.

The Congress has pitted its



youngest candidate Divyanshu Budhiraja (31), a Punjabi-Khatri and former head of the party's youth wing in Haryana, to take on Khattar (70).

As a student leader, Budhiraja, a close aide of two-time Chief Minister Bhupinder Hooda and his MP son, Deepender Hooda, was known for taking on the Khattar government on unemployment and paper leak scams in the Haryana Public Service Commission and the Staff Selection Commission.

Challenging Khattar for a debate, Budhiraja, who this week got

bail in a 2018 property defacement case in which he was declared a proclaimed offender, said, "I have got bail. Khattar-ji 'Ab aap janta ki adalat mein aaye, log faisla kareng" (Now you come to the people's court. Together we will fight for the honour of Karnal and defeat the anti-Karnal forces," added Budhiraja, who was the Haryana NSUI President from 2017 to 2021.

The other candidates in the fray from Karnal are NCP (Sharad Pawar) state unit chief Virender Verma; Jannayak Janta Party's (JJP) Devender Kadyan, son of former Assembly Speaker and three-time legislator Satbir Kadian; and BSP's Underjeet Jaimana.

Verma's party is part of the IN-DIA bloc at the national level and has been extended support by the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD). He fought his first Lok Sabha elections on a BSP ticket in 2009. The JJP was formed in December 2018 after a vertical split in the INLD following a feud in the Chautala family. In 2019, JJP extended support to the BJP after the latter fell short of the majority mark in the Assembly elections. The alliance ended in March after which the JJP leadership said it would field its candidates on all the 10 Lok Sabha seats in the state.

Polling in Haryana will be held in the sixth phase on May 25, while the results will be out on June 4.

NCPCR asks all states to prevent illegal transportation of children

New Delhi, May 4 (IANS) The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has asked Chief Secretaries/Administrators of all states and Union Territories to prevent illegal transportation of children.

In a letter issued on Friday to the Chief Secretaries/Administrators, the NCPCR said that recently 95 children were rescued and it was found that they had been attending unregistered madrasas in the Saharanpur District of Uttar Pradesh.

They disclosed that they were coerced into carrying bricks, cleaning toilets, and endured physical and mental abuse.

Instead of attending formal schools, these children were confined to the madrasa.

It appears that in the name of religious education, the children were deprived of their Fundamental Rights given under the Constitution and the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009.

Section 3 of the Act provides to every child of the age of 6 to 14 years the right to free and compulsory education in a neighbourhood school till the completion of elementary education. However, as per the

reports, the children were not sent to any formal school and subsequently were devoid of their right to benefit from the entitlements given under the RTE Act, 2009, an official said.

On April 26 this year, these 95 children were rescued while allegedly being illegally transported from Bihar to Uttar Pradesh.

The Uttar Pradesh State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (UP-SCPCR) rescued the children in Ayodhya and presented them before the Child Welfare Committee (CWC).

Following counseling sessions, orders were issued to relocate these children to the Government Children's Home for Boys in Lucknow.

The commission said that instances where such religious institutions are found to be fundraising in the name of children and illegally transporting them could potentially amount to child trafficking and may attract the provisions of Juvenile Justice Act, 2015, Section 370 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Section 370 of the IPC. The NCPCR in

its letter stated that whoever, for the purpose of exploitation, recruits, harbours, transfers or receives a person, commits the offence of trafficking.

In accordance with the mandate outlined in Section 13 (1) of the Commissions for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005, the commission recommends that states must ensure that all children in the age group of 6-14 years are enrolled in neighbourhood schools and receive formal education.

In its recommendations to the states the NCPCR asked to ensure that in all such cases where it is found that money is being raised in the name of children and children are illegally taken from one place to another, the concerned Investigating Officer may consider action in light of the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015 and Section 370 of the Indian Penal Code. They also asked states to issue necessary directions to the District Collector/Magistrate of all Districts in state/UT to enhance vigilance in their respective districts, thereby preventing the illegal transportation of children between locations. Additionally, the District Child Protection Unit (DCPU), Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU), and Special Juvenile Police Units (SJSU) should be instructed to conduct routine inspections and monitoring to deter such occurrences.



It's Jhansi vs Sribharat in high-profile Visakhapatnam

Visakhapatnam, May 4 (IANS) A direct close fight is on the cards between two highly-educated leaders from prominent political families in the high-profile Visakhapatnam constituency.

Botcha Jhansi Lakshmi of the ruling YSR Congress Party (YRSCP) will take on Sribharat Mathukumilli of the TDP who finished runner-up with the loss by a narrow margin in 2019.

Jhansi is the wife of state education minister Botcha Satyanarayana while Sribharat is the grandson of late MVVS Murthi, a former TDP MP.

He is also the son-in-law of TDP MLA and Tollywood actor N. Balakrishna and co-brother of TDP General Secretary Nara Lokesh, son of TDP President N Chandrababu Naidu.

After keeping a low profile for nearly one decade, Jhansi is looking to politically bounce back while Sribharat, despite the loss on his

debate, is going all out for a win this time.

With YSRCP reiterating its commitment to make Visakhapatnam the administrative capital of the state, the poll battle in the coastal city this time has assumed more significance.

YSRCP President and Chief Minister, YS Jagan Mohan Reddy chose Jhansi, a two-time MP, in place of sitting MP MVV Satyanarayana.

Unfazed by the criticism that the parties are fielding non-locals in Visakhapatnam, the YSRCP fielded the former MP from Bobbili and Vizianagaram.

Botcha Satyanarayana, who headed the Congress party in combined Andhra Pradesh and also served as minister in the Cabinet of Jagan Mohan Reddy's father YSR, is a strong leader from north coastal Andhra.

In 2004 Jhansi had suffered a defeat from Bobbili, a seat won by

her husband in 1999. However, in the bye-election held in 2006, she emerged victorious, though by a minuscule margin of 157 votes.

In 2009, she was elected from Vizianagaram. However, she came a poor third in 2014, when the Congress faced a humiliating defeat across the state due to public anger over bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh.

In 2015, the couple joined YSRCP. Botcha Jhansi denies that she is a non-local in Visakhapatnam. She claimed that Visakhapatnam was her maternal home and she moved to Vizianagaram after marriage.

During the campaign, she has been highlighting the priority the YSRCP government has been giving to the development of Visakhapatnam and its decision to make the port city the administrative capital of the state.

The proposed privatisation of the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP) is

one of the major issues in the elections.

The YSRCP candidate has assured VSP workers that she would exert pressure on the Centre to withdraw the proposal.

Jhansi, who did MA in philosophy, also has a doctorate in philosophy. The 61-year old's main opponent Sribharat is also highly educated. President of GITAM (Deemed University), the 35-year-old is an alumni of Stanford University. He did Masters of Arts in education and also Master of Business Administration.

During the campaign, TDP leaders have been accusing the YSRCP leaders of promoting land mafia in the port city.

TDP President and former Chief Minister, N Chandrababu Naidu claimed that while the TDP promoted Visakhapatnam as an IT and economic capital, Jagan Mohan Reddy turned it into a centre for settlements and land encroachments.

There are 33 candidates in the fray in Visakhapatnam, which has over 18 lakh voters. However, it is likely to be a direct fight between YSRCP and TDP candidates.

With the TDP, Jana Sena Party and BJP entering an electoral alliance, it's going to be a straight fight in this prestigious constituency spread over the port city of Visakhapatnam, its suburbs and rural areas in neighbouring Vizianagaram District.

In 2019, the constituency witnessed a multi-cornered contest. Candidates of five major parties were in the fray. Satyanarayana of YSRCP was elected with a margin of 4,414 votes over his nearest rival Sribharat of the TDP.

The YSRCP candidate had polled 4,36,906 votes while Sribharat had secured 4,32,492 votes.

VV Lakshminarayana, a former IPS officer who served as Joint Director of the CBI, had contested as Jana Sena candidate and finished

third by polling 2,88,874 votes.

D. Purandeswari, a former Union Minister and daughter of TDP founder and former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, NT Rama Rao, had contested as the candidate of the BJP, a party which she joined after quitting the Congress following Andhra Pradesh's bifurcation in 2014.

She, however, finished a poor fourth with only 33,892 votes. Congress party's P. Ramanikumari had secured only 14,633 votes, less than NOTA votes.

In 2014, BJP's K. Haribabu was elected from Visakhapatnam and this was one of the two Lok Sabha seats bagged by the BJP, which then fought the polls in alliance with the TDP. He had defeated Jagan Mohan Reddy's mother YS Vijayamma. Visakhapatnam had traditionally been a Congress stronghold till 1984 when it was wrested by the TDP. The regional party won it again in 1991 and 1999.

Sayantani Ghosh opens up about herself; not experimental by nature, she says

Mumbai, May 4 (IANS) Actress Sayantani Ghosh, who is currently seen in the show 'Dahej Daasi' has shared that she is not an experimental person by nature and that she likes consistency in her life. The diva, who started her acting career in 2005, is happy to be a part of the TV industry and said that it provides a regular source of income as well. Sayantani, who has been part of shows like 'Kumkum' and 'Meri Maa' shared: "I'm not an experimental person by nature, and I like certain consistency in my life. After working really hard for 20 years, I like comfort at this stage of my life. Of course, I need to have creative satisfaction as well. So if I'm happy with a particular show and a role, and if the show sustains and runs for many years, I am very happy." She further said:

"Daily soaps mean constant work, of course, but like every other aspect of life, everything has its plus and minus points. A lot of people complain about the continuous work or the number of working hours, but that also comes with its advantages and perks. It's a regular source of income. It's more like constant employment, and thus provides a bit more financial security."



"It's sustainable because when it comes to any other format, you do a project and then there's a downtime. But when you're associated with the daily soap, it runs for a fair bit of time. So for me, I think it's an advantage," she said.

Sayantani believes that it's not just about a show, it's about a whole team that an actor works with, and who becomes their work family.

It's everybody, whether it's your makeup, your hair team, the spot dada, the directors, or the co-actors, those people become like a family. And if you're happy in that family, then if it continues for years, I think it's a great situation for me because it gives me consistency," concluded Sayantani.

COLORS announces its upcoming rib-tickling show 'Laughter Chefs Unlimited Entertainment'

A platter full of laughter garnished with cooking mishaps will be served to the audience, leaving them craving for more! COLORS announces its latest show, 'Laughter Chefs Unlimited Entertainment'. Guaranteeing full-on entertainment, this new show reunites your favourite TV actors, who will spill the beans about their lives, serving their hilarious chemistry, antics, and quirks to viewers at dinner time. More than just a culinary journey of recipes, the offering is an entertainment feast for the family, where 13 popular stars will cook up the best stories, even if they may not be the best chefs. From kitchen newbies to cooking enthusiasts, these celebrities will lay out the unique flavours, stirring up the laughter. Leading the charge as the host is none other than the queen of comedy herself, Bharti Singh. With her sharp wit and sense of humour, she'll ensure that the laughter never simmers, keeping the audience in stitches from start to finish. Joining the star-studded ensemble is Celebrity Chef Coach - Harpal Singh Sokhi, who will lend his expertise through the kitchen chaos. This eccentric kitchen will be graced by fan-favourite celebrities such as KrushnaAbhishek - Kashmera Shah, Vicky Jain - AnkitaLokhande, Rahul Vaidya - AlyGoni, Reem Sameer Shaikh - JanantZubair, Karan Kundrra - ArjunBijlani, and SudeshLehri - Nia Sharma.



Dia Mirza warns against trimming trees for the monsoon: 'Unscientific, horrific'

Mumbai, May 4 (IANS) Dia Mirza, who actively participates for social and environmental issues, on Saturday, opened up on the destruction of biodiversity in the urban spaces and trimming of trees for monsoon, urging the officials to ensure implementation of better practices.

Taking to Instagram, Dia, who was last seen in 'Made in Heaven', shared a beautiful picture of herself sitting under a tree. She is seen wearing a blue suit paired with a white shawl. She also shared a series of pictures, featuring exotic birds and wildlife species.

The long post started with a shayari of Kaifi Azmi:

"Each year, the months of April and May are particularly heartbreaking when one witnesses the destruction of biodiversity in our urban spaces. Trees are being 'trimmed' in preparation for the monsoon...The 'trimming' is unscientific, and horrific, because the entire canopy/shade is axed away by unfeeling, unthinking individuals. The country is reeling in an acute heat-wave. The trees that offer us some respite with their shade in our cities are being cruelly cut," read the note.

A fan commented: "Little mindfulness is what we expect from every individual and concerned authority". Another user wrote: "It is together that we will be able to save our biodiversity." On the activism front, the actress has adopted two cheetah cubs in Lucknow. In 2017, she was appointed the brand ambassador for the Wildlife Trust of India and supported campaigns to raise awareness about the shrinking space for wild elephants in the country.



Dia added: "Year on year, we reach out to authorities begging, pleading for a more refined process. But to no avail. In the comments list out the benefits of tree cover in urban centres and tag @my_bmc so we can urge them to ensure that better practices are implemented. The images are not a representation of the reality we are dealing with. But are a representation of what one feels and what one can experience when we allow nature to do her magic."

Mira Rajput sports jewellery designer Falguni Mehta's jadau for Mumbai fashion show

Mumbai, May 3 (IANS) Mira Rajput Kapoor, wife of Bollywood actor Shahid Kapoor, dazzled in jadau jewellery by designer Falguni Mehta at the 'Legacy of Deft Hands' show. Mira turned muse in handcrafted jadau jewellery, adorning an antique finish polki choker with a long Russian emerald pendant to complement her elegant ensemble by JADE. Mehta joined hands with JADE to unveil a stunning collection of Jadau jewellery at the show, in partnership with the Rotary Club of Bombay, in support of the Textile Gallery

of the CSMVS in Mumbai. Talking about the show, Mehta said in a statement: "In the realm of global jewellery trends, enduring popularity and contribution of India's polki and jadau jewels is widely acknowledged."

"It underscores India's cultural magnificence and shines through in its ability to blend centuries-old techniques with modern design sensibilities, resulting in unique and breathtaking pieces that transcend trends and time," she added.



Himani Shivpuri's summer mantra is to not stay too much in AC environment

New Delhi, May 3 (IANS) Senior actress Himani Shivpuri has shared her mantra for the summer skincare routine, saying that she tries not to stay too much in the AC.

Himani, who is known for her roles in movies like 'Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge' and 'Jodi No.1', revealed that her summer mantra is to be as hydrated as possible.

Talking to IANS, Himani said: "When you are in the studios, under the lights, you tend to sweat and lose essential salts from the body, so I try to drink nimbu paani with salt. I can't take sugar

because I am diabetic. But for those who aren't, can add a little bit of sugar, as you know it is the latest poison. The best option is nimbu paani or chaach." The actress, who is currently seen in 'Happu Ki Ultan Paltan', further shared that she tries not to stay too much in the AC, as it is harmful.



"I try not to stay too much in the AC, because it is very harmful, as once I go out from the room to the set, which is full of lights, so your body takes a shock. So it's not very healthy. AC is frankly not very good for the skin. So even when I am travelling by car, I try to use as little AC as possible, because it sucks all the moisture from your skin. So basically it is to get hydrated and learn to bear the heat," she said.

Zeenat Aman urges industry colleagues to avoid bringing wild animals to sets 'at all costs'

Mumbai, May 3 (IANS) Veteran actress Zeenat Aman on Friday shared her distress regarding the plight of both domestic and wild animals, urging her colleagues in the film industry to avoid bringing wild animals onto sets.

Taking to Instagram, Zeenat recounted an emotional experience she had while witnessing an elderly, domestic elephant on a project's set. The actress posted a picture of herself wearing a blue and white kurta, standing beside a table adorned with miniature elephant idols.

Her heartfelt note read, "I was brought to tears recently when I arrived on set to find an elderly, domestic elephant on the scene. She was standing on the burning asphalt, bejewelled and bedecked... and she stayed there all day as the cameras rolled. I was bound by contract to do my job, but I am absolutely guilt-ridden that such a majestic animal suffered for my job and your entertainment. The plight of animals, both domestic and wild, has always distressed me. I do not believe that any wild animal belongs in captivity, especially not an animal as perceptive, intelligent and emotional as an elephant. From the little I have learnt about this species, I know that they are highly sentient, social animals. To keep them in captivity is to willingly support cruelty."



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GC reiterate forming distict anti-ragging panels

Ahmedabad : To curb incidents of ragging and harassment in colleges, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has reiterated the setting up of district level anti-ragging committees across the country.

UGC's circular dated April 18 states that these committees will have eight members including the district collector, university heads, superintendent of police, additional district magistrate, local media representatives, representatives from local police and administration.

Doctors correct rare facial deformity 3-Year-Old with Two Palates Undergoes Complex Surgery

Ahmedabad: The civic body run dental hospital performed a complex on a three-years-old child with a rare congenital facial deformity.

The child had an exceptionally uncommon congenital condition - two plates. According to a press release issued by the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) dental college, "Such cases are rarely seen and can lead to significant social stigma due to facial appearance, difficulty in eating psychological impact on the child."

A dedicated team of orthodontists at the hospital, led by Dr Dolly Patel, took on the challenge of a 12-year treatment for the young patient. The unique challenge arose due to the continuous eruption of both milk and permanent teeth the abnormal plate. Dr Patel and her team meticulously performed a complex palate surgery followed by a series of orthodontic interventions to remove extra teeth and reshape the palate.

The young individual can now enjoy a normal diet, improved facial aesthetics and the prospect of leading a fulfilling life. The dental hospital has treated 300 patients with congenital facial and oral defects.

Union Minister Pradhan exudes confidence of BJP winning all LS seats in Odisha

Bhubaneswar, May 4 (IANS) Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, the BJP candidate for Odisha's Sambalpur constituency, on Friday exuded confidence that his party will win all the 21 Lok Sabha seats in the state.

Addressing a press meet here, the Union Minister said, "Last time, the BJP secured 38 per cent votes and our opponent got 42 per cent. The difference was just four per cent and we won eight Lok Sabha seats. I believe this time the Bharatiya Janata Party is going to win all 21 seats in Odisha."

The BJP leader further claimed that the party will also form government in the state by winning maximum Assembly seats.

He said Odisha had received a "meagre Rs 3 lakh crore during the Congress rule at the Centre between 2004 and 2014", while in the last 10 years of the Narendra Modi government, the state received "around Rs 18 lakh crore".

Union Minister Pradhan claimed that despite the receipt of huge amounts of financial aid from the Centre, several places in the state lack drinking water and irrigation facilities, the school dropout rate in the state is high and the cases of malnutrition are also highest. The ruling BJD, on the other hand, has questioned the BJP leaders about the steps taken by them to safeguard the pride of Odisha.

Sachin Pilot campaigns for Digvijaya Singh, accuses BJP of suppressing Opposition

Bhopal, May 4 (IANS) Congress leader Sachin Pilot on Friday accused the BJP of trying to polarise voters to divert their attention from the real issues as the Central government led by it "failed to fulfill promises made in the last two general elections".

Addressing a public rally in Madhya Pradesh's Raigarh for Congress candidate Digvijaya Singh, the former Deputy Chief Minister of Rajasthan also accused the BJP government at Centre of suppressing opposition leaders by implicating them on fake charges.

Pilot appealed to Raigarh voters to support Digvijaya Singh in the Lok Sabha election, saying that the latter has served the people for the last several decades. "Digvijaya Singh is among those leaders, who fight for the people. He has served Raigarh's people in different roles and now it's your (people) turn to elect him your MP," he said. Congress veteran and two-time Chief Minister Digvijaya Singh is contesting his last election (as he has announced) from his home turf Raigarh after three decades. In 2019, he contested from Bhopal against BJP's Pragya Thakur and lost.

Guwahati received major boost during BJP regime: Sarbananda Sonowal

Guwahati, May 4 (IANS) Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Friday said that Guwahati -- considered gateway to the northeast -- received a major boost during the BJP government's tenure, adding the city was neglected when Congress was in power in Assam.

Addressing a public meeting here to garner support for the BJP candidate in Guwahati, Bijuli Kalita Medhi, Union Minister Sonowal said: "For long, the significance of Guwahati was not acknowledged by the successive Congress governments as they ignored the city along with the rest of the northeast as a remote, distant, and backward area of the country."

"No sincere attempt was made to make the city part of the national narrative and make the people active actors of India's growth story. However, Prime Minister Narendra Modi took it as a challenge and implemented the groundbreaking 'Act East' policy with Guwahati at its heart to turn the northeastern region as the growth engine of new India's economic resurgence," he said.

Karnataka 'love jihad' case: Accused shot in leg during police encounter, arrested

Dharwad, May 4 (IANS) An accused in a "love jihad" case was shot in the leg during a police encounter and arrested in Karnataka's Dharwad city on Saturday.

The accused, identified as 19-year-old Saddam Hussain Limbuwale, a resident of Eshwarnagar in Hubballi city, was on the run after a case was lodged against him on the charges of raping a 17-year-old minor girl in Navanagar police station in Hubballi city. Hussain attempted to assault Inspector Sangamesh and Constable Arun, who had arrested him, with a knife and tried to escape, after which the police opened fire. During the firing, the accused was shot in the leg. The parents of the girl said that Hussain befriended the minor girl, forced her into a relationship first and then started assaulting her sexually.

Five held for 'promoting enmity' between Leuva, Kadva Patels, 4 get bail

By Staff Reporter

Ahmedabad, Five men were arrested in Rajkot for promoting enmity between different communities after they allegedly distributed pamphlets stating the BJP offered the traditional Leuva Patel Lok Sabha seat to Union Minister Parshotam Rupala who belongs to the Kadva Patel sub-caste group of the Patidar community. The Congress has termed the arrests targeted action against the Leuva Patel community.

Four accused who were arrested late at night on Thursday were granted bail by a local court a day later. The fifth accused, who is suspected to be the one who printed the pamphlets, was nabbed on Friday.

The five were arrested based on a complaint filed by Mahesh Pipariya, a factory-owner and the BJP unit president for Ward No 11 of the Rajkot Municipal Corporation (RMC). Pipariya's complaint states that Raju Dangariya, general secretary of BJP's Kisan Morcha for RMC Ward No 11, saw the four accused -- Ketan Tala, Prakash Vejpara, Vipul Tarpara and Deep Bhandari -- distributing pamphlets that can "promote enmity between Kadva Patels and Leuva Patel factions of the Patidar community" in Rajdeep Society at 1:30 am Wednesday. He alleged that the accused also

shared the images of the pamphlets on social media.

Meanwhile, Rupala's rival and Congress candidate Paresh Dhanani, a Leuva Patidar, alleged that the FIR has been filed with a mala fide interest of diverting people's attention.

"The BJP has been shocked by the support I got from all communities during my campaign in Morbi taluka... To divert people's attention, I feel such false complaints are being filed," Dhanani said, and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony, 188 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant) and 114 (abetter present when an offence is committed).

Commuters raise alarm after three passengers fall to their death from overcrowded local trains

By Staff Reporter

Ahmedabad, After the death of three persons from Dombivli in the last fortnight -- all of them fell off overcrowded suburban trains of the Central Railway, concerned commuters have urged CR to address the issue of overcrowding.

On April 23, a 25-year-old IIT Patna postgraduate student, Avadhesh Dubey, a resident of Dombivli, died after falling off a train. He had boarded a train at Dombivli and was near the door as the coach was packed.

He lost his balance and fell to his death between Diva and Mumbra stations.

On April 29, 26-year-old Riya Rajgor lost her life

after falling from an overcrowded local train in Dombivli. Rajgor boarded a CSMT-bound train at Dombivli station around 8 am. As the train passed the Kopar area, she lost her grip on the grab handle and fell onto the tracks, resulting in her immediate death. Rajgor, who worked for a construction firm in Thane, was a resident of Dombivli and is survived by her parents. On April 30, a 49-year-old man, Rahul Purushottam Ashtekar, lost his life after falling off a running train near Mumbra due to overcrowding again.

Ashtekar, a resident of Dombivli West, had boarded the train from Dombivli and fell between Diva and Mumbra stations.

Removal of mangroves to build cricket ground: HC issues notice to Centre, state govt & dist officials

By Staff Reporter

Ahmedabad, The Gujarat High Court Friday issued notices to the Central and state governments and Amreli district officials on the alleged illegal removal of mangroves in the Jafrabad area for the construction of a cricket ground.

Noting that the matter requires consideration, the division bench of Chief Justice Sunita Agarwal and Justice Aniruddha Mayee issued the notices as it was considering a public interest litigation that sought the court to is-

sue directions to protect Jafrabad and take actions against officials who permitted the alleged illegal removal of mangroves in the area.

According to the PIL moved by Hareesh Bhambhaniya in Amreli, there has been "indiscriminate cutting and destruction of mangroves in and around Jafrabad town in Amreli", more specifically in the area of Sama Kantha Creek. The petitioner has also submitted that he saw heavy machinery, such as JCB machines, being used to level the land on

December 22, 2023 following which mangroves were uprooted and the construction of a playground was underway. After repeated requests, the district administration provided Bhambhaniya with a communication by local MLA Hirabhai Solanki who had, in a letter to the District Collector on December 31, 2023, sought an approval for construction of the cricket ground on the said "wasteland" citing a lack of such fields in Jafrabad.

Highlighting that the land where the mangroves were located falls under the regulated zone of the Coastal Regulation Zone notification of 2019, Bhambhaniya through his advocate Abhishek Mehta further argued that the land in question falls in 'high tide line' where no construction activities can be carried out within 500 metres of landward side of the high tide line as stipulated under the CRZ-I notification.

Married Man Sets Self On Fire Over Girlfriend Trouble

By Staff Reporter

Ahmedabad, On March 28, a married youth attempted suicide by self-immolation near Ratnakar Nine Square in Satellite area. Satellite police started an investigation after the youth died during treatment, 34 days later. Police found a note from the youth in which he held his girlfriend responsible for his action. Bhagyesh Sadhu, 30, a resident of Ghatodia, practiced law in the Metro Court. He got married in 2020. On March 27, 2024, his girlfriend Sangeeta (name changed) filed a complaint at the Maninagar Police Station against Bhagyesh for harassing her. On March 28, Bhagyesh went to meet Sangeeta at her workplace. When she refused to meet him, Bhagyesh attempted sui-

cide by self immolation right there in the parking lot of the office building. It was the ambulance paramedics who informed his family while on the way to the hospital. When the family reached the GMERS Sola Civil Hospital, they were informed that Bhagyesh had suffered burns over 55-60% of his body. He was first moved to a private hospital and from there to SVP Hospital for treatment. Doctors declared him dead on April 30. Satellite police found a note by Bhagyesh during the investigation. Based on this letter, Satellite police have registered a complaint of 'abetment to suicide' against Sangeeta. Satellite PI H C Zala said, "Bhagyesh was a married man and preliminary probe has revealed that Sangeeta too is married."

Chinese Crooks Target Guj Bizmen

By Staff Reporter

Ahmedabad, scammers. Cyber sleuths are also chasing a massive money laundering racket in which money thus earned was transferred to offshore accounts in Hong Kong and Shanghai in China. The money transferred in the form of cryptocurrency is expected to be massive.

Earlier Mica president Shailendra Mehta was duped of Rs 1.15 crore by one Moin Ingaria, a wannabe doctor who ended up being a cybercrook, and Mustafa Neviwal who masterminded the racket. Later a retired employee of Torrent Power Shrenik Vaishnav, 58, was duped of Rs. 40 lakh by the crooks. In the third case, the victim was Minesh Kumar Engineer who

Centre lifts onion export ban; Maharashtra onion belt readies for Lok Sabha poll battle

By Staff Reporter

Ahmedabad, Ahead of voting in the onion belt of Maharashtra, the Centre lifted the ban on the export of the pink bulb. The Narendra Modi-led Union government had banned onion exports since October last year fearing a shortage in supply owing to lower-than-expected acreage.

Speaking about the lifting of the ban, Consumer

'Need action to reduced marine plastic pollution'

Ahmedabad: Experts from India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka participating in a two-day event in Ahmedabad echoed concerns over the rampant use of plastics in coastal regions that is choking marine life and damaging ecology.

They were sparring at the orientation and training workshop on May 1 and 2 hosted by the Center for Environment Education (CEE) for the Tide Turners Plastics Challenge supported by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Organizers said that it is the fifth round of the global where youths join the challenges as individuals

and parts of organization. The challenge entails activities to reduce consumption of plastics and promote greener alternatives. The event task piece at three levels knowledge, action advocacy.

Madhavi Joshi, director for CEE, Academy said that there are several successful implementations of ideas generated from previous challenges. "One of the projects in coastal Garat is to make cloth bags from throw-away textile waste. Women are distributing these bags to shopkeepers in their villages to give to customers and encourage them to bring it for their next purchase. The idea floated

was simple. Single use plastic is often seen as jellfish like food by marine creatures and they choke on the plastics has reduced significantly," she said.

During this round, Probha Aurora from Bangladesh and the young Biologist's Association Sri Lanka will work with other organization in respective country, said officials. Gayatri Raghav, senior consultant (education), UNEP India and Kartikeya Sarabhai, director of CEE, interacted with participants. They stressed the critical role of youth engagement and encourage them to bring it for their next purchase. The idea floated

'Problem not with the seat but with you': Amit Shah hits out at Rahul Gandhi for contesting from Rae Bareilly

By Staff Reporter

Ahmedabad, A day after Congress leader Rahul Gandhi filed his Lok Sabha nomination from the party bastion of Rae Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said in Gujarat on Saturday that Gandhi has been changing seats "for the fear of losing" the elections. Shah also attacked the INDI alliance for its "rotation formula" for the post of Prime Minister and urged voters not to "hand over power to a divisive party".

"The Congress's leader is Rahul Gandhi and they work under his leadership."

He lost the elections in Amethi (2019) and so he went to Wayanad (in Kerala). Now, fearing that he

is going to lose Wayanad, he went to Rae Bareilly but did not return to Amethi. Rahul Baba, please hear my advice -- the problem is not with the seat but with you.

You are going to lose Rae Bareilly by a huge margin. No matter where you run, people are searching for you...," Shah said at an election rally in Bodeli in Chhota Udepur district.

"The Congress party is trying to divide the country into North and South India. They cannot be given power," Shah added.

Shah also invoked the tribal deities of Devi Rani Kajal Mata, Hafeshwar Dev, and Bhatiji Maharaj while attacking the Congress for being "anti-tribal". Stating that the INDI bloc, which has decid-

ed to "rotate the PM's term" between them, will jeopardise the country's safety, Shah said.

"They are not going to win the elections but even if they win by chance, can you tell me who will become the PM? The BJP has a clear face that when we win and form the government, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be our Prime Minister, but if the INDI alliance wins, do you know who will become the PM? Do you know any names? Can Sharad Pawar, Mamtaben (Banerjee), Stalin, or Uddhav Thackeray become the PM? Chandrababu Naidu has now come with us... and lastly, can Rahul Baba (Gandhi) become the Prime Minister? Why are you all laughing, he is a tall

Congress leader. One INDI alliance leader was asked who would be the Prime Minister.

He was in a dilemma and did not have an answer. So he said, every-one will become for one year..."

He further said, "This is not about running a partnership firm, it is about running the country... Can this ghamandia (arrogant) alliance keep the country safe after rotating the Prime Minister's term between them for one year each? If a situation like Covid-19 arises, can they save the country? Will they be able to save Kashmir from terrorists? These people can only spread lies, like they are spreading about reservation quota..."

Destruction of Amreli mangroves: Gujarat High Court issues notice to Centre, state govt

By Staff Reporter

Ahmedabad, The Gujarat High Court Friday issued notices to the Central and state governments and Amreli district officials on the alleged illegal removal of mangroves in the Jafrabad area for the construction of a cricket ground.

Noting that the matter requires consideration, the division bench of Chief Justice Sunita Agarwal and Justice Aniruddha Mayee issued the notices as it was considering a public interest litigation that sought the court to issue directions to protect Jafrabad and take actions against officials who permitted the alleged illegal removal of mangroves in the area.

According to the PIL moved by Hareesh Bhambhaniya in Amreli, there has been "indiscriminate cutting and destruction of mangroves in and around Jafrabad town in Amreli", more specifically in the area of Sama Kantha

Creek. The petitioner has also submitted that he saw heavy machinery, such as JCB machines, being used to level the land on December 22, 2023 following which mangroves were uprooted and the construction of a playground was underway. After repeated requests, the district administration provided Bhambhaniya with a communication by local MLA Hirabhai Solanki who had, in a letter to the District Collector on December 31, 2023, sought an approval for construction of the cricket ground on the said "wasteland" citing a lack of such fields in Jafrabad.

Highlighting that the land where the mangroves were located falls under the regulated zone of the Coastal Regulation Zone notification of 2019, Bhambhaniya further highlighted that the land in question falls in 'high tide line' where no construction activities can be carried out within 500 metres of landward side of the high tide line as stipulated under the CRZ-I notification. The court has sought responses from the Ministry of Environment as well as the state government and the district Collector and mamlatdar to the contentions raised in the petition by the next date of hearing.

Key accused plotted Sabarkantha explosion on 'suspicion' of illicit relationship, arrested: Police

By Staff Reporter

Ahmedabad, The main accused who plotted and executed the blast that killed a man and his minor daughter at their house in Sabarkantha planned the murder on suspicion that the victim was having an affair with his wife, the police said Friday. The accused, Jayanti Babu Vanzara (31), who was detained Thursday, has been formally arrested.

A resident of Kuranda village in Khedbrahma taluka, Jayanti made the bomb on his own, said Special Operation Group police inspector A G Rathod. Jayanti got married to a Veda resident in 2015 and the couple has three children. "However, after his marriage, he came to know that his wife was earlier friends with the deceased Jitu. This led to

suspicion that the two were still having an affair. He had never seen them together, yet he was suspicious. Jayanti had even threatened and warned Jitu to end the relationship," Rathod said. The accused is a professional photographer and also does petty work to earn a living, the police said.

"The accused was suspicious that his wife was in a relationship with the deceased, Jitu alias Jitendra Vanzara. Jayanti purchased ammonium nitrate and gelatin sticks for Rs 400. He had also purchased a small radio for Rs 400 from a fair at Vijay Nagar in February. He personally made the bomb at his house by putting ammonium nitrate in the speaker-cum-radio and connected it to a gelatin stick.

Sunita Kejriwal Seeks Votes To 'Save Democracy'

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's wife Sunita Kejriwal took part in roadshows for Aam Aadmi Party's candidates in Gujarat on Thursday, appealing people to cast their vote to save the country "which is heading towards dictatorship." People will respond to her husband's arrest in an alleged corruption case through the ballot box, she said, campaigning in Bharuch and Bhavnagar Lok Sabha constituencies.

"They have put Delhi Chief Minister and my husband Arvind Kejriwal in jail for the last 40 days. In Gujarat, they had put Chaitar Vasava and his wife in jail. No court has pronounced him (Kejriwal) guilty. They are saying the investigation is on; if the investigation continues for 10 years, will they keep him in jail for ten years?" she said, speaking during the roadshow at Botad town in Bhavnagar constituency.

"Earlier, a person would be sent to jail if he was found guilty by a court. Now, they have started a new system, so long as the investigation continues, the case continues, the person will be kept in jail. This is clear high-handedness, dictatorship," Sunita Kejriwal said.

Earlier, talking to reporters at the Ahmedabad airport, Sunita Kejriwal said people were smart, and will respond through votes to her husband's imprisonment.

Father-son duo held for killing a 53-year-old man over bicycle parking issue

A father-son duo have been arrested by the VP Road police for allegedly assaulting and causing the death of a 53-year-old man in Girgaon. The police said that there was a quarrel between the two parties over parking their bicycle inside the building premises following which the two accused ended up killing the elderly person.

According to the police officials, the two accused have been identified as Vikas Raut (53) and Vipul Raut (32) and they are residents of Girgaon.

UN warns of surge in casualties from potential Gaza escalation

Geneva, May 4 (IANS) An Israeli incursion into the southern city of Rafah in Gaza could lead to a "slaughter" and worsen the humanitarian catastrophe in the region, the United Nations' humanitarian office and health agency warned.

The city currently serves as a base for humanitarian operations in-



side Gaza following months of fierce Israeli bombardment and civilian casualties, Xinhua news agency reported.

Earlier this week, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said a ground offensive in Rafah would proceed regardless of any potential truce deal with Hamas.

With more than 1.2 million people crammed into Rafah, the city's ailing health system could not withstand potential devastation if Israel launched an incursion into the region. Hundreds of thou-

sands of people in Gaza would be at imminent risk of death in case of an assault, warned Jens Laerke, spokesperson for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, at a press briefing in Geneva.

"It could be a slaughter of civilians and an incredible blow to the humanitarian operation in the entire strip," he said.

The border city is a critical entry point for humanitarian aid. Dozens of aid organisations store supplies for civilians across the Gaza Strip such as food, water, health, sanitation, and hygiene items in southern Gaza City.

The WHO is making contingency plans to ensure the health system is prepared and can continue providing care, but these plans would only be a "band-aid", Richard Peepkorn, Representative in WHO's office for the West Bank and Gaza, told the briefing via video link.

An influx of new displacements would worsen overcrowding, increasing pressure on resources like food, water, and health care, the WHO said in a statement.

Death toll rises to 39 from heavy rains in Brazil

Sao Paulo, May 4 (IANS) The death toll from heavy rains in the southern Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul has risen to 39 with nearly 70 people still missing, the Civil Defence agency said.

The heavy rain was one of the worst climate tragedies that has so far affected 235 municipalities, including the state capital of Porto Alegre, according to the agency on Friday.

The state has seen persisting rainfall since Monday, causing rivers to swell, destroying bridges, and putting the city of Porto Alegre, with a population of more than 1.4 mil-

lion, on alert, Xinhua news agency reported.

Heavy rains also spread to the neighbouring state of Santa Catarina, where a person was killed in the flooding and landslides.

Recognising the calamity, the Brazilian government has sent equipment and financial aid to Rio Grande do Sul.

More than 24,000 people were displaced by the disaster, according to the agency. "These will be difficult days. We ask people to leave their homes. Our goal is to save lives. Things will be lost, but we must preserve lives. Our priority is to rescue people.



Conservative commentator Andrew Sullivan (inset), who is a conservative but a staunch critic of Trump, warned Biden's tepid response to the campus chaos of recent weeks is enough to cost him the election. Universities such as UCLA (left) have been rocked by unrest as pro Palestine protesters clash with administrators and the police. Sullivan claims this combined with Biden's failures on immigration and his stand on trans rights are enough to propel Trump back to the White House.

Yemen's Houthis threaten to attack all Israeli-linked commercial ships in Mediterranean

Sanaa, May 4 (IANS) Yemen's Houthi group has announced the expansion of its ballistic missile attacks to include all Israeli-linked commercial vessels transiting the Mediterranean. "We will attack all ships heading to or having links with Israel in the Mediterranean Sea as well as in any area within our reach," Houthi military spokesman Yahya Sarea said on Friday in a televised statement while elaborating on the group's fourth phase of military

escalation in the region, Xinhua news agency reported. "The implementation of this decision begins now," he noted. Moreover, the spokesman warned that if Israel intends to launch an aggressive military operation against Rafah in southern Gaza, the Houthis will target all ships and companies that deal with Israeli ports and prevent "all ships of these companies" from passing through the Red Sea, the Arabian Sea, and the

Mediterranean Sea, "regardless of their destinations." "We will not hesitate to persist in military escalation until Israel stops its war and lifts the blockade on the Gaza Strip. Houthis began to launch anti-ship ballistic missiles and drones targeting what they said were Israeli-linked ships transiting the Red Sea to show solidarity with the Palestinians in Gaza, which has been under relentless Israeli attacks for nearly seven months.

The West is 'waging war' against Moscow using Ukrainians: Russian Foreign Ministry

Moscow, May 4 (IANS) Western countries are "waging a war" against Russia in Ukraine with the use of foreign weapons, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Maria Zakharova said. The statement comes following British Foreign Secretary David Cameron's recent visit to Kiev, where the official said on Friday that Ukraine had the right to use British weapons to strike targets within Russian territory, Xinhua news agency reported. Zakharova said that the Western politician had publicly admitted that

"The West is waging an open war against Russia at the hands of Ukrainians". Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov also said on Friday that Cameron's words are "another very dangerous statement".

"These (statements) are examples of a direct escalation of tensions around the Ukrainian war, which can potentially pose a threat to European security," he said, adding that Moscow is deeply concerned about such escalating rhetoric coming from official representatives.

Hamas to release 20 Israeli hostages instead of 33

Tel Aviv, May 4 (IANS) Hamas has agreed to release 20 Israeli hostages in its custody instead of the 33 proposed by Israel.

A delegation of Hamas leaders led by Khalil al-Hayya has reached the Egyptian capital of Cairo for a fresh round of indirect mediatory talks regarding a ceasefire in the war with Israel as well as the release of Israeli hostages.

Other Hamas leaders in the three-member delegation include Zaher Ja-

barin and Ghazi Hamad. According to sources in the Israel Defense Ministry, Hamas has informed the Qatar and Egyptian mediators that it can release 20 Israeli hostages, including women, the elderly, and the sick.

Israel had earlier proposed the release of 33 of its hostages held in Hamas custody in exchange for around 600 Palestinian prisoners languishing in Israeli jails. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) director, William Burns, has

reached Cairo and will supervise the indirect mediatory talks.

Hamas, according to sources, has also demanded a ceasefire for 40 days and later a permanent retreat of the Israel army from the Gaza Strip.

However, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has already informed the mediators that the Israeli army would invade the Rafah region of the Gaza Strip by next Friday if the mediatory talks are not moving forward.

UN spokesperson declines to react to Biden's claim that India's economy stalling due to 'xenophobia'

United Nations, May 4 (IANS) A UN spokesperson has declined to react to an assertion by US President Joe Biden that India was "stalling so badly economically" because it was "xenophobic" and not taking in immigrants.

"I wouldn't comment on what he said," Farhan Haq, the Deputy Spokesperson for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, said on Friday when he was asked by a Chinese TV reporter about Biden's comment that also covered China, Russia, and Japan. Asked by the re-

porter about the UN's definition of "xenophobia", Haq said that it "is simply the dictionary definition". Biden had said on Wednesday, "You know, one of the reasons why our economy is growing is because of you and many others.

Why? Because we welcome immigrants. We look to -- the reason -- look, think about it. Why is China stalling so badly economically? Why is Japan having trouble? Why is Russia? Why is India? Because they're xenophobic.

They don't want immigrants." However, reports by several interna-



tional organisations and multinationals tell a different story from that of Biden, who has a record

of making fact-challenged statements.

According to the International Monetary Fund, the US economy grew by 2.5 per cent last year and is expected to grow this year by 2.7 per cent, while India, according to Biden, has a "stalling" economy grew three times faster than the US at 7.8 per cent last year and is projected for a two-and-a-half time faster growth at 6.8 per cent this year.

China's economy grew by 5.2 per cent last year with a projection of 4.8 per

cent this year.

White House spokesperson Karine Jean-Pierre tried to play down Biden's assertion, saying that "he was making a more broad comment, speaking about this country and speaking about how important it is to be a country of immigrants." "Obviously, we have a strong relationship with -- with -- with India, with -- with Japan. And the President, if you just look at the last three years, has certainly -- certainly has focused on that diplomatic -- those diplomatic relationships," she added.

Zelensky meets UK Foreign Secretary on military aid to Ukraine

Kiev, May 4 (IANS) Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky met with visiting British Foreign Secretary David Cameron to discuss military aid to Ukraine, the Presidential press service said.

At the meeting, which took place in Kiev on Thursday, Zelensky thanked the British government for recently approving the largest-ever military aid package for Ukraine, worth 500 million pounds (\$630 million), Xinhua news agency reported.

"The provision of this package, along with the

crucial decision of the US to provide assistance, is of great importance to us at this key moment," the Ukrainian President added on Friday.

He briefed Cameron on the situation on the frontlines of the Russia-Ukraine war and urged Britain to promptly deliver the weapons as part of the aid package.

Zelensky specifically outlined the types of weapons Ukraine requires, including armoured vehicles, ammunition, and various missiles.

According to the Brit-

ish Parliament, Britain has pledged 12.5 billion pounds (\$15.8 billion) in support to Ukraine since the outbreak of the war in February 2022, of which 7.6 billion pounds (\$9.6 billion) was for military assistance. This includes 3 billion pounds (\$3.8 billion) for military assistance in 2024/25.--IANS

Turkey halts trade with Israel to compel ceasefire: President Erdogan

Istanbul, May 4 (IANS) Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has said that Turkey's decision to suspend trade with Israel had one singular purpose, which is to compel the Israeli government into a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip.

He made the remarks on Friday during a meeting with the board of direc-

tors of the Independent Industrialists and Businessmen Association in Istanbul, according to the Presidency's website.

The President also noted that the government will coordinate and consult with the business community to manage the consequences of halting trade with Israel, Xinhua news agency reported.



'MADDIE FAKER' JOINS VIGIL
Kate and Gerry were said by a family member to be away at a secret location on a 'much needed' long weekend break. A message from them was read out during an informal gathering of friends and well wishers and they apologised for not being present. Read by vicar the Rev. Robert Gladstone from the local parish church, it stated: 'It's 17 years since Madeleine was taken from us. It's hard to even say that number without shaking our heads in disbelief.' The unexpected visitor Julia Wendell (left), 22, known as the 'Maddie faker', accompanied by a friend Robert Zyla, listened on intently, clutching a letter she had desperately hoped to give to the McCanns.

Indian sailors still on stranded ship off US port city after 35 days

Washington, May 4 (IANS) They would have been in Colombo in Sri Lanka, their destination, a couple of days ago, and would have been on their way home. But they remain on a cargo ship off the coast of the US port city of Baltimore.

The 20 Indian members of the crew of Dali remain on board the vessel 35 days after the container ship brought down a bridge in Baltimore on March 26 in an early morning maritime accident that claimed the lives of six men who were working on the bridge at the time. A member of the crew who was injured received treatment on shore and returned to the ship the day after. If everything had gone right that night, they would be in Colombo by the end of Monday or Tuesday.



everything goes according to schedule, they might have added.

Dali hit a pillar of the Key Scott Bridge, a 50-year-old structure that serves thousands of motorists every day, in circumstances that are being investigated by multiple US agencies. The collision

brought the bridge and blocked the passage of all cargo ships waiting to be on their way after Dali.

The crew are on the ship which is the scene of investigation by the US authorities. The FBI has launched a criminal inquiry into the incident apart from separate probes underway by the National Transportation Safety Board and the Coast Guard's Marine Board of Investigation.

The bridge collapse received nationwide attention and US President Joe Biden has promised all possible help in the construction of the bridge and visited the site. Jim Lawrence, a spokesperson for the Dali owner Grace Ocean Private Ltd.,

said the Indian crew members confirmed their presence on board now for 33 days. "Still on board, in good spirits," he added.

They are frequently represented by representatives of the company and the Indian embassy and by the Seamen's Church Institute, which serves mariners in education, legal advocacy, and pastoral guidance. The crew "routinely have catered meals and desserts delivered to the ship", Lawrence said, adding, "In addition to performing normal duties on board the ship, they are also assisting with the ongoing salvage work." "quest for information about the well-being of the Indian sailors: if they can go off the ship, whether they have US permission to go on the mainland, and, finally, how often was the embassy or the relevant consulate checking on the crew.



Israel announces countermeasures against Turkey following trade suspension

Jerusalem, May 4 (IANS) Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs has announced several measures to be taken against Turkey following the latter's decision to halt all trade activities with Israel due to "non-stop violence" against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

The Ministry said on Friday in a statement that in a discussion carried out by senior officials from the Foreign and Economy ministries, as well as the Israel Tax Authority, it was decided to work towards reducing any economic connection between Turkey and the West Bank and Gaza, Xinhua news agency reported.

Additionally, it was decided to take action in international economic forums to explore sanctions against Turkey for violating trade agreements, to create an alternative list for the Israeli economy across various sectors and products, and to support affected Israeli export sectors.

It noted that Turkey is the Palestinian Authority's largest importing country. According to Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics, in 2023, Israeli exports of goods to Turkey amounted to \$1.57 billion, while Israeli imports from Turkey reached \$4.61 billion.

Palestinian president undergoes routine medical examinations in West Bank

Ramallah, May 4 (IANS) The Palestinian Presidency has said that President Mahmoud Abbas had undergone routine medical examinations in the West Bank city of Ramallah.

A statement issued by the Presidency said that Abbas took routine medical examinations at the Arab Consultative Hospital on Friday, and the results were reassuring, after which he left the hospital. The statement did not provide further details on the matter, Xinhua news agency reported. Abbas, born in 1935, had previously received medical examinations at the same hospital last February and July 2022. In April 2021, he travelled to Germany for medical examinations.

In May 2018, Abbas stayed at a hospital in Ramallah for eight days to receive treatment for pneumonia. Abbas was elected President of the Palestinian Authority in January 2005 following the death of his predecessor Yasser Arafat.

Conflict in Gaza continues to be 'war on women': UNRWA

Gaza, May 4 (IANS) The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) has said that Israel continues to target women in strikes in the Gaza Strip.

"The war in Gaza continues to be a war on women," UNRWA said on Friday in a press statement posted on its social media platform X, adding that more than 10,000 women have been killed and 19,000 others injured in the ongoing Israeli attacks on Gaza, Xinhua news agency reported.

On average, 37 children in Gaza lose their mothers every day, it added.

Living conditions are particularly "appalling" for more than 155,000 pregnant or lactating women in the enclave, who face extreme difficulty in accessing water and health facilities, the agency said.



EW Putting a brave face on grim results, Rishi Sunak admitted that voters are "frustrated" but argued that Keir Starmer has not sealed the deal. Mr Sunak is willing Mr Street to join Tees Valley mayor Ben Houchen in securing a third term this afternoon, with the outcome thought to be on a knife edge. Lord Houchen's success has seemingly helped Mr Sunak quell a fresh coup bid from rebels, most of whom have now conceded the leader will not change before the general election. However, the broader picture for the Conservatives was relentlessly grim, with the party likely to end up losing 500 councillors in one of the worst showings for 40 years. It was not all plain sailing for Sir Keir though, with experts warning that a slump in support in areas with large Muslim populations suggested he was 'in trouble'.

IPL 2024: A special win, says spinner Varun Chakravarthi as KKR beat MI at Wankhede after 12 years

Mumbai, May 4 (IANS) Conceding that his team looked down and out despite a fighting 70 by Venkatesh Iyer, Kolkata Knight Riders spinner Varun Chakravarthi said the 24-run victory over Mumbai Indians was special as it was their first win at Wankhede in 12 years.

Jasprit Bumrah (3-18) and Nuwan Thushara (3-42) claimed three wickets apiece at each end of the KKR innings as Mumbai Indians restricted them to a paltry 169 despite brilliant fighting 70 off 52 balls by Venkatesh Iyer, who raised 83 runs for the sixth wicket in the company of Manish Pandey, rescuing their team from a precarious 57/5 at one stage.

Chakravarthi praised Venkatesh Iyer and Manish Pandey for pulling them to 169 which they eventually defended.

"This is a very special win because we were down and out in the first innings. The way Venkatesh and Manish pulled it back was great," said Chakravarthi at the presentation ceremony.

Di Maria on Inter Miami radar

Buenos Aires, May 4 (IANS) Argentina World Cup winner Angel Di Maria was reported to join his national teammate Lionel Messi at Inter Miami this summer.

Di Maria's contract with Portuguese club Benfica is due to expire next month and Inter Miami is among the frontrunners to secure the 36-year-old's signature, Argentina's TyC Sports reported.

The right winger previously expressed a desire to return to his original club Rosario Central but has reportedly changed his mind due to security concerns in the Argentine city.

Di Maria has scored 16 goals and provided 15 assists across all competitions for Benfica this season. The former Real Madrid, Manchester United and Juventus star has said he will retire from international football after this year's Copa America - to be played in the United States from June 20 to July 14 - but he is expected to continue his club career.

Madrid Open: Felix Auger-Aliassime to face Rublev in final after Lehecka back injury

Madrid, May 4 (IANS) Unseeded Canadian Felix Auger-Aliassime will face Andrey Rublev in Sunday's men's final of the Madrid Open, after the world number 35 had a walkover against Jiri Lehecka, while Rublev defeated Taylor Fritz.

The evening match between Auger-Aliassime and Lehecka was level at three games each when the Czech complained of a back problem. He attempted to continue after treatment, but only lasted three more points, before falling to the ground in agony as he looked to return and he was almost in tears as he left the court, reported Xinhua. "I couldn't believe that was happening, when he (Lehecka) put his hands to his back. I feel really bad for him," said Auger-Aliassime. "I don't know what he must have thought when he knew he couldn't continue. I really feel for Jiri, but I can't do anything," added the Canadian player.



The German is poised to leave Bayern Munich at the end of the season, as announced in February, even though more than 19,000 supporters have signed a petition for him to stay. Ten Hag is fighting for his future with United sixth in the Premier League table and revving up for a repeat of last year's FA Cup final against Manchester City towards later this month.

Tamil Nadu, Railways keep winning in Group A of Sr Women's NFC for Rajmata Jijabai Trophy

New Delhi, May 4 (IANS) Tamil Nadu, Railways, and Delhi emerged winners on the second matchday of the 28th Senior Women's National Football Championship for Rajmata Jijabai Trophy Final Round Group A, defeating Bengal, Punjab, and Chandigarh, respectively, in Kolkata, on Friday. With these results, Tamil Nadu and Railways move to the top of Group A, both having garnered six points apiece. The former are ahead on goal difference.

Tamil Nadu tame Bengal:

Defending champions Tamil Nadu completed a dominant win over hosts Bengal at the Kishore Bharati Krirangan, registering a 4-0 win to jump to the top of Group A.

Tamil Nadu had a good start to the match, as Sandhya P (14') and Priyadarshini S (19') scored two early goals to put them in a comfortable position.

Priyadarshini turned provider in the 79th minute, when she found Sandhya Ranganathan

with a delicately threaded ball between the Bengal



lines, as the latter glided her shot past the keeper, and into the bottom corner.

Iswarya made it four in injury time, when she controlled a weak Bengal clearance at the edge of the box, skipped past a tackle, and lobbed it into the top far corner. Bengal goalkeeper Manju nowhere to be seen, defender Saraswati Murmu made a flailing lunge on the goal line, her arms outstretched above her head to stop the ball. However, Iswarya's shot was too well-placed.

Murmu's action, though in vain, earned her the second booking of the match as she walked off seconds before the final whistle.

Kamala Devi brace wins it for Railways: Railways came back from a goal down to defeat Punjab 3-1 at the AIFF National Centre of Excellence Ground in Kolkata, to move to second in the Group A table.

Nisha (2') netted an early goal for Punjab, that set the tempo of the game for the first half. Punjab kept last season's semi-finalists at bay for a little over half an hour, before the comeback began.

Naabi Chanu Laishram brought Railways back into level terms in the 37th minute, when she scored off a cross by Sanju, as the two teams trudged off with the scores reading 1-1 at the break.

Railways' experienced midfielder Kamala Devi came into her own in the second half, when she se-

cured the victory for her side. She put her side in the lead in the 76th minute, receiving a pass from Kunti Kumari Lakra, before she side-stepped her marker at the edge of the box and curled a left-footer into the bottom corner.

Kamala put the result beyond all doubts in injury time when Mamta sprinted up the right flank and cut it back for the former, who tapped it in.

Delhi edge past Chandigarh: Delhi scraped past Chandigarh to register their first victory of the Final Round, winning 1-0 at the AIFF NCE.

With the score tied at 0-0 at half-time, Delhi came out of the blocks quickly, and some smart play on the wing by Raziya Khan resulted in her sending a dangerous low ball across the face of the goal. While it evaded both friend and foe, Jyoti's patient wait at the far post paid off, as she received the ball and placed it home.

Delhi now stand fourth in the group with three points.

IPL 2024: Pandya blames lack of partnerships for Mumbai's 24-run defeat to KKR

Mumbai, May 4 (IANS) Mumbai Indians skipper Hardik Pandya blamed his batters' inability to forge partnerships for their 24-run defeat to Kolkata Knight Riders in Match 51 of the Indian Premier League despite a brilliant effort by his bowlers at the Wankhede Stadium on Friday.

Jasprit Bumrah (3-18) and Nuwan Thushara (3-42) claimed three wickets apiece at each end of the KKR innings as Mumbai Indians restricted them to a paltry 169 despite brilliant fighting 70 off 52 balls by Venkatesh Iyer, who raised 83 runs for the sixth wicket in the company of Manish Pandey, rescuing their team from a precarious 57/5 at one stage.

Mitchell Starc claimed 4-33, claiming three wickets in the 19th over to end Mumbai innings for 145 after spin twins Sunil Narine and Varun Chakravarthi had reduced them to 61/4 with identical 2-22 hauls. Suryakumar Yadav

waged a lone battle raising Mumbai Indians' hopes with a 35-ball 56, raising 49 runs for the seventh wicket with Tim David (24) before Andre Russell (2-30) and Mitchell Starc ended Mumbai's innings, sharing the last five wickets between them.

Pandya said the lack of partnerships undid the super effort by the bowlers and it will take time to find answers to the questions raised by their dismal performance throughout IPL 2024.

"Obviously we couldn't form partnerships and kept losing wickets. There are a lot of questions that will take time to answer. But for now, not much to say," said Hardik at the post-match presentation.

He said though the wicket played better in the second innings and there was dew too to make it tough for the KKR bowlers, he will have to go through the game again to see what they can do better.

Kerala, Haryana start with wins in Swami Vivekananda U20 Men's NFC

Narainpur (Chhattisgarh), May 4 (IANS) Kerala and Haryana recorded wins in their opening Group D fixtures at the Swami Vivekananda U-20 Men's National Football Championship at the Ramakrishna Mission Ashram Ground, on Friday. Kerala put on a first-half masterclass to triumph over Gujarat 3-1, while Haryana held

Andhra Pradesh at bay with a superlative defensive performance to take a 2-0 victory. Kerala edged out Gujarat in the first game of the day, Akshay Kumar Subedi's brace key to them taking home the points. Kerala's opener came in the 11th minute, after some ingenious play by Subedi and his attacking counterpart Alan Shaju.

Having picked up the ball in midfield, Subedi exchanged a quick one-two with Shaju, whose perfectly-weighted pass put the forward through one-on-one with the goalkeeper. He finished coolly to give his team the lead. If the first displayed brilliant teamwork the second was pure individual brilliance as Subedi let fire from 30 yards to slot the ball in the top corner. Shaju got a goal himself in the 37th minute to put Kerala in cruise control at the end of the half. A disciplined and resolute second-half performance saw Gujarat pull a goal back via Krishna Khatsuriya in the 62nd minute, but in the end it wasn't enough to threaten a Kerala victory.



Business & Technology



Musk's X cracks down on deepfakes with improved image matching

New Delhi, May 4 (IANS) Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk, on Saturday, said that a new update on "improved image matching" will defeat deepfakes as well as shallowfakes on social media platform X.

The new update will show notes on 30 per cent more posts that contain "similar or identical images."

"We just rolled out the update and will be monitoring for any erroneous image matches," X said in a post. Musk added that

this move "should make a big difference in defeating deepfakes (and shallowfakes)."

Shallowfakes are photos, videos and voice clips generated without the help of artificial intelligence (AI), and use widely available editing and software tools.

X notes on images automatically show on posts that contain a matching image.

"It's common for these notes to match on dozens, hundreds and sometimes thousands of posts. Now, you can see how many

posts an image note is matching on, right in note details," according to the company.

In the global election season, experts have warned about the spread of fake news and deepfakes that aim to interfere with polls.

The independent Oversight Board which has 22 global human rights and freedom of expression experts from across the globe, has called for urgent action to tackle deepfakes threatening global elections.

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar explains how women emancipation is shaping India

New Delhi, May 4 (IANS) Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, the spiritual leader and the Founder of the Art of Living Foundation attended the Viksit Bharat Ambassador event at Kashi Vishwanath Dham's Tribhakeshwar Hall on Saturday and gave an insight into how India was leading the way, not just on growth parameters but also on issues like women emancipation and women empowerment.

Addressing the Sri Shakti Samvad, Sri Sri said that the government has envisioned achieving the Viksit Bharat goal by 2047 and added that women will play a pivotal role in it, because of their dexterity and multi-tasking skills.

"If women are assigned any big task, they have the potential to finish it, ten years early. Despite having multiple responsibilities, they not only complete their household chores but also, manage external work efficiently. Women can take care of different things at a time," he said.

Citing the example of Hindu Goddesses, he said: "This was possibly the reason why women

were entrusted with key ministries in the ancient ages. Education Ministry was assigned to Goddess Saraswati, Finance to Goddess Lakshmi and Defence Ministry was given to Goddess Durga."

The spiritual leader further highlighted that today, India is leading the world in women's empowerment, as women here are breaking the glass ceiling and moving ahead.

"The US, which brags and boasts about women empowerment never elected any woman President to date. We have

done it. It is for the first time that Women Reservation Bill has been cleared from the Parliament," he said.

Sri Sri further urged everyone to actively participate in Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan and said, "Firstly, the country should remain clean, the house should remain clean, the streets should remain clean, we have to contribute to this. The more we use plastic, the more damage it does to the environment. Taking care of the environment is our first task."

IDBI Bank reports 55% rise in profits on YoY basis

Mumbai, IDBI Bank, announced its quarterly results for Q4 FY24. Net Profit surges to all time high at ₹5,634 crore for the year with YoY growth of 55% and ₹1,628 crore for Q4 FY 24 with QoQ growth of 12%. The operating profit stood at ₹9,592 crore. NIM was recorded at 4.93%, and Net Interest Income stood at ₹3,688 crore with a YoY growth of 12%. Cost of Deposit stood at 4.48% for Q4-2024 as compared to 3.71% for Q4-2023. CRAR stood at 22.26% with YoY growth of 182 bps. Return on Assets (ROA) was recorded at 39 bps to 1.82% for Q4-2024 as compared to 1.43% for Q4-2023 and Return on Equity (ROE) stood at 19.50%. (YoY growth of 335 bps). Net NPA at 0.34%, down from 0.92% as on March 31, 2023. Gross NPA at 4.53%, down from 6.38% as on March 31, 2023. PCR stood at 99.09% as against 97.94% on March 31, 2023.

New Vitamin C-rich bandage to boost burn healing

New Delhi, May 4 (IANS) Italian researchers have developed a novel bandage developed from biodegradable material and loaded with vitamin C to help boost the healing process of burn wounds.

The bandage developed by the team from the Italian Institute of Technology (IIT) consists of zein - a protein obtained from maize; pectin -- a sugar found in the peel of many fruits, like apple; and soy lecithin -- a substance sourced from the like-named plant.

The body's natural defence mechanism leads to inflammation after a burn, making the affected area red and swollen. However, inflammation when excessive can counterproductively trigger the generation of oxygen free radicals, and impede the healing process.

The new bandage, de-

tailed in the journal ACS Applied Bio Materials, was found capable of preventing an increase in the level of inflammation and cutting down the number of free radicals, thus reducing the time needed for healing.

"This is just one of the possible applications for this category of smart materials," said Athanassia Athanassiou, Principal Investigator of IIT's Smart Materials Unit.

"We are working on other devices capable of speeding up healing, not only of burns but also various other types of wounds such as lacerations or skin ulcers, pathologies," Athanassiou added.

Importantly, the bandage naturally degrades within a few days, providing an environmentally sustainable alternative to skin patches, the team said.

Eternal blessings with Platinum jewellery for Akshaya Tritiya this Year

Mumbai, Celebrated as one of the most auspicious occasions in Hindu culture, Akshaya Tritiya marks a day of new beginnings, prosperity, and good fortune. It symbolizes the onset of new endeavours, prosperity and unending blessings.

This year, the festival will be celebrated on May 10th 2024. As the celebrations around Akshaya Tritiya evolve, the significance of purchasing 'true white' continues to hold great meaning as it symbolizes purity and auspiciousness. Besides being intrinsically white, Platinum jewellery with its 95% purity and timeless appeal, perfectly embodies the spirit of this occasion. One of the rarest & purest metals to exist on this planet, platinum is known for its naturally white, that remains untarnished over time, making it a fitting

choice for auspicious events. Platinum jewellery thus becomes particularly favoured for this occasion due to its association with purity.

Highlighting the significance of Akshaya Tritiya for platinum jewellery, Vaishali Banerjee, MD, PGI India said, "Platinum's preciousness and rarity appeals to young consumers. Over the years, platinum has emerged as the metal of choice for celebrating emotionally significant milestones, special occasions, and festivals, especially its 'true white' that is associated with purity and longevity. Rajesh Kalyanaram, Executive Director of Kalyan Jewellers, said, "At Kalyan Jewellers, we prioritize offering a diverse range of jewellery designs across various categories to meet the evolving preferences of our customers. During

Study calls for making cardiorespiratory fitness a part of annual check-up

New Delhi, May 4 (IANS) Making cardiorespiratory fitness a part of your annual health checkups can help you gauge your health status and understand the risk of underlying disease as well as predict mortality, according to a study.

Cardiorespiratory fitness (CRF), also known as cardio or aerobic fitness can be defined as the ability of the heart, lungs, and blood vessels to supply oxygen during sustained physical activity.

According to the American Heart Association (AHA), an individual's aerobic fitness level can indicate factors such as smoking, hypertension, and high cholesterol.

The study, published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine, suggests the need to incorporate this measure in routine clinical

and public health practice. It comes amid reports of even seemingly healthy and fit people succumbing to heart disease, among others.

"Apparently 'healthy' adults can take the cardiorespiratory fitness test - under medical advice and supervision annually. In 'healthy' adults, it has the power to predict the risk of cardiovascular disease (heart attacks, strokes), and is an even stronger predictor of mortality than diabetes, hypercholesterolemia, smoking (tobacco abuse)," Sanjay Chugh, Associate Director and Senior Consultant Interventional Cardiology at Narayana Hospital Gurugram told IANS.

"It also predicts risk of developing diabetes, cancer or mental illness," he added. In the study, a high CRF measure was found

to lower the risk of death from cardiovascular disease (CVD) and cancer, while a low CRF indicated the risk of developing chronic conditions such as hypertension, heart failure, stroke, atrial fibrillation, dementia, and depression in the future.

The test measures maximum oxygen uptake (VO2 max) and how it's used during intense exercise. Sanjay noted that in patients planned for surgery, "the test predicts the surgical risks of complications and death from surgeries and helps risk stratify, prognosticate, and guide patient management." "Cardiorespiratory fitness (CRF) measurement should be routinely included in clinical practice," Sudhir Kumar, a neurologist at Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals, wrote in a post on X.

LANXESS drives sustainable change in Jhagadia through CSR initiatives

Jhagadia, LANXESS reaffirms its commitment to sustainability and community development through a series of impactful Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) projects in Jhagadia, Gujarat. The organization has implemented several initiatives aimed at promoting education, renewable energy, vocational training, and water conservation in the region in the last couple of years. LANXESS has been a driving force in promoting renewable energy solutions in Jhagadia. Focusing on the topic of Climate Protection, the organization has installed solar panels and solar street lights in key locations across the region, including rural areas, government schools and hospitals. These solar lighting projects not only contribute to reducing carbon emissions but also provide a sustainable source of electricity to the community. Commenting on the development of its CSR projects, Namitesh Roy Choudhury, Vice-Chairman & Managing Director at LANXESS India said, "LANXESS remains dedicated to its mission of creating value for society and fostering sustainable development in the communities it serves. Our CSR initiatives are a testament to our commitment to supporting communities in need and contributing to their long-term well-being. We will continue to work closely with local authorities and like-minded organizations and provide support to the community and nearby areas of Jhagadia region in the future". In addition to this, the organization has also invested in Rainwater Harvesting projects in the region to meet the water needs of the community in Jhagadia. This involved collecting rain water from the identified villages and recharging the ground water levels.

TBO TEK IPO opens on 8th May, 2024

Ahmedabad, May 04th, 2024: TBO Tek Limited ("The Company" or "TBO"), shall open bids for its initial public offering of Equity Shares on Wednesday, May 08th, 2024. The Offer will close on Friday May 10th, 2024. The Anchor Investor Bidding Date shall be on Tuesday May 07th, 2024.



The Price Band of the Offer has been fixed at Rs. 875 to Rs. 920 per Equity Share. Bids can be made for a minimum of 16 Equity Shares and in multiples of 16 Equity Shares thereafter ("Price Band").

The Offer comprises of fresh issue of Equity Shares aggregating to Rs. 4,00,00,000 million [Rs. 400.00 Crore] (the "Fresh Issue") and an Offer of Sale by certain shareholders of up to 12,508,797 Equity Shares (the "Offer for Sale"), and together

with the Fresh Issue, the "Offer" ("Total Offer Size"). The Company proposes to utilize net proceeds of the Fresh Issue portion of the Offer towards (i) Growth and Strengthening of its platform by adding new Buyers (defined below) and Suppliers which shall include (a) Rs. 1,350,00,000 million [Rs. 135 crore] towards investment in technology and data solutions by the Company, (b) Rs. 1,000.00 million

[Rs. 100 crore] towards investment in its Material Subsidiary, Tek Travels DMCC, for onboarding platform users through marketing and promotional activities, and hiring sales and contracting personnel for augmenting the Supplier and Buyers based outside India, (c) Rs. 250.00 million [Rs. 25 crore] investment in sales, marketing and infrastructure to support organization's growth plans in India; and (ii) Unidentified inorganic acquisitions and towards general corporate purpose amounting to Rs. 400.00 million [Rs. 400 crore]. ("Objects of the Offer")

The Offer for Sale comprises of up to 2,033,944 Equity Shares by Gaurav Bhatnagar, up to 572,056 Equity Shares by Manish Dhingra, up to 2,606,000 Equity Shares by LAP Travel Private Limited (collectively referred to as "Promoter Selling Shareholders"); up to 2,637,040 Equity Shares by TBO Korea Holdings Limited and up to 4,659,757 Equity Shares by Augusta TBO (Singapore) Pte. Ltd. (together referred to as the "Investor Selling Shareholders"). (The Promoter Selling Shareholders and Investor Selling Shareholders, together referred to as the "Selling Shareholders")

Adani Ports & SEZ eyes significant expansion into the Philippines

New Delhi, May 4 (IANS) Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone (APSEZ) is planning to invest significantly in the Philippines, and is looking at Bataan for its port development plan, the Philippines government has said.

Bataan is a province on the Philippine island of Luzon. According to a statement from the Philippines Presidential Office, APSEZ is planning to invest owing to the "stability in regulation and business environment" under the President Ferdinand R Marcos Jr administration.

"Your Excellency, as a private sector, what we always look for is stability. Stability in the regulation, stability in the environment that we are operating in. That is what, as you said, you are providing," Karan Adani, Managing Director, APSEZ, told President

Marcos during a meeting at Malacanang Palace in the Philippines.

APSEZ is looking at Bataan for its port development plan, Karan Adani said, adding it could be a good opportunity for the company. The company plans to develop a 25-metre-deep port that can accommodate Panamax vessels. "On the other hand, the Adani Group is planning to invest in ports, airports, power, and defense," said the official statement.

Welcoming APSEZ's expansion plans in the Philippines, President Marcos said it may focus on ports "handling agricultural products to enable the Philippines to eventually compete globally".

APSEZ has seven ports and terminals along the west coast and eight on the east coast of the South East Asian country.

Business Brief III

Over 80,000 tech employees lost jobs globally in first four months this year in 279 firms: Report

New Delhi, May 4 (IANS) More than 80,000 employees in the technology sector have lost jobs in the first four months this year, and layoffs continue to haunt the overall startup ecosystem globally. Latest figures from Layoff.fyi, a portal that tracks tech sector job cuts, 279 tech companies have sacked 80,230 employees to date (till May 3). In 2022 and 2023, tech companies worldwide laid off more than 425,000 employees, as global slowdown hit the IT/Tech and the startup ecosystem.

In a latest job cut, US customer experience management platform Sprinklr sacked about 116 employees. Exercise equipment and fitness company Peloton this week announced to lay off 15 per cent of its workforce (about 400 employees). Google also laid off about 200 employees from its core teams in a reorganisation move, according to reports.

In fresh job cuts, Elon Musk-run Tesla laid off hundreds of employees, weeks after reducing 10 per cent (or 14,000 people) from its global workforce. The tech billionaire disbanded the entire Tesla charging team in the new layoff round. In India, ride-hailing platform Ola Cabs has started a restructuring process that will impact at least 10 per cent of its workforce.

Kotak Bank's Q4 net profit rises 18 pc to Rs 4,133 crore

Mumbai, May 4 (IANS) Mid-sized private sector lender Kotak Mahindra Bank on Saturday reported an 18 per cent increase in net profit to Rs 4,133 crore for the January-March quarter of 2023-24, compared with the corresponding figure of Rs 3,496 crore in the same quarter of the previous year.

The bank's net interest income during the fourth quarter rose by 13 per cent to Rs 6,909 crore, from Rs 6,103 crore in the same period last year.

Kotak Bank also recorded an improvement in its asset quality with gross non-performing assets (NPA) declining to 1.39 per cent of total loans from 1.78 per cent last year. The net NPA also fell to 0.34 per cent from 0.37 per cent in the same quarter last year. The bank's advances increased 20 per cent year-on-year to Rs 391,729 crore as of March-end.

'Markets can turn volatile in the near term'

New Delhi, May 4 (IANS) Markets are likely to turn volatile in the near term given the rising volatility index, analysts said.

V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services, said the rising VIX is indicative of potential volatility. The market can turn highly volatile in the short run.

In the two days of trading in May, FPIs invested Rs 1156 crore in equity and sold Rs 1726 crore in debt. He said the Fed's decision indicates rate cuts much lower than expected earlier this year. Inflation has turned stubborn at lower levels but the latest jobs data in the US indicates a slowing economy and, therefore, rate cuts may be necessitated. "The wage increase falling below 4 per cent also reflects a weakening labour market. From the stock market's perspective, this is good news which is why the US markets rallied sharply on Friday," he added. "More than anything else, FPIs will respond to changes in the US bond yields. If the US bond yields fall and the Indian economy and markets do well, they will turn aggressive buyers," he added. Nagaraj Shetti, Senior Technical Research Analyst, HDFC Securities, said the short-term trend of Nifty seems to have reversed. The higher top of the bullish pattern is likely to have completed on Friday at the swing high of 22794 levels and the short-term downward correction is expected in the coming sessions. Immediate resistance is at 22600 and the next downside levels to be watched are around 22120 levels.

Karma has a way of biting back: Zerodha CEO Nithin Kamath

New Delhi, May 4 (IANS) Karma has a way of biting back, said Zerodha Co-founder and CEO Nithin Kamath on Saturday.

Nithin, who once worked at a call centre, said this as he is dealing with "unsolicited calls" by telemarketing companies. He said that his phone has now become "unusable".

"My phone has become unusable due to telemarketing and is always silent," said Nithin, in a post on X.com.

"Guess what goes around comes around. I spent four years at a call centre, making unsolicited calls to people in the US. I guess Karma has a way of biting back," he added.

The Zerodha Co-founder in February reported suffering a stroke.

"Around 6 weeks ago, I had a mild stroke out of the blue. Dad passing away, poor sleep, exhaustion, dehydration, and overworking -- any of these could be possible reasons," he posted on X, adding that it will take "3 to 6 months for full recovery". The 44-year-old entrepreneur said that the stroke left him a "big droop in the face and unable to read or write...and absent-minded".

Ola Krutrim opens AI Cloud infrastructure for developers, launches mobile app

Bengaluru, May 4 (IANS) Homegrown artificial intelligence (AI) company Ola Krutrim on Saturday announced to open up its cloud platform to enterprises, researchers and developers to build their own products, along with launching a mobile app.

The cloud platform will provide access to AI computing infrastructure, Krutrim's foundational Models and open-source models to developers.

The Krutrim AI assistant app, built on the company's own large-language model (LLM), will simplify leveraging the power of AI for everyone, the company said in a statement.

"In line with our Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Viksit Bharat', we are committed to developing full-stack AI capabilities in India, for the world," said Bhavish Aggarwal, Founder, Ola Krutrim.

The AI company in January this year became India's fastest unicorn, and also the first AI unicorn in the country.

"Our Krutrim assistant app will revolutionise the adoption of GenAI with its ability for a seamless integration into everyone's life," Aggarwal said at an event here.

Krutrim has announced Model-as-a-Service (MaaS), offering developers access to its LLMs as well as open-source models being hosted on its cloud at cheaper costs.

Inspiring voices of India's women panchayat leaders resonate at UN meet

New York, May 4 (IANS) The inspiring stories of India's elected women representatives of the Panchayati Raj institutions resonated in the hallowed halls of the United Nations Headquarters as three iconic grassroots leaders took the centre stage on Friday at the Side Event titled 'Localising the SDGs: Women in Local Governance in India Lead the Way'.

Supriya Das Datta from Tripura, Kunuku Hema Kumari from Andhra Pradesh, and Neeru Yadav from Rajasthan shared their experiences and innovations in local governance and advancing the localisation of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in many thematic areas.

These ranged from combating child marriages to promoting health, education, livelihood opportunities, and environmental sustainability.

The trio exemplified the transformative power

of grassroots leadership as they articulated the challenges and struggles they faced and overcame in their journey of leadership.

The Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations and the Ministry of Panchayati Raj jointly organised the Side Event in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) at the UN Headquarters Secretariat Building in New York.

Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj set the tone for the event, highlighting India's unique Panchayati Raj system as a beacon of decentralised power and direct democracy that facilitates active people's participation.

With more than 1.4 million elected women representatives, India's journey with the Panchayati Raj system is a narrative of empowerment, inclusion, and progress, particularly highlighting the strides made in women's leadership, she said. Ambassa-

dor Kamboj also emphasised the meticulous alignment of local planning processes with the SDGs, with a special focus on addressing women's issues. Vivek Bharadwaj, Secretary in the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, said that grassroots level is playing a pivotal role in the advancement of India.

He also highlighted the innovative approaches taken by the Panchayati Raj institutions in leveraging technology for development and policy interventions to ensure economic empowerment, citing examples like the 'Drone Didi' and 'Lakhpati Didi' initiatives of the Central government.

The event witnessed keynote speakers including Deputy Permanent Representative of Norway to the United Nations, Andreas Lovold, and representatives from UNFPA, including Pio Smith, UNFPA Asia Pacific Regional Director.

Indian tech companies begin to create global impact: SAP's Manish Prasad

New Delhi, May 4 (IANS) The last decade has transformed the IT and technology landscape in India and some of the homegrown technology enterprises, mid-market firms and startups are now creating an impact globally as well, said Manish Prasad, President and Managing Director for SAP Indian Subcontinent.

The senior executive at cloud software major SAP is bullish about India's prospects going forward, as the global companies embrace the country from all perspectives - be it manufacturing, electronics, semi-conductors or innovation at scale.

"If we can do it in manufacturing, why can't we do it for technology? I think it's more to do with the culture. And that culture is changing quite significantly in India," Prasad told IANS. "If you take a step

back and look at startups and unicorns in India, it is an intellectual property (IP) that we are creating within the country and taking it globally as well," he added.

The startup ecosystem in the country, the third

largest in the world, is set to add nearly 10 lakh startups and 10,000 unicorns in the coming decade.

Currently, there are more than 1 lakh startups and about 110 unicorns in the country. Prasad said that some of the technology companies which are originating from India are "creating an impact globally as well".

"I am surprised to see the number of acquisitions that Indian companies are doing in global markets and how quickly they're integrating them back into the fold of their core competency," he told IANS.

According to the government, startups are playing a pivotal role in India's journey towards becoming 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047.

Paul Marriott, President for Asia Pacific Japan (APJ) of SAP, who visited India late last month, said that a visionary political leadership, talented youth and a massive AI and startup community will help India reach its \$30 trillion GDP growth goal by 2047.

According to Prasad, that transition is already happening in the country at a fast pace. "Small aberrations may come from time to time but India's journey to the global stage has already started," he noted. The company has its biggest research and development (R&D) development centre in India, outside of Germany.



iPhone sales down 10 pc in March quarter, Apple stock up after \$110 billion buyback

New Delhi, May 3 (IANS) Apple has reported a 10 per cent decline in iPhone sales for its March quarter, from \$51.33 billion to \$45.96 billion (year-over-year), primarily driven by a slowdown in China market.

However, Apple managed to beat the Wall Street expectations and its stock went up more than 6 per cent after hours on Thursday, as the company set an all-time revenue record in Services with \$23.9 billion, up 14 per cent (on-year).

Apple also announced a massive \$110 billion stock buyback from last

year's \$90 billion.

"Keep in mind, as we described on the last call in the March quarter a year ago, we were able to replenish iPhone channel inventory and fulfill significant pent up demand from the December quarter COVID-related supply disruptions on the iPhone 14 Pro and 14 Pro Max," said Apple CEO Tim Cook.

This one-time impact added close to \$5 billion to the March quarter revenue last year.

"If we removed this from last year's results, our March quarter total company revenue this year would have grown,"

Cook told analysts during the earnings call.

The revenue for Mac devices was \$7.5 billion, up 4 per cent from a year ago.

In iPad, revenue for the March quarter was \$5.6 billion, 17 per cent lower year-over-year due to a difficult compare with the momentum following the launch of M2 iPad Pro and the 10th generation iPad last fiscal year.

"iPad continues to stand apart for its versatility, power, and performance. For video editors, music makers, and creatives of all kinds, iPad is empowering users to do

more than they ever could with a tablet," said Cook.

Apple is set to launch new iPads next week. The company has not refreshed its tablet line-up since 2022.

The company is also reportedly exploring potential partnerships with Google and OpenAI for AI features in its device line-up. "Given our confidence in Apple's future and the value we see in our stock, our Board has authorised an additional \$110 billion for share repurchases. We are also raising our quarterly dividend for the twelfth year in a row," said Apple CFO Luca Maestri.

Venkaiah Naidu urges civil service rankers to uphold Constitutional values

Hyderabad, May 4 (IANS) Former Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu on Saturday urged the civil service rankers to uphold Constitutional values in service to the nation.

Underscoring the unique privilege that civil service rankers hold to serve 'Mother India', he urged them to adhere unwaveringly to the principles enshrined in the Constitution of India.

Reflecting on the challenges that lie ahead, Naidu encouraged the rankers to remain steadfast in their commitment to public service and the development of the nation. Drawing from his own journey, he shared anecdotes of perseverance and dedication, highlighting the transformative power of service to society.

He commenced his remarks by extending heartfelt congratulations to all the rankers, emphasising the transformative power their journey holds for both themselves and the nation. He invoked the words of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, India's first Union Home Minister, who famously referred to civil service officials as the "steel frame" of India, underscoring their pivotal role in nation-building.

Addressing the rankers directly, the former Vice-President stressed the importance of upholding the highest moral and ethical standards in their service to society, regardless of caste, creed, or gender. He reminded them

that their allegiance lies not with political bosses, but with the people of the country, and urged them to adhere unwaveringly to the principles enshrined in the Constitution of India.

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that their allegiance lies not with political bosses, but with the people of the country, and urged them to adhere unwaveringly to the principles enshrined in the Constitution of India.

Reflecting on the challenges that lie ahead, Naidu encouraged the rankers to remain steadfast in their commitment to public service and the development of the nation. Drawing from his own journey, he shared anecdotes of perseverance and dedication, highlighting the transformative power of service to society.

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that their allegiance lies not with political bosses, but with the people of the country, and urged them to adhere unwaveringly to the principles enshrined in the Constitution of India.

Arvinder Singh Lovely and four others join BJP, days after quitting Congress

New Delhi, May 4 (IANS) Arvinder Singh Lovely, former Delhi Congress chief and Rajkumar Chauhan, a former Congress minister, joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) at the party headquarters in the capital on Saturday.

Apart from Arvinder Lovely and Rajkumar, a couple of other known faces of the Delhi Congress unit including Narseeb Singh, Neeraj Basoya and Amit Malik joined the BJP on Saturday.

Notably, the Delhi Congress unit has been beset with intense turmoil and infighting, as the city

leaders are miffed and upset over the alliance with the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the high command giving preference to 'outsiders' over local leadership, in ticket allotment for Lok Sabha polls and also for party's affairs. Rajkumar Chauhan, the former Delhi minister and the All India Congress Committee (AICC)

member resigned from the party last month after Delhi Congress' disciplinary committee objected to his 'dissent' to the party line. Arvinder Singh Lovely's resignation as the Delhi unit chief, last month, came as a big blow to the party. This followed a series of exits including couple of well-known names like Narseeb Singh and Neeraj Basoya, both former Delhi legislators.

CHANGE OF NAME

I have changed my old name from **KAGZI NARGISSBANU RAYAZUDDIN** to new name **KAGDI NARGISSBANU RIYAZUDDIN**
Add. 103, FF Cristal Apartment, Shahpur, Ahmedabad
399B

CHANGE OF NAME

I have changed my old name from **THAKRANI NIKITABEN LAVJIBHAI** to new name **PATEL NIKITA MILIND**
Add. 22, Prabhupark Soc, Naroda, Ahmedabad
397A

CHANGE OF NAME

I have changed my old name from **BAROT JILBEN** to new name **BAROT JEEL TUSHARKUMAR**
Add. Plot No.157, Sahkar Colony, Sector-25, Gandhinagar
P201A

CHANGE OF NAME

I have changed my old name from **PARULBEN JITENDRAKUMAR PATEL** to new name **PREMILABEN JITENDRAKUMAR PATEL**
Add. 22, Prabhupark Soc, Naroda, Ahmedabad
397

CHANGE OF NAME

I have changed my old name from **SANGEETAKUMARI MUKESHKUMAR KAKHANI** to new name **SANGEETA MUKESHKUMAR KAKHANI**
Add. 1, Old L.R. Apartment, Near Railway Crossing, Shahibaug, Ahmedabad
396

CHANGE OF NAME

I have changed my old name from **PATEL ANILKUMAR RATILAL** to new name **PATEL ANILBHAI RATILAL**
Add. 101/A, Samasta Brahmkhatryiya Co Op Housing Society, Paldi Ahmedabad
399A

CHANGE OF NAME

I have changed my old name from **PATEL DARSHANABEN ANILKUMAR** to new name **PATEL DARSHANABEN ANILBHAI**
Add. 101/A, Samasta Brahmkhatryiya Co Op Housing Society, Paldi Ahmedabad
399

CHANGE OF NAME

I have changed my old name from **BINAL JAIN** to new name **TASHI KULDEEP JAIN**
Add. E 203, 2nd Floor Swagat Rainforest-1 Kudasan, Gandhinagar-382421
P201

CHANGE OF NAME

I have changed my old name from **PRAJAPATI ANKUR GOVINDBHAI** to new name **SADHU SIDDHANTPRIYADAS**
Add. B.A.P.S. Swaminarayan Sanstha, Shahibaug, Ahmedabad-380004
398

WESTERN RAILWAY - BHAVNAGAR DIVISION

OUTSOURCING OF FURNISHING ACTIVITIES

For and on behalf of the President of India Dy. Chief Mechanical Engineer, Carriage Repair Workshop, Bhavnagar Para, Western Railway invites E-Tender for below work: E-Tender No. BVPW-2023-24-Furnishing-45, Name Of The Work: Works contract for outsourcing of furnishing activities including stripping, laying, welding of PVC and stripping, handling, repairing and re-fitment of seat during POF of BG coaches at Bhavnagar Workshop as per Scope of work for 1 year. Approximate cost of work: ₹ 1,87,26,866.25/- Bid Security: ₹ 2,43,600.00/- Tender Document Fees: ₹ 0.00/- Validity of tender offer: 60 Days, Completion Period of work: 12 months from the date of issue of LOA. Last date & time for Submission & Opening of tender: 20-05-2024, 11:00 Hrs. and 20-05-2024, 11:30 Hrs. Issued by: Deputy Chief Mechanical Engineer, Office of Chief Workshop Manager, Carriage Repair Workshop, Bhavnagar Para, Western Railway. Important Note: The tender shall be submitted only Electronically on https://www.irps.gov.in and no manual offers are allowed against this E-tender, and any such manual offer received at this office shall be ignored and not opened. BVP-05

WESTERN RAILWAY - BHAVNAGAR DIVISION

VARIOUS ENGINEERING WORKS

Sr. No.	E-Tender No.	Name of work	Tender Value (₹)	EMD (₹)
01	13/2024-25	Group Work: (1) Kanalus-Portbandar Section-Construction of RUB in lieu of LC No. 21 'C' class Non-Interlocked at Km 8732/3-between Lalpur-jam-Gop-jam stations. (2) Rajkot-Jetalsar Section - Construction of RUB in lieu of LC No. 21 'C' Non-Interlocked at Km 2114/5-Between Bhaktinagar-Ribda station. (3) Kenalus-Portbandar Section-Construction of RUB in lieu of LC No. 53 'C' class Interlocked at Km 923/8-9 at Wansajliya yard. Bidding Start Date: 07/05/2024 & Date of Closing: 21/05/2024	13,91,94,165.96	8,46,000.00
02	14/2024-25	Bhavnagar Division: Replacement of AC sheet roofing of old Type-II & III staff quarters. Bidding Start Date: 07/05/2024 & Closing: 21/05/2024	2,13,41,100.08	2,56,700.00
03	15/2024-25	Bhavnagar Division: Provision of IPS at LC Gates. Bidding Start Date: 07/05/2024 & Date of Closing: 21/05/2024	17,91,517.04	35,800.00
04	16/2024-25	Group Work (1) Bhavnagar Division: Manufacture & Supply of Isolated Sleepers for PRCs & TFR(GRSP)/Turnouts-419 sets dated 16/02/2024 (2) DEN-W Jurisdiction- Casual renewal of defective PRC sleeper at Various locations. Bidding Start Date: 07/05/2024 & Date of Closing: 21/05/2024	1,04,20,479.86	2,02,100.00
05	17/2024-25	ADEN-Jetalsar sub-division: Supply of potable drinking water on various locations such as Stations, Gang Huts, Level Crossings and Railway colonies etc. with contractors own all arrangements for the period of 2 (Two) years. Bidding Start Date: 07/05/2024 & Date of Closing: 21/05/2024	1,13,76,976.37	2,06,900.00

The NIT has been uploaded on Railway Website : www.irps.gov.in on 29-04-2024 BVP-07
Like us on: facebook.com/WesternRly-Follow us on: twitter.com/WesternRly

News in a Nutshell

Win Raebareli and then challenge for the top... Garry Kasparov's cryptic post sets social media on fire

New Delhi, May 4 (IANS) A day after Congress released a video showing Rahul Gandhi discussing chess, his 'favourite' international player and former world champion Garry Kasparov posted a cryptic tweet, saying that tradition says "first you win Raebareli and then challenge for the top post".

Telangana: Congress candidate Jeevan Reddy slaps woman

Hyderabad, May 4 (IANS) Senior Congress leader and party candidate from Nizamabad Lok Sabha constituency T. Jeevan Reddy, has landed in a controversy after he slapped a woman.

PM Modi to address rally in Bihar's Darbhanga today

Patna, May 4 (IANS) Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address a rally in Bihar's Darbhanga Lok Sabha constituency on Saturday.



GUNA, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath addressing a public meeting, in Guna on Saturday. UNI

258 candidates in fray for 11 seats in Maha going to polls on May 7

Mumbai, May 4 (IANS) As many as 258 candidates are in the fray for the third phase of Lok Sabha elections at 11 constituencies in Maharashtra scheduled for May 7, a top poll official said on Friday.

Amid the controversy over the delay in the release of final voter turnout data by the Election Commission of India (EC) for the first two phases of the Lok Sabha polls, Chockalingam defended the poll panel's move, saying that there has been a difference between the assessment and the final data.

Sharad Pawar: Hope Uddhav Thackeray never needs PM Modi's help

Pune (Maharashtra), May 4 (IANS) NCP(SP) President Sharad Pawar on Saturday expressed the hope that his ally and Shiv Sena (UBT) chief, Uddhav Thackeray never requires any help from Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Student bodies shocked over police closure report in Rohith Vemula case

Hyderabad, May 4 (IANS) A group of 12 student organisations on Friday expressed shock over the closure report filed by Telangana Police in University of Hyderabad research scholar Rohith Vemula's suicide case.

Rajasthan: Girl's parents chop son-in-law's nose objecting to love marriage

Jaipur, May 4 (IANS) In a shocking incident, the parents of a woman in Rajasthan's Jodhpur district allegedly chopped a man's nose, objecting to his love marriage with their daughter, the police said on Friday.



NEW DELHI, AAP candidate for East Delhi Parliamentary seat Kuldeep Kumar on the way to file nomination papers for the Lok Sabha Election-2024, in New Delhi on Saturday. UNI

BJP seeks Rahul Gandhi's apology over Rohith Vemula case, accuses him of politicising the issue

New Delhi, May 4 (IANS) The BJP has called for an apology from Rahul Gandhi following the closure report filed by Telangana Police in the Rohith Vemula suicide case.

Coimbatore police arrest popular TN YouTuber 'Suvakku' Shankar

Chennai, May 4 (IANS) The Coimbatore City Cyber Wing police, on Saturday morning, arrested popular Tamil YouTuber 'Suvakku' Shankar.

Sexual harassment complaint against Bengal Gov: BJP, CPI(M) highlight TMC connections of accuser

Kolkata, May 4 (IANS) With the Trinamool Congress highlighting the sexual harassment complaint against West Bengal Governor, CV Ananda Bose, by a temporary staff member of Raj Bhavan in Kolkata, the Opposition parties including the BJP and CPI(M) have started questioning the links of the woman to the ruling party.

HM Amit Shah's doctored video: Court sends Arun Reddy to 3-day police custody

New Delhi, May 4 (IANS) A court here on Saturday sent Arun Reddy, an accused in the Union Home Minister Amit Shah's doctored video case, to three-day police custody.

LS polls: PM Modi to campaign in Jharkhand, Bihar, UP today

New Delhi, May 4 (IANS) Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address public meetings in Jharkhand, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh on Saturday.

DMK to anoint Udhayanidhi Stalin as Deputy CM after Lok Sabha poll results

Chennai, May 4 (IANS) The ruling DMK will appoint state Minister for Youth Welfare and Sports Development, Udhayanidhi Stalin as the Deputy Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu.

Advertisement for 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' featuring a temple image and text in Gujarati/Hindi: 'વાસ્તુ પણ વિકાસ પણ', 'આ છે મોદીની ગેરંટી', 'તમારા મતથી અચોધ્યામાં શ્રી રામના ભવ્ય મંદિરનું નિર્માણ થયું', 'આ વખતે તમારા મતથી કાશી કોરિડોરની જેમ અન્ય ધાર્મિક સ્થળોનો વિકાસ કરીશું', 'ફરી એક વાર મોદી સરકાર', 'કમળનું ખટન દબાવો ભાજપને જીતાડો'.