

# Western Times

Founder Editor : Ramubhai Patel PHONE : 079-2640 2880 (Advertisement : 2640 2881 mail : advt@westerntimes.co.in)

VOL. 57 \* NO. 298\* AHMEDABAD SATURDAY 18/5/2024

Owned, Printed & Published by Nikunj R. Patel on behalf of Western Times Pub. Pvt. Ltd. Printed at & Published from Western Times Pub. Pvt. Ltd. Survey No. 1315P, Opp. Ramapir Temple, Shilaj, Ahmedabad (Gujarat). Editor : Nikunj R. Patel RNI Regn. No. GUJ/11172/67. Reg. Office : 301, 3rd Floor, Gala Argos, B/h. Hari Krupa Tower, Ellisbridge, Ahmedabad-380 006. (Gujarat).

Postal Reg. No. G-GNR-321 valid upto 31-12-2026 Posting at RMS Ahmedabad

Pages 8

₹ 21/-

## News Brief

### Man gets 30 years in jail for raping 5-yr-old girl in UP

Bijnor, May 17 (IANS) The special judge Prakash Chand Shukla of POCSO court in Uttar Pradesh's Bijnor district has sentenced a 24-year-old man to 30 years of rigorous imprisonment, after finding him guilty of raping a 5-year-old girl in November 2021.

The court also slapped a fine of Rs 1 lakh on the convict, Rs 80,000 of which will be given to the survivor, said additional district government counsel (ADGC) Yogendra Singh.

According to Singh, a woman from the Mandavali area in Bijnor had lodged a complaint that her daughter was on her way to a madrasa when the accused lured her with candies and raped her on November 6, 2021.

### Assam: Fake currency notes worth Rs 1.85 lakh seized; 1 arrested

Guwahati, May 17 (IANS) The police in Assam have seized fake currency notes worth Rs 1,85,000 and also arrested one person in this connection, an official said on Thursday. An official said that the Special Task Force (STF) conducted an operation based on specific input in the Puberun Path area in Guwahati. One person identified as Shazarul Islam, 30, was arrested.

Islam is a resident of Daulatpur village in Lakhimpur district. Two mobile phones and cash from his possession were also seized by the police.

### Food Safety Dept seize fruit ripening chemicals, issues challans to 4 traders in Jaipur

Jaipur, May 17 (IANS) Food Safety officials issued challans against four traders after seizing a huge quantity of fruit ripening chemicals from their shops in Muhana Mandi's vegetable market here on Thursday.

The seizures were made on Thursday morning during an inspection led by Pankaj Ojha, Additional Commissioner of the Food Safety Department. Ojha said, "Chemicals were kept between heaps of papaya and mango baskets and they were used to get them ripened. Small packets of these chemicals were seen in different places among the fruits."

### Darul Uloom Deoband prohibits entry of women on campus

Saharanpur, May 17 (IANS) Islamic seminary, Darul Uloom in Deoband, has prohibited the entry of women on its campus. Officials said on Friday that the decision was taken because females used to come and make reels, due to which the studies of the students were getting affected.

After watching the videos on social media, complaints were received from all over the country. Mohtamim (administrator) Maulana Mufti Abul Qasim Noumani confirmed the for the same. "Darul Uloom is a seminary and such acts are not acceptable in any school," he said.

## Sparks fly as BJP, Cong, SP big guns roar in Amethi

Amethi (UP), May 17 (IANS) Just three days before the fifth phase of the Lok Sabha polls kicks off, Amethi turned into a virtual battleground on Friday with big guns from the BJP, Congress and SP addressing major election rallies in the constituency.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi and former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav raised political temperatures in Amethi while campaigning.

In his speech, HM Shah slammed nepotism in the Congress and SP and said that Amethi and Raebareli were not family seats and did not belong to one family.

He termed the Congress and SP as anti-Hindu and said that they spurned the invitation to the opening of the Ram Temple.

He also said that the Modi Government was committed to protecting the boundaries of the

country. "Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir belongs to us and we will take it back," he promised. HM Shah asked people to make the lotus bloom in Amethi and Raebareli and the BJP will be '400 paar'.

The INDIA bloc rally was jointly addressed by Congress MP Rahul Gandhi and SP chief Akhilesh Yadav.

An emotional Rahul Gandhi recalled his 42-year-old association with the constituency and said that he had first come to Amethi with his father, late Rajiv Gandhi, as a 12-year-old.

"Whatever I know of politics, is what I have learnt from Amethi," he added. Rahul Gandhi further said, "I belonged to Amethi. I still belong to Amethi and will continue to belong to Amethi. I will ensure that whatever Raebareli gets in future, Amethi will get the same."

Appealing for votes for Congress candidate Kishori Lal Sharma, he

said that Sharma had been working in Amethi for four decades and people knew him as a simple man. Rahul Gandhi said that the 2024 elections would decide the future of the people of the country and the Constitution.

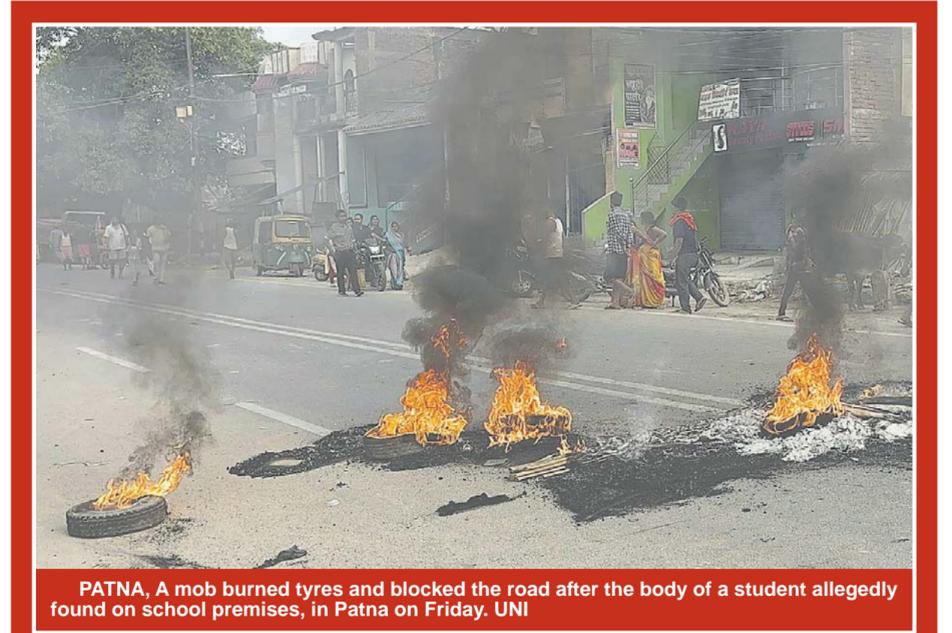
On his part, Samajwadi Party President Akhilesh Yadav said that the coming together of the Congress and SP was like "ek aur ek, gyarah" which would make the BJP go "nau, do, gyarah."

Akhilesh Yadav reminded farmers about the manner in which they had been treated by the central government during their agitation against the farm laws.

He promised the MSP guarantee that the farmers had been demanding from the Modi Government, if the INDIA bloc formed the government at the Centre.

The SP leader promised to reopen all industrial units that had shut down in Amethi.

--IANS



PATNA, A mob burned tyres and blocked the road after the body of a student allegedly found on school premises, in Patna on Friday. UNI

## 2 fake call centres busted, 155 held

Chandigarh, May 17 (IANS) The Cyber Crime Division of Punjab Police has busted two fake call centres running in Mohali, near here, and arrested 155 employees for making fraudulent calls to people living in the US and duping them, police said on Friday.

In a post on X, Punjab Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav said both the call centres seemed to be run by Gujarat-based kingpins.

Yadav said preliminary investigations have revealed that the fake call centres were operating

during the night and callers were using three modus operandi to dupe



foreign nationals by mak-

ing them purchase gift cards from Target, Apple, Amazon, etc. These gift cards were shared with a team manager and redeemed by the kingpin or owner, he added.

Additional Director General of Police (Cyber Crime) V. Neeraja said intelligence inputs about fake call centres operating in Mohali were developed by Inspectors Gaganpreet Singh and Daljit Singh along with their team with technical assistance from the digital in-

vestigation training and analysis centre (DITAC) lab of cybercrime.

She said after zeroing in on the locations, police teams raided both call centres and arrested all 155 employees working there.

However, both the kingpins are absconding and police teams are working to nab them, she added.

Neeraja said out of 155 arrested, 18 employees were taken on police remand, while the rest were sent on judicial remand. --IANS

## Patna: Mob sets school afire after four-year-old's body found in sewer

Patna May 17 (IANS) A four-year-old child was found dead in the sewer of a private school in Patna on Friday after which angry locals, including his family, set the educational institution afire.

The angry people of Digha locality created a ruckus and leveled murder charges against the school management.

They blocked the Digha-Ashiana road and Danapur-Gandhi Maidan road. The child, who went

to the school on Thursday morning, did not return home, after which his family members started searching for him. The local police station was also informed about it.

The cops of the Digha police station launched a search operation in the vicinity but could not trace the child. The family members found the child's body from the sewer inside the school. The police said that the construction of the sewer was done recently.

"During the search, we reached his classroom and spotted a sewer adjoining it. When we opened the slab of the sewer, the body of my nephew was found in it. It seems someone killed him and threw his body in the sewer," said the uncle of the deceased. "We have taken the body and sent it for post-mortem. The CCTV footage is being examined," said Brajesh Kumar, SHO, Digha police station, Patna. --IANS

## Swati Maliwal's 'after-assault' video surfaces, being told to move out

New Delhi, May 17 (IANS) Four days after the assault on Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) RS MP Swati Maliwal at Delhi CM's residence, the chilling details of the incident have started to surface, with the lodging of the First Information Report (FIR) and subsequently the surfacing of alleged video of the incident. The video, now viral on social media, captures the voices of shouting and screaming, though not so-clear, at the crime scene and comes as incriminating evidence of the episode which is making the AAP leadership uncomfortable.

In the video, a person

is heard directing a woman (read Swati Maliwal) to move out of the premises.

"I have made a call to the police on 112. I will do it, I won't succumb to your pressure," she is heard saying in the video. "I won't nudge from here, I will teach you a lesson," she is heard saying when 'forced' by men (read Bibhav Kumar and his associates) to leave the premises.

In less than a minute video, Swati Maliwal is also seen in one frame,

sitting on chair surrounded by men in official attire.

Notably, the chain of events as evident in the video corresponds with the charges leveled by Swati Maliwal in her FIR. Maliwal, while narrating her harassment and torture inside CM's residence, mentioned in her FIR that Kejriwal's PA Bibhav Kumar pounced on her and hit her in the face, stomach and pelvis. Also, the video establishes the pain and anguish of Swati Maliwal, as mentioned by her in the FIR. The video doesn't have any footage of the assault incident and is said to be of the moments after Maliwal's thrashing.

The authenticity of the video can't be ascertained for now but it has set the social media buzzing and eliciting many reactions from netizens.



## India needs a national security filter for doing business with some nations: EAM Jaishankar

New Delhi, May 17 (IANS) India needs to put in place a national security filter for business propositions with some countries to evaluate certain national security sensitivities, External Affairs Minister (EAM), S. Jaishankar, said on Friday, adding that as far as national security goes, it is more complex with China.

Addressing the 'CII Annual Business Summit 2024' in the national capital, EAM Jaishankar said India has not ignored doing business with China, but "we need to define the issues and take precautions". "For some countries, we have to put a national security filter. In a business proposition, we have to evaluate certain national security sensitivities which may be there," the Minister said during a panel discussion at the event.

## SC gives no interim relief to Hemant Soren

New Delhi, May 17 (IANS) The Supreme Court on Friday refused to consider the plea filed by former Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren seeking interim release to enable him to campaign during the ongoing Lok Sabha elections.

A Bench presided over by Justice Sanjiv Khanna was hearing Soren's plea filed against his arrest in connection with a money laundering case linked to an alleged land scam.

However, the Bench, also comprising Justice Dipankar Datta, asked the federal anti-money laundering agency to file its reply, including the interim relief, by Monday (May 20). Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Soren, submitted that polling in Jharkhand commenced on May 13 and the remaining three phases of elections will be held on May 20, May 25 and June 1. Sibal added that there exists "no material" against the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) leader and the money laundering case is based on oral statements stating that the

land in question belongs to the former Chief Minister. "I am not in possession of land and I've never been," he said. Opposing this, Additional Solicitor General (ASG) S.V. Raju, representing the Enforcement Directorate (ED), stated that Soren is directly involved and he could not be released on interim bail since he was arrested way before the Lok Sabha elections schedule was announced. ASG Raju said that the Enforcement Directorate (ED) would require time to reply to Soren's petition. According to submission, the apex court directed the matter to be relisted on May 21 before the vacation bench.

Soren resigned from the CM's post on January 31, after the ED informed him that it was arresting him under the PMLA. In an order passed on May 3, the Jharkhand High Court dismissed Soren's writ petition against ED arrest, saying that "there is an abundance of documents that lay a foundation for the arrest and remand of the petitioner to police and judicial custody".

## Naga body rejects govt appeal, remains firm to boycott urban local bodies' poll

Kohima, May 17 (IANS) The Eastern Nagaland People's Organisation (ENPO) on Friday rejected the Nagaland government's appeal and remained firm on abstaining from participating in the Urban Local Bodies (ULB) elections, scheduled on June 26.

ENPO Secretary W. Manwang Konyak said that they did not receive any written appeal and only saw in the media that the state government has made an appeal not to boycott the ULB polls.

"We have to go by the decision of our grassroots level people and organisation. We would abstain from participating in the ULB polls," Konyak told IANS.

After a cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio, the Nagaland government on Thursday urged the ENPO not to boycott the vital ULB polls. Parliamentary Affairs Minister K.G. Kenye, who is the Spokesman of the state government said that the government has appealed to ENPO and its constituent bodies to participate in the ULB elec-

tions, which are being conducted on the directions of the Supreme Court.

The ULB election is for empowering local self-governance and facilitating development and uplift of the citizens at the grassroots, he said.

Kenye said that after a prolonged battle involving the women's reservation in the ULBs, the state would be holding the ULB election in the larger interest of the public and their welfare. He said that ULB elections should not be seen as a means for ENPO to register resentment and protest for their demands on Frontier Nagaland Territory. Since 2010, the ENPO has been demanding a separate 'Frontier Nagaland Territory' or a separate state comprising the six eastern Nagaland districts -- Kiphire, Longleng, Mon, Noklak, Shamator, and Tuensang and it also boycotted the election to the lone Nagaland Lok Sabha seat on April 19 in support of its demand.

The ENPO Secretary said that they have already informed the State Election Commission

(SEC) that the people of the six districts would abstain from voting in the ULB polls, covering three Municipal Councils and 36 Town Councils.

Konyak said that the ENPO had, on March 19, adopted a unanimous resolution that the people of the region would not participate in any central and state elections due to the delay in creating the 'Frontier Nagaland Territory (FNT)' as offered and assured by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on December 7, 2023.

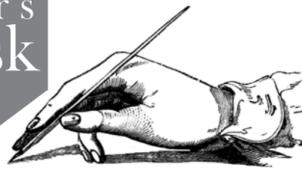
"Through many letters to MHA and mass rallies, we tried to persuade the Central government to resolve our demand but it turned a deaf ear," the Naga leader said.

However, the ENPO has clarified that this stance should not be misconstrued as opposition to the Nagaland Municipal Act, 2023 with 33 per cent reservation for women. Nagaland Chief Minister earlier said that the state government has proposed the constitution of an autonomous body for the development of eastern Nagaland and its people.



AMRITSAR, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Punjab's Bhagwant Mann offer prayers at the Bhagwan Sri Valmiki Tirtha St-hal, the holy place of Sri Amritsar Sahib, on Friday. UNI

From Editor's Desk



## SII invests in IntegriMedical to advance India's 1st needle-free tech

Serum Institute of India (SII), the world's largest vaccine manufacturer, on Friday announced a strategic investment in IntegriMedical to advance Needle-Free Injection System (N-FIS) technology.

With the investment, SII will acquire a 20 per cent stake in IntegriMedical. The investment will also accelerate the development and commercialisation of the N-FIS technology, making it more widely accessible to patients in India and worldwide.

"At SII, we are constantly seeking opportunities to invest in technologies that align with our mission to make healthcare accessible and affordable for people worldwide. IntegriMedical's Needle-Free Injection Systems (N-FIS) represent a significant advancement in drug delivery and we envision a needle-free solution to deliver vaccines," said Adar Poonawalla, CEO, Serum Institute of India.



Instead of the traditional needles, IntegriMedical's US-patented N-FIS makes use of high-velocity jet streams using mechanical power to effectively and consistently administer biologics and drugs.

The innovative drug delivery solution aims to alleviate pain during administration, providing needle-phobic patients with a pleasant and stress-free experience, and preventing needle-stick injuries and cross-contamination.

"We are excited to have Serum Institute of India as our strategic partner. This investment is a testament to the potential of our Needle-Free Injections System technology and its ability to revolutionise drug delivery," said Sarvesh Mutha, MD, IntegriMedical. The global N-FIS, valued at \$12.49 billion in 2022, is projected to experience substantial expansion with a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 14.16 per cent from 2023 to 2028. It is likely to reach a valuation of \$27.65 billion by 2028. --IANS



New Delhi, May 17 (IANS) Metabolism-related risk factors such as high blood pressure, high blood sugar, and high body mass index (BMI) are driving poor health and early death worldwide, according to a global study on Friday.

The latest findings from the Global Burden of Diseases, Injuries, and Risk Factors Study (GBD) 2021, published today in The Lancet, presents comprehensive estimates of the disease burden of 88 risk factors and their associated health outcomes for 204 countries and territories from 1990 to 2021.

## High BP, diabetes & obesity fuelling poor health, early death worldwide: Study

Between 2000 and 2021, researchers found an increase in people experiencing risk factors associated with metabolism, such as high systolic blood pressure (SBP), high fasting plasma glucose (FPG), high body mass index (BMI), high LDL or bad cholesterol, and kidney dysfunction.

This led to a 49.4 per cent increase in the number of global DALYs, or disability-adjusted life years (lost years of healthy life due to poor health and early death). The researchers demonstrated it as the consequence of an ageing population and changing lifestyles on a global scale. Particulate matter air pollution, smoking, low birth weight, and short gestation were also among the largest contributors to DALYs in 2021, the researchers said.

"Risk factors that currently lead to ill health, such as obesity and other components of metabolic syndrome, exposure to ambient particulate matter air pollution, and tobacco use, must be addressed via a combination of global health policy efforts and exposure reduction to mitigate health risks and improve population health," said Dr Emmanuela Gakidou, Professor of Health Metrics Sciences at the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation

(IHME) -- an independent research organisation at the University of Washington (UW) in the US. The study also found substantial progress between 2000 to 2021 in reducing the global burden of disease attributable to risk factors linked to maternal and child health; unsafe water, sanitation, and handwashing; and household air pollution from cooking with solid fuels.

Dr Greg Roth, Director of the Programme in Cardiovascular Health Metrics at IHME called for an "urgent need for interventions focused on obesity and metabolic syndromes."

## Pulled my shirt up, punched me in chest and stomach: Chilling details in Swati Maliwal's FIR

New Delhi, May 17 (IANS) Swati Maliwal, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Rajya Sabha member on Friday formally lodged a complaint with Delhi Police, revealing the extent of harassment and torture she faced at the Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's residence.

The FIR lodged by Swati Maliwal, a copy of which is with IANS, reveals chilling details about the alleged atrocity and brutality inflicted on her on May 13.

"When I called 112 (emergency number) after the assault, Bibhav said do what you have to do. You can't spoil anything for us. We'll bury and dump in such a place that no one will even know," read the AAP MP Swati Maliwal's statement in the FIR, after the assault on her by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's personal secretary (PS) Bibhav Kumar.

According to the FIR, accessed by IANS, on May 13, at around 9 a.m., Maliwal had visited the residence of Arvind Kejriwal at 6, Flagstaff Road, Civil Lines, Delhi.

"I then entered the residential area through the main door, as I have always done in the past year since Bibhav Kumar was not present at the gate. I entered the residence area and informed the staff present there to convey my message to the CM to meet me. I was informed that he was present in the house and I was directed to the drawing room. I proceeded to the drawing room, sat on the sofa, and waited for him to meet me," she said in the complaint.

She said that a staff member informed her that the CM would meet her shortly, and suddenly, the PS of the CM, Bibhav Kumar, barged into the room.

"He started screaming without any provocation and even resorted to verbal abuse. I was stunned by this sudden outburst and reacted by

telling him to stop talking to me in such a manner and to call the CM. He said, 'How dare you not obey us? How can you not obey us? Your status is so low that you won't refuse us. You're a lowly woman, we'll teach you a lesson,' she claimed in the FIR.

Maliwal said that while uttering these words, he came and stood

with his legs," she claimed in the FIR.

"I was in extreme pain and pleaded with him to stop. Despite my pleas, he continued to assault me. My shirt was pulled up, but he persisted in attacking me. I kept begging him to stop. Eventually, I was taken outside the CM residence, where I sat briefly on the floor

due to the intense pain. The PCR police arrived, but I was in a dazed state and left, walking towards my previous residence in Civil Lines. I was crying and managed to reach my earlier residence. I sat on the ground there for some time until some personnel who had accompanied me from the CM house called an auto for me. I sat in it and started towards my house, as I was in terrible pain and was traumatised and shattered," Maliwal further said.

"Somehow, I gathered the strength to reach the PS Civil Lines to report the matter. I reached there and informed the SHO about the incident while crying. I was in severe pain and experiencing severe cramps. I also started receiving numerous calls from the media on my mobile. Due to the trauma, pain, and my reluctance to politicise the inci-

dent, I left the Police Station without filing a written complaint. My head was splitting with pain, and my arms and legs were aching terribly," she said. "The past days since the incident have been extremely painful for me. It is one of the most difficult times of my life. The pain, trauma and harassment has been mind-numbing. My head and neck have been hurting constantly since the attack. My arms are very sore and my abdomen is also paining. I am also having difficulty in walking. My situation is exacerbated by the fact that having worked all my life for women issues and having helped lacs of women get justice," the FIR read.

"I ended up being brutally beaten by a person whom I know since long. I am deeply disturbed by this incident and am distraught that someone could display such goonda behavior. I feel totally shattered. It has taken me 3 days to gather myself and report the matter through a written complaint. I request you to kindly take strongest possible action in the matter. I am shocked that this brutal attack happened to me completely unprovoked at CM residence," it added.



right in front of me. Without any provocation on my part, he started hitting me repeatedly.

"He slapped me at least 7-8 times while I continued to scream for help. I felt absolutely shocked and kept screaming for assistance. In an attempt to protect myself, I pushed him away with my legs. At that moment, he aggressively attacked me, pulled my shirt up deliberately, causing the buttons to come undone, and my shirt flew up.

"I fell down and hit my head on the centre table. I continued to scream for help as he did not stop and proceeded to kick me in my chest, stomach, and pelvic area

## In secluded hamlets of Himachal, political intrigue seems a world away!

Kaza (Himachal Pradesh), May 17 (IANS) In secluded Himalayan hamlets nestled close to the icy heights adjoining Tibet, political intrigue seems to be a world away.

Among the stark, rugged and landlocked landscapes here, the inhabitants, mostly the Buddhists, devote themselves to the season's harvest of peas, barley, and potatoes, weaving their lives around the cycles of the Earth rather than the clamour of distant power plays.

Hardworking women farmers in the picturesque Spiti Valley are currently preparing fields for sowing peas, the main crop from late May to mid-September.

They told IANS that if they busy themselves with political activities, they will miss the sowing season, something they can ill-afford to do.

Kaza, part of the remote but picturesque Lahaul-Spiti District in Himachal Pradesh, falls in the sprawling Mandi parliamentary constituency, one of the toughest and covers almost two-thirds of the state.

Incidentally, this time the people of Kaza will also vote for their MLA and incumbent Ravi Thakur, who represented the Lahaul-Spiti seat, but resigned as a Congress lawmaker.

He's again in the fray for the bypoll as a BJP nominee and is pitted against Congress candidate Anuradha Rana.

BJP rebel and former minister Ram Lal Markanda is also trying his luck but as an Independent candidate.

For the Mandi parliamentary constituency, the battleground shifts between "royalty" and "reel", as Congress legislator Vikramaditya Singh, the scion of the erstwhile royal family and son of Virbhadra Singh, challenges actress Kangana Ranaut.

Vikramaditya has toured Kaza, while Kangana is yet to knock on doors asking for votes. The outgoing MP Pratibha Singh has opted out of the election.

The world's highest polling sta-

tion, Tashigang (15,256 feet), is located in the Spiti Valley. It's currently covered in a blanket of snow. Kaza is located at an altitude higher than Leh, where temperatures plummet below minus 30 degrees



centigrade in winter.

"Owing to economic significance, we are currently busy sowing peas. If there is a delay in sowing, the crop would be impacted," remarked local grower Anita Bodh.

Another farmer Lahmo Bodh added, "These politicians come only when they seek our votes. Once they get elected, they will disappear. In November 2022, we had voted to elect our legislator. Now he's again

in the fray, but has switched sides. This is bad practice. We will go and vote but will not attend public meetings as we are busy doing household chores and farming."

In Spiti, women farmers play a prominent role in agricultural tasks, from field preparation to sowing, irrigation and harvesting. They opt for minimal use of fertilisers and rely on manure.

After transitioning to apple cultivation in the arid terrain as the primary cash crop, their earnings have

spiked.

As per field reports, the visiting politicians are getting an audience of less than 150 at their public meetings.

Thirteen gram panchayats fall in the Spiti Valley, mainly populated by tribals, who are largely farmers. The gram panchayats are Losar, Kibber, Kaza, Langcha, Demul, Lalung, Dhankar, Tabo, Gue, Hal, Khurik, Kungri and Saganam.

For the politicians too, it is tough to reach out to their constituents via road. To reach Kaza, helicopter is the easiest, time-saving mode of transportation. And to reach some of the tiny hamlets, with elevations ranging from 15,000 feet to 20,000 feet above the mean sea level, one has to trudge more than 10 kms.

Kaza is some 320 kms from state capital Shimla through Kinnaur District and equidistant from the picturesque Manali tourist resort and the Lahaul Valley via Kunzum Pass.

The bumpy and uncomfortable drive from Shimla and Manali towns

onwards towards Spiti is a motorist's nightmare as the road remains closed at one place or another most of the time. The Kunzum Pass is still closed for traffic owing to ongoing snow-clearing operations.

Traditionally, in the Lok Sabha polls, the electorate here favours the party at the helm in the state. These elections are being seen as a referendum on Himachal Pradesh's 16-month-old Congress government.

The Congress wrested the state from the BJP in December 2022, winning 40 seats in the 68-member Assembly, reducing the BJP to 25.

Besides the Mandi seat, which includes Kullu, Mandi and some areas of Chamba and Shimla districts, the tribal-dominated Kinnaur and Lahaul and Spiti, the other three parliamentary constituencies are Shimla (Reserved), Kangra and Hamirpur. The bypoll to six Assembly seats, which fell vacant after the disqualification of Congress MLAs, would be held simultaneously with the Lok Sabha polls on June 1.

## Agra adds a new attraction to its heritage

Agra May 17 (IANS) A new white marble structure in Agra that took 104 years to build is daily drawing hordes of spiritually inclined tourists.

The visitors often draw comparisons between the iconic Taj Mahal and the newly built mausoleum of the founder of the Radhasoami sect in Soami Bagh, located about 12 km away from the Taj Mahal.

The immaculate white marble structure has become a popular attraction for tourists exploring Agra. Many are in awe of the grandeur of the mausoleum and consider it a worthy rival to the Taj Mahal, adding to the architectural splendour of the city known for its Mughal monuments.

Unlike the Taj Mahal, which was completed in 22 years with the labour of thousands of skilled artisans and craftsmen in the 17th century under a medieval authoritarian regime, the construction of the Soami Bagh mausoleum spanned over a century, in an open society.

A devoted follower of the faith, Pramod Kumar mentioned that the construction of the mausoleum was a testament to the unwavering faith, fervour, and dedication of its creators, who were driven by their religious beliefs.

Resting on a foundation of 52 wells, the 193-foot tall structure, all in white marble from Makrana in Rajasthan, is undoubtedly one of the most ambitious projects in India.

The mausoleum is dedicated to the founder of the Radha Soami

faith Param Purush Pooran Dhani Swamiji Maharaj. The grand mausoleum is situated in the Soami Bagh colony in Agra's Dayalbagh area. Each day bus loads of tourists visit the mausoleum and express their admiration and awe at the exquisite craftsmanship on display. The entrance is free while the



photography is not permitted.

Some minor additions are yet to be made. One can see scores of craftsmen at the workshop equipped with huge machines using state-of-the-art technology. "Now of course we have huge grinders, cutters, finishers, lorries, lifters, and all kinds of machines and computer technology, all of which were employed to advantage here, and the results show," an official connected with the project said.

Already visitors have begun comparing the Soami Bagh mausoleum with the world heritage monument, the Taj Mahal which draws thousands of tourists from all over the world daily. The Taj Mahal houses the mausoleum of Mughal Em-

peror Shah Jahan and his wife Mumtaz Mahal.

Officials who supervised the construction said, "It is a form of worship that has been going on and will go on relentlessly."

The Soami Bagh mausoleum stands amidst a colony of the followers of the Radha Soami faith.

The faith has millions of followers in states like Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, and Karnataka as well as foreign countries.

The original samadh was a simple white sandstone structure. In 1904, work began on a new design by an architect from Allahabad. Work was held up for a few years, but since 1922 to this day men have been toiling away, mostly by hand, at the enormous, highly decorated construction.

The artisans work with intense devotion. Some old men have spent all their lives on the site, as their fathers and grandfathers did before them, and as their sons and grandsons are now doing. These days the artisans have some machinery to help them, but their work is as painstaking as ever.

The architectural design of the building conforms to no particular style, modern or traditional, though in conception it is essentially oriental. An effort has been made to blend a variety of styles harmoniously.

However, the sponsors of Soami Bagh, literally the 'garden of the

Lord', firmly deny any plans of rivaling the Taj.

The 31.4-foot gold-plated pinnacle is taller than that of the Taj Mahal and was mounted by a crane especially called from Delhi for this highly specialised job. It took years because marble stones of the desired size could not be found. Most of the marble for the mausoleum has come from Makrana and Jodhpur quarries in Rajasthan. The variegated mosaic stone is from Nowshera in Pakistan. Semi-precious stones for inlay work have been procured from riverbeds in central and southern India.

The construction process faced many problems, including difficulties in procuring the right quality of marble although quarries were taken on lease in Mount Abu and Udaipur areas. To add to the woes, construction work was affected time and again due to labour shortage, as a large number of skilled masons migrated to greener pastures in Gulf countries. While the Taj Mahal continues to remain the first choice of visitors who are fascinated by the romance and the structural grandeur of the imposing edifice, the spiritually inclined are turning to Soami Bagh which is both an architectural marvel and a centre for soul healing and solace. The promoters of the project consider it wrong to compare it with any other building, but those who visit the mausoleum continue to wonder whether the Taj Mahal has a rival in Agra.--IANS

## Tamil Nadu Leads IndiaSkills 2024 with Highest Number of Participants

New Delhi, The IndiaSkills Competition 2024 witnessed the completion of several test projects of multiple trades -- from traditional crafts to cutting-edge technologies -- today at Yashobhoomi, Dwarka amid lots of anticipation and enthusiasm. The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) organised the country's biggest skill competition designed to demonstrate the highest standards from 15th May to 19th May 2024. Tamil Nadu witnessed the maximum participation with 86 candidates, followed Odisha (64), Karnataka (61), Punjab (53), and Haryana (47).

This year, IndiaSkills is witnessing the participation of around 900 candidates from 30+ states and Union Territories and 400+ industry experts. They are showcasing their diverse skills and talent on a national platform across 61 trades including Wall and Floor Tiling, Bricklaying, Carpentry, Fashion Technology, 3D Digital Game Art, Cloud Computing, Mobile Applications Development, Autonomous Mobile Robotics, Health and Social Care, and Prosthetic & Makeup.

While 47 skills competition will be held onsite, 14 will be held off-site in Karnataka, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Gujarat keeping in mind the best infrastructure available. Participants will also participate in 9 exhibition skills like Drone-Filming making, Textile-Weaving, Leather-Shoemaking, and prosthetics-make-up. Speaking on the side-

lines of the event, Shri Atul Kumar Tiwari, Secretary, MSDE said that the IndiaSkills Competition embodies our collective dedication to nurturing a culture of skill development and excellence in our nation. It's more than just a showcase; it's a celebration of skill's intrinsic worth in shaping our future. These skills aren't just about employability; they ignite innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic growth. Through platforms like this, we not only honour our youth's skills but also inspire them to pursue excellence, driving our nation forward.

Two panel discussions were held on the topic Empowering India's Workforce for Global Competitiveness and Importance Of Industry - Academia Partnerships In Skilling For Employability and were attended by industry experts from companies including JK Cements, JBM Group, TeamLease, Tata Power, Jubilant Foods, Tern Group, and Charkos Global.

Beauty guru and Chairperson, B&WSSC Dr Blossom Kochhar attended the event to encourage the participants and said that IndiaSkills 2024 is a wonderful platform for the youth to show off the candidates' excellence in their respective skills. It encourages them to shine and learn the spirit of competition. We are grooming candidates, especially women from the rural areas, by teaching them entrepreneur skills and giving them a respectable livelihood.

## When ED Sheeran shares his experience meeting Kind Khan

Mumbai, Week by week, Netflix's The Great Indian Kapil Show has been a laughter riot, delivering non-stop fun and entertainment with celebrity guests being their candid best at 8 PM only on Netflix. With the eighth episode featuring the Global Sensation Ed Sheeran on the anvil, brace yourself to see Ed attempting speaking in Hindi and Kapil Sharma sweating it out with his English! The redhead singer has prepared himself up to the arms for this episode, with Hindi lessons in check and his guitar in hand for any impromptu musical moments that may ensue. One of the most exciting &



endearing moments was when Ed met the Badshah of Bollywood - Shah Rukh Khan. Talking about his meeting with King Khan, Ed Sheeran shares, "It was just wonderful. He's such a nice guy... For how big he is, the man is just so lovely. Just a really warm human being.

We had a lot of fun. I met his family and we jammed on some songs and they even taught me how to dance a little bit." When prompted by Archana on how Shah Rukh taught Ed his iconic pose, he further shared, "[chuckles] I don't think I got it quite right."

## Katrina shares glimpses of hubby Vicky's 36th birthday with loved-up pictures

Mumbai, May 17 (IANS) Bollywood star Katrina Kaif shared a gamut of pictures to give a sneak peek into what her husband and actor Vicky Kaushal's 36th birthday was like.

On Friday morning, Katrina took to Instagram and shared a motley of candid pictures of Vicky.

The first image featured the 'Uri: The Surgical Strike' star sitting next to a window, smiling while looking away from the camera.

Another photo showed Vicky wearing a white sweatshirt paired with dark blue jeans, and holding a

coffee mug. The third picture seemed to be from a restaurant, where a slice

plate was placed beside him. For the caption, Katrina added some white heart and cake emojis, with 'Dekha Tenu' from 'Mr. and Mrs. Mahi' playing in the background.

The actress also shared the pictures on her Instagram stories, drawing a white heart on them.

Vicky and Katrina have been married for three years. They tied the knot in an intimate ceremony in Rajasthan in 2021. Talking about their upcoming projects, Vicky's next film is with Laxman Utekar. The film is christened 'Chhava', where he will be seen playing the role of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj. Meanwhile, Katrinawas last seen in Sriram Raghavan's 'Merry Christmas'.



of cheesecake with "Happy Birthday" written on the

## Laugh Out Loud: Shinchan's Hilarious Antics Hit Sony YAY! Screens

Mumbai, Buckle up for an explosion of laughter on your favourite TV channel Sony YAY!, because everyone's favourite, the naughty kindergarten - Shinchan has a new home. The never-seen-before episodes of Shinchan will showcase his cheeky grin and hilariously unconventional antics, bringing a unique flavour of comedy that is bound to leave you in stitches. He's known for his unreasonable words for every situation and his aversion to Shimla mirch. Whether he's outsmarting his parents and teachers with his mischievous schemes or going on wild adventures with his friends, there's never a dull moment when Shin Chan is around. With double the chaos and triple the laughs, Shin Chan is ready to unleash his trademark brand of mischief with brand-new episodes and movies, only on Sony YAY!



## Kajol reminisces about younger days, shares picture from 'world before selfies'

Mumbai, May 17 (IANS) Kajol took a trip down memory lane, reminiscing about her younger days by sharing a picture from the "world before selfies." Kajol, one of the highest-paid actresses in Hindi cinema, took to X and shared a monochrome picture.

In the image, the actress is seen looking away from the camera as she sits still for a pose.

Tagging herself as a "time traveller," Kajol, who is married to Bollywood star Ajay Devgn, wrote: "In a world before selfies. #TimeTraveler #Flash-

backFriday."

Fans couldn't seem to stop gushing about Kajol's throwback image as they dropped compliments in the comment section. One said: "Most prettiest eyes ever." Another called her a "true beauty." One simply tagged her as "beautiful." Kajol, who is the daughter of veteran actress Tanuja and filmmaker Shomu Mukherjee, made her acting debut with 'Bekhud' in 1992.

In a three-decade-long career, she has been feted with several honours, including a Padma Shri by the government in 2011.

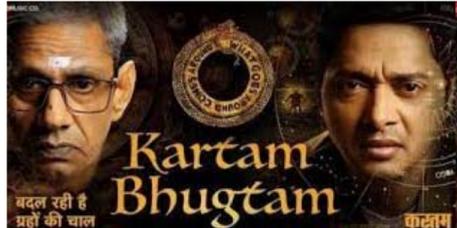
## 'Kartam Bhugtam': A riveting thriller delving into faith & astrology

Mumbai, May 17 (IANS) 'Kartam Bhugtam' is a compelling journey into the realms of belief, fate and human emotions, masterfully crafted by Soham P. Shah.

Known for his earlier works like 'Kaal' and 'Luck', Shah demonstrates his storytelling prowess once again, taking the audience on a gripping ride filled with twists and turns. The film follows the story of Dev Joshi (Shreyas Talpade), an NRI who returns to Bhopal from New Zealand after ten years to attend to his late father's affairs.

His encounter with Anna (Vijay Raaz), a local astrologer, sets off a series of events that challenge Dev's beliefs and perceptions. As Dev gets entangled in a web of fate and illusions, he finds himself questioning everything he thought he knew.

Talpade delivers a nuanced performance as Dev, portraying his vulnerability and inner turmoil with depth. Vijay Raaz is



mesmerising as Anna, his baritone voice adding an eerie charm to his character. Madhoo and Aksha Pardasany shine in their respective roles, adding layers to the narrative.

The screenplay is the backbone of 'Kartam Bhugtam', keeping the audience hooked with its unpredictable twists and emotional depth. The background score and songs enhance the mood of the film, adding to its overall impact.

Soham Shah's direction is top-notch, creating a world that is both captivating and thought-provoking. He skilfully navigates through the com-

plexities of belief and fate, leaving the audience questioning their own perceptions.

'Kartam Bhugtam' is a must-watch for those who enjoy psychological thrillers that delve into the human psyche.

With its strong performances, engaging storyline and impactful direction, it is a film that will stay with you long after the credits roll.

Film: Kartam Bhugtam Duration: 2 hours 11 minutes

Director: Soham P. Shah

Cast: Shreyas Talpade, Vijay Raaz, Madhoo and Aksha Pardasany

## Director Sandrine Bonnaire onboards 'Slow Joe' biopic starring Jackie Shroff

Mumbai, May 17 (IANS) International filmmaker Sandrine Bonnaire has come on board to direct veteran Bollywood star Jackie Shroff in the upcoming film 'Slow Joe', which is

cast and cannot wait to begin filming," Bonnaire said in a statement.

Da Rocha, known as Slow Joe, was a former heroin addict and drug dealer, who was born in Mumbai, was disowned by his family, was heartbroken at 50, and later moved to Goa and cleaned up.

In 2007, during a trip to Goa, Lyon-based French musician Cedric de la Chapelle met Joe, 64, who was making ends meet as a hotel room broker. Joe, also a poet and musician, sang for de la Chapelle, who was captivated by his voice and recorded some of his cappella songs.

Jackie said in a statement: "I am thrilled to have Sandrine Bonnaire on Joe." Her exceptional talent and vision will undoubtedly elevate the film to new heights.



based on the late Indian musician Joseph Manuel Da Rocha.

"Joseph Manuel Da Rocha's story is moving and extraordinary, demonstrating that it's never too late to overcome adversity and achieve your dreams. I am truly excited to be a part of this film with its talented



## Kartik Aaryan's proudest moment; shares 'Chandu Champion' warsequence

Mumbai, May 17 (IANS) Kartik Aaryan unveiled the third poster for the upcoming sports drama 'Chandu Champion' on Friday, offering a glimpse of the eight-minute long single-take war sequence in the movie.

Sharing the poster on social media, Kartik wrote: "The proudest moment of my career so far - playing a soldier of the Glorious Indian Army, one of the many facets of Chandu Champion's life!! Glimpse of the 8 min long single take War Sequence Salute to the Indian Armed Forces! #ChanduChampion Trailer out tomorrow."

# AHMEDABAD \* MARKET \* GUIDE

## परिमल होस्पिटल

NABH CERTIFIED

पुनीत मार्ग, मधडीया द्विजनी बाजुमां, मणीनगर, अमदावाद-380002. 079-2546 7145, 84600 65008

४० वर्षी (Estd.-1982) पारंगत पारदर्शक आधुनिक टेकनीक द्वारा होस्पिटल सेवा

**सर्जरी** : पथरी तथा प्रोस्टेट सर्जरी दूरबीनशी (PCNL-URS/RIRS-V-LAP), सारधागांठ, हरस-मसानी स्टेपलर पध्दति द्वारा सारवार, पिताशय, ओपेन्डीकस तथा आंतरडाना तमाम ओपरेशन दूरबीन-लेप्रोस्कोपी द्वारा सारवार.

**मेडीकल**: डायलीसीस, हृदयरोग, डेडसा, आंतरडा, लीवर, ज्ञानतंतु तथा अन्य गंभीर डिमारीओनी निष्ठांत डोक्टर द्वारा सारवार

**CASH-LESS (विना रोकड) सारवार उपलब्ध**

**तमाम इन्श्योरन्स TPA द्वारा मान्यता प्राप्त**

निष्ठांत तबीओ अने आधुनिक उपकरणशी सज्ज ISO: Certified Hospital

## H.K. TRAVELS

New Launched Luxury

डेईली सर्विस

**पारसल सर्विस उपलब्ध**

H.O.: शेडाली शोपिंग सेन्टर, पालडी अरवन्ट डीवेवरी online booking www.hktravel.in

**फोन बुकींग ओडीस** 9979881489 9429893289

सुभा वसु-शुभा मीट

स्त्री-पुरुषोना लग्न-जवनने लगता कोर्टपक्ष ज्ञानना गुणतरोग (सेक्स समस्याओ) माटेनुं भारतभरमां पोतानी डबनुं ओकमात्र गवन्नेनेट रज्ज्स्टड सायंटीकिक सेक्स क्लीनीक

**स्वतंत्र सेक्स क्योर**

"नोपेनल" नहेट्रोवीज सामे, आश्रमरोड, अमदावाद- 380 002 www.swaroopsexure.com

डोल : : समय : २६५८ ६००० सवावे ११ वी २ २६५८ ३००० सांवे ४.३० वी ३ २६५८ ८००० रविवारे रण ४००० ००००

**५४ सुं वर्ष**

**WESTERN TIMES Disclaimer**

Advertisement appeared in this News Paper have not been verified factually and "WESTERNTIMES" does not stand responsible for the sales proposition.

**धंदाकिय BUSINESS**

शेर & स्टोक

धंदांमां १ लाखनुं रोकाण

करी, मासिक ४०००/- आवक मेजावो

7600800601

## Patel Chem Specialities P. Ltd.

A Consistent Quality / Innovative Solutions A GMP & ISO 9001:2015 CERTIFIED COMPANY

Plot No. 272/4-5, Phase-II, GIDC Estate, Vatva, Ahmedabad - 382 445. Gujarat, INDIA, Phone : +91 79 2970 9854 / +91 97129 99854, E-mail: info@pcspl.net • Website : www.pcspl.net

**Manufacturer & Exporter of Pharmaceutical Excipients & Speciality Chemicals**

<b>Super Disintegrants</b>	<b>Binders &amp; Fillers</b>
<b>Disolwell®</b> Croscarmellose Sodium IP, BP, EP, USP-NF	<b>Hindcel®</b> Microcrystalline Cellulose IP, BP, USP-NF Pregelatinized Starch IP Potato & Maize Starch IP
<b>Blow Tab®</b> Sodium Starch Glycolate IP, BP, EP, USP-NF	<b>Viscosity Modifier</b>
<b>Swellcal®</b> Carboxymethylcellulose Calcium, (Calcium CMC) JP, BP, EP, USP-NF	<b>Rheollose®</b> Sodium Carboxymethyl Cellulose IP, BP, EP, USP-NF
	<b>Lubricants</b>
	Magnesium Stearate
	<b>API Intermediates</b>
	Sodium Monochloro Acetate

कोमो ओडर्स मां अक ५ नाम

**MAHESHWARI**  
Sherwani | Indo-Western | Blazers & Suits | Kurta Sets | Formals

<b>DULHA PACKAGE</b> इकत 1,799/- देवी रोवानी वर्क सेट (सांवे + दुपट्टो + मोचडी + माण) + २कसीओ सुट (कोट + पेट + शर्ट + टाई + इंडीयन्स + हेडी) इन्डो वेस्टर्न सेट	<b>SIDER PACKAGE</b> इकत 2,999/- सुट (कोट + पेट + शर्ट) + कोटी - कुर्ता सेट + पेट - शर्ट
---	---

3 Pant + 3 Shirt  
**रव्यमाणे DIGJAM Arvind**  
₹ 6,199/- ONLY Fabric + Stitch

**बुकींग पर लकी ड्री**  
मां अकस्टू डिस्काउन्ट लेवालु यूकशो नदीं.

पेकेज प्राईज इकत रविवार सुधी ५ रडेशे.

<b>PALDI</b> 5, Vardhaman Complex, Opp. Honest, Under Anjali Bridge. 079 - 2660 7614	<b>NARANPURA</b> 2/29, Sunernagar Society, Beside Manish Hall, Nr. Kameshwar Mahadev, +91 9173-0-8282-7	<b>BOPAL</b> 110, Satyamev Elite, Below Vakil Saheb Bridge, Bopal - Ambli T. Junction. +91 8686-8-8282-7
--	---	--

दिवानी वेकेशन इमीली क्पल पेकेज

## शुवावाला टुरीज्म

गोवा महाबलेश्वर लोनावाला	हेदरगाह तीरुपती छटी-मेसुर	सप्तःज्योतीर्लीग ए.भारत रामेश्वर कन्याकुमारी
नेपाण पोभरा बनारस	हरद्वार आगा मथुरा	सीमला मनाली डेलहाडिसी

**BY AIR / RAIL / BUS / INDIVIDUAL PACKAGE**  
Kerala-Darjiling-Nainital

"हाईडेटिफिकेड", म्युजियमनी सामे, दिवान भल्लुभाई स्कुलनी जाणुमां, पालडी, अमदावाद. Ph. : 26587922 / 23 (M) 9408777333, 94267 55909  
ओइ/४३, पुजन कोम्प्लेक्स, राजहंस सिनेमा पासो, शुडन चार रस्ता पासो, निडोल. Ph. : (M) 9409625111, 9408777333

Swati Maliwal at Tis Hazari court to record statement

New Delhi, May 17 (IANS) Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Rajya Sabha member Swati Maliwal reached the Tis Hazari court in Delhi on Friday to get her statement recorded before the magistrate in connection with the alleged assault on her at Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's official residence.

Under section 164 CrPC, a judicial magistrate is empowered to record any statement or confession made before him in the course of an investigation. Earlier in the day, Maliwal underwent a medical examination at AIIMS.

After recording the statement of Maliwal, Delhi Police late on Thursday lodged an FIR under Sections 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), 354 (assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty), 506 (criminal intimidation), and 509 (insulting the modesty of a woman) of the IPC.

Maliwal, the former chairperson of the Delhi Commission for Women (DCW), in her complaint, had alleged that while she was waiting in the drawing room at the Chief Minister's residence, his Private Secretary Bibhav Kumar came and without any provocation, slapped her and also delivered punches to her abdomen.

On Monday, DCP (North) Manoj Kumar Meena said that a PCR call was received at 9.34 a.m. at the Civil Lines police station, in which the caller claimed that she was assaulted by Chief Minister's PS Bibhav Kumar at CM Kejriwal's official residence.

BJP Mahila Morcha protests outside CM Kejriwal's residence, demands his resignation

New Delhi, May 17 (IANS) Delhi BJP Mahila Morcha on Friday protested outside the residence of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal over alleged assault on AAP Rajya Sabha Member of Parliament Swati Maliwal and demanded his resignation.

Holding bangles, they protested outside CM Kejriwal's residence and raised slogans against him for maintaining silence over the incident.

Expressing their outrage, the women leaders argued that if such an atrocity happened against a woman Rajya Sabha MP at the Chief Minister's residence and Kejriwal did not take any action, then he should step down from the post.

After recording the statement of Maliwal, Delhi Police on Thursday lodged an FIR. The incident had occurred at CM Kejriwal's official residence on Monday. The National Commission for Women (NCW) has taken suo motu cognisance and issued a summons to CM Kejriwal's Personal Secretary and accused in the case Bibhav Kumar to appear before it on Friday.

First India-Russia consultations on visa-free tourist exchange set for June

Kazan, May 17 (IANS) The first consultations between Russia and India on the launch of a visa-free group tourist exchange are scheduled for June, and a bilateral agreement is to be signed by the year-end, Nikita Kondratyev, Director of the Russian Economic Development Ministry's Department of Multilateral Economic Cooperation and Special Projects, told Russian state-owned news agency Sputnik.

"The process with group visa-free trips has moved a little. The Indian side returned with the answer that they are at the final stage of internal state coordination and asked us again for the latest draft of the document and promised to return in the very near future. I think we will hold the first consultations with them in June to discuss a draft agreement," Kondratyev said on the sidelines of the International Economic Forum 'Russia-Islamic World: Kazan Forum 2024' in the city of Kazan.

"We plan to sign by the end of the year," he mentioned. The ministry had said earlier that it expects to launch visa-free tourist exchanges with India in 2024, following the example of agreements signed with China and Iran.

Tripura: Two held for killing family head after victim fails to pay premium for son's bike

Agartala, May 17 (IANS) In a horrific crime, a woman and her son were arrested for allegedly murdering middle-aged Haribol Biswas, a daily wage earner, after he expressed his inability to pay the premium for his son's bike, police said on Friday. The crime took place at Lefunga in West Tripura district, on Thursday. A police official said that the victim was brutally beaten by his wife, Alpina Biswas, and son Suman Biswas and after his death, both locked the house and fled. Police rushed to the spot after a complaint was lodged by Haribol's brother and took away the body for autopsy.

LS polls: Top BJP, Congress leaders to campaign in UP today

New Delhi, May 17 (IANS) Political parties have intensified poll campaigns ahead of the last three phases of the Lok Sabha elections. On Friday, top campaigners including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Congress Parliamentary Party chief Sonia Gandhi, Wayanad MP Rahul Gandhi, and Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra will be in Uttar Pradesh. The Prime Minister is scheduled to address public meetings in Barabanki at 10:00 a.m., Fatehpur at 12 noon, and Hamirpur at 1:00 p.m. From Uttar Pradesh, Prime Minister Modi will go to Maharashtra to address a rally at Mumbai's Shivaji Park.

Sessions Court sentences four in producing and circulating counterfeit currency notes

(Bhavesh Barot) Himmatnagar, Four people involved in producing and circulating fake currency notes were sentenced by sessions Court here for two different terms of imprisonment. According to prosecution a division police of Himmatnagar town had apprehended Vijaysinh Harisinh Vaghela, Vijay Hasmukhbhai Rami, Akshay Dashrathbhai Raval and Ashok Bhikhabhai Parmar for producing and circulating counterfeit currency notes and recovered 17 fake notes in Rs 500 denomination, color printer and xerox machine from their possession in Motipura area of town.

Police had registered complaint regarding this offence under I.P.C section 489 A, B, C and section 114 of I.P.C against four people and charges were framed. On basis of documentary evidences placed by prosecution, deposition of F.S.L. and on submission made by additional public prosecutor Nitin Shah that menace of fake Indian currency notes is threat to the economic stability of the nation Court of principal District Judge K.R.Rabari sentenced main conspirator Vijaysinh Harisinh Vaghela to seven years imprisonment while other three were awarded four years imprisonment.

Forest dept to scan 15,500 sq km to count Indian wild asses next week

By Staff Reporter,

Ahmedabad, The state forest department is gearing up for a massive exercise next week to count Indian wild asses, a species whose only wild population in the world is thriving in the deserts of Little Rann of Kutch and Great Rann of Kutch in Gujarat.

To overcome the challenges of vastness of the area and issues of accessibility and for better accuracy, the department has decided to use drone cameras and camera traps for the first time to count wild asses.

Nityanand Shivastava, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) and Chief Wildlife Warden of Gujarat, presided over a

workshop at Dhrangadhra, the headquarters of the Wild Ass Sanctuary in Surendranagar, on Wednesday to train officers for the '10th Wild Ass Population Estimation' on May 21 and 22. S K Srivastava, Additional PCCF (research and training); Sandeep Kumar, Conservator of Forests (CF) of Kutch territorial forest circle and Raj Sandeep, CF of Gandhinagar wildlife circle also attended the workshop and guided assistant conservator of forests (ACFs) and range forest officers (RFOs) about the census to be conducted over an area of 15,500 sq km.

Indian wild asses belong to the Equidae family whose members include horses and mules, among

others. Locally called Ghudkhar and Khar, they are larger than donkeys but smaller than horses in size. Equus Hemionus Khur is one of the two subspecies of Indian wild asses. The other subspecies is Tibetan wild ass or Kiang (Equus Hemionus Kiang), which is native to Tibetan plateau and is found in India, China, Nepal and Pakistan. However, Little Rann of Kutch and Great Rann of Kutch and their peripheral areas in Gujarat are the only place in the world where Ghudkhar are surviving.

Ghudkhars have learnt to survive by grazing vegetation of desert ecology. Their population in 2020 was estimated to be 6,082, spread over Surendranagar and Morbi in

Saurashtra, Kutch district, Ahmedabad district in central Gujarat and Patan and Banaskantha in north Gujarat. Speaking to The Indian Express, S K Srivastava said, "We are using some more technologies this time to ensure accuracy. Enumerators will make data entries on our e-Gujforest mobile phone application from the spot wild asses are sighted."

This will give us more locational data and timeline, helping avoid duplication. Also, many of our officers have personal drone cameras and camera traps. We will allow them to use the same to count the number of wild asses in a herd and also cover as much area as possible," he added.

Vadodara resident loses Rs 94 lakh in stock market trading scam, 17 arrested

By Staff Reporter,

Ahmedabad, The Vadodara Cyber Crime unit has detained 17 people part of an interstate cybercrime racket for allegedly siphoning off more than Rs 94 lakh from a city resident by enticing him to download a fake stock market application, officials said on Thursday.

The 17 accused were nabbed on Wednesday. They were sent to two days' police custody Thursday.

The racket was unearthed based on Rajiv Ramakrishna's complaint, according to which he was

duped of Rs 94.18 lakh by cyber fraudsters who lured him into clicking on a social media advertisement promising big returns from stock market investments. The complaint, filed on March 30, states that the fraudsters added the victim to a WhatsApp group named C6 Blackrock Stocks Pull Up and urged the victim to submit details via a form. "The victim was then added to another group called C3 Angel Broking Customer Care and received a phone call from a person posing as an executive who informed the victim that his application had been con-

firmed... They then shared a link of a fake mobile application called ANGELBG that included forged SEBI registration details. The victim was handed over a username and password... The application showed the victim a big profit to gain his trust," said MM Rajput, Assistant Commissioner of Police, Cyber Crime.

The victim then deposited Rs 94.18 lakh in multiple installments in various accounts. "However, when he was unable to withdraw the profits, he approached the police, realising that he had been cheated," he added.

Ahmedabad: Arrested bootlegger found using GPS jammer to avoid police on his tracks

By Staff Reporter,

Ahmedabad, The arrest of a 48-year-old bootlegger in Ahmedabad Thursday sprang a surprise when his car was found equipped with a GPS jammer to prevent cops on his trail. The accused, Bhavanisinh Solanki (48), a resident of Sanchore in Rajasthan, was apprehended at Nikol by the Ahmedabad crime branch.

The accused has been booked under various provisions of the Gujarat Prohibition Act and sent to a day's police remand.

A search of the car revealed "a charger-like device that turned out to be a GPS jammer," which disallows GPS-tracking, said police inspector JH Sindhav.

8 hoardings on premises of Pune railway station yet to submit structural audits

By Staff Reporter,

Ahmedabad, The Pune Railway Division has initiated a special drive to inspect hoardings near stations within the division from May 15, two days after a massive hoarding collapsed in Mumbai's Ghatkopar, killing 16 people and injuring over 70 others.

To prevent a similar incident to the one in Mumbai, the Pune division has reviewed around 65 hoardings installed on the premises of stations within the division. Among these, 28 hoardings are located around Pune railway station, of which eight have not submitted their structural audits yet, said a railway official.

"These billboards and

hoardings belong to private agencies, and the auditing costs amount to Rs 25,000 or more. However, often the process is merely on paper. The owners of these hoardings will be contacted and given around a week's time to complete the audit after reviewing the agreement documents," said the railway official.

The Pune railway division has generated around Rs 10 crore revenue from the hoardings installed on the premises of Pune railway station in the last two years. The last structural audit of all hoardings was conducted in November of last year, valid until 2026. However, another railway official

from the Divisional Railway Manager's office mentioned that all hoardings, except those in new stations merged under Pune division, are legal. "We have warned the parties to submit their audits within a week," he added.

The incident in Mumbai harks back to 2018, when three people were killed and several were injured after a hoarding was being dismantled by a private contractor a railway land at Shahir Amar Shaikh Chowk near Juna Bazar Chowk. Currently, there are four hoardings installed at Juna Bazar Chowk, each sized 40\*30. To prevent mishaps in future, the billboard has been relocated and its foundations have been reviewed.

Avinash Reddy appears before CBI court in Vivekananda Reddy's murder case

Hyderabad, May 17 (IANS) Kadapa MP YS Avinash Reddy, his father YS Bhaskar Reddy and other accused appeared before the CBI court here on Friday in the YS Vivekananda Reddy murder case.

Avinash Reddy, Bhaskar Reddy and Devreddy Shiva Shankar Reddy, who are on bail, appeared before the CBI court at Nampally Criminal Court Complex.

Four other accused lodged in Chanchalguda

Central Prison were produced before the judge via video conference.

The accused are Erra Gangi Reddy, Sunil Yadav, Uma Shankar Reddy and G Uday Kumar Reddy.

However, the court adjourned the hearing to June 11.

The petition was filed by Shaik Dastagiri, an accused-turned-approver, in the case. The court, however, refused to grant bail to other accused G Uday Kumar Reddy and Sunil

Yadav. Avinash Reddy, who contested once again from Kadapa as the candidate of YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) in the May 13 election, was granted bail by the High Court on May 31, 2023.

Avinash Reddy, who is a cousin of Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, had approached the High Court for anticipatory bail after failing to appear before the CBI three times.

Shielding The Craft Legacy of Gujarat : The GI Tag Felicitation

Ahmedabad, Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII), Ahmedabad is happy to announce a significant milestone in the preservation and promotion of Gujarat's rich heritage crafts. The Commissioner of Cottage & Rural Industries, Govt. of Gujarat, in collaboration with the Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII), facilitated the Geographical Indication (GI) tagging of four traditional crafts from Gujarat.

The recent GI tagging, marks a momentous occasion for Gujarat's artisanal community. The recognized crafts, sanctioned by the Geographical Indications Registry Office under the DPIIT-Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, include Gujarat Soof Embroidery, Ahmedabad Sodagari Block Print, Surat Sadeli Craft and Bharuch Sujani Weaving

partner of the Government of Gujarat's Hastkala Setu Yojana, EDII has played a pivotal role in supporting craft-preneurs engaged in these crafts. From assisting in the formation of co-operatives to facilitating post-GI tagging interventions, EDII remains steadfast in its commitment to preserving and promoting Gujarat's cultural heritage.

The Felicitation and award of certificates to artisans, was ensured in an elaborate ceremony at EDII Ahmedabad campus. Present on the occasion were Chief Guest: Shri Pravin Solanki, Commissioner & Secretary, Cottage and Rural Industries, Govt. of Gujarat; Guest of Honour: Shri B K Singhal, Chief General Manager/OIC, NABARD and Distinguished Guest: Shri Kartikeya V. Sarabhai, Founder Director, Centre for Environmental Education (CEE). Also present were Dr. Sunil Shukla, Director General - EDII and

Dr. Satya Ranjan Acharya, Project Director, Hastkala Setu.

Shri Pravin Solanki said, "The State gets its identity from its craft legacy. Gujarat is home to unique crafts, and it is our responsibility to nurture these. And, so, with the support of EDII, the Gujarat Government is committed to preserving the rich craft heritage and providing recognition to artisans. While skill training is helping artisans make a mark, I am happy that we have secured GI tag, establishing the uniqueness of these crafts."

Shri B K Singhal opined, "Traditional art and craftsmanship is our heritage, and needs to be nurtured and recognized. I am happy that 4 more unique crafts have been granted GI tag under the aegis of EDII. The project Hastkala and the GI tagging is a testimony to the fact that Gujarat's traditional art has a strong mar-

ket and preference.

Shri Kartikeya V. Sarabhai expressed, "India is rich in the diversity of its craft traditions preserved over generations by artisans. Each tradition closely relates to the natural environment within which these crafts have evolved. These are the pride of our nation and a testament to India's unbroken tradition of several thousand years.

Elaborating on EDII's role as an implementing agency of the Project, Dr. Sunil Shukla said, "EDII is handholding entrepreneurs, under the Hastkala Yojana Project, to enhance their skills & knowledge, give them newer markets and promote ease of reaching out to customers. Today, they are making innovative, marketable products with high demand, and are gaining visibility. GI tagging is a great step towards giving recognition to their unique crafts"

Man sleeping on footpath in Una run over by car

By Staff Reporter,

Ahmedabad, A car in which a family from Ahmedabad was travelling to the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir on a holiday allegedly ran over an elderly man sleeping on a footpath in Una of Gir Somnath district after the driver lost control of the vehicle early Thursday.

The deceased have been identified as Dinesh Gandhi (75). Police said nine persons, including the driver, were injured in the incident.

The accident took place at 7.22 am when the driver, Yatin Sigal, lost control of the car while driving through Tower Chowk area of Una

town. Purported footage recorded by a CCTV camera showed the car first hitting a bike parked on the roadside before running over Gandhi who was asleep on the footpath in front of a juice centre. The car came to a halt after crashing into the shutter of a shop. "Gandhi was killed on the spot... The nine persons in the car, including the driver, sustained injuries. Three of them suffered serious injuries," said M N Rana, Inspector in charge of Una police station.

He added that Sigal has been detained and booked for culpable homicide not amounting to murder under the Indian Penal Code.

Caste threatens social aspects and divides communities: Fadnavis

By Staff Reporter,

Ahmedabad, The caste polarisation between the Marathas and the OBCs (Other Backward Class) in the Marathwada region, so evident during the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, is detrimental to the state's social fabric, said BJP leader and Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

"The most disturbing aspect in the ongoing elections has been the caste conflict in parts of Marathwada. Such development does not augur well for the state. My worry is post-polls. Once the elections are held, it will set in process an analysis on who worked for whom. It would require greater vigilance in terms of law and order," Fadnavis told The Indian Express and Loksatta during an interaction on Thursday.

"When it comes to politics, we can tackle it. But when there are issues

threatening social aspects, it becomes a cause of serious concern. It is not about polls or politics. When caste conflict leads to division within communities, it threatens social harmony," he said.

laborating on a wide range of subjects from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's third term in the Centre to coalition politics in Maharashtra, Fadnavis said he was confident about the Mahayuti (alliance with Ajit Pawar's NCP and Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena) doing well in the Lok Sabha elections.

"BJP will remain in the role of a big brother in the Maharashtra Elections in Maharashtra. With 115 seats in the Assembly now, BJP is the single largest party. Therefore, it is bound to contest more seats compared with its alliance partners," he said. The 'big brother' role does not mean BJP is staking claim to the CM post.

Theft of electric wiring worth over Rs 1.7 lakh reported at Ahmedabad's GIFT City

By Staff Reporter,

Ahmedabad, The opening of a restaurant at Ahmedabad's GIFT City in the first week of May led to a startling revelation days later—over 600 m of electrical wiring worth Rs 1.79 lakh had been stolen.

An FIR was registered on May 14 on the basis of a complaint lodged by the security and fire safety director at the hotel of GIFT City Club, a member of Radisson Individuals. The FIR has charged the "unknown" accused with theft under Indian Penal

Code section 379.

According to the complainant, Hazarisinh Bhandari, on May 4, the restaurant's guest area near the swimming pool inside the hotel was opened, and lights in the guest area were turned on in the evening. However, for the next few days the lights from one electric pole did not function when switched on. As per the complainant, the staff assumed that the lights were not working owing to ongoing electric work. The theft was detected after an electrician was called for repair work on May 7. It was found that approxi-

mately 320 m of double-wiring cables worth around Rs 1.34 lakh had been stolen along with around 300 m of CCTV wires worth Rs 45,000 from the guest area. The hotel estimates that a total of 620 m of wiring worth Rs 1.79 lakh has been stolen.

The FIR was registered a week later.

GIFT City Club is among the few establishments within GIFT City where the Gujarat government has permitted wine-and-dine facilities after relaxing the prohibition law in December 2023.

Met forecasts mercury uptick over next 2-3 days in Bengal, Raiganj hottest at 41°C

By Staff Reporter,

Ahmedabad, The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) on Thursday said that temperature levels in West Bengal are likely to rise by 2-4 degrees Celsius over the next two to three days. The weather office also said that there was a pos-

sibility that heatwave conditions prevail in some districts till Saturday.

The weather office has also forecast a yellow alert for Paschim Medinipur, Paschim Bardhaman, Birbhum and Bankura for Saturday. The department said the four districts may experience heatwave conditions till Sunday.

On Thursday, Raiganj in Uttar Dinajpur district clocked the highest temperature level in Bengal at 41.8 degrees Celsius. In Kolkata, the maximum temperature was recorded as 36.9 degrees Celsius and a maximum humidity at 84 per cent on Thursday. The sky remained partly cloudy, officials said.

In the southern part of the state, the maximum temperature in Burdwan, Panagar, Barrackpur and Jhargram hovered around 37-38 degrees Celsius.

Air India flight with 180 passengers collides with tug tractor at Pune airport runway

A Delhi-bound Air India flight with 180 passengers aboard collided with a pushback tug vehicle at the Pune airport runway on Thursday. While there was no injury to the passengers, the aircraft suffered damage, said officials.

"The aircraft suffered damage near the belly when the pushback tug hit it. The passengers and crew on board were safe and the airline adjusted them to other flights or refunded those who wanted to be," an airport official told The Indian Express about the incident that took place at about 4.21 pm on Thursday.

With MCC in force, HM Amit Shah not to chair formal security review in Kashmir

Srinagar, May 17 (IANS) Since the model code of conduct (MCC) is in force in the country, Union Home Minister Amit Shah will not take any formal security review in Kashmir.

Top sources told IANS that 'since the MCC is in force in the country because of the ongoing Lok Sabha elections, the Union Home Minister will not chair any formal security review meeting on Friday'. He met various

delegations of Pahari, Sikh and Gujjar/Bakarwal communities and also had detailed discussions on party affairs with BJP leaders.

He did not enjoy any official protocol during his stay in Srinagar city and only the usual security details for the Home Minister were in place.

Shah arrived here on Thursday evening. He was received by the BJP leaders at the Srinagar International Airport.

## ICJ holds hearing on South Africa's plea against Israel's operations in Gaza

The Hague, May 17 (IANS) The International Court of Justice (ICJ) opened its two-day hearings on Thursday regarding South Africa's request to halt Israel's military offensive in Gaza.

South Africa's Ambassador to the Netherlands Vusumuzi Madonsela told the judges that his country has returned to the court "due to the continuing annihilation of the Palestinian people, with over 35,000 now killed, and most of Gaza reduced to rubble", Xinhua news agency reported.

"Israel continues to show utter contempt for Palestinian life, operating with impunity," he said, explaining the reason behind South Africa's continued call for the protection of "the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people."

Since its initial application to the ICJ on December 29, 2023, South Africa has made subsequent re-

quests in February and March 2024 for additional "provisional measures" to halt Israel's "persistent acts of genocide against the Palestinian people in Gaza."

In the renewed request, Ambassador Madonsela emphasized the escalating "gravity of the situation in Gaza" and "the destruction of Gaza on a scale not witnessed since World War Two."

Madonsela urged the court to order Israel to cease its military operations in Gaza, including in Rafah, and withdraw its troops from the entire Gaza Strip.

Additionally, the ambassador called for Israel to take "all effective measures" to ensure unimpeded access to Gaza for the United Nations and humanitarian aid. Israel's argument will be presented to the ICJ on Friday, with a judgment expected in the coming weeks.

## New Caledonia 'calmer' as France sends reinforcements

Bangkok, May 17 (IANS/DPA) France is sending security reinforcements and essentials to its overseas territory of New Caledonia following days of unrest in the country.

The French High Commission said it was now a "calmer and more peaceful situation" in the country, although overnight curfews and a ban on gatherings remained in place.

Five people, including two police officers, have died so far in the unrest, while hundreds of others have been injured. The High Commission said a school and two businesses were set alight overnight on Thursday.

Violence broke out on Monday after France's National Assembly approved contentious voting reforms, which angered independence supporters. The National Assembly in Paris then adopted the reform. New Caledonia's

pro-independence movement fears the change will result in a weakening of political influence among the Indigenous Kanak people. The Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) called on the United Nations to lead an "impartial and competent dialogue mission" to monitor the situation in New Caledonia. It stood "in deep solidarity with our sisters and brothers of liturgical crisis," PCC said. "The violence that the country is currently experiencing is once again endangering the dignity of the life of every human being in the territory."

"For Paris, New Caledonia is important militarily and for its nickel. The territory, located 1,200 kilometres east of Australia, has gained extensive autonomy through the so-called Noumea Agreement after being a French colony from 1853 to 1946.



Speaking to The Mirror, author Tom Quinn remarked that the whistlestop 72-hour visit "confirmed the worst fears" for the Duke of Sussex's family, and has left the King and Prince of Wales (right) "absolutely furious". "Everything you might expect from an official royal visit was there - the receptions, the visits to schools and charities, to wounded soldiers and the disabled," he explained. "Meghan and Harry's speeches and their whole attitude has been designed to give the impression that they are still fully paid-up royals and William and his father King Charles don't like it one bit." Tom said it appears that Harry and Meghan (left) appear to have 'gone rogue' - and alleged that the Firm has been worried they would 'try to pull a fast one'.

## Up to 2,000 gallons oil may spill into Gulf of Mexico as barge hits bridge in US

Houston, May 17 (IANS) Up to 2,000 gallons of oil may have spilled into the Gulf of Mexico after a bunker barge struck a bridge in the island city of Galveston, eastern Texas, the US Coast Guard estimated.

The source of the leakage from the barge has been contained after the accident, said the US Coast Guard, reports Xinhua news agency.

The Coast Guard said it deployed planes and drones to evaluate the extent of the oil spill on Thursday while closing about 6.5 miles (10.5 km) along the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, a busy shipping channel for the region. Galveston is about 50 miles (80.5 km) away from downtown Houston, the largest city in Texas.

"We're pretty confident there was much less oil introduced to the water than we initially estimated," Coast Guard Captain Keith Donohue told a news conference.

"We've recovered over 605 gallons of oily water mixture from the environment, as well as an additional 5,640 gallons of oil product from the top of the



barge that did not go into the water," Donohue said.

The 321-foot barge, which has the capacity to hold 30,000 barrels of oil, was carrying 23,000 barrels, which amounts to nearly 9.66 million gallons, when it slammed into a pillar of the Pelican Island Causeway bridge on Wednesday, Rick Freed, a vice president of barge operator Martin Marine, told the news conference.

A tugboat lost control of two barges "due to a break in the coupling" connecting them. One of the barges slammed into the bridge, the Coast Guard said.

Freed said an investigation is still underway.

The crash led to the partial collapse of the bridge, forcing the only land connection from Galveston to Pelican Island to shut down. No injuries were reported.

"The harmful consequences of oil are once again impacting our coastal communities, wildlife, and waters," Joseph Gordon with an ocean conservation group named Oceana said in a statement. The spill probably have minimal long-term consequences, considering the volume of oil on board the barge, Danny Reible, a Texas Tech University professor, told ABC News on Thursday. The accident came weeks after a cargo ship slammed into a support column of the Francis Key Bridge in Baltimore on March 26, claiming six lives.--IANS



## GIOVANNI QUILTS STRICTLY

Giovanni Pernice reportedly quit Strictly Come Dancing after the scrutiny became "too much" when three of his ex dance partners slammed his 'militant' approach. But the professional dancer, 33, [pictured left with girlfriend Molly Brown] is 'adamant he has done nothing wrong' after his last celebrity partner, Amanda Abbington [centre], 52, led the charge in accusing him of 'difficult behaviour' during training. Amanda, who dramatically withdrew from last year's competition and was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder after the show, met with Laura Whitmore, 39, [top right] and Ranvir Singh [bottom right], 46, earlier this year for an 'emotional summit' to 'compare notes' about their time working with him.

## US House votes to resume arms supply to Israel

Washington, May 17 (IANS/DPA) The US House of Representatives has voted in favour of a bill aimed at forcing President Joe Biden to resume arms deliveries to Israel which had been paused.

The text was passed on Thursday with 208 Republican votes and 16 votes from Biden's Democrats, but is likely to fail in the Senate, where the president's party has the upper hand.

Biden had previously announced that he would veto the bill should it pass Congress. The text calls on his administration to swiftly implement all arms transfers to Israel that have already been authorised by Congress.

The US is currently withholding a delivery of ammunition due to Israel's actions in the city of Rafah in the south of the Gaza Strip.

The White House has repeatedly made it clear that it rejects a major offensive by the Israeli army in the city, which is over-

crowded with internally displaced people from other parts of the Gaza Strip.

Last week, Biden threatened Israel that a major ground offensive could have consequences for US arms supplies. Subsequently, senior administration officials tried to appease Israel and made it clear that the US was behind Israel and that it was only about this one delivery.

At the same time, there were reports of a new arms delivery to Israel.

"We have been very loud and clear about our concerns about a major military operation in Rafah for weeks — for months," confirmed Biden's spokeswoman Karine Jean-Pierre on Thursday. "This is something that we are concerned about," she said.

She said the White House still accepts Israeli assurances that the current deployment of the Israeli military in Rafah is

"limited."

The Republican chairman of the House of Representatives, Mike Johnson, accused Biden of having turned his back on Israel.

"The Biden Administration's decision to withhold weapons is catastrophic and goes directly against the will of Congress," Johnson wrote on the social media platform X.

"With the passage of the Israel Security Assistance Support Act, we send a clear message of solidarity and support to Israel and demand the urgent delivery of defence weapons to our most important ally in the Middle East," he wrote. He called Biden's threat to veto the legislation an "act of betrayal to our closest ally in the region."--IANS/

## Relatives of Israeli hostages address UN Security Council

New York, May 17 (IANS/DPA) Relatives of the Israeli hostages being held by the Palestinian militant organisation Hamas in the Gaza Strip have addressed a specially convened meeting of the UN Security Council in New York.

Among others at the meeting on Thursday, Gilli Roman, who is also a German citizen, recalled his sister-in-law Carmel, who was abducted from Kibbutz Beeri on October 7 last year.

"We know little about Carmel's situation," said Roman. "We hope she is alive. But we don't know."

The representatives of the Security Council and several other UN member states present, including Germany, promised to continue their efforts to secure the release of all hostages. Hamas and its supporters killed around 1,200 people, including around 800 civilians, in the attacks on October 7.

## Australia sanctions entities linked to North Korea arms supply

Sydney, May 17 (IANS/DPA) Australia on Friday imposed financial sanctions on six entities linked to North Korea's supply of weapons to Russia.

Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong said the continued transfer of weapons from North Korea to Russia was a "flagrant violation" of United Nations Security Council resolutions.

"Australia condemns, in the strongest possible terms, North Korea's illegal export and Russia's procurement and use of North Korean ballistic missiles, in support of Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine," she said in a statement.

"The use of North Korean ballistic missiles by Russia increases the suffering of the Ukrainian people, supports Russia's illegal and immoral war of aggression and undermines the global non-proliferation regime."

Tensions in the Asia-Pacific region are high. Since the beginning of 2022, North Korea has significantly increased the scope of its weapons tests, including the testing of nuclear-capable missiles, and has stepped up its rhetoric against the US and its allies.

## UN body says aid delivery to Gaza 'almost impossible' amid intensified fighting

Gaza, May 17 (IANS) The United Nations (UN) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has said that distributing humanitarian aid "is almost impossible" in Gaza, due to the irregular fuel supply and interrupted communications amid the ongoing intense war between Israel and Hamas.

OCHA in a statement posted on social media platform X on Thursday said that key crossings for aid into Gaza have been closed for several days and now the access to the Palestinian enclave is neither safe nor logistically feasible.

On May 5, Israel closed the only commercial crossing of Kerem Shalom with Gaza, in response to a Hamas rocket attack on an Israeli military point nearby that killed four soldiers.

Shortly after its reopening on May 8, militants fired eight rockets from southern Gaza's Rafah toward the Kerem Shalom crossing area in Israel.

The attack came after the Israeli army announced on May 7 "operational control" of the Gaza side of the Rafah crossing, which in effect closed this crucial entry point for truckloads of aid from Egypt into Gaza.

OCHA and other humanitarian organisations warned of the devastating

## UN body says aid delivery to Gaza 'almost impossible' amid intensified fighting



impact of the crossings' closure on over 2 million Palestinians in war-stricken Gaza, Xinhua news agency reported.

On Thursday, the Jordan Armed Forces said it conducted three airdrops of humanitarian aid over various locations in southern Gaza. The move was part of Jordan's commitment to assisting Gazans to overcome the difficult conditions, said the army without detailing further.

Earlier in the day, local sources and eyewitnesses in Gaza told Xinhua that aircraft were seen flying over and dropping food aid through parachutes in Al-Mawasi, an open area along the enclave's southwestern coast that is now flocked with residents coming at the Israeli army's evacuation order.--IANS

## North Korea slams 'planned' South Korea-US military drills, warns of 'catastrophic aftermath'

Seoul, May 17 (IANS) North Korea on Friday denounced a plan by South Korea and the US to stage their joint annual military drills in August, warning that they could face a "catastrophic aftermath" if they carry out the exercise.

The Ulchi Freedom Shield (UFS) by Seoul and Washington is a "nuclear attack exercise" against Pyongyang that will involve state-of-the-art military equipment, including nuclear strategic assets, according to the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

In December 2023, South Korea and the US agreed to hold a discussion-based exercise simulating North Korea's use of a nuclear weapon in conjunction with the UFS. It would mark the first time such training takes place, Yonhap news agency reported.

"The joint military exercise slated for August aims to complete the US nuclear war plan ... and fully implement it. This clearly shows that Washington's claim that it has no hostile intent is nothing but a deceptive hypocrisy," the KCNA said.

## NASA upbeat about greater space cooperation with South Korea

Washington, May 17 (IANS) The US space agency NASA expressed expectations for greater space cooperation with South Korea, as the two countries are widening the scope of their alliance beyond its longstanding security focus.

Mark Clampin, NASA's astrophysics division director, and John Wisniewski, a NASA scientist for the SPHEREx, a future space observatory, attended an event on bilateral space cooperation at the



Alleged gunman Juraj Cintula, 71, (left) is facing life in prison if convicted of the 'lone wolf', 'politically motivated' assassination attempt on the pro-Putin (inset) Slovakian Prime Minister Robert Fico (right), as it emerged he holds a range of political views. The poet and retired security guard has rallied against communism, migrants, and violence - and has links to a pro-Russian militia. But, in a further contradiction, footage emerged on Thursday showing Cintula at a protest against Mr Fico three weeks ago - where he is heard shouting: 'Long live Ukraine!'

### Brazilian para runner Jacques breaks Men's 5,000m T11 world record

Kobe, Japan, May 17 (IANS) Brazilian para-athlete Yeltsin Jacques won the Men's 5,000m T11 Final with a new world record at the Para Athletics World Championships here on Friday.

The 32-year-old visually-impaired athlete clocked 14 minutes 53.97 seconds at the Universiade Memorial Stadium in the central Japanese port city of Kobe.

Outrunning his previous personal best of 15:12.37, the athlete also set a new championship record, reports Xinhua.

At the Tokyo Paralympic Games in 2021, Jacques won the Men's 5,000m T11 Final and Men's 1,500m T11 Final. At the Tokyo Paralympic Games in 2021, Jacques won the Men's 5,000m T11 Final and Men's 1,500m T11 Final.

The 2024 World Para Athletics Championships, the 11th edition of its kind, runs until May 27 at the Kobe Universiade Memorial Stadium, where over 1,000 athletes from 100 countries and regions are competing in 168 events. The Kobe championships, originally scheduled to take place in 2021 but postponed due to the COVID pandemic, are held in East Asia for the first time.

### Botafogo reach Copa Libertadores last 16

Rio de Janeiro, May 17 (IANS) Substitute Jeffinho scored late as Brazil's Botafogo advanced to the Copa Libertadores knockout stage with a 1-0 away victory over Peruvian side Universitario.

Jeffinho, who replaced Luiz Henrique in the 65th minute, ran onto Savarino's slick one-touch pass before dribbling into the box and casually chipping a shot over goalkeeper Sebastian Brito.

The result at Estadio Monumental in Lima leaves Botafogo second in Group D with nine points, behind Colombia's Junior Barranquilla on goal difference.

Universitario are third with five points and can no longer reach the next round. "It was a very tough battle but we made it through," Botafogo midfielder Marlon Freitas said after the match.

### Tennis: Jarry beats Tsitsipas in Rome to make first ATP 1000 SF

Rome, May 17 (IANS) Nicolas Jarry advanced to his first ATP Masters 1000 semifinal at the Italian Open, rallying past sixth seed and 2022 finalist Stefanos Tsitsipas 3-6, 7-5, 6-4.

Favourite on the eve, Tsitsipas was unable to close out a match in a second set in which he added five break points to bring about a turning point in a match which, as the minutes passed, Jarry managed first to straighten out and then to bring to his side.

The 28-year-old displayed mental fortitude throughout the two-hour and 38-minute thriller, during which he fought off 11 of 13 break points faced, according to Infosys ATP Stats.

The Chilean produced relentless power from the baseline, striking 23 forehand winners, including a 166 kilometres-per-hour bruiser, to spoil Tsitsipas' quest for a third consecutive semifinal appearance in Rome.

Jarry will face 14th seed Tommy Paul in Friday's semifinals. The Santiago native won their lone meeting at Roland Garros last year. --IANS



## KLOPP'S FINAL PRESSER

Follow Mail Sport's live blog for the latest news and updates from Jurgen Klopp's final press conference as Liverpool manager. After almost a decade in charge of the Reds, the German is set to take charge of his final game at Anfield on Sunday in what is certain to be an emotional occasion. He will leave with the Carabao Cup success in February as his last piece of silverware - despite his charges chasing four separate trophies at one point this term.

## T20 World Cup: India to play warm-up game against Bangladesh on June 1 in USA

New Delhi, May 17 (IANS) India are set to play their Men's T20 World Cup warm-up game against Bangladesh at a yet to be decided location in the USA on June 1, said the International Cricket Council (ICC) on Thursday. India, captained by Rohit Sharma, were the inaugural winners of the Men's T20 World Cup in 2007 and are aiming to claim the silverware in the upcoming edition of the tournament hosted by the West Indies and USA, who were awarded joint hosting rights of the competition in 2021.

The warm-up match fixtures for the Men's T20 World Cup, as released by ICC, are scheduled to be held from May 27 to June 1 across the USA and Trinidad and Tobago. The venues hosting the 16 warm-up matches are Grand Prairie Cricket Stadium in Texas, Broward County Stadium in Florida, Queen's Park Oval and Brian Lara Cricket Academy in Trinidad and Tobago.

per side and will not have international T20 status, allowing teams to field all members of their 15-player squad. In a departure from the previous cycle, teams can now choose to play up to two warm-up matches, depending on their arrival time for the showpiece event. ICC added the

warm-up match between the West Indies and Australia at Queen's Park Oval, Trinidad and Tobago on May 30 will be open to fans. Tickets can be purchased at the official tick-

ets website or at box offices located at the National Cricket Centre and Queen's Park Oval from May 16 onwards. The 2024 Men's T20 World Cup will open on June 1 with a clash between co-hosts USA and neighbours Canada.

The 2024 Men's T20 World Cup will be held



across six venues in the West Indies and three stadiums in USA. In the Caribbean, Kensington Oval in Barbados, Brian Lara Cricket Academy in Trinidad, Providence Stadium in Guyana, Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in Antigua, Darren Sammy Cricket Ground in St Lucia and Arnos Vale Stadium, St Vincent will be the hosts.

In the USA, apart from New York, Broward County in Lauderdale Hill, Florida and Grand Prairie Stadium in Dallas, Texas, will be the venues. West Indies, the two-time winners of the Men's T20 World Cup, will be hosting the ninth edition of the tournament after first playing the hosts for the competition in 2010, while this is the first time USA will be hosting an ICC tournament. The 20 teams will be divided into four groups of five each for the first round. Top two teams from each group will qualify for the Super eight stage, where teams will be split into two groups of four each.

The 2024 Men's T20 World Cup will be held

## La Liga: Barcelona beat Almeria to consolidate second place

Madrid, May 17 (IANS) Two goals from midfielder Fermin Lopez gifted FC Barcelona a 2-0 win away to Almeria on Thursday and consolidated their second place in the La Liga table.

Barca's win, coupled with Girona's home defeat to Villarreal on Tuesday, gives Xavi Hernandez's side a four-point cushion over their nearest rivals with just two games remaining.

Lopez's first goal against a team already condemned to relegation came after 14 minutes when he arrived at the far post to meet a cross from young defender Hector Font.

Font was also involved in the second goal, as he gave the ball to Sergi Roberto, who burst into the Almeria area, before pulling the ball back for Lopez to double Barca's lead.

Real Sociedad and Betis are involved in a head-to-head struggle for sixth place and qualification for next season's Europa League, with Real Sociedad's 1-0 win at home to Valencia lifting them back to sixth, one point above Betis who they visit on Sunday, reports Xinhua.

Andre Silva headed Real Sociedad ahead in the third minute and both keepers made important saves to keep the scoreline unchanged until the final whistle.

In Thursday's early kick-off, Las Palmas twice came back from behind to draw 2-2 at home to Real Betis and moved six points clear of third-from-bottom Cadiz.

Mika Marmol's own goal put Betis ahead after 21 minutes, but Alex Suarez leveled for the home side just six minutes later. Ayoze Perez restored Betis's lead four minutes after the break, but Alberto Moleiro was on hand to make it 2-2 in the 64th minute to end Las Palmas' run of eight consecutive defeats that had left them in the struggle to avoid relegation.

Real Sociedad and Betis are involved in a head-to-head struggle for sixth place and qualification for next season's Europa League, with Real Sociedad's 1-0 win at home to Valencia lifting them back to sixth, one point above Betis who they visit on Sunday, reports Xinhua.

Andre Silva headed Real Sociedad ahead in the third minute and both keepers made important saves to keep the scoreline unchanged until the final whistle.

In Thursday's early kick-off, Las Palmas twice came back from behind to draw 2-2 at home to Real Betis and moved six points clear of third-from-bottom Cadiz.

Mika Marmol's own goal put Betis ahead after 21 minutes, but Alex Suarez leveled for the home side just six minutes later. Ayoze Perez restored Betis's lead four minutes after the break, but Alberto Moleiro was on hand to make it 2-2 in the 64th minute to end Las Palmas' run of eight consecutive defeats that had left them in the struggle to avoid relegation.

Real Sociedad and Betis are involved in a head-to-head struggle for sixth place and qualification for next season's Europa League, with Real Sociedad's 1-0 win at home to Valencia lifting them back to sixth, one point above Betis who they visit on Sunday, reports Xinhua.

Andre Silva headed Real Sociedad ahead in the third minute and both keepers made important saves to keep the scoreline unchanged until the final whistle.

In Thursday's early kick-off, Las Palmas twice came back from behind to draw 2-2 at home to Real Betis and moved six points clear of third-from-bottom Cadiz.

Mika Marmol's own goal put Betis ahead after 21 minutes, but Alex Suarez leveled for the home side just six minutes later. Ayoze Perez restored Betis's lead four minutes after the break, but Alberto Moleiro was on hand to make it 2-2 in the 64th minute to end Las Palmas' run of eight consecutive defeats that had left them in the struggle to avoid relegation.

Real Sociedad and Betis are involved in a head-to-head struggle for sixth place and qualification for next season's Europa League, with Real Sociedad's 1-0 win at home to Valencia lifting them back to sixth, one point above Betis who they visit on Sunday, reports Xinhua.

Andre Silva headed Real Sociedad ahead in the third minute and both keepers made important saves to keep the scoreline unchanged until the final whistle.

In Thursday's early kick-off, Las Palmas twice came back from behind to draw 2-2 at home to Real Betis and moved six points clear of third-from-bottom Cadiz.

Mika Marmol's own goal put Betis ahead after 21 minutes, but Alex Suarez leveled for the home side just six minutes later. Ayoze Perez restored Betis's lead four minutes after the break, but Alberto Moleiro was on hand to make it 2-2 in the 64th minute to end Las Palmas' run of eight consecutive defeats that had left them in the struggle to avoid relegation.

Real Sociedad and Betis are involved in a head-to-head struggle for sixth place and qualification for next season's Europa League, with Real Sociedad's 1-0 win at home to Valencia lifting them back to sixth, one point above Betis who they visit on Sunday, reports Xinhua.

Andre Silva headed Real Sociedad ahead in the third minute and both keepers made important saves to keep the scoreline unchanged until the final whistle.

In Thursday's early kick-off, Las Palmas twice came back from behind to draw 2-2 at home to Real Betis and moved six points clear of third-from-bottom Cadiz.

Mika Marmol's own goal put Betis ahead after 21 minutes, but Alex Suarez leveled for the home side just six minutes later. Ayoze Perez restored Betis's lead four minutes after the break, but Alberto Moleiro was on hand to make it 2-2 in the 64th minute to end Las Palmas' run of eight consecutive defeats that had left them in the struggle to avoid relegation.

Real Sociedad and Betis are involved in a head-to-head struggle for sixth place and qualification for next season's Europa League, with Real Sociedad's 1-0 win at home to Valencia lifting them back to sixth, one point above Betis who they visit on Sunday, reports Xinhua.

Andre Silva headed Real Sociedad ahead in the third minute and both keepers made important saves to keep the scoreline unchanged until the final whistle.

In Thursday's early kick-off, Las Palmas twice came back from behind to draw 2-2 at home to Real Betis and moved six points clear of third-from-bottom Cadiz.

Mika Marmol's own goal put Betis ahead after 21 minutes, but Alex Suarez leveled for the home side just six minutes later. Ayoze Perez restored Betis's lead four minutes after the break, but Alberto Moleiro was on hand to make it 2-2 in the 64th minute to end Las Palmas' run of eight consecutive defeats that had left them in the struggle to avoid relegation.

Real Sociedad and Betis are involved in a head-to-head struggle for sixth place and qualification for next season's Europa League, with Real Sociedad's 1-0 win at home to Valencia lifting them back to sixth, one point above Betis who they visit on Sunday, reports Xinhua.

Andre Silva headed Real Sociedad ahead in the third minute and both keepers made important saves to keep the scoreline unchanged until the final whistle.

In Thursday's early kick-off, Las Palmas twice came back from behind to draw 2-2 at home to Real Betis and moved six points clear of third-from-bottom Cadiz.

Mika Marmol's own goal put Betis ahead after 21 minutes, but Alex Suarez leveled for the home side just six minutes later. Ayoze Perez restored Betis's lead four minutes after the break, but Alberto Moleiro was on hand to make it 2-2 in the 64th minute to end Las Palmas' run of eight consecutive defeats that had left them in the struggle to avoid relegation.

Real Sociedad and Betis are involved in a head-to-head struggle for sixth place and qualification for next season's Europa League, with Real Sociedad's 1-0 win at home to Valencia lifting them back to sixth, one point above Betis who they visit on Sunday, reports Xinhua.

# Business & Technology

## Redmi Note 13 5G Series Surpasses 15 Million Unit Sales Worldwide

New Delhi, Xiaomi, the most trusted and loved smartphone brand, recorded a remarkable milestone of exceeding 15 million Redmi Note 13 Series units sold worldwide. Celebrating the massive success, Xiaomi announced a big price drop on the series and an India exclusive Redmi Note 13 Pro+ 5G World Champions Edition, in collaboration with the Argentine Football Association (AFA).

Redmi Note 13 5G Series Price Drop -Xiaomi announced the never seen before prices on the entire lineup. Now, with the Redmi Note 13 Series 5G starting at a net effective price of INR 15,499. Xiaomi aims to empower even more customers to experience the best-in-class technology that the Note series has to offer.

Redmi Note 13 5G will now be available at a net effective price of INR 15,499 for 8GB+128GB, INR 17,499 for 8GB+256 GB and INR 19,499 for 12GB+256GB, inclusive of offers.

Redmi Note 13 Pro 5G will now be available at a net effective price of INR 21,999 for 8GB+128GB, INR 23,999 and INR 25,999 for 12GB+256GB, inclusive of offers. Redmi Note 13 Pro+ 5G will now be available at a net effective price of INR 27,999 for 8GB+256GB, INR 29,999 for 12GB+256GB and INR 31,999 for 12GB+512GB inclusive of offers.

These will be available across Mi.com, Amazon, Flipkart, Xiaomi Home & Xiaomi Retail, inclusive of bank offers.

Ahead of celebrating its momentous 10th anniversary in India, Xiaomi launched the Redmi Note 13 Pro+ 5G World Champions Edition, an India-exclusive creation in collaboration with the Argentine Football Association (AFA). It is inspired by the vibrant blue and white stripes, and comes in a specially crafted collectible gift box with customized AFA edition 120 HyperCharge, USB Type-C cable, and a football-inspired sim ejector pin.

Packed with top-of-the-line features, including IP68 protection for dust and water resistance, a true 200 Megapixel camera, and a 3D Curved AMOLED display protected by Corning Gorilla Glass Victus, the smartphone is available at a price of INR 34,999\*.

## Pride Hotels Group Expands Its Diverse Portfolio with the Strategic Addition of Pride Elite Wellness Resort Becharaji

Pride Hotels Group is excited to unveil the newest addition to its distinguished portfolio, the Pride Elite Wellness Resort Becharaji, located in the historic town of Becharaji, Gujarat. This resort is nestled near notable landmarks such as the sacred Sakeshwar Jain Temple and the renowned Modhera Sun Temple, offering guests a unique blend of cultural enrichment and relaxation.

"We are thrilled to unveil the Pride Elite Wellness Resort Becharaji, our first venture into the wellness resort domain and a shining example of our dedication to delivering unparalleled hospitality experiences. Situated in the business hub of Gujarat, this newest addition not only caters to the needs of leisure travelers but also provides a platform for our corporate clientele looking for a seamless fusion of business, leisure & wellbeing. With its meticulously designed spaces, state-of-the-art amenities, and a team committed to excellence, Pride Elite Wellness Resort Becharaji promises a comfortable, boutique stay that exceeds every expectation", shared Mr. Atul Upadhyay, Executive Vice President of Pride Hotels Group.

The new Pride Elite Wellness Resort Becharaji features 92 comfortable rooms, a refreshing swimming pool, a contemporary Gymnasium, and a lush green lawn perfectly ideal for weddings and events. Additionally, the property boasts a dedicated meeting room for conferences, outdoor games and wellness treatments curated for guests, a unique offering from Rishivan Vive-

kananda Wellness Center. These Focus on providing holistic experiences, like stress management, diabetes control, weight management, spine wellness and many more curated packages for corporates and guests who aim to travel for wellbeing through a blend of Ayurveda and Yoga. Mr. Koustuv Mukherjee, Associate VP (Gujarat Region) at Pride Hotels Group, emphasized the strategic importance of Gujarat and the Becharaji region. "With current times, Gujarat has been a vibrant destination with a rich cultural heritage and significant business investment & opportunities. Pride Elite Wellness Resort Becharaji is not just a hotel; it's a gateway for guests to experience the warmth of Gujarat's hospitality and the region's remarkable attractions.

Mumbai, SBI Mutual Fund, India's largest fund house, announces the launch of the SBI Automotive Opportunities Fund, an open-ended equity scheme following automotive & allied business activities theme. The investment objective would be to generate long-term capital appreciation to unit holders from a portfolio that is invested in equity and equity related instruments of companies engaged in automotive & allied business activities theme from the domestic as well as global universe. However, there can be no assurance that the investment objective of the Scheme will be realized. The fund would be benchmarked to the Nifty Auto TRI.

Mr. Shamsheer Singh, Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer, SBI Funds Management Limited, said, "Today India is the world's 3rd largest auto-

mobile market. The Indian Automotive sector presents an attractive opportunity as domestic demand and auto exports have been drivers of growth. Electric mobility and rise of logistics & passenger transportation provide inflection points for the industry.

Mr. D P Singh, Deputy MD & Joint CEO, SBI Funds Management Limited, said, "I am pleased to present the SBI Automotive Opportunities Fund to investors who are keen to add a thematic offering to their portfolios. The Indian Automotive Industry is running in top gear as our country is a force to be reckoned in terms of production of vehicles and auto exports while our burgeoning domestic market, demands safer and premium vehicles. In addition, manufacturing of auto parts and ancillaries contribute to al-

## TCI announces Results for the Q4 & FY ending 31st March, 2024

Gurugram, India's leading integrated supply chain and logistics solutions provider, Transport Corporation of India Ltd., announced its financial results today for the financial year ending 31st March, 2024.

Commenting on the Q4 results of FY24, Mr. Vineet Agarwal, Managing Director of Transport Corporation of India Limited, stated, TCI has delivered a stellar performance, spurred by growth in key sectors such as automobiles, engineering, temperature-sensitive products, alongside promising developments in new-age verticals.

The new financial year has started with a strong pipeline for most of our services, including 3PL, warehousing, inbound-outbound logistics, cross-border, rail and coastal multimodal solutions. This underscores our clients' choice of TCI as their preferred logistics partner. We continue to build solutions in the area of sustainability, by adopting EV & alternate fuels like LNG. Additionally, TCI-IBM Supply Chain Sustainability Lab celebrated its first-year anniversary, reinforcing the team's dedication to advancing ESG practices for the betterment of the industry.

The company's commitment to innovation and excellence is reflected in its digital initiatives aimed at providing customized solutions, including WhatsApp for business, control tower, integration with ULIP, ONDC, etc. We have recently launched our new website for better interactivity with all our customers & other stakeholders. Group TCI, with revenues of over Rs. 7000 Cr is India's leading integrated supply chain and logistics solutions provider. TCI group with expertise developed over 6 decades has an extensive network.

## Indian Container Cargo to Grow at 8% in FY25 amid Red Sea Crisis, says CareEdge Ratings

Mumbai, According to CareEdge Ratings, container volume is expected to grow by 8% at 342 MMT in FY25, amid the risk of a prolonged Red Sea crisis. The slated connection of the Dedicated Freight Corridor to Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) in FY26, alongside capacity additions by ports, is expected to drive growth in container volumes over the medium term. Going forward, significant adverse movement in charter rates impacting cargo volumes and vessels addition by shipping lines shall be key monitorable.

CareEdge Ratings expects coal cargo throughput at ports to grow at a CAGR of 3-4% from FY24 to FY26, despite an anticipated decline in coal imports by 2-3% due to increased domestic coal production. The share of coastal cargo is expected

to rise from 33% in FY24 to 42% by FY26, as per CareEdge Ratings report. "This growth will primarily be driven by the coastal movement of coal along the eastern coast, complemented by added capacities and synergistic benefits. The Government of India's focus on building agglomeration infrastructure for specific sectors like steel and cement and enhancing multimodal connectivity under the Maritime Amrit Kai 2047 vision, also supports the expected increase in coastal movements at ports," said Maulesh Desai, Director, CareEdge Ratings.

Coal throughput witnessed healthy growth from 292 MMT in FY22 to 367 MMT in FY23 representing growth of ~26%. The growth in throughput was supported by increased power generation from thermal plants

by 6% to 1059.9 billion units. Against this, the imported coal volume registered a y-o-y growth of 18% to 249 MMT in FY23. However, the volume growth was also driven by increased coastal volumes of coal.

"The Red Sea crisis has led to an increase in voyage span by 15-20 days, in addition to higher freight rates. However, the capacity liners' readiness to expand container capacity—owing to healthy profitability by chartering additional vessels, cascading capacity from other regions, and accelerating fleet renewal—bodes well for mitigating the increased transit times. Going forward, significant adverse movement in charter rates impacting cargo volumes and vessels addition by shipping lines shall be key monitorable," added Maulesh Desai.

most 30 percent of the manufacturing ecosystem providing wealth creation opportunities for investors in the long-term. The fund would predominantly invest i.e., 80%-100% of its assets in Equity and Equity-related instruments of companies engaged in automotive & allied business activities theme (including equity derivatives), with the balance assets as per the following allocation: a) 0 - 20% in Equity and Equity-related instruments of companies other than above (including equity derivatives) b) 0 - 20% in Debt and Debt-related instruments (including securitized debt (upto 20%) & debt derivatives) and money market instruments including tri-party repos c) 0 - 10% in Units issued by REITs and InvTs, with the exposure in line with SEBI limits specified from time to time.

Abmedabad, Page 6

## OpenAI partners Reddit to train its AI on users' posts

New Delhi, May 17 (IANS) ChatGPT maker OpenAI has inked a deal with Reddit to train its artificial intelligence (AI) models on users' posts on the popular community discussion platform.

As part of the partnership, OpenAI will bring Reddit content to ChatGPT and new products.

In order to do so, OpenAI will access Reddit's Data API, which provides real-time, structured, and unique content from Reddit.

"This will enable OpenAI's AI tools to better understand and showcase Reddit content, especially on recent topics," Reddit said in a statement.

Brad Lightcap, COO of OpenAI, said that they are thrilled to partner with Reddit to enhance "ChatGPT with uniquely timely

and relevant information, and to explore the possibilities to enrich the Reddit experience with AI-powered features."

The partnership is consistent with other content arrangements, and does not change Reddit's Data API Terms or Developer Terms.

"Reddit has become one of the internet's largest open archives of authentic, relevant, and always up to date human conversations about anything and everything," said Steve Huffman, Reddit Co-Founder and CEO.

"Including it in ChatGPT upholds our belief in a connected internet, helps people find more of what they're looking for, and helps new audiences find community on Reddit," he added. -IANS

## 92% of Indian Knowledge Workers use AI in the workplace, finds Microsoft and LinkedIn 2024 Work Trend Index

Mumbai, Microsoft and LinkedIn today released the India findings of the 2024 Work Trend Index on the state of AI at work. The report titled, "AI at work is here. Now comes the hard part" shows how, in just one year, AI is influencing the way people work, lead and hire. The report spotlights employees' strong desire for AI integration in the workplace, the opportunities it creates for career growth, and the emergence of AI power users in the future of work.

Microsoft and LinkedIn partnered for the first time for the fourth Work Trend Index to provide a comprehensive view of how AI is shaping work. The findings are based on a survey of 31,000 people in 31 coun-

tries, labor and hiring trends on LinkedIn, trillions of Microsoft 365 productivity signals and research with Fortune 500 customers. Irina Ghose, Managing Director, Microsoft India and South Asia said, "Data from the Work Trend Index shows that AI is now a reality at work, with India having one of the highest AI adoption rates among knowledge workers, at 92%. The rate of diffusion we're seeing across sectors, from BFSI to healthcare to ITES and the public sector has been very encouraging. This AI optimism presents a tremendous opportunity for organizations to invest in the right tools and train-

ing, to unlock efficiencies for employees and ultimately drive long term business impact." Ruchee Anand, Head of Talent & Learning Solutions at LinkedIn said, "AI is transforming the world of work, reshaping the talent landscape and nudging both individuals and organizations to embrace change. The demand for AI expertise has seen a remarkable 17% jump from last year, echoing LinkedIn platform insights and findings of the Work Trend Index. We've seen professionals in India over index on learning while also adding AI skills to their professional toolkit. As the workforce looks to

tap into the benefits of AI, it's crucial for leaders to boost their organization's AI capabilities through thoughtful investment in both technology and talent." Use of generative AI at work has nearly doubled in the last six months, globally, LinkedIn is seeing a significant increase in professionals adding AI skills to their profiles. However, with every second leader in India worried that their company lacks an AI vision and employees bringing their own AI tools to work, leaders have reached the hard part of any tech disruption: moving from experimentation to tangible business impact. On the sidelines of the report, Microsoft announced new capabilities in Copilot for Microsoft 365 to help people get started with AI, and LinkedIn announced over 50 learning courses that are being made free to empower professionals at all levels to advance AI aptitude.

## UN raises India's 2024 growth rate to 6.9 pc; remains world's fastest-growing large economy

United Nations, May 17 (IANS) Indian economy's growth rate projection for this year has been raised by 0.7 per cent to 6.9 per cent from the forecast made in January by the UN and it retains its position as the world's fastest-growing large economy.

The better outlook is fueled by lower inflation, robust exports, and increased foreign investments, Hamid Rashid, the chief of the UN's Global Economic Monitoring Branch, said on Thursday. "The drivers are very simple: inflation has come down significantly, and that means the fiscal position is not as constrained as in other countries," he said at the release of the mid-year edition of the World Economic Situation and Prospects report. Exports, which is another element in the improved projection, have been "pretty robust" and India is also benefiting from more investments coming in from other Western sources while the flow to China is coming down, Rashid said.

"India has become an alternative investment source or destination for

many Western companies," he added.

Another factor benefiting India, he said, is the special import arrangement India has with Russia for oil that is lowering its cost, he said. The WESP report also gave a positive picture of the employment situation, saying: "In India, labour market indicators have also improved amid robust growth and higher labour partici-

pation." It said that the women's labour force participation has increased particularly in South Asia. Last year, the WESP report said, India's economy grew by 7.5 per cent and in 2022 by 7.7 per cent when it received a big short-term boost coming out of the drastic Covid slowdown.

The report also revised the projection for the world economy this year to 2.7 per cent, an increase of 0.3 per cent from January.

## Air India flight dodges tug tractor collision at Pune airport, passengers safe

New Delhi, May 17 (IANS) An Air India flight, with 180 passengers on-board for Delhi, narrowly avoided a collision with a tug tractor as it was taxiing towards the runway at Pune Airport, an airline official said on Friday. The incident occurred on Wednesday at Pune airport. The plane sustained damage to its nose and a tyre near the landing gear following the encounter with the tug tractor. However, despite the incident and resulting damage, all passengers and crew members aboard were reported as safe.

"Passengers were eventually refunded their full fares and offered complimentary rescheduling. Those with onward international connections were flown to Delhi by other carriers.

**WESTERN RAILWAY - VADODARA DIVISION**  
**SIGNAL & TELECOMMUNICATION WORKS**  
Tender Notice No. S&T/BR/24-25/10/SIG Date: 14-05-2024 Sr. DSTE/Vadodara acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders against Tender No. SandT\_BRC\_24-25\_10\_SIG. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. 1. Name of the work with its location: Part Supply of material, Digging of trenches, laying of cables, horizontal boring, erection of relay racks, relays etc. in connection with the work of "Reliability improvement and safety enhancement at interlocked LC gates under the jurisdiction of Sr. DSTE/Co./BRC/2. Approx cost of the work: ₹ 52,20,011.13 3. Earnest Money to be deposited: ₹ 1,10,500.00 4. Date & time for submission of e-tender and opening of e-tender: 10.06.2024 @ 15:00 Hours and 10.06.2024 @ 15:30 Hours 5. Web site particulars and notice for location where complete details can be seen etc.: Senior Divisional Signal & Telecommunication Engineer, 2nd Floor-Annex Building, DRM's Office, Western Railway, Pratnagar, Vadodara-390004 <http://www.ireps.gov.in>

Like us on: [facebook.com/WesternRly](https://www.facebook.com/WesternRly)

**WESTERN RAILWAY - VADODARA DIVISION**  
**SUPPLY OF MATERIAL & EXECUTION OF WORKS**  
Tender Notice No. S&T/BR/24-25/11/SIG Date: 14-05-2024 Sr. DSTE/Vadodara acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders against Tender No. SandT\_BRC\_24-25\_11\_SIG. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. 1. Name of the work with its location: Part Supply of material and execution of works in connection with the work of "Reliability improvement and safety enhancement at interlocked LC gates under the jurisdiction of Sr. DSTE/Co./BRC/2. Approx cost of the work: ₹ 78,30,182.44 3. Earnest Money to be deposited: ₹ 1,56,800.00 4. Date & time for submission of e-tender and opening of e-tender: 10.06.2024 @ 15:00 Hours and 10.06.2024 @ 15:30 Hours 5. Web site particulars and notice for location where complete details can be seen etc.: Senior Divisional Signal & Telecommunication Engineer, 2nd Floor-Annex Building, DRM's Office, Western Railway, Pratnagar, Vadodara-390004 <http://www.ireps.gov.in>

Like us on: [facebook.com/WesternRly](https://www.facebook.com/WesternRly)

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
I have changed my old name from **PARMAR USHABEN KALPESHKUMAR** to new name **MISTRY USHA KALPESH**  
Add. A-44, Snehdeep Soc, Vejalpur Ahmedabad-380051 570A

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
I have changed my old name from **CHOWDHARY ABHISHEK VIRCHANDJI** to new name **JAIN ABHISHEK VIRCHANDJI**  
Add. 1201-F, Jaymangal Residency, Shahibag, Ahmedabad 569

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
I have changed my old name from **PATIL SARLABEN DASHRATHLAL** to new name **PATIL SARLABEN DASHRATHBHAI**  
Add. At. Ghadk, Ta. Prantij, Dist. Sabarkantha-383205 K020

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
I have changed my old name from **MAHESHKUMAR CHANDUBHAI PATEL** to new name **MAHESHKUMAR CHATURBHAI KORINGA**  
Add. 37, Shramjivnagar Co.op.Hou.Soc.Ltd., C.T.M. Char Rasta, Amraivad Ahmedabad-380026 569A

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
I have changed my old name from **GOYANI VARSHABEN SURESHKUMAR** to new name **GOYANI VARSHABEN SURESHBHAI**  
Add. 38, Vraj Vihar Society, L.B.S. Road, Opp. Chirag Diamond, Bapunagar Ahmedabad 568A

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
I have changed my minor son's old name from **GOHIL PARVARAJ SINH HITENDRASINH** to new name **PARVARAJ SINH HITENDRASINH GOHIL**  
Add. 36/294, Vidhyanagar Flat, Nr. Himmatlal Park, Ambawadi, Ahmedabad-380015 571

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
I have changed my minor daughters old name from **TRISHABEN BHAVESHKUMAR THAKKAR** to new name **TRISHA BHAVESHKUMAR THAKKAR**  
Add. Railway Station Road, Harij, Dist-Patan 566

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
I have changed my old name from **ANSARI JAVEDAKHTAR JUBERAHMAD** to new name **ANSARI JAVEDAKHTAR ZUBERAHMAD**  
Add. 30/7, Mamdu Master Ni Chali, Bapunagar Ahmedabad 564

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
I have changed my old name from **GOHIL SHWETABA** to new name **SHWETABA HITENDRASINH GOHIL**  
Add. 36/294, Vidhyanagar Flat, Nr. Himmatlal Park, Ambawadi, Ahmedabad-380015 571A

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
I have changed my old name from **ASHOKKUMAR HIMATAJI PRAJAPATI** to new name **ASHOK BAGDARAM PRAJAPATI**  
Add. A-3, Ishwarkurpa Society, Sola, Ahmedabad 567A

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
I have changed my old name from **MOHAMMEDUSMAN SALIMULLAH** to new name **ANSARI MOHAMMED USMAN SALIMULLAH**  
Add. 108, Chartoda Kabrastan Na Chhpra, Gomtipur, Ahmedabad 564A

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
I have changed my old name from **ISAK MOHAMMAD GULAM RASHUL SHAIKH** to new name **ISAKMAHAMMAD GULAMRASUL SHAIKH**  
Add. Chmarvas, Po. Modasa, Ta. Modasa Dist. Arvalli 1021

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
I have changed my old name from **SONI AKA ADEAHARA NITA SANJAYKUMAR** to new name **SONI NITA SANJAYBHAI**  
Add. C-302, Indraprath-5, Satellite, Ahmedabad 567

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
I have changed my old name from **KWINJAL PARMAR** to new name **KARANVEER PARMAR**  
Add. F 10/5, Rushwina Park Society, Nobalnagar, Ahmedabad-382340 563

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
I have Changed my old name from **MOHAMMADAAKIB ARIFBHAI MEMON** to new name **MOHAMMADAAKIB MAHAMADARIF MEMON**  
Add : 10, Panchratna Society, Ayojanagar, Pansar Road, Kalol, Dist-Gandhinagar V045

**WESTERN RAILWAY - RAJKOT DIVISION**  
**PUBLIC NOTIFICATION**  
Notice is hereby given to all users of Railway lines and premises situated on the completed section New B.G. Doubling Line of the under noted section of the Rajkot Division of Western Railway that the 25000 Volt, 50 Hz AC overhead traction wires will be energized on or after date 30-05-2024.

On and from the date, the overhead traction line shall be treated as live at all times and no unauthorized person shall approach or work in the proximity of the said overhead lines.

Station	Location (Chainage)	Station	Location (Chainage)	Remark
Rajkot Jn	743/10Km	Rajkot-Kanalul	766/22	On or after 30.5.2024
Padadhari	743/166.80	Kanalul	766/396.60	

Like us on: [facebook.com/WesternRly](https://www.facebook.com/WesternRly) • Follow us on: [twitter.com/WesternRly](https://twitter.com/WesternRly)

**WESTERN RAILWAY - AHMEDABAD**  
**(SURVEY & CONSTRUCTION)**  
Dy. Chief Engineer(CIV, Ahmedabad for & on behalf of President of Union of India invites E-Tender for the following work: (1) E-Tender No. T. No. DyCE-C-V-ADI-VG-SIOB/61 Date: 13.05.2024 (2) Name of work : Construction of drain between old and new ROB, Side shoulder & footpath improvement, side kerb construction, road marking strips, providing MBCB, Median rectification and maintenance work if occur in upcoming monsoon at ROB Km 699/3-4 (Wadhara - Maliya Miyana section) and Km 706/8-9 (Maliya Miyana - Surbari section) for handing over to NHAI after completion of ongoing diversion on new ROB at Km 706/8-9 (Maliya Miyana - Surbari section) in connection with doubling of Viramgam Samakhyali section of Ahmedabad Division on Western Railway.(3) Approx. cost of work : ₹ 5,87,08,164.02 (4) Bid Security : 4,43,600 (5) Type of Tender : Open tender (Single Packet system)(6) Completion period : 4 Months including monsoon period. (7) Closing time & Date : 03/06/2024, 15:00 (8) Website particulars Notice board location where complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office. Dy. Chief Engineer(CIV, Western Railway, Ahmedabad Website : [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)

Like us on: [facebook.com/WesternRly](https://www.facebook.com/WesternRly)

**WESTERN RAILWAY - RAJKOT DIVISION**  
**WARNING TO ROAD USERS**  
It is notified for information of the public that the overhead traction wire will be Energized on 25 KV over the section New B.G. Doubling Line as given below of Rajkot Division of Western Railway.

Station	Location (Chainage)	Station	Location (Chainage)	Remark
Rajkot Jn	743/10Km	Rajkot-Kanalul	766/22	On or after 30.5.2024
Padadhari	743/166.80	Kanalul	766/396.60	

The height gauges have been erected at all the level crossings with clear height of 4.78 meter above road level with a view to prevent loads of excessive height from coming into contact or dangerous proximity to live traction wire (contact wire), which shall be at a height of minimum 5.50 meter above the rail level at Level crossing. Public are hereby notified to observe the height specified above for the purpose of loading vehicles and to see that the load carried in road vehicles do not infringe the height gauges under any circumstances. The dangers of a load of excessive height are as follows:-1. Dangers to the height gauge and consequent obstruction to the road as well as the Railway line. 2. Danger to the materials of equipment carried on the vehicles itself. 3. Danger of fire and risk of life due to contact with or dangerous proximity to the conductors.

Like us on: [facebook.com/WesternRly](https://www.facebook.com/WesternRly) • Follow us on: [twitter.com/WesternRly](https://twitter.com/WesternRly)

**SHARE SMART MARKET CREATORS LIMITED**  
Registered Office : Creative Castle 70, Sampatrao Colony, Vadodara - 7 Ph. 0265 - 2354075 Fax: 2340214 • Email: [info@marketcreators.net](mailto:info@marketcreators.net) Website : [www.sharemart.co.in](http://www.sharemart.co.in) • CIN No. : L7140GJ1993PLC016555

**Statement of Standalone Financial Results for Quarter & Year Ended 31/03/2024**

Particulars	Quarter Ended		Year Ended	
	31.03.24	31.12.23	31.03.23	31.03.24
	Audited	Unaudited	Audited	Audited
Total income from operations (net)	248.46	208.53	197.92	797.38
Total Profit/(Loss) from ordinary activities before tax	(13.04)	11.61	7.32	1.14
Net Profit / (Loss) from ordinary activities after tax (after Extraordinary Items)	(18.11)	12.86	6.43	(3.23)
Equity Share Capital	1050.00	1050.00	1050.00	1050.00
Reserves excluding Revaluation Reserves as per balance sheet of previous year	-	-	-	-
Earnings Per Share (In Rupees before / After extraordinary items) (of ₹ 10/- each)(*)	-	-	-	-
1) Basic: (*)	(0.17)	0.12	0.06	(0.03)
2) Diluted: (*)	(0.17)	0.12	0.06	(0.03)

Note: (1) The above is an extract of the detailed format of audited financial results for the quarter and year ended 31st March 2024 filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of these financial results is available on the Stock Exchange websites at [www.bseindia.com](http://www.bseindia.com) and also on the Company's website at [www.sharemart.co.in](http://www.sharemart.co.in) (2) The above results have been reviewed by the Audit Committee and subsequently approved by the Board of Directors in their respective meetings held on 17th May 2024.

By Order of the Board For Market Creators Ltd. Dr. J. H. Shah (Chairman) DIN:00051917

Place : Vadodara Date : 17<sup>th</sup> May, 2024

**JAYATMA INDUSTRIES LIMITED**  
Regd. office :- 4th Floor, 1, Laxminagar Co-op Hou. Soc. Ltd. B/s Naranpura Post Office, Naranpura , Ahmedabad - 380013, Gujarat (India) Website - [www.jayatmaindustries.com](http://www.jayatmaindustries.com) ; Mail us on :- [aj@jayatma.com](mailto:aj@jayatma.com) ; Ph. No. :- 079 - 27682700/40227000 CIN : L17110GJ1983PLC006462

**EXTRACT OF AUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE FOURTH QUARTER/YEAR ENDED ON 31.03.2024**

Sr. No.	PARTICULARS	Quarter Ended		Year Ended	
		31.03.2024	31.12.2023	31.03.2023	31.03.2024
		(Audited)	(Unaudited)	(Audited)	(Audited)
1	Total income from operations (net)	220.92	949.45	2418.44	3058.42
2	Net Profit / (Loss) from ordinary activities before tax, exceptional and/or extra ordinary items	3.83	0.44	5.78	8.89
3	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	3.83	0.44	5.78	8.98
4	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	1.52	0.44	1.97	6.58
5	Equity Share Capital	615.30	615.30	615.30	615.30
6	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve as shown in the Balance Sheet of previous year)				615.76
7	Earning Per Share (In rupees before/after extraordinary items) (of Rs. 10/- each)				609.19
	Basic :	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01
	Diluted :	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01

Note: The above is an extract of the detailed format of Standalone Audited Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchange under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of Standalone Audited Financial Results are available on the Company's website i.e. [www.jayatmaindustries.com](http://www.jayatmaindustries.com) and website of stock exchange i.e. [www.bseindia.com](http://www.bseindia.com).

By Order of the Board For, Jayatma Industries Limited Sd/- Nirav K. Shah (DIN : 00397336) Director & CEO

Date : 17.05.2024 Place : Ahmedabad.

## Business Brief III

### EVs account for 20 pc of car imports in Jan-April period in S. Korea

Seoul, May 17 (IANS) Nearly one out of five imported vehicles in South Korea were battery-powered ones in the January-April period despite slowing sales of electric vehicles (EVs) globally, industry data showed on Friday.

In the first four months, registrations of pure EVs jumped to 13,863 units from 5,417 during the same period of last year, accounting for 18.2 per cent of overall vehicle imports, according to data from the Korea Automobile Importers & Distributors Association (KAIDA).

Tesla's Model Y SUV topped other EV models with registrations of 6,016 units in the four months, followed by Tesla's Model 3 with 1,731 units, BMW's i5 eDrive40 sedan with 644 units, and Audi's Q4 e-tron SUV with 621 units, the data showed, reports Yonhap news agency.

Registrations of imported gasoline hybrid cars rose 39.3 per cent on-year to 37,085 units, taking up 48.7 per cent of all imported cars in the January-April period. Their ratio jumped from 32.2 per cent in the year-ago period. In contrast, the number of imported gasoline cars fell 37 per cent to 2,828 units in the four-month period from 4,481 a year ago. The ratio of gasoline cars also dropped to 27.4 per cent from 49 per cent. Diesel-powered car registrations fell 71 per cent to 2,084, with their ratio down to the lowest 2.7 per cent from 8.7 per cent during the same period, the data showed.

### Google Cloud launches AI-driven security operations region to India

Mumbai, May 17 (IANS) Aligning with India's data localisation norms, Google Cloud on Friday announced to bring its AI-powered security operations (SecOps) region to India.

The enterprises in the country can now store their Google security operations customer data in the Mumbai region.

"Today's complex threat landscape, combined with talent shortages, requires immediate and innovative solutions. Gemini in Google Security Operations is a catalyst to supercharge our customers' security operations, a game changer to drive operational excellence with Google's AI at scale," said Jyothi Prakash, India Head of Google Cloud Security.

With the new SecOps region in the country, Google Cloud can help more organisations, in both the private and public sectors, reap the benefits of secure cloud infrastructure, said the company.

Google Cloud's security operations platform is designed to give security operations centre (SOC) teams a boost across their detection and response lifecycle. To reduce toil and manual processes across security teams, Google Cloud has announced updates to Gemini in its security operations.

### Sensex down 166 points, M&M gains over 6 pc

Mumbai, May 17 (IANS) India equity indices were in red on Friday following muted global cues. At 9:45 a.m., Sensex was down 166 points or 0.23 per cent, at 73,497 points and Nifty was down 45 points or 0.21 per cent, at 22,353 points.

Midcap and smallcap indices outperform benchmarks. The Nifty midcap index was up 204 points or 0.40 per cent, at 51,357 points and the Nifty smallcap was up 151 points or 0.87 per cent, at 16,747 points.

India Vix was down 0.85 per cent at 20.17 points. Among the sector indices, Auto, PSU Bank, Metal, Realty, Media, Energy, Infra, and Oil&amp;Gas were major gainers. IT, FMCG, Pharma, Fin services, and Pvt banks were major losers. In Sensex, 22 out of 30 shares opened in the red and 8 shares in green.

M&M is the top gainer and jumps over 6 per cent. Tata Motors, Tata Steel, Power Grid, and SBI were other major gainers. Axis Bank, Maruti Suzuki, Reliance, Sun Pharma, and HUL were major losers. As per the market experts, the net institutional buying turning positive while the sharp recovery of nearly 350 points from the lows in Nifty and the large short position in the market have the potential to aid recovery in the market. Going forward, news from the political front is likely to turn more positive.

### Govt's ONDC and WinZO partner to boost digital commerce in India

New Delhi, May 17 (IANS) The government-run Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) on Friday announced a partnership with online gaming platform WinZO to democratise access to digital commerce and foster transparent and fair market access.

WinZO is the first skill-based interactive entertainment company to partner with ONDC. WinZO will help ONDC to access over 175 million of its paying users, primarily accessing the Internet in vernacular languages, to connect buyers and sellers to facilitate digital commerce. ONDC, which encompasses a network for grocery and food delivery, mobility, fashion, agri-products, and health and wellness, will list its services on the WinZO store. "We're super excited and delighted in welcoming WinZO to the ONDC network to advance our mission of empowering local homegrown start-ups," said T Koshy, CEO of ONDC. "Together, we aim to revolutionise the digital commerce industry, fostering a vibrant ecosystem where Indian talent and innovation take centre stage. Our collaboration will help the growth of local commerce and showcase the immense potential of India's digital landscape," Koshy added.

### Paytm travel carnival offers deals on domestic flights, discounts on train, bus bookings

New Delhi, May 17 (IANS) Financial services company Paytm on Friday launched "Paytm Travel Carnival", offering exclusive summer deals and discounts on travel bookings, including flights, trains, and buses.

The special sale will be live between May 17 and May 21.

On booking domestic flights via Paytm, users can use the "SUMMERSALE" promo code to unlock a double advantage: zero convenience fees and a 10 per cent discount up to Rs 750.

For international flights, one can get an 8 per cent discount up to Rs 2000 using the promo code "INTLSALE."

In addition, all flight bookings include free cancellation and a best-price guarantee, ensuring the lowest price for both one-way and round-trip tickets. "As the summer season ignites the desire to travel, we are pleased to announce the launch of the Summer Travel Sale, offering unbeatable discounts and deals on flights, trains, and buses."

## News

## in a Nutshell

## UP man booked after woman files wife-swapping complaint

Lucknow, May 17 (IANS) A man has been booked for allegedly forcing his spouse into a wife-swapping act besides beating and torturing her and clicking obscene photos of her.

The 40-year-old wife, resident of Aashiana locality in Lucknow, has lodged a complaint against her husband.

The woman was married to the accused in 2008 and has a daughter. She complained she had to go back to her maternal home, following brutal treatment and pressure to get into immoral acts. She alleged that she was being subjected to torture ever since her marriage and it increased after she delivered a girl child. "My husband talks to women during odd hours in my presence. I was subjected to torture for dowry but did not complain to the police only to save our marriage. I was starved for days by my husband and in-laws," she alleged. She further alleged that her husband clicked her photos while she was asleep and shared them with his friends.

## Sri Ganganagar sizzles at 46.3 degrees Celsius

Jaipur, May 17 (IANS) Heatwave conditions continued in Rajasthan on Friday with rising temperatures, the India Meteorological Department said.

Sri Ganganagar was the hottest in the state with 46.3 degrees Celsius temperature followed by Vanasthali Pali which recorded 45.1 degrees Celsius in the past 24 hours, the weather office said. The maximum temperature was recorded between 41 - 46 degrees Celsius in most parts of the state in the past 24 hours, said R. S. Sharma, director, Jaipur meteorological centre.

## West Bengal: CBI to open camp office in Sandeshkhali

Kolkata, May 17 (IANS) The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) will open a camp office in West Bengal's Sandeshkhali to probe into the alleged illegal land-grabbing, extortion and sexual harassment of women.

Sources said that two platoons of Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) personnel will be deployed in Sandeshkhali to provide security for the camp office.

The camp office will increase the pace of the investigation as the CBI officials will not have to commute daily from Kolkata to Sandeshkhali.

It will also ease the process of filing complaints by the local people who are not accustomed to the process of filing the same through emails. The locals will also be able to file their complaints at the camp office instead of commuting to Kolkata.

However, sources, said that besides the process of physical filing of the complaints the system of e-filing will also continue.



**BAGHLAN**, This photo taken on May 16, 2024 shows the northern entrance of the Salang Tunnel on the border of Afghanistan's Baghlan and Parwan provinces. Connecting Kabul to the nine northern provinces onward to Central Asian states, the Salang Tunnel along the Salang Pass in Afghanistan was first opened in 1964 and was badly damaged due to more than four decades of wars. Reopened in 2023, the tunnel now serves as an essential lifeline for the war-ridden country. UNI

## Amit Shah urges Kashmiri delegations not to vote for dynastic parties

Srinagar, May 17 (IANS) Union Home Minister Amit Shah has told various delegations during his two-day visit to Kashmir that they should not vote for dynastic parties.

The Home Minister met delegations of the Pahari community, Sikh community and Gujjar/Bakarwals, and also had detailed discussions about party affairs with local BJP leaders.

Speaking to reporters later the leaders of the Pahari community said they had thanked the Union Home Minister for granting them the ST status for which the community had been fighting for several decades in J&K.

"We expressed our unhappiness for the BJP not fielding any candidate in the three Lok Sabha seats of the Valley. We, however, assured him that the community would abide by the decisions taken by him in such a situation," the

Pahari leaders said.

Sikh delegation members have told the Union Home Minister that the members of this community living in Baramulla, Keran and Uri are all Paharis, but they had been kept out of the ST status granted to the Paharis.

The Sikh delegation also demanded that the language in which their holy scriptures are written should be included in the Universities to preserve this language.

Bakarwal delegation also met the Union home minister. Their leaders later said that he had asked them to vote for any candidate they liked except those of the dynastic families of NC, PDP and the Congress.

Shah also met BJP leaders with whom he had detailed discussions about the political situation and the party interests in J&K.

"He said while the BJP has been strengthened at

the grassroots level throughout the country, it had decided not to fight Lok Sabha elections in the Valley.

"Sometimes battles are not fought to defeat the enemy, but to check, reinforce and strengthen the party cadres, the home minister told us," said one of the BJP leaders who attended the meeting with Amit Shah.

He also said that the Union Home Minister had asked them to ensure that every worker of the BJP should vote in the Baramulla and Anantnag Lok Sabha seats and ensure that they vote for like-minded parties to defeat dynastic parties.

The home minister told the party leaders that the BJP will fight all the Assembly seats in J&K in the elections likely to be held later this year.

Tarun Chugh, Ravinder Raina, Sunil Sharma, Darakshan Andrabi, Hina Bhat, Altaf Thakur and other

BJP leaders were among those who discussed the party affairs with Amit Shah.

The annual Amarnath Yatra begins on June 29 and will end on August 19 and after that, the Assembly elections are expected to be held here.

## Three-tier security cordon at counting centres in Bengal on June 4

Kolkata, May 17 (IANS) There will be a three-tier security layer in and around counting centres in West Bengal on June 4. Sources in the office of West Bengal Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) said the inner-tier of security at the counting centres will be managed only by the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) personnel and one company of the CAPF will be deployed at each centre. The second and

third tier of the security layer will be managed by the state police forces which will also include personnel from the air from that, Section 144 will be imposed in a radius of 200 metres. Most importantly, CCTVs will be installed at each counting centre including the counting halls. The footage of these CCTV cameras will be preserved for the purpose of probing possible counting-related irregularities," the source said.

## INDIA bloc leaders daydreaming to become Prime Ministers: PM Modi

Barabanki (UP), May 17 (IANS) Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said that all leaders of the INDIA bloc are daydreaming to become Prime Ministers.

"They have even left behind Mungeri Lal when it comes to daydreaming. Babua (Akhilesh) has

found a new Bua from West Bengal who has assured them of outside support. They are already disintegrating and their sole purpose is to create disturbances," PM Modi said while addressing a rally in Barabanki.

He said that a Congress leader had announced in Raebareilly that the voters would be electing a Prime Minister from the constituency.

"This has made the SP leaders disheartened. Will you waste your vote for such people? Can you expect development from such people? You need a 'damdar sarkar' to ensure speedy development and for this - it is only kamal," he said.

The Prime Minister said that the work of the INDIA bloc MPs would be to compete with each other in abusing Modi.

"If you need an employee, you will look for one who has the ability. You will not employ one who can only abuse," he said.



**AMETHI**, Samajwadi Party supremo Akhilesh Yadav and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi being garlanded by supporters at an election rally in support of I.N.D.I.A alliance candidate for parliamentary election Kishori Lal Sharma, in Amethi on Friday. UNI

## Rajasthan Cong slams BJP for anti-encroachment drive in Jalore amid protests

Jaipur, May 17 (IANS) Rajasthan Congress President Govind Singh Dotasra on Thursday constituted a four-member committee to understand the 'plight' of the villagers who faced off with the police and the local administration while protesting against an anti-encroachment drive at Odwada village in Jalore district, which, as per officials, followed the directions of the high court.

Dotasra said in a statement, "A state-level committee has been formed by the Rajasthan Pradesh Congress Committee to know the stand of the victimised villagers on the so-called anti-encroachment drive at Odwada village as

well as on the inhuman treatment meted out to the villagers by the district administration and the police. The committee members should meet the affected villagers, and prepare a detailed report on the matter."

The villagers in Odwada, including women, strongly resisted a team of officials and police personnel that visited the village to carry out the anti-encroachment drive. Eventually, an additional police force had to be deployed in the village to maintain law and order and to proceed with the anti-encroachment drive.

As per Jalore SP Gyan Chandra Yadav, "The action was taken as per the

high court's direction to remove encroachments, including houses, from government land.

"When the team went to the encroachment site, the local people did not allow them to enter the village. The roads were blocked and hence additional policemen were deployed to control the situation after which the anti-encroachment drive started. Meanwhile, Dotasra also attacked the BJP government in Rajasthan in a post on X, saying: The Congress nominee from Jalore, Vaibhav Gehlot, also questioned the drive, claiming that 440 houses were demolished where families lived for years.

## Swati Maliwal assault case: NCW issues second notice to CM Kejriwal's PS

New Delhi, May 17 (IANS) The National Commission for Women (NCW) on Friday issued a second notice to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's personal secretary Bibhav Kumar to appear before it in connection with the assault on AAP Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal.

Kumar was asked to appear before the National Commission for Women (NCW) on Friday, however, it is likely that he will skip the summons.

"We have issued a second summons today to Kumar through the police, regarding his appearance before the NCW concerning the alleged assault on AAP MP Maliwal," said NCW chief Rekha Sharma while addressing a press

conference. "We could have personally gone there (Kumar's residence) today, it's not as though we are waiting for him (Kumar)," said Sharma.

Divulging details about the incident, Sharma said that the NCW took immediate action after learning about it from social media.

"I closely monitored the situation, spoke to Maliwal and encouraged her to come forward and file a complaint. I believe she was traumatised because no one would have expected her to be assaulted in such a manner at her party leader's residence," said the NCW chief.

"She is an MP who has consistently advocated for women's issues.

## Congress' mission is to win 50 seats now: PM Modi

Fatehpur (UP), May 17 (IANS) Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday that the Congress has now launched 'Mission 50' and is working to win a minimum of 50 seats only in the ongoing Lok Sabha elections.

"The entire Congress family is working to save its face and win 50 seats now. The 'cycle' has also punctured," he said.

PM Modi said that he had definite information about Congress' 'mission'. "I had said that the 'Shehzada' will flee from Wayanad. I had also said that he has no courage to go

to Amethi and I was proved right," he added.

The Prime Minister added that the two 'shehzadas' (Rahul Gandhi and Akhilesh Yadav) share the 'same horoscope'.

"Both pursue the politics of appeasement, promote mafia, give protection to corruption and believe in nepotism. You bers for the BJP and ensure the development of your area," he said.

The Prime Minister further said that the INDIA bloc has started falling apart like a pack of cards and their workers too are disillusioned.

## NCP state chief visited Nashik hotel where Sharad Pawar stayed, claims NCP(SP) leader

Mumbai, May 17 (IANS) A senior leader on Friday claimed that the rival Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) state chief had allegedly visited a hotel in Nashik in Maharashtra where several NCP(SP) bigwigs were staying.

NCP(SP)'s former Minister Anil Deshmukh told media persons that recently the Ajit Pawar-led NCP's state President Sunil Tatkare had gone to the same hotel in Nashik

where NCP(SP) President Sharad Pawar and state President Jayant Patil were staying during the Lok Sabha poll campaign.

"Tatkare had gone to the hotel... We don't know why.

He even met some of our party activists. He has not contacted me or any other leaders in the NCP (SP)," Deshmukh said, without elaborating when or in which hotel.

Nashik will be voting on May 20 and another local

NCP strongman and Minister Chhagan Bhuwal -- who was angling for an LS ticket -- is now reportedly miffed with the party leadership.

To a question, he dismissively said even if Tatkare approaches the NCP(SP), he will not be entertained in any manner, nor will be given a re-entry to the NCP (SP) -- ending political speculation on a possible change of equations post-LS results.

## PM Modi will be back with 'good majority', work on full budget to start soon: FM Sitharaman

New Delhi, May 17 (IANS) Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday said the BJP is confident that Prime Minister Narendra Modi would "come back with a good majority" and discussions for the full budget for 2024-25 would start as soon as the new government is formed.

Addressing the annual event of 'Apex Business Chamber' CII, the Finance Minister said India has emerged as the fastest-growing economy in the world and would continue

to be the fastest-growing economy in the next few years as well.

She also highlighted the fact that the IMF expects India to contribute as much as 18 per cent of the world's GDP in the next five years to buttress her point.

The Finance Minister said that the fundamental reason behind this high economic growth was the stability in government policies without any flip-flops and corruption-free decision making which has been going on silently be-

hind the scenes.

She highlighted that the government's PLI scheme had resulted in transforming the smartphone electronics sector. She highlighted that the government's PLI scheme had resulted in transforming the smartphone electronics sector.

"While import dependence for mobile phones was as high as 78 per cent in 2014, today 99 per cent of all mobile phones are made in India," she remarked.

She pointed out that

the success in import substitution in the telecom sector was now as much as 60 per cent, reflecting the higher self-reliance achievement as part of the government's Aatmanirbhar Bharat policy.

The Finance Minister said that the government had presented only a vote-on-account in February and the preparation for the full budget to give a bigger thrust to economic growth would be taken up as soon as the new government takes over.

She said that the gov-

ernment sees a very big role for the private sector "in our goal of becoming a developed country by 2047 with the government acting as a facilitator and enabler."

Highlighting the growth prospects ahead, the Finance Minister said the Indian consumer market is poised to double by 2031.

She expressed confidence in the robust health of both the corporate sector's balance sheet and the finance sector's balance sheet to take the growth process ahead.



**BARABANKI**, BJP supporters at a public meeting addressed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for Lok Sabha elections in Barabanki, Uttar Pradesh on Friday. UNI