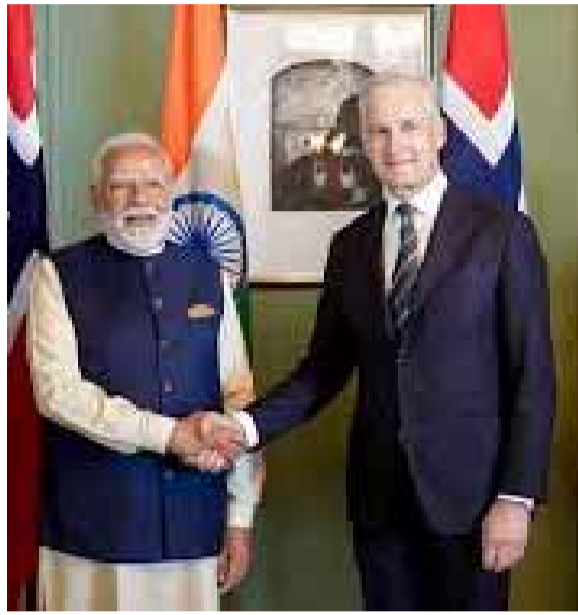


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PM Modi holds bilateral meeting with Norwegian PM Jonas Gahr



New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a bilateral meeting with Norwegian PM Jonas Gahr Store in Oslo today. Earlier, the Prime Minister was warmly welcomed by the Indian diaspora upon his arrival in Oslo as part of his multi-nation tour. Prime Minister Modi's has arrived in Oslo for his first-ever visit to Norway. This is also the first Prime Ministerial visit from India in 43 years.

This visit includes bilateral talks between India and Norway and also the 3rd India-Nordic Summit. This visit will give impetus to India's relations with the Nordic Countries.

Today, the Prime Minister will call on their Majesties King Harald V and Queen Sonja. He will also address the India-Norway Business and Research Summit. This visit

is expected to focus on areas like clean & green technology and blue economy. It will also give momentum to trade and investment opportunities. Tomorrow, the Prime Minister will attend the 3rd India-Nordic Summit. In view of the recently implemented Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement, the Summit is expected to catalyze economic relations with the member countries.

The bilateral trade between India and the 5 Nordic countries currently stands at 19 billion dollars. The focus areas include a wide range of sectors like Innovation, Defense, the Arctic and people to people contact. This visit is expected to deepen India's already cordial ties with the Nordic countries.

Refineries operating normally; sufficient crude inventories in the country ensures govt

New Delhi: The government has said that refineries in the country are operating normally and India has sufficient crude inventories despite the import disruption due to the ongoing West Asia crisis. Addressing the Inter-Ministerial Briefing in New Delhi today on Recent Developments in West Asia, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Sujata Sharma said that the country has sufficient stock of petrol, diesel, LPG and natural gas. She highlighted that no dry outs have been reported in any LPG distributorship but due to the spreading of rumours, panic buying has been observed in some parts of the country. She informed that immediate actions are being

taken to replenish the supplies at the identified retail LPG outlets. The Secretary said that over seven lakh PNG connections have been gasified since March, adding that infrastructure has been created for two lakh seventy six thousand connections. The Secretary also highlighted that in the last four days around one lakh seventy two thousand domestic LPG cylinders were delivered in the country. She said that since the start of this month, around one lakh eight thousand tonnes of commercial LPG were sold. The Secretary further noted that over one lakh ninety thousand 5 kg cylinders were sold in the last four days. Joint Secretary, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, Aparna S Sharma



said that availability of fertilizer for the Kharif season is more than 50 percent across the states. The Joint Secretary said that over two hundred Lakh Metric Tonnes of fertilizers is available across the country. She clarified that

there has been no change in Maximum Retail Price of major fertilizers. She said that domestic production after the crisis period has been substantial, about 86.2 Lakh Metric Tonnes and more than 22 Lakh Metric Tonnes of

imports have reached the shore.

Additional Secretary of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Mukesh Mangal, said that a Marshall Islands-flagged LPG carrier SYMI carrying about 19 thousand 965 metric tonnes of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) for India arrived at the Deendayal Port Authority in Kandla in Gujarat on Saturday night. He said that all Indian seafarers in the region are safe and no incidents involving Indian Flag Merchant vessels or Indian seafarers on foreign flag Merchant vessels has been reported in the past 96 hours. Mr Mangal added that the Ministry continues to coordinate with the Ministry of External Affairs, Indian Missions, and maritime

stakeholders to ensure seafarer welfare and uninterrupted maritime operations.

Additional Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs (Gulf) Aseem Mahajan said that Indian embassies and consulates continue to operate round the clock help lines to provide timely assistance and are proactively assisting country's citizens. Mr Mahajan informed that Indian Embassy in Tehran has facilitated the movement of two thousand and 551 Indian nationals out of Iran through land border routes. He also said that regular advisories are being issued including information related to local government guidelines, flight and travel situations.

NIA files investigation against five juveniles in Pakistan-linked espionage case

Ghaziabad: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Monday filed its Investigation Report against five Juveniles in Conflict with Law (JCLs) in a case relating to a Pakistan-linked terror conspiracy to spy on sensitive locations with the intent of endangering India's safety and security.

NIA has filed its detailed investigation report before the Juvenile Justice Board, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, under relevant sections of BNS 2023, the Official Secrets Act, and UA (P) Act. According to the release,

a total of 21 accused have so far been arrested in the Ghaziabad espionage case, originally registered by the local police in March 2026 for the installation of solar-powered cameras at sensitive sites of railway stations and providing live access from these cameras to suspected terrorists in Pakistan.

NIA, after taking over the investigation, found that these five juveniles had conspired with other co-accused to assist suspected Pakistani terrorists in obtaining photographs and videos of sensitive

installations, along with their precise GPS coordinates, with the aim to endanger India's sovereignty, unity, integrity and security.

The JCLs had illegally trespassed into, approached, and accessed prohibited/sensitive areas of vital importance. NIA investigations further revealed.

They had provided active support in installing spy cameras and transmitting sensitive information, including photographs and videos with geo-tagging, to suspected Pak-based

terrorists.

The juveniles had also facilitated suspected Pak-linked terrorists in procuring and using Indian SIM cards for carrying out terror activities on Indian soil.

Investigation against the remaining arrested accused and other suspects in the

case is continuing.

Earlier on May 16, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) said it had charge-sheeted five persons, including an absconding mastermind, in connection with a case of human trafficking and cyber slavery in Cambodia.

Anand Kumar Singh alias Munna Singh, the mastermind, along with four co-accused, have been charged under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) in the chargesheet filed before the NIA special court in Patna (Bihar) on

Friday.

Three of the chargesheeted co-accused, Abhay Nath Dubey and Rohit Yadav from Uttar Pradesh, and Abhiranjan Kumar from Bihar, were arrested in February this year on their arrival in the national capital from Cambodia. The fifth, identified as Prahlad Kumar Singh, is out on bail.

NIA said the accused were involved in "luring Indian youth to Cambodia on the pretext of legitimate jobs and handsome salaries, as part of an organised human trafficking syndicate."

DTC to run special bus service for Delhi govt employees for office commute

New Delhi: To encourage use of public transport, the Delhi Transport Corporation will run special buses for Delhi government employees to travel from their residence to the nearest metro station and then to the Delhi Secretariat, officials said on Monday.

The move comes amid intensifying efforts by the Delhi government to encourage use of public transport in the wake of fuel concerns linked to uncertainties in West Asia.

"The special bus services shall facilitate connectivity from Delhi Administration Flats to the nearest metro stations as well as to Delhi Secretariat in accordance with office timings," an order said.

The buses will run in morning and evening shifts, commencing 9 am as office-



hour traffic peaks, and between 5 pm and 8 pm for homeward commute. Around 54 buses will be run under the special service.

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta earlier this week launched the 90-day 'Mera Bharat, Mera Yodgan' fuel-saving campaign, stipulating two-day work-from-home for all Delhi government employees and use of public transport. The bus services

will cover several residential colonies of the city, including ones located at the CWG Village complex, Vasant Kunj, Greater Kailash, Model Town, Mayur Vihar, Dwarka, Timarpur, and other areas.

Government employees using Metro services through the Blue Line may de-board at Indraprastha Metro Station and avail the DTC shuttle

bus service to Delhi Secretariat during operational hours," the order said.

The DTC will also run DEVI electric buses in the morning hours between 9 am and 11 am and in the evening-rush hours, 6 pm to 8 pm. The service would be available from Indraprastha metro station, Bharat Mandapam, Supreme Court, ITO, Delhi Gate, and Delhi Secretariat.

In addition, dedicated feeder bus connectivity would be available between Delhi Secretariat and ITO metro station at Gates 4 and 5 as well as Delhi Gate metro station, it added.

The government has asked its employees residing in these flats to make optimum use of available bus services.

Delhi HC grants interim bail to Baramulla MP Abdul Rashid Sheikh after father's demise

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Monday granted interim bail to Baramulla MP Abdul Rashid Sheikh till June 2 on the grounds of the demise of his father.

His father passed away at AIIMS Delhi in the intervening night of May 17 and 18.

A Division Bench comprising Justices Prathiba M Singh and Madhu Jain granted interim bail to the MP after hearing an urgent plea moved before the court. Earlier, he was granted interim bail to meet his father in the hospital.

Advocate Vikhyat Oberoi mentioned the matter before the Delhi High Court for urgent hearing of the plea. He prayed for interim

bail for the purpose of the Appellant to conduct the burial and carry out the customary rites, and perform various ceremonies which are required to be performed by the Appellant.

"The Court has heard the parties and perused the records. Accordingly, due to the demise of the Appellant's father, interim bail is granted to the Appellant until 2nd June, 2026," the Division Bench ordered on May 18.

The High Court imposed certain conditions while granting relief. It directed that Rashid would remain accompanied by at least two police officials in plain clothes during the entire period of interim bail. The police said officials shall accompany

him from the beginning of the journey from the concerned jail till the time he returns from Srinagar. The Jail Superintendent is at liberty to nominate the police officials who shall accompany the Appellant.

The court has also restricted his stay to only two specified addresses in Jammu and Kashmir during the interim bail period.

Earlier, Baramulla MP Abdul Rashid Sheikh was allowed by the Delhi High Court to meet his father in AIIMS. The high court directed the authorities to take him to AIIMS from Tihar Jail and then back to Tihar Jail on the same evening.

Rashid Engineer is in judicial custody in connection with a terror funding case registered by

the NIA. Advocate Vikhyat Oberoi, along with Nishita Gupta, appeared for Rashid Engineer.

During earlier proceedings on April 17, the defence had informed the court that Rashid's father was seriously ill and hospitalised, seeking one-month interim bail on humanitarian grounds.

On the other hand, Special Public Prosecutor (SPP) Gautam Khazanchi had opposed the plea for interim on various grounds. However, it was suggested that custody parole could be granted to enable him to meet his father.

Rashid had earlier also been granted custody parole to attend Lok Sabha sessions.

Odisha Assembly Speaker Criticised Over Participation in BJP Event

Bhubaneswar (DNS): Odisha Legislative Assembly Speaker Surama Padhy has come under criticism for allegedly compromising the neutrality and dignity associated with her constitutional position by participating in party activities linked to the Bharatiya Janata Party.

Political observers and intellectuals have argued that once a legislator is elected as Speaker of the Assembly, parliamentary convention and democratic tradition require the office-holder to rise above party affiliations and function impartially. Although

Speakers are elected as members of political parties—usually from the ruling party—they are expected to maintain neutrality after assuming office, treating both the ruling and opposition benches equally.

The controversy intensified after BJP national president Nitin Nabin arrived in Odisha on a two-day visit on Sunday. Senior BJP leaders, including Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, deputy chief ministers, ministers, MPs, and MLAs, gathered at the



airport to welcome him with floral bouquets and ceremonial scarves. Speaker Surama Padhy was also seen among the party leaders and reportedly felicitated the BJP

president during the reception.

The development triggered sharp reactions in political circles, with critics questioning whether the

Speaker should participate in overtly partisan events. Observers noted that this was not the first such instance. Padhy had earlier attended programmes connected to visits by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, including events held at party offices.

Critics argue that the Speaker's conduct should inspire confidence among all political parties, particularly the opposition, since the Speaker is entrusted with ensuring the impartial functioning of the Assembly.

According to them, participation in party programmes creates a perception of bias and may weaken public confidence in the neutrality of the office.

Several intellectuals and commentators have reportedly suggested that the BJP leadership should advise the Speaker to maintain a greater distance from party activities in keeping with constitutional conventions. They also said that the ruling party, which often speaks about "Asmita" or pride and dignity, should uphold democratic values not only in

speeches but also through conduct.

Political analysts pointed out that the behaviour and public conduct of individuals occupying constitutional positions significantly influence public perception. They warned that visible involvement in party functions could expose the Speaker to criticism from opposition parties during Assembly proceedings and undermine claims of impartiality.

Political observers recollect an example from the tenure of former Chief

Minister Biju Patnaik. When Speaker Yudhisthir Das sought to meet Biju Patnaik over a controversy, the then Chief Minister reportedly declined and instead said he himself would visit the Speaker, citing the dignity of the office.

Political analysts say that constitutional institutions and democratic traditions must be respected regardless of political power. They caution that actions driven by political authority without regard for institutional decorum may ultimately damage democratic norms and public trust.

NCC Alumni Association successfully organized Curd Water distribution programme



Paradip - (DMS),The NCC Alumni Association of Paradip college in associate with NCC Cadets conducted a week-long Curd Water Distribution Programme at the main road side in front of the college to provide relief to the public during the intense of summer heat.

On this occasion, the Executive Officer of Paradip Municipality, Shri Abhisek Panda, attended the programme as a special guest and distributed curd water among the public on Monday. He highly appreciated

the dedicated social service activities regularly carried out by the NCC Alumni Association and NCC cadets for the welfare of society. He praised the organization for its continuous efforts in various awareness and social service programmes such as sea beach cleaning drives, "Say No to Drugs" campaigns, "Say No to Plastics" awareness programmes, blood donation camps, environmental protection activities, and the initiative of providing water and food for birds during summer. Members of the

NCC Alumni Association stated that the organization remains committed to the spirit of "Nation First" and will continue its social and environmental service activities for public welfare. Among others, NCC Alumni Association Advisor Lt. Cdr Akshay Chandra Mishra, president Ambika Prasad Mohapatra, senior lecture of Paradip college Ganeswar Patra, Journalist Sasanka Acharya alongwith Several NCC Alumni members, cadets, and local citizens actively participated in today's programme.

Nitin Navin along with his family, visited Puri on Monday and offered prayers at the Shree Jagannath Temple

Puri: BJP leader Nitin Naveen, along with his family, visited Puri on Monday and offered prayers at the Shree Jagannath Temple. He sought the blessings of Mahaprabhu Shree Jagannath during his visit. After the darshan, Naveen performed rituals within the temple premises and prayed for peace and harmony across the country and the world. Speaking on the occasion, he said he had prayed before Lord Jagannath for the prevalence of love, goodwill, and peace in the nation, and also sought divine blessings for global peace and the welfare of humanity. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and state BJP president Manmohan Samal were also present with him during the visit. Upon his arrival at the temple, he was warmly welcomed by local BJP workers and devotees. The temple administration had made necessary arrangements for the smooth conduct of the darshan.



AM/NS India organises Arogya Seva Health Camp

Paradip - (DMS), May 18, 2026: ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India) successfully organised an Arogya Seva health camp at its Paradeep Township Project Site in Chakradharpur village for more than 100 employees and business partners, reaffirming its steadfast commitment to employee welfare and workplace safety.

During the camp, participants

received comprehensive medical check-ups, while essential medicines were distributed free of cost. In addition to general health assessments, the participants were also counselled on preventive measures against heatstroke, reinforcing the company's proactive approach to employee care.

The camp was inaugurated by Sunila Das, Head, HR & IR, Odisha Asset, AM/NS India, in the presence

of employees and partner representatives from KMV Projects. Conducted under the expert supervision of Dr. Rajesh Mishra, Chief Medical Officer, Paradeep Pellet Plant, along with Dr. Niranjana Dwivedi from the CSR wing of AM/NS India, the camp ensured comprehensive care and attention to the health and wellbeing of all participants. The program reflects the company's

commitment to its PROSAFE framework which stands for Productivity, Safety, Availability, Facility, and Engagement. This framework is designed to enhance organisational efficiency and nurture a culture of care and responsibility. Through initiatives like Arogya Seva health camp, AM/NS India continues to reinforce its commitment to employee welfare and workplace safety.

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Janbhagidari Abhiyan - Farthest, First of All-: Make ST community aware about the various govt. schemes, says ADM, Mr. Beura.

Khordha-18/5-As per the directions of Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India and in collaboration with Department of Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Caste Development, Government of Odisha, Janjatiya Garima Utsav-2026 - Farthest, First of All is going to be celebrated in 16 tribal villages of 6 blocks of Khordha district. The main objective of this week-long program, which will be celebrated between May 18, 2026 and May 25, 2026, is to make the Scheduled Tribe community aware about the various schemes being implemented by the government for their individual and collective development and to include the most vulnerable people in all the schemes. The program will be held in Chudanga, Dalua, Daspur and Bhagabatipur of Bhubaneswar block, Niladriprasad, Talaborei, Gurpada and Bengarajpalli of Banpur block, Tarakai, Bantala and Berhampura of Khordha block, Binjhagiri, Minichinipatna and Gramdiha of Jatni block, Godipokhari of Begunia block and Hariapur village of Bolgarh block.



The Block Development Officers have been instructed to make the program a success by ensuring the direct participation of district level officers of various departments and elected representatives of Panchayati Raj institutions, ADM, Prapat Chandra Beura informed the media at a press conference held at the OSWAN Conference Hall of Collectorate, Khordha. Anganwadi centers or primary schools in these villages have been

declared as Aadi Seva Kendras. Govt. employees (anganwadi and ASHA workers, primary school teachers) working in those villages have been declared as Karma Yogi. Similarly, the Block Development Officer's have been instructed to declare others government employees, educated youths, young women, self-help group members, grassroots tribal leaders, village heads working in those villages as Adisathi and Adi Sahajogi. It

has been decided to take appropriate action regarding how the beneficiaries who have been excluded from various government schemes will be included in the schemes. It has been decided to organize health and Aadhar camps in the above villages. Photos and videos of the meetings, programs and camps held every day will be made available on the website, social media and the portal set up by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, said ADM, Mr. Beura.

Suraksha Pe Charcha by Bharat Gas held in Rasulpur.

Jajpur :-"Bandurga Bharatgas Gramin Bitarak" Rasulpur in the district holds "Suraksha Pe Charcha" an ongoing safety awareness campaign initiative by Bharat Gas on this Wednesday here in SK Lodging Kuakhia aimed at educating customers on the safe handling of LPG cylinders, equipment maintenance, and emergency response procedures to prevent household accidents.

Bharatgas State Head Shri Raj Kumar Singh attained the drive as the chief guest and expressed his views on the benefits of LPG. Manager State Shri Ravinder Pal Singh highlighted the approved guidelines for maintaining safety while using LPG. Sales Manager Prasanna Kumar Pradhan had interacted with the participant customers and solved various questions from LPG booking, using gas in the kitchen too.

Under the coordination of BP Gas dealer Surendra Sahoo, Er. Sidhartha Mohanty along with all staff, locals were prominently present. Later plantation in the Station premises were made the day very remarkable.

Foundation laid for Ambedkar Statue in Bari inagurates.



Jajpur :- Foundation Laid for the statue of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar inaugurated by Bari BJP Leader Umesh Chandra Jena on Sunday here in Ambedkar Bhawan, Neula Bari.

Joining as Chief Guest to the event Umesh said that everyone must strive hard for realising the dreams of Dr BR Ambedkar, the chief architect of the Indian Constitution and extends his rich tribute to this noble person. Social worker Basant Mallick who has contributed financial assistance for this Statue, Local Sarpanch Manas Kumar Jena, Organisation President

Duryodhan Dallai, Secretary Dushmant Sethi, ex ZP Member Rabindra Kumar Jena, ex Sarpanch Nirupama Mallick were prominently present and highlighted the biography of Ambedkar

Chief Advisor Shridhar Mallick, Jaladhar Mallick, Ramakant Mallick, Kunja Dalei, Kulamani Mallick and others were coordinated the programme.

About five hundred Ambedkar Lovers were participated and extended their thanks to Basanta Mallick towards his distinguished contributions.

Daylight Robbery at Gun Point: Odisha Panchayat Officials Looted Of Rs 8.18 Lakh

Keonjhar: Three robbers looted cash bag containing Rs 8.18 lakhs on Monday at gun point in broad daylight from two panchayat officials of Bauripada GP of Sadar block in Sadar police station area of Odisha's Keonjhar district has spread in that area. The incident took place around 10 am this morning near Mukuna village under Bauripada GP of Sadar block, as the duo were proceeding toward the Panchayat office with the cash to distribute pensions to beneficiaries.

According to sources, Panchayat Executive Officer

(PEO) Tushar Soren and Assistant Development Officer (ADO)/Assistant Development Extension Officer (ADEO) Abhimanyu Sahu of Bauripada Panchayat withdrew the cash from Bank and were going to the panchayat office on a scooter when three unidentified persons on a bike chaged from behind and stopped them on the road near Mukuna Bazaar under the Sadar police station.

Three miscreants, one in helmet and another two without helmets stopped them on the road and pulled out a gun to threaten us. One



of them blank fired and snatched the two bags filled with cash and fled toward Mukuna. They are talking in odia language" the ADO told TOI.

After the incident they informed the BDO of Sadar block and went to the Sadar police station to lodge an FIR. "We have filed a complaint and sought further detail from the bank," Binod Panda, the BDO told the media.

Local, criticised the officials for carrying a large sum in cash instead of opting for digital payment methods. Questions are also being

raised about why a police escort was not sought for the transaction.

In reply BDO Panda, said that, "According to the Madhubabu pension scheme, we are distributing cash instead of digital payment. Many beneficiaries are receiving pensions under this scheme. Every month they are distributing cash withdrawn from the bank. IIC Sadar police station Amit Kumar Bhuyan said, "We are investigating from all angles and initiating search operations in different suspected places. The accused will soon be behind the bar".

Police broker Sk. Latif Uddin arrested



Jagatsinghpur, As per report of DSP Ajay Kumar Das a criminal named Sk. Latif Uddin (Mama) of Rasulpur under Biritol GP of Tirtol was arrested on Sunday by Tirtol Police and forwarded to honourable JMFC, Raghunath pur. The bail application of Sk. Latif Uddin was rejected and he forwarded to Alipingal jail. JMFC given direction to produce the accused with all criminal records against him on 25/5/2026. Sk. Latif Uddin of Rasulpur pur is the husband of ex- sarpanch of Biritol GP and he used to extract money from people to solve cases as broker of Police. Extraction of money in the name of Police is a criminal offence. So Tirtol Police arrested him and forwarded to court. As per Police report case no. 310/19,387/19,380/24,622/25 pending against him and honourable CJM convicted him against case no. 116/16 RI of three years and fine as well.

Public grievances hearing camp held in Nijigarh Tapanga GP.

Khordha-18/5- A public grievances hearing camp was held at Nijigarh Tapanga Gram Panchayat office under Khordha Panchayat Samiti. The public grievances hearing camp was held under the chairmanship of Collector , Khordha Amrit Raturaj, Zilla Parishad Chief Development & Executive Officer, Jyoti Shankar Sahu, Deputy Superintendent of Police , Khordha, Sub-Collector,Sankalp Swastik Sahu, BDO Siddharth Pattnaik, Assistant Collector, Grievances Bhubaneswari Kanhar participated in this public hearing camp.A total of 44 grievances were received in this camp, out of which 40 were individual grievances and 4 grievances were



related to collective problems. Collector, Mr. Raturaj immediately resolved 18 grievances on the spot.All the other grievances were forwarded to the concerned department

to resolve the grievances as soon as possible.Later, the Collector visited the education and information stalls opened for the successful implementation of various development and

flagship schemes of the State and Central Government. All the district level officers of various departments, public and media representatives attended this camp.

Drone spotted over Shree Jagannath Temple premises; operator detained

Puri: A drone was reportedly seen flying over the Shree Jagannath Temple premises around 5:55 PM today, triggering an immediate security response. According to officials, Singhadwar Police Station and a special team swiftly launched an operation to intercept the drone. During the investigation, the operator was traced to the Dhanakuti Sahi lane area, where he was found controlling the device. The individual has been identified as Dipu Kumar Yadav (25), a resident of Jharkhand. He has been detained and is currently being held at the Singhadwar Police Station. Police said further legal action will be taken as per the law.



Advocate will start movement in Wo- man costume

Jagatsinghpur, Social activist cum one of the eminent revolutionary personality will start movement against shifting of Town Police station, shifting of Sub registrar Office and drainage system of Municipality area . He will start movement in Women costume on 21 st May 2026. To- day Advocate Basudev started his publicity about movement in Wo- man costume inside Municipality area. This type of innovative movement supported by people of Municipality area.



Police crack down on sand mafias under Operation "Baitarini."

Keonjhar : Keonjhar Police on Monday launched a major coordinated action campaign named "Operation Baitarani" against the organized sand mafia network operating in the district, based on confidential information regarding illegal sand mining, transportation, and the use of fake transit passes. Superintendent of Police Nitin Kushalkar gave this information while addressing a press conference held at the district police headquarter office.

According to the report in this campaign, simultaneous raids were conducted this morning at 12 locations in the Anandpur, Ghasipura, Nandipada and Ghatgaon police station areas. During the raids, police seized over Rs 27 lakh in cash, fake transit passes, duplicate bank accounts, financial transaction details, over 30 vehicles suspected of being used in illegal sand transport, and several pieces of criminal paraphernalia, all suspected to be

proceeds from illegal sand smuggling.

"More than 10 people involved in illegal sand mafia activities have been detained and interrogation is underway. Financial analysis of the money and property seized from them and verification of seized documents and interrogation are underway" police said.

The police said that action will be taken against the arrested persons under strict provisions of the law related to organized crime, fraud, illegal mining and conspiracy. The police have informed that all disproportionate assets including the proceeds of crime will be confiscated and legal action will be initiated as per the criminal laws act. During the raids, police seized, cash of Rs 27 lakh in cash, forged documents (especially fake transit passes), multiple bank account details, more than 30 vehicles



and other incriminating materials.Police are investigating the incident by interrogating the detained persons and compiling the seized

items. "After the raid process is complete and the investigation details are available, we will provide an update," said SP.

Govt issues advisory on how to protect yourself amid extreme heat wave conditions

New Delhi: The Ministry of Ayush today issued a comprehensive Public Health Advisory on Extreme Heat and Heatwave for the current summer season. The advisory emphasizes adequate hydration, avoiding direct exposure to sunlight during peak hours, use of light cotton clothing, and consumption of seasonal fruits and fluids rich in electrolytes. It cautions citizens to remain alert for danger signs of heat-related illnesses such as dizziness, headache, nausea, altered mental status, high body temperature, dehydration, seizures and fainting.

Heatstroke has been

identified as a medical emergency requiring immediate medical attention. The advisory recommends promptly calling emergency helplines 108 and 102 in severe cases. The Ministry said, the advisory has been issued for the general public, vulnerable groups, employers, workers, and participants in mass gatherings and sports events to safeguard themselves against heat stress and heat-related illnesses. It emphasizes that infants, children, pregnant women, elderly persons, outdoor workers, and individuals suffering from chronic

illnesses such as heart disease and hypertension are particularly vulnerable during heatwave conditions and require special care and monitoring. Special precautions have been advised for workplaces, public gatherings and outdoor activities, including provision of shaded rest areas, regular hydration breaks, acclimatization measures for workers, and awareness generation regarding symptoms of heat stress.

The advisory also incorporates traditional wellness and preventive measures from various Ayush systems including Ayurveda,

Siddha, Yoga, Unani and Homoeopathy for combating heatwave conditions. It has recommended cooling dietary practices, intake of hydrating beverages such as buttermilk, coconut water and lemon-based drinks, and use of traditional preparations including Nimbukaphala Panaka, Amra Prapanaka and Chincha Panaka to help regulate body temperature during extreme heat. It further encourages the public to include hydrating and cooling traditional food items such as cucumber, watermelon, lime, musk melon, ash gourd and tomatoes in their daily diet during the summer season.

Man killed in hit-and-run on Aruna Asaf Ali Road in Delhi

New Delhi: A 20-year-old man was killed after being hit by a vehicle on Aruna Asaf Ali Road in southwest Delhi, police said on Monday. The deceased has been identified as Rohit, a resident of Mehrauli.

The police said a PCR call regarding the accident was received following which a team from Kishangarh police station rushed to the spot. During inquiry, it was found that a vehicle had hit the pedestrian and fled from the scene, an officer said.

JSW JFE Steel Launches Biodiversity Conservation Week 2026; Signs MoU with IIT Kharagpur.

Sambalpur-18/05 (DMS) Reinforcing its commitment towards environmental sustainability and responsible industrial growth, JSW JFE Steel Limited inaugurated Biodiversity Conservation Week 2026 at Mahanadi Hall, IB River Guest House, marking another significant milestone in its biodiversity conservation and decarbonisation journey.

Organized by the Environment Management Department, the program witnessed the participation of senior leadership, zonal and departmental heads, employees, and distinguished representatives from government and academia.

The event was graced by Shri Gyanendra Lima, Assistant Conservator of Forest, Government of Odisha, as the Chief Guest. Senior leaders present included Shri Prakash Sapa, Sr. Vice President & Head - Operations, JSW JFE Steel Limited, and Shri Vikas Jain, Vice President & Zonal Head (Rolling Mills). Distinguished guests also included Unnikrishnan Menon, Post-Doctoral Scholar, IIT Kharagpur, and Rakesh Kumar Panda, Assistant Environment Engineer, Odisha State Pollution Control Board (OSPCB), Sambalpur. The key highlight of the event was signing of a



strategic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between JSW JFE

Steel Limited and IIT Kharagpur to jointly develop innovative technologies for Carbon Capture and Utilization (CCUS) and broader decarbonisation initiatives. The collaboration aims to accelerate research and innovation in carbon reduction, environmental sustainability, biodiversity enhancement, and climate resilience.

The initiative has been undertaken under the leadership and continuous guidance of Shri Umesh Rai, Whole-Time Director & CEO, JSW JFE Steel Limited, and Prof. Brajesh Kumar Dubey, IIT Kharagpur. Addressing the gathering, dignitaries appreciated the company's proactive environmental efforts under its Biodiversity Management Plan, which includes biodiversity awareness programs, habitat conservation, greenbelt

enhancement, butterfly park development, installation of artificial bird nests, aquatic biodiversity initiatives, and stakeholder engagement activities. Speaking on the occasion, senior leadership emphasized that sustainable industrial growth and ecological conservation must progress together. The company reiterated its commitment to responsible steel manufacturing aligned with Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) principles and long-term environmental stewardship. During the program, dignitaries also unveiled several biodiversity-focused initiatives, including the installation of artificial bird nests on trees, placement of biodiversity QR codes, and the formal unveiling of the MoU document with IIT Kharagpur. The program concluded with the felicitation of guests and a vote of thanks by the organizing team.

CM Rekha Gupta launches 'Metro Monday'

New Delhi: Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Monday launched the 'Metro Monday' initiative in response to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal for fuel conservation amid the ongoing West Asia crisis. To mark the launch, Gupta travelled by Metro from Kashmere Gate to ITO station before taking an electric feeder bus to the Delhi Secretariat. Cabinet Ministers Parvesh Verma and Ravindra Indraj accompanied her during the commute. The initiative, launched under the broader 'Mera Bharat, Mera Yogan' campaign, aims to promote the use of public transport and encourage fuel conservation. On the first day of the campaign, several Delhi government ministers and senior officials used the Metro and other public transport services to reach their offices. Appealing to citizens to adopt public transport more frequently, Gupta said the initiative would help conserve fuel and reduce pollution levels in the national capital. "I would like to request all citizens that we

all should use public transport as much as possible. This will not only save fuel for the country but is also extremely essential for our Delhi," the Chief Minister said. "Today, under the call of 'Metro Monday', I, all my fellow ministers, legislators and officials have made efforts to ensure maximum use of the Metro and public transport. It is heartening to see that many people of Delhi have also decided to travel via Metro today. Let us together make Delhi even better," she added. Earlier, Gupta had announced a series of administrative and public measures, including a proposal for two days of work-from-home every week, a one-year freeze on official foreign visits, the 'Metro Monday' campaign, and an appeal for citizens to observe a weekly 'No Vehicle Day'. The announcements followed Prime Minister Modi's recent appeal urging citizens to reduce fuel consumption, adopt sustainable practices and support economic resilience amid global uncertainties arising from the

West Asia conflict. Addressing a press conference in Delhi, Gupta said the government was implementing coordinated measures at both administrative and private-sector levels to reduce fuel consumption and improve urban mobility. "We are acting at two levels — government and private. In the Delhi government, there will be two days of work-from-home each week. The same advisory will be issued to private companies and institutions. The Labour Department will monitor this," she said. Gupta added that the government would also engage with companies employing large workforces to encourage flexible work arrangements. She further urged residents to observe a weekly 'No Vehicle Day' by avoiding the use of private vehicles and opting for public transport instead. "Delhi government offices will operate from 10:30 am to 7 pm, while MCD offices run from 8:30 am to 5 pm. We appeal to Delhi citizens to observe 'No Vehicle Day' once a week," she said.

Delhi Metro to add 24 extra train trips from May 18 to encourage shift from private vehicles

New Delhi : Recognising the critical role of mass transit in ensuring energy security, economic resilience, and environmental sustainability in the extant scenario, the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) is undertaking a series of strategic initiatives to facilitate greater adoption of metro services while enhancing commuter convenience, safety, and accessibility, an official statement from the organisation said.

As part of its operational preparedness for increased demand and anticipating a likely shift from road to the Metro in the existing scenario, the DMRC will introduce 24 additional train trips from six additional trains every Monday, starting from May 18. These additional trips will also be introduced on other days as and when required. This capacity expansion aims to ensure uninterrupted service and efficient passenger management during increased passenger journeys. The DMRC will be closely monitoring any surge in demand to take any action required to meet the passenger requirements. To handle the additional passenger capacity and improve commuter movement, the DMRC is intensifying measures for enhanced security and passenger flow. These measures include deploying additional security personnel, operating additional ticketing counters, activating spare Door Frame Metal Detectors (DFMDs) and baggage scanners, reducing waiting times at frisking points, and ensuring smoother passenger movement during peak periods. Providing ease of connectivity to desired destinations, the Delhi Metro's extensive network serves as a vital mobility lifeline by providing direct and seamless intermodal connectivity with railway stations, major Interstate Bus Terminals (ISBTs), Airport terminals, the Namu Bharat Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS), Noida Metro, and Rapid Metro, Gurgaon.

This integrated transport framework enables commuters to transition efficiently between multiple transport systems, significantly reducing dependency on private vehicles and petroleum-based road transport.

Delhi-NCR braces for intense heatwave as temperatures may touch 45°C: IMD

New Delhi: Residents across Delhi-NCR are likely to face intense heatwave conditions over the next few days as temperatures continue to rise sharply across the region. The India Meteorological Department has forecast severe heat and dry weather till May 23, with daytime temperatures expected to range between 42 and 45 degrees Celsius.

The weather department has issued a yellow alert for May 19 and 20, warning people about possible heatwave conditions and advising them to avoid unnecessary

outdoor exposure during peak afternoon hours.

According to IMD guidelines, a heatwave in the plains is declared when the maximum temperature reaches at least 40 degrees Celsius and remains significantly above normal. A severe heatwave is recorded when temperatures rise more than 6.4 degrees Celsius above average or cross the 45-degree mark, regardless of seasonal norms. Such conditions can pose serious health risks, especially for children, senior citizens and

Narco Terror

INDIA's first-ever seizure of Captagon — the notorious synthetic stimulant widely dubbed the "jihadi drug" — is both a major law enforcement success and a stark warning about the audacity of transnational narcotics networks. The Narcotics Control Bureau's seizure of 227.7-kg Captagon worth Rs 182 crore under Operation RAGEPILL shows that India is no longer merely battling domestic drug abuse; it is increasingly confronting sophisticated international syndicates attempting to exploit its territory as a transit corridor.



The involvement of an overstaying Syrian national and the intended movement of the consignment to Gulf markets provide a glimpse of the modus operandi employed by global trafficking cartels. Captagon trafficking is deeply intertwined with organised crime, hawala networks, forged trade documentation and terror financing. Also, there is growing evidence of narco-trafficking from Myanmar to the North East and cocaine consignments entering Indian shores through maritime trade routes. India cannot afford to be complacent.

However, seizures alone will not resolve the crisis. The experience of states such as Himachal Pradesh and Punjab suggests that anti-drug campaigns succeed when policing is combined with rehabilitation, community participation and a financial crackdown on criminal enterprises. Property confiscation, preventive detention, awareness drives and local-level monitoring must become integral parts of a nationwide strategy. Global cooperation is a must. Home Minister Amit Shah has called for uniform international laws, intelligence-sharing and extradition mechanisms. Drug cartels thrive on legal loopholes, fragmented enforcement and geopolitical divisions. No nation can combat narco-terror in isolation. India's zero-tolerance approach against narcotics sends a strong message, but sustaining it will require relentless vigilance, technological surveillance, stronger port security and coordinated diplomacy. The Captagon haul is a grim reminder that the battle against drugs is inseparable from the challenge of ensuring national security.

Aviation Ambitions

AFTER decades of waiting, missed deadlines and political promises, the sight of the first commercial flight landing at Halwara airport carries emotional and economic significance for Punjab. For Ludhiana, the Delhi-Halwara connection is a gateway to national and global markets. The launch has been greeted with excitement across central Punjab. Administrative authorities arranged transport for passengers, political leaders rushed to claim credit and tickets reportedly saw brisk demand even before operations formally began. That enthusiasm is understandable.

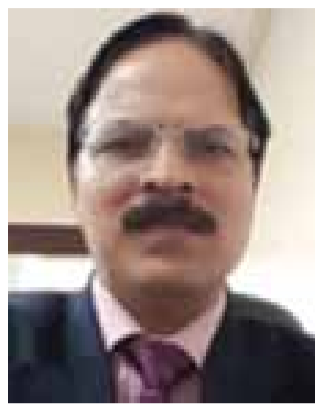
Ludhiana's exporters, industrialists and entrepreneurs have long complained that dependence on Chandigarh and Amritsar slowed business mobility and increased logistics costs.

Halwara also arrives at an important moment. The Centre recently expanded the UDAN regional connectivity scheme with an outlay of nearly Rs 28,840 crore, compared to the original Rs 4,500 crore allocation. The programme seeks to develop 100 new airports and airstrips. However, regional connectivity remains uneven. North India accounts for nearly 30% of the country's passenger traffic, but many smaller airports continue to struggle with weak demand and irregular flights.

That is why Halwara's success cannot be taken for granted. Many airports inaugurated with fanfare have become underutilised later. Infrastructure without sustained airline operations quickly turns into an expensive symbol rather than an economic asset. Still, Halwara possesses some advantages. The airport's terminal, developed by expanding the Air Force base, can handle 300 passengers at a time, while Air India has begun operations with two daily flights to Delhi. Ludhiana's industrial ecosystem gives the airport a natural passenger base that many UDAN airports never had. But the real test begins after the inaugural applause fades. Connectivity must become reliable, affordable and commercially sustainable. Cargo handling, last-mile transport and route expansion will determine whether Halwara truly transforms Punjab's economy. The state must ensure the runway remains busy.

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Like It or not, it is GST



Subash Chandra Misra

Perhaps it is human nature to aspire for something very intensely and after getting it he starts finding fault with it and aspires for something better. This is true with implementation of GST in India. While the reform process in the indirect tax started during the tenure of former PM Shri Rajeev Gandhi, the single common GST was proposed during the BJP government in 1999. Prime Minister Vajpayee set up a committee headed by Shri Asim Dasgupta the then Finance Minister of West Bengal to explore the logistics and necessary technology required for smooth functioning of GST. The congress led UPA government which came to power in 2004 continued with the proposal and introduced a bill in 2011 for implementation of GST. This bill was opposed by BJP in 2011 on the ground that it would affect the tax revenue of the states and finally the bill was postponed. When BJP came to power in 2014 they introduced the GST Bill and after the bill was passed in Parliament and the state legislatures, it was implemented in July 2017. Under the new GST bill the centre guaranteed 14% annual increase of revenue over the pre-GST period to states and the loss of revenue to states was initially compensated for five years and then extended up to March 2026. The midnight session of Lok Sabha to launch the GST on June 30-July 1, 2017 was boycotted by the opposition including the Indian National Congress on the apprehension

that GST would affect the middle class.

The GST subsumed 8 central taxes and 9 state taxes and several cesses in to one and made collection process less expensive and simpler. The GST Council comprising of the Union Finance Minister and the finance ministers from the states and union territories is the governing body for administrating of GST. It is the apex decision taking body empowered to modify and introduce new laws or regulations related to GST. The GST has

are under zero percent slab. Some items like petroleum products, alcohol beverages and electricity are outside the ambit of GST. Essential food items, healthcare services, educational and government services are exempt from GST.

In 2017-18, after implementation, the monthly GST collection was less than Rs 1 lakh crore which reached Rs 2.43 lakh crore in April 2026 due to better compliance, growth of the economy, and use of technology for monitoring



three components—the Central GST, the State GST and the Integrated GST. In case of intra state transactions, the CGST goes to the Central Government and the SGST goes to the state government. In case of Inter state transactions the Integrated GST is collected by the centre and the state GST component is transferred to the destination state where the goods are consumed. Since GST is a consumption-based tax, the state where goods are consumed receives the tax revenue and not the state where they were produced. Initially the GST rates were set at 0%, 5%, 12%, 18% and 28% which were later amended in November 2017 by slashing rates on 178 items. The rates were again revised and simplified from September 2025 with rates at 0%, 5%, 18% and 40%. With the revision, rates on most of the items were reduced and the 12% and 28% slabs were removed while luxury and sin goods were placed under 40%. Most of the unbranded food and daily essentials

compliance. The tax payer base has gone up from 65 lakh in 2017 to 1.50 crore in 2025. As a percentage to GDP, the gross collection has slightly improved from 6.7% in the pre-GST era to 6.86% in FY 2025 despite the elimination of the cascading effect of tax (tax on tax) and higher GDP number implying improvement in compliance. However, after input credit and refunds the number is less than 6%.

Among the positives, GST is said to have simplified the tax administration process and reduced the cost of collection of tax by subsuming a number of taxes in to one. It eliminates tax on tax and allows the intermediate products to get tax credit. Many essential items and food items have zero tax and there is overall reduction of tax resulting in lower inflation. An online digital simple system for tax collection reduces cost and increases efficiency and compliance. Finally a uniform tax structure for similar

goods across all the states eliminates the need for illegal transactions across state borders to avoid higher tax in one state and lower in another. On the flip side, it is however argued that GST compliance needs high dependence on technology which small business owners can not afford. They also do not have the expertise to comply with the requirements of GST. Under GST system, states have lost their fiscal autonomy to levy tax as they like and manufacturing states are at a disadvantage vis a vis the consuming states despite the fact that they do a more important economic activity than consumption. It is also argued that the differential rates for products under GST has not simplified tax administration but has complicated it. World Bank in its paper on Indian GST after its implementation in 2017 observed that the GST tax slab at 28% was the second highest among 115 countries in the world for which data was available. Second, while most of the countries in the world use one or two non-zero rates, India had four non zero rates which complicates tax administration. These observations have been aptly addressed in the 2025 revision of the tax rates by eliminating 12% and 28% slab and reducing number of non zero rates to two except the 40% for sin goods.

We are behind other countries in matters of simplification of indirect tax administration. The GST system was first introduced in France in 1954 with four slabs of tax and since then 170 countries have implemented GST to reduce the burden of cascading tax. Advanced nations like Singapore, Australia, Canada and New Zealand have two rates viz zero and another rate, while many other countries have three rates including zero and the maximum rate is less than 20%. Though we are late in introducing GST in India, it is catching up with the global standard and hopefully it will be made simpler with lower rates in future as the compliance increases.

The author is a Retired Chief General Manager of Reserve Bank of India.

Chastity endows women with immense power



Dr. Arundhati Devi

This land of Bharat has given birth to many noble women, like Savitri, who brought her dead husband back to life; Chandramati, who extinguished wild fire with the power of truth; Sita, who proved her virtue by coming out of blazing fire unscathed, and Damayanti, who reduced an evil-minded hunter to ashes with the power of her virtue. At first, Chandramati was fear-stricken by the raging forest fire. She and her husband and son were surrounded by flames of wild fire. Nobody could say.

When Yama took the life of Savitri's husband Satyavan, Savitri was full of grief and prayed to him to bring her husband back to life. She said, "You either give back my husband's life or take my life also. I cannot live without my husband; we are one." When Yama wanted to go away after taking the life of her husband, Savitri blocked his way and did not allow him to move. Yama had no choice but to listen to her prayer.

He asked her, "Mother! What do you want?" "Give my husband back to me because it is not possible for me to live without him", said Savitri. Ultimately, Yama had to yield to her prayer and revive Satyavan. Yama not only brought Satyavan back to life but granted many boons also to both Savitri and Satyavan, happy as he was with the chastity and determination of Savitri. It was because of her power of chastity that Savitri could bring her dead husband back to life.

Realize that we and all are one. Everybody is afraid of Yama, god of death. He goes about in every corner of the world and takes away the life principle of those whose life sojourn on earth comes to an end. Chastity endows women with immense power.

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Trump-Xi Summit 2026: A Defining Moment for Global Peace, Power and Diplomacy

Madhusudan Mishra, IAS, Retd.

The state visit of United States President Donald Trump to China from 13 to 15 May 2026 has emerged as one of the consequential diplomatic developments of the decade. At a time when the international order is facing prolonged conflict, economic uncertainty, technological rivalry, and rising geopolitical polarization, the summit between President Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping sent a powerful message to the world that dialogue between major powers remains the most effective instrument for preserving global peace.

The visit carried enormous symbolic and strategic importance. It marked President Trump's second official visit to China, following his earlier trip during his first presidency in 2017. Nearly a decade had passed since an American President last travelled to China, and therefore the international community watched the summit with attention. The image of Trump and Xi standing together in Beijing represented far more than diplomatic ceremony. It reflected the reality that the future direction of the twenty-first century will be shaped significantly by relations between the United States and China.

President Trump received a grand welcome in Beijing and was formally greeted by President Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People. Extensive bilateral discussions were held in the presence of senior officials from both countries. The talks reportedly covered critical issues including strategic stability, trade relations, military communication, artificial intelligence, technological cooperation, climate concerns, regional security, and the urgent need to reduce escalating geopolitical tensions. Most importantly, President Xi announced that both nations had agreed to pursue a "constructive China-United States relationship of strategic stability." This declaration attracted global attention because it indicated a conscious effort to move away from confrontation and toward structured engagement and responsible competition.

One of the most memorable moments of the visit was the appearance of Trump and Xi at the historic Temple of Heaven in Beijing. The symbolism of this event was profound and deeply civilizational. It represented not only China's cultural heritage but also the recognition by both leaders that peace, continuity, and mutual respect are

more enduring than rivalry and conflict. President Trump became only the second sitting American President after Gerald Ford to visit the Temple of Heaven while in office.

The summit assumes even greater significance against the backdrop of the prolonged Russia-Ukraine War. The conflict has disrupted global energy markets, affected food security, weakened economic recovery, and deepened divisions among geopolitical blocs. Both Washington and Beijing understand that an extended war benefits nobody. While China has maintained close strategic ties with Russia and the United States has remained one of Ukraine's strongest supporters, the Trump-Xi dialogue has revived hopes that fresh diplomatic channels for peace negotiations may emerge.

The summit is equally significant for India, which today occupies an increasingly influential position in global affairs. India maintains strong strategic relations with the United States while preserving longstanding defence and historical ties with Russia. Simultaneously, India shares a complex yet important relationship with China. Any reduction in hostility between Washington and Beijing can create a more stable geopolitical environment for India, enabling it to focus more effectively on economic development, technological advancement, infrastructure expansion, regional connectivity, and its growing role as a leading global power.

For India, peace among major powers directly affects trade, investment, energy security, and strategic stability in Asia. A more cooperative relationship between the United States and China could reduce tensions in the Indo-Pacific region and lower risks of military escalation. Such stability would strengthen India's ambition to emerge as a global manufacturing hub, a leading digital economy, and a strong voice of the Global South.

The implications of the summit also extend to the Middle East and especially to Iran. China has expanded its economic engagement with Iran, while Russia has strengthened strategic ties with Tehran. If Washington and Beijing begin cooperating on broader security issues, there may be renewed diplomatic momentum toward reducing tensions in West Asia. Greater stability in the Gulf region would benefit global energy markets and provide relief to

developing economies dependent on imported fuel.

Another major dimension of the visit relates to the global economy. Economic rivalry between the United States and China in recent years disrupted supply chains, trade flows, semiconductor industries, technology transfers, and international investment. Financial markets across the world monitored the summit closely because both nations together account for a dominant share of global economic activity. Even limited cooperation between Washington and Beijing can restore investor confidence, stabilize markets, and contribute to economic recovery.

History demonstrates that visits by American Presidents to China often produce transformative outcomes. Richard Nixon's historic visit in 1972 reshaped global geopolitics and opened diplomatic relations after decades of hostility. Later engagements by Presidents Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton, and Barack Obama contributed toward strengthening strategic dialogue and economic cooperation between the two powers.

Diplomatic meetings between great leaders do not instantly solve every international crisis, but they create opportunities for communication, reduce misunderstandings, and open pathways toward peace. The Trump-Xi summit of 2026 appears to have created such an opportunity. At a time when military conflicts, ideological polarization, and geopolitical rivalry threaten international harmony, the willingness of the world's two largest powers to engage in dialogue sends a reassuring message to humanity.

In the final analysis, the Beijing summit revived hope that diplomacy still possesses the power to heal divisions, reduce tensions, and prevent the escalation of global crises. If the spirit of dialogue demonstrated by President Trump and President Xi continues in the coming years, the world may gradually move away from conflict toward a more balanced, peaceful, and cooperative international order founded upon mutual respect, strategic wisdom, and shared responsibility for the future of humanity. The Trump-Xi Summit 2026 has rekindled global hope that diplomacy, wisdom, and dialogue can overcome conflict and division. If sustained with sincerity and strategic vision, this engagement may guide the world toward greater peace, stability.

100 DMs Feature In Preliminary Findings Of Fame India's 'Best District Magistrates' Survey

New Delhi, 18/7: Fame India, an acclaimed rating magazine has listed 100 District Magistrates (DMs) in its survey findings, as the "outstanding and best-performing" administrative heads of the state and is set to feature the twenty-five most distinguished of them, in its upcoming 2026 edition. The extensive pan-India survey of District Magistrates, across 800 districts in the country, seeks to encourage outstanding leadership in public service, amidst challenging circumstances. As the DMs serve as the senior-most administrative officers in any district, their role assumes great significance as they are the real 'power centres' in bringing changes to lives of ordinary people. While institutions and individuals contribute to development work, the greatest responsibility for implementing government schemes at the grassroots level and ensuring their benefits reach the public lies with the District Magistrate. The Fame India, through its special edition "Best District Magistrates 2026," has attempted to highlight the



work and achievements of those District Magistrates, who have demonstrated excellence in administration, innovation, and public service during their tenure. The survey which started first in 2011, has become a yearly tradition at the noted media organisation and its categorization of DMs on basis of 'performance and delivery' over the years has gone to set moral high ground, not just those for the selected ones but also for fellow officers. According to Fame India Magazine's Managing Editor Anil Singh, such surveys

go on to instil a sense of competitiveness among the officers, spurring them to outdo each other and benefit the people at large. Further sharing details about 'evaluation' of outperforming officers, Anil Singh told IANS that elaborate and extensive exercises are conducted on the ground to arrive at any conclusion. "From public opinion to views of public representatives and leaders - both ruling and Opposition alike are factored into for deciding upon respective DM's performance and distinguished service," he

'World Sees PM Modi As Ray Of Hope': NDA Leaders Hail Sweden's Highest Honour Conferred On Prime Minister

New Delhi, 18/5: NDA leaders on Monday hailed Prime Minister Narendra Modi being conferred Sweden's highest civilian honour, the 'Royal Order of the Polar Star' Commander Grand Cross, calling it a moment of pride and recognition for the entire nation. Reacting to the honour, BJP leader Syed Shah Nawaz Hussain said Prime Minister Modi is recognised as a global leader by other countries and seen as a ray of hope during times of crisis. "Every country sees PM Modi as the world's leader, and in a global crisis, PM Modi is seen as a ray of hope. This is not just the honour of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, but the honour of the people of the country," Hussain told IANS. BJP spokesperson R.P. Singh described the recognition as a reflection of India's growing stature on the global stage. "That this is the 31st international honour received by the Prime Minister. He is being recognised for his work towards peace, and that India's global stature is now being acknowledged worldwide," Singh said. Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak also congratulated the Prime Minister on receiving the prestigious honour. "...I extend



my heartfelt congratulations to the Prime Minister," Pathak said. JD(U) Chief Spokesperson Neeraj Kumar said the honour brought pride to every Indian citizen. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi is the democratically elected leader chosen by 140 crore people of this country. It is a matter of pride for the nation that he has been honoured with Sweden's Royal Order of the Polar Star. The leader of 140 crore Indians becoming a shining star for other nations is a matter of self-respect and pride

for every citizen of India, irrespective of religion or caste," he told IANS. Prime Minister Modi received the 'Royal Order of the Polar Star' Commander Grand Cross during his official visit to Sweden on Sunday. The honour, considered Sweden's highest recognition that can be conferred upon a Head of Government, was presented to PM Modi by Crown Princess Victoria during a ceremony held at the County Governor's residence in the presence of Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson.

EET-UG Paper Leak Case: CBI Arrests Maha Coaching Centre Director; 10th Arrest In Ongoing Probe

New Delhi, 18/5: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Monday arrested Shivraj Raghunath Motegaonkar, director of Maharashtra-based coaching centre, in connection with the NEET-UG 2026 paper leak case, taking the total number of arrests in the probe to ten. According to CBI sources, Motegaonkar, who reportedly ran coaching classes in Latur, played an important role in the alleged NEET paper leak network. He had earlier been taken into custody for questioning before being formally arrested by the agency. Sources said the CBI is likely to issue an official statement on the latest arrest shortly. The development comes amid an intensifying nationwide investigation into the alleged leak of the NEET-UG 2026 examination paper, which triggered massive outrage and eventually led to the cancellation of the May 3 examination. Meanwhile, a Delhi court on

Sunday sent NEET paper leak accused Manisha Gurunath Mandhare to 14-day custody of the CBI. Mandhare, an NTA-appointed senior Botany teacher from Pune, is suspected to be the co-mastermind behind the leak of the Biology question paper. Chemistry Professor P.V. Kulkarni is being considered the alleged "kingpin" of the paper leak. During proceedings in Delhi's Rouse Avenue Court, the CBI informed the bench that Mandhare was an expert in translating botany and zoology question papers and had access to the NEET-UG Biology paper. "Manisha was in conspiracy with P.V. Kulkarni and Manisha Waghmare. She gave the question paper to another accused, Shubham. Simultaneous investigations are going on across the country. We need to take her to different parts of the country for investigation," the CBI said. The agency further alleged

that Mandhare had mobilised prospective NEET candidates through Pune-based consultant Manisha Waghmare, who was arrested earlier this month, and conducted special coaching sessions for students at her Pune residence. According to the CBI, during these classes, she allegedly disclosed several Biology questions and asked students to note them down and mark them in textbooks. Investigators claim that a majority of those questions matched the actual NEET-UG 2026 question paper. Earlier, nine accused have been arrested in this case from Delhi, Jaipur, Gurugram, Nasik, Pune and Ahliyanagar. Out of these, five accused have already been produced before the court and taken into 7-day police custody remand for detailed interrogation. Two other accused, who were arrested on Friday, were produced before a court in Pune and shifted to Delhi after taking transit remand.

informed and added that stake surveys are conducted in the later part where views and feedbacks about his works are taken from top-most bureaucrats, preferably at Secretary ranks. The latest survey by Fame India, was undertaken in collaboration with Asia Post agency, based on 10 parameters - Outstanding administrative capability, Effective governance, Vision and innovation, Accountable working style, Quick decision-making ability, Crisis management skills, Sensitivity and seriousness, Interpersonal skills, Public relations and communication ability, Development-oriented thinking. "As a responsible and positive media organization, our initiative aims to honour and recognize those District Magistrates and Deputy Commissioners who are playing a significant role in nation-building," said Fame India in a statement. It also informed that around 100 officers have been selected in preliminary results and out of this, a few distinguished District Magistrates will be featured in its upcoming magazine.

New Delhi, 18/7: The Delhi High Court on Monday granted interim bail to jailed Baramulla MP Engineer Rashid till June 2 to enable him to attend the funeral and perform the customary last rites of his father, who passed away at AIIMS-Delhi in the early hours of the day. A division bench of Justices Prathiba M. Singh and Madhu Jain allowed the plea moved by Abdul Rashid Sheikh, popularly known as Engineer Rashid, after the National Investigation Agency (NIA) verified the death of his father. In its order, the Delhi High Court noted that Rashid would be required to carry out several rituals, including funeral prayers and burial on May 18, a four-day mourning period, and subsequent ceremonies such as the seventh-day prayers and other customary observances. Rashid, who is facing trial in a terror funding case, had moved the application seeking interim bail to conduct the burial and perform customary religious rites following his father's demise at AIIMS, Delhi, around 12:10 a.m. The Delhi High Court directed that Rashid be released on interim



bail till June 2, subject to stringent conditions, including continuous police escort and restrictions on his movement and interactions. It ordered that the MP will remain accompanied by at least two plainclothes police personnel throughout the period of interim bail, from the time of his release till his return to custody. The Justice Singh-led Bench further directed that Rashid would be permitted to stay only at his residences in Srinagar and Kupwara districts of Jammu and Kashmir and may visit the burial ground or place of worship

strictly for the purpose of performing last rites. "Apart from the said venues, the appellant (Rashid) shall not be permitted to move anywhere else," the order stated. It added that any meeting with persons other than immediate family members during the interim bail period will take place only in the presence of two police officials. The Delhi High Court also reiterated conditions requiring Rashid to use only one mobile number, keep it active at all times, and refrain from contacting witnesses or indulging in any unlawful activity.

NIA Files Investigation Report Against Five Juveniles In Pakistan-Linked Ghaziabad Espionage Case

New Delhi, 18/5: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Monday filed its investigation report against five juveniles in Conflict with Law (JCLs) in connection with a Pakistan-linked terror conspiracy involving espionage activities aimed at endangering India's safety and security. The NIA submitted its detailed investigation report before the Juvenile Justice Board in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, the Official Secrets Act, and the UA(P) Act. So far, a total of 21 accused have been arrested in the Ghaziabad espionage case, which was originally registered by the local police in March 2026. The case pertains to the installation of solar-powered cameras at sensitive railway station locations and providing live access to the footage to suspected terrorists based in



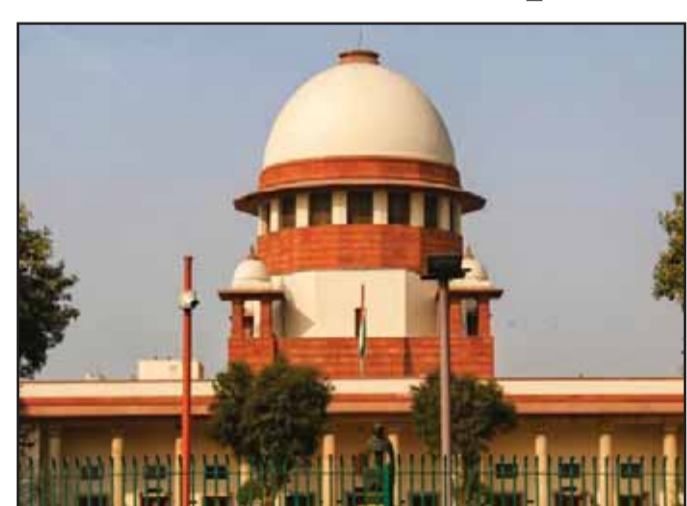
Pakistan. After taking over the investigation, the NIA found that the five juveniles had allegedly conspired with other co-accused to assist suspected Pakistani terrorists in obtaining photographs and videos of sensitive installations, along with their precise GPS coordinates, with the intention of threatening India's sovereignty, unity, integrity, and security. Further investigation revealed that the

juveniles had illegally trespassed into and accessed prohibited and sensitive areas of strategic importance. They allegedly provided active support in installing spy cameras and transmitting sensitive information, including geo-tagged photographs and videos, to suspected Pakistan-based terrorists. The juveniles also allegedly facilitated Pakistan-linked operatives in procuring and using

Indian SIM cards for carrying out terror-related activities on Indian soil. The NIA said that the investigation against the remaining arrested accused and other suspects in the case, registered as RC-01/2026/NIA/LKW, is still underway. Earlier in March, Ghaziabad Police had arrested eight more accused in a Pakistan-linked espionage module case, taking the total tally to 22, including key operatives and masterminds linked to the module. The arrests build on earlier action taken on March 14, when Ghaziabad Police had arrested six individuals linked to what is being described as the largest spying module backed by Pakistan's Intelligence agency ISI. Among them was Sohail Malik, a resident of Meerut and a key mastermind, along with a woman identified as Mahek alias Sane Iram. Both were responsible for recruiting operatives and facilitating payments.

SC Refuses To Hear PIL On Temple Priests' Wages

New Delhi, 18/5: The Supreme Court on Monday declined to entertain a public interest litigation (PIL) seeking directions for framing a uniform wage and welfare framework for priests, sevadars, and temple staff working in state-controlled temples across the country. A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta expressed disinclination to interfere in the matter and refused to entertain the plea filed by advocate Ashwini Upadhyay, who appeared in person. After the apex court indicated its unwillingness to examine the issue, Upadhyay sought permission to withdraw the petition with liberty to approach the appropriate authorities. The Justice Vikram Nath-led Bench thereafter dismissed the matter as withdrawn. "The petitioner seeks permission to withdraw the plea with liberty to approach the appropriate authorities. The petition is dismissed as



withdrawn," the top court recorded in its order. The plea had sought directions to the Centre and state governments to constitute a judicial commission or expert committee to review the wages and service conditions of priests, sevadars, and temple staff in temples under government control. The petition also sought a declaration that priests and temple

staff fall within the definition of "employee" under Section 2(k) of the Code on Wages, 1947, making them entitled to minimum wages and other labour welfare protections. The plea contended that once state governments assume administrative, financial and economic control over temples, an employer-employee relationship arises between temple

administrations and priests or temple workers. It claimed that priests and temple staff in several states survive on "arbitrary honorariums, dakshina-based payments and meagre remuneration", often ranging between Rs 1,000 and Rs 5,000 per month, without pension, healthcare or social security protections. Referring to statutory frameworks governing temples in states such as Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka and Kerala, the plea argued that governments exercise pervasive control over appointments, service conditions, disciplinary supervision, and temple revenues, while simultaneously denying labour welfare protections to temple workers. The petition further relied on constitutional provisions under Articles 14 and 21, contending that denial of fair wages and dignified livelihood to priests and temple staff violates their fundamental rights.

Robert Vadra withdraws Delhi HC plea against cognisance of ED chargesheet in Shikohpur land deal case

New Delhi, 18/5: Businessman Robert Vadra on Monday withdrew his petition before the Delhi High Court challenging the trial court order taking cognisance of the Enforcement Directorate's (ED) chargesheet in the Shikohpur

land deal-linked money laundering case. The matter came up before Justice Manoj Jain, where Advocate Prateek Chaddha, appearing for Vadra, informed the Court that the plea was being withdrawn unconditionally. Recording the submission, the High Court permitted withdrawal of the petition. Vadra's plea had challenged the trial court's order taking

cognisance of the ED chargesheet filed under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). During the earlier hearing, Senior Advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, appearing for Vadra, had argued that the alleged predicate offences pertained to the period between 2008 and 2012, while some of those offences were added to the schedule of the PMLA only subsequently.

PM Modi Receives Warm Welcome From Indian Community In Norway

Oslo, 18/5: The Indian community in Norway gave a warm welcome to Prime Minister Narendra Modi as he arrived in Oslo for a State visit. PM Modi greeted the members of the Indian diaspora as people gathered to welcome him, carrying Indian flags, with the chants of 'Modi Modi'. The Prime Minister witnessed a cultural and musical performance and also interacted with girls who performed Bharatnatyam to welcome him. Earlier in the day, PM Modi was welcomed by his Norwegian counterpart Jonas Gahr Store at the airport. PM Modi expressed confidence that his visit would strengthen the friendship between the two nations. During this visit, the Prime Minister will attend the third India-Nordic Summit and hold bilateral engagements. He will call on King Harald V and Queen Sonja and hold bilateral talks with PM Jonas Gahr Store. He will also address the India-Norway Business and Research Summit along with the Norwegian counterpart, Jonas Gahr Store. "I have landed in Oslo, Norway. I



am grateful for the warm welcome from Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store at the airport. This is the first visit by an Indian prime minister to Norway in over 40 years. I am confident that the visit will strengthen the friendship between India and Norway," PM Modi posted on X. "I will meet Their Majesties King Harald V and Queen Sonja, and hold talks with Prime Minister Store.

Tomorrow, the 19th, the third India-Nordic Summit will be held in Oslo. It will be a good opportunity to meet my Nordic colleagues," he added. Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) called Norway a "valued partner" for India and stated that PM Modi's visit will add fresh vigour to the partnership between the two nations. "God morgen Norge! Prime Minister Narendra Modi

has arrived in Oslo, Norway. In a special gesture, he was received by PM Jonas Gahr Store at the airport. This is PM Modi's first visit to Norway and a Prime Ministerial visit from India to Norway in 43 years. In an earlier statement, the MEA stated, "The visit will provide an opportunity to review the progress made in India-Norway relations and explore avenues to further strengthen them, with a focus on trade and investment, capitalising on the India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement, as well as on clean and green tech and blue economy." "The visit will also be an opportunity to induce momentum in bilateral trade worth around USD 2.73 billion (2024), and investments by Norway's Government Pension Fund (GPF) of close to USD 28 billion in the Indian capital market," it added.

engagements, and tomorrow, he will participate in the 3rd India-Nordic Summit. The visit is set to add fresh vigour to the India-Norway partnership," he added. PM Modi arrived in Norway for a two-day official visit after concluding his visit to Sweden. This is PM Modi's first visit to Norway and will also mark the first Prime Ministerial visit from India to Norway in 43 years. In an earlier statement, the MEA stated, "The visit will provide an opportunity to review the progress made in India-Norway relations and explore avenues to further strengthen them, with a focus on trade and investment, capitalising on the India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement, as well as on clean and green tech and blue economy." "The visit will also be an opportunity to induce momentum in bilateral trade worth around USD 2.73 billion (2024), and investments by Norway's Government Pension Fund (GPF) of close to USD 28 billion in the Indian capital market," it added.

Hantavirus-Hit Cruise Ship Arrives In Rotterdam As Final Stop

Amsterdam, 18/5: The hantavirus-hit cruise ship MV Hondius arrived at the Dutch port of Rotterdam on Monday for disinfection, concluding a voyage that had drawn the attention of international health authorities. The crew members are set to enter quarantine immediately. Those unable to return to their home countries will undergo quarantine in the Netherlands, the Dutch health ministry said last week. According to Oceanwide Expeditions, the Dutch vessel's operator, there are currently 27 people on board, including 25 crew members and two medical personnel. The group consists of 17 Filipinos, four Dutch nationals, four Ukrainians, one Russian and one Polish national. Most of them will undergo a six-week quarantine in Rotterdam. Xinhua news agency reported. "The remaining crew and medical staff on board MV Hondius will disembark in a staggered approach upon arrival in Rotterdam, in close coordination with the cleaning process," Oceanwide Expeditions said in a statement. Meanwhile, the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) has confirmed a case of hantavirus in a cruise

passenger currently isolating in British Columbia following laboratory testing. PHAC said in a statement on Sunday that samples from British Columbia were sent to the agency's National Microbiology Laboratory (NML) in Winnipeg for confirmatory testing. According to the agency, one individual's sample was confirmed positive for hantavirus on Saturday. A second individual, a travelling partner of the confirmed case, was confirmed negative. No additional cases have been identified so far. PHAC said all high-risk contacts are isolating and will continue to be closely monitored by local public health authorities, adding that the overall risk to the general population in Canada remains low at this time. The outbreak occurred aboard the polar expedition cruise ship MV Hondius and has resulted in three deaths so far. The incubation period for hantavirus generally ranges from one to eight weeks. Earlier, health authorities in Canada's British Columbia province announced that a Canadian cruise passenger currently in isolation has tested presumptively positive for hantavirus.

Two US Fighter Jets Collide Md-Air At Idaho Air Show

Idaho (United States), 18/5: Two US fighter jets collided mid-air during an air show at Mountain Home Air Force Base in Idaho, prompting authorities to place the air base under lockdown and cancel all remaining scheduled events, according to local media reports. The incident took place during the Gunfighter Skies Air Show in Idaho, United States, shortly after 12:30 p.m. local time on Sunday. Emergency response teams rushed to the area after the collision, while thick black smoke was seen rising near the crash site. According to local media reports, the aircraft involved in the accident were two EA-18G Growler fighter jets. The jets reportedly crashed nearly two miles outside the air base following the collision. Videos circulating on social media showed the two military aircraft colliding in mid-air before breaking apart. Moments later, four parachutes were seen descending toward the ground, indicating that the crew members had managed to



eject from the aircraft. According to the Idaho Statesman newspaper, an announcer present at the event informed the audience that all four crew members aboard the two fighter jets had safely ejected before the crash. The US Navy later confirmed that four crew members had successfully escaped after the two military aircraft collided during the aerial demonstration near Mountain

Home Air Force Base. Following the accident, authorities immediately cancelled all remaining activities scheduled for Sunday as a precautionary measure. Mountain Home Police also confirmed that the base had been placed under lockdown after the incident while emergency and security teams responded to the crash.

Fictional Middle East map shared by Donald Trump signals severe escalation risks with Tehran

USA, 18/5: Donald Trump has triggered global alarm by publishing a digitally manufactured map of the Middle East featuring a United States flag overlay and bright red arrows aggressively pointing directly at Iranian territory. Shared on the Truth Social platform, the uncaptioned graphic arrived alongside a series of ominous warnings declaring that time is running out for Tehran. The American leader explicitly asserted that the clock is ticking for the Islamic Republic, warning that they must alter their geopolitical course rapidly or risk total domestic devastation. This digital provocation marks a sharp shift toward psychological warfare as formal diplomatic channels fail to secure long-term stability. Geopolitical analysts observe that this psychological maneuvering directly mimics previous cross-border standoffs



where visual propaganda preceded actual deployments, a pattern frequently monitored by international maritime hubs including Indian energy strategists tracking shipping safety. Washington and Tel Aviv are actively reviewing updated military contingencies, colloquially referred to under the operational title of Operation Epic Fury 2.0. These strategic

blueprints allegedly include high-risk maneuvers such as deploying elite commandos into hostile territory to seize highly enriched uranium hidden beneath heavily fortified nuclear installations. Hostilities had temporarily subsided under a fragile ceasefire, but the regional equilibrium is disintegrating following the rejection of recent diplomatic proposals. Additional synthetic

graphics shared by the administration depicted fictional combat scenarios, illustrating futuristic laser weapons neutralizing targeted aircraft and drones striking fast boats flying the Iranian flag. These posts have sent shockwaves through international energy markets, pushing global crude prices upward as the threat of an extended naval blockade near the critical Strait of Hormuz looms large. Domestic enforcement inside the Islamic Republic has simultaneously intensified, with local cybersecurity agencies tracking citizens and restricting digital networks to suppress internal dissent during this period of heightened external vulnerability. Officials in Washington reiterate that these aggressive public updates reflect a refusal to tolerate further diplomatic stalling, framing potential defensive operations as the final opportunity to halt regional weapons proliferation.

Iran War Fuels US Inflation Fears

Washington, 18/5: Rising fuel prices and growing economic anxiety linked to the Iran conflict are beginning to create political problems for President Donald Trump and Republicans ahead of the US midterm elections, according to media. Senior administration officials and Republican allies defended Trump's handling of the Iran crisis, while Democrats accused the White House of triggering economic pain through a prolonged conflict in the Gulf region. US Trade Representative Jamie Green acknowledged on CBS News on Sunday that Americans were facing rising fuel costs as the war continued. "Gas is at an average of \$4.51 a gallon," CBS News said during the interview, citing data showing Americans had spent \$45 billion more on fuel since the conflict began compared to a year earlier. Greer defended the administration's position by saying that preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons remained the White House's top priority. "We know that no one wants to see higher gas prices," he said. "At the same time, the President is balancing foreign



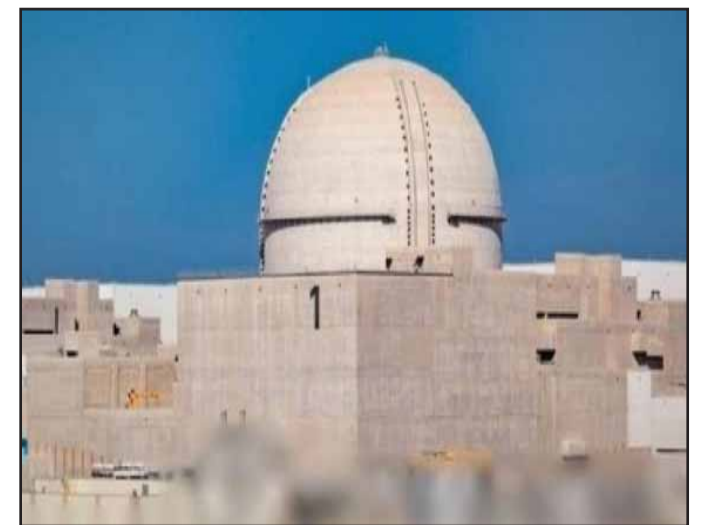
policy considerations." He added: "We don't want our children or grandchildren to inherit a world where Iran has a nuclear weapon." The economic impact of the conflict also was discussed on CNN where former Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg blamed the Trump administration for rising costs across the American economy. "Buttigieg said the administration's actions had caused 'everything from diesel to fertiliser to mortgages' to become more expensive." He also accused the administration of making ordinary travel unaffordable. More and more Americans cannot afford a

road trip, because of the explosion in diesel prices and gas prices caused directly by the Iran war," Buttigieg said. On ABC News, Trump himself defended his focus on Iran's nuclear programme even as fuel prices rose. "I don't think about Americans' financial situation," Trump said during remarks highlighted by the programme. "I think about one thing, we cannot let Iran have a nuclear weapon." The comments quickly became a point of attack for the Democrats. Representative Hakeem Jeffries accused Trump of dragging the country into a "reckless and costly war of choice" during ABC's coverage of the

President Trump's China summit. On CNN, Democratic Congressman Jake Auchincloss said Americans were directly linking higher prices to Trump's foreign policy. "Prices go up," Auchincloss said, referring to both the China trade conflict and the Iran war. Republicans pushed back, insisting the economic pain would be temporary. Former White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer said on CNN that Americans understood the broader national security stakes. "There's a bigger existential threat that Iran poses to our safety," Spicer added. Republican Congressman Buddy Carter predicted fuel prices would eventually fall once the conflict stabilised. "As soon as this conflict is over, I can assure you gas prices are going to go down," Carter said. The Strait of Hormuz, through which a large portion of the world's oil shipments pass, remains central to global concerns over energy markets and inflation. Rising oil prices and prolonged instability in the region could place additional pressure on inflation, shipping costs and economic growth across energy-dependent economies, including India.

Unacceptable: India Expresses Deep Concern Over Attack On UAE's Barakah Nuclear Facility; Calls For Restraint, Diplomacy

New Delhi, 18/5: India has expressed serious concern over the reported drone strike targeting the Barakah Nuclear Power Plant in the United Arab Emirates, describing the incident as a dangerous escalation and urging all sides to exercise restraint and return to diplomatic engagement. "India is deeply concerned at the attack targeting the Barakah nuclear facility in the UAE. Such actions are unacceptable and represent a dangerous escalation. We urgently call for restraint and a return to dialogue and diplomacy," the Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement. The reaction from New Delhi comes amid rising tensions in the region and growing international concern over attacks on critical infrastructure, especially nuclear facilities, which are considered highly sensitive under international safety norms. The Barakah Nuclear Power Plant, located in the Al Dhafra Region of the UAE, is the Arab world's first operational nuclear power facility and plays a crucial role in the country's energy infrastructure. Any threat to such installations has raised alarm globally due to concerns related to regional security and nuclear safety. A fire was reported in the premises of the Barakah



Nuclear Power Plant in the Al Dhafra Region of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) after a drone strike, local media reported on Sunday. "Authorities in Abu Dhabi responded to a fire incident that broke out in an electrical generator outside the inner perimeter of the Barakah Nuclear Power Plant in the Al Dhafra Region, caused by a drone strike," the Abu Dhabi media office said on X. No injuries were reported, and there was no impact on radiological safety levels, it added. "The Federal Authority for Nuclear Regulation (FANR) confirmed that the fire did not affect the safety of the power

plant or the readiness of its essential systems, and that all units are operating as normal," the statement said. It emphasised that all precautionary measures have been taken, and asked the public to obtain information from official sources only and to avoid spreading rumours or unverified information. No information regarding the origins of the drone strike was mentioned in the statement. Earlier this month, the UAE reported several missiles and drones "launched from Iran" towards several areas of the country.

Vedanta's Nand Ghars boost childhood nutrition and learning across rural Odisha

Bhubaneswar 18/5(DMS): For many families across Odisha's remotest districts, anganwadi centres remain the first and often only point of access to structured learning, nutrition, and public health services. Yet, persistent challenges continue to exist in providing this essential service, ones created by distance, limited infrastructure, and inadequate awareness.

Nand Ghar, Vedanta's flagship community development project, aims to change this narrative by reimagining anganwadis across India as modern community hubs for nutrition, digital early learning, healthcare, and women empowerment. Now, Vedanta Aluminium, through the Anil Agarwal Foundation and in partnership with the Ministry of Women & Child Development and the Odisha government, is working to strengthen rural development systems by transforming hundreds of anganwadi centres across districts such as Jharsuguda, Rayagada, and Kalahandi into Vedanta Nand Ghars. The need is significant. As per the National Family Health Survey-5 (2019-



21), anaemia affects nearly 65% of all children up to 5 years of age in Odisha, indicating high levels of nutritional vulnerability during the most critical years of development. Assessments undertaken by the NITI Aayog further highlight that a majority of districts in the state continue to report malnutrition as a key public health concern. While national initiatives such as the Integrated Child Development Services and Poshan 2.0 have expanded access significantly, the focus needs to now be on ensuring

that they translate into measurable improvements in nutrition, learning, and health outcomes at the grassroots. Nand Ghars are well-positioned to augment this effort, transforming India's ubiquitous anganwadis into modern, community-centric spaces that offer easier access to early education, nutrition, and avenues for women's empowerment. Inside a Vedanta Nand Ghar, learning is designed to be structured and interactive, encouraging more children to visit the centre regularly. Often

located in remote areas where children may find it expensive and difficult to access learning materials, the walls of a Nand Ghar are designed to serve as a video teaching aid, while smart TVs introduce children to engaging new modes of learning. The solar-powered buildings ensure continuity in low-electricity areas, while access to clean drinking water and improved sanitation supports better attendance and health outcomes. "My child loves coming here every day. They have a TV to learn and play games and get to learn a lot of new concepts in an interactive and engaging way," says, Savita Puri, the mother of a six-year-old student at a Nand Ghar in Jharsuguda. For many children, especially first-generation learners, this early exposure helps build familiarity with structured learning before formal schooling. The shift is equally visible among young mothers. "Earlier, we did not know what kind of food was important for children. Now we are more aware of which meals are the most nutritious for our children, and how to take better care of their health,"

shares Sasmita Bag, a young mother from Kalahandi district. Nutrition delivery at Nand Ghars is supported by awareness and behavioural change efforts. Community sessions and demonstrations guide families on diet diversity, while kitchen gardens help promote the use of locally available produce. The scope extends beyond nutrition and education. Through convergence with ICDS, Nand Ghars also serve as touchpoints for immunization tracking, growth monitoring, and maternal health awareness, critical in districts where healthcare access remains limited. The centres are also emerging as spaces for women's engagement beyond childcare. The centres provide them with entrepreneurship training and access to credit linkages, enabling women to start their micro-enterprises and independently earn their livelihoods. "I come here for training and meetings. It is helping me learn new skills and consider about earning something on my own," says Apekha Nayak associated with a self-help group in the district.

India's EV Market Surges 57 Pc In Q1 2026: Report

New Delhi, 18/5: India's electric passenger vehicle market surged 57 per cent year on year in the first quarter of 2026, outpacing overall passenger vehicle growth of 13 per cent driven by superior charging infrastructure, competitive pricing and connectivity features, a report said on Monday.

The report from CyberMedia Research (CMR) said connected EVs grew 67 per cent year on year and that digital cluster adoption jumped 55 per cent, with penetration rising from 35 per cent to 48 per cent. The surge in the connected EV segment, established the passenger car as India's second most important smart device after smartphones. EVs led that digital cluster adoption with 60 per cent growth. The report highlighted that advanced driver assistance systems adoption rose 49 per cent and Level 2 ADAS is now standard on 91 per cent of equipped vehicles. Regulatory momentum via Bharat NCAP and plummeting sensor costs have transformed safety to baseline expectation. The report estimated EVs to account for 7-8 per cent of India's PV market by end-

2026, while connected vehicles are projected to capture 40-45 per cent of market share. Digital cockpits grew 49 per cent, with penetration climbing from 29 per cent to 39 per cent as immersive in-cabin experiences became key purchase drivers. India's passenger vehicle market continued to remain predominantly value-driven, with 97 per cent of volumes concentrated in the sub-Rs 30 lakh segment. "India's automotive market is undergoing a fundamental transformation, shaped by the convergence of electrification, connectivity, and premiumisation. The continued growth of EVs and connected vehicles indicates sustained long-term structural momentum," said Amit Sharma, Senior Analyst - Smart Mobility Practice, CMR. Future growth will depend on continued investments in charging infrastructure, supply-chain resilience, and balanced policy support, Sharma added. Another recent report said that Kerala led with 14.1 per cent penetration in EV adoption; Karnataka and Odisha showed deepening adoption, while Maharashtra's share declined to 9.2 per cent.

Sensex, Nifty Recover From Day's Lows To End Flat; IT Stocks Shine

Mumbai, 18/5: Indian equity benchmarks erased most of their intra-day losses to end marginally higher on Monday, aided by strong buying in information technology stocks even as investors continued to track developments in West Asia. The benchmark Nifty closed 6.45 points, or 0.03 per cent, higher at 23,649.95, while the Sensex gained 77.05 points, or 0.10 per cent, to settle at 75,315.04. Both indices had traded in negative territory for most of the session before recovering in late trade. Commenting on Nifty technical outlook, market experts said that the 23,700 level now stands as an immediate resistance area, while a sustained breakout above this region could strengthen recovery momentum toward the broader 23,900-24,000 zone. "On the downside, the 23,300 region continues to remain a strong base support area," an analyst stated. Buying in heavyweight IT counters supported the rebound, with Tech Mahindra, Infosys and Bharti Airtel emerging as the top gainers on the Nifty index. The Nifty IT index surged more than 2 per cent, outperforming all other



sectoral gauges. Defensive sectors also witnessed buying interest, with the Nifty Pharma and Nifty Healthcare indices ending higher. Market participants preferred sectors seen as relatively resilient amid global uncertainty. However, the broader market remained under pressure. The Nifty MidCap index slipped 0.15 per cent, while the Nifty SmallCap index declined 1.26 per cent. Among laggards, the Nifty Consumer Durables and Nifty PSU Bank indices registered the

sharpest losses during the session. Market experts said that traders remained cautious amid concerns over geopolitical tensions in West Asia and their potential impact on global markets and crude oil prices. "The current market environment continues to favour disciplined risk management over aggressive leverage, as volatility-driven swings are likely to remain elevated until global geopolitical uncertainty and crude oil concerns stabilise," an analyst mentioned.

Rising Crude Oil Prices Biggest Headwind For Markets, Says Market Expert

Mumbai, 18/5: Rising crude oil prices have emerged as the biggest concern for financial markets, with inflation fears, higher bond yields and foreign fund outflows creating pressure on equities, a market expert said on Monday. Speaking to IANS, Shrikant S. Chouhan, Head, Equity Research at Kotak Securities said crude oil prices continue to remain elevated with no signs of relief, adding that prices increased further by around \$2-3 over the weekend. "As long as crude prices remain high, inflation concerns will continue to dominate global markets," he said. He noted that persistent inflationary pressure is leading to a sharp rise in bond yields, especially in the United States. Referring to developments last week, Chouhan said US bond yields across 10-year, 20-year and



30-year maturities witnessed a significant surge. "These bond yields are now moving towards exceptional levels. Whenever such a trend emerges, bond markets start attracting large investments," he told IANS. Chouhan explained that

higher returns in developed market bonds usually trigger capital outflows from emerging markets such as India, as global investors shift funds towards safer debt instruments in markets like the US and Japan. "Because of these global headwinds, Indian equity

markets are likely to remain range-bound in the near term," he mentioned. Speaking on foreign institutional investor (FII) activity, he said persistent selling by overseas investors is linked to rising global uncertainty and elevated crude oil prices. He added that if crude prices sustain around the \$105-\$110 per barrel range, the impact could begin to reflect more strongly on the global economy. He also pointed out that higher crude prices are weakening currencies across markets, adding to concerns for emerging economies dependent on energy imports. "The combination of expensive crude oil, rising bond yields and continued foreign fund outflows is creating a challenging environment for equity markets globally as well as in India," Chouhan noted.

Rupee may remain under pressure, experts warn of possible slide to 100 per USD

New Delhi, 18/5: Currency experts have warned that the Indian rupee may continue to remain under pressure in the coming months due to rising crude oil prices, persistent foreign investor outflows, global uncertainty and geopolitical tensions. Rupee has depreciated by around 6 to 7 per cent against the US dollar this year. The currency started the year near the 89 mark and has now fallen to a historic low beyond 96 per US dollar. Experts said the pace of depreciation in recent weeks has raised concerns in financial markets. K N Dey, Currency expert told ANI that the sharp fall in the rupee since May 11 has surprised market participants.



"The speed of the rupee's descent since May 11 has caught the market off guard, yet both the regulator and North Block have remained notably silent," he said. According to Dey, aggressive selling by foreign institutional investors (FIIs) has been one of the major reasons behind the rupee weakness. He said institutional investors have already pulled out Rs

2.65 lakh crore from Indian markets in 2026, close to last year's total outflow of Rs 3.04 lakh crore. "This downward pressure is fuelled by aggressive FII capitulation," he stated. Dey added that there is currently no clear indication of where the rupee may stabilise. "With no bottom in sight, trying to forecast a stabilisation point is pure guesswork, and even a psychological slide to 100 is now on the table," he said. Ajay Suresh Kedia, Director at Kedia Advisory told ANI, that the

rupee continues to face sustained pressure because of strong dollar demand and rising crude oil prices. "The Indian Rupee remains under sustained pressure as the dollar index stays firm near 99 while rising crude oil prices continue inflating India's import bill," Kedia told ANI. He said higher energy prices have increased demand for dollars in domestic markets, while elevated US bond yields are strengthening the US dollar globally.



into effect from June 1, while the FTAs signed with other countries are also likely to be implemented this year after the legal process is completed. India and Oman signed a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)

on December 18, 2025, giving most Indian exports, including textiles, duty-free access. The CEPA gives India zero-duty access on 98.08 per cent of Oman's tariff lines, covering 99.38 per cent of Indian exports

by value. India will cut duties on about 78 per cent of its tariff lines, covering nearly 95 per cent of imports from Oman, with sensitive products given access mainly through tariff-rate quotas. Talks for the free trade agreement began in November 2023 and were successfully wrapped up in August 2025 after five rounds of negotiations. The total volume of trade between India and Oman touched \$10.61 billion in 2024-25, which represented a growth of 18.6 per cent over the previous year. India has also operationalised trade agreements with the UAE, Australia, and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) bloc, among others, while pacts with the European Union and the United Kingdom are expected to come into force this year.

SEBI working on framework for AI-based trading amid growing cyber threats: Tuhin Kanta Pandey

Bhubaneswar, 18/5: Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) Chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey on Monday said the market regulator will soon come out with guidelines for AI-driven trading, while cautioning that artificial intelligence presents both

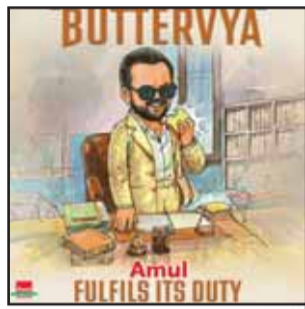
opportunities and heightened cyber risks for the financial ecosystem. Speaking to ANI on the sidelines of an event organised by the Association of Mutual Funds in India in Odisha, Pandey said SEBI was working on a framework to regulate the growing

use of AI in trading activities. "For AI-driven trading, we are actually going for guidelines on that. On how AIs will, in future, do that. Now AI has an opportunity as well as a risk. The opportunity is that you can use the AI for several of your things which can be

automated, but risks will come with the cyber risk. Cyber risk from AI has increased and we are now issuing an advisory on how the SEBI ecosystem, the regulated entities can be protected from that enhanced risk," Pandey told ANI.

Amul Honours Saif Ali Khan for His Gripping Cop Avatar in Netflix Crime Drama 'Kartavya'

Amul released its iconic cartoon tribute to celebrate the success of Saif Ali Khan's latest investigative feature, Kartavya. Posted across various digital handles on Monday, the creative caricature features the lead actor sporting dark eyewear alongside a stylish cream suit. Utilizing its signature linguistic flair, the dairy manufacturer introduced the term "BUTTERVYA" while asserting that the brand constantly fulfills its creative responsibilities toward national pop culture. The investigative cinematic release debuted globally on Netflix on May 15. Directed by Pulkit, the narrative charts a realistic portrayal of an administrative officer balancing high-stakes investigative pressure with intrinsic ethical conflicts. Industry peers and production executives quickly recognised the digital tribute online. Streaming service Netflix India joined the conversation with playful commentary, while Red Chillies Entertainment acknowledged the dairy brand for executing its creative duties. Adding a personal touch to the celebration, actor Kareena Kapoor Khan shared the promotional artwork on her personal social media handle, expressing adoration for her spouse's ongoing cinematic achievements. Behind the animated celebration lies a grounded, character-centric crime story that breaks away from typical cinematic police tropes. Khan expressed deep gratitude for the working environment, comparing the collaborative energy to that of an independent cinema crew where everyone exceeded basic expectations. Supported by a seasoned ensemble including Sanjay Mishra and Zakir Hussain, the project focuses heavily on consequences of justice, and systemic reform. Khan remains focused on character-driven narratives, with upcoming projects titled Haiwaan and Hum Hindustani expected to build further upon this artistic trajectory.



Special screening of 'Aakhri Sawaal' held at Rashtrapati Bhavan

New Delhi: Sanjay Dutt starrer Aakhri Sawaal continues to remain in the spotlight despite its poor box office performance. Though the film has received positive reviews from critics and audiences alike, it has failed to make a strong impact commercially. However, the film has been drawing attention from several prominent personalities, including political leaders and members of the public. A special screening of the movie was recently organised at Rashtrapati Bhavan, further adding to the buzz surrounding the film. The controversy surrounding Aakhri Sawaal has also intensified after a PIL seeking a ban on the film was reportedly filed in the UAE. Despite this, curiosity and interest among Indian audiences continue to grow. Recently, Rekha Gupta watched the film and praised its content. The film is being appreciated not only for its entertainment value but also for highlighting an issue that directly impacts society and common people. Directed by National Award-winning filmmaker Abhijeet Mohan Warang, the film has been presented by Nikhil Nanda. It has been jointly produced by Nikhil Nanda and Sanjay Dutt, while Punit Nanda, Dr Deepak Singh, Gaurav Dubey and Ujjwal Anand have served as co-producers. The story, screenplay and dialogues of the film have been penned by Utkarsh Nathani.



SPORTS

Lionel Messi Stars With Goal And Assist In Inter Miami Victory

Miami, 17/5: Lionel Messi continued his excellent form in Major League Soccer, scoring once and providing an assist to lead Inter Miami CF to a 2-0 victory over the Portland Timbers on Sunday. This win marked the club's first at its new home stadium. Messi netted his 12th goal of the season and recorded his sixth assist, while German Berterame scored Miami's second goal during a dominant performance at Nu Stadium. This victory ended Miami's frustrating 0-3-1 start at the venue, which officially opened in April. Dayne St. Clair made four saves to help Miami achieve their third clean sheet of the season, the first since a 2-0 win over Real Salt Lake in April. For Portland, the away game was tough again as they suffered their fourth 2-0 road defeat this season and their third loss in their last five away matches. Despite taking 16 shots, the Timbers were outshot 22-16 and trailed 9-4 in shots on target. Messi continues to get closer to the league's scoring lead. The 38-year-old is now tied with Petar



Musa and just one goal behind Hugo Cuypers in the MLS Golden Boot race. The Argentine superstar has also contributed five goals and all six of his assists in his last four games as he builds momentum ahead of what is expected to be his final FIFA World Cup campaign later this year. The eight-time Ballon d'Or winner looked dangerous from the

start, forcing James Pantemis into an early save in the fourth minute before scoring in the 31st minute. Messi began the play from outside the penalty area, passing to Luis Suárez before charging into the box. Suárez combined well with Telasco Segovia, whose backheel pass set up Messi for a calm finish past Pantemis. Eleven minutes later, Messi created

another goal with a moment of brilliance that echoed his best years at FC Barcelona. After controlling Rodrigo de Paul's cross with his chest, Messi exchanged passes with Suarez before maneuvering through a group of defenders in the box. He then made a precise pass to Berterame, who scored right away from close range to secure Miami's comfortable win.

Shakira drops major teaser for 2026 FIFA World Cup official song 'Dai Dai' featuring Burna Boy

Washington [US], 17/5: Pop superstar Shakira has sparked excitement among football and music fans after unveiling a teaser for 'Dai Dai', the Official Song for the 2026 FIFA World Cup. The singer shared a high-energy reel on her official Instagram account featuring intense football match visuals along with the caption, "Coming soon...." accompanied by a wolf and football emoticons, hinting at the imminent release of the track. The upcoming anthem will feature Nigerian Afrobeats star Burna Boy and is expected to play a major role in the build-up to the global football tournament. According to promotional details shared on Shakira's profile, 'Dai Dai' is also linked to the FIFA Global Citizen Education Fund, an initiative focused on expanding access to quality education and football programmes for children



worldwide. The teaser arrives shortly after announcements surrounding the 2026 FIFA World Cup Final entertainment lineup. Shakira is set to co-headline the first-ever FIFA World Cup Final Halftime Show on July 19 at the New York-New Jersey Stadium. She will perform alongside Madonna and BTS in what is being billed as a landmark live event. The halftime show is being curated by Chris Martin of

Coldplay and produced by Global Citizen. The Instagram teaser gained more than 1 million likes and thousands of comments within hours of being shared. 'Dai Dai' audio, which was released on May 16, marks Shakira's latest association with football after the global success of her past tournament anthem, 'Waka Waka'. The FIFA World Cup 2026 is scheduled to take place from June 11 to July 19, 2026

Hockey: India U18 Men And Women Go Down To Australia In The Second Match Of Series

Bhopal, 17/5: It was a challenging day for the hosts as both the Indian U18 men's and women's hockey teams suffered defeats against Australia U18 in their respective second matches at the Udhav Das Mehta (Bhai Ji) Central SAI Centre in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, on Sunday. In the men's encounter, Australia secured a 3-1 victory to take a 1-0 lead in the four-match series, following the 2-2 draw in the opening game. Arjun Brian (16') opened the scoring for Australia early in the second quarter, but India responded quickly through Ashish Tani Puri (24'), who found the back of the net to bring the hosts level. However, Australia regained control in the third quarter, with Sam

Peoples (39') and Angus McMullen (45') contributing a goal each to seal the win for the visitors. In the women's match, the India U18 team suffered a 1-4 loss against the visitors. Diya (11') gave India an early lead in the first quarter, allowing the hosts to stay in control during the initial exchanges. However, Australia staged a powerful comeback, with Anneliese Cullen (26'), Giselle Thompson (31'), Aurora Kovacevich (36'), and Stella Bartholomew (48') all scoring to secure Australia's second consecutive win of the tour. The Indian U18 women's team will look to bounce back when they take the field for their third match of the series on Monday at the International Sports Complex, Nathu Barkheda in

Bhopal. Meanwhile, the Indian U18 men's team will also be in action for their third match of the series against Australia tomorrow, May 18, at the Udhav Das Mehta (Bhai Ji) Central SAI Centre in Bhopal. Earlier on Friday, the Indian men's team was held to a 2-2 draw in its opening clash, with Akash Deep (11') and Deepak Prakash Toppo (45') scoring for the hosts. For Australia, Jett Johnstone (2') gave the visitors an early lead, while Franky Baker (60') found a late equaliser in the final minute of the game to ensure the spoils were shared. In the women's opener, the Australia U18 women's team clinched a 4-3 win. Aurora Kovacevich (21') gave the visitors the lead before Diya (22') quickly restored parity for India.

Ishaan Khatter conferred with honorary membership by Indian Armoured Corps

Mumbai, 17/5: Actor Ishaan Khatter has been conferred with an honorary membership of the 45 Cavalry of the Indian Armoured Corps for his portrayal of a 45 Cavalry officer in 'Pippa' and his respect for the regiment's ethos. Sharing moments from the ceremony on social media, Ishaan described the recognition as "the honour of a lifetime." "The honour of a lifetime to be conferred upon an honorary membership of 45 Cavalry of the Indian Armoured Corps - which I may now proudly call my regiment! There is no bigger acknowledgment and I only hope to always be reliably and humbly in service in any which way I can be to the bravest and most honourable members of the Indian army," he wrote. Reflecting on the experience, the actor added,

"As somebody who came from a life far removed from military exposure, this is truly mind boggling for me. I only did my best as an artiste to bring authenticity to the role of a cavalier but this is fuel for a lifetime to keep giving my heart and soul to every role I essay." He further thanked the regiment and officers for hosting him at the XLV Officers Mess. "Conveying my deepest respect and many thanks for a lovely evening spent at the XLV Officers Mess. VEER BHOGYA VASUNDHARA. Jai hind," he added. The honour comes amid a significant phase in Ishaan's career, with the actor earning appreciation for projects such as Homebound and The Royals. He was also recently featured on the Gold House Gold 100 list, becoming the only Indian

male actor to make it to this year's lineup. Produced by Ronnie Screwvala under the banner of RSVP Movies and Siddharth Roy Kapur's Roy Kapur Films, and directed by Raja Krishna Menon, the film features Ishaan, Mrunal Thakur, Priyanshu Painyuli and Soni Razdan in pivotal roles. Based on the book 'The Burning Chaffees' by Brigadier Balram Singh Mehta, the film is written by Menon, Tanmay Mohan, and Ravinder Randhawa. The title of the film is a tribute to the amphibious war tank called the PT-76 (Palavushi Tanka), popularly known as "Pippa," akin to an empty tin of ghee that smoothly floats on water. This wartime saga narrates a story of patriotism and traces the coming of age of Captain Balram Mehta (played by Ishaan) of the 45 Cavalry Tank Squadron.