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FAN BACKLASH FORCES CARDI B QUIT TWITTER

American rapper and songwriter Cardi B has shut down her Twitter account after getting into a feud with her fans over her skipping the Grammys. The *I Like It* hitmaker was inundated with messages asking why she wasn't at the bash in Las Vegas following which she shut down her account.

JOJO TEASES IDENTITY OF HER NEW PARTNER

Popular American singer and YouTuber Jojo Siwa has offered some hints about the identity of her new girlfriend but suggested fans won't have to wait too long to discover who she's dating. Jojo has suggested she has known her new partner for some time.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

You will desire absolute freedom in whatever you do today. A lot of entertainment is on the cards for teenagers, like window shopping or going for a movie. Kids may demand a treat from you. Generally, family affairs dominate today.

TAURUS

A short trip could be in the offing today, says Ganesh. Before proceeding, you may, however, be compelled to make changes in your itinerary. If you are not too happy with the new schedules and decide to stick to your original plans, you are likely to feel disturbed, uneasy at the end of the day. It would be better if you reconciled to the changes that are needed and then make a positive effort to make the trip an enjoyable and fruitful one.

GEMINI

You will make a reputation for yourself as a leader in your social circle. You yearn for something in your heart, and need to concentrate your energies upon attaining it. Your creative mind will come up with solutions today, to certain questions that have been perplexing you for quite some, says Ganesh.

CANCER

With Ganesh's grace, whatever you think or perse will be successful. Students will excel and finish pending work. You can display your imagination excellently. In short, a day of happiness and variety.

LEO

You will pay more attention to matters at home. You may take up home renovation projects. You may end up replacing the entire furniture at your place even. You will spend the day enjoying with your family members and friends, says Ganesh.

VIRGO

Avoid all kinds of prejudice and do not allow intolerance to enter your mind today, advises Ganesh. In all likelihood, you will look around yourself in search of love and affection. You will do well to keep negativity at bay as otherwise it may cow you down. Ganesh suggests that you marshal all your courage to live as per your convictions.

LIBRA

Ganesh says that you will be busy in your work field today and will be able to attain your goals in your work field today. Your level of enthusiasm will be at its peak. Today you may be able to meet with a person from the opposite sex who will be your future partner. Ganesh showers you with his blessings always.

SCORPIO

Being a workaholic may divert your attention from your family and you may have to bear the consequences. It's time to sort differences with your spouse. But, all this while, you need to be calm and patient. Watch your words in case of any arguments, warns Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS

To do or not to do? That will be the question for most of today as you find yourself pulling out of one dilemma only to trip into the next one. Controversy will surround you and you may find yourself at the crossroads, where you are unsure of which direction to take. Turn to the wisdom of the experienced for proper guidance, advises Ganesh.

CAPRICORN

The most intimidating of ventures can prove successful if fortune favours you; you will be fortunate today, says Ganesh. Those of you dealing in stocks and shares can expect a profitable day ahead, but don't forget to give credit to your spouse; it will be their luck working wonders for you.

AQUARIUS

Meeting people from the different walks of life, having a good conversation with them and widening the horizon of your knowledge - this will be the highlight of today for you. At work, you will have a busy day with plenty of meetings, discussions, planning and execution, feels Ganesh. You will fully utilize your energies, but it may also leave you exhausted.

PISCES

Today you will get attention from the opposite sex and this will play an important role in your success in the near future. Due to the favourable alignment of the planets you will receive more than your expectations. Ganesh feels that even though you are a calculative and cautious person, you will tend to be aggressive, outgoing and willing to take risks today. This could also translate in you trying your luck in uncertain fields like gambling, stocks or betting.

GRAMMY 2022

Batiste takes home BIG HONOURS



LOS ANGELES: Musician Jon Batiste, who was nominated for 11 Grammys, was the big winner of the night, picking up five trophies, including album of the year for *We Are*.

'Silk Sonic', a group featuring the collective talents of Bruno Mars and Anderson Paak, picked up four awards, including record of the year, while Olivia Rodrigo and 'Foo Fighters' each collected three Grammy Awards, reports *Variety*. "The creative arts are objective. It will find the person when they need it the most. Be you!" a moved Batiste said in his acceptance speech.

After a two-month delay, the 64th Annual Grammy Awards took place Sunday night, live from the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas, without a slap in sight and "keep-

ing people's names out of our mouths", joked host Trevor Noah early in the night.

Being back in person after a virtual setting revived the Grammys with in-person performances by Lil Nas X, BTS, Silk Sonic, Lady Gaga (with a virtual introduction by Tony Bennett), Rodrigo, Batiste, Justin Bieber with Gideon and Daniel Caesar, Billie Eilish and Finneas, and more.

In an emotional moment, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy addressed the audience with a taped message introducing a performance by John Legend, accompanied by Ukrainian artist Mika Newton and poet Lyuba Ykimichiuk performing 'Free'.

"Our musicians wear body armour instead of tuxedos," he said adding, "We are fighting Russia

which brings horrible silence with its bombs. The dead silence. Fill the silence with your music."

The Grammys were initially scheduled to take place January 31, at the Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles. However, due to the Omicron surge in late 2021, the event was postponed until spring and moved to the MGM Arena, which has

housed the Latin Grammy Awards for six years. IANS



Wedding bells for Alia-Ranbir finally

MUMBAI: The wedding that everyone's been eagerly waiting for may happen a lot sooner than anticipated. Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt have finally decided to tie the knot. As per sources, the couple was considering second week of April for their low key wedding taking into consideration Alia's maternal grandfather's fragile health condition. A source close to the couple has now confirmed that April 17 is the final wedding date.

"Alia's grandfather N Razdan wanted to see her getting married to Ranbir. A hush hush wedding has thus been planned April 17 which will be a close knit family affair. The ceremony will be held at RK Studios and nothing extravagant has been planned yet," the source informed.

Both Ranbir and Alia are working out the logistics of the RK Studios site in Chembur. There have been no confirmations on the guest list because the couple has been checking with close family

members for their availability. Recent reports suggested that Shaadi Squad and mehendi expert Veena Nagda were approached for Alia and Ranbir's wedding, but they revealed that they've not been approached by the actors for an April function. The source explains that the marriage function will be a small and private family affair between the families. The wedding will be either a single day or at max, a 2-day affair featuring close family members only.

AGENCIES



When Ram Charan WALKED BAREFOOT

HYDERABAD: *RRR* actor Ram Charan was spotted at Mumbai airport, as he was seen in unusual black attire walking barefoot.

The Rangasthalam actor observes a 41-day 'Deeksha', which is the reason behind his attire. Ram Charan, a core believer of Sabarimala Ayyappa, generally observes 'Deeksha', a 41-day ritual, whenever possible. As the actor was busy with back-to-back promotions for *RRR*, he started the 'Deeksha' post the movie's grand release.

Ram Charan, who is a pet lover, had taken this oath to follow the Deeksha ritual, as he had a mannat when his pet dog 'Brat' fell sick some time ago.

"I lost my Brat (pet dog) earlier. That pain was haunting me and hence my wife Upasana gifted me a similar puppy. I named him Brat, again. Brat got his leg fractured and hence I have a 'mannat' that I will not eat non-vegetarian food until



he gets up and run," Ram Charan had explained in one of his interviews earlier. AGENCIES

A must-watch in list of sci-fi series

Space and time have many mysteries entangled within themselves. There have been some smart attempts at depicting such tales on the silver screen, where the representation is based on the best of human imagination. Here're a few sci-fi shows that are currently streaming on various OTT platforms that promise wholesome entertainment

Lost in Space
The story of *Lost in Space* revolves around the Robinson family, which happens to crash land on an alien planet that is nothing like



Earth. The family went into space to fight for a chance for humanity, but now fighting to save their life. The series stars the likes of Molly Parker, Toby Stephens and Maxwell Jenkins.

Loki
Based on the Marvel Comics character *Loki*, the American series is hailed as one of the best sci-fi works in recent times. Played by Tom Hiddleston, Loki is the adopted brother of Thor and is also touted as the god of mischief. He steps out of the shadow of his



brother and embarks on an adventure full of variants, timelines and a multiversal war. The first season of the show is streaming on Disney+ Hotstar.

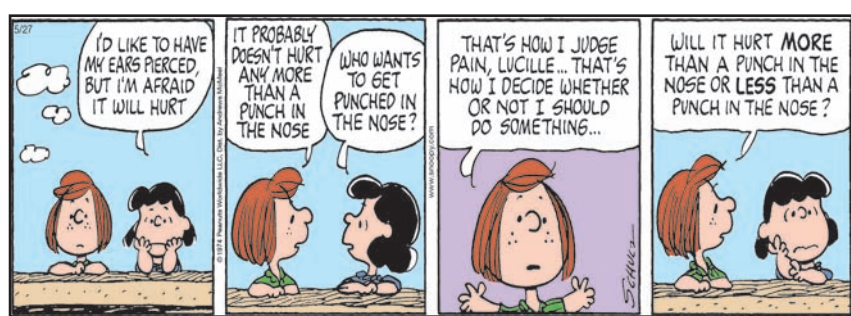
Detective Boomrah
A man appears mysteriously in a locked room of a heritage hotel and when confronted, he rushes to the roof and jumps to disappear mid-air. In a bid to find his whereabouts, the authorities reach out to *Detective Boomrah*, who comes to probe the case along with his partner Sam. The show delves into con-



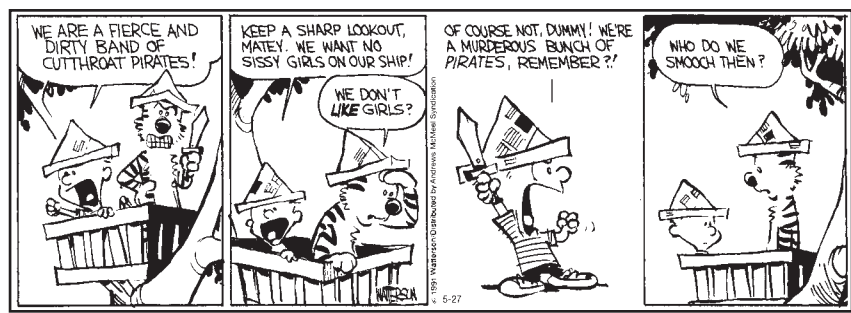
cepts like time travel. The first season of the show is available on MX Player.

JL 50
Starring critically acclaimed actors like Pankaj Kapur, Piyush Mishra and Abhay Deol, *JL 50* is another series based on the concept of time travel. A flight crashed landed in a remote region of West Bengal, triggering an investigation. It is later discovered that even as the plane crash-landed now, it had gone missing nearly 35 years ago. The show is available on Sony Liv. IANS

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

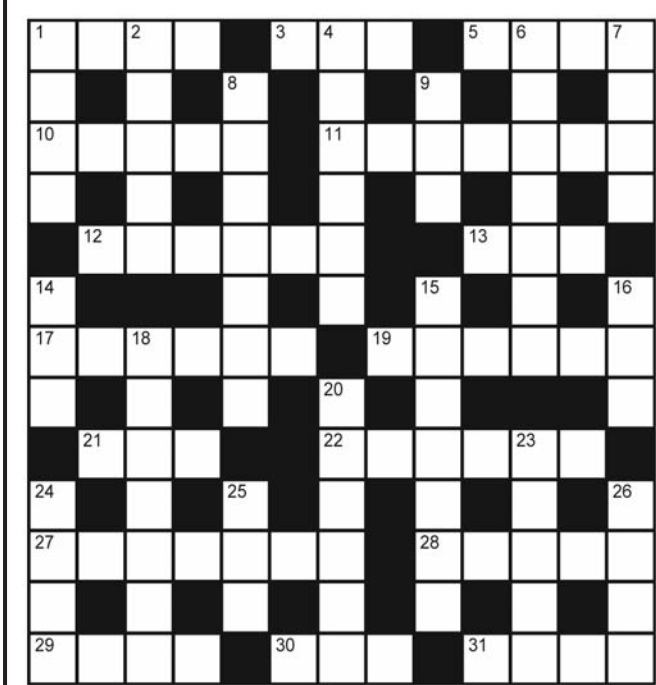


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



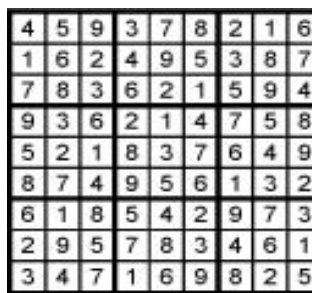
- Across
- 1 Extinct bird
 - 3 Auction unit
 - 5 Self-satisfied
 - 10 Trend
 - 11 Hot sauce
 - 12 Sushi condiment
 - 13 Beast of burden
 - 17 Apprentice
 - 19 Organ stop
 - 21 Coffee holder
 - 22 S.A. river
 - 27 Rattle
 - 28 Sang-froid
 - 29 Malt kiln
 - 30 Swedish shag rug
 - 31 Make a sweater
- Down
- 1 Swimmer's action
 - 2 Article of faith
 - 4 Clothing ensemble
 - 6 War paint
 - 7 Rum drink
 - 8 Auto expense
 - 9 Subside
 - 14 Subsidy
 - 15 Full of fight
 - 16 Genteel affair
 - 18 Despot
 - 20 Napoleon locale
 - 23 Burger topper
 - 24 Martial art
 - 25 Circle segment
 - 26 Waistcoat

SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



IT'S FINALLY ARRIVED

Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt, putting all speculations to rest, have finally decided to tie the knot

LEISURE



MOSCOW FACES FLAK

Russia faced a fresh wave of condemnation Monday after evidence emerged of deliberate killings of civilians in Ukraine

INTERNATIONAL P8



BARCA MOVE TO 2ND

Barcelona continue their revival under Xavi Hernandez as they move to second in La Liga after their win over Sevilla

SPORTS

BACK PAGE

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BHUBANESWAR | TUESDAY, APRIL 5 | 2022

P1

No let-up in fuel prices; 12th hike adds 40 paise/ltr

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 4: Petrol and diesel prices stood at ₹110.79 and ₹100.54 respectively in the Capital city following a hike of 40 paise per litre, Monday.



CITY FUEL PRICES	
PETROL	₹110.79/litre
DIESEL	₹100.54/litre

Oil prices were again raised Monday by 40 paise a litre each at national level, taking the total increase in rates in the last two weeks to ₹8.40 per litre. Petrol in Delhi will now cost ₹103.81 per litre as against ₹103.41 previously, while diesel rates have gone up from ₹94.67 per litre to ₹95.07, according to a price notification of state fuel retailers. Rates have been increased across the country and vary from state to state, depending upon the incidence of local taxation. This is the 12th increase in prices since the ending of a four-and-half-month long hiatus in rate revision March 22. In all, petrol prices have gone up by ₹8.40 per litre.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Govt lifting mask mandate was not for us, you dimwit!

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	VIATION
SENSEX	60611.74	↑ 1335.05
NIFTY	18053.40	↑ 382.90
DOLLAR	75.97	↓ ₹0.20
EURO	82.81	↓ ₹1.15
GOLD	₹51,224	↓ ₹120
SILVER	₹66,097	↓ ₹636

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	34.4°C	34.2°C
TEMP MIN	26.5°C	26.5°C
Humidity	73%	79%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Dry weather likely	

HDFC TO MERGE WITH HDFC BANK

New Delhi: In the biggest merger in corporate history, India's largest housing finance company HDFC Ltd will merge with country's largest private lender HDFC Bank to create a banking behemoth. Once the deal is effective, HDFC Bank will be 100 per cent owned by public shareholders, and existing shareholders of HDFC will own 41 per cent of the bank, according to stock exchange filings by the firms. Every HDFC shareholder will get 42 shares of HDFC Bank for 25 shares held. This is a merger of equals, said Deepak Parekh, Chairman, HDFC Ltd. The HDFC-HDFC Bank merger is expected to be completed by the second or third quarter of FY24. P11

MUSK TAKES 9.2% STAKE IN TWITTER

San Francisco: Tesla CEO Elon Musk is taking a 9.2% stake in Twitter. Musk purchased approximately 73.5 million shares, according to a regulatory filing Monday. Musk's stake in Twitter is considered a passive investment, which means Musk is a long-term investor that's looking to minimise his buying and selling of the shares. However, Musk has been raising questions about the ability to communicate freely on Twitter, tweeting last month about free speech and the social media platform and industry analysts were skeptical about the mercurial CEO remaining on the sidelines anywhere. P11

HIGHWAY PILEUP KILLS 1, INJURES 3



SANDWICHED: Fire Services personnel carry out rescue operations at the mishap site near Palasuni Square in Bhubaneswar, Monday

Bhubaneswar, April 4: A chain-reaction accident involving five vehicles including a truck left one person dead and three others injured in Bhubaneswar Monday, police said. The accident took place on National Highway-16 in Palasuni area of the City after the truck hit a car. In the impact of the crash, the car jumped the road divider and collided with another vehicle moving in the opposite direction. At least three other vehicles were also involved in the accident. The lone person in the first car died on the spot, while three others travelling in other vehicles were injured, police said. The truck driver fled the spot after the accident which caused a huge traffic jam in the area on the National Highway-16. Hundreds of vehicles remained stranded on both sides of the road for more than three hours, police said.

One man's act: CS

DGP Bansal, who accompanied the Chief Secretary to the shrine, said investigation is on and the motive behind the disrespectful act will be ascertained soon

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, April 4: Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra, who visited Srimandir along with Director General of Police Sunil Kumar Bansal following Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's directive to take stock of the investigation into the vandalism at the shrine's kitchen, Monday said that one person was seen on the CCTV footage of the vandalism and he will be nabbed soon. Addressing the media, Mahapatra said the state government has taken a strict note of the incident. "Appropriate measures will be taken to ensure that such incident does not recur," the Chief Secretary said after holding discussions with district Collector Samarth Verma and Superintendent of Police KV Singh. He ruled out that the incident was a result of differences between 'Suar-Mahasuar Niyog' and the 'Suar Niyog'—the two groups of servitors engaged in the holy kitchen. Earlier in the day, the temple administration approached the Singhdwar Police here alleging



that around 43 earthen hearths (chullahs) at Srimandir kitchen were found vandalised. Based on the complaint, police registered a case under several Sections of the IPC including 427 and 295A in connection with the vandalism. The DGP said those behind the incident would be arrested soon and investigation is underway to ascertain the motive of the vandalism. A five-member team has been formed to investigate the matter, he said. Bansal said the number of security personnel at the shrine will be increased and high-resolution cameras would be installed at the 12th century temple. Sources said for the first time in the history of Srimandir, around 80 earthen hearths at the temple kitchen were found vandalised Sunday.

SRIMANDIR VANDALISM

Rules amended for deputy mayor poll

The new rule has allowed for appointment of agents by political parties and the election officer will allow the authorised agents to verify the votes cast by elected members of their respective parties

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, April 4: Ahead of the election for the post of deputy mayor in three municipal corporations, the state government has amended the election rules. The housing & urban development department Monday issued two separate notifications to implement the new rule for the election of deputy mayor and vice-chairperson in several urban local bodies (ULBs) of the state. The new rule has allowed for appointment of agents by political parties and the election officer will allow the authorised agents to verify the votes cast by the elected members of their respective parties as is being done during the Rajya Sabha elections. "In furtherance of the provisions of the Odisha Municipal Corporation (division of city into wards, reservation of seats and conduct of election) Rules, 2003, the government has been pleased to decide that every political party, whose member as an elector casts a vote for the purpose of election to the office of the deputy mayor of a municipal corporation, may appoint one authorised agent," read one of the notifications. The president or the general secretary of the state-level political party or state unit of the national party will have to submit the details of authorised agent in writing to the election officer prior to the scheduled date of election. "When an elector being a member of a political party, records his vote on a ballot paper and before such elector inserts that ballot paper into the ballot box, allow the authorised agent of that political party to verify as to whom such elector has cast his vote," it said. The government has enforced similar provision under the Odisha Municipal Rules, 1994, for the purpose of election to the post of the vice-chairperson in municipalities and NACs. The indirect election for the post of deputy mayor in Cuttack, Berhampur and Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporations will be held April 8, 9 & 10, respectively.

NEWS IN BRIEF

VM KWATRA TO BE NEW FOREIGN SECY

New Delhi: Vinay Mohan Kwatra, India's ambassador to Nepal, has been named the new Foreign Secretary by the Centre Monday succeeding Harsh Vardhan Shringla who retires April 30. Known to be having extensive expertise in dealing with India's neighbourhood as well as the US, China and Europe, the 1988-batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer pipped nearly half-a-dozen others in the race for the coveted post including Indian High Commissioner to UK Gaitri Issar Kumar (1986-batch IFS) and Ruchira Kamboj (1987 batch IFS).

COVID CASES FALL TO SINGLE-DIGIT

Bhubaneswar: The daily fresh Covid-19 cases in Odisha Monday were the lowest in nearly two years as it dropped to single-digit for the first time since May 2020, the Health department said. The state registered only five fresh cases and no new fatality in the last 24 hours. Two children were among the five more people who were afflicted with the disease, according to a bulletin. The active Covid-19 cases dropped to 298, while 37 more patients have recuperated. The daily positivity rate was 0.02 per cent and the infections were detected out of 20,640 sample tests, it added.

Helps 'ugly girls' marry: Textbook lists dowry 'merits'

A picture of the page from "Textbook of Sociology for Nurses" listing the "merits and advantages" of dowry system has gone viral on social media, prompting a furore in academic circles

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, April 4: In a shocker, a sociology textbook for nurses has claimed that the oft-reviled system of dowry is actually good for society and even helps parents of "ugly looking girls" to get them married off.

The "gems" of social wisdom are available in "Textbook of Sociology for Nurses", penned by senior author TK Indrani, and published by the New Delhi-based Jaypee Brothers Medical Publishers Pvt Ltd. Following a furore in Maharashtra academic circles, the publishers informed IANS that they will delete the offensive sections in their future editions of the same textbook. The idea of dowry, termed as preposterous by many, figures in Chapter 6, Page 122, contending the main cause of accepting dowry by the groom's parents is that they have to, in turn, give dowry to their outgoing daughters and sisters.



"Naturally, they look to the (incoming) dowry of their sons to meet their obligations in finding

husbands for their daughters," the book seeks to justify. Contacted for comments, Samina Khan, a spokesperson for the publication house, said that the textbook author will not be revising the title. "Whenever we go in for revised editions, this portion will be removed from the text," the company told IANS in an email. The chapter refers to how young boys earning high salaries or promising professional careers become "scarce commodities" and hence, their parents demand huge amounts of money from the girl's parents to accept her as their daughter-in-law.

The author lists several "merits and advantages of the dowry system", that is officially frowned on, while giving/accepting dowry is banned under the Indian laws. The dowry system helps spread education among girls as due to the burden of dowry, many people have started educating their girls, it also said. "When the girls are educated or even employed, the demand of dowry will be less. Thus, it is an indirect advantage," says the textbook. Finally, it claims that "ugly-looking girls can be married off with attractive dowry with well or ugly-looking boys".

HE dept extends online scholarship application deadline

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 4: The Higher Education (HE) department yet again extended the deadline of online application and online validation of all the categories of scholarship for the year 2021-22.

In a letter to the colleges and universities of the state, department Joint Secretary Pratiba Sahu said, "The department intimates you regarding the extension of deadline for online application by students and online validation by institutes for all categories of scholarship awarded by the department under e-Medhabruti for UG, PG, and Technical and Professional merit students and Vyasakabi Fakir Mohan Bhasabruti for UG and PG Odia students till May 5 (for online application by students) and till May 20 for online validation by institution head."

The last date of online application for students has been extended till May 5. The deadline for online validation by the heads of institutes concerned has been extended till May 20

"You are requested to create awareness among the students of your institution for application of the aforementioned scholarships for session for 2021-22 in various modes," read the letter.

This is the third time the higher education department has granted extension to the scholarship application process. Earlier, the last date of online application for students was extended till April 5 this year, while the deadline for online validation by heads of institutes/principals concerned was extended till April 20. Before that, the last date for the receipt of application was extended to March 5 from February 5.

Under e-Medhabruti scholarship, financial assistance is provided to meritorious students pursuing undergraduate, postgraduate, technical and professional courses. Similarly, the Vyasakabi Fakir Mohan Bhasabruti scholarship is provided to students pursuing undergraduate and postgraduate courses in the Odia language.

Students call Sushrutam Trust good for nothing

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 4: The first and second year students of School of Nursing and Allied Health Science, a BSc nursing course of Utkal University's second campus in Chandikhol, protested Monday demanding the removal of Sushrutam Utkal Health & Educational Charitable Trust.

Demonstrating at Utkal University Vani Vihar, the students asked the university to take over the administration of the course.

Termining the trust was good for nothing, the agitating students said that they were not getting practical training due to the lack of teachers and that the trust was not filling up the vacancy of teachers.

"We demand immediate removal of the trust from college management and ask the university to take control of the course. We also demand recruitment of required teachers," said one of the protesting student.

The students also demanded that classes be taken on the second campus of the university. "At present, the classes are being conducted on another college campus. We also demand seats at hostel for the BSc students as many students are living outside with lot of difficulties," the student added.

Utkal University VC Sabita Acharya assured the students of organising a meeting with the trust Tuesday and said she would take control of the course soon. Though the students called off their protest, they threatened to resume the stir if their demand was not met.

State deploys 106 ERVs, 150 more soon

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 4: With a view to boosting emergency service infrastructure in Odisha, the state government along with Odisha Police deployed as many as 106 112 emergency response vehicles (ERVs) in the first phase across the state, Monday.

The aim of this new service is to address the distress calls by citizens in a more coordinated manner. Special DGP (SAP) Manoj Chhabra flagged off the 106 ERVs at an event held at OSAP 6th Battalion ground, Cuttack.

In an effort to establish coordination between different emergency services, and to minimise confusion in reaching out to separate emergency numbers for different needs, this new initiative will act as a holistic solution for people of the state.

These new 112 emergency response vehicles will act similarly like a PCR van. To help them serve



more efficiently, these new vans have been equipped with modern systems such as GIS and GPS. With these additions, assistance will be provided promptly at the time of emergency situations such as crime, mob attack or accidents.

Manoj said, "Today is important for Odisha Police, Fire and Ambulance service. Like 911 in

America, people of Odisha will get three emergency services like police, fire and ambulance under one emergency number that is 112. We have already handed over 106 numbers of vehicles. In the second phase, we are going to launch another 150 vehicles."

Sabyasachi Biswal, State Head of Ziqitza Healthcare Limited, the

Today is important for Odisha Police, Fire and Ambulance service. Like 911 in America, people of Odisha will get three emergency services like police, fire and ambulance under one emergency number that is 112. We have already handed over 106 numbers of vehicles. In the second phase, we are going to launch another 150 vehicles

MANOJ CHHABRA | SPECIAL DGP (SAP)

managing company for 112 ERVs in the state, said, "Earlier Odisha government had launched an all-encompassing emergency helpline number '112' to bring police, fire brigade, ambulance and other services under the Emergency Response Support System (ERSS). The launch

of these new 106 ERVs are in line with the state govt's effort in strengthening the 112 service. This initiative will be a key enabler to ensure timely response in case of any emergency. It will be a boon to the 4.3 crore population of the state."

A total of 106 ERVs have been strategically deployed as part of the service across the districts and key cities of the state, namely Angul (3), Balasore (3), Bargarh (3), Berhampur (3), Bhadrak (3), Bolangir (3), Boudh (2), Cuttack (3), Deogarh (2), Dhenkanal (3), Gajapati (3), Ganjam (3), Jagatsinghpur (3), Jajpur (3), Jharsuguda (3), Kalahandi (3), Kendrapara (3), Keonjhar (3), Khurda (3), Koraput (3), Malkangiri (3), Mayurbhanj (3), Nabarangpur (3), Nayagarh (3), Nuapada (2), Puri (3), Rayagada (3), Rourkela (3), Sambalpur (3), Subarnapur (2), Sundargarh (3), DCP Bhubaneswar (7). Like other emergency services, this will be entirely free for the public.

Boosting immunisation under Indradhanush

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 4: UNICEF Odisha in collaboration with Department of Health and Family Welfare, Odisha and Regional Outreach Bureau (ROB), Bhubaneswar, organised a virtual media sensitisation programme on 'Intensified Mission Indradhanush' (IMI) and Covid Vaccine for children.

The drive is being carried out in three districts - Mayurbhanj, Koraput and Ganjam.

The IMI was rolled out in the state for boosting full immunisation coverage of both mother and children post pandemic scenario under which Odisha was the only state in the country to achieve 90.5% of immunisation apart from the successful Covid vaccination as per National Family Health Survey (NFHS) 5 report.

While 20 districts of the state were above 90% in full immunisation, 10 districts are still in focus due to coverage below 90%.

Crash probe training prog to curb mishaps

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 4: In a bid to offer scientific understanding of accident investigation processes to police and transport officials, Commerce and Transport Minister Padmanabha Behera Monday inaugurated the State-level Crash Investigation Training Programme at the Commissionerate Police office here.

Organised by State Transport Authority (STA) in association with Odisha Police, it is a first-of-its-kind state-level programme in Odisha wherein police & transport officials will be trained on ways to provide authentic data of an accident which in turn will facilitate the designing of policy-level interventions for the reduction of road mishaps.

Behera said road accidents are a serious cause of concern for all. Odisha has lost more than 45,000 lives to road mishaps in the last decade. The government is committed to reduce the fatalities.

With Muskan for Road Safety, a NGO, with its knowledge partner, the training will be conducted at all police range headquarters across Odisha and Commissionerate Police, Cuttack-Bhubaneswar.

In the first phase, the training will be conducted at Berhampur, Rourkela and Commissionerate Police, Bhubaneswar. Altogether 70 participants—50 from police department and 20 from transport department— will

participate in the programme at each place.

About the training programme, he said, "The training programme will certainly enhance the skill of police and transport department officials for investigating a road crash with a holistic approach covering all possible causes."

Director General of Police (DGP) Sunil Kumar Bansal said trained and skilled investigators can offer key insights to both enforcement and road owning agencies on improving road safety scenario in the state.

"Like a surgeon needs to be trained about surgery process, officers need to be trained on ways to conduct investigation in a scientific manner. A proper crash investigation will not only help find the culprit but also prevent further mishaps," the police top brass said.

Twin city police commissioner Saumendra Priyadarsi said only enforcement is not adequate to curb road mishaps. "We all understand that more work and efforts are needed in the field of road safety. We have to have a synergy in the mission of saving lives."

The upgraded STA website was inaugurated on the occasion. The revamped website is one-stop destination for transport-related queries. It is user friendly, easy to navigate and informative. Some of the best performers in Road Safety in Odisha were felicitated on this occasion.



Centre For Sight Group of Eye Hospitals Chairman and Managing Director Mahipal Singh Sachdev felicitated Governor Ganeshi Lal during the inauguration of the group's eye care hospital in Nayapalli area of Bhubaneswar. Lokayukta Member RP Sharma, Health & Family Welfare Additional Chief Secretary Raj Kumar Sharma and Bhubaneswar North MLA Susant Kumar Rout were seen

Focus films, books on forgotten warriors like Paikas: Shah

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, April 4: Union Home Minister Amit Shah Monday felicitated the entire team of "Vidroh", a serial based on Paika warrior Buxi Jagabandhu. He urged people to carry out research and write books and make films on forgotten warriors and the incidents of Indian history.

The Union Home Minister attended a special screening of Vidroh serial along with Union Ministers - Dharmendra Pradhan,

Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Bishweswar Tudu, Rajeev Ranjan, V Muralidharan, Annapurna Devi and Anurag Thakur.

Shah said that he read about Buxi Jagabandhu for the first time at the age of seven from a Marathi Pundit. "The life and the struggle of Buxi Jagabandhu against the company rule is an inspiration for everyone. He fought for the freedom of his land, people and culture," he said.

Shah said that there were over 2,000 people in the history who could inspire people in the country.



"However; they have been removed from the history books," he said.

He also advised everyone to stay away from the controversy of "history rewriting" and said there was no need to change textbooks. "There

are other ways like book writing or film making. People should research about the forgotten warriors and incidents in our history, which is over 10,000 years old and write books and make films on them," he said.

Shah also lauded Paika tradition of Odisha. He said that he had studied the world history but had never read about such great tradition in any other part.

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan also appreciated the star cast and creators of Vidroh serial.

RUMBLING RED PLANET

Volcanic activity in mantle behind Marsquakes: Study

The study authors say while the quakes would have caused some shaking on Mars, the seismic events were relatively small in magnitude and would barely be felt if they had occurred on Earth. The quakes were detected over a period of about 350 sols, a term used to refer to one solar day on Mars, which is equivalent to about 359 days on Earth

Volcanic activity beneath the surface of Mars could be responsible for triggering repetitive Marsquakes, which are similar to earthquakes, in a specific region of the Red Planet, an international team of researchers suggested.

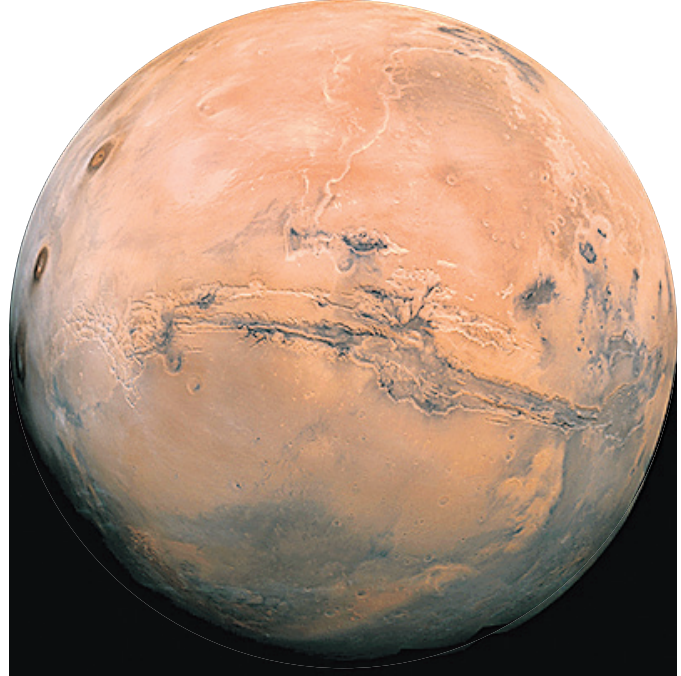
The team from the Australian National University (ANU) and the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing discovered 47 previously undetected Marsquakes beneath the Martian crust in an area called Cerberus Fossae, a seismically active region on Mars that is less than 20 million years old.

They speculate that magma activity in the Martian mantle, which is the inner layer of Mars sandwiched between the crust and the

core, is the cause of these newly detected Marsquakes.

The findings, published in the journal Nature Communications, suggest magma in the Martian mantle is still active and is responsible for the volcanic Marsquakes, contrary to past beliefs held by scientists that these events are caused by Martian tectonic forces.

According to geophysicist Professor Hrvoje Tkalčić from the ANU Research School of Earth Sciences, the repetitive nature of these quakes and the fact they were all detected in the same area of the planet suggests Mars is more seismically active than scientists previously thought. "We found that these Marsquakes repeatedly occurred at all times of the Martian day, whereas Marsquakes detected



and reported by NASA in the past appeared to have occurred only during the dead of night when the planet is quieter," Tkalčić said. "Therefore, we can assume that the movement of molten rock in the

Martian mantle is the trigger for these 47 newly detected Marsquakes beneath the Cerberus Fossae region," he added.

The researchers used data collected from a seismometer attached

We found that these Marsquakes repeatedly occurred at all times of the Martian day, whereas Marsquakes detected and reported by NASA in the past appeared to have occurred only during the dead of night when the planet is quieter. Therefore, we can assume that the movement of molten rock in the Martian mantle is the trigger for these 47 newly detected Marsquakes beneath the Cerberus Fossae region

HRVOJE TKALČIĆ | GEOPHYSICIST PROFESSOR, RESEARCH SCHOOL OF EARTH SCIENCES, AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

to NASA's InSight lander, which has been collecting data about Marsquakes, Martian weather and the planet's interior since landing on Mars in 2018.

Using a unique algorithm, the researchers were able to apply their

techniques to the NASA data to detect the 47 previously undetected Marsquakes.

The study authors say while the quakes would have caused some shaking on Mars, the seismic events were relatively small in magnitude and would barely be felt if they had occurred on Earth. The quakes were detected over a period of about 350 sols, a term used to refer to one solar day on Mars, which is equivalent to about 359 days on Earth.

According to Tkalčić, the Marsquake findings could help scientists figure out why the Red Planet no longer has a magnetic field.

"The Marsquakes indirectly help us understand whether convection is occurring inside of the planet's interior, and if this convection is happening, which it looks like it is based off our findings, then there must be another mechanism at play that is preventing a magnetic field from developing on Mars," he said.

"Understanding Mars' magnetic field is crucial for future missions and also if scientists one day hope to establish human life on Mars," he further added.

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SHORT TAKES

'Custodial death' sparks tension

Phulbani: Tension ran high after an undertrial prisoner who had allegedly sustained critical injuries in police custody of Gochhapada police station in Kandhamal district died during treatment, Monday. The deceased was identified as Mrutyunjaya Kanhar of Pairaju village under Gochhapada police limits in the district. The deceased was arrested in November 31 last year in a drug-related case and was allegedly tortured in police custody. Later, he was remanded to Phulbani jail but was not provided any treatment. He fell sick March 30 and was admitted to the district headquarters hospital. Later he was shifted to MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur and was undergoing treatment where he succumbed during treatment, Sunday. People demanding ₹20 lakh compensation to the bereaved family and suspension of Gochhapada IIC Ranjit Kumar Muni and two other police officials staged a demonstration outside the police station, Monday.

B. Pharma student found hanging

Nuapada: A first year student of B. Pharma was found hanging Monday from a ceiling fan in his hostel room at Mahamaya Boys' Hostel of Sunsunia in Nuapada district. Prime facie it is a case of suicide, reports said. However, the exact reason is yet to be ascertained. The deceased student has been identified as Sridhar Panda of Barikel in Barghar district. As per the reports, Sridhar was the first-year student of Batakushna College of Pharmacy. While the whole college was busy preparing for the Annual Day celebrations, Sridhar was alone in his room. A few of his friends spotted his door locked from inside and called him, but he did not answer. On being informed, local police arrived at the hostel and broke open the door, only to find him hanging from a ceiling fan. Fellow students revealed Sridhar was an introvert and did not talk much to anyone.

Man with wife's help tries to bury mom



POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, April 4: In a shocking incident, a man and his wife tried to bury the former's mother by heaping bricks on the elderly woman at Dattapur village under Mangalpur police limits in Jajpur district. The incident, a fallout over property dispute came to the fore after a video of it went viral on social media platforms, Monday. The woman identified as Makhi Behera however, survived the attack. A source said that Makhi had

been previously abandoned by her four sons and daughter-in-laws. Hence, she was living on the mercy of her neighbours and relatives. One of her sons, Raghunath alias Chagulu and his wife Madhusmita recently asked Makhi to transfer the ownership of the ancestral property in their names.

After Makhi refused to act according to their instruction, the couple started torturing her. Things took an ugly turn when the two tried to bury her under a heap of bricks. However, Makhi was rescued by her youngest daughter-in-law with assistance from neighbours. Later, she was rushed to community health centre in Mangalpur.

An FIR in this regard was lodged with Mangalpur police, based on which police have launched a probe into the incident.



BUDDING SCIENTISTS

Students displaying their projects at a block-level science exhibition held at Shankara High School under Binka block in Subarnapur district, Monday OP PHOTO

Female population on rise in Odisha prisons

LACK OF JAILS EXCLUSIVELY FOR WOMEN HAVE COMPOUNDED THE PROBLEMS OF THE ODISHA GOVERNMENT

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, April 4: Men commit more crimes than women usually do. However, new data shows that the number of women behind bars has seen a significant rise in the past few years in Odisha.

Approximately 7,622 women are currently serving their times in 87 jails across Odisha. Out of them, 1,431 women have been found guilty and have been convicted while the remaining 6,191 are serving as undertrials since 2010.

This data was released in Odisha Assembly by Minister Dibyashankar Mishra on the questions of MLA Mohancharan Majhi a few days back. Among the women in prison 36 are staying with their children.

There has been a significant rise in the involvement of women in thefts, contraband smuggling, murders and cyber crimes, the minis-



Approximately 7,622 women are currently serving their times in 87 jails across Odisha. FILE PHOTO

ter observed in the Assembly. With no employment opportunities, educated girls have taken to social media to lure young men and blackmail them with nude pictures and videos. There has also been a rise in women's involvement in selling and peddling of drugs. Some of the districts where crimes by women have gone up are Mayurbhanj, Berhampur, Cuttack, Balasore, Khurda, Sundargarh, Kalahandi, Bolangir and Bhadrak.

As per reports, 490 women were jailed in 2010, 443 in 2011, 476 in 2012, 641 in 2013, 538 in 2014, 642 in 2015, 538 in 2016, 560 in 2017, 604 in 2018, 587 in 2019, 660 in 2020, 739 in 2021 and 704 by February 2022 in different prisons across Odisha.

The minister observed that no women have been impregnated or sexually harassed while serving time in prisons. He pointed out that the last time sexual harassment of a woman prisoner was reported in 2013. On orders of the National Human Rights Commission, the Odisha government had paid a compensation of ₹1,00,000 to the victim.

There is only one women's prison in Odisha and it has compounded

the problems of the Odisha government. There are 92 jails in the state out of which five are circle jails, nine district prison, two special jails, six special sub-jails, 67 sub-jails, one open air prison and one model convict jail.

Most of the prisons are full to the brim with prisoners. While the total capacity in Odisha stands at 20,027 prisoners (both women and men), currently there are 19,571 which constitutes 97.72% of the prison population. The lack of women's prisons has forced both men and women stay in the same complex.

On the other hand, five prisons in the state are non-functional now. Patrapur sub-jail in Ganjam district suffered damages during the cyclone 'Phailin'. Repair work is currently on. Similarly, Kashipur sub-jail in Rayagada district has been closed due to manpower shortage. The Laxmipur sub-jail in Koraput district and Malkangiri sub-jail have now been turned into CRPF camps to combat the threat of Maoists. Also prisoners from Rajgangpur sub-jail in Sundargarh district have been transferred to other jails due to lack of water facilities.

It should also be stated that at least 80 posts out of 322 prison executive officers and 402 staff position out of 1,872 are lying vacant in prisons across Odisha.

Defying odds, Salma dons the black robe

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, April 4: Initially identified as a male, Salma Begum, a native of Bhuyan Roida under Joda block in this district has become the first transgender in Odisha to become a lawyer. At first, Begum had to struggle with social dogma, gender bias and humiliation to register herself as the first transgender lawyer in Odisha. She graduated in science and later went on to complete her L.L.B in 2021 and registered for a bar license at Odisha State Bar Council, last Thursday. After the Transgender Protection Act, 2019 came into effect, Begum got an Aadhaar card.

It gave her the confidence to study law with the hope to practice at Barbil court. At the outset, she will practice as a lawyer at Barbil court in Keonjhar district.

Begum was originally born as



Mohammed Salim. In 2015, she came in contact with a transgender group and embraced the identity of Salma Begum. A few years back Salma had shot into the limelight after applying for the post of sub-inspector of police. While the result is still awaited, Salma took up law.

When contacted, she attributed her success to her mentor and fellow transgender Meera Parida.

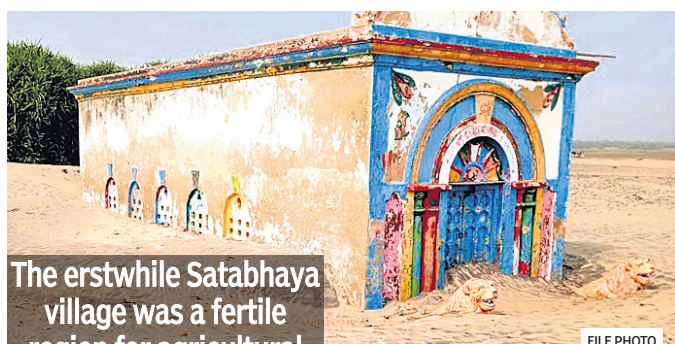
Satabhaya villagers rue admin neglect

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, April 4: Being forced to survive sans any form of livelihood, villagers displaced from Satabhaya area in Rajnagar block of Kendrapara district have raised their voices against neglect and apathy by the administration. "After being displaced from our ancestral lands, we have lost our livelihood. How do we feed our children? It has become very difficult to manage families and meet household expenses," the angry locals said Sunday.

It is worth mentioning, that the erstwhile residents of villages that made the Satabhaya cluster were rehabilitated in Gupti and Bagapatia. While the administration has provided them with some basic amenities, much more is needed to be done.

During rehabilitation, each of the Satabhaya villagers got just 10 decimals of land at the designated colonies in Gupti and Bagapatia to



The erstwhile Satabhaya village was a fertile region for agricultural activities and used to be the main source of livelihood for the residents. FILE PHOTO

construct a house. Electricity, drinking water, road and schools including Anganwadi centres were also provided. However, there was no farmland in the new rehabilitation area. The erstwhile Satabhaya village was a fertile region for car-

rying out agricultural activities and used to be the main source of livelihood for the residents. "Without a stable source of earning, many have migrated to states like Kerala and Tamil Nadu in search of work as migrant labourers," several residents stated.

Residents of Bagapatia rehabilitation colony are yet to be issued their Records of Right (RORs). Hence, they are apprehensive that the district administration may ask them to vacate the land any time

as they have not been recognised as bonafide owners.

Satabhaya previously was a cluster of seven villages. Due to major changes in the local environment, especially sea erosion, the number has now come down to two. The residents were rehabilitated by the Odisha government in 2012. The Odisha government had rehabilitated as many as 571 families of Satabhaya cluster in Kendrapara district.

The villages of Satabhaya and Kanpur still exist. Five other villages namely Gobindpur, Mohanpur, Chintamanipur, Bada Gahirmatha and Kharikula have been washed away due to erosion by the sea.

Descendants of the former ruler of Kanika had established the cluster of villages constituting a panchayat in the coastline of Bay of Bengal. Satabhaya was then a large village owned by seven royal brothers. At the entrance of this cluster of villages was the shrine of presiding deity goddess 'Panchu Barahi'.

MAN MURDERS SISTER-IN-LAW

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rairakhol, April 4: A woman was brutally hacked to death with a sharp-edged weapon by her brother-in-law Sunday evening over previous enmity in Kandataila village of Burda panchayat under Rairakhol police limits in Sambalpur district. The deceased has been identified as Saraswati Bhoi, while the accused is Charan Bag.

According to sources, Saraswati and Charan had a heated argument late Sunday evening over some family issues. Losing his cool, Charan took a sharp-edged weapon and hacked her to death. The victim died on the spot. Seeing the woman die, Charan fled from the spot.

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Mastermind taken on police remand

The group had allegedly sold land worth ₹10 crore in Berhampur through fake papers

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, April 4: In a major case of land fraud, miscreants have sold off prime residential plots at Gandhinagar in this city worth over ₹10 crore by showing the deceased owners as living without the knowledge of their legal heirs, a report said. Police investigating the case have arrested a woman named Bharati Patra, the mastermind of the racket. She is lodged in Berhampur Circle Jail after her arrest as police obtained a one-day remand, Monday.

Bharati was arrested after Kamalendu Patra, a resident of Gandhi Nagar lodged a complaint at the Town police station, January 22. Kamalendu had alleged that



his father Lakshmikanta Patra had purchased a plot at Gandhinagar 27-years back. The sale deed was with Kamalendu but he found the patta (Record of Rights) in

LAND FRAUD
Bharati allegedly committed the fraud with the help of her kin Jayanti Jena and her domestic help N Chiranjeevi Rao alias Srinu

another person's name when he checked it online. Police registered a case and had earlier arrested two persons.

Bharati allegedly committed the fraud with the help of her kin Jayanti Jena and her domestic help N Chiranjeevi Rao alias Srinu. They were absconding after the land deal was busted till police arrested

them from Pune. Town police had applied for her remand in the court of sub-divisional judicial magistrate (SDJM) Jeetendriya Panigrahi which heard the plea and allowed Bharati to be taken on remand. Police have conducted a marathon interrogation with Bharati to find out the roots behind the shoddy land deals.

Bharati with the help of her accomplices have allegedly sold of over 20 acre of land worth ₹10 crore to various persons, police found during interrogating the mastermind. Police also said that they have got vital clues regarding the fraud after interrogating Jayanti, who is a resident of Bijipur Canal Sahi. She is also lodged in Berhampur Circle Jail.

Class VII girl alleges sexual harassment

POST NEWS NETWORK

Udala, April 4: A Class VII girl has brought allegations of sexual harassment against her school authorities in this town of Mayurbhanj district. The minor is a student of Shalakhunta Ashram School under Udala police limits. She accused the school headmaster and matron of passing obscene remarks and threatening to use her pictures inappropriately and make it viral.

According to sources, the girl remained absent from school for some days. Later, when she joined, the headmaster and the matron made the obscene remarks.

On learning about the incident, her family members lodged a written complaint with the police. The accused headmaster when contacted, refused to comment on the allegations.

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FOCUS GEOPOLITICS

SEND MERKEL TO MOSCOW



Former German Chancellor Angela Merkel has unique qualities, and a shared history with Russian President Vladimir Putin unmatched by any other world leader. She should be persuaded to come out of retirement to help rescue the international order she fought to uphold during her time in office

A s a horrified world searches for a way to stop Russian President Vladimir Putin's brutal war against Ukraine, there is one person who might be able to get through to the Kremlin's dangerously isolated autocrat. Angela Merkel, until recently chancellor of Germany held Putin to some degree of good behaviour during her 16 years in office, including by blocking his first attempt to seize Ukraine in 2014.

Merkel has unique qualities, and a shared history with Putin unmatched by any other world leader. She should be persuaded to come out of retirement to help rescue the international order she fought to uphold during her time in office.

Putin and Merkel's complicated relationship began November 9, 1989, with the fall of the Berlin Wall. That event marked Merkel's liberation from the East German police state that had confined her for her first 35 years. She soon shed her scientist's white coat and joined the Christian Democratic Union, later becoming the party's leader and then Germany's first woman chancellor.

For Putin, November 1989 and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet empire he served - which he called "the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the [twentieth] century" - ended his career as a KGB officer in East Germany. Two years apart in age, and products of the same Soviet era, Merkel and Putin have a clear-eyed understanding of each other. They literally and figuratively speak each other's languages.

After Merkel became chancellor, Putin subjected her to various KGB techniques to test her mettle. Knowing her fear of dogs, he unleashed his large black Labrador near her at a 2007 meeting. Merkel did not flinch. "He has to do this to show his manhood," she later said. "He tests you all day and if you don't resist you become smaller and smaller."

Merkel, whose background had prepared her for Putin's capacity for cruelty and deception, did not become smaller. In their many interactions, she simply ignored his staged outbursts and menacing silences.

Although Merkel found Putin

alarmingly detached from reality already in 2014, she pressed on, sometimes for 15 hours at a stretch, in search of an inch of common ground regarding Ukraine. In such situations, she said, "I am as focused as a tightrope walker, only thinking about the next step." Putin stayed at the table and eventually agreed to halt his aggression after Russia had annexed Crimea and occupied parts of Ukraine's eastern Donbas region. For Merkel, a frozen conflict was always better than all-out war.

Her method during their many hours negotiating was to let Putin bluster uninterrupted. When he finished, Merkel would repeat what he had just said in almost childlike language, draining both drama and much sense from his explosion. "Vladimir," she would assert, "this is not how the world sees things."

Merkel's icy calm was backed up by a mastery of battlefield details. "I think I know every tree in Donbas," she once said of the war zone. She pressed Putin to state his goal with precision, and then offered a few steps to get him there. With her scientific training, and free of ego, ideology, and emotion, she broke down his grandiose schemes to their smallest, most manageable parts. "What counts is finding solutions," she often

said. Insofar as Putin is capable of trust, he trusts Merkel, who not only has no remaining political ambitions but also has never publicly denigrated him or divulged the contents of their many private exchanges. Known to admire Russian culture, Merkel never referred to Russia as a "regional power," as former US President Barack Obama once did.

Two months after she left the chancellery, Putin launched the full-scale war she had prevented in 2014. With Merkel gone, her successor, Olaf Scholz, untested, and the United States bitterly polarised thanks to former President Donald Trump, Putin likely calculated that he might finally reverse the "catastrophe" that began in 1989.

But Merkel, too, had miscalculated. A cautious politician, she allowed German business interests to hold sway and failed to halt the (now suspended) Nord Stream 2 pipeline, which would have transported gas directly from Russia to Germany via the Baltic Sea. Nor did she increase Germany's defence budget sufficiently to meet a growing security threat. Merkel despises war and considers recourse to it an utter failure of statesmanship. Yet, with war now raging in Ukraine, Europe and the West have been

plunged into the post-Merkel era with no clear end in sight.

Merkel is possibly the only person on the planet who neither fears, openly holds in contempt, nor is beholden to Putin, and whom he also appears to respect. Given their long-shared history, Putin would be unlikely to relegate Merkel to the opposite end of that comically long Kremlin table where he has recently seated other heads of state to telegraph his lack of interest in serious negotiation.

Putin takes Merkel seriously and - as isolated as he is - must at some level realise that he needs help climbing down from his high and precarious tree without suffering the total loss of face that he dreads and is ready to spill more blood to avoid. Merkel, who knows Putin better than any other world leader does, might help him. With her supreme calm, she might admonish him one final time: "Vladimir; this savage war is not in your interest."

It is a long shot, of course, but the world order of which Merkel was the most stalwart defender hangs in the balance. The stakes are high enough to take the gamble.

The writer is Founding Advisory Council Chair of Action for Democracy.
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Kati Marton

PUTIN TAKES MERKEL SERIOUSLY AND - AS ISOLATED AS HE IS - MUST AT SOME LEVEL REALISE THAT HE NEEDS HELP CLIMBING DOWN FROM HIS HIGH AND PRECARIOUS TREE WITHOUT SUFFERING THE TOTAL LOSS OF FACE THAT HE DREADS

Dollar Vs Ruble

As all eyes are riveted on the geopolitical and humanitarian impact of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, the real war that is being waged is over challenging the supremacy of the US dollar by the Russian ruble or other alternative currencies. In fact, according to one explanation, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine and the subsequent US-led sanctions against Russia are intended to reduce Europe's dependence on Russian crude and gas and thereby erode the strength of the ruble in the international currency market. America's worry increased due to Russia's collaboration with Germany for supply of gas to the EU countries through the Nord Stream II gas project. Once it is commissioned, Europe will be further dependent on Russian gas supply. The war has put the project, which was going on in full swing, on the back burner. Germany has suspended it responding to the US' clamour for sanctions.

The progress of the Russia-Ukraine war and the flurry of international actions increasingly bring to the fore the challenge being offered to the dollar hegemony. India and Russia are trying to establish rupee-ruble trade settlement and this topped the agenda during last week's visit of the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to India and his parleys with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Similarly, China and Saudi Arabia are exploring trade settlement opportunities in their respective currencies. If such trade settlement negotiations materialise, it would change the face of global trade where the US dollar and euro dominate presently. According to a report from 1999-2019, the dollar accounted for 96 per cent of trade invoicing in the Americas and 79 per cent in the rest of the world. About 60 per cent of the international and foreign currency liabilities and claims are denominated in US\$. This share has remained relatively stable since 2000 and far exceeds that of the euro, which is at 20 per cent.

A recent State Bank of India report says that now is a golden opportunity for internationalisation of the Indian currency (rupee) as countries are proposing trade in their fiat currencies to by-pass the economic sanctions imposed by the Western world. Probably the government's decision to demonetize the INR sullied the currency's image. Internationalisation of a currency implies that the currency can be freely transacted by both residents and non-residents of the country and be used as a reserve currency for global trade. The INR suffers in those aspects.

In the wake of the severance of Russian financial institutions from the SWIFT system and the freezing of Moscow's dollar reserves by the US and its allies, the bitter conflict in the international finance system between Russia and the West has assumed serious proportions. As a result, different nations may now be more eager to diversify their foreign exchange reserves so that their financial security may not depend on their relationship with Washington alone. However, the global trust earned by the US\$ over the decades, cannot be wiped away.

Productive economies of the world deplete their resources and exhaust their manpower to boost their exports. This is done to increase the earning of forex so that the productive countries may invest their forex surplus in the so-called 'real economy'. This strategy has been more prevalent since the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997. The US is the largest beneficiary of investments from export earnings of developing countries. This is because it is the dominant currency for global trade.

China, according to one estimate, has \$3.2 trillion of forex against Saudi Arabia's \$447 billion and India's \$632 billion. These are some of the countries with the largest dollar forex. China and Russia are alive to the threat of exchanging their produce for the dollar, whose value and access is controlled by the US. To obviate this, they have created alternatives to the SWIFT. After the Russia-Ukraine war, more countries may find merit in this strategy that offers the opportunity to use their own currencies for trade and faster adoption of alternatives to SWIFT. At the moment, two banks of Russia have been brought under the sanction of denying SWIFT facilities which has started impacting the economy of many countries.

It is in this context the remarks made by Jaishankar before the British foreign secretary Liz Truss need to be examined. His charge that European countries continue to buy crude and gas from Russia despite the sanctions is borne out by facts. In fact, in March Europe had bought 15 per cent more oil and gas from Russia than it did the month before. Most of the major buyers of oil and gas from Russia are in Europe. India gets the bulk of its energy supplies from the Middle East. Russia's contribution is less than 1 per cent.

Truss also admitted Britain's dependence on Russia, claiming in the same breath that her country is trying to reduce it. India's willingness to buy Russian crude at a discount taking advantage of the sanctions is only natural. But, it is also time for India to take stock of its financial systems and plan to safeguard its financial sovereignty since the control of global finance in the hands of either the US or China will never augur well for it.

WISDOM CORNER

- There is no revenge so complete as forgiveness. **JOSH BILLINGS**
- The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong. **MAHATMA GANDHI**
- Forgiveness says you are given another chance to make a new beginning. **DESMOND TUTU**

WORDSWORTH

Smaragdine

Holiday reading is a great source of interesting vocabulary. This turned up in S M Stirling's time-travel story, *Island in the Sea of Time*, in which Nantucket Island is thrown back 3000 years through an unspecified event: "You could see smudges of black woodsmoke drifting out over the smaragdine brightness of the harbor." Poul Anderson's *There Will Be Time*, another time-travel story, also includes it: "On a transverse axis, vision reached from glittering blue across the Sea of Marmora to a mast-crowded Golden Horn and the rich suburbs and smaragdine heights beyond." Fittingly, the term is ancient. It means an emerald-green colour. It probably derives from Sanskrit marataka for an emerald (though a Semitic source has also been suggested). This was taken into Greek as smaragdus, then to Latin smaragdus and thence into English as smaragd as a name for the same stone. Smaragdine came from Latin smaragdinus, relating to the emerald. Emerald also comes from the same source, via Old French e(s)meraud. Its most famous appearance in literature is the Smaragdine Table of Hermes Trismegistus, an emerald-green tablet supposedly found by Alexander the Great in the tomb of Hermes, though it was actually a late medieval forgery. On it was said to be written, in Phoenician characters, the 13 precepts underlying alchemy, including (in this translation from Latin by Sir Isaac Newton), "That which is below is like that which is above and that which is above is like that which is below to do the miracles of one only thing."

LOL

Safe to swim here?

While sports fishing off the Florida coast, a tourist capsized his boat. He could swim, but his fear of alligators kept him clinging to the overturned craft. Spotting an old beachcomber standing on the shore, the tourist shouted, "Are there any alligators around here?" "No," the man hollered back, "they

ain't been around for years!" Feeling safe, the tourist started swimming leisurely toward the shore. About halfway there he asked the guy, "How did you get rid of the alligators?" "We didn't do anything," the beachcomber said. "The sharks got them."

SPECTRUM SOCIETY

Charak or Hippocrates: Needless controversy



Dr. Guru Prasad Mohanta

THE REAL ISSUE IS HOW FAR WE ARE SENSITISING THE FUTURE DOCTORS SO THAT THEY ADHERE TO THE PRINCIPLES OF THE OATH

The National Medical Commission (NMC), the apex medical education regulatory body, has issued a circular dated March 31, 2022 recommending that the modified 'Maharshi Charak Shapath' be introduced when a candidate is introduced to medical education. The circular has led to a controversy whether it is going to replace the traditional 'Hippocratic Oath'. There is no clarity on this as there have been conflicting decisions. The minutes of NMC's meeting with medical colleges say that the Hippocratic Oath is to be replaced by Charak Shapath. On the other hand, Minister of State for Health has clarified in response to a question in the Parliament that there is no proposal for replacement of the Hippocratic Oath. The first-hand understanding makes it clear Charak Shapath is to be introduced when the students have just entered into medical education and Hippocratic Oath is already in practice but given when students transit from pre-clinical to clinical subjects.

The circular has 'brief transliteration of Maharishi Charak

Shapath'. The two significant points include behaviour of the students in the institute and how to deal with a patient of different gender. The first point says: "During the period of study I shall live a disciplined life with my teachers and peers." As this is planned to be introduced in the beginning of the programme, it is very relevant both for sensitising and bringing discipline among the students. The second point is: "I shall treat the patient of gender other than mine in presence of relatives or attendants." How far this provision is practicable? It may be very difficult to have presence of relative or attendant of opposite gender. Shapath or Oath needs to be adhered to in practice. It should not be just a ceremonial ritual.

Hippocratic Oath has its genesis in Greek Physician Hippocrates, who is regarded as the father of modern medicine, and is believed to have been written 2400 years ago. The basic philosophy of the oath says the physician will not exploit the patients and will take care of him/her as the first duty. Even today, the oath is very relevant. Hippocratic Oath is the most well-

known medical oath. Charak Shapath is mentioned in Charak Samhita, a treatise on medical science and practice in ancient India, written by Acharya Charak. It is believed to be written during the First or Second Century AD. The basic philosophy of the Charak Shapath is similar to that of the Hippocratic Oath and says to the doctors: "You must strive with all your soul for the health of the sick. You must not betray your patients, even at the cost of your own life." Adoption of Charak Shapath is a welcome step as its author is Indian and this would be a tribute to the great son of ancient India.

Times have changed and there have been many variations of the Hippocratic Oath. Different cultures and societies have brought these changes. There is no universal medical oath. Currently the financial world is controlling the healthcare sector. There is very little interpersonal relationship between a doctor and a patient. Oath/Shapath is in the best interest of the patient. This makes medicine a profession rather than a trade. To counter the problem of medicine becoming a trade, the

oath should be introduced in the beginning of education and not in the middle or end. As financial interests are increasingly trying to influence the physicians' behaviour, the doctors are in a dilemma.

This controversy over Charak Shapath or Hippocrates Oath for medical students is needless. Fundamentally, both are same with welfare of the patient as their central theme. But the real issue is how far we are sensitising the future doctors so that they adhere to the principles of the oath. The situation has changed from the times the oaths were written. Healthcare is now dominated by insurance companies and the corporate world with huge investments. The doctors are confused between the oath they have taken and the economic pressure of the corporate world. Will our intellectual mass find a solution to guide the future doctors?

The writer is a former Professor and Head, Department of Pharmacy, Annamalai University. Views are personal.

The Gandhian path

Sir, Gandhism has not outlived its utility. It is still relevant in modern times. Agriculture and sanitation are the core values of Gandhism. There is no merit in uttering rhetoric on Gandhism without emulating his principles by word and deed. Since Independence, the posts of the President and the Vice-President have been reserved for the chosen few. Mostly, Vice-Presidents are chosen for the post of President. It is a convention. Similarly, Presidents are selected from political backgrounds. Any Indian citizen who is above 35 years of age and not insolvent and qualified for the member of the Lok Sabha is eligible for the post of President and Vice-President. Let the term change this time. Let farmers, sanitation workers, labourers, and tea sellers be selected for these prestigious posts. Let democracy show its true ethos. May Mahatma Gandhi lead us on the noble path of purity and integrity.

Prabhudutt Dash, BHUBANESWAR

Deepening crisis

Sir, This refers to the editorial 'Lankan Mess', Orissa POST, April 4. The Sri Lankan economy has been facing one of its worst economic crises, resulting from mismanaged government finances and ill-timed tax cuts, besides the impact of the pandemic. Huge piles of foreign debt, series of lockdowns, soaring inflation, shortage in fuel supply, fall in foreign currency reserves and devaluation of currency have adversely impacted the country's economic growth. Sri Lanka's economy was in trouble even before the pandemic struck. The lockdowns further added to its woes and impacted the informal sector hard, which accounts for nearly 60 per cent of the country's workforce. The country's foreign exchange reserves have fallen 70 per cent in the past two years to about \$2.31 billion, leaving it struggling to pay for essential imports, including food and fuel. Tourism, one of the key sources of foreign exchange for the country, was badly hit due to the pandemic. Besides, remittances from Lankans working overseas also declined sharply. Job losses have become a common phenomenon in almost every household. Besides, fall in earning has led to rise in poverty rates. Shortages have scaled to such heights that examinations for millions of students in the country had to be postponed due to lack of paper and ink. Shortage in fuel was already leading to long hours of power disruptions across the country. Countries like India, China and Bangladesh have stepped in to help Sri Lanka. It has also sought financial assistance from International Monetary Fund.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST are most welcome to contribute letters (200 words), articles and columns (between 750-1250 words). Contributors are requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: edit@orissapost.com

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of the day quote

I have shared a relationship of respect and affection with respected elder brother Shivraj Singh Chouhan ji from 1984 to March 2022. While going to the office or even if I was on a visit to the Himalayas or if he remembered any of my religious songs, Shivraj ji would meet or telephone me. During the past two years, during every meeting, I have discussed liquor prohibition with him. But now that the matter has come out in public, why has my brother stopped talking to me? Why is he speaking through the media?

UMA BHARTI | SENIOR BJP LEADER

The Broadcast Seva Portal will reduce the turnaround time of applications and at the same time help applicants track the progress. The portal will reduce the human interface that was required earlier and thus add to capacity building of the Ministry and will be a major step towards Ease of Doing Business

ANURAG SINGH THAKUR | UNION MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING

Goa will need a roadmap to put its tourism sector back on track after the Covid pandemic

ROHAN KHAUNTE | GOA NEW TOURISM MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Life term for don Bannanje Raja

Belagavi (Karnataka): A special KCOCA court Monday awarded life imprisonment to international gangster and underworld don Bannanje Raja, known as 'threat king', and three other accused persons in connection with the sensational shootout case of BJP leader and industrialist RN Nayak. The accused were pronounced guilty earlier by the special court. Along with Bannanje Raja, the court has convicted Jagadish Patel, the prime accused in the case from Uttar Pradesh, Abhi Bhandagar from Bengaluru and Ganesh Bhajanthri from Udupi for life imprisonment.

Kerala man drowns while taking selfies

Thiruvananthapuram: In a tragic incident Monday, a newly-married couple fell into a lake in Kerala's Kozhikode district while taking selfies and while the bride was rescued, the bridegroom drowned, police said. Reginal and his wife, who got married March 14, had reached the tourist location near Kuttiyadi Monday morning and were spending time on the lake front. As they were taking selfies, suddenly both of them fell into the lake which was having a good water flow. The local villagers quickly swung into action but despite their best efforts, the life of the new bridegroom could not be saved.

PM Modi, Bennett discuss global events

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to his Israeli counterpart Naftali Bennett, whose visit to India was postponed after he contracted Covid-19, to enquire about his health and also discussed recent global events. Modi tweeted that he looked forward to welcoming Bennett to India for his first visit to the country.

Terrorist killed

Jammu: An infiltration bid by Pakistani terrorists in Naushera sector of Jammu and Kashmir early Monday was foiled by the Indian Army, and one terrorist killed. "On night of 03/04 April 2022, Indian Army successfully eliminated an infiltration bid attempted by Pakistani terrorists along the Line of Control in Naushera Sector, District Rajouri (J&K)," the army said.



The price of petrol and diesel have been hiked 11 times during the last 13 days. There has been an exorbitant hike in the price of cooking gas as well. The country is going through an acute economic crisis

MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER

SHOCKING REPORT

Twenty four cases of suicide by students were reported in Central Universities in last five years, maximum of them from Uttar Pradesh, according to UGC statistics. The information was shared by Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan in response to a written question in Lok Sabha. The maximum number of cases were reported in 2017 (7) followed by 6 each in 2018 and 2019



No impact of WHO action on Covaxin: BB

Bharat Biotech sources said the pharma company has not supplied the COVID-19 vaccine to any UN agency and no impact of the suspension would be felt

AGENCIES

Hyderabad, April 4: With WHO announcing the suspension of Covaxin supply through UN procurement agencies, Bharat Biotech sources said Monday the pharma company has not supplied the Covid-19 vaccine to any UN agency and no impact of the suspension would be felt.

So far, sources said, the firm has supplied vaccines to the Indian government and nine countries under the Centre's Vaccine Maitri programme, and has made direct commercial supply under emergency use authorisation. "We have not received any orders from any UN agency so far," a source said. Gavi Covax, the international vaccine alliance, has also not placed any orders for Covaxin.

Citing good manufacturing practices (GMP) deficiencies, the World Health Organization (WHO) on April 2 confirmed the suspension of supply of Covaxin through



UN procurement agencies and recommended countries that received the vaccine to take actions as appropriate. In a statement, WHO had said this suspension is in response to the outcome of WHO post Emergency Use Listing (EUL) inspection and the need to conduct process and facility upgrade to address recently identified GMP deficiencies.

Daily Cov cases fall below 1,000

New Delhi, April 4: India recorded less than 1,000 new COVID-19 cases for the first time in 715 days and its active infection count fell below 13,000, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Monday. Thirteen new fatalities pushed the death toll from the pandemic to 5,21,358, the data updated at 8 am stated. A total of 913 new infections were recorded on Monday, taking the case tally to 4,30,29,044. The active case count accounts for 0.03 per cent of the total infections, while the national Covid-19 recovery rate remained at 98.76 per cent, the ministry said. India recorded COVID-19 cases below 1,000 for the first time since April 18, 2020 when 991 cases were reported. A reduction of 416 cases has been recorded in the number of active infections in a span of 24 hours.

On facility upgrade, company sources said Monday that none of the facilities where Covaxin is being made were designed specifically for manufacturing Covaxin. These are repurposed facilities which were already existing for manufacturing other vaccines. "We will be upgrading the existing facilities and make them 100 per cent specific for Covaxin," the source said. "Our vaccine certificates remain valid and there

will be no interruption in supplies in India," the source said.

WHO officials carried an inspection of the BB facility during March 14-22. It was not a surprise visit, the sources said, adding there was no inspection before the EUL was granted and the WHO audit was only for Covaxin. The source said once all facility upgrades are done "we will apply to WHO for full licensure for Covaxin" in due course of time.

J&K: 79 foreigners among 172 ultras active, says Army

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, April 4: As many as 172 terrorists including 79 foreigners are active in Jammu and Kashmir, Army said Monday, adding the number included 15 local youngsters who joined the terrorist ranks since the beginning of the new year.

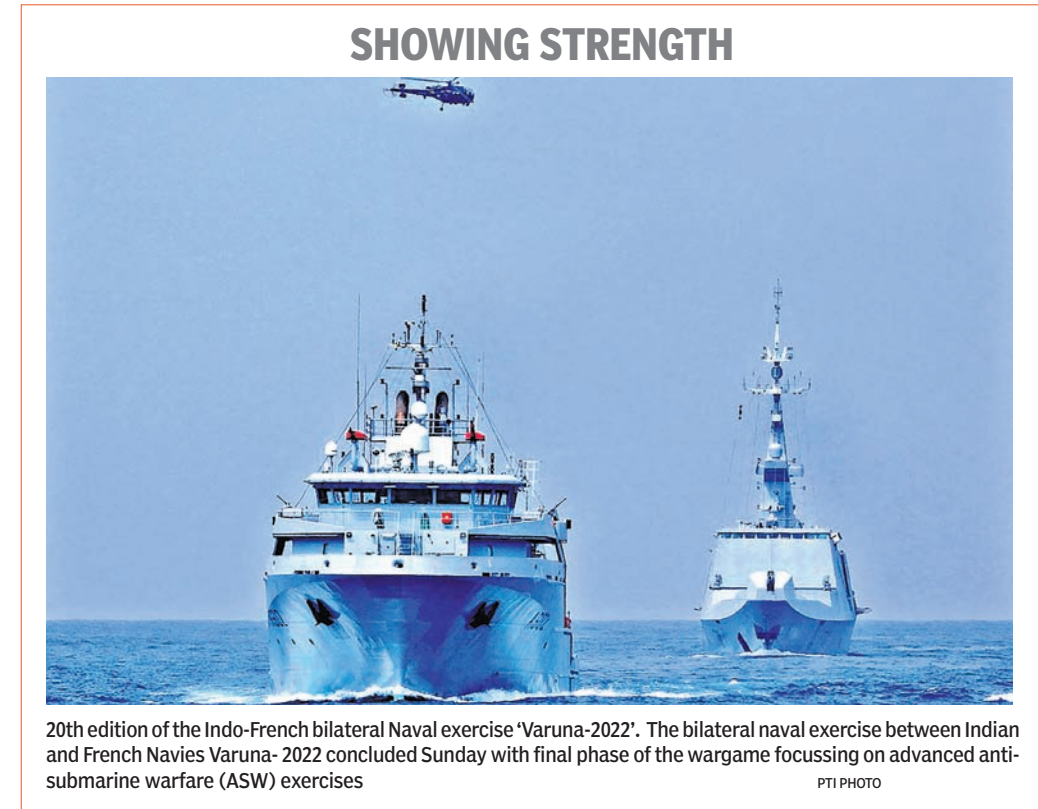
A total of 156 terrorists - 79 locals and 77 foreigners - are active in Kashmir and 16 others including two foreigners are operating in the Jammu region, a defence spokesman said quoting the data released by Indian Army's northern command.

The data for January to March 2022 revealed that a total of 15 local men joined the militancy. Two infiltration bids, one each in Kashmir and Jammu zones, were foiled along the Line of Control (LoC) this year, the Army said, referring to the infiltration bids foiled in north Kashmir's Kupwara district, and Poonch in the Jammu region in January.



While one Pakistani terrorist was killed and another captured alive in Kupwara during the failed infiltration bid on the first day of the new year, an attempt by a group of terrorists to infiltrate into this side from across the border in the Poonch district was foiled the next day.

In addition, the Army scuttled the third infiltration attempt from Pakistan on Monday when the alert troops shot dead a terrorist along the LoC in the Naushera sector of Rajouri district. On terrorist initiated incidents, the Army said a total of 35 such incidents were reported in the first three months of this year. These included 27 terrorist initiated actions against security forces and eight atrocities committed against civilians.



20th edition of the Indo-French bilateral Naval exercise 'Varuna-2022'. The bilateral naval exercise between Indian and French Navies Varuna- 2022 concluded Sunday with final phase of the wargame focussing on advanced anti-submarine warfare (ASW) exercises

Buses, taxis in Bengal may go off roads

Private bus and cab operators said they might have to take their vehicles off the roads if the State and Central governments didn't provide some succour in the form of an allowance or make way for fare hikes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, April 4: With fuel prices touching a new high every day, private bus and cab operators are contemplating taking their vehicles off the roads if the state and central governments did not provide some succour in the form of an allowance or make way for fare hikes to support the ailing transport sector.

Petrol and diesel prices were hiked by 40 paise a litre each, taking the total increase in rates in the last two weeks to Rs 8.40 per litre. This is the 12th hike in oil prices since March 22.

On Monday, petrol price in Kolkata stood at Rs 113.45 per litre, and diesel price at Rs 98.22 per litre. The operators said the minimum bus fare should be hiked to Rs 15 from Rs 10, while for yellow taxis, the starting meter rate should

FUEL PRICE HIKE



be Rs 50 from Rs 30. General Secretary of West Bengal Online Cab Operators Guild, Indranil Banerjee, said they wanted cab aggregators to raise the fare by Rs 25 per km for AC rides and by Rs 20 per km for standard trips. Tapan Banerjee, the general secretary of Joint Council of Bus Syndicate, said only 30 per cent of

the 42,000 private buses are plying the city roads at present, and the number would dwindle further if oil prices continue to surge. The state government, in January, effected a 10-fold increase in traffic violation fines.

As buses and minibuses stayed off the roads for the major part of 2020 and 2021 due to pandemic-related restrictions, maintenance cost of vehicles went up during the period.

Ninety per cent of the vehicle owners have failed to repay bank loans under such circumstances. "We sent several letters to the prime minister and chief minister, but neither the Centre nor the state government responded."

From high insurance premium to EMIs, the bus owners have to shell out every penny from their pockets while not making any profit from their daily trips," he said. A

KHERI VIOLENCE CASE

SC reserves order on plea challenging bail to Ashish Mishra



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 4: The Supreme Court Monday raised questions over the Allahabad High Court verdict granting bail to Ashish Mishra, son of Union minister Ajay Mishra, in the Lakhimpur Kheri violence case, saying "unnecessary" details like post mortem report, nature of wounds should not have gone into when the trial was yet to commence.

Reserving the order on a plea of farmers seeking cancellation of bail of Ashish, a special bench comprising Chief Justice N V Ramana and Justices Surya Kant and Hima Kohli also took strong note of the fact that the state government did not file an appeal against the high court's order as suggested by the apex court-appointed SIT, saying, "This is not a matter where you wait for years".

"How can the judge go into a postmortem report etc. We are hearing a bail matter, we do not want to prolong. This way of going into merits and going into wounds etc. Is unnecessary for the question of bail," the bench observed.

The bench took note of the submissions of senior advocate Dushyant Dave and Prashant Bhushan, appearing for farmers, that the high court did not consider the extensive charge sheet and rather relied upon the FIR where it was alleged that one person received bullet injuries. The bail was granted after the high court took note of the facts in-

cluding the post mortem report which did not indicate bullet injuries of the deceased.

"We do not approve of this type of nonsense. Sorry for using this word...These things were irrelevant for considering the bail. See, he was hit by a bullet. He was hit by a car and he was hit by a tyre and scooter. What is this," said the CJI. The bench said, "the trial has not started and evidence is still being collected". Dave said that one of the witnesses had been threatened in March also and as per an FIR, he was beaten up saying that "ab BJP satta me hai dekh tera kya haal hoga (now BJP is in power, now you see what consequences you may face)".

Senior advocate Ranjit Kumar, appearing for the accused, said that the matter was listed for framing of charges and the charge sheet has been filed after the conclusion of the probe. On March 16, the top court had sought responses of the Uttar Pradesh government and Ashish Mishra, on a plea challenging the grant of bail to him.

It had also directed the state government to ensure the protection of witnesses after the counsel, appearing for farmers, referred to the attack on a key witness on March 10. On October 3 last year, eight people were killed in Lakhimpur Kheri during violence that erupted when farmers were protesting against Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya's visit to the area.

Space debris found in Maha village likely from 'China rocket'

AGENCIES

Mumbai, April 4: A large metal ring and sphere that villagers in Maharashtra fell from the sky over the weekend could be from a Chinese rocket launched into space last year, officials told local media.

The metal ring - reportedly two to three metres (6.5-10 feet) in diameter and weighing over 40 kilograms (90 pounds) - was discovered in a village field late Saturday, district collector Ajay Gulhane told the Press Trust of India.



"We were preparing a community feast, when the sky blazed with the red disc which fell with a bang on an open plot in the village," an unnamed woman in Maharashtra's Chandrapur district told The Times of India.

"People ran to their home fearing (an) explosion and remained inside for nearly half an hour." Another object - a large, metal ball around half a metre (1.5 feet) in diameter - fell in another village in the district, Gulhane told PTI.

"It has been collected for examination. We had sent (junior officials) to every village in the district to find if more parts of objects, if any, are lying scattered."

There were no reports of injuries or structural damage. An Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) official told The Times that the timing of the objects' arrival was the "closest match" to the re-entry times on Saturday for debris from a Chinese rocket launched in February 2021.

108 died due to tiger attacks between 2019 & 2021

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 4: A total of 108 people died in the country due to tiger attacks between 2019 and 2021, the government said Monday.

Replying to a question on the issue, Minister of State for Environment Ashwini Kumar Choubey, however, told the Lok Sabha that the number of human deaths due to tiger attacks in India has come down drastically in two years, with 14 persons dying in 2021 compared to 50 in 2019.

A total of 108 people died of tiger attacks in India with the maximum deaths occurring in Maharashtra, the minister said. The state-wise data shared by the minister revealed that out of the 14 deaths by tiger attacks in 2021,



Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh recorded five casualties each, Bihar three and Uttarakhand one.

Between 2019 and 2021, Maharashtra recorded 56 deaths due to tiger attacks with 26 in 2019, 25

in 2020 and five in 2021. In Uttar Pradesh, 17 deaths occurred during this period with eight in 2019, four in 2020 and five in 2021.

The figures revealed no death due to tiger attacks in Assam,

Between 2019 and 2021, Maharashtra recorded 56 deaths due to tiger attacks with 26 in 2019, 25 in 2020 and five in 2021

In Uttar Pradesh, 17 deaths occurred during this period with eight in 2019, four in 2020 and five in 2021

The figures revealed no death due to tiger attacks in Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh in recent years

Arunachal Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh in recent years. Sharing the details of the government's steps to deal with the human-animal conflict, the minister said the National Tiger Conservation

Authority has devised three standard operating procedures (SOPs) to deal with the issue.

The three SOPs include dispersing tigers over a larger area and managing livestock kills for them to reduce the man-animal conflict, the minister said. The third SOP involves relocating tigers to areas where their density is low so that there is no conflict in areas with higher tiger density, he added.

"Also as per the Tiger Conservation Plans, need-based and site-specific management interventions are done for improving the quality of wildlife habitat for which funding is provided under the ongoing centrally-sponsored scheme of Project Tiger," he said in a written reply.

It's now halal vs jhatka in polarised Karnataka

Litterateurs have warned the government over the communal agenda while Biocon chief Kiran Mazumdar Shaw has warned that if communal exclusion affects the IT-BT industry, India would lose its global leadership

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bangalore, April 4: Karnataka, which has entered election year, has been witnessing unsavoury developments threatening the law and order situation and attracting international attention for the wrong reasons. At a time when the hijab row seemed to be settling down, the 'halal' controversy has erupted across the state.

With Hindu organisations carrying out campaigns for boycotting halal meat and the ruling BJP ministers openly endorsing it, the situation is turning ugly. Hindu organisations are prevailing upon the majority Hindus to buy only jhatka meat, making it a halal cut versus jhatka cut meat in Karnataka.

Former Chief Minister HD Kumaraswamy has slammed the halal controversy as the roadmap of the ruling BJP to get 150 seats in the upcoming elections. Litterateurs have written warning the government over the communal agenda while Biocon chief Kiran Mazumdar Shaw has warned that if communal exclusion affects the IT-BT industry, India would lose its global leadership.

Right wing thinker Chakravarthy Sulibele explained to IANS that the campaign is necessary as Muslims are bringing economic exclusion in every industry. "We have to hit where it hurts. Muslims should rectify their mis-



takes and live cohesively with Hindus like they did 50 or 100 years ago," he stated. Former Advocates' Union president AP Ranganath, who has headed a group of advocates who lodged a complaint against Hindu activists for propagating the halal cut ban, told IANS that what is happening in the state is not a good development. "Karnataka was a peaceful state. Now, if action is taken against these few persons who are carrying out a divisive agenda, everything would settle down," he said. "These activities are being carried out by very few people, less than 3 per cent. If legal action is initiated against these 5 to 6 lead-

ers, the hate campaign would stop. We are proceeding stage by stage. We will continue to pressurise the government. There should not be any force. It should be left to the individual to eat halal meat or otherwise. If the government does not initiate action, there are the courts, we will proceed legally against the government," Ranganath stated. Shashikala Jolle, Minister for Muzrai, Wakf, said that a decision would be taken by the Chief Minister regarding the halal meat issue. "Like the halal cut, jhatka cut should also be there. We are with the Hindu organisations that are pushing for the jhatka cut."

IIT graduate attacks cops at Gorakhnath temple

The temple is under high security as it is frequently visited by CM Yogi Adityanath, who is the head seer

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gorakhpur/Lucknow, April 4: An IIT graduate attacked two policemen with a sharp-edged weapon at a gate of the famed Gorakhnath temple and tried to barge into the premises before being overpowered, Uttar Pradesh officials said Monday terming it a 'terror incident'.

The attack occurred Sunday evening at the temple which is under high security as it is frequently visited by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, who is the head seer.

The accused, identified as Murtaza Abbasi, was arrested and has been sent to judicial remand for two weeks, police said and alleged that he tried to forcibly enter the temple, which was teeming with devotees during the Navratri festival, after raising the religious slogan of "Allahu Akbar".

Videos shared on social media showed the man brandishing a large sickle and roaming around on the premises, as some took cover while others threw stones at him. Soon a group of devotees along with security personnel surrounded him and pinned him to the ground.

Murtaza was earlier taken to hospital and produced in a local court on Monday. His father Munir Abbasi said Murtaza belonged to the 2015 batch of IIT-Mumbai and was a chemical engineer.

Speaking to a TV channel, he claimed that his son was mentally



The man attacks constables at Gorakhnath Temple gate, Sunday night

unstable and that this should be taken into account.

In a statement, the UP Home Department said, "The attack on police jawans at Gorakhnath temple in Gorakhpur is a part of deep conspiracy, and based on the available facts, it can be said that it was a terror incident."

ADG, Gorakhpur zone, Akhil Kumar said Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) constables Gopal Gaur and Anil Paswan were

injured as they tried to stop the accused who went to a PAC post near gate no 1 and attacked the security personnel.

Chief Minister Adityanath visited the injured constables at the BRD Medical College hospital. He has announced a cash reward of 5 lakh for the two jawans and constable Anurag Rajput for foiling the attack.

Additional Director General (Law and Order) Prashant Kumar

said the documents recovered from Abbasi "are quite sensational". He said that if the accused had managed to enter the temple, the devotees would have been harmed and the situation could have gone out of control.

Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Awanish Awasthi said in Lucknow that the incident will be investigated by the Uttar Pradesh Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS). "Directions have been given to UP ATS and UP STF to work jointly to probe the incident," he said. SSP Gorakhpur Vipin Tada said that a case under various serious sections including section 307 IPC (attempt to murder) and section 7 Criminal Law Amendment Act have been registered against the attacker. Details emerging in the interrogation of the accused during questioning will be investigated by five teams, he said.

Police teams are being sent to other districts to verify information provided by the attacker till now, the SSP said, adding that things recovered from his possession, his family, relatives and background and the nearby CCTV cameras are being checked.

Action will be taken on the basis of the investigation report, he said. The attacker had tried to enter the temple premises with bad intention, which was neutralised by the brave jawans of the PAC and police, the state Home Department said.

Turncoats land plum portfolios in Yogi 2.0

GRASSROOTS LEADERS, WHO SERVED AS MINISTERS IN THE FIRST TERM OF THE ADITYANATH GOVERNMENT, AND BECAME LEGISLATORS THIS TIME TOO, HAVE BEEN SIDELINED

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, April 4: The BJP has provided plum portfolios to the political turncoats in the Yogi 2.0 ministry but its grassroots workers, who served as ministers in the first term of the Yogi Adityanath government, and became legislators this time too, have been sidelined.

Jitin Prasada, who switched to the BJP from Congress just before the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections, has been given Public Works Department (PWD). As soon as he joined the saffron party last year, he was given charge of Technical Education Department.

In Adityanath's first term, the PWD department was given to then deputy chief minister Keshav Prasad Maurya. PWD is believed to be a very important portfolio. In the previous governments too, the department used to be with the second-in-command in the government. In the Samajwadi Party government, Shivpal Yadav had this portfolio. In the Bahujan Samaj Party government, the department

was assigned to Nasimuddin Siddiqui. Former Congress leader Rakesh Sachan, who joined the BJP just before the Assembly polls, and won Bhognipur seat in Kanpur Dehat has also found a place in the Yogi 2.0 ministry. Sachan began his political career with the SP. He was an SP MLA from Kanpur's Ghatampur seat in 1993. He was re-elected in 2002. SP founder Mulayam Singh Yadav's confidant Sachan won the Fatehpur parliamentary constituency in 2009 but lost from the same in 2014.

Denied ticket by the SP in 2019, Sachan joined Congress but lost the polls that time too. In 2022, Sachan won the polls on a BJP ticket and has been given charge of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises, Khadi and Village Industries, Sericulture, Handloom and Textile Industries ministries.

Former SP leader Nitin Agarwal, who joined the BJP and was made the Deputy Speaker of the Assembly, has now been allocated Ministry of State for Excise and Prohibition (Independent charge).

Agrawal fought on a BSP ticket from Hardoi in 2008 and secured a win with 17,000 votes. He was an SP MLA in 2012 and 2017.



Jitin Prasada



Tourists use umbrellas to shield themselves from the sun during their visit to the Taj Mahal in Agra, Monday. PTI PHOTO

HDK accuses BJP of raising emotive issues

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, April 4: Former Chief Minister of Karnataka H D Kumaraswamy Monday alleged rampant corruption in the State and took a dig at Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai by saying he should offer concession to "people's files" like the one given to "The Kashmir Files".

"You made The Kashmir Files tax-free but you never touched people's files. You are collecting 100 per cent tax on those people's files. Give 100 per cent concession to them. The country will benefit," Kumaraswamy told reporters.

He said the contractors have alleged that ministers were demanding 40 per cent commission on public works.

On the row over 'hijab' and 'halal' meat, Kumaraswamy said he had expressed apprehension that the



You made The Kashmir Files tax-free but you never touched people's files. You are collecting 100 per cent tax on those people's files. Give 100 per cent concession to them. The country will benefit
HD KUMARASWAMY | EX-CM

BJP would raise some emotive issues and create an atmosphere to disturb peace and harmony in society. "My prediction has come

true..." The JD(S) leader accused the BJP government, led by Bommai, of turning a blind eye and a deaf ear to the ongoing campaign against halal meat.

"Why do you play the state anthem by noted Kannada poet Kuvempu, which says Karnataka is a garden of racial peace? I am not in favour of any particular religion or any specific caste or community. I am with the 6.5 crore people of Karnataka," Kumaraswamy said.

He alleged that those distributing leaflets against such meat, and disturbing peace in society are roaming scot-free without paying heed to complaints filed by some advocates in that regard.

He slammed the Congress. "Congress is responsible for bringing the BJP to power and for the deterioration of peace and harmony in the state," the former chief minister said.

Buzz over Shivpal, BJP 'bonhomie'

AKHILESH YADAV'S UNCLE MAY GET DEPUTY SPEAKER'S POST IN UP ASSEMBLY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, April 4: Amid reports of growing bonhomie between Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party-Lohia president Shivpal Yadav and the BJP, there is speculation that he may become Deputy Speaker in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly with the backing of the ruling party. "Such speculation is doing the rounds. The sky has no limits, nor does politics. The door of possibilities is never closed in politics," PSPL spokesperson Deepak Mishra told PTI.

Shivpal Yadav had floated his own party in 2019 after a rift with his nephew, Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav. But ahead of the recent Assembly polls, the two were back together and Shivpal Yadav won from Jaswantnagar on an SP ticket. Strains appeared to have developed again between the two again after the election results, with the BJP returning to power for a second consecutive term.

The PSPL spokesperson recalled Shivpal Yadav's experience as a legislator. "If the MLAs give him this responsibility, it will increase the dignity of the Assembly," Mishra said.

Asked why Yadav is eyeing the Deputy Speaker's post, he said, "Which post is left now for him? He cannot become the Speaker. Neither can he become the Leader of the House or the Leader of Opposition."

Mishra said there has been no official proposal on PSPL leader's election to the Deputy Speaker's post. "But if such a proposal comes, Shivpal Yadav will be the first choice of the ruling party and the

opposition," he added.

When asked about the possibility, UP's Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Jaswant Singh Saini said, "I have no information in this regard."

Earlier, there was speculation that Yadav would be sent to the Rajya Sabha by the BJP and his son Aditya Yadav would contest from the Jaswantnagar assembly seat vacated by him.

In October 2021, BJP-backed SP rebel Nitin Agarwal was elected as Deputy Speaker of the UP Legislative Assembly. In recent days, there have been signs of strain within the opposition alliance headed by Akhilesh Yadav, and his uncle Shivpal Yadav has thrown hints that he is moving towards the BJP. He has met Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and begun following Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and former deputy chief minister Dinesh Sharma on Twitter.

The rift between Shivpal Yadav and Akhilesh Yadav has been widening after the uncle was not invited to a meeting of newly elected SP MLAs on March 26. Shivpal Yadav then skipped a meeting of the opposition alliance chaired by Akhilesh Yadav. He later went to CM's residence here, fuelling speculation that he could be changing sides. Another member of the Yadav family has already crossed over: Mulayam Singh Yadav's daughter-in-law Aparna Yadav joined the BJP before the assembly elections.

Meanwhile, Akhilesh met his father, SP patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav in New Delhi on Saturday.



Trouble in SP's 'caste paradise' as allies get restive

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, April 4: It is not even a month since the election results were announced in Uttar Pradesh and there is already trouble in the Samajwadi paradise.

The rainbow coalition of OBCs that SP president Akhilesh Yadav had created prior to the polls, was termed as a 'caste paradise' by political pundits. However, issues and egos are now tearing the paradise apart and troubled allies of

the Samajwadi camp are getting increasingly restless. The Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party Lohia (PSPL), led by Shivpal Yadav, had joined hands with the SP before the elections, seemingly putting an end to the feud in the Yadav clan.

Shivpal Yadav who, according to sources, has been upset over the manner in which Akhilesh denied him seats, except his own, ignored him throughout the campaign and did not allow him to address rallies for the candidates, is now prepar-

ing to walk out of the alliance after he was not invited to the Samajwadi legislature party meeting last week.

"There is no justification for not inviting Shivpal to the meeting since he has been elected on a SP ticket. He is a senior leader in his own right and cannot be treated like dirt by the SP chief," said a supporter of Shivpal. Shivpal (who is the uncle of Akhilesh) is now busy deciding on his future course of action and if sources are to be believed, he may soon announce snapping of ties with the SP.

The Apna Dal (K), another ally of the SP, is also annoyed with the party leadership. Pallavi Patel of Apna Dal (K) had contested the Sirathu assembly seat on a SP ticket and emerged as a 'giant killer' when she defeated UP deputy chief minister Keshav Maurya.

She was also not invited to the legislature party meeting and Akhilesh has not bothered to meet her after her victory. Apna Dal (K) sources said that they are unhappy over the way they were treated

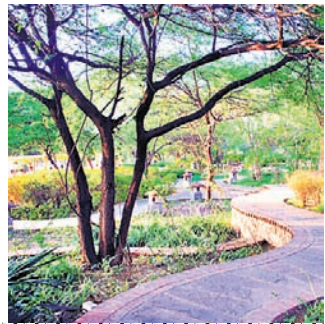
during the election and after the results. The two other allies of the SP -- the Janwadi Party and the Mahaan Dal -- are also upset with the "arrogance and attitude" of Akhilesh Yadav.

"We were not treated with respect and were taken for granted. We were not involved in strategy meetings and the result is there for all to see," said a Janwadi Party leader who declined to say whether they would continue to remain in the alliance.



There are some essential medicines linked to WPI that can see rise or fall automatically as per the WPI movement. These are drugs that are priced a few rupees and therefore, a 10 per cent WPI increase may lead to the price rising by a few paise

PARKS TO BE NAMED AFTER UNSUNG FREEDOM FIGHTERS FROM DELHI Parks in the capital will soon be named after unsung freedom fighters from Delhi as a mark of respect and recognition to their sacrifices, officials said.



of the day quote

The Arvind Kejriwal-led AAP government has a responsibility for reducing pollution in the national capital

If someone would study the history of DSEU, they will come to know that it is the fastest growing university of India. It has redefined the skill-education in India today

The MEA is currently in the process of progressively setting up those units across those 10 countries, and we are hoping that this will be the first tranche of service. We have implorred the MEA to tell us if we need to go beyond those 10 countries to have additional desks.

UN: World hurtling to climate danger zone

AGENCIES

New Delhi/Berlin, April 4: Temperatures on Earth will shoot past a key danger point unless greenhouse gas emissions fall faster than countries have committed, the world's top body of climate scientists said Monday, warning of the consequences of inaction but also noting hopeful signs of progress.

Governments agreed in the 2015 Paris accord to keep global warming well below 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit) this century, ideally no more than 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit).

Yet temperatures have already increased by over 1.1C (2F) since pre-industrial times, resulting in measurable increases in disasters such flash floods, prolonged droughts, more intense hurricanes and longer-burning wildfires, putting human lives in danger and costing governments hundreds of billions of dollars to confront.

"Projected global emissions from (national pledges) place limiting global warming to 1.5C beyond reach and make it harder after 2030 to limit warming to 2C," the panel said.

In other words, the report's co-chair, James Skea of Imperial College London, told The Associated Press: "If we continue acting as we are now, we're not even going to limit warming to 2 degrees, never mind 1.5 degrees."

Ongoing investments in fossil fuel infrastructure and clearing large swaths of forest for agriculture undermine the massive curbs in emissions needed to meet the Paris goal, the report found. "To keep the 1.5-degree limit agreed in Paris within reach, we need to

MATTER OF CONCERN

Antonio Guterres said the report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change revealed "a litany of broken climate promises" by governments and corporations, accusing them of stoking global warming by clinging to harmful fossil fuels

The UN panel said about 40% of emissions since then came from Europe and North America

Global emissions can be halved by 2030 with major transitions in the energy sector, including a substantial reduction in fossil fuel use, said an IPCC report released, highlighting that mitigation action needs to be taken now to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius

cut global emissions by 45% this decade," said Antonio Guterres, the UN chief.

"But current climate pledges would mean a 14% increase in emissions." In a summary negotiated with governments over the past two weeks, the panel concluded that returning warming to 1.5C by 2100 would require removing vast amounts of carbon dioxide — the main greenhouse gas — from the atmosphere.

Many experts say this is unfeasible with current technologies, and even if it could be done it would be far costlier than preventing the emissions in the first place. The report's authors said they had "high confidence" that unless countries step up their efforts to cut greenhouse gas emissions, the planet will on average be 2.4C to 3.5C (4.3 to 6.3 F) warmer by the end of the century — a level experts say is sure to cause severe impacts for much of the world's population.



With 13 new districts, AP gets new map

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Amaravati, April 4: In a major administrative overhaul aimed at decentralisation of governance and balanced development, Andhra Pradesh Monday created 13 new districts taking the total number to 26.

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy launched the new districts in a virtual mode from his official residence here. Ministers, MPs, MLAs, district collectors and superintendents of police attended the inaugural programmes in their respective districts.

The Chief Minister said a new beginning has been made with the reorganisation of 13 districts to double the number. He said from the state capital to the village, his government was following the policy of decentralisation.

He said the exercise was undertaken to ensure decentralised development of all re-



gions by taking governance closer to the people.

The Chief Minister said while retaining names of 13 old districts, 13 new districts have been carved out for decentralised, accelerated and balanced growth and for administrative convenience.

Jagan Mohan Reddy said the new districts have been formed in accordance with the public opinion. He claimed that while naming the new districts, the government took into consideration various factors, including senti-



Women belonging to the Garo tribe collect tea leaves in a tea garden, near Sandubi in Kamrup, Assam

Multiple terror attacks in J&K

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, April 4: Terrorists carried out three attacks in Jammu and Kashmir Monday, leaving one CRPF personnel dead and four persons, including two workers from Bihar and a Kashmiri Pandit, injured, officials said.

Two CRPF personnel were injured when terrorists opened fire on security forces at Maisuma. They were rushed to SMHS hospital where one of them - Head Constable Vishal Kumar - succumbed to injuries while the other was undergoing treatment.

The area was cordoned off as security forces launched a search operation to track down the assailants but no arrests were made.

35-year-old Bal Krishan alias Sonu, a Kashmiri Pandit, was shot at and injured by suspected terrorists at Chotigam in Shopian district late Monday evening, officials said, adding he was taken to district hospital Shopian.

Earlier in the day, militants opened fire on two non-local labour-



CRPF personnel stand guard after the attacks

One CRPF personnel died and 4 others were injured in the attacks

ers in Pulwama district "Terrorists opened firing on Patleshwar Kumar and Jako Chowdhary, both residents of Bihar,

at Lajoora this afternoon," the officials said.

They said the duo were rushed to a nearby hospital for treatment. This was second attack on non-local labourers in Pulwama district in as many days. Two workers hailing from Punjab were shot at and injured in Nowpora area of the district Sunday.

RS proceedings washed out, Oppn walkout in LS over price rise

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 4: Rajya Sabha proceedings were a washout Monday as a united opposition protested pressing for a discussion on rising prices of fuel and essential commodities.

Opposition members also staged a walkout in the Lok Sabha with several of them raising the issue during Zero Hour.

In the Upper House of Parliament, Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu did not allow adjournment notices moved by opposition members on the issue of price rise, prompting members of the Congress, TMC, left parties, DMK, AAP, NCP, RJD and Shiv Sena to create an uproar.

The Rajya Sabha was adjourned twice during the pre-lunch period and was adjourned soon after it met after lunch. Soon after the laying of papers, Naidu said he had received notices from several members under Rule 267 to discuss issues of price rise, including prices of petrol, diesel, and LPG, and said the issue has already been discussed during the debate on the Finance Bill and the Appropriation Bill. The chairman also informed that Deepender S Hooda (Congress) too had given a notice to discuss the resolution passed by the Punjab Assembly regarding transfer of the Union Territory of Chandigarh. This notice too was not admitted by the chair. "...Rule 267 is not the appropriate rule (for such discussions), so there is no question of accepting (the notices)," he said.

As he disallowed the notices, opposition members started protesting and were on their feet demanding a discussion, forcing the chairman to adjourn the House till 12 noon. Members who had given notice for suspension of the business under Rule 267 were Tiruchi Siva (DMK), Binoy Viswam (CPI), Abir Ranjan Biswas (TMC), and K C Venugopal (Congress). When the House met again at 12 noon, opposition members were on their feet and trooped into the well raising slogans.

SHORT TAKES

Andhra CM to meet PM today

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy will leave for Delhi Tuesday to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Chief Minister is likely to discuss various state-related issues with the Prime Minister. Release of funds for Polavaram project and the pending installments of the Central assistance for development of backward areas and other issues in Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act are likely to come up during the meeting. Jagan Mohan Reddy is also likely to brief the Prime Minister on creation of 13 new districts to double the number of districts to 26.

BSF seizes Pak fishing boat

New Delhi: The Border Security Force (BSF) said Monday that it has seized one Pakistani fishing boat from the Harami Nala area near Bhuj in Gujarat. According to BSF officials, at around 8.20 pm Sunday, force personnel noticed the movement of two Pakistani fishing boats and four to five Pakistani fishermen near border pillar No. 1160. After seeing the BSF patrol party approaching them, the Pakistani fishermen took advantage of the marshy terrain and fled to the Pakistani territory. However, the BSF troopers chased them and seized one Pakistani fishing boat, approximately 100 metres inside the Indian territory.

Ashok Tanwar joins AAP

New Delhi: In a boost to the AAP in Haryana, former Congress leader Ashok Tanwar joined the Arvind Kejriwal-led party Monday. He was inducted into the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) by its national convener and Delhi Chief Minister Kejriwal. Senior AAP leader and Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia and other leaders were present at Kejriwal's residence on the occasion.

BJP leader grilled by police

Mumbai: The Mumbai Police Monday grilled BJP's Leader of Opposition (Council) Pravin Darekar for over four hours in connection with the alleged irregularities during his tenure at the Mumbai District Central Cooperative Bank (MDCCB) Ltd. Following the summons issued Sunday, Darekar reported at the MRA Marg police station, which lodged an FIR March 14 based on a complaint by Aam Aadmi Party state general secretary Dhananjay Shinde.

C'garh becoming a flash point between Cong-AAP-BJP

AGENCIES

New April 4: Chandigarh could be the new flash point between the BJP, Congress and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) after AAP recently passed a resolution in the Punjab Assembly urging the Centre to "immediately transfer Chandigarh to Punjab".

On Monday, Congress Rajya Sabha MP from Haryana, Depender Singh Hooda, submitted a notice in the Upper House highlighting Haryana's claim over Chandigarh.

Hooda's notice under Rule 267 said, "The claim that Chandigarh was created as capital of Punjab is misleading. It's a violation of the Punjab Reorganisation Act of 1966." Not only the Congress, but the

BJP too has opposed the move by AAP. The BJP-ruled Haryana will convene a day-long special session of the Vidhan Sabha Tuesday. A cabinet meeting was held Sunday under the chairmanship of Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, who has condemned AAP moving a resolution in the Assembly to transfer Chandigarh to Punjab.

"Condemnable. They should not have done this. Punjab should first go to the Supreme Court for resolving the Satluj Yamuna Link (SYL) canal issue. The Hindi-speaking areas were not given to Haryana, which delayed the rest of the issues. They should first be ready to hand over the Hindi-speaking areas to Haryana," Khattar said, adding



that Chandigarh is and will remain the capital of both Haryana and Punjab. Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and



Chandigarh came into existence through the Punjab Reorganisation Act passed in 1966. Last Friday, the Punjab Assembly

Sidhu asserts Chandigarh belongs to Punjab

Chandigarh: Ahead of a special session of the Haryana assembly, Congress leader Navjot Singh Sidhu Monday asserted that Chandigarh always belonged to Punjab while his party colleague Sunil Jakhar said the "lost cause" will only create acrimony between the two states. The Haryana government has summoned a special session of the assembly here Tuesday, days after the Punjab assembly passed a resolution seeking immediate transfer of Chandigarh to the AAP-ruled state.

unanimously adopted the resolution moved by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, urging the Centre to transfer Chandigarh to Punjab. The issue was triggered March 27 after Union Home Minister Amit Shah announced that the Central Civil Service Rules will be implemented for all employees under the Chandigarh administration,

which was opposed by different political parties in Punjab. If the Central Civil Service Rules are implemented, all employees will get the pay scale under the Central rules. As per the rules, retirement age will be enhanced from 58 to 60 years, while the maternity leave will be extended to two years from the existing one year.

international



Japan will firmly carry out what it should do while cooperating with the international society in possible further sanctions against Russia
FUMIO KISHIDA | JAPANESE PM

MOUNTING CONCERN
China has sent more than 10,000 health workers from across the country to Shanghai, including 2,000 military medical staff, as it struggles to stamp out a rapidly spreading COVID-19 outbreak in China's largest city



of the day quote

You (officials) should always keep in mind that people are never deprived of getting services because the independence of the country has been attained for changing their destiny
SHEIKH HASINA | BANGLADESH PM

The talks in Vienna on the restoration of the 2015 nuclear deal are close to an agreement
HOSSEIN AMIR ABDOLLAHAN | IRANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

The reports of Ukrainian civilians who have been killed, raped and severely wounded by Russian troops is beyond reprehensible
JACINDA ARDERN | NEW ZEALAND PM

SHORT TAKES

Naravane pays tribute to martyrs
Singapore: Indian Army chief General MM Naravane on Monday visited the Kranji war memorial in Singapore and paid tributes to those who laid down their lives in the line of duty during World War-II. Dedicated to the men and women from India, the UK, Australia, Canada, Sri Lanka, Malaya, the Netherlands and New Zealand who died defending Singapore and Malaya against the invading Japanese forces during the Second World War, the memorial comprises the War Graves, the Memorial Walls, the State Cemetery and the Military Graves.

Heavy rain kills 16
Rio de Janeiro: At least 16 people have been killed, while 10 others were reported missing as heavy rain has lashed Brazil's Rio de Janeiro state, rescue teams announced. The city of Angra dos Reis has been the most affected by the rains, with at least eight people dead and 10 missing after several landslides buried homes, Xinhua news agency quoted the teams as saying. On Friday night, Angra dos Reis registered 655 mm of rain, the largest in the city's history. In the city of Paraty, seven people from the same family, a mother and her six children between the ages of two and 17, died after being buried in a landslide.

12 inmates killed
Quito: At least 12 inmates were killed and 10 others injured during a violent riot at a prison in Ecuador, according to authorities. The riot took place on Sunday in Cuenca's city's Turi prison, one of the largest correctional centres in the country, reports Xinhua news agency. In response to the riot, the government sent more than 800 members of the National Police and the Armed Forces to restore law and order. Interior Minister Patricio Carrillo told reporters that so far, "12 victims have been identified".

Easter delays for UK travellers
London: British travellers going abroad for the Easter holidays faced disruptions Monday as two main carriers, British Airways and easyJet, cancelled dozens of flights due to staff shortages related to soaring cases of COVID-19 in the UK. Budget carrier easyJet grounded 62 flights scheduled for Monday after canceling at least 222 flights over the weekend, while British Airways said some three dozen out of its 115 flights cancelled Monday were due to pandemic-related problems.

99% of world's population breathes poor quality air: WHO

ASSOCIATED PRESS
Geneva, April 4: The UN health agency says nearly everybody in the world breathes air that doesn't meet its standards for air quality, calling for more action to reduce fossil-fuel use, which generates pollutants that cause respiratory and blood-flow problems and lead to millions of preventable deaths each year. The World Health Organisation, about six months after tightening its guidelines on air quality, on Monday issued an update to its database on air quality that draws on information from a growing

number of cities, towns, and villages across the globe — now totaling over 6,000 municipalities. WHO said 99 per cent of the global population breathes air that exceeds its air-quality limits and is often rife with particles that can penetrate deep into the lungs, enter the veins and arteries, and cause disease. Air quality is poorest in WHO's Eastern Mediterranean and Southeast Asia regions, followed by Africa, it said. "After surviving a pandemic, it is unacceptable to still have 7 million preventable deaths and countless preventable lost years of good health due to air pollution," said



WAKE-UP CALL
Dr Maria Neira, head of WHO's department of environment, climate change and health. "Yet too many investments are still being sunk into a polluted environment rather than in clean, healthy air." The database, which has traditionally considered two types of particulate matter known as PM2.5 and PM10, for the first time has in-

cluded ground measurements of nitrogen dioxide. The last version of the database was issued in 2018. Nitrogen dioxide originates mainly from human-generated burning of fuel, such as through automobile traffic, and is most common in urban areas. Exposure can bring respiratory disease like asthma and symptoms like coughing, wheezing and difficulty in breathing, and more hospital and emergency-room admissions, WHO said. The highest concentrations were found in the eastern Mediterranean region. Particulate matter has many sources, such as transportation, power plants, agriculture, the burning of waste and industry — as well as from natural sources like desert dust. The developing world is particularly hard hit: India had high levels of PM10, while China showed high levels of PM2.5, the database showed. "Particulate matter, especially PM2.5, is capable of penetrating deep into the lungs and entering the bloodstream, causing cardiovascular, cerebrovascular (stroke) and respiratory impacts," WHO said. "There is emerging evidence that particulate matter impacts other organs and causes other diseases as well."

ECONOMIC CRISIS

SL Opposition rejects President's offer

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Colombo, April 4: Sri Lanka's Opposition parties Monday rejected President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's invitation to join the proposed unity government as a "sham" after he fired his brother and Finance Minister Basil Rajapaksa from his post, as protests were held nationwide over the ruling Rajapaksa family's poor handling of the country's worst economic crisis. President Gotabaya Rajapaksa Monday fired Basil Rajapaksa from his post and invited the Opposition parties to join a unity Cabinet to tackle the raging public anger against the hardships caused by the economic crisis.



SUNDAY, ALL 26 CABINET MEMBERS SUBMITTED : DESPITE THE DECLARATION OF LETTERS OF RESIGNATION AFTER THOUSANDS OF : CURFEW, PEOPLE JOINED THE PEOPLE DEFIED A COUNTRYWIDE STATE OF : PROTESTS CALLING FOR THE EMERGENCY AND CURFEW AND JOINED PROTESTS : RESIGNATION OF RAJAPAKSA

Sunday night, all 26 Cabinet Ministers submitted letters of resignation after thousands of people defied a countrywide state of emergency and curfew and joined street protests denouncing the government. The largest opposition political party, the United People's Force, or Samagi Jana Balavegaya, immediately rejected the president's proposal of a unity government and termed this spate of resignations a "sham".

Party leader Sajith Premadasa said he wished to see a political model that works. "We want resignations and then we want a political model that works. A new Sri Lanka will begin with stronger institutions and not just a change in leadership. An interim government is nothing but internal party politics," he tweeted. Mano Ganesan, a Tamil leader from the Opposition said his party Tamil People's Alliance and the main Muslim party Sri Lanka Muslim Congress also on the opposition will also not join the unity government. President Gotabaya Rajapaksa

named just four Cabinet members after the entire Cabinet other than president Mahinda Rajapaksa resigned Sunday night. All 26 Cabinet ministers handed in their resignations after thousands of people defied a countrywide state of emergency and curfew and joined street protests denouncing the government. Following the Cabinet's resignation Rajapaksa made an open invitation for all parties to join the unity Cabinet to tackle the current economic crisis. Despite the declaration of the state of emergency and a weekend curfew, people joined the protests calling for the resignation of Rajapaksa. It appeared that Rajapaksa's unity Cabinet plea had no resonance with the public as they were out in larger numbers, calling for the resignation of the entire Rajapaksa family from politics. Basil, who had negotiated the Indian economic relief package to help Sri Lanka tackle the current foreign exchange crisis, was at the centre of anger within the ruling Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) coalition.

CARRIE LAM WON'T SEEK NEW TERM

ASSOCIATED PRESS
Hong Kong, April 4: Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam said Monday she wouldn't seek a second term after a rocky five years marked by huge protests calling for her resignation, a security crackdown that has quashed dissent and most recently a COVID-19 wave that overwhelmed the health system. Her successor will be picked in May, with the city's hard-line security chief during the 2019 protests seen as a likely choice. "I will complete my five-year term as chief executive on the 30th of June this year, and I will also call an end to my 42 years of public service," Lam said at a news conference.



I will complete my five-year term as chief executive on the 30th of June this year, and I will also call an end to my 42 years of public service
CARRIE LAM | HONG KONG LEADER

NEW EVIDENCE OF ATROCITIES

Russia faces growing outrage

ASSOCIATED PRESS
Bucha (Ukraine), April 4: Russia faced a fresh wave of condemnation Monday after evidence emerged of what appeared to be deliberate killings of civilians in Ukraine. Some Western leaders called for further sanctions in response, even as Moscow continued to press its offensive in the country's east. However, western allies, united in outrage, appeared split on how to respond. Poland, which is on Ukraine's border and has taken in large numbers of refugees, angrily singled out France and Germany for not taking more strident action and urged Europe to quickly wear itself off Russian energy, while Berlin said it would take a longer-term approach. Ukrainian officials said the bodies of 410 civilians were found in towns around capital Kyiv that were recaptured from Russian forces in recent days. In Bucha, northwest of the capital, Associated Press journalists saw 21 bodies. One group of nine bodies, all in civilian clothes, were scattered



around a site that residents said Russian troops used as a base. They appeared to have been shot at close range. At least two had their hands tied behind their backs. In Motyzhyn, to the west of Kyiv, AP journalists saw the bodies of four people who appeared to have been shot at close range and thrown into a pit. Residents said the mayor, her son, and her husband — who had been bound and blindfolded — were among them. "This is genocide, this is fascism. This is the extermination of people, innocent people, children, women, and the elderly," said Olena

Kolesnik, who fled Kharkiv for Poland. She described her hometown in Ukraine's north as being in a state of ruin after weeks of shelling. The images of battered corpses lying in the streets or hastily dug graves unleashed a wave of outrage that could signal a turning point in the nearly six-week-old war. Sanctions have, however, failed to halt the offensive thus far, and rising energy prices along with tight controls on the Russian currency market have blunted their impact, with the ruble rebounding strongly after initially crashing.

The 64-year-old career civil servant said she plans to spend more time with her family, which is her "sole consideration." Speculation had swirled for months about whether she would seek another term, and she repeatedly declined to comment on the possibility. But Monday, she said her decision had been conveyed to the central government in Beijing last year and was met with "respect and understanding." Her time in office will likely be remembered as a turning point during which Beijing firmly established control over the former British colony, which was returned to China in 1997.

FACING THE FORCES OF NATURE

Late frost ices over French vineyards, threatens fruit crops

The frost is particularly frustrating after a similar phenomenon hit French vineyards last year, leading to some 2 billion euros (USD2.4 billion) in losses
ASSOCIATED PRESS



Chablis (France), April 4: French vintners are lighting candles to thaw their grapevines to save them from a late frost following a winter warm spell, a temperature swing that is threatening fruit crops in multiple countries. Ice-coated vines stretched across hillsides around Chablis as the Burgundy region woke on Monday to temperatures of minus 5 C. Fruit growers are worried that the frost will kill off large numbers of early

buds, which appeared in March as temperatures rose above 20 C, and disrupt the whole growing season. The frost is particularly frustrating after a similar phenomenon hit French vineyards last year, leading to some 2 billion euros (USD2.4 billion) in losses. Scientists later found that the damaging 2021 frost was made more likely by climate change. Before dawn on Monday, row upon row of candles flickered beneath the frosty vines in Chablis. As the sun rose, it illuminated the ice crystals gripping the vines. Some vintners tried to warm the vines with electrical lines, or sprayed the buds with water to protect them from frost. The water

creates a thin layer of ice that ensures the blossom's temperature remains around freezing point but does not dip much lower. Chablis vintner Daniel Defaix, whose vineyard has been producing wine for 400 years and lived through a multitude of climate disasters, calls what's happening now "a very, very serious frost". He noted temperatures are dropping a few degrees lower than last year, down to minus 7 C in places, and have reached warmer hill-top plots as well as those in the cooler valleys. He placed paraffin candles on the soil or set up special irrigation systems to protect about five hectares of his most valuable grand cru and premier cru grapes, but had to leave the remaining 25 hectares to face the forces of nature. At a cost of 10 euros per candle — and 600 candles per hectare — it was too costly to invest in saving

the rest of the grapes. "After that, you have to cross your fingers and pray to God," he said. In neighbouring Switzerland, fruit growers scrambled on Sunday to protect their crops, rolling out heaters and pellet stoves at night and around dawn, or turning on overhead irrigation systems, said Beatrice Ruettimann, a spokeswoman for Swiss Fruit, a union of fruit producers. Some unfurled plastic sheeting to shield their trees. The temperature fell below freezing in most fruit-growing regions in Switzerland, she said. Northwestern Switzerland bore the brunt of the cold snap, which was most critical for stone fruit — like cherries, apricots and plums — because they're in bloom and "therefore in a delicate stage", she said. A few early varieties of apple including Gravensteiner and Williams were also affected.

maintainable due to its link with a so-called foreign conspiracy. Minutes later, President Arif Alvi dissolved the National Assembly on advice of Prime Minister Khan. President Alvi, the Supreme Court Bar Association and all political parties have been made respondents in the case. Lawyers from the government and opposition presented their argument regarding the ruling by the deputy speaker. During the arguments, the Chief Justice Bandial said that even if the Speaker of the National Assembly cites Article 5 of the Constitution, the no-confidence motion cannot be rejected, Geo News reported. If Khan gets a favourable ruling, elections will take place within 90 days. If the court ruled against the deputy speaker, the parliament will reconvene and hold the no-confidence vote against Khan, experts said. Chief Justice Bandial had earlier in the day said the court would issue a "reasonable order" today on the issue. During the proceedings, Justice Ahsan noted that there were violations in the proceedings of the no-trust resolution, Dawn reported. Justice Bandial observed that a debate before voting on the no-confidence motion had been clearly mentioned in the law but didn't take place.

Pakistan's opposition party leaders Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, left, Shahbaz Sharif, centre and Asadur Rehman hold a press conference regarding current political situation, in Islamabad, Monday
AP/PTI

business

of the day quote

Narcotics Control Bureau and Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs have unearthed the payment of approx ₹2.2 crore through crypto-currency in 11 cases linked to drug trafficking

PANKAJ CHOUDHARY | MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE

The government has taken many measures. A recent step is that we have initiated an inspection drive from April 1 to curb hoarding and black marketing of edible oils and oilseeds

SUDHANSHU PANDEY | FOOD SECRETARY

Till December 31, 2021, 14.92 lakh Covid-19 health claims, of a total amount of ₹17,537 crore, were lodged with public sector insurance companies, of which 93.3 per cent claims had been disposed of

BHAGWAT KARAD | MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE

SHORT TAKES

Zomato, Swiggy under radar

New Delhi: Competition Commission Monday ordered a detailed probe against food delivery platforms, Zomato and Swiggy, for alleged unfair business practices with respect to their dealings with restaurant partners. The order has come on a complaint filed by the National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI). The regulator said that "prima facie there exists a conflict of interest situation, warranting a detailed scrutiny into its impact on the overall competition between the RPs vis-à-vis the private brands/entities which the platforms may be incentivised to favour".

Vodafone raises its stake in Vi

New Delhi: British telecom major Vodafone has raised its stake in debt-ridden Vodafone Idea Limited to 47.61 per cent through its subsidiary Prime Metals, a regulatory filing said Monday. The company earlier held 44.39 per cent stake in Vodafone Idea Limited (Vi). "Prime Metals held 2,18,55,26,081 equity shares, representing 7.61 per cent of the equity share capital, of Vodafone Idea Limited. PML has acquired 570,958,646 equity shares of the company through allotment of equity shares pursuant to a preferential issue of the company," the filing said.

2 firms get Sebi nod to float IPOs

New Delhi: Agro chemical manufacturer Dharmaj Crop Guard and steel pipe maker Venus Pipes & Tubes have received regulatory approvals to raise funds through initial public offerings (IPOs). The companies that had filed their preliminary IPO papers with Sebi between December 2021 and January 2022 obtained this "observation" letter March 29-31, an update with the regulator showed Monday. According to the DRHP, Dharmaj Crop Guard's IPO consists of fresh issue of equity shares worth up to ₹216 crore and an offer-for-sale (OFS) of up to 14.83 lakh shares by its existing shareholders.

Mankind enters agri-tech space

New Delhi: Mankind Pharma Monday announced its foray into the agri-tech segment, with plans to invest up to ₹200 crore in the first two to three years. The company has set up a new arm Mankind Agritech Pvt Ltd, which will offer a variety of crop care solutions to Indian farmers, including weedicides, insecticides, fungicides, plant growth regulators and biologicals, Mankind Pharma said in a statement.



The FIs and FPIs would come and go. But, today the Indian retail investors have proven that even if they come and go any shock that may come in is now taken care of because of the shock absorbing capacity that the Indian retailers have brought into the Indian market

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

VOLKSWAGEN POLO MARKS 12 YRS

Volkswagen India Monday said it has launched a special edition of its hatchback Polo to mark 12 years of the model in the country. The Polo Legend edition is priced at ₹10.25 lakh (ex-showroom) onwards. With its market launch in 2010, the company has already sold over 3 lakh units of the model in the country



FINANCIAL SERVICES TITAN

HDFC declares merger with HDFC Bank

The merger will help HDFC Bank shrink the gap with state-run lender and bigger rival State Bank of India while boosting competition in the home loan space as people step up purchases with pandemic woes receding



After 45 years of housing finance and 9 million homes provided to Indians, we had to find a home for ourselves. We have found it within our own family and in our own bank. This is a merger of equals

DEEPAK PAREKH | CHAIRMAN, HDFC LTD

DEAL VALUED AT \$40 BILLION - HDFC BANK CEO
HDFC LTD SHAREHOLDERS TO GET 42 HDFC BANK SHARES FOR 25 HELD
COMBINED COMPANY TO HAVE BALANCE SHEET OF \$237 BN

PROPOSED ENTITY WILL HAVE A COMBINED ASSET BASE OF AROUND ₹18 LAKH CRORE
HDFC BANK MERGER TO CREATE ENTITY TWICE THE SIZE OF ICICI BANK: S&P GLOBAL RATINGS

REUTERS

Mumbai, April 4: India's largest private lender HDFC Bank and its biggest shareholder are merging in a \$40 billion deal, the country's biggest ever, creating a financial services titan to better tap rising demand for credit in the economy. HDFC Bank's deal with housing finance firm HDFC Ltd, which owns about 21% of the lender, will build on its 68 million customers and expand its home loan portfolio significantly while also opening up the scope for larger loans.

Following a crisis at shadow lenders in 2018 that shook India's financial system, the central bank issued guidelines in November 2021 allowing well-run large shadow lenders to be converted into banks. The HDFC group is the latest in India to take advantage of the new rules and undertake mergers of their companies. Under the terms of the

deal, shareholders of HDFC Ltd will receive 42 shares of the bank for 25 shares held. Existing shareholders of HDFC Ltd will own 41% of HDFC Bank, which will become a full-fledged public company as the housing finance company's stake in the lender will be cancelled in the deal.

"The value of HDFC Ltd is \$60 billion. If you strip off the portion of their holding in us, it comes to \$40 billion and that's the value of the deal," HDFC Bank CEO Sashidhar Jagdishan told reporters at a press conference.

BIGGER BALANCE SHEET

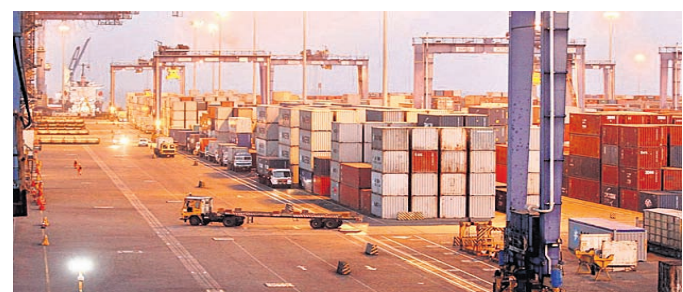
The combined company will have a bigger, \$237 billion balance sheet which will allow it to underwrite larger ticket loans, including infrastructure loans. HDFC Bank is currently a largely retail-focused bank.

The planned merger will expand HDFC Bank's loan book by 40% and the combined company's market value will rise to about \$160 billion at current prices, Jefferies said in a note.

The companies expect the deal to be completed in the second or third quarter of the financial year starting in April 2023. Jagdishan will be the chief executive of the combined company.

"Over the last few years, various regulations for banks and NBFCs have been harmonised, thereby enabling the potential merger," HDFC Ltd Chairman Deepak Parekh said, referring to shadow lenders also referred to as non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) in India.

Trade deficit rises 88% in FY22: Govt



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 4: India's trade deficit rose 87.5 per cent to \$192.41 billion in 2021-22 as against \$102.63 billion in the previous year, the government data showed Monday. While total exports during last fiscal year increased to a record high of \$417.81 billion, imports too soared to \$610.22 billion, leaving a trade gap of \$192.41 billion.

"India's merchandise import in April 2021-March 2022 was \$610.22 billion, an increase of 54.71 per cent over \$394.44 billion in April 2020-March 2021 and an increase of 28.55 per cent over \$474.71 billion in April 2019-March 2020," said a release by Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

For the first time, India's monthly merchandise exports exceeded \$40 billion, reaching \$40.38 billion in March 2022, an increase of 14.53 per cent over \$35.26 billion in the year-ago month, the release said. It was up by 87.89 per cent over \$21.49 billion in March 2020. The ministry said the country's

The trade deficit in March 2022 was \$18.69 billion, while it was \$192.41 billion during entire 2021-22

merchandise import last month stood at \$59.07 billion, an increase of 20.79 per cent over \$48.90 billion in the year-ago period. It was up 87.68 per cent over \$31.47 billion in March 2020.

During March 2022, the value of non-petroleum exports stood at \$33 billion, registering a growth of 4.28 per cent over \$31.65 billion in the same month a year ago. Non-petroleum exports grew by 74 per cent from \$18.97 billion in March 2020.

Non-petroleum import stood at \$40.66 billion during March 2022, showing a rise of 5.26 per cent over \$38.63 billion in the year-ago month. It was up by 89.79 per cent from \$21.42 billion in March 2020, showed the data from the ministry.

HDFC twins settle 10 per cent higher

MUMBAI: Shares of HDFC and HDFC Bank witnessed heavy buying on Monday and settled with nearly 10 per cent gains as investors lapped up the announcement of their proposed merger. The scrip of HDFC settled at ₹2,678.90, registering a jump of 9.30 per cent. It had scaled an intra-day high of ₹2,855.35 per share, a gain of 16.49 per cent over its previous closing price on BSE. Mirroring the rally in the stock, market capitalisation of HDFC zoomed to ₹4,85,691.18 crore. Similar trends were seen on NSE, where the stock opened at ₹2,570.50, then touched a high of ₹2,933.80 and finally ended at ₹2,676, higher by 9.12 per cent over its previous close. Once the deal is effective, HDFC Bank will be wholly owned by public shareholders, and existing shareholders of HDFC will own 41 per cent of the bank, according to stock exchange filings by the firms. In tandem, shares of HDFC Bank settled at ₹1,656.45, up 9.97 per cent over previous close. During intra-day trade, the stock saw a high of ₹1,721.85. Accordingly, market capitalisation of HDFC Bank jumped to ₹9,18,591.13 crore at the end of the trading session Monday. On NSE too, the bank's shares were up nearly 10 per cent at ₹1,654.10 apiece. The combined market capitalisation of HDFC and HDFC Bank stood at ₹14,04,282.31 crore, higher than TCS' market capitalisation of ₹13,79,389.19 crore.

Sensex reclaims 60K; Nifty breaches 18K



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 4: The Sensex vaulted 1,335 points while the Nifty shot past the 18,000-mark Monday, fuelled by index heavyweights HDFC twins which soared almost 10 per cent after announcing corporate India's biggest merger.

India's largest housing finance company HDFC Ltd will merge with the country's top private lender HDFC Bank to create a banking behemoth with a combined balance sheet of about ₹17.87 lakh crore.

The announcement triggered robust buying in these two counters as well as other banking and financial stocks. FMCG, IT and metal stocks too saw heavy demand.

The 30-share BSE Sensex started up 1,335.05 points or 2.25 per cent to close at an over two-month high of 60,611.74. Likewise, the broader NSE Nifty jumped 382.95 points or 2.17 per cent to 18,053.40.

HDFC Bank and HDFC led the Sensex gainers' chart, advancing 9.97 per cent and 9.30 per cent, respectively. The other gainers in-

cluded Kotak Bank, HUL, L&T, IndusInd Bank, Sun Pharma and Tata Steel.

Only two names closed in the red - Infosys and Titan, slipping up to 1.05 per cent. In the broader markets, the BSE midcap and smallcap gauges gained as much as 1.88 per cent.

World equities made cautious gains amid talks of more sanctions against Russia in response to its invasion of Ukraine. Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Tokyo, Seoul, Hong Kong and Shanghai closed in the green.

Stock exchanges in Europe were largely trading higher in mid-session deals. Meanwhile, international oil benchmark Brent crude declined 1.05 per cent to USD 103.29 per barrel.

The rupee started the financial year 2022-23 on a bullish note and settled 21 paise higher at 75.53 (provisional) against the US dollar Monday.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) were net buyers in the capital markets as they bought shares worth ₹1,909.78 crore on Friday, as per exchange data.

Red Fort Festival closes with massive footfall

New Delhi: The Ministries of Culture & Tourism, along with Red Fort's 'Monument Mitra', Dalmia Bharat Limited, rounded off one of the world's greatest cultural extravaganzas Sunday, that witnessed a massive footfall of more than 1,50,000 visitors over a period of 10 days, at the iconic 17th century monument. The closing ceremony received an overwhelming response from visitors and was helmed by Minister of Commerce & Industry, Consumer Affairs & Food & Public Distribution and Textiles Piyush Goyal along with Monument Mitra, Dalmia Bharat Limited's Managing Director Puneet Dalmia. "Red Fort Festival - Bharat Bhagya Vidhata has set a very high standard globally with its unique showcase of our nation's rich culture and heritage. Indeed, it has proven to be an incredible experience for over 1,50,000 visitors," said Goyal. "Even more commendable are the opportunities that the festival created post-Covid which is testimony to how we are collaboratively moving towards a 'New India.' I hope that corporates such as Red Fort's Monument Mitra, Dalmia Bharat Limited, will join us as we strengthen our focus on the welfare of our people without losing sight of our glorious legacies." "We've come a long way from being bestowed the honour of being Red Fort's Monument Mitra, to conceptualising and making our path breaking initiative 'Red Fort Festival - Bharat Bhagya Vidhata' a resounding success," said Dalmia.



BIZ BUZZ

Utkal Diwas fete at PPL



Bhubaneswar: Utkal Diwas was celebrated with much fervour at Paradeep Phosphates Limited (PPL) April 2. The employees, their family members, Paradeep Phosphates Officers' Club and Employee Recreation Club all made lovely arrangements to make the celebration a grand and memorable affair. This is an occasion to remember the legends of the state and the unique and unparalleled Odia culture. In the evening, a cultural function was arranged where all Odia traditional art and dance forms were presented, starting from Odissi to Ghodanacha, Sambalpuri, Gotipua, Kendara Badan and much more. Pranab Bhattacharya, Chief Manufacturing Officer and Unit Head inaugurated the function and highlighted state's richness in minerals, natural resources and skilled manpower. Jagannath Khuntia, General Manager (HR) said about Odia tradition, heritage, tourism locations and above all the great Jagannath culture, which makes Odisha second to none in the world. Ramesh Patra, famous Kendara player was felicitated with a scroll and cash reward at the function. Goutam Swain, Secretary, PPEC; Suvendu Biswal, President, PPERC; Hemant Moharana, Secretary, PPERC and other senior executives of PPL joined the function.

MCL celebrates 31st Foundation Day

Sambalpur: Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) celebrated its 31st Foundation Day April 3, beginning with the campaign 'Run For Excellence' for the growth of the nation as well as the company, participated by officers, staffs and their family members. Chairman & Managing Director, OP Singh, flagged off the campaign in presence of KR Vasudevan, Director (Finance), Keshav Rao, Director (Personnel), PK Patel, Chief Vigilance Officer along with former CMDs, SN Sharma, SR Upadhyay, Bholanath Shukla and PK Sinha. The campaign for women participants was flagged off by Manjula Shukla, former President Jagriti Mahila Mandal, in presence of Padmaja Singh, President of Jagriti Mahila Mandal, Padmini Vasudevan, Sarita Patel. After the race was over, prizes were distributed among the winners.



FACTORY ACTIVITY SLOWED IN MARCH

REUTERS

Bangalore, April 4: India's factory activity expanded at a slower pace in March as rising prices meant new orders and output grew at their weakest rate since September, according to a survey released Monday that also showed optimism at a two-year low.

The survey provides the latest

evidence the recovery in Asia's third-largest economy is slowing. Hikes in oil prices, primarily driven by uncertainties around the Russia-Ukraine war, have already taken a toll on consumer spending - the biggest contributor to GDP growth.

Compiled by S&P Global, the Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index declined to 54.0 in March from 54.9 in February.

However, it has remained above the 50-level separating growth from contraction for nine straight months.

"Manufacturing sector growth in India weakened at the end of fiscal year 2021/22, with companies reporting softer expansions in new orders and production," noted Pollyanna De Lima, economics associate director at S&P Global.

Musk takes 9.2% stake in Twitter, stock soars 28%

THE WORLD'S RICHEST MAN, WITH OVER 80 MILLION FOLLOWERS ON TWITTER, BOUGHT NEARLY 73.5 MILLION SHARES IN THE MICRO-BLOGGING PLATFORM

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

San Francisco, April 4: Twitter shares surged nearly 28 per cent

Monday after regulatory filings in the US revealed that Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk has a 9.2 per cent passive stake in Parag Agrawal-run platform.

According to a regulatory filing in the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) in the US, the world's richest man, with over 80 million followers on Twitter, bought nearly 73.5 million shares in the micro-blogging platform.

Last month, Musk said he is considering building a new social media platform.

"Am giving serious thought to this," he wrote on the micro-blogging site in a reply to a user.

Musk has been a vocal critic of



social media platforms, including Twitter. In a Twitter poll, Musk had asked: "do you believe Twitter rigorously adheres to this principle?" and at least "70 per cent" of respondents said "no". "Given that Twitter serves as

the de facto public town square, failing to adhere to free speech principles fundamentally undermines democracy. What should be done?" Musk wrote in a response to the poll result. He also asked users "is a new platform needed?"

We would expect this passive stake as just the start of broader conversations with the Twitter board/management that could ultimately lead to an active stake and a potential more aggressive ownership role of Twitter

DAN IVES | WEBBUSH SECURITIES

Musk's legal skirmish with the US SEC also continues. Musk is currently looking to throw out his 2018 agreement with the SEC, which requires him to get pre-approval for tweets that are of material importance to Tesla.

Davis Cup tie to be held earlier than scheduled

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 4: India will be able to field its 'A' team at both Davis Cup and the Asian Games with the ITF preponing the team tournament and ATF pushing back the tennis events at the regional multi-sport showpiece by eight days to avoid a clash in dates.

The Indian Davis Cup team was recently drawn to meet Norway in an away contest, which was to be held either on September 16-17 or 17-18.

The tennis events at the Asian Games were scheduled to be held from September 10-14, which meant that India could play only one event with its 'A' team since reaching Hangzhou in China from Davis Cup venue Norway was not practically possible.

However, the All India Tennis Association (AITA) and the Asian Tennis Federation (ATF) managed to convince the International Tennis Federation (ITF) to revise the dates.

The Davis Cup tie between India and Norway and that of nine other Asian nations will now be held on September 14-15 while the ATF itself rescheduled the tennis event at the Asian Games to September 18-24.

"The ATF has communicated to AITA that ITF has revised the dates of Davis Cup ties, involving 10 Asian Nations in World Group I and II, so that it does not clash with the tennis events at the Asian Games," AITA Secretary General Anil Dhupar told PTI.

"India's Davis Cup tie will now be played on September 14-15. ATF has also pushed back dates of tennis event at Asian Games to avoid clash," Dhupar added.

It has been learnt that ITF President David Haggerty himself wrote to AITA President Anil Jain, conveying the ITF's decision to revise the dates. AITA wanted the tie to be postponed to November 2022 but that proposal was rejected even as it agreed to revise the dates.

According to AITA sources, efforts are still on to convince ITF to allow all 10 Asian nations in World Group I and II, where home-and-away tie format is followed, to host the ties.

LSG GET BETTER OF SRH



Avesh Khan is pumped up after dismissing a Sunrisers batter

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Navi Mumbai, April 4: Lucknow Super Giants paid 25 times more than his base price of Rs 20 lakh to get Avesh Khan's services in IPL-15. The move was worth it as his excellent bowling (4/24) acted as the catalyst for his team's 12-run win over Sunrisers Hyderabad here Monday.

Heading into the lucrative T20 league as the most expensive uncapped Indian player, Avesh bowled a brilliant 18th over to turn the match decisively in LSG's favour.

Asked to bat first, skipper KL Rahul (68, 50b, 6x4, 1x6) and Deepak Hooda (51, 33b, 3x4, 3x6) struck useful half-centuries to lift LSG to 169/7 after a disastrous start.

Chasing 170, Kane Williamson (16) paid the price for going overboard, his ramp shot off Avesh finding a sliding Andrew Tye at short fine leg in the fourth over with SRH score reading 25/1. Avesh brought about Abhishek Sharma's downfall with a change in pace as the batter failed to read it while



KL Rahul (R) and Deepak Hooda run between the wickets during their crucial fourth wicket partnership against SRH, Monday

trying to loft him.

After a 44-run stand for the third wicket, Rahul Tripathi (44, 30b, 5x4, 1x6) and Aiden Markram (12) perished one after the other off Krunal Pandya (2/27). Then, Nicolas Pooran (34, 24b, 3x4, 2x6) and Washington Sundar (18) tried their best to help SRH get over the line, but failed.

Earlier, after his team were reduced to 27/3, mainly due to Sundar (2/28), Rahul found an able ally in Hooda and added 87 runs for the fourth wicket to revive the innings.

Manish Pandey struck Romario Shepherd for a four and a six but then, going for one too many, ended up lobbing a catch to mid-on in the

same over to leave LSG in a spot of bother.

Spurred by the early success, Williamson effected bowling changes frequently but he may have delayed by at least an over in introducing the attacking T Natarajan while opting for Abdul Samad's innocuous, part-time seam up stuff at the DY Patil Stadium.

The pacy Umran Malik consistently hit 145 kmps but also leaked plenty of runs, allowing Rahul and Hooda to settle down and revive LSG's innings.

Having withstood the early reverses, the duo of Rahul and Hooda went about their task in a professional manner, finding the boundaries

as well as running the singles and twos as the 100 came up in the 14th over with Malik going for 16 runs.

Shepherd broke the partnership when he had Hooda caught in the deep to signal the arrival of the in-form Ayush Badoni (19), who got into the groove with a boundary.

BRIEF SCORES

LSG 169/7 (KL Rahul 68, Deepak Hooda 51; T Natarajan 2/26, Washington Sundar 2/28, Romario Shepherd 2/42) beat SRH 157/9 (Rahul Tripathi 44, Nicolas Pooran 34; Avesh Khan 4/24, Jason Holder 3/34, Krunal Pandya 2/27) by 12 runs.

RCB face RR in 'Royal encounter'



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 4: Rajasthan Royals would aim to build on their promising start to the season when they take on Royal Challengers Bangalore, a side that is yet to unlock its potential, in the Indian Premier League here Tuesday.

Rajasthan come into the game following their 23-run win over Mumbai Indians. Bangalore, led by Faf Du Plessis, head into the match after a narrow three-wicket win over Kolkata Knight Riders and would be looking to be more convincing.

It's also learnt Australian all-rounder Glenn Maxwell will not be available for the game Tuesday. "No Australian player can play before (April) 6th. There's an embargo from the Australian Board, so Maxwell is not available," a source privy to the development said.

The Wankhede track has been aiding the pacers initially and both the teams can take advantage of it. For Rajasthan, opener Buttler is in sublime form and can pummel any attack to submission, like he did on Saturday en route to a memorable hundred. He would however, need support from fellow opening batter Yashasvi Jaiswal and one-down Devdutt Padikkal, who would be itching to get among the runs.

After his half century in the first game, RR skipper Sanju Samson was unable to convert the start against Mumbai Indians. Knowing his ability to hit sixes at will, Samson would be more than keen to find consistency and lead



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from the front. Another important cog in their wheel is West Indies batter Shimron Hetmyer, who has played useful cameos in the first two games. The top five, if they get going, can make things hard for the RCB bowlers.

On the bowling front, RR are unlikely to tinker with their combination. Trent Boult, Prasidh Krishna and Navdeep Saini held their nerve against KKR. While Hasaranga will be key in stopping Samson and Co, pacers David Willey, Akash Deep and Mohammed Siraj, who combined to take four wickets against KKR, would need to come good again.

Also death overs specialist Harshal Patel will have to be at his best if RCB aim to contain a powerful RR batting unit. More than the bowling, batting has been a concern for RCB. While opener Anuj Rawat needs to show consistency, Du Plessis also will have to lead from the front and get a big score.

TODAY'S MATCH

RCB vs RR

Time: 07:30 pm

TELECAST

Star Sports channels & Hotstar

MBAPPE HELPS PSG OVERPOWER LORIENT



FIERY COMBINATION: Kylian Mbappe (No.7), Neymar (No.10) and Lionel Messi celebrate a goal with Nuno Mendes at Parc des Princes, Sunday

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paris, April 4: Kylian Mbappe notched two goals and three assists as Paris Saint-Germain beat Lorient 5-1 and maintained its 12-point lead over Marseille to move ever closer to a record 10th French league title. There are eight rounds left.

Mbappe provided the spark in the final third from the fourth minute with a dribbling run and low shot that goalkeeper Matthieu Dreyer palmed away. Soon after, the France striker fed Neymar, who opened the scoring.

The lead doubled in the 28th when Mbappe scored with his signature move, faking a curler into the far corner before drilling into

the near corner. When Lorient forward Terem Moffi cut the lead in the 56th by pouncing on a sloppy back pass from Achraf Hakimi to knock the ball past goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma, PSG supporters loudly booed their team's lapse in concentration.

Mbappe dashed Lorient's hopes of a comeback by raising his league tally to 17 goals, dribbling past Julien Laporte to bury the ball into the bottom corner in the 67th.

Six minutes later, Mbappe squared the ball back for Lionel Messi, who shot under the crossbar for 4-1, ending his goal drought. Mbappe made his league-leading 13th assist by playing Neymar in for the final goal in the 90th.

Spurs move to 4th in EPL; rout Magpies

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, April 4: Tottenham powered above north London rival Arsenal into the English Premier League top four — for at least one day — by thrashing Newcastle 5-1.

Ben Davies, Matt Doherty, Son Heung-min, Emerson Royal and substitute Steven Bergwijn scored at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium for Spurs, who have netted more goals (30) than any other team in the league in 2022.

Newcastle took the lead through Fabian Schar's free-kick in the 39th minute but couldn't handle the relentless attacks of Tottenham. They came from all angles, with wing backs Doherty and Royal even popping up to score rare goals.

Tottenham moved into fourth place on goal difference ahead of Arsenal, which has two games in hand. Tottenham and Arsenal are five points behind third-placed Chelsea.

Newcastle has lost three straight games in the league, having previously gone eight games unbeaten, and is still not safe from relegation in 15th place.

Barca move to second in La Liga

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madrid, April 4: With a statement win against Sevilla, Barcelona showed it wasn't giving up yet in the fight for the Spanish league.

Barcelona's revamped team under coach Xavi Hernandez kept its momentum and moved into second place for the first time this season after beating Sevilla 1-0 at home Sunday.

Pedri González broke the deadlock by scoring a beautiful goal in the 72nd minute at Camp Nou Stadium to move the Catalan club past Sevilla and keep its slim title hopes alive.

The result left Barcelona 12 points behind leader Real Madrid but it has a game in hand. Madrid salvaged a 2-1 win at Celta Vigo Saturday with a couple of goals by the league scoring leader Karim Benzema.

Xavi has slowly turned Barcelona into a competitive squad again in his first year with the club. Barcelona has the same points as Sevilla and defending champion Atlético Madrid, which won at Alavés 4-1 Saturday. Sevilla dropped from second to fourth because of the head-to-head tie-breakers.

Barcelona hadn't been as high as



PURE MASTERCLASS: Dani Alves and Ousmane Dembele celebrate with goal scorer Pedri after the teenager's stunner against Sevilla at Camp Nou, Sunday

second after a tough start to its first season without Lionel Messi. It reached the top three only a few rounds ago. Barcelona has won eight and drawn one of its last nine matches in all competitions.

It hasn't lost in 13 consecutive games. Sevilla had been second since the 16th round but gradually lost ground. It had drawn its last three in a row.

Barcelona was mostly in con-

INTER STUN JUVE

Milan: Inter Milan halted their poor run of form in the best possible way by beating fierce rival Juventus 1-0 to boost its Serie A title chances and hinder its opponent's own hopes. Hakan Calhanoglu converted a penalty at the second time of asking in first-half stoppage time. Defending champion Inter moved to within three points of leaders AC Milan and Napoli, which won at Atalanta 3-1 earlier. Inter, which has played a match fewer than most of its title rivals, had won just one of its previous seven league matches. Juventus was unbeaten in 16 consecutive league matches ahead of the game.

rol but struggled to create significant scoring chances. Veteran defender Gerard Piqué almost opened the scoring with a header that struck the crossbar in the 69th. Pedri finally got the winner by faking his shot twice outside the area before firing in a low strike.

The match came a few hours after the club ratified an agreement with Spotify for at least 12 seasons. The agreement, initially announced in March, was approved by 89% of votes in Sunday's general assembly.

A chance encounter that changed Tilak's life

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Navi Mumbai, April 4: Suresh Raina most certainly won't remember the chance encounter he had with the little known Hyderabad cricket coach Salam Bayash or the 12-year-old kid, who had accompanied him in tow during that evening at the HCA Stadium in Uppal back in 2014.

Chennai Super Kings were pitted against Sunrisers Hyderabad on the very next day and little did 'Chinna Thala' know that his five-minute interaction and a photo with a then 12-year-old Namboori Thakur Tilak Varma will have such an impact on 12-year-old's impressionable mind.

Eight year hence, the now 20-year-old left-hander's lucid style of strokeplay must have brought a wide grin on Raina's face while watching him reverse sweep Ravichandran Ashwin for a six. "I had a friend of mine, who was



a local manager. I took his help to procure permission to watch the practice and had little Tilak ac-

company," it seemed as if it happened yesterday in the manner Bayash recollected events of that day

"I distinctly remember a wide-eyed Tilak just watching Suresh Raina's batting with awe. He didn't remove his eyes even once and watched every shot played by Raina. Then we clicked pictures with him and I strongly feel that the "special meeting" with Raina was enough for Tilak to decide that he wanted to become a cricketer," the childhood coach said about his ward, who has become the find of Mumbai Indians.

Son of an electrician, Varma believes that the Rs 1.7 crore contract will help him provide a better life for his parents, who has sacrificed a lot to see their son realise his dream.

But Bayash always knew that Varma was special and did play a huge role in shaping his career from age-group cricket to U-19 and now sending a near-finished product to Mumbai Indians.

Bayash recalled how Varma's batting in a tennis ball match at a local ground, caught his attention. "I saw him and felt that the kid

was doing well. Then I called his parents and persuaded them to take the kid to my academy. He had issues while commuting, so he used to accompany for practice. We used to cover 40 km one way."

Varma's is a resident of Salala Barkas area in Belapur locality and travelled all the way to Lingapally to practice at the Legala cricket academy. "I had taken special permission from school authorities and often he would have lunch at the academy before starting training in the afternoon session. While Tilak's family at that point had hardships but I must give credit to his parents, who were very supportive with his career choice," Bayash said.

But amidst all these Bayash's real happiness lies somewhere else. When he played cricket, Bayash's only wish was to meet Sachin Tendulkar once in his lifetime, talk to him and seek his blessings. What he couldn't achieve, his favourite ward has done it.