

## Viability of freebies: EC leaves it to voters

The apex poll panel tells Supreme Court that it can't regulate state policies and decisions which may be taken by the winning party

**New Delhi, April 9:** The Election Commission (EC) has told the Supreme Court that offering or distribution of any freebies either before or after an election is a policy decision of the party concerned and whether such policies are financially viable or have

adverse effect, has to be decided by the voters of that state. In its affidavit, the EC said, "The Election Commission of India cannot regulate state policies and decisions which may be taken by the winning party when they form the government. Such an action, without enabling provisions in the law, would be an overreach of powers." The poll panel said, "... It is also stated that offering/distribution of any freebies either before or after the election is a policy decision of the party concerned and whether such policies are financially viable or its adverse effect on the economic health of



The State is a question that has to be considered and decided by the voters of the state."

It said that in December 2016, a set of 47 proposals on electoral reforms has been sent to the Centre in respect of reforms relating to political parties of which one chapter deals with "de-registration of political parties". "It is also submitted that the Election Commission of India has also made recommendations to the Law ministry to enable it to exercise the powers to de-register a political party and to issue necessary orders regulating registration and de-registration of political parties," the poll panel said. The EC said in so far as the prayer of the petitioner Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay that the EC may be directed

to seize the election symbol/deregister the political party which promises/distributes freebies from public fund, the Supreme Court in its verdict of 2002 had directed that the EC had no power to cancel the registration of a political party except for three grounds. The poll panel said that Upadhyay has also sought a direction to ECI to insert an additional condition that political parties shall not promise/distribute freebies from the public fund before election. It said the Election Symbols Order of 1968 has provisions which deal with recognition of national parties.

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**First XE case detected in Gujarat**  
**Ahmedabad:** A 67-year-old man from Mumbai, who had travelled to Vadodara in Gujarat last month, was found infected with XE, Omicron's sub-variant that is considered more transmissible than other variants of coronavirus, making it the first such case in the state, officials said Saturday. The patient had tested positive for Covid-19 March 12 during his visit to Vadodara, but had returned to Mumbai the next day.

## ₹1.4 crore cash seized from Roul's sis-in-law

**Bhubaneswar, April 9:** The Vigilance sleuths Saturday seized ₹1.4 crore cash from the house of crorepati assistant engineer Kartikeswar Roul's sister-in-law at Salia Sahi in Nayapalli area of the city here. With this, the total cash seizure in this case has reached ₹3.41 crore - the highest ever cash seizure by the state Vigilance, said



the officials. After arresting Roul, assistant engineer of Minor Irrigation department in Bhanjanagar of Ganjam, Friday, the Vigilance officials interrogated Kalpana (second wife of Roul). During interrogation, she confessed to having

concealed more cash and gold in her sister's house at Salia Sahi. Subsequently, a team of the Vigilance raided the single-room house of Kalpana's sister early this morning and seized ₹1.41 crore cash along with 360 gram gold and 1,004 gram silver belonging to Roul. The Vigilance officials also arrested Kalpana for actively abetting the offence of the engineer. Vigilance director YK Jethwa said, "We have enhanced the use of domain experts in search teams. We are deploying financial experts to minutely scrutinise financial data; technical teams to conduct assessment of buildings and other constructions, and cyber teams to scan mobiles, laptops, CCTVs, hard disks and social media content. We have also enhanced focus on benami assets and deposits of corrupt functionaries." Kalpana was produced before the court that sent her to judicial custody. The anti-corruption agency officials also found property documents indicating purchase of a triplex bungalow by Roul at Pokhaript in the Capital city on cash payment of ₹78.50 lakh.

## Vax prices slashed to ₹225

Covishield and Covaxin will now be available for private hospitals at ₹225 per shot instead of ₹600 and ₹1,200 earlier

**New Delhi, April 9:** Ahead of the opening of the booster drive for the 18-plus population, vaccine majors Serum Institute of India (SII) and Bharat Biotech Saturday said they have decided to cut prices of the precaution dose of their respective Covid-19 vaccines to ₹225 per shot for private hospitals after discussions with the government. "We are pleased to announce that after discussion with the central government, SII has decided to revise the price of COVISHIELD vaccine for private hospitals from ₹600 to ₹225 per dose." SII CEO Adar Poonawalla said in a tweet. On Friday, the company had said that the precaution dose of its

Covishield vaccine against Covid-19 will be priced at ₹600 per shot for eligible individuals. Bharat Biotech Co-Founder Joint Managing Director Suchitra Ella in a tweet said: "We welcome the decision to make available precautionary dose for all adults. In consultation with the Central Government, we have decided to revise the price of #COVAXIN from ₹1,200 to ₹225 per dose, for #privatehospitals." Meanwhile, the Centre Saturday told the states that the precaution dose will be of the same Covid-19 vaccine as the one used for the administration of the first two doses and that private vaccination centres can charge up to a maximum of ₹150 per dose as service charge over and above the cost of the vaccine. The Health Ministry Friday announced that those above the age of 18 years who have completed nine months after the administration of the second dose will be eligible for the precaution dose.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



No, never! You can't give this speech in public, sir. Top leadership will be very unhappy. There is no hatred in it!!

## Manjulata Kanhar City deputy mayor

**Bhubaneswar, April 9:** Manjulata Kanhar, a BJD corporator of ward no 22, was elected unopposed as the deputy mayor of Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC). Kanhar, a post-graduate in Political Science from Sambalpur University, took charge officially and was greeted by residents of the Capital city. Speaking to mediapersons after being elected to the post, Kanhar said, "I would like to thank all the residents of Bhubaneswar. I will always be with them and work for their development." Stating that her priority will be to address the waterlogging issue in the city, she said, "With the support of all, I will try to take forward the development works of BMC."



WEATHER	
BHUB	CTK
MAX 36.8°C	36.2°C
MIN 25.4°C	25.2°C
Humidity 74%	78%
Rainfall Nil	Partly cloudy sky

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# leisure



## BEN AFFLECK, JENNIFER LOPEZ ARE ENGAGED AGAIN

Hollywood 'it' couple and stars Ben Affleck and Jennifer Lopez are engaged again. Lopez announced the engagement in a short video via her fan newsletter, On The JLo, in which she stares adoringly at a green-hued diamond ring.

## PINK FLOYD REUNITES FOR UKRAINE PROTEST SONG

Rock band Pink Floyd has reunited to record their first new material in 28 years, a protest song against the Ukraine war. *Hey Hey, Rise Up!* features David Gilmour and Nick Mason alongside long-time Floyd bassist Guy Pratt and Nitin Sawhney on keyboards, reports *bbc.com*.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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#### ARIES

You may get all nostalgic and wistful today, predicts Ganesh. You will go out of your way to improve your relationships. To you, your commitment is an investment for the future. The result is loving life-long bonds.

#### TAURUS

Financial gains are on the cards today, predicts Ganesh. Happiness will fly in as you receive some good news from an overseas friend. If you have feelings that you haven't expressed to someone you dearly love, today is a good day to go ahead and let them know. The evening promises rejoicing and relaxation, says Ganesh.

#### GEMINI

Today, you may be busy purchasing food supplies or penning an inventory. In your spare time, which you are likely to have in plenty today, you will try to befriend strangers or tread into unfamiliar territories. Such activities will not bring you any harm. A stroll with your sweetheart will nicely conclude a fairly eventful day, says Ganesh.

#### CANCER

You will be in high spirits today, foretells Ganesh. It is a favourable day to engage in household activities, like gardening, cooking or even washing laundry. In the evening, work will be eclipsed by the pleasures of love.

#### LEO

Time is one thing that you have in short change today, says Ganesh. There is every possibility that you shall remain extremely busy. The tasks may be small — like writing a letter to revive old contacts — but it is important that you do them. Chances are that you may also end up giving a few interviews over the phone. Just remember that your ability to make things work and do your best make you the prime candidate for organising and conducting urgent meetings. In short, buckle up as Ganesh predicts a busy day.

#### VIRGO

Ganesh predicts that your writing skills will possibly help you vent your feelings without offending others. You will successfully complete your pending assignments. Great success will knock at your door in anything and everything you undertake today, predicts Ganesh.

#### LIBRA

Your concern for your family surmounts all else, that much Ganesh knows. Today, you will fulfil your filial duties in all that you undertake. As Ganesh rightly points out: All good things begin at home, including your fortune and good luck.

#### SCORPIO

A healthy and hectic day is in store for you today. You are likely to finish your pending tasks with new zeal. But the chaotic day will blossom into a fabulous evening when you hang out with your sweetheart, says Ganesh.

#### SAGITTARIUS

Appreciation for all that excellent work you have put in is a no-go for you! Yet, you stand to gain nothing by losing heart. While the acknowledgement you look for has been delayed, Ganesh says it has not been denied and is in the offing already.

#### CAPRICORN

Your accomplishments may take you on cloud nine today. Success may come easily to you, but don't try your luck too much, advises Ganesh. Make the most of today as tomorrow may not be the same as today. You will be popular today, especially in your social circle as you'll impress everyone with your wit and humour.

#### AQUARIUS

You will prove yourself today by staying ahead of your rivals in all ways. You will conquer your frustrations, and will soon be raring to go. Your pleasing demeanour endears you to others and you win admiration from all quarters, says Ganesh.

#### PISCES

An action-packed day awaits you, busy as you will be corresponding with old contacts, telephonic interviews, organising meetings and scheduling tasks, says Ganesh. Do not forget to breathe!



## Vidya Balan on playing deglam parts

MUMBAI: Films like *Kahaani 2: Durga Rani Singh* (2016), *Begum Jaan* (2017), *Natkhah* (2020), *Sherni* (2021) and the recently released *Jalsa*, saw actor Vidya Balan shunning the sheen and playing deglamorised parts. But she has no qualms about it as she would rather focus on the love she received for them.

Hoping for the hype and the conversation surrounding such roles to be normalised, Balan, in her signature candour, says, "I don't even think about these things. Glamour is not even the reason why I joined films. I am here to tell stories and I am fortunate to get stories, which are very different from each other, each time. Stories that are raw, real and relatable fascinate me."

Ever since her Hindi film debut with *Parineeta* (2005), she has been hailed for breaking existing stereotypes about women characters, and setting new trends in contemporary commercial cinema. Quiz her if she feels the pressure to live up to such expectations with every project she does, and the 43-year-old says, "When I am making a decision about doing a film, I only think about whether it appeals to me. That's my primary consideration."

For Balan, it is solely her instinct that makes her want to do a film and live the character in it. She states, "It is never about what people are expecting from me because different people will have different expectations, and I won't be able to fulfil all of it." AGENCIES

## Ayushmann spills the beans on upcoming movies in 2022

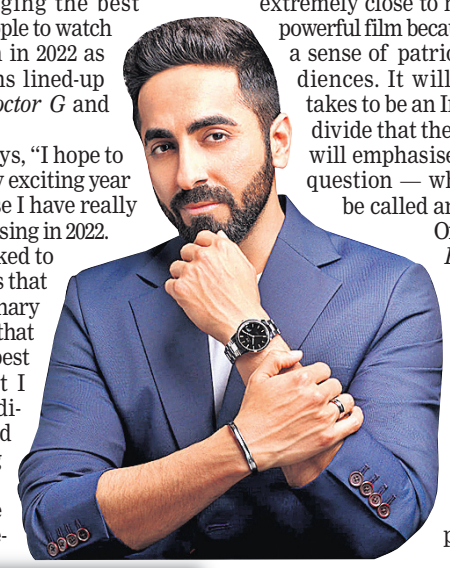
MUMBAI: Actor Ayushmann Khurrana feels he is 'bringing the best of content' for people to watch on the big screen in 2022 as he has three films lined-up such as *Anek*, *Doctor G* and *Action Hero*.

Ayushmann says, "I hope to have an incredibly exciting year in cinema because I have really diverse films releasing in 2022. I have always looked to handpick projects that are out of the ordinary and I'm confident that I'm bringing the best of content that I could find for audiences to watch and enjoy on the big screen."

About *Anek* he says, "My first re-

lease of the year. *Anek*, is a project that's extremely close to my heart and it's a powerful film because it should invoke a sense of patriotism amongst audiences. It will question what it takes to be an Indian above all the divide that the country faces and will emphasise on a hard hitting question — what does it take to be called an Indian?"

On *Doctor G* and *Action Hero*, he reveals, "My next *Doctor G* is a subject that will make people ponder about an important social issue told in the most entertaining manner. It's a brilliant subject with a message that will appeal to people's hearts." AGENCIES



## Pooja is the industry's lucky charm: Dil Raju

MUMBAI: Telugu's leading producer Dil Raju, who has acquired the rights to release the Telugu version of the Tamil movie *Beast*, hailed actress Pooja Hegde and called her the 'Lucky Charm'.

Dil Raju made the remarks while attending a press meet Friday, in Hyderabad. The video of his comments on Pooja has now become viral on social media. "Pooja is like a lucky charm to the film industry. *DJ- Duvvada Jagannadham*, *Maharshi*, *Ala Vaikunthapuramu Loo*, *Aravinda Sametha*, all of these movies were super hits because Pooja

stepped in. Pooja! I want your dates", Dil Raju said.

Dil Raju compares Pooja to a famous regional sweet Kaja, which has grabbed much attention. While some netizens commented that it was insensitive to objectify an actress, some of them enjoyed his comments. At the same time, his speech was assumed to be witty, by many others. Hemed by Nelson Dilipkumar, Pooja Hegde and Vijay-starrer *Beast* will hit the screens April 13. AGENCIES



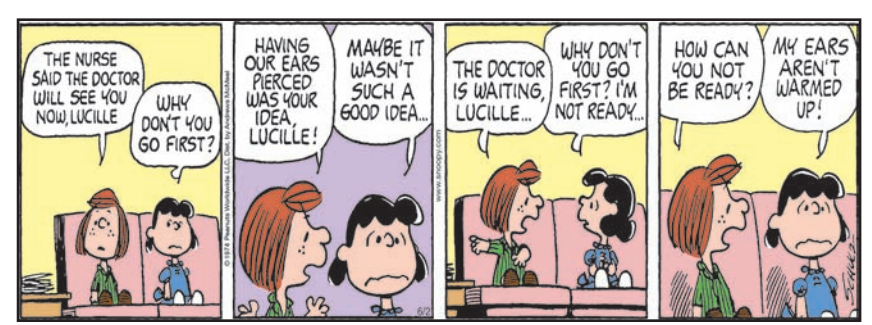
## Janhvi gets mobbed in Lucknow

MUMBAI: Actor Janhvi Kapoor was in for a rude shock as she visited a mall on Shaheed Path in Lucknow for a store launch. The actress, who was supposed to inaugurate the showroom, was mobbed by guests and fans at the store and beat a hasty retreat on seeing the commotion her visit had caused.

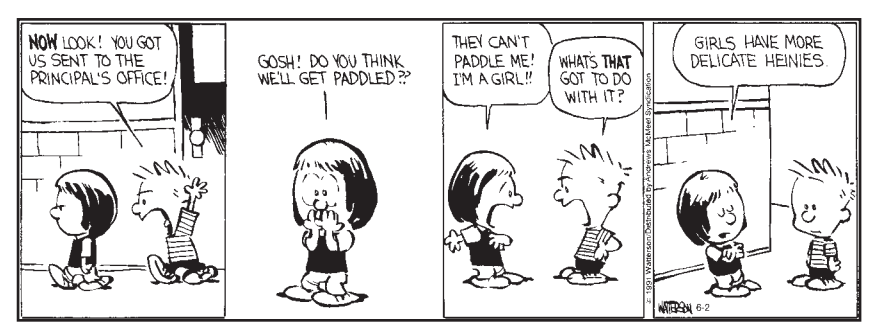
The guests too had to bear the brunt of her fanfare as they were pushed and jostled around by eager fans looking for a selfie with the *Dhadak* and *Rohie* actress. Janhvi arrived late for the event with a retinue of nearly 20 bouncers which added to the confusion. "I had been invited by the store owners for the launch and since they were friends, I went to the mall and was also eager to meet Janhvi. She was supposed to arrive by 8:30 PM but she came an hour and a half late. By then word had got out that the actress will be visiting the store and a huge crowd had gathered there. The security at the store was clearly outnumbered by the crowd and there was nearly a stampede when Janhvi came. There were just too many guests. A few of us were pushed and some also fell down in the melee," informs a customer present there. AGENCIES



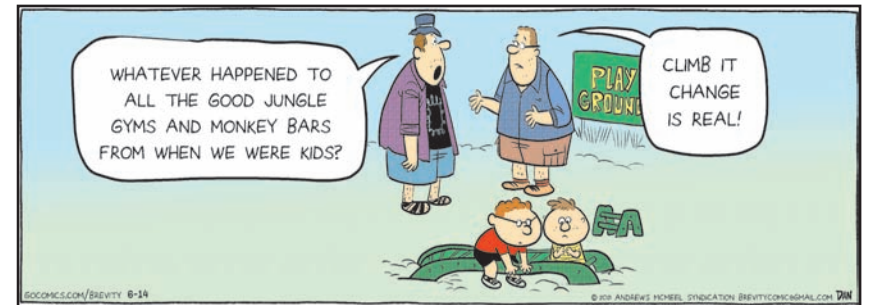
### PEANUTS



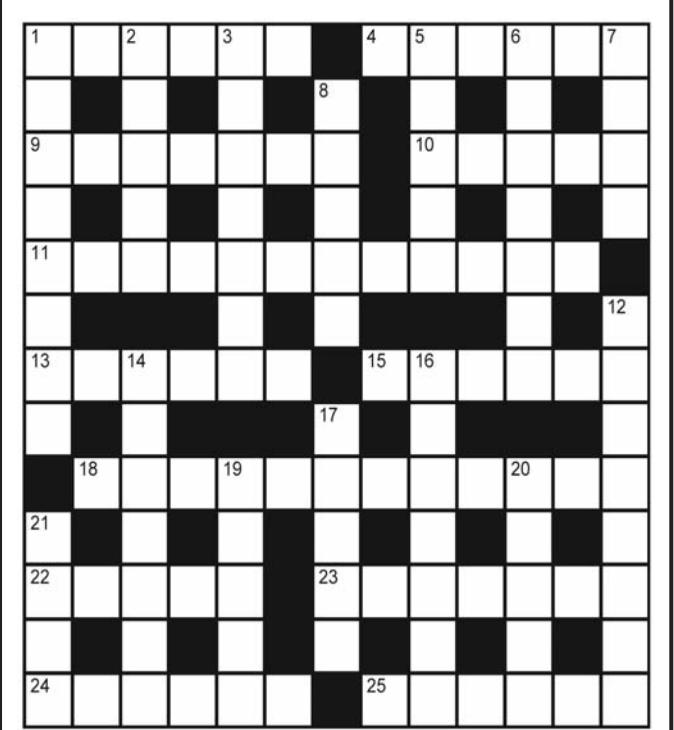
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



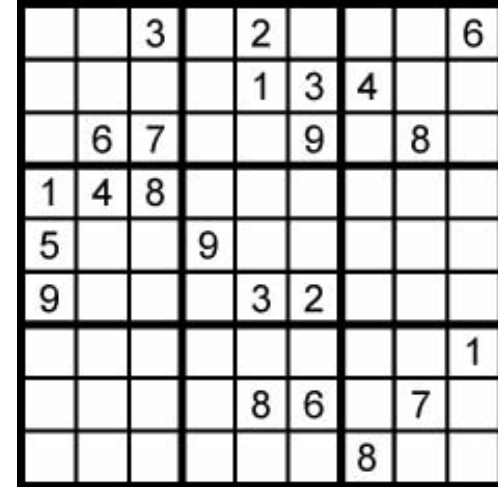
### FUN post CROSSWORD



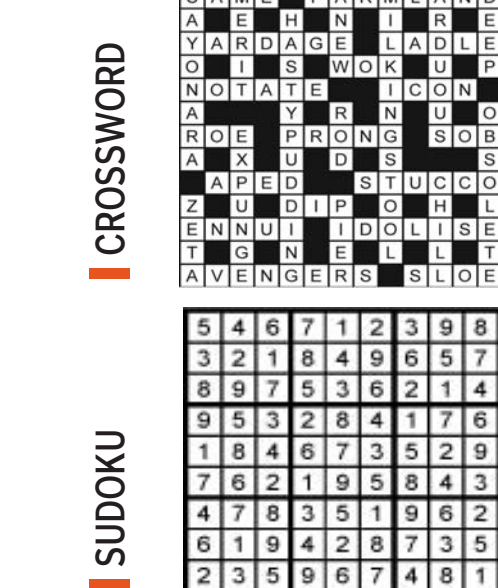
- Copyright ©2022 PuzzleJunction.com
- Across**
- 1 Oddball
  - 4 Exit
  - 9 Queues (5,2)
  - 10 Sufficient
  - 11 Ornithologists (4,8)
  - 13 Gauge
  - 15 Fortified wine
  - 18 Playing field (7,5)
  - 22 Rival of Paris
  - 23 Tucker out
  - 24 Breakfast item
  - 25 Typeface with slanting letters
- Down**
- 1 Tusked animal (4,4)
  - 2 Before circle or ear
  - 3 Renounces a child, maybe
  - 5 Chart
  - 6 Kind of penguin
  - 7 Part of a rose
  - 8 Skewers
  - 12 Kind of trance
  - 14 Winter personage
  - 16 Snub (4,3)
  - 17 One with wings
  - 19 Textile machines
  - 20 Peer
  - 21 Like the Gobi

### 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

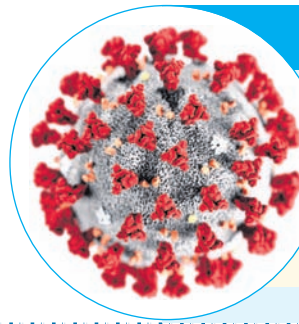


# downtown



## FRESH YIELD

Vendors unload pineapples from a truck at Ashok Nagar market in Bhubaneswar, Saturday



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	49,79,38,804	43,35,73,914	62,00,054
India	4,30,34,217	4,25,01,196	5,21,656
Odisha	12,87,834	12,78,485	9,121

# Sulochana sworn in as Bhubaneswar mayor



Sulochana Das takes oath as the mayor of Bhubaneswar in the presence of BMC commissioner Sanjay Kumar Singh and other officials, Saturday

On the auspicious occasion of Ashokastami, I pray to Lord Lingaraj to take forward the Rath (chariot) of development of Bhubaneswar like his Rukuna Rath. The Lord may bless all the residents of Bhubaneswar with a happy life

**SULOCHANA DAS | MAYOR**

**Bhubaneswar, April 9:** The newly-elected Mayor, Sulochana Das, of the state biggest urban body, Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), took the oath of office Saturday along with the winner corporators of 67 wards.

Sangramjit Nayak, director of the municipal administration, administered the oath to Das at the BMC conference hall. Following the ceremony, Sulochana said: "I thank all the residents of Bhubaneswar for their support and congratulate all the 67 newly-elected corporators and staff of the BMC."

Under the leadership of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Bhubaneswar has been developed into a smart city. The development activities will continue, and we will work collectively in this direction."

She added, "On the auspicious occasion of Ashokastami, I pray to Lord Lingaraj to take forward the Rath (chariot) of development of Bhubaneswar like his Rukuna Rath. The Lord may bless all the residents of Bhubaneswar with a happy life."

It can be mentioned that the BJD leader had won in the recent polls defeating her nearest rival Suniti Mund of the BJP by a margin of

61,143 votes. Sulochana, who began her career as a journalist, started her political journey with the Congress and later joined the BJD.

Notably, the ruling BJD had won the corporator posts in 48 of the 67 wards of the BMC, while the candidates of the principal opposition BJP secured victory in 10 wards. The Congress could not even open its account in the BMC election, the result of which was announced March 26.

Another important aspect of this year's BMC election is that women candidates have won from 41 of the 67 wards, including seven unreserved ones.

Of the 41 women corporators, 35 have won from BJD, while six from BJP. In the 2014 BMC election, women candidates had won from 34 of the 67 wards, sources said.

## DEVOTION IN THE AIR



Hundreds of devotees pull the Rukuna Rath of Lord Lingaraj in Bhubaneswar on the occasion of Ashokastami, Saturday

## Officials told to submit asset info by April 30

A copy of the property statement will also be forwarded to the Lokayukta

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 9:** The state government has asked all of its employees to submit their asset details before April 30.

The General Administration and Public Grievances (GA&PG) department recently issued a circular to all departments, RDCs and collectors, for this purpose.

Earlier, the employees were asked to submit their annual property statement for the year 2021 by March 2022 end. However, some of the employees have not submitted

it as they were busy in election duty. Hence, the state government has given another month's time to them to submit their property details. Now, the government officers can submit their asset details before April 30.

Considering such difficulties, the government has pleaded to allow the extension of the timeline for the submission of property statements online (Using HRMS portal) for the period up to April 30, 2022, the circular said.

The senior officers have been requested to inform all of their subordinate offices about the extension of the deadline. The employees have been directed not to wait till the deadline comes closer and file their property statement

ahead of the timeline.

To pave the way for the compulsory submission of property statements by all government employees, the state cabinet in its meeting held June 9, decided to amend Odisha Government Servants' Conduct Rules, 1959.

As per the provisions prescribed under Rule-21 of the Odisha Government Servants' Conduct Rules, 1959, every government servant is required to make a true and complete declaration of all his assets movable and immovable and the value thereof.

The statement can also be placed in the public domain. A copy of the property statement will also be forwarded to the Lokayukta for his information, sources said.

## May 28 deadline for filing Covid-19 ex-gratia claims: SRC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, April 9:** The Odisha government has fixed May 28 as the deadline for submission of ex-gratia claims for Covid-19 deaths that occurred on or before March 20, a senior official said Saturday.

State Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) PK Jena stated that the next of kin of patients who died due to the viral infection on or before March 20 can file an application till May 28 to avail an ex-gratia of ₹50,000 from the disaster management fund.

Those eligible can either apply online on the government website or visit their respective Collectors' offices with requisite documents to file an offline claim.

The money will be disbursed within 30 days of filing the application, the top official said.

Also, family members of patients who succumbed to the disease after March 20 will have to raise the claim within 90 days of death, he pointed out.

In case anyone misses the deadline, the person can approach the Grievance Redressal Committee set up in each district, he added.

Meanwhile, Odisha Saturday registered 11 new Covid-19 cases, taking the tally to 12,87,834. The state had reported 22 new cases Friday and 28 Thursday. The death toll remained static at 9,121 as no new fatality was reported.

As many as 12,78,485 patients have recovered from the infectious disease so far. The coastal state currently has 175 active cases. Altogether 21,995 samples were examined since Friday. The state's daily test positivity rate (TPR) stood at 0.05 per cent.

## Ministers told to resume monthly report submission

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 9:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has asked all ministers to resume the submission of monthly performance reports.

A week after he took charge as the Chief Minister for the fifth consecutive term in 2019, Naveen had directed his ministers to submit monthly reports on the implementation of the BJD's election manifesto promises. The ministers were asked to submit the report in the first week of every month.

However, some of the ministers were not submitting the report due to the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic and local body elections in the state. Now, the Chief Minister

Office (CMO) has informed the offices of all the ministers to submit their reports.

The ministers were asked to give details regarding the performance on the implementation of 5T action plan, execution of welfare schemes of the BJD government, monthly tour programme, pending issues of the department and review meetings.

"I've submitted details of all government programmes of my departments. The Chief Minister will take necessary action in this regard," said Water Resources and Information and Public Relation Minister Raghunandan Das. Similarly, minister Ashok Panda said he had been submitting the monthly report on the performance of his all three departments.

## Mediation programme for judicial officers

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 9:** A 40-hour (five days) Mediation Training Programme for judicial officers was organised by the Odisha State Legal Services Authority (OSLSA) at the Odisha Judicial Academy here, Saturday.

Supreme Court Judge Justice Vineet Saran inaugurated the event and addressed the officers about the aim and objectives of the training. Orissa High Court Chief Justice and OSLSA Patron-in-Chief S Muralidhar addressed the gathering about the importance of the mediation system in India.

Thirty judicial officers, including six from each of the five Judgeships- Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara, Dhenkanal and Khurda



Supreme Court Justice Vineet Saran inaugurated the workshop in the presence of Orissa High Court Chief Justice S Muralidhar and other judges, Saturday

attended the training programme being conducted from April 9 to 11 and April 16-17.

Senior trainers of the Mediation

and Conciliation Project Committee (MCPC) namely Veena Ralli, the organising secretary of Delhi High Court Mediation Centre

(SAMADAN), and JP Singh, a Senior Advocate from Delhi, joined the event as resource persons to train judicial officers.

## ILLUMINATION OF FESTIVITY



Ram Mandir in Bhubaneswar decorated with lights on the eve of Ram Navami, Saturday

## 'Not just lungs, smoking affects every cell of human body'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, April 9:** Not just lungs but also every cell of human body and hard organs like bones and teeth get adversely affected by smoking, said Professor Uma Kumar, Head of Rheumatology at All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi.

Kumar said that the first hand smoke and second hand smoke both are equally harmful for health.

Expressing concerns on rising smoking habits among women, she said that it may result into infertility, cases of which are also rising these days. Also, smoking may lead to premature birth.

People generally think that smoking affects lungs only; but the case is different, it affects every part and is one of the important risk factors for the growing number of cases related to autoimmune dis-



Professor Uma Kumar, Head of Rheumatology at AIIMS, New Delhi, said the first hand smoke and second hand smoke both are equally harmful for health

Vishal Rao of HCG, Bangalore said that the reason for the rapidly increasing cases of oral cancer in India is tobacco products

To save the lives of 13 lakh Indians annually, it is need of the hour that the strictness on tobacco products should be increased, said economist and BJP's national spokesperson Gopal Krishna Agarwal

by tobacco on the occasion of World Health Day. The event was organised by Tobacco Free India.

Vishal Rao of HCG, Bangalore said that the reason for the rapidly increasing cases of oral cancer in India is tobacco products. To save the lives of 13 lakh Indians annually, it is need of the hour that the strictness on tobacco products should be increased, said eminent economist and BJP's national spokesperson Gopal Krishna Agarwal.



# Forfeiture of drug peddler's ₹2.35 crore property ordered



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 9:** The Competent Authority under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act has ordered the forfeiture of properties to the tune of ₹2.35 crore belonging to fugitive interstate drug peddler Anil Pandi.

Pandi had acquired the wealth allegedly through the illegal trade in contraband ganja. The security officers are allowed to seize the properties illegally acquired from narcotics business in last six years by convicted, arrested or fugitive drug peddlers as per the provisions of NDPS case chapter V A of NDPS Act (Section A- Z).

The absconding Anil is wanted in several cases in various states including 11 NDPS cases in Gujarat alone

Earlier, his brother Sunil was arrested by Gujarat police. A non-bailable warrant has been issued against Anil

The STF has also declared a reward December 2, 2021

“On 7.04.2022, Honorable Competent Authority, Kolkata under the NDPS Act has been pleased to pass order to the forfeiture of huge amount of property worth of ₹2.35 crores seized in STF PS Case No. 29/2021 U/s. 20(b)(ii)(c)/29 NDPS Act. Competent Authority is a quasi-judicial authority under NDPS Act

to pass order for the forfeiture of such illegally acquired property,” informed Special Task Force (STF) in a press note.

The STF sleuths who intercepted a vehicle transporting contraband ganja weighing 10 quintals August 13, 2021, later found the involvement of Pandi in the case. The probe also found that the accused and his brother Sunil Pandi, native of Chhachina under Kodala police limits of Ganjam, are dreaded interstate drug peddlers.

Subsequently, the sleuths initiated a financial probe and found that Anil, Sunil and other family members own huge properties including one palatial three storied building having luxurious facilities including a swimming pool and 33 plots and bank deposits etc purchased within the last six years from ill-gotten money in drugs trade. The STF seized all the assets and sought the permission of competent authority to confiscate the same under NDPS Act.

The absconding Anil is wanted in several cases in various states including 11 NDPS cases in Gujarat alone. Earlier, his brother Sunil was arrested by Gujarat police. A non-bailable warrant has been issued against Anil. The STF has declared a reward December 2, 2021.

## SPRING FESTIVAL



Maa Basanti Durga's Mahashanti Puja was observed at the Chandinichowk Puja Mandap in Cuttack, Saturday

OP PHOTO

## JKU project to help 2,500 organic farmers

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 9:** To facilitate and implement scaling of organic and natural farming in state, the Jagadguru Kripalu University (JKU) here launched a pilot project 'The Organic Odisha' in collaboration with a US based charitable organisation 'NANBAN Foundation of Dallas'.

Organic farming is the kind of agriculture that makes soil, plants, food, and environment healthy, and boosts crop productivity. The endeavour will promote natural and organic farming by the small and marginal farmers of Odisha for their sustainable livelihood and food security. It will also support and encourage the implementation of state policy regarding organic farming framed by the Odisha government in 2015.

The goal is to create prototypes of successes in these clusters in organic and natural farming sectors, for other districts to follow and make it a mass movement in coming days.

The project will cover 2,500 farmers in 20 different clusters in districts of Rayagada, Puri, and Cuttack for the next three years, empowering 500 villages to do natural farming. The practice can be adapted either on land where there has been no prior chemical fertiliser and pesticide-based farming, or by converting existing chemical farmlands into organic and natural ones.

# A pitcher of holy water fetches ₹1.3 lakh in City

IT'S BELIEVED THAT BATHING IN THE 'MARICHI KUNDA' WATER HELPS RESOLVE FERTILITY ISSUES AMONG DEVOTEES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, April 9:** Some may call it a superstition, some may see it as a business opportunity, the day's first pitcher of holy water drawn from the famous 'Marichi Kunda', a pond located in Mukteswar Temple here, fetched ₹1.30 lakh, in an auction conducted on the eve of Lord Lingaraj's annual Rukuna Ratha festival here.

The auction for the holy water was held Friday night near the Marichi Kunda. It is believed that bathing in the holy water helps resolve fertility issues among devotees.

The auction was conducted by Bodu Nijog, a group of servitors of Lingaraj Temple. A couple from Baramunda area in Bhubaneswar offered the highest price and they received the first pitcher of water by paying ₹1.30 lakh while the base price was just ₹25,000.

Similarly, the second pitcher of water was auctioned for ₹47,000 against the base price of ₹16,000 while the third pitcher fetched ₹13,000.

After the first three couples received the holy water, the Badu Nijog distributed other pitchers among poor couples without mak-



**A couple from Baramunda offered the highest price and received the first pitcher of water by paying ₹1.30 lakh while the base price was just ₹25,000**

ing any demands. The water auction process which has been going on for a long time, could not be held for last two years due to Covid-19 pandemic, said a servitor.

Purchasers of the first pitcher said their family was prepared to

go up to ₹2.5 lakh to buy the Marichi Kunda holy water.

“There is no such scientific reason behind this belief in this water. We do not believe that bathing with a pitcher of water will enhance fertility in human beings. At the same time, I also do not deny that the water might have some (other) medicinal properties as the Marichi Kunda is surrounded by many Ashoka trees, the roots of which end in the tank,” said Santosh Mishra, an eminent gynaecologist. Mishra said people believe that Mother Sita conceived twins - Lav and Kush - after her captivity at the Ashoka Vatika, a garden of Ashoka trees in Lanka.

## BIDDING ADIEU



Class X students' farewell ceremony was organised by Saraswati Sishu Vidya Mandir, Unit III, Bhubaneswar, Saturday

## Infra boost for City college

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 9:** Mo College Abhiyan chairperson Akash Das Nayak Saturday inaugurated a mega blood donation camp at Raja Madhusudan Dev Degree College in the city here.

Around 100 units of blood were collected during the camp. Das Nayak also inaugurated a newly-built two-wheeler-cum-cycle stand at the college and inspected the e-Library work, sources said.

Bhubaneswar North MLA Susant Rout and other dignitaries were present on the occasion. Principal Prashant Rout gave the welcome address while Bhubaneswar Sub-Collector Debabrata Sahoo presided over the meeting.

“The Abhiyan has truly changed the functioning of our colleges and this initiative has made our colleges and Universities a thing to be proud of. Students will get the benefit of this holistic development in our higher educational institutions,” the principal said.

Among others, Mo College governing body member Tanmay Swain, members of the alumni association, faculty, college staff and around 400 students participated in the event.

# Over 5,500 new viruses, missing link in viral evolution found

An analysis of the genetic material in the ocean has identified thousands of previously unknown RNA viruses and doubled the number of phyla, or biological groups, of viruses thought to exist, according to a new study a team of researchers from The Ohio State University has published in the journal Science.

The team comprising of microbiologists Guillermo Dominguez Huerta, Ahmed Zayed, James Wainaina and Matthew Sullivan said that RNA viruses are best known for the diseases they cause in people, ranging from the common cold to Covid-19. They also infect plants and animals important to people.

These viruses carry their genetic information in RNA, rather than DNA. RNA viruses evolve at much quicker rates than DNA viruses do. While scientists have cataloged hundreds of thousands of DNA viruses in their natural ecosystems, RNA viruses have been relatively unstudied.

However, unlike humans and other organisms composed of cells, viruses lack unique short stretches of DNA that could act as what researchers call a genetic bar code. Without this bar code, trying to distinguish different species of virus

The team identified a total of 5,504 new marine RNA viruses and doubled the number of known RNA virus phyla from five to 10

Mapping these new sequences geographically revealed that two of the new phyla were particularly abundant across vast oceanic regions, with regional preferences in either temperate and tropical waters (the Taraviricota, named after the Tara Oceans expeditions) or the Arctic Ocean (the Arctiviricota)

The researchers believe that Taraviricota might be the missing link in the evolution of RNA viruses that researchers have long sought, connecting two different known branches of RNA viruses that diverged in how they replicate

in the wild can be challenging.

To get around this limitation, the researchers decided to identify the gene that codes for a particular protein that allows a virus to replicate its genetic material. It is the only protein that all RNA viruses share, because it plays an essential role in how they propagate themselves. Each RNA virus, however, has small differences in the gene that codes for the protein that can help distinguish one type of virus from another.



So the team screened a global database of RNA sequences from plankton collected during the four-year Tara Oceans expeditions global research project. Planktons are any aquatic organisms that are too small to swim against the current. They're a vital part of ocean food webs and are common hosts for RNA viruses. The screening ultimately identified over 44,000 genes that code for the virus protein.

The next challenge, then, was to determine the evolutionary con-

nections between these genes. The more similar two genes were, the more likely viruses with those genes were closely related. “Because these sequences had evolved so long ago (possibly predating the first cell), the genetic signposts indicating where new viruses may have split off from a common ancestor had been lost to time. A form of artificial intelligence called machine learning, however, allowed us to systematically organize these sequences and detect differences

## What still isn't known

Despite identifying so many new RNA viruses, it remains challenging to pinpoint what organisms they infect. Researchers are also currently limited to mostly fragments of incomplete RNA virus genomes, partly because of their genetic complexity and technological limitations.

According to the researchers, the next steps would be to figure out what kinds of genes might be missing and how they changed over time. Uncovering these genes could help scientists better understand how these viruses work.

## Why it matters

These new sequences help scientists better understand not only the evolutionary history of RNA viruses but also the evolution of early life on Earth.

As the Covid-19 pandemic has shown, RNA viruses can cause deadly diseases. But RNA viruses also play a vital role in ecosystems because they can infect a wide array of organisms, including microbes that influence environments and food webs at the chemical level.

Mapping out where in the world these RNA viruses live can help clarify how they affect the organisms driving many of the ecological processes that run our planet. The study claims to provide improved tools that can help researchers catalog new viruses as genetic databases grow.

more objectively than if the task were done manually,” said a researcher.

The team identified a total of 5,504 new marine RNA viruses and doubled the number of known RNA virus phyla from five to 10. Mapping these new sequences geographically revealed that two of the new phyla were particularly abundant across vast oceanic regions, with regional preferences

in either temperate and tropical waters (the Taraviricota, named after the Tara Oceans expeditions) or the Arctic Ocean (the Arctiviricota).

The researchers believe that Taraviricota might be the missing link in the evolution of RNA viruses that researchers have long sought, connecting two different known branches of RNA viruses that diverged in how they replicate.

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# Rising road deaths spark concern in Ganjam dist

CONSTRUCTION OF FLYOVERS AND UNDERPASSES ON THE DISTRICT'S HIGHWAYS IS STUCK IN RED-TAPISM GIVING RISE TO MAJOR MISHAPS AND FATALITIES ON ROAD

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Chhatrapur, April 9:** Deaths due to road accident are on the rise in Ganjam as construction of flyovers and underpasses on the highways passing through the district are stuck in red-tapism.

Frequent accidents are occurring as there are not enough flyovers and underpasses on the highways passing through the district. Moreover, rash and speed driving are also contributing to the accidents. Accidents are also occurring on the state highways but the national highways have become all the more unsafe and susceptible to road accidents.

A report from the state transport department says that as many as 355 persons lost their lives in 617 major road accidents that occurred in 2020. In 2021, the district witnessed 377 deaths and 731 accidents. Such deaths in 2021 saw a 6.20 per cent rise than the previous year 2020.

The rising fatalities are in sharp contrast to a Supreme Court order which had directed to reduce deaths due to road accidents by 50 per cent by 2020. The state transport department had formed district road safety committee to implement the Supreme Court order.

The committee analyses the reasons behind the increasing road accident deaths in its meeting. The committee chairperson also directs the district Collector to take necessary steps to reduce road accidents. However, these orders are hardly implemented.

The district administration with the help of Ganjam and Berhampur police has identified black spots, the places of frequent road accidents from Girishola to Puintala on the national highway. The district administration after identifying the black spots proposed for construction of flyovers and underpasses in some places of the highway to the National Highways



A report from the state transport department says that as many as 355 persons lost their lives in 617 major road accidents that occurred in 2020. In 2021, the district witnessed a 6.20 per cent rise in deaths taking the casualties to 377

Authority of India (NHAI).

The proposals were prepared after a joint survey was undertaken by the rural development department and public works department.

However, the NHAI authorities are yet to take steps on these proposals. The proposals include construction of a flyover from DRDA Square to College Square in Chhatrapur, an underpass at Jayshree Square and a service road at Bank Colony. Bishnupada Sethi, the principal secretary commerce and transport has also written a letter to the Collector directing him to file a report within a fortnight as to why deaths due to road accidents are not declining.

The regional transport officers have also been directed to file a report every week on the number of road accidents taking place in their areas and action taken against traffic norm violators.

The RTOs have been asked for strict enforcement of road safety rules by conducting meetings of the district road safety committee in regular intervals.

The state transport department had directed the police and transport departments to reduce road accidents by identifying traffic rule violators through special enforcement drive. However, the principal secretary, transport department has admitted that the special enforcement drive was not properly held for panchayat and subsequent urban local body polls.

Now, the drive has again started in April after the completion of both the polls. Moreover, the meetings of the district road safety committee also could not be held regularly due to the polls. Meanwhile, a training programme for the transport and police has started to check recurrence of road accidents.

## SHORT TAKES

### Teenagers meet watery grave

**Bhadrak:** In two separate incidents, two youths drowned while taking bath in ponds in the district Saturday. The deceased have been identified as Dipak Dalei (22), a native of Sarapur village and Jagannath Padhi (16), a native of Aradi. In the first incident, Dipak was taking bath in a village pond when he was pulled into the deep water. Locals rescued him and rushed to the Bhadrak district headquarters hospital (DHH) where doctors certified him dead. Similarly in another incident, Jagannath Padhi drowned while bathing in a pond at Aradi village. Locals carried him to the Bhadrak DHH, but doctors declared him dead.

### Drunken man kills mother

**Balasure:** A man in drunken state killed his mother as she delayed serving him lunch in Gujudia village under Soro police limits in Balasure Saturday. The deceased was identified as Satyabhama Behera, mother of the accused Ratikanta Behera. Ratikanta returned home in an inebriated state and asked his mother to serve him lunch. He picked a quarrel as there was a little delay in serving him meal. Enraged, the accused took a wooden plank and bludgeoned his mother, leading to her death on the spot. Informed by their neighbours, police detained the accused and recovered the body for autopsy.

### 3 women found hanging in forest

**Nabarangpur:** In a horrendous incident, a married woman and two minor girls were found hanging from a tree near Tohara village under Umerkote block in Nabarangpur district Saturday. The deceased are 21-year-old Hemalata Gauda and two minor girls. All of them were friends. The trio had left their homes at 4pm Saturday and did not return home. Panicked family members searched for them and found them hanging from a tree. Reason behind the incident is unclear.

# ₹50cr for water body renovation lying unused

There are 42 water bodies in BeMC area while almost half of them are wallowing in neglect and on the brink of losing their existence

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Berhampur, April 9:** Repair, renovation and restoration projects for the sprawling Bedhabandh water body in Gosani Nuagaon area have failed to make any headway, even though the Berhampur Municipal Corporation (BeMC) had allocated ₹50 crore for the purpose in the last fiscal. The project is part of the BeMC's efforts for groundwater conservation in the urban local body area.

"Ten months have passed since the BeMC made budgetary allocation for the project. Now, the new financial year has commenced, but the civic authorities are least concerned about the project," lamented some members of Sachetan Nagarika Manch.

According to reports, there are 42 water bodies in BeMC area while almost half of them are wallowing in neglect.

These water bodies play a key role in recharging the groundwater as the water table has been plummeting during the last several years. "On one hand we have rising population pressure and on the other the groundwater level is nose-diving.



The area is becoming water-stressed because of spiraling water needs," a local pointed out. The idea of conservation and restoration of water bodies was conceived when then Congress MP and now BJD MP Chandrasekhar Sahu was a minister in UPA government of 2004. With Sahu's efforts, the UPA government had sanctioned ₹16 crore for 42 water bodies under Repair, Renovation and Restoration (RRR) of Water Bodies scheme of the Ministry of Water Resources' at the Centre.

In 2003, the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) first got electoral success in the civic body polls in Berhampur. However, the council had not utilised the central fund for the water body conservation project.

In view of delay in launch of the project, the Union government had sent repeated reminders to the civic

body. Later, the civic authorities had started restoration work of some water bodies like Haridakhandi and Dhubabandh, and that too in a hurried manner. Locals had then accused the civic body of botching up the work and misappropriating the fund.

Even in 2008, the civic body had not fully utilised the central fund, even after voted to power. Though funds were utilised for some water bodies in 2013, several other water bodies including Bedhabandh were left out of the restoration.

"In 2018, the Collector was given additional charge of BeMC administration. In the last fiscal, there was budgetary allocation of ₹50 crore to develop various facilities like power boating and restaurants. However, the work is yet to be taken up even though 10 months have passed," locals lamented.

## Schoolkids gain knowledge on reporting

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Balasure, April 9:** A workshop for school students on child reporting was jointly organised by Odia daily Dharitri, UNICEF and People's Cultural Centre (PECUC) at Talsari Panthanivas in Balasure Saturday. Scores of students of class-VII, VIII and IX participated in the workshop. The children were allowed to do group discussion on multiple issues of the village and the school. They deliberated on topics like



shortage of classrooms, drinking water, playground, library, toilets, kitchen, sale of liquor, gutka (tobacco) and meat near schools. The group discussion was moderated by Dharitri's Jajpur correspondent Harsavardhan Behera. Dharitri's deputy news editor Lala Sunil Kumar Rath explained the

children how to write spot news and basic points of story line.

Balasure district correspondent Manas Biswal outlined story ideas on floods and cyclones.

UNICEF's state coordinator Radhika Srivastava, PECUC secretary Ranjan Kumar Mohanty executive director Anuradha Mohanty, project coordinator Chimay Pathi, community mobiliser Narayan Das and training officer Shital Pattnaik explained the schoolchildren about various issues.

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M-14, Baramunda Housing Board Colony, Bhubaneswar - 751003, Ph.: 0674-2537900			
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Sl. No.	BRANCH / Name & Address of Borrowers / Guarantors / Mortgagors / Co-Applicants / Co-Obligants / Outstanding Dues	Description of Properties to be Auctioned	Reserve Price/ EMD / Bid Increment
1.	<b>CHANDI CHHAK BRANCH, Mob.: 9338403401/</b> 1) Shamsir Ahmed, S/o: Shabir Ahmed, H/o: Mumtaz Khan, At: Odia Bazar, Lalbagh, Buxi Bazar, Cuttack- 753001 / Outstanding: ₹33,63,725.10 with further interest, cost & Expenses	All that piece and parcel of Land and Building at Plot No.: 461/4238, Khata No.: 29/168, Mouza: Cuttack Sahar Unit No.: 12, Sutahat, P.S.: Lalbagh No.: 2, Tahasil: Cuttack, At: Odia Bazar, Near Urdu Girls High School, PO: Buxi Bazar, Cuttack, Area: Ac. 0.020 Dec., Property Bound ed by North: Asgar Hashim, South: Common Passage, East: Safdar Hashim, West: Haider Hashim	₹60,29,000/- / ₹6,02,900/- / ₹10,000/-
2.	<b>CDA BIDANASI BRANCH, Mob.: 9918301433/</b> Borrower: Mr. Samarendra Gopal, At: Mansinghpatta, Gopalsahi, Tulasipur, Cuttack, Odisha-753008 / Guarantor: Mr.Sangramendra Gopal, At: Mansinghpatta, Gopalsahi, Tulasipur, Cuttack, Odisha-753008 / Outstanding: ₹10,54,221.44 as on 31.03.2022 with further interest, cost & Expenses	All that piece and parcel of Land and Ground Floor Building - Residential belonging to Mr.Samarendra Gopal & Mr.Sangramendra Gopal, Both are S/o.: Late Braja Gopal, situated at Khata No.: 981, Plot No.: 1528, Area: Ac.0.017 Dec., Mouza: Unit-13 Chandinichowk, Thana: Lalbag-1, Tahasil: Cuttack Sadar-202, Dist.: Cuttack, Odisha-753008.	₹23,65,000/- / ₹2,36,500/- / ₹10,000/-
3.	<b>MALGODOWN BRANCH, Mob.: 9398263799/</b> 1) M/s. Rita Enterprises, Through its Prop.: Smt. Rita Behera, 2) Smt. Rita Behera, W/o.: Mr. Bharat Behera, At: Jobra, Malla Sahi, P.O.: College Square, Cuttack, 3) Mr. K. Sanjib Rao, At: Mangalabagh, P.O.: Buxi Bazar, Cuttack/ Outstanding: ₹36,81,354.49 as on 31.03.2022 with further interest, cost & Expenses	All that piece and parcel of Land & Building at Plot No.: 389/1364, Khata No.: 180/30, Cuttack Town, Unit No.: 11, Odia Bazar, P.O.: Buxi Bazar, Dist.: Cuttack, PIN-753001, Area: 1089 Sq. fts. standing in the name of Mr. K. Sanjib Rao, Bounded by North: Plot No.: 371, South: Isimaili Road, West: Rest of this plot	₹20,67,000/- / ₹2,06,700/- / ₹10,000/-
4.	<b>MALGODOWN BRANCH, Mob.: 9398263799/</b> Borrower: Mr. A Shankar Rao, S/o.: Late A Chandi Rao, At: Dewan Bazar, Buxi Bazar, Cuttack - 753001/ Co-Applicants: 1) Mr. Allaka Basu, S/o.: Late A Chandi Rao, 2) Mr. A Mohan Rao, S/o.: Late A Chandi Rao, 3) Ms. Allaka Satyabati, W/o.: Late A Chandi Rao, All are At: Dewan Bazar, Buxi Bazar, Cuttack - 753001/ Outstanding: ₹4,72,212.13 as on 11.03.2022 with further interest, cost & Expenses	All that piece and parcel of Land and Building at Khata No.: 179/139, Plot No.: 487/2539, Area: Ac.0.024 Dec., Village/ Mouza: Cuttack Sahar Unit No.: 12 Sutahat, P.S.: Lalbag, Tahasil/Dist.: Cuttack, State: Odisha, PIN - 753001, standing in the name of A Shankar Rao, A Mohan Rao, Allaka Satyabati and Allaka Basu, Bounded by North: Narrow Road, South: Kankam Amyai, East: Golatistiya, West: Own Road	₹34,78,000/- / ₹3,47,800/- / ₹10,000/-
5.	<b>SOMPUR BRANCH, Mob.: 7873301333 /</b> 1) Ranjana Sethi, W/o.: Late Rabindra Kumar Sethy, 2) Shri Rashmi Ranjan Sethy, 3) Smt. Benga Bewa, 4) Shri Subash Chandra Sethy (No. 1 to 4 are the Legal Heir of Late Rabindra Kumar Sethy), Prop. of M/s. Shiv Shakti Stores, 5) Smt. Sapani Sethy, 6) Hemanta Sethy, 7) Shri Sarat Sethy, (No. 5-7 are Legal heir of Guarantor Late Govinda Sethy), At: Kamarpada, P.O.: Jasapada, Dist.: Cuttack - 754130/ Outstanding: 1 to 4 jointly and severally liable for ₹ 84,65,142.43 & 5 to 7 jointly and severally liable for ₹ 20,90,587/- as on 30.04.2021with further interest, cost & Expenses	Land & Building belonging to Late Rabindra Kumar Sethy over Plot No.: 1388, 1389/1598 and 1389 (Chaka No.: 398), Khata No.: 493/29 and 259, Area: Ac.0.61 Dec., at Kamarpada Mouza, PS/Tahasil: Kishannagar, Dist.: Cuttack.	₹1,28,77,000/- / ₹12,87,700/- / ₹10,000/-
6.	<b>CUTTACK e-CB BRANCH, Mob.: 7008422377/</b> 1) Mr. Panika Bhue, S/o.: Mr Raja Bhue, 2) Mrs. Tulana Bhue, W/o.: Mr. Panika Bhue, Address-At: Sohela-Barapali Road, Saraswati Sishu Mandir, P.O.: Sohela, Dist.: Bargarh / Outstanding: ₹26,55,827.55 as on 31.03.2022 with further interest, cost & Expenses	All that piece and parcel of Residential Land and Building situated at Khata No.: 325/919, Plot No.: 1850/3614 (Area: Ac. 0.10 Decimal), Mouza: Sohela, Tahasil: Sohela, Thana: Sohela No.: 54, Dist.: Bargarh, Odisha Registered in the name of Panika Bhue, S/o.: Raja Bhue, Bounded by North: Land of Vendor, South: Sohela-Barpali Main Road, East: Plot No.: 2234, West: Property of Sanjeeb Agarwal	₹65,52,000/- / ₹6,55,200/- / ₹10,000/-
7.	<b>MAHANADI VIHAR BRANCH, CUTTACK, Mob.: 7008105322/</b> 1) Mr. Minaketan Behera, C/o.: Late Madhabananda Behera, 2) Mr. Manoj Kumar Behera, C/o.: Late Madhabananda Behera, 3) Mr. Malaya Kumar Behera, C/o.: Late Madhabananda Behera, 4) Mr. Manoranjan Behera, C/o.: Late Madhabananda Behera, At: Qtr No.: 7, Labour Colony, Rajabagicha, ₹11,57,253.13 as on 31.03.2022 with further interest, cost & Expenses	Land and Residential Building - belonging to Late Madhabananda Behera (Father), Mr. Minaketan Behera (Son), Mr. Manoj Behera (Son), Mr. Malaya Kumar Behera (Son), Mr. Manoranjan Behera (Son) at Plot No.: 172/2118 & 172/12441, Khata No.: 657/48, Purihat, At: Qtr No.: R/7, Rajabagicha, Labour Colony, P.O.: Telanga Bazar, PS.: Badambadi, Cuttack-753009	₹25,82,000/- / ₹2,58,200/- / ₹10,000/-
8.	<b>JAGATPUR BRANCH, CUTTACK, Mob.: 7735346669 /</b> 1) M/s. Mahaveer Agencies, Prop.: Mr.Subhas Chandra Lenka, 2) Mr.Subhas Chandra Lenka, 3) Mr.Ghanashyam Lenka, At: Beruan, P.O.: Rangarh, P.S.: Tangi, Dist.: Cuttack-754022 / Outstanding: ₹11,51,776.64 as on 31.03.2022 with further interest, cost & Expenses	All that piece and parcel of Land & Building having total Plot Area: Ac.0.070 Dec. situated at Mouza: Beruan, Thana: Tangi,Tahasil:Jagatpur, Cuttack, Dist.: Cuttack, Khata No.: 250/56, Plot No.: 63, Property owned by Mr.Ghanashyam Lenka & Mr.Subhas Chandra Lenka, Bounded by North : Plot of Mr.Ashok Sahu, South: Drain, East: Plot of Padmalaya Swain, West: Road	₹7,05,000/- / ₹70,500/- / ₹10,000/-
9.	<b>OSBC BRANCH, CUTTACK, Mob.: 9763541231/</b> Borrower: Mr. Kashinath Biswal, S/o.: Late Kamal Kanta Biswal, At: Paikana, Kisan Nagar, PS.: Kisan Nagar, Dist.: Cuttack, State: Odisha, PIN - 754130/ Guarantor: Annapurna Biswal, W/o.: Late Kamal Kanta Biswal, At: Paikana, Kisan Nagar, PS.: Kisan Nagar, Dist.: Cuttack, State: Odisha, PIN - 754130/ Outstanding: ₹5,52,725.68 as on 31.03.2022 with further interest, cost & Expenses	All that piece and parcel of Land and Building at Khata No.: 3, Plot No.: 415, (Area: Ac.0.030 Dec., Gharabari), Mouza: Paikana, Dist.: Cuttack, Bounded by North: Plot No.: 417, South: Road, East: Plot No.: 416, West: Plot No.: 413 & 414	₹36,72,000/- / ₹3,67,200/- / ₹10,000/-
10.	<b>COLLEGE SQUARE BRANCH, Mob.: 707798855/</b> 1) M/s. Hazra Electricals, Prop.: Sk Karim Mohd., At: Idcol Chhak, Imam Nagar, P.S.: Jagatpur-754200 / Guarantor: 2) Sahin Sahenaj, W/o.: Sk Karim Mohd., At: Gunjarpur, P.O.: Bhairpur, P.S.: Jagatpur, Cuttack - 754200 / Outstanding: ₹18,82,573.57 as on 31.03.2022 with further interest, cost & Expenses	All that piece and parcel of vacant land at Open Land belonging to Sahin Sahenaj, Plot No.: 2104/ 2919, Khata No.: 747/944, Mouza : Gunjarpur, Thana: Salipur No.: 1, Tahasil: Salipur No.: 511, Dist: Cuttack, Odisha, Area: Ac.0.040 Dec., Bounded by North: Rajak Khan, South: Ismie Khan, East: Alimi Bibi, West: Common Road	₹11,77,000/- / ₹1,18,000/- / ₹10,000/-
11.	<b>SALIPUR BRANCH, Mob.: 9090587336/</b> 1) M/s. Shree Ganesh Jewellery (Prop: Kamalakanta Sahoo), 2) Shri Kamalakanta Sahoo, At: Dhuasahi, Sunguda, Salipur, Cuttack-754221, 3) Mr. Pratap Chandra Sahoo, S/o.: Late Babaji Charan Sahoo, 4) Jharana Sahoo, W/o.: Late Babaji Charan Sahoo, 5) Mr. Raj Kishor Sahoo, S/o.: Late Durga Charan Sahoo, All are At: Kusambi, PO.: Sunguda, Salipur, Cuttack-754221/ Outstanding: ₹10,78,892.49 as on 31.03.2022 with further interest, cost & Expenses	Land and Residential Building belonging to Mr. Babaji Charan Sahoo, Mr. Raj Kishor Sahoo, S/o.: Late Durga Charan Sahoo, At: Kusambi, PO.: Sunguda, Salipur, Cuttack-754221, over Plot No.: 416/2899, Khata No.: 987/208, Mouza: Kusambi, Tahasil: Salipur, Dist.: Cuttack	₹12,47,000/- / ₹1,24,700/- / ₹10,000/-
12.	<b>CUTTACK BUXI BAZAR BRANCH, Mob.: 8660127427/</b> 1) M/s. Chidyani Pharmaceuticals, Represented by its Prop.: Mr. Jatindra Kumar Behera, At: Tarachand Patana, P.O.: Tala Telanga Bazar, Cuttack, PIN - 753001, 2) Mr. Umesh Chandra Tripathy, S/o.: Late Ratnakar Tripathy, At: Korkor, PO.: Napanga, PS.: Tangi, Cuttack / Outstanding: ₹37,60,277/- as on 31.03.2022 with further interest, cost & Expenses	1) All that piece and parcel of Land measuring Area: Ac.0.20 Dec., Plot No.: 307/498, Khata No.: 156/80, Mutation Khata No.: 79, Mutation Plot No.: 307/498 situated at Village: Harisanarpur, P.S.: Athagarh-46, Tahasil: Athagarh, Dist: Cuttack, belonging to Mr. Jatindra Kumar Behera, Bounded by North: Sarat Kumar Dalei, South: Damodar Barik, East: Vendee Own, West: Health Department, Athagarh, 2) All that part and parcel of property Land measuring Area: Ac. 0.20 dec., Khata No.: 79, Plot No.: 307 situated at Village: Harisanarpur, P.S.: Athagarh-46, Tahasil: Athagarh, Dist.: Cuttack, belonging to Mr. Jatindra Kumar Behera, Bounded by North: Jayanta Kumar Behera, South: Sashi Dei, East: Dhruva Charan Behera, West: Paresah Jagati	₹38,00,000/- / ₹3,80,000/- / ₹10,000/-
13.	<b>MADHUPATNA BRANCH, Mob.: 9522221112/</b> 1) Shri Arabinda Sahoo, S/o.: Shri Alekha Chandra Sahoo, Prop. of M/s. Shri Arabinda Traders, At: Commission Road, Mangalabagh, Buxi Bazar, Cuttack -753001, 2) Sri Chandra Kumar Sahoo, S/o.: Shri Arabinda Sahoo, At: Commission Road, Mangalabagh, Buxi Bazar, Cuttack - 753001/ Outstanding: ₹26,03,629.20 with further interest, cost & Expenses	All that piece and parcel of Land and Building at Khata No.: 1068/101, Plot No.: 1025/2162, Mouza: Mirkamalpatna, Cuttack Sahar, Unit-22, Tahasil: Cuttack, PS.: Mangalabagh, Cuttack-753001, Area: Ac.0.027 Dec., Bounded by North: Plot No.: 1024, South: Plot No.: 1025 (Part), East: Road, West: Plot No.: 1024 & 1017	₹30,00,000/- / ₹3,00,000/- / ₹10,000/-
14.	<b>DHENKANAL e-CB BRANCH, Mob.: 8917597768/</b> Borrower: Mr. Akshaya Kumar Pradhan, S/o.: Late Brundaban Pradhan, Jawahar Chowk, Dhenkanal - 759001 / Guarantor: Mr. Binay Kumar Patra, S/o.: Kumar Patra, At: Nachipura, P.O.: Mangalpur, Dhenkanal- 759001/ Outstanding: ₹4,83,565.98 as on 31.03.2022 with further interest, cost & Expenses	All that piece and parcel of Residential Land and Building at Plot No.: 4594/1444 and 4594/1445, Khata No.: 3470/2053, Mouza: Dhenkanal Town, P.S.: Dhenkanal & No.: 1, Tahasil: Dhenkanal & No.: 1, Dist.: Dhenkanal, Plot No.: 4594/1444 is Bounded by North: Brahmananda Pradhan, South: Road, East: Bhanja Chandra, West: Approach Road, Plot No.: 4594/1445 is Bounded by North: Sachidananda Pradhan, South: Road, East: Bhagaban Pradhan, West: Brahmananda Pradhan	₹12,10,000/- / ₹1,21,000/- / ₹10,000/-
15.	<b>DHENKANAL BRANCH, Mob.: 8584884228/</b> 1) Rasida Bibi, W/o.: Samad Beg, 2) Khalid Beg, S/o.: Samad Beg, 3) Abdul Malik Beg, S/o.: Samad Beg, 4) Samad Beg, S/o.: Late Sharif Beg, Address: Ward No.: 13, Meena Bazar, Near Tarini Temple, Dhenkanal / Outstanding: ₹17,60,466.71 as on 31.03.2022 with further interest, cost & Expenses	All that piece and parcel of Residential Land & Building situated at Plot No.: 356, Mutation Khata No.: 387/836, Area: Ac. 0.062 Dec., Tahasil: Dhenkanal Sadar, P.S.: Dhenkanal, Dist.: Dhenkanal in the name of Rasida Bibi, Bounded by North: Kapila Behera, South: Own Road, East: S.K Sepharu Khatun, West: Raj Behera	₹48,35,000/- / ₹4,84,000/- / ₹10,000/-
Date & Time of Inspection of Properties for intending purchasers: Before 28.04.2022 on any working day during banking hours			
DATE & TIME OF E-AUCTION: 29.04.2022 between 11.00 AM to 5.00 PM			
Last date & Time of EMD submission : On or before the Commencement of E-Auction			
Details of encumbrances if any : NIL			
For registration and login and bidding rules visit <a href="https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/bapi/index.jsp">https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/bapi/index.jsp</a> , www.unionbankofindia.co.in. For further detailed any query please contact: Mr. Rishikanth Prasad, Mob.: 9769987208			
STATUTORY 15 DAYS SALE NOTICE UNDER RULE 8(6)/ RULE 9(1) OF STATUTORY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002			
This may also be treated as notice u/r 8(6) / Rule 9(1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 to the borrower/s and guarantor/s of the said loan about the holding of E-Auction Sale on the above mentioned date.			
Place: Bhubaneswar, Date: 08.04.2022		Sd/- Authorized Officer, Union Bank of India	



FOCUS GEOPOLITICS

# PUTIN'S WAR & FRENCH POLLS



Even if the outcome of the Presidential election is clear, it seems no less clear that the collateral effects of Russia's invasion of Ukraine are likely to complicate politics elsewhere in Europe as well

ing the support of around 25% of the electorate. Nor has the war in Ukraine helped. The left is divided over the response and the role of Europe, France, and NATO in it. The Green candidate, Yannick Jadot, and the socialist candidate, Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo, have accused Mélenchon of supporting autocrats, though with little effect on his relative popularity.

Behind the Ukraine dividing line, there are two clashing views about how to reconstitute the French left. The first is to match the radicalism on the far right, whose rise seems to reflect the demands of an electorate that feels betrayed by the mainstream. The second asserts that the left has become repellent to most of society precisely because it has lost its moderate elements. To return to power, it must appeal to voters who are interested in issues such as ecology but suspicious of radicalism. In fact, both views are true; the left's problem is the absence of anyone capable of producing the necessary synthesis.

Thanks to Putin, it is now all but certain that Macron will face Le Pen in the second round, as he did in 2017. The polls predict that Macron will win, but with a margin much tighter than five years ago. Some polls suggest that Le Pen could receive as much as 47% of the second-round vote – an unprecedented level of support for a French far-right candidate. The increase in fuel prices has buoyed Le Pen's candidacy. With none of Macron's commitment to fiscal prudence, she can promise drastic cuts to fuel taxes.

Putin's war has reshaped the French presidential race. Even if the outcome seems clear, it seems no less clear that the collateral effects of Russia's invasion of Ukraine are likely to complicate politics elsewhere in Europe as well.

*The writer, President of the Board of Directors of the Paris School of Economics, is the author, most recently, of The Inglorious Years: The Collapse of the Industrial Order and the Rise of Digital Society (Princeton University Press, 2021).*

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Vladimir Putin's war on Ukraine has had a powerful impact on the French presidential campaign. Before the Russian invasion, there were three Putin supporters among the leading candidates: the far left's Jean-Luc Mélenchon and the far-right contenders Marine Le Pen and Éric Zemmour.

While Le Pen has proudly staged photo ops with Putin (in 2017), approved of his annexation of Crimea, and presided over a party that received loans from Russian banks, Zemmour has expressed his admiration for Putin, whom he has described as a "patriot." And Mélenchon, for his part, has long advocated a French exit from NATO, reflecting his anti-Americanism and affinity for the Latin American left of Fidel Castro and Hugo Chávez. All three candidates confidently insisted that Putin would not invade Ukraine.

Though Putin took all three candidates by surprise, Zemmour has been the only one to pay a political price so far. Le Pen immediately denounced the invasion and reoriented her campaign to focus on pocketbook issues like the sudden surge in energy prices. Mélenchon's response has been more muddled: while saluting Ukrainians' heroism, he balks at sending them weapons. As with Le Pen, his campaign is primarily focused on domestic social issues, and he has been avoiding discussion of the war whenever possible.

By contrast, Zemmour's entire campaign has been about shunning immigrants, which has made adapting to the onset of war difficult. He has expressed reservations about welcoming Ukrainian refugees, and with nothing specific to say about rising energy prices, his candidacy has come to seem increasingly irrelevant. He is now polling far behind Le Pen, whom he had previously hoped to challenge for pre-eminence on the far right. In the campaign's final stretch, the three leading contenders are the incumbent, President Emmanuel Macron, with around 27%, followed by Le Pen and Mélenchon, with around 23% and 16%, respectively.

Among the clearest effects of

the war is that the candidate of the traditional, Republican right, Valérie Pécresse, has effectively fallen out of the running. In addition to mismanaging her campaign, her candidacy has been hit hard by a shift in support toward Macron, who has not just reaped the political benefits of the Ukrainian war but has also co-opted some of Pécresse's policy proposals.

Pécresse has responded angrily to her change in fortune, accusing Macron of "counterfeiting" her program. But the problem for the Republican right is not just that Macron is peeling away some of Pécresse's supporters. It is that he has systematically adopted its core positions, including retirement at 65, work requirements for welfare beneficiaries, and a reduction in the inheritance tax. This amounts to a full-scale takeover of the French center right. If Macron is re-elected, he will preside over a formidable big tent party, and the Republicans will be left with crumbs, squeezed between a resurgent far right and a governing party that is intent on devouring them.

Macron's goal is clear. He does not want to suffer the same fate as Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, whose seven-year presidency left no trace in French political life. Like Charles

de Gaulle following his return to power in 1958, Macron wants to rebuild the right from the ground up.

The calculation is simple. All told, the French right commands some 75% of the electorate – including supporters of Macron's own party, La République en Marche. Within this broad cohort, there is room for two big forces: the far right, which accounts for 30-35% of the electorate, and a united front comprising the remainder of conservative voters. Together with Macron, this latter bloc could govern France for quite a long time, echoing the legacy of Gaullism and its multiple reincarnations after de Gaulle's death.

Assuming that the far right seizes the opportunity, it could re-compose itself and become a powerful bloc capable of taking power one day. Just as de Gaulle forced the socialist and communist left under François Mitterrand, Macron's play for traditional conservatives could produce a consolidation of forces to his right. The far right need only position itself as the only alternative to the new Gaullist power.

As for the left, it seems hard-pressed to challenge this reality. Whatever its moral authority on ecological or social-justice issues, the left is playing a zero-sum game from a weak position, command-



Daniel Cohen

**ALL THREE PUTIN SUPPORTERS - JEAN-LUC MÉLENCHON, MARINE LE PEN AND ÉRIC ZEMMOUR - AMONG THE LEADING CANDIDATES OF PRESIDENTIAL RACE IN FRANCE CONFIDENTLY INSISTED THAT RUSSIA WOULD NOT INVADE UKRAINE**



THE MOTHER

The path is long, but self-surrender makes it short; the way is difficult, but perfect trust makes it easy.

## Democracy Index

What is democratic government? Often it is reduced to one essential element, and that is the electoral process. This refers to having heads of government who are elected through fair and free elections. And also to whether or not all sections of society have the right to participate. India usually scores well on this count. Even in the rankings of Freedom House, which says India is only 'partly free', on electoral democracy, India scored 33/40, which is pretty good. In fact it is one point more than the United States of America, which got 32.

On civil liberties, however, India only scored 33/60 while the US scored 51. And so US was rated as 'free' while we got 'partly free' (and Kashmir was rated 'not free'). It may surprise readers that electoral democracy was only good for 40 points while civil liberties was 60. But that is how most of the world views democracy. It is about the rights and freedoms of the individuals and not just limited to a single act once every five years. This, then, is how democracies are rated and why we are slipping.

However, there is a third aspect to democracies which has not been discussed here and that is the functioning of the state. The engagement of the citizen has is not with the politician they elected. It is with the bureaucrat and collector and the police officer and the judge that we have to deal with. For us it is these people who are the state, and who are the ultimate representatives of the democracy. If they were to be rated, how would it go?

Unfortunately, it would be quite bad. One part is obviously the corruption and inefficiency that we have to live with. But there is something else and it is the ability of the political establishment to bend the bureaucracy to their will. The police and the agencies are unleashed on opponents by the politicians and there is no resistance to this from within.

There appears to be no real morality in the officers manning the agencies that are used in this way. Raids by the enforcement directorate (which is controlled by the Union government) on opposition leaders and parties have become a weekly affair. And the targeting of those who are especially threatening is obvious. Similarly, the National Investigation Agency, again controlled by the Union government, has been used against activists. The Bhima Koregaon case was initially about the violence between Marathas and Dalits in the village of Bhima Koregaon, but it was taken away from the Maharashtra police after the BJP lost the state to the MVA. Those in jail in the case include individuals whose work the BJP doesn't like and doesn't want continued. One of those, Father Stan Swamy, died in jail because the BJP kept opposing bail to him.

But the intent of the political party is separate from what actually happens. Some officer will have to write down a case that is either wholly fraudulent or cooked up in some way or meddled with in other ways. Another officer must approve this file, knowing full well that what is happening is patently illegal. But they go along with it. These things do not happen in other democracies. We have to accept that. And when they do, these things are caught and exposed and there are consequences. There are none here. And that is the reason that the officers continue to harass people that the political leaders want harassed. What can be said about those individuals in government who as officers and as advocates denied Stan Swamy the right to die in dignity? What can be said about those in the police force who, as courts in Delhi have observed, deliberately went after the victims of the Delhi pogrom rather than the perpetrators? You have to be a particularly venal sort of person to do such things. And yet it seems that there are more such people in the system than of the sort that resist. On such things as meat ban and hijab ban, we are finding that elements that comprise the system are enthusiastic about denying people their rights. It says something awful about us as a society.

It is bad enough that the state structurally does not allow us to exercise our rights and freedoms, as the global indices scores show. But it is even worse that within such a restrictive space, the apparatus of the bureaucracy has succumbed to the whims of those who are elected. It is why our road to becoming a modern, civilised, prosperous and free society is long and will be full of obstacles.



Aakar Patel

**There appears to be no real morality in the officers manning the government agencies. Raids by the Enforcement Directorate on opposition leaders and parties have become a weekly affair**

### WISDOM CORNER

- Time stays long enough for anyone who will use it. **LEONARDO DA VINCI**
- Keep reading books, but remember that a book's only a book, and you should learn to think for yourself. **MAXIM GORKY**
- Overcoming poverty is not a task of charity, it is an act of justice. **NELSON MANDELA**

### WORDSWORTH

#### Aeriated

The word is based on aerated, with an extra vowel stuffed into the middle, something that can happen in casual speech. Other examples are athlete said as athelete, or the England football supporters' chant of Engerland. The technical term for it is epenthesis, more strictly in this case anaptyxis since the extra sound is a vowel. The error, if we can describe it as that, is very far from new. The Oxford English Dictionary has examples of aeriated in the place of aerated from as far back as 1794: "If a small heat be applied to the aeriated water, it parts with its fixed air" (fixed air was then the usual name for carbon dioxide), which is no more than seven years after the first known appearance of aerated. The OED records the colloquial term – defined as overexcited, angry or irate but spelled aerated – from 1912, though we may reasonably assume it could be decades older. However, its first citation for aeriated in our sense is as recent as 1974. What makes the derivation certain is that the anaptyxis is still around – we can find aeriated in its standard English sense spelled with the extra vowel: The course will be closed to golfers that day because the greens are being aeriated. The technical term aerated, for introducing a gas into a liquid, started to become known to the general public at the end of the eighteenth century through the invention by the Swiss watch maker Johann Schweppe of an effervescent drink made by bubbling carbon dioxide into water under pressure.

### LOL

#### Japan's quality standard

IBM, the computer giant, decided to have some parts manufactured in Japan as a trial project. In the specifications, they set out that they will accept three defective parts per 10,000. When the delivery came in there was an accompanying letter.

"We, Japanese people, had a hard time understanding North American business practices. But the three defective parts per 10,000 have been separately manufactured and have been included in the consignment. Hope this pleases you."



SN Mishra

**THE WHOLE EDIFICE OF DEMOCRATIC PLANNING IS GETTING OBFUSCATED UNDER THE SMOKESCREEN OF COOPERATIVE FEDERALISM, PIOUS PLATITUDES AND RHETORIC**

Prime Minister Modi during his independence address from the ramparts of the Red Fort on August 15, 2014 declared the demise of Planning Commission, a 64-year-old old institution founded on Command Economy model of the Soviet Union. Mr. Arun Jetley described Planning Commission as 'redundant organisation, relic of the past which is irrelevant in a market driven India'. While the Planning Commission had developed a number of warts & moles, many discerning analysts believed that the Prime Minister had acted in haste and 'thrown the baby with the bath water'.

Harking back to history he notes how USSR established Gosplan as the centralised agency to foster rapid industrialization. Grigory Feldmen, an electrical engineer and economist was its prime architect (1928-1932). Interestingly, when economic depression struck the USA in 1930s it was left to the Simon Kuznets to bring out National Statistical Data about the dip in GDP & unemployment. This formed the basis for Franklin D Roosevelt to launch state planning through the New Deal Programme. The 1930s thus witnessed a coalescence of planning as a public policy, for ide-

ologically different countries. The dawn of independence laid to a surge in India's interest in data. Stimulated by the needs of a planned economy, the 1950s saw a massive expansion in the fledgling state's data capability. At the centre of this development was PC Mahalanobis, the presiding genius of statistics in India and of Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta, where he was the patriarch. With full political support of Nehru who established the Planning Commission in 1950, he was the author of the crucial 2nd Five Year Plan (1956-61) which underlined strategy of vast public sector footprint, import substitution and heavy industrialisation as its grand architecture.

While Nehru called the 2nd Plan document 'the horoscope of Mother India' Prof. BR Senoy dissented as also politician Kripalini who considered it anti-Gandhian. The 2nd plan reflected the policy of import substitution and heavy industrialisation by giving low priority to investment in agriculture. This kind of thinking was driven by a seminal paper by Hans Singer and Raul Prebisch in 1950 who brought out that the terms of the trade in

less developing countries declined relative to richer country in view of their higher content of primary goods. Paul Rosentstein Rodan in 1943 had also strongly advocated for a Big Push theory which advocated injection of industrial investment beyond a certain threshold to break through a new equilibrium. While the 2nd Plan started in full cry in the initial years, it had to be aborted towards the end as India was bleeding out of its foreign exchange reserves.

Ironically the policy of self reliance and protectionism which were the defining features of Nehruvian economics are back in fashion with Modi's Atma Nirbhar Bharat campaign. This is not peculiar to India. From Washington to Beijing, London to France, the governments are falling in love with economic self sufficiency, state intervention and hyper nationalism. What distinguishes the present moment in India from Nehruvian times is official anti-intellectualism that manifest in the short shrift being given to professional expertise. The public still yearns for a technocrat who can deliver economic bounty. It was Prof. Mahalanobis who played that key

role in the 1950s, Dr Manmohan Singh in the 90s and to a certain extent it was Raghuram Rajan during 2013-16.

India's experience with economic planning has to be understood from the frame of technocracy and technology on one hand and the political project of democratic planning on the other. By establishing a planned economy, India instituted capability like NS survey, National Income Accounts, and a Central Statistical body. Mobilising citizens for development needs without totalitarian means was integral to the Nehruvian ideas of a state which chose a neutral path during the cold war. Planning is a technology exercise in directing the economy as a means for modern state building. By decimating the planning structure, the Modi government has snuffed away a major mechanism that set the template for reviewing state's progress against various macro and sectoral targets. The whole edifice of democratic planning is getting obfuscated under the smokescreen of cooperative federalism, pious platitudes & rhetoric. Mahalanobis's profound legacy lies in ruins.

*The writer teaches economics*

### Save our planet

Sir, Even though we are greatly reliant on our environment, we are damaging it by exploiting our natural resources. Our negligence can have a harsh effect on the environment. The constant use of fossil fuel-powered vehicles for transportation and incandescent bulbs is detrimental to the environment. We should concentrate on how to reduce our carbon footprint. First, people should try to choose clean transportation options. Public transportation is a right option. Small cars must be prioritised because of their energy-efficient nature. Instead of taking short-haul air trips, people should cover these distances by public transport like trains and buses. Energy-efficient products must also be installed at homes. LED bulbs are the best option because an eight to nine watt LED bulb provides the same bright light as a 60-watt incandescent bulb and uses approximately 90 percent less energy than a traditional bulb. Similarly, passive solar heating is the best equipment for homes as it accumulates sunlight and releases it in the absence of the sun. Our small steps will help us save the environment to a large extent. **Jubel D'Cruz, MUMBAI**

### Safe motherhood

Sir, Safe motherhood forms the crux of a nation's socio-economic prosperity. Notwithstanding the fast pace of development of health care and infrastructure in India, maternal mortality rate remains a cause for concern though over the years there has been a welcome drop in the maternal deaths. Death of mother during and after pregnancy; and within six weeks of delivery constitute maternal mortality. Roughly 15 percent of the worldwide maternal mortality rate, that approximately accounts to 40000 deaths, comes from India. Every woman has a right to live and survive pregnancy and childbirth. Care of the mother during pregnancy and lactation is a turning point for a healthy woman and child. In a nation where child marriages tend to happen irrespective of campaigns and awareness against the same, the gravity of danger posed to young mothers can easily be deciphered. Rural India poses a high risk for safe pregnancies and child deliveries. In areas where institutional child birth is still a mirage, it is appropriate to set proactive safety measures in right earnest. Mindsets of elders and mothers should shift for the better because in spite of having access to skilled institutional deliveries, many households are opting for home deliveries. Proper education and timely awareness programmes could help. So, it is time to focus their attention again on maternal and child health. **Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA**

## 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**

**OrissaPOST**  
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of the day quote

NC represents the enduring multi-cultural ethos and pluralism of Jammu and Kashmir. NC is a symbol of unity in J&K

FAROOQ ABDULLAH | NC PRESIDENT

Illegal mining goes on unabated. What is the govt doing? Arvind Kejriwal Ji Where is ₹20k crore from sand?

NAVJOT SINGH SIDHU | CONGRESS LEADER

Modi government's continuity, consistency and coherence are restricted to achieving phenomenal and extraordinary heights of inflation. The BJP government is grinding and crushing the common man in the millstone of three things - inflation, unemployment and taxation

ABHISHEK SINGHVI | CONGRESS SPOKESPERSON

SHORT TAKES

2 LeT associates arrested in J&K

Srinagar: Two militant associates of Lashkar-e-Taiba were arrested in Budgam district of Jammu and Kashmir Saturday, police said. The duo was arrested from orchard area of Rathsun in Beerwah, they said. They have been identified as Wajid Yousuf Akhoun, a resident of Rathsun Beerwah, and Mohammad Ashraf Sheikh, a resident of Kawoosa Khalisa. Incriminating material of the proscribed terror outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), arms and ammunition, including a Chinese pistol, two pistol magazines, and 12 pistol rounds have been seized from their possession, police said. A case has been registered and investigation is on, they added.

Two held for murder

Srinagar: Two men were arrested in Srinagar for murdering their father and dumping his body in the Dal lake, police said Saturday. Police said on information on Thursday that an unidentified dead body was lying in the Dal Lake near Akhoun Mohalla Foreshore Road, personnel from police station Nigeen swung into action, fished out the body and shifted it to the hospital for medico-legal formalities. The deceased person was identified as Khurshid Ahmad Tota, resident of Elahibagh Soura in Srinagar.

3 more ministers inducted in Goa

Panaji: Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant expanded his cabinet Saturday with the induction of three more ministers who were administered the oath of office by Governor P.S. Sreedharan Pillai at the Raj Bhavan here. The new ministers are Sudin Dhavalikar of the Maharashtra Gomantak Party, Subhash Phaladesai and Nilkanth Halarnkar both from the BJP. Earlier Saturday, Phaladesai resigned as the deputy Speaker of the state Legislative Assembly.

India test-fires Pinaka rockets

New Delhi: A new version of the Pinaka rocket system has been successfully flight-tested by the DRDO and the Indian Army at the Pokhran firing ranges, the defence ministry said Saturday. As many as 24 Pinaka Mk-1 (Enhanced) Rocket Systems (EPRS) were fired for different ranges during the last fortnight and the weapons met the required accuracy and consistency, it said.



From the economic point of view, the Centre has completely failed. It does not even talk about controlling the rising inflation

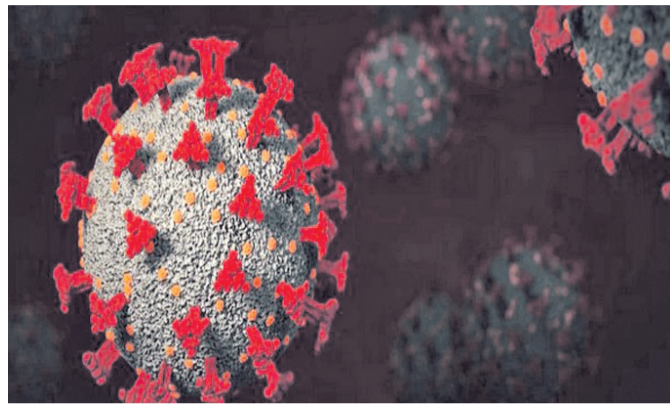
SACHIN PILOT | EX-RAJASTHAN DEPUTY CM

SONAM'S DELHI HOME ROBBED

Actress Sonam Kapoor and her entrepreneur husband Anand Ahuja have reported a theft of ₹2.4 crore from their New Delhi residence, police said Saturday. Deputy Commissioner of Police (New Delhi) Amrutha Guguloth said that the couple had filed a report February 23 about a theft at their house on Amrita Shergill Marg



XE variant of Covid detected in Gujarat



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, April 9: A 67-year-old man from Mumbai, who had travelled to Vadodara in Gujarat last month, was found infected with XE, Omicron's sub-variant that is considered more transmissible than other variants of coronavirus, making it the first such case in the state, officials said Saturday.

The patient had tested positive for COVID-19 on March 12 during his visit to Vadodara, but had returned to Mumbai the next day without informing the local authorities, the officials said.

He was later found infected with the XE variant as per a report given by a Gandhinagar-based lab, which was cross-checked and confirmed by a facility in Kolkata on Friday. The man is currently in Mumbai and his health condition is stable, they added.

The state health department said that the patient was first tested for COVID-19 at a private laboratory after he developed fever following his arrival in Vadodara in a flight. His sample was sent for genome sequencing at a laboratory in Gandhinagar, where it was found that he was infected with the new XE variant, it said in a release.

Samples of three persons, who had come in contact with him, had tested negative for the viral infection, it said. "The patient's sample was further sent for cross-checking at a laboratory in Kolkata, which confirmed on Friday that it was XE variant," Additional Chief Secretary (Health), Manoj Aggarwal said.

The patient had left Gujarat and

The state health department said that the patient was first tested for Covid-19 at a private laboratory after he developed fever following his arrival in Vadodara in a flight

gone to Mumbai after testing positive. The health department contacted him over phone and found that he was in a completely stable condition, the department said in a statement. He is co-morbid, it said.

"The patient has no other symptoms as of now. We have shared the information about him to the officials of the Maharashtra government so that they can take necessary steps. We are keeping a constant eye on the development," Aggarwal said.

The patient had given the address of a local (Gujarat-based) relative to the private laboratory, where he had tested positive. After testing positive for the COVID-19 infection, he had returned to Mumbai without informing the local authorities, Medical Officer of Health, Vadodara Municipal Corporation, Devsh Patel said.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has said that XE could be more transmissible than any COVID-19 strain so far. XE is a combination or recombination of both sub-variants (BA.1 and BA.2) of Omicron.

Hafiz Saeed's son declared terrorist

The central government believes that Hafiz Talha Saeed is involved in terrorism and he should be notified as a terrorist under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, the notification said



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 9: Hafiz Talha Saeed, a key leader of the dreaded terrorist group LeT and the son of 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks mastermind Hafiz Saeed, has been declared a ter-

rorist by the government.

In a notification, the Union home ministry said that Hafiz Talha Saeed, 46, has been actively involved in recruitment, fund collection, and planning and executing attacks by the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) in India and Indian

interests in Afghanistan.

He has also been actively visiting various LeT centres across Pakistan, and during his sermons propagating for jihad against India, Israel, the United States of America and Indian interests in other western countries, it stated.

The central government believes that Hafiz Talha Saeed is involved in terrorism and he should be notified as a terrorist under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, the notification said.

Accordingly, he has been designated as an individual terrorist under the stringent Act. Hafiz Talha Saeed is now the 32nd individual who has been declared a terrorist by the government.

He was born on October 25, 1975, and is a resident of Lahore in Pakistan. Hafiz Talha Saeed is a senior leader of the LeT and is the head of the cleric wing of the terrorist organisation.

Hafiz Saeed, founder of the LeT, was the brain behind the Mumbai terror attacks of November 26, 2008, in which 166 people were

killed. He had been declared a terrorist under the same law a few years ago and is currently serving a jail term in Pakistan on terror charges.

India has been consistently seeking Hafiz Saeed's custody but Pakistan has refused to do so. Apart from the 26/11 attacks, the LeT has been responsible for a series of deadly attacks in India, mostly in Jammu and Kashmir, in which scores of civilians and security personnel have been killed over the years.

Hafiz Saeed and the LeT 'operational commander' Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi are among the most wanted terrorists in India for their involvement in numerous terrorist acts. The LeT is listed as a terrorist organisation under the First Schedule of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

The UAPA has been enacted to provide for more effective prevention of certain unlawful activities of associations and individuals and for dealing with terrorist activities and for matters connected therewith.



A woman covers herself and her child to get protection from the scorching sun in Jabalpur

PTI PHOTO

9 INJURED IN DELHI BLAZE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 9: Six fire-fighters were among nine people who were injured while trying to douse a blaze at an electrical components manufacturing factory in Anand Parbat area here Saturday, officials said.

It is suspected that the fire broke out after an LPG cylinder exploded at around 5:15 am, they said. Twelve fire tenders were rushed to the spot and the fire was doused by around 7:05 am, officials said.

Six fire department personnel, a policeman, a Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) official and a local were injured in the incident, the Delhi Fire Services (DFS) said.

"We got a call of the fire in a three storey building in street number 4, industrial area Anand Parbat", a senior police officer said. He said one Hukum Chand runs the manufacturing unit of electric appliances there.



"When the fire brigade staff, firm owner and police reached the site and opened the main gate, a blast, probably in the air conditioner unit, took place. Glasses of windows up to third floor got shattered in the incident," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central) Shweta Chauhan said.

Six fire fighters, one police constable from Anand Parvat and one local security guard Mohit sustained injuries who were rushed to BLK and Jeewan Mala hospital, the DCP said. Crime team has been called and further efforts are on to know the cause of fire, police added.

BJP leader booked

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chandigarh, April 9: Punjab Police have registered an FIR against a Delhi BJP leader for allegedly sharing on his Twitter handle a "doctored video clip" of Aam Aadmi Party national convener Arvind Kejriwal.

This is the third FIR against a BJP leader since the AAP formed government on March 16.

The FIR was registered against Delhi BJP's media cell head Naveen Kumar Jindal in Mohali, near here.

He has been booked on the complaint of advocate Gurbhej Singh, who alleged that Jindal shared a cropped footage of an interview given by Kejriwal to a TV channel and doctored the original content.

The complainant said some words of the Delhi Chief Minister from the original interview were dropped, a police official said.

BJP scared, inducting 'tainted' leaders: AAP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 9: The BJP has resorted to bring "tainted" leaders into its fold fearing the AAP's expansion in Himachal Pradesh, the Arvind Kejriwal-led party said Saturday, after three of its members, including its state chief, defected.

AAP Himachal Pradesh president Anup Kesari, general secretary (organisation) Satish Thakur and Una district chief Iqbal Singh joined the BJP in the presence of its president JP Nadda, and Union Minister and Hamirpur MP Anurag Thakur here. However, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) sought to downplay the defections from its unit in the hill state, where assembly polls are due at the end of this year, saying it was anyways going to sack them.

Without naming anyone, senior



AAP leader and Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said in a tweet that the party was set to sack one of these three leaders following an allegation of his indecent behaviour with women.

"It's the BJP top leadership's great fear of Kejriwal ji. BJP president Nadda and new chief ministerial face Anurag Thakur rushed to HP (Himachal Pradesh) and in-

ducted an AAP official (into their party) at 12 o'clock in the night. The AAP was going to remove him today on the allegation of his dirty acts against women," Sisodia in a tweet in Hindi.

Replying to Sisodia's tweet, Kejriwal, who is the chief minister of Delhi, said the BJP is not afraid of him but of the people of

the state, and asserted that the defection of "tainted" functionaries of his party would not affect the AAP's poll prospects in the hill state.

"These people are afraid of the public, not me. BJP people, if you had worked honestly for the public, there would not have been this much fear, need to change the CM and fall at the feet of tainted leaders of other parties," he tweeted in Hindi.

In his tweet, Kejriwal asserted, "People have faith in the AAP. The AAP will provide a staunch honest and patriotic government to HP"

People have faith in the AAP. The AAP will provide a staunch honest and patriotic government to HP

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CM

Ray of hope for TN fishermen

The news of the arrest of Indian fishermen and apprehension of their boats by the Lankan Navy is almost a daily occurrence

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, April 9: Indian fishermen are hoping that the Narendra Modi government will get back Katchatheevu island from Sri Lanka as a goodwill gesture for helping the island nation financially and materially as it is facing a dire economic situation.

"We hope India gets back Katchatheevu from Sri Lanka. If Katchatheevu comes back to India, then the Indian fishermen will have about 20 nautical mile of fishing area and they will not venture into Sri Lankan waters," P. Jesuraja, President, All Mechanised Boat Fishermen Association, said from Rameswaram.

Indian Prime Ministers and Tamil Nadu Chief Ministers have come and gone but the one persistent unresolved issue between



two is getting back Katchatheevu islet that was transferred to Sri Lanka decades back.

The news of the arrest of Indian fishermen and apprehension of their boats by the Sri Lankan Navy

is almost a daily occurrence. However, the only consolation is that the earlier reports of Sri Lankan Navy opening fire on and killing Indian fishermen no longer figures in the news.

"More than 500 Indian fishermen were shot dead by Lankan Navy and an equal number seriously injured and maimed," Jesuraja said. Now the fishermen are hoping that India will try to secure a permanent solution for the vexed issue - say by getting back the Katchatheevu as a gift or even on a long lease.

"If Katchatheevu is returned back to India by Sri Lanka it is a welcome move and the fishermen issue will get solved," Tamil Nadu BJP Fisherman Cell President S. Satish Kumar said. The 285-acre islet in the Palk Strait was transferred to Sri Lanka by India during Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's

regime in 1974.

At that time, DMK President, late M. Karunanidhi was the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and he didn't raise any objection to the transfer nor did he approach the courts against the transfer to protect the interests of the state's fishermen.

As per the India-Sri Lanka agreement in 1974, fishermen of both countries can use Katchatheevu to rest and dry their nests and can worship at the St. Anthony shrine there. According to Jesuraja, till 1983, there was no problem between the Indian and Lankan fishermen as both fished even crossing the borders.

"At that time, the number of Indian fishermen was less. But now the number of fishermen and fishing boats have increased several times, resulting in the pressure on fishing areas," he said.

Employee steals employer's motorcycle

New Delhi: In a bid to teach his employer a lesson, a 25-year-old man in the national capital stole his employer's motorcycle and demanded ₹20,000 in lieu of returning it, an official said Saturday. According to the official, the accused, identified as Anoop, a resident of Nihal Vihar, Delhi, was arrested for the crime. Furnishing details, DCP (outer) Sameer Sharma said a motorcycle theft complaint was received on April 1 at the Mundka police station. "During investigation, the complainant told police that he received a phone call from one Anoop Singh who worked with him earlier and demanded ₹20,000 from him in lieu of returning his motorcycle," DCP Sharma said. After this, the police nabbed and arrested the accused from Nihal Vihar, Delhi. During interrogation, the accused disclosed that he was working with the complainant Virender but he didn't pay his pending dues and also bluntly refused to pay the same. So he stole his bike to teach him a lesson and to get his money back. The police said they have recovered the stolen motorcycle and further probe is still on.

Congress appoints new Punjab chief

New Delhi: Congress president Sonia Gandhi Saturday appointed Amrinder Singh Brar (Raja Warring) as the party's new Punjab chief in place of Navjot Singh Sidhu, and former Rajya Sabha member Pratap Singh Bajwa as the new legislature party leader. While Warring won the recent assembly elections from the Gidderbaha constituency, Bajwa was elected as an MLA from the Qadian assembly constituency. "The Congress President has appointed Amrinder Singh Brar (Raja Warring) as President and Bharat Bhushan Ashu as Working President of Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee," the party said in a statement. "The Congress president has appointed Pratap Singh Bajwa as Leader and Raj Kumar Chhabewal as deputy Leader of Punjab Congress Legislature Party in Punjab," the statement added. Warring replaces cricketer-turned politician Navjot Singh Sidhu, who had to resign after the Congress lost power in Punjab.



'MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN EUROPE'

# Indians flock to Valley's lakes, boats

REUTERS

**Srinagar, April 9:** Kashmir region is attracting record tourists after the easing of pandemic restrictions and some improvement in the security situation, bolstering local businesses.

Tourist arrivals are set to touch a ten-year high this year after more than 340,000 tourists have come since January, local tour operators and government officials said, despite restrictions on foreign tourists and some recent incidents of violence.

Tourism plunged in Kashmir after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration stripped the region of its special status and autonomy in 2019, and later as the COVID-19 pandemic cut domestic and foreign tourist inflows.

"We are seeing the highest-ever tourist arrivals in Kashmir this year with 0.18 million tourists arriving in March only," Sarmad Hafeez, Tourism Secretary for Jammu and Kashmir told Reuters, adding April arrivals could surpass March.

Along with horticulture and agriculture, tourism is an important industry for Kashmir, contributing about 7% to its economy, according to government data.

Touting itself as 'Paradise on Earth', Kashmir is home to Dal Lake, which was a favourite centuries ago for Mughal emperors escaping the summer heat of India's plains. The lake's famous house-



Tourists ride 'Shikaras' or boats in the waters of Dal Lake during sunset in Srinagar

REUTERS

boats are major attractions along with the nearby Indira Gandhi Tulip Garden, Asia's largest, and the region's mountains and glaciers.

Hafeez said an advertising campaign across major Indian cities and the opening of new destinations was attracting more tourists.

Boatman Wali Mohammad Bhat, 54, said he had no work during the pandemic, "But, now I am earning 1,000 to 1,500 rupees a day and we expect a good tourist season ahead."

Many hoteliers and houseboat owners said tourists have booked rooms in advance for the next couple of weeks, and the earnings helped them to pay part of their

debts.

After a gap of years, hoteliers, taxi drivers and tour operators are doing a brisk business. Ghulam Hassan Bhat, 75, a tour operator in Srinagar said.

"Hotels room tariffs have gone up by over 30% from the pre-COVID period, and there is a huge rush for bookings," he said.

The rush is so strong that tour operators said they are having a hard time finding bookings for their clients as hotels are between 80% to 90% full and air fares have increased.

"Hotel rooms are not available in good locations," said Pronab Sarkar, a New Delhi-based tour operator and the past president

of the Indian Tour Operators Association.

Many high-end tourists from wealthier Indian regions like Gujarat, Delhi and Mumbai were opting for Kashmir, instead of destinations in Europe because of pandemic-related uncertainty, operators said.

"We have limited high-end accommodations and commercial transport services here which is a major challenge for us," said Mohammad Yasin Tuman, Managing Partner Mascot Travels. But, the tourists are not bothered.

Navdeep Singh and his wife Gurpreet Kaur came to Kashmir from Australia, saying they were mesmerised by its beauty.

## 80L tourists visited Kashmir in past few months, says Sinha

**Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor Manoj Sinha** said Saturday that Kashmir is witnessing a golden period on the tourism front as 80 lakh tourists have visited the Valley in the past few months alone, breaking the record of past 20 years.

Record number of people are visiting Kashmir. This is a golden period on tourism front in the history of Kashmir and we should cash in on this period.

In the past few months, 80 lakh tourists have visited Kashmir, which is a record number compared to past 10 to 20 years. Flight operations too have broken all previous records. Today, all hotels are booked in advance and people of other states of India are finding it difficult to get an air ticket for Srinagar, Sinha said.

On an average, 3,500 Shikaras row in the Dal Lake each day, he said, adding that the government is committed to ensuring that the lake is cleaned on a fast track basis.

"I have travelled all over Europe but this place is more beautiful. People are warm and friendly and we didn't see any kind of trouble here," he said.

# Sedition against 13 for sloganeering inside Jamia Masjid



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Srinagar, April 9:** Thirteen people have been arrested and booked for sedition in connection with the anti-national sloganeering inside the famous Jamia Masjid here, police said Saturday.

The accused had received instructions from Pakistani handlers of terror outfits to disrupt Friday prayers and create a law and order situation by provoking people. Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Srinagar Rakesh Balwal said.

The sloganeering took place after the culmination of congregational prayers at Jamia Masjid in Nowhatta area of the city Friday with around twenty four thousand people in attendance - the largest in recent history, Balwal said.

In addition to sedition charge, those arrested will also be booked under the Public Safety Act (PSA), he added. About a dozen persons started anti-national and provocative sloganeering for a while. They were joined by a few others even

though most of the gathering remained aloof, he said.

There was also an altercation between the persons indulging in sloganeering and the volunteers of Intezamia (managing) Committee of the mosque who tried to stop the sloganeering and hooliganism, he added.

This led to clashes between the two sides, the SSP said, adding that the hooligans were evicted from the mosque by the volunteers. Even after coming outside, more than a dozen of them tried to provoke others by continuing to raise the provocative slogans but failed. They then dispersed seeing the police presence around, he said.

Balwal said a case was registered under sections 124A (sedition) and 447 (criminal trespass) of the Indian Penal Code at the Nowhatta police Station. Section 120B (criminal conspiracy) was also invoked in this case, he added.

The investigation in this case is going on at a fast pace and some more arrests are likely, he said.

# Mizoram starts issuing identity cards to Myanmarese refugees

A total of 29,532 Myanmarese refugees have fled their homes and sought shelter in all the 11 districts of Mizoram since the military takeover



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Aizawl, April 9:** The Mizoram government has started issuing identity cards to Myanmarese refugees who have taken shelter in the northeastern state following the military takeover of the neighbouring country in February last year, a Home Department official said Saturday.

The identity cards, which will be valid only in Mizoram, will facilitate speedy and easier identification of the refugees, besides preventing them from enrolling in the state's voters' list, he said.

Besides showing basic infor-

mation about the refugee concerned, the identity card mentions that the holder is taking shelter in Mizoram on humanitarian grounds, the official said.

A total of 29,532 Myanmarese refugees have fled their homes and sought shelter in all the 11 districts of Mizoram since the military takeover, as per official data accessed by PTI.

Most of the refugees are from Myanmar's Chin state and share ethnic ties with Mizos. A majority of them live in refugee camps, while others reside with their relatives or in rented houses.

The district administrations

have been tasked with issuing the identity cards. Different districts have started the process on separate dates, while some districts are yet to begin the exercise.

Serchhip started the process in February, while Hnahthial distributed 1,110 cards on Thursday and Lawngtlai, which borders Myanmar, has issued 4,794 cards so far. The exact number of such documents issued thus far is yet to be collated, the official said.

The process of issuing identity cards to refugees will start in Aizawl next week, its Deputy Commissioner Lalhriatuzali Ralte said. South Mizoram's Siaha district has been housing the highest number of Myanmar nationals at 9,464, followed by Champhai (7,810) and Lawngtlai (5,475), the official data said.

At least 1,916 Myanmarese have taken refuge in Aizawl district, 1,986 in Lunglei, 1,732 in Hnahthial, 433 in Serchhip, 149 in Kolasib, 450 in Mamit, 64 in Khawzawl and 53 in Saitual, it said.

Six districts - Champhai, Siaha, Lawngtlai, Serchhip, Hnahthial and Saitual - share a 510-km-long international border with Myanmar's Chin state.

Apart from the state government, village councils, NGOs, churches and individuals have provided the Myanmarese refugees with food and other necessary assistance.

# 16 Assam villages to be developed as model villages

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Hailakandi, April 9:** Sixteen villages of Assam's Hailakandi district will be developed as model villages during the current financial year, an official said Saturday.

Of the 16 model villages, Pradhan Mantri Aadarsh Gram Yojana will be implemented in 10 villages and they will receive rupees twenty lakh each for various works. District Development Commissioner Ranajit Kumar Laskar said.

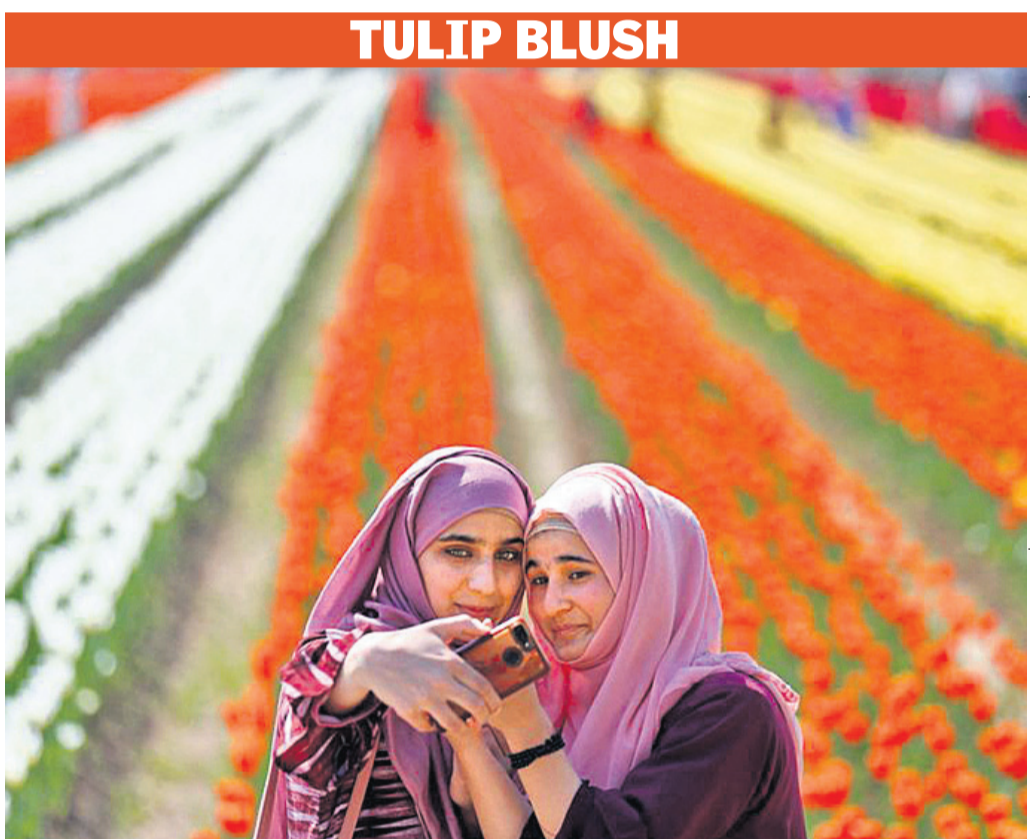
Asam Adarsh Gram Yojana will be implemented in the remaining six villages, he said.

Laskar said that the benefits of the schemes will be given to beneficiaries when the account is opened in any nationalised bank located near the village.

The selected 10 model villages under Prime Minister Adarsh Gram Yojana are Barbond part III, Bakrihawar Part II and III, North Narayanpur Part IV, Palarpar, Ramnathpur Part V, Gharmurra Part V, Jacobpura Part V, Dhalai-Malai Part VI, Harishnagar Part I.

The six model villages under Asom Adarsh Gram Yojana are Barbond Part I, Bhajantipur Part I, Rongpur Part VI, Dhalai-Malai Part V, North Kanchanpur Part II, Mohanpur Part II.

Laskar asked all the official heads of the district to extend their help for the successful implementation of the model village schemes.



Girls take a selfie inside Kashmir's tulip garden on the foothills of the Zabarwan mountain range in Srinagar

REUTERS

## E-mail threatens CM, edu institutions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Shillong, April 9:** An e-mail by an alleged member of a terror outfit threatening Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sagma and to blow up educational institutes in the state has spurred a search by the state police.

The e-mail was received by a media house here a few days ago and the police have launched a search to net those behind it, state special director general of police Idhishia Nongrang said Friday.

He said police have taken the e-mail from the unverified person or persons seriously.

## The e-mail threatened that bombs will go off every single week starting 1st May, 2022

The sender in the e-mail has allegedly identified himself as an armed cadre of a terror outfit and claimed it was sent in retaliation against dearth of jobs in the state.

It threatened to blow up educational institutions, including the North Eastern Hill University here. Deputy Inspector General of Police (Eastern Range) Davis NR Marak said that a case has been registered by the cyber wing and crime branch of the state police and both are investigating the matter.

"We are serious about any threat and we will seriously investigate into this case," Marak told PTI.

# Sinha flags off Dal Lake rejuvenation initiative



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Srinagar, April 9:** J&K Lt Governor, Manoj Sinha Saturday flagged off a unique partnership between the citizens and authorities to rejuvenate the Dal Lake in Srinagar.

Sinha flagged off 'Athwas' initiative to develop and conserve ecological heritage.

"For rejuvenation of the Dal Lake, effective community participation is vital to develop and conserve ecological heritage. De-weeding and dredging of the lake will be conducted in collaboration with the citizens," he said.

Sinha also said that dedicated efforts have been initiated in the last two years to clean Dal Lake and for conservation and protection of other water bodies across J&K.

"In this year's budget, Rs 373 crore has been allocated for development and conservation of Dal and Nigeen lakes."

For the first time in history, a successful campaign is being run with active public participation to clean Dal Lake

MANOJ SINHA | LT GOVERNOR, J&K

"The de-weeding campaign which was started last year was very successful; now we will add new cleaning machines to the existing fleet and start dredging work on the western side to restore 60,000 sq metre area," he said.

The Lt Governor also said that a walkway is proposed to be built along the Lake which will enhance the beauty as also help in preventing encroachment along it.

"Our aim is to revive the historical and cultural heritage of Jammu and Kashmir and the lakes here are invaluable part of that heritage," he said.

# Meghalaya to power remote hosps with solar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Shillong, April 9:** The Meghalaya government has successfully installed solar-powered devices in 100 health centres in remote villages, an official said Saturday.

The state government said it plans to cover all rural health centres under the solar power scheme to improve the functioning of these centres and ensure that last mile delivery in the health sector is achieved using solar technologies.

In a pilot programme, the National Health Mission has successfully powered 100 sub-centres in the 11 districts with solar devices, a senior health official said.

He said as part of the programme, energy efficient equipment like radiant warmer, suction apparatus, spotlight, solar direct drive vaccine refrigerator and luminaries, were installed and made functional.

To meet the health demands of the vulnerable people in remote areas of the state, the government had partnered with SELCO Foundation to scale the remaining 342 sub-centres and 122 pri-



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

mary health centres (PHCs) across the state, according to the official.

The site assessment is in progress at all these centres to ensure last mile health care facilities in Meghalaya.

Irrespective of the difficult terrain, remoteness, vulnerability to climate risks and natural disasters of rural habitations, the intervention will greatly benefit from solar energy that can power critical healthcare services including immunization, maternal care, deliveries, diagnostics and contribute

to increasing monitoring including vaccination of COVID 19 among others. Joint Secretary, Health Department, Ram Kumar, who also heads the National Health Mission said, "Having consistent energy flow into the health systems, builds the confidence among people on the services provided by the health systems."

He said the aim is to ensure that these health centres, irrespective of their remoteness, provide consistent power and ensure that services are available 24/7.

"Health centres are sustained on their own in terms of power so that there is no dependency on external power as well as have an efficient system of monitoring them," he said.

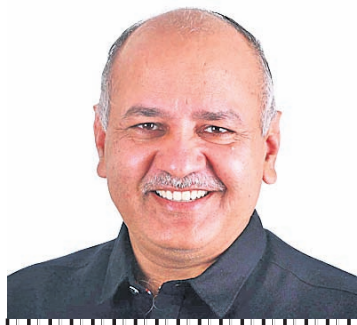
In the programme, adopted on a pilot basis in Meghalaya and a few other states, the NHM is being supported by SELCO Foundation and CryptoRelief to cover the entire spectrum of public health facilities in the state, the official stated.

An ANM of Jalyiah, C Syrti, said, "We are getting important solar powered equipment which are used in conducting safer and healthier deliveries."

SELCO Foundation and Crypto Relief said they are partnering with each other in one of the largest programmes for upgrading and empowering public health facilities with solar energy across five states.

CryptoRelief chief Sandeep Nailwal said, "The team at Crypto Relief realises the potential that solar powering health centres will enable a foundation to impact health indicators on the ground in these districts."





I will visit Gujarat on April 11 to see what work has been done by the BJP government  
MANISH SISODIA | AAP LEADER

## UP PRISONS TO PLAY 'GAYATRI MANTRA'

'Gayatri Mantra' will be played in jails to bring positive attitude among the prisoners, Uttar Pradesh Prisons Minister said



## of the day quote

When (former chief minister) Raman Singh was in power in Chhattisgarh (between 2003-2018), the state was identified as a model of credible growth but now in Bhupesh Baghel's rule, it is known for growth of corruption. Development has ended and there is only rule of corruption in the state

SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN | MP CM

It is a matter of happiness and satisfaction and we don't want such incidents to take place any more. We want peace and normalcy to return to Bastar. The region will reclaim its earlier identity of peace, brotherhood and tribal brothers and sisters living peacefully with nature. We have been making efforts in this direction

BHUPESH BAGHEL | CHHATTISGARH CM

The new projects, once completed, will strengthen urban infrastructure, improve city services, public aesthetics and ease of living, and provide a clean and sustainable environment

MANOJ SINHA | J&K LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR

## SHORT TAKES

### Girl gangraped

**Bangalore:** Karnataka police have arrested seven persons in connection with the gang rape of a 16-year-old girl in Bangalore, officials said Saturday, adding that search is underway for another accused. According to the police, the main accused person had sexually assaulted the victim and made a video of the incident. After the assault he had threatened the victim that he would kill her if she chose to tell anyone about it. Later, he shared the video with his friends.

### Gold smuggler held

**Lucknow:** Customs officials at Lucknow Airport arrested two men for smuggling 224 grams gold worth Rs 11.91 lakh. A customs official said that a passenger, who had reached Lucknow Airport from Sharja, was held Friday. "On the basis of passenger profiling, he was intercepted. During the scanning of his baggage, one 24 carat gold chain and five magnetic bracelets were found. On dismantling the bracelets, 40 small cut pieces of gold were recovered.

### Terrorist killed

**Srinagar:** A self-styled commander of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) outfit, who was involved in several attacks on civilians including non-locals and security personnel, was killed in an encounter in Anantnag district of Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday, police said. The slain terrorist was identified as Nisar Ahmad Dar alias Musab, resident of Redwani Bala, Kulgam, a police spokesman said. Acting on specific information regarding the presence of the terrorist in village Sirhama, security forces had launched a cordon and search operation there, he said.

### Former J&K minister arrested

**Jammu:** Former Jammu and Kashmir minister Jatinder Singh alias 'Babu Singh', the main accused in a case related to the recent recovery of Hawala money meant for subversive activities, was arrested from Kathua district on Saturday, a police officer said. Singh was at large since March 31 after police busted a Hawala racket here and issued a lookout notice for him on April 6. "He (the former minister) was arrested from Kathua district and is being brought to Jammu for questioning," Senior Superintendent of Police, Jammu, Chandan Kohli, said.

## ATTACK ON PAWAR HOME

# Sena senses 'BJP conspiracy'

Housing Minister Dr Jitendra Awhad made a startling claim that the whole purpose of the assault was to cause "bodily harm" to Pawar, his wife and other family members present at that time in their Silver Oaks bungalow

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Mumbai, April 9:** In a direct charge, Maharashtra's ruling Shiv Sena Saturday accused opposition Bharatiya Janata Party of masterminding the conspiracy of the attack on Nationalist Congress Party President Sharad Pawar's home Friday evening, while a minister said it was a sinister plan to cause physical harm to the senior leader and his family, and Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari condemned the incident.

Housing Minister Dr Jitendra Awhad made a startling claim that the whole purpose of the assault was to cause "bodily harm" to Pawar, his wife and other family members present at that time in their Silver Oaks bungalow. "Fortunately, with the blessings of millions of people of the state, nothing untoward happened to Pawar Saheb or his family members," he added.

NCP state spokesperson Mahesh Tapase said that the attack was a pre-planned and politically-motivated conspiracy intended to destabilise the MVA government, but warned that the party activists would



not "remain mute spectators".

"On one hand, the state transport workers welcomed the Bombay High Court verdict with huge celebrations... How did they suddenly decide to pelt stones and shoes? BJP leaders like Anil Bonde and others are misguiding the employees which is very regrettable," he said.

Talking to the media after meeting Pawar, Sena MP and chief spokesperson Sanjay Raut said that the transport workers' stir on Friday was not an agitation, but "a brutal, pre-planned attack" on the NCP leader's residence at Silver Oaks bungalow in south Mumbai.

"It is regretful that the Opposition (BJP) is supporting such acts... They are stooping to the lowest level of politics to target the MVA government and create a law-and-order situation in the state," he said.

Training guns on the leader and lawyer of the agitating Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) staffers, Gunratan Sadavarte, Raut demanded to know the people "behind" him, at whose house he lives, and who is supporting him financially.

Even when scores of MSRTC employees rushed to the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT), they all had platform tickets and Raut asked

how they could all buy the entry tickets simultaneously and who had provided the money for it.

Raut alleged that Sadavarte has been "propped up" by the BJP under the garb of a labour agitation with the sinister aims of toppling the MVA government but they would not succeed.

Meanwhile, Sadavarte and around 100-plus who were arrested late last night in connection with the attacks, will be produced before a Mumbai Magistrate Court.

Between 100-125 employees of the MSRTC - who are on the warpath since November 2021 - went on a rampage outside Pawar's home and later carried out a precision attack with stones and shoes, shaking the state and national polity.

Sanjay Raut | Shiv Sena MP

# Siddaramaiah, 63 others threatened



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Bangalore, April 9:** As many as 64 persons, including Karnataka Opposition leader Siddaramaiah, former Chief Minister Kumaraswamy and famous progressive litterateur K. Veerabhadrapa, have received death threat messages which are doing rounds on social media.

The police department has taken serious note of the matter and is contemplating beefing up the security. "Death is lurking around you, be ready to die," read the message which has gone viral on social media in Karnataka. The miscreants who put out the message have called themselves as 'Sahishna Hindu' (tolerant Hindu).

"You have been on the path of destruction. Death is very close to you. You be ready. Death might strike you in any form. Inform your family members and make arrangements for your funerals," read the message.

Former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy has warned the government not to take such threats lightly. He urged the ruling BJP to provide security to progressive thinker and writer K.

The police department has taken serious note of the matter and is contemplating beefing up the security

Veerabhadrapa and also to other writers who have opposed the government's silence on "communal polarisation" in the state.

Incidents such as the shootout of activist and writer Prof M.M. Kalburgi should not be repeated in the state, he said. The development has caused concern in the state. Following the hijab row and Muslim organisations' protest against the court verdict, Hindu organisations have demanded a ban on Muslim merchants in temples, halal cut meat, idols made by Muslim sculptors, mango traders and even drivers and transport companies.

The opposition Congress and JD(S) have blamed ruling BJP for these developments and alleged that it is aiding and abetting Hindu organisations to create unrest in society.

## 6 girls consume poison, three die in Bihar

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Patna, April 9:** Three girls died, while as many as battling for their lives after all six of them consumed poison at a village in Bihar's Aurangabad district, an official said Saturday.

According to police, one of the girls was involved in a one-sided affair.

When her marriage proposal was rejected by the boy she was in love with, she took the extreme step. All the others followed suit.

The incident took place in a village which falls under Kasma police station in Aurangabad.

Three of the girls are stated to be "critical" in Gaya's Magadh medical college. Elaborating on the incident, Kantesh Kumar Mishra, SP of Aurangabad said: "One of the girls was in love with her brother's brother-in-law.

"On Friday, that girl along with five of her friends went to the boy and proposed marriage to him. The boy turned down her proposal after which they returned home. But the dejected girl consumed a poisonous substance in the evening. The five other girls who were following her, also consumed the same."

They were immediately rushed to Aurangabad Sadar hospital where three of them succumbed, while the others were referred to Magadh medical college for better treatment in Gaya.

Following the incident, the situation is tense in the village, where the Area Circle officers and SHO are camping to avoid any untoward incident.



Children dive in the Hooghly river, on a hot day in Nadia district

PTI PHOTO

# Courts must make mediation mandatory: CJI

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Kevadia (Gujarat), April 9:** Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana on Saturday said an active effort must be taken by courts to make negotiation and mediation mandatory, as a part of case management.

In his address at the inaugural event of a two-day national conference on mediation and information technology organised near the Statue of Unity in Gujarat's Narmada district, he said: "Conflicts are inevitable aspects of our lives. Misunderstandings, ego issues, lack of trust and greed can lead to conflicts. Even the big conflicts can be resolved through understanding. Conflicts have a human face. One must have the foresight to look beyond the conflict. A dispute should not spoil your relationship."

The conference was also attended by President Ram Nath Kovind,



The Chief Justice cited the mediation undertaken by Lord Krishna, to prevent the war of Kurukshetra

Law Minister Kiren Rijiju, judges of the Supreme Court, and other dignitaries.

The Chief Justice cited the mediation undertaken by Lord Krishna, to prevent the war of Kurukshetra. "We all know the consequences of that failed mediation. Imagine, how much destruction would have been avoided; how lives could have been saved and how the kingdoms would have prospered, had Krishna succeeded," he added.

He said the concept of ADR (al-

ternate dispute resolution), through lok adalats, gram nyayalayas, mediation and arbitration centres, has the potential to transform the legal landscape of India by providing millions of people a platform to settle their grievances.

Chief Justice Ramana said imbibing effective ADR mechanisms into the judicial process can reduce pendency, save judicial resources and time, and allow litigants a degree of control over the dispute resolution process and its outcome. "The role of courts as-

sumes great importance in realising the full potential of ADR. An active effort must be taken by courts to make negotiation and mediation mandatory, as a part of case management," he said.

The Chief Justice said with adequate cooperation from all stakeholders, it has the ability to emerge as a tool of social justice in India, and several states in India are currently coming to build a robust ADR-friendly environment.

"Mediation and negotiation at the pre-litigation stage are one of the most empowering methods of resolving disputes as they maximize the participation of stakeholders," he said.

He emphasised on the need of skilled mediators to decide some significant issues during the process of mediation and in a situation where settlement is fully going in favour of a particular party

## UP CMO's Twitter handle briefly hacked

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Lucknow, April 9:** The Uttar Pradesh government Saturday said that strict action will be taken against those responsible for hacking the official Twitter handle of the state Chief Minister's Office (CMO).

The state CMO's Twitter account was briefly hacked in the early hours of Saturday and was immediately restored. Twitter had suspended the account after observing unnatural activity.

Before it got restored, the unnamed hackers had sent out 400-500 tweets from the account. "There was an attempt by anti-social elements to hack the official Twitter account of the Chief Minister's Office @CMOfficeUP at 12.30 am on April 9. Some tweets were posted by them which were recovered immediately," the state government tweeted.

# Air pollution led to 1,00,000 premature deaths: Study

THE INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE DYING PREMATURELY FROM EXPOSURE TO AIR POLLUTION WAS HIGHEST IN CITIES IN SOUTH ASIA

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, April 9:** The increase in the number of people dying prematurely from exposure to air pollution was highest in cities in South Asia.

In India it caused an estimated 1,00,000 premature deaths in Mumbai, Bangalore, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Chennai, Surat, Pune and Ahmedabad, according to a study.

Around 1,80,000 avoidable deaths over 14 years in fast-growing trop-

ical cities were caused by a rapid rise in emerging air pollution, a study led by researchers at the University of Birmingham and UCL has revealed.

The international team of scientists aimed to address data gaps in air quality for 46 future megacities in Africa, Asia and the Middle East using space-based observations from instruments onboard NASA and European Space Agency (ESA) satellites for 2005 to 2018.

Cities analysed in the study are: Africa: Abidjan, Abuja, Addis Ababa, Antananarivo, Bamako, Blantyre, Conakry, Dakar, Dar es Salaam, Ibadan, Kaduna, Kampala, Kano, Khartoum, Kigali, Kinshasa, Lagos, Lilongwe, Luanda, Lubumbashi, Lusaka, Mombasa, Ndjamena, Nairobi, Niamey and Ouagadougou.

**South Asia:** Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Chittagong, Dhaka, Hyderabad, Karachi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Pune and Surat.

**Southeast Asia:** Bangkok, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Jakarta, Manila,



Phnom Penh and Yangon. **Middle East:** Riyadh and Sana'a.

Published on April 8 in Science Advances, the study reveals rapid degradation in air quality and increases in urban exposure to air pollutants hazardous to health.

Across all the cities, the authors found significant annual increases

in pollutants directly hazardous to health of up to 14 per cent for nitrogen dioxide (NO2) and up to eight per cent for fine particles (PM2.5), as well as increases in precursors of PM2.5 of up to 12 per cent for ammonia and up to 11 per cent for reactive volatile organic compounds.

The researchers attributed this rapid degradation in air quality to emerging industries and residential sources like road traffic, waste burning, and widespread use of charcoal and fuelwood.

Lead author Karn Vohra (UCL Geography), who completed the study as a PhD student at the University of Birmingham, said: "Open burning of biomass for land clearance and agricultural waste disposal has in the past overwhelmingly dominated air pollution in the tropics.

"Our analysis suggests we're entering a new era of air pollution in these cities, with some experiencing rates of degradation in a year that other cities experience in a decade."

The scientists also found 1.5 to four-fold increases in urban population exposure to air pollution over the study period in 40 of the 46 cities for NO2 and 33 of the 46 cities for PM2.5, caused by a combination of population growth and rapid deterioration in air quality

According to the study, the increase in the number of people dying prematurely from exposure to air pollution was highest in cities in South Asia, in particular Dhaka in Bangladesh (totalling 24,000 people), and the Indian cities of Mumbai, Bangalore, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Chennai, Surat, Pune and Ahmedabad (totalling 1,00,000 people).

The researchers say that while the number of deaths in tropical cities in Africa are currently lower due to recent improvements in healthcare across the continent resulting in a decline in overall premature mortality, the worst effects of air pollution on health will likely occur in the coming decades.

Study co-author Eloise Marais (UCL Geography) said: "We continue to shift air pollution from one region to the next, rather than learning from errors of the past and ensuring rapid industrialisation and economic development don't harm public health."



# international

## of the day quote

Sri Lanka will need about \$3 billion in external assistance within the next six months to help restore supplies of essential items, including fuel and medicines, to manage a severe economic crisis. It's a Herculean task

ALI SABRY | FINANCE MINISTER, SL

They are the largest democracy in the world. We have a strong defence relationship with them. They are part of the Quad, with Australia and Japan. We, obviously, would prefer that India move away from their long-term history of non-alignment G77 partnership with Russia

WINDY SHERMAN | DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE, US

Covid-19 pandemic is far from over as large outbreaks are spreading in Asia. We're seeing 1.5 million new cases each day. Large outbreaks are spreading in Asia. A new wave is sweeping across Europe

ANTONIO GUTERRES | SECRETARY-GENERAL, UN

## SHORT TAKES

### Iran Prez vows to continue N-activities

**Tehran:** President Ebrahim Raisi said Saturday that Iran will continue nuclear development activities as talks to revive Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers remain stalled, state media reported. Speaking in a ceremony marking Iran's national day of nuclear technology, the hard-line president said his administration will support an acceleration in research of peaceful nuclear technology. "Our knowledge and technology in the nuclear field is not reversible. Iran's (continuation of) research in peaceful nuclear fields will not depend on others' demands or viewpoints," said Raisi.

### Pak tests ballistic missile successfully

**Islamabad:** Pakistan's Army Saturday conducted a successful flight test of the surface-to-surface medium-range ballistic missile Shaheen-III which can strike targets up to 2,750 kilometres, bringing a number of Indian cities under its range. Shaheen-III is a surface-to-surface ballistic missile with a range of 2,750 kilometres, which makes it capable of reaching the farthest point in India's northeast and Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the Dawn newspaper reported.

### Israeli forces kill Palestinian ultra

**Jenin:** Israeli soldiers killed a Palestinian militant Saturday in clashes that broke out in the occupied West Bank during a raid in the hometown of a gunman who had carried out a deadly shooting attack in Tel Aviv, Israeli and Palestinian sources said. Israeli-Palestinian tensions have soared in the run-up to the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, with both sides warning against escalation. Deadly incidents have since surged. The Palestinian Health Ministry said 13 people were wounded in Saturday's exchange of fire in the city of Jenin.

### ₹2cr to release Indian fishermen

**Chennai:** Indian fishermen in Ramanathapuram district are shocked to hear about a Sri Lankan court fixing Rs 2 crore each as the bail amount to release the arrested fishermen, said a top member of All Mechanised Boat Association. March 23 about 13 Indian fishermen from Rameswaram were arrested by the Sri Lankan Navy for fishing in their waters.



My instinct says: If this is not a war crime, what is a war crime. I saw the photos, Denys Shmyhal (Ukrainian PM) showed me: Killing people as they are walking by. Residential buildings are no military target

URSULA VON DER LEYEN | PRESIDENT, EUROPEAN COMMISSION

## 10-YEAR BAN FOR SMITH

The motion picture academy Friday banned Will Smith from attending the Oscars or any other academy event for 10 years following his slap of Chris Rock at the Academy Awards. The academy in a statement called Smith's actions "unacceptable and harmful"



# Pakistan PM to 'fight till the last ball'

Khan, who came to power in 2018 with promises to create a 'Naya Pakistan', has been dogged by claims of economic mismanagement as his government battles depleting foreign exchange reserves and double-digit inflation. Interestingly, no Pakistani prime minister has ever completed a full five-year term in office

## PAK POLITICAL CIRCUS



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Islamabad, April 9:** Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan held an emergency meeting of his Cabinet Saturday night as he vowed not to resign and "fight till the last ball", even though his government is expected to lose a no-confidence motion in the National Assembly. Khan chaired the emergency Cabinet meeting where it was decided that he should not resign, sources said. The emergency Cabinet meeting has taken many by surprise as Khan has little chance of surviving the no confidence motion against him. Later, Khan met with a group of his favourite journalists and rejected rumours about making any change in the army leadership. He said that he was not interfering in the process of implementation of the orders of the SC to hold a no-confidence vote.

Meanwhile, top courts have become active and the Islamabad HC and SC were expected to become operational by midnight to take action if the orders to complete voting on a no-confidence motion were not implemented till the end of the day. The joint Opposition has lodged an official complaint with the Speaker, urging him not to further delay the voting on a no-confidence motion against the prime minister. They said all authorities concerned including him were guilty of "gross contempt and liable to punishment in accordance with law". The joint Opposition needed 172 members in the 342-member house to oust Prime Minister Khan. They have garnered the support of more than the needed strength with the help of some allies of the ruling coalition and rebels from Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party

## Maryam slams PM for praising India

**Islamabad:** Pakistan's Opposition leader Maryam Nawaz Saturday lashed out at Prime Minister Imran Khan for lavishing praise on India, saying he should go to the neighbouring country if he likes it so much. Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Vice President Maryam, who is the daughter of deposed prime minister Nawaz Sharif, also suggested that Khan should emulate the example of India where no prime minister has abrogated the Constitution while facing a no-confidence motion. Her remarks came after Khan called India a "nation with a great sense of honour". Prime Minister Khan, in an address to the nation Friday night ahead of the no-trust motion where he has little chances of surviving unless some miracle takes place, said that he was not against India and had a huge following in the neighbouring country



MARYAM NAWAZ | OPPOSITION LEADER, PAKISTAN

"No superpower can force India to do anything against its interests. They (India) are buying oil from Russia despite sanctions. Nobody can dictate terms to India which is a sovereign nation. Both countries got freedom at the same time. What the European Union ambassadors said here, could they say that to India also?" he asked and added that they could not because India is a sovereign nation. Responding to his remarks, Maryam said that Khan has "gone mad". "Imran is praising India. He should also follow it on no-trust move. Some 27 no-confidence mo-

Khan, who has been saying that he will fight till the "last ball", has been claiming that the Opposition's no-confidence motion against him was the result of a "foreign conspiracy" because of his independent foreign policy and funds were being channelled from abroad to oust him from power. In an address to the nation Friday, the 69-year-old prime minister reiterated his allegations that a senior US diplomat threatened regime change in Pakistan. The US has bluntly rejected the allegations.

## Khan's close aide hints at martial law

**Islamabad:** Amidst the deadlock in Pakistan's Parliament on the no-confidence vote against embattled Prime Minister Imran Khan, his close aide Saturday warned that those who bought MPs will be responsible if martial law is imposed in the country. The remarks by Minister for Information and Broadcasting Fawad Chaudhry came hours after Chairman of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari alleged that Prime Minister Khan was seeking military intervention in the country's political affairs by delaying voting on the no-confidence motion and to create a constitutional crisis. In an informal chat with journalists inside the Parliament House, Chaudhry said that "those who bought MPs will be responsible if martial law is imposed." Geo News reported. Nearly two dozen lawmakers from Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party has joined hands with the Opposition to oust the prime minister through the no-trust vote.

# Indian student shot dead in Canada

## THIS WAS CITY'S 19TH MURDER OF THE YEAR

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Toronto, April 9:** A 21-year-old Indian student has been shot dead by an unidentified man at the entrance of a subway station here in Canada while he was on his way to work, police said. The victim, identified as Kartik Vasudev, was shot Thursday evening at the Glen Road entrance to Sherbourne TTC station in St James Town. Vasudev received medical attention from an off-duty paramedic and was taken to a hospital where he succumbed to his injuries, the Toronto Police Service said in a statement. The homicide squad of the Toronto Police Service has taken over the investigation. Investigators would like to speak to any witnesses that were in the area at the time, as well as any drivers or businesses that have camera footage, the police said. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar expressed grief at the killing. "Grieved by this tragic incident. Deepest condolences to the



family," Jaishankar tweeted. "We are shocked & distressed at the unfortunate killing of Indian student Kartik Vasudev in a shooting incident in Toronto yesterday," the Consulate General of India wrote in a statement posted on Twitter Friday. "We are in touch with the family and will provide all possible assistance in the early repatriation of mortal remains," it said. The victim's father, Jitesh Vasudev said, "We have lost everything. He was just trying to fulfil his dreams, it was his dream to come to Canada." Vasudev's brother told CP24 news channel he was a student at Seneca College and was taking the subway to his job when he was killed. He arrived in Canada in January.

## Indian-origin cult chief held for rape dies in UK prison

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**London, April 9:** An Indian-origin man who ran a secretive extremist Maoist cult in London and was sentenced to 23 years in jail by a UK court for a string of sexual assaults six years ago has died in jail. Aravindan Balakrishnan, known to his followers as Comrade Bala, was sentenced for six counts of indecent assault, four counts of rape and two counts of actual bodily harm back in 2016. The 81-year-old found guilty of "brutal" violence died in custody at HMP Dartmoor prison in southwest England Friday the UK Prison Service said. The cult leader had been convicted following a jury trial in December 2015, where it emerged that he had kept his daughter in captivity for over 30 years of her life. The daughter described her situation in court as "horrible, dehumanising and degrading". Sentencing Balakrishnan in January 2016, the judge said: "You decided to treat her as a project, not a person. You claimed to do it for her to protect her from the outside world, but you created a cruel environment."

## DEADLY STATION STRIKE

# More civilians flee east Ukraine



ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Kyiv, April 9:** Civilian evacuations moved forward in patches of battle-scarred eastern Ukraine a day after a missile strike killed at least 52 people at a train station where thousands were waiting to leave the increasingly vulnerable region before an expected Russian onslaught. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy demanded a tough global response to Friday's train station attack in Kratomorsk, calling it the latest sign of war crimes by Russian forces and hoping to prod Western backers to step up their response to help his country defend itself. "All world efforts will be directed to establish every minute of who did what, who gave what orders, where the missile came from, who transported it, who gave the com-

mand and how this strike was agreed," Zelenskyy said in his nightly video address, his voice rising in anger. Russia denied it was responsible and accused Ukraine's military of firing on the station to try to turn blame for civilian slayings on Moscow. A Russian Defense Ministry spokesman detailed the missile's trajectory and Ukrainian troop positions to bolster the argument. Western experts and Ukrainian authorities insisted that Russia launched the missile. Ukraine's state railway company said in a statement that residents of the country's contested Donbas region, where Russia has refused its forces after failing to take over the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, could flee through other train stations Saturday.

Donors including the Canadian government and the European Commission Saturday pledged a combined 9.1 billion euros in donations, loans and grants to support refugees. Zelenskyy met UK PM Boris Johnson, one of his staunchest backers, in Kyiv Saturday, with the British leader using the visit to set out a new financial and military aid package for Ukraine.

"The railways do not stop the task of taking everyone to safety," the statement on the messaging app Telegram said. Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk said 10 evacuation corridors were planned for Saturday in hopes of allowing residents to leave war zones in the eastern regions of Donetsk and Luhansk, which comprise the Donbas, as well as neighboring Zaporizhzhia. Ukrainian authorities have called on civilians to get out ahead of an imminent, stepped-up offensive by Russian forces. Britain's Defense Ministry reported Saturday that Russian naval forces were launching cruise missiles to support the ground operations in eastern Ukraine, including in the port cities of Mykolaiv and Mariupol.

# Brazil's Amazon deforestation worst in 6 yrs

Destruction of the world's largest rainforest has surged since President Jair Bolsonaro took office in 2019 and weakened environmental protections, arguing that they hinder economic development that could reduce poverty in the Amazon region

REUTERS



estation of the Brazilian Amazon rose 64 per cent from a year ago to 941 square kilometers (363 square miles), data from national space research agency Inpe showed. That area, larger than New York City, is the most forest cover lost in the period since the data series began in 2015/2016. Destruction of the world's largest

rainforest has surged since President Jair Bolsonaro took office in 2019 and weakened environmental protections, arguing that they hinder economic development that could reduce poverty in the Amazon region. The President's office and the Environment Ministry did not immediately respond to requests for

Brazil is an example of what the UN climate report is saying when referring to governments not taking the necessary actions. We have a government that goes deliberately against the necessary steps to limit climate change

CRISTIANE MAZZETTI | FOREST CAMPAIGNER IN BRAZIL FOR GREENPEACE, AN ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY GROUP

comment. A UN climate panel report Monday warned that governments are not doing enough to rein in greenhouse gas emissions in order to avert the worst effects of global warming. While fossil fuel use is mostly to blame, deforestation accounts for about 10 per cent of global emissions, according to the report. "Brazil is an example of what the UN climate report is saying when referring to governments not taking the necessary actions," said Cristiane Mazzetti, a forest campaigner in Brazil for environmental advocacy group Greenpeace. "We have a government that goes deliberately against the necessary steps to limit climate change," she added. Some scientists predict deforestation will continue to rise ahead of Brazil's October presidential election, as it has ahead of the last three elections. Environmental enforcement typically weakens in election years and criminals may rush to deforest ahead of a new government taking office, according to Carlos Souza Jr, a researcher at the institute Imazon. A poll Thursday showed that left-wing former President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, whose administration drastically reduced deforestation in the 2000s, would get 45 per cent of the vote over 31 per cent for Bolsonaro in the first round of the election.

## Space station's first all-private astronaut team docked

REUTERS

**Washington, April 9:** The first all-private team of astronauts ever launched to the International Space Station (ISS) arrived safely at the orbiting research platform Saturday to begin a week-long science mission hailed as a milestone in commercial spaceflight. The rendezvous came about 21 hours after the four-man team representing Houston-based startup company Axiom Space Inc lifted off on Friday from NASA's Kennedy Space Center, riding atop a SpaceX-launched Falcon 9 rocket. The Crew Dragon capsule lofted to orbit by the rocket docked with the ISS at about 8:30 am Saturday as the two space vehicles were flying roughly 250 miles (420 km) above the central Atlantic Ocean, a live NASA webcast of the coupling showed.





**We have seen new-age entrepreneurs chasing valuations, which can be fickle... So the age-old way of doing business for profit, looking after cash-flows is important**  
**GAUTAM HARI SINGHANIA | CHAIRMAN & MD, RAYMOND**

## NETFLIX EYEING SPORTS STREAMING

Netflix may buy a stake in TV and film studio NFL Films as the streaming giant is reportedly planning to enter the live sports arena along with ramping up its sports docuseries section. According to a TechCrunch report, the NFL is in talks with media companies about selling equity in NFL Films



## of the day quote

**We are committed to commission the project in the current financial year. This will be an important milestone in our capacity addition journey and help in achieving our vision of 5,000 MW installed capacity by 2023, 25,000 MW by 2030 and 50,000 MW by 2040**

**NAND LAL SHARMA | CHAIRMAN AND MD, SIVN**

**CSC has been providing insurance services to citizens since 2014. Through our partnership with Tata AIA Insurance, we have added new products like Tata AIA Life POS Smart Income Plus plan, endowment and income plans to our existing catalogue**

**DINESH KUMAR TYAGI | MD, CSC E-GOVERNANCE SERVICES**

**Nissan has been a leader in electrification technology through a wide range of R&D activities, from molecular-level battery material research to the development of safe, high-performance EVs**

**KUNIO NAKAGURO | EXECUTIVE VP (R&D), NISSAN**

## SHORT TAKES

### Meta plans virtual currency Zuck Bucks

**Washington:** Meta, the company that owns Facebook and Instagram, has announced plans to create its own virtual currency, which the staff have dubbed as "Zuck Bucks." The firm is working on various virtual products to diversify its revenue and revitalise its user base, which is increasingly flocking to newer competitors such as TikTok. Meta has plans to integrate NFTs into its social media apps. "Social tokens" or "reputation tokens" are examples of products that the company is looking at. These could be utilised as rewards by consumers. It's also looking at "creator coins" that influencers on Instagram can use.

### YT blocks Russian parliament channel

**New Delhi:** YouTube has blocked Duma TV which broadcasts from Russia's lower house of parliament, drawing an angry response from officials who said the world's most popular streaming service could face restrictions in response. Saturday, a message on YouTube said the Duma channel had been "terminated for a violation of YouTube's Terms of Service". YouTube, owned by Alphabet Inc's, has been under pressure from Russian communications regulator Roskomnadzor and officials were quick to respond. "From the look of it, YouTube has signed its own warrant. Save content, transfer (it) to Russian platforms. And hurry up," foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said on the Telegram messaging service.

### 21 bids for five city gas licences

**New Delhi:** Seven companies have put in 21 bids for licence to retail CNG to automobiles and piped cooking gas to households in five areas in states like Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, oil regulator PNGRB said. The Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) had offered five Geographical Areas (GAs), spread over 27 districts in five states, in the 11A city gas distribution (CGD) bid round. Bids for the five GAs were received on April 6, PNGRB said in a statement. "21 bids have been received from 7 bidders with no single bid in any GA." It, however, did not identify the bidders.

# Clock ticks down towards Russian default

*Russia has not defaulted on its external debt since the aftermath of its 1917 revolution, but its bonds have now emerged as a flashpoint in its economic tussle with Western countries*

REUTERS

**London, April 9:** Russia faces its first sovereign external default in over a century after it made arrangements to make an international bond repayment in roubles earlier this week, even though the payment was due in US dollars.

S&P Saturday lowered the country's foreign currency ratings to "selective default" on increased risks that Moscow will not be able and willing to honour its commitments to foreign debtholders.

Russia has not defaulted on its external debt since the aftermath of its 1917 revolution, but its bonds have now emerged as a flashpoint in its economic tussle with Western countries. A default was unimaginable until recently, with Russia rated as investment grade in the run up to its Feb 24 invasion of Ukraine, which Moscow calls a "special military operation".

*Here are answers to key questions:*

### CAN RUSSIA PAY?

Russia was due to make a payment of \$649 million to holders of two of its sovereign bonds Monday. But the US Treasury blocked the transfer, preventing Russia from using any of its frozen foreign currency reserves for servicing its debt.

Coming up with an alternative, Russia placed the rouble equivalent of those payments for bondholders from so-called unfriendly nations in special accounts at its National



Settlement Depository. Moscow has a 30-day grace period from the payment date, which was April 4.

Analysts say Russia has the means and ability to pay. The country receives billions in US dollars in revenue from energy exports, and while around half its foreign exchange reserves are frozen, it has hundreds of millions that are not.

Elina Ribakova, deputy chief economist at the Institute of International Finance, said this was likely a "willingness-to-pay situation."

The US Treasury did not ban correspondence banking with Russia, subject to checks, and has granted a license to allow for payments relating to Moscow servicing sovereign debt until May 25. All this means it looks like Russia could still make the payment, if it wanted to, according to analysts.

### WHAT TYPE OF DEFAULT?

At its most basic level, a default is a breach of contract, though the term can cover a variety of scenarios.

Payment default is a failure to pay principal, interest or other amounts due after the grace period has passed, according to a paper by restructuring experts at the International Monetary Fund.

However, there are also technical defaults due to events such as administrative errors, generally viewed by market participants as minor and swiftly remedied.

Legal experts say payment in the wrong currency, in this case roubles, constitutes a non-payment.

### WHAT ELSE COULD HAPPEN?

Russia could unilaterally declare a moratorium - a temporary or permanent payment stop.

Made as an announcement or legislation separate from the missed

**In theory, a default situation could be created but this would be a purely artificial situation. There are no grounds for a real default**

**DMITRY PESKOV | KREMLIN SPOKESPERSON**

payment, a moratorium can come before or after the payment default, according to the IMF.

A government might announce a moratorium as an interim measure to halt payments before launching a debt restructuring, as Mexico did in 1982.

The declaration of a moratorium is also one of the potential triggers for CDS contracts. There are around \$6 billion worth of CDS contracts outstanding on Russia.

### WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A DEFAULT?

Debt obligations at risk of, or already in, default are often snapped up by funds specialising in distressed situations, either hoping to make money when a restructuring is eventually worked out or to litigate in courts with the aim of getting compensation or seizing a debtor's assets instead.

However, litigation and asset seizures are lengthy and costly processes. Many previous attempts have been unsuccessful, such as when creditors tried to seize Argentina's famous navy vessel, the ARA Libertad, in 2012 over a debt default a decade earlier or Argentine dinosaur fossils exhibited in Europe.

# No plan to privatise railways: Vaishnaw



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 9:** Union Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw Saturday reiterated that the Centre has no policy to privatise the national transporter and emphasised the need for the sector to accept the latest technology to meet the aspirations of the passengers, especially in terms of safety and comfort.

The technology should be indigenous like the contribution of Integral Coach Factory (ICF) to Vande Bharat Express, and take the sector forward, he said, while virtually inaugurating the 20th all India conference of the Bharatiya Railway Mazdoor Sangh (BRMS) at Rail mandapam, Perambur, from Delhi.

Vande Bharat Express was designed and manufactured by ICF at Perambur under the Centre's Make in India initiative.

"The opposition parties are repeatedly alleging a move to privatise the railways. I wish to clearly state that the railways is a big complex organisation...there's no policy to privatise the railways. No such plans, whatsoever," the minister said. "What is uppermost in the mind (of administrator) is strive

**The Minister said there is an imperative need to flex the technology to meet the goal of Aatmanirbhar Bharat in order to make progress**

to do what is better for the railways and take it forward," he said.

"There's no affinity for privatisation of railways but technology should be imbued," Vaishnaw said and added Prime Minister Narendra Modi had already said the Central government has no intention to privatise the railways.

"This should meet the aspirations of the nation, the youth, emerging middle class and also 8 crore passengers. The contribution should be like ICF's role in designing and making Vande Bharat express," he pointed out.

Lashing out at the previous UPA regime for doing precious little on the recruitment front, the minister said the Narendra Modi-led government filled up 3.5 lakh posts in the railways and initiated steps to recruit people for 1.40 lakh posts.

# Indian banana, baby corn to be exported to Canada

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, April 9:** Thanks to the successful negotiations between an Indian agency and the Canadian government, Indian banana and baby corn can now be exported there, officials said Saturday. "The negotiations between National Plant Protection Organisations of India and Canada on market access for Indian Banana and Baby corn resulted in Canadian market access for these

**India is the largest producer of bananas accounting for over 25 per cent of global production**

commodities. Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Manoj Ahuja held a meeting with Canadian High Commissioner Cameron MacKay on April 7 wherein this was cleared," an official said.

Canada informed that export of fresh baby corn from India to Canada may begin from April 2022 after updation of directive D-95-28: Plant Protection Import and Domestic Movement Requirements for Corn and the Automated Import Reference System (AIRS).

Further, based on the technical information provided for fresh bananas by India, Canada has approved its entry with immediate effect.

# Malabar Gold and Diamonds launches new store in Cuttack



**BHUBANESWAR:** Malabar Gold and Diamonds, one of the largest gold and diamond retail chains in the country launched its new store April 9. Located at Cantonment Road, Cuttack, the new store provides a large range of collections as well as fair prices for jewellery with reasonable making charges starting from 4.9%. The store offers a wide

range of gold, diamond, precious gemstone and bridal collections.

The new store launch is in line with the brand's aggressive retail expansion plan. With 280+ stores across 10 countries, Malabar Gold and Diamonds is ranked among the top 5 jewellery retailers globally. The new store at Cuttack will be the brand's second store in state, yet an-

other showroom in Odisha is set to open soon in Chandrasekharpur, Bhubaneswar. "The great quality and product range that our customers in Odisha have come to expect from us will be available at our Cuttack store. We aspire to be more accessible to our clients and respond to their needs with each new store," said Malabar Group Chairman MP Ahammed.

The store was inaugurated by Odia movie star Sabyasachi Mishra in the presence of Siraj PK, Retail Head (India); Tahasil Ahmed, Cluster Head; Ashnaf Arrakal, Deputy Store Head; Siddheswar Rath, Business Head (Odisha) and other dignitaries.

# Delhi HC snubs Red Bull's plea against Pepsi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 9:** The Delhi High Court has dismissed an application by Red Bull seeking to injunct Pepsi from using tagline "Stimulates Mind, Energizes Body" for its energy drink Sting.

The court said plaintiff Red Bull has failed to establish a prima facie case in its favour and balance of convenience is also in favour of defendant PepsiCo India Holdings Pvt Ltd for not granting interim injunction as the products of the defendants have been



selling in the market with this tagline for almost five years.

"Both the taglines used by the plaintiff and the defendants are descriptive and laudatory in nature. Whether the tagline of the plaintiff has acquired distinctiveness or secondary meaning in respect of the plaintiff's products can only be established at the stage of trial," Justice Amit Bansal said.

In 2018, Red Bull had filed a trademark suit in the high court for its mark "Vitalizes Body and Mind." against PepsiCo's use of its tagline "Stimulates Mind, Energizes Body" for its energy drink product Sting. Red Bull claimed that the marks

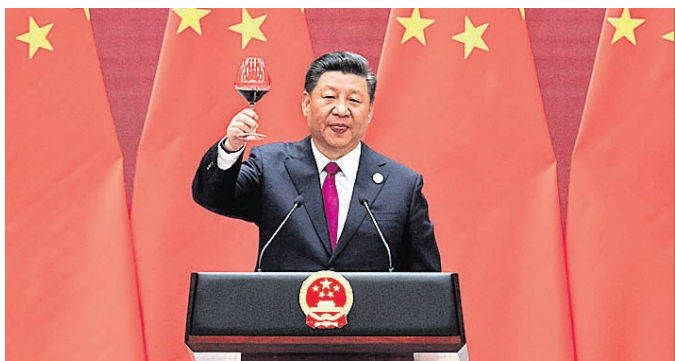
are similar and Pepsi's use of "Stimulates Mind, Energizes Body" amounts to infringement and passing off its trademark - "Vitalizes Body and Mind". It had argued that the mark had acquired distinctiveness and secondary meaning, thus entitled to protection.

Pepsi, represented by J Sagar Associates, defended its use of the tagline as being descriptive of the product and thus no action for infringement can lie. Pepsi had argued that Red Bull's trademark itself is invalid since it is in contravention of Section 9 of the Trade Marks Act.

## CAUGHT IN CHINESE DEBT TRAP

# India's neighbours stare at economic catastrophe

*After taking huge debt from China, servicing it is becoming a crisis for Pakistan and Sri Lanka, giving rise to fears of a sovereign default*



programme is restored, The News reported.

Pakistan and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are so far unable to strike a consensus on the completion of the 7th Review and release of the \$960 million tranche under the \$6 billion Extended Fund Facility.

The IMF has indicated holding talks with the 'new' government and keeping in view the fluid political situation, the

restoration of the IMF programme seems in danger.

Top official sources said that China had agreed in principle for granting a rollover of a \$2.5 billion commercial loan last week, but so far Beijing authorities are processing its rollover, The News reported.

However, there is another possibility that the Chinese might have refused to roll over loans earlier, but after intervention at the

Pakistan requires dollar inflows on an immediate basis to restore confidence, as the current account deficit has risen sharply while the foreign currency reserves are depleting at an accelerated pace

Colombo borrowed the most from the global capital market, which constitutes 47 per cent of its total debt, then comes the Asian Development Bank (ADB) with 13%, Japan 10%, China%, the World Bank 9% and India 2%

## SL hikes interest rates

**Sri Lanka's** central bank has decided to hike interest rates by an unprecedented 700 basis points to tame high inflation amid the worst economic crisis that has led to protests across the country and put President Gotabaya Rajapaksa under mounting pressure to resign. The move comes as Sri Lanka's main Opposition party SJB Friday announced that it will move a no-confidence motion against the government of President Rajapaksa and is prepared to impeach the embattled leader if he fails to address the concerns of the public facing hardships due to the economic crisis. The Monetary Board of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka on Friday decided to increase the Standing Deposit Facility Rate (SDFR) and the Standing Lending Facility Rate (SLFR) of the Central Bank by 700 basis points to 13.50 per cent and 14.50 per cent, respectively, effective from the close of business April 8.

ported. According to the country's central bank, there is only \$2 billion foreign exchange reserve and \$1 billion worth of notes maturing in July 2022.

The country's debt-to-GDP has increased from 85 per cent in 2019 to 104 per cent in 2021. The current foreign exchange shortage has led to great difficulties in obtaining the supply of daily neces-

sities, including fuel, electricity, paper, milk powder, etc.

The country is facing hours of power cuts each day and even the newsprint has halted as a result of the shortage of printing paper. The general inflation rate in the country is more than 17 per cent while the food inflation rate reached 30.2 per cent in March, the report said.



# SRH EASE PAST CSK



**MEMORABLE KNOCK:** Abhishek Sharma guides one on the outside during his match-winning innings against CSK, Saturday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Navi Mumbai, April 9:** IPL's sentimental favourites Chennai Super Kings slumped to their fourth successive defeat with young Abhishek Sharma's 50-ball-75 (5x4, 3x6) guiding Sunrisers Hyderabad to their maiden eight-wicket win in this edition of the tournament.

The 21-year-old Sharma took the attack to the opposition with a blistering first IPL half century to help Sunrisers easily chased down the target of 155 with 14 balls to spare.

CSK now has to win at least eight out of their remaining 10 games in order to reach the magic figure of 16 points which during past few years is the cut-off for play-off qualifications.

It was Sunrisers' first win of this IPL, having lost to Rajasthan Royals and Lucknow Super Giants in their earlier matches. CSK have

already lost to Kolkata Knight Riders, Lucknow Super Giants and Punjab Kings in earlier games.

On a sluggish pitch, Sharma took the pressure off his captain Kane Williamson (32) who played second fiddle to the youngster who was in top form after failing to score big in the previous two matches.

Williamson was out in the 13th over off the bowling of left-arm seamer Mukesh Choudhary (1/30) after sharing 89-run opening stand with Sharma, who also fell in the 18th to Dwayne Bravo (1/29) with Sunrisers needing just 10 runs. Rahul Tripathi (39 n o, 15b, 5x4, 2x6) then ensured that there was no hiccups in the run chase.

Earlier, Moeen Ali top-scored with a 35-ball-48 (3x4, 2x6) to guide CSK to 154/7 after being asked to bat first. Skipper Ravindra Jadeja (23) played a little cameo towards the end to prop up CSK after they

**BRIEF SCORES**  
**CSK 154/7**  
(Moeen Ali 48, Ambati Rayudu 27; Washington Sundar 2/21, T Natarajan 2/30) lost to  
**SRH 155/2**  
(Abhishek Sharma 75, Rahul Tripathi 39 n o, Kane Williamson 32; Dwayne Bravo 1/29) by 8 wickets.

lost a few wickets in a heap.

Robin Uthappa (15) was dismissed by Washington Sundar (2/21) in the off-spinner's very first ball, when the batter ended up sky-ing a catch while going for a slog-sweep.

Having conceded 25 runs in the first three overs, SRH were back in the game and it got better for them with the introduction of T Natarajan (2/30) into the attack as the left-arm pacer bowled Ruturaj

Gaikwad (16). At 36/2 in 5.1 overs, CSK were in a spot of bother and they needed a partnership, and the duo of Moeen and Ambati Rayudu (27) answered the call with a third-wicket stand of 62 runs.

Nearing 100 and with some more batting to come on a pitch where the ball seemed to stop, CSK were well-placed when Rayudu departed after playing a part in rebuilding the innings.

However, Williamson's gamble to bring in Markram worked as CSK lost their fourth wicket at 108 in the 15th over. In a soft dismissal, Natarajan accounted for Shivam Dube as the defending champions lost three wickets in quick succession.

Two overs later, even the great MS Dhoni (3) was walking back to the dugout, with CSK struggling at 122/6 with 15 balls left to add to their total.

# RCB hand MI 4th loss on trot

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Pune, April 9:** Mumbai Indians' season of woes just got a tad worse after the five-time champions followed another high-profile team Chennai Super Kings to lose their fourth match on the bounce as Royal Challengers Bangalore centered to an easy seven-wicket win in an IPL match Saturday.

It was Suryakumar Yadav's unbeaten 68 (37b, 5x4, 6x6) that gave Mumbai Indians a respectable total of 151/6 but that was never going to be enough as young Anuj Rawat (66, 47b, 2x4, 6x6) struck his maiden IPL fifty, anchoring the team to the target in just 18.3 overs.

He had two fifty plus partnerships - 50 for opening stand with skipper Faf du Plessis (16) and 80 with former skipper Virat Kohli (48, 36b, 5x4) for the second wicket to seal the issue.

Mumbai Indians are currently last in the table of 10 teams because of inferior net run-rate compared to CSK but the road towards redemption is becoming difficult with every passing match.

Whether it is skipper Rohit's lean patch or a poor sentimental call by the MI management to retain a non-performing asset like Kieron Pollard for one season too many, there are too many loopholes that needs plugging.

The next set of young batters are getting ready but the current

**BRIEF SCORES**  
**MI 151/6** (Suryakumar Yadav 68 n o; Harshal Patel 2/23, Wanindu Hasaranga 2/28) lost to  
**RCB 152/3** (Anuj Rawat 66, Virat Kohli 48; Dewald Brevis 1/8) by 7 wickets.

**ANUJ RAWAT**

attack with Murugan Ashwin, Basil Thampi and Jaydev Unadkat bowling at least 12 out of 20 overs, doesn't give the confidence that it can actually become a side in contention for a silverware.

Earlier, Rohit (26) and Ishan Kishan's (26) flamboyant start was followed by an inexplicable batting collapse before the indomitable Suryakumar gave MI's total semblance of respectability.

For RCB, Harshal Patel (2/23) was brilliant with his variations as most of the MI batters had no idea about his slower deliveries, which were

primarily off-cutters with occasional loopy block-hole balls that drifted.

MI were 50 for no loss after Powerplay but in the next four overs lost as many as five wickets to become 62/5 and subsequently 79/6 before Suryakumar with his 15th IPL fifty, took them to a decent total. Suryakumar added 72 off 41 balls with Jaydev Unadkat (13 n o).

Tilak Varma had his first real failure due to miscommunication with Pollard which resulted in a run-out and the big West Indian then got fooled by a Wanindu Hasaranga (2/28) googly.

# KKR test awaits Delhi Capitals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, April 9:** Skipper Rishabh Pant will face a big test when Delhi Capitals lock horns with table-toppers Kolkata Knight Riders, led by their former captain Shreyas Iyer, in an IPL clash here Sunday.

Iyer, one of the architects of the Delhi franchise's resurgence in the IPL, having taken them to their maiden final in 2020, was replaced as skipper of the team last season after he missed the first half due to an injury. The franchise didn't retain the 27-year-old, who was picked up by KKR at the auction.

Under his captaincy, the Knight Riders are perched at the top of the league with six points from four outings, their only loss coming against Royal Challengers Bangalore. The Capitals on the other hand, after a winning start, have slumped to back-to-back defeats and are placed seventh.

Both Pant and Iyer are touted as future India captain and it will be

**TODAY'S MATCHES**

**KKR** vs **DC**  
Time: 03:30 pm

**RR** vs **LSG**  
Time: 07:30 pm

**TELECAST**  
Star Sports channels & Hotstar

interesting to see how the two fare. However, the wicketkeeper-batter might be feeling the pressure, having won just one game so far.

The Capitals have lost a close match to new entrants, Lucknow Super Giants, after falling to the other new team, Gujarat Titans.

While the return of pace spearhead Anrich Nortje, who had been nursing an injury, bolstered the bowling unit, the South African, who hasn't bowled since the T20 World Cup in November, looked understandably rusty.

Despite having plenty of op-

tions, the bowling department has not looked potent, leaking runs against Gujarat Titans and LSG. Mustafizur Rahman has been their top performer but others need to complement him better.

The Capitals will be counting on Prithvi Shaw and seasoned opener David Warner to provide a solid start as their middle order is yet to inspire confidence.

KKR will head into the match high on confidence, having defeated Mumbai Indians in their last game. The former champions have looked like a cohesive unit capable of tackling all situations.

Umesh Yadav has been in imperious form and alongside Australian Pat Cummins, make for a formidable pace attack. Spinners Varun Chakravarthy and Sunil Narine can also turn on the heat. Venkatesh Iyer shone in the previous game with the bat but the seasoned Ajinkya Rahane is finding it tough. Skipper Iyer would also be on the lookout for a big score.

# Dipika secures twin World doubles titles



Dipika Pallikal Karthik (R) and teammate Joshna Chinappa react after their win

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Glasgow, April 9:** Less than six months after giving birth to twins, Dipika Pallikal Karthik made the mother of all comebacks Saturday when she teamed up with brother-in-law Saurav Ghosal and long-time teammate Joshna Chinappa to win the mixed doubles and women's doubles title at World Doubles Championships here.

Dipika, playing her first competitive event since October 2018, first clinched the mixed doubles title with Ghosal with a 11-6, 11-8 win over England's Adrian Waller and Alison Waters.

An hour and a half later, Dipika and Joshna triumphed in the women's doubles final after a hard fought 11-9, 4-11, 11-8 win over England's Sarah Jane Perry and Waters.

In the year of Commonwealth Games and Asian Games, the tournament was a perfect preparation for the seasoned trio of Dipika, Joshna and Ghosal who continue to bring laurels to the country even after more than 15 years of competing at the highest level.

They are hoping their performance in the World Doubles gets noticed and they are back in the government's Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS). They were included in the scheme four years ago ahead of CWG and Asian Games

but have not been added yet.

"Just happy to be back on court. I trained really hard (for the comeback). I was quite edgy at the start of the tournament but got better as I played more matches.

"It is a good preparation for us for CWG which is the main target. The competition is more or less the same (here and CWG) and we know more about our opponents and we know where we need to improve," the 30-year-old Dipika told this agency.

After giving birth to twins in October, Dipika had begun training in December at the ISA in Chennai with Joshna and Ghosal.

"It is also a relief to be honest that I can still perform. Training is one thing but to be able to do that in a match is another. Never thought we would get this result in my first event in more than three years but so glad that we were able to tick all the boxes.

"There were people who felt I won't be able to do this (after motherhood) but I was never in doubt. The bigger goal remains CWG and Asian Games, so looking forward to that," said Dipika.

Dipika and Joshna made history in 2014 when they won the women's doubles gold at the CWG. Compared to Asian Games, the competition in CWG is much tougher with all top nations competing, barring Egypt.

# India eves go down in shootout

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, April 9:** The Indian women's hockey team dished out a below-par performance to suffer a 1-3 loss to Olympic champions Netherlands' second string side in the shootout after both sides were locked 1-1 in the regulation time in the second match of their FIH Pro League tie here Saturday.

Rajwinder Kaur scored in the first minute of the match and the Dutch side, playing here without any player who have won gold in the Tokyo Olympics last year, equalised in the 53rd minute through captain Jansen Yibbi to take the match to the shootout.

Jansen was the most experienced player of the Dutch side with 24 caps before Saturday's match. Only four other Dutch players have played more than 10 international matches.

Captain and goalkeeper Savita was the most experienced Indian with 223 caps. India, who are also without three key players in Lalremsiami, Salima Tete and Sharmila Devi from the historic fourth-place finish in the Tokyo Olympics, had won the first match



The Netherlands players are ecstatic after their win at Kalinga Stadium, Saturday

2-1 on Friday. That win was the first against the Netherlands in over a decade.

India collected one point from the match to remain on second spot in the standings, while the Netherlands also retained their numero uno position. The Dutch now have 19 points from eight matches, while India have 16 points, also from eight matches.

Only Navneet Kaur scored for India in the shootout while Rajwinder, Neha and Jyoti missed the target. For the Dutch side, Barentsen Marente, Fortuin Kyra and Jansen

sounded the board, while Morgenstern Fiona missed the target in the shootout. After beating Netherlands 2-1 Friday in a creditable performance, the Indians were outperformed by the Dutch players after taking a lightning fast lead in the 34th second on the clock.

India got two penalty corners as soon as the match started and Rajwinder found the target with a deflection from the second.

But after that it was second string Dutch team that dictated the terms with more ball possession and circle penetration. The Indians lacked

direction and creativity and lost possession too often. Just like in the first match, the Indian defence was rock solid till it conceded the equaliser in the fourth quarter, seven minutes from regulation time after incessant attack from the Dutch, who were desperate to find a goal.

The Netherlands got as many as six penalty corners in quick succession. They scored from the sixth one with Jansen sending a high shot past Savita into the goal.

The Indian team will travel to Belgium for its next matches June 11 and 12.

# LACKLUSTER MAN UTD LOSE TO EVERTON

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Liverpool, April 9:** Everton gained a huge win in its fight for survival and further damaged Manchester United's flimsy top-four hopes with a 1-0 victory in the Premier League Saturday.

Anthony Gordon's shot from the edge of the penalty area deflected into the net off the outstretched leg of United defender Harry Maguire in the 27th minute at Goodison Park.

It was another lackluster performance by United, which brought two great saves out of Jordan Pickford - both from efforts by Marcus Rashford - early in the match and was frustrated by some obdurate and at times desperate defending by Everton in the second half. United stayed three points behind



Everton players (in blue) react after scoring against Manchester United

the teams in fourth and fifth place - Tottenham and Arsenal, respectively - and the two London clubs have games in hand.

Things look much more positive, though, for Everton, which bounced

back from a demoralizing loss at relegation rival Burnley Wednesday to move four points clear of the bottom three as the team looks to avoid going out of the top flight for the first time since 1954.

# CHELSEA ROUT SOUTHAMPTON

Chelsea rode on braces by Mason Mount (16th & 54th minutes), who also set up the opening goal for Marcos Alonso in the eighth minute, and Timo Werner (21st & 49th) to hand Southampton a 6-0 drubbing. Kai Havertz was the other scorer.

# SON HAT-TRICK LIFTS SPURS

Son Heung-min (third, 66th & 71st minutes) struck a brilliant hat-trick to help Tottenham Hotspur thrash Aston Villa 4-0. Dejan Kulusevski scored the other goal in the 50th minute.

# ARSENAL STUNNED AT HOME

Arsenal suffered a 1-2 defeat at home - the Emirates Stadium - against Brighton. Leandro Trossard (28th minute) and Anok Mwepe (66th) were on target for the visitors, while Martin Odegaard scored the consolation goal for the Gunners.

# NEWS IN BRIEF

## Sindhu, Srikanth out of Korea Open

**Suncheon (South Korea):** PV Sindhu and Kidambi Srikanth's impressive run ended in the semifinals after they went down in straight games at the Korea Open Super 500 badminton tournament here Saturday. Former World Champion Sindhu, who came into the tournament after claiming the Swiss Open, suffered her fourth successive defeat to 20-year-old An Seyoung, losing 14-21, 17-21 in 48 minutes. For World Championships silver medalist Srikanth, it ended in yet another semifinal finish as he came up short against Asian Games champion Jonatan Christie, going down 19-21, 16-21 in 50 minutes.

## Leclerc takes pole

**Melbourne:** Ferrari driver Charles Leclerc claimed his second pole position of the year with a blistering final lap in qualifying for the Australian Grand Prix Saturday. Leclerc, who won the season-opening race in Bahrain in March, posted a time of 1 minute, 17.868 seconds to edge Red Bull driver and defending series champion Max Verstappen by 0.286 seconds. Red Bull driver Sergio Perez qualified in third position, while Lando Norris will start from the second row in his McLaren after qualifying fourth. Lewis Hamilton, who had claimed pole position in the six previous races here, finished 0.957 seconds behind Leclerc in fifth. Leclerc gave Ferrari its first pole position in here since Kimi Raikkonen in 2007.

## History beckons

**POTCHEFSTROOM:** History beckons the Indian women's hockey team as they eye a maiden final berth in the FIH Junior World Cup but in three-time champions, the Netherlands a stern test awaits it in the semifinal here Sunday. India's best performance in the tournament so far is a bronze medal finish in the 2013 edition of the event in Monchengladbach, Germany. Unbeaten so far in the tournament, the Indians have exceeded expectations in the event, beating Wales 5-1, upsetting Germany (2-1), Malaysia (4-0) and Korea (3-0).