



BOLD CONFESSION

Actor Kangana Ranaut opens up about the time she fell for a married man of the film industry

LEISURE P2



FRENCH PREZ POLL

France conducts the first round of a presidential election where Macron's re-election hopes are threatened

INTERNATIONAL P10



STUNNING COMEBACK

Kuldeep Yadav takes 4 wickets as Delhi Capitals trounce Knight Riders by 44 runs in their IPL game

SPORTS P12

VOLUME 12, ISSUE 11 | www.orissapost.com

BHUBANESWAR | MONDAY, APRIL 11 | 2022

12 PAGES | ₹5.00



Yechury re-elected as CPI(M) Gen Secy

KANNUR(KER): Senior CPI(M) leader Sitaram Yechury was re-elected as the General Secretary of the party for the third consecutive time here Sunday. Speaking to the delegates after being re-elected to the top post at CPI(M)'s 23rd Party Congress, Yechury said the principal task of the party was to isolate and defeat the BJP, which is pursuing the Hindutva communal agenda of the fascist RSS. He said isolation and defeat of the saffron party was essential not only for our forward march for human liberation but to safeguard India as a secular democratic republic.

Groups clash at JNU over non-veg food

NEW DELHI: Two groups of students clashed at the Jawaharlal Nehru University's Kaveri Hostel here Sunday allegedly over serving of non-vegetarian food in the mess on Ram Navami, with police saying six students were injured in the violence. The two groups, however, claimed that over 60 students were injured from both sides. Several purported videos of the violence surfaced on social media, with one of them showing a student, Akhtarista Ansari, bleeding from the head. Officials have not confirmed the authenticity of the videos.



P9

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Biden, Modi to meet virtually

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, April 10: US President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Narendra Modi would meet virtually Monday, the first of its kind between the two leaders that would coincide with the maiden India-US 2+2 dialogue under the Biden Administration, the White House said Sunday.

"President Joseph R Biden, Jr will meet virtually with Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India Monday, April 11 to further deepen ties between our governments, economies, and our people," White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki announced.

During the virtual meet, Biden and Modi will discuss cooperation on a range of issues, including ending the COVID-19 pandemic, countering the climate crisis, strengthening the global economy, and upholding a free, open, rules-based international order to bolster security, democracy, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific, she said.

The two leaders will advance ongoing conversations about the development of an Indo-Pacific Economic Framework and delivering high-quality infrastructure, Psaki said.

Biden last spoke to Prime Minister Modi with other Quad Leaders in March.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Yes sir, dinner is complementary. Bill is for the lemon handwash

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
TEMP		
MAX	37.4°C	36.2°C
MIN	26.3°C	25.6°C
Humidity	66%	69%
Rainfall	NIL	NIL
Forecast		Dry weather likely

Teen drowns, 2 more missing in Mahanadi



POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, April 10: A teenage boy drowned while two others went missing in the Mahanadi river near Jobra under Jagatpur police limits here Sunday.

Sources said the incident took place in the afternoon when Chhotu, 17, Seikh Sahil, 18, and Raj, 17, three friends of Charigharia-Chunabhati area under Malgondown police limits here had gone to take

bath in the Mahanadi river near Jobra around 1:30pm. "However, they were swept away due to strong currents," they added.

It was learnt that some locals jumped into the river and managed to rescue Sahil and rushed him to SCB Medical College and Hospital where the college boy was declared 'dead on arrival'.

ODRAF and Fire Services personnel were on a rescue operation when the last report came in.

Cuttack Collector Bhabani Shankar Chayani, Cuttack ACP (Zone-I) Subhanarayan Muduli, Jagatpur inspector in-charge Rabindra Nath Meher and Malgondown inspector in-charge Trupti Ranjan Nayak took stock of the rescue operation in the evening.

TEMPLE RUSH



As Covid cases decline and restrictions ease after nearly two years, Ram Mandir in Bhubaneswar witnessed a huge footfall on the occasion of Ram Navami, Sunday

IMRAN'S INNINGS ENDS

Pak to get new PM today

■ Khan who stayed defiant "till the last ball" has become the first premier to be removed by a no-trust vote in Pakistan where no Prime Minister has ever completed a full five-year term in office

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, April 10: Pakistan will have a new Prime Minister Monday when the National Assembly, which was adjourned in the early hours of Sunday, reconvenes to elect a new head of the government after Imran Khan was ousted from office through a no-confidence vote, becoming the first premier in the country's history to suffer this ignominy.

The combined Opposition has already named Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) president Shehbaz Sharif as its joint candidate to replace Khan.

The marathon proceedings of the National Assembly Parliament's lower house, were adjourned in the early hours of Sunday to meet again Monday at 2pm to elect the



Outgoing Pak PM Imran Khan



Frontrunner Shehbaz Sharif

new Prime Minister.

Khan, 69, the country's 22nd prime minister, was unceremoniously removed from the office through the no-confidence vote, becoming the first premier in Pakistan's history to be ousted through a no-trust motion.

He was sworn as the prime minister of Pakistan August 18, 2018 and the no-confidence motion against him was passed April 10, 2022 after which his term as the premier came to a sudden end. His 1,332-day tenure as Prime Minister which began Saturday, August 18, 2018 ended Sunday, April 10, 2022.

The cricketer-turned-politician served as the prime minister of Pakistan for three years seven

months and 23 days, which in terms of months is around 43 months and 23 days, Geo News reported. The term of the current House is up to August, 2023.

Ayaz Sadiq of the PML-N, who was chairing the crucial session, said the nomination papers for the new prime minister may be submitted by 2pm Sunday and the scrutiny would be done by 3pm.

He summoned the session Monday at 11am and said the new premier would be elected then. However, the National Assembly of Pakistan later informed on its official Twitter account that the House will meet at 2pm.

"The Sitting of the National Assembly will meet again Monday,

the 11th April, 2022 at 2:00 pm instead of 11:00 am," it tweeted.

Earlier, Sadiq was nominated by Speaker Asad Qaiser to chair the session after the leader of Imran Khan's party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), announced to step down as it was not possible for him to continue. Sadiq immediately started the voting process.

The joint Opposition - a rainbow of socialist, liberal and radically religious parties - secured the support of 174 members in the 342-member National Assembly, more than the needed strength of 172 to oust the prime minister on a day full of drama and multiple adjournments of the lower house.

No Pakistani prime minister has ever completed a full five-year term in office.

Khan was not present in the lower house at the time of voting. His party lawmakers staged a walk-out during the voting. However, PTI's dissident members were present in the house and sat on the government benches.

Khan, who came to power in 2018 with promises to create a 'Naya Pakistan', was dogged by claims of economic mismanagement as his government battled depleting foreign exchange reserves and double-digit inflation.

(More P10)

Coast Guard adds teeth to its arsenal

■ Four ALH MK III helicopters have been stationed at Bhubaneswar, covering the entire coast of West Bengal and Odisha, ICG statement said

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 10: The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) Sunday commissioned a squadron of Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) MK III here, which will strengthen maritime security.

ALH MK III choppers are fitted with modern surveillance radar and electro-optical equipment which enables them to undertake the role

of long-range maritime reconnaissance, an ICG statement said.

These helicopters also feature an array of state of the art sensors, which add up to the maritime prowess of the Indian Coast Guard at sea.

They have traffic alert and collision avoidance system, advanced communication systems, a heavy machine gun, a removable Medical Intensive Care Unit and other facilities.

Four such helicopters are positioned at Bhubaneswar, covering the entire coast of West Bengal and Odisha, the statement said.

The 830 squadron was commissioned by ICG Director General VS Pathania in presence of various civil and military dignitaries based in Odisha and the adjoining region.



Musk polls to 'make Twitter SF HQ a homeless shelter'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

San Francisco, April 10: Tech billionaire Elon Musk, who has recently joined Twitter as a board member, has asked its followers if the company's San Francisco headquarters should be converted into a homeless shelter.

In a series of polls on the micro-blogging site, the Tesla CEO asked Twitteratis whether Twitter's San Francisco headquarters should be converted to a homeless shelter since no one shows up anyway.

Convert Twitter SF HQ to homeless shelter since no one shows up anyway, Musk wrote on the platform. The poll has received over 10 lakh votes in around 9 hours and over 90 per cent of the users have responded with a 'Yes' on the on-going poll.



However, replying to the post a user wrote, "Yes. And make the CEO's office a master bedroom."

Meanwhile, another user wrote, "I have a feeling you planning to run for next election 2024. Y or N".

Recently, Twitter CEO Parag Agrawal announced that the platform has appointed Musk to its board of directors. Musk, who acquired a 9.2 per cent share in the micro-blogging platform for nearly \$3 billion, is limited from buying more than 15 per cent of Twitter's stock.

India has 217 space objects orbiting Earth: Report

■ According to Orbital Debris Quarterly News issued in March by NASA, India has 103 spacecraft, including active and defunct satellites, and 114 space debris objects, including spent rocket bodies orbiting the Earth

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 10: India has 103 active or defunct spacecraft and 114 objects categorised as 'space debris' in orbit and it has embarked on a research to reduce such fragments from outer space.

"Presently, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has

taken up research activities to study the feasibility and technologies required to undertake active debris removal (ADR)," Minister of State in PMO Jitendra Singh told parliament.

According to Orbital Debris Quarterly News issued in March by NASA, India had 103 spacecraft, including active and defunct satellites, and 114 space debris objects, including spent rocket bodies orbiting the earth. So, the country has a total of 217 space objects orbiting the earth.

Singh said Active Debris Removal (ADR) was one of the active methods suggested by the Space Debris Research Community to contain the growth of space debris objects.

"ADR is a very complex technology and involves policy and legal issues. Technology demonstration studies have been taken up by many countries, including India.

Developmental studies for finalising necessary technologies are initiated to demonstrate ADR," he said.

A top ISRO official had told a technology conclave last year that the

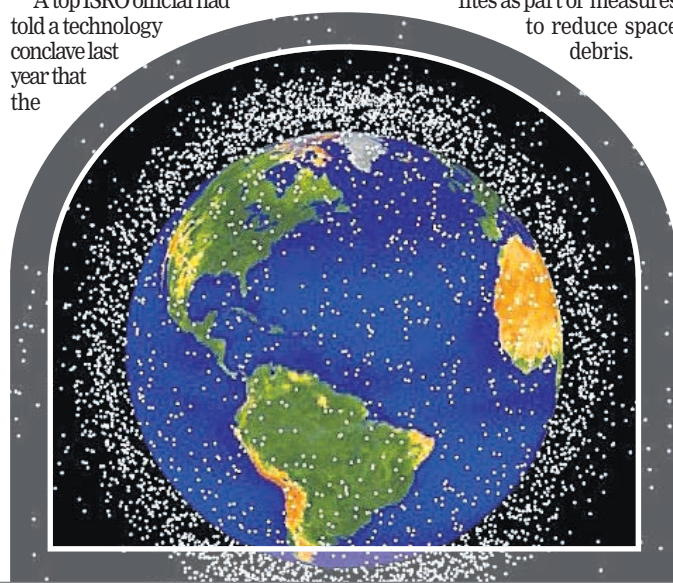
space agency was working on futuristic technologies such as self-eating rockets and vanishing satellites as part of measures to reduce space debris.

According to the Orbital Debris Quarterly News, the US has 4,144 spacecraft (active and defunct), and 5,126 objects that can be categorised as space debris in the earth's orbit. China has 517 spacecraft, active and defunct, and 3,854 objects, including spent rocket bodies, orbiting the earth.

Singh said ISRO has also set up the Directorate Space Situational Awareness and Management at its headquarters to deal with issues related to space debris.

A dedicated Space Situational Awareness Control Centre is set up in Bangalore to coordinate all space debris related activities within ISRO and to safeguard Indian operational space assets from collision threats, he said.

The minister added that ISRO was also planning to have its own observational facilities to track and catalogue the space objects.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

You will achieve things today, not by the sleight of your hand but by your communication skills, says Ganesha. Your eloquence shall win many hearts. The stars suggest monetary benefits, but you need to guard against injury and minor ailments.

TAURUS

It will be a thought-provoking day with titbits of success and rewards scattered here and there, says Ganesha. If you feel you got the short end of the stick, do not let it affect your morale. Every sunrise comes with a different promise and today is not the end of the world.

GEMINI

Some of your personal belongings are very dear to you. You may have to grudgingly share them with someone else. A mild pang of jealousy may kick in. But, you are merely being protective of something very personal, so there is nothing wrong with that, says Ganesha.

CANCER

Today is a crucial and fascinating day for you, predicts Ganesha. You will learn and gain from your bosses and elders. Peers and siblings may extend their full support to you. Your chances of winning legal battles are remote, so an out-of-court settlement may be your best bet.

LEO

If it's a fresh start that you have been looking for, then this day promises to give you just that, predicts Ganesha. If you have already chalked out any plans for your future, today is the day to initiate the implementation. Remember Lions, though, that rushing blindly into anything is not the solution.

VIRGO

You will be in a very ambitious and conscientious mood today. Your actions will speak louder than words. You set the pace with your meticulous planning and careful execution. Ganesha says you may expect a lot of appreciation and recognition for your work coming from your boss and your colleagues.

LIBRA

Of late, you have been very concerned about the health of one of your close friends. Take this day to lay your fears to rest by spending time with that friend. Work can wait, as today you must prove to yourself, if not to others, that a friend in need is a friend indeed. Ganesha wishes you the very best.

SCORPIO

Your mind shall take over the proceedings today. And it shall, in all likelihood, draw you to the work bench and keep your nose to the grindstone. But your heart will flutter like a butterfly, and if you manage to strike the right balance, you may win over your special one and your boss too, says Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS

Be set to capture the flag and sing the victory song in whatever task you take up today. Your subordinates will be the ones needing your support and motivation. At the end of the day, the icing on the cake would be the smile you take to bed.

CAPRICORN

You'll be popular today at your workplace. Your honesty and efforts will be recognised, which will be fulfilling for you. But, tomorrow will be a different day and times may not be favourable for you. It is, therefore, necessary for you to understand the importance of today and utilise it to the maximum, advises Ganesha.

AQUARIUS

Today, you will experience the harmonious balance between logic and emotion. You will consequently know how to mix business with pleasure. Money wise, you are content, but trivial issues may bother you today, says Ganesha.

PISCES

The focus is firmly on career advancement today. Business deals, which have been a long time in the making, will finally come through. Those pursuing a profession can expect pay rises or promotions. Make sure your skills are up to the mark to be able to tackle your new responsibilities satisfactorily, says Ganesha.



AMBER HEARD GOES ON SOCIAL MEDIA SABBATICAL

American actress Amber Heard, the ex-wife of *Pirates of the Caribbean* star Johnny Depp, is taking a break from social media while saying that she has always maintained love for Johnny, reports *Variety*.

ASHLEY GREENE HAD CRUSH ON JACKSON RATHBONE

American actress Ashley Greene says she "had a big old crush" on Jackson Rathbone while working on the *Twilight Saga*. Ashley said: "I had a big old crush on Jackson Rathbone while we were filming." Asked if the attraction was quick to come, she said: "Kinda."



Kangana shares huge scandal of her life

Mumbai: Kangana Ranaut who is currently hosting the reality show *Lock Upp*, opened up about the time she fell for a married man. The actress who was rumoured to be in a relationship with Hrithik Roshan when he was married to Sussanne Khan said that young girls are often vulnerable in such situations. While she did not name Hrithik, she said that such a situation became a huge scandal in her life.

On the show, Kangana said, "Every girl falls into the charm of married men. I speak from personal experience. It happens because they (married men) are domesticated

and they are more understanding. They are responsible and have that aura around them that charms young women." She added, "Such men have stories of being trapped and they tell similar stories to the wife and the young girl. In my case, it became a huge scandal in my life. The young girls feel they are the only ones who can save the married man from his wife. But, if you hear the wife's story, you'd be shocked."

AGENCIES



When Deepika channelled her inner poet as a tween

Mumbai: Deepika Padukone is a woman of many talents. Apart from being a talented actress, she is also a film producer and badminton player. But not many knew that the actress also has a poet in her which was channelled at the age of 12. Sunday, Deepika took to her Instagram handle to share a picture of her poetry from Class VII.

She shared that back in school they were given two words to write a poem - *I Am*. My first AND LAST attempt at writing poetry! This was in grade 7. I was 12. The poem was titled *I Am*. We were given the first 2 words that you see and the rest is history! (sic.)

Sharing the first few lines, the actress wrote: "I am a child with love and care. I wonder how far the stars reach. I hear the rush of the waves. I see the deep blue sea. I want to be a loving child of God. I am a child with love and care. I pretend to be a blooming flower."

She said it was her first and last attempt at writing poems. On the work front, Deepika Padukone will next be seen in the film *Pathaan* co-starring Shah Rukh Khan and John Abraham. She also has *Fighter* with Hrithik Roshan and *Project K* with Prabhas.

AGENCIES

Sonic poised to rule US box office

The sequel is outperforming its 2020 predecessor, which opened to \$58 million at a time when COVID-19 was still a nebulous threat to many



Los Angeles: Sci-fi action-adventure comedy *Sonic the Hedgehog 2* is poised to top the US box office charts with an impressive opening of \$67 million to \$69 million.

However, the Jake Gyllenhaal-starrer *R-rated actioner, Ambulance* will most likely fail to clear double digits, reports *Variety*.

It says, *Sonic* went off the mark on the box office to the tune of \$6.3 million in pre-view and has been on an upward curve since, playing in 4,234 locations. The sequel is outperforming its 2020 predecessor, which opened to \$58 million at a time when COVID-19 was still a nebulous threat to most North Americans.

Sonic the Hedgehog 2 stars funnyman Ben Schwartz as the voice of the titular video game character, with Idris Elba joining the series as the voice of the villain Knuckles the Echidna. Colleen O'Shaughnessey, who has regularly voiced Tails the Fox in the video game series, reprises the role of Sonic's sidekick for the film.

Talking about the film's live-action cast, Jim Carrey stars as Dr. Robotnik with James Marsden as Sheriff Tom Wachowski, as well as Tika Sumpter, Natasha Rothwell, Adam Pally, Shemar Moore, Lee Majdoub and Tom Butler.

IANS

Akshay saves dragonfly, speaks about will to live

Mumbai: Akshay Kumar, more often than not, wins hearts of fans with his thought-provoking posts. Sunday, the Sooryavanshi actor was again at his best when he turned a lifesaver for a little dragonfly that drowned in the pool.

The short video clip sees Akshay helping the little dragonfly to fly again. Standing by the pool's side he tries to help the fly regain consciousness while blowing air on it. He even touches the dragonfly's feathers to help the insect fly. In the end, we see it fly again and it leaves the actor relieved. Sharing the video, he gave a life lesson speaking about hope, will to live, and wings to fly. The video had R Kelly's hit song *I Believe I Can Fly* in the background.



Akshay captioned it, "This li'l friend slipped in the swimming pool this morning and needed help. A bit of patience, a bit of cheering...and off he flew. Isn't that what we all need in life - hope in the heart, will to live, and wings to fly?"

AGENCIES

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

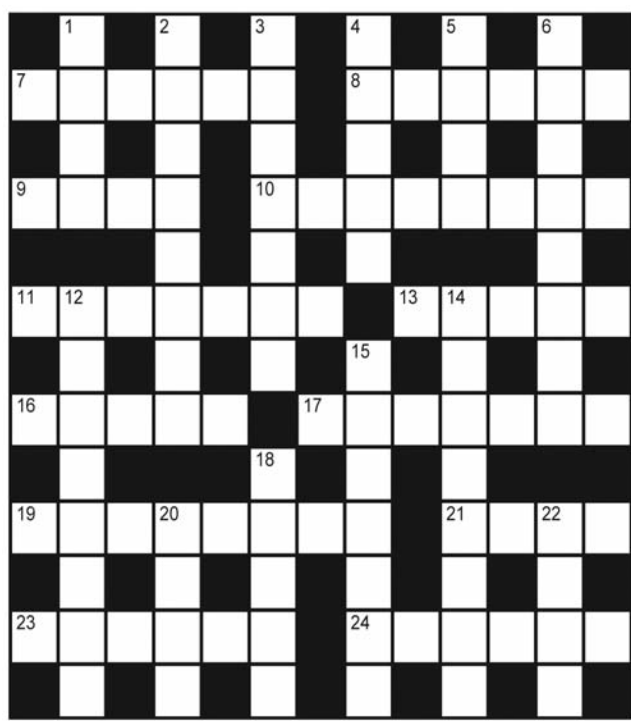


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



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Across

- 7 Knees and elbows, e.g.
- 8 Odours
- 9 Swiss river
- 10 Squirrel relative
- 11 White table wine
- 13 Reprimand
- 16 Knight's need
- 17 Deceive

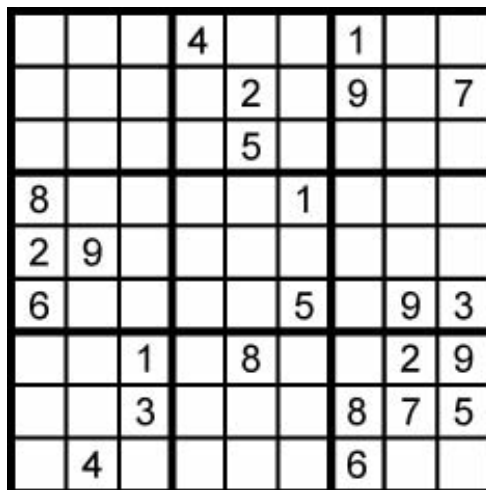
- 19 Port city in South Africa (4,4)
- 21 Cobblers' tools
- 23 Shade of red
- 24 Hesitant

Down

- 1 Roman robe
- 2 Corps de ballet
- 3 Medium
- 4 Desert sight
- 5 Angler's choice
- 6 Hawaiian volcano (5,3)
- 12 Big trouble (3,5)
- 14 Fall apart
- 15 Enlists (5,2)
- 18 Before comb, bun or badger
- 20 Blue-pencil
- 22 Instrument for Orpheus

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.

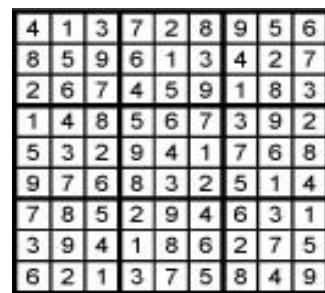


SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



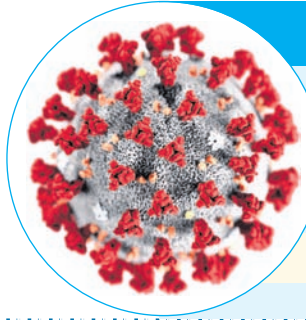
SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



A boy dressed as Lord Hanuman feeds monkeys at Khandagiri-Udayagiri hills in Bhubaneswar on the occasion of Ram Navami, Sunday



	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	49,88,13,085	44,38,24,952	62,02,669
India	4,30,35,271	4,25,02,454	5,21,685
Odisha	12,87,842	12,78,536	9,121


ANOTHER THING I LIKE ABOUT INDIA IS THAT THE OPPOSITION NEVER GETS UNITED THERE

©MANJULA

POST NEWS NETWORK

Devotees thronged the shrine on the occasion of Ram Navami, Sunday

“There has been plenty of demand for different fruits during the last 10 days. While the demand has been increasing, the supply is also adequate. With festive and marriage season around, we might make enough profit to recover our loss during pandemic,” said Bikash Puhana, a fruit vendor at Unit-2 market here.



OP PHOTOS

Hundreds of people visited stalls at 16th Toshali National Crafts Fair at Janata Maidan in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

POST NEWS NETWORK

The total volume of transactions by all the stalls at this year's Toshali Fair could be estimated around Rs 16 crore. The stalls dealing in handicraft goods did business to the tune of Rs 6.18 crore while those selling handloom items witnessed transactions worth Rs 7.47 crore. The stalls at the food court of the fair generated business worth Rs 2.4 crore, sources said.



Artistes presented a cultural event at the concluding ceremony of the fair

Participating in the concluding ceremony, Handlooms, Textiles and Handicrafts department Commissioner-cum-Secretary

OP PHOTOS

**THE STALLS AT THE FOOD COURT
OF THE FAIR GENERATED
BUSINESS WORTH ₹2.4 CRORE.
MORE THAN 20 LAKH PEOPLE
VISITED THE 14-DAY FAIR THAT
CONCLUDED SUNDAY**

Odissi exponent Ileana Citaristi regaled the audience with her performance. Folk dance troupes from Cuttack, Brahmagiri, Bargarh and Sambalpur also performed at the concluding ceremony.

POST NEWS NETWORK

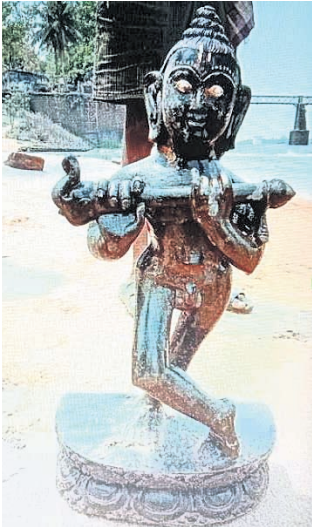
As per the allegation, hundreds of villagers, mostly weavers, had deposited their hard-earned money in savings and fixed deposit accounts at the Routapada branch of KCCB. A former assistant cashier of the bank, Buddhiram Das, was helping the depositors in various banking transactions even though he had retired from his service around two years ago.

Taking advantage of the depositors' innocence, the former assistant cashier had allegedly misappropriated Rs 1.5 crore from their bank accounts through forged documents.

POST NEWS NETWORK

According to sources, a fisherman of Shribantapur had gone fishing in the Kharasrota River Saturday morning. He felt something unusual when a heavy object stuck his fishing wheel inside the water. Thinking it was a big catch he jumped into the water and discovered an idol of Lord Krishna. Then as he looked around he spotted another idol one-and-a-half feet high close by.

It is pertinent to mention that many valuable ancient stone-made idols were earlier found near Dashaswamedha Ghat of



A Krishna idol found from the river

A priest of the Saptamatruka Temple named Bholanath Panda had gone to the banks for washing his hands after attending nature's call. While washing his hands, Panda felt that one of his feet was touching a smooth but stubborn ob-

AGENCIES

like 6 months to one year; other organs will be damaged. By the time they come to a rheumatologist, they can't revive the other organs that are damaged. So, early detection of problems is the most important aspect. This is an autoimmune disease. It starts slowly, but rises gradually."



“Nearly 20,000 doctors are needed as per our population, but only around 1800 are available to date. More training centres are needed. No single medical college in Andhra Pradesh has a rheumatology centre. Governments should come forward and open such centres. Some post-

“These are problematic both to the patients and their family members. Patients with rheumatological diseases can also get Covid. But, most of the patients are not at risk of severe



Rheumatology is not understood even by the general public. Children cannot express themselves well regarding these issues. But there is a good chance that they also can get arthritis. Stiffness in the hands and legs, long fever, and decreased eyesight are some of the symptoms which should be taken care of. Parents should take their children to a rheumatologist and get evaluated

SUMA BALAN | PAEDIATRIC RHEUMATOLOGIST

“There are more than 200 rheumatology diseases. This is a relatively new speciality in India. There is no adequate awareness even among some non-rheumatology doctors too. There is a misconception that most rheumatology diseases have no cure. A lot of research has been done in the last 20 years. Very very effective treatment has come in rheumatology. We are planning to have conferences and public awareness programs to educate the public about this problem.”

The image is a formal letter on a cream-colored background with a decorative border. At the top left, the text reads: "Prof. Ganeshi Lal", "Governor, Odisha", and in Odia "ପ୍ରଫେସର ଗଣେଶୀ ଲାଲ", "ରାଜ୍ୟପାଳ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା". At the top center is the State Emblem of India. At the top right, it says: "RAJ BHAVAN", "BHUBANESWAR-751 008", "ଗାଜପଟନ", "ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର-୭୫୧୦୦୮", and "April 07, 2022". In the center is a portrait of Prof. Ganeshi Lal, an elderly man with a white beard and glasses, wearing a light blue shirt. Below the portrait is the word "MESSAGE" in bold capital letters. The main body of the letter contains three paragraphs of text in English. The first paragraph states that the "SAKSHAM-2022" program is a fuel conservation awareness drive organized by Oil Industries under the aegis of MoPNG and PCRA, to be conducted in Odisha from April 11th to 30th, 2022. The second paragraph describes the program as a thoughtful endeavour to sensitize people on the need to conserve Oil and Gas, aiming to protect the national economy and environment. The third paragraph expresses the Governor's confidence that the program will leave a positive impression on the people of the State. The letter concludes with the sentence "I wish 'Saksham-2022' all success." At the bottom right is a handwritten signature of Ganeshi Lal, followed by the printed name "(Ganeshi Lal)".

Prof. Ganeshi Lal
Governor, Odisha
ପ୍ରଫେସର ଗଣେଶୀ ଲାଲ
ରାଜ୍ୟପାଳ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା

RAJ BHAVAN
BHUBANESWAR-751 008
ଗାଜପଟନ
ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର-୭୫୧୦୦୮
April 07, 2022

MESSAGE

It gives me immense pleasure to know that "SAKSHAM-2022", is a fuel conservation awareness drive programme by Oil Industries under the aegis of MoPNG (Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas) and PCRA (Petroleum Conservation Research Association) is to be conducted in Odisha from 11th April to 30th April 2022.

"Saksham-2022" is a thoughtful endeavour to sensitise people on the pressing need to conserve Oil and Gas. It is high time to put a check on the consumption of these non-renewable resources in order to protect national economy as well as environment and all forms of life. It is heartening that the programme takes up different activities to explain and promote various means of optimum consumption of Petroleum products. I am sure "Saksham-2022" would leave positive impression in the mind of the people of the State to act sensibly and be a proud contributor to this conservation drive.

I wish "Saksham-2022" all success.

Ganeshi Lal
(Ganeshi Lal)

11 PLACES SEE TEMPERATURE ABOVE 40°C

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 10: As many as 11 places in the state recorded temperatures above 40 degrees Celsius, informed the regional centre of India Meteorological Department (IMD) Sunday.

With 42.3 degrees Celsius temperature, Sonepur reported the highest temperature of the day. This was followed by Bolangir which sizzled at 42.2 degrees Celsius.

Two other places Baripada and Titilagarh witnessed a maximum temperature of 42 degrees Celsius.

Likewise, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur and Boudh recorded temperatures above 41 degrees Celsius. While the mercury in Jharsuguda and Sambalpur rose to 41.8 and 41.7 degrees Celsius respectively, residents of Boudh went through the blistering heatwave of 41.5 degrees Celsius. Angul boiled at 40.9 degrees Celsius.

Slicing of logs for 3 chariots begins

AGENCIES

Cuttack, April 10: The process of slicing of logs for the construction of the three chariots for the Rath Yatra festival in Puri kicked off at Khapurja government saw mill here on the occasion of the Ram Navami Sunday.

A team, led by superintendent of the Rath works Sudarshan Mekap, reached the saw mill with the ritualistic divine consent (Agyan Mala or holy garland) from Srimandir for the consecration of the ceremony.

In the first phase, three logs of Dhaura wood have been sliced at the saw mill.

As per the tradition, the logs will be sliced till all the specified pieces are prepared for chariot construction from the day of Akshaya Tritiya.

The construction of the chariots of Lord Jagannath and His sib-

As many as 865 logs of Dhaura, Phasi, Asana are generally used in the construction of the three magnificent wooden chariots. The Rath Yatra of the divinities is scheduled July 1

lings Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra takes place near the royal palace of Srimandir with the tireless efforts of hundreds of carpenters, blacksmiths, tailors, and painters.

According to the practice, 865 logs of Dhaura, Phasi, Asana are generally used in the construction of the three magnificent wooden chariots.

The Rath Yatra of the divinities is scheduled July 1.



Logs for construction of chariots of Lord Jagannath and His siblings being consecrated at the state-run saw mill in Khapurja area of Cuttack, Sunday

Sambalpur-Puri Intercity Express resumes services

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 10: After remaining cancelled in view of the Covid-19 situation, Sambalpur-Puri Intercity Express train resumed its services Sunday.

Railway sources said 18303 Sambalpur-Puri Intercity Express will leave Sambalpur at 6am and reach Puri at 12.50pm. In the return, 18304 Puri-Sambalpur Intercity Express will leave Puri at 3.45pm and reach Sambalpur at 10.20pm.

The train will provide stoppages at Jujomura, Rairakhol, Bamur, Boinda, Jarapada, Angul, Talcher Road, Meramandalli, Dhenkanal, Naraj Marthapur, Mancheswar, Bhubaneswar and Khurda Road stations between Sambalpur and Puri from both the directions, it was learnt.

The train has 2 AC chair cars, five second class seating, five general second class and two guard-cum-luggage vans in its composition.

‘Three women found hanging were adults’

AGENCIES

Umerkote, April 10: In a tragic incident, as many as three women were found hanging from a single tree in a forest near Tohara village under Umerkote police limits in Nabarangpur district late Saturday night.

There were reports that one was a married woman and two others were minor girls. However, disproving earlier reports, tehsildar Jagatjiban Chaudhury said, “The three deceased were above 18 years of age. The trio has been identified as Hemalata Gouda, Koushalya Majhi and Phulamati Majhi.”

The three women were friends and were last seen going towards a forest Saturday evening. Later, their family members launched a frantic search as and when they did not return in the night for quite long hours.

Subsequently, they were spotted hanging from the tree. Actual cause behind their death is yet to be ascertained. “Although it appears to be a case of suicide, we cannot be sure of the exact cause unless Umerkote police carries out a detailed probe and confirms by saying something,” a relative of the deceased said.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By Affidavit sworn before Notary, Bhubaneswar. I, Sonali Pal declare that my actual name is Sonali Pal, W/o. Sadananda Pal but is wrongly mentioned in my Passport bearing No. K2244748 as Sonali Pal Pal. Henceforth, Sonali Pal and Sonali Pal Pal is one and same person.

NHRC disposes of 1,902 petitions in a day

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 10: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has recently disposed of 1,902 out of the 2,621 petitions filed by rights activist seeking redressal of grievances regarding the unavailability of social welfare schemes and basic amenities in Koraput and Keonjhar districts.

The petitioner, Radhakant Tripathy, during the virtual hearing March 28 mentioned that he

takes up the cases free of cost of the common people who approach him. The people mostly come to him from remote areas and are deprived of welfare schemes. Many are yet to be fully rehabilitated in the above districts.

Besides the petitioner, higher authorities of Odisha government including Chief Secretary, Suresh Chandra Mahapatra and District Collectors of Keonjhar and Koraput were present during the hearing of the pleas March 28.

The commission after scruti-



nizing the reports presented by the state government expressed satisfaction over the steps taken



After being evicted by BDA, green grocers sell their stuff along the road in Jharpada area of Bhubaneswar, Sunday

BOYS AT GREATER RISK OF REPEATING GRADES: UNESCO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 10: Boys are more likely than girls to repeat primary grades in 130 out of 142 countries, with data indicating their poorer progression through school, according to a new Global Education report by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco).

The report titled-Leave no child behind: Global report on boys’ disengagement from education—pointed out that no less than 132 million boys of primary and secondary school age are out of school. It said boys are more likely than girls to experience physical bullying and are often targeted because of their real or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity or expression (SOGIE).

Boys are more likely than girls to repeat primary grades in 130 out of 142 countries, with data indicating their poorer progression through school. In 57 countries, with data on learning poverty, 10-

year-old boys fare worse than girls in mastering reading skills and adolescent boys continue to fall behind girls at the secondary level.

“While girls are more likely than boys to never attend school, boys in many countries are at higher risk of failing to advance and complete their education. As it stands, 132 million boys are currently out of school,” the report stated.

Shedding light on the factors driving boys’ disengagement from education, the UN report attributed the trend to harsh discipline, corporal punishment, gendered norms, poverty and the need to work, among major reasons.

“Poverty and the need to work, for instance, can lead boys to drop out. Gendered norms and expectations can also affect their desire to learn. In particular, certain subjects can run counter to traditional expressions of masculinity, making them unpopular with boys. Harsh discipline, corporal punishment and other forms of violence at school also negatively impact



boys’ academic achievement, while increasing absenteeism and dropouts.

“In many countries, boys are at greater risk than girls of repeating grades, failing to complete different education levels and having poorer learning outcomes in school. Where previously boys’ disadvantage seemed most notable in high- or upper-middle-income contexts at the beginning of the millen-

nium, this has shifted and now includes several low- and lower-middle-income countries,” it said.

The report noted that secondary education is where boys’ disadvantage is most prevalent.

“The right to education remains unfulfilled for many boys. Far too many children and youth of primary and secondary school age are out of school. Just over half of them are boys. It has been a concern

Shedding light on the factors driving boys’ disengagement from education, the UN report “Leave no child behind: Global report on boys’ disengagement from education” attributed the trend to harsh discipline, corporal punishment, gendered norms, poverty and the need to work, among major reasons

In 2020, the last school year before the pandemic, an estimated 259 million children and youth of primary and secondary school age were out of school, 132 million of whom were boys

that the Covid-19 pandemic would lead to an increase in school dropouts. In 2020, the last school year before the pandemic, an estimated 259 million children and youth of primary and secondary school age were out of school, 132 million of whom were boys.

“There will not be a clear picture of Covid-19 effects on enrolments before the end of 2022,” it said.

At the global level, almost no country with data has achieved gender parity at the tertiary level.

The gender parity index data in 2019 for tertiary enrolment showed 88 men for every 100 women enrolled at the tertiary level. While previously boys’ disengagement and dropout was a concern mainly in high-income countries, several low and middle income countries have seen a reversal in gender gaps, with boys now lagging behind girls in enrolment and completion.

In 73 countries, fewer boys than girls are enrolled in upper-secondary education. In Mathematics, on the other hand, the gender gap that once worked against girls at the start of the millennium has narrowed or equalised with boys in half of all countries with data.

Experts pointed out that prolonged school closures and the longer-term impact of Covid-19 on learning loss and school dropout are likely to exacerbate existing gender disparities unless steps are taken to address the learning needs of all.

Seismic survey finds oil, natural gas in Gop area

POST NEWS NETWORK

Gop, April 10: A seismic survey conducted by Oil India Limited (OIL) has yielded positive results with the discovery of oil and natural gas at two places under Gop block in Puri district.

According to sources, the OIL had conducted a survey in Gop and Konark area of Puri in 2020 to find out any oil and natural gas reserve in the localities. Senior officials of the OIL had also visited Gop area several times.

The survey has identified oil and natural gas reserves at Kushupur of Gop panchayat and Chitra area of Mahalpada panchayat.

An eight-member team of the OIL had visited the two panchayats March 25 and held discussions with the villagers, sources said.

A six-member team of the the OIL led by its CGM Biranchi Narayan Sahu visited the two panchayats Saturday and held dis-



cussions with the farmers on various issues related to the land acquisition. The OIL has revealed that its seismic survey has found oil and natural gas reserves in Gop area.


In the first phase, the OIL will acquire 16 acre agricultural land at Kushupur and Chitra for oil ex-

ploration work. This apart, the OIL would acquire the agricultural land of several farmers on lease basis for three years for the oil exploration work, sources said.

“Our survey has identified oil and natural gas reserves in Gop area. We will soon start our work in the locality,” Sahu said.

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Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Movable/ Immovable properties mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the constructive/symbolic/physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Union Bank of India (Secured Creditor), will be sold on "As is where is" and "As is What is" and "Whatever there is" basis on 29.04.2022 , for recovery of dues as mentioned hereunder to Union Bank of India from the below mentioned Borrower(s) & Guarantor(s). The Reserve Price and the Earnest Money Deposit are also mentioned hereunder.					
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Property No.1: Existing EM of freehold homestead land in the name of Mr. Pawan Kumar Bagaria & 848 sq.ft RCC building, Khata No.: 660/16 and Plot No.: 960 & 961 of Area: 4.3 dec at Mouza: Muruna, Dist: Balasore. Type of Possession: Symbolic / Reserve Price: ₹3,16,00,000/- / Earnest Money to be deposited: ₹31,60,000/-					
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Borrower: Late Kamala Kanta Mishra, At: Nua, PO: Antara, Via: Simulia, Dist: Balasore - 756134/ Guarantors/Legal Heirs: 1) Mrs. Sasmita Mishra, W/o: Late Kamala Kanta Mishra, 2) Shri Sandeep Kumar Mishra, 3) Shri Sanjeet Kumar Mishra, Both are S/o: Late Kamala Kanta Mishra, All are At: Nua, PO: Antara, Via: Simulia, Dist: Balasore - 756134		₹ 36,91,894/- as on 31.03.2021 with further interest, Cost and expenses			
Property No.2: Land and Building in the name of Late Kamala Kanta Mishra, bearing Khata No.: 431/212, Plot No.: 167/1948, Measuring Area: Ac.0.20 dec. with Gharabari KISSAM, At: Nua, P.O.: Antara, Via: Simulia, Dist: Balasore Type of Possession: Symbolic / Reserve Price: ₹34,22,357/- / Earnest Money to be deposited: ₹3,42,236/-					
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Property No.3: Land and Building - Residential belonging to Madhusudan Maharana, S/o: Bhikari Charan Maharana, bearing Khata No.: 320, Plot No.: 1634, Measuring Area: Ac. 0.08 Dec., Plot No.: 1636, Measuring Area: Ac. 0.02 Dec. and Plot No.: 1637, Measuring Area: Ac. 0.08 Dec. (Total Area: Ac. 0.18 Dec.) at Mouza: Nua, P.O.: Antara, Via: Simulia, Tahasil: Khairia, No.: 153, Dist.: Balasore Type of Possession: Symbolic / Reserve Price: ₹22,05,179/- / Earnest Money to be deposited: ₹2,20,517.90					
KARANJIA BRANCH-3, Dist: MAYURBHANJ, Ph No.: 9078837143, Email: cb3101@unionbankofindia.com					
Name & Address of Borrowers & Guarantors:		Amount Due			
Borrower: (All Legal Heirs of Borrower Late Anil Kumar Agarwalla, Prop. of M/s. Krishna Body Builders), 1) Smt. Sarita Agarwalla, W/o: Late Anil Kumar Agarwalla, 2) Sri Ashu Agarwalla, S/o: Late Anil Kumar Agarwalla, 3) Sri Alok Agarwalla, S/o: Late Anil Kumar Agarwalla, All are At: Ward No: 1, NH-49, Karanjia NAC, Dist.: Mayurbhanj, Odisha-757037 / Legal Heirs of Deceased Guarantor Prahalad Ray Agarwalla are: 1) Suresh Kumar Agarwalla, S/o: Prahalad Ray Agarwalla, 2) Manoj Kumar Agarwalla, S/o: Prahalad Ray Agarwalla, 3) Rajesh Kumar Agarwalla, S/o: Prahalad Ray Agarwalla, 4) Sarita Agarwalla, 5) Ashu Agarwalla, 6) Alok Agarwalla, All are at Ward No.: 1, Karanjia NAC, Dist: Mayurbhanj-757037, Odisha, 7) Babita Kayal, W/o: Manoj Kumar Kayal, Khalasilane, Buxi Bazar, Cuttack-753001.		₹ 90,23,267.59 as on 10.08.2020 with further interest, Cost and expenses			
Property No.4: EMG of Factory Land and Building at Plot No.: 853/1311, Khata No.: 105/323, KISSAM: Gharabari, Area: Ac.0.46 dec. at Mouza: Sarubali, SRO: Karanjia, Tahasil: Karanjia, PS No.: 49, District: Mayurbhanj in the name of Late Anil Kumar Agarwalla , Bounded by North: Jaykrushna Mohanta, South: Kshetra Mohanta, East: NH Road, West: Road. Type of Possession: Symbolic / Reserve Price: ₹1,86,00,000/- Earnest Money to be deposited: ₹18,60,000/-					
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Property No.5: All that part and parcel of the property consisting of Land and Building at Khata No.: 120/145, Plot No.: 449/684, Area: Ac.0.100 dec. & Plot No.: 451/685, Area: Ac.0.010 dec., Total Area: Ac.0.110dec. , KISSAM: Gharabari, Mouza: Madhapur, P.S.: Sadar, Keonjhar, in the name of Mr. Bijay Kumar Barik and Mr. Ashok Kumar Barik within the registration Sub-District: Sadar, Keonjhar, Dist.: Keonjhar, Bounded by North: Road, South: Govt. Land, East: Shyam Sunder Barik, West: Nirmal Chandra Mohapatra Type of Possession: Symbolic / Reserve Price: ₹70,00,000/- / Earnest Money to be deposited: ₹7,00,000/-					
Name & Address of Borrower, Co-applliant & Guarantor:		Amount Due			
Borrower: M/s. S. M. Fashion, Prop.: Hafizur Rehman, S/o: Fazlur Rehman, At: Magurgadia, PO.: Keonjhargarh, PS: Town, Dist.: Keonjhar - 758001/ Co-applliant/Guarantor : Bushra Tabasum , At: Magurgadia, PO.: Keonjhargarh, PS: Town, Dist.: Keonjhar - 758001					

“All that is born and destroyed is reborn in the sweep of the ages; Life like a decimal ever recurring repeats the old figure.”

SRI AUROBINDO

Pak Democracy

After unprecedented twists and turns in the political drama in Pakistan, the fate of the Imran Khan government was finally sealed April 9 when he was deposed by a no-confidence vote in Parliament, days after he had blocked a similar attempt. Democracy has not been able to take firm roots in Pakistan due to the manipulations of a proactive military establishment that has far too often interfered with the democratic process. Fortunately for the people of Pakistan this time around, the Supreme Court set right an undemocratic and unconstitutional act of the elected government run by Khan and ordered the no-confidence motion be held. For the first time in the history of Pakistan, a Prime Minister was overthrown through a democratic, constitutional exercise. No Pakistani Prime Minister has ever completed a five-year term in office in the country's 75-year history. Khan had prevented the no-confidence motion from being taken up, got the Parliament dissolved and had set the stage for fresh elections, denying the Opposition an opportunity accorded by the country's Constitution to try and form a government a year before the present term was to be over.

The no-confidence motion required 172 votes in the 342-seat Parliament to pass. It had become clear Khan would not be able to muster the number as apart from his allies, 20 legislators of his own party, Tehreek-e-Insaf, had spelt out their plan not to support him. Eventually, the motion was supported by 174 legislators. Anticipating his loss, Khan had called on his supporters to stage rallies nationwide April 10. He had alleged the Opposition colluded with the United States to unseat him. After his defeat in the Parliament he hardly had any option other than keeping the momentum of street protests to pressure the Parliament to hold early elections.

To keep up the democratic spirit, Pakistan Opposition leader Shehbaz Sharif said after the no-confidence vote, “We will not seek revenge. We will not put people in jails, but the law will take its course.” It is widely expected that Sharif, who is the younger brother of former three-time Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, is going to replace Khan in the next few days.

Khan had played the victim card by alleging that foreign powers, meaning the US, had hatched a conspiracy to oust him as he had embarked on a foreign policy independent of the US, embracing China and Russia as Pakistan's dependable allies. In fact, he had visited the two countries in the past few months to cement further Pakistan's ties with them. He also incurred the wrath of the West by not denouncing Russia's invasion of Ukraine and lending tacit support to it. He tried to drum up people's support by giving a back-handed compliment to Indian democracy which he said is so firmly entrenched that no power can force it to change its independent foreign policy “as is being done in the case of Pakistan.”

The next Prime Minister of Pakistan will have to handle the same issues that bedevilled Khan. The challenges facing the country both internally and externally are enormous. The Opposition has alleged that the collapse of governance is so complete that it will be a herculean task “to stem the rot.” A poorly performing economy, attacks by armed groups and shaky relations with former allies will top the agenda for the next administration. Crippling debt, galloping inflation and a feeble currency have contributed to stagnant growth for the past three years with little prospect of improvement. Pakistan watchers say radical policy reforms are needed to turn around the economy. The Khan government is perceived to have failed to revive an economy battered by COVID-19 or fulfill promises to make Pakistan corruption free.

Corruption has been endemic in Pakistan and the current president of the Pakistan People's Party, Asif Ali Zardari, who was once President of Pakistan, was in the past accused of indulging in corruption, cronyism and political vendetta. The PPP is going to be part of the new government that will take shape. A stupendous task is ahead of Pakistan's political establishment if it wants to shake off the tag of a failed state, put democracy on a firm footing and stop the military from dictating terms to an elected government as it has hitherto been doing.

The big question is whether the intent of the people is strong enough to bring about these huge changes or not. But then, also, do the people have any choices that they can exercise?

BUILD EQUITABLE CAPITALISM

FOCUS ECONOMIC POLICY



Bertrand Badré & Yann Coatanlem

REGULATION AND ENFORCEMENT TO ENSURE COMPETITION HAVE BECOME ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT NOW THAT DIGITAL AND ROBOTIC TECHNOLOGIES HAVE RESTRUCTURED MARKETS

Global crises have grown in frequency and intensity over the past 20 years, with worrying implications for future economic development. The World Bank warns that the effort to reduce poverty has suffered its “worst setback” in a quarter-century, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. Inequalities are deepening within and between countries, and across many key sectors, from education to health.

Given the scale of these problems, public policy cannot focus narrowly on income and wealth. The situation demands a holistic approach with longtime horizons. Otherwise, subsequent governments will always be tempted to pursue short-term improvements with immediate political payoffs (such as an increase in households' purchasing power), rather than investing in future welfare. We will need to quantify the necessary trade-offs so that politicians can explain to voters why they should support having a bit less now for the sake of gaining more later.

We also need to be mindful of how we measure inequalities. Is it fair to demand that developing countries reduce their greenhouse-gas emissions at the same rate as advanced economies, even though the latter have contributed far more historically?

The challenge for policymakers is to adopt strategies that are both global and granular; tailored to specific contexts. Otherwise, there is a strong chance that measures to correct one type of inequality will introduce new ones. We can fight climate change by subsidising new solar panel installations, but we should be prepared to hear complaints from those who already reduced their carbon footprints before state incentives were introduced.

Advocating for equity in all its dimensions requires an expansive perspective on inequality – a frequent consequence of zero-sum dynamics, rent-seeking, “private taxes,” free-riding, corruption, discrimination, and so forth. The most salient forms of inequality change over time, often evolving with the broader legal environment. At the end of World War II,



Two decades of economic crises have exposed the flaws of a system that has grown increasingly incompatible with sustainable development and equality of opportunity. To reform capitalism requires rethinking social welfare and how public policy can tackle inequality in all its forms

work was considered a fundamental right, whereas during the pandemic, access to low-cost high-speed internet became a top priority.

The ever-changing nature of these issues implies the need to broaden the concept of social welfare, so that policies do not end up simply perpetuating the advantages of insiders. It also must become more adaptive, so that we can face challenges like climate change and energy-price spikes. And it must develop new tools (such as universal basic income) to help the disadvantaged and marginalised overcome long-standing structural hurdles and take calculated entrepreneurial risks (which ultimately benefit all of society).

The concept of social returns must guide policymaking. In education, for example, we know that developing human capital from early childhood provides the best long-term return on investment. But social policy does not necessarily mean public or state action. We should remain open to the use of markets in situations where they add value. For example, in pensions systems, a capitalisation pillar can ensure that the greatest number of people benefit from the generally higher returns of mar-

kets, rather than being stuck with the lukewarm returns of the pay-as-you-go system.

Taxation is another key lever for combating inequality, because it generates the revenues to support inclusive social policies and reduces income and wealth gaps. The point is not to treat wealth itself as a problem. Rather, we should follow the philosopher John Rawls' difference principle, which holds that inequalities are justified only if they redound to the benefit of the least well-off. Economist Philippe Aghion's research shows that innovation satisfies this condition: although it increases the weight of the top 1% (in income and wealth), it also tends to increase social mobility, and it does not necessarily increase inequalities across the rest of the population.

That said, the current structure of taxation could be improved to meet desirable objectives such as simplicity, efficiency, stability, equity (eliminating loopholes that benefit only the rich), better incentives (to work or to protect the environment), and neutrality (so that a euro earned in one year is not taxed more than a euro earned in ten years).

Finally, an essential step in reforming contemporary capital-

ism is to review competition rules. The market is far superior to any centralised system when it comes to price discovery and the dissemination of economic information; but it also must be rigorously supervised and regulated by public authorities. Regulation and enforcement to ensure competition have become all the more important now that digital and robotic technologies have restructured markets and ushered in what Shoshana Zuboff of Harvard Business School describes as “surveillance capitalism.”

The pathology is reflected in sharply rising inequality in corporate performance. In 2016, the White House Council of Economic Advisers noted that a “90th percentile firm sees returns on investments in capital that are more than five times the median. This ratio was closer to two just a quarter of a century ago.” Moreover, as Aghion shows, the top 1% of exporters now account for 67% of all exports, while the top 1% of patenting firms account for 91% of patents and 98% of references in research papers (an indicator of the most valuable patents). The margins of the top 10% of firms have increased by 35% since the beginning of the 2000s, and their profitability has grown by 50% – indicators that have stagnated for most other firms.

The changes proposed above would marshal the widespread demand for equity in the service of efficiency, ensuring true equality of opportunity for individuals and companies. The alternative is a return to a rigidly hierarchical society with less freedom for all but those atop the pyramid.

It remains to be seen whether today's chain of financial, environmental, and geopolitical crises will lend momentum to the kind of shift that is needed. The danger is that they could just as easily become a distraction or, worse, an excuse for fatalism and complacency.

Bertrand Badré is a former managing director of the World Bank. Yann Coatanlem is an economist and fintech executive.

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WISDOM CORNER

- “Happiness cannot be travelled to, owned, earned, worn or consumed. Happiness is the spiritual experience of living every minute with love, grace, and gratitude.” DENIS WAITLEY
- “Plenty of people miss their share of happiness, not because they never found it, but because they didn't stop to enjoy it.” WILLIAM FEATHER
- “The moments of happiness we enjoy take us by surprise. It is not that we seize them, but that they seize us.” ASHLEY MONTAGU

WORDSWORTH

■ Snarge

When bird strikes cause air accidents — such as the flock of Canada geese that forced a plane to ditch in the Hudson River in January 2009 — it's important to find out the species involved in order to work out ways to reduce such accidents in the future. There are usually bits of mixed-up bird remains on the aircraft, such as blood, beaks, feathers, and flesh. This is snarge, a term widely known among US air-accident investigators. Analysing the remains can often tell its species. Scientists are analyzing snarge DNA to track airplane bird strikes, with the hope of decreasing hazardous collisions (Wired Magazine, 23 Sep. 2005). The standard technique for collecting it involves spraying the area with water and wiping it with a paper towel. The towel is sent to the Feather Identification Lab at the Smithsonian in Washington, DC. The Lab currently gets about 4,000 samples a year. An article in the magazine Flying Safety in 2003 says that the term snarge was invented at the Lab. However, one of its researchers, Carla Dove, says they didn't but instead borrowed it from the experts who prepared bird specimens for the collections: “Everyone referred to the bird poop, guts, tissue, etc. as snarge. I think anyone who works in a museum and prepares bird specimens for research collections is familiar with the word.” Its ultimate source is unknown.

SPECTRUM INDIA

Lower growth, higher inflation



Shivaji Sarkar

GOVERNMENT FINANCES MAY BE IMPACTED IN MEETING INFLATIONARY PRESSURES

The feel good factor may be impacted as the Reserve Bank of India estimates growth to remain lower, inflation to remain high, and crude prices to be around \$100 a barrel. The RBI Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) estimates growth to lower to 7.2 per cent from 7.8 per cent even as it keeps repo rate unchanged at 4 per cent and reverse repo at 3.35 per cent. Inflation averaging 6.3 per cent in the first quarter, 5 per cent in the second quarter, 5.4 per cent in the third quarter, and 5.1 per cent in the fourth quarter remains a concern.

Inflation projections have been primarily revised upwards due to war-induced factors, according to RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das. “In the sequence of priorities, we have now put inflation before growth. Time is appropriate to prioritise inflation ahead of growth,” he said. This may entail difficult times as government finances may be impacted in meeting inflationary pressures.

The Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) finds the rate of recovery slowing down after the second pandemic wave can reduce consumer sentiments and

by March 2023 it could be 15 per cent lower. The challenges are many. India's forex came down by \$14 billion though it is still considered comfortable with \$619 billion reserves. The value of gold reserves also decline by \$1.831 billion to \$42.011 billion.

Proposals for foreign investment in infrastructure are fraught with risk. There are suggestions from former RBI Governor Bimal Jalan that infrastructure development should be done in rupees. This would hedge the rupee as well as the economy. Higher FDI would also have higher outgo in repatriation. Jalan suggests tax cuts and says rising petrol prices, supposedly highest in the world, are concerns.

Meanwhile, the government has joined the International Energy Agency's initiative for a coordinated release of 120 million barrels of oil from its emergency reserves to calm oil prices. India has a daily consumption of 4.5 million barrels and a reserve of 39 million barrels. In November 2021 too it had agreed to release 5 million barrels from its reserve as part of US-led initiative for lowering crude prices, when it breached \$80 a barrel.

The consumer sentiment ex-

panded by 5 per cent in January but in March it declined to 3.7 per cent. The average monthly rate of increase during the last three months has been 4.23 per cent. It would take three years to recover to the pre-COVID level provided there is no other jerk to the economy. The RBI apparently took a note of this.

The Ukraine war related sanctions imposed by the US affects India's exports to an extent as well. The relationship with Russia though good is at a low level. The trade is less than 2 per cent. In the present circumstances, it may not be able to increase. The new insurance conditions prohibiting flights to Russia and Ukraine has led to Air India suspending its flights to Moscow. The Russian carrier Aeroflot has also stopped its flights to Delhi. India has reaffirmed its ties with Russia though it also faces Western pressures amid its suspension from UN Human Rights Commission. India may have to reposition its diplomacy.

The government has taken to various international tie-ups to tide over the crisis. The latest free trade pact with Australia is a move

to counter China. Another decision to invite companies from Gulf countries to invest in Kashmir is being seen as a major gain. These companies in their meeting with the Lt. Governor say they have spotted 4226 sites for setting hotels, tourism centres and factories under the FTA with UAE.

Meanwhile, phasing out imports of 101 more defence items will give a push to self-reliance and save forex. The plan is to make the country a global hub for defence manufacturing. It could be a big forex earner as well as create an aura for the country. It is hoped that these would gradually tide over the balance of trade issue. At present, despite \$400 of exports there remains trade deficit of \$192 as imports in value terms have become expensive. It also adds to forex loss despite higher earnings. In the present global scenario boosting the rupee is a herculean task.

Amid these problems, FDI has increased to over \$560 million. It shows the confidence of investors in the country's policies. The country is going through a difficult phase but it has to get over it for a bright future.

INF A

LOL

Pessimist and a dog



An avid duck hunter was in the market for a new bird dog. His search ended when he found a dog that could actually walk on water to retrieve a duck. Shocked by his find, he was sure none of his friends would ever believe him. He decided to try to break the news to a friend of his, the eternal pessimist who refused to be impressed with anything. This, surely, would impress him. He invited him to hunt with him and his new dog. As they waited by the shore, a flock of ducks flew by. They fired, and a duck

fell. The dog responded and jumped into the water. The dog, however, did not sink but instead walked across the water to retrieve the bird, never getting more than his paws wet. This continued all day long; each time a duck fell, the dog walked across the surface of the water to retrieve it. The pessimist watched carefully, saw everything, but did not say a single word. On the drive home the hunter asked his friend, “Did you notice anything unusual about my new dog?” “I sure did,” responded the pessimist. “He can't swim.”

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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Alarming report

Sir, The Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change Assessment (IPCC) delivered a dire assessment and warning in its latest report released April 4, revealing what UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said was “a litany of broken climate promises” by governments and corporations. Six Assessment Reports have been published so far, the sixth report (AR6) coming in three parts — the first in August 2021, the second in February 2022, and the third April 4, 2022. The first part of AR6 flagged more intense and frequent heat-waves, increased incidents of extreme rainfall, a dangerous rise in sea-levels, prolonged droughts, and melting glaciers — and said that 1.5 degrees Celsius warming was much closer than was thought earlier, and also inevitable. The second part warned that multiple climate change-induced disasters were likely in the next two decades even if strong action was taken to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases. More than half the temperature rise since 1950 was attributable to human activities, and that the atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide were “unprecedented” in the last 800,000 years. The rise in global temperatures by 2100 could be as high as 4.8 degrees Celsius from pre-industrial times, and more frequent and longer heat waves were “virtually certain”. A “large fraction of species” faced extinction, and food security would be undermined. **Asit Mohanty**, JAJPUR

Unstable neighbour

Sir, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's ouster extends the country's unenviable record for political instability: no prime minister has completed their full term since independence, although Khan is the first to be removed through a no-confidence vote. Though the week-long drama preceding the trust vote plunged Pakistan in constitutional crisis, Khan's downfall had been in the making since last year when he crossed swords with the country's all powerful army. The united Opposition in Pakistan, after weeks of tackling obstacle after obstacle, has succeeded in its objective of toppling the Khan-led government. Removing Khan is probably only the first in a long list of challenges that Pakistan's new leader will have to face. The front-runner for PM's post Shahbaz Sharif, or whoever is elected next PM, will inherit the same issues that Khan's government was facing. This includes crippling debt, rising inflation, militancy and unsteady relations with foreign powers. With his claim that the US was involved in a conspiracy to topple his government, Khan has directly contributed to the new government's long list of problems. **N Sadhasiva Reddy**, BANGALORE

of the day quote

Panchkula will be developed in every sphere, be it education, health, enterprise or service sector projects



MANOHAR LAL KHATTAR | HARYANA CM

Earlier, private schools could arbitrarily increase their fees in Delhi, but we stopped it in 2015. In the last seven years, we have stopped the private schools from increasing the fees and then we introduced a system where if they need to hike the fees, they will have to seek permission from the Delhi government



MANISH SISODIA | DELHI DEPUTY CM

People of BJP are also raising questions on the crumbling education system of Gujarat. Rising above the party line, voices for a good education in Gujarat have started to emerge. BJP could not provide good education in 27 years



ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CM

SHORT TAKES

Bomma unveils 161-ft Hanuman statue

Bangalore: It's good times ahead for Karnataka, said Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai Sunday as he unveiled the 161-feet tall Panchamukhi Anjaneya Swamy Statue installed by the Bidanagere Basaveshwara Mutt at Bidanagere in Tumkur district. Noting that many holy works are being taken up on the auspicious occasion of Rama Navami, Bommai said the region would see huge developments in the coming days.

Delhi: Fire breaks out in banquet hall

New Delhi: A fire broke out in a banquet hall near the Peera Garhi Chowk here Sunday morning, Delhi Fire Services officials said. No casualty was reported, they added. A call was received about a blaze at Maidens Crown banquet hall at around 11 am and seven fire tenders were rushed to the spot, Delhi Fire Services Director Atul Garg said. Police said that when they reached the spot with their staff, a lot of smoke was coming from Maiden Crown banquet, seven fire tenders and one ambulance was also deployed, but the fire staff managed to control the fire without any casualty.

3 dead, 16 hurt in two accidents

Shimla: Three people died and 16 others were injured in two separate road accidents in Himachal Pradesh's Una and Chamba districts Sunday, a senior state disaster management official said. In Chamba district, two people died and one injured in a car accident on Chamba Jhumar road. In Una district, one person died and 15 others were injured as a small tempo fell into a gorge at Ghaluwal in Haroli.

One killed in landslide

Haflong: A construction worker was killed in a landslide in Dima Hasao district of Assam Sunday, officials said. The worker was engaged at a construction site in Kana Basti near Vivekananda School in Haflong where a massive landslide happened around 12 pm, they said. "Police, District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) and medical assistance rushed to the spot and the body was recovered at 2.50 pm," an official said. The deceased was identified as Ala Uddin (43), a native Karimganj district. The body was sent to Haflong Civil Hospital for autopsy, the official said.



As we do not feed unnecessary medicines to our mother, we should not use unnecessary chemicals on our land too
NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

STRICT VIGIL

Following intelligence inputs that a large number of terrorists have assembled in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir's Abaspur and Daukhan, the intelligence agencies have sounded an alert to keep a strict vigil on the International Border (IB) and Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir



Is Covid picking pace in India?

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 10: Amid a global rise in Covid cases driven by BA.2 sub-variant of Omicron, India is also seeing a slow yet steady rise in the number of infections in several states.

This comes as two cases of the new XE variant - a mutant hybrid of Omicron sub-variants BA.1 and BA.2 - have been detected in the country, one each from Maharashtra and Gujarat.

The Union Health Ministry has asked five states - Kerala, Haryana, Maharashtra, Delhi, and Mizoram - to continue monitoring the spread of infection and undertake prompt steps to manage the Covid spread.

Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan has directed these states to conduct regular monitoring and follow up action in emerging areas of concern. "A sustained and significant decline in the number of Covid-19 cases has been observed in India over the past 2 months, with the country reporting less than 1,000 daily new cases for the past few days. Further, the weekly positivity rate has remained below 1 per cent," Bhushan said in the letter.

However, Delhi, Haryana, and Gujarat have seen a rise in the seven-day average of daily cases. Delhi on April 7 saw 176 new cases - the highest daily rise since March 10.



It also reported an increase in weekly new cases - to 826 new cases in the week ending April 8 from 724 new cases in the week ending April 1. It has also seen an increase in positivity in the last week from 0.51 per cent to 1.25 per cent.

Haryana reported a surge in seven-day average - 68 April 9 from 47 April 4. Weekly new cases in the state rose to 416 in the week ending April 8 from 367 in the week ending April 1. Haryana has also seen an increase in positivity in the last week from 0.51 per cent to 1.06 per cent.

Gujarat reported 34 fresh cases

on April 9 - the highest daily count since March 13, while the average also rose to 15 from 9 on April 4. There is also a slow rise seen in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal. Meanwhile, about 1.5 million new cases are being reported each day worldwide, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has said. "We're seeing 1.5 million new cases each day. Large outbreaks are spreading in Asia. A new wave is sweeping across Europe," Guterres said, while addressing a recent summit on international vaccine sharing scheme COVAX.

SII to give free Covishield vials

New Delhi: A day after slashing the price of the precaution dose of Covishield to ₹225 per shot for private hospitals, the Serum Institute of India (SII) told the Centre Sunday that it will compensate for the price difference for the unexpired stocks lying with private centres in the form of free vials of fresh stocks, official sources said. Vaccine majors SII and Bharat Biotech Saturday said they have decided to cut the prices of the precaution dose of their respective Covid-19 vaccines to ₹225 per shot for private hospitals after discussions with the government. Bharat Biotech had also announced that the price differential with any existing stocks of Covaxin in private hospitals shall be compensated in the form of additional doses.

The countries seeing new outbreaks in Asia include China, and Hong Kong, and the UK, France, Italy and the Netherlands in Europe. Guterres said that some countries are also reporting their highest death rates since the start of the pandemic.

Precaution dose of Cov vax rolled out at pvt centres



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 10: India Sunday began administering precaution dose of COVID-19 vaccines to all aged above 18 years, who have completed nine months since the administration of their second dose, at private vaccination centres.

The Centre has told all states and UTs that the precaution dose will be of the same Covid-19 vaccine which has been used for administration of the first and second dose 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. Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan, who held an orientation meeting of all health secretaries of states and UTs on Saturday, also informed that no fresh registrations would be required for precaution dose as all due beneficiaries are already registered on CoWIN. All vaccinations will mandatorily be recorded on CoWIN platform and both the options of 'Online appointment' and 'Walk-in' registration and vaccination will be available at private Covid vaccination centres (CVCs).

Private CVCs will maintain the vaccination sites as per the guidelines issued earlier by the Ministry of Health. "They can charge up to a maximum of ₹150 per dose as service charge for vaccination over and above the cost of vaccine," Bhushan had said. "Administration of precaution dose will be homologous i.e. Same vaccine type will be used for precaution dose which

was used for vaccination of first and second dose," he had stated. Healthcare workers, frontline workers and citizens aged 60 years and above, shall continue to receive precaution dose vaccination at any vaccination centres, including free of charge vaccination at Government Vaccination Centers, Bhushan had underlined. The countrywide vaccination drive was rolled out on January 16 last year with healthcare workers getting inoculated in the first phase. Vaccination of frontline workers started from February 2 last year. The next phase of COVID-19 vaccination commenced on March 1 last year for people over 60 years of age and those aged 45 and above with specified co-morbid conditions. India launched vaccination for all people aged more than 45 years from April 1 last year. The government then decided to expand its vaccination drive by allowing everyone above 18 years of age to be inoculated against the viral disease from May 1 last year.

The next phase of vaccination commenced from January 3 for adolescents in the age group of 15-18 years. India began administering precaution doses of vaccines to healthcare and frontline workers and those aged 60 and above with comorbidities from January 10.

The country began inoculating children aged 12-14 from March 16. The cumulative Covid-19 vaccine doses administered in the country has exceeded 185.70 crore, according to official data till 7 am.

MAYAWATI HITS BACK AT RAHUL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, April 10: BSP chief Mayawati Sunday rejected Rahul Gandhi's claim that she had spurned an alliance offer from his Congress during the Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls, asking him to get his own house in order instead of worrying about other parties.

Gandhi had Saturday said that the Congress reached out to the BSP leader, offering her the chief minister's post for contesting the assembly polls together, but she did not respond. Hitting back at the Gandhi scion, Mayawati said all the allegations levelled by him are wrong and reflect his party's "casteist mindset" and feeling of malice.

"Yesterday, the former president of the Congress had made some remarks regarding our party and especially about its chief, which clearly reflect the casteist mindset and a feeling of malice towards the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP). It also shows similar feelings towards deprived sections of the society, especially the dalits," she told reporters here. "Before levelling any allegation on the BSP, Rahul Gandhi must introspect," she said.

The BSP supremo also accused the Congress of failing to take any concrete step during its long tenure to improve the social and economical condition of dalits and other deprived sections of the society. She also alleged that the community was not given full benefits of various other facilities, including reservation.

She also alleged that it was because of this attitude of the Congress that Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar, who was the then law minister in the Congress government, had tendered his resignation. The BSP leader also questioned the Congress' claims of preventing the BJP from coming to power.



Youngsters dive in a swimming pool to beat the heat on a hot day in Chennai

PTI PHOTO

2 terrorists shot dead in Srinagar

Both the killed terrorists were Pakistanis and identified as Mohammad Bhai alias Abu Qasim, alias Mir Shoaib alias Mudassir, and Abu Arsalan alias Khalid alias Aadil

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, April 10: In a pinpoint intelligence operation, two Pakistani Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists involved in the April 4 attack on CRPF personnel in the city, were killed while three security personnel got injured in an encounter here Sunday, police said.

Inspector General of Police (IGP), Kashmir, Vijay Kumar said the police was tracking both the Pakistani terrorists from the day of the attack on the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) men on April 4, and the operation was launched on Sunday after pinpointing their location. A police spokesman said at about 10:50 am, on specific input generated by Srinagar Police regarding the presence of terrorists in Bishambar Nagar area of the city,



a cordon and search operation was launched by the police and Valley QAT CRPF there.

He said as the search party proceeded towards the suspect spot, the hiding terrorists fired indiscriminately upon search parties which was retaliated, leading to an encounter. In the initial exchange of fire, one terrorist was killed. Keeping in view the tourist move-

ment and huge rush in the area, police and CRPF exercised maximum restraint and carried out the operation in a professional manner to avoid any civilian casualty, the spokesman said.

During the course of evacuation of civilians, the trapped terrorist hurled a grenade, resulting in minor splinter injuries to two policemen and a CRPF Jawan who

were shifted to hospital for treatment of their injuries, he said.

The operation was resumed and in the ensuing encounter, another hiding terrorist was killed and bodies of both the killed terrorists were recovered from the site of the encounter, the spokesman said.

According to police records, both the killed terrorists were 'A' categorised and linked with proscribed terror outfit LeT. While Mohammad Bhai was active since 2019, Abu Arsalan was active since year 2021 in Central Kashmir.

The spokesman said both the killed terrorists were carrying fake Aadhaar cards to conceal their identity. Meanwhile, IGP Kumar told reporters near the encounter site that the killing of the two terrorists is a huge success for the police and CRPF.

British-era bridge collapses in MP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Narmadapuram, April 10: A British-era bridge on the dry Sukthwa river in Madhya Pradesh's Narmadapuram collapsed while a trailer-truck was crossing Sunday, leading to traffic disruption on the Bhopal-Nagpur national highway, a senior police official said.

The incident took place when a 138-wheeler trailer-truck was crossing the narrow bridge, leading to the vehicle falling on the dry river bed, Additional Superintendent of Police Awadhesh Pratap Singh told PTI over phone, adding that there were no report of injuries.

"The driver complained of some minor injury to the spleen but he left the spot soon after. Five more people who fell along with the vehicle are fine. The multi-axle vehicle was bringing transformers from Hyderabad to Itarsi in Narmadapuram," Singh said.

UNIQUE PROTEST

Women perform Garba with LPG cylinders

AGENCIES

Bhopal, April 10: A group of women in Madhya Pradesh chose the occasion of Navaratri to express their annoyance towards the rising prices of LPG -- Liquid Petroleum Gas, and rocketing prices of vegetables, pulses and milk.

In a video that surfaced on the social media on Saturday, a group of women could be seen performing 'Garba' dance with a 'mini' LPG cylinder on their head.

The incident has been reported

from Madhya Pradesh's Rewa district. The women are associated with the Congress party, and they were protesting against rising prices of LPG and other commodities of daily usage.

They had come to a temple and had carried LPG cylinders to cook meals for 'Kanya Bhojan.' "We cooked meals for 'Kanya Bhojan' and fed 51 Kanyas (girl children). In the meantime, women were singing songs and chanting for Goddess Durga and performing dance also. Later, we decided to do a dance... and we did Garba dance with LPG cylin-



IN A VIDEO THAT SURFACED ON THE SOCIAL MEDIA SATURDAY, A GROUP OF WOMEN COULD BE SEEN PERFORMING 'GARBA' DANCE WITH A 'MINI' LPG CYLINDER ON THEIR HEAD

THE WOMEN ARE ASSOCIATED WITH THE CONGRESS PARTY, AND THEY WERE PROTESTING AGAINST RISING PRICES OF LPG AND OTHER COMMODITIES OF DAILY USAGE

ders," said Kavita Pandey, a former councillor of Rewa municipal corporation.

Pandey told IANS that Garba with LPG cylinders was a part of their protest against rising prices of daily usage goods and items.

Notably, the Madhya Pradesh unit of the Congress April 1 launched a week-long anti-inflation campaign in the state.

The protest was launched by state Congress chief Kamal Nath. Nath had asked the party cadres to carry out anti-inflation campaigns across the state with beating of dholak (drum), and thalis (plates) and with sounds of 'majera' (cymbal) songs, and dance.

Assam outfits against Hindi as compulsory subject

Opposition parties in Assam have also criticised the Centre's announcement that all the eight Northeastern states have agreed to Hindi being a compulsory subject till class 10 and described it as a 'step towards cultural imperialism'

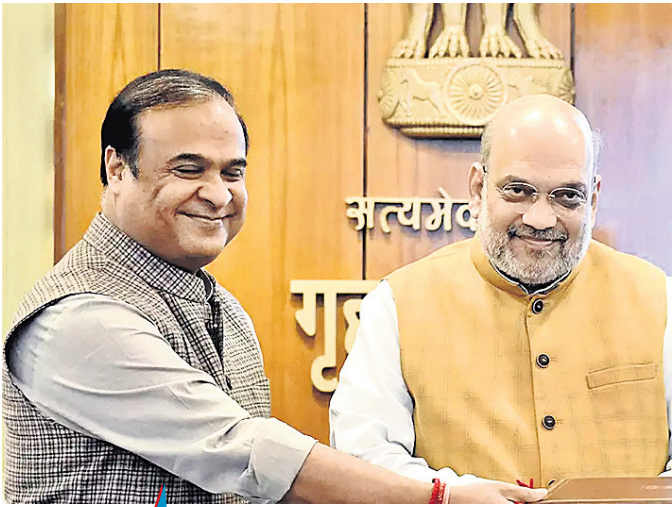
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, April 10: The Asam Sahitya Sabha, a century-old literary-cultural organisation of Assam, has criticised the central government's move to make Hindi a compulsory subject till class 10 in North-Eastern states.

The All Assam Students' Union (AASU), which also holds significant clout in the state, demanded that the government concentrate on conserving and promoting indigenous languages.

In a statement, Asam Sahitya Sabha Secretary-General Jadav Chandra Sharma said if Hindi is made compulsory, the future of indigenous languages and Assamese as a link language will be endangered.

Sharma also said the Sabha had been pressing the state government for the inclusion of Assamese



We strongly oppose the move by the government to make Hindi compulsory at the expense of Assamese and other mother languages...It is a threat to the indigenous culture and languages of the North East

SAMUJJAL KUMAR BHATTACHARJYA | AASU CHIEF ADVISOR

in CBSE and English medium schools, but no progress has been made in this regard so far.

Sabha, an influential organisation constituted in 1917, works for the development of the Assamese language, literature and culture.

AASU chief advisor Samujjal

Kumar Bhattacharjya asserted that the move was a threat to the future of indigenous languages of the North-eastern region.

"We strongly oppose the move by the government to make Hindi compulsory at the expense of Assamese and other mother languages," he said in a Tweet.

"It is a threat to the indigenous culture and languages of the North East," Bhattacharjya said demanding that the government immediately withdraw the decision.

Opposition parties in Assam have also criticised the Centre's announcement that all the eight Northeastern states have agreed to Hindi being a compulsory subject till class 10 and described it as a 'step towards cultural imperialism.'

Maoists trying to set up bases in Assam

WEST BENGAL HAS A 127-KM INTER-STATE BORDER WITH ASSAM, WHERE MAOIST REBELS ARE DESPERATELY TRYING TO SET UP BASES AS THEIR TRADITIONAL AREAS OF INFLUENCE IN ANDHRA PRADESH, JHARKHAND, BIHAR, ODISHA ARE SHRINKING

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Guwahati/Agartala, April 10: The CPI (Maoist), according to intelligence and many other credible reports, is desperately trying to revive its base in West Bengal's 'Jungle Mahal' and expand its footprint in northeastern states, especially in Assam.

After a long gap, a 'successful' shutdown, called by the Maoist, was observed in large parts of Jungle Mahal Friday when normal life was affected in Jhargram, West Midnapore, Purulia and Bankura districts which make up the region.

The shutdown was observed to protest the Bengal government's move to appoint former Maoists cadres as junior constables or special homeguards. The CPI (Maoist) accused their former cadres as 'criminals' and also threatened that those not observing the strike



would be killed.

West Bengal has a 127-km inter-state border with Assam, where Maoist rebels are desperately trying to set up bases as their traditional areas of influence in Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Odisha besides West Bengal are shrinking due to intensified crackdown by the security forces.

CM Himanta Biswa Sarma last week indicated about the resurgence of a 'third wave' of Maoists' threat in the state which had prompted operations against them by Central and state agencies

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) last month arrested top Maoist leader Arun Kumar Bhattacharjee a.k.a. Kanchan Da, a member of the central committee of CPI (Maoist) along with his associate Akash Orang alias Kajal, a member of Assam state organising committee of the outfit.

The Maoist leaders were arrested from Patimara Tea Garden under Udarband police station of Cachar district in southern Assam.

On the basis of the inputs shared by Kanchan Da, the Crime Branch of the Assam Police arrested Maoist cadre Hriday Kalita from Kamrup district and the NIA nabbed woman Maoist Reema Orang a.k.a. Saraswati, who has been on the run for a long time, from Dibrugarh.

The intelligence officials after

"The Maoist rebels have yet to start any armed revolution in Assam and other northeastern states. They might be trying to expand their support base first and engage young cadres. However, the situation in Assam and other northeastern states is not so conducive to extend their area of influence," a top Assam Police officer told IANS on condition of anonymity.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who also holds the Home portfolio, last week indicated about the resurgence of a 'third wave' of Maoists' threat in the state which had prompted operations against them by Central and state security agencies.

Renowned security analyst Manas Paul said that the Maoists had always had some presence in the northeast, if not operationally, but strategically and ideologically.

However, this time their eastward move, as evidenced by some recent arrests and interrogations and intelligence inputs, assumed significance for the fact that this time it seemed more definite, purposeful and based on long term plans, he told IANS.

No let-up in Assam encounter killings

Altogether 43 people have been killed and at least 107 injured in police action since Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma assumed office in May 2021

AGENCIES

Guwahati, April 10: There seems to be no let-up in encounter killings in Assam ever since the Himanta Biswa Sarma government assumed office last year. In the latest such killing, a suspected cattle smuggler was killed in a gunfight with the police in Dhubri district, officials said Sunday.

Acting on a tip-off, police tried to intercept a vehicle in Sapatgram area Saturday night, they said.

"The car was signalled to stop, but it sped away. Our team started chasing it," a police officer said.

Those inside the car fired at the police vehicle, which was retaliated in self-defence, he said.

"There were three people in the vehicle. One of them died on the

way to a hospital, while the other one is undergoing treatment now," he said.

One of the suspects managed to escape, the officer added. In another incident, a suspected dacoit was injured in police firing in Doboka in Nagaon district, officials said. The suspect was arrested Saturday, after which he was taken to recover hidden arms at night, they said.

"He pushed away a constable and tried to run. We had to fire to ensure that he doesn't escape. He was wounded on the right leg," a police officer said.

Altogether 43 people have been killed and at least 107 injured in police action since Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma assumed office in May 2021.



Devotees gather at the banks of Sarayu river on the occasion of Ram Navami in Ayodhya, Sunday.

PTI PHOTO

Every assembly segment to have 100-bed hospital: Yogi Adityanath

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, April 10: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath Sunday inaugurated a state-wide health campaign, and said each of the 403 assembly segments in the state will have a 100-bed hospital.

Launching the Jan Arogya Mela in the state from the Jungle Kaudia primary health centre in Gorakhpur, the chief minister said his government is focusing on strengthening the health infrastructure.

"Every assembly segment in the state will have a 100-bed well-equipped hospital and the Jan Arogya Mela will be organised every Sunday at all primary health centres," he said.

People will get free consultation and medicines during the drive, he said.



Encephalitis came under control in the past four years. The deadly encephalitis will be eradicated forever in one to two years

YOGI ADITYANATH | CHIEF MINISTER

The chief minister said the campaign was started in 2020 but discontinued due to the coronavirus pandemic.

He also claimed that the deadly encephalitis, which took lives of more than 50,000 children from 1977 to 2017, came under control due to joint efforts of the Union and the state governments.

"Encephalitis came under control in the past four years. The deadly encephalitis will be eradicated forever in one to two years," he said.

According to reports, between 2005 and 2018, 47,509 AES cases were reported in Uttar Pradesh, which led to the death of 8,373 patients. For Japanese Encephalitis, there have been a total of 4,677 cases with 881 deaths in the same period.

SP FACES TROUBLE IN ITS RANKS

A NUMBER OF LEADERS HAVE STARTED TO OPENLY CRITICISE THE PARTY LEADERSHIP AND SP PRESIDENT AKHILESH YADAV'S MANNER OF HANDLING ISSUES

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, April 10: After facing trouble from allies, the Samajwadi Party is now facing trouble from within.

A number of leaders - many of them on condition of anonymity - have started to openly criticise the party leadership and SP president Akhilesh Yadav's manner of handling issues.

SP MP Shafique-Rehman-Barq has openly stated that he is not satisfied with the working of his party.

"SP is no longer working for Muslims and does not raise issues related to the community. Yogi Adityanath is working for his own community and is doing great work but this does not include Muslims," he added.

Barq's grandson Ziaur Rehman recently won the Kundarki seat from Moradabad.

Though the SP MP is known to speak his mind, this is the first time after the assembly



elections when he has criticised his own party.

Trouble is also brewing in Azamgarh where SP MLA Ramakant Yadav is the MLA. His son Arunkant Yadav was the BJP candidate in the just concluded legislative council polls.

Local SP leaders claim that Ramakant Yadav flouted party discipline and openly sought voters for his son who is in the BJP.

"We informed the party high command but no action was taken against Ramakant who happens to be among the powerful leaders of the constituency. We have been told that Ramakant will soon be contesting the Lok Sabha by-elections in Azamgarh on a BJP ticket," a local SP leader said.

The Azamgarh Lok Sabha seat has fallen vacant with the resignation of Akhilesh Yadav who has

At least half a dozen SP MLAs are upset with Akhilesh Yadav for 'lack of direction' and 'inability to act against his disloyal cronies'

opted to retain his Karhal assembly seat.

In another pointer to the simmering discontent within the Samajwadi 'Parivar' (family), Abbas Ansari, the Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party (SBSP) MLA, did not cast his vote in Saturday's council polls.

Sources said that the SP leadership had pulled up Abbas Ansari for his controversial statement during the assembly polls and hence the newly-elected MLA did not vote for SP candidate.

Meanwhile, sources said that at least half a dozen SP MLAs are upset with Akhilesh Yadav for 'lack of direction' and 'inability to act against his disloyal cronies'.

"One of Akhilesh Yadav's close aides sought money for tickets during the polls and candidates who did not pay, were denied tickets. Akhilesh has been informed of this but refuses to take action. In such a situation, we are naturally wary of the party's future and may have to search for options," said one of the MLAs, who requested anonymity.

Sisodia slams UP over fee hike in pvt schools

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 10: Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia Sunday slammed the BJP-led Uttar Pradesh government for allowing fees hike in private schools.

"Many states have went through elections recently and two parties have formed government in those states. Within 10 days of government formation by the Aam Aadmi Party in Punjab, Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann issued an order saying private schools cannot increase their fees," said Sisodia in a virtual press briefing here.

He alleged that on the other hand, as the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) formed the government in Uttar Pradesh, it passed an order saying private schools have

the freedom to increase the fees.

Sisodia further said: "Earlier, private schools could arbitrarily increase their fees in Delhi, but we stopped it in 2015. In the last seven years, we have stopped the private schools from increasing the fees and then we introduced a system where if they need to hike the fees, they will have to seek permission from the Delhi government."

He said that their accounts are analysed by the government to figure out whether they actually need to increase the fees.

Delhi Education Minister Sisodia said that the BJP should consider the condition of the parents. He said many people have lost their livelihood during the Covid-19 pandemic and the fee hike will hurt them.



of the day quote

Dalits are not a consolidated force and have got fragmented. Dalits, who once had common energy to fight, are today holding fresh aspirations as they have become educated. Now, the divisive narrative has also come in and is fragmenting them as a block

K RAJU | CONGRESS LEADER

Basavaraj Bommai has outsourced the law & order dept of govt to Sangh Parivar, & the goons of Sri Rama Sene are appointed on contractual basis. This is a disaster for Karnataka

SIDDARAMAIAH | LEADER OF OPNN IN THE KARNATAKA ASSEMBLY

Hearty wishes to Com. Sitaram Yechury on his re-election as the Gen Secy of Communist Party of India (Marxist). Greet the newly elected Central Committee and Polit Bureau

MK STALIN | DMK PRESIDENT AND TAMIL NADU CHIEF MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

NIA conducts searches in Assam

Guwahati: The NIA Sunday conducted searches at 11 locations in Barpeta and Bongaigaon districts of Assam in a case linked to a module of the Al-Qaeda in the Indian Sub-Continent which was being led by a Bangladeshi national in India. The case pertains to an active module of the Ansarulrah Bangla Team (ABT), affiliated to the Al-Qaeda in the Indian Sub-Continent (AQIS) terrorist organisation, operating in Barpeta which was being led by Saiful Islam of Bangladesh, a spokesperson of the NIA said. Saiful had entered India illegally and was working as an Arabic teacher at the Dhakaliapara Masjid, the spokesperson said.

Kerala: Son hacks parents to death

Thiruvananthapuram: In a shocking incident, a 30-year-old man hacked to death his parents at Thrissur in Kerala Sunday morning. Police sources told IANS that the incident occurred at 9 a.m. Kuttan (60) and Chandrika (55) were cleaning their courtyard when their son, Aneesh, hacked them with a sickle. Police said that Kuttan was attacked first and then Chandrika was also hacked several times. Aneesh called the local police station, but later fled on a two-wheeler. Police said that they were in search of the culprit. The neighbours told IANS that the man had regular fights.

Naxals hack cop to death

Bijapur: A police jawan was hacked to death by Naxals at a village market in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district Sunday, police said. The incident occurred when the deceased assistant constable, Gopal Kaddi, was visiting the weekly market in Mirtur village, 73 km away from Bijapur city. The attackers, dressed as civilians, stabbed Kaddi with sharp-edged weapons, killing him on the spot, and fled, a senior officer said.

Curfew relaxed in Karauli

Jaipur: Curfew relaxation from 9 am to 5 pm was announced in violence-hit Karauli city Sunday -- to be applicable from next day -- following a peace meeting held with community groups, an official said. The curfew will however continue till April 12 considering the still tense law and order situation in the city.



If PM Narendra Modi did not utter a word on the project, people can expect from Shekhawat, who is also an MP from the state, to get the ERCP the status of a project of national importance

ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CHIEF MINISTER

NO RESPITE

Amid the heat wave, the national capital sweltered Sunday too with a maximum temperature of 41.8 degree Celsius being recorded at the Safdarjung monitoring station, while it was as high as 43.6 at Ayanagar



‘Despite lockdown, pollution levels soared during 2nd Cov wave’

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 10: The second Covid-19 wave not only unleashed unprecedented devastation of human life but also some worst air pollution episodes in Delhi despite the lockdown during March-May 2021, a new study has revealed.

According to the study in journal 'Chemosphere' published by SAFAR, experts say that the bio-mass emissions of carbon rich tiny particles and rapid flow of distant dust were found to be primary reasons for the pollution.

The study also made some shocking revelations that an "unaccounted emission source" was playing



ing a leading role after balancing of the impact of curtailed lockdown emissions. "The hidden source

of emission is believed to be associated with additional carbonaceous biofuel burning re-

lated to crematoriums whose emissions could not be accounted for in the model," an excerpt of the research paper read.

The steep surge in infection counts and the peak mortality (400 deaths/day) period was directly coinciding with peak levels of PM2.5.

The study modelled the emission as per the wood required for cremation (around 300-400 kg/ pyre) for open pyre and accounted for the chemistry of crematoria flue gases which contain higher percentage of organic, inorganic matter and particulate dust material.

According to the study, the increased carbon rich PM2.5 and PM10, aggravated the sever-

ity of Covid patients and vulnerable population, further adding to the misery.

Researchers also found that other peaks in the later part of lockdown were related to the north-westerly winds which often brought dust particles from the desert region to Delhi.

The frequency of such dust storms was unusually higher than normal, probably due to free and faster flow of dust without much resistance under this lockdown period. The paper concluded that since both Covid-19 and the dust storms can cause overlapping respiratory symptoms, a suitable strategy needs to be worked out during such emergencies.

More than one IAF official found guilty in accidental firing of missile into Pakistan



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 10: The Indian Air Force, in its enquiry, has found more than one official guilty in the case of the "accidental" firing of an armed supersonic missile into Pakistani territory, sources said, adding that severe action would be taken against the persons found guilty.

The enquiry is being conducted by Air Vice Marshal R.K. Sinha, who is probing how the missile got fired during routine maintenance work.

An unarmed supersonic missile "accidently" took off from Sirsa and landed at a place 124 km within Pakistani territory on March 9 evening. The Indian Defence Ministry had "regrettably" explained it as "a technical malfunction".

The ministry had said that on March 9, in the course of routine maintenance, a technical malfunction led to the accidental firing of a missile. The Indian government has taken a serious view and "ordered a high-level court of enquiry". "It is learnt that the missile landed in an area of Pakistan. While the incident is deeply regrettable, it is also a matter of relief that there has been no loss of life due to the accident," said the ministry.

The Pakistan Foreign Ministry had warned New Delhi of "unpleasant consequences" over what it claims was an Indian originated, but unidentified high-altitude supersonic object that crashed in its territory. It had urged India to take effective measures to avoid such violations in the future. Pakistan claimed a supersonic missile took off from Sirsa and landed within Pakistani territory.

Scuffle breaks out in JNU, several injured

The Left alliance members accused the ABVP of forcefully imposing a ban on non vegetarian food at the Kaveri Hostel in the campus while the ABVP alleged that the members of the Left alliance including the NSUI were not allowing them to conduct a Pooja and Havan programme on the occasion of Ram Navami

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 10: At least six students received minor injuries as clashes broke on Sunday at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) here between the members of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) and the Left alliance over the serving of non-vegetarian food.

The clashes erupted on Sunday afternoon following an argument between the two groups.

The Left alliance members accused the ABVP of forcefully imposing a ban on non vegetarian food at the Kaveri Hostel in the campus while the ABVP alleged that the members of the Left alliance including the NSUI were not allowing them to conduct a Pooja and Havan programme on the occasion of Ram Navami.

Later, in the evening, the clashes further intensified and images of wounded students went viral on the social media. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Southwest district) Manoj C. said the situation is now peaceful and both the stu-



A student shows his injuries PTI PHOTO

dent parties are protesting peacefully.

"Appropriate legal action will be taken on receipt of complaint," the DCP said. He said as many as six students were injured during the brawl. "All received minor injuries," the DCP, who is currently at the spot to pacify the situation, said. The ABVP, in a statement, said residents of Kaveri Hostel had organised a 'pooja' to celebrate Ram Navami which was supposed to start at 3.30 p.m. but due to the ruckus created by Leftists it could only start at 5.00 p.m.

"We were not conducting any Pooja, rather it was organised by the common students of the Kaveri Hostel. From the past 9 days everything was going on peacefully but today the members of the Left organisation created a ruckus and were not allowing us to carry on with the Pooja," ABVP national media convener Siddhartha Yadav told IANS.

He said that there was no issue of forcefully banning the non vegetarian food at the hostel, rather the members of the Left alliance had problems with students conducting a religious ceremony on the occa-

sion of Ram Navami. "The university witnessed a peaceful simultaneous celebration of Iftar and Ram Navami. This simultaneous celebration once again established the fact that JNU represents a microcosm of Bharat where different identities coexist peacefully.

The Leftists, however, do not digest this fact," he said. Yadav said that ABVP JNU Joint Secretary Vikas Kumar was injured during the incident. "His fingers were possibly fractured by the Leftist goons," he said, adding another student named Ravi Raj received injuries on his head. "His head was struck with a flower pot," said Yadav. A girl student named Divya also received injuries on her hands.

Separately, the JNUSU, in a statement accused the ABVP of forcing and attacking the mess committee to change the dinner menu and exclude the usual non vegetarian items in it for all students.

"The menu has food items for both vegetarian and non vegetarian students who can consume it based on their personal choice.

But, ABVP is using muscle power and its 'goondaism' to create a complete ruckus and reinforce their Brahmanical hegemonization ideals by manhandling the staff and asking to not prepare any non vegetarian items," the JNUSU said. It further said that JNU and its hostels are meant to be inclusive spaces for all and not one particular section.

Students from different physical, social and cultural backgrounds have different food preferences that must be respected and catered to. Meanwhile, the injured students were taken to Safdarjung hospital.

Birbhum violence: CBI trying to trace ‘political’ links of accused

Kolkata: As the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) team probing the Birbhum violence case made further progress Sunday by arresting another accused, the officials are trying to trace the "higher-level political and administrative links" of the accused as well as the victims. This is the fifth arrest by the CBI in this case. The probe agency has arrested Samir Sheikh -- the father-in-law of one of the prime accused, Lalan Sheikh who is still absconding. The CBI officials will present him at the court on Monday. Nine persons were killed March 21 in a gruesome carnage at Bogtui village in Rampurhat of West Bengal's Birbhum district. Those killed included local Trinamool Congress village panchayat chief, Vadu Sheikh. CBI sources told IANS that preliminary findings through questioning of various persons including the arrested ones hint towards multiple angles of the causes behind the massacre in which the victims as well as accused were close associates of the Trinamool Congress. The CBI sleuths feel that these two angles had made the grassroots level rivalry even more bitter that ultimately led to the gruesome massacre.



Next Prez of India, who?

The dust for the Assembly elections in five states is settling down as the process of biennial polls for 62 Rajya Sabha seats is also under process and 13 MPs have already been reelected. With this whispers in the power corridors have begun with regard to the next President of India. Though the Presidential poll is due to take place Mid-July, speculations have begun right earnest. With the BJP winning four state assemblies, any uncertainty regarding its candidate being elected have been put to rest. However, in terms of votes, the BJP and NDA will still

need some outside support to win more than 50% popular votes. The President is indirectly elected through an electoral college consisting of 4,120 MLAs in 31 state Assemblies & UTs and 776 elected MPs of both houses. Each of the 776 MPs will have 708 votes totaling 5,49,408 while 4,120 MLAs will carry 5,49,495 votes. The MLAs will carry votes according to the population of their respective states but the vote of an MP will be the same. For example an MLA in UP will have 208 votes while Maharashtra MLA will carry 178 votes and Sikkim MLA will have just seven votes. Their combined value of votes is 10,98,903.

What's cooking in Modi's mind?

Modi had surprised the country in 2017 when Ramnath Kovind was picked for the top job. Kovind was nowhere in the reckoning but Modi opted for the then Bihar Governor who is a low-profile Dalit leader. In the Rajya Sabha he was a back-bencher and headed the BJP's Dalit Morcha between 1998-2002. However, few knew then that he had strong RSS connections and had donated his ancestor's house to the saffron

parivar long ago for public good. Another factor that weighed heavily in Kovind's favour was his caste. Kovind belongs to the Koli community which makes up around 24 % of Gujarat's electorate. In Gujarat, the Kolis were beginning to turn against the Patidars. Interestingly, in Gujarat, Kolis are classified under the OBC category. However, the Centre has been treating them as SCs, particularly in Delhi, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. Secondly, Modi also wanted to prove his OBC credentials and chose another OBC cum Dalit for the post. Therefore, political pundits have started speculating the criteria PM Modi may adopt this year. Insiders say political compulsions this time for BJP are different than what prevailed in 2017. The RSS wants BJP to expand its base in Southern Indian states having consolidated enough in North, West and the East. The BJP is desperate to gain in Andhra, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu and a massive RSS workforce is deployed in these states.

Names doing the rounds

Insiders say there is no prospect of Ramnath Kovind being re-nominated

due to a variety of reasons. Another obvious name for the coveted post is that of Vice President of India M Venkaiah Naidu. He was also a surprise pick by PM Modi in 2017 and he too was very reluctant initially. He has performed his duties extremely well during the past five years and a natural choice for the top post. He also hails from Andhra Pradesh and belongs to the OBC community. But Naidu himself was once heard telling privately that the party had given him enough and he would like to retire to do social work in South India. B S Yediyurappa is another name being mentioned as Karnataka is on a weak wicket this time around. BSY was instrumental in the first BJP win in Southern India. But Team-Modi is uncomfortable with him as he is unpredictable and may not play ball. Many suggest the name of current Telangana Governor Dr. Tamililai Soundararajan as the possible choice. She hails from Tamil Nadu. Some of the prominent governors are also eyeing the post ever since Ramnath Kovind was picked up by Modi in 2017. The RSS has only one request to Modi: make an RSS connected person the President.

AAP snubs KCR

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has snubbed Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao's dreams of emerging as the leader of the third front saying he is 'Chhota Modi'. AAP Convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal made it clear that his party was not interested in joining "this front or that front". He also made it clear that the AAP believed in doing constructive work for the people rather than doing any negative politics. Obviously, Kejriwal was hinting at the efforts of Telangana Chief Minister who is keen to hold a meeting of 10 non-BJP non-Congress Chief Ministers in the National Capital. He met Sharad Pawar and Uddhav Thackeray and others. He wanted to meet Kejriwal also. But he made himself unavailable. Later, a strongly worded statement was issued by the AAP's Telangana in charge alleging that "KCR" distributed government jobs among his family members and did everything to damage the state's economy. K Chandrashekhara Rao had earlier camped in Delhi to meet Kejriwal to forge Opposition unity. KCR is forging a united front -- which excludes the Congress -- to fight against the BJP in the run up to the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

IMRAN KHAN
BOWLED OUT

Political crisis, a poorly performing economy, rising militancy and shaky relations with former allies will be on top of the agenda for the next administration

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Islamabad, April 10: Whoever becomes Pakistan's next Prime Minister following the dismissal of Imran Khan Sunday will inherit the same issues that bedeviled the former international cricket star.

A poorly performing economy, rising militancy and shaky relations with former allies will be top of the agenda for the next administration.

The incoming government will need to staff off "multiple challenges on domestic and foreign relations levels", said Professor Jaffar Ahmed, director of the Institute of Historical and Social Research.

Following are the key issues ahead for the incoming premier of the country of 220 million people:

The economy

Crippling debt, galloping inflation and a feeble currency have combined to keep growth stagnant for the past three years with little prospect of genuine improvement.



"We don't have any direction," said Nadeem ul Haque, vice-chancellor of the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), a research organisation in Islamabad.

"Radical policy reforms are needed to turn around the economy." Inflation is ticking along at over 12 percent, foreign debt is at \$130 billion - or 43 percent of GDP

-- and the rupee has dipped to 190 to the dollar, a decline of nearly a third since Khan took power.

A \$6 billion International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout package signed by Khan in 2019 has never been fully implemented because the government reneged on agreements to cut or end subsidies on certain goods and improve

revenue and tax collection.

"The IMF package must go on," said Ehsan Malik, head of the Pakistan Business Council.

On the bright side, remittances from Pakistan's vast diaspora have never been higher, although the cash flows have put Pakistan on the radar of the Financial Action Task Force, the global money-laundering and terrorist-funding watchdog.

"This is a hanging sword which could fall on the country any time," Jaffar said.

Rise of militancy

Pakistan's Taliban, a separate movement that shares common roots with the militants who took power in Afghanistan last year, have stepped up attacks in recent months.

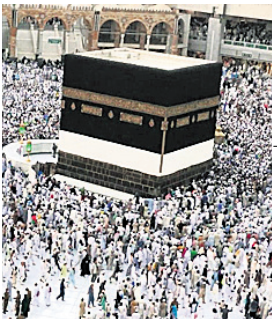
They have threatened an offensive against government forces during Ramadan -- which started Sunday -- and in the past have been blamed for a string of murderous attacks.

Put the weapons down! Let an Easter truce start. But not to rearm and resume combat but to reach peace through real negotiations

POPE FRANCIS

SAUDI ARABIA TO ALLOW ONE MILLION HAJJ PILGRIMS

Saudi Arabia said Saturday it would permit one million Muslims from inside and outside the country to participate in this year's Hajj. A sharp increase after pandemic restrictions forced two years of drastically pared-down pilgrimages



Next Pak leader to face tall challenges

The nightmare for my beloved Pakistan is over. Time to heal & repair. The darkest period in the history of Pakistan has come to an end. We bow our heads before The Almighty and pray for His guidance & success as we embark on a difficult journey of repairing the damage this man has caused to our homeland

MARYAM NAWAZ SHARIF | VICE PRESIDENT OF PAKISTAN MUSLIM LEAGUE

On April 10, 1986, Benazir Bhutto ended her self-imposed exile and arrived in Lahore to launch her struggle against former Pakistan President Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq. Today April 10, 2022, we welcome [you] back to the purana Pakistan. I have a message for the Pakistani youth that they should never give up on their dreams as nothing is impossible. Democracy is the best revenge

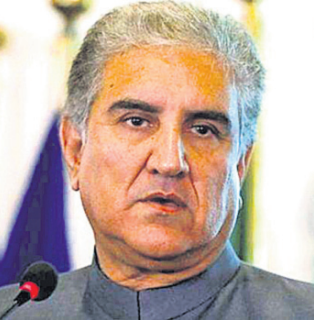
BILAWAL BHUTTO ZARDARI | PAKISTAN PEOPLES PARTY (PPP) CHAIRMAN



Kakar suggested a two-pronged approach -- "confidence-building measures and political reconcili-

ation" in Balochistan, but taking off the kid gloves for the Taliban "once and all".

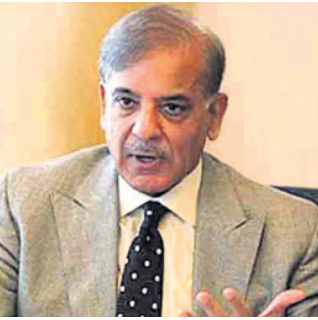
Shehbaz, Shah Mehmood throw hats into the ring



Islamabad: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Shehbaz Sharif Sunday submitted his nomination papers for the Prime Minister's post.

In accordance with the deadline of the submission stipulated by the National Assembly (NA), Sharif submitted nomination papers for the new leader of the house, while the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) nominated former Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi for the post. The Express Tribune reported.

PML-N senior leaders Khawaja Asif and Rana Tanveer will act as



endorses for Sharif. Meanwhile, PTI members Aamir Dogar and Ali Muhammad Khan will serve as endorses for the party's vice-chairman.

The NA Secretariat had earlier announced the time for the submission of nomination papers and scrutiny for the election of premier and leader of the NA.

According to the spokesperson, the submission and scrutiny of nomination papers for the election of the premier and leader of the NA shall be in accordance with the times announced in the House.

What Pakistan's political upheaval means for India, rest of the world

Washington: The nation of more than 220 million people lies between Afghanistan to the west, China to the northeast and India to the east, making it of vital strategic importance.

Here is what the upheaval, which comes as the economy is in deep trouble, means for countries closely involved in Pakistan.

■ Afghanistan

Ties between Pakistan's military intelligence agency and the Islamist Taliban have loosened in recent years. Now that the Taliban are back in power in Afghanistan, and facing an economic and humanitarian crisis due to a lack of money and international isolation, Qatar is arguably their most important foreign partner.

"We (the United States) don't need Pakistan as a conduit to the Taliban. Qatar is definitely playing that role now," said Lisa Curtis, director of the Indo-Pacific Security Program at the Center for a New American Security think-tank.

Pakistan wants the Taliban to do more to crack down on extremist groups and worries they will spread violence into Pakistan. That has



Supporters of an opposition party celebrate the success of a no-confidence vote against Prime Minister Imran Khan in Karachi, Sunday

begun to happen already. Khan had been less critical of the Taliban over human rights than most foreign leaders.

■ China

Khan consistently emphasised China's positive role in Pakistan and in the world at large. At the same time, the \$60 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which binds the neighbours together was actually conceptualised and launched under Pakistan's two es-

■ India

The nuclear-armed neighbours have fought three wars since independence in 1947, two of them over Kashmir. As with Afghanistan, it is Pakistan's military that controls policy in the sensitive area, and tensions along the de facto border there are at their lowest level since 2021, thanks to a ceasefire.

But there have been no formal diplomatic talks between the rivals for years because of deep distrust over a range of issues, including Khan's extreme criticism of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his handling of attacks on minority Muslims in India.

Karan Thapar, an Indian political commentator who has closely followed India-Pakistan ties, said the Pakistani military could put pressure on the new government in Islamabad to build on the successful ceasefire in Kashmir.

Pakistan's army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa said recently that his country was ready to move forward on Kashmir if India agrees.

■ United States

US-based South Asia experts said that Pakistan's political crisis

is unlikely to be a priority for President Joe Biden, who is grappling with the war in Ukraine, unless it led to mass unrest or rising tensions with India.

"We have so many other fish to fry," said Robin Raphel, a former assistant secretary of state for South Asia who is a senior associate with the Center for Strategic and International Studies think-tank.

With the Pakistani military maintaining its behind-the-scenes control of foreign and security policies, the change of government was not a major concern, according to some analysts.

"Since it's the military that calls the shots on the policies that the US really cares about, i.e. Afghanistan, India and nuclear weapons, internal Pakistani political developments are largely irrelevant for the US," said Curtis, who served as then-US President Donald Trump's National Security Council senior director for South Asia.

She termed Khan's visit to Moscow a "disaster" in terms of US relations, and that a new government in Islamabad could at least help mend ties "to some degree".

SHORT TAKES

■ Palestinians torch West Bank shrine

Tel Aviv: Palestinians set fire to a West Bank shrine revered by Jews as Israeli forces operated in the occupied territory following a spate of recent Palestinian attacks in Israel, the Israeli military said Sunday. The developments come as tensions between Israelis and Palestinians have escalated during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, which this year converges with major Jewish and Christian holidays. Protests and tensions around the holiday last year boiled over into the 11-day Gaza war. Military spokesman Ran Kochav told Israeli Army Radio that some 100 Palestinians marched toward the site late Saturday, rioted and set it ablaze before they were dispersed by Palestinian security forces. Images on social media showed parts of the tomb inside the shrine smashed and charred.

■ China delivers missile to Serbia

Belgrade: Russian ally Serbia took the delivery of a sophisticated Chinese anti-aircraft system in a veiled operation this weekend, amid Western concerns that an arms buildup in the Balkans at the time of the war in Ukraine could threaten the fragile peace in the region. Media and military experts said Sunday that six Chinese Air Force Y-20 transport planes landed at Belgrade's civilian airport early Saturday, reportedly carrying HQ-22 surface-to-air missile systems for the Serbian military. The Chinese cargo planes with military markings were pictured at Belgrade's Nikola Tesla airport.

France votes in cliffhanger prez poll

REUTERS

Paris, April 10: Voters cast their ballots across France Sunday in the first round of a presidential election in which far-right candidate Marine Le Pen is posing an unexpected threat to President Emmanuel Macron's re-election hopes.

Polling stations opened at 8am (06:00 GMT) and will close at 18:00 GMT, when the first exit polls will be published. Such polls are usually very reliable in France.

Until just weeks ago, opinion polls pointed to an easy win for the pro-European Union, centrist Macron, who was boosted by his active diplomacy over Ukraine, a strong economic recovery and the weakness of a fragmented opposition. Those arguments resonated with some voters Sunday. In Paris, 34-year old Thomas Bostock, who recently obtained French citizenship, said his vote was meant to



"congratulate" Macron for what he has achieved amid a tense geopolitical environment.

But Macron's late entry into the campaign, with only one major rally that even his supporters found underwhelming and his focus on an unpopular plan to increase the retirement age, have dented his ratings, along with a steep rise in inflation.

In contrast, the anti-immigra-

Iran MPs set conditions for reviving 2015 nuclear deal

REUTERS

Dubai, April 10: Iranian lawmakers have set conditions for the revival of a 2015 nuclear pact, including legal guarantees approved by the US Congress that Washington would not quit it, Iranian state media reported Sunday.

Iran and US have engaged in indirect talks in Vienna over the past year to revive the 2015 nuclear agreement between Tehran and world powers which then - US President Donald Trump left in 2018 and Iran subsequently violated by ramping up its nuclear programme.

Negotiations have now stalled as Tehran and Washington blame each other for failing to take the necessary political decisions to settle remaining issues.

Imposing such conditions at a crucial time could endanger a final

agreement by restricting negotiators' room for manoeuvre in the talks.

"The US should give legal guarantees, approved by its ... Congress, that it will not exit the pact again," the semi-official Tasnim news agency quoted a statement signed by 250 lawmakers out of a total of 290.

The letter also said that under a revived pact the United States should not be able to "use pretexts to trigger the snapback mechanism", under which sanctions on Iran would be immediately reinstated, the Tasnim news agency reported.

The lawmakers also said that "sanctions lifted under the reinstated pact should not be reimposed and Iran should not be hit by new sanctions".

Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian said Sunday that Biden should issue executive orders to lift some sanctions on Iran.

Russia appoints new Ukraine war chief: US

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, April 10: After its striking post-invasion setbacks, Russia has appointed a new Ukraine war commander, a US Official said Sunday.

Russia has turned to General Alexander Dvornikov, 60, one of Russia's most experienced military officers and - according to US Officials - a general with a record of brutality against civilians in Syria and other war theatres.

The senior official who identified the new commander was not authorised to be identified and spoke on condition of anonymity.

But the White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan said "no appointment of any general can erase the fact that Russia has already faced a strategic failure in Ukraine."

"This general will just be another author of crimes and brutality against Ukrainian civilians," Sullivan told CNN's "State of the Union."

"And the United States, as I said before, is determined to do all that we can to support Ukrainians as they resist him and they resist the forces that he commands."

The decision to establish new battlefield leadership comes as Russia gears up for what is expected to be a large and more focused push to expand Russian control in the Donbas and follows a failed opening bid to conquer Kyiv, the capital.

Dvornikov gained prominence while leading the Russian group of forces in Syria, where Moscow has waged a military campaign since 2015 to shore up President Bashar Assad's regime during a devastating civil war.

Dvornikov is a career military officer and has steadily risen through the ranks after starting as a platoon commander in 1982.

Iraq's young give lease of life to river that birthed civilisations

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Baghdad, April 10: Garbage clogs the banks of Iraq's Tigris River in Baghdad but an army of young volunteers is cleaning it, a rare environmental project in the war-battered country.

With boots and gloves, they pick up soggy trash, water bottles, aluminum cans and muddy styrofoam boxes as part of a green activist campaign called the Cleanup Ambassadors.

"This is the first time this area has been cleaned since 2003," shouts a passer-by about the years of conflict since a US-led invasion toppled dictator Saddam Hussein.

The war is over but Iraq faces another huge threat: a host of inter-related environmental problems

from climate change and rampant pollution to dust storms and water scarcity.

The 200 volunteers at work in Baghdad want to be part of the solution, removing garbage from a stretch of one of the mighty rivers that gave birth to the ancient civilisations of Mesopotamia.

"It breaks my heart to see the banks of the Tigris in this state," said one 19-year-old volunteer, who gave only her first name Rassel while working under Baghdad's Imams Bridge. "We want to change this reality. I want to make my city more beautiful," she added.

The task is Herculean in a country where it remains common for people to drop their trash on the ground. The green banks of the Tigris, popular for picnics



by families and groups of friends, are usually littered with waste, from single-use plastic bags to the disposable tips of hookah pipes, especially after public holidays. "There are a lot of plastic, nylon bags and corks," said Ali,

also 19 and an organiser of the cleanup event.

More often the garbage ends up directly in the Tigris. It is one of Iraq's two major waterways, along with the Euphrates, that face a host of environmental pressures.

of the day quote

If telcos have to pay high price for spectrum, their back will be to the wall. Government must not miss the woods for the trees and therefore they must see it (auction, pricing) in its entirety, in the long-term

SP KOCHHAR | DIRECTOR GENERAL, COAI

One of the priority markets for Oriflame is India. We have an expectation to continue the double-digit growth over next 3-5 years and I do not see it as a huge challenge

FREDERIC WIDELL | VICE PRESIDENT, ORIFLAME

We are in an expansion mode and will invest ₹200 crore over 2-3 years to increase our capacity to 5,00,000 tonne as demand for our products from customers is continuously rising

MC GARG | CMD, GOODLUCK

SHORT TAKES

4 of top-10 cos lose over ₹1L cr

New Delhi: The combined market valuation of four of the 10 most valued firms tumbled ₹1,05,848.14 crore last week, with IT majors TCS and Infosys emerging as the biggest laggards. While the market valuation of Reliance Industries, TCS, Infosys and Bajaj Finance declined, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, HUL, SBI, HDFC and Bharti Airtel emerged as the gainers with a combined addition of ₹51,628.12 crore. Among the four firms, the valuation of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) tumbled the most by ₹40,640.76 crore to stand at ₹13,49,037.36 crore.

Shell to set up LNG stations

New Delhi: Global energy giant Shell will foray into retailing LNG for long-haul transportation like trucks, with its first filling station coming up in Gujarat this year as it bets big on the Indian gas market, a senior company official said. Shell operates a 5 million tonne a year liquefied natural gas (LNG) import facility at Hazira in Gujarat and has a small network of petrol pumps. It is now looking at the LNG for trucks/buses market as a growth avenue.

Discoms' dues to gencos rise 17.3%

New Delhi: Total outstanding dues owed by electricity distribution companies (discoms) to power producers increased by 17.3 per cent year-on-year to ₹1,23,244 crore in April 2022, as per official data. Discoms owed a total of ₹1,05,029 crore to power generation firms in April 2021, according to portal PRAAPTI. On a sequential basis too, total dues in April 2022 increased from ₹1,17,390 crore in March 2022.

Gold imports up \$46.14bn in '21-22

New Delhi: India's gold imports, which have a bearing on the country's current account deficit (CAD), rose by 33.34 per cent to \$46.14 billion during the 2021-22 fiscal on account of higher demand, according to official data. Gold imports were worth \$34.62 billion in 2020-21. The surge in gold imports during the last financial year contributed to the widening of the trade deficit to \$192.41 billion, against \$102.62 billion in 2020-21. India is the world's second-biggest gold consumer after China. The imports are largely driven by the jewellery industry. The gems and jewellery exports during 2021-22 grew by about 50 per cent to about \$39 billion.



You see, reforms are important for the agriculture sector. Some farmers were opposing it (three farm laws)...I think immediately what needs to be done is restarting fresh consultations with the states

RAMESH CHAND | MEMBER, NITI AAYOG

BMW EYES 'MEGA YEAR'

German luxury automotive group BMW is expecting a 'mega year' in India in 2022 having clocked 25 per cent rise in four-wheeler sales and 41 per cent jump in two-wheelers in the first quarter. The BMW group has also lined up 24 products to be introduced in India this year



India going the EV way

India is seeing rapid growth in sales of EVs as consumers rush to switch from gasoline-powered vehicles due to the rising cost of fuel. Apart from this, EV sales have also been affected due to increasing government sops, growing awareness in urban locations over the past few months

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

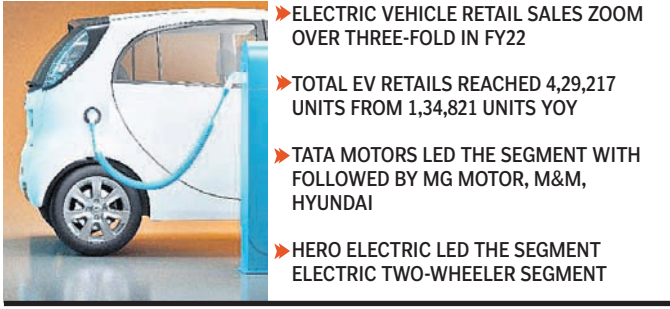
New Delhi, April 10: Electric vehicle retail sales in the country witnessed over three-fold jump last fiscal with two-wheeler offtake leading the segment, according to data compiled by automobile dealers' body FADA.

Total electric vehicle (EV) re-tails reached 4,29,217 units in 2021-22, a rise of three-fold from 1,34,821 units in the financial year 2020-21, the industry body said.

Total EV sales had stood at 1,68,300 units in the 2019-20 fiscal, it noted. According to the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA), electric passenger vehicle retail sales stood at 17,802 during the last fiscal, up over three-fold from 4,984 units in FY21.

Home-grown auto major Tata Motors led the segment with re-tails of 15,198 units and a market share of 85.37 per cent in the vertical. The Mumbai-based company's retail sales stood at 3,523 units in 2020-21.

MG Motor India settled into the second place with sales of 2,045 units last fiscal with a market share of 11.49 per cent. It had re-tailed 1,115 units in the 2020-21 fiscal.



Mahindra & Mahindra and Hyundai Motor India stood at third and fourth places with dispatches of 156 and 128 units respectively, both settling for a market share of less than 1 per cent. M&M and Hyundai had sold 94 and 184 units respectively in the 2020-21 fiscal, FADA data said.

Electric two-wheeler retail sales last fiscal stood at 2,31,338 units, a jump of over five-fold from 41,046 units in 2020-21, it stated. Hero Electric led the segment with sales of 65,303 units, grabbing 28.23 per cent share in the domestic market. It was followed by Okinawa Autotech which re-tailed 46,447 units last fiscal. Third place was taken by Ampere Vehicles with sales of 24,648 units. Hero MotoCorp-

backed Ather Energy stood at fourth position with registration of 19,971 units in 2021-22.

Bangalore-based Ola Electric with sales of 14,371 units stood at sixth position, while TVS Motor Company with registrations of 9,458 units took the seventh position last financial year.

FADA, which gathered data from 1,397 of the total 1,605 regional transport offices, said that total electric three-wheeler sales last fiscal stood at 1,77,874 units, registering an increase of two-fold over 88,391 units in the preceding fiscal.

Similarly, FADA noted that electric commercial vehicle sales rose to 2,203 units last financial year as compared with 400 units in FY21.

FPIs turn buyers; invest ₹7,707cr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 10: After a six-month selling spree, foreign investors have turned net buyers in April so far by infusing ₹7,707 crore in Indian equities as a correction in markets provided them a good buying opportunity.

Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director - Manager Research, Morningstar India, said it would still be slightly premature to call it a change in trend with respect to FPI flows, and hence it will be prudent to watch how the scenario unfolds over the next few weeks or months to get more clarity.

According to latest data with the depositories, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have made a net investment of ₹7,707 crore in Indian equities during April 1-8.

Srivastava said the inflow indicates that maybe foreign investors are almost done with the recalibration exercise of their portfolios owing to the current scenario.

The latest inflow comes following massive net outflows to the tune of ₹1.48 lakh crore from equities in the last six months from October 2021 to March 2022.

In the entire FY22, FPIs withdrew a net ₹1.4 lakh crore from equities. Despite the pullout, the NSE Nifty rose 19 per cent in the same period.

FOR 3RD QUARTER IN ROW

Funding in startups crosses \$10bn in Q1, creates 14 unicorns



As more startups mature, talks around corporate governance are now becoming mainstream and it will become increasingly important for the startups to design a corporate governance roadmap that is in sync with organisational growth aspirations

AMIT NAWKA | PWC INDIA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 10: The startup ecosystem has created as many as 14 unicorns in the first three months of 2022, and for the third consecutive quarter, they have received over \$10 billion across 334 funding deals, says an industry report.

Creation of 14 more unicorns takes the overall tally of startups with over \$1 billion valuation in the country to 84 now, according to a PwC India report.

This is the third consecutive quarter ending March 2022 when the fund inflows into the domestic start-ups ecosystem have grossed over \$10 billion in fresh funding. The quarter also has seen as many as 14 startups becoming unicorns, the report said, adding the total fund inflow in Q1 stands at \$10.8 billion.

According to the agency, the quarter saw maximum funds flowing into software-as-a-service (SaaS) companies, grossing more than \$3.5 billion.

Unicorn creation continued to flourish with 14 startups attaining the coveted status in Q1 with the SaaS sector accounting for the largest share creating five unicorns.

Amit Nawka, the startups leader at the consultancy, told PTI that despite uncertainties in the global economic environment, the domes-

tic startups have continued to attract capital, particularly in the growth capital stage.

The quantum of investments into SaaS ecosystem has a three-fold increase in the last three years, he said, adding the pandemic has only boosted this ecosystem globally, given the rising importance of remote working, productivity and overall digital transformation.

The past year has seen the advent of 15 SaaS businesses in the unicorn category amongst in the country, including Darwinbox, Fractal, Uniphore, Hasura and Amagi Media Labs. With Freshworks' blockbuster listing on the Nasdaq late 2021, mature SaaS players are increasingly considering public listing, he said.

The first quarter saw around 80 M&A transactions in the start-up ecosystem, driven primarily by roll-up e-commerce companies. And Curefoods, Mensa Brands, GlobalBees and MyGlam, which have M&As as their core business strategy continued to be the top acquirers in Q1 as well and Upscalio and Evenflow are other roll-up e-commerce companies that have joined this bandwagon.

As much as 38 per cent of M&As in Q1 were in the e-commerce and direct-to-consumer space and 22 per cent of the deals are in the SaaS space.

Musk proposes Twitter Blue subscription shake-up

Twitter Blue, launched in June 2021, is Twitter's first subscription service and offers "exclusive access to premium features" on a monthly subscription basis, Twitter says. It is available in US, Canada, Australia and NZ

REUTERS

Washington, April 10: Elon Musk, Twitter Inc's biggest shareholder, Saturday suggested a raft of changes to the social media giant's Twitter Blue premium subscription service, including slashing its price, banning advertising and giving an option to pay in the cryptocurrency dogecoin.

Musk, who disclosed a 9.2% stake in Twitter just days ago, was offered a seat on its board of directors, a move which made some Twitter employees panic over the future of its ability to moderate content.

In a Twitter post, the head of electric vehicle maker Tesla Inc suggested that users who sign up for Twitter Blue should pay significantly less than the current \$2.99 a month, and should get an authentication checkmark as well as an option to pay in local currency.

"Price should probably be



MUSK SUGGESTED THAT USERS WHO SIGN UP FOR TWITTER BLUE SHOULD PAY SIGNIFICANTLY LESS THAN THE CURRENT \$2.99 A MONTH

HE ALSO PROPOSED AN OPTION TO PAY WITH DOGECOIN AND ASKED TWITTER USERS FOR THEIR VIEWS

~\$2/month, but paid 12 months up front & account doesn't get checkmark for 60 days (watch for credit card chargebacks) & suspended with no refund if used for scam/spam," Musk said in a tweet. "And no ads," Musk suggested.

"The power of corporations to dictate policy is greatly enhanced if Twitter depends on advertising money to survive."

The company already lets people tip their favorite content creators using bitcoin. Twitter had

JSPL plans 2nd coal gasification plant

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 10: JSPL has plans of setting up a coal gasification plant - the second in the country - at its Raigarh plant in Chhattisgarh, company's MD V R Sharma said. The company is already using the coal gasification technology to produce steel at its plant in Angul, Odisha.

The 2 million tonne per annum production capacity plant, inaugurated in 2018, holds the distinction of being India's first and the only plant producing steel from 'swadeshi' coal using the coal gasification technology.

"As part of our mission to promote diversification of usage of coal, we will be setting one more coal

gasification plant at our plant in Raigarh," the MD said adding it will be second such plant in the country. When asked about the likely investment for the project, he said, "It will be pre-mature to quote any figure. We are evaluating it and will reach a final investment figure soon."

Explaining the gasification process, Sharma said coal is converted into syngas which can further be used for producing power, petrol, diesel and other petroleum products.

Syngas can be also used in sponge iron making, by the glass and ceramic industry and even in cooking. Further, India can produce the cheapest hydrogen through the coal gasification route, the MD said.

FOREX RESERVES DIP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, April 10: Nepal's central bank has announced a ban on the import of vehicles and other luxury items, citing liquidity crunch and declining foreign exchange reserves, despite government assurances that the economy will not go into a tailspin like Sri Lanka.

Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB), the country's central bank, issued this directive last week after a high-level meeting here consisting of officials from Nepal's commercial banks.

"We have been seeing symptoms that there may be some kind of crisis in the economy, mainly because of growing imports. Therefore, we have discussed halt-

Nepal bans import of luxury items



The forex reserves are now only enough to sustain the import of goods and services for 6.7 months, below the central bank's target for at least seven months

ing the imports of those items which are not immediately necessary," NRB spokesperson Gunakhar Bhatta said.

Since July 2021, Nepal has seen a decline in forex reserves due to the surging imports, declining inflows of remittance and meagre earn-

ings from tourism and exports.

By February 2022, the Himalayan country's gross forex reserves had decreased 17 per cent to \$9.75 billion from \$11.75 billion in mid-July 2021, according to central bank figures. However, despite the high balance of pay-

ment deficit, Nepal's FM Janardhan Sharma assured that the nation is not headed in the direction of Sri Lanka.

Addressing 'National Conference on Economics and Finance' organised by Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) in Kathmandu Friday, "Instead of creating panic by comparing Nepal's economy with that of Sri Lanka, we need to focus on improving it," Sharma said.

Sharma, however, admitted that the country's foreign exchange reserves was under stress due to the high imports of petroleum products, vehicles and luxury items and underlined the need to promote domestic production to curb imports.

BharatPe puts behind Grover episode, posts record growth

BHARATPE, WHICH ALLOWS SHOP OWNERS TO MAKE DIGITAL PAYMENTS THROUGH QR CODES, IS NOW IN 225 CITIES (MORE THAN 2X GROWTH FROM LAST FISCAL) AND HAS OVER 8 MILLION MERCHANTS ONBOARD (UP FROM 5 MILLION IN FY21 THAT ENDED MARCH 31, 2021)

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 10: Putting behind the controversy around its co-founder Ashneer Grover, fintech startup BharatPe has posted record growth in the fiscal year ended March 31 and is on track to break even and list on stock exchanges in the next 18-24 months, its CEO Suhail Sameer said.

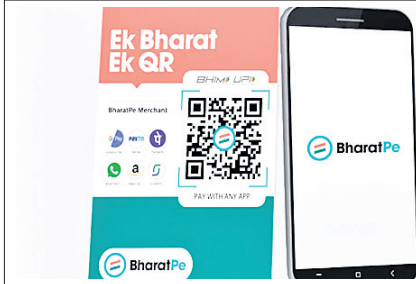
In an interview with PTI, he said while the board will take a call on what to do with the money allegedly defrauded by Grover, his priority is the firm's employees so that they stay focused and teams re-

main stable.

"Second focus is to keep firing on the business front. From a long term point of view, that's all that will matter for me, for my teams. I am just doubling down on these things," he said.

"Business in the last quarter (January-March) is up 20 per cent on every metric - transactions, TPV, loans facilitated, and revenue. And this is despite January being (hit by) Covid and everything was slowing a bit. Delhi was shut, many cities had weekend curfews," he said.

"Transaction value (TPV) has grown 2.5x year-on-year to \$16 bil-



lion in 2021-22 (April 2021 to March 2022). POS (point of sale) business is also 2x up from last year with over 1.25 lakh POS machines deployed. We do \$4 billion transactions on it,

as of March," he said.

Number of merchants who availed loans has increased to 3 lakh from 1.6 lakh a year back. "How much loan facilitated - exactly

3x. We facilitated \$650 million of loans last year (FY22)," he said.

PostPe, the buy-now-pay-later product the company launched five months back, is doing a million

transactions a month and \$50 million a month TPV.

"Overall from the company point of view, revenue has grown nearly four times y-o-y. And we will exit the year at a \$110 million annualised run rate as compared to \$31-32 million (last year)," he said. "From \$6 million, we have become \$110 million in 18-20 months."

BharatPe last month stripped Grover of all titles and positions after a third-party audit alleged grave governance lapses under him. But that has not stopped the bickering between him and the company management, including the CEO.

Kuldeep exacts sweet revenge

BOWLER RETURNS TO HAUNT FORMER TEAM AFTER WARNER-SHAW BLITZKRIEG

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 10: Openers Prithvi Shaw (51, 29b, 7x4, 2x6) and David Warner's (61, 45b, 6x4, 2x6) fear-less batting followed by Kuldeep Yadav's (4/35) bowling helped Delhi Capitals (DC) thrash Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) by 44 runs in their IPL encounter here Sunday.



Openers David Warner and Prithvi Shaw set up the platform for Delhi's victory

After being put in, DC scored 215 for five and then dismissed the Knights for 171 in 19.4 overs at the Brabourne Stadium here with Kuldeep exacting sweet revenge for being sidelined by the Kolkata team. The scoreboard pressure was always telling and Kuldeep's bowling proving to be the vital cog on a belt of a pitch. He dismissed opposition skipper Shreyas Iyer (54, 33b, 5x4, 2x6) just when he looked like taking the game away. Kuldeep had Iyer stumped with a googly which the latter had no clue as he came down the track and the ball turned away after pitching. Pat Cummins didn't play any manic knock as a Kuldeep leg-

break ended his stay and then he took a magnificent skier off his own bowling to cap off a superb evening under lights. Left-arm pacer Khaleel Ahmed (3/25) bowled fast and sharp at the onset and in the end Andre Russell (24, 21b, 3x4) had too much to do with too little time left and result was a one-sided victory for DC.

BRIEF SCORES

Delhi Capitals 215 for 5 (David Warner 61, Prithvi Shaw 51, Sunil Narine 2/21) beat KKR 171 in 19.4 overs (Shreyas Iyer 54, Kuldeep Yadav 4/35, Khaleel Ahmed 3/25) by 44 runs.

At the start, Shaw and Warner feasted on a quality bowling attack before DC survived a scratchy middle-order show to reach a healthy score. If Shaw-Warner added 93 to set the platform, Shardul Thakur (29 n o, 11b, 1x4, 3x6) and Axar Patel (22, 14b, 2x4, 1x6) added 49 in just 3.2 overs to finish the innings in style.



NIGHT OF REDEMPTION: Kuldeep Yadav (arm pointed) celebrates after getting a wicket against the Knights

Warner and Shaw were facing one of the most lethal pace attacks of this edition but to their advantage it was perhaps the best batting track. Umesh Yadav (1/48) had his first bad outing in this IPL, while Warner also launched into Cummins (0/51)

with two boundaries over cover as 50 came in four overs. It's a rarity to have 10 fours and two sixes being hit in the power play as Iyer looked clueless. The only bowler who could restrict DC batters was Sunil Narine (2/21).

CHahal SPINS ROYALS TO THRILLING TRIUMPH

LEG-SPINNER ACHIEVES 150-WICKET MILESTONE IN IPL

AGENCIES

Mumbai, April 10: Last minute histrionics by Marcus Stoinis (38, 17b, 2x4, 4x6) did not prove useful as Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) fell to the guiles of Yuzvendra Chahal (4/41) to lose the game to Rajasthan Royals by three runs at the Wankhede Stadium here Sunday. Chasing a victory target of 166 runs, LSG ended on 162 for eight with Stoinis remaining unbeaten.

What was more surprising was the decision to send Stoinis at No.8. The Australian has opened for his club and batted high up the order for his country and the various franchises he has played for. So it definitely was a blunder to send him at so low down the order. Had Stoinis got a few more overs to play with, who knows, the situation could have been different.

It will certainly be a night for Chahal to remember as he reached the milestone of 150 IPL wickets with the dismissal of Dushmantha Chameera. Even though Chahal went for a few runs, he went on picking up wickets at regular in-

BRIEF SCORES

RR 165 for 6 (Shimron Hetmyer 59 n o, Krishnappa Gowtham 2/30) beat LSG 162 for 8 (Quinton de Kock 39, Marcus Stoinis 38 n o, Yuzvendra Chahal 4/41, Trent Boult 2/30) by three runs.

ternals to stall the LSG chase.

Lucknow started disastrously losing skipper KL Rahul who was dismissed by Trent Boult (2/30)



MAN OF THE MOMENT: Yuzvendra Chahal is the centre of attention after dismissing Dushmantha Chameera, Sunday

for a first-ball duck. Quinton de Kock (39, 32b, 2x4, 1x6) offered some resistance but lacked support till the knock by Stoinis.

Earlier batter Shimron Hetmyer (36b, 1x4, 6x6) smashed an unbeaten half century as RR recovered from a mid-innings slump to post 165 for six against LSG. Jos Buttler (13) and Devdutt Padikkal (29) added 42 runs in the first five overs but they lost three wickets in a 15-ball burst to be reduced to 67 for four

at one stage.

Hetmyer and Ravichandran Ashwin (28b, 23b, 2x6) then rebuild the innings with a 68-run stand off 51 balls before the latter was strategically retired out by RR in the death overs. slog overs.

Earlier, Avesh Khan produced the first breakthrough with his first ball and then a two-wicket burst by Krishnappa Gowtham saw them reduce RR to 67 for four on a track where the ball was holding.

SHORT TAKES

Career-worst for Woods at Augusta

Augusta: Tiger Woods used to turn weekends at Augusta National into gripping theatre with his relentless charge on other golfers in the past. However, now he seems a spent force. The magic five-time Masters champion summoned so easily for so long was nowhere to be found Saturday. His 6-over 78 marked his worst in 93 career rounds at the tournament he has come to define and left him at 7-over. The last time he had such a poor round was in 1995, the year he debuted at the Augusta Masters with a score of 77.

CR7 in trouble

Manchester: Police are investigating an incident in which Manchester United forward Cristiano Ronaldo apparently is seen slapping a phone out of a supporter's hand as he left the field after a loss at Everton. "As players were leaving the pitch at 2:30pm, it was reported that a boy was assaulted by one of the away team as they left the pitch," Merseyside Police said Sunday. "Inquiries are under way and officers are currently working with Everton Football Club to review CCTV (video) footage," the police added.

Harshal bereaved

Pune: Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) pacer Harshal Patel has left the IPL bio-bubble following the death of his sister, who had been unwell for quite some time now. Harshal came to know about the tragedy after the game against Mumbai Indians ended Saturday. "Unfortunately, Harshal had to leave the bio-bubble due to a death of his sister. He did not take the team bus back to Mumbai from Pune," an IPL source informed. "He will be rejoining the bubble before the next game against CSK April 12," the source added.

All-American final

Houston: Tall, big-hitting Americans, John Isner will meet close friend Reilly Opelka in the final of the US Men's Clay Court Tennis Championships here. Fourth-seeded Isner, who won the Houston title in 2013, hit 17 aces Saturday to eliminate reigning champion Cristian Garin 4-6, 6-3, 6-4 in the semifinals. The third-seeded Opelka had 21 aces while beating Nick Kyrgios 6-3, 7-5. This is will be the sixth meeting between the two with Opelka having won four of the five meetings so far.

AGENCIES

Chanu's 55kg entry rejected at 2022 CWG

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 10: Indian weightlifter Mirabai Chanu's entry in the women's 55kg category at the 2022 Commonwealth Games has been rejected. It means she will move back to her pet 49kg division to compete at the quadrennial meet in Birmingham. The Indian Weightlifting Federation (IWLF) had earlier planned to enter Chanu in the higher 55kg division to maximise India's medal chances at the CWG, to be held from July 28 to August 8.

The Manipuri ace, who had already qualified for the CWG 49kg event courtesy of being the top-ranked Indian weightlifter in the division, accepted the proposal. She then made the 55kg cut by winning gold at the Singapore Weightlifting International in February, which was the final CWG qualifying event.

However, a change in entry rules by the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) closed the Tokyo Olympics silver medallists' prospects of competing in the 55kg at CWG 2022. According to the new rule, a country's top-ranked weightlifter in a category qualifies for the CWG but if they with-

India had wanted to field Chanu in the 55kg segment to maximise medal chances. Now Chanu will compete in the 49kg category only

draw, the next best lifter doesn't get the berth automatically. As per the old rule, the spot would have gone to the next best or qualified lifter.

Chanu's fellow Manipuri lifter Bindyarani Devi is the top-ranked Indian lifter in the 55kg division. Bindyarani was supposed to move up to the 59kg division if Chanu could have participated in the 55kg as per the IWLF's initial plans, an 'olympics.com' report said Sunday.

The 27-year old Chanu is the reigning Commonwealth Games champion in the women's 49kg. She is also the second Indian weightlifter to win an Olympics medal. The first Indian woman to win a weightlifting medal at the Olympics was Karnam Malleswari when she won a bronze at the Sydney Olympics in 2000. Chanu, on the other hand, won a silver at the Tokyo Games last year.

Indian eves atop points table in FIH Pro League

Women in Blue awarded 6 points for 2 matches cancelled against England



The Indian eves after the game against the Netherlands at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 10: The Indian women hockey team went to the top of FIH Pro League points table after their two games against England were cancelled. The Indian eves were awarded six points for the two matches that were earlier postponed due to Covid-19 related issues with the England team. The

Indian eves now have 22 points, and have leapfrogged the Netherlands (19) and Germany (13).

The two matches were initially scheduled for April 2 and 3 at the Kalinga Stadium here but postponed due to a high number of Covid-19 cases and injuries in the England team.

"The FIH Hockey Pro League matches between India and England

(Women), initially scheduled on 2 and 3 April in Bhubaneswar, but postponed due to a high number of Covid-19 cases and injuries affecting the English team, will unfortunately be cancelled, eventually," the FIH said in a statement.

"Despite all efforts from Hockey India, England Hockey and FIH, no dates could be found to reschedule the matches in India. Consequently, it has been agreed between the FIH and the two nations that the six points available for these two matches will be awarded to India," it added.

India had beaten the Netherlands 2-1 in the first match of the two-legged tie here Friday before losing 1-3 in the shootout in the second game Saturday.

On the match India lost in the shootout against Netherlands coach Jannke Schopman said that the eves neglected to create more chances.

"I think we played well for most of the game. In the first three quarters, we put a lot of pressure on them, but we neglected to create more outcomes. We little bit rushed in the end phase, and unfortunately we didn't earn penalty corners today (Saturday)," Schopman said.

Dominating Leclerc speeds away to glory

FERRARI DRIVER MAINTAINS LEAD FROM THE START TO WIN AUSTRALIAN GRAND PRIX

AGENCIES

Melbourne, April 10: A flawless Charles Leclerc led from start to finish to steer his Ferrari to an action-packed win Sunday at the Australian Grand Prix here with World Champion Max Verstappen failing to finish. Leclerc from Monaco started from pole, held his position at the first corner and never looked back, scorching round the 58-lap Albert Park circuit to take the chequered flag by a massive 20.5 seconds. Red Bull's Sergio Perez was second with George Russell an encouraging third for the struggling Mercedes and his seventh-time World Champion teammate Lewis Hamilton fourth.

"It's amazing, the car was incredible today (Sunday). What a race and what a pace today," said Leclerc after clocking a fourth career win and second of the season. "Honestly, what a car! I did a good job all weekend but it's not possible without the car. I'm just so happy. Obviously we have only had three races so it's difficult to think of the World Championships right now, but we have a very strong and a reliable car," he added.



EMOTIONAL MOMENT: Ferrari driver Charles Leclerc can't control his emotions after winning the Australian Grand Prix at Melbourne, Sunday

The McLarens of Lando Norris and Daniel Ricciardo were fifth and sixth. Alpine's Esteban Ocon came seventh ahead of Valtteri Bottas in an Alfa Romeo, with Pierre Gasly's AlphaTauri and Alex Albon's

Williams rounding up the top 10. But there was disaster for Red Bull's Verstappen, the winner two weeks ago in Saudi Arabia, who pulled over on lap 39 when second, saying on the team radio: "I smell

some weird fluid." He jumped out with smoke coming from the engine, grabbing a fire extinguisher to help a marshal put out the flames. It was his second retirement in three starts this season.

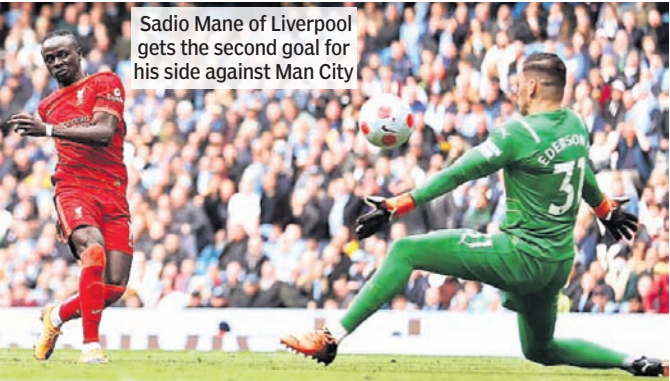
"It's early in the season and just three races have been done. So its too early to talk about winning the World Championships"

CHARLES LECLERC

Victory consolidated Leclerc's championship lead after three rounds with the Ferrari ace, who won the opening race of the year in Bahrain, earning the extra point for the fastest lap to add to the 25 for winning.

The Albert Park circuit has been revamped this year for the first time since 1996, promising to be faster and with better overtaking opportunities and it delivered for the fans. Starting on medium tyres on a fine day, Leclerc got a perfect getaway from his 11th pole in 83 Grands Prix starts and built a gap of 0.6 seconds on Verstappen after the opening lap. There was no stopping him after that.

Man City, Liverpool share points, goals



AGENCIES

Manchester, April 10: Manchester City and Liverpool shared four goals and points in an exhilarating Premier League 2-2 draw played here Sunday. The stalemate enabled Manchester City maintain their slender one-point lead in the PL table... they have 74 points to Liverpool's 73 with both having played 31 games apiece. There are still seven games to play for and one can certainly say that it will go down to the wire.

Kevin De Bruyne (5th) and Gabriel Jesus (36th) scored for the

hosts while Diogo Jota (13th) and Sadio Mane (46th) brought the Reds back on level terms each time they feel behind.

But then football is not just about goals, it is also about emotions and flairs and the way the two sides played it seemed that the game was the winner. City will certainly rue the chances they missed that came their way, but then Liverpool also had their opportunities, particularly in those 15-20 minutes at the start of the second session. No one should grudge the fact that the draw was fair result.