



ITS OFFICIAL

Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor, who were in a relationship, finally ties the knot Thursday in a traditional Punjabi ceremony

LEISURE P2



NEW IMMIGRATION STRATEGY

Britain could send tens of thousands of asylum seekers to Rwanda for resettlement, says PM Boris Johnson

INTERNATIONAL P10



EASY FOR INDIA

India hammer Germany 3-0 in their FIH Pro League first leg hockey match at the Kalinga Stadium

SPORTS P12

Normal monsoon on cards, says IMD

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 14: India is likely to witness normal rainfall during the southwest monsoon season this year with favourable La Nina conditions predicted to continue during the June-September period, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said Thursday. India had received normal rainfall during the four-month southwest monsoon season in 2019, 2020 and 2021.

The rainfall during the southwest monsoon season in 2022 will be 96 per cent to 104 per cent of the Long Period Average (LPA) of 87 cm of the 1971-2020 period, the IMD said in a release. Earlier, the IMD used to consider the LPA of 88 cm of the 1961-2010 period as the benchmark.

Quantitatively, the June to September monsoonal rainfall is likely to be 99 per cent of the LPA with a margin error of five per cent, the IMD said. The Met office predicted that there is a 40 per cent probability of 'normal' rainfall, 15 per cent of 'above normal' (104% to 110% of LPA) and five per cent probability of 'excess' rainfall (more than 110% of LPA).

Normal to above-normal rainfall is most likely over many areas in the northern part of peninsular India, central India, along the foothills of the Himalayas and some parts of northwest India. Below-normal rainfall is likely over many parts of the northeast, some parts of northwest India and southern parts of the peninsula, the IMD said.

The IMD said La Nina conditions over the equatorial Pacific region are likely to continue during the monsoon season.

Also, neutral Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) conditions prevailing over the Indian Ocean are predicted to continue till the beginning of the southwest monsoon season. Thereafter, an enhanced probability of negative IOD conditions is predicted. IOD, also known as 'Indian Nino', is an irregular oscillation of sea-surface temperature in which the western Indian Ocean becomes alternately warmer and then colder than the eastern part of the ocean.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Teachings I am yet to see but I follow him...religiously

WEATHER		BHUB	CTK
MAX	38.4°C	37.7°C	
MIN	25.8°C	26.2°C	
Humidity	77%	79%	
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	
			Forecast Dry weather mostly

6 DEAD IN AP FACTORY FIRE

Amaravati: At least six workers were charred to death and 12 others grievously injured when a reactor in a chemical factory at Akkireddigudem village in the new Eluru district of Andhra Pradesh, blew up and caused a fire in the wee hours of Thursday. More than 50 workers were present during the night shift of Porus Laboratories when fire broke out. Five people died on the spot while another succumbed to his injuries at the hospital. The conditions of three of the 12 injured are slated to be critical. Eluru District Collector V Prasanna Venkatesh informed that a probe has been ordered into the incident.



WOMAN KILLS 3-YR-OLD SON IN KORAPUT

Koraput: In a shocking incident, a woman killed her three-year old son by slitting his throat Wednesday night during 'Chaiti Parba' at Lukumari village under Koraput Sadar police limits. Police said Thursday that it is a suspected case of the woman, identified as Phulamati Muduli, losing her mental balance. The woman has been detained while police have sent the body for post-mortem. A forensic team also visited the spot to carry out investigation. Sources said that police are trying to ascertain whether the murder is a part of ritual killing. A case of murder has been registered and the woman is being interrogated.



COUNTDOWN BEGINS



Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik poses with dignitaries and members of the Indian men's hockey team after unveiling the logo of the 2023 Men's Hockey World Cup at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar, Thursday

Fuel prices singe state farmers

It is not just that vehicle owners are feeling the pinch due to hike in fuel prices, but also farmers who need diesel for tractors and pumps

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 14: A lot has been written and said about the rise in both petrol and diesel prices in the past few weeks. Diesel prices have gone past the ₹100/litre mark in most cities. However, it is not the vehicle owners who are feeling the pinch only. Even farmers have been hit hard by the rise in diesel prices as agriculture production depends on tractors and pumps for irrigation.

Bubuli Kishore Swain of Brahman Sairo village in Kantapada block of Cuttack district who earns his livelihood through agriculture pointed out that production costs have gone up by ₹20,000-₹25,000 while producing paddy in the three hectare of land he possesses. "Previously a tractor could be hired at ₹700 per hour and now the rate has skyrocketed to ₹1,000 for the same time frame," Swain pointed out.

"Even though nominal, transportation costs have gone up too. To take a quintal of rice to the mandi, earlier I had to shell out ₹1,910 per quintal. Now the cost has gone up to ₹1,940. In future this will increase also unless there is a cutback on diesel prices," Swain opined.

It is not that the farmers of



Odisha are facing this problem alone. The same is the case in Maharashtra and Punjab. Farming has become a costly affair, farmers in Aurangabad claimed.

Bhagwan Bongane, a farmer who is pursuing BSc Agriculture, said, "I own a tractor. It requires six litres of diesel to plough one acre of land, while last year, this used to cost me ₹400. But now, the price has gone up to nearly ₹650," he said.

Farmers who rent machinery have to shell out ₹1,800 to plough an acre of land, while last year, they only spent ₹1,000 to ₹1,100 for the purpose, Bongane stated. Ultimately it is the buyer who is also feeling the pinch,

Bongane pointed out Ramakanta Nanda, a farmer from Bargarh district said that due to the rise in diesel prices, cost of irrigation has increased manifold. "We are compelled to use diesel pumps as the supply of electricity is uncertain in most rural areas," he pointed out.

Farmer activist Sudarshan Chhotaray demanded that the Odisha government should provide subsidy in diesel prices for the farmers. He informed that most pumps run on diesel and due to the rising fuel prices, farmers are in a lot of difficulty. "Water scarcity during the summer forces farmers

to use diesel pumps, so they should be provided some relief in the prices," Chhotaray stated.

Puri farmer Krushna Chandra Swain pointed out that not only has the production costs doubled due to the increase in diesel prices, consumers are also being forced to pay through their teeth. So the pinch is being felt by everyone, he informed.

In recent times the Left parties and farmers group in Odisha had observed a bandh against the steep rise in prices of fuel and other essential commodities. It remains to be seen whether their efforts bring relief to the agricultural class.

1 dead, 10 injured in Nayagarh clash

Coming in the backdrop of the Joda skirmish, the incident is indeed a serious matter of concern

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nayagarh, April 14: One person was killed and 10 others injured in a clash Wednesday night between two groups in this district, police said Thursday. The conditions of two of the injured are stated to be critical.

The incident happened at Sindhuria village in Nayagarh Town police station area during 'Danda Jatra', a local festival, police informed. Coming in the backdrop of the Joda clashes, the incident once more is a pointer to how religious festivities can prompt disturbances.

Residents of Durgaprasad and Deulapalli villages took out processions with their deities on the occasion. Soon an altercation started between the two groups near a Shiva temple, police informed.

The situation soon turned ugly as some youths of Deulapalli allegedly kidnapped Naveen Parida (26) of Durgaprasad village, and hacked him to death, police said. As police rushed to the spot to control the situation, the mob attacked them, hurling brickbats.



One of the injured undergoing treatment at the Nayagarh DHH

According to sources, 'Danda Thakur' was taken out in a procession from Deulipali to Sinduria village. During the procession, trouble erupted between the youths of two villages over a trivial issue. It led to stone pelting between the two sides. Along with the villagers, Pragna Paramita Jena, IIC of the Town police station and four other police personnel were also injured. All the injured are undergoing treatment at the district headquarters hospital.

Extra forces were later sent to the spot, who brought the situation under control, ASP Umakanta Samal said. Parida's body was found near a pond in Deulapalli village, he added.

An investigation is underway to nab those behind the violence. Police have been deployed in both the villages to avoid any further flare-up, Samal informed.

MAHANADI CLAIMS 2 MORE YOUNGSTERS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jagatsinghpur, April 14: In a tragic incident, two college students drowned in the Mahanadi river in this district while taking bath, Thursday.

This is the second time this week that youngsters have lost lives while taking a bath in the Mahanadi river. Three youths had been swept away Sunday while taking a bath in the Mahanadi near the Jobra barrage in Cuttack district. Even though local rescued one of the boys, the other two were swept away in the strong current. Their bodies were found later. The twp deceased have been

Girl jumps into Baitarani

Bhadrak: A girl student went missing after jumping into the Baitarani river from a bridge connecting Chandbali and Rajkanika in this district Thursday. The girl reportedly parked her bicycle on the bridge and jumped into the water body. On being informed, Fire Services personnel reached the spot and launched a rescue operation to trace the girl.

identified as Rajeew Lochan Sahu (19) and Ganeswar Sahoo (18) of Pathuria village under Kujang police limits in the district.

Musk offers \$43bn for Twitter's 'freedom'

Tesla CEO wants to buy the social media platform to promote free speech which is now 'missing'

ASSOCIATED PRESS

New York, April 14: Elon Musk has offered to buy Twitter just days after the Tesla CEO said he would not join the social media company's board of directors.

Twitter Inc said in a regulatory filing Thursday that Musk, who currently owns slightly more than nine per cent of its stock and is the company's biggest shareholder, provided a letter to the company Wednesday which contained a proposal to buy the remaining shares of Twitter that he doesn't already own. Musk offered \$54.20 per share

of Twitter's stock. He called that price his best and final offer. If Twitter agrees Musk will have to shell out USD 42 billion approximately. "I invested in Twitter as I believe in its potential to be the platform for free speech around the globe, and I believe free speech is a societal imperative for a functioning democracy," Musk said in the filing.

"However, since making my investment I now realise the company will neither thrive nor serve this societal imperative in its current form. Twitter needs to be transformed as a private company," the billionaire added.



Musk revealed in regulatory filings over recent weeks that he has been buying shares in almost daily batches starting January 31. At that point Twitter quickly gave

TWITTER IN ITS CURRENT FORM WILL NEITHER THRIVE NOR SERVE SOCIETAL IMPERATIVE. TWITTER NEEDS TO BE TRANSFORMED AS A PRIVATE COMPANY
ELON MUSK

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lowers make him one of the most popular figures on the platform. But his prolific tweeting has sometimes got him into trouble.

Musk and Tesla in 2018 agreed to pay \$40 million in civil fines and for Musk to have his tweets approved by a corporate lawyer after he tweeted about having the money to take Tesla private at \$420 per share.

Musk has described himself as a 'free speech absolutist' and has in the past said he doesn't think Twitter is living up to free speech principles. So he would like to buy the company to help people express their thoughts 'with absolute freedom'.

leisure



HAYEK REPLACES NEWTON IN MAGIC MIKE'S LAST DANCE

Hollywood star Salma Hayek is joining the cast of Channing Tatum's new Magic Mike's sequel, replacing original female lead Thandie Newton. "Newton has made the difficult decision to step away *Magic Mike's Last Dance* to deal with family matters," informs *Variety*.

PORTRAYING MICHELLE OBAMA IS TERRIFYING: VIOLA DAVIS

Actress Viola Davis portrays Michelle Obama, former First Lady of the United States, in a new TV drama *The First Lady* and said that it was a nerve-wracking experience. Davis was concerned about what Obama would think of her performance in drama, reports *femalefirst.co.uk*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

Ideas play havoc in your head today. The good thing is that you will execute them well. Here is a word of caution for you: avoid hasty decisions. Experienced people will help you find a firm footing. Ganesha advises you to pay heed to elders' counselling.

TAURUS

Ganesha predicts that today, you will be successful in money matters. There is, at best, only an outside chance that any stimulating event or thrilling escapade will occur today. In short, the day may be boring. Fret not as the dreary day may change into an exhilarating evening, feels Ganesha.

GEMINI

The idea of being with your family will keep you motivated throughout the day. In business, your inquisitive approach will do you a lot of good. In fact, you will have the proverbial Midas touch - whichever venture you put your hands on will turn into a glittering success.

CANCER

Today, you will strictly follow your plan book. All Ganesha needs to do to predict your day is take a peep into the book. However, this is only one of those rare days when things go according to plan. You are likely to keep your views to yourself, and will hardly betray what's on your mind.

LEO

Most battles are fought and won inside our head. Hence, Ganesha urges you to maintain a positive outlook today. The stars grant you the ability to double your efforts, and allow your imagination to take flight and chart new routes to success. This should curb your frustration of the last few days.

VIRGO

You better identify your worth in the realms of emotions, feelings and sentiments. You shall warm up to and about everything - from play to colleagues to family. Simultaneously, you may realise where your limitations are. Ganesha predicts that the artist in you will flourish beginning today.

LIBRA

The Bhagavad Gita says, "Do your duty without expecting the fruit." Remember this important lesson and strive hard to put in extra efforts to finish off whatever you undertake to do. Worrying about results will only hamper your progress. Go with the flow and let results come to you.

SCORPIO

Don't run from your troubles, learn to face the challenges and try to solve your problems. This piece of Ganesha's advise is going to help you today. And you very well know why. Take all the tips that come to you spontaneously and try to implement it in your practical life.

SAGITTARIUS

Today, arranging meetings with customers and suppliers will eat into most of your time. Your patience will enable you to listen to suggestions and opinions offered by people. The result of all this, however, is slated to be most favourable and productive.

CAPRICORN

You have always been generous by nature, but your benevolent attitude will do you no good, warns Ganesha. People will try, almost blatantly, to take advantage of you, and for once, you will feel that being crafty and unrelenting would have helped kept those blood-sucking leeches at bay. But as the day progresses, you will thank the Almighty for all the precious things he made you the guardian of.

AQUARIUS

Today, you work hard and party harder! The morning sees you sweating it out at work, as you do your best to implement your plans. In the evening, you will don your best attire and get ready to have a gala time with your beloved. Ganesha says, you receive as much as you give.

PISCES

A highly productive day awaits you. You will be driven to succeed, and filled with energy and enthusiasm to achieve your goals. Meetings with your superiors ought to yield some much anticipated results, says Ganesha.

Alia Wedding

Newlyweds seal it with a kiss

Mumbai: The big fat Ranbir Kapoor-Alia Bhatt wedding everyone had been waiting for finally happened Thursday. Touted to be an intimate affair, the wedding had about 50 guests in attendance, including only family members and close friends.

The star couple, who has been in a relationship for over 5 years, took the plunge in a traditional Punjabi wedding ceremony. 'Alia' as they are fondly called by fans, reportedly exchanged their vows and took their pheras, surrounded by their families and closest friends.

For the big day, guests arrived in colour co-ordinated outfits for the white and gold theme wedding. Immediate family members, including Neetu Kapoor, Soni Razdan, Shaheen Bhatt, Riddhima Kapoor, Kareena Kapoor Khan, Rima Jain, Randhir Kapoor, Rahul Bhatt and even Karan Johar were seen dressed their best in shades of pink. As the ceremony commenced indoors, members of Ranbir and Alia's team were seen arriving distributing sweet boxes to members of the media who had assembled outside the

gated complex.

The couple released some stills that sealed the nuptial moment in Alia's Instagram account. The caption read, "Today, surrounded by our family and friends, at home... in our favourite spot - the balcony we've spent the last 5 years of our relationship - we got married. With so much already behind us, we can't wait to build more memories together... memories that are full of love, laughter, comfortable silences, movie nights, silly fights, wine delights and Chinese bites. Thank you for all the love and light during this very momentous time in our lives. It has made this moment all the more special. Love, - Ranbir and Alia"



Priyanka on how she plans to raise her daughter

Los Angeles: Priyanka Chopra has spoken out about what it's like to be a new parent. In January of this year, the actress and her singer-actor husband Nick Jonas welcomed a baby girl through surrogacy. Priyanka discussed what kind of parents she had and what kind of parent she wants to be for her daughter during an interview with Lilly Singh about her new book.

The actress, in Lilly Singh's new book, "Be a Triangle: How I Went from Being Lost to Getting My Life..." discussed "As a new parent right now, I keep thinking that I will never im-

pose my desires, fears, and upbringing on my child." She further said, "Children come through you, not from you, I've always believed. There is no belief that says, 'This is my child, and I will shape everything.' They come to you in order to find and build their own life. Recognizing that helped me a lot, and my parents were very non-judgmental in a way." On the work front, Priyanka is currently working on a number of projects. She has completed filming for *Text For You* and the web series *Citadel*. She will also star in Farhan Akhtar's *Jee Le Zaraa* with Alia Bhatt and Katrina Kaif.



Indian docu *All That Breathes* to be screened at Cannes

New Delhi: Delhi-based filmmaker Shaunak Sen's documentary *All That Breathes* will premiere in the Special Screening segment at the upcoming Cannes Film Festival, the organisers announced Thursday as they unveiled the official line-up of the movie gala.

The 10-day festival, considered one of the most prestigious gatherings of cinema talent from across the world, will also see Hollywood spectacles such as *Top Gun: Maverick* and the Elvis Presley biopic in its 75th edition.

The 90-minute Indian documentary follows siblings

Mohammad Saud and Nadeem Shehzad, who have devoted their lives to rescue and treat injured birds, especially the Black Kites.

Working out of their derelict basement in Wazirabad, the Delhi brothers become the central focus of the film and their story zooms out to document a larger snapshot of the city, where the air is toxic and the ground is on a slowburn of social turmoil.

In January, the film won the World Cinema Grand Jury Prize: Documentary at the Sundance Film Festival, a film gala that promotes independent cinema and filmmakers.

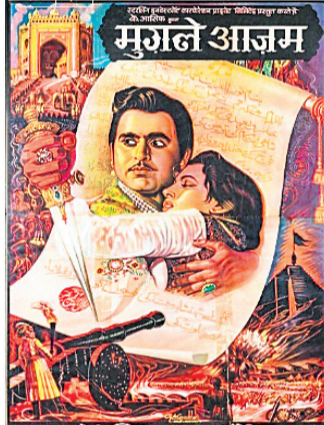


ONLINE AUCTION India's film posters set new records

New Delhi: deRivaz&Ives inaugural of The India's Film Poster Heritage Online Auction was a success, setting new records for many of the iconic images of Indian cinema, with many lots exceeding 50 bids in the intense battle to own a small part of India's crumbling and fragile paper-based cinematic heritage.

There was fierce competition for the iconic items, but interest was low for many lesser-known films and designs. The competition between a handful of film buffs resulted in some unexpected tussles such as *Khel Khel Mein* (1973), *Shatranj Ke Khilari* (1978), and the four iconic photographic images of Amitabh Bachchan on there-release lobby cards of *Deewaar* (1975).

Dev Anand's lesser-known films, such as *Aandhiyan* (1952), 'House No.44' (1955), and 'Manzil' (1960), all broke records, as did 'Tarana' (1951), 'Khamoshi' (1969), 'Aavishkar' & 'Majboor' (1974), 'Mili' (1975), and 'Laila Majnu' (1976). "We are pleased with our inaugural auction on India's film poster

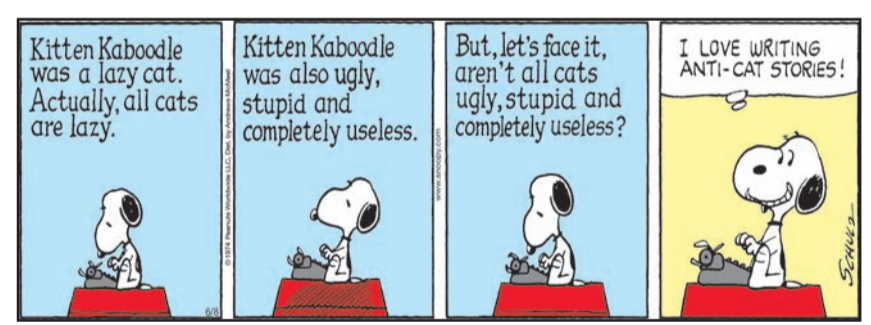


heritage. The market is rapidly growing with interest from England, Singapore, Dubai, the USA and, naturally, India. However, the participation of the film fraternity will need to improve if the preservation efforts are to take a significant leap forward. I am sure our next auction will galvanise further interest," stated Ambassador (Retd.) Niranjan Desai, Chief Spokesperson of deRivaz & Ives.

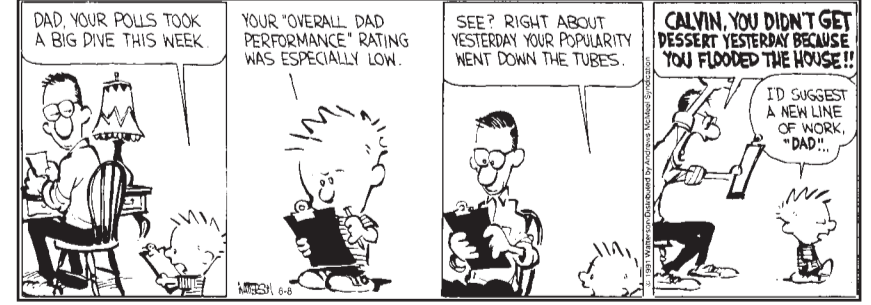
TOP 6 GROSSERS

1. MotherIndia - One-Sheet first release poster - ₹425,600.00
2. Mughal-e-Azam - Three-Sheet first release poster - ₹380,800.00
3. Deewaar - Four photographic prints on re-release lobbycard - ₹358,400.00
4. Mughal-e-Azam - Two-Sheet first release poster - ₹291,200.00
5. Awara - One-sheet original release poster - ₹179,200.00
6. Khel Khel Mein - one-Sheet original release poster - ₹179,200.00

PEANUTS



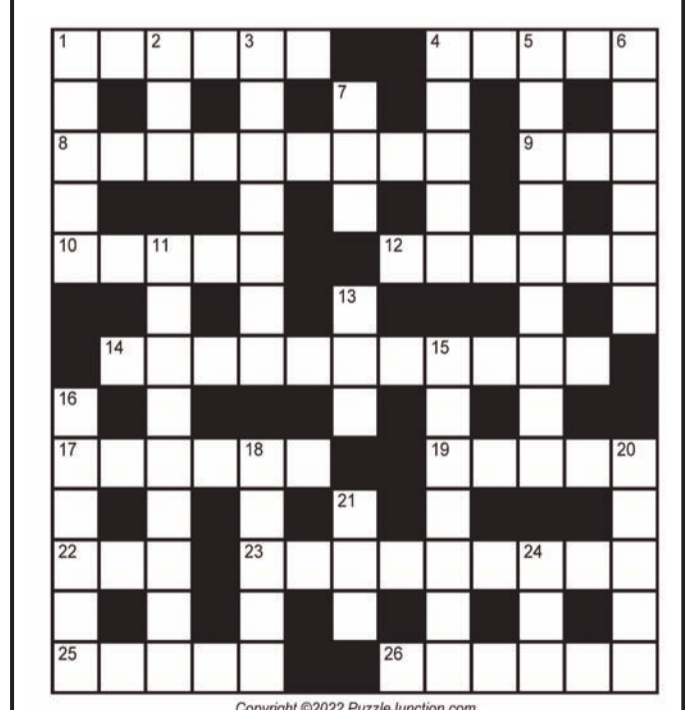
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



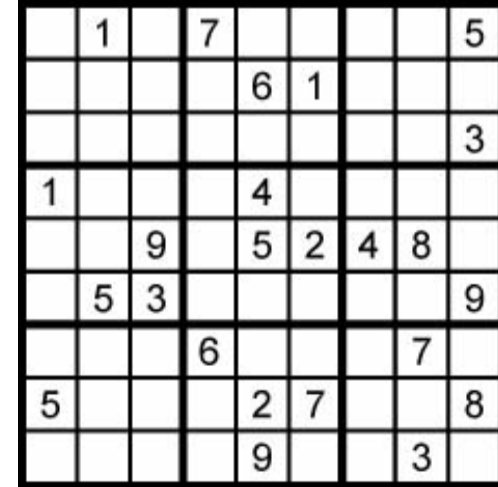
FUN post CROSSWORD



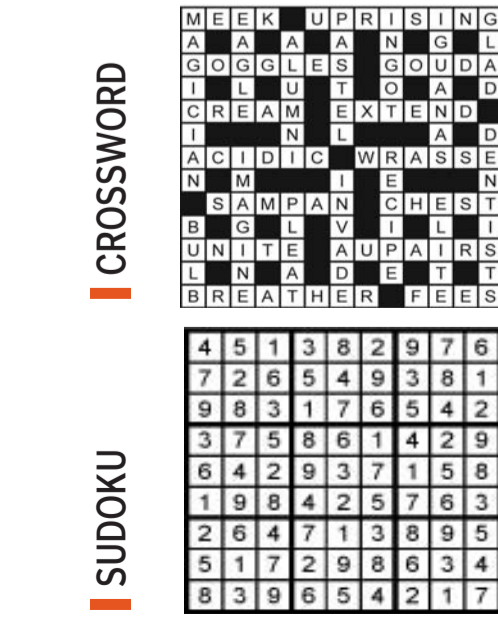
- Across
- 1 Anxious
 - 4 Kingdom
 - 8 Winging it (2-7)
 - 9 Hit the slopes
 - 10 Santa ___ Hill, in Santiago, Chile
 - 12 Formal order
 - 14 *The Prince* author
 - 17 Ready to retire
 - 19 Necklace item
 - 22 Sailor's affirmative
 - 23 Toxic
 - 25 Passenger ship
 - 26 Fix
 - 5 Moreton Bay locale
 - 6 Type of voyage
 - 7 18-wheeler
 - 11 Madagascar lizard
 - 13 Pathetic
 - 15 Detonate
 - 16 Tear into
 - 18 Someone you pay?
 - 20 Vanquished
 - 21 Fairy tale
 - 24 Harem room
- Down
- 1 Game bird
 - 2 Aquatic shocker
 - 3 Day of rest
 - 4 Scalawag

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS

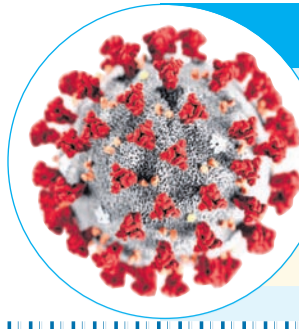


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



FESTIVE TREAT

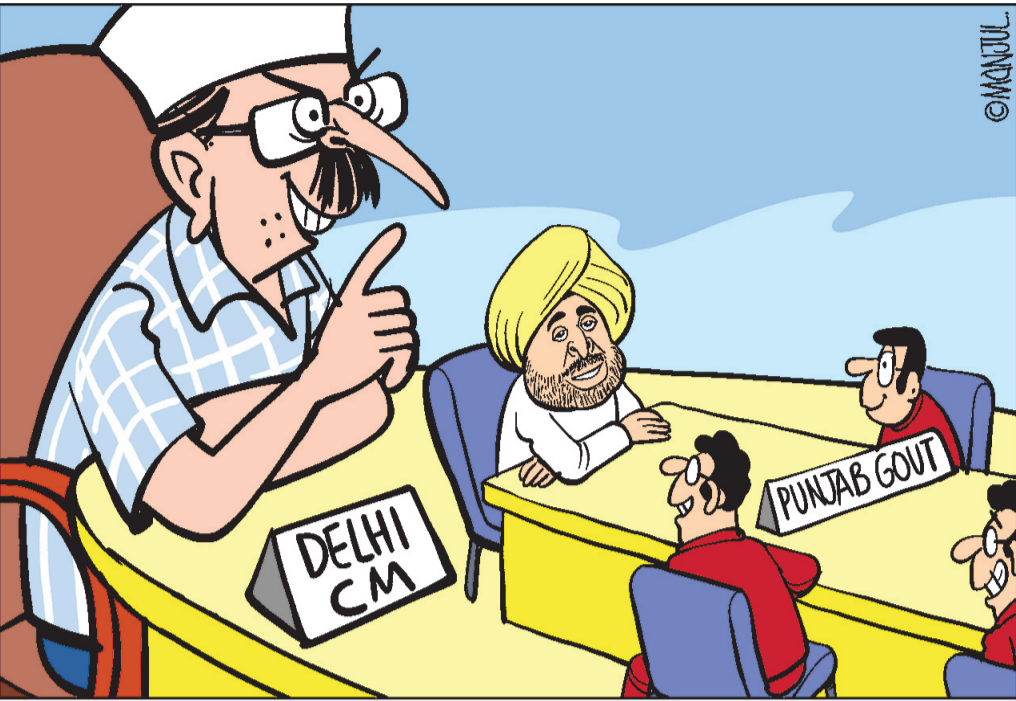
Members of a voluntary organisation distribute Pana, a traditional drink, at PMG Square in Bhubaneswar on the occasion of Maha Bishuba Sankranti, Thursday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	50,23,87,434	45,26,37,385	62,15,334
India	4,30,39,023	4,25,06,228	5,21,737
Odisha	12,87,885	12,78,605	9,122

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



₹39.3cr spent on Vamsadhara Tribunal

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, April 14: An expenditure of Rs 39.3 crore was incurred till December 2021 by the Vamsadhara Water Dispute Tribunal constituted to adjudicate Vamsadhara river dispute between Odisha and Andhra Pradesh.

This was revealed by the annual report of the Ministry of Jal Shakti recently.

The Centre had constituted the tribunal in February 2010 following the direction of the Supreme Court to resolve the dispute between the riparian states.

It was dissolved by the Centre in March this year.

The ministry is satisfied that no further reference to the tribunal in the matter would be necessary.

Odisha has moved the SC against the order of the tribunal and now the matter is pending



Union Ministry of Jal Shakti is satisfied that no further reference to the tribunal in the matter would be necessary

Odisha has moved the Supreme Court against the order of the tribunal and now the matter is pending before the apex court

before the apex court.

Significantly, the tribunal had given its final verdict on the river dispute in September 2017 but Odisha and the Centre had sought clarification on the order and filed applications for the same in December 2017.

In 2019, the tribunal gave a direction to conduct a survey in order to identify 106 acres of land to be acquired by Odisha.

The tribunal submitted its next report in June 2021 permitting Andhra Pradesh to construct the Neradi barrage across

the river with ancillary structures.

The tribunal had said that the barrage can have a right head sluice (RHS) of 8,000 cusecs of design capacity for meeting the requirements of AP and have a left head sluice (LHS) to cater to the requirements of Odisha below the Neradi barrage.

The cost of LHS was directed to be borne by Odisha, it was learnt.

Aggrieved by the verdict of the Vamsadhara Tribunal, Odisha has filed three special leave petitions (SLPs) before the Supreme Court.

The first SLP was filed in 2018 against the September 2017 order of the tribunal while the second SLP was filed in 2019 against September 2019 order of the tribunal.

Odisha filed a third SLP in 2021 against the June 2021 order of the tribunal.

PM, CM greet people on Odia New Year



Devotees walk on burning charcoal as part of a penance in front of Goddess Mangala temple at Rasulgargh in Bhubaneswar on the occasion Maha Bishuba Sankranti, Thursday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 14: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Thursday greeted people of Odisha on the occasion of Odia New Year and Maha Bishuba Sankranti.

"Greetings on Odia New Year and Maha Bishuba Pana Sankranti. May the New Year be filled with abundance of happiness. May the spirit of brotherhood in our society be furthered and may everyone be in best health," he tweeted. Odisha Governor Ganeshi Lal and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik also extended greetings to people of Odisha.

In a video message, Patnaik said, "With the blessings of Lord Jagannath, may the New Year be prosperous for all."

The Odia New Year is marked by the publication of the new 'panjika' - an almanac of Hindu

religious festivals, timings, and predictions for the New Year.

The 'panjika' is prepared as per the solar calendar, and it incorporates the auspicious dates, timings and movement of stars from 'Mesha Sankranti' till 'Mina Sankranti'.

Special rituals were performed at the Jagannath temple in Puri where the astrologers recited the new 'panjika' before the trinity -- Lord Balabhadra, Lord Jagannath and Goddess Subhadra.

Maha Bishuba Sankranti, also called 'Pana Sankranti', as 'Pana' - a sweet drink prepared with fruits, sugar, 'chenna', cashew and spices -- is distributed among the people.

People perform special pujas on this day, which is also celebrated as Hanuman Jayanti in the state. Devotees also take baths in rivers to mark the day.



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A Government committed to inclusive development of Tribal Communities

State eyes 100 MTPA steel production by '30

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 14: Odisha which has a steel-producing capacity of 30 million tonne per annum (MTPA) expects to enhance it to 100 MTPA by 2030, said Industries Minister Dibya Shankar Mishra at the two-day investors' meet at Jamshepur that concluded Thursday.

Organised by the Odisha government in association with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), the meet aimed at showcasing the investment potential of Odisha in sectors like metal, metal downstream and chemical.

Interacting with the investors, Mishra said Odisha contributes 34.3 per cent of the total mineral production in the country. "We are the number one producer of chromite, nickel, bauxite, manganese and iron ore. Odisha has the steel-producing capacity of around 30 MTPA, which is expected to grow up to 100 MTPA by 2030," he said.

Odisha has the vision to develop downstream units in the metal sector in order to achieve more than 50 per cent value addition to the primary metal produced in the state,

added the minister.

Industries Secretary Hemant Sharma presented the investment potential in Odisha. He highlighted the progressive policies, natural advantages, industry-led infrastructure development, and availability of the industrial land and highly skilled human resources which give the state a competitive advantage over others.

Sharma also highlighted the ready-to-move industrial lands across the state and the competitive power as well as water tariffs to set up industries and manufacturing units.

Highlighting that Odisha is equipped with the necessary infrastructure, IPICOL and IDCO MD Bhupendra Singh Poonia invited the investors from Jharkhand to expand and explore new avenues in Odisha.

The state government delegation also interacted with more than 20 potential investors from sectors such as downstream and ancillary in the metal sector, renewable energy and chemical in a one-to-one format, it was learnt.

More than 120 delegates representing various large scale and MSME industries across Jharkhand attended the meet.

- ◆ Bhagwan Birsa Munda's Jayanti declared as 'Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas'
- ◆ Four-fold increase in Union budget for tribal development from ₹21,525 crore in 2013-14 to ₹87,584 crore in 2022-23
- ◆ Allotment for Scholarships doubled from ₹978 crore in 2013-14 to ₹2,726 crore in 2021-22
- ◆ Five-fold jump in number of Eklavya schools sanctioned in 2014-22 (512), compared to 2004-2014 (90)
- ◆ Over one crore tribals screened during project to eliminate Sickle Cell disease

- ◆ 10 Tribal Freedom Fighters Museums being set up across India
- ◆ Doubling of forest rights from 55 lakh acre in 2006-14 to 103.5 lakh acre in 2014-22
- ◆ Mission Van Dhan benefitting 9 lakh people via 52,976 Van Dhan SHGs in 3,110 Vikas Kendra clusters
- ◆ Bamboo taken out of regulatory shackles by amending Indian Forest Act, boosting bamboo cultivation and sale
- ◆ For the first time ever, Development and Welfare Board for De-Notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities constituted

“ Our Government has been steadfast in its efforts towards empowerment of our tribal communities and preservation of their traditions. We are working tirelessly to transform the tribal-rural economic system ”

- Narendra Modi

CS on 3-day visit to Malkangiri, Koraput

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 14: Chief Secretary SC Mahapatra is on a three-day official visit to Malkangiri and Koraput districts. On the first day, Thursday, Mahapatra reached Malkangiri and reviewed several developmental projects being executed or proposed for the district.

He held a meeting with all district-level officials at the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) conference hall. Collector Vishal Singh, SP Nitesh Wadhvani, DRDA project director Balkumud Bhuyan along with district-level officers of different departments presented the updated data about the works being implemented by them.

The projects relating to road communication, drinking water, agriculture, horticulture, social security schemes and promotion of agro enterprises figured in the meeting.

Reviewing the progress of various projects at a meeting, the Chief Secretary directed the officials to work with a mission to serve people. He directed the officials to complete the construction and repair of roads before the onset of monsoon. He directed to complete various livelihood projects at the earliest to provide employment for people throughout the year.

He said the proposed airport at Malkangiri will be developed by March, 2024. It will come up on 95 acres of land on the outskirts of Malkangiri. He also said that land acquisition has been completed and forest clearance for the project has been obtained. The state government would soon invite tender and construction of field level work would start soon. It has plans to ensure drinking water to all the towns in Malkangiri on saturation mode.

Balimela township has been fully covered with piped drinking water facilities and will be completed in Malkangiri district headquarters town soon, he added. Mahapatra also visited a few project sites to assess progress. He will visit Koraput Friday to hold a similar meeting.

Weapons seized from gangster's house

BHUBANESWAR: A Commissionerate Police team Thursday raided dreaded criminal Rajesh Mahapatra's house at Pichukuli sium in Ganganagar under Capital police limits here, and found sharp weapons and a toy gun. City cops, while probing into several looting cases in the city, found Rajesh involved in all the incidents. The victims also identified him from CCTV footage of the crime. Rajesh, a native of Nayagarh, had concealed some of the weapons under concrete flooring. The cops failed to arrest him as he had already fled the City.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By an affidavit (No. 54AA 090933) before the Executive Magistrate at Jharsuguda, I Maranatha John Stephen Bridge, resident of Swargiyasthana, Cox Colony, Jharsuguda, hereby declare that my mother's actual and correct name is DELPHINA TITRA BRIDGE. That her name is wrongly mentioned in my Educational and Identification documents as DELPHINE TITRA BRIDGE. That DELPHINE TITRA BRIDGE and DELPHINA TITRA BRIDGE are one and the same person.

LOST
I, Bijay Sharma, 41years, S/o Late Kamal Kishore Sharma, At -Jumma Masjid lane, Po-Chandnichowk, Ps-Lalbag, Dist-Cuttack have lost my Certificate No. OD02620418377621T, Regd. Sale Deed No- 10392105817, Dated- 11/10/2021 of Mouza-Unit No.17, Machhua Bazar, Area- AO.050dec. from one Nelli Venkat Sai Goutam on 08.10.2021 vide regd. sale deed somewhere in the high court premises. If anybody found the same document please contact the above address or ph. 7606895109

One more held over ₹6.8cr subsidy fraud



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 14: The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of the state Crime Branch Thursday arrested one more person in connection with the misappropriation of government subsidy to the tune of ₹6.81 crore on the pretext of selling agricultural equipment to farmers.

The accused has been identified as Bijaya Kumar Nayak, the proprietor of Modern Agro Tech in Balasore. Earlier, the EOW had arrested Sheetal Agro Inputs Pvt. Ltd Director Manas Ranjan Dash and his brother Tapas Kumar Dash in connection with the subsidy fraud.

According to EOW sources, Sheetal Agro Inputs Pvt. Ltd was registered with the state Agriculture department's direct benefit transfer (DBT) portal and authorised

by the government to sell agricultural equipment to farmers under various subsidies schemes.

Between 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 fiscals, Dash and his brother Tapas in connivance with its eight dealers, including Nayak, had uploaded a series of fake invoices related to the sale of 504 transplanters to farmers of 19 districts including Jagatsinghpur, Jajpur, Balasore, Sambalpur, Khurda and Kalahandi on the DBT portal and misappropriated subsidies to the tune of Rs 6.81 crore, EOW sources said.

Out of the total 504, Nayak has uploaded fake invoices related to the sale of 86 transplanters to the farmers in Balasore district. In reality, not a single transplanter was sold to the farmers, sources said.

Nayak uploaded fake documents including the bank accounts of the farmers and their address details to the government portal. He conspired with the farmers and paid them a few thousands before misappropriating the subsidy amount.

The cost of each paddy transplanter ranged between ₹2.33 lakh and ₹3 lakh while the government offered ₹93,320 to ₹1.5 lakh as subsidy on each machine, sources said.

OPCC prez says change of guard needed sooner

Immediately after the recently concluded panchayat and urban polls, there is a fresh move for a change of the OPCC president, and some of the senior leaders have already met the party high command and sought a change of guard in the OPCC



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 14: Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) president Niranjan Patnaik Thursday said a change is needed in the OPCC.

Patnaik said this in the backdrop of wide speculation on change of guard in the OPCC after the party's dismal performance in the recently concluded panchayat and urban polls. He said the OPCC president's post is not permanent; it is changed every two-three years.

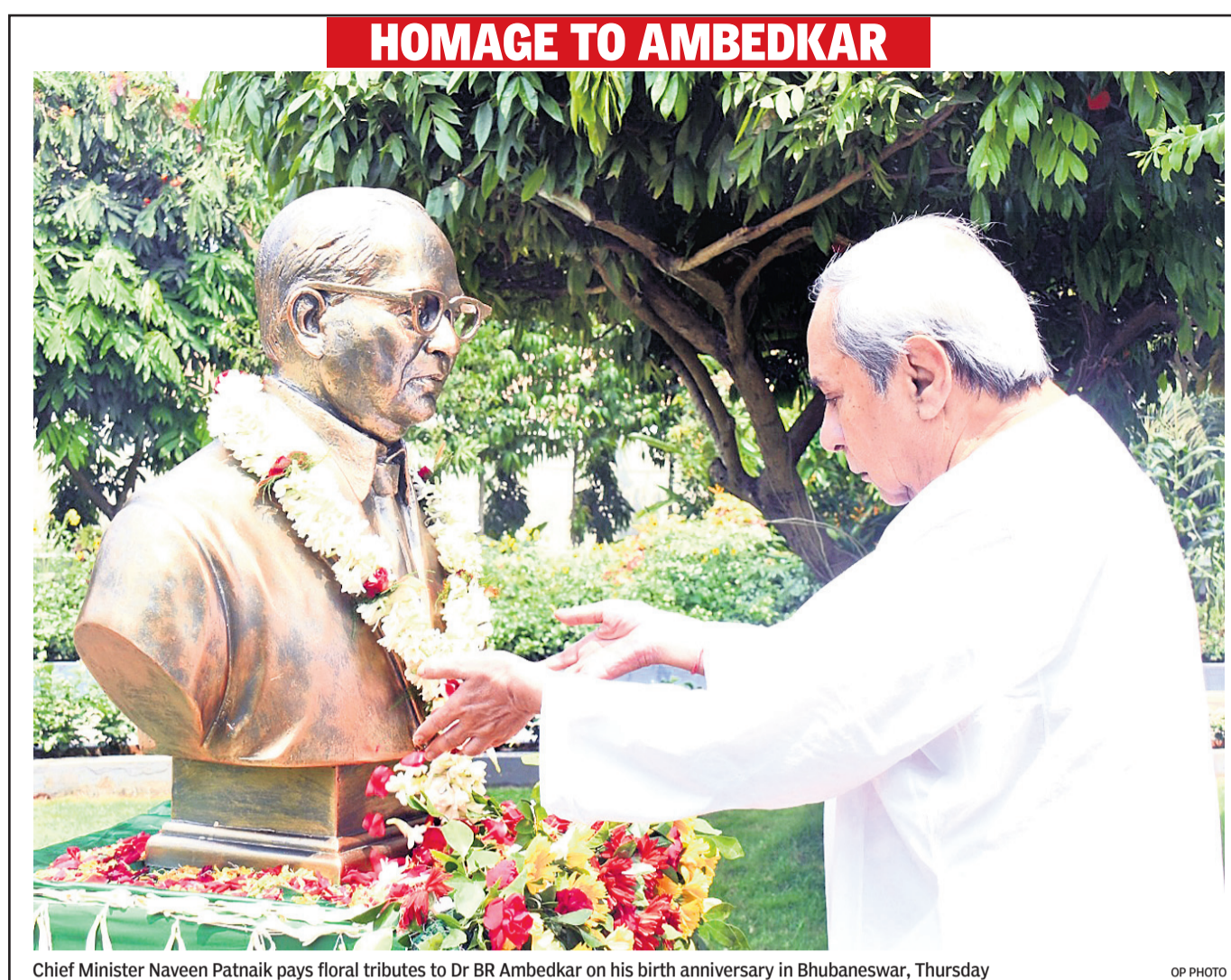
Patnaik, who assumed the OPCC chief post in 2018 ahead of the general elections for Lok Sabha and state Assembly, said, "Some people spread only bad messages. Change of leadership is not a new thing. It is needed, the sooner the better."

An MLA should be appointed for the post, be it Suresh Routray, Barabati-Cuttack MLA Mohammed Moquim or any other. We will welcome the move

TARAPRASAD BAHINIPATI | CONGRESS MLA

The OPCC president also said that he had resigned from the post immediately after the 2019 elections on moral responsibility for party's dismal performance. "What can I do, the All India Congress Committee (AICC) has not yet accepted my resignation."

Patnaik also said that he has no idea when the high command will take a final call in regard to his resignation. He said that there are



Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik pays floral tributes to Dr BR Ambedkar on his birth anniversary in Bhubaneswar, Thursday

OP PHOTO

HOMAGE TO AMBEDKAR

All-time high nesting of Olive Ridley turtles on Rushikulya coast



POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, April 14: Nesting of Olive Ridley turtles has reached an all time high on Rushikulya coast of Ganjam district. More than five crore eggs were laid on the second largest Olive Ridley-friendly coast of the world this year, a senior Forest official said.

According to Berhampur divisional forest officer (DFO) Amlan Nayak, so far, as many as five lakh female turtles have nested around Gokharakuda and Kantiagada forest ranges of the coast and laid more than five crore healthy eggs.

"Hatchlings will successfully emerge from the eggs during the next 50 days. Keeping in view favourable hatching and safety of the mother turtles along with their hatchlings, the Forest department has made extensive arrangements on Rushikulya coast," Nayak informed.

The area under three kilometre distance from the coast has been de-

clared as 'core area', in order to facilitate smooth nesting of the turtles. The area has been separated into three different zones with distinct partitions. Entire nesting zone has been protected from visitors, Nayak added.

It is pertinent to mention here that scientists have tagged more than 6,500 Olive Ridley turtles in the Rushikulya coast of Ganjam to gather more information about their breeding behaviour and migration.

During the nesting period, scientists of the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) have tagged nearly 1.5 per cent of all turtles that have turned up at the beach. ZSI scientist Basudev Tripathi stated.

"The more Olive Ridelys we tag, possibly, the more information will be obtained about their breeding behaviour and re-migration interval. The probability of tag returns was very low last year and while 1,200 turtles were tagged, only four tag returns were recorded," Tripathi said.

SOA pays tribute to BR Ambedkar

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 14: Glowing tributes were paid to Bharat Ratna BR Ambedkar on his birth anniversary at Siksha 'O' Anusandhan (SOA) Thursday with speakers hailing him as the architect of Indian Constitution which has stood the test of time.

Though he came from a family of 'untouchables', he battled heavy odds to emerge as the true face of India in the outside world, VC Ashok Kumar Mahapatra said at a meeting organised by the NSS wing to mark the occasion. Describing the Indian Constitution as the best in the world, he said it encompassed law, justice, equality and honesty.



SOA Advisory Board chairman Damodar Acharya said in spite of the kind of experience Dr. Ambedkar had as an untouchable in society, he rose to be the architect of the constitution of the nation. He said that untouchability was the result of a mental attitude and the society was still trying to come out of this mindset. "We should respect our Constitution and Dr. Ambedkar to take the country forward," he said adding he had embraced Buddhism to protest against untouchability.

'It would be challenging to pursue 2 full-time courses simultaneously'

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, April 14: The University Grants Commission (UGC) recently announced that students will now be able to pursue two full-time academic programmes in physical mode. The commission has laid down a set of guidelines regarding the same. Earlier, the students did not have the permission to pursue two full-time programmes. They could only pursue one full-time degree along with online/short-term/diploma courses.

The new guidelines will apply to all the programmes available across the country. Students can either choose a combination of a diploma programme and an undergraduate (UG) degree, two master's programmes, or two bachelor's programmes. If a student is eligible to pursue a postgraduate (PG) degree and also wants to enroll in a bachelor's degree in a different domain,

he/she will be able to pursue the PG and UG degree simultaneously. However, the class timing for both the programmes must not clash, said the new guidelines.

Orissa POST talks to a few students and experts to collect their views on the issue.

Swetalina Mohanty, a first year Zoology student of BJB College, said the UGC guidelines will open new opportunities for the students and they will be able to gain skills and knowledge of two degrees at the same time. She expressed her desire to pursue a degree in Chemistry. "Pursuing two courses simultaneously will be a tough task. But, we have studied multiple subjects for Class X and XII exami-

nations. So, I think students can manage things," She added.

Sweta Soundarya Das, a BTech student, said the UGC decision is good but it would be difficult for the students to pursue two degrees simultaneously. This will create confusion for the students and they cannot give proper focus

on two separate courses. In this context, we have to check the infrastructure and facilities available in our educational institutions. This is a new thing and our system will take time to get familiar with it, she added.

Vivek Puspalak, a first-year Chemistry student from BJB Autonomous College here said, "The decision could be beneficial

for the students. But students pursuing technical courses will find it difficult to give attention on another course simultaneously. I am however focusing on competitive exams."

Naimisha, a sociology graduate, said the students need skills in multiple subjects to make themselves eligible for jobs in different sectors. "I am planning to do PG in Sociology and Economics simultaneously," she added.

Soumya Rout, another first year student, said it will be challenging for students to pursue two courses simultaneously. Apart from

focusing on their college education, the students need time to prepare for the competitive examinations, he added.

Educationist Naba Kishore Pujari welcomed the decision and said it would be beneficial for students. They can now pursue some professional courses in addition to their college education to enhance their employability, he said.

Alok Ranjan Behera, an Assistant Professor in the department of Economics at Utkal University, said there would be multiple challenges for pursuing two full-time programmes simultaneously. The

students may find it difficult to attend the required number of classes for the two courses. "I think the examination process requires an overhaul for effective implementation of the new UGC guidelines," he added.

Utkal University Vice Chancellor Sabita Acharya said students can't give justice to two academic programmes simultaneously. They have to devote a lot of time to attend the classroom teachings for both courses. The UGC guidelines clearly states that the class timing for both the programmes must not clash. This would be a challenging task.

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JODA LIMPS BACK TO NORMALCY

POST NEWS NETWORK

Joda, April 14: After days of unrest and simmering communal tension, the district administration has managed to restore peace in Joda town, Thursday, but prohibitory orders under Section 144 are still in force.

As per sources, Hanuman Jhanda was hoisted atop the Shiv temple here in the presence of police and administrative officials on the occasion of Pana Samkranti, Thursday.

There were heavy security arrangements in ward no-4 when Hanuman Jhanda was taken from Hanuman temple to Shiv temple. Armed police forces had been deployed atop the roofs. Ranjit Mahakud, Saroj Sahu, Mahavir Sharma and Manoj Jaiswal on behalf of the temple committee took part in the flag procession while people from the minority community such as Mohammed Abdul Hassan, Naushad Alam, Mohammed Waqil and Mohamed Safique participated in the procession.

Keonjhar superintendent of police (SP) Mitrabhanu Mohapatra, ASP



Sudam Charan Sahu, Champua sub-collector Pratap Pritimaya, Barbil tehsildar Alok Patel (as magistrate), Barbil SDPO Himansu Bhusan Behera, Joda IIC Padmalaya Sahu, Joda municipality chairperson Jadish Prasad Sahu and executive officer Bichitrnanda Nayak were present on the occasion. The procession reflected a scene of communal harmony with some people of minority community serving water to others amid scorching heat, Thursday.

"All possible efforts are being taken to maintain communal harmony and

camaraderie. The administration will gradually relax Section 144 depending on the changing situation," said the Champua sub-collector. He also added that grocery shops will be allowed to open so that people can buy essentials.

The SP said that police force will be deployed in the area until normalcy returns. He also added that police are hawk-eyed on groups in social media floating rumours. Stern action will be taken against people trying to create communal hatred, he added.

Some people of both the communities observed that a few traders from

CLASH AFTERMATH

Hanuman Jhanda hoisted atop Shiv temple in presence of officials

Prohibitory orders under Section 144 are still in force

Police are hawk-eyed on groups in social media spreading rumours

outside had created such a situation.

Notably, the administration has formed a peace committee involving people of two communities and some officials Wednesday.

A meeting was held at the Joda municipality office at 1 pm. Senior citizens, representatives of the majority and minority communities, administrative and police officials and intellectuals discussed effective ways to end current situation.

At the meeting, representatives of both the communities had assured the officials that they would agree on whatever steps will be taken by the administration to being back normalcy.

MATTER OF FAITH



Women prostrate as a mark of submission for fulfillment of their wishes on the occasion of Meru Prava, the concluding day of Dandakali Yatra in Purusottampur of Ganjam district, Thursday

SHORT TAKES

2 killed, as many critical in mishap

Athagarh: A man and a minor girl died while two others sustained grievous injuries in a mishap on a bridge near Gopinathpur under Badamba police limits of Cuttack district Thursday. The deceased have been identified as Akshay Nayak and Supriya Jena, 10, of Nayagarh. Supriya along with her father Bharat Jena was crossing the T-Bridge at Gopinathpur when Akshay's motorcycle coming from the opposite direction collided head on. Akshay and Supriya died on the spot.

3 bodies found

Sambalpur: Mutilated bodies of a youth and a girl, believed to be lovebirds, were recovered from railway tracks under A Katapali overbridge near Hirakud station in Sambalpur district Thursday. It is suspected that someone has killed them before dumping their bodies on the tracks. Police recovered the bodies, the identities of which are yet to be ascertained, and sent them for autopsy. An investigation into the matter is underway. In another incident, Kaptipada police in Mayurbhanj Thursday fished out the body of a man tied with heavy stones from Sona dam. Prime case, it appears to be a murder case, said the police, who registered a case and started a probe.

Nayagarh 'Chhenapoda' yet to receive GI tag

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nayagarh, April 14: Nayagarh is for 'Chhenapoda', a desert made of baked cottage cheese, as Cuttack district Thursday. Hundreds of families in the district are into 'Chhenapoda' business for decades. The famous signature dish of Odisha, 'Chhenapoda', has transformed the lives of people here and made them self-reliant.

The 'Chhenapoda Diwas' that was celebrated April 11 is actually a tribute to its creator Sudarshan Sahu.

Born April 11, 1931 at Satapatana village under Daspalla block in Nayagarh district, Sudarshan moved out of his village and set up a sweet stall in the heart of Nayagarh in 1947. Along with his father Bidyadhar Sahu, Sudarshan came up with the recipe of this great Odia delicacy. It then gained popularity and became a symbol of Odia culture and identity.

However, even after 91 years of its invention, the sweet and succulent Chhenapoda, which tickles the taste bud of every Odia, has failed to get a GI (Geographical Indication) tag. Locals raved that no efforts were made by the administration in this regard.

When contacted, Nayagarh Collector Poma Tudu said, "A team from Chennai was supposed to visit Nayagarh for necessary process, but they could not come due to the pandemic. However, efforts are on and the administration is taking necessary steps to obtain GI tag for the sweetmeat as soon as possible." On the other hand, there have



Efforts are on and the administration is taking necessary steps to obtain GI tag for the sweetmeat as soon as possible

POMA TUDU | NAYAGARH COLLECTOR

been allegations that the quality of 'Chhenapoda' is deteriorating by the day.

"Odisha's quintessential Chhenapoda is loved by all. People love to carry it during journeys. However, due to poor quality, packaging and hygiene, the true taste of the sweet dish is often compromised," a local said.

On the other hand, there has been a drastic decline in the number of cattle in the district. So, there is also a decline in milk supply, and thus dwindling production of 'Chhenapoda'.

"It will be safe to say that Chhenapoda will continue to be savoured with utmost delight as long as sweet teeth are there. There is just one thing left to be done and it is the GI tag. Getting due recognition for 'Chhenapoda' will be a fitting tribute to Sudarshan Sahu," said a local.

Quintuple murder: Shiva on 3-day police remand

POST NEWS NETWORK

Mahanga, April 14: A local court in Salipur of Cuttack district granted three-day police remand of Mahanga quintuple murder accused Shiva Sahu for further interrogation.

Shiva had surrendered before Balichandrapur police in Jajpur after committing the murder. Mahanga police had taken the accused into custody from Balichandrapur police station, late Tuesday night.

Mahanga police produced Shiva in the court of sub-divisional judicial magistrate and applied for five-day remand for further interrogation of the accused. The court, however, granted three days remand. After receiving permission, Mahanga police took Shiva from Salipur jail but failed to take him to court as he complained of difficulty in walking.

Later, police conducted a health check-up of the accused at Mahanga CHC. Questioned by mediapersons, Shiva refused to speak but flashed a finger sign indicating that he alone has committed the murders. The investigating team will recreate the crime scene during the remand period.



Notably, Siva had allegedly killed five members of his elder brother's family following a family feud at Kusupur village under Mahanga police station in Cuttack district. He later surrendered before Balichandrapur police in Jajpur.

Asked about the remnants of hair recovered from the hand of one of the victims Smruti Sandhya, ASP Ashok Kumar Behera said that truth will come out on completion of the probe.

Kendrapara mangroves face pollution threat

Leaves are turning black and a thick layer of oily substances is found on the mangroves, seriously jeopardising their survival

POST NEWS NETWORK

Mahakalapara, April 13: Toxic smoke and sticky effluents being released by over a dozen industries in Paradip port town has posed serious threat to the survival of saline and mangrove forests as well as to the people residing under this block in Kendrapara district, as per a report.

The ongoing heatwave condition has made life even miserable for the residents.

Environmental Samarendra Mahali stated that leaves are turning black and a thick layer of oily substances is found on the leaves and branches of these trees. "Industrial pollution has posed serious threat to the survival of saline and mangrove forests as well as to the wildlife in the area," he added. Mahali apprehended that if immediate steps are not taken, the pollution might lead to loss of the mangrove cover and wildlife in the area.

Villagers Hari Gochhayat, Anadi Swain, Bijay Swain of Kochila village; Parikhita Parida, Sarat Samal of Palligad



village; Nath Kumar Bhol of Kentia village; and Bapina Parida, Srimant Mandal and Nabaghan Behera of Pitapata village have alleged that the pollution has become so apparent that people are facing difficulty in breathing. Many complained of burning sensation in their eyes and other skin related problems.

Reports said, over 15 industrial plants have come up in Paradip which is on the other side of River Mahanadi. The toxic fumes and chemicals emanating from these plants get carried in the southern wind and settles down on the leaves and branches of hundreds of hectares of saline, cashew and mangrove forests in seaside Batighar; Kharinasi, Ramnagar, Jambu and on the river basin areas.

The cashew flowers are also suffering from blight due to the pollution, thereby affecting cashew production. When contacted, tehsildar Soubhagya Ranjan Panda said he would visit the areas and review the situation. He will submit a report to the senior authorities if the claims are found true.

Kendrapara Collector Amrit Raturaj said a field visit will be undertaken in the affected areas to verify the claims on pollution.

Senior official Dillip Kumar Das of State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) at Paradip said he is not aware of the matter while pollution has reduced drastically during last five years in Paradip. He rather said, "When pollution is not having any impact on Paradip, how could it pose threat to Mahakalapara block?"

Family abandons baby with gonadal disorder

AGENCIES

Jajpur, April 14: A woman and her newborn baby were allegedly abandoned by family members at a hospital in Jajpur district after being informed that the baby has ambiguity in genitalia.

She said her family wanted her to hand over the baby with both male and female gonads to an orphanage but she refused.

The woman was admitted to a private hospital in Jajpur town Sunday and delivered the hermaphrodite baby the same night, an official of the medical establishment said Thursday. Many plants and animals fall under the hermaphrodite category. However, this condition is very rare in humans, according to a doctor. After the baby was born, the doctor informed the mother and her family about the disorder.

"After the doctor told us about it, my husband and in-laws asked me to leave the baby at an orphanage. They left us at the hospital. But I am the mother and will never abandon my child," she said.

Her husband and in-laws did not visit the

hospital again, she claimed. The woman said she would consult other doctors and take their advice about the baby's treatment. An association of transgenders Thursday visited the hospital and enquired about the health of the baby and the mother.

"I appeal to the family members to accept the baby and raise it with love and affection. The baby should not suffer like us," said Kajal Nayak, president of the Jajpur Transgenders' Association. The association also met the district Collector and urged the administration to take steps on the matter.

District Collector Chakravarti Singh Rathore has directed the Child Welfare Committee to resolve the issue. The woman's husband could not be contacted.

MCC violation: 3 more teachers suspended

POST NEWS NETWORK

Phulbani, April 14: Days after two teachers were suspended for violating model code of conduct (MCC) during the panchayat elections in Kandhamal, Collector Brundha D has placed three more teachers under suspension on the same ground, Thursday.

These suspended teachers are: Kahnucharan Maharana, headmaster from Tumudibandh block, assis-

tant teacher Ranjit Majhi from Chakapada block and sports teacher Sushant Bhol of Tikabali. Maharana was accused of wrongfully folding ballot papers at a booth while Majhi was seen unnecessarily frequenting a booth to influence voters.

Similarly, the sports teacher was allegedly influencing voters in favour of a party. The administration had probed allegations and recommended the district administration for action.

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3. Class of Contractor : "A" & "B" Class (of Odisha PWD) or relevant class of other licensing authorities.
a) Estimated cost more than Rs. 40 lakh & not exceeding to Rs. 1.50 Crore : "B" & "C" Class (of Odisha PWD) or relevant class of other licensing authorities.
b) Estimated cost more than Rs. 20.00 lakh & not exceeding to Rs. 40.00 lakh : "C" & "D" Class (of Odisha PWD) or relevant class of other licensing authorities.
c) Estimated cost not exceeding to Rs. 20.00 lakh : Rs. 18.41 lakh
4. Estimate cost of individual project : 4 (Four) Calendar months
5. Time for completion :
6. Other details :

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender Online for Bidding	Date & Time of Opening of Tender
1	2	3	4
Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Bhubaneswar	Tender Online - BBSR Divn. - 01	18.04.2022 at 11.00 A.M.	27.04.2022 upto 5.00 P.M. 28.04.2022 at 11.00 A.M.

Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersorissa.gov.in.
OIPR-25066/11/0003/2223
Sd./- Executive Engineer, Rural Works Divn. BBSR

OFFICE OF THE COMMANDANT
THQ 160 BN BSF, MV-03, MALKANGIRI (ODISHA)
/// AUCTION NOTICE ///

A public auction of the large quantity of Condemned/Unserviceable Govt./Pvt. stores will be conducted at following locations:

Sl. No.	Location	Date & Time
1.	RHQ, 160 Bn BSF, Badatota, Khurda Road, P.O.- Jatani, Dist.- Khurda (Odisha)	on 20 April 2022 at 11.00 hrs.
2.	Tac Hqs. 160 Bn BSF, MV - 03, P.O.- Tamasa, Dist.- Malkangiri (Odisha)	on 27 April 2022 at 12.00 hrs.

2. Details of Condemned/Unserviceable Stores:
(i) MT Stores (vii) Sector Misc. Stores
(ii) Batteries (viii) Sports Items Stores
(iii) Burn Oil (ix) Unit Welfare Fund Items Stores
(iv) Comm Stores (x) Steel Carrier, PM & other stores of Magazine Stores
(v) Defence Stores (xi) Engg. Stores
(vi) Barrack Property Stores (xii) Miscellaneous Stores

3. Terms and Conditions

- All interested bidders are requested to attend the auction on scheduled date and time.
- Every intending bidder will have to deposit **Rs. 15,000/-** (Rupees fifteen thousand) only in advance as Cash/Banker Cheque/Bank Draft in favour of Commandant, 160 Bn SF payable at SBI, Malkangiri as earnest money at least one hour before the scheduled time of auction, which will be adjusted/refunded after finalization of auction on the same day.
- All bidders must be in possession of their Aadhaar Card, PAN Card and Income Tax Clearance Certificate in original and copy of GST Registration Certificate which will be scrutinized by the auction board, failing which bidder will not be allowed to participate in the auction.
- The stores will be sold on "as is where basis is". The auction process will be conducted by auction committee of this Office. Taxes and duties (GST) that may be levied by Govt. of India will be extra as applicable.
- The bidders will be allowed to inspect the said stores.
- Other terms and conditions will be announced by the Board of Officers appointed for the purpose before commencement of the auction.
- The successful bidders shall have to deposit 25% values of the auctioned store plus admissible taxes/surcharge immediately in the Shape of Cash/Bank Draft after the auction is over.
- The successful bidder will be permitted to lift the stores only after the receipt of full payment and the stores have to be lifted within 05 (five) days of completion of deal failing which ground rent at the rate of Rs.200/- per day will be charged. Transportation and labour will not be provided by this Battalion for carrying/shifting of auctioned stores.
- Once the release order is issued, this office will not be responsible either for safe custody or for any loss or damage to the above stores.
- The decision of the auction committee for all the purpose shall be final and binding.
- The Commandant, 160 Bn BSF reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without assigning any reason. The decision of the Commandant, 160 Bn BSF will be final in any stage during the process of this auction.

1. This auction notice will also be available on BSF website www.bsf.nic.in.
No. 1347/Prov/Auction/THQ160 Bn/2022/7149-80
Dated, the 4 April 2022
SD./- (SHRI PRAKASH SINGH), AC/QM FOR COMMANDANT 160 BN BSF
DAVP-19110/11/0006/2223

“If a religion is not universal, it cannot be eternal. A narrow religion, a sectarian religion, an exclusive religion can live only for a limited time and a limited purpose. SRI AUROBINDO



Treason of Illiberals

The global far right is gloating. After recent setbacks, one of their standard-bearers, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, won an overwhelming victory in this month's parliamentary election. While figures like the Italian nationalist politician Matteo Salvini have appeared to pay a price for their past adulation of Russian President Vladimir Putin, neither Marine Le Pen, the runner-up in the first round of the French presidential elections, nor Orbán (Putin's closest ally in the European Union, and also a servant of China) most certainly did not.

Assorted post-liberal, illiberal, and anti-liberal intellectuals have long celebrated Orbán's Hungary as a nationalist-conservative Disneyland (where men are still men and women are still women). Now, they are hailing him as the true leader of the West, whose electoral victory must be seen as a decisive popular rejection of liberalism. But their willingness to justify even the most unsavory aspects of Orbán's rule demonstrates something that was already evident during Donald Trump's one-term presidency in the United States: they will pay any price for their illiberal policy preferences to be realised, even accepting authoritarianism and kleptocracy.

The Hungarian election was free but not fair, because it was held under a system that international observers have rightly described as electoral autocracy. Those falling for Orbán's self-advertising as an "illiberal democrat" have bought into the idea that democracy is real so long as the ruling party does not openly stuff the ballot boxes. But democracy requires more than fraud-free elections; it also requires the effective use of essential rights, not least a free media environment in which parties can make their case to citizens.

This is hardly possible when the main opposition candidate gets only five minutes on state television during the entire campaign, as happened in Hungary. Those who point out such fundamental flaws are not denying that Orbán's party, Fidesz, has genuine popular support. But any outcome on such a grotesquely uneven playing field, they argue, cannot be taken at face value.

Orbán's international admirers look a lot like what used to be called useful idiots. In the twentieth century, countless books were produced to shame intellectuals who let themselves be duped into declaring the Soviet Union a socialist paradise. Today, some want to believe that Hungary is a model for a social conservatism that has broken with free-market pieties.

But while Orbán does wield state power ruthlessly and rapaciously (as Trump always dreamed of doing), he uses that power mostly to enrich Hungary's oligarchs. Meanwhile, the country's public-health system is chronically underfunded, and the lives of the already vulnerable (such as the homeless) have turned into a living hell. (Although Hungary and Poland are often lumped together as the two quasi-authoritarian spoilers within the EU, Poland's right-wing populist government does at least have a social agenda.)

Hungary is also a convenient echo chamber for self-declared champions of academic freedom. There they can whine about "cancel culture" in front of the prime minister who forced Central European University out of the country, and who invited China's Fudan University to open a branch in the Hungarian capital. As with the ideological battles of the twentieth century, political narcissists can always find their parochial problems reflected, and seemingly solved, in the mirror of some other country. Then as now, they are blind to the colossal failures of political judgment that result from their distorted views.

Yet in some ways, the category of useful idiots no longer seems apt, because Orbán's defenders seem well aware that the criticisms levelled against their champion – namely, that he presides over a regime of unbridled venality – are well founded. Whenever this comes up, they faithfully copy Orbán's own strategy by diverting the debate immediately to their favourite subject: their supposed victimisation at the hands of nefarious liberal globalists and progressives, going so far as to accuse the latter of "soft totalitarianism."

But Hungary's recent election had little to do with such conservative paranoia (which betrays a complete lack of historical consciousness among people who pretend to care about the past). The contest was not about the illiberal David vanquishing the liberal Goliath in the great transnational culture war. Its main feature was the Orbán government scaring citizens into thinking that the opposition sought to take the country into Russia's actual war in Ukraine.

Worse yet, the Hungarian government has effectively been helping Putin by prohibiting the shipment of weapons to Ukraine across its borders. Hungarian public TV spreads Russian disinformation day and night. The day before the election, an assembly of ordinary people expressing solidarity with Ukraine was framed on state television as a "pro-war rally."

Moreover, on the issue where cultural illiberalism really did fight a battle in Hungary, it lost. A referendum on "protecting children," based on highly manipulative questions, produced the desired majority, but it was invalidated by insufficient voter participation. As a result, those who always accuse liberals of not respecting democracy rushed to claim that citizens who spoiled their ballots to protest the government's anti-LGBTQ hate campaign somehow "attacked democracy." As always, illiberalism's fellow travellers displayed the very behaviour that they projected onto their liberal enemies. Instead of finding specific problems in the process, their argument boiled down to, "There can be no democracy unless our side wins."

Many Orbán admirers are not idiots, nor do they rely on the argument that Hungary's socialist governments were also corrupt. That is true, but their failings pale in comparison to a dozen years of Orbán's industrial-scale looting – again, something that one would have thought conservatives promoting "virtue" cared about.

The latest wave of self-consciously anti-liberal commentary about Hungary has been clarifying. It has shown that when the chips are down, and when the childish Twitter trolling of liberals stops, anti-liberals find corruption and autocracy to be acceptable.

The writer, Professor of Politics at Princeton University, is a fellow at The New Institute, Hamburg. @PROJECT SYNDICATE

WISDOM CORNER

- “To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment. RALPH WALDO EMERSON**
- “The art of art, the glory of expression and the sunshine of the light of letters, is simplicity. WALT WHITMAN**
- “If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away. HENRY DAVID THOREAU**

LOL ON A HIKING TRIP

Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson were on a camping and hiking trip. They had gone to bed and were lying there looking up at the sky. Holmes said, "Watson, look up. What do you see?"



"Well, I see thousands of stars."
"And what does that mean to you?"
"Well, I guess it means we will have another nice day tomorrow. What does it mean to you, Holmes?"
"To me, it means someone has stolen our tent."



DK Giri

INDIA WANTED NOT TO FOCUS ON UKRAINE AND SEPARATE IT FROM THE REST OF BILATERALISM, BUT THE US WAS MAKING IT THE MAIN ISSUE AND NUDGING INDIA TO RECOGNISE IT

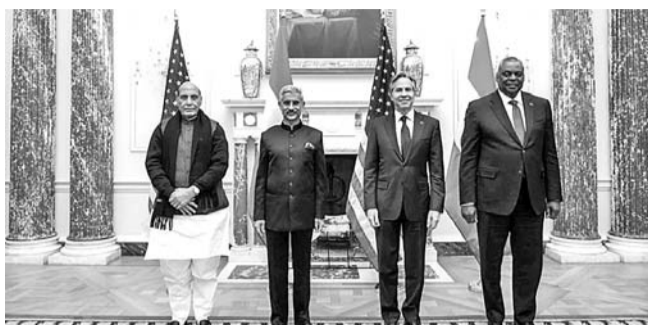
Democracy requires more than fraud-free elections; it also requires the effective use of essential rights, not least a free media environment in which parties can make their case to citizens

Jan-Werner Mueller



FOCUS DIPLOMACY

RIDING TWO HORSES



India seems to be working on the new version of strategic autonomy, which is making specific and contextual alignments underscoring a multipolar world, in which it can also play a global role

India-US 2+2 ministerial dialogue between Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh took place April 11 in Washington DC. This dialogue was preceded by a virtual meeting between Narendra Modi and Joe Biden, their first interaction since the Russians invaded Ukraine February 24. The ministerial dialogue was also the first formal exchange since the war.

The divergent positions of both countries on Russian-Ukrainian war were evident from the start. These meetings were expected to bridge the differences. Perhaps not, it was not the spirit nor the objective. The meeting ended in both countries reiterating their respective stances. In arithmetic, 2+2 is 4, but in the chemistry of human relations – diplomatic, social or political, 2+2 could be less than 2. That is what was vindicated in these meetings.

In usual diplomatic summits, in discussion of bilateralism, multiple sectors are taken up. There are usual exchanges of pleasantries, diplomatic tributes, even hyperboles. Modi said that as the world's two largest and oldest democracies, "we are natural partners." Biden said, "the majority of our partnership is a deep connection between our people and our shared values." But the crux of these meetings was the war in Ukraine. India wanted not to focus on Ukraine and separate it from the rest of bilateralism, but the US was making it the main issue at this time and nudging India to recognise it. Jaishankar said, "our convergences far outweigh the divergences." But Blinken had his own perspectives.

India has a special mechanism in shape of 2+2 dialogues with four countries which New Delhi treats as crucial strategic partners – the US, Japan, Australia, and Russia. Notably the first three countries are India's partners in Quad. India initiated this format of diplomacy with the US during the presidency

of Donald Trump. The US is the oldest and longest 2+2 dialogue partner. That shows the importance both countries attach to their bilateralism. The first meeting was held in New Delhi in September 2018 between then Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj, Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, and their counterparts Michael Pompeo and James Mattis.

The launch of 2+2 was seen as the "reflection of the shared commitment" by India and the US to provide "a positive, forward-looking vision for the India-US strategic partnership and to promote synergy in their diplomatic and security efforts." Have they done so in the current case of war over Ukraine? Jaishankar said that he held a discussion with Blinken on several issues, including the ongoing war in Ukraine, the situation in Afghanistan, challenges pertaining to the Indo-Pacific region, and a range of key bilateral issues. In a formal statement, he said, "A good part of my meeting with Secretary Blinken in the morning went to the ongoing conflict in Ukraine that has many ramifications. Even countries far away are worried about food security, energy security and commodities prices and logistics disruption."

In esoteric terms, Jaishankar said, "A strategic partnership like the one between India and the US,

is built through shared interest, common values and constant nurturing. It is natural that each of us will bring to the relationship our particular perspectives, experiences and priorities." He added, "But when there is a mutual appreciation of ties, there is also a desire to better understand each other's thinking. Our dialogue today has helped in that regard." Did it?

Let us read the statement of Blinken. He too invoked shared values and international rules-based order to call upon all nations to "condemn Moscow's increasingly brutal actions" in Ukraine. He urged all partners "not to increase their purchases of Russian energy." He was very vocal on the Ukraine situation: "Russia's war against Ukraine is an attack on Ukraine's people; it's also an attack on that rule-based order that we both adhere to and defend. The United States will continue to increase our support to the government and people of Ukraine and call on other nations to do the same, just as we call on all nations to condemn Moscow's increasingly brutal actions. Russia's aggression stands in stark contrast to the vision that the United States and India share for a free and open Indo-Pacific."

The US intention is clear. They want to highlight the events occurring in Ukraine and their link with the rationale of the security arrangement (Quad) in the Indo-Pacific. To which Jaishankar replied, "So first of all, thank you for the advice and suggestions in your question. I prefer to do it my way and articulate it my way." Once again a bold assertion of India's 'strategic autonomy'.

Days before their meeting, Biden had called India's stand "some-what shaky." Even one US official had warned that India had been informed that the consequences of a "more explicit strategic alignment" with Moscow would be "significant and long-term." The US is making a direct offer to India to choose its tent. It is giving India leeway and time to readjust her partnerships. The same official said, "We do differ on Russia and will unlikely bridge the gap, but won't allow it to derail wider co-operation in the Indo-Pacific either." The offer is made even clearer, in a candid remark made by Blinken after the meeting. He said: "India's relationship with Russia has developed over decades at a time when the United States was not able to be a partner to India." But, "times have changed" and the US was willing to be a partner of choice with India across virtually every realm – commerce, technology, education, and security.

India seems to be working on the new version of strategic autonomy, which is making specific and contextual alignments underscoring a multipolar world, in which it can also play a global role. Thus, India is partnering with America and its allies in Indo-Pacific to restrict China, and going with Russia to wean it away from China and Pakistan at least in her rivalry with Shino-Pak axis. But the war in Ukraine has challenged that position. Will India be able to maintain it? Only time would reveal. But India is surely riding two horses, and we know the consequence of this aphorism.

The writer is Professor of International Politics, JIMMC. @INFA

SPECTRUM SUSTAINABILITY

Hidden carbon subsidies will destroy us



Jayati Ghosh & Debamanyu Das

WESTERN GOVERNMENTS HAVE BEEN HEAVILY SUBSIDISING THEIR OWN FOSSIL-FUEL INDUSTRIES EVEN AS THEY EXHORTED MUCH POORER COUNTRIES TO DO MORE TO REDUCE GREENHOUSE-GAS EMISSIONS

The latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change should terrify policymakers and ordinary people around the world. The IPCC warns that some disastrous climate outcomes are now likely to occur not in the distant future, but within the next 15 years, or even the next decade. But instead of waking up to the threat and responding quickly, policymakers remain focused on Russia's horrific war against Ukraine and its immediate consequences. While this may be understandable, the Ukraine crisis has also exposed the excessively short-term policy orientation of Western governments. Many have quickly reneged on even the relatively meager and obviously inadequate climate pledges they made only a few months ago at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasgow.

The invasion of Ukraine and the subsequent Western-led sanctions against Russia triggered a dramatic increase in fuel prices, when the energy market was already heating up because of the economic recovery in the United States and Europe. Yet, instead of seeing this price spike as an opportunity to hasten the shift away from fossil fuels, governments in advanced economies have tried to reduce the pain by keeping domestic energy prices low, for short-term political reasons.

US President Joe Biden's administration, after unsuccessfully imploring Saudi Arabia to increase oil production, has promised to release one million barrels a day from the US government's strategic reserves for the next six months. In Europe, which has been hit much harder by the fallout from the war because of its heavy reliance on Russian natural gas, the talk is not just of more nuclear energy but also of reviving coal-based power. Coal is by far the "dirtiest" fossil fuel, and rich countries routinely pillory India and China for using it.

Only those who previously swallowed Western governments' insincere green rhetoric, rather than examining the reality, should be surprised by this turn of events. These governments have been heavily subsidising their own fossil-fuel industries even as they exhorted much poorer countries to do more to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions. But the full extent of these subsidies has been hidden by the methods used to measure them. The standard way to measure government support for fossil-fuel production or consumption is to look at direct budgetary transfers and subsidies, as well as tax breaks for the sector. Using this method, the OECD and the International Energy Agency estimate that governments across 52 advanced and emerging economies

– accounting for about 90% of global fossil-fuel energy supply – provided fossil-fuel subsidies worth an average of \$555 billion per year from 2017 to 2019. This support declined to \$345 billion in 2020, mainly because of the collapse in fuel prices and drop in consumption during the COVID-19 pandemic. But, even before the Ukraine war, there were fears that rebounding fuel prices could push up subsidies as the global economy recovered.

Those fears were more than borne out. It turned out that the bleakest estimates massively understated the actual fossil-fuel subsidies that governments provide. In a recent study, the International Monetary Fund devised a more comprehensive measure that includes both explicit subsidies, or undercharging for supply costs, and implicit subsidies, or undercharging for environmental costs and foregone consumption taxes.

The IMF estimated that global fossil-fuel subsidies in 2020 totaled \$5.9 trillion, more than ten times the OECD-IEA estimate. That is not surprising: Implicit subsidies accounted for 92% of the total.

Under both methodologies, India is a heavy subsidiser of fossil fuels – although lower-income countries can be partly excused, given the high cost of the green-energy transition. But other countries' rankings change in interesting ways when im-

licit subsidies are considered. Russia was the largest provider of explicit fossil-fuel subsidies, but the US – with an estimated \$662 billion of implicit subsidies in 2020 and nearly \$800 billion in 2021 – extends significantly more subsidies overall. China provided the largest implicit subsidies in 2020, totaling an estimated \$2.2 trillion.

These important numbers highlight the extent to which government intervention is skewing prices, and therefore market incentives, in favour of fossil fuels, rather than against them. While governments were supporting the fossil-fuel industry to the tune of \$5.9 trillion in 2020, the IPCC estimates that global climate finance from both public and private sources totaled only about \$640 billion that year.

Given this huge disparity, no one should be shocked at the fossil-fuel industry's continued resilience. The world is rapidly running out of time to limit global warming to 1.5°C Celsius and avert a climate catastrophe. But the global economic system and many governments appear unable to take the threat seriously.

Jayati Ghosh is Professor of Economics at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Debamanyu Das is a research scholar at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. @PROJECT SYNDICATE

Welcome decision

Sir, The University Grants Commission (UGC) has issued detailed guidelines for those wishing to study two courses at the same time. Now a student can pursue two undergraduate degrees, postgraduate degrees, diplomas, and integrated courses simultaneously in two or single educational institutions. A student can study two courses through physical and online mode or distant mode. The objective of the policy is to enable an individual to study one or more specialised areas of interest at a deep level. This policy will help students to prepare for more meaningful and satisfying work roles. This will eliminate the major separation between different streams and eliminate hierarchies among different courses. A major positive change will occur in our educational system due to this decision.

Deba Prasad Nayak, CUTTACK

Promoting cricketing talent

Sir, The Indian Premier League is known to showcase domestic cricket talent in a big way. It has been a stepping stone for plenty of young cricketers hoping to represent the nation. Despite a few inherent flaws, the IPL has groomed and encouraged players some of whom are now household names. Presence of senior Indian cricketers alongside, company of former greats of the game in the dugout, freedom to go for their natural game and a significant financial cushion have ensured that names like Anuj Rawat, Rahul Tewatia, Ayush Badoni, Tilak Varma and Akash Deep came to the forefront. Fearless and committed, sincere and ambitious, the young guns in the 15th edition of IPL have paid scant respect for reputations. Their focus is more on the ball; bowlers are secondary. Obviously, talent scouting by team franchises before they pick a player has paid dividends. The confidence reposed by franchises on some players despite their lackadaisical form has made sure that they repay the trust reposed in them. India is a country where cricket is not just a sport, it is a religion. Neither socioeconomic roadblocks nor academic ambitions have prevented youngsters from suppressing their desire to rub shoulders with the best in the game. Numerous local cricket leagues modelled on the IPL are trying their hand at honing cricket talents. Not all talents can go all the way; lucky are the ones who get a break to fulfil their dreams. When they receive a break, it is incumbent upon them to put their heads down and build their career.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST
B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

national

of the day quote

Every government formed after independence has contributed in taking India to the heights it has achieved today

NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

The SP is a party of hooligans. People are distancing themselves from it and joining the BJP. Such people are welcome in the BJP

KESHAV PRASAD MAURYA | UP DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

The Goa government has started the process of building an Ambedkar Bhavan in the state

PRAMOD SAWANT | GOA CHIEF MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Delhi: 13 injured in cylinder explosion

New Delhi: Thirteen people were injured following a cylinder blast inside an eatery near Jamia Millia Islamia in southeast Delhi Thursday, Delhi Fire officials said. A call about the fire was received at 3.49 pm and three fire tenders were rushed to the spot, said Atul Garg, Director, Delhi Fire Service. All those who got injuries were taken to a nearby hospital, he said. The fire was later extinguished, he added.

Ceiling falls on JNU student

New Delhi: A student was injured after a portion of the bathroom ceiling collapsed at a hostel in Jawaharlal Nehru University here Thursday morning, officials said. The incident took place at the Sabarmati Hostel. Hours after the incident, the university said it had received Rs 56.34 crore for hostel repairs. "JNU receives a grant of 56.34 crores towards hostel repairs and maintenance. VC Prof. Santishree D. Pandit, in keeping with her mission of a student centric & friendly administration, thanks the UGC & MoE for the release of the grant. @EduMinOfIndia @ugc_india," the university said in a tweet.

2 villagers shot dead by Naxals

Nagpur: Two villagers were allegedly shot dead by naxals on suspicion of being police informers in separate attacks in Maharashtra's Gadchiroli district, police said Thursday. The victims, who were in their 20s, were picked up from Gorkutta and Jharaiwada area, located close to each other, late on Wednesday night, a senior police official said.

Auto, cab drivers to go on strike April 18

New Delhi: With a fresh hike of Rs 2.5 in CNG prices, the members of auto, taxi and cab drivers' associations Thursday warned authorities that they will go on a strike from April 18 to press for their demand of subsidy on gas prices. On April 11, hundreds of auto, taxi and cab drivers staged a protest at the Delhi secretariat, demanding subsidy on CNG prices.

Over 1,000 houses damaged in storm

Shillong: Over 1000 house in Meghalaya's Ri-Bhoi district were affected in a cyclonic storm that ravaged the district Thursday but there was no casualty, an official said. A senior district official told PTI, "Prima facie, 47 villages in the district were affected in the storm from where the damages to houses were reported."



My humble tributes to the architect of the Indian Constitution, Dr BR Ambedkar on his birth anniversary today. Babasaheb was a multi-faceted genius - a legal luminary, visionary statesman, outstanding constitutional expert, brilliant parliamentarian & social reformer

M VENKAIAH NAIDU | VICE PRESIDENT

SAY NO TO PLASTIC

The Sikkim Pollution Control Board (SPCB) recommended the state government to ban plastic bags of less than 75 micron thickness by the end of this year. It also urged the government to phase out of plastic bags with a thickness of less than 120 micron in the next phase as a part of the efforts to make Sikkim a plastic-free state



Centre designates Mushtaq Latram as terrorist under UAPA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 14: Dreaded militant Mushtaq Ahmed Zargar alias 'Mushtaq Latram' has been designated as a "terrorist" under the stringent anti-terror law UAPA, a move which enables the security agencies to attach his or associates' properties believed to be purchased from proceeds of crime.

With this, anyone staying in touch with him becomes an offender under the law.

Considered to be ruthless in the early 1990s, Zargar had broke JKLF and formed his own Al-Umar Mujahideen terror group.

He was one of the terrorists released in exchange for passengers of hijacked Indian Airlines plane IC-814 in 1999 besides Maulana Masood Azhar, the chief of banned terror group Jaish-e-Mohammed, and Sheikh Omar, who killed American journalist Daniel Pearl who was working for The Wall Street Journal.

Zargar is currently based in Pakistan where he had gone in the late 1980s to receive arms training. The home ministry said Zargar has been running an incessant campaign from Pakistan to fuel terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir.

He has been involved in various terror crimes, including murder, attempt to murder, kidnapping, planning and execution of terrorist attacks and terror funding, it noted.



With this move, the government, through security agencies, would be able to attach his or his associates' immovable and moveable properties believed to have been purchased from proceeds of crimes.

On April 8, the government had designated Hafiz Talha Saeed, a key leader of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and the son of 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks mastermind Hafiz Saeed, a terrorist. Three days later, April 11, Pakistani national Mohiuddin Aurangzeb Alamgir, who was involved in the terror attack on a CRPF bus in Pulwama in Jammu and Kashmir in 2019, was designated as a terrorist.

On April 12, Ali Kashif Jan, the Pakistani handler of the 2016 terror attack on Pathankot airbase, has been designated as a terrorist by the government.

The Act empowers the Central government to notify the name of an individual in its Fourth Schedule if it believes that he is involved in terrorism.

Ahmedabad may have massively undercounted Cov deaths: Data

AGENCIES

Ahmedabad, India, April 14: When COVID-19 infections peaked in India in April and May last year, the western city of Ahmedabad officially recorded at least three times as many total deaths in those two months than in the same period in the previous two years, government data showed.

The data, provided by Ahmedabad's local administration to a public-information activist and shared with Reuters Thursday, does not give the cause of those deaths, but it appears to bolster claims of many health experts that India heavily undercounted Covid-19 fatalities. The numbers show the city of 8 million reported 30,427 deaths in April and May of 2021, compared with an average of 8,337 in the previous two years for that period. Gujarat's health ministry data shows fewer than 1,000 Covid-19 deaths occurred in those two months last year.

Ahmedabad is the largest city in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's home state of Gujarat, which has recorded 10,942 Covid-19 fatalities since the start of the pandemic, though it has approved at least 87,000 compensation claims linked to Covid-19 deaths.

"I have been given the data after a prolonged legal battle," said the activist, Pankaj Bhatt. "This itself shows that the authorities were trying to hide something and did not want to reveal the real picture or the scale of the tragedy." One Gujarat health official, speaking on



Covaxin's phase 2/3 trials in US put on hold

Hyderabad: The US Food and Drug Administration has put on hold the phase 2/3 clinical trials of Bharat Biotech's Covid-19 vaccine Covaxin, in USA. According to a press release by Ocugen Inc, Bharat Biotech's partner for US and Canada for Covaxin, the FDA's decision was based on the US firm's decision to voluntarily implement a temporary pause in dosing participants of the trial, following the World Health Organisation's observations on Covaxin manufacturing plants in India. "This is a result of the company's decision to voluntarily implement a temporary pause in dosing participants of OCU-002 while it evaluates statements made by the World Health Organization following their inspection of Bharat Biotech International Limited's (BBIL) manufacturing facility," Ocugen said April 12. WHO had earlier suspended the supply of Covaxin through US procurement agencies, after its inspectors identified GMP (good manufacturing practice) deficiencies in the Bharat Biotech's manufacturing plants.

condition of anonymity, denied any attempts to suppress the actual Covid-19 toll. The state's health secretary, Manoj Aggarwal, declined to comment. Many Indians died at home, in parking lots and on the way to the hospital when a dramatic rise in cases from around March last year led to massive shortages of medical oxygen, ambulance and hospital beds in cities like Ahmedabad and New Delhi. India has so far reported 43 million

infections - second only to the United States - and around 521,000 deaths. Only the United States, Russia and Brazil have reported more deaths. Some public health experts, however, have estimated India's death toll at more than 3 million. The federal government has repeatedly appealed to state authorities to update their data as warranted, while rejecting claims of massive under-counting as "ill-informed and speculative".

Delhi govt to issue fresh guidelines to schools as Cov surges

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 14: The Delhi government will issue fresh guidelines for schools amid reports of a few students testing positive for Covid-19 across the national capital and NCR.

Noting a "slight" rise in Covid cases, Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said he has directed the education department to issue guidelines Friday in this regard. However, both Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Sisodia maintained the government is closely monitoring the situation, and asked people not to panic as there is no rise hospitalisation.



"Covid cases have slightly increased but there is no rise in hospitalisation, so we need not worry. There is no need to panic but (we have to) stay alert. We have to learn to live with Covid. We are constantly monitoring the situation," Sisodia told reporters.

Delhi Wednesday reported 299 new Covid-19 cases, a jump of 118 per cent in two days. The positivity rate stood at 2.49 per cent, according to data shared by the city health department.

Reports of infections from schools have sparked concerns weeks after they opened for completely offline classes after a two-year gap due to the pandemic.

Six workers killed in Andhra factory fire

AGENCIES

Amaravati, April 14: At least six workers were charred to death and 12 others grievously injured when a reactor in a chemical factory at Akkireddygudem village in the new Eluru district of Andhra Pradesh, blew up and caused a fire in the wee hours of Thursday.

Eluru district Collector V Prasanna Venkatesh, who visited the accident spot, ordered immediate shutdown of the Porus Laboratories unit pending a detailed investigation. "We are investigating what led to the accident. Did high pressure cause the reactor to blow up, whether hazardous chemicals were being used...we will probe all such aspects. We are also investigating if any rules were violated in the operation of the plant," Venkatesh told reporters.

State Chief Secretary Sameer Sharma spoke to the Eluru district Collector over phone from New Delhi and enquired about the incident. The Chief Secretary directed the Collector to conduct a thorough inquiry into the mishap and submit a report.

State Disaster Response and Fire Services personnel, as well as NDRF men, carried out the rescue and relief operations.

The fire was doused in a couple of hours and the situation remained normal. Residents of Akkireddygudem staged a protest outside the plant, demanding that it be relocated from the village forthwith. The villagers alleged that the

4 die as fire breaks out at saree factory

Varanasi: Four persons were killed Thursday when a fire broke out at a saree factory in Varanasi, police said. The incident took place in Ashfaq Nagar locality under the Bhelupur police station limits when the workers were cooking food in the factory and synthetic materials kept nearby caught fire, they said. The blaze was later doused by a team from the fire department, police said.

plant caused water and air pollution, making their life miserable.

Meanwhile, hours after the incident, the Andhra Pradesh Pollution Control Board (APPCB) Thursday issued orders for closure of the plant. APPCB Chairman A K Parida also issued orders for disconnecting power to the unit at Akkireddygudem village in Musunuru mandal on Eluru.

The APPCB said the accident at bulk drug manufacturing industry occurred Wednesday night due to explosion of a reactor while manufacturing 4-Nitro-N-methyl phthalimide, due to not implementation of standard operating procedures.

The APPCB took the action after an inspection by its officials. They found the company was not complying with CFO conditions and causing pollution in surrounding areas.

The unit was engaged in manufacture of bulk drugs and intermediates and speciality chemicals.

FEARLESS ACT



Hindu devotees swing using ropes during an acrobatic performance on the occasion of the Charak Puja, at Kedarchandpur in Murshidabad district, West Bengal

EX-PB CM CHANNI GRILLED IN MONEY LAUNDERING CASE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Jalandhar, April 14: Former Punjab chief minister Charanjit Singh Channi was questioned by the ED for over six hours in a money laundering investigation linked to

sand mining in the state, officials said Thursday.

The federal agency recorded the statement of the 59-year-old Congress leader under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and he left the Enforcement Directorate's (ED)

zonal office in Jalandhar late Wednesday night. Channi tweeted to say he was "summoned by the ED yesterday regarding the mining case".

Channi's nephew Bhupinder Singh alias Honey was arrested in this case by the agency days be-

fore the February 20 Punjab Assembly polls.

A charge sheet was filed against him and others before a special PMLA court in Jalandhar March 31. Honey, currently lodged in judicial custody, has recently applied for bail.

After 2 yrs, Mumbai Dabbawalas let their load down

During the pandemic lockdown, the Dabbawalas were among the worst-hit service providers with business trickling down to virtually zero and many took up alternative jobs or even quit their world-renowned profession

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, April 14: For the first time after the two years of Covid-19 pandemic lockdown, Mumbai's

famed Dabbawalas have gone on a five-day break to celebrate the annual village festivals with their near and dear ones, a spokesperson said here Thursday.

Since the start of the pandemic, this is the first opportunity for over 5,000 Dabbawalas to take time off to travel to their villages, mostly in Pune district and celebrate the festivities of Dev Khandoba, their deity.

"Prior to the pandemic we used to announce our annual festival leave in advance to enable customers to make alternative arrangements. This year, there are four holidays of the five-day sojourn, so our patrons readily cooperated," said Ritesh S Andre, spokesperson for Nutan Mumbai Tiffin Box

FESTIVAL BREAK



Suppliers Charity Trust and Mumbai Tiffin Box Suppliers Association (NMTBSCT and

MTBSA). Since Tuesday, a majority of the Dabbawalas - 95 % of the tribe -

have reached their villages like Khed, Junnar, Maval, Mulshi, and the rest scattered across Maharashtra, he added.

The NMTBSCT and MTBSA also explored options like large community kitchens for large-scale deliveries, tying up with other organisations in similar businesses, etc., to ensure livelihood for the then jobless Dabbawalas.

"Presently, of the 5,000 barely 1,200 Dabbawalas are on duty and serving around 20,000 customers who have started attending their offices after the restrictions were lifted in March... We expect more to join gradually and substantially by June," Andre said with hopes of hard times finally passing them. Returning to their villages, many

Dabbawalas were accorded a welcome with cheers and tears by their families from whom they had been separated and not congregated to celebrate the Dev Khandoba festival for two consecutive years.

"This year, we have been selected for the prestigious 80th 'Master Deenanath Mangeshkar Award' which will be presented to us in Mumbai April 24," said Andre proudly, of yet another recognition to his toiling ilk.

Well before the award ceremony - which is likely to be attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi - the Dabbawalas shall return to their daily grind from Monday (April 18) to ferry the tiffin-boxes filled with good food for their familiar customers.

NEET FACE OFF

DMK, allies boycott Guv's 'At Home'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, April 14: The ruling DMK and its allies Thursday boycotted the 'At Home Reception' organised by Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi here protesting over the pendency of an Assembly bill seeking exemption for Tamil Nadu from the ambit of NEET, with the former observing the participation by it would amount to hurting the overall sentiments of the people.

Tamil Nadu industries minister Thangam Thennarasu and Health Minister Ma Subramanian earlier met the Governor at the Raj Bhavan over the status of the second Assembly bill seeking exemption for the state from the ambit of the National Entrance-cum-Eligibility Test (NEET) on the "directions of Chief Minister" MK Stalin and also conveyed to Ravi the decision to boycott the event.

Subsequently, Stalin, who was also slated to attend the inaugu-



ration of a statue of national poet Mahakavi Subramania Bharathiar at the Raj Bhavan, the ruling DMK's allies and top officials of the state government did not participate in the event Thursday which saw the opposition AIADMK and the BJP in attendance.

Thennarasu said that while the

SENSITIVE ISSUE

NEET is a sensitive issue in Tamil Nadu, with many medical aspirants, including S Anitha of Ariyalur, allegedly committing suicide for either unable to crack the entrance test or over apprehension of low scores

All parties except BJP in the state favour NEET exemption for Tamil Nadu citing students' interest, especially those from rural areas

Abolition of NEET is a poll promise of the DMK, which sailed to power in May 2021

The death of a Dalit girl Anitha in 2017 by suicide prompted an outrage in the state and calls for abolition of NEET have only gained steam ever since, even as the previous AIADMK government also adopted an Assembly resolution seeking exemption for Tamil Nadu from the ambit of NEET

Governor had to give his approval to the bill, he informed that it was still under his consideration.

"The Assembly functions according to democratic ethos. And a unanimous resolution for the second time was adopted and its still stuck at the Raj Bhavan. So in this situation, it would not be proper for us to participate in the feast," he said.

The 'At Home Reception' was

organised coinciding with the Tamil New Year day Thursday.

Participation in the event by the chief minister and other people's representatives would amount to "belittling the dignity of the century-old Assembly and hurting the overall sentiments of the people of Tamil Nadu," the Minister said.

Later in the day, Ravi unveiled the life size statue of Bharathiar which has been presented by city-

based Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. He also inaugurated the main lawn which was renovated in the premises of Raj Bhavan.

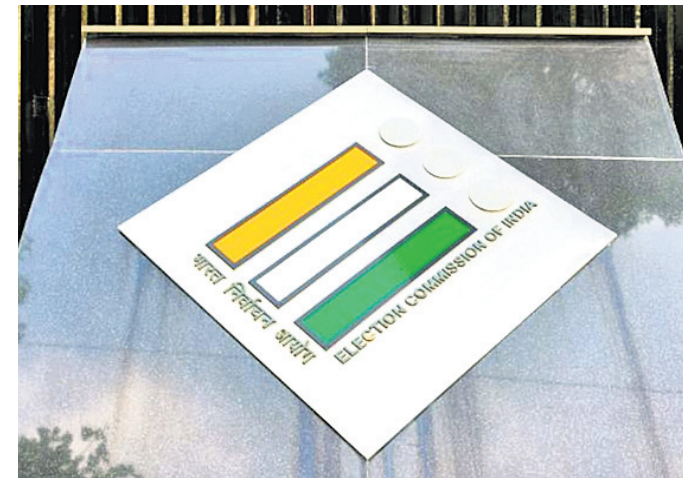
The Governor on the occasion presented the certificates and cash prizes to winners of an essay competition organised by the Raj Bhavan.

Senior AIADMK leaders and ex-ministers SP Velumani, Thalavai Sundaram and C Vijaya Bhaskar, Tamil Maanila Congress leader GK Vasam, BJP Tamil Nadu unit president K Annamalai and party MLA Vanathi Srinivasan were among those present on the occasion.

The Assembly had in September 2021 adopted a bill against NEET but the Governor had returned it in February this year, saying it was against the interests of rural students.

Soon after that the DMK piloted another Assembly resolution seeking NEET exemption for the state and sent it to the Governor after the House adopted it.

BJP, Cong, AAP gear up for Himachal polls



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shimla, April 14: Having tasted success in the recent Assembly elections, the BJP and the AAP are looking to repeat their strong showing in the Himachal Pradesh polls due later this year while the Congress, having swept the 2021 state bypolls, is hoping for a turnaround after a string of poll losses.

BJP national president Jagat Prakash Nadda, Aam Aadmi Party leaders Arvind Kejriwal and Bhagwant Mann, and Congress leader Rajiv Shukla recently visited Himachal Pradesh as part of preparations for the state polls. Kejriwal is scheduled to visit Kangra April 23.

The ruling BJP hopes to retain power in the hill state, as it did in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Manipur and Goa last month.

State BJP president and Shimla MP Suresh Kashyap told PTI that his party will tell voters about the development work carried out by the state government and the Centre.

The BJP has given clean governance to the nation and the state, and both its governments are working with zero tolerance towards corruption, he said.

Kashyap said the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government at the Centre launched the biggest ration distribution scheme 'Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana' during the COVID-19 pandemic and it has been extended till September this year.

The Modi government has distributed 759 metric tonnes of free ration to 80 crore beneficiaries. In Himachal Pradesh, the Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur-led government has distributed this ration to eight lakh beneficiaries so far, he said.

The Congress, which faced a drubbing in the Assembly polls in the five states, is hoping to wrest power from the BJP and arrest its shrinking footprint.

State Congress president Kuldeep Singh Rathore told PTI that his party will raise issues of unemployment and inflation as part of

POLL PREP

The ruling BJP hopes to retain power in the hill state, as it did in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Manipur and Goa last month

The Congress, which faced a drubbing in the Assembly polls in the five states, is hoping to wrest power from the BJP and arrest its shrinking footprint

The AAP is looking to make inroads into Himachal Pradesh after its resounding victory in the Punjab polls

its election campaign.

The people of Himachal are fed up with the 'anti-public' policies of the BJP government due to which unemployment and inflation have increased greatly in the country, he claimed.

Rathore said the Congress won all three Assembly seats of Fatehpur, Arki and Jubbhal-Kotkhai and the Mandi Lok Sabha seat that went to bypolls on October 30 last year as the people of the state voted on issues of unemployment and price rise.

This is why the Congress will raise these issues in its Assembly election campaign. The party will wrest power from the BJP in the state, he asserted.

However, the AAP, which is looking to make inroads into Himachal Pradesh after its resounding victory in the Punjab polls, dismissed any challenge from the Congress.

State AAP spokesperson Gaurav Sharma said the Himachal Pradesh Assembly elections will be a direct contest between his party and the BJP.

The AAP will contest the elections on the issue of corruption and providing better infrastructure for schools and hospitals in the state, Sharma told PTI. He exuded confidence that the AAP will form the government in the state, as it did in neighbouring Punjab.

Anurag Thakur, man behind coup in Himachal AAP unit

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 14: Amid the ongoing coup in the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) unit of Himachal Pradesh, Union Minister Anurag Thakur is said to be instrumental and played an active role in diminishing the AAP's poll prospects ahead of the Assembly election in the state.

As per sources, he has been actively facilitating the exodus of leaders in the opposition parties. Last Friday's midnight coup delivered a big jolt to AAP's ambitious plan to expand itself in Himachal by inducting its top state leadership in presence of BJP chief JP Nadda. April 8 midnight Himachal AAP President Anup Kesari and other AAP leaders joined the BJP in presence of Nadda and Thakur.

A day before Delhi and Punjab CMs Arvind Kejriwal and Bhagwant Maan respectively, launched the AAP campaign in Himachal by organising a 'Tiranga Yatra' in Mandi. Hours before the midnight coup, Thakur played a magnificent innings of 47 not out leading MP XI against Delhi Police Commissioner XI at the Arun Jaitley stadium in the national capital. MP XI led by the Union Minister lost the match but he scored a major political victory against Kejriwal's AAP ahead of the year-end Himachal Pradesh Assembly polls. After AAP's yatra in Mandi, Thakur and other BJP leaders got active and executed the coup April 8. To everyone's surprise, Friday evening the Union



Minister was playing a friendly cricket match at Arun Jaitley stadium in the national capital. As the match ended he left the stadium before the prize distribution ceremony to ensure the induction of Himachal Pradesh AAP president into the BJP before the start of a four-day visit of the BJP chief to the state, sources said.

A party insider said before the start of the match Thakur had placed everything in place and with the guidance of Nadda, ensured that it happened on the same day.

Monday when the BJP chief was in Himachal, the Union Minister staged another coup by ensuring the Himachal AAP Women Wing head, Mamata Thakur and other leaders joined BJP in Delhi. Himachal is the native of both Nadda and Thakur. By inducting the complete leadership of Himachal AAP unit, Thakur and the BJP have dealt a major blow to the AAP's plan to expand the party in a new state after the historic victory in Punjab.

TN to form exclusive bank for fishermen

With nationalised banks refusing to provide loans, most of the fishermen find themselves trapped in loans provided by private lenders

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, April 14: The Tamil Nadu fisheries department is in the process of constituting a bank exclusively for fishermen. Sources in the department told IANS that a committee has been constituted to study the feasibility of forming fisheries cooperative credit societies.

A meeting of high-level officers of the fisheries department was held recently to identify a financial institution for this. Tamil Nadu minister for fisheries and animal husbandry, Anita R. Radhakrishnan Wednesday informed the state legislative Assembly that the department is to form an exclusive bank for the fishermen in the state.

The minister said the Chief Minister is keen that a primary cooperative bank be formed exclusively for the fishermen and that this has been a long-pending demand of lakhs of fishermen in the state.

Sources in the government told IANS that the Chief Minister had in interaction with the leaders of the fishermen association during his travel across coastal regions of the state come to know that the fishermen are in dire straits due to



Eighty-four fishermen from TN are languishing in Sri Lankan jails after they were apprehended by Lankan navy for crossing the IML and venturing into the island nation's waters

overdependence on private lenders. It may be noted that many nationalised banks do not provide loans to fishermen who have to approach them for the purchase of fishing nets, outboard engines, and other materials required for professional mechanised fishing.

With the nationalised banks refusing to provide loans, most of the fishermen find themselves trapped in the loans provided by private lenders.

Tamil Nadu fishermen association leader, J. Jesuadasan while

speaking to IANS said, "The government announcing an exclusive bank for fishermen is welcome. The government must initiate proceedings at a faster pace and commence the operations at the earliest. This will be of huge help to the battered fishermen of Tamil Nadu who are in dire straits having fallen prey to the powerful finance sharks and it is turning into an ever ending trap."

Eighty-four fishermen from Tamil Nadu are languishing in Sri Lankan jails after they were apprehended by the Sri Lankan Naval authorities for crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) and venturing into the island nation's waters. The custody of fishermen and their mechanised vessels has led to the families of fishermen falling easy prey to the financial sharks and the announcement of the government of a fishermen's bank is being looked upon in a positive light by the coastal areas of Tamil Nadu.

Govt on defensive after teacher's suspension over conversion charge

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, April 14: The Tamil Nadu government has got into a defensive mode following controversies over a teacher being suspended on conversion charges.

School Education Minister Anbil Mahesh Poyyamozhi while speaking to IANS said: "The conversion incident is an isolated one and not as being made out to be by the BJP. The teacher was immediately put on suspension after a sixth standard student charged that there were conversion attempts on the part of a lady teacher in the government higher secondary school at Kanniyakumari."

He said the incident should not have happened and that the government has asked the school and the district education department for a detailed report.

The issue came to light after a sixth standard girl student of a Government Higher Secondary School in Kanniyakumari charged that their tailoring teacher wanted the students to read the Bible. When some students told her that they were Hindus and were reading Bhagavad Gita, the teacher insulted Gita and the Hindu religion as such.

The girl student, in a video recorded in presence of the police officers, said that the teacher used to insist that the students should read Bible and when the students said that they were Hindus and reading Bhagavad Gita, the teacher said that Bible was the truth and



The conversion incident is an isolated one and not as being made out to be by the BJP. The teacher was immediately put on suspension after a sixth standard student charged that there were conversion attempts on the part of a lady teacher in the government higher secondary school at Kanniyakumari

ANBIL MAHESH POYYAMOZHI | SCHOOL EDUCATION MINISTER

Gita was bad.

BJP Tamil Nadu state president K. Annamalai in a tweet said that the DMK government would not have bothered about the issue and took it up after it became news.

He also said suspension of the teacher is not a solution to this

and the anti-forced conversion law is the need of the hour.

It may be recalled that at Michael Patti in Thanjavur district a 17-year-old girl had committed suicide January 19 alleging forced conversion to Christianity by her school hostel warden.

The 67-year-old warden of Sacred Heart School hostel, Sister Saghya Mary was arrested based on the dying deposition of the girl and BJP and other Hindu organisations raking up major protests across the state.

The state government is on the defensive after another incident of conversion has also come out in the media and as a fire fighting exercise, the teacher was suspended and the state school education Minister is speaking to the media.

However, the issue of conversion will be taken up by the BJP across the state and the DMK will have to do a lot of defense against the same.

Plains sizzling, holidaymakers rush to HP

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Shimla, April 14: Amid a decline in Covid-19 cases and to escape the early setting of scorching heat in plains, hordes of holidaymakers converged across destinations in Himachal Pradesh Thursday, the first day of the onset of a long weekend that lasts till April 17.

As per the hospitality industry, the state capital and its nearby picnic spots have been geared up to play host to over 50,000 tourists in the extended four-day weekend.

According to various reports, there has been an increase of 80-90 per cent in the tourist inflow to the state compared to last year

Keeping in mind to set cash registers ringing, several private hoteliers in prominent destinations like Shimla, Kufri, Manali, Dharamsala, Palampur, Kasauli and Chail have hiked room tariffs. Available information suggests a room fetching Rs 1,000 last year owing to the pandemic is sold off at Rs 5,000 a day in most of the hotels in Shimla, Kufri, Chail, Narkanda and Kasauli.

"Almost all our properties in Shimla and its nearby destinations like Chail, Kufri, Narkanda and Kasauli are packed to capacity till this weekend," a senior official with Himachal Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (HPTDC) told IANS here.



He said most tourists prefer to visit those destinations from where they can enjoy the view of snow-laden hills.

Besides Shimla and Manali, the most sought after destinations are Narkanda, Sangla, Kasauli, Chail, Palampur, Dharamsala and Dalhousie, he said.

Chandigarh-based entrepreneur Rakesh Bhandari said: "After a long gap of fear and anxiety owing to the pandemic, we got an opportunity for a family vacation. Since media reports say the entire Kashmir is packed to capacity, we decided to travel to Shimla."

His daughter Neha added: "What a pleasant weather in the hills from

the scorching conditions in Chandigarh."

Manali remains a favourite for tourists due to nearby chuckling snow-laden mountains.

"Nearby hills of Manali still have plenty of snow where the tourists can enjoy," a Manali-based travel agent told IANS over the phone.

Seeing the rush of tourists, taxi drivers and guides are openly fleeing the tourists by quoting high rates, pinching the pockets of holidaymakers.

"In Kufri, pony owners are virtually trying to poach you despite your refusals. You will end up getting charged hefty for a ride," said

tourist Deepak Talwar.

According to various reports, there has been an increase of 80-90 per cent in the tourist inflow to the state compared to last year.

But a word of caution for the motorists travelling towards the Kunzum Pass.

Lahaul-Spiti Deputy Commissioner Neeraj Kumar has advised tourists and locals to avoid travelling through Kaza-Losar-Gramphu-Koksar highway as the road is not restored for traffic. The highway passes through 14,931 feet (4,551m) Kunzum Pass.

The state economy is highly dependent on hydroelectric power, horticulture and tourism.

of the day quote

We got votes from all sections of the society and our vote percentage has increased



MULAYAM SINGH YADAV | SAMAJWADI PARTY (SP) FOUNDER

It has always been clear in the country's politics that even if casteist parties, especially the Congress and the BJP, make a Dalit MP, MLA, minister, deputy chief minister or even the president, that Dalit person can only ensure his progress and that of his family but cannot do anything for the progress of the neglected community



MAYAWATI | BAHUJAN SAMAJ PARTY PRESIDENT

India dreamt of by Vivekananda and Maharishi Aurobindo is nearing realisation. People say it may take 20-25 years, but from my experience I feel it will be realised in next 8-10 years. For this, the entire society has to work together



MOHAN BHAGWAT | RSS CHIEF

SHORT TAKES

History-sheeter held in Thane

Thane: A notorious criminal wanted in the case of attack on a policeman has been arrested in the district after being on the run for nine months, an official said Thursday. Ibrahim Ismail Mazzid alias Pappa Haddi was involved in several crimes in Kalyan area of the district, he said. Officials of the Bazarpath police station laid a trap after receiving a tip-off that the was to arrive in Macchi Bazar area of Kalyan Tuesday night, the police official said. Mazzid tried to escape by jumping from one rooftop to another but police managed to nab him after a chase, the official said.

Clerk held with over ₹18 lakh

Jodhpur: The Anti-Corruption Bureau arrested a clerk and seized ₹18.25 lakh in cash from him Thursday morning, an official said. Kailash Chandra Jat, who works as an upper division clerk in the colonisation department, said the money was given to him by a senior official, who had told him to hand it over to some person in Jaipur. DIG ACB Kailash Chandra Bishnoi said following a tip-off, an ACB team set up a picket at the Rampura toll post near Mathania.

3 held in Sangam Vihar murder case

New Delhi: Delhi Police's Special cell has arrested three absconding criminals wanted in the Sangam Vihar murder case. The accused arrested on Wednesday night were identified as Mohammed Rashid, Deepak alias Deepu and Ronit alias Debu. They are involved in more than ten cases. Two pistols with eight live cartridges were recovered from their possession. DCP of Special Cell, Jasmit Singh said that Inspector Ishwar Singh and ACP Attar Singh were working on an information to nab the trio.

Man found dead

Thane: A 48-year-old employee of a manufacturing unit was found dead in the dissolver tank of the plant in Kalyan taluka of Maharashtra's Thane district, police said Thursday. According to the police, a case of suicide has been suspected and an accidental death report has been registered. Anil Jha, the chief operating officer of a rayon manufacturing company in Shahad, was found dead in a tank with multiple injuries on his body Wednesday, the station house officer of Ulhasnagar police station said.



In all heinous crimes, the accused persons are arrested immediately. But Eshwarappa has not been arrested yet. All are equal before the law

SIDDARAMAIAH | LEADER OF THE OPPN OF THE K'TAKA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

GREAT INITIATIVE

A training institute for drone pilots would be set up in Haryana by Drone Imaging and Information Service of Haryana Ltd (DRIISHYA), it was announced Thursday. A decision in this regard was taken at the second board of directors meeting of DRIISHYA chaired by Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar



ENCOUNTER IN SHOPIAN

Four ultras killed; 3 Army men dead in mishap on way to site

ENCOUNTER ERUPTS DURING A CORDON AND SEARCH OPERATION AT BADIGAM IN ZAINAPORA AREA OF SHOPIAN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, April 14: Four Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorists were killed in an encounter with security forces in Shopian district of Jammu and Kashmir Thursday, while three army personnel lost their lives as their vehicle met with an accident on way to the site of the gunfight, officials said.



On receiving information about the presence of terrorists at Badigam in the Zainapora area of Shopian, security forces launched a cordon-and-search operation, a police official said. During the search operation, the terrorists fired upon the forces which led to an encounter, he said.

In the exchange of fire, four militants were killed, the official said. The official identified the slain terrorists as Aaqib Farooq Thoker and Waseem Ahmed Thoker -- both residents of Heffkhuri in Zainapora -- and Farooq Ahmad Bhat and Shogeen Ahmad Mir of Sujan. Inspector General of Police (IGP) of Kashmir Vijay Kumar said the slain ultras belonged to the LeT.

"LeT #terrorists neutralised in today's #encounter were active in Shopian & adjacent areas of Pulwama. They were involved in 6 #terror crimes including attacks on outside labourers. Hunt for their associates like Aijaz of Pulwama

is on & they will be neutralised soon," the IGP said on Twitter. Meanwhile, three army personnel were killed and five others injured when their vehicle met with an accident while on way to the encounter site, Srinagar-based Defence PRO Col Emron Musavi said. "Owing to the wet road conditions, the driver seemingly lost control over the vehicle and it skidded off the road. The eight injured soldiers were shifted to District Hospital Shopian, where two among them were declared dead. "One soldier had received minor injuries and was discharged from District Hospital. The five other injured soldiers were evacuated to 92 Base Hospital, Srinagar, where

the third soldier also succumbed to his injuries. Four soldiers are presently at the 92 Base Hospital and are being treated," Col Musavi said. Citing police records, officials said the slain terrorists were part of groups involved in several terror crime cases, including attacks on police and security forces and civilian atrocities. Aaqib Farooq Thoker was involved in the snatching of a 12 bore rifle from Jammu and Kashmir Bank guard Abdul Hamid Wani, posted at Murrin. He was also involved in attacks on civilians in Nowpora and Yadar. The IGP congratulated the joint forces for conducting successful anti-terrorist operation without any collateral damage.

CONTRACTOR'S DEATH: MINISTER TO RESIGN

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Shivamogga (Karnataka), April 14: Karnataka's Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister K.S. Eshwarappa, who is embroiled in the suicide case of contractor and BJP leader Santhosh K. Patil, Thursday announced his resignation.

"I have worked as the RDPR minister till date under the CM's (Basavraj) Bommai's leadership in the government. I have taken a decision to tender my resignation on Friday evening. I don't want to cause embarrassment to my party and party leadership," he said.

Eshwarappa said that he had decided to tender his resignation earlier, but was stopped by his colleagues. "If I have committed any mistake, let the god punish me. I am confident of coming out clean from the allegations in the contractor suicide case," he said. Patil, who committed suicide by con-

Eshwarappa must be arrested: K'taka Cong

BANGALORE: Hours after underfire Karnataka minister K.S. Eshwarappa announced to tender his resignation, the state Congress said Thursday that resignation is not sufficient, and the BJP leader must be arrested immediately in connection with the suicide case of a civil contractor who held Eshwarappa directly responsible for his death.

suming poison, held Eshwarappa directly responsible for his death, alleging that the minister had asked for a 40 per cent commission in a ₹4 crore project, through his aides. The Congress has called for an indefinite strike, demanding resignation and arrest of Eshwarappa.



PROTECTING FROM STORM: A worker covers wheat sacks during a dust storm, in Jalandhar

PTI PHOTO

MP to adopt 3 more Meghalaya villages

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shillong, April 14: Rajya Sabha MP Rakesh Sinha Thursday said he will be adopting three more remote villages in Meghalaya for improving the livelihood of people and basic facilities.

The parliamentarian who had adopted Kongthong village in 2019 claimed that the area is now more beautiful than Kashmir. "I have decided to adopt Mawmang,

Mawshut, and Sder after the village elders approached me," the BJP MP told PTI here.

These villages are inaccessible by roads, and one has to trek for two and half hours from Kongthong to reach them, the MP said.

"I will go to these villages to meet the people," the MP said, adding that a virtual clinic will be set up in these places by May end. The district deputy commissioner would be visiting Kongthong on April 16 with

line department officers to address the issues there, Sinha said. At Kongthong, under his direct supervision, 200 dustbins, a sanitary napkin vending machine were installed, and six public toilets were built. On Wednesday, he distributed 400 honey boxes and kits among the villagers there.

The MP said he would be inviting Bollywood producers to shoot their films in the vicinity of Kongthong and on the road from

Shillong to the village, with greenery and scenic views on both sides. According to tradition, each newborn in Kongthong is assigned both a regular name and a distinct melodious tune at birth by their mother. While their name is only used for official purposes, this tune becomes their identity to which they respond throughout their lives. Once a person dies, their tune dies with them, never to be repeated for anyone else ever.

After Raj Thackeray's barbs, BJP drops 'twitter bomb' on Pawar

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, April 14: A week after Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut accused the BJP of having declared a 'war' on the Maha Vikas Aghadi government in Maharashtra, and three days after Raj Thackeray's barbs, Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnavis dropped a series of 14 Twitter bombs at Nationalist Congress (NCP) Party supremo Sharad Pawar, here Thursday.

Fadnavis launched a blistering, no-holds-barred attack at Pawar, ranging from the Constitution to the mafia to 'The Kashmir Files' and the man who coined the word 'Hindu terror' - though the immediate political provocation for the loaded verbal assault was not clear. Among other things, Fadnavis en-

dorsed Maharashtra Navnirman Sena chief Raj Thackeray's charges against Pawar of appeasing minorities and polarising the society on communal lines -- a day after the 81-year-old NCP chief rebuked Thackeray for his 'childish' outbursts Tuesday against the Pawars and others.

"On one hand, we are celebrating (today) 131st birth anniversary of Dr BR Ambedkarji, who was against inclusion of Article 370 granting special status to Jammu & Kashmir. But look what is being said going against the wishes and values of Dr Ambedkarji," posted Fadnavis.

Talking of Pawar's statements on the film 'The Kashmir Files', Fadnavis said they were not surprising as they were in tune with the NCP's decades old track record



of appeasement politics and polarising the society on communal lines. Fadnavis also pointed out that NCP minister Nawab Malik was arrested by the Enforcement Director for activities linked to alleged money-laundering of abducting mafia don Dawood Ibrahim Kaskar, while in 2013, the

NCP was on record declaring Ishrat Jahan as innocent, with its senior leaders extending help to her and even trying to demean the Intelligence Bureau though they were themselves in power at that time. In a brief reaction, NCP's Home Minister Dilip Walse-Patil said that even in the past, Sharad

Fadnavis launched a blistering, no-holds-barred attack at Pawar, ranging from the Constitution to the mafia to 'The Kashmir Files' and the man who coined the word 'Hindu terror' - though the immediate political provocation for the loaded verbal assault was not clear

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Pawar was linked to the mafia and said it has become a favourite hobby of people to target the NCP chief. Fadnavis said in 2012, when the

Congress-NCP ruled the state, the 'shameful' Azad Maidan violence took place in Mumbai, and the Amar Jawan Jyoti was desecrated, but the NCP, which held the home portfolio, went soft on the Raza Academy and instead removed the Mumbai Police Commissioner.

Going back by three decades, Fadnavis asked what happened when Mumbai cried during the 12 serial blasts of March 12, 1993 that shook the city but Pawar 'invented' a 13th blast in a Muslim area, and instead of law and order, appeasement was his first priority. The BJP leader said the NCP has 'grand-plans to introduce Muslim quota in Maharashtra though the Constitution has no such provision, adding that it is "shameful how vote-bank politics prevails over Constitutional values".

HANSKHALI RAPE CASE

Father alleges body snatched at gunpoint

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hanskhali (WB), April 14: The CBI is Thursday expected to interrogate the father of the girl who was allegedly gang raped and died in West Bengal's Nadia district, after he alleged that his daughter's body was snatched at gunpoint for cremation, an officer of the investigating agency said.

The CBI, which is investigating the case on the direction of Calcutta High Court, is also likely to visit the house of the prime accused where the crime was allegedly perpetrated, the officer said. A CBI team, which has two woman officers, reached Hanskhali in Nadia district Wednesday night. It visited the police station in Nadia district and took into its custody the case diary and other documents related to the investigation, he added.

Crimes against women are unacceptable. It is a matter of shame for all of us even if a single crime incident against women is reported in the state which is helmed by a woman chief minister. We should have zero tolerance of crime against women

SOUGATA ROY | SENIOR TMC MP

"We have collected the case diary and other documents related to the investigation. We may go and meet the father of the girl and record his statement today," the of-



The CBI, which is investigating the case on the direction of Calcutta High Court, is also likely to visit the house of the prime accused where the crime was allegedly perpetrated

ficer told PTI. The girl's father, who is in hospital, had claimed on Wednesday that the accused, the son of a panchayat leader, had snatched his daughter's body at gunpoint and cremated her.

The girl's parents have also alleged that they were threatened with dire consequences if they reported the incident to the police.

The girl, a student of standard nine, died after she was allegedly gang-raped at a party in that house on April 4. The police complaint was filed by her family on April 10.

The prime accused is the son of a TMC panchayat member at Hanskhali, her family claimed.

international



Pakistan has been an important partner on wide-ranging mutual interests for nearly 75 years and we value our relationship
ANTONY BLINKEN | US SECRETARY OF STATE

A NEW HIGH

China's financial hub Shanghai reported over 27,000 coronavirus cases Thursday, a new high, a day after President Xi Jinping said that the country must continue with its strict "dynamic COVID clearance" policy and pandemic control measures



of the day quote

The conflict is supercharging a three-dimensional crisis of food, energy and finance that is pummeling some of the world's most vulnerable people, countries and economies
ANTONIO GUTERRES | UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

On Covid-19, there's good news. Last week, the lowest number of Covid-19 deaths was recorded since the early days of the pandemic
TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS | WHO DIRECTOR GENERAL

I hope the country will achieve its greenhouse gas reduction goal, although President-elect Yoon Suk-yeol's transition team seeks to modify the outgoing government's carbon neutrality plans
MOON JAE-IN | SOUTH KOREAN PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

Vietnam Dy Foreign Minister arrested

Hanoi: Police in Vietnam Thursday arrested Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs To Anh Dung on suspicion of bribery, the Ministry of Public Security said. Dung, 58, is accused of taking bribes and police have searched his house, the ministry said in a statement. Dung's arrest is part of a wider investigation where foreign ministry officials have been accused of taking bribes from Vietnamese citizens abroad who have wanted to return to the country on "rescue flights" at a time during the COVID-19 pandemic when commercial flights were not available, according to state media.

US lawmakers arrive in Taiwan

Taipei: A delegation of six U.S. lawmakers led by Republican Lindsey Graham from South Carolina arrived in Taiwan on Thursday for a two-day visit that has already been denounced by China. The U.S. lawmakers are to meet with Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen and the island's defense minister. The visit is "again a demonstration of the U.S.'s rock solid support and commitment to Taiwan" amid a "severe" situation in Ukraine, the island's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement.

29 drown in Nigeria

Bauchi: At least 29 people died when a boat capsized in Nigeria's Sokoto state in the northwest of the country, residents and the state governor said Wednesday. The boat was carrying 35 people, mostly women, across a dam in Shagari local government area when it sank. Divers managed to rescue six people, Governor Aminu Tambuwal said.

4 Germans held

Berlin: Four people were arrested in Germany and weapons were seized in an investigation into suspected anti-government extremists who allegedly planned to cause a long nationwide blackout and kidnap well-known figures including the country's health minister, authorities said Thursday.

Two killed

Tel Aviv: Israeli troops operating in the West Bank shot and killed two Palestinians, the Palestinian Health Ministry said Thursday, in the latest escalation of violence between the sides amid intensifying Israeli raids in the occupied territory. The deaths come a day after three Palestinians were killed in clashes with Israeli troops, who have been patrolling the West Bank.

Russia warns of nuclear deployment

REUTERS

London, April 14: One of Russian President Vladimir Putin's closest allies warned NATO Thursday that if Sweden and Finland joined the U.S.-led military alliance then Russia would deploy nuclear weapons and hypersonic missiles in an enclave in the heart of Europe.

Finland, which shares a 1,300-km (810-mile) border with Russia, and Sweden are considering joining the NATO alliance. Finland will decide in the next few weeks, Prime Minister Sanna Marin said on Wednesday. Dmitry Medvedev, deputy chairman of Russia's Security Council, said that should Sweden and Finland join NATO then Russia would have to strengthen its land, naval and air forces in the Baltic Sea.

Medvedev also explicitly raised the nuclear threat by saying that there could be no more talk of a "nuclear free" Baltic - where Russia has its Kaliningrad enclave sandwiched between Poland and Lithuania.

"There can be no more talk of any nuclear-free status for the Baltic - the balance must be restored," said Medvedev, who was Russian president from 2008 to 2012. Medvedev said he hoped Finland and Sweden would see sense. If not, he said, they would have to live with nuclear weapons and hy-

FRESH THREAT



A woman holds a broom outside a heavily damaged apartment block, following an artillery attack in Ukraine
REUTERS PHOTO

personic missiles close to home.

Russia has the world's biggest arsenal of nuclear warheads and along with China and the United States is one of the global leaders in hypersonic missile technology. Lithuania said Russia's threats were nothing new and that Moscow had deployed nuclear weapons to Kaliningrad long before the war in Ukraine. NATO did not immediately respond to Russia's warning.

Still, the possible accession of Finland and Sweden into NATO - founded in 1949 to provide Western security against the Soviet Union - would be one of the biggest strategic consequences of the war in Ukraine. Finland gained independence from Russia in 1917 and fought two wars against it during

Military assistance for Ukraine

Washington: In anticipation of a new Russian offensive in eastern Ukraine, President Joe Biden has approved an \$800 million package of military assistance, including additional helicopters and the first provision of American artillery. The Ukrainians also will receive armored personnel carriers, armored Humvees, naval drone vessels used in coastal defense, and gear and equipment used to protect soldiers in chemical, biological, nuclear and radiological attacks.

Fate of Russia warship unclear

Kyiv: Ukrainian officials said their forces hit the flagship of Russia's Black Sea fleet with missiles, and one official said Thursday that the vessel sank. Russia said the Moskva was badly damaged by a fire that forced the warship's evacuation but that it was still afloat. The loss of the warship named for the Russian capital would be a major military and symbolic defeat for Moscow as its troops regroup for a renewed offensive in eastern Ukraine after retreating from much of the north, including the capital. Russia did not acknowledge any attack but said a fire aboard the ship, which would typically have 500 sailors on board, forced the entire crew to evacuate. It later said the fire had been contained and that the ship would be towed to port with its guided missile launchers intact. The ship can carry 16 long-range cruise missiles, and its removal from combat would greatly reduce Russia's firepower in the Black Sea.

World War Two during which it lost some territory. On Thursday, Finland announced a military exercise in Western Finland with the participation of Britain, the

United States, Latvia and Estonia. Sweden has not fought a war for 200 years. Foreign policy has focused on supporting democracy and nuclear disarmament.

NEW STRATEGY

UK to relocate illegal migrants to Rwanda



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, April 14: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced a new immigration strategy on Thursday which will see many migrants entering the UK illegally flown out to the African nation of Rwanda.

Johnson said that as part of efforts to make asylum seeking routes to the UK safe and legal, the Royal Navy will take over operational command from the Border Force in the English Channel, which has over the years seen increased numbers of small boats smuggling migrants illegally into the UK.

Under a new Migration and Economic Development Partnership, anyone caught entering the UK illegally, as well as those who have already entered the country illegally from January 1 this year, could be relocated to Rwanda.

"The deal we have done is uncapped and Rwanda will have the capacity to resettle tens of thousands of people in the years ahead," Johnson said in a speech at an airport in Kent, south-east England.

"This innovative approach - driven our shared humanitarian impulse and made possible by Brexit freedoms - will provide safe and legal routes for asylum, while disrupting the business model of the gangs, because it means that economic migrants taking advantage of the asylum system will not get to stay in the UK, while those in genuine need will be properly protected, including with access to legal services on arrival in Rwanda, and given the opportunity to build a new life in that dynamic country,

The deal we have done is uncapped and Rwanda will have the capacity to resettle tens of thousands of people in the years ahead
BORIS JOHNSON | UK PM

supported by the funding we are providing," he said.

"And let's be clear, Rwanda is one of the safest countries in the world, globally recognised for its record on welcoming and integrating migrants," he added.

UK Home Secretary Priti Patel will sign the Migration and Economic Development Partnership with Rwanda during an ongoing visit to the east African nation and is expected to set out further details.

The initial cost of the programme is estimated at around GBP 120 million. The UK move comes ahead of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) scheduled in the Rwandan capital Kigali in June.

"Before the pandemic, in 2018, the IMF said Rwanda was the world's fourth fastest growing economy," noted Johnson.

The new plan is aimed at ending what the UK government says is the "barbaric trade in human misery", caused by people traffickers in the English Channel, as dangerous crossings in makeshift boats and dinghies reach around 1,000 people a day in a few weeks.

Boris Johnson said the government is confident the new measures are fully compliant with international legal obligations, but admitted that he expects this may be challenged in the courts.

Boris may visit India next week

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, April 14: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is expected to arrive in India next week, soon after the long Easter break in the UK, with a state visit that highlights a successful India-UK partnership on the agenda besides a wide-ranging schedule in New Delhi, according to highly-placed Indian government sources.

The visit next week, which is yet to be formally announced by Downing Street, follows the successful completion of four out of 26 chapters in the ongoing India-UK free trade agreement (FTA) negotiations.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Johnson are expected to take stock of the negotiations and mandate a timeline for the possible completion of the process, initially set for the end of this year.

According to officials close to the discussions, there has also been "significant progress" in the remaining 22 chapters of the FTA at the end of the first two rounds of official negotiations, with the third round of talks scheduled for later this month.

The focal point of Johnson's India visit is expected to be on April 21 and 22, when bilateral discussions and interactions with Indian business leaders are on the cards. A joint statement, being worked on by both sides, is likely to cover agreements across a variety of sectors, including defence and security and education.

The Russia-Ukraine conflict is likely to feature strongly during the meeting, but officials pointed out that other regional matters such as the situation in Afghanistan and the UK's Indo-Pacific tilt will be high on the agenda of the bilateral visit.

LAL KACH SPIRIT



Hindu devotees dance after applying paint on their bodies as they celebrate the Lal Kach festival in Munshiganj, Bangladesh
REUTERS PHOTO

NAVALNY'S AIDE JAILED FOR 6 MTHS

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Moscow, April 14: A Moscow court replaced the parole-like restrictions on a close associate of imprisoned Russian opposition leader Alexey Navalny with a prison sentence of nearly six months Thursday.

Activist Lyubov Sobol received the 18-month parole-like sentence in August of last year after being convicted of breaching coronavirus regulations. The limits on Sobol's freedom included a nightly curfew, and bans on using the internet and the telephone.

She has denied the accusations against her, calling them baseless and politically motivated. The charges were part of a criminal



case the Russian government launched against individuals involved in nationwide protests against Navalny's arrest and incarceration. The Moscow court Thursday ordered Sobol, who is reported to have left Russia like many other Navalny allies, to serve five months and 26 days in prison.

Protesters mark New Year near Gotabaya's office

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Colombo, April 14: Sri Lankan protesters, including some celebrities, welcomed the traditional Sinhala and Tamil New Year outside the presidential secretariat by boiling milk and distributing traditional sweets Thursday, the sixth day of their anti-government stir demanding resignation of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and his powerful family for mishandling the country's worst economic crisis.

Protesters are occupying the entrance and surroundings of President Gotabaya's office, holding him responsible for the economic situation. The protesters Wednesday rejected Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa's offer for talks and de-



A man sits on a domestic gas cylinder as he waits to buy gas on a main road, amid the country's economic crisis in Colombo
REUTERS PHOTO

manded the resignation of President Gotabaya and all members of his family from the government.

The protesters hailed the dawn of the New Year at 8:41 am and then boiled milk at the auspicious

time of 9:07 am. The spill of milk at the auspicious time is the indication of well being in the New Year. At 10:17 am, the time for the first meal in the New Year, they distributed the traditional sweets outside the president's office where they have been camping since Saturday.

Social media posts from the participants said they were unwilling to have any talks unless the Rajapaksas quit from all positions in the government.

The protest is being carried out round-the-clock by youths demanding a total transformation of the "corrupt political culture", which they claim has been prevailing in the island nation since it gained Independence from Britain in 1948.

REWARDED FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

Kim gives NK's most famous newscaster a luxury home

KIM MET RI AT A NEWLY BUILT RIVERSIDE TERRACED RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT THAT WAS INAUGURATED WEDNESDAY IN PYONGYANG

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Seoul, April 14: State media anchor Ri Chun Hi is one of North Korea's most famous voices after announcing the country's major events of past decades - among

them nuclear and missile tests and the death of a leader - in a resounding, booming voice filled with emotion.

The anchor dubbed abroad as the "pink lady" for her bright, traditional attire was the topic of official North Korean media herself Thursday after leader Kim Jong Un gave Ri a luxurious residence and asked her to continue to vigorously serve as the voice of his ruling Workers' Party.

Experts say Kim is trying to boost his support from elite North Koreans while the country deals with pandemic hardships and a diplomacy stalemate. "(Kim) said it is the sincerity of the party that there is nothing to spare for the treasures of the country like her who has worked as a revolutionary



announcer for the party for more than 50 years since her girlhood," the official Korean Central News Agency said. Kim expressed "expectation that she would as ever vigorously continue her work in good

health as befitting a spokeswoman for the party."

Kim met Ri at a newly built riverside terraced residential district that was inaugurated Wednesday in Pyongyang. KCNA said houses in

the district were presented to Ri and other people who have given distinguished service to the state.

Friday is the 110th birthday of Kim's late grandfather and state founder Kim Il Sung. It's the most important state anniversary in North Korea, which has been successively ruled by three generations of the Kim family since its foundation in 1948. The new housing area is where Kim Il Sung's official residence was located until the 1970s.

"By giving houses to those who have been faithful to him, Kim Jong Un would want to further bolster their loyalty and internal unity," said Moon Seong Mook, an analyst with the Seoul-based Korea Research Institute for National Strategy. "Ri Chun Hi is a clear

example of such people as she's strongly propagated his nuclear and missile tests and served as a sort of bugler for him."

KCNA said Kim looked around Ri's house with her Wednesday and took an unspecified step to prevent her from suffering any inconvenience "while going up and down the stairs." Ri, who is about 79, said she felt her new house was like a hotel and that all her family members "stayed up all night in tears of deep gratitude for the party's benevolence," according to KCNA.

Ri joined state TV in the early 1970s, when the country was still governed by Kim Il Sung, and she has gradually become the face of the country's propaganda-driven news broadcasts.



We want the ease of doing business for the industry and lessen the compliance burden on it. This is why we always carry out consultations with all stakeholders prior to the formulation of any policy or regulation

MANSUKH MANDAVIYA
UNION CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS MINISTER

ALLIANCE AIR LEAVES AI'S HANGAR

Tata Group-owned Air India Thursday said that Alliance Air "is no longer a subsidiary" and booking or queries related to it won't be handled by the carrier from April 15, 2022. The airline advised passengers that "tickets of Air India with a 4-digit flight number starting with '9' or 3-digit flight number starting with '91' belong to Alliance Air



of the day quote

Digital Empowers is one of the only technology forums that brings together leading organisations from across different sectors to explore how digital innovations of all types can lead to transformative solutions to local and global challenges

BALAJI GANAPATHY
GLOBAL SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OFFICER, TCS

Travel optimism is at an all-time high across the country. As restrictions are eased and air travel bans lifted, travellers are looking forward to celebrating festivals with their loved ones, heading out on summer vacations and making the most of their long weekends

SHREERANG GODBOLE | SENIOR VP, OYO

We are happy to report that the emissions associated with electricity and fuel consumption have been reduced to zero, thereby having no carbon impact on the environment

AMIT JAIN | MD, L'ORÉAL INDIA

SHORT TAKES

Mineral production rises 4.5% in Feb

New Delhi: The country's mineral production increased 4.5 per cent in February 2022 over the same month a year ago, the mines ministry said Thursday. The index of mineral production of mining and quarrying sector for the month of February was at 123.2, registering a rise of 4.5 per cent as compared to the level recorded in the year-ago month, it said in a statement. The mineral production recorded cumulative growth of 13.2 per cent in April-February 2021-22, according to the provisional statistics of the Indian Bureau of Mines.

Bol moves NCLT against FRL

New Delhi: Bank of India has moved the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), filing a petition to initiate insolvency proceedings against debt-ridden Future Retail Ltd. Earlier this month, Future Retail Ltd (FRL) had reported a default of ₹5,322.32 crore to its lenders on account of the ongoing litigations with e-commerce major Amazon and other related issues. The Future group firm said it has received a copy of the petition and is in the "process of taking legal advice".

BPCL teams up with Microsoft

New Delhi: Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Microsoft have entered a strategic cloud partnership aimed at accelerating the firm's digital transformation and driving innovation in the oil and gas industry. According to a joint statement, the collaboration seeks to unlock the opportunities that Microsoft's cloud provides to address the unique challenges of the oil and gas sector, enabling BPCL to accelerate the modernisation of its tech architecture. This, in turn, will enhance and redefine customer experience.

Honda launches City e:HEV sedan

New Delhi: Japanese auto major Honda Cars Thursday unveiled its new offering for the Indian market -- City e:HEV sedan, marking its foray into the mainstream strong hybrid electric vehicle segment in the country. The company, which is present in India through a wholly-owned subsidiary, has commenced the bookings of the model and plans to introduce it in the market next month.

TAX REVENUE MOP-UP ZOOMS

India on track to becoming \$5trn economy: FinMin



In the last fiscal year, direct tax collection rose by a record 49% to ₹14.10 lakh crore, while indirect taxes recorded a growth of 20% to ₹12.90 lakh crore-- reflecting buoyancy in economy

For the current fiscal year, capex is budgeted to rise by 35.4% to ₹7.5 lakh crore to continue the public investment-led recovery of the Covid-battered economy. The capex last year was pegged at ₹5.5 lakh crore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Tax revenues in last fiscal year grew by a record 34% to ₹27.07 lakh crore, which the ministry said is "a remarkable testimony to the rapid recovery" of the economy following successive waves of Covid-19

New Delhi, April 14: The focus on capex in the recently announced Budget for the current fiscal year will boost manufacturing and tax revenue collections, thereby keeping India on track to becoming a \$5 trillion economy, the finance ministry said Thursday.

"The central government's focus on making India a global economic powerhouse and the host of measures adopted towards this commitment has directly reflected in India's GDP growth in recent years. This has translated into increased revenue collection for the excheq-

uer while keeping India well on the track towards achieving a \$5 trillion economy..." the ministry said.

The ministry said apart from a brief setback under Covid-19, the government has maintained the nominal GDP growth above 10 per cent in recent years. GST, a simplified way of collecting indirect taxes, has been a revolutionary step propelling India's GDP.

"With a big push to capex in the Union Budget of 2022-23, the coming years are going to see a surge in domestic manufacturing as well as growth in employment. These in turn will directly boost tax contribution to the exchequer," the ministry said.

This, the ministry said, shows that the new simplified tax regime with low rates and no exemptions has lived up to its promise, enhancing Ease of Doing Business for the corporate sector, stimulating India's economy and increasing tax revenues for the government.

PM Narendra Modi in 2019 envisioned making India a \$5 trillion economy and a global economic powerhouse. The Indian GDP is estimated to be around \$3 trillion in 2021-22.

Textiles PLI: Proposals of ₹19K cr approved

Government had approved the PLI scheme for Textiles products like MMF apparel, MMF fabrics and products of technical textiles for enhancing manufacturing capabilities and boosting exports with an approved financial outlay of ₹10,683 crore over a five-year period

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 14: The government Thursday said it has approved 61 applications of companies, including Ginni Filaments, Kimberly Clark India Pvt Ltd, and Arvind Ltd, with an investment potential of over ₹19,000 crore under the production linked incentive (PLI) scheme for textiles.

Textile Secretary UP Singh said that a total of 67 proposals were received under the PLI scheme for the

textiles sector.

"In the approved 61 applications the proposed total investment expected from the applicants is ₹19,077 crore and a projected turnover is ₹184,917 crore with a proposed employment of 240,134 people," Singh told reporters here.

Out of 67 applications, 15 were received under Part-1 and 52 under Part-2, the official said. In Part 1, the minimum investment requirement is ₹300 crore and the minimum turnover required



to be achieved for incentive is ₹600 crore, and in Part-2, the minimum investment should of ₹100 crore and the minimum turnover is ₹200 crore.

The companies whose proposals have been approved include Avgol India Pvt Ltd; Goa Glass Fibre Ltd; H P Cotton Textile Mills; Kimberly Clark India Pvt Ltd (subject to formation of a new company for investment and production under

the scheme); Madura Industrial Textiles; MCPV Pvt Ltd; Pratibha Syntex; Shahi Exports; Trident Ltd; Doner Industries; Gokaldas Exports; and Arvind Ltd.

Singh said that the scheme would help increase India's share in the global man-made fibre and technical textiles sector. "We are targeting to increase exports of technical textiles from \$2 billion to about \$8-10 billion," he added.

Talking about the Mega Investment Textiles Parks (MITRA) scheme, the secretary said they have received 17 proposals from 13 states, including Madhya Pradesh (4) and Karnataka (2). The Textiles Ministry will follow a "challenge method" to select states for the scheme, under which seven parks will be set up in the country.

BlackRock-led group to invest ₹4,000cr in Tata Renewables

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 14: Tata Power Thursday said a consortium led by US-based BlackRock Real Assets will invest ₹4,000 crore in its subsidiary, Tata Power Renewable Energy Ltd, for over 10 per cent equity stake.

Abu-Dhabi-based investment company Mubadala Investment Company (Mubadala) is also part of the consortium, Tata Power Company said in a statement.

Tata Power and BlackRock Real Assets-led consortium, including Mubadala, have entered into a binding agreement to invest in Tata Power's renewable energy subsidiary, Tata Power Renewables.

"BlackRock Real Assets, together with Mubadala, shall invest ₹4,000 crore (\$525 million) by way of equity/compulsorily convertible instruments for a 10.53 per cent stake in Tata Power Renewables, translating to a base equity valuation of ₹34,000 crore," it said.

According to the statement, the first round of capital infusion is expected to be completed by June



2022 and the balance funds will be infused by the end of the ongoing calendar year.

Over the next five years, Tata Power Renewables aims to achieve a portfolio of over 20 gigawatts (GW) of renewables assets and a market-leading position in the rooftop and electric vehicle charging space across India, Tata Power said.

Tata Power CEO and Managing Director Praveer Sinha said, "I am delighted to welcome BlackRock Real Assets and Mubadala to join us to take the renewables business to the next level of growth. The collaboration will support us to pursue exciting opportunities that lie ahead in the coming decades."

Tata Power Renewables is one of the largest renewable energy companies in India. Its vertically integrated operations have about 4.9 GW of renewable energy assets

Anne Valentine Andrews, BlackRock's Global Head of Real Assets, said "Tata Power Renewables is at the forefront of India's ambition to secure greater energy stability for its citizens while positioning its economy for a low carbon future."

Khaled Abdulla Al Qubaisi, Chief Executive Officer, Real Estate and Infrastructure Investments at Mubadala, said "Mubadala has a strong focus on renewable energy in multiple markets, so we are delighted to be co-investing with BlackRock Real Assets to help progress Tata Power Renewables' ambitions in India."

M&M hikes vehicle prices by 2.5%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 14: Mahindra & Mahindra Thursday said it has increased prices of its entire model range by 2.5 per cent with immediate effect.

This will result in an increase of ₹10,000 to ₹63,000 on the ex-showroom prices across the range, depending upon the model and the variant, the home-grown auto major said in a statement.

The price revision is the result of a continuous increase in prices of key commodities such as steel, aluminium, palladium, etc, it added.

"The company has taken necessary initiatives to partially offset the unprecedented hike in commodity prices to absorb the impact, passing a minimal percentage of cost increase to customers through a price revision," M&M noted.

The company, which sells models like Thar and XUV700, is working with its sales and dealer network to communicate the new prices to the customers appropriately, it added.

Earlier this month, the country's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) has also announced an increase in prices of its entire model range amid rise in input costs.

BIZ BUZZ

IMFA holds 9th Shambhavi Puraskar ceremony

Bhubaneswar: Aiming to recognise those who bring societal changes and motivate others, the Bansidhar and Ila Panda Foundation (BIPF), of IMFA Group instituted the prestigious Shambhavi Puraskar here at Lemon Tree Premier, Thursday. The ninth edition of the award ceremony saw 'Shambhavi Puraskar 2022' being conferred upon Ratnakar Sahoo for his indistinct contribution in the domain of education. Sahoo, founder of 'ASHAYEN', aimed at improving lives of underprivileged children through his unique community-based learning centres known as 'Ama-Pathashala.' With his revolutionary approach he successfully converted few liquor shops into study centres "Madashala ru Pathshala" to conduct evening classes for street children and slum dwellers. In recognition of his perseverance and commitment the BIPF has conferred Sahoo with a cash prize of ₹2,50,000 along with a memento and citation. Speaking on the occasion, Chief Guest, VK Madhavan, Chief Executive of Water Aid India, said, "It is an honour to be a part of such a prestigious recognition ceremony. Odisha has always come with unique ideas fuelled by the passionate people of the state. The entire India can take example of the 'Drink From Tap' initiative which can be emulated across India. However, much focus needs to be done on water sanitation and infrastructure inclusivity." Meanwhile, the BIPF which also recognises individuals who stand out as an example of courage and pillars of strength to the community, conferred the 'Jury Commendation Certification 2022' upon Chinmayee Das of Jarapada (Angul District). As a social activist, Das has been vocal about the rights of transgender community. She was awarded a cash prize of ₹50,000/- along with a citation.



PNB's 128th Foundation Day fete

Bhubaneswar: Punjab National Bank, the second largest Public Sector Bank of the country celebrated its 128th Foundation Day April 12. On this momentous occasion, various activities were carried out by each and every unit of the bank throughout the country. In Zonal office, Bhubaneswar, Blood Donation Camp was organised where more than 100 units of the blood was collected, (Inaugurated by Zonal Head Sanjeev Bhardwaj). Health Check-up at the PNB Pokhariput branch (Inaugurated by Zonal Head Sanjeev Bhardwaj, Paresh Kumar Das, Circle Head Bhubaneswar). SHG Mela at the PNB Malisahi Branch, (Inaugurated by Zonal Head Sanjeev Bhardwaj, General Manager Mukti Ranjan Roy and Laxmikanta Mishra, Circle Head, Cuttack). Mobile ATM VAN inaugurated by Zonal Head Sanjeev Bhardwaj (in the presence of officers and employees of the Zonal Office). Customer meets were also organised by all the branches and circle offices of the state.



NTPC Darlipali observes 131st Ambedkar Jayanti

Bhubaneswar: The 131st birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna Dr BR Ambedkar Jayanti was celebrated at NTPC, Darlipali, Thursday. Abhay Kumar Samaiyar, Chief General Manager (CGM) Darlipali was the chief guest and was joined by General Manager (GM) and HODs of NTPC Darlipali. The programme was inaugurated with the lighting of lamps and floral tribute to Babasaheb Ambedkar by the dignitaries and members of the association. Speaking on the occasion, Samaiyar shared the contribution of Baba Saheb Ambedkar and said, "He is remembered as the father of the Indian constitution and his contribution to the society is immeasurable and is an inspiration for all of us." Meanwhile, prizes to the winner students of Bal Bharati Public School for various essay and quiz competitions organised on this occasion were given away on this occasion by the dignitaries. TK Bageshwer, GM (TS), Arnab Maitra, GM (Maint), Vishal Mather, GM (Project), Sanjay Shrivastav, GM (Operation), Subhash Thakur, GM (FM) and other senior officials of NTPC Darlipali also attended the programme.



RIL explores bid for Walgreens' Boots biz

REUTERS

Mumbai, April 14: India's Reliance Industries is exploring a bid for drug retailer Walgreens Boots Alliance's UK-based Boots business, Bloomberg News reported on Wednesday, citing people familiar with the matter.

Boots is being sold as part of an auction process led by Goldman Sachs and can be valued at up to 8 billion pounds (\$10.49 billion), Reuters reported in February, citing sources.

Deliberations were ongoing and there was no certainty Reliance would actually bid for Boots, the Bloomberg report quoted people who asked not to be identified as the information was confidential.

US-based Walgreens said in January it was conducting a strategic review of the Boots business as the second largest US pharmacy chain renews its focus on domestic healthcare.

Other suitors for Boots include TDR Capital, which owns supermarket chain Asda, a con-



The Boots business spans across 2,200 stores in the UK, including pharmacies, health and beauty stores, according to the chain's website

sortium of CVC Capital Partners and Bain Capital as well as US investment firm Apollo.

WhatsApp to boost UPI adoption for next 500mn users

WhatsApp kicked off its ambitious peer-to-peer (P2P) digital payments pilot project in India in 2018 with nearly 10 lakh users. According to the NPCI, UPI had processed 5.04 billion transactions till March 29, amounting to ₹8.88 trillion

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

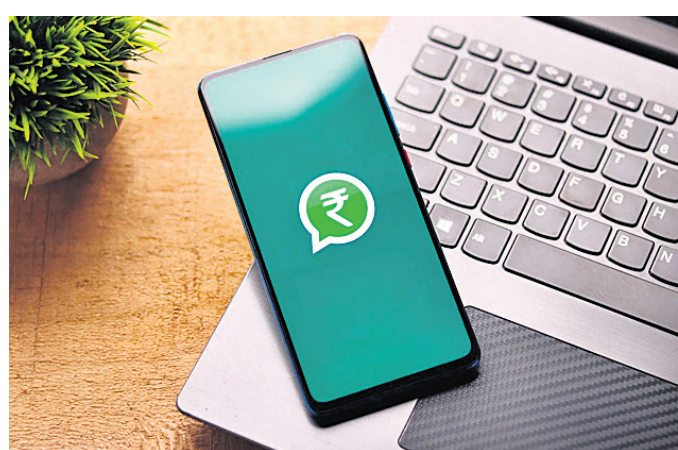
New Delhi, April 14: Meta-owned WhatsApp Thursday said that its simple, reliable and se-

cure experience will accelerate adoption of unified payments interface (UPI) for the next 500 million Indians.

Welcoming the approval by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) for an additional 60 million users for UPI for WhatsApp -- taking its cap to 100 million for Payments -- Manesh Mahatme, Director-Payments, WhatsApp India, told IANS that the UPI has been an unquestioned success.

In November last year, the NPCI approved increasing the user cap for WhatsApp's payment service from the current 20 million to 40 million users.

The NPCI has been giving ap-



proval to WhatsApp in a phased manner so that the competition in

the digital payment space in the country is not stifled.

We believe there is an opportunity for UPI to have an even greater impact for the country -- especially in rural regions where digital and financial inclusion can significantly improve peoples' lives. We believe that payments on WhatsApp can be a key partner to NPCI and the RBI as we all aim to scale adoption of UPI and financial inclusion to those most in need

MANESH MAHATME | DIRECTOR-PAYMENTS, WHATSAPP INDIA

"Since our initial approval from the NPCI, we have been working to

deliver a simple, reliable and secure experience for WhatsApp users that we hope will accelerate adoption of UPI for the next five hundred million Indians," Mahatme told IANS.

As part of this roadmap, he said that the company has planned significant investments in 'payments on WhatsApp' across India "including 'India-first' features and focus on creating awareness and driving adoption among our users".

As the adoption of 'payments on WhatsApp' increases with users across the country, the company looks forward to working with the NPCI to further expand it to all users.

ENGLISH DELIGHT

Man City, Liverpool reach Champions League semifinals as Guardiola's men fend off Atletico, while Klopp's men oust Benfica



The Champions League semifinals will see Manchester City and Liverpool lock horns with Real Madrid and Villarreal, respectively

and Atlético had a couple of goods chances to break the deadlock but couldn't capitalize on them.

Atlético was able to have the stadium at full capacity after the Court of Arbitration for Sport Wednesday accepted the club's appeal to overturn UEFA's closure of a 5,000-seat section as punishment for a fan's Nazi salute in the first leg in England.

The club was trying to reach the semifinals for the first time in five years. Atlético is now winless in its last seven Champions League games at home, while City is unbeaten in its last 13 away games in all competitions, with 10 wins.

Elsewhere at the Anfield, Ibrahima Konaté, one of the scorers in Liverpool's 3-1 win in the first leg, netted another header for Klopp's team for the first goal and Roberto Firmino added two more in the second half at Anfield.

Goncalo Ramos had made it 1-1 on the night in the 32nd minute — keeping Benfica in with the unlikely of chances — but Liverpool never looked like squandering its big advantage, even though substitute Roman Yaremchuk and Darwin Nunez scored goals for the visitors in the 73rd and 82nd minutes, respectively.

Liverpool stayed on course to win the competition for a seventh time, and for an unprecedented quadruple of trophies this season.



INTENSE ENCOUNTER: Atletico Madrid's Stefan Savic (R) involved in a scuffle with Man City's Raheem Sterling at the Wanda Metropolitano during their Champions League quarterfinal second leg contest, Wednesday

ASSOCIATED PRESS
Madrid, April 14: Just like the Tuesday night when Spanish clubs Real Madrid and Villarreal sealed semifinal berths, Wednesday turned out to be for the English sides — Manchester City and Liverpool. Man City held Atlético Madrid

to a 0-0 draw to return to the Champions League semifinals and keep alive their hopes of winning Europe's top club competition for the first time. City advanced thanks to its 1-0 win in the first leg last week. In the end, it was Pep Guardiola getting the best of Diego Simeone in the battle of styles between

City's offensive-minded tactics and Atlético's more cautious approach.

Liverpool, on the other hand, didn't need its best players to secure progress to the Champions League semifinals. Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp opted to rest stars like Mohamed Salah, Sadio Mane, Virgil van Dijk and Trent Alexander-Arnold, and saw his backups play out a wild 3-3 draw with Benfica in the second leg of the quarterfinals to wrap up a 6-4 aggregate win.

At Wanda Metropolitano, Atlético's attack struggled to find the net again and the Spanish club managed only three attempts on target after having none in the first leg.

The hosts played the final minutes a man down after defender Felipe was sent off for kicking an opponent. The benches had been cleared a few moments earlier as Atlético's players appeared upset with City's attempt to waste time.

The match ended with more than 12 minutes of stoppage time

Liverpool keep their quadruple dreams alive

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Liverpool, April 14: A place in the Champions League semifinals secured. The dream of an unprecedented quadruple of trophies still intact. Key players rested amid a hectic schedule.

Liverpool is in a good place entering the home straight of what could turn out to be the club's greatest ever season. Even conceding two late goals to draw 3-3 at home to Benfica couldn't take the smile of Jurgen Klopp's face.

With Liverpool inflicting significant damage by winning the first leg 3-1 in Lisbon last week, Klopp was confident enough to rest stars like Mohamed Salah, Sadio Mane, Virgil van Dijk and Trent Alexander-Arnold for a return match against Benfica that turned into a wild, end-to-end contest at Anfield.

Ultimately, Liverpool has coasted into the last four of Europe's top club competition and is there for the 12th time — tying the record for an English team with Manchester United — and the first since the last of its six title triumphs in 2019.

The quadruple of major trophies might really be on for Liverpool, already the winner of the English League Cup, currently in second place in Premier League — just a point behind Manchester City — and into the semifinals of the FA Cup.

That Klopp was able to rotate so heavily against Benfica — even Andrew Robertson and Fabinho had the night off — should enable Liverpool to field a full-strength team against Man City in the FA Cup semifinals at Wembley Stadium Saturday.



Liverpool scorers Roberto Firmino (L) and Ibrahima Konate rejoice after the latter's goal against Benfica at the Anfield, Wednesday

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madrid, April 14: Atlético Madrid's rough approach didn't end at the final whistle against Manchester City. The melee in Madrid spilled into the tunnel long after full time had blown on a Champions League campaign that Diego Simeone's side tried to keep going with a variety of dark arts and rough tactics.

Sime Vrsaljko was never even brought off the substitutes' bench in the quarterfinal. The Atlético defender instead tried to make his impact in the tunnel in incidents captured in broadcast footage Wednesday night.

Vrsaljko threw something at the City contingent and had to be held back as he was angrily gesticulating. On the other side of the tunnel, City defender Kyle Walker had to be restrained by the visiting contingent as they walked up the steps.

Still, Vrsaljko tried to launch himself at the City players. And as they approached the dressing



rooms, police intervened in an attempt to restore calm.

The scenes will surely be investigated by UEFA. City manager Pep Guardiola didn't want to stoke the tensions. "Everyone saw

the action but I have nothing to say," Guardiola said when asked if he had liquid thrown on him.

Tensions were already simmering when a flare-up happened in the 89th minute that saw an al-

ready-aggressive Atletico side reduced to 10 men. It was sparked by Felipe kicking out at City forward Phil Foden as Atlético was chasing the goal to force extra time. Foden's head was already

wrapped in a bandage after an earlier challenge in the game from Felipe as they contested a high ball.

As Foden was rolling around, perhaps to waste time, Atlético defender Stefan Savic charged over, tugging at his shirt and attempting to drag him up.

Once calm was restored, Felipe received his second yellow card. The Brazilian hadn't initially been booked for causing the cut to Foden's head in the first half but for clipping Kevin De Bruyne.

Perhaps the only surprise was there wasn't an additional red card after VAR reviewed the chaos as former City defender Stefan Savic was seen seemingly attempting to headbutt Raheem Sterling and pulling unused substitute Jack Grealish's hair.

The Premier League champions, though, weren't unsettled by the mayhem. Pep Guardiola's side held on through 13 minutes of stoppage time to reach the semifinals, battered and bruised.

MAYHEM IN MADRID

Naveen unveils 2023 FIH Men's WC logo

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 14: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Thursday unveiled the logo of 2023 FIH Men's Hockey World Cup, to be held in the twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Rourkela.

The prestigious quadrennial tournament is scheduled from January 13 to 29.

Hockey India and its official partner Odisha will host the marquee event for the second consecutive time in the country after 2018.

The 15th edition of the showpiece will be staged in Bhubaneswar and Rourkela, where the country's largest hockey stadium is being constructed. The stadium will have a seating capacity of 20,000.

"We are thrilled that there will be two venues this time-Bhubaneswar and Rourkela. The 2018 FIH Men's World Cup gave us all memories that we still cherish to this day and the 2023 FIH Hockey Men's World Cup will be even more exciting and unforgettable," Patnaik said.

International Hockey Federation (FIH) president Narinder Batra said, "The reveal of the logo is one

We are thrilled that there will be two venues this time-Bhubaneswar and Rourkela. The 2018 FIH Men's World Cup gave us all memories that we still cherish to this day and the 2023 FIH Hockey Men's World Cup will be even more exciting and unforgettable

NAVEEN PATNAIK

The reveal of the logo is one of the important milestones on the road to the 2023 FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup, Bhubaneswar - Rourkela

NARINDER BATRA, FIH PRESIDENT

of the important milestones on the road to the 2023 FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup, Bhubaneswar - Rourkela."

Harmanpreet seals India win



Indian players acknowledge the crowd for their support after the match against Germany at the Kalinga Stadium, Thursday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 14: Vice-captain Harmanpreet Singh continued his goal-scoring spree with a brace as the Indian men's hockey team defeated an inexperienced Germany 3-0 in the first match of the two-leg tie to extend its lead in the FIH Pro League standings here Thursday.

Harmanpreet converted two penalty corners for India in the 18th and 27th minutes, while Abhishek scored from another set piece in the 45th minute.

With a half a dozen of Germany's 22-member squad making their

senior debut here, the vast gap between the two sides was evidently visible.

By virtue of this win, India have consolidated their position at the top of the table with 24 points from 11 games, while the Germans are placed second with 17 points from nine matches. Both the teams will lock horns again in the second match of the tie at the Kalinga Stadium Friday.

The Indians started on a bright note and secured a penalty corner early into the first quarter but Jugraj Singh's effort from a penalty corner was kept out by the German defence and from the resultant re-

bound Nilkanata Sharma shot wide.

India continued in the same vein in the second quarter and took the lead in the 18th minute through none other than Harmanpreet from a penalty corner with a superbly executed dragkick.

India earned another penalty corner soon but this time German goalkeeper Alexander Stadler denied Harmanpreet. But the Punjab lad doubled India's lead three minutes from halftime, wrong-footing Stadler from another set-piece.

The Indians kept up the pressure after the change of ends and created plenty of scoring opportunities but the young German defence stood firm but were also guilty of conceding a lot of plenty corners.

And from such opportunity, Abhishek deflected in Harmanpreet's variation to hand India a comfortable 3-0 lead just at the end of the third quarter. Minutes into the fourth and final quarter, Germany conceded another penalty corner but this time Stadler kept out Harmanpreet's try.

The Germans gave a good account of themselves in the final 15 minutes but they gave too many chances to the Indians in the form of penalty corners which cost them dearly.

Hardik, Lockie help Titans defeat Royals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Navi Mumbai, April 14: Skipper Hardik Pandya (87 n o, 52b, 8x4, 4x6) impressed with another responsible knock before Lockie Ferguson's (3/23) game-changing spell allowing Gujarat Titans seal a 37-run win over Rajasthan Royals in their IPL encounter here, Thursday.

Chasing a massive 193-run target, Royals had a flying start, courtesy Jos Buttler (54, 24b, 8x4, 3x6). Royals raced to 28 in just 1.5 overs, all scored by Buttler, before Devdutt Padikkal was dismissed for a first-ball duck off Yash Dayal (3/40).

Buttler continued his onslaught and took their score to 56 in five overs. But the sixth over, bowled by Ferguson, changed the complexion of the game as the Kiwi pacer first dismissed R Ashwin, before bagging the prized wicket of Buttler just after conceding a six.

Later, Shimron Hetmyer (29), Riyan Parag (18) and Jimmy Neesham (17) got starts, but couldn't convert those into useful ones as Royals lost wickets at regular intervals to suffer yet another defeat.

Earlier, Hardik first found an able ally in Abhinav Manohar (43,



28b, 4x4, 2x6) before he exploded in the company of David Miller (31 n o, 14b, 5x4, 1x6) to power the debutants to their highest score — 192/4 — of the tournament.

Hardik and Manohar shared an 86-run stand for the fourth wicket before the skipper and Miller blasted 53 off 25 balls to end the innings in style. After put in to bat, Gujarat found themselves reeling at 53/3.

BRIEF SCORES: GT 192/4 (Hardik Pandya 87 n o, Abhinav Manohar 43, David Miller 31 n o; Riyan Parag 1/12) beat RR 155/9 (Jos Buttler 54, Shimron Hetmyer 29; Lockie Ferguson 3/23, Yash Dayal 3/40) by 37 runs.