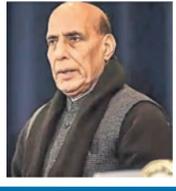




**CANDID TALK**  
Actor Ileana D'Cruz has revealed how she once had suicidal thoughts during a low point in her life  
**LEISURE P2**



**STRONG MESSAGE**  
In a strong message to China, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has said that if harmed, India will not spare anyone  
**INTERNATIONAL P10**



**INDIA BEAT GERMANY**  
India beat Germany 3-1 in the second leg to end their home campaign of the FIH Pro League on a high  
**SPORTS P12**

## Nabarangpur gets air health service

**Bhubaneswar/Nabarangpur, April 15:** With an aim to ensure availability of super specialised doctors at the district hospital, the Mukhyamantri Vayu Swasthya Seva (CM's Air Health Service) was launched in Nabarangpur district Friday.

A team of senior doctors of super speciality departments flew to Nabarangpur to provide high-level healthcare service to the needy people free of cost.

The service has already been launched in Malkangiri and Kalahandi districts. Specialists such as neurologists, nephrologists and cardiologists are being flown to the district headquarters hospitals (DHHs) to treat patients under the programme.

The state government will meet the expenditure incurred due to the services, officials said.

The main objective of the programme is to provide quality health services to the patients, who are unable to visit cities like Bhubaneswar and Cuttack to avail super speciality care, the officials said.

As per requirement of patients listed out by the district healthcare authority, senior doctors will be deployed to the concerned district through the chopper, the officials said.

Senior physician Dattaswar Hota (urologist) and other senior doctors flew to Nabarangpur Friday and provided treatment to patients.

In 2020, the state government had launched boat ambulance service in the Swabhiman Anchal (earlier known as cut-off area) of Malkangiri district and remote areas near the Bhitarkanika National Park of Kendrapara district. The service was launched to ferry patients of the remote and interior areas to hospitals and clinics in case of emergency.

## SOAKED IN DEVOTION



Devotees enact the crucifixion of Jesus Christ on the occasion of Good Friday at St. Joseph School in Bhubaneswar

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## Mercury above 40°C in 16 places

**Bhubaneswar, April 15:** There was no let-up in the sweltering heat in Odisha Friday as 16 places recorded maximum temperatures above 40 degrees Celsius, the meteorological department said.

Baripada in Mayurbhanj district registered 43.4 degrees Celsius. Sonepur town sizzled at 43.2 degrees, followed by 43 in Bolangir and 42.7 in Jharsuguda.

Bhubaneswar and Cuttack recorded maximums of 38.2 degrees Celsius and 39 degrees Celsius respectively during the period. The Met office has forecast no major change in maximum (day) temperature during the next five days.

The mercury is expected to be more than 40 degrees Celsius and above normal by two-three notches in interior parts of the coastal state during the next four-five days, the Met office said.

However, there is a possibility of a thunderstorm in many places over the next 24 hours, the Bhubaneswar Meteorological Centre said.

People have been advised to take precautionary measures while going outside between noon and 3 pm.

## Friends kill minor over mobile game

**The horrific incident comes a day after a woman killed her 3-year-old son in a drunken state**



Family members mourn the boy's death, Friday.

**Koraput, April 15:** In a horrendous incident, a Class VIII student was reportedly bludgeoned to death with a stone by two of his friends following a quarrel over playing 'Free Fire', a mobile game.

Worse, to cover up their heinous crime, the two boys dragged the body of the 12-year-old and dumped it in Kolab river.

The matter came to the fore after villagers spotted the body and informed the victim's mother who then informed the cops. The bone-chilling incident was reported from Masiput village under Town police limits here.

The victim has been identified as Lulu Bhoi, 12, while the accused duo have been identified as Lucky Mali, 19, and a minor boy. Police have detained the main accused Lucky in this connection.

According to police, the three friends were playing 'Free Fire' on a mobile phone near a school in

the village. As Lulu lost the game, the two friends told him to give them the device so that they could play the game further.

Things took a violent turn after Lulu refused to give them the phone. In a rage, the two boys bludgeoned him with a stone, killing him on the spot.

Later, they dragged the body and dumped it in the Kolab river near the village. Family members launched a frantic search for the boy after he failed to return home. Villagers spotted Lulu's body floating in the river. Police along with a forensic team reached the village and launched a probe. The body was seized and sent for autopsy

"Based on an FIR lodged by the victim's mother, a case has been registered under relevant Sections of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act," Additional Superintendent of Police Utkal Keshari Das said.

"The main accused Lucky is 19-20 years old. He will be produced in the court Saturday. The minor boy will be produced before the Jeypore Juvenile Justice Board," said Town Police IIC Dhiren Pattnaik.

The incident comes a day after a woman in a drunken state decapitated her 3-year-old son during the ongoing 'Chaiti Parva' at Lukumari village in Koraput district.

## COKE INTENDED FOR HOCKEY WC

**Drug cartels have reportedly chalked out a plan to create a market for cocaine in the state ahead of the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup**

**Bhubaneswar, April 15:** In a startling revelation, state crime branch sources Friday said that drug cartels involved in the trade of cocaine have prepared a blue print to target international visitors during the upcoming FIH Men's Hockey World Cup scheduled to be held at Bhubaneswar and Rourkela next year. The sleuths of Special Task Force (STF) came across the design of the drug cartels during preliminary investigation following the arrest of two interstate drug peddlers - Ravi and Sunny Kumar - along with 202 gm cocaine in the city April 12.

The state capital hopes to witness an increased footfall of international travellers as the state is going to host various international sports events. Visitors from Europe would throng the capital to support their teams participating in the Hockey World Cup in January 2023. Similarly, the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup is going to be held across three venues including Bhubaneswar's Kalinga Stadium along with Goa's Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium and Navi Mumbai's DY Patil Stadium from October 11 to 30.

The recent arrest of two peddlers has exposed that the cartels have reportedly chalked out a plan to create a market for the highly expensive cocaine in the state ahead of the Hockey World Cup.

The main accused Ravi got the idea to sell cocaine in posh areas during the Commonwealth Games in New Delhi. Ravi had procured the cocaine from his boss who operates from Turkman Gate in Delhi. Ravi had contacted his friend Sunny Kumar who also belongs to Rajasthan to target the international players and visitors by introducing cocaine through the hotels of the city before the world cup. Sunny who stays in Salia Sahi has a shop in the market building area here.

Notably, the STF has sought the court's permission to take the duo on remand for further probe.

## The woman who saved 15 men from angry mob

**Jaipur, April 15:** This is the story of Madhulika Singh, a single mother of two children who saved at least 15 men - most from another community, from an enraged mob that had come to attack them during the violence earlier this month in Rajasthan's Karauli.

Madhulika, 48, stood alone in front of the mob that rushed towards her shop during the violence April 2. A widow, she has been running a garments business for the last five years since her husband died. When a procession was being taken out to mark the Hindu New Year, it entered an area where many people of a particular community reside. Suddenly, she heard people shouting and screaming.

According to police, during the procession, 'sensitive' slogans were played on a loudspeaker and soon, there was violence and stone-pelting.



Madhulika said: "People were running... downing the shutters... they said riots have broken out. I had locked the gate of the shopping complex and asked them (who came to take shelter there) not to worry. I saved them as humanity stands sacrosanct."

Around 15 men told her they were scared, and were unable to decide whether to leave or stay put.

Madhulika Singh said the mob tried to break in but she stopped them. Mohammad Talib and Danish were among those who were present in that shopping complex.

"Madhulika didi saved us. She told us not to worry," said Talib.

Mithlesh Soni, who runs a salon in the same shopping complex, said she and three other women attempted to douse the flames with buckets of water.

**IRREGULAR by MANJUL**

Doesn't sound like hate speech to me. Even we keep saying such things all the time

**WEATHER**

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP. MAX	38.2°C	39.0°C
TEMP. MIN	26.0°C	26.0°C
Humidity	79%	81%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Dry weather mostly	

## Russia loses 'Moskva', says attacks on Kyiv will increase

The warship's loss in an invasion already widely seen as a historic blunder was a symbolic defeat for Moscow as its troops regroup for an offensive in eastern Ukraine after retreating from the Kyiv region and much of the north

**Kyiv, April 15:** A day after Moscow suffered a stinging symbolic defeat with the loss of the flagship of its Black Sea fleet, Russia's Defense Ministry promised Friday to ramp up missile attacks on the Ukrainian capital in response to Ukraine's alleged military "diversions on the Russian territory."

The threat of intensified attacks on Kyiv came after Russian authorities accused Ukraine of wounding seven people and damaging about 100 residential buildings with airstrikes on Bryansk, a region that borders Ukraine. Authorities in another border region of Russia also reported Ukrainian shelling Thursday.



Kyiv has gradually displayed some signs of pre-war life after Russian troops failed to capture the city and retreated to focus on a concentrated assault in eastern Ukraine, leaving evidence of possible war crimes in their wake. A renewed bombardment could return the capital's residents to sheltering in subway stations and the steady wail of air raid sirens.

Ukrainian officials have not confirmed striking targets in Russia, and the reports by Russian authorities could not be independently verified. However, Ukrainian officials claimed their forces struck a key Russian warship with missiles Thursday. If true, the claim would represent an important victory.

The guided-missile cruiser Moskva, named for the Russian capital, sank while being towed to port Thursday after suffering heavy damage under circumstances that remained in dispute. Moscow acknowledged a fire on board but not any attack.

The Moskva had the capacity to carry 16 long-range cruise missiles, and its removal reduces Russia's firepower in the Black Sea. If Ukrainian forces took out the vessel, the Moskva likely represents the largest warship to be sunk in combat since

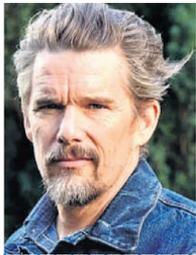
the Falklands War. A British submarine torpedoed an Argentine navy cruiser called the ARA General Belgrano during the 1982 conflict, killing over 300 sailors on board. In his nightly address Thursday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the people of his country should be proud of having survived 50 days under attack when the Russian invaders "gave us a maximum of five."

Zelenskyy did not mention the Moskva by name, but while listing the ways Ukraine has defended against the onslaught, mentioned "those who showed that Russian warships can sail away even if it's to the bottom" of the sea. It was his only reference to the Moskva.

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# leisure



## ETHAN HAWKE SHARES TRICK TO PLAY A VILLAIN

Hollywood actor Ethan Hawke, who made his MCU debut with the recently released Marvel Studios' miniseries, *Moon Knight*, shared that to play the character of villain, it's important for actors to not be judgemental about their character.

## BRITNEY TO MARRY SAM AFTER BIRTH OF THEIR BABY

Singer Britney Spears won't get married to fiancé Sam Asghari until she gives birth to their first child together, according to a new report. Explaining why the couple has been calling each other 'husband' and 'wife,' a source claims that they are being playful with each other, and they are not married.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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#### ARIES

Some cheerful news could put you in really high spirits today. The news could either be of a personal or professional nature – perhaps about your career, or a social gathering, or some monetary profit. You always give your best, and Ganesha says today it will lead to rich dividends.

#### TAURUS

Feel your imagination run wild as you star-gaze throughout the day wondering about the existence of the extra-terrestrial. You will paint the workplace in your flavour of innovation, combined with a drive to work equally hard. Add some smooth talk to the equation and you will find a lot of people in awe of your charm, says Ganesha.

#### GEMINI

Today will be a day of joy, happiness and festivities on the home-front. You will try and spend as much time as possible with the children and will enthusiastically participate in home improvement projects. You will be able to solve pending issues at home by taking an intelligent interest in them, says Ganesha.

#### CANCER

Today, it will be all about finding your comfort zone, and spending the day there. You are likely to spend most of the day with your close friends. Your smooth demeanour will help you breeze through all business deals. The opposite sex may find you irresistible.

#### LEO

Don't expect you'll be handed everything on a silver platter. Especially today, you must put such expectations on the back burner, says Ganesha. Today, you would do better to dig deep into your resources of persistence, as a somewhat less productive day awaits you.

#### VIRGO

You will charm people with your flexibility of thought and willingness to adjust today. Those under the spell of love will see an unexpected turn of events; but don't panic, as things will eventually work out in your favour. Some quality family time is also on the cards.

#### LIBRA

"Efforts made are never in vain, even when they may seem otherwise". Let this be your motto for the day. Today may not seem to be the most productive day, especially when it comes to interviews. You may feel like the rook in the chess set – sometimes coming back to square one despite making many moves forward to the ultimate checkmate! So remember, persistence is the key, says Ganesha.

#### SCORPIO

You wish to make an image makeover in your office. You are tough and determined, and your work knows no limit when it comes to achieving your targets. You will love to brainstorm and give innovative ideas to colleagues and bosses. However, don't give away your best of ideas to anyone, advises Ganesha.

#### SAGITTARIUS

You will enjoy the magic of the Midas touch today, feels Ganesha. In business, sheer brilliance will help you derive the best possible results in productivity and clinching new contracts. Your approach, in general, will be methodical, disciplined and systematic for most part of the day.

#### CAPRICORN

Your power of reasoning will be strong today, says Ganesha. Those of you beginning your career will show a disposition to take up a job in television or print media. The spiritual side of you may also come to the fore and make you feel at peace, especially when visiting a holy place.

#### AQUARIUS

You zoom in on research and development today. Your fabulous work speaks volumes and your commitment pays off. You're keen to play Romeo today, and all your gimmicks and surprises will work wonders! Love on, says Ganesha.

#### PISCES

You set irreproachable standards for yourself, but what keeps your subordinates from grumbling about it is the efforts you make to help them achieve perfection in their endeavours, says Ganesha. You inspire, they aspire.

## Ileana clarifies about her suicidal thoughts

**Mumbai:** Actress Ileana D'Cruz struggled with body image-related issues for quite some time. Talking about it, recently she revealed that although she had a hard time dealing with body dysmorphic disorder and had suicidal thoughts, however, both of them were never connected. She expressed her disappointment about an article that claimed Ileana attempted suicide due to her body image issues and told an entertainment portal that it annoyed her with wrong assumptions. Ileana, who struggled with body image since she was almost 12-years-old, said that she was once suicidal during a really low point in her life, but it had nothing to do with her body issues. "Those are two separate issues, so I didn't like the fact that they clubbed them," she said.

Earlier, Ileana had shared an unfiltered picture of herself in a stunning red bikini. She added a note with the still that read, "So easy to get sucked into apps that get you to alter your body so effortlessly to make you look 's-limmer', 'more toned' etc, etc... Proud of the fact that I have deleted all those apps. This is me and I am embracing, every curve, all of me." On the work front, she will be next seen in *Unfair & Lovely*. AGENCIES



### DEALING WITH TROLLS

## I don't care what people think: Nargis

**Mumbai:** Actress Nargis Fakhri recently revealed how celebrities have to deal with unreal standards of beauty and fitness. Speaking about receiving compliments for her beauty avatars on social media, Nargis said, "We are used to getting compliments about our physical appearance and our beauty. But the compliments that matter are the ones that appreciate a person's heart and soul. The ones that say you're a genuine and good human being." When asked

about body shaming, she said, "I don't care what other people think. People are fickle, they're sheep, they will follow what others are doing. They change their mind from one minute to other. So I kind of wave it off." Nargis feels some fans make a positive impact on celebrities' lives, too. Speaking about her own experience with fans, she said, "There's a fan in Delhi who has stuck by me from the very beginning, so every time I'm in Delhi I reach out to her and we try to hang out. The great thing about having fans is that one positive comment and one compliment can go a long way in making you feel positive about yourself." AGENCIES

## Chinta 'O' Chetana's Baishakhi fest begins

**Bhubaneswar:** The 43rd Edition of Baishakhi Festival, a six-day cultural rainbow of India's classical dance and music, organised by Chinta 'O' Chetana, a socio-cultural organisation of the City, kicked off here at Sookhana Bhawan, Friday.

On the inaugural evening, Odissi danseuse Arupa Gayatri Panda held the audience spellbound with her Jagannath Ashtakam, a performance in praise of Lord Jagannath.

The next presentation was Odissi dance Guru Gajendra Panda and Group's Lakshmi Narasimha Dhyana, a performance featuring the ferocious man-lion god in his benevolent form with Goddess Lakshmi on his lap.

Dr. Anshuman Panigrahi, for his exceptional contribution to the field of medical science, was conferred with Chinta 'O' Chetana National Awards on the occasion.

On the first day of the festival Santosh Munda, Deputy Commandant of CRPF, singer Laxmikant Palit, organisation's



Dr. Anshuman Panigrahi was conferred with Chinta 'O' Chetana National Award

national president Shashi Bhusan Behera, president Sahadeva Sahoo and general secretary Surendra Das were present on the first day of the festival.

Talking about the event, gen-



Arupa Gayatri Panda

eral secretary Das said, "The festival had been planned to celebrate the Odia New Year when no one was celebrating the occasion. But it is a matter of joy that several organisations have come forward after that and it is now being celebrated with fervour. Baishakhi has become a major event in the cultural calendar of the city."

**Orissa POST** and Dharitri Editor Tathagata Satpathy will be honoured with prestigious Nilachakra Samman while 15 others will receive Chinta 'O' Chetana National Awards. Similarly, eight distinguished persons from the state will get Baishakhi Awards. PNN

## Vivek Agnihotri's next titled *The Delhi Files*

**Mumbai:** Filmmaker Vivek Ranjan Agnihotri, whose last release *The Kashmir Files* proved to be a smash hit at the box office, has shared that he will soon start working on his next project, *The Delhi Files*. Agnihotri took to his Twitter handle Friday and expressed gratitude to the people who watched *The Kashmir Files* and said, "It's time for me to work on a new film."

He wrote, "I thank all the people who owned #TheKashmirFiles. For last 4 yrs we worked very hard with utmost honesty & sincerity. I may have spammed your TL but it's important to make people aware of the GENOCIDE and injustice done to Kashmiri Hindus. It's time for me to work on a new film." In a subsequent tweet, Agnihotri added, "#TheDelhiFiles."

Interestingly, this film had been announced by the filmmaker last year even before the release and success of *The Kashmir Files*.

A motion poster of *The Delhi Files* was also unveiled in which a Sikh kid could be seen on the Emblem of India logo that is coloured red, indicating that the film will deal with another compelling tale of a dark and unread chapter from Indian history. AGENCIES



### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

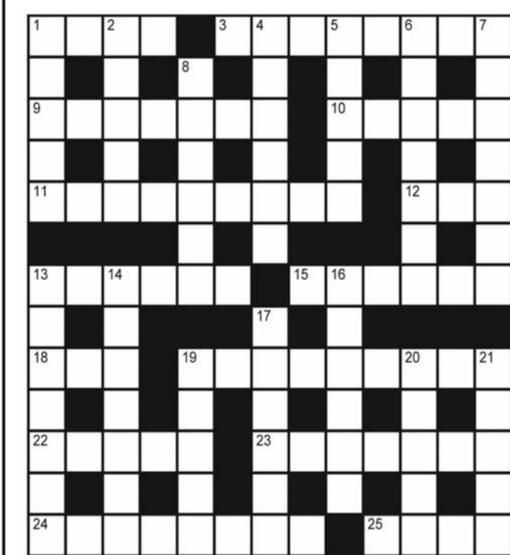


### BREVITY



### FUN post

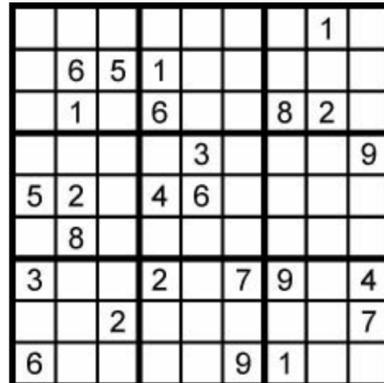
### CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Treaty
  - 3 They were woolly
  - 9 Mollycoddles
  - 10 Ophidian
  - 11 Synthetic fibre
  - 12 Psychic's claim
  - 13 Reverberated
  - 15 Worn and tattered
  - 18 Hubbub
  - 19 Piggy bank
  - 22 Eskimo dwelling
  - 23 Separate (5,2)
  - 24 Propose as a candidate
  - 25 Like the Gobi
- Down**
- 1 Kind of web ad (3-2)
  - 2 Caravan beast
  - 4 Stocks and such
  - 5 Scrooge
  - 6 Catastrophe
  - 7 Took a walk
  - 8 Tranquil
  - 13 Jubilation
  - 14 Thug
  - 16 Increased
  - 17 Cold dessert
  - 19 Queen topper
  - 20 Funnyman
  - 21 Speedy

### SUDOKU

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



### SOLUTIONS

#### CROSSWORD



#### SUDOKU

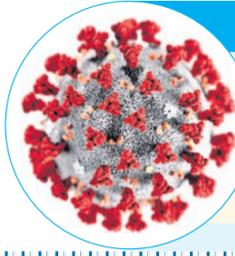


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



**RELIGIOUS CEREMONY**

Devotees take out a procession to mark the 10th annual festival of Hanuman temple at Sagadia Sahi in Cuttack, Friday



**COVID-19 TRACKER**

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	50,32,62,202	45,36,47,459	62,18,742
India	4,30,39,972	4,25,07,038	5,21,743
Odisha	12,87,902	12,78,605	9,123

**Chief Secy thrust on livelihood creation in Swabhiman Anchal**



Chief Secretary SC Mahapatra during his visit to Swabhiman Anchal Friday

The Chief Secretary took stock of the progress of work for projects related to horticulture, fishery, livelihood enhancement, healthcare, education, eco-tourism, irrigation, electrification, road connectivity and telecom service in the erstwhile cut-off area of Chittrakonda

He instructed the officials to intensify the infrastructure building and livelihood creation activities in all gram panchayats and villages of the locality

The review meeting revealed that a large chunk of the population of the area was engaged in fishing, forestry and horticulture activities

are operating in the area. All households in nine gram panchayats of Swabhiman Anchal have been provided with mobile handsets. Around 99 per cent of the area has been made free of Naxal activities, officials revealed at the meeting.

During his tour, Mahapatra inspected developmental works and interacted with people at a horticulture farm and eco-tourism park at Chittrakonda. He also took stock of the functioning of lift irrigation projects, progress of piped drinking water supply and work for a 33 KV power sub-station at Chittrakonda.

He went to the BSF camp in the locality and interacted with the officials. He also discussed with the people about road connectivity and service delivery in the area.

Large number of locals along with Malkangiri Zilla Parishad chairperson Somari Tanguu gathered near the BSF camp to interact with the Chief Secretary. They expressed their happiness about the developmental works undertaken by the state government in the locality.

Many locals, meanwhile, claimed that this was the first ever visit of any Chief Secretary to the area.

On the first day of his tour, the Chief Secretary inspected the transformation project at Madhusudan High school of Motu and agricultural activities in the deep bore well irrigation cluster at Potteru area.

Mahapatra reviewed the progress of work for a bridge over Saberi river connecting Odisha and Chhattisgarh. He also went to Mugi border line point and reviewed developmental activities there.

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 15:** Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra Friday visited different places in Swabhiman Anchal (erstwhile cut-off area) of Chittrakonda in Malkangiri district and reviewed field-level implementation of the special package announced by the Chief Minister for the region.

The Chief Secretary, who is on a three-day visit to Malkangiri and Koraput districts, took stock of the progress of work for projects related to horticulture, fishery, livelihood

enhancement, healthcare, education, eco-tourism, irrigation, electrification, road connectivity and telecom service in the Swabhiman Anchal.

He instructed the officials to intensify the infrastructure building and livelihood creation activities in all gram panchayats and villages of the Swabhiman Anchal.

The review meeting revealed that a large chunk of the population of the area was engaged in fishing, forestry and horticulture activities.

A total of seven mobile towers

**RICH TRADITION**



An artist dressed as demon king Ravana performs during Sahi Jata in Puri, Friday

OP PHOTO

**45-year-old man found hanging in City**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 15:** The body of a 45-year-old man was found hanging from a tree under mysterious circumstances near Nalco Square under Chandrasekharpur police limits here Friday.

The deceased has been identified Susant Kumar Behera of Salia Sahi in Nayapalli area.

A few shop owners spotted Behera's body in the morning. On being informed, the police reached the spot and sent the body for postmortem at Capital Hospital, sources said.

Behera's family members, mean-



while, revealed that Behera left home in an inebriated condition after finishing his dinner Thursday evening. Sources in the Commissionerate Police claimed that Behera was facing severe financial distress, which might have driven him to commit suicide.

"Behera's body was found hanging from a very low height while his feet were touching the ground. So, the police should look into all angles before terming the incident as a case of suicide," said a local.

However, Behera's family members did not allege any foul play in their complaint before police. They also denied having any altercation with Behera before he left home Thursday evening. Behera is survived by his wife and four children, including three daughters.

The police have initiated a probe into the incident after registering a case of unnatural death, sources added.

**Blaze at shopping mall**

**Bhubaneswar:** Fire broke out at a shop at BMC Keshari Mall at Unit-II market under Capital Police limits here Friday night. Sources said a garment shop at the first floor of the mall caught fire around 11pm.

The inferno soon spread to at least six other shops on the floor. It is suspected that the mishap was caused by an electric short circuit.

However, the exact cause of the blaze is yet to be ascertained. Two fire tenders were pressed into service to douse the flames. As per preliminary report, properties worth lakhs of rupees were reduced to cinders.



**₹6.56 crore spent on Mahanadi tribunal**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi, April 15:** The Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal (MWDIT), which was constituted by the Centre in March 2018 to adjudicate the water dispute between Odisha and Chhattisgarh, has incurred an expenditure of Rs 6.56 crore till December 2021, an official said Friday quoting a recent report of the Ministry of Jal Shakti.

The tribunal was required to give its report as required under the Inter-State River Water Disputes (ISRWD) Act, 1956 within three years of its constitution—by March 11, 2021, but it could not.

Subsequently, in June 2021, its tenure was extended by two years or till the submission of the report, whichever is earlier, as per the provisions of the Act,

it was learnt. The tribunal incurred an expenditure of Rs 2.24 crore between April and December 2021, said the official.

The tribunal has so far held 25 hearings, but it could not pass any 'significant' order in connection with the dispute, it was learnt.

Sources said Odisha and Chhattisgarh have filed petitions in the tribunal over sharing of Mahanadi river water.

Odisha in its petition claimed that Chhattisgarh has constructed several barrages on the river, obstructing the water flow to Odisha.

Odisha has sought a stay on the construction and operation of barrages being built on the Mahanadi river and also for maintaining specific flow of water during the non-monsoon months—November to May.

**SOPAN in all blocks, ULBs of Sundargarh**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 15:** The district administration in Sundargarh has planned to extend the Strategy for Odisha's Pathway to Accelerated Nutrition (SOPAN) scheme to all 17 Blocks and four urban local bodies (ULBs) of the mineral-rich district.

The state government had started implementing the nutrition scheme through Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) in 125 blocks of 22 districts April 1 this year.

The scheme aims at addressing any nutrition gap in children, adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers in the mining affected and tribal dominated regions of Odisha. Seven blocks of Sundargarh district were earlier included under the scheme.

However, the district administration has decided to extend the scheme to all blocks and ULBs of Sundargarh by utilising funds from the utilising funds from



SEVEN BLOCKS OF SUNDARGARH DISTRICT WERE EARLIER INCLUDED UNDER THE SCHEME. HOWEVER, THE ADMINISTRATION HAS DECIDED TO EXTEND THE SCHEME TO ALL BLOCKS AND ULBS OF SUNDARGARH BY UTILISING DMF FUNDS

District Mineral Foundation (DMF), sources said.

Moreover, the administration has planned to boost healthcare services in the remote areas of the district.

As per the provisions of SOPAN scheme, severely underweight

(SUV) children will be given specially formulated Chhatua (powdered grain) for 75 days. Similarly, both pregnant women and lactating mothers will be provided with cooked meal for 150 days through the AWCs. Similarly, spe-

cial attention will be given to the adolescent girls to supplement their nutrition.

"We are devising special strategies to supplement the nutrition status of the needy people by taking into account their requirements. The SOPAN scheme will benefit children and women, students, working women and the rural population at large. We are seeking suggestions and proposals from the public and the Gram Sabhas while designing strategies for implementation of various projects," said Sundargarh Collector Nikhil Pavan Kalyan.

Being a leading industrial zone, Sundargarh has a sizable population of women workers and daily wagers. The district administration has decided to build crèches for the kids of working women and daily wagers. In the first phase, at least 90 such crèches would be set up in six mining affected blocks of the district, sources said.

**MLAs visit INS Chilka, Kalijai shrine**

POST NEWS NETWORK/ AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, April 15:** Members of the Odisha Assembly visited the INS Chilka naval training facility Friday.

Eighty-two lawmakers, led by Speaker SN Patro, visited the Indian Navy facility as part of an initiative to make India's maritime glory popular. The legislators also visited Kalijai shrine in the lake.

Eighty-two lawmakers, led by Speaker SN Patro, visited the Indian Navy facility as part of an initiative to make India's maritime glory popular

The day-long programme included a presentation on aspects related recruitment and training of sailors, a visit to training facilities and living spaces of trainees, as well as witnessing training activities conducted at INS Chilka



MLAs and ministers led by Odisha Assembly Speaker SN Patro visit Kalijai temple in Chilika, Friday

OP PHOTO

INS Chilka, officials said. Aspects related to coastal security, and civil-military liaison with emphasis on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations were discussed during the presentation, they said.

Cmdr NP Pradeep, the Commanding Officer of INS Chilka, apprised the guests of the recent technological developments in the Navy towards ensuring maritime security of the nation. State government officials also visited the facility along with

the MLAs. The speaker said that Odisha is proud that the premier training establishment is located in the state.

The bedrock of a sailor's journey in the Navy is laid here, he added.

**'Magic mushroom helps open up brains of people with depression'**

A psychedelic compound found in psilocybin, commonly known as magic mushrooms, can help to 'open up' depressed people's brains, enabling brain regions to talk more freely to one another, finds a study.

Psilocybin is one of a number of psychedelics being explored as a potential therapy for psychiatric disorders. Several studies have trialled a synthesised form of the drug to treat patients with depression and anxiety, with promising results.

A team at Imperial College London's Centre for Psychedelic Research believes to have untangled how psilocybin exerts its therapeutic effects on the brain.

The new results, taken from two combined studies including about 60 adults, reveal that people who responded to psilocybin-assisted therapy showed increased brain connectivity not just during their treatment, but up to three weeks afterwards.

In those treated with a conventional antidepressant (called escitalopram), suggesting the psychedelic works differently in treating depression.

According to the team, the findings, published in the journal Nature Medicine, are a promising advance for psilocybin therapy, with the effects replicated across two studies.

They explain that patterns of brain activity in depression can become rigid and restricted, and that psilocybin could potentially help the brain to break out of this rut in a way that traditional therapies cannot.

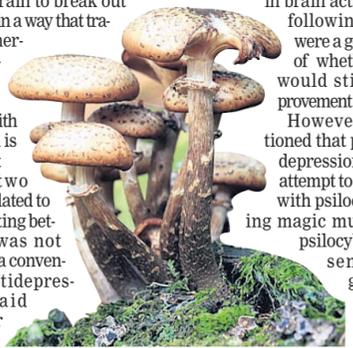
"The effect seen with psilocybin is consistent across two studies, related to people getting better, and was not seen with a conventional antidepressant," said Professor Robin

Carhart-Harris, from University of California, San Francisco.

"In previous studies we had seen a similar effect in the brain when people were scanned whilst on a psychedelic, but here we're seeing it weeks after treatment for depression, which suggests a carry-over of the acute drug action," Carhart-Harris, who was former Head of the Imperial Centre for Psychedelic Research.

The researchers added that while follow-up data is still being analysed for participants, initial changes in brain activity one day following treatment were a good predictor of whether a person would still show improvement at six months.

However, they cautioned that patients with depression should not attempt to self-medicate with psilocybin, as taking magic mushrooms or psilocybin in the absence of safeguards may not have a positive outcome. IANS



# Odisha likely to have country's 1st cluster cold storage facility



Odisha is in the process of making a pilot project on the initiative which will be replicated in other states after its successful trial run

This is a unique model connecting all the stakeholders of the agricultural supply chain like farmers, FPOs, food processors, cold storages, logistics, mandis, traders, exporters and bulk consumers

Pointing out the state's potential in its rich agro-forestry resource, he said, "The OCSA is very actively disseminating updates while coordinating with its members for setting up new infrastructures. We have given a proposal to the state government for setting up common facility centre for about 15 storage clusters in Odisha. The total cost is estimated to be around Rs 15-20 crore."

It can be mentioned that Odisha is in the process of making a pilot project on the initiative which will be replicated in other states after its successful trial run. This model is a unique concept connecting all the stakeholders of the agricultural supply chain like farmers, FPOs, food processors, cold storages, logistics, mandis, traders, exporters and bulk consumers.

"Due to poor agricultural supply chain in the entire country, the cold storage sector has been terribly neglected. There are around 8,000 cold storages in India. While UP is leading the race with 2,200 cold storages, Odisha lags with only about 70 active cold storage facilities. To reach its true potential, the state government must actively support in increasing cold storage facilities," Sahoo added.

**The OCSA is very actively disseminating updates while coordinating with its members for setting up new infrastructures. We have given a proposal to the state government for setting up common facility centre for about 15 storage clusters in Odisha. The total cost is estimated to be around ₹15-20 crore**

**JANARDAN SAHOO | PRESIDENT, ODISHA COLD STORAGE ASSOCIATION**

who was nominated as an Office Bearer of the Federation of Cold Storage Associations of India, was recognised at the two-day event for his excellence in the field of cold chain infrastructure in Odisha.

## CLOSING CEREMONY



Artistes perform during the concluding ceremony of 74th Capital Foundation Day celebration at Utkal Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Friday

OP PHOTO

## JSW BPSL observes National Fire Service Day

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 15:** The JSW Bhushan Power & Steel Limited recently observed the National Fire Service Day.

Senior Vice President Girish Naik, Vice President Naresh Raghav and Factory Manager Umesh Mishra paid homage Thursday to the brave fire fighters who lost their lives on the line of duty. The event was followed by hoisting of fire service flag.

BPSL Safety Advisor T Yogeswara led the event and General Manager Ashok Biswal welcomed the dignitaries. Fire Service pledge was taken during



event. Various inter-department fire fighting and rescue competitions like fire hydrant operation;

rescue competition; and breathing apparatus set operation competition were carried out.

This was followed by female graduate engineer trainees demonstrating operation of different types of fire extinguishers.

Meanwhile, the Fire Service team presented different types of fire fighting branch, fire tenders, water monitors and fire entry demonstrations. Moreover, the Fire Service team presented the Tri Color by fire fighting equipment.

Dignitaries and Fire Service teams conducted a tree plantation drive during the event. A total of 127 trees were planted as part of the drive. The vote of thanks was given by Varun Changle, Senior Manager of Fire Service.

## Man held for cheating couple of ₹5.15 lakh

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 15:** The Commissionerate Police Friday arrested a man for allegedly duping a couple of Rs 5.15 lakh under the pretext of helping them open a beauty parlour near KIIT Square under Infocity police limits here.

The accused was identified as Bishnu Prasad Moharana, 39, of Badpatna in Erasama police limits in Jagatsinghpur. Moharana is currently staying at Choudhury Bazar area under Purighat police limits of Cuttack.



According to sources, the complainant Prabhanjan Barik met the accused through a mutual friend Deepak Mohapatra January 5. Barik requested Moharana to arrange a room to open a parlour for his wife at KIIT Square.

The accused assured Barik that he would give him the room he had in his possession after setting up the interior construction required for the parlour. He received Rs 5.15 lakh from Barik for the said purpose.

However, he neither handed over the room nor returned the money taken from Barik. He also allegedly threatened Barik of dire consequences if he asked for the money.

Finding no other way, Barik lodged a complaint with the Infocity police April 4. Police Friday arrested the accused and produced him before the court that later sent him to judicial custody.

# Industries suck irrigation water, cost exchequer ₹1,44lcr

*Flawed architectural designs, faulty detailed project reports, fiscal mismanagement and undue delay in land acquisitions are causes behind failure of the proposed and under-construction irrigation projects*

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 15:** Many of the ongoing irrigation projects have failed in their main objective i.e. cater to the water requirements of farmers. Interestingly, local industries have allegedly been benefitting instead by using the water from these projects, a report said Friday.

The industries are procuring water sans any valid permission from the concerned authorities. As a result, a tremendous revenue loss of ₹1,441.83 crore during FY 2021-22 has left the state exchequer with a bloody nose.

This was reflected in a recent report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India submitted in the Assembly Budget Session. According to the report, it has been difficult for the state government to provide full-fledged irrigation facilities to farmers for their farmlands. Despite crores of rupees being spent, the farmers feel the pinch of water scarcity and drought-like conditions every year.

Moreover, wrong architectural designs, faulty detailed project reports (DPRs), fiscal mismanagements and undue delay in land acquisitions are the main causes be-



hind failure on part of the proposed and/or under-construction irrigation projects.

In such cases, completion of the projects takes a minimum of 13 years to a maximum of 43 years, the CAG report mentioned. From 2014 to 2019, around ₹12,742.11 crore was spent towards construction of different irrigation projects. These were then targeted to irrigate at least 5,02,842 hectare of farmlands.

However, only 2,22,418 hectare of farmlands could be irrigated after successful completion and

commissioning of some of the projects, which comes to nearly 24 per cent of the set target.

The CAG report also said that some industries have been accorded permission to use water meant for irrigation. In a similar vein, contracts were earlier inked between the authorities concerned and different industries pertaining to the use of water from Rengali Multi-purpose Irrigation Project.

Allegedly, there is no single mention in the DPR for providing water to industries from the irrigation

project. On the other hand, water has not yet been provided to local farmers due to the unusual delay in construction of the mega irrigation projects.

The contracts were signed at a later stage in gross violation of Orissa Irrigation Rules, 1961. Also, several local industries have been evading the water taxes decided by the government. As per provisions of the Rules, a defaulter industry should be charged an interest at the rate of two per cent per month, in case payment is not made within due time period.

In May 2006, an agreement was signed between Brahmani left basin manager and Samal barrage chief engineer (left head) and the Orissa Power Consortium Limited (OPCL) to provide water from lower catchment regulator at 110km, for next 30 years. The rate was fixed at ₹60 per gallon. Accordingly, the in-

dustry had lifted 49.93 lakh gallons of water in between 2009 and September 2010.

Surprisingly, around ₹246.14 crore has not been collected from the OPCL so far towards water tax and interest at the rate of two per cent per month for delay in payment, the CAG report stated.

Likewise, three more industries had signed agreements for receiving water from Samal barrage in 2016 and had misappropriated.

Another industry had used 47,696 Cusecs of water without any valid agreement with the authority concerned. In between 2014 to 2019, about ₹505.08 crore was not collected from the company towards penalty at the rate of six times the water tax.

In 1999, an industry had used 47,696 Cusecs of water, but did not pay tax to the tune of ₹644.67 crore, the CAG report said.

## ETHICS, EDUCATION, EXCELLENCE



The All India Federation of Tax Practitioners held a Tax Conference in a hotel in Bhubaneswar, Friday

op photo

## BJD govt failed tribals: BJP



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 15:** The state BJP Friday attacked the ruling BJD, calling out its "failure" in providing basic facilities such as education, health, drinking water, road communication and law and order to the tribal communities in the state.

At a press meet here Friday, state BJP General Secretary Lekhashree Samantasinghar said water (jab), forest (jungle) and land (jami) of people from scheduled tribes (ST) have always been under threat due to the negligence of the government.

Hitting out at the BJD, she said the Panchayat (Extension of the Scheduled Areas) Act, or PESA has been in place since 1996. Despite that, the state government still has its control on the areas inhabited by scheduled tribes. But it has not been pro-

viding basic constitutional rights to the people living there.

"The Centre, meanwhile, has been prioritising the development of scheduled tribes in Odisha. Raising the budgetary allocations for ST communities' development and giving ministerial berth to a tribal leader from the state show the Centre's commitment towards the cause," she said.

"While the Centre has hiked the allocation for the ST people by four times since 2014, the allocations for scholarships and Ekalavya schools have been raised twice and five times respectively. But surprisingly over ₹16,000 crore is lying unutilised in the District Mineral Foundation (DMF) fund. The state government's indifferent attitude to their development has defeated the purpose," she said.

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# Crime scene recreated



Accused Shiva Sahu along with police officials at Kusupur, Friday

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Nischintakoili, April 15:** On the second day of the three-day remand, police Friday took the prime accused in quintuple murder case Shiva Sahu to the crime spot at Kusupur under Mahanga police limits of Cuttack where the crime scene was recreated. Shiva demonstrated the devilish act before the police and narrated the manner in which he wiped out his elder brother's entire family. He was taken to Kusupur amid tight security. A police official said the crime scene was recreated in the presence of sub-divisional police officer (SDPO) and Mahanga police station IIC. Notably, Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC) Court in Salipur

**Q** Accused Shiva Sahu demonstrated the devilish act before the police and narrated the manner in which he wiped out his elder brother's entire family

**H** He was taken to Kusupur amid tight security and the crime scene was recreated in the presence of SDPO and the IIC of Mahanga police station

**S** Shiva had murdered five members of his elder brother's family April 11 night over some property dispute and then surrendered before Balichandrapur police

had allowed the Mahanga police to take Shiva on a three-day remand. However, the crime scene recreation was postponed Thursday due to Shiva's illness.

Worth mentioning, Shiva had murdered five members of his elder brother's family April 11 (Monday) night over some property disputes and then surrendered before Balichandrapur police in Jajpur district.

The deceased have been identified as Alekha Sahu, his wife Rashmita Prusty, daughter Payal, elder son Guddu and younger son Ishi.

According to a source, the brutal killing was fallout of the decade-old feud that ended in murders.

Shiva's wife has claimed that her husband's elder brother had been torturing them for

the last 12 years.

"A scuffle erupted after my husband asked his elder brother for keys of the house. Later, the elder brother and his family attacked my husband and severely beat him up. Things took an ugly turn when, in a fit of rage, he retaliated and killed all of them," the woman stated while bursting into tears.

"During the murder spree, I was locked up by my husband in a room. No other person was involved in the murder except him. He unlocked the door and threatened to kill me if I didn't leave the place soon after the crime was committed," Sunita added.

On the other hand, in-laws of the deceased have demanded the case to be handed over to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

## Two killed, 1 injured in road mishap

**Baripada:** Two people died and another person sustained injuries when a speeding motorcycle hit a pedestrian in Mayurbhanj district Friday, police said. The accident happened near Raipada village in Thakurmunda block, they said. Giridhari Karju, 60, was on his way home after collecting Mahua flowers from a forest when Aju Mohanta, 30, hit him with his bike, they said. The two died on the spot, while the pillion rider was admitted to the community health centre, inspector Premada Naik said.

## Woman drugged, raped; one held

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jaleswar, April 15:** A 48-year-old woman was allegedly drugged and raped at Gopalprasad in Majhisahi panchayat under Jaleswar block of Balasore. Police have arrested the accused Santosh Barik, 22, Thursday.

According to sources, the woman from Nidhipada works at a Sevashram in the area. She often visits the house of a relative at Gopalprasad. In course of time, the youth developed a relationship with the woman. A couple of days ago,

the youth took her to a desolate place on a bike and offered her spiked cold drinks. After the woman lost sense, the youth raped her and videographed the act on a cellphone.

Then, the accused started blackmailing her. Due to fear and humiliation, the woman had not revealed her ordeal until the clip of the obscene video was shared by the youth in a WhatsApp group created by the Sevashram. The woman filed a complaint with Raibania police in this regard.



Fire services personnel along with Mayurbhanj ADM Prakash Chandra Behera flagged off a vehicle to create awareness on fire safety and emergency helpline at Baripada, Friday

# NH-55 expansion pushed to uncertainty

**NHAI HAS ISSUED A SHOW-CAUSE NOTICE TO THE CONSTRUCTION FIRM AND WARNED OF LEGAL ACTION IF IT FAILS TO MEET THE DEADLINE**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sambalpur, April 15:** Expansion of National Highway-55 connecting Sambalpur with Angul has been pushed into uncertainty as the construction firm 'Gayatri' is dilly-dallying on the work, a report said. Keeping in view the rising traffic on the route during the last few years, it was decided to make the highway a four-lane one. However, the construction firm has stalled the expansion work for the last two years for the reasons best known to it. NH-55 is also the main link be-



tween Sambalpur and Bhubaneswar and incomplete work is causing serious problems for the commuters. The work began way back in 2015 with the completion deadline of 2018. However, the deadline went on changing several times and the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways finally ordered completion of the project by March 2020. Later, the deadline was again extended till March 2022 which has also expired. According to sources, the firm is yet to earmark the areas for elephant corridors, and complete the service and by-pass roads on the highway. Senior government officials, public representatives and

ministers, who frequently travel on the highway, are well aware of the problem but have never demanded early completion of the expansion work. The firm is citing various reasons like land acquisition problems, forest land sanction, local problems and financial bottlenecks that are hampering the expansion work. The firm is accused of not clearing the bills of the sub-contractors for which the latter have withdrawn themselves from the projects. The National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) had directed Gayatri to complete the work on both sides of the highway and open it for traffic by March 2022. But, only

40 per cent of the work has been completed as of now. Although the NHAI is extending timely financial assistance, the firm has failed to resume the remaining portion of the work. Meanwhile, the owner of the land, where the firm has set up its camp office, has issued eviction notice to the firm directing it to shift its office elsewhere. Several staffers have resigned due to alleged non-payment of salary while the sub-contractors are unwilling to work due to pending bills. They are staging agitations and locking up the office frequently. Meanwhile, a firm official said the work will resume soon and will be completed within the extended deadline. When contacted, project director of NHAI Nageswar Rao said the firm has been repeatedly warned to start the works while it has promised in writing to finish the works at an early date after it was issued a show-cause warning of legal action. He also said that action will be taken if the firm fails to meet the deadline.



Artists regaled the audience by their Odissi performance at Damanjodi in Koraput on the occasion of Ambedkar Jayanti

# Wood crunch shadow on chariot making

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Baripada, April 15:** Shortage of wood has emerged as a stumbling block to construction of chariots for the deities of Baripada's Sri Sri Haribaldevjewa temple, also known as the 'Dwitiya Shrikhetra' of Odisha.

A delegation of carpenters and the Rath Mohapatra took up the issue with the district administration.

The carpenter servitors submitted a memorandum to the district Collector recently seeking immediate solution to problem of wood crunch. The carpenters also stated that they would move the High Court if the issue is not resolved immediately.

According to the Rath Mohapatra, the district administration is usually intimated about the need for making wood arrangements 45 days before construction of chariots every year.

"Timbers are yet to come from forests. Now, a kind of uncertainty

## BARIPADA RATH YATRA



has come up over chariot making. Logs used for chariot making are usually dismantled after Rath Yatra and are stored in a godown for their reuse next year. However, the administration demolished the old godown for construction of a new one. As a result, wood kept under polythene sheets for the last six months have become unfit for reuse," he explained.

In 2016, several issues cropped up in metalling around chariot wheels. There was need for fresh metalling of wheels. Chief Rath Maharana Rabintra Maharana said though the district administration had been informed about this problem, no step was taken in this direction. Another problem which has remained unresolved is that Rath Barchhias, a section of carpenters engaged in chariot-making, have been demanding status of servitors. As the administration has not taken any decision on their status, they are reluctant to undertake the chariot work. Moreover, some carpenters (Rath Maharanas) are unhappy as lands given to them as 'jagir' along Subarnarekha canal have been encroached upon. They had urged the administration to remove encroachments, but precious little has been done so far, they alleged.

## WOMAN, SON ELECTROCUTED

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Basudevpur, April 15:** In a tragic incident, a woman and her son died after coming in contact with a live wire here in Bhadrak district Friday.

The deceased have been identified as Laxmimani Nayak and her son Sapan Nayak. Sources said the incident occurred while Sapan was switching on the water pump in his house. He got stuck to the live conductor and was unable to extricate himself from the live wire.

Responding to his alarm, Laxmimani also rushed to the spot and tried to rescue him. However, both of them were electrocuted.

On being informed, local police rushed to the spot and started an investigation. The bodies have been seized and sent for autopsy.

Two cases of unnatural deaths have been registered in this connection, police said. A pall of gloom descended on the area following the incident.

# Honey harvesting behind Bhitarkanika fire

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kendrapara, April 15:** Illegal honey harvesting is the prime reason for forest fire and subsequent destruction of rare flora and fauna in Bhitarkanika National Park, a report said Friday.

Forest fires have been reported from 11 places in Bhitarkanika over the last four years resulting in destruction of hundreds of acres of valuable forest land. A thorough survey attributes the wild-fires to illegal honey business.

The collection of honey takes place during summer - mostly during April and May. Honey traders regularly visit jungles in Bhitarkanika and harvest honey by using firebrands.

Moreover, use of firebrands has led to a decline in honeybee population which, if not checked, might spell danger for the ecosystem.

The traders do not abide by norms and enter the forest to collect honey. They also engage local people in the harvesting after luring them with a little amount of cash.

The traders use firebrands to



The traders leave the firebrands and other inflammables in the forest which later spread out and destroy the forest

drive away bees. The smoke and the blazing fire frighten the bees forcing them to fly away. Later, the traders pull down the hives and collect the honey.

Worse, they leave the firebrands and other inflammables in the forest which later spread out and destroy the forest. This has been

which is a prohibited zone for common people.

"This dense forest is filled with natural bounties. The area is famous for wild honey and it boasts of a record 480 quintals of honey in a single year. The craze for honey harvesting among traders is the reason behind destruction of large tracts of forests in Bhitarkanika," said environmentalists Hemant Kumar Rout, Ashok Kumar Swain, Prabhu Prasad Mohapatra and Sk Chand said.

On the other hand, locals claimed that the Forest department should train interested residents in honey harvesting and protection of honeybees. This will help people get wild honey of Bhitarkanika at a reasonable price while the Forest department will receive revenue.

Over 5,000 residents can become self-reliant through honey harvesting, they claimed.

When contacted, Mahakalpara ranger Sahaji Charan Biswal said no one has been given permission for honey harvesting in the prohibitory zone. He, however, said he would examine the proposal to train people in honey collection.

## Youth's body found; murder suspected

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Baripada, April 15:** Jashipur police Friday recovered the decomposed body of a youth, who had been missing for the last few days, from near Jhadbada Ghagara nullah in Mayurbhanj district. Police suspect the youth might have been murdered. The deceased was identified as Dhaneswar Guiya of Gonteyasahi.

Police sent the body for post-mortem and started an investigation with a scientific team.

Police registered a murder case following a complaint by the deceased's wife Subuni Guiya.

According to the complaint, Dhaneswar along with his friend Pitambar Behera had gone to Bhanjajikia Bazaar to buy asbestos sheets April 4, but did not return home. His family members had filed a missing person complaint with the local police.

After 10 days, a few fishermen in the area spotted the body which was crammed between two rocks. Given the circumstantial evidence, his kin and police suspect it to be a murder. The incident has triggered an outrage in the area as locals demanded immediate arrest of the persons involved in the crime.

### NOTICE

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has accorded Environment Clearance to JSW Utkal Steel Ltd. (JUSL), Paradip. Vide F.No. 14-J-11011/584/2017-14-II (I) on 10.04.2022 for a 13.2 MTPA crude steel integrated plant. The EC document is available on parivesh portal, MoEFCC. website link: [http://164.100.213.216/E-Sign/Esign/ECL\\_AUTH\\_442172\\_IA\\_OR\\_IND\\_74396\\_2018.pdf](http://164.100.213.216/E-Sign/Esign/ECL_AUTH_442172_IA_OR_IND_74396_2018.pdf)

### NOTICE

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has accorded Environment Clearance to JSW Utkal Steel Ltd. (JUSL) 52 MTPA handling capacity captive Jetty vide F.No. 10-68/2018-IA-III on 12.04.2022. The EC document is available on parivesh portal, MoEFCC. website link: [http://164.100.213.216/E-Sign/Esign/ECL\\_AUTH\\_9696H9\\_IA\\_OR\\_MIS\\_74417\\_2018.pdf](http://164.100.213.216/E-Sign/Esign/ECL_AUTH_9696H9_IA_OR_MIS_74417_2018.pdf)

FOCUS DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS

# DOWNWARD CONVERGENCE



When economists talk about global convergence, what they usually have in mind is that developing economies grow more rapidly than advanced economies, and the incomes of the world's poor rise to levels in richer economies

Manufacturing has lost its ability to create many jobs, owing to automation and other labour-saving innovations. Manufacturing employment has shrunk (as a share of total employment) even in countries that have maintained strong industrial sectors, such as South Korea or Germany.

In high- and low-income countries alike, then, economic development will have to rely in the future much more on services and on small and medium-size enterprises. Both types of economies will need a new breed of coordinated policies aimed at the supply and demand sides of labour markets, combining skill training programs with support for firms. Good jobs require good firms, and vice versa.

National policy frameworks will need to support these local productivity experiments with resources and enabling macroeconomic policies. In particular, that means reconsidering national innovation policies that blithely encourage technological changes that are biased in favour of capital and highly educated professionals. Taking a fresh look at the direction of innovation, and incentivizing technologies that augment rather than replace prevailing workforce skills, would help greatly in addressing the labour-market challenges that rich and poor countries face.

When economists talk about global convergence, what they usually have in mind is that developing economies grow more rapidly than advanced economies, and the incomes of the world's poor rise to levels in richer economies. The irony nowadays is that we are experiencing downward rather than upward convergence. Developed countries' problems increasingly resemble the problems found in poor countries. The models and frameworks used to study developing economies are increasingly relevant to the problems confronting rich countries.

*The writer is a Professor of International Political Economy at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, ©PROJECT SYNDICATE, 2022.*

At the heart of development economics lies the idea of "productive dualism." The economists who founded the field of development economics, such as the Nobel laureate Caribbean economist W. Arthur Lewis, noted that poor countries' economies are split between a narrow "modern" sector that uses advanced technologies and a much larger "traditional" sector characterized by extremely low productivity.



Dani Rodrik

**IN BOTH DEVELOPING AND ADVANCED ECONOMIES, MANUFACTURING HAS LOST ITS ABILITY TO CREATE MANY JOBS, OWING TO AUTOMATION AND OTHER LABOUR-SAVING INNOVATIONS**

Dualism was long held to be the defining feature of developing countries, in contrast to developed countries, where frontier technologies and high productivity were assumed to prevail across the entire economy. This marked development economics as a distinct branch of the discipline, separate from conventional neoclassical economics.

Development policy, in turn, traditionally focused on overcoming the disparities in incomes, education, health, and life chances more broadly. Its task was to overcome productive dualism through new institutional arrangements that would alter how markets work and expand access to productive opportunities.

While this distinction may have made some sense in the 1950s and 1960s, it no longer appears to be very relevant. For one thing, the methods used to study developed and developing countries have essentially merged: development economics today is essentially the application of standard frameworks of public finance, labour economics, industrial economics, or macroeconomics to low-income settings. But perhaps more importantly (and interestingly), productive dualism has become a critical and visible feature of advanced economies as well, requiring remedies that come straight out of the development policy toolbox.

In his 2017 book *The Vanishing Middle Class*, the MIT economic historian Peter Temin pointed out that the Lewis model of a dual economy had become increasingly relevant to conditions in the United States. A combination of forces—de-industrialization, globalization, new technologies that favoured professionals and capi-

talists, and declining protections for labour—have indeed produced a widening gap between the winners and those who are left behind. Convergence between poor and rich parts of the economy was arrested, educational attainment increasingly polarized labour markets, and regional disparities widened.

In Europe, the increase in inequality was not as marked, owing to a stronger welfare state, but the same forces operated there, too. The gaps between leaders and laggards among firms and regions grew, and the middle class shrank.

As a result, policymakers in advanced economies are now grappling with the same questions that have long preoccupied developing economies: how to attract investment, create jobs, increase skills, spur entrepreneurship, and enhance access to credit and technology—in short, how to close the gap with the more advanced, more productive parts of the national economy.

The starting points may be different, but the problems of a region where good jobs have disappeared look distressingly familiar to a development economist: Scarce productive employment, mushrooming social problems such as

crime and substance abuse, and low trust in the government among various social groups and the business community. The obstacles that racial or ethnic minorities, recent immigrants, or low-educated workers must surmount in such settings are the bread-and-butter of development economics.

To be sure, left-behind localities in advanced economies may have access to vastly greater financial resources. In the US, state and local governments spend tens of thousands of dollars, not very effectively, on tax incentives and other subsidies to attract large firms. But their officials typically operate under structural and bureaucratic constraints that would be familiar to their counterparts in poor nations. As one experienced US practitioner recently put it at a meeting held at Harvard University, "we are at the center of everything, but control nothing."

They also face similar limits on the available remedies. Industrialization has been the traditional vehicle for overcoming dualism; as workers are absorbed into more productive manufacturing activities, wages rise and the economy's overall productivity increases. But, in both developing and advanced economies, man-

ufacturing has lost its ability to create many jobs, owing to automation and other labour-saving innovations. Manufacturing employment has shrunk (as a share of total employment) even in countries that have maintained strong industrial sectors, such as South Korea or Germany.

In high- and low-income countries alike, then, economic development will have to rely in the future much more on services and on small and medium-size enterprises. Both types of economies will need a new breed of coordinated policies aimed at the supply and demand sides of labour markets, combining skill training programs with support for firms. Good jobs require good firms, and vice versa.

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SPECTRUM DRINKING WATER

## Big gap in achieving target

Several state governments need to get their act together to ensure that rural households get what has been envisaged by the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM). The goal to provide Piped Water Supply (PWS) and Functional Household Tap Connection (FHTC) to this section by 2024, unfortunately doesn't seem to be on course. According to the report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on water resources tabled in Lok Sabha last month, less than 40 per cent of the target has been achieved so far on both fronts.

Recall, in August 2019, the Centre in partnership with states had kicked off the JJM after subsuming erstwhile National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP), to make provision of potable water at the service level of 55 litre per capita per day (lpcd) to every rural household through tap water connection. However, given the statistics placed before it, the Committee has expressed dismay over under-utilisation of funds, which it described as a clear indication of "lack of financial prudence and fiscal discipline."

The picture emerges that in large states such as Uttar Pradesh, West

Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Assam, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, less than 40 per cent of rural households have a FHTC. However, states such as Telangana, Haryana, Goa, Puducherry, Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Dadra & Nagar Haveli have achieved 100 per cent FHTC, while other states like Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat have made 90% household coverage.

This apart, only 47.28 per cent of rural households have access to PWS, in the background that over 19 crore rural households are recorded across the country, but only 9,11,37,165 have got this access. Three states—Haryana, Goa, and Telangana, and three Union Territories, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Puducherry have access to running water.

Worse, there is 'under-utilisation' of JJM funds, which obviously would 'deprive targeted beneficiaries of access to safe/clean potable water at homes.' As per the report, states like Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh,

Jharkhand, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu have utilised less than 25 per cent of central allocation. This is in the backdrop of a revised estimate of Rs 45,011 crore for fiscal year 2021-22. The 'actual expenditure was only Rs 28,238 crore.'

Groundwater resources in India come under increasing pressure due to over-reliance and unsustainable consumption. Wells, ponds and tanks dry up which means fetching water in hundreds of districts has become harder as the water table has fallen. This has escalated the water crisis and placed an even greater burden on women accessing water.

It may be recalled that in 2017, government statistics showed that around 239 million people spread across 152 districts in 21 states were drinking water that contains high levels of arsenic. The World Health Organization (WHO) has warned that long-term intake of such water leads to arsenic poisoning or arsenicosis with cancer of bladder, kidney or lung or diseases of skin—colour changes and hard patches on the palms or soles or blood vessels of legs and feet. Further evidence

indicates possible association between intake of contaminated water and onset of diabetes, hypertension and reproductive disorders.

But the Centre can't manage the water crisis alone. So far, the work entailed in JJM includes joint discussion and finalisation of saturation plan and annual action plan (AAP) of states/UTs, regular review of implementation, workshops/conferences/webinars for capacity building, and more.

Management of water requires a measure to work with, and water also needs to be treated as a life-form resource rather than just a human-centric one. We need to restructure the Centre-state and local bodies' relationship with water as a subject and allow for single-window decision making. More so, as the recently released IPCC Special Report reveals that the increase in warming levels may need more water which would become scarcer with every passing year.

Involvement and combined efforts by civil society, private sector, including its foundations, and the public at large too need to be undertaken.

### Combating air pollution

Sir, Both Delhi and Punjab need to take some cues from countries where alert networks have already been established that spread information on air-pollution through television and social media. For example, in Beijing there are sirens placed to inform the public when the air quality reaches harmful levels. The campaign against the air-pollution in India's capital and in other northern States need the participation of the media, educational institutions, civil society, the state and the Central governments—all need to be equal to the task in the fight against the same. Delhi's neighbouring State governments should come together to draft, design and implement sustainable ways of addressing this menace. While this wasn't happening for a long time owing to political and organisational contexts, the presence of the Aam Aadmi party government in Punjab now makes it a real possibility. Optimistically, the collaborative effort between the two AAP-ruled States can produce some degree of positive results in the fight against air-pollution in the north.

*Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI*

### Don't ruin country's reputation

Sir, In the scriptures, the birth anniversary of Lord Rama, is considered to be the best for doing good deeds and any good deeds done on this day give the desired results. Lord Rama is known as the ideal man. If we study myths and stories, we will learn that the character of a man should be like Lord Rama. In fact, in the Tulsī Ramayana, the noble Purushottam Rama is not just an ideal son, went into exile for 14 years at the behest of his mother, his ideal brother was crying for Lakhman, he killed Ravana to save Sita, he was a king and a saint as well. But it is a matter of deep concern that, on this auspicious day the whole world witnessed violent communal clashes in four states—Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and West Bengal. In MP, at least 10 houses were set ablaze and more than two dozen people were injured in clashes that erupted during Ram Navami procession in various areas of Khargone in MP on Sunday. In Gujarat, communal clashes broke out between two communities in Himmatnagar and Khambhat cities. Such heinous acts by the divisive forces are not only an insult to Lord Shriram but also a misleading message to the whole world. This is not automatic; it is a systematic process that can intimidate a small number of people. No religion teaches hatred, but peace and brotherhood. These forces must be defeated through a people's movement.

*Asit Mohanty, JAJPUR*

## 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](mailto:edit@orissapost.com)

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

THE MOTHER



## Rein on Babus

Sikkim will soon have a separate department for non-performing babus. Chief Minister Prem Singh Golay announced this while addressing a meeting of entrepreneurs in Gangtok. It wasn't an April Fools Day gag, in case you are wondering but said with some seriousness, and in the presence of some very senior babus. But those in the know say that this is not the first time that Golay has expressed his exasperation with bureaucratic apathy.

Last year, an extensive drive was conducted against officials reporting late for work in government offices and the latecomers were reprimanded. But the drive petered out within a month and babus were soon back to their old ways.

However, this time, Golay has a definite plan to discipline the obstinate babus. The government is setting up a new "Department of Coordination" under the Home Department with immediate effect, where all engineers, accounts officers, and even the likes of additional chief secretary-level officials, who are known to be lax towards their duties will be transferred. Or sent to Coventry, as the old saying goes!

And to rub it in further, these ostracized babus will not be given official vehicles and other perks they've enjoyed thus far, only their salaries. The aim is to separate these employees from those who are efficient and productive.

For a public long resigned to the inefficiencies of the system, it all sounds too good to be true. But it is also hoped that steps will be taken to ensure there is no victimization of honest workers in the name of improving governance.

### Examining the civil service's existential crisis

A recent exchange between two former senior IAS officers on the state of the civil service drew some attention in babu circles. Some noted it with dismay and some with concern. It started with D Subbarao, former RBI Governor and former Finance Secretary, bemoaning that the IAS had turned into elitist, self-serving babus who were out of touch with reality and lost the courage of conviction to stand for what's right.

The skeptics among the public would say that it has become a sort of a trend for some babus to run down the service and distance themselves from it, of course after retirement and with the wisdom of hindsight. But Subbarao has always been known for his sober views, and what he says cannot be discounted easily. But Deepak Gupta, former chairman of UPSC and the author of a serious history of the IAS, wrote a riposte to counter the issues that Subbarao had raised.

Undoubtedly, both views merit study and reflection. It's not often that two senior babus cross swords over the fundamental issues of administration. Some observers feel that this debate may have been triggered, especially now, by potential changes to the system the government may be contemplating. The coming weeks and months will likely clear the air.

### Netagiri beckons babu?

A little bird tells us that Haryana IAS officer and whistleblower Ashok Khemka, recently promoted to chief secretary grade, could dip his toes into politics. It appears that a party with national ambitions after having tasted success recently is now keen to create a space for itself in Khemka's cadre state.

The whistleblower is best known for canceling Robert Vadra's illegal land deal in Gurgaon and having run into trouble with politicians across the board. He has been transferred 54 times in 29 years by various state governments after he exposed corruption in the departments that he had served. The former-in-transit officer is even the subject of a bestselling biography detailing his checkered career, which can be viewed as either exemplary or a cautionary tale!

Will Khemka cross over to the other side, as is being whispered by some observers? If he does, he certainly won't be the first babu to do so—or the last! We're waiting with bated breath.

Share a babu experience! Follow [dilipthecherian@twitter.com](https://twitter.com/dilipthecherian). Let's multiply the effect

### WISDOM CORNER

- When a king speaks, the armies move. But when a wise man speaks, only the beard shakes. **VINOBA BHAVE**
- If a person wants to become big, then he should do even the smallest work, because only self-help is the best. **ISHWAR CHANDRA VIDYASAGAR**
- For wise and good men always feel disinclined to hurt those that are of much less strength than themselves. **RAM MOHAN ROY**

### WORDSWORTH

#### Aerobot

Agencies working for NASA have used this term for craft designed to explore solar-system bodies such as Venus, Mars and Titan. Three sorts of aerobots are proposed or are under development. One type is an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), which is launched from an orbiting spacecraft and deploys wings before it lands. The second is a lighter-than-air craft, a helium-filled balloon fitted with heaters powered by solar cells. A third is a hybrid balloon-kite system sometimes called a helikite. An advantage of the second and third kinds is that they don't need fuel, which is expensive to transport and which runs out all too soon. Unlike satellites or the winged aerobot, the lighter-than-air versions can fly for extended periods, allowing long-term monitoring of the properties of the atmosphere. They can also view and record the ground from much lower altitudes than is possible with satellites. In the NASA sense, the word combines the prefix aero-, as in aeronautics, with bot, a common abbreviated form of robot. However, aerobot is also a trademarked term of Moller International for its small ducted fan aerial vehicle, in which the first part of the word would seem to be from aerial rather than aeronautics. It is said that a team spent 18 months and several hundred-thousand Euros developing a mission concept featuring two orbiters packed with miniaturized instruments and a tiny aerobot that would be dropped into Venus's corrosive atmosphere.

#### Cybocephalic

The word, in several dictionaries, formally refers to a person having an abnormally long and narrow skull, mishapen due to a congenital condition. What happens is that one or more of the sutures in the head—fibrous joints between the bones of the skull—close before the brain has finished growing. The condition is recorded under many different names, depending on which sutures are involved and the shape of the resulting deformation; some of the other terms are acrocephaly (Greek akron, tip), dolichocephaly (Greek dolikos, long), plagiocephaly (Greek plagios, slanting), brachycephaly (Greek brakus, short), trigonocephaly (Greek trigonos, three-cornered), tectocephaly (Latin tectum, a roof), oxycephaly (Greek oxus, sharp), and scaphocephaly (Greek skaphos, a light boat or skiff). In all these terms, the last element is from Greek kephale, head. In cybocephalic the first part is from another Greek word for a small boat, kymbe.

Dhurjati Mukherjee

**IN 2017, GOVERNMENT STATISTICS SHOWED THAT AROUND 239 MILLION PEOPLE OF 152 DISTRICTS IN 21 STATES OF INDIA WERE DRINKING WATER THAT CONTAINS HIGH LEVELS OF ARSENIC**

# national

## of the day quote

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



MANISH SISODIA | DELHI DEPUTY CM

I am being harassed so much that I feel bad about it. Gujarat Congress leaders want that I should leave the party. I am more pained because I have represented the situation to Rahul Gandhi many times, but no action has been taken by him against Gujarat Congress leaders



HARDIK PATEL | GUJARAT CONGRESS WORKING PRESIDENT

The vengeance with which the BJP is bulldozing India's Constitution has now reached the homes of minorities. BJP leaders are outdoing each other in stripping Muslims of everything, be it their homes, livelihood and dignity



MEHBOOBA MUFTI | PDP PRESIDENT

## SHORT TAKES

### Girl gangraped

**Kolkata:** Bolpur-Santiniketan in Birbhum district of West Bengal, which houses the iconic Visva-Bharati University founded by Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, is on the boil following the gangrape of a tribal girl late Thursday evening. The incident happened when the victim went to a local fairground with her boyfriend. He later informed the police that suddenly five persons came to the spot, attacked and injured him and abducted the girl. They took the victim to a nearby river bed and raped her. The victim is currently under treatment at a local hospital.

### Freak accident

**Mumbai:** In a freak accident, two long-distance trains reportedly came on the same track and hit each other at a crossing between Dadar and Matunga here late Friday. The incident involved the Pucherry Express and Gadag Express, which came on the same railway line and at least three bogies of one train was derailed, said Central Railway (CR) chief spokesperson Shivaji Sutar. Panicky passengers in both trains claimed they heard some loud sound, along with sparks on the overhead electric wires. No casualty has been reported in the accident.

### FIR lodged

**New Delhi:** The Special Cell of Delhi Police has registered a First Information Report (FIR) in connection with hacking of the University Grants Commission's official Twitter handle. According to the FIR copy accessed by IANS, the UGC's Twitter handle was hacked on April 10 at approximately 1.30 a.m. in the night. UGCA is a statutory body set up by the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Government of India for the coordination, determination and maintenance of standards of teaching, examination and research in university education.

### Four killed

**Deoghar:** Four persons, including a woman, were killed and two others seriously injured on Friday when a four-wheeler carrying them hit a tree on the side of the road in Jharkhand's Deoghar district, a police officer said. The victims are residents of Katihar district in Bihar, he said. The driver lost control of the speeding vehicle, which then hit the roadside tree in Mohanpur police station area, Officer-in-Charge Prem Pradip said.



Democracy is a pillar of our Constitution and therefore any move to tamper with its values will not be tolerated at any cost

BHAGWANT MANN | PUNJAB CM

## AI RESTORING SALARIES

Air India is restoring salaries of employees in a phased manner to pre-pandemic levels as the aviation sector is recovering with the decline of Covid cases in the country, according to the airline's official document Tuesday



## Eshwarappa quits amid high drama



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

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Bangalore, April 15:** Karnataka's Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister K.S. Eshwarappa, who is embroiled in the contractor suicide case, submitted his resignation on Friday night amid high drama as hundreds of his supporters gathered in front of the CM's residence and asked him not to step down.

Eshwarappa's supporters also raised slogans in his favour and demanded justice for him. They also raised slogans against Congress leaders Siddaramaiah and D.K. Shivakumar. Eshwarappa had announced his resignation on Thursday evening in connection with the allegations against him in the suicide case of contractor and BJP leader Santhosh K. Patil.

"I have worked as the RDPR Minister till date under CM Bommai's leadership. 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 had 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 consuming poison, held Eshwarappa directly responsible for his death, alleging that the minister had asked for a 40 per cent commission in a Rs 4 crore project, through his aides.

The Congress has been pressing for the resignation and arrest of Eshwarappa.

## Russia delivers components of 2nd S-400 regiment

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 15:** Notwithstanding its continuing military strikes against Ukraine, Russia has started supplying some components of the second regiment of the S-400 Triumf missile defence system to India, people familiar with the development said Friday. However, they added that some of the critical parts and systems of the regiment are yet to be delivered. The supplies came amid increasing concerns in New Delhi over possible delays in the supply of major military hardware to India by Russia in view of the crisis in Ukraine.

"Russia has started delivering some components of the second regiment of the S-400 missile system. Not all key parts of the regiment have been supplied yet," said one of the people cited above. It is understood that the components



The S-400 system is capable of tracking, engaging and addressing the threat of Chinese or Pakistani fighters the moment they take off from air bases

India decided to upgrade its military infrastructure when the country was locked in a major faceoff with China along the Line of Actual Control in July 2020

supplied included simulators for training purposes.

The sources said India anticipates some delays in delivery of

some of the main parts of the second regiment in view of the crisis in Ukraine. Some of the parts that have been delivered are for train-

ing purposes, they said. Russia had started delivery of the first regiment of the missile in December.

The missile system has already been deployed in such a way that it can cover parts of the border with China in the northern sector as well as the frontier with Pakistan.

It is learnt that the issue of India-Russia defence ties figured during Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's visit to India two weeks ago.

Last month, Russia said that there will be no impact of the Western sanctions against it on the supply of S-400 missile systems to India.

"As regards the S-400 deal, be rest assured that it will not be impacted in any way. It is a 100 surety," Russian Ambassador Denis Alipov had said.

## IN SYNC



Artists perform during an event to celebrate Himachal Divas at Dhalpur in Kullu district

PTI PHOTO

## PFI activist killed in front of father

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Palakkad (Kerala), April 15:** A political killing rocked Kerala on the day of Vishu as a local leader of the Popular Front of India (PFI), an Islamist outfit, was allegedly hacked to death in front of his father in Palakkad district Friday.

Subair, 43, was allegedly hacked to death at Elappully in the district Friday afternoon, police said. He was rushed to the hospital by the locals immediately after the incident but could not be saved. PFI's president of the Para area committee, Subair, was allegedly hit by a car while on a bike with his father and attacked using sharp-edged weapons.

Subair's father, who allegedly suffered injuries after falling from the bike, has been admitted to a hospital, police said. The incident occurred when they were returning home after offering prayers in a nearby mosque.

After reviewing the situation with top police officials of the district, Palakkad SP R Viswanadh said Subair's father has given a statement regarding the RSS enmity with his son. He said alerts have been sounded in the district to prevent any retaliatory attacks following the killing of the PFI activist.

Security has been tightened to prevent the occurrence of untoward incidents. A Prabhakaran, ruling CPI(M) MLA representing Malappuzha constituency, condemned the killing of Subair, describing it as an "inhuman act" committed on the day of Vishu.

Police have taken into custody an abandoned car, allegedly used by the assailants to knock down Subair's bike.

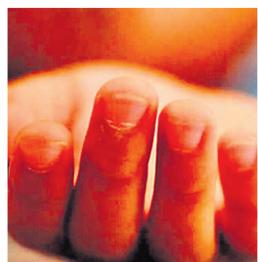
The assailants allegedly fled the scene in another car immediately after the incident.

The incident occurred months after S Sanjith, a 27-year old RSS worker, was hacked to death allegedly by activists of the SDPI, the political offshoot of the PFI, in the same area.

Sanjith was killed in front of his wife in November last year. Police said the preliminary investigations suggest that the abandoned car was registered in the name of Sanjith.

To ascertain this, police have launched a probe with the Motor Vehicles department to confirm the owner of the car.

## Seven children die of 'mysterious illness'



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Jaipur, April 15:** Seven children aged between 2 and 14 years have died in Rajasthan's Sirohi district of some 'mysterious illness' with symptoms varying from fever to seizures.

All residents from Fulabai Kheda and Fulaber villages in Sirohi, these children breathed their last between April 9 and 13. Joint Director (Health), Jageshwar Prasad, said the cause of the deaths is yet to be ascertained.

"While they seem to be cases of some acute viral disease, nothing can be said with certainty till all their reports are received,"

he added.

Prasad also said that the deaths were reported within a day of showing symptoms.

A mother who lost her five-year-old child said that her son woke up at 5 am and asked for water before having seizures.

"The boy vomited and then died at around 8 am." "Three of the seven deceased children had consumed local flavoured ice," Prasad said, though he ruled out a case of acute food poisoning.

Teams of doctors from Jaipur and Jodhpur are set to visit the area.

"The situation is being monitored. Around 300 houses have already been surveyed and 58 samples have been sent to a lab in Jaipur for testing," Prasad said.

Meanwhile, three more children have been admitted to a hospital as a precautionary measure.

"They have mild symptoms of cold and one has pneumonia," Prasad said. Kuldeep Singh, head of the paediatric department at Jodhpur's All India Institute of Medical Sciences, said it seems to be a case of viral infection.

## Woman shot dead for not serving breakfast

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Thane, April 15:** A woman was shot dead allegedly by her father-in-law apparently for not serving breakfast to him in Maharashtra's Thane city, police said Friday.

The woman, a resident of the Rabodi locality, suffered bullet injuries in her abdomen and died while undergoing treatment at a private hospital in the morning, a day after the incident, they said.

Senior inspector Santosh Ghatekar of the Rabodi police station said initially an offence under IPC sections 307 (attempt to murder) and 506 (criminal intimidation) besides the Arms Act was registered against the accused, Kashinath Pandurang Patil, 76, and it has now been converted into a murder case (section 302) following the death of the victim, a housewife.

The officer, quoting a complaint filed by another daughter-in-law of the accused, said the incident took place at their house at around 11.30 am Thursday. The accused got annoyed when the victim did not serve him breakfast along with tea, he said. The elderly man, a real estate developer, pulled out a revolver and fatally shot his daughter-in-law, the officer said.

## Manjhi triggers row

On September 22 last year, Manjhi had sparked a row after calling Lord Ram a historic figure who is just a character in a mythological story

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Patna, April 15:** The President of Hindustani Awam Morcha (HAM) and former Chief Minister of Bihar, Jitan Ram Manjhi, has again made a controversial statement on Lord Ram.

Speaking at an event organised by HAM MLA Praful Kumar Manjhi at Sikandra in Jamui district to mark Ambedkar Jayanti on Thursday, Manjhi said: "I don't believe Ram was a God. Ram was a character created by Tulsideas and Valmiki to spread their message."

On September 22 last year, Manjhi had sparked a row after calling Lord Ram a historic figure who is just a character in a mythological story. At the event in Sikandra, Manjhi also said: "People who perform Puja at other's houses do not become big people. People belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes should stop puja in their houses. Brahmins used to eat meat, consume liquor and speak lies. You cannot achieve



religious merit by inviting Brahmins at your houses for puja. In fact, you gain sin that way."

Reacting to Manjhi's remarks, RJD state unit chief Jagadannand Singh said: "I can't understand why Manjhi repeatedly makes statements on Lord Ram. We worship Lord Ram. He is the creator of the universe. Why do some people use his name to create controversy and flare up communal tension in the society? I firmly believe that someone is asking him (Manjhi) to say such things to target the saffron brigade," Singh said.

## India to get record number of doctors in next 10 yrs: PM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhuj, April 15:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday said the country will get a record number of doctors in the next 10 years due to the central government's policy of establishing at least one medical college in every district.

Speaking after dedicating to the nation a 200-bed K K Patel Multi-speciality Hospital in Bhuj in Gujarat's Kutch district via video-conferencing, he said coronavirus is still lurking and people should not take it easy and be watchful.

The modern health facility is the first charitable multi-speciality hospital in the Kutch region and it has been built by the Leuva Patel community of Bhuj with help from donors based in India and abroad.

"The goal of having at least one



medical college in every district and ensuring that medical education was in reach of everyone will result in the country getting a record numbers of doctors after 10 years," the PM said.

He said two decades ago, Gujarat had just nine medical colleges with around 1,100 MBBS seats, but the medical education scenario has improved vastly in the last 20 years. "Now, the state has one AIIMS and

over three dozen medical colleges.

Earlier, only 1,000 students used to get admission in medical colleges of Gujarat, now around 6,000 students get admission in these colleges. AIIMS in Rajkot has started admitting 50 students from 2021," Modi said.

Stressing that coronavirus has still not gone away and people should not take it easy, the PM said Yoga and Ayurveda, which have their origins in India, caught the world's attention during the pandemic. He said export of turmeric from India has increased after the advent of the pandemic as people across the globe learnt about

its health benefits.

To spread the message of healthy living, Modi urged the people of

Kutch to set a world record by ensuring maximum participation of citizens in the district during the International Day of Yoga on June 21. To boost tourism in Gujarat and in the country, the PM sought help of people from Kutch living

abroad in persuading foreigners to visit attractions like the White Rann of Kutch during Rann Utsav and 182-metre tall Statue of Unity in Narmada district dedicated to Sardar Patel.

"This is my appeal to the Kutchi diaspora spread across the world.

The goal of having at least one medical college in every district and ensuring that medical education was in reach of everyone will result in the country getting a record numbers of doctors after 10 years

NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

# Caste equations changing in Bihar



Representational image

**Patna, April 15:** Hints of changing caste equations are emerging in Bihar as seen during the recently-concluded MLC elections for 24 seats where three of the upper caste candidates of the RJD won and the trend is said to be continued during the polls in Bochahan by-elections as well in Muzaffarpur.

Bhumihars were considered the main pillars of the BJP in Bihar but now their focus is shifting towards the RJD. Now, the Bhumihar-Brahmin Social Front has decided to organise an event in Sri Krishna Memorial Hall in Patna May 8 to take deliberate on their course of action.

A meeting in this regard was held in the residence of former cabinet minister Veena Shahi in Patliputra colony Wednesday. The meeting, chaired by former minister Suresh Sharma, saw leaders of the front unanimously decide to start a membership campaign from April 23 to May 7 across 38 districts of Bihar.

"We have decided to go with the party which gives respect to our community," Sharma said. Though, the leaders of the front did not disclose about their stand on going either for the RJD or the BJP but sources have said that people of the Bhumihar caste were backing the BJP in the past but the saffron party has not given due respect to it, and hence, they will go towards Tejashwi Yadav

# JD-U targets Centre

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Patna, April 15:** Bihar's ruling JD-U is not leaving any chance to slam the ally BJP and the Narendra Modi government and used the Ambedkar Jayanti Thursday to hit out at it for ignoring its key demands.

At a function to mark the birth anniversary of the Architect of the Indian Constitution, JD-U's national President Rajiv Ranjan Singh alias Lalan Singh said: "Those who are not giving special status to Bihar are playing with the dreams of Baba Saheb Bhim Rao Ambedkar. If we want to fulfil the dream of Baba Saheb, they have to give special status to Bihar."

He said that the Narendra Modi government is doing injustice to the people of Bihar by not giving special status. "The NDA government

**In Bihar, both Bhumihars and Rajputs are considered upper castes, but the population of the former is higher**

and the RJD.

Tejashwi Yadav, after the win of three candidates of Bhumihar caste in the MLC election, said that the participation of every caste and communities is increasing in RJD. The RJD, after MY (Muslim-Yadav) equation, it is heading towards achieving BY (Bhumihar-Yadav) equation in Bihar.

The BJP is also feeling the heat pertaining to the Bhumihar factor. Hence, it has decided to pay tribute to Veer Kunwar Singh, a freedom fighter of 1857 War of independence. He was a native of Jagdishpur in Bhojpur district and Union Home Minister Amit Shah is coming to Jagdishpur April 23 for the event, as per state BJP chief Sanjay Jaiswal.

Jaiswal appealed to supporters of BJP to go with 75,000 national flags to pay tribute to Veer Kunwar Singh in Jagdishpur in the celebration, organised under Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav of the Centre.

Sources said that the BJP tactically chose to pay tribute to Veer Kunwar Singh and give a message to the Bhumihars that Rajputs are with it.

at the Centre has given a special financial package to 17 states but Bihar is not included in that list. Moreover, the Centre has selected those states where financial management is not sound. Compared to them, Nitish Kumar has done exemplary financial management in Bihar. It is extremely unfortunate that the Centre has not given financial aid to Bihar," Lalan Singh said. "Baba Saheb dreamed about financial and social inequality in the country. It will not be removed if we do not give special status to Bihar," he said. Besides Lalan Singh, leaders like Upendra Kushwaha, Ashok Chaudhary, and Neeraj Kumar pointed out that Nitish Kumar is the real follower of Ambedkar, and Bihar has become the favourite state for people belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

# Hindu Sena issues warning, puts up saffron flags near JNU

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 15:** The Hindu Sena has put up posters and saffron flags near the main gate of the Jawaharlal Nehru University and surrounding areas almost a week after a clash broke out in a hostel over allegedly serving non-vegetarian food during Ram Navami.

It also warned of "stringent steps" if there is an "insult to saffron". Hindu Sena chief Vishnu Gupta said the posters reading "Bhagwa (saffron) JNU" have been put up by the right-wing outfit's national vice-president Surjit Singh Yadav.

In a video circulated on WhatsApp, Gupta is purportedly heard saying in Hindi, "Saffron is being insulted in the JNU campus on a regular basis. We want to warn those who are doing this. Mend your ways. We won't tolerate this."



"We respect your ideology and every religion. But insult to saffron will not be tolerated and we might take stringent steps," he said. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Southwest) Manoj C said,

# BJP felicitates 8 for protesting outside Delhi CM's house

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 15:** The Delhi BJP has felicitated the eight BJYM members who were arrested and later let out on bail for protesting and indulging in vandalism outside Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's house.

Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta in a ceremony at the party office here Thursday welcomed with garland the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) members, attracting the ire of the AAP.

"The eight activists of BJYM who went to jail for protest against anti-Hindu Kejriwal got bail from the court after 14 days. Welcomed these young revolutionaries at the party office today. Each of our worker will keep on fighting anti Hindu forces," Gupta tweeted sharing photos of the event. Lashing out at the BJP in a press conference, senior AAP leader Atishi said that the BJP has sent a message to its workers all over the country that they too will be felicitated if they indulge in "hooliganism and vandalism". The Delhi High Court had earlier this week granted bail to the eight activists arrested after they staged a protest and indulged in vandalism outside the residence of Delhi Chief Minister March 30.



The members of Hindu Sena put up saffron flags outside JNU campus forcing the police to initiate legal action and remove the said flags from there

In a statement, the Hindu Sena said the police should not be in a hurry to take down the flags

Notably, the university has again become a hotbed of politics after the April 10 violence in the campus

As many as 16 students were injured during a scuffle that allegedly started over consumption of non vegetarian food on the occasion of Ram Nawami

"On Friday morning, it was noticed that a few flags and banners have been put on the road and adjoining areas of JNU. Those were promptly removed because of the recent incident and suitable legal action is being taken."

"Saffron is not a symbol of terror that the police is showing haste. It is a right under the law to protect saffron and Hindutva," the outfit said.

Two groups of students clashed at JNU's Kaveri Hostel Sunday allegedly over serving non-vegetarian food in the mess on Ram

Navami, with police saying 20 students were injured in the violence.

The two groups, however, claimed that over 60 students from both sides were injured.

The JNU Students' Union alleged that Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad members stopped students from eating non-vegetarian food in the hostel mess and "created a violent atmosphere".

However, the right-wing ABVP denied the charge and claimed that "Leftists" obstructed a puja programme organised at the hostel on Ram Navami.

# COVID SURGES IN DELHI

# Rise in home isolation cases: Data

The number of home isolation cases stood at 574 while 325 new coronavirus cases were recorded with a positivity rate of 2.39 per cent Thursday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 15:** Amid an uptick in daily cases of Covid-19 in Delhi and the positivity rate going beyond two per cent, there has been a rise of nearly 48 percent in the number of home isolation cases here in the last one week, according to official data.

The daily cases have been on the rise in the last few days while the positivity rate here has been registered in excess of one per cent since April 4 when it had stood at 1.34 per cent.

As the Covid positivity rate in the national capital has jumped from 0.57 per cent on April 1 to 2.39 per cent on April 14, the number of home isolation cases has shown an upward trend in the last one week.

On April 8, the city had reported 146 cases with a positivity rate of 1.39 per cent and 388 patients were under home isolation, according to the data shared by city health department authorities. The count of home isolation cases has steadily increased in this period, rising to 574 on April 14. The corresponding figures on April 11 was 447 and on April 13 it had stood at 504. There has been a rise of nearly 48 per cent in the home isolation cases in the last one week. Doctors Tuesday had said that it was "not a panic situation" as the count of daily cases was still low, but had cautioned against dropping the guard. Many doctors had also said that very few people are going for a Covid test after onset of symptoms and people are now preferring to recuperate at home.



# Free precaution doses soon

**New Delhi:** The Delhi government Friday said precaution doses of coronavirus vaccines will soon be provided free of cost to people at its hospitals. The move comes as the national capital witnesses an uptick in coronavirus cases and a rise in positivity rate. India rolled out precaution dose of Covid-19 vaccines for all people aged above 18 years at private centres Sunday. Those who have completed nine months after the second shot are eligible for it. Both Covishield and Covaxin doses now cost Rs 225, and private vaccination centres can charge up to a maximum of Rs 150 per shot as service fee over and above this cost.

# MATTER OF FAITH



Christian devotees pray at a church on the occasion of Good Friday

# Survey to unearth ancient structures

AGENCIES

**Patna, April 15:** The Bihar government is conducting a survey in Banka and Patna districts, hoping to unearth ancient structures that are buried in the soil, an official said Thursday.

Banka and Patna are historically and mythologically significant places, so the exercise of ground-penetrating radar (GPR) survey has been undertaken, he said.

"The GPR survey is almost on the verge of completion in Bhadaria village in Amarpur block of Banka. It will now start in Patna district," Additional Secretary and Director (Archaeology) of Art, Culture and Youth Department Deepak Anand told PTI.

"All formalities have been completed to conduct the GPR survey in Patna," he said, refusing to share the specific location in the district where the exercise would be conducted. A report will be published based on the findings, he said.

At present, the findings at the Bhadaria village are being analysed by experts, he added. "Ancient Patna, then Pataliputra,



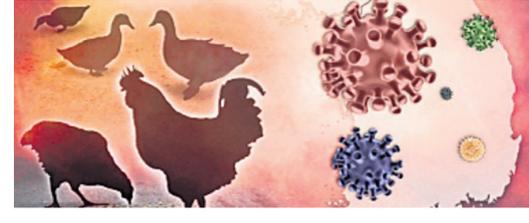
was the capital of the Magadh Empire. Pataliputra was a seat of learning and it was home to many scholars, including Aryabhata, Vatsyayana and Chanakya. The Mandar hill in Banka has many references in Hindu mythology. This hill was used for churning the ocean to extract the nectar from its bosom, as per mythology," Kumar said. "We want to find out if there are any ancient buried structures in

these places," he said. Recently, villagers found some ancient bricks and structures in Bhadaria, the official said. "It has been established that Bhadaria is a historical place. As per initial studies, the remains found there are 2,600 years old," he said. Chief Minister Nitish Kumar also visited the archaeological site on the banks of Chanan river in Bhadaria recently and declared that it would be developed into a tourist spot.

# FRESH PROPOSAL FOR UNESCO'S HERITAGE TAG

**Patna:** Bihar government has sent a fresh proposal to the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to get Cyclopean wall, a more than 2,500 years old structure at Rajgir, listed in the UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Cyclopean Wall of Rajgir is a 40 km long wall of stone which encircled the ancient city of Rajgir to protect it from external enemies and invaders, built before 3rd century BC. "We are leaving no stone unturned to get Cyclopean wall listed in the UNESCO World Heritage Site. We have submitted a fresh proposal highlighting the historical significance and features of the Cyclopean Wall to the ASI following their request", Additional Secretary cum Director (Archaeology), of Bihar's Art, Culture and Youth department, Deepak Anand told PTI. Anand said the wall is among the oldest examples of cyclopean masonry in the world and it must be listed in the UNESCO World Heritage Site.

# Bird flu scare in Supaul



AGENCIES

**Patna, April 15:** Avian influenza (H5N1) scare has gripped Bihar's Supaul district with the administration Thursday directing culling of chickens in poultry farms located in affected areas after samples of birds found dead there came out positive.

District officials appealed to the people to avoid consumption of chicken in the region.

Divisional Forest Officer, Supaul, Sunil Kumar Sharan said that more than four dozen birds, including crows, ducks, chickens, and other birds were found dead in mysterious circumstances in Chapkahi village under Sadar police station March 31.

The villagers of Chapkahi spot-

# TODDLER DIES OF 'CHAMKI' FEVER

**Patna:** A toddler died of Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES), commonly known as Chamki Bukhar, in Bihar's Muzaffarpur. The victim, son of one Babloo Mahto from Vaishali, was admitted to the Kejrival hospital in Muzaffarpur after he developed a high fever. As he was not showing signs of recovery, doctors referred him to Sri Krishna Medical College and Hospital (SKMCH) for treatment where he passed away Wednesday night. Kamal Singh, the district public relation officer of Muzaffarpur, confirmed the death.

do the culling followed by putting them into the jute bags and sprinkle calcium carbonate powder before the burial. The district administration has provided PPE kits to every labourer who will do the culling. They will also be assigned to count the numbers and report to the team and the district civil surgeon will report to the District Magistrate office.

of the day quote

Kejriwal was not only holding meetings with Punjab officials in Mann's absence but also ordering postings of senior superintendents of police and deputy commissioners in the state

SUKHBIR SINGH BADAL | SAD CHIEF

I think that the politicians who create political noise don't understand the issues of national importance. Do they know that in Afghanistan once there were more than 50,000 Sikh families which have now been reduced to 2,000. Where will those Sikh brothers go... Those Sikh brothers who came to India what will they do

J P NADDA | BJP PRESIDENT

You have seen in recent days what has happened. Efforts are on to divide us. People from Goa should think, who is doing this? Are there Goans involved in this? I do not know. Some persons from outside are trying to divide us

MICHAEL LOBO | GOA'S LEADER OF OPPOSITION

SHORT TAKES

3 die in car fire

Chandigarh: Three people were burnt to death when the car they were travelling in caught fire after it rammed into a truck on Panipat-Rohtak national highway Friday, police said.

Sarpanch shot dead

Srinagar: A village sarpanch, associated with the BJP, was killed by militants in J&K's Baramulla district Friday, police said.

Woman gangraped

New Delhi: A 36-year-old woman was allegedly gangraped by three men in the national capital following which all the accused were arrested, an official said Friday.

Fake call centre busted

Kolkata: At least eight people were arrested after a fake call centre was busted by Kolkata Police in the city's Garden Reach area, an officer said.

Naidu arrives in Ayodhya

Ayodhya: Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu along with his wife Usha Naidu reached the temple town of Ayodhya Friday and offered prayers to Lord Ram at the Ram Janmabhoomi site amidst the chanting of hymns by priests.

CBI plans DNA tests in Hanskhali rape case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, April 15: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is planning to conduct DNA tests in the Hanskhali rape case to check whether the samples collected from the crime spot match with those found on the arrested accused, an officer of the agency said Friday.

A Class 9 student was allegedly raped April 4 in Hanskhali in West Bengal's Nadia district during a birthday party at the house of the prime accused, a local TMC leader's son. She had died after the incident. Her father filed a police complaint on April 10, and alleged that the accused had snatched the body at gunpoint and cremated her.

CBI sleuths visited the house again Friday morning to gather more evidence, after collecting samples from the spot Thursday night. They plan to collect samples from the arrested accused and match those with the samples found from the spot. This will be a crucial step in our investigation. We will continue our search operations at different locations in Hanskhali, the officer said over the phone.

CBI sleuths had Thursday broken open the lock of the prime accused's house and searched the crime spot. They were accompanied by personnel of the Central Forensic Science Laboratory and the entire search operation and evidence collection was videographed.

The search continued till late



The right of demolishing houses via bulldozers does not lie even with the CM and PM. How can you raze a house without any investigation, without holding anyone accountable? What must be crossing an innocent's mind when on seeing his house being brought down like a pack of cards?

ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CM

GOA CM'S APPEAL

The Goa government will write to the Bombay High Court to seek to list the Konkani language, in addition to English, as the official language to conduct court proceedings, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said Friday



GRACEFUL MOVES



Youngsters perform a traditional dance inside the premises of Ranghar, during the Rongali Bihu celebrations in Sivasagar

PTI PHOTO

Making efforts to fill vacancies: CJI

The judicial officers must sensitise themselves to different vulnerabilities of the parties, including minors, women and persons with disabilities who may have different requirements and treat everyone with respect, he said

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad, April 15: Chief Justice of India (CJI) N V Ramana Friday said he is making efforts to fill up vacancies in the judiciary and to improve judicial infrastructure in the country, besides addressing issues relating to security of judges and others.

Our judiciary is overburdened, he said, while speaking after inaugurating the two-day Telangana State Judicial Officers Conference here.

The CJI said he has taken up filling up vacancies and improving the infrastructure of the judiciary soon after taking over.

"The reason is access to justice is possible only when we provide sufficient number of courts as well as infrastructure," he said. Justice Ramana said he wanted to see that there are no pending vacancies either in the high courts, Supreme Court or the district judiciary.

He also sought to see that the judicial system is strengthened. Chief Justice Ramana added judicial infrastructure was found to be inadequate in different parts of the country.

In the case of Telangana, he had cleared the pending file for increasing the number of judges from 24 to 42 without delay, he said. He requested the judicial officers to create a congenial environment for the litigants and to always remember the human aspects of the dispute.

"Law cannot be far from equity. It is important to project the human face of the judiciary whenever you



The reason is access to justice is possible only when we provide sufficient number of courts as well as infrastructure

N V RAMANA | CJI

their mind independently on the materials presented before them.

"For instance, the requirement of the Criminal Procedure Code are not mere formalities. They are an important check on the executive excesses and represent substantive rights of the accused," he said.

The judicial officers must keep themselves updated and they will be able to apply the changing law and precedents to cases before them and ensure justice only when they are aware of them, he said.

He stressed on the judicial officers performing their duties without any fear. "I am aware of the increasing physical attacks on judges. I am doing my utmost to prevent such occurrences. Directions were issued to improve the security of the judicial officers both inside and outside court rooms," Justice Ramana said. He also urged them to take care of their physical as well as mental health.

Patient attacks doctor with scissors

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 15: A patient at a Delhi government hospital allegedly attacked a doctor with a pair of scissors on Friday, causing minor injuries, police said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police, West, Ghanshyam Bansal said a call was received in the morning reporting that a doctor had been stabbed by a patient in the ICU of the Central Hospital at Tilak Nagar in west Delhi.

As the police enquired the matter, it was found out that the accused, Kuldeep Singh, 40, had been admitted to the hospital on April 13 so as to enable his freedom from alcohol addiction and also for the treatment of occasional fits.

"When Dr. Vipin Jha came to treat him, the patient became violent, tried to evade the treatment, and became adamant at leaving the hospital," DCP Bansal said.

DON'T FALL IN BJP'S TRAP: SISODIA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 15: The AAP Friday alleged the BJP government in Himachal Pradesh is "copying" the Arvind Kejriwal model of governance, soon after Chief Minister Jairam Thakur announced free power and water supply, and a 50 per cent rebate in bus fare for women.

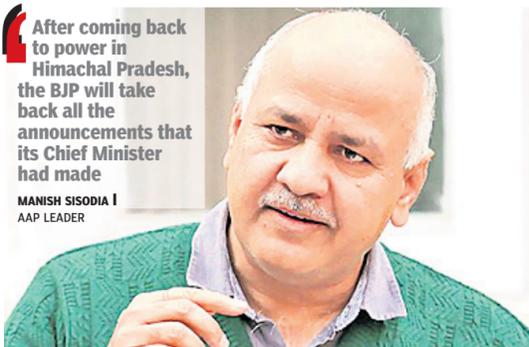
Addressing a press conference here, senior AAP leader Manish Sisodia said the BJP government's announcements ahead of assembly polls in the state are an attempt to "hoodwink" people, as the saffron party has always said it is "completely" against freebies like free electricity.

After coming back to power in Himachal Pradesh, the BJP will take back all the announcements that its chief minister had made, Sisodia claimed, asking people of the hill state not to "fall in their trap".

"Vote for the AAP in elections," he appealed to them.

After coming back to power in Himachal Pradesh, the BJP will take back all the announcements that its Chief Minister had made

MANISH SISODIA | AAP LEADER



While addressing an event in Chamba earlier in the day, the Himachal Pradesh chief minister announced his government has decided to provide free power up to 125 units and waive water bills in rural areas.

He also his government has decided to reduce the bus fare for women by 50 per cent. "What the BJP

government has announced today is an attempt to partially copy the Kejriwal model of governance. They have started staging a drama of copying the Kejriwal model of governance in the state with an eye on elections," Sisodia said.

He said the BJP and its "friends" are in power in 18 states but they have not thought of providing

cheaper electricity in any of these.

"Everywhere they say electricity should not be free. They make fun of such freebies. They say freebie is anti-national. They even go on to review it at the level of Central government to come out and say that freebie is destroying the country," he charged.

And just a few months ahead of the assembly polls in the state, the Himachal government has announced free electricity, water and a bus fare rebate for women because the party is "extremely scared" of Kejriwal and the AAP, Sisodia claimed.

"The BJP government is making these announcements fearing its imminent defeat in election," he said. "Vote for the AAP, form an AAP government. The truth is the BJP will take back all these schemes once they return to power. They have always opposed the provision of free electricity. Across the country, they have made everything costlier," Sisodia added.

Teen crosses border for chocolate, nabbed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Agartala, April 15: A Bangladeshi teen has been arrested and put behind bars for illegally crossing into India to buy chocolate, BSF said Friday.

Eman Hossain, a resident of a Bangladeshi village close to Shalda River, which marks the international border between the two countries, regularly swam across the water body to buy his favourite Indian chocolate in Tripura's Sipahijala district.

He used to sneak through a hole in the barbed wire fencing to buy chocolate from a shop in Kalamchoura village in India, and return home the same way. However, his adventurism came to an end April 13 when BSF nabbed Hossain while he was undertaking one such journey. The boy was handed over to local police, which produced him before the court. He was remanded to 15 days' judicial custody, Sonamura SDPO Banoj Biplab Das said.

CRPF to give choice posting to personnel showing exemplary courage

CRPF officials said that the choice posting will be given for a full term irrespective of whether the personnel were posted in particular operational areas recently and they will not have to wait to complete their posting tenure

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 15: With the aim of motivating its personnel, the

Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) is mulling to give choice postings to personnel showing exemplary courage during operations against terrorists and ultras in the Left Wing Extremism areas, apart from the cash rewards and Director General's commendation, officials said.

CRPF officials said that the choice posting will be given for a full term irrespective of whether the personnel were posted in particular operational areas recently and they will not have to wait to complete their posting tenure. This will be an additional incentive, apart from cash rewards or DG's commendation or even out-of-turn



promotion, the officials added. This incentive will be applicable

up to the Sub-Inspector level, they added. The officials said that this

idea was mooted by higher officials and opinion is also sought from the field formations too.

In para-military forces, there is a concept of 'hard' and 'soft' postings for all personnel but due to operational engagements in many theatres, the alternate posting system is not adhered to, a senior official deployed in operational areas said on condition of anonymity.

He also said that sometimes the jawans' postings in hard areas like Jammu and Kashmir, and LW regions get stretched beyond their tenure due to operational compulsions.

In such hard postings, the jawans

do not have the facility to keep their families with them and have to stay in a very inhospitable environment - thus, they want to get relieved as soon as possible.

CRPF sources also admitted that due to these reasons, many security personnel have opted for voluntary retirement.

The officials also said that the 100 days leave in a year for jawans, as announced by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, will be announced soon as the framework of this comprehensive policy is being worked out.

This will also reduce the stress of the security personnel to some extent.

# international

## of the day quote

There has been a sharp increase in displacement since January due to armed conflicts and a rise in inter-communal violence in the northern and central parts of Mali

STEPHANE DUJARRIC | SPOKESMAN FOR ANTONIO GUTERRES

Five months after their detention by the Houthis authorities, two UN staff remain in custody. Despite past promises to release them, they have not been set free

MARTIN GRIFFITHS | UN UNDERSECRETARY-GENERAL FOR HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS

I can confirm that Imran Khan took gifts from Toshakhana and sold them in Dubai for Rs 140 million (\$7.6 lakh). Valuable gifts include diamond jewellery, bracelets, watches and sets

SHEHBAZ SHARIF | PAKISTAN PM

## SHORT TAKES

### Easter holiday bus crash takes 35 lives

Mutare: A bus carrying worshippers travelling to an Easter pilgrimage in mountainous eastern Zimbabwe plunged into a gorge, killing 35 people in the early hours of Friday. The bus was overloaded with 106 passengers and veered off the winding road near Chimanimani and hurtled into a deep ravine, police said. The crash happened near the Chipinge district of Zimbabwe's eastern Manicaland province, state broadcaster ZBC reported. The bus was carrying members of the Zion Christian Church.

### Lebanon ready to work with Cyprus

Nicosia: Lebanon is ready to work with Cyprus to exploit potential gas deposits in waters between the two east Mediterranean countries, Lebanon's top diplomat said Friday, even though a deal on offshore rights hasn't been formally finalized. Cyprus and Lebanon signed an agreement delineating their respective offshore exclusive economic zones in 2007, but the Lebanese parliament has yet to ratify it amid the country's ongoing maritime border dispute with Israel.

### Bilquis Bano Edhi dies at 74

Karachi: Bilquis Bano Edhi, the wife of Pakistan's renowned and revered humanitarian and philanthropist late Abdul Sattar Edhi, passed away at a private hospital here Friday, according to a family member. She was 74. Bilquis worked shoulder to shoulder with her husband in establishing the Abdul Sattar Edhi Foundation, a welfare organisation that gained worldwide fame for its humanitarian work in many areas. After the death of her husband in July 2016, Bilquis carried on the enormous work of the foundation with her son Faisal Edhi, who confirmed her passing away to the media.

### NK marks key anniversary

Seoul: North Korea Friday celebrated the milestone birth anniversary of its late founder with a mass dance, fireworks and calls for stronger loyalty to his grandson and current leader Kim Jong Un, but there was no word on an expected military parade amid heightened tensions over its nuclear program. The 110th birthday of Kim Il Sung comes after North Korea conducted a spate of weapons tests in recent months, including its first full-range intercontinental ballistic missile launch since 2017.



The US has said that it was looking forward to working with Pakistan's new government led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, as it again refuted ousted premier Imran Khan's allegations of America's role in toppling his government

NED PRICE | SPOKESPERSON FOR THE US DEPARTMENT OF STATE

## HARD TIMES

China Friday reported more than 3,400 positive & 20,700 asymptomatic coronavirus cases, majority of them in Shanghai city which is reeling under prolonged lockdown, and where hospitals have been ordered not to delay treatment of non-Covid patients



# If harmed, India will not spare anyone: Rajnath

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, April 15: In a strong message to China, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has said that if harmed, India will not spare anyone, as he asserted that India under Prime Minister Narendra Modi has emerged as a powerful country and is headed to be among the top three economies of the world.

Singh, in his address to the Indian-American community in San Francisco, also sent a subtle message to the US that New Delhi does not believe in a diplomacy of "zero-sum game" and its relationship with one country cannot be at the expense of the other.

The defence minister was here to attend the India US 2+2 ministerial in Washington DC. Thereafter, he travelled to Hawaii for meetings at IndoPACOM headquarters and then to San Francisco.

At a reception hosted in his honour by the Indian Consulate in San Francisco, the Defence Minister told the select gathering about the valour shown by Indian soldiers on the border with China.

The Ladakh border standoff between the Indian and Chinese militaries erupted May 5, 2020, following a violent clash in the Pangong lake areas. The face-off escalated after the Galwan Valley clashes June 15, 2020. As many as 20 Indian soldiers and an unspecified number of Chinese troops were killed in the clashes.

India and China have held 15 rounds of military talks so far to resolve the eastern Ladakh stand-off. As a result of the talks, the two sides completed the disengagement process last year in the



I cannot say openly what they (Indian soldiers) did and what decisions we (the government) took. But I can definitely say that a message has gone (to China) that India will not spare anyone, if India is harmed. (Bharat ko agar koi chhrega to Bharat khohrega nahi)

RAJNATH SINGH | DEFENCE MINISTER

of India has changed. The prestige of India has improved. In the next few years, no power in the world can stop India from becoming the world's top three economies," Singh said.

In his address to the Indian community, Singh said that in the past, if any country in the world wanted to develop and prosper, they always thought about establishing a vibrant trade with India.

In eight years, he said, the Modi government has "turned around" the country and the image of India has changed for the better.

India has taken several key steps towards indigenisation of its defence sector, he said as he briefly described some of such decisions being taken by the government.

Observing that India has a lot of faith and confidence in the country's IT sector, the defence minister said that Indian talents are playing a major role in the world's IT sector and the Modi government has taken steps towards massive digitisation.

India today, he said, is marching ahead to become an economic power and the government is not only working towards the welfare and prosperity of its people, but also helping people in other parts of the world as well.

## Harry, Meghan visit Queen for 1st time since giving up royal roles

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, April 15: Prince Harry and his wife Meghan have visited Queen Elizabeth II at Windsor Castle on their first joint visit to the UK since they gave up formal royal roles and moved to the US more than two years ago.

The couple's office says they visited the 95-year-old queen, Harry's grandmother, Thursday on their way to the Netherlands to attend the Invictus Games. Harry is a founder and patron of the international sports competition for wounded military veterans. Harry and Meghan stepped down as senior working royals and moved to North America in 2020, citing the unbearable pressure of their roles and racist attitudes of the British media.

The couple, also known as the duke and duchess of Sussex, lost their taxpayer-funded police guard when they walked away, and Harry is suing the British government for refusing to let him pay for his own police security on his visits to the UK. His lawyers say Harry wants to bring his children — Archie, who is almost 3, and 10-



month-old Lilibet — to visit his home country but that it is too risky without police protection.

Harry and Meghan are expected to attend a reception in The Hague Friday for the Invictus Games, which run from Saturday to April 22.

## Police: More than 900 civilian bodies found in Kyiv region



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kyiv, April 15: More than 900 civilian bodies have been discovered in the region surrounding the Ukrainian capital following the withdrawal of Russian forces — most of them fatally shot, police said Friday, an indication that people were "simply executed."

Andriy Nebytov, the head of Kyiv's regional police force, said the bodies were abandoned in the streets or given temporary burials. He cited police data indicating that 95% died from gunshot wounds. "Consequently, we understand that under the (Russian) occupation, people were simply executed in the streets," Nebytov said. More bodies are being found every day, under rubble and in mass graves, he added.

"The most victims were found in Bucha, where there are more than 350 corpses," he said. Meanwhile, Russia's Defense Ministry promised to ramp up missile attacks on the Ukrainian capital in response to Ukraine's alleged aggression on Russian territory, an ominous warning that followed Moscow's stinging loss of its flagship in the Black Sea. The threat of intensified attacks on Kyiv came after Russian authorities accused Ukraine of wounding seven people and dam-

aging about 100 residential buildings with airstrikes in Bryansk, a region bordering Ukraine. Authorities in another border region of Russia also reported Ukrainian shelling Thursday.

"The number and the scale of missile attacks on objects in Kyiv will be ramped up in response to the Kyiv nationalist regime committing any terrorist attacks or diversions on the Russian territory," Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov said.

Russia issued the warning while it continues to prepare for a renewed offensive in eastern Ukraine. Meanwhile, locals in the pummeled southeastern city of Mariupol reported seeing Russian troops digging up bodies.

In Kyiv, a renewed bombardment could mean a return to the steady wail of air raid sirens heard during the early days of the invasion and to fearful nights sheltering in subway stations. Tentative signs of pre-war life have resurfaced in the capital after Russian troops failed to capture the city and retreated to concentrate on eastern Ukraine, leaving behind evidence of possible war crimes.

Ukrainian officials have not confirmed striking targets in Russia, and the reports could not be independently verified.



Western lowland gorilla Fatou, the world's oldest according to the Berlin zoo, receives a rice cake with fruit on her 65th birthday at the zoo in Berlin, Germany

REUTERS

## 10 al-Qaeda inmates escape from prison

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sanaa (Yemen), April 15: Ten jailed al-Qaida militants have escaped from prison in Yemen's eastern province of Hadramawt, security officials said Friday.

The inmates staged a quarrel among themselves late Thursday



at the prison in the city of Seiyun, forcing guards to inter-

vene. But when they did, the prisoners overpowered them, seizing their Kalashnikov rifles and binding their hands before running away, prison officials said.

They asked to remain anonymous because they were not authorised to brief the media.

## Clashes erupt at Jerusalem holy site

According to cops, protestors entered the compound revered by Jews as Temple Mount and by Muslims as Noble Sanctuary, to break up a violent crowd that remained at the end of morning prayers

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jerusalem, April 15: Palestinians clashed with Israeli police at the Al-Aqsa mosque compound in Jerusalem on Friday as thousands gathered for prayers during the holy month of Ramadan. Medics said more than 150 Palestinians were wounded in the most serious violence at the site in nearly a year.

The holy site, which is sacred to Jews and Muslims, has often been the epicentre of Israeli-Palestinian unrest, and tensions were already heightened amid a recent wave of violence.

Clashes at the site last year helped spark an 11-day war with Hamas militants in the Gaza Strip. The clashes come at a particularly sensitive time. Ramadan this year coincides with Passover, a major



weeklong Jewish holiday beginning Friday at sundown, and Christian holy week, which culminates on Easter Sunday. The holidays are expected to bring tens of thousands of faithful into Jerusalem's Old City, home to major sites sacred to all three religions.

Hours after the clashes began, the police said they had put an end to the violence and arrested "hundreds" of suspects. The mosque was re-opened, and some 60,000 people attended the main Friday prayers midday, according to the Islamic endowment that administers the site.

After prayers, thousands of Palestinians marched around the esplanade, chanting "with our souls, with our blood, we sacrifice for you, Al-Aqsa," in addition to slogans in support of Hamas, the

Islamic militant group that rules Gaza. Some carried Palestinian and Hamas flags.

Israeli authorities said that before the violence broke out they had held negotiations with Muslim leaders to ensure calm. But the police say Palestinians stockpiled rocks and other objects inside the compound and hurled stones at the Mughrabi Gate, which leads to the Western Wall — a major Jewish holy site — triggering the violence.

Palestinian witnesses, who spoke on condition of anonymity out of security concerns, said a small group of Palestinians threw rocks at police, who then entered the compound in force, setting off a wider conflagration. Palestinians view any large deployment of police at Al-Aqsa as a provocation.

# Crisis-hit SL now has a cooking gas supply problem

Sri Lanka is currently experiencing its worst economic crisis in history. With long lines for fuel, cooking gas, essentials in short supply and long hours of power cuts, the public has been suffering for months

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Colombo, April 15: Sri Lanka has started a process to import cooking gas through a credit line arrangement with India, the chair of the country's state-run gas company Litro Gas said on Friday as he resigned from his post alleging that a gas mafia was engaged in cor-

ruption amidst the country's worst economic crisis.

Theshara Jayasinghe, the Chairman and CEO of Litro Gas, the country's largest importer and supplier of cooking gas, said in his resignation letter to President Gotabaya Rajapaksa: "I had initiated a process through the Indian High Commission to obtain an Indian credit line to import gas. This could be easily implemented".

Jayasinghe said he was resigning as he did not receive the fullest cooperation from the government and had come under pressure from what he called a gas mafia operating against him.

"There is massive corruption in the gas business," Jayasinghe said.

Cooking gas shortage is just one of the scarcities that the public had to face in the island nation's worst economic crisis since inde-



pendence. People are forced to spend time in long queues for fuel

while most essentials, including medicine, are in short supply

## Sri Lanka starts fuel rationing

Colombo: Sri Lanka's state-owned petroleum corporation announced fuel rationing for vehicles with effect from Friday, as an unprecedented economic crisis rolls the country. According to the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC) statement, now motorcycles and other two-wheelers can purchase fuel up to worth Rs 1,000 per visit to a fuel station. Similarly, three-wheelers can purchase fuel worth Rs 1,500, cars, jeeps and vans up to Rs 5,000. Buses, lorries and commercial vehicles have been exempted from the rationing. Long queues at fuel stations have resulted in massive public anger. Further, households are experiencing nearly 12-hour-long powercuts and there is a massive shortage of essentials, due to falling value of the Sri Lankan rupee.

Massive anti-government protests are being held throughout the country with a major demonstration happening outside the Rajapaksa secretariat in central Colombo.

The protest, which entered its seventh day Friday, was bolstered by the appearance of celebrities. A policeman who joined pro-

testers while still in uniform on Thursday was released on bail Friday. The sergeant blessed the protesters while on duty and said the corrupt system and those responsible for it must quit.

The protesters expressed anger over the latest decision to ration fuel at retail stations.

## of the day quote

SEPC expects exports to reach \$5 billion by 2027 from the current \$1.9 billion. SEPC will be organising a series of activities and outreach programmes on ECTA followed by sector-specific business delegations to Australia

India imports 2-2.25 lakh tonne of sunflower oil from Ukraine on an annual basis. As the supply decreases, the demand for sunflower oil will shift to other oils, especially soya oil and palm oil

This year we expect to clock revenue of ₹50 crore and gross merchandise value of ₹130 crore. Lots of MSME and large offices have started adopting vending machines

## SHORT TAKES

### Alliance Air to fly under govt control

**New Delhi:** Regional airline Alliance Air has become an independent business unit under the Central government's control. Alliance Air was an erstwhile part of Air India prior to the latter's divestment. At present, it is operated as a division under the Air India Asset Holdings Pvt Ltd (AIHL). The airline mainly operates on domestic regional routes as part of the government's Regional Connectivity Scheme. Currently, it has 19 aircraft -- 18 ATR-72s and 1 Dornier-228 -- which it operates on over 100 regional routes connecting Tier-II and Tier-III cities.

### Forex reserves fall for 5th week

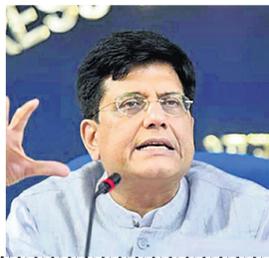
**New Delhi:** India's foreign exchange reserves continued its fall for the fifth straight week as the Reserve Bank of India appears to be selling dollars from its coffers to prevent sharp depreciation of the rupee amid a surge in global crude prices. The reserves fell by \$2.471 billion in the week to April 8 to \$604,004 billion, RBI data showed. In the last five weeks, reserves fell by a massive \$28.5 billion. The foreign currency assets fell \$10.7 billion in the reporting week to \$539.727 billion.

### Coal supply to power plants rises

**New Delhi:** Coal supply to electricity generating plants increased by 24.5 per cent to 677.67 million tonne in FY22 compared to that of the preceding fiscal, the government data said Friday. Despite increased supplies, there were reports of fuel shortage at various thermal power units due to soaring energy demand. The data, however, showed that the supply of coal to power utilities stood at 544.07 MT in FY21, which was less than 567.25 MT recorded in FY20.

### HDFC moves NCLT against SITI

**New Delhi:** Housing Development Finance Corporation Ltd (HDFC) has moved insolvency tribunal NCLT against the country's leading multi-system operator SITI Networks Ltd for an alleged default of ₹296 crore. SITI Networks has received a notice issued by the Mumbai bench of the National Company Law Tribunal over the petition filed by HDFCL, the Essel group firm said.



Every country does protect its core industry and I feel our core industry is the pharma industry. It's extremely important that we focus not only on our strengths in the generic sector but also ensure our backward and forward linkages

PIYUSH GOYAL | UNION COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER

### MSI DRIVES IN NEW ERTIGA

Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) Friday said it has launched a new version of its multi-purpose vehicle Ertiga priced between ₹8.35-12.79 lakh (ex-showroom). The model comes with a 1.5 litre petrol engine paired with both manual and automatic transmissions



# Twitter mulls 'poison pill' to thwart Musk

The "poison pill" strategy is used by a firm to prevent or discourage a potential hostile takeover. It allows existing shareholders the right to purchase additional shares at a discount, effectively diluting the ownership interest of a new and hostile party

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**San Francisco, April 15:** Treating Elon Musk's \$43 billion offer to buy Twitter as an "unwelcome" step, the board of the company is reportedly considering a "poison pill" strategy to make it more difficult for Musk to acquire a larger stake in the micro-blogging platform and avoid a hostile takeover.

According to The Information, Twitter's board of directors view Musk's hostile takeover offer as "unwelcome", and are ready to "fight the bid".

"One person close to the situation said that the board wanted to support CEO Parag Agrawal, who only assumed the role in November. Meanwhile, Musk hasn't provided details of his plans for Twitter or his financing for the deal," the report mentioned.

Asset management firm Vanguard Group disclosed last week that its funds now own a 10.3 per cent stake in Twitter which makes it the largest shareholder.

Twitter has had some "poison pill" provisions in its bylaws, including the board's ability to issue "blank check" preferred stock without prior approval, reports The Verge.

Musk said during a Ted Talk session late Thursday that he has a 'Plan B' ready if he fails to acquire 100 per cent of Twitter, without divulging any further details. "I am not sure that I will actually be able to acquire it," the billionaire added.

In his offer letter to Twitter's board, the Tesla CEO had said that he would "need to reconsider (his) position as a shareholder" if



MUSK SAID THAT HE HAS A 'PLAN B' READY IF HE FAILS TO ACQUIRE 100% OF TWITTER

### I REJECT OFFER: SAUDI PRINCE, INVESTOR

Billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk's bid to buy Twitter has set him against a major shareholder of the tech firm, a Saudi Prince. Musk saw some investors, including Saudi Prince Alwaleed bin Talal, speaking against his \$43 billion all-cash offer to Twitter chairman Bret Taylor, days after the Tesla chief denied a seat on the board of the microblogging site. "I don't believe that the proposed offer by @elonmusk (\$54.20) comes close to the intrinsic value of @Twitter given its growth prospects," Talal tweeted. In his valuation, Musk had offered \$54.20 per share of Twitter, saying the social media company has "extraordinary potential" and that he will "unlock it". "Being one of the largest & long-term shareholders of Twitter, @Kingdom\_KHC & I reject this offer," Talal said, tagging a post that claimed the Kingdom and he own a 5.2 per cent stake in Twitter. In a response to the Saudi Prince's tweet, Musk asked two questions. "Interesting. Just two questions, if I may. How much of Twitter does the Kingdom own, directly & indirectly? What are the Kingdom's views on journalistic freedom of speech?" he asked in a tweet.



the company refuses his offer.

Musk has also started a new poll with his nearly 82 million followers on Twitter, with the subject line "Taking Twitter private at

\$54.20 should be up to shareholders, not the board".

"Will endeavour to keep as many shareholders in privatised Twitter as allowed by law," he posted.

## Future Enterprises defaults on NCDs interest payment

This is the second default by the Kishore Biyani-led Future group firm this week

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 15:** Debt-ridden Future Enterprises Ltd (FEL) has defaulted on the payment of interest of ₹1.22 crore due on non-convertible debentures, according to a regulatory filing.

The due date for payment of ₹1.22 crore interest was April 13, 2022, FEL said in the regulatory filing. "The company is unable to service its obligations in respect of the interest on Non-Convertible Debentures was due on April 13, 2022," it said.

On April 12, FEL had informed about the default on the payment of ₹9.10 crore interest due on NCDs. The latest default is on the interest of securities issued for a sum of ₹25 crore.

FEL has defaulted on interest payment for the period between October 13, 2021, to April 12, 2022, according to the regulatory filing from the Future group firm. The debentures are secured and have a coupon rate of ₹9.80 per cent annum.

Earlier this month, FEL had informed about the default of ₹2,835.65 crore to a consortium of banks.



Its due date was March 31, 2022. FEL has defaulted on several payments in the last two months. In March, it had defaulted on payment of ₹19.16 crore and ₹93.99 crore to banks.

FEL is part of the ₹24,713 crore deal announced by Future Group in August 2020, under which it is to sell 19 companies operating in retail, wholesale, logistics and warehousing segments to Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd (RRVL).

All 19 companies would be consolidated into one entity - FEL - and then transferred to Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd.

Future Group companies will be conducting meetings with their respective shareholders and creditors between April 20 to April 23, 2022, to seek their approval for the ₹24,713 crore deal.

### Rapido raises \$180mn led by Swiggy, TVS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 15:** Bike taxi platform Rapido Friday said it has raised \$180 million (over ₹1,370 crore) in a Series D round of funding led by new investor Swiggy.

The round also saw investment from TVS Motor Company, along with existing investors Westbridge, Shell Ventures and Nexus Ventures, the company said in a statement.

The funds would be used to bolster technology, amplify and strengthen teams across diverse sets of capabilities, and increase overall supply to create an enhanced consumer experience in metros, tier I, II and III cities, it added.

Rapido said it will be investing these funds in all its three categories - bike-taxi, auto and delivery - to enhance its drive partners' earnings and improve customer experience in over 100 cities that it operates in.

"Swiggy's participation in this round will build on the synergies between the two companies," the company said. Commenting on the fundraise, Rapido co-founder Aravind Sanka said, "We look forward to learning from Swiggy's experience to scale up throughout the country and enhance our captains' (driver-partners) / customers' experience, who are the backbone of our business."

### Not held hostage by Musk offer: CEO

**Washington:** Twitter Chief Executive Officer Parag Agrawal sought to reassure employees during an all-hands meeting Thursday that the company was not being "held hostage" by news of Elon Musk's offer to buy the company, a source familiar with the matter told Reuters.

As Agrawal took questions from staff that were posted on the company's Slack messaging service, he encouraged employees to remain focused and told them "we as employees control what happens," said the source, who did not want to be identified because they were not authorized to speak publicly on the matter.

Agrawal told staff that the board was continuing to review Musk's offer, but that he was limited in what he could share with the employees. In one section of the question and answer session, one employee asked how the company



arrived to the decision to offer Musk a board seat.

"Are we just going to start inviting any and all billionaires to the board?" according to a section of the meeting heard by Reuters.

Agrawal responded that the board was acting in the best interest of shareholders.

"I have a strong point of view that people who are critical of our service, their voice is something that we must emphasize so that we can learn and get better," he said.

### Musk no longer largest stakeholder

Tesla chief Elon Musk, who became Twitter's largest stakeholder after picking up a 9.2 per cent stake in the microblogging site, is no longer its majority shareholder. This is because the American investment advisor, Vanguard group has taken a 10.3 per cent holding in Twitter, making it the largest stakeholder in the social media major. As per the most recent filings with the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Vanguard now owns 82.4 million shares of Twitter or 10.3 per cent of the company. Basis the Twitter stock's closing price Wednesday, April 13, Vanguard's holdings are now worth \$3.78 billion. The Wall Street Journal reported. "Vanguard isn't making a directional bet on Twitter... Instead, the majority of its assets are in index and other so-called passive funds. The firm often sides with management on voting issues and doesn't advocate for changes like a hedge fund or activist investor might," the publication said. Vanguard owned approx. 70.4 million Twitter shares as of last December, constituting 8.8 per cent of all outstanding shares.

## IMPACT OF RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

# Egypt okays India as wheat supplier

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, April 15:** Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal Friday said Egypt, which is one of the largest importers of wheat from Ukraine and Russia, has approved India as a wheat supplier.

There is a sharp decline in availability of wheat in the global markets due to the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Both the nations are major producers and exporters of wheat.

Egypt imported wheat worth about \$1.8 billion from Russia and \$610.8 million from Ukraine in 2020. The African nation is looking to import 1 million tonne of wheat from India and would need 2,40,000 tonne in April.

India's wheat exports increased to \$1.74 billion in April-January 2021-22 as against \$340.17 million in the same period last year. In 2019-20, wheat exports were \$61.84 million, which rose to \$549.67 million in 2020-21.

India's wheat exports are mainly to neighbouring countries with Bangladesh having the largest share of more than 54 per cent in both volume and value terms in 2020-21. It has entered new wheat markets such as Yemen, Afghanistan, Qatar and Indonesia.



Indian farmers are feeding the world. Egypt approves India as a wheat supplier. Modi Govt. Steps in as the world looks for reliable alternate sources for steady food supply. Our farmers have ensured our granaries overflow and we are ready to serve the world

PIYUSH GOYAL | COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER

The top ten countries importing Indian wheat in 2020-21 were Bangladesh, Nepal, the United Arab Emirates, Sri Lanka, Yemen, Afghanistan, Qatar, Indonesia, Oman and Malaysia.

India accounts for less than 1 per cent in the world's wheat export. However, its share has increased from 0.14 per cent in 2016 to 0.54 per cent in 2020. India is the second largest producer of wheat with a

### AI's CEO reshuffles top management

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 15:** Air India Chairman N Chandrasekaran Friday effected a major reshuffle in the top management of recently-acquired airline, with Nipun Aggarwal appointed as Chief Commercial Officer and Suresh Dutt Tripathi as Chief Human Resources Officer.

Aggarwal, who is also Senior Vice President at Tata Sons, replaces Air India veteran Meenakshi Malik, while Tripathi, who was Vice President of Human Resources at Tata Steel from 2012 to 2021, succeeds AI's Amrita Sharan.

The order was issued by Chandrasekaran, who is also the chairman of Tata Sons. Malik and Sharan were Friday appointed as Advisors to the CEO of Air India, according to a company communication. As the Tata Group is yet to appoint the CEO of Air India, Malik and Sharan will currently be advisors to Chandrasekaran, it mentioned.

Satya Ramaswamy, who has worked at Tata Consultancy Services before, was on Friday appointed as Chief Digital and Technology Officer at Air India, the order stated.

Rajesh Dogra was appointed as the Head of Customer Experience and Ground Handling at Air India, it mentioned. Air India veteran R S Sandhu will continue to hold the charge of Chief of Operations at Air India, it noted.

Another Air India veteran Vinod Hejmadi will continue to hold the charge as Chief Financial Officer, it mentioned.

"The new appointees will exercise the powers of functional/departmental heads as per the delegation of authority. We wish them all the very best in their new role," Chandrasekaran stated in the order.

### Wheat exports rose by 54.50% in 2021-22

Country's wheat exports reached an all-time high of ₹15,428 crore in value terms in 2021-22 according to official data released by Agriculture Ministry. This value is almost four times higher than that of previous year. In total, wheat exports in 2021-22 went up by 54.50 per cent. In fact, in the current financial year (2022-23), wheat export is estimated to increase to more than 100 lakh tonne from 70 lakh tonne of export recorded in 2021-22, official sources said.

Meanwhile, the total agriculture and allied sector reported a growth of 24.5 per cent in 2021-22. In 2021-22, there has been a significant increase in export of several essential commodities over the corresponding fiscal of 2020-21, official sources said. While wheat exports went up by 54.50 per cent, rice exports rose by 9.24 per cent, coffee by 41.15 per cent, fruits and vegetables (9.91 per cent) and processed food items exports rose by 22 per cent in 2021-22 over the previous fiscal.

share of around 14.14 per cent in the world's total production in 2020.

# Fund raising via debt placement hits 6-yr low in FY22

Unless the high government borrowings and adverse interest rate cycle play spoilsport, the ongoing financial year is expected to be robust in terms of fund raising activities through the debt route on account of higher demand for credit from corporates in light of the improving economic outlook, experts said

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 15:** Fund raising by listed companies through private placement of corporate bonds plunged to a six-year low in 2021-22 to ₹5.88 lakh crore owing to good performance of the equities and aggressive fund disbursement by banks at lower interest rate.

This was 24 per cent lower from a record ₹7.72 lakh crore mobilised in 2020-21, data with Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) showed.

"During FY23, there should be some increase in raising of debt through bonds as corporate India presses the pedal on the next major phase of the capex cycle. Also, with a potentially rising interest rate scenario, these bond issuances should evince good interest from

risk seeking investors," Ricky Kirpalani, Lead Sponsor, First Water Capital Fund (AIF) said.

Vibhor Mittal, Chief Business Officer, CredAvenue, believes issuance volumes in the private debt market are improving on account of higher demand for credit from issuers in light of the improving economic outlook.

However, dampeners to the cause could be high government borrowings that may crowd out private placements and adverse interest rate cycles. In FY22, fund raising through the private placement of corporate bonds was subdued at ₹5.88 lakh crore.

This was the lowest level since 2015-16, when listed companies had raised ₹4.58 lakh crore, the data showed.

In terms of issuance, 1,405 is-



issues were witnessed in the just concluded fiscal year as compared

to 1,995 issues in 2020-21. The debt markets are mostly tapped by the

Banks and NBFCs have been aggressive in disbursing funds through the loan route at lower rates due to abundant systemic liquidity; this has made it difficult for capital market investors to compete with the loan market on yield offering

VIBHOR MITTAL | CHIEF BUSINESS OFFICER, CREDAVENUE

financial sector companies who use funds for onward lending (as the economic cycle gathers pace) and boost capital buffers.

The non-financial bunch deploys the funds mainly for general corporate expenses, capital expendi-

ture and for inorganic growth opportunities apart from refinancing existing debt.

The lower fund raising through private placement route in FY22 compared to the preceding fiscal could be attributed to good performance of the equities in the stock market last year, Kamlesh Shah - MD Share India Securities, said.

Explaining the reasons for high-est-ever fund-raise through the route in 2020-21, Shah said low interest rates and measures by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), boosting liquidity, helped the cause despite the pandemic.

Apart from the capital raised via private placement of corporate debt, a total of ₹11,589 crore came from public issuance of corporate debt in the past fiscal year.

# RCB look to get back momentum

# MUMBAI TAKE ON POWERFUL LSG

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

## TODAY'S MATCHES

Time: 03:30 pm		
Time: 07:30 pm		
TELECAST Star Sports channels & Hotstar		

However, David might be given a go in place of a Jaydev Unadkat, who has once again come short in the highest level of cricket and is an example of the yawning gap between standards in domestic cricket and IPL. One among Unadkat and Basil Thampi need to make way for David as they don't have too many options at the table.

In case of Murugan Ashwin, the only plausible replacement at this time looks to be leg-spinner Mayank Markande, who not so many moons back had some decent performances for the five-time champion outfit.

For Lucknow, mentor and brains behind the strategy Gautam Gambhir needs to think whether both Marcus Stoinis and Jason Holder could be a part of same eleven or they would be better off dropping one of them and playing the hard-hitting Evin Lewis in the top-order alongside Rahul and De Kock.

the likes of Quinton de Kock, KL Rahul, Krunal Pandya, Ayush Badoni to name a few.

Krunal and De Kock, in particular, would like to pose some serious challenges for the MI brigade and may be compel them to think whether not putting enough efforts to get them back in their roster was a prudent enough thing to do.

Such has been MI's plight that they haven't been able to field their full quota of foreign players in order to have enough bowlers in their ranks.

**Mumbai, April 15:** An auction botched up by poor planning, Mumbai Indians will continue to grope in the dark in search of an ideal playing eleven with an aim to end their five-match losing streak against Lucknow Super Giants in an IPL match Saturday.

This is not the first time that MI have had a losing streak of five matches but this is probably the first time that it seems that the team's think-tank do not have an idea of how to stem the rot that has set in.

It is certainly not skipper Rohit Sharma's fault that the five-time champions had bungled big time at the auction table with below-par domestic signings save N Tilak Varma, which is coming to bite them.

Against Lucknow in the afternoon Mumbai heat, Rohit and his chosen ten would have to put their best foot forward in order to tame

blown hot and cold with two 40 plus scores but lacked consistency.

The Capitals, on the other hand, are heading into the match after a massive 44-run win over Kolkata Knight Riders. With two back-to-back fifties, opener Prithvi Shaw has been in sensational form, while seasoned Australian opener David Warner has provided the team solidity at the top as he provided the fireworks to set DC's massive win over KKR.

The number three spot, however, remains a concern with none of the batter tried by the team able to grab the chance. Skipper Rishabh Pant too will expect more runs from his batting.

Spinner Kuldeep Yadav has emerged as their top bowler with 10 wickets so far, while pacer Khaleel Ahmed too has taken seven scalps in three games. Delhi also have plenty of bowling all-rounders such as Axar Patel, Shardul Thakur and Lalit Yadav to count on.



missed his services after he left the bio-bubble Sunday following the death of his cousin.

The 31-year-old from Gujarat, who had taken 32 wickets in the 2021 edition, has emerged as one of the best T20 bowlers with his variations, which include off-cutters and slower ones, bowled with variable arm speed.

Among others, pace duo of Mohammad Siraj and Akash Deep has been taken for runs, while Wanindu Hasaranga claimed two

wickets but he bled 35 in three overs in the last match. Spin duo of Glenn Maxwell and Shahbaz too was blown away and skipper Du Plessis will expect a better show from his bowlers on Saturday.

In batting, Du Plessis and young left-hander Anuj Rawat have given the team good starts, while Dinesh Karthik has played the role of the finisher well. Engineer-turned cricketer Shahbaz Ahmed too has impressed with his batting so far. Former skipper Virat Kohli has

# India end home campaign on high

# TRIPATHI, MARKRAM LIFT SRH

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, April 15:** Rahul Tripathi (71, 37b, 4x4, 6x6) and Aiden Markram's (68 n o, 36b, 6x4, 4x6) effortless batting display along with the pacers magnificent show formed the cornerstone of Sunrisers Hyderabad's comfortable seven-wicket victory over Kolkata Knight Riders in their IPL match here Friday.

The SRH pace unit comprising the likes of T Natarajan (3/37), Umran Malik (2/27), Marco Jansen (1/26) and Bhuvneshwar Kumar (1/37) restricted KKR to 175/8. Tripathi and Markram then produced hostile knocks to take SRH to their third successive win with 13 balls to spare.

For KKR, Nitish Rana scored 54 (36b, 6x4, 2x6) while Andre Russell was unbeaten on 49 (25b, 4x4, 4x6). SRH now have three wins from five games while it was KKR's third loss in six games.

With the green track not aiding the spinners, Sunrisers' Tripathi took the KKR's spin-heavy bowling unit to the cleaners.

Playing against his previous franchise, Tripathi smashed Varun Chakravarty for a four followed by two back-to-back sixes in the eighth over; that yielded 18 runs. He brought his maiden fifty this season off just 21 balls.

Tripathy found an able ally in Markram, who smashed six fours and four sixes and when the former was out he took the onus upon himself to take his side over the line.

Earlier opting to field, South African Jansen used the bounce and swing on offer really well to draw first blood as he sent Aaron Finch (7), who is playing his first match of the season, back to the hut in the second over. Natarajan then bowled a sensational fifth over, snaring two wickets.

Natarajan first bowled a brilliant length ball, pitching just outside off to account for Venkatesh Iyer (6), who looked unsettled during his stay, with the flamboyant Sunil Narine (6) following his teammate a couple balls later as KKR slumped to 31/3.



AIDEN MARKRAM



RAHUL TRIPATHI

Kane Williamson introduced spin but left-armed Jagadeesha Suchith (1/32) looked rusty and struggled with his line. Young Malik then struck twin blows, snatching the wickets of Shreyas Iyer (28) in the 10th over and Sheldon Jackson (7).

Noticing Iyer, who looked uncomfortable facing Malik's raw pace, shuffling across the pitch,

the 22-year-old fired a scorching 148.8kmph yorker in the blockhole to cut short the Knight Riders captain's innings.

However, Rana kept the score board ticking, hitting singles and boundaries alike in his 36-ball knock. Rana was involved in 39-run stands with skipper Iyer and Russell each. However, his stay in the middle was cut short by

Natarajan in the 18th over as SRH broke the potentially dangerous partnership. Russell helped KKR add 55 runs in the last five overs.

**BRIEF SCORES:** Kolkata Knight Riders 175/8 (Nitish Rana 54, Andre Russell 49 n o; T Natarajan 3/37, Umran Malik 2/27) lost to Sunrisers Hyderabad 176/3 (Rahul Tripathi 71, Aiden Markram 68 n o; Andre Russell 2/20) by 7 wickets.



Indian players celebrate a goal, while German players look dejected during their match, at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar, Friday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, April 15:** The Indian men's hockey team defeated an inexperienced Germany 3-1 in the second match of the double-leg tie to consolidate their lead at the top of the FIH Pro League standings here Friday. The two wins mark the end of India's home campaign in this edition of the competition.

The Indians scored through Sukhjeet Singh (19th minute), Varun Kumar (41st) and Abhishek (54th), while Germany's lone goal was scored by Anton Boeckel (45th). The Indians had defeated Germany 3-0 in the first match of the tie Thursday.

India are now sitting pretty at the top with 27 points from 12 games, while Germany are placed second with 17 points from 10 matches.

Against a new-look Germany, whose half a dozen players of the 22-member squad made their debut in these two games, the Indians continued their domination. The Indians made some fine runs into the opposition circle in the first quarter but failed to convert any of the chances.

Four minutes into the second quarter, Sukhjeet handed India the lead with a clever field goal. Sukhjeet found himself at the right position inside the circle to score only his second interna-



An Indian fan holds the Tricolour showing support to the hosts while enjoying the match

PICS: BIKASH NAYAK

tional goal after being beautifully set up by Manpreet Singh and Nilkanta Sharma. The goal ignited sparks into India's game as they started to move around the turf freely and their passing too looked impressive.

The Germans put the opposition defence a bit under pressure on the final few minutes of the second quarter and managed a shot but Krishan Bahadur Pathak was alerted under the Indian post.

India enjoyed the lion's share of possession in the first half with three shots on goal against none. Three minutes after the change of ends, India finally secured their first penalty corner but Germany goalkeeper Jean Danneberg made a great reflex save to deny Harmanpreet Singh.

In the 41st minute, Shilanand Lakra earned another penalty corner for India and this time Varun Kumar perfectly placed the ball low into the bottom left corner to double the home team's lead.

Germany, however, pulled one back four minutes later through Anton Boeckel, who pushed into an empty goal after India custodian PR Sreejesh committed early.

Abhishek made it 3-1 in the 54th minute with a vicious shot from the left side of the circle after receiving a long pass from Harmanpreet.

The Germans gave their heart and soul in the final few minutes of the game and in the process secured a penalty corner but Pathak palmed away the ball to deny the visitors any inroads.

# Odisha Police begin IWL journey against Gokulam

# Barca stunned at home by Frankfurt



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, April 15:** Debutants Odisha Police, a team which is keen to make its presence felt, will begin their Indian Women's League (IWL) campaign against defending champions Gokulam Kerala here, Saturday.

Gokulam became the first-ever Indian women's club to play in an AFC club tournament - the AFC Women's Club Championship in 2021 and the star-studded squad is aiming for a solid start to its campaign this season.

For Odisha Police, who won the state league, it will be a novel experience, and an interesting challenge to play against the best of the country.

"Our girls are working in dif-

ferent districts, and that didn't allow us much time to prepare. But the big platform that IWL is, we are ready to give it our all.

"For the first time ever, players in the IWL are getting more matches to perform. We will be taking it step by step and work on different aspects of our game. No doubt Gokulam are one of the best teams in this tournament. But we will work as a team and try to win our first match." Odisha Police head coach Shradhanjali Samantaray said.

In other matches of the day, Ahmedabad-based ARA FC will start their IWL campaign against Odisha Sports, while former champions Sethu Madurai FC will take on debutants Mata Rukmani FC from Chhattisgarh.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Washington, April 15:** Barcelona's European campaign has gone from bad to worse in its first season post Lionel Messi. First the Spanish powerhouse was eliminated from the lucrative Champions League, and now it has been knocked out of the second-tier Europa League by Eintracht Frankfurt.

The German team stunned Barcelona 3-2 at the Camp Nou to advance to the semifinals on a 4-3 aggregate score. Barcelona were the title favorites, looking to win the one trophy not in their collection. It was playing for the first time in the Europa League and had never won their predecessor, the UEFA Cup, reaching the semifinals on four occasions but not getting to a final. Frankfurt won the UEFA Cup in 1980.

Frankfurt will next face West Ham after the Premier League club advanced to a European competition semifinals for first time since 1976 by eliminating Lyon 4-1 on aggregate. Earlier, Christopher Nkunku scored twice to help Leipzig reach their first semifinals in a European competition with a 2-0 victory at Atalanta. Kemar Roofe



TWO SIDES OF EMOTION: Barcelona players (L) look devastated following their loss at Camp Nou, while Frankfurt players celebrate, Thursday



scored in extra time for Rangers to prevail 3-1 over nine-man Braga for a 3-2 aggregate victory to face Leipzig next.

Leicester became the first team to advance to the semifinals of the inaugural Europa Conference League after coming from a goal down to beat PSV Eindhoven 2-1 in the Netherlands.

The Premier League team will next play Roma. With José Mourinho in charge, Roma is one of the favorites to win UEFA's new third-tier competition. The Italian club got its revenge with a 4-0 victory over Norway's Bodø/Glimt to make the semifinals 5-2 on aggregate. At Camp Nou, Barcelona had possession, but Frankfurt scored.

They had entered tied 1-1 after the first leg. In a dream start for the visitors, Filip Kostic put them ahead 1-0 from the penalty spot four minutes into the game, sending goalkeeper Marc-André ter Stegen the wrong way.

Rafael Borré doubled the advantage still in the first half with a drive into the roof of the net

from 25 meters (yards), giving Ter Stegen no chance. Kostic scored again in the 67th minute.

Barcelona threatened late when Sergio Busquets scored in the 91st minute. The visitors were reduced to 10 after Evan N'Dicka received the second yellow ahead of substitute Memphis Depay's penalty 11 minutes into stoppage time.