



NO SHELF LIFE

Actress Mrunal Thakur says with the arrival of streaming platforms, actresses can blossom at any stage of their career

LEISURE P2



MARIUPOL TEETERS ON BRINK

Mariupol appears on the brink of falling to Russian forces Sunday after seven weeks of siege

INTERNATIONAL P10



4TH SUCCESSIVE WIN

Sunrisers Hyderabad register their 4th win on the trot in IPL defeating Punjab Kings by 7 wickets

SPORTS P12



Chhatisgarh devotee dies in Puri

PURI: A devotee from Chhatisgarh died after fainting inside Srimandir complex here Sunday. The deceased was identified as YG Murti, 72. Sources said Murti had come to have a darshan of the sibling deities at the Srimandir along with his family members. Murti, who collapsed on his way to Bimala temple, was immediately rushed to Puri hospital where the doctors declared him brought dead. "We had come to the temple at 10am. We do not know anything much as his health was good. However, he collapsed inside the temple complex," said a family member.

UK PM to visit India April 21

LONDON: Boris Johnson will become the first British Prime Minister to visit Gujarat when he lands in Ahmedabad next week for a two-day visit to India for 'in-depth talks' with his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi, officials said. Johnson's first visit to India as UK PM will begin April 21 with a trip to Ahmedabad in Gujarat, Modi's home state. Investment announcements in key industries in both the UK and India will take place. Johnson will then proceed to New Delhi to meet Modi April 22, where the focus will be on India-UK strategic defence, diplomatic and economic partnership.



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After Delhi, violence hits K'taka

A day after incidents of communal flare-up during Hanuman Jayanti, mob targets police in Karnataka's Hubballi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Karnataka, April 17: Incidents of communal flare-up during Hanuman Jayanti processions were reported from Andhra Pradesh and Uttarakhand while a mob went on a rampage, attacking police personnel, a hospital and a temple in the old town of Hubballi in Karnataka over a social media post Sunday.

In the national capital of Delhi, at least 20 people were arrested and two juveniles apprehended, while security was stepped up following clashes between two communities Saturday when a Hanuman Jayanti procession was passing through Jahangirpuri. Eight cops and a civilian were injured in the violence.

Since April 2, several incidents of communal clashes have been reported during Hindu religious processions, including on Ram Navami April 10. Hindu and Muslim outfits have accused each other of provoking the violence



A damaged police vehicle at Hubballi in Karnataka

Prohibitory orders under Section 144 have been clamped in Hubballi city in Karnataka after the violence that left 12 police personnel injured. According to Hubballi-Dharwad Police Commissioner Labhu Ram, a police complaint had been lodged on an objectionable social media post after which a person was arrested.

Not satisfied with the action, some people gathered around the police station but were persuaded to disperse. Around midnight, a large number

of people once again started gathering around the police station and indulged in heavy stone-pelting.

In this incident, about a dozen police officers have sustained injuries, the police said, adding several police vehicles, a nearby hospital and a Hanuman temple were damaged.

Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai termed it an organised attack and said the state will not tolerate such incidents.

He also appealed to the people not

to give a different political colour to this incident as it should be looked at from the law and order point of view.

Members of two communities clashed during a Hanuman Jayanti procession at Holagunda village in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh Saturday night, police sources said Sunday.

When the procession reached a mosque in the village, the Jayanti organisers switched off the mike, in reverence to the Ramadan observation. But some devotees allegedly chanted 'Jai Shri Ram' slogans, they said. Irked by this, some people started pelting stones at the Hanuman Jayanti procession and the other side retaliated, police said. Additional police force was deployed to prevent any untoward incident.

In Uttarakhand, stones were pelted at a Hanuman Jayanti procession while it was crossing through a village in Bhagwanpur area near Roorkee in Haridwar Saturday, leaving four persons injured.



Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik pays tributes to his father and former Odisha CM Biju Patnaik, on the legendary leader's death anniversary, on the premises of Odisha Legislative Assembly in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

REMEMBERING THE ICON

GST Council may do away with 5% rate

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 17: With most states on board to raise revenue so that they do not have to depend on Centre for compensation, the GST Council at its meeting next month is likely to consider a proposal to do away with the 5 per cent slab by moving some goods of mass consumption to 3 per cent and the remaining to 8 per cent categories, sources said.

Currently, GST is a four-tier structure of 5, 12, 18 and 28 per cent. Besides, gold and gold jewellery attract 3 per cent tax. In addition, there is an exempt list of items like unbranded and unpacked food items which do not attract the levy.

Sources said in order to augment revenue the Council may decide to prune the list of exempt items by moving some of the non-food items to 3 per cent slab.

Sources said that discussions are on to raise the 5 per cent slab to either 7 or 8 or 9 per cent, a final call will be taken by the GST Council which comprises finance minis-

Four arrested for ₹124cr tax evasion

SAMBALPUR: Police Sunday claimed to have arrested four persons, including two employees of the Urban Co-operative Bank, allegedly for evading Goods and Services Tax (GST) to a tune of around Rs 124 crore here. The accused were identified as Amit Beriwal, Akshay Kumar Nayak, Prasanta Kumar Jena and Subash Chandra Swain, police said.

ters of both Centre and states.

As per calculations, every 1 per cent increase in the 5 per cent slab, which mainly includes packaged food items, would roughly yield an additional revenue of ₹50,000 crore annually. Although various options are under consideration, the Council is likely to settle for an 8 per cent GST (Goods and Services Tax) for most items that currently attract 5 per cent levy.

Man shot dead in Dhenkanal

The incident triggered a counter-attack that left the three-year-old son and wife of the prime accused seriously injured

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dhenkanal, April 17: A 56-year-old man was shot dead near his house at Kandhapal village in Gengutia panchayat under Sadar police limits here over the digging of a pond in the village Sunday, an official said.

The victim was identified as Dalei Nayak, a former ward member and father-in-law of current ward member Pankajini Nayak.

According to Dhenkanal sub-divisional police officer (SDPO) Bikash Behura, the incident took place around 7am when a contractor, Nrupati Nayak accompanied by his associates Niranjan Nayak, Narahari Nayak, Abhimanyu Nayak, Benudhar Nayak and Manas Nayak tried to dig a pond near his land with the help of an excavator.

Dalei and his family members opposed the move when Nrupati and



A three-room house of one of the accused was torched

his associates hurled abuses at them and warned them of dire consequences, the SDPO said.

Later, Nrupati and his aides armed with firearms and lathis came near Dalei's house when he was standing outside with his family members. Nrupati fired seven rounds of bullets at Dalei from a country-made gun and fled after the latter collapsed on the spot.

A profusely bleeding Dalei was soon rushed to the district headquarters hospital where doctors declared him dead on arrival, the SDPO said.

Police said the incident triggered a counter-attack that left

Nrupati's three-year-old son Nitin Nayak and wife Sarathi Nayak seriously injured. They were first admitted to the district headquarters hospital and later shifted to Cuttack. A three-room house of another accused Niranjan Nayak was also torched despite police deployment.

Keeping in view the palpable tension in the region, one platoon of police force has been deployed to maintain a law and order situation.

A case was registered in this connection and one person has been detained in connection with the incident while efforts are on to nab the rest of the accused, said an official.

PRAFULLA KAR PASSES AWAY

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 17: Noted Odia musician and Padma Shri Prafulla Kar passed away following a cardiac arrest at his Satya Nagar residence here Sunday night. He was 83.

His last rites will be performed at Swargadwar Monday, family sources said. Kar is survived by wife Manorama Kar and children Mahaprasad Kar, Sandhyadipa Kar and Mahadeep Kar.

Born February 16, 1939, Kar was an Odia musician, singer, lyricist, writer and columnist. He had received Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian award in 2015 for his contribution in the field of arts. The Jaydev awardee was also honoured with the second Sikandar Alam Memorial Award by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik in 2019.

A household name in Odisha, Kar had scored music in over 70 films and lent his voice to hun-



dreds of movie, radio and album songs. The maestro had also composed music for numerous Odissi dance dramas and ballets.

Known for his mellifluous voice, Kar has been a patron of Odisha's rich cultural traditions and recorded Odia Bhagabat and Odia Chhanda, a rare collection of traditional Odia songs. He had become a household name in Odisha with his song 'Kamala Desha Rajakumara'.

People from several walks of life thronged his residence to pay their last tributes while his demise was mourned by many eminent personalities of the state till the filing of this report.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Rumour is that we all will be suspended because a religious procession passed through our area peacefully

WEATHER	
	BHUB CTK
TEMP. MAX	38.6°C 38.1°C
MIN	24.1°C 24.0°C
Humidity	63% 68%
Rainfall	NIL NIL
	Forecast
	Light rain very likely

Experts oppose imposition of Hindi on states

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, April 17: Language experts from Odisha have raised a strong voice against Union Home Minister Amit Shah's controversial statement on imposition of Hindi language on non-Hindi speaking states.

Presiding over the 37th meeting of the Parliamentary Official Language Committee in New Delhi recently, Shah had said that Hindi should be the alternative to English for communication among Indians drawing ire of all.

This statement from a tall leader like Shah has left the people of Odisha a worried lot as they have an emotional attachment with Odia language and feel proud of it.

The roots of Odisha began from the Odia language. Odisha was declared as a separate state April 1, 1936 (pre-independent) on linguistic basis. In fact, Odisha is



the first state, which has been declared as a separate province on the basis of language.

"We strongly oppose the forceful imposition of Hindi on us. We had raised our voice in the past and we will never allow imposition of Hindi language on the Odia people," said Dillip Dashsharma, from Utkal Sammilani, which had played a major role in the formation of Odisha.

In the National Education Policy (NEP), the Union government

says that the medium of teaching at primary level will be in the mother tongue.

However, the Union Home minister is contradicting the policy, he said.

Similarly, Tathagata Satpathy, former Lok Sabha MP, has also strongly opposed the statement of Shah. Writing an editorial titled 'Hindi Again' in his English daily newspaper **Orissa POST**, Satpathy said forcible imposition of Hindi will squeeze other regional languages and probably the present political leadership hopes fluent Hindi speaking leaders will then

seem more appealing to voters all across the country. "It is up to the states to decide what their language of communication should be. There cannot be a fiat from the Centre not to use English. There is no doubt that English is a foreign language but it is equally foreign for all citizens," the former Parliamentarian said.

Stating India too is a very diverse country, he said any use of force today could possibly result in unforeseeable disasters tomorrow.

Hrushikesh Mallick, president of Odisha Sahitya Akademi, too expressed his displeasure over Shah's controversial statement. Mallick said he is not against the Hindi language. However, it should not be forcefully imposed on all, he said.

"Hindi should be an optional language while Odia, the mother tongue in Odisha, must remain as the first language for the people of our state," said Mallick.

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Explore viability of PNG, electric crematoria: NGT

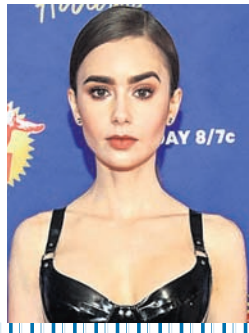
AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 17: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed all states and union territories to switch over to environment friendly methods of cremation and explore viability of electric or PNG crematorium alongside wood to curb air pollution.

A bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel said air pollution takes place in the course of cremation and electric/PNG crematoria can be set up as an option to the wood-based crematorium.

The tribunal noted that as per religious belief, the mode of cremation by fire is considered to be pious and in one cremation, 350-450kg of wood is burnt in the open.

leisure

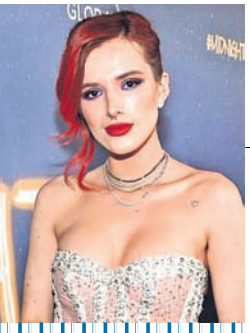


MY DOG IS MORE FAMOUS THAN ME: LILY COLLINS

Actress Lily Collins filmed the series *Emily in Paris* on the streets of the French capital, but onlookers were often more interested in her dog Redford. Taking part in a show, Lily revealed: "Sometimes when I didn't get recognised in Paris shooting the show, Redford would still get recognised."

BELLA WAS KEEN TO INVITE ALIENS TO COACHELLA PARTY

Actress Bella Thorne is reportedly keen to invite extra-terrestrial life to her Alien Invasion party in Coachella. Thorne is said to be using a software called Beacon in the Galaxy to "attempt to contact other life-forms in the universe," reports *femalefirst.co.uk*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You will share wonderful moments with your beloved today. Go ahead and learn some musical instrument, suggests Ganesh: it's a beautiful way to convey emotions. And it provides a perfect means to woo someone anew. Join a class before the mood wanes.

TAURUS
This day could be full of surprises, mostly unpleasant, fears Ganesh. Nothing is likely to turn out as planned and expected. There will be sharp and sudden twist and turns, unexpected shocks and setbacks all day long. You will, however, with the grace and blessings of the Almighty, manage to stay steady and unruffled, and move ahead.

GEMINI
Your day will be spent indulging in activities that appeal to you. You may go out shopping with your family members, or go out to dinner with friends. A leisurely, entertainment filled, fun day awaits you, says Ganesh.

CANCER
People will be stunned at the swift pace of your work. All your pending tasks and projects will fructify. But Ganesh counsels you not to do anything haphazardly or in any careless manner. Ganesh thinks you as an extraordinary orator.

LEO
Long forgotten relationships may be renewed today. Old acquaintances, room partners, hostel mates and the like may bump into you today. You will be in a happy mood as a result. Marital life will be blissful, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
You will be the flag-bearer for people around you, spreading hope and inspiration. Ganesh advises you to be the ideal family man today. By doing this you will radiate affection and love. This will, in turn, work remarkably in cultivating positive relationships.

LIBRA
Ganesh advises you not to take stress about small issues or matters. To avoid tension and to gain mental peace it is advised you perform yoga or meditation. There will be pressure put on you regarding certain matters at the work-front. You should take decisions regarding critical matters only after carefully weighing the pros and cons.

SCORPIO
According to Ganesh, your family and friends top your priority list today. Life looks hunky dory on personal as well as professional front. Apart from business developments, romantic relations are on the bloom. And this is evident from your blushing cheeks.

SAGITTARIUS
Your business is likely to scale new heights, says Ganesh. You need to build up your confidence and move ahead with zest and enthusiasm. Rake in the moolah as the business yield profits.

CAPRICORN
You will walk down the memory lane, cherish those lost moments and later on feel an urge to meet or contact old friends, says Ganesh. Expectations of your near and dear ones, however, may seem burdensome. You will still see the brighter side of everything, and spending quality time with your sweetheart will certainly re-energise your powers to deal with difficulties.

AQUARIUS
If the Almighty loads you with pain, He will also bless you with pleasure, assures Ganesh. You will begin the day with a long list of things to be done, but luckily you will be able to finish them off one by one. It will drain you out, so later on the day take a hot water bath, sit back and relax, says Ganesh.

PISCES
You are not by nature ill-tempered or jealous. However, you will need to be on guard against being both, today. Someone may try to sully your image or slander your name today. However, the best way to deal with provocation is not to lose your temper and to continue as usual, for things will take care of themselves soon enough, says Ganesh.

No more shelf life for actresses now: MRUNAL

Mumbai: Actress Mrunal Thakur, who has made a smooth transition from television to the big screen, has recalled her acting journey. There was a shelf life for actresses at one time - from 18 to 28 which is not the case now, says the *Dhamaka* actress.

"They would have work but now the ott has come and we are celebrating movies. Be it Shefali Shah or Madhuri Dixit Nene they are blossoming at this age also," she added.

Mrunal made her acting debut in 2012, with *Mujhse Kuchh Kehi... Yeh Khamoshiyaan*. She gained popularity with the television show *Kumkum Bhagya*.

The actress then made Hindi film debut with the drama film *Love Sonia*. After which, she was seen in films including *Super 30*, *Batla House* and *Dhamaka*.

"I am very lucky to be able to make that transition. A lot of TV actors don't get these chances. I did a lot of hard work. I fought (for myself) a lot. I would shamelessly go and stand for auditions and not go till my take is not taken. I was very rigid and still am," says Mrunal. The 29-year-old actress shared that she worships Hollywood veteran star Meryl Streep.

"She is somebody who is still working. That's the kind of goal I want to set," concluded the actress. IANS



Shriya on dealing with uncertainty

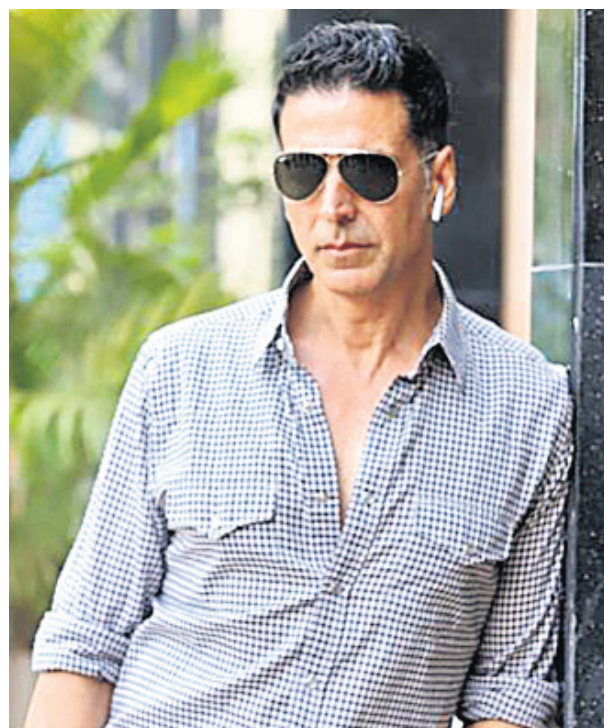
Mumbai: With two web series on release - *Guilty Minds* and *Murder In Agonda* - actress Shriya Pilgaonkar, says how her parents taught her to be focused on her craft instead of indulging in the debate of nepotism.

In a conversation, Shriya, daughter of two veteran actors Sachin Pilgaonkar and Supriya Pilgaonkar, shared that even though she is aware of the privilege she has, opting for an independent way to create her space in acting was completely her choice.

Shriya said: "I think one of the most important things my parents have taught me without teaching me anything is, the life of an artist is filled with uncertainty and only talent is not rewarded to achieve success, fame and stardom.

"It is a combination of talent, opportunity and luck. But we can remain an artist by expanding our creative horizon."

Speaking about nepotism, she added, "How you are starting your journey and how filmmakers are casting an actor is their choice, but I also believe that the more work you do, you become visible. The more visible you are, our fraternity notices you, and gives you work. If the talent and craft are not there, an opportunity cannot be justified."



Fans disappointed over Akshay's pan masala ad

Mumbai: A popular pan masala brand tried to pull off a casting coup by getting Ajay Devgn, Shah Rukh Khan and Akshay Kumar on board for promoting its product. However, Akshay's fans didn't really like the fact that Kumar is promoting the said brand and thus, the actor has drawn flak from his admirers.

They have expressed their disappointment on social media, and have pointed out the fact that earlier Akshay Kumar used to say that he would never be a part of an endorsement that includes products that are injurious to health. Akshay has always tried to promote a healthy lifestyle and now that he is endorsing a pan masala brand, the fans are just not in support.

As soon as the video was shared online, comments started flooding in. A netizen commented, "Akshay sir ne dil Tod diya (Akshay sir broke the heart)."

"Akshay kumar once said that he will not endorse guthka wine advertisements. Now he is doing it," reads another comment.

Fans have also dug out the video wherein Akshay has been seen saying that though he has been offered a handsome amount of money from 'guthka' companies, he would never promote such products.

Benedict Cumberbatch to host SNL in May

London: *The Power of The Dog* star Benedict Cumberbatch will host *Saturday Night Live*, the long-running sketch series, May 7. Cumberbatch's appearance on *SNL* will come a day after his *Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness* hits the screens.

This will be a two-time Oscar-nominated actor's second hosting gig after he made his debut back in November 2016, according to the reports.

For the episode, the British

star will collaborate with indie rock band Arcade Fire who will take the *SNL* stage as musical guest.

Cumberbatch was recently nominated for a best actor in a leading role Academy Award for his performance in Jane Campion's *The Power of The Dog*.

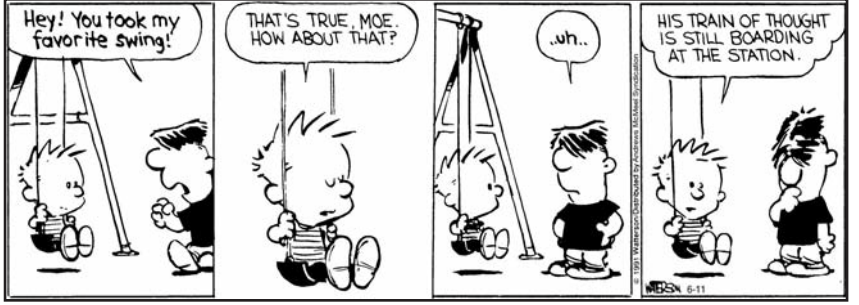
The upcoming episode of *SNL* will mark Arcade Fire's fifth appearance as musical guest, following stints in 2007, 2010, 2013 and 2018.



PEANUTS



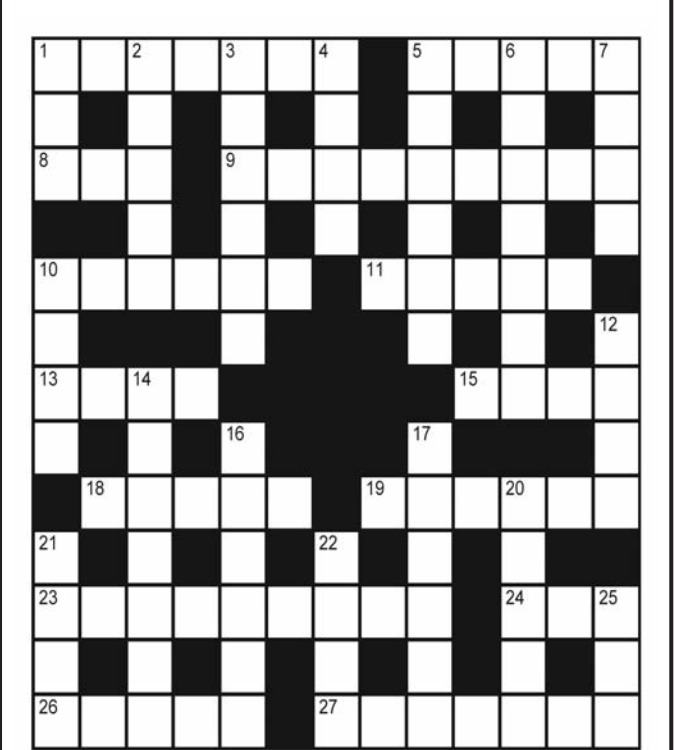
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



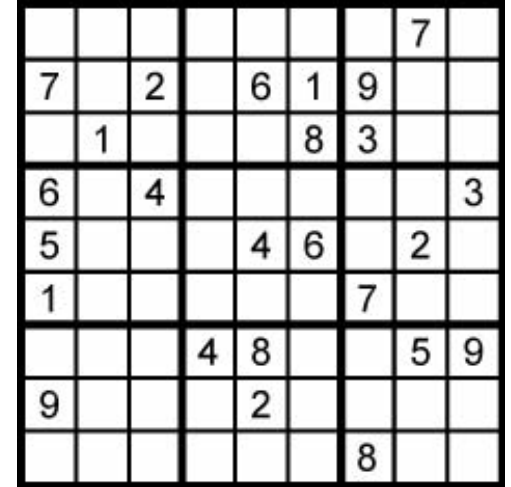
FUN post CROSSWORD



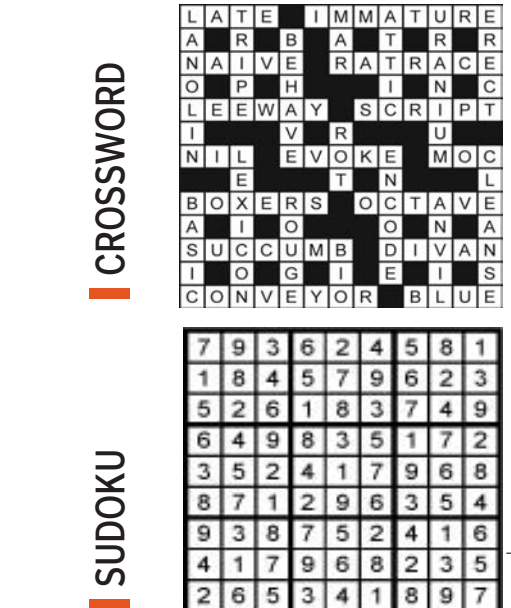
- Across**
- 1 Inuits
 - 5 Apprehension
 - 8 Tourist's aid
 - 9 Disguised
 - 10 Some joints
 - 11 Lucifer
 - 13 Badgers
 - 15 Like a crone
 - 18 Dependable
 - 19 Firebird
 - 23 As a rule
 - 24 Health resort
 - 26 Rocker
 - 27 Garlands
- Down**
- 1 Stately tree
 - 2 Done for
 - 3 Kind of voyage
 - 4 Big bag
 - 5 Stiletto
 - 6 Departing
 - 7 Lozenge
 - 10 Abbey resident
 - 12 Nipper
 - 14 Black Sea republic
 - 16 Farm machine
 - 17 Sock pattern
 - 20 Beginning
 - 21 Gator's kin
 - 22 Forehead
 - 25 Commercials

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



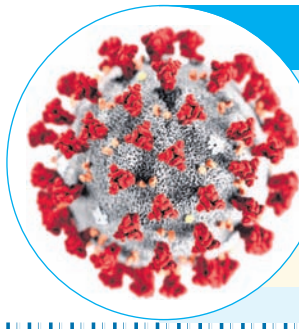
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



CULTURAL FETE

Artistes perform Mahari dance at the concluding ceremony of Srikhetra Mahotsav in Puri, Sunday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	50,44,51,689	45,52,68,675	62,22,430
India	4,30,42,097	4,25,08,788	5,21,751
Odisha	12,87,922	12,78,641	9,123

'Women empowerment true tribute to Biju babu'

CM NAVEEN PATNAIK SAID THIS AT THE STATE-LEVEL OBSERVANCE OF BIJU BABU'S DEATH ANNIVERSARY

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 17: Women empowerment was Biju Babu's main focus and he had achieved many milestones in the same, said Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik at the state-level observance of the 25th death anniversary of former Chief Minister and his father Biju Patnaik at Soochana Bhawan here, Sunday.

Pointing out the significant number of women participants in the recently concluded panchayat and ULB election, Naveen said that women empowerment will be the best tribute to Biju Babu.

While paying homage to the legendary leader at Biju Patnaik Park here, the Chief Minister said Biju Babu was the son of the soil. He was a towering personality, firmly com-



Information and Public Relations Minister Raghunandan Das and other dignitaries at the state-level celebration of the legendary leader's death anniversary in Bhubaneswar

mitted for the upliftment of the people of Odisha, Patnaik added.

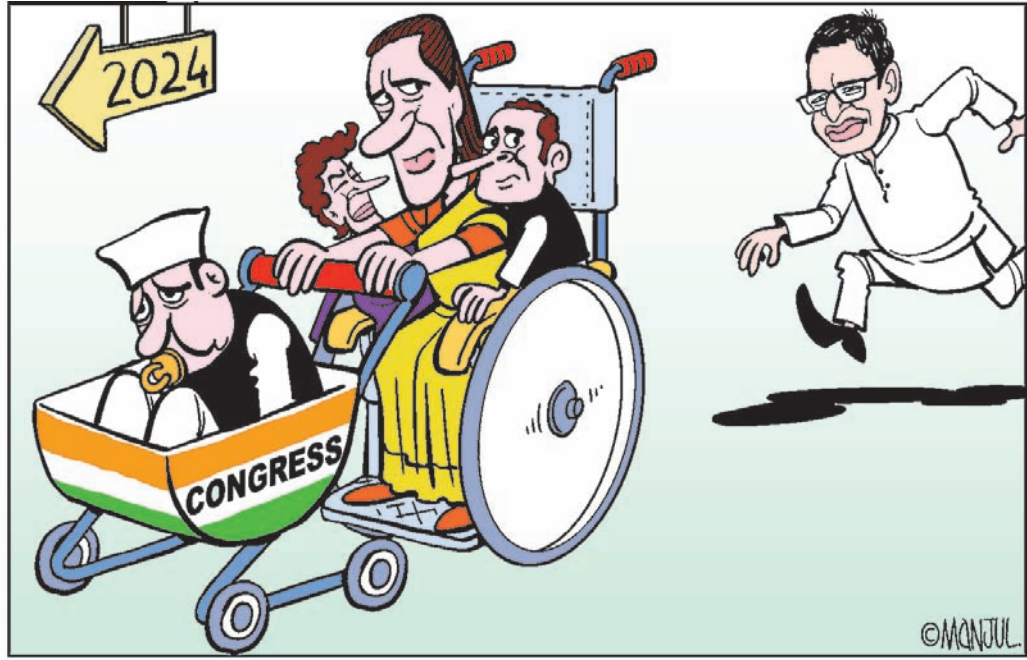
Mayor Sulochana Das, local MLAs, and senior leaders participated in the programmes organised at the park.

The ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) observed the death anniversary of the former Chief Minister throughout the state.

Biju Patnaik passed away April 17, 1997 at a hospital in New Delhi. His last rites were performed amid a sea of followers and leaders from all parts of the country at Puri's Swargadwar the following day.

Remembering the visionary leader, Patnaik said, "Odisha is progressing in all aspects by treading the path shown by Biju babu. The ideals and policies of the great leader inspire us for public service."

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



ATM heist: City cops recreate crime scene



The crime scene being recreated by the police, Sunday

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 17: Two members of an international gang of looters, involved in the theft of Rs 20 lakh from a SBI ATM here, were made to recreate the crime scene by the police, Sunday.

A special team of the city police had nabbed the two accused from Bangalore Friday. Accused Khokan Molla and Mijanur Rehman Molla were taken to several places in the city for recreation of the crime scene.

The police claimed to have seized a screwdriver, a hammer and a crowbar from a bush near Daya river. The accused had used these equipment to break open the uprooted ATM, they said.

The accused were first taken to a dilapidated house in front of a filling station at Lingipur under Dhauli police limits, where they had holed up before executing their blueprint to steal money from the ATM.

Later, the accused duo was taken to the SBI kiosk at Indira Colony and Daya riverbed for recreation of the sequence of events of the ATM heist.

The police also produced the accused duo in the SDJM court here. The accused were later sent to judicial custody, sources said.

The Commissionerate Police has sought the permission of the court to take the accused

on remand for seven days for further investigation on the case. The court is likely to take a decision in this regard Monday, sources said.

Khokan is a resident of Bagerhat in Bangladesh while Mijanur claims to be a resident of 24 Pargana district in West Bengal.

Notably, the gang had uprooted an ATM from a SBI kiosk at Indira Colony in the city here and extracted Rs 20 lakh from it before dumping the machine near Daya river on the intervening night of April 4 and 5.

According to sources, the accused duo along with four others had come to Bhubaneswar around 20 days prior to the ATM theft incident. They visited several ATM kiosks in the city to find out the vulnerable one. After stealing the cash, the accused had fled to Bangalore via Telangana.

The police identified the accused through their unique attire after examining the CCTV footage and checking the visitors' records at hotels in city through the Sarai App. Subsequently, they contacted their counterparts in Goa and New Delhi and traced the accused duo to Bangalore.

After visiting 30 hotels in Bangalore, the city police team finally managed to get clues on the whereabouts of the accused. The team arrested two while five others managed to escape, sources said.

Cops capture man a day after his escape from custody



Accused Biku Bhoi

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 17: The Commissionerate Police has managed to capture an accused who had escaped from the custody of Airfield police here Friday.

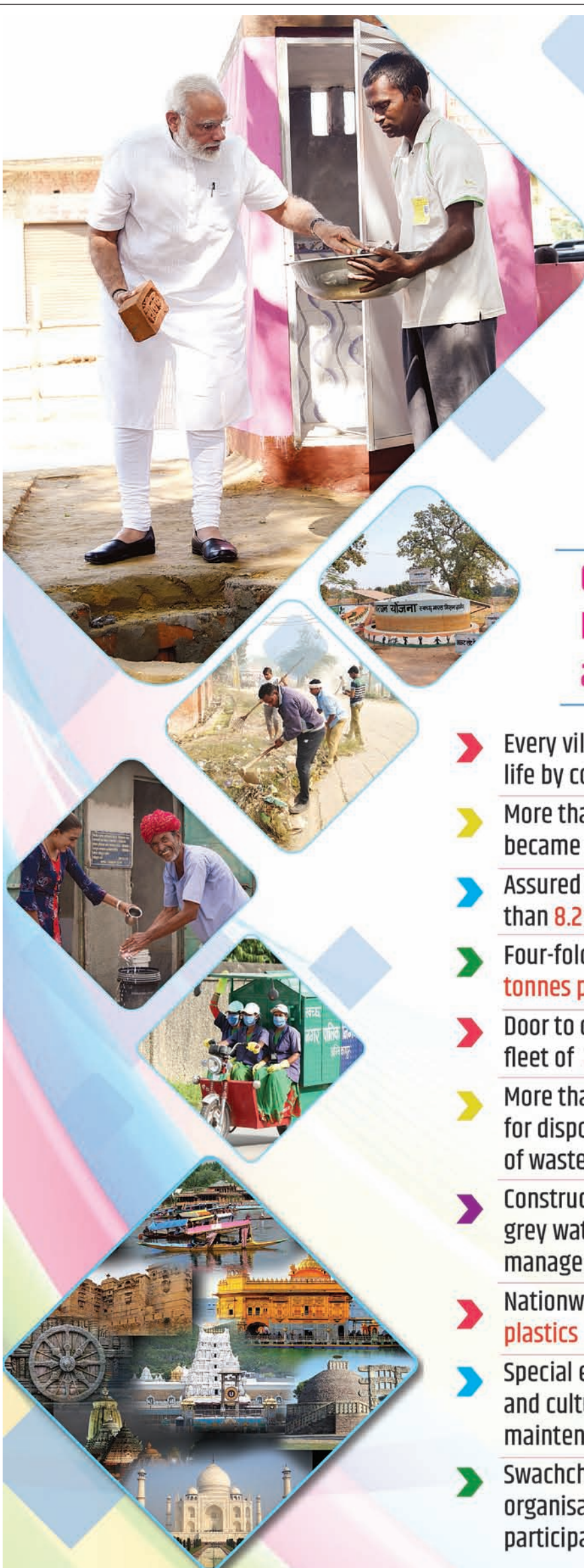
The accused has been identified as Biku Bhoi of Bhoi Sahi in Sunderapada

area of the capital city. The Airfield police had arrested five persons, including Bhoi, on charges of stealing iron rods, asbestos and pipes, arranged for the construction of a drain in the locality.

The agency engaged for the supervision of the construction work had lodged a complaint in this regard with police. While in custody, Bhoi went to the washroom Friday morning after taking permission from the cops. He managed to escape through the skylight of the washroom, sources said.

"We managed to capture Bhoi Saturday night," said a police officer.

Sources claimed that as many as 69 accused have succeeded in escaping from the police custody in the twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack in last few years.



Cleanliness gives new identity to nation

People's participation earns global recognition

Cleanliness is national character of new India. Every citizen is now committed for a garbage and waste free nation

- Every village and city became open defecation free, assured dignified life by constructing toilets in over **11.5 crore** houses
- More than **58 thousand** villages and more than **33 hundred** cities became ODF Plus
- Assured availability of toilets at every place by constructing more than **8.2 lakh** Community Sanitation Complexes in villages and cities
- Four-fold increase in waste disposal in urban areas - from **26 thousand tonnes per day** in 2013-14 to **1 lakh tonnes per day** in 2021-22
- Door to door garbage collection in **87 thousand** urban wards through fleet of **2.5 lakh** garbage collection vehicles
- More than **350** biogas plants in **232 districts** under Gobardhan Yojana for disposal and optimum utilisation of cow dung, excellent example of waste to wealth
- Construction of **1 million** community and household soak-pits for grey water management under Sujalam Abhiyan; Better water management in **1.4 lakh** villages
- Nationwide mass campaign for disposal and reuse of **single use plastics**
- Special emphasis on conservation and cleanliness of historical and cultural heritage sites - Improvement in cleanliness and maintenance standards of **39 heritage sites**
- Swachh Sarvekshans promoted healthy competition among the organisations and generated mass awareness and public participation, Feedback received from **10 crore** people

“The journey of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan to date is really going to make every countryman proud. It also has the mission, pride, aspirations of a country and love for the motherland. Behind its success is the contribution, hard work and sweat of every citizen.”

-Narendra Modi

Crackdown on drunk driving resumes

After going easy on drunken driving during Covid pandemic in view of the health hazards associated with breath analyser test, the enforcement squads have been asked to conduct such drives at regular intervals

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 17: With Covid related restrictions lifted by state government following a drastic dip in cases, the Transport Department and State Police Sunday resumed the intensive drive to check drunken driving subjecting about 2,600 drivers to breath analyser test.

In the night-long drive, a total of 251 drivers were detected driving under the influence of alcohol. In accordance with the directives of the Supreme Court Committee on Road safety, a total of 138 driving licenses were suspended. Police and RTO staff detained 232 vehicles of the offenders. In strict action 216 drunk drivers were arrested by the police.

As many as 59 drivers were detected driving under the influence of alcohol in Cuttack district. All of them were arrested. A total of 33 driving licences were suspended in the district. Similarly, in Subarnapur district, 20 drivers were found under influence of alcohol and 17 of them arrested by Police.



As per the September 2019 amendment of the Motor Vehicles Act 1988, first-time offenders of drunk driving will face imprisonment up to six months and/or fine up to ₹10,000. The second offence, if within two years, can lead to up to two years prison term and/or fine of ₹15,000.

Despite a set of strict laws and regulations, drunk driving continues to be one of the major reasons behind road accidents in India. As many as 648 road accidents took place in Odisha in 2020 due to drunken driving. A total of 298 people lost their lives in these incidents.

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Similarly, in Subarnapur district, 20 drivers were found under influence of alcohol and 17 of them were arrested

After going easy on drunken driving during Covid pandemic in view of the health hazards associated with breath analyser test, the enforcement squads have been asked to conduct such drives at regular intervals.

State breathes easier with 19 recoveries, 10 infections

The death toll remained at 9,123 as no new fatality due to the infection was reported in the last 24 hours while the number of active cases dropped to 105 from 114 the previous day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 17: Single-day recoveries outnumbered new Covid-19 cases yet again in Odisha Sunday as 19 people were cured of the disease and 10 more tested positive for the infection, the state Health department said in a bulletin.

Out of the ten new infections, seven were reported from quarantine centres while three persons contracted the virus locally. The state had registered 10 cases of coronavirus infections and



zero fatalities Saturday. The coronavirus caseload rose to 12,87,922 in the state and 12,78,641 people have so far recovered from the disease, it said.

Sambalpur district registered the highest number of new cases with four individuals testing positive for the disease. It was followed by Kendrapara with three new infections. Other districts that reported fresh Covid-19 cases include: Bolangir (1) and Khurda (2).

The death toll remained at 9,123 as no new fatality due to the infection was reported in the last 24 hours, the bulletin said. Fifty-three other Covid patients have

died due to comorbidities in the state thus far.

The number of active cases in Odisha dropped to 105 from 114 the previous day. Two children were among the newly infected patients, the Health bulletin said.

The coastal state's daily test positivity rate (TPR) was 0.05 per cent as the fresh infections were detected from 18,945 sample tests, it added.

The State Pool did not report any new case of persons coming from outside Odisha and testing positive for the virus. A total of 3,10,46,779 swab samples have been cumulatively tested so far.

A NEW CHAPTER



The inaugural ceremony of Geological Society of India's Regional Chapter, Odisha was held at the IDCOL Auditorium in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

SPORT IT 2022

Convergence of ideas, knowledge & innovation

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 17: Celebrating the spirit of innovation, effectuation and inclusion, the XAVIER-EMLYON Business School (XEBS) Saturday concluded the second edition of its two-day event SPORT IT virtually.

The XEBS is a one-of-its kind Indo-French collaboration between XIM University, Bhubaneswar and Emlyon business school, France and the only academic high performance centre of excellence in sports industry management of Odisha.

The event was organised in collaboration with the Sports and Youth Services Department, Tourism Department, Start-Up Odisha and FICCI and witnessed participation of over 30 start-ups, investors and industry experts from different parts of the country. The event took place on an exclusively curated platform of FICCI and the theme this year was 'Sports, Tourism and Technology'.

In the inaugural session Sports and Youth Services Minister Tusharkanti Behera shared a message welcoming the entrepreneurs and industry experts to the unique event and appreciated the efforts



of XEBS to promote an innovative and entrepreneurial spirit within the sporting community. This was followed by kicking off the Start-up Mash-up which was a virtual exhibition for start-ups working in the sports, technology and tourism domains. The first day also saw students and entrepreneurs participating in the National Innovation Challenge that was organised in collaboration with Start-Up Odisha and AIC Nalanda. The contest was opened a month ago on predefined themes for ideas/prototypes in sports and tourism sectors and the finale saw the participants pitching in for the same.

Later in the evening, there was a panel discussion on the subject 'Sports and Tourism: Responsibilities and Opportunities'. The panellists included Hockey India CEO Elena Norman; QTT Adventure Sports Academy Pvt

Ltd MD and Surfing Federation of India General Secretary Jehan Driver; Rajya Sabha MP Sasmit Patra; MD (India, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Nepal operations), Atmosphere Hotels and Resorts, Souvagya Mohapatra; FICCI Sports Committee Co-chairman and Founder of WordsWork Communications Consulting Neha Mathur Rastogi; and Entrepreneur, Fitness and Wellness Expert, Franchise Owner of IRONMAN India, Deepak Raj.

Moderated by Diksha Tiwari, the session threw light on how sports and tourism are becoming increasingly interlinked and the immense opportunities they hold. When big marquee sports events take place, they provide big boost to the local economy and are an important driver of tourism, the 2018 FIH Men's Hockey World Cup Bhubaneswar being a prime example.

Ramesh Swain's 2nd wife brought on remand

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 17: The Commissionerate Police Sunday brought Kamala Tirkey, the second wife of fake doctor Ramesh Swain, on a four-day remand to ascertain further details about her involvement in the crimes committed by the conman. She was recently arrested by City police from Jharkhand April 4 for allegedly aiding the conman in duping other women.

Kamala, a medical practitioner, had been on the run since the arrest of Ramesh here in February this year. She is reportedly employed at Jamnagar, Gujarat.

City cops have also seized three cars and one laptop from Kamala's house in IFFCO Township in Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh with the help of local police. The cars have been registered in the name of Bidhu Prakash Swain, another fake name of Ramesh.

Police will interrogate Kamala to know in what ways she helped Ramesh cheat the gullible ladies from the across the country. She will be produced before a court April 20 evening.

Notably, the gamut of crime committed by the conman has provoked interest in many to write books on his life and journey to crime.

Four women authors who expressed their interest to write books on Ramesh's life Sunday met him in the Special Jail at Jharpada. They collected various data related to him.

Free health camp for senior citizens

Bhubaneswar: A health camp with free bone mineral density (BMD) assessment, free blood sugar measurement and free orthopaedic consultation was organised at Sailashree Vihar here Sunday. The camp was managed by orthopaedic surgeon Debabrata Padhy, senior consultant at Apollo Hospitals, for the

needy people and senior citizens. It was organised by Top Bone and Joint Clinic in association with Focus for Health and the Odisha Arthroplasty Association. The camp was attended by at least 25 patients from the locality. On the occasion, Padhy said osteoporosis (bone weakness) and diabetes are two dreaded diseases

for the elderly people. Osteoporosis leads to fracture in bones with a fall only. Diabetes has all types of complications associated with it, he said. Padhy reiterated the need of the above said tests and announced that such free camps will be organised for the needy people at regular intervals.

Recycling of single-use plastics creates new job avenues

What do you do with your plastic water bottle bought in the market? In all likelihood, you just throw it into the dust bin without giving a second thought to its final destination. Did you know, including those plastic bottles, India generates 3.5 million tonnes of plastic waste annually?

What if you get 15 minutes of electric vehicle charging time in lieu of just two such bottles? Or for that matter, a certain time for free Wi-Fi? Or cash back on PayTM for a particular number of plastic bottles?

Termed as Reverse Vending Machine, a latest facility at one of the busiest markets in Delhi at Green Park offers you incentives as mentioned above in lieu of the plastic bottles. The incentives vary according to the number of bottles that you put into the machine.

From July 1, 2022, the government has pledged to phase out all kinds of single-use plastic (SUPs). Plastic bottles and polythene bags form one of the largest chunks of the annual 3.5 million tonnes of plastic waste.

A joint initiative of the Small Industries Development Bank of

India (SIDBI) and the Dalit Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry (DICCI), a total of 1,000 plastic RVMS are planned to be installed across Delhi and Varanasi as part of the campaigns 'Stand Up India' and 'Swachh Delhi, Swavalambi Delhi/Swachh Delhi, Swavalambi Kashi'. The first phase includes installing 20 such RVMS in Delhi and 40 at Varanasi. SIDBI and DICCI have a pact for 'Swavalamban Sankalp' for helping the economically weaker sections from across the country.

In a first of its kind joint initiative, DICCI is identifying and handholding entrepreneurs from weaker sections of the society to create not just employment opportunities but also increase awareness about and actually tackle the problem of plastic bottles.

These entrepreneurs would also get supplementary income for the maintenance of these machines from advertising carried on them. The SIDBI-DICCI venture has identified one person each to run 10 such machines at different locations across both the cities.

In the Green Park market, Ankesh Rathore explained how the machine works and said, "I



There is no denying that the problem of plastic pollution is enormous. My first thought was, what can be the incentive so that people are pushed to use such a machine? The incentives such as free Wi-Fi time, free EV charging time looked feasible as we have CSR funding to support this

KARAN DHAUL | CHAIRPERSON AND CO-FOUNDER, THETA ENERLYTICS

will move around myself telling people about the venture and also inform them about the incentives they will get to dispose of plastic bottles into the machine."

The machine's boot can gather up to 25 kg of crushed bottles that

comes with an alarm to warn when it is nearing full capacity. One such machine is already installed near the CSD canteen store inside the Army Cantonment near the airport. Similarly, these machines would also be installed at Dr

Ambedkar International Centre, Moolchand Hospital, Deer Park among other places.

The bottles gobbled up by the machine are immediately crushed. "Entrepreneurs such as Rathore would sell this crushed residue to plastic waste recyclers that will earn them their livelihood," DICCI founder chairperson Milind Kamble told IANS.

"We have done basic two-day training for the first batch and now they will undergo an in-depth 14 day training that will also teach them the operations and maintenance of the machines," Kamble added.

The Plastic Reverse Vending Machines (RVMs) are developed by Theta Enerlytics in India. "There is no denying that the problem of plastic pollution is enormous. My first thought was, what can be the incentive so that people are pushed to use such a machine? The incentives such as free Wi-Fi time, free EV charging time looked feasible as we have CSR funding to support this," chairperson and co-founder, Karan Dhaul explained the theory behind coming up with these RVM ideas.

The best part is that the effort

does not stop at just installing the RVMS. The Environment Ministry has already notified the extended producer responsibility for plastic producers, marketers etc whereby it will be compulsory to opt for circular economy.

DICCI and SIDBI along with Theta Enerlytics in India have announced to and are working at getting the whole chain ready wherein the plastic collected will be strictly used for recycling by partner organisations under the MSME initiatives and to ensure Carbon Neutrality, the entrepreneurs involved will use electric vehicles for transportation of the collected plastic etc.

Currently, the logistics issues such as getting power connection for the machine etc are being sorted out. When asked if the entire exercise is in any way supported by the government, Theta Enerlytics co-founder Gaurav Gupta said, "The local municipal councilors are helping us identify the right place and also in getting these logistics issues sorted."

The first set of 20 machines in Delhi and 40 in Varanasi will be completed in the next 45 days, Dhaul said.

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Call for barrage across Mahanadi grows louder

FIVE YEARS AGO, THE STATE GOVERNMENT HAD ANNOUNCED TO SET UP A 3-KM LONG BARRAGE AT THE CONFLUENCE OF MAHANADI AND TEL RIVERS NEAR KHAIRMAL OF SUBARNAPUR DIST

RALLY PLANNED APRIL 19



POST NEWS NETWORK

Sonepur, April 17: Various quarters and organisations have received the demand for construction of a barrage across the Mahanadi at Khairamal in Subarnapur district. They have planned a rally April 19 to raise their voice for the issue. They have expressed their displeasure over state government's apathy over the barrage project.

"The state government had earlier announced setting up of a barrage at Khairamal, but no action in this regard has been taken after the announcement. To draw attention of the government toward the issue, a rally will be organised April 19," said members of Kosal

Sahitya Sanskruti Academy and Baristha Nagarika Manch at a meeting here, Saturday.

The Mahanadi is enough to meet the needs of the agriculture and industry. But water resources are lying untapped in the absence of a barrage.

While the neighbouring Chhattisgarh has made several barrages and dammed the Mahanadi in the upstream area for agricultural and industrial use, sadly, the state government is making no effort to conserve water, the outfits pointed out. During the monsoon, excess water of the Mahanadi flows into the sea and thereby is wasted due to absence of a barrage.

Five years ago, the state gov-

ernment had announced to set up a 3-km long barrage at the confluence of the Mahanadi and the Tel river near Khairamal, three kilometre from Rameswar. It was also stated that a master plan for the project has been drawn up. Later, a survey was conducted by the water resources department. The survey had got approval of the technical advisory committee.

The members of the outfit observed that if the barrage is constructed, it would create a massive scope for irrigation, fish farming as well as tourism sectors. Sonepur town is encircled by the Mahanadi and Tel river. The barrage would have water stored throughout the year. As result, weather in the town would be cooler. Notably, Sonepur town has emerged as one of the hottest towns in the country. The barrage would help reduce the temperature of the town and also the water needs of the dwellers.

"After announcement of the barrage project, people of the district were happy, but no budgetary provision has been made as yet," said Gorekhanath Sahu, secretary of the academy.

The members of the two outfits came down heavily on the state government for neglecting the project. When Sonepur MLA Niranjana Pujari was the water resources minister, the project was announced. They pointed out that Pujari is now the finance minister, but there has been no allocation of funds for the project.



A man from fishermen community performing 'Chaiti Ghoda' dance at Basulai shrine on the occasion of Chaiti festival at Bajarpur village under Mahakalapura block in Kendrapara district

OP PHOTO

Joda communal clash: 11 arrested

POST NEWS NETWORK

Joda, April 17: Joda police arrested 11 persons belonging to two warring groups who were involved in the communal clash in the mining town and produced them in court Saturday.

The arrested persons were identified as Rakesh Mohanty, Mukesh Barik, Aman Karua, Naresh

Mahakud, Chandan Gupta, Biswajit Sharma, Md Waquill, Md Dilsad Alam, Md Babu, Md Mudasar Anari and Md Iqbal.

Notably, the situation in Joda town turned tense following the clash April 11. As tension flared up, both the groups started hurling stones and glass bottles at each other. The situation was diffused to some extent after police resorted

to blank firing to disperse the warring groups. The district administration imposed Section 144 in the town to check any further escalation. The clashes erupted over hoisting the saffron flag on Ram Navami at a temple located in a Muslim-dominated area. Several police personnel and scribes sustained injuries while many houses and vehicles were vandalised.

Two nabbed for illegal trade of Hanuman coin

POST NEWS NETWORK

Deogarh, April 17: A special squad of Deogarh police nabbed two persons and seized a Hanuman coin from their possession on charge of trading in the illegal coin at Taranga village square under Rimalal police limits, Sunday.



A special squad posed as decoy customers and sealed a deal with the accused persons to purchase the coin at a price of ₹1 crore

The accused were identified as Saroj Badi and Tankadhar Badi of Goudapada village under Naktideula police limits in Sambalpur district. The breakthrough came after members of the special squad posed as decoy customers and sealed a deal with the accused persons to purchase the coin at a price of ₹1 crore.

The two were arrested after intelligence inputs warned that some persons were trying to sell the illegal Hanuman coin in Taranga village under Rimalal police limits on the fringes of Deogarh and Sambalpur districts.

A special squad led by SDPO Pratyush Kumar Mohapatra immediately left for Taranga village and sent a feeler to the accused persons expressing their interest to purchase the coin. Accordingly, Saroj and Tankadhar reached the Taranga village square where the squad members in hiding surrounded them from all side and nabbed them.

Youth jumps into crocodile infested Baitarani, rescued

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chandbali, April 17: A youth escaped death by a whisker as he was promptly saved by the Fire Services personnel after he jumped into the crocodile infested Baitarani river near Aranya Niwas in Chandbali, late Saturday night.

The unidentified youth, a native of nearby Nuagaon village, is suspected to be mentally unstable. He jumped into the Baitarani river near Aranya Niwas here and was swept away in the river current but got stuck on a bamboo pole in the river near Bada Bazaar. On being informed, Fire Services and police personnel rushed to the spot.

A six-member joint team of po-

lice, fire and some local youths went in a boat and rescued the youth safely from the river. Several onlookers had gathered at the spot but none could dare to enter the river infested with crocodiles and rescue the youth.

Locals alleged the youth to be mentally unstable. After the rescue, he was rushed to the Chandbali hospital where he was admitted for treatment.

Cousins drown in Salunki river

POST NEWS NETWORK

Phulbani, April 17: In a tragic incident, two minor cousins drowned while bathing in Salunki river near Chhatijhar village under Tikabali block in Kandhamal district, Sunday.

The deceased were identified as Satyajit Dehuri, 4, son of Yudhishthir Dehuri and Jyotish Dehuri, 5, daughter of Prasant Dehuri in the village. A pall of gloom descended in the village after news of their death spread. The incident oc-

curred when the cousins had gone with their elder aunt and other family members to bathe in the river. The elder aunt and family members had gone to wash themselves when the two kids entered the river and drowned. They raised an alarm when some boys who were fishing nearby recovered Satyajit and Jyotish floating in the river. Family members rushed them to Tikabali hospital where a doctor pronounced them dead. Police registered a case and sent the bodies for post-mortem.

IPL betting racket busted, 9 held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kuanrunda, April 17: Acting on a tip-off, a special squad of Biramitrapur police station and Kuanrunda outpost here in Sundargarh district busted an IPL betting racket and arrested nine persons on charge of involvement in illegal betting for the ongoing IPL matches, Saturday night.

The accused were identified as Malit Singh, 25, Vishal Rai, 18, Himanshu Debagana, 25, Pankaj Debagana, 22, Bikash Thakur, 23, Minu Singh, 21, Dinesh Kumar Sahoo, 28, Vikramjit Singh, 19, and Jogendra Singh, 22 - all from Durg district of neighbouring Chhattisgarh. At least 18 expensive mobile phones were seized from their possession including one tablet and a laptop.

This was stated by Biramitrapur SDPO Manas Ranjan Pradhan and Manoj Manjari Nayak, IIC of Biramitrapur police station at a press meet held at the Kuanrunda police outpost, Sunday. The accused were taken for a medical examination and later produced in court. The accused have been booked under sections 294 (A)/420/120(B)/34 of IPC and sections 4/5 of Prize Chits and Money



THE BREAKTHROUGH CAME WHEN THE SPECIAL SQUAD RAIDED A HOUSE AT JAMUNANAKI JHARA SLUM UNDER KUANRUMUNDA POLICE OUTPOST

ALL THE ARRESTED ACCUSED ARE FROM DURG DISTRICT OF NEIGHBOURING STATE OF CHHATTISGARH

THROUGH AN ONLINE LOTTERY OFFICE, THEY WERE BETTING ON THE ONGOING IPL MATCHES AND WERE LURING PEOPLE TO JOIN

Circulation Schemes Act, 1978. The breakthrough came when the special squad raided a house at Jamunanaki Jhara slum under Kuanrunda police outpost. There the squad found some youths who had opened an online lottery office and allegedly were betting money on the ongoing Indian Premier League (IPL) matches. The accused youths were also found to be instigating others to bet their money by luring them with attractive prizes and offers. SDPO Pradhan, IIC Nayak and Kuanrunda OIC Shyamal Oram participated in the raid.

Notably, police had busted an IPL online racket in Sambalpur and arrested five persons in November, 2020. The police seized ₹15,150 cash and five mobiles from their possession. In 2018, police had arrested six people in the district and seized lakhs of rupees.

Earlier, Berhampur police had arrested two persons and seized cash worth over ₹33 lakh during a raid on an illegal IPL betting syndicate.

JEYPORE-MALKANGIRI RAIL ROUTE

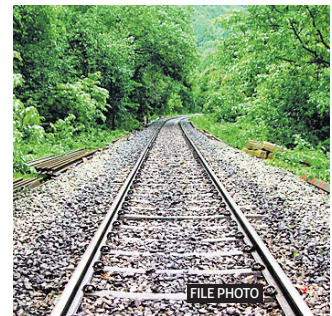
Malkangiri: Trains to roll in 5 yrs

POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri, April 17: Rail services will be available to Malkangiri residents within five years as railway authorities prepare to complete land acquisition for construction of a rail route within the next six months, a report said.

This was stated here by Anup Kumar Satpathy, divisional railways manager (DRM) of Vishakhapatnam railways division during his visit to Malkangiri here, Saturday. Satpathy was here to review the under-construction rail route project in Malkangiri.

Attending a review meeting at the Circuit House here, Satpathy said over 20 per cent work of 130-km long Jeypore-Malkangiri rail route has been completed. He stressed on speeding up land acquisition for the remaining part of



the rail route within the next six months. ADM Birasen Pradhan, revenue officials and senior officials of the railways department participated in the review meeting.

The rail route works will be expedited on a priority basis with funds sanctioned in the budget after completion of land acquisition process. Subsequently, the residents in Malkangiri will get rail

services within five years, he said.

Meanwhile, a delegation of Malkangiri Zilla Surakshya Manch (Citizen's Forum) submitted a memorandum to the DRM stating that despite having a number of proposed mines, Malkangiri has failed to develop as a district due to lack of a rail route for transportation of goods. In the memorandum they stressed on establishment of a rail route under the 'Akanksha' scheme of the Centre and demanded to expedite the works.

Duryodhan Patra, Ram Patnaik, Dillip Parichha, Durga Tripathy, Lambodar Turuk, Nrusingha Charan Mohanty, Paresh Chandra Mohanty, Debabrata Sana as well as other members were part of the delegation.

When contacted, the ADM said that land acquisition will be completed in six months for the rail route project.

Locals allege scam in MGNREGS, seek probe

POST NEWS NETWORK

Loisingha, April 17: Large-scale irregularities have allegedly been committed in various projects under MGNREGS in the last five years under Badatika panchayat under Agalpur block in Bolangir. Villagers alleged that despite taking up the issue

with the block administration and the office of the 5T secretary, no investigation is being done into the wrongdoings.

They pointed out that scores of migrant labourers and locals had been deprived of work while project works were carried out with machines. Miffed over the irregularities, locals have warned

of agitation in front of the panchayat office from May 1.

Many projects pertained to construction and renovation of ponds, upgradation of playgrounds. Names of job card holders were used in muster rolls while works were done with machines. In some cases, wages of some job card holders have been misappropriated.

MYTHOLOGY ON STAGE



Artists enacting a scene on 'Sita Chori' as part of Ram Leela Mahotsav organised by Ram Leela Natya Sansad at Baunsuni in Boudh district

OP PHOTO

FOCUS SOCIETY

TYRANNY OF SLOW CHANGE



Court verdicts and official action may help clear the way for recognition of rights but the India experience has shown that these are not enough as mindsets and attitudes must change before transgenders get their rightful place in society

for transgender have been taken over the years, like Kerala's housing projects for the homeless and skill building. In Tamil Nadu there have been welfare schemes providing self-employment grants for small businesses, vocational training or material support. The Madras High Court recently suggested that school students be educated to understand the transgenders.

But it is not easy to change mindsets, for instance, in 2017, the Kochi Metro Rail Ltd (KMRL) offered jobs to transgenders, in departments from ticketing to housekeeping, through the Kudumbashree Mission. Kudumbashree, which means 'prosperity of the family' in Malayalam, is a poverty eradication and women empowerment programme by the Kerala government's State Poverty Eradication Mission (SPEM). KMRL signed a three-year contract with Kudumbashree to ensure jobs for women and transgenders. But since then, most of the 23-member transgender group hired in the first phase have quit due to low salaries, lack of viable accommodation facilities in Kochi and even attitudes. One of the transgenders who resigned told a TV network that they often faced attitudes of 'verup' (hate), disgust and contempt.

One of the problems cited by the transgender group hired by KMRL is accommodation. Prejudice often stands in the way of house owners renting to transgender tenants. It is among the many problems the community faces, beginning with employment. Despite many favourable developments, what transgenders face is systemic oppression, phobia, fear, bias and distrust. This keeps transgenders from living their simple lives as ordinary citizens. So, India may have led the change in passports but it remains way behind in changes that can translate to safer, better and fulfilling lives for its transgender community.

The writer is the Managing Editor of The Billion Press.
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It was only last week that the US State department added the option of a gender 'X' on its passport forms, giving official recognition on US passports to transgender, non-binary and gender non-conforming persons. India is among the countries that have led in this area; Indian passport application forms have the third gender option (marked now as 'transgender') since 2005.

But on the ground, in lived experiences, it has been a different struggle that has played out in the courts, in the job market and in everyday activities, social interaction or jobs for transgenders, who are commonly known in India by terms like hijra, thirunagai, kinnar, mangalamukhi, aravani, kothi, jogappas, shiv shaktis, thirunambis, bhaiyya, and paityan.

Eight years ago, in April 2014, the Supreme Court of India recognised transgender as a third gender and ruled that they as a class are entitled to reservations in education and jobs, saying "the recognition of transgenders as a third gender is not a social or medical issue but a human rights issue." The judgement mandated that the fundamental rights guaranteed under the Constitution would be equally applicable to transgenders. Though the judgement itself was seen in some circles as problematic because of its transphobic usages ("use of the word 'eunuch' itself is offensive and throughout the judgement, 'hijra' and 'eunuch' is used interchangeably," the noted activist, researcher and author Gee Imaan Semmalar wrote), it opened the door for respectful acceptance of the third gender; at least officially, but it did not open the minds and hearts of India.

This was followed by the Transgender Protection Act of 2019, aimed at protecting and reinforcing transgender rights, welfare and related matters. Thereafter, in the following year, a National Council for Transgender Welfare was set up under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. Since then, favourable verdicts from courts across the country have sought rights for transgenders. The government now runs a na-

tional portal for transgender persons and is offering scholarships; over one million people have visited the portal.

Most recently, the Bombay High Court (March 28) issued notices to Maharashtra and the state's Public Service Commission asking for responses to a petition seeking the inclusion of a 'third gender' category in all recruitment and employment controlled by the government. The court was ruling on a petition filed by two non-profit organisations and two transgenders who were refused jobs in the state's police and transport departments despite the applicants having the requisite training and educational qualifications. The petitioners said they were verbally informed by the government departments they approached that unless the MPSC made changes to its existing rules, little could be done for a third gender in recruitment, which considered only the binary categories of male and female.

Court verdicts and official action may help clear the way for recognition of rights but the India experience has shown that these are not enough as mindsets and attitudes must change before transgenders get their rightful place in society. The approximately 4.90 lakh transgender population in India has traditionally lived on the fringes of society. That number itself came officially for the first time when the 2011 Census made

a provision to count transgenders as a separate category. It has been separately reported that a large number of the community suffers health issues, including HIV and AIDS. The mortality rate in the community due to the infection is reported at just under 40 per cent. They constitute about 18 per cent of the total cases undergoing anti-retroviral therapy for HIV.

Eight years have passed since the Supreme Court judgement, and an interim of rulings by high courts in many states, but Karnataka is the only government that has officially offered jobs to the transgender community. In July 2020, the Karnataka government agreed to provide reservation for transgenders in the state police recruitment process. A year later, the state officially agreed, and was the first to introduce a one per cent reservation for the transgender community in government jobs. And in February this year, a similar quota was set aside in teaching jobs by Karnataka. The department of public instruction, also known as the department for school education, called for applications of primary school teachers, with one per cent reservation for transgenders, making Karnataka the first state to recruit teachers from the community.

In 2017, Odisha implemented the Sweekruti scheme to promote transgender equality and shield the community from discrimination. Several state-specific measures



Lekha Rattanani
THE APPROXIMATELY 4.90 LAKH TRANSGENDER POPULATION IN INDIA HAS TRADITIONALLY LIVED ON THE FRINGES OF SOCIETY

Pak Window

The congratulatory message sent by the Joe Biden administration to the newly appointed Prime Minister of Pakistan, Shehbaz Sharif, could be an indication of changing relations. The impression that is sought to be created is that Shehbaz, like his brother and former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, is friendly towards the US unlike deposed Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan. During Imran's tenure, Pakistan's relations with the US gravely deteriorated. In fact, Khan had accused the US of trying to topple his government despite stout denial by the US administration. The congratulatory message might be taken as diplomatically a conventional act. However, the two countries had got distanced after the hurried withdrawal of American and allied forces from Afghanistan in August 2021. Pakistan was the major access point for Western forces into Afghanistan. The manner of withdrawal not only upset Afghan women and liberals but, on hindsight, seems to have disturbed the equations that were put in place by Pakistan for Afghanistan. That withdrawal demonstrated a latent weakness of Western powers and disturbed the geopolitical situation not only in Asia but across the world. While researchers in the future may be able to shed more light on what global leaders thought of after August 2021, the glaring reality that the world sees today makes it possible, to some extent, to understand global thinking. It is possible that countries like Russia started rethinking their international action plans. The US and Allied forces seemed to be not only weak but also in disarray. That perception of weakness might have caused reactions that have culminated in a war situation in Ukraine.

The situation in Taliban led Afghanistan helped prop Pakistan as the international main arbiter between Afghanistan, Russia, China and other Moslem countries. China invited Putin during the Beijing Winter Olympics. And that seems to have been the turning point for global repositioning. Interestingly, Imran visited Moscow on the day of the very first voting in the UN Security Council on the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Although Pakistan too, like India, did not vote against Russia yet it diplomatically handled the situation so very well that the world failed to notice this aberration. India got noticed and is still facing flak. Siding with a country waging war can only have negative impacts. Pakistan, on the other hand, has taken the same action but the West now seems to be trying to woo it back from the Russia-China axis.

Noteworthy is that the Pakistan military establishment supposedly prefers ties with the US and was opposed to Imran's embrace of Russia and China as the country's more dependable allies. In fact, Khan had incurred the wrath of the US for not allowing Pakistan's soil and airspace to be used by America to monitor the activities of the new Taliban regime. It was looking for a trusted ally in the region and Pakistan, under the current dispensation, it is believed, could fill that void.

The new government has a tall task ahead of it. The economy of Pakistan is shattered but the world wants to befriend it nevertheless. This is a great opportunity for the new government. If it can use the olive branch properly, it may be in a position to bring Pakistan regain its breath.

WISDOM CORNER

- Great things are done by a series of small things brought together. **VINCENT VAN GOGH**
- Where the willingness is great, the difficulties cannot be great. **NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI**
- Discipline is the bridge between goals and accomplishment. **JIM ROHN**

WORDSWORTH

Soft sawder

This has very much the same meaning as blarney, soft soap, or buttering up — flattery that has the aim of persuading or cajoling you to do something for someone else. We've all been on one end or the other of the process at some time, but we probably didn't call it soft sawder, because that way of describing it has gone out of use since Agatha Christie's day. Thomas Chandler Haliburton (Judge Haliburton) of Nova Scotia was well-known in the nineteenth century for his comic writings, which first appeared in book form in *The Clockmaker*; or the Sayings and Doings of Samuel Slick of Slickville of 1836. Judge Haliburton — a real judge — is sometimes described as the founding North American humorist. In his stories, Sam Slick was a maker and seller of clocks who accompanied a visiting English gentleman on a tour of early 19th-century Nova Scotia. Judge Haliburton is said to have got the character from a real clock salesman who appeared before him, who used gross flattery to sell his clocks to local people. Thomas Haliburton has appeared here before in connection with the phrase mad as a hatter. He's also credited with creating soft sawder and it was because his writings about Sam Slick were so hugely popular that the term came into the language. The term first appeared in the story *The Trotting Horse* in that first collection, in which Sam Slick says of a sour innkeeper's wife: "If she goes to act ugly, I'll give her a dose of 'soft sawder', that will take the frown out of her frontispiece, and make her dial-plate as smooth as a lick of copal varnish." But where does it come from? Sawder is just a variant way of writing the usual North American pronunciation of solder (it looks odd to modern British English speakers, who pronounce the l — we didn't at one time, but the "speak as you spell" movement has triumphed). Soft solder (it's called that because it melts at a lower temperature) is, as its name suggests, easier to apply than the hard variety, though it sets as solid, binding parts together as tightly as a salesman would wish to bind his customer to him. Solder would have come quickly enough to the mind of a clockmaker at that period, as the reference in its first appearance in print shows.

Solar sail

Like so many ideas concerning space travel, this one has been around for decades, mostly in science-fiction stories, though it has in recent years been considered seriously as new materials become available. In 2010 the Japanese space probe IKAROS to Venus was the first spacecraft to employ a solar sail. The idea is that a spacecraft would unfurl a huge but incredibly thin solar sail, perhaps a kilometre in diameter. The pressure of sunlight on the sail — radiation pressure — would be tiny, but it would be there. A craft massing several tonnes could accelerate to more than a kilometre per second within days, and then go on accelerating so long as it remained relatively close to the sun. It is suggested that an initial shove could be given by giant ground-based lasers (as described in Larry Niven's novel *The Mote in God's Eye*). It would even be possible to tack the craft by angling the sail. A combination of lasers and a solar sail could make it possible to send a craft anywhere within the Solar System.

LOL

Catching the bear

Two men went bear hunting. While one stayed in the cabin, the other went out looking for a bear. He soon found a huge bear, shot at it but only wounded it. The enraged bear charged toward him, he dropped his rifle and started running for the cabin as fast as he could. He ran pretty fast but the bear



was just a little faster and gained on him with every step. Just as he reached the open cabin door, he tripped and fell flat. Too close behind to stop, the bear tripped over him and went rolling into the cabin. The man jumped up, closed the cabin door and yelled to his friend inside, "You skin this one while I go and get another!"

SPECTRUM J&K

Targeted terror, glimmers of hope



Deepika Bhan
RESORTING TO TARGETED KILLINGS, IN FACT, IS BEING SEEN AS A CHANGE OF STRATEGY BY TERROR HANDLERS SITTING IN PAKISTAN

Ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Jammu and Kashmir April 24, the first after the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019, a contrasting picture has emerged in the Union Territory.

On one hand is the record number of tourists visiting Kashmir; increasing investment and development activity; on the other is the terror push from Pakistan that seeks to renew fear among the people and derail the normalisation process.

The Prime Minister's visit to the UT is being seen as a message to showcase grassroots democracy in Jammu and Kashmir: Modi will address the rural local bodies across the country April 24, which is being observed as the Panchayati Raj Diwas, from Palli village in district Samba of the Jammu region. The village will also be showcased as a carbon-free village.

The fact that Modi is visiting a village on his first visit to the UT after the massive change in the status of J&K indicates the Centre's resolve to strengthen the pillar of democracy and to decentralise power.

It was to strengthen grassroots democracy that the Centre amended the J&K Panchayati Raj Act, 1989 for the first time in October 2020 and paved the way for the creation of

District Development Councils (DDCs). The DDC is a directly-elected local government body with jurisdiction over the entire district, excluding areas designated as a municipality or municipal corporation. The first-ever elections to DDCs were held successfully in 2020.

It was for the first time in the UT that the DDCs, along with the Halqa Panchayats and Block Development Councils (BDCs), set up a three-tier Panchayati Raj system, which was never before attempted by the previous governments. It is this success that is being sought to be showcased when Modi visits Palli.

The Prime Minister's visit also comes at a time when Kashmir is seeing record tourist arrivals despite terror strikes. Lt. Governor Manoj Sinha has said: "I think this is the golden period for Jammu and Kashmir in which all the records of the last 15-20 years have been broken. More than 80 lakh tourists arrived here in the last few months. This has brought prosperity and is helping people establish peace."

Almost all of the valley hotels are running at full capacity. The heavy rush of tourists to the valley has made the Srinagar airport one of the busiest in the country. April 11, the airport handled a record 102 inbound and outbound flights with a total number

of 15,199 passengers.

This year, the Amarnath yatra has been given the green signal after remaining suspended during 2020 and 2021 because of the onslaught of COVID-19. Religious tourism is expected to bring a windfall to the UT economy, especially to the Valley.

In a boost to the economy, which has been badly hit by terrorism, the Centre is aggressively pushing for investments in the UT. Recently, a 34-member delegation of businessmen from the UAE, other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and Hong Kong was on a four-day visit to Jammu and Kashmir to explore investment opportunities. In his address, the Prime Minister is expected to talk about tourism and the investments made, and those on the anvil.

Even as the Prime Minister prepares to visit the UT, terror strikes continue in the Valley. Almost every day there are gunfights between security forces and terrorists, targeted killings of Hindus, non-locals, sarpanches and security personnel.

Recently, Director General of Police, Dilbag Singh, said the number of militants was fast decreasing, but militancy was alive in Kashmir. Till the first week of March, 20 anti-terror operations were conducted in Kashmir in

which 35 terrorists, including three top commanders and nine Pakistani terrorists, were eliminated.

The security forces have also managed to arrest 16 active terrorists so far this year. Despite efforts to neutralise terrorists, targeted killings are being carried out by militant outfits. Four sarpanches have been killed since the beginning of this year, the latest being on April 14. By attacking sarpanches, political workers, non-local residents and Kashmiri Pandits, the terror outfits are trying to recreate the fear that used to prevail in the 1990s. Resorting to targeted killings, in fact, is being seen as a change of strategy by terror handlers sitting in Pakistan.

Infiltration from across the Line of Control has been curbed and most of Pakistan's supporters in Kashmir are behind bars, so the terrorists are choosing soft targets.

Several Kashmiri Hindu bodies believe that the situation in the Valley is returning to what it was in the 1990s, when threat letters used to be issued against them and targeted killings were the routine.

In this backdrop, the Prime Minister's words will be keenly heard, especially because Pakistan's new dispensation has parroted its age-old sinister line on Kashmir.

©IANS

Eliminating silos in education

Sir, The University Grants Commission's decision to allow students to pursue two undergraduate or post-graduate degrees/diplomas simultaneously in the physical, online or combination modes is in line with the National Education Policy's principle of eliminating silos in education. The decision widens opportunities for students in higher education. On the other hand, it poses several challenges. How students, teachers and those involved in education respond to this move is very important. There is no denying the fact that courses must give students scope for employability. Indian education system has always been criticised for its limited scope for employability. In contrast to traditional courses, vocational courses provide more job opportunities. However, traditional courses have their own importance. The UGC's move gives equal importance to traditional and vocational courses. As students are allowed to pursue degree/diploma courses from two different universities or the same university; they will gain greater exposure. It also enables students to compare the courses of different universities. Besides, teaching and learning will become more student-oriented. Since physical and online modes of learning are allowed, students are free to join courses of their choice. Given that there are many drawbacks in the present higher education system, radical changes are needed to meet the challenges of the present time. While the UGC's move is commendable, the challenges it poses need to be dealt with. To begin with, doing two courses simultaneously is strenuous. Secondly, when dual degrees become a prescribed qualification for jobs, those who fail to pursue dual degrees will not get opportunities. Thirdly, when students pursue two courses, the issue of attendance may arise. Fourthly, there are concerns about certainty of acquiring deep knowledge in two different subjects.

Venu GS, Kollam

Minister in soup

Sir, Karnataka Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister KS Eshwarappa, finding himself in knots over the suicide of a civil contractor, has finally put in his papers. We believe the BJP top brass pushed Eshwarappa to quit a day after he defiantly ruled out resignation. The saffron leader claimed he was resigning to avoid embarrassment to the government and the party. But embroiled in controversies and corruption, he had landed his party in a soup several times in the past. He will be the second BJP minister to step down in a year.

NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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national



India has moved away from token solution to total solution in the healthcare sector
MANSUKH MANDAVIYA | UNION HEALTH MINISTER

MEGA PLENARY

About 3,000 delegates will attend the plenary session of Telangana's ruling party Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) scheduled to be held in Hyderabad April 27



of the day quote

Let us work unitedly and go on a victory yatra. It would be the victory of Karnataka's poor. It would lead to building New India from New Karnataka. Let us strengthen the hands of our leaders Narendra Modi, Amit Shah and JP Nadda and make Karnataka contribute \$1 trillion to make India a \$5 trillion economy. Let us march with confidence without caring for the ranting of the Opposition

BASAVARAJ BOMMAI | KARNATAKA CM

BJP makes politicians out of criminals who riot, rape and disrespect women. Our country needs to boycott parties that support hooligans and criminals if it actually wants to become a world leader

MANISH SISODIA | DELHI DEPUTY CM

Wrong selection of candidate by the BJP cost NDA the Bochahan assembly seat in the by-election

JITAN RAM MANUJI | FORMER BIHAR CM

Iridium sat phones find way to terror groups in Kashmir

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, April 17: Fifteen signatures of Iridium satellite phones, used by the US-led allied forces in Afghanistan, and Wi-Fi-enabled thermal imagery devices that help a terrorist to escape security cordons especially during night have been found in the militancy-hit Kashmir valley, officials here said on Sunday.

They said some of the signatures of Iridium satellite phones have been found in cyber space since February. It started from North Kashmir and now there have been some spots in parts of South Kashmir as well, they said.

These satellite phones could be part of the consignment dumped by the allied forces while leaving Afghanistan or may have been snatched by the Taliban or terrorists fighting there, the officials said.

They said there is no need to panic as the movement of these phones was being specially monitored and those using them would definitely be in custody soon or get neutralised, the officials said.

Bodies like the National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO) and the Defence Intelligence Agencies (DIA) have been tasked with finding and giving out real-time information about the presence of



these satellite phones in the Kashmir valley, they said. In the aftermath of the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks, the Directorate General of Shipping (DGS) first restricted the use of Iridium and Thuraya

satellite phones and infrastructure, and in 2012 completely banned them under the provisions of the Indian Telegraph Act.

Passengers importing satellite telephone as baggage are required to declare them to the Customs on arrival at immigration and customs checkpoints. Also, the satellite phone declared by Customs can be allowed clearance subject to production of permission for use from the government's Department of Telecommunications.

The officials said that signatures of thermal imaging devices which can be connected to Wi-Fi have also been found from some of the encounter sites.

This device, which is not part of the Pakistani Army and may possibly have found its way into Kashmir from Afghanistan, is used by terrorists to find their way out during cordon and search operations especially during night.

The device senses the image of approaching security personnel from the heat generated from his body besides giving an overview of the general area outside their hideouts, the officials said.

As a precautionary measure, the security forces now carry jammers along with other tools to block all signals so that the terrorists do not find a way to escape from the area, the officials said.

FIRE AT UPHAAR CINEMA HALL

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 17: A fire broke out in the early hours of Sunday at Uphaar Cinema Hall in the national capital, a Fire Department official said.

The official said the Fire Department received a call about the fire incident around 4.46 a.m. in the morning at some building near Green Park Metro station after which five fire engines were pressed into service. However, as the firemen reached the spot, they found that the blaze was at Uphaar Cinema Hall.

Delhi Fire Services chief Atul Garg said that the fire was in seats and furniture of the theatre. "The blaze engulfed the theatre's balcony and a floor; however, none was injured in the incident," the official said.

The fire was put out at 7.20 a.m. in the morning. Notably, 25 years ago, on June 13, 1997, halfway through the screening of the Hindi film "Border", a fire broke out in the Uphaar cinema, owned by Ansals located in Green Park in south Delhi, killing 59 people in one of the worst tragedies in the country.

Uneasy calm in Jahangirpuri

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 17: A large number of police personnel, including anti-riot force, were deployed in the violence-hit areas of Jahangirpuri in northwest Delhi as an uneasy calm prevailed Sunday.

Shops and markets near the Jahangirpuri metro station remained open on Sunday though people mostly stayed indoors. There was a heavy police deployment in C Block, the epicentre of the communal clash that left eight police personnel and a local injured on Saturday evening.

Mukesh, a shopkeeper who stays near the C Block mosque, said those who tried to disrupt peace in the area must have been outsiders. "I have been staying here for last 35 years but have never seen such kind of violence in this area. Hindus and Muslims live here peacefully. People who were in the procession must be outsiders and not Jahangirpuri locals," he said.

Some members of the two communities alleged that actions of the other side triggered the violence. Sheikh Amzad, a resident of C Block, said he was inside the mosque in C Block when the violence broke out on Saturday evening. "They (participants of Hanuman Jayanti procession) were chanting 'Jai Shri Ram' and raising provocative slogans. They forcibly entered the mosque and started tying saffron flags in its premises. They were threatening us with swords...That's when stone pelting



Security personnel keep vigil after clashes broke out between two communities during a Hanuman Jayanti procession Saturday, at Jahangirpuri in New Delhi, Sunday

PTI PHOTO

began. Such an incident has never before happened in Jahangirpuri," he alleged.

Amzad claimed that nearly 50 people forcibly entered the mosque. Manoj Kumar said he was at his shop in C Block when the violence broke out. "I saw people screaming and rushing inside their houses...Previously I have seen verbal altercations between the communities here. People in the procession were carrying weapons but stone pelting was done by Muslims first," Kumar claimed.

Security has been beefed up in and around C and D blocks. Barricades have been put up and police personnel deployed at every 200 metres. Despite this, shops around the mosque at C Block were all shut. According to the police, there

was stone-pelting and arson during the clashes between the two communities. Some vehicles were also torched. The Delhi Police has arrested 14 people over the violence.

As on Sunday morning, there is a heavy police deployment in Jahangirpuri area where the clashes took place. A team of Rapid Action Force has also been deployed to keep a tight vigil on the situation which is now under control, a police officer said.

"Drones and facial recognition software are being used to identify those involved in creating the ruckus. All mobile footage and CCTV cameras installed in and around the vicinity are being scanned to identify the culprits and trace them," said another police officer.

Govt hiding data on Covid deaths: Rahul

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 17: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Sunday claimed that 40 lakh Indians died during the coronavirus pandemic due to the government's "negligence" and once again demanded that all families of the deceased be given Rs 4 lakh compensation each.

Taking to Twitter, Rahul Gandhi shared the screenshot of a New York Times report which claimed that India is stalling the WHO's efforts to make global Covid death toll public. "Modi ji neither speaks the truth, nor lets others speak. He still lies that no one died due to oxygen shortage!" Gandhi charged in a tweet in Hindi along with the screenshot of the report.

"I had said earlier also - due to the negligence of the government during Covid, not five lakh, but 40 lakh Indians died," the former Congress chief said.

"Fulfill your responsibility Modi ji - give compensation of Rs 4 lakh to every (Covid) victim's family," Rahul Gandhi said.

India Saturday questioned the World Health Organisation's (WHO) methodology to estimate COVID-19 mortalities in the country, saying using such a mathematical modelling cannot be applied to estimate the death figures for such a vast nation of geographical size



I had said earlier also - due to the negligence of the government during Covid, not five lakh, but 40 lakh Indians died

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

and population.

The Union Health Ministry issued a statement in response to the article titled India Is Stalling WHO's Efforts to Make Global Covid Death Toll Public dated April 16, saying the country has on several occasions shared its concerns with the global health body over the methodology used.

The Congress has been alleging that the government has not released the actual COVID-19 death figures and has demanded a compensation of Rs 4 lakh to the family members of the deceased. According to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Sunday, the death toll from Covid has climbed to 5,21,751 with four fresh fatalities.

SHORT TAKES

6 cops injured

Srinagar: Six policemen were injured Sunday in clashes over a land dispute between two groups in Jammu and Kashmir's Budgam district. Police sources said six policemen were injured in stone pelting after clashes erupted over land dispute between two parties in the Arwah village of Beerwah tehsil in Budgam district. "All the policemen have minor injuries and are being treated" sources said.

Couple ends life

Palanpur: A couple allegedly committed suicide by jumping into a canal along with their two toddler daughters at Tharad in Gujarat's Banaskantha district Sunday, police said. The bodies of the four deceased, all residents of Piluda village, were fished out of the Narmada canal with the help of local swimmers, a Tharad police station official said.

Three killed

Janjgir: Three members of a marriage party were killed and as many others injured after their car overturned and skidded off the road in Chhattisgarh's Janjgir-Champa district on Sunday, police said. The accident took place in the wee hours near Jhulan Pakariya village under Mulmula police station limits when the victims were on their way to the wedding venue after having dinner at a 'dhaba' (roadside eatery), an official said.

Three arrested

Palghar: Three persons were arrested and MD drugs worth Rs 7.04 lakh were seized from them in Palghar district of Maharashtra, police said Sunday. The trio were nabbed by a team of Anti-Narcotics Cell (ANC) in Nalasopara Friday. Police recovered 88 gm of drugs from their possession, a senior officer said.

Gold seized

Indore: The DRI in Madhya Pradesh's Indore seized three kg of gold worth Rs 1.58 crore smuggled from foreign countries and arrested five persons including a jeweller from Ulhasnagar in Maharashtra. On a tip-off, DRI sleuths intercepted a car on the Mumbai-Agra Highway near Indore on April 12 and found three foreign origin gold bars weighing 3 kg hidden in a specially created cavity in the car, the DRI said in a release Sunday.

Ukraine returnees hold protest at Jantar Mantar



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 17: Indian students evacuated from war-torn Ukraine and their parents gathered at Jantar Mantar here Sunday to press for their demand for their admissions in Indian medical institutes.

Around 300 parents and students from across the nation under the Parents Association of Ukraine

MBBS Students demanded the government ensure the evacuees enrollment in the Indian institutes to complete their remaining education.

The Association President R.B. Gupta said: "The government was planning to admit these students in Poland, Hungary, and European countries where the fees are much higher and more or less similar to Indian private medical colleges... we all are from middle class families who can't afford the fees.

"So we gathered here to request Prime Minister Narendra Modi that these children should accommodate in Indian medical colleges." He said that the government should save their children's careers the way they saved their lives and brought them back from Ukraine.

Key takeaways from India's missile malfunction

On March 24, 2022, Frank O'Donnell spoke with South Asian Voices Managing Editor Brigitta Schuchert and Associate Editor Isha Gupta on the key takeaways from India's missile malfunction in Pakistan, and its significance in the context of the India-Pakistan relationship and nuclear security in South Asia. Frank O'Donnell is the Deputy Director of the South Asia Program. O'Donnell has written extensively about inadvertent and accidental escalation risks within the China-India-Pakistan trilateral nuclear rivalry and Indian nuclear force developments and their relevance for U.S. regional strategic interests.

The more common type of missile test failure, in most states, is when the missile is launched according to plan, but when a component malfunctions mid-flight, and the missile veers off course and is then destroyed in-flight by the test managers. This test failure can be due to malfunctions in various parts of the missile, for example its navigational or propulsion systems. However, the phrasing of the Press Information Bureau announcement, of "accidental firing," suggests a more concerning type of missile failure, relating to some human or technological element of the command-and-control system authorizing the initial launch of the missile. Even if the Prime Minister's Office and Ministry of Defence had given their prior approval for the test-launch, and the Indian Air Force had scheduled the

test for that day, the nature of this malfunction still qualifies as an unauthorized missile launch.

■ It was later reported that the missile launched was the BrahMos cruise missile. What is the significance of this?

It is significant for its strategic, but also symbolic, importance to the Indian military. Symbolically, this is a technologically leading missile in India's arsenal, and is its only supersonic cruise missile. It is heavily promoted for export to other states, and India concluded an agreement to sell BrahMos missiles to Philippines in late January. For such a grave accident to occur with a BrahMos missile, as arguably the symbolic flagship platform in India's missile arsenal, is therefore more damaging to India's efforts to demonstrate the sophistication of its precision-guided munitions than if this had oc-

curred with other missiles. It is strategically important as Pakistan believes that BrahMos missiles are dual-use, and that some missiles may be part of India's nuclear forces. Even if not, there have strong indications that Indian military planners see the BrahMos as effective for conventional counterforce missions. The BrahMos-II (K), a supersonic variant, has been described by Indian officials as "well suited to attacking hardened or deeply buried targets such as bunkers or nuclear and biological-weapon storage facilities." We are therefore fortunate that Pakistan did not respond more aggressively to what it could have potentially interpreted as the first salvo of a nuclear attack.

■ Are there Standard Operating Procedures for when something like this happens? There will be an option for the test

managers to order the missile to self-destruct as soon as the unauthorized launch was detected, just as there would be for a launch which veered off course. Pakistan military briefings claim that there was a period of about three minutes from the launch until it crossed the international border, and then another four minutes before it crashed inside Pakistan. There was more than enough time for the Indian test managers to react and order the missile to self-destruct within the first minute after launch.

■ Media reports emerged afterwards that Pakistan had considered a retaliatory strike but did not because the launch was assessed to be an accident. What might go into an assessment of this sort?

This suggests that Pakistan had effective surveillance and intelli-

gence regarding the BrahMos missile preparation and launch. The Pakistan military briefing revealing the exact launch time and location and timestamps of it crossing the border and crashing into Pakistani territory suggests that Pakistan was closely monitoring the BrahMos site. In judging the accidental nature of the launch, Pakistan's surveillance could include observing if the missile was being armed with a warhead, and assessing at the point of launch that it was unarmed. The launch of a single missile, as opposed to several or dozens of simultaneous missile launches, is more suggestive of an accidental launch. The absence of corresponding Indian military movements or intercepted communications "chatter" was also suggestive of an accidental firing.

CREDIT: SOUTH ASIAN VOICES



A man bathes his horse as a boy dives in the Krishna river, on a hot day, in Karad

PTI PHOTO

SUMMER RESPITE

LANGUAGE CONTROVERSY

Why Kerala is not worked up over Hindi

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, April 17: While Union Home Minister Amit Shah's forceful direction that Hindi be accepted as an alternative to English was met with stiff resistance from most of the non-Hindi speaking states, Kerala remained silent.

Several states and opposition political parties came out against the Union Minister even though he had meant that communication between people of two states could be done in Hindi rather than in English but the local languages should never be ignored.

However, states like Tamil Nadu started protests against the state minister with Chief Minister of MK Stalin shooting off a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Home Minister against "imposition" of Hindi.

While the neighbouring state of Tamil Nadu was live with all political parties, including the state unit of the BJP forcefully, stating that the imposition of Hindi in the state would not be allowed, Kerala was silent. There were no protests and even the politicians of the



The reason why there is no opposition to Hindi in the state is that almost all people have learnt Hindi in schools as the state had a three-language education policy

Another reason is the historic nature of Keralites not to enter into major confrontations unnecessarily

Migrations have led to a cosmopolitan outlook for the Malayalis in their language, dress code, food habits and even in marriages

state did not speak their mind out.

The reason why there is no opposition to Hindi in the state is that almost all people have learnt Hindi in schools as the state had a three-language education policy. English, Hindi and Malayalam are taught in almost all schools and most of the people know Hindi well, even if

they are not able to communicate.

This is one reason for Kerala not entering into an agitation mood after the announcement of Amit Shah. Another reason is the historic nature of Keralites; not to enter into major confrontations unnecessarily. Kerala has never witnessed strong agitations at a national level

unlike that in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, the other two southern states.

Even the decades-long water sharing issue of the Mullaperiyar dam between Kerala and Tamil Nadu has not led into a violent agitation in Kerala unlike the Cauvery issue between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu wherein many people lost their lives and properties damaged including motor vehicles, shops and establishments. This nature of the Malayalee populace is reflecting in the language controversy as well.

The middle class of Kerala is a migratory society and after education, many in North Kerala travel to middle east for a living those in central Kerala and South Kerala prefer both middle east, US, UK and Canada. A large migration to other North Indian states is also evident from Kerala. This has led to a cosmopolitan outlook for the Malayalis in their language, dress code, food habits and even in marriages. So Kerala as a society stands apart for barriers in language and hence there was not much impact on the statement by Amit Shah in the south-

ernmost tip of India.

While there are voices of dissent in some parts of Kerala, it is mostly confined to political parties like the CPM who want to oppose as the person who had brought the idea is Amit Shah. However, even those voices of opposition are turning shriller by the day.

More than this Kerala has the history of protecting its linguistic minorities with Tamil and Kannada minority communities getting reservation in schools and colleges and even in Public Service Commission. Still there were agitations in certain predominantly Kannada language speaking areas of Kasargod district in Northern Kerala for posting officials with Kannada language knowledge in areas where Kannada speaking people are in the majority.

The presence of a large number of migrant workers from North Indian states and Bengal have led to even the nook and cranny of the state knowing Hindi as a colloquial language that is used in vegetable shops, meat shops, local tea shops and even in buses and Keralites have adapted to the language of Hindi.

Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind moves SC against bulldozing of houses

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 17: The Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind has filed a petition in the Supreme Court against the use of bulldozers for razing houses and other buildings in various BJP-ruled states, terming it a ploy to target minorities, especially Muslims, under the guise of crime prevention.

Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind Maulana President Arshad Madani said, "The petition asks the court to order the states not to demolish anyone's home or shop without the court's permission. It is noteworthy that the politics of bulldozers is already going on in Uttar Pradesh, but now this nefarious act has started in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh as well."

It noted that during a procession in Khargone city of Madhya Pradesh on the occasion of Ram Navami, riots were started by chanting highly provocative slogans and then by order of the state government, houses and shops of Muslims were demolished. On the other hand, the Madhya Pradesh government is defending its cruel act.

The petition names as respondents the Central government as well as the states of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat, where Muslims have been targeted

in recent days.

The petition has been prepared by advocate Sarim Naved after consultation with senior advocate Kapil Sibal while advocate on record Kabir Dixit has filed it online. A request for an early hearing on the petition may be made to the Chief Justice of India in the next few days. Expressing his deep concern over the hatred and sectarianism that has been going on in the country for some time now, Maulana Madani said that an atmosphere of religious extremism and hatred is prevailing across the country. Conspiracies are being hatched to intimidate minorities, especially Muslims.

He said that provocations were taking place in Muslim localities and in front of mosques. In the presence of the police, sticks and staffs are being waved and slogans are being chanted, and all are silent spectators. It seems as if there is no law left in the country, and no government can arrest them, he said, adding that Muslims were being harassed by the sectarian forces, and the Central government was silent as if nothing had happened. The criminal manner in which the police and the administration have acted in support of the bullies in Khargone shows that enforcing the law is no longer their goal.

Intelligence agencies warn of more RSS-PFI confrontations

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, April 17: The back to back killings of a Popular Front of India worker and a former RSS activist has created a tense situation in Kerala as this could lead to communal flare up. The state intelligence, according to sources, has warned the government of serious issues if stringent action is not taken against the perpetrators of the crimes.

Popular Front of India worker, Subair (44) was killed after being knocked down by a car while he was returning home with his father, Aboobacker after attending prayers at a local mosque Friday. Barely 24 hours within the murder of Subair, RSS local leader and a former 'Pracharak', Sreenivasan (45) was hacked to death by suspected PFI SDPIR gang.

Police said that the killing of Subair was suspected to be in retaliation to the murder of RSS worker Sanjith November 15, 2021.

The Central intelligence agencies have also warned the state government that if the issue was not dealt with strongly, things could get out of control.



Recently an SDPI activist MK Ashraf from Muvattupuzha in Kerala was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) for embezzlement of wealth and for disproportionate sources of income. It is alleged that Ashraf is one of the main sources of funding of the SDPI and PFI. The arrest of Journalist Siddique Kappan in Uttar Pradesh while he was travelling to Hathras in 2020 was also a blow to the SDPI after the Uttar Pradesh Police alleged that the Keralite, who was living in New Delhi for several years, was part of the PFI group. Police and central agencies had opposed Kappan's

baill stating that he was involved in several anti-national activities and this has a bearing on SDPI in Kerala.

With the killing of the RSS leader, there are possibilities of more action from the central home ministry and, hence the state government will have to act strongly against the perpetrators of the crime.

Sources told IANS that around 50 RSS and PFI activists were under detention in Palakkad and some district level leaders of both the organisations would be interrogated and taken into custody if necessary.

The killings witnessed in the last two days, have taken the sheen out of the festivities in the state.

Heavy rush in Kerala churches for Easter

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, April 17: Churches across Kerala are witnessing a heavy rush of devotees for Easter celebration to mark the resurrection of Jesus Christ on the third day. Devotees are thronging the churches in large numbers attending masses Saturday late night till Sunday morning.

At the St Basileus Church, Ernakulam, Cardinal Mar George Alencherry led the prayers. There was a large presence of devotees in the Church to attend the late night and early morning masses. After two years of close down due to Covid-19 pandemic, churches are now open and the devotees have made use of this opportunity and area attending in large numbers to attend the Holy mass.

At the St Josephs Cathedral in Palayam, Thiruvananthapuram, Latin Catholic Church Arch Bishop, Thomas J Netto led the holy mass and prayers Saturday late night and Sunday morning. Like the heavy participation in Ernakulam, Thiruvananthapuram also witnessed a heavy rush of devotees. Christians from all walks of life thronged the church premises.

Cardinal ACleemis A Mar Basileus of the Syrian Malankara Church led the holy mass and prayers at the Pattom church in Thiruvananthapuram. Here also a large presence of devotees was seen. The Christian community is celebrating Easter after 50 days of penance that include prayers and renouncing of non-vegetarian food and Easter brings joy and celebrations take place.

After a lull of two years when Easter and for that matter all other celebrations were low key affairs following Covid-19 pandemic, the present celebrations are done with pomp and galore and the Christians are upbeat with festivities to welcome Easter and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Kerala ration shops to offer banking services from May

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, April 17: The ration shops or public distribution outlets in Kerala will henceforth double up to provide banking services from May 2022 onwards.

Sources in the state public distribution department told IANS that of more than 14,000 ration shops in the state, around 800 shops with facilities would offer the service.

The major proposal is to provide banking services through the Electronic Point of Sale (EPOS). Sources said that four banks have evinced interest in offering the services and chips will be installed in existing ration cards to bring out the project of banking through ration shops.

Kerala minister for Food and Civil Supplies GR Anil will chair a meeting of the concerned officials of the department and the banks that had evinced interest in the first week of May.

Other proposals that will be offered through ration shops include power bills payment facilities, payment of water bills and to include more provisions like in Maveli stores in areas where the Supplyco units are not there.

The Minister told IANS that the project is in the pipeline and that the department is planning to make the ration shops more user-friendly. He also said that the banking facilities will be extended to 1,000 ration shops within a year and more banks will be included in the project.

MP BJP leaders take non-political routes to promote 'sonrise'

Modi has recently reiterated his opposition to dynastic politics and that's the reason the sons of Madhya Pradesh BJP leaders are taking non-political routes to evade the party diktat

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhopal, April 17: The Bharatiya Janata Party, which has been cornering the Congress over dynastic politics, is making efforts to save itself from the allegations of 'Privaarvaad'.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recently reiterated his opposition to dynastic politics and that's the reason the sons of Madhya Pradesh BJP leaders are taking non-political routes to evade the party diktat.

Recently, addressing a parliamentary committee meeting, Prime Minister Modi had said that dynastic politics will not be allowed, increasing the worries of the leaders who were planning to launch their future generation into politics.

Over 12 BJP leaders in Madhya Pradesh want to field their children in politics who could be seen taking charge during poll campaigns.

Taking a quick look, it can be observed that Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan's son Kartikey, Cabinet Ministers Jyotiraditya Scindia's son Mahaanaryaman, Narendra Singh Tomar's son Devender Pratap Singh, state ministers Gopal Bhargav's son Abhishek, Kamel Patel's son Sandeep, Narottam Mishra's son Sukarna Mishra, Gindhar Singh Rajput's son Akash Rajput, Tulsi Silawat's son Nitish Silwar and former MP Prabhat Jha's son Tushmul Jha are standing on the threshold of politics.

Most of them have earlier secured organisational posts in the party. National general secretary Kailash Vijayavargiya's son Akash Vijayavargiya is an MLA. Moreover, the family members of senior leaders who are not in active politics are ministers and MLAs.

There is silence on dynastic politics among the leaders. MP BJP chief Vishnu Dutt Sharma said the BJP has taken the lead in rooting out dynastic politics and "we are making efforts for that. The BJP is marching ahead on the way towards strengthening democracy."

On the other hand, a few leaders in the saffron party are restless over the fact. Former Chief Minister Virendra Kumar Saklecha's son Om Prakash Saklecha, who is a minister, has even given a "new"



Over 12 BJP leaders in Madhya Pradesh want to field their children in politics who could be seen taking charge during poll campaigns

definition of 'parivaarvaad', saying, "The meaning of parivaarvaad is very simple. One from whose family, nobody is active in politics for the past five, seven years, has not done any work, he should not be given an opportunity."

The sons of many leaders in Madhya Pradesh are active in their constituency and have also started to search for other paths so that they can have direct contact with the public.

Mahaanaryaman Scindia is the fourth generation of the erstwhile Scindia royal family. During elections, he is active in his father's constituency, but now he has stepped into the field of cricket and has become the vice president of the Gwalior Divisional Cricket Association.

Similarly, Devendra Pratap Singh is vice-president of the Indian Hockey Federation and is also associated with the special organisation Interactive Forum on the Indian economy.

Abhishek Bhargav held various posts in the organisation but his work was limited to his father's Assembly area. He remains in constant touch with the public.

State Agriculture Minister Kamal Patel's son Sandeep Patel focuses on sports activities more than politics. He had recently organised a sports festival.

Tushmul Jha is active in social activities, more than politics.

Khargone violence takes a toll on wedding plans

Khargone continues to be under curfew since communal clashes broke out on Ram Navami last Sunday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Khargone, April 17: Communal violence affects social harmony and peace, which is a given but recent clashes in Khargone city in Madhya Pradesh have also impacted the marriage plans of some youngsters while a prospective groom has shifted out from a troubled area to save his engagement.

Khargone continues to be under curfew since communal clashes broke out on Ram Navami last Sunday.

Aman Verma's family members had been preparing for the last four months to make his marriage a grand event but they are now forced to perform the ritual after securing permission from the police and in the presence of a few relatives, devoid of pomp and revelry.

On Sunday morning, Verma's marriage party left for Kasrawad, the hometown of his bride, some 35 km from Khargone city.

Additional Collector Sumer Singh Mujalde said special permission was given to this marriage party to leave during the relaxation of curfew Sunday morning.

Since Thursday, the administration has been relaxing the curfew in Khargone city every day for four hours in intervals of two hours each. On Sunday, the curfew was relaxed from 8 am to 12 noon to allow people to buy essential items and carry out necessary work.

But what is a marriage without a band and 'baraatis'? Aman's sis-



ter said they had booked a DJ band for Aman's marriage but now they are compelled to perform the rituals in the presence of a few close relatives on the fixed date.

24-year-old Aman, a resident of the Talab Chowk area, said that most of his relatives could not reach Khargone due to the curfew. Talab Chowk is one of the worst-hit areas during the Ram Navami violence.

For Shekhar Patil, the fallout of the violence is threatening his prospective marriage, forcing him to relocate from the Sanjay Nagar locality to Motipura.

The marriage of Patil, an electrician by profession and a resi-

dent of Sanjay Nagar, was fixed some four years back.

However, he is now worried as the girl's family is having second thoughts about marrying off their daughter to him due to his area of residence. During the clashes Sunday, Khargone Superintendent of Police Siddharth Choudhary had sustained a bullet injury to his leg in the Sanjay Nagar area.

Patil said that he has now shifted to rented accommodation in the Motipura area to save this relationship.

"My family is trying to sell the house due to repeated violence in Sanjay Nagar but are not finding a buyer," he rued.

Patil's neighbour Rahul Kumawat said his sister's marriage is scheduled during a mass marriage ceremony May 3 but he had to shift from Sanjay Nagar to another locality after the violence.

He is now making arrangements to accommodate his relatives in a lodge and a dharmshala.

Kumawat said that he has promised his in-laws to shift to another place after his sister's marriage.

Vivek Joshi, who works as a district cooperative bank manager, said that he decided to change the venue of his son's marriage to Sanawad town, some 68 km away from Khargone. Joshi said that family members of Shivam Shukla, a 16-year-old boy injured badly in communal violence, have also decided to postpone the marriage of his elder sister scheduled April 17. Shivam is undergoing treatment in an Indore hospital for head injuries caused by pellets.

On the other hand, Altaf Azad, a Muslim community leader, said that the marriage season in his community will start after the Eid festival next month.

If the situation does not improve, then marriages in his community will have to be postponed because all the preparations are to be done in April itself, he said.

Meanwhile, Khargone Collector Anugraha P has visited the violence-hit areas in the city and assured the victims that the state government will soon start the work to restore their houses after carrying out a survey.

of the day quote

The plastic industry needs to reduce the volume of imports and become self-reliant. The volume of imports of USD 17 billion shows that there is a clear market waiting for us to capture.

PIYUSH GOYAL | UNION MINISTER

From 2017 to 2022, the double-engine BJP government has provided 44 lakh houses to people in UP. Apart from this, over 14 crore people in UP have got free ration

KESHAV PRASAD MAURYA | UP DEPUTY CM

This is a good thing that awareness is increasing. The rise in the reporting of crime is a good sign. It shows that people's faith in the system is growing

KAILASH SATYARTHI | NOBEL LAUREATE

SHORT TAKES

Bora joins TMC

Kolkata: Former Assam Congress president Ripun Bora Sunday joined the TMC in the presence of party's national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee here.

Five killed

Guwahati: At least five members of a Bihu team, including four teenagers, have been killed and five others injured as a vehicle carrying them turned turtle in Assam's Biswanath district, police said Sunday.

Tiger kills farmer

Chandrapur: A farmer was mauled to death by a tiger in Brahmapuri forest division of Maharashtra's Chandrapur district, an official said Sunday.

12 injured in fire

Damoh (MP): At least 12 persons, including three children, were injured on Sunday in a fire that broke out at a house hosting a wedding in a village in Madhya Pradesh's Damoh district, police said.



The demand for removing loudspeakers on mosques and the reciting Hanuman Chalisa are parts of an effort to create a communal hatred to topple the MVA government by BJP in collaboration with the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS)

SANJAY RAUT | SHIV SENA MP

RAINS LIKELY TO CONTINUE IN NORTHEAST

While rainfall in the southern peninsular India is set to reduce, some states in the northeast would continue to witness heavy-to-very heavy rainfall for the next two days, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has said



Swamped by smuggled goods, traders seek access to Myanmar

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Aizawl/Imphal, April 17: India and Myanmar's official trade through Mizoram and Manipur has been closed for many years although various drugs, arms and ammunition, endangered animals and other items valued at hundreds of crores of rupees are being traded illegally across the border.

various items, especially highly addictive drugs. Moreh in Manipur and Zokhawthar in Mizoram are the two important international trading points along the 1,643-km long India-Myanmar unfenced border.



capital Imphal, is one of the oldest trade points in India along the border with Myanmar, with the city of Tamu on the other

side of the border. The India-Myanmar Friendship Bridge in Moreh connects India to Kalewa in Myanmar's Sagaing Division. A senior ICP official said that given its strategic location, ICP Moreh has the advantage of acting as India's gateway to the East through the Moreh-Tamu border point, which is presently the only feasible land route for trade between India and Myanmar and other South East Asian countries.

Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway. The Mizoram based International Trade Initiative Forum (ITIF) recently urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Mizoram Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati to resume the trade with Myanmar through the Zokhawthar border point.

Shehbaz writes to Modi, seeks 'meaningful' talks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 17: Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has written a letter to his Indian counterpart, Narendra Modi, pitching for "meaningful" engagement between the two countries, people familiar with the development said Sunday.



In a Twitter post, Modi congratulated Shehbaz Sharif on becoming the Prime Minister of Pakistan and said India desires peace and stability in a region free of terrorism



It is learnt that Sharif, in his reply to Modi's letter, also sought resolution of the outstanding issues, including that of Kashmir, while maintaining that Pakistan favours peaceful and cooperative ties with India

Sharif's communication Saturday came in response to a letter sent by Modi to the Pakistani leader congratulating him on becoming the prime minister, they said.

In his letter a few days ago, Modi conveyed to Sharif that India desired constructive ties with Pakistan.

April 11, the Pakistan parliament selected Sharif as the 23rd prime minister of the country, a day after Imran Khan was ousted from power in a no-confidence vote. In a Twitter post, Modi congratulated Sharif on becoming the prime minister of Pakistan and said India desires peace and stability in a region free of terrorism.

"Congratulations to H. E. Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on his election as the Prime Minister of Pakistan. India desires peace

and stability in a region free of terror, so that we can focus on our development challenges and ensure the well-being and prosperity of our people," he tweeted on April 11. In his response, Sharif said Pakistan desires peaceful and cooperative ties with India.

"Thank you Premier Narendra Modi for felicitations. Pakistan desires peaceful & cooperative ties with India. Peaceful settlement of outstanding disputes including

Jammu & Kashmir is indispensable. Pakistan's sacrifices in fighting terrorism are well-known. Let's secure peace and focus on socio-economic development of our people," the Pakistan prime minister tweeted.

It is learnt that Sharif, in his reply to Modi's letter, also sought resolution of the outstanding issues, including that of Kashmir; while maintaining that Pakistan favours peaceful and cooperative ties with India.

UK PM to begin India visit from Ahmedabad

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, APRIL 17: The UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson will visit India this week to "deepen" the long-term partnership amidst the global economic challenges and "threats" from autocratic states.



and stepping up security co-operation in the Indo-Pacific.

The visit will commence from Ahmedabad on April 21, wherein he will meet with leading businesses and discuss the UK and India's thriving commercial, trade and people links. This will be the first time that a UK Prime Minister would visit Gujarat, India's fifth largest state and the ancestral home of around half of the British-Indian population in the UK.

The British Prime Minister will then travel to New Delhi to meet Prime Minister Modi on April 22, a statement by the British embassy here said. The leaders will hold in-depth talks on the UK and India's strategic defence, diplomatic and economic partnership, aimed at bolstering the close partnership

In Gujarat, Johnson is expected to announce major investment in key industries in both -- the UK and India, boosting jobs and growth at home, as well as new collaboration on cutting-edge science, health and technology.

He will use the visit to drive progress in the Free Trade Agreement negotiations launched earlier this year -- a deal with India is predicted to boost our total trade by up to \$36.57 billion annually by

2035 and increase wages across the UK by up to \$4 billion.

Speaking ahead of the visit, Johnson said: "As we face threats to our peace and prosperity from autocratic states, it is vital that democracies and friends stick together: India, as a major economic power and the world's largest democracy, is a highly valued strategic partner for the UK in these uncertain times."

"My visit to India will deliver on the things that really matter to the people of both our nations -- from job creation and economic growth, to energy security and defence," he added. In 2021, the British Prime Minister and Prime Minister Modi agreed on a UK-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, announcing more than \$692 million in investment into the UK and committing to a deeper bilateral relationship across trade, health, climate, defence and security, and connecting people of the two nations.

Lawyer jumps to death from building in Hyd

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad, April 17: A young woman lawyer committed suicide by jumping from an apartment building in Hyderabad in the early hours of Sunday, the police said.

Shivani, 23, jumped from the fourth floor of a building in Lakshmi Vihar Phase One in Defence Employees' colony under the limits of Chandanagar police station of Cyberabad police commissionerate.

According to police, domestic problems led to the woman's suicide. Preliminary investigations revealed that Shivani and her husband Arjun had a fight over some issue on Saturday. Arjun surrendered before police, who were questioning him. Shivani and Arjun had a love marriage five years ago and they have two-year-old son.

Circle inspector Kastro Reddy said Shivani was at her sister's house along with her mother and other family members when she jumped from the fourth floor of the building. He said they registered a case on a complaint by the deceased's mother and sister and took up further investigation.

According to family members, Shivani resorted to the extreme on a day when her son was to celebrate his birthday. The lawyer's mother Hema told the media that Shivani had lost her father during childhood and her maternal uncle took her responsibility and made her a lawyer.

Loudspeaker controversy: Thackeray sets deadline

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

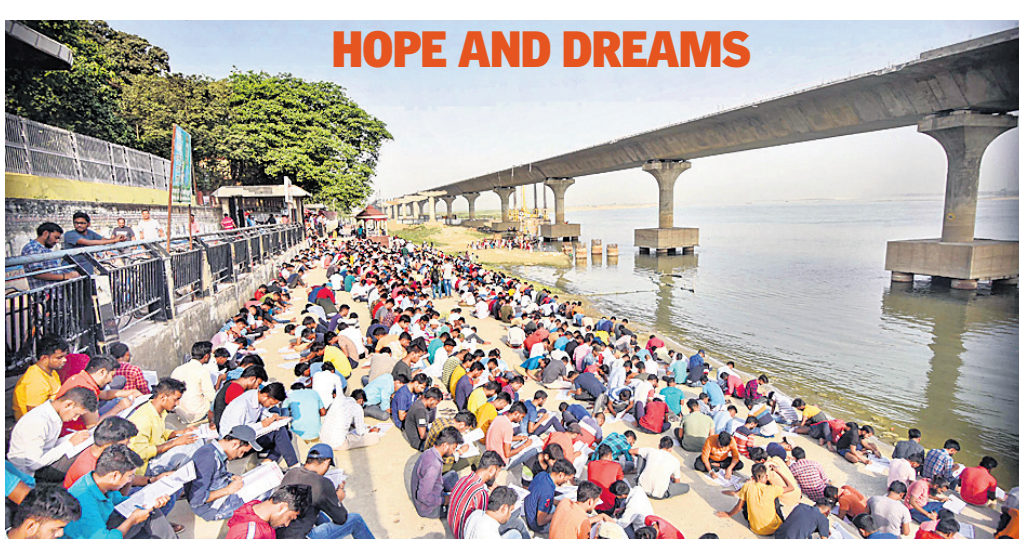
Pune, April 17: Raising the pitch for Hindutva, MNS president Raj Thackeray on Sunday said he will visit Ayodhya on June 5 to take darshan of Lord Ram and appealed to "Hindu brothers" to be prepared if loudspeakers are not removed from mosques by May 3.

Stating that loudspeakers relaying the 'azaan' call is more of a social issue than a religious one, Thackeray said they don't want peace in the society disturbed, "but if the use of loudspeakers continues then they (Muslims) will also have to listen to our prayers on loudspeakers". "On May 1, I will address a public gathering at Sambhajanagar (Aurangabad). On June 5, I will visit Ayodhya for darshan along with MNS volunteers. I also appeal to others to come to Ayodhya," the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) president told a press conference in Pune. When asked about the purpose

of his visit to Ayodhya, Raj Thackeray parried the question, saying he has not travelled out for a long time. However, speaking about the Ayodhya visit after the press conference, he said, "So many 'kar-sevaks' lost their lives for it (Ram temple). And due to the Supreme Court and central government, the Ram temple is being established there. So I want to go there at its initial stage (of construction). Later, once the temple gets ready, everybody will visit it again."

Interestingly, amid a war of words between the ruling Shiv Sena and Raj Thackeray, Sena MP Sanjay Raut Saturday said that state minister Aaditya Thackeray will visit Ayodhya next month. Raj Thackeray reiterated his demand that loudspeakers on mosques be removed by May 3 or else MNS will play 'Hanuman Chalisa' eulogising Lord Hanuman on loudspeakers outside mosques.

"People think that loudspeakers atop mosques is a religious issue, but it is a social issue. If you want to play loudspeakers five times a day then we will play 'Hanuman Chalisa' five times in front of mosques. I appeal to all Hindu brothers to be prepared. We will wait till May 3 when Ramzan ends. But if they don't stop, and if they think that their religion is bigger than the judiciary, then we will give tit for tat," he said.



Students prepare for competitive exams on the banks of Ganga in Patna, Sunday

SC ruling today on plea against Ashish bail

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 17: The Supreme Court is scheduled to deliver on Monday its order on a plea seeking cancellation of bail to Ashish Mishra, son of Union minister Ajay Mishra, in the Lakhimpur Kheri violence case. A bench headed by Chief Justice

N V Ramana is likely to pronounce its verdict at 10:30 am Monday. The top court April 4 had reserved its order on a plea of farmers seeking cancellation of bail to Ashish Mishra.

The apex court had earlier raised questions over the Allahabad High Court verdict granting bail to Ashish Mishra, saying unnecessary de-

tails like postmortem report and nature of wounds should not have gone into when the trial was yet to commence. The special bench, also comprising Justices Surya Kant and Hima Kohli, had also taken strong note of the fact that the state government did not file an appeal against the high court's order as suggested by the apex court-appointed SIT.



UP, Chhattisgarh top in police encounter deaths

UP and Chhattisgarh have topped in deaths in police encounters for the past six years. According to Union Home Ministry's official data analysed, of the 813 deaths in police encounters during the past six years, 354 such cases are

still pending. As many as 459 cases have been disposed of. No clue has been given as to how these cases have been disposed of. The highest number of deaths in police encounters took place in Chhattisgarh (259) followed by UP with 121 cases. Incidentally, lowest encounters were witnessed in West Bengal where five cases took place in six years while Punjab witnessed 8 police encounters. Maharashtra, on the other hand, saw 34 police encounters deaths during the past six years. However, these encounters have been on the decline for the past three years.

BJP high command buying peace

The BJP leadership has swung into action to put its house in order

particularly in Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh. It is also gearing up to retain power in Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh. The BJP high command has decided to buy peace with estranged leader Vasundhara Raje Scindia who had been in political hibernation since 2018. The BJP even tried to form a government with the help of dissident Congress leader Sachin Pilot too but could not succeed. Now Vasundhara Raje Scindia is back in favour, and was invited to the swearing in-ceremony of Yogi Adityanath in Lucknow. Later, BJP Chief J P Nadda invited her to discuss the party affairs in Rajasthan. She also called on the PM. The BJP wants to win all these states in the run up to the 2024 Lok Sabha polls and wants leaders to sink their differences.

Why NCP, Sena soft on PM

Strange it may sound but true. A close study of the proceedings of Parliament showed that none of the 30 MPs of the Shiv Sena and NCP in both Houses of Parliament hardly took on the Modi government during the Budget session. Though central agencies have been targeting MVA leaders day-in and day-out, their MPs play coy on the issue inside the Parliament. They have been bitterly attacking the Modi government for misusing the ED, CBI and Income-Tax for political vendetta outside the House. But none of their senior leaders had raised such issues in a big way inside the Parliament. Most of the Sena MPs confined themselves to raising issues of their constituencies rather than attacking the government. However,

outside the Parliament, Sharad Pawar, Sanjay Raut and other leaders have been attacking the government.

Raghavan goes

The key post of Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) to the Government of India has fallen vacant with K Vijay Raghavan demitting office April 2. Surprisingly, the government is without a PSA which has never been the case for the past 20 years. The post of PSA was created during the Vajpayee era and many industrialists personalities including Dr A P J Abdul Kalam (1999-2002) and R Chidambaram held the august office for more than 16 years. Raghavan held the post from 2018 initially for a period of three years and was given an extension and finally his tenure ended on April 2.

international

of the day quote

I hear the anxiety that exists in a lot of our young people. I see young people, adolescents, who are fearful about our planet's future



EMMANUEL MACRON | FRENCH PRESIDENT

Karachi, I thank you from my heart. I've come to talk about some very special things because the problem is that of your and your children's future. This conspiracy against our country, I want you to carefully listen if this was a conspiracy or an interference



IMRAN KHAN | FORMER PAKISTAN PM

We are inching towards full fledged civil unrest, Imran Khan has exercised utmost restraint even he won't be able to stop this very angry mob and we will see country plunging into a civil unrest



FAWAD CHAUDHRY | PAKISTAN TEHREEK-E-INSAF (PTI) LEADER

SHORT TAKES

Baghdad: 13 killed in traffic accident

Baghdad: Up to 13 people, including nine school teachers, were killed and four others wounded in a car crash south of the Iraqi capital Baghdad, Iraqi authorities and a source have said. Iraqi Interior Ministry's Traffic Directorate said Saturday in a statement that a 4-wheel drive vehicle and a minibus collided as a result of inattentive driving and speeding in the north of Babil's province capital Hilla, nearly 110-km south of Baghdad.

2 dead, several hurt in shooting

Pittsburgh: Two people were killed and several injured in a shooting at a party in Pittsburgh early Sunday morning, police said. Pittsburgh police in a news release said the shooting happened at about 12:30 a.m. During a party at a short-term rental property.

Global Covid-19 cases top 504mln

Washington: The global coronavirus caseload has topped 504 million, while the deaths have surged to more than 6.19 million and vaccinations to over 11.16 billion. In its latest update Saturday morning, the University's Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) revealed that the current global caseload and the death toll stood at 504,079,223 and 6,196,927 respectively, while the total number of vaccine doses administered has increased to 11,166,887,576.

12 injured in shooting at mall

Columbia: Ten people were shot and two others injured in a shooting at a busy shopping mall in South Carolina's capital that authorities do not believe was a random attack. Three people who had firearms have been detained in connection with the Saturday afternoon shooting at Columbiana Centre, Columbia Police Chief WH "Skip" Holbrook said.

Quake jolts Indonesia

Jakarta: A 5.8-magnitude earthquake rocked Indonesia's eastern province of Papua Sunday, however no tsunami alert was issued, the meteorology, climatology and geophysics agency said. The quake struck at 12:49 p.m. Jakarta time, with the epicenter at 111 km northwest of Kepulauan Yapen (Yapen islands) district and the shallow of 10 km under the seabed, the agency said.

MARIUPOL TEETERS ON BRINK

AGENCIES

Kyiv, April 17: The battered port city of Mariupol appeared on the brink of falling to Russian forces Sunday after seven weeks under siege, a development that what would give Moscow a crucial success in Ukraine following Russia's failure to storm the capital and the loss of its Black Sea flagship.

The Russian military estimated that about 2,500 Ukrainian fighters holding out at a hulking steel plant with a warren of underground passageways provided the last pocket of resistance in Mariupol. Russia gave a deadline for their surrender, saying those who put down their weapons were "guaranteed to keep their lives," but the Ukrainians did not submit.

"All those who will continue resistance will be destroyed," Maj. Gen. Igor Konashenkov, the Russian Defense Ministry's spokesman, said. He said intercepted communications indicated there were about 400 foreign mercenaries along with the Ukrainian troops at the Azovstal steel mill, a claim that couldn't be independently verified.

Seizing Mariupol would free up Russian forces to weaken and encircle Ukrainian soldiers forces in eastern Ukraine, where Russia has focused its war aims for now and is deploying personnel and equipment withdrawn from the



Russia tells fighters in Mariupol steelworks to lay down arms

Bombardments continue elsewhere around Ukraine

Ukrainian President Zelenskyy says occupiers must pay

Pope decries 'cruel and senseless' conflict

Kiev ordered the militants located on the territory of the Azovstal metallurgical plant, surrounded and blocked in Mariupol, to shoot those who want to lay down their arms

north after a botched attempt to take Kyiv.

Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar described Mariupol as a "shield defending Ukraine" as Russian troops prepare for a full-scale offensive in Donbas, the country's eastern industrial heartland where Moscow-backed separatists already control some territory.

Clashes erupt again near flashpoint Jerusalem holy site

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jerusalem, April 17: Israeli police Sunday entered the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in Jerusalem's Old City to secure the way for Jewish visitors to the flashpoint holy site, fuelling clashes that left 17 Palestinians wounded, according to Palestinian medical workers.

The unrest happened just two days after clashes with Palestinians at the same site. Violence in Jerusalem between Israeli security forces and Palestinian demonstrators a year ago escalated into an 11-day Gaza war.

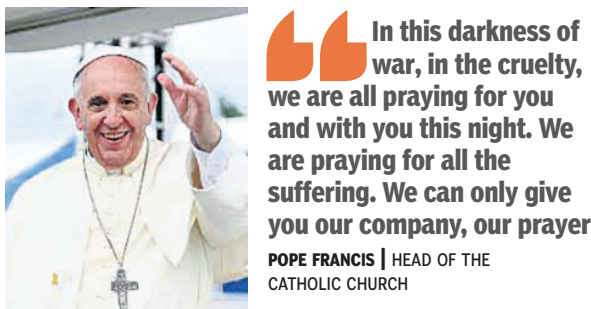
The hilltop compound housing the mosque is the third-holiest site in Islam, while it is the holiest place for Jews, who refer to it as the Temple Mount. The competing claims to the site have sparked numerous rounds of violence.

This year the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, Christian holy week culminating in Easter Sunday and

the week-long Jewish Passover are all occurring at the same time, with tens of thousands of visitors flocking to the city after coronavirus restrictions have been mostly lifted.

Israeli police accused Palestinians of "defiling and desecrating" a holy site, while Palestinian officials accused Israel of trying to divide the sensitive holy site. "What happened in Al-Aqsa Mosque is a dangerous escalation, the repercussions of which are to be borne by the Israeli government alone," said Nabil Abu Rdeneh, spokesman for Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

Police said they entered the compound to facilitate the routine visit of Jews to the holy site. They said Palestinians had stockpiled stones and set up barriers in anticipation of violence. Omer Barlev, the Israeli minister in charge of the police, said it was important to ensure freedom of worship "but we will not compromise when violence and terror take place".



In this darkness of war, in the cruelty, we are all praying for you and with you this night. We are praying for all the suffering. We can only give you our company, our prayer

POPE FRANCIS | HEAD OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

WILLIAM AND KATE LEAD ROYALS AT EASTER SERVICE

Senior British royals including Prince William and his wife Kate have attended an Easter Sunday church service at Windsor Castle. Queen Elizabeth II, who has been experiencing mobility problems, did not attend the service at St George's Chapel on the castle grounds, a fixture in the royals' calendar



Lankan delegation to seek \$4bn from IMF

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Colombo, April 17: A Sri Lankan government delegation is headed to the US on Sunday to engage with the IMF to secure a USD 4 billion package as it desperately tries to salvage the country's beleaguered economy currently reeling under a severe forex crisis.

The delegation led by newly-appointed finance minister Ali Sabry will hold talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) between April 19 and April 24. Sabry has said that Sri Lanka is seeking a bail out package of \$4 billion from the IMF, having earlier resisted calls to seek a facility from the global lender.

Sri Lanka had to meet \$7 billion of debt payments this year.

This was the first ever debt default by Sri Lanka in its history since 1948 and the country's 22 million people are facing crippling 12-hour power cuts, and an extreme scarcity of food, fuel and other essential items such as medicines.

The Securities and Exchange Commission of Sri Lanka (SEC) on Saturday announced that the Colombo Stock Exchange will remain temporarily closed for a week from Monday to provide investors an opportunity to have "more clarity and understanding" of the cur-



The visit is taking place days after the finance ministry Tuesday announced that it is suspending repayments of foreign debt

rent economic conditions in crisis-hit Sri Lanka that would help them "to make informed investment decisions".

Sri Lanka is facing its worst economic crisis since gaining independence from the UK in 1948. The economic crisis also triggered a political turmoil in the island nation with citizens holding nationwide street protests for weeks over lengthy power cuts and shortage of fuel, food and other daily essentials and demanding ouster of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa.

Five killed in Kharkiv attack

Kyiv: A Ukrainian health official says that at least five people have been killed in the Russian shelling of Kharkiv. Maksym Haustov, the head of the Kharkiv regional administration's health department, said that another 13 residents were wounded by Sunday's shelling of Ukraine's second-largest city. Rescuers have been working to help survivors after the shelling that hit residential and administrative buildings and caused fires. Officials said the centre of Kharkiv came under shelling by multiple rocket launchers.

Friday to step up missile strikes on the capital. The Russian military said Sunday that it had attacked an ammunition plant near Kyiv overnight with precision-guided missiles, the third such strike in as many days.

Russia renewed attacks on Kyiv after accusing Ukrainian forces of airstrikes on Russian territory that wounded seven people and damaged about 100 residential buildings in Bryansk, a region bordering Ukraine. Ukrainian officials have not confirmed hitting targets in Russia.

HOLY CONGREGATION



Pope Francis on his popemobile drives through the crowd of faithful at the end of the Catholic Easter Sunday mass he led in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican, Sunday. For many Christians, this weekend marks the first time in three years they will gather in person to celebrate Easter Sunday

South African floods kill more than 400

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Durban, South Africa, April 17: South Africa's flood-ravaged east was hit by more rain Saturday after the deadliest storm to strike the country in living memory killed nearly 400 people and left tens of thousands homeless.

Floodwaters engulfed parts of the southeastern coastal city of Durban this week ripping apart roads, destroying hospitals and sweeping away homes and those trapped inside.

Emergency services in the southeastern KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province, where Durban is located off the Indian Ocean



coast, were on high alert. Recovery operations and humanitarian relief were underway in the city of 3.5 million which would normally have been teeming with Easter holiday-makers this weekend. The death count rose Saturday to 398 while 27 people were re-

ported still missing, the government said in a statement. More than 40,000 have been rendered homeless.

"Sadly there are still bodies being recovered from homesteads, especially from the rural areas," Shawn Herbst of the first responder company Netcare 911 told AFP.

"There is still damage taking place, especially with the rain we are experiencing today."

This weekend's rainfall will not be "as hectic as it was in the past few days", according to Puseletso Mofokeng, South Africa Weather Service forecaster. With soil being over-saturated with water, more flooding is expected.

China sending up next space station crew in June

China says it will launch three more astronauts to its newest space station in June after the latest crew returned this weekend following a six-month stay in orbit

AGENCIES

Beijing, April 17: China will launch three more astronauts to its newest space station in June after the latest crew returned this weekend following a six-month stay in orbit, an official said Sunday. The crew of the Shenzhou 14 capsule will spend six months on the Tiangong to add two modules

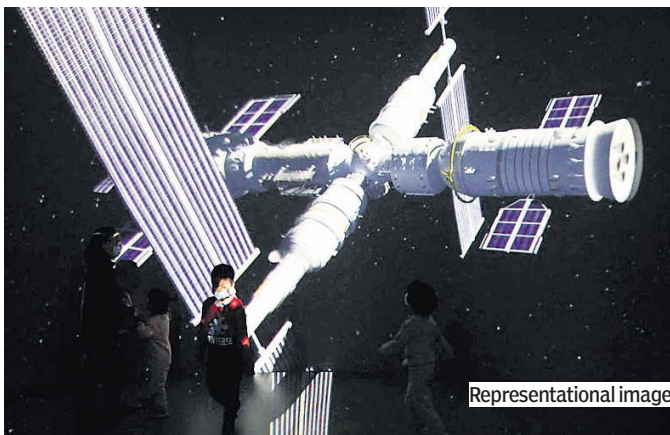
to the station, Hao Chun, director of the China Manned Space Engineering Office, told a news conference.

China's ambitious space programme launched its first astronaut into orbit in 2003, landed robot rovers on the moon in 2013, and on Mars last year. Officials have discussed a possible crewed mission to the moon.

The core module of the Tiangong, or Heavenly Palace, was launched in April 2021. Plans call for completing construction this year.

The Wentian module will be launched in July and the Mengtian module in October, Hao said.

Near the end of the Shenzhou 14 crew's mission, three more astronauts will be launched aboard Shenzhou 15 for a six-month stay, Hao said. He added that the two crews would overlap for three to five days, marking the first time



the station has six people aboard. On Saturday, the crew of Shenzhou 13 landed in the Gobi desert in the northern region of Inner Mongolia.

During the mission, astronaut Wang Yaping carried out the first

spacewalk by a Chinese woman. Wang, commander Zhai Zhigang and crewmate Ye Guangfu also beamed back physics lessons for high school students.

China was the third nation to launch an astronaut into space on

Fresh hurdle

Beijing: The massive surge of COVID-19 cases in Shanghai city has hit China's shipbuilding industry, including the construction of the third aircraft carrier scheduled for launch April 23. For over a fortnight, Shanghai -- China's business and industrial hub with over 26 million people -- has been literally shut down with strict lockdown as the city experienced rampaging spread of the Omicron variant of the coronavirus. Shanghai reported 3,590 confirmed locally transmitted COVID-19 cases and over 21,500 local asymptomatic carriers Saturday, the city municipal health commission said on Sunday. The lockdown has slowed China's shipbuilding plans and may affect the launch of the country's third aircraft carrier, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported on Sunday. The People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) was widely expected to launch the aircraft carrier around its 73rd anniversary April 23.

its own after the former Soviet Union and the United States. Tiangong is China's third space station following predecessors launched in 2011 and 2016.

The government announced in 2020 that China's first reusable spacecraft had landed following a

test flight but no photos or details have been released.

China is excluded from the International Space Station due to US unease that its space programme is run by the ruling Communist Party's military wing, the People's Liberation Army.



The global trust deficit around China means there is a great opportunity for us not only to sell semiconductor chips from India but also hardware products that are made in India
AJAI CHOWDHRY | HCL CO-FOUNDER

96 CPSEs INCORPORATED SINCE 2014

Union government has incorporated as many as 96 CPSEs since 2014, as per official data. 69 of these Central Public Sector Enterprises have their registered offices in Delhi. The list includes Air India Assets Holding Ltd, set up in 2018 as a precursor to Air India's sale to hold non-core assets, liabilities of erstwhile national carrier.



of the day quote

We are a little behind our competitors in introducing the (EV) model to the Indian market, but we see that still, the market demand for those EVs is limited. Actually, sales of EVs in the Indian market are still very, very limited
HISASHI TAKEUCHI | MARUTI SUZUKI MD & CEO

I think we definitely should have much better growth in the market because of the huge latent demand and waitlist on our cars despite the chip shortage severely affecting our supply.
RAJEEV CHABA | MG MOTOR INDIA PRESIDENT & MD

We can ourselves see the conditions of our neighbours whether it is Pakistan or Sri Lanka or other countries. People there are crying for help, while the government here is concerned about its people and working to strengthen their condition
BHAGWAT K. KARAD | MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE

Govt amends FEMA rules to allow 20% FDI in LIC

Following Cabinet approval, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade March 14 had amended the FDI policy to facilitate overseas investment in LIC ahead of the mega IPO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 17: The government has amended rules of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), paving the way for up to 20 per cent foreign direct investment in the insurance behemoth LIC.

The government is planning to dilute its stake in LIC through the Initial Public Offering (IPO). LIC in February had filed the Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP) before the markets regulator Sebi for the IPO.

Last month, Sebi gave approval to the draft papers and the insurer is in the process of filing a request for proposal with changes.

Following the Cabinet approval, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) March 14 had amended the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) policy to facilitate overseas investment in LIC ahead of the mega public offer.

FEMA notification was required to operationalise the provisions DPIIT issued through a press note, including FDI policy changes that will allow large foreign portfolio in-



vestors to subscribe to shares of LIC.

"These rules may be called the Foreign Exchange Management (Non-debt Instruments) (Amendment) Rules, 2022," said a gazette notification issued recently.

The notification has inserted a paragraph in the existing policy, allowing up to 20 per cent FDI in LIC through the automatic route.

Since the foreign inflows' ceiling for public sector banks is 20 per cent under government approval route

as per the present FDI policy, it has been decided to allow foreign investment of up to 20 per cent in LIC and other such corporate bodies.

"Foreign investment in LIC shall be subject to the provisions of the Life Insurance Corporation Act, 1956, (LIC Act) as amended from time to time and such provisions of the Insurance Act, 1938, as amended from time to time, as are applicable to LIC," it said.

Oil Min freezes gas allocation, prices of CNG, PNG spike



High prices bring the CNG almost at par with diesel and petrol, eroding the incentive for users to convert vehicles to the cleaner fuel

any fresh allocation for over a year now, three sources aware of the matter said.

Besides the shortfall in the allocation, the prices of APM gas for CNG and PNG have been revised from USD 2.90 per million British thermal unit to USD 6.10, an increase of 110 per cent.

While the demand has grown at a rapid pace in existing cities with CNG networks and supplies starting in newer areas, lack of allocation from domestic fields meant that operators bought imported liquefied natural gas (LNG) at prices that were at least six times the domestic rate. Result - CNG prices have risen by 60 per cent or by over ₹28 per kg in one year and PNG by over a third.

Sources said this has put a question mark on the economic viability of the entire CGD sector, putting at risk the planned ₹2 lakh crore investment in expansion into newer cities as high prices bring the CNG at almost par with diesel and petrol, eroding the incentive for users to convert vehicles to the cleaner fuel.

City gas projects are essential for meeting the government target of raising the share of environmentally-friendly natural gas in the country's primary energy basket to 15 per cent by 2030 from current 6.7 per cent. Cutting domestic gas supplies to such projects would impact the progress in achieving the target, the sources said.

UPI to stay on top in next 5 yrs: Report



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 17: Retail online transaction platform UPI will likely continue to dominate the digital payments space in the country even as newer methods such as BNPL and digital currency are expected to define the future of payments, a study has said.

Unified Payments Interface (UPI), Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL), Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) and offline payments will drive growth of digital payments in India in the next five years, PwC India said in a report.

UPI is expected to continue to be the major contributor in the digital payments space, followed by BNPL, it said.

The Indian digital payments market saw steady growth at a CAGR of 23 per cent (volume wise), and is expected to reach 217 billion (21,700 crore) transactions in FY26 from 59 billion (5,900 crore) in FY22, said the report titled 'The Indian Payments Handbook - 2021-26'.

In 2020-21, UPI transactions reached a record 22 billion (2,200 crore), and it is expected to reach 169 billion (16,900 crore) by 2025-26,

growing at a CAGR (compounded annual growth rate) of 122 per cent, it said.

Partnerships with other countries in Asia to enable low-value transactions and cross-border remittances through UPI will contribute to this growth. BNPL, which is currently estimated at ₹363 billion (₹36,300 crore), is expected to reach ₹3,191 billion (₹3,19,100 crore) by the end of 2025-26, according to the report.

"We expect the payments industry to focus heavily on enhancing customer experience and providing customer options for payment, enhancing security, undertaking innovations in technology like distributed ledger technology (DLT) and emerging tech like IoT (Internet of Things) over the next couple of years. With the efforts and initiatives of key stakeholders such as regulators, banks, payment/fintech companies, card networks and service providers, the industry is going to see tremendous growth in the coming years," Mihir Gandhi, Partner & Payments Transformation Leader, PwC India, said.

FPIs TURN NET SELLERS AGAIN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 17: Adopting a cautious stance, foreign investors have pulled over ₹4,500 crore from the Indian equity market last week on fears of an aggressive rate hike by US Federal Reserve.

This comes following a net investment of ₹7,707 crore by foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) during April 1-8 as a correction in the markets provided a good buying opportunity, data with depositories showed. Prior to that, FPIs remained net sellers for six months to March 2022, withdrawing a massive net amount of ₹1.48 lakh crore from equities. These were largely on the back of anticipation of a rate hike by the US Federal Reserve and due to the deteriorating geopolitical environment following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Sonam Srivastava, Founder at



Wright Research, a Sebi-registered investment advisor, said, "We are hoping for FPIs to come back to India in a big way when the Ukraine crisis eases as our valuations have become highly competitive."

According to depositories data, FPIs have pulled out a net sum of ₹4,518 crore from Indian equities during the holiday shortened April 11-13 week. Markets were closed April 14 and April 15 on account of Ambedkar Jayanti and Good Friday, respectively. During the holiday-truncated week, FPIs turned net sellers on fears of an aggressive rate hike by US Fed.

SHORT TAKES

Draft tea bill for removing licenses

New Delhi: The draft tea bill intends to remove archaic or redundant provisions, do away with licences, promote ease of doing business and boost exports from the sector, an official said. The commerce ministry has proposed to repeal the 68-year old Tea Act, 1953 and introduce a new legislation Tea (Promotion and Development) Bill, 2022. "The purpose of the new bill is to remove the archaic/redundant provisions which have lost their relevance and make it industry friendly, doing away with licences and act as a facilitator," the official said. It would also suit the need of the industry and the economic scenario currently prevalent in the country.

Campus IPO expected in May

Baddi (HP): Sports and athleisure footwear company Campus Activewear plans to expand its distribution network and deepen its footprints in western and southern regions, a top official of the company said. According to market sources, the company is planning to get listed on stock exchanges in May 2022. Besides, the homegrown footwear maker, which is backed by equity fund TPG Growth and QRC Enterprises, also plans to expand its offering in the high-margin women and kids portfolio, Campus Activewear CFO Raman Chawla said.

Winzo expects to create 1L jobs

New Delhi: Gaming start-up Winzo expects its ecosystem to create more than 1 lakh direct and indirect jobs over the next one year, a top official of the company said. Winzo co-founder Saumya Singh Rathore told PTI that with growth in the number of games, the company is engaging housewives, teachers and influencers for various assignments paid on a work basis and the number is expected to grow in coming years. "Two years ago, Winzo was working with 25,000 micro influencers who were earning approximately ₹30,000-40,000 a month. As of date that number has grown to 1 lakh influencers who are earning ₹75,000 to ₹1 lakh on an average per month. We expect the numbers to double, that is to become 2 lakh within the next one year and their payout is also expected to increase 2-2.5 times," Rathore said.

Seven of top 10 firms lose ₹1.32L cr in m-cap

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 17: Seven of the 10 most valued firms suffered a combined erosion of ₹1,32,535.79 crore in market valuation last week, with Reliance Industries emerging as the worst hit.

In the holiday-truncated week, the Sensex tumbled 1,108.25 points or 1.86 per cent.

While Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL), TCS, HDFC Bank, Infosys, HUL, Bajaj Finance and HDFC were the laggards from the top-10 pack, ICICI Bank, SBI and Adani Green Energy were the gainers.

Adani Green Energy had Monday last week entered the list of the top-10 most valued domestic firms.

The market capitalisation (m-cap) of Reliance Industries plum-



meted by ₹43,491.37 crore to reach ₹17,26,714.05 crore.

The valuation of Infosys dived ₹27,953.78 crore to ₹7,35,611.35 crore. HDFC Bank's market valuation

eroded by ₹27,866.34 crore to ₹8,12,338.57 crore and that of HDFC tumbled ₹14,631.11 crore to ₹4,31,028.49 crore.

The m-cap of Tata Consultancy

Services (TCS) tanked ₹9,348.88 crore to stand at ₹13,39,688.48 crore.

The valuation of Hindustan Unilever (HUL) declined by ₹7,119.26 crore to ₹5,05,737.77 crore and that of Bajaj Finance dipped by ₹2,125.05 crore to ₹4,43,685.79 crore.

In contrast, the new entrant Adani Green Energy added ₹84,581.99 crore, taking its valuation to ₹4,48,050.99 crore.

ICICI Bank's market capitalisation jumped ₹5,559.02 crore to ₹5,29,739.59 crore and that of State Bank of India (SBI) rose ₹1,249.45 crore to ₹4,61,848.65 crore.

In the ranking of top-10 firms, Reliance Industries maintained its top position, followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, Infosys, ICICI Bank, HUL, SBI, Adani Green Energy, Bajaj Finance and HDFC.

MFs add 3cr folios in FY22 on rally in equity market

AS INTEREST RATES HAVE BEEN MODERATING, INVESTORS ARE LOOKING AT OPTIONS BEYOND TRADITIONAL AVENUES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 17: Increasing awareness about mutual funds, ease of transactions through digitisation and sharp surge in equity markets have aided asset management companies to add a staggering 3.17 crore investor accounts in 2021-22, with experts saying the trend is likely to continue this fiscal as well.

This was a significant rise from 2020-21 when 81 lakh accounts (or folios in mutual fund parlance) were opened, data with the Association of Mutual Funds in India (Amfi) showed.

The ongoing financial year too appears to be promising in terms of folios as increase in investor accounts will enable people to move beyond fixed deposits and savings accounts, said Priti Rathi Gupta,

founder of LXME, a financial platform for women.

Market conditions, geopolitical situations, inflation rates, financialisation of investments and increasing awareness among the people are some of the elements that may have an impact on this industry, she added.

If the retail investors get spooked by the market turbulence driven by change in interest rates, then folios are expected to decline, said Swapnil Bhaskar, Head of Strategy, Niyoy - a millennial-focused neo-banking fintech.

According to the data, the number of folios with 43 fund houses rose to 12.95 crore in March 2022 from 9.78 crore in March 2021, registering a gain of 3.17 crore during the one-year period.

The industry crossed a milestone of 10 crore folios in May 2021.



The number of folios under equity, hybrid and solution oriented schemes, wherein the maximum investment is from retail segment, stood at about 10.34 crore as of March 2022. Folios are numbers designated to individual investor accounts. An investor can have multiple folios.

The mutual fund space has been

witnessing consistent growth in folio numbers in the past few years.

It saw an addition of 73 lakh investor accounts in 2019-20, 1.13 crore in 2018-19, 1.6 crore in 2017-18, over 67 lakh in 2016-17 and 59 lakh in 2015-16.

Some tailwinds that are supporting the industry include increasing mutual fund (MF) aware-

ness, strong distribution platforms and ease of transactions through digitisation, which was further driven by the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to LXME's Gupta, multiple factors have enabled the growth in MF folios, like an increase in digitisation, availability of easy-to-consume information, increased awareness, and a mindset shift from traditional instruments to mutual funds as the investors are expecting good returns based on past market outperformance despite the ongoing pandemic.

"Amfi's ongoing 'Mutual Fund Sahi hai' campaign and other investor awareness initiatives undertaken by Asset Management Companies (AMCs) have been instrumental in connecting the industry with wider masses to emphasise on the importance of investing in MFs," said Saugata Chatterjee, Chief Business Officer, Nippon India Mutual Fund.

Also, with AMCs deepening their branch network, and increase in distribution touchpoints across length and breadth of the country, the industry has been able to bring in new investors, he noted.

Jimmy Patel, MD and CEO, Quantum AMC, said as interest rates have been moderating, investors are looking at options beyond traditional avenues. Further, increased awareness about mutual funds has helped in boosting participation by retail investors.

He further said volatility in the market and chaos across the globe have not prevented Indian investors from pouring funds into the market through the mutual fund route. This shows the investors' trust and confidence in the Indian growth story.

SHORT TAKES

Thrilling draw

Malapurram: Odisha and Karnataka played out a six-goal thriller in the opening game of Group B in the final round of the 75th Santosh Trophy National Football Championships here Sunday. Odisha got their goals through Jamir Oram, Bikash Kumar Sahoo and Chandra Muduli, while the Karnataka goals were scored by Sudheer Kotikela (2) and Babu Nishad in the exciting encounter played at the Kottappadi Stadium here. Odisha showed great fighting spirit in the game as they came back from a 1-3 deficit to share points. Odisha took an early lead, but then they lost their grip and Karnataka scored three goals before Odisha scripted the turnaround.

Ghosh shines

New Delhi: Bengal shooter Mehuli Ghosh won the women's 10m air rifle competition (4th trial) in the national selection trials at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Ranges here Sunday. Ghosh shot a total of 262.8 points to get the better of Gujarat's Elavelin Valarivan 261.5 in the gold medal match. Nancy of Haryana shot 260.0 to finish third, while Vinita Bhardwaj, also from Haryana, settled for the fourth place with a total score of 259.4. Odisha's Kashika Pradhan was sixth with 207.2 points.

Tsitsipas in final

Monaco: Defending champion Stefanos Tsitsipas breezed into the Monte Carlo Masters tennis tournament final Saturday after dispatching second-seeded Alexander Zverev 6-4, 6-2. He will meet Spaniard Alejandro Davidovich Fokina who fought hard to beat Grigor Dimitrov 6-4, 6-7 (2-7), 6-3. Incidentally Fokina had knocked out top seed Novak Djokovic in the second round. Tsitsipas dominated Zverev on clay like he never had previously. Zverev recovered from a break down twice in the first set that Tsitsipas took with a third break in the 10th game. No. 5-ranked Tsitsipas then broke Zverev twice more in the second set to win the match comfortably.

New natl records

Ranchi: Juned Khan of Haryana and Ramandeep Kaur of Punjab rewrote the men and women's 35km race walking national records respectively here Sunday in the ninth Indian Open Race Walking competition. The 23-year-old Ramandeep clipped more than 13 minutes from Priyanka Goswami's national record set in the World Athletics Race Walking Championships in Muscat last month. In the men's race, 22-year-old Juned pulled away from Ram Baboo and Chandan Singh after the 20-km mark to lower the national record by five minutes.

SRH PACERS DESTROY KINGS

Youngster Malik and experienced Bhuvneshwar share 7 wickets as Hyderabad register 4th win on the trot



SEARING PACE: SRH fast bowler Umer Malik bowled a sensational final over against Punjab Kings; (Inset) Bhubaneswar Kumar

AGENCIES

Navi Mumbai, April 17: Young pace sensation Umran Malik (4/28) and the experienced Bhuvneshwar Kumar (3/22) combined effectively to help Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) script a facile seven-wicket win over Punjab Kings (PBKS) in their IPL encounter here Sunday. It was the Hyderabad's side fourth win on the trot.

Malik bowled a sensational 20th over to bag three wickets without conceding a single run. It turned out to be a match-winning effort in the end. A fourth wicket also fell in the final over, but the batter was run out as the Kings finished on a below par 151 all out.

In reply, SRH did not have a per-

fect start and lost skipper Kane Williamson (3) early in the fourth over with Kagiso Rabada drawing the first blood. Opener Abhishek Sharma (31, 25b, 3x4, 1x6) and the in-form Rahul Tripathi (34, 22b, 4x4, 1x6) failed to convert their starts but the modest total meant that SRH did not have to worry much in the end.

South African Aiden Makram (41 n o, 27b, 4x4, 1x6) and West Indian

Nicholas Pooran (35 n o, 30b, 1x4, 1x6) then completed the formalities with an unbroken 75-run partnership from 50 balls for the fourth wicket. Markram finished off the chase in the penultimate over hitting Vaibhav Arora for consecutive boundaries and six to seal the issue with seven balls to spare.

The win took SRH to eight points, moving up from the middle-table

rush to climb to fourth spot, while PBKS remained on seventh with six points from as many matches.

Earlier Liam Livingstone (60, 33b, 5x4, 4x6), who was the most expensive overseas player in this season's IPL auction with a price tag of ₹11.50-crore, resurrected the PBKS innings with a counter-attacking knock and in the process got his third half century in four matches.

Reduced to 61/4 inside eight overs after being put in, Livingstone found a perfect ally in No. 6 batter Shahrulkh Khan (26, 28 b, 1x4, 2x6) as the duo stitched together 71 from 49 balls to revive them in the middle overs.

BRIEF SCORES

PBKS 151 all out (Liam Livingstone 60, Umran Malik 4/28, Bhuvneshwar Kumar 3/22) lost to **SRH 152** for 3 (Aiden Makram 41 n o, Nicholas Pooran 35 n o) by **seven wickets**.

On a slow pitch scoring was difficult early on. However, Livingstone did not have any trouble as he played shots all across the park.

But the momentum shifted heavily in favour of SRH after Bhuvneshwar provided the key breakthrough of Livingstone as PBKS lost five wickets in seven balls with Malik producing a perfect final over.

Malik first had Odean Smith with a slower one before casting Rahul Chahar and Vaibhav Arora in successive deliveries.

Miller, Rashid steal game from Chennai



David Miller dives to complete the winning run against CSK

PTI PHOTO

AGENCIES

Pune, April 17: David Miller's (94 n o, 51b, 8x4, 6x6) histrionics and a blitzkrieg by stand-in skipper Rashid Khan (40, 21b, 2x4, 3x6) helped Gujarat Titans (GT) beat Chennai Super Kings (CSK) by three wickets in a thrilling IPL encounter here Sunday. Needing 170 for a win, GT crossed the finish line with one delivery to spare.

However, this victory would not have been possible without the assault of Khan who took Chris Jordan (0/58 in 3.5 overs) in the 18th over. Three sixes and four all by Khan suddenly turned the game around for the Titans when they looked down and out. Miller completed the formalities by hitting the hapless Jordan for a six and a four in the 20th over of the innings.

Titans had started their chase disastrously as they were reduced to 2 for two wickets and then 48 for four at the completion of the eighth over. Then the Miller show had started but still 170 looked a tall order. However, Khan who led the side in place of an injured Hardik Pandya, changed all that to script the fifth win for GT and lift them to the top of the table with 10 points.

Dwayne Bravo (3/23) and Maheesh Theekshana (2/24) bowled their hearts out for CSK.

Earlier Rituraj Gaikwad (73, 48b, 5x4, 5x6) finally found some form with the bat before GT pulled things back to stop CSK at 169 for five. The Titans bowlers did exceedingly well in the last six overs, conceding only 45 after a 92-run third-wicket stand between Gaikwad and Ambati Rayudu (46, 36b, 4x4, 2x6) threatened to take the game away. The two had come together with CSK in a spot of bother at 32 for two.

Pacers Mohammed Shami (1/20) and Alzarri Joseph (2/34) were among the best bowlers on view from the Titans.

However, after threatening to score above 180-185, CSK lost the plot after losing Rayudu and Gaikwad in quick succession, slipping to 131 for four. While Rayudu presented a sitter to Vijay Shankar as sweeper-cover, in a bid to score quickly, Gaikwad perished in the 17th over.

Brief scores: CSK 169 for 5 (Rituraj Gaikwad 73, Ambati Rayudu 46, Alzarri Joseph 2/34) lost to GT 170 for 5 in 19.1 overs (David Miller 94 n o, Rashid Khan 40, Dwayne Bravo 3/23) by three wickets.

Hamilton may leave Mercedes

FORMER CHAMP BOTHERED WITH 'FAULTY' CAR

AGENCIES

London, April 17: Seven-time Formula One (F1) champion Lewis Hamilton may leave Mercedes at the end of the season because of problems with the cars. Both Hamilton and new recruit George Russell vehicles are struggling with a 'porpoising' issue so far this campaign, meaning they are around a second behind Ferrari off each lap. Even though, Russell is yet to complain, Hamilton has expressed his displeasure a number of times, sources said.

Hamilton secured his first podium of the season in the first race in Bahrain, but that was only due to an issue with fellow title rivals Red Bull. Since then he has failed to finish among the top three in the other F1 races this season.

The 37-year-old is currently fifth in the drivers' standings, 43 points off leader Charles Leclerc and nine behind fellow Brit and teammate Russell. Former F1 star Mika



Hakkinen has said that a 'sulking' Hamilton could leave Mercedes if the issues with the car are not solved.

"It's a tough spot for Lewis, it's obvious," the Finn was quoted as saying by 'Planet F1'. "The last race in Australia was a tough spot for Lewis - really tough. He is not used to driving in such conditions," the two-time Formula One champion in the 1990s added.

"But I'm sure Lewis is still annoyed by the situation. It's hard to be beaten by George (Russell finished third in Australia while Hamilton was fourth). I'm afraid this will be a really difficult season for Lewis," Hakkinen said.

Danish Boe set for 2nd stint as doubles coach

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 17: Danish legend Mathias Boe is likely to return for a second stint as the doubles coach of the Indian badminton team after Malaysia's Tan Kim Her declined the offer despite the Sports Ministry approving his appointment. Boe, a London Olympics silver-medallist and former World No. 1 doubles player, had trained the Indian doubles players, including Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, ahead of the Tokyo Olympics.

"We were very keen to get Tan Kim Her and also had got the approval of SAI and the Sports Ministry. However, he refused to accept the offer. So he is not coming as of now," Badminton Association of India (BAI) secretary general Sanjay Mishra said Sunday.

"We are currently in discussion with Boe. He has the experience of training our players and had done well with Satwik and Chirag. Nothing is finalised yet but we are trying to get his services at least till the Asian Games," Mishra added.

Root quits Test captaincy

Englishman has 27 wins under his belt, the most by an England skipper

AGENCIES

London, April 17: Joe Root has stepped down as England captain and said that the decision was the most challenging one of his career. The 31-year-old, who succeeded Sir Alastair Cook as captain in 2017, ended his tenure with the most matches (64) and wins (27) as an England men's Test skipper.

Root's decision follows a run of just one win in England's last 17 Tests, stretching back to February 2021, which ended with a series defeat in the West Indies last month.

"After returning from the Caribbean tour and having time to reflect, I have decided to step down as England men's Test captain," Root said in a statement released late Saturday evening.

"It has been the most challenging decision I have had to make in my career but having discussed this with my family and those closest to me; I know the timing is right. I am immensely proud to have captained my country and will look back on the past five years with enormous pride.



It has been the most challenging decision I have had to make in my career, but now is the right time to give up captaincy
JOE ROOT

It has been an honour to have done the job and to have been a custodian of what is the pinnacle of English cricket," the departing skipper said.

"I have loved leading my country, but recently it's hit home how much of a toll it has taken on me and the impact it has had on me away from the game. I am excited to continue representing the Three Lions and producing performances that will enable the team to succeed. I look forward to helping the next

captain, my teammates and coaches in whatever way I can," Root added.

Root oversaw several successes during his captaincy, including a 4-1 home series victory over India in 2018, and away triumphs against South Africa and Sri Lanka.

The Yorkshire batter is currently England's second-highest Test run-scorer of all time, trailing only Cook, while Root's 14 centuries as skipper helped him to a record tally of 5,295 runs for an England captain.

Chelsea test awaits Liverpool

AGENCIES

London, April 17: Two second half goals by Ruben Loftus-Cheek (65th minute) and Mason Mount (76th) helped Chelsea beat Crystal Palace 2-0 and seal their spot in the final of the FA Cup at the Wembley Stadium, here Sunday. Chelsea started the game as favourites and dominated in stages to run out comfortable winners.

Chelsea will meet Liverpool who had defeated Manchester City in an exciting game Saturday evening. This is the third successive time that Chelsea have reached the final of the FA Cup.

However, it was Palace who had the first scoring opportunity of the game when Cheikhou Kouyate's shot was saved by Edouard Mendy under the Chelsea bar. After that however, Patrick Vieira's side rarely managed to find a way through the Chelsea defence.

Earlier Liverpool reached the FA Cup final as Sadio Mane's double inspired a 3-2 win over Manchester City that kept alive their quadruple bid and shattered their rivals' treble hopes. Jurgen Klopp's side

are chasing an unprecedented clean-sweep of the four major trophies in a single season. They remain on course to achieve that incredible target after a scintillating first half display in Saturday's semifinal.

Ibrahima Konate put Liverpool ahead and Mane doubled their lead thanks to a blunder from City keeper Zack Steffen. Senegal forward Mane struck again before half time and, although Jack Grealish and Bernardo Silva netted after the interval, Manchester City were unable to complete a remarkable revival.

The Reds, into the FA Cup final for the 15th time, haven't won the competition since 2006, while Klopp is yet to lead them to a domestic knockout trophy.

Trailing Premier League leaders City by just one point with seven games left, Liverpool have already won the League Cup and have also reached the Champions League semifinals, where they will play Villarreal.

For City, fatigued physically and mentally, it was a game too far as Liverpool handed them a first defeat in 11 games. Both league meetings this season had ended in 2-2 draws.

EMBARGO IMPOSED...
CAN'T USE FUNDS...
SAHARA IS HAVING ₹ 25,000 CRORE WITH SEBI...

CAN ANYONE RUN WHEN IN SHACKLES?

Since last 9 years, there has been an Embargo of the Hon'ble Supreme Court on Sahara India Pariwar that if the Pariwar raises any fund out of sale of any asset or out of mortgage, that fund will be deposited in SEBI-SAHARA account and not even a single rupee can be utilised for making repayments to public.

This way SEBI-SAHARA account is having around ₹25,000 Crores. SEBI SHOULD MAKE THE PAYMENTS TO THE DEPOSITORS FROM THIS AMOUNT. Why is SEBI not making payments to the public?

This way how can Sahara make timely payments to its depositors? However, Sahara is still making payments but delayed payments.

SAHARA
INDIA PARIWAR