



COPING WITH CRITICISM

Janhvi Kapoor, in a recent interview, says she has become increasingly indifferent to trolling on social media

LEISURE P2



100 DIE IN NIGERIA

At least 100 people may have died in a refinery explosion in southeast Nigeria, an official said Sunday

INTERNATIONAL P10



ARCHERS BAG GOLD IN WC

India's mixed recurve team of Tarundeep Rai and Ridhi Phor win gold at the World Cup in Antalya

SPORTS P12

UNITED WE STAND



Members of Hindu and Muslim communities take out a Tiranga Yatra in the communal violence-hit Jahangirpuri area in New Delhi, Sunday. PTI PHOTO

CAPITAL SHOCKER

Man kills wife, sister-in-law

Accused killed the victims three days ago and kept the bodies in his home; the grisly crime came to fore after the victims' father along with locals got hold of the accused



File photo of the victims; (R) the accused in police custody. OP PHOTOS

Bhubaneswar, April 24: Inhabitants of the capital city Sunday woke up to the ghastly murders of two sisters by the elder one's husband at his residence in Housing Board Colony under Chandrasekharpur police limits. The crime was reportedly committed three days ago. The incident came to the fore after the victims' father with the help of locals managed to get hold of the accused, Bijay Ketan Sethi, early Sunday morning.

Bijay, a resident of Karilopatna in Patkura area of Kendrapara district, works as an AC mechanic at a premier educational institute in Infocity area. He has been residing on rent in Housing Board Colony for the last couple of years.

Bijay got married to Gayatri of Nischintakoili in Cuttack district in 2011. Gayatri's younger sister, Saraswati Sethi, who was also hacked to death by the accused, worked as a staff nurse in a private medical college and hospital in Patia area.

The worried parents of the deceased sisters began to suspect something fishy when the mobile phones of both were found switched off since Thursday evening and Bijay did not respond to their calls. They along with some relatives reached Bhubaneswar Friday but found the house locked from outside.

They later went to the private medical college's hostel in Patia to know the whereabouts of Saraswati, who was found missing too. Saraswati had got married in February this year. The family also lodged a missing report at the Infocity police station Saturday.

Meanwhile, the relatives of the deceased were informed by a neighbour at the colony that Bijay was coming to his house every day. Subsequently, Sudam Sethi, the deceased siblings' father, waited for Bijay hiding in a nearby temple in the colony during the wee hours of Sunday.

Sudam with the help of some lo-

cals finally caught Bijay when he again came to the house early in the morning. Bijay was later handed over to police who arrested the accused after registering a case under Section 302. Upon enquiry, he reportedly confessed to have hacked both the sisters to death Thursday night. Bijay after hatching a plan to kill the siblings called his sister-in-law to his house Thursday evening.

Police recovered the bodies and sent them to Capital Hospital for post-mortem. Members of a forensic team examined the crime scene to collect evidence. Police sources revealed that a hand written note with the signature of the accused was recovered by the forensic team from spot. In the letter, Bijay confessed that he was constantly taunted by his wife and sister-in-law for failing to beget any offspring despite the lapse of 11 years to their marriage. Annoyed by the taunts he hacked both the sisters to death, according to the letter.

French President Macron wins second term

PARIS: Centrist French President Emmanuel Macron defeated his Far-right rival Marine Le Pen Sunday by a comfortable margin, early projections by pollsters showed, securing a second term and heading off what would have been a political earthquake. The first projections showed Macron securing around 57-58 per cent of the vote. Such estimates are normally accurate but may be fine-tuned as official results come in from around the country. Le Pen has conceded defeat in the presidential runoff, handing victory to incumbent Macron. She said her unprecedented score in a presidential election represents "a shining victory in itself."



(More P10)

2 BJD leaders killed over political rivalry

POST NEWS NETWORK

Digapahandi, April 24: Two BJD leaders were murdered over alleged political rivalry at Palajhadi under Digapahandi police limits in Ganjam district Saturday night. The deceased were Sudhir Kanta Patra and Sudarshan Suara of Palajhadi.

Police along with a forensic team, have started an investigation and came to know that the crime was pre-planned with the involvement of seven people, all of whom are absconding. The two were on their way back home after attending a feast at Nimakhandi. As the duo reached Mangalabari Chhak, a group of people, suspected to be their rivals, attacked them with lathis and iron rods.

As the two fainted on the road, the assailants bludgeoned them with stone blocks. A tractor driver passing by spotted the duo. Villagers rushed them to the local CHC where doctors declared Sudarshan dead. Sudhir succumbed while he was being shifted to MKCG hospital.

State sizzles, Bhub records 43°C

Mercury may further rise by 3-5 degrees Celsius in the interior parts of the state during the next two days due to the northwesterly-westerly dry air and high solar insolation

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 24: The state capital Sunday recorded the season's highest temperature of 43.3 degree Celsius, shattering previous records, while intense heat scorched other parts of the state as well with Sonepur recording the highest 43.8 degree Celsius.

As per the IMD, this was the third-highest April temperature of Bhubaneswar since 2011. The city had recorded 45.8 degree Celsius April 11, 2016 and 43.7 degree April 16, 2019.

Meanwhile, the IMD regional centre stated that 26 places in the state recorded temperature above 40 degree Celsius. While Sonepur recorded the hottest temperature at 43.8 degree Celsius, it was followed



by Angul and Talcher at 43.1 and 43 degree Celsius respectively.

The IMD said that the maximum temperature is very likely to gradually rise by 3 to 5 degree Celsius at many places over the districts of interior Odisha during the next three days.

"Due to northwesterly-westerly dry air and high solar insolation maximum temperature is very likely to gradually rise by 3 to 5°C at many places over the districts of

Parents worried over curtailed vacations

BHUBANESWAR: Amid soaring temperatures across the state, parents here have raised concern over the state government's decision to curtail the summer vacation in schools from 50 to only 11 days. With students forced to travel long distances to schools while temperatures being recorded between 41-44 degree Celsius, parents are worried over heat stroke or dehydration risk to children. "There is an urgent need to reconsider the decision of curtailing summer vacations in view of the heatwave. The pandemic has taught us that much of the education can be provided through online classes and there is no need to force children to attend physical classes under such gruesome weather," said Manjulata Behera, a mother of two, here.

interior Odisha during next three days and no large change thereafter over the districts of Odisha," the Meteorological Centre, Bhubaneswar said.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Why this govt advisory against showing hateful content? We only run bytes of ministers, MPs & MLAs!

Binapani Mohanty no more

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 24: Eminent writer and academician Binapani Mohanty passed away Sunday evening. She was 85. Mohanty suffered a cardiac arrest at her residence in Badambadi, Cuttack.

Born in Berhampur November 11, 1936, Mohanty was conferred with a Padma Shri in 2020 for her contribution to Odia literature. Besides, she was honoured with the prestigious Atibadi Jagannath Das Puraskar in 2019, Sarala Puraskar in 2010, Odisha Sahitya Akademi Award in 1969, Jhankar Puraskar in 1974 and several other awards in Odisha and other states.

Among her body of works, 'Kasturi Mruga O Sabuja Aranya', 'Bastra Harana', 'Arohana', 'Interview', 'Sayanhara Swar', 'Kunti Kuntala' and 'Shakuntala' were immensely popular among readers.

A pall of gloom descended on the literary circuit after the news spread. PM Narendra Modi, Governor



Ganeshi Lal and CM Naveen Patnaik condoled Mohanty's demise.

"Pained by the passing away of noted writer Binapani Mohanty Ji. She made monumental contributions to Odia literature, especially fiction writing," Modi said in a tweet. "She will always remain in the hearts of the people for her literary works. I express my condolence to the bereaved family members," Patnaik said.

Patnaik said that her funeral will be held with full state honours.

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WEATHER	
BHUB	CTK
MAX 43.3°C	41.1°C
MIN 26.8°C	26.5°C
Humidity 56%	58%
Rainfall NIL	NIL
Forecast: Mainly Clear Sky	

leisure



BEN AFFLECK DENIES HERNAN'S RAYA CLAIMS

Ben Affleck has denied Emma Hernan's claim that they connected on dating app Raya before he reunited with Jennifer Lopez. *Selling Sunset* star Emma, 30, claimed that she matched with Ben on the celebrity dating app before he rekindled his romance with JLo, 51, in April 2021.

SCHWARTZ, MALONEY STILL LIVE TOGETHER DESPITE THEIR DIVORCE

Reality TV stars - Tom Schwartz and Katie Maloney - tied the knot in 2019 but called it quits in March. Now Tom says: "We still live together and it's not that awkward! Even though we're divorced, I still have a deep admiration for Katie."



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You will find work to be very stressful today. However, it will not prevent you from taking shots at your opponents. You are thoughtful, but can be cunning too. People would have gauged it by now. Ganesh advises you to go ahead nevertheless.

TAURUS
This is a day when you will be dying to share your thoughts and feelings with someone near and dear. You will be extremely effective in communicating your ideas and emotions and will thus develop greater closeness and intimacy with your loved one. The time spent with your sweetheart will be full of love and warmth.

GEMINI
Today, you need to find ways to integrate your feelings with your logical and analytical observations, says Ganesh. In nutshell, it's time you became a bit practical. Otherwise, the afternoon will prove to be too emotional for you. Fortune will favour you if you manage to keep your emotions in check.

CANCER
It is quite likely that the elderly will shower care and love on you, predicts Ganesh. Financially, you will probably collect certain overdue payments in the afternoon. Later in the day, your wooing may pay rich dividends, says Ganesh.

LEO
Old is gold. This adage holds true for you in that you shall be led by conventional wisdom today. Your ability to stay upbeat is peaking just at the right time, and you shall be supremely confident about your chances of a brilliant future. This shall reduce the tension in your work and go a long way in helping you enjoy warmth and affection later in the evening, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
Learn to weave emotions and cold logic in one fabric of thought, says Ganesh. The afternoon may be an emotional overdose for you. Fortune, however, will favour you in the evening when you set off on an impulsive outing.

LIBRA
Some feelings last forever, and so do some relationships. Bear this in mind and look forward to the beginning of an enduring relationship today, says Ganesh. The joy of companionship shall spill over to the workplace as well, and keep you very delighted and elated today. But you need to watch out for spats with people around you, especially neighbours and acquaintances. It is best to avoid any war of words, suggests Ganesh.

SCORPIO
Children will be drenched in the rain of love and affection you shower on them, says Ganesh. A special treatment awaits you at work. Your spouse will be a permanent source of happiness and abundance. You shall feel whole and complete in the evening, predicts Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
Matters concerning family bonds will keep you occupied for most part today. Be sure to make all your loved ones feel special. Early in the day, those with whom love's labour has been lost might try to end all connections. Proceed with caution when it comes to children, advises Ganesh.

CAPRICORN
Certain distasteful events occurring during the day may spoil your mood, but it won't really show in your work, and you will get over that phase sooner than you may have thought, says Ganesh. An unusual day, indeed. You can expect some good news from abroad, something you may have expected long back.

AQUARIUS
You can't tolerate inequality and discrimination. This may cause a furore at your workplace. Don't bite off more than you can chew, cautions Ganesh. Also, remember that the same principles apply in relationships too. Give importance to what your loved ones have to say.

PISCES
Pisces: Your family will be the cause of annoyance to you in the morning. However, as the day progresses and you find out just how much of an annoyance the workplace can be, your thinking processes ought to shift right back to your heart.

Janhvi turns indifferent to online trolling

Mumbai: Filmmaker Boney Kapoor and late veteran actress Sridevi's elder daughter Janhvi Kapoor made her acting debut with Karan Johar's *Dhadak* alongside Ishaan Khatter. Apart from her dedication to her work, Janhvi is quite active on social media platforms. She often treats her fans with glamorous and quirky posts. Just like other celebs, Janhvi too has been a victim of online trolling. Recently, she spoke in length about how she deals with the constant trolling on social media and said that it's not a big deal. "I have become increasingly indifferent to it. But time and again, I think I'm always a little surprised and taken aback by just the double standards sometimes. And how bitter some people can be, but then again, it's not a big deal," the *Roohi* actress said.

During the same interview, when Janhvi was asked how much of her life is influenced by what she sees on social media, the actress said she hopes her life much influenced by what she witnesses online. "That would be a very empty kind of life," she adds. Meanwhile, on the work front, Janhvi Kapoor was last seen in the 2021 horror-comedy *Roohi* alongside Rajkumar Rao and Varun Sharma. She now has *Goodluck Jerry and Mili* in her kitty.



Sidharth, Kiara share cryptic posts amid breakup rumours

Mumbai: As the break up rumours of star couple Sidharth Malhotra and Kiara Advani gain momentum, the two have shared cryptic posts on their respective social media handles.

While Sidharth shared a stunning picture of himself from his recent work trip to Turkey on his Instagram, Kiara shared a picture of herself from a photoshoot where she can be seen in a garden appreciating the beauty of bougainvillea. Sidharth wrote in his caption, "A day without sunshine is like, you know, night- Steve Martin."

Meanwhile, Kiara posted a gorgeous image of herself enjoying the beauty of nature and captioned the post as, "Plant smiles, grow laughter, harvest love."

Sources have revealed that the two have stopped meeting each other. Although both Sidharth and Kiara are tight-lipped about their relationship, the breakup rumours seem to shake up their followers.

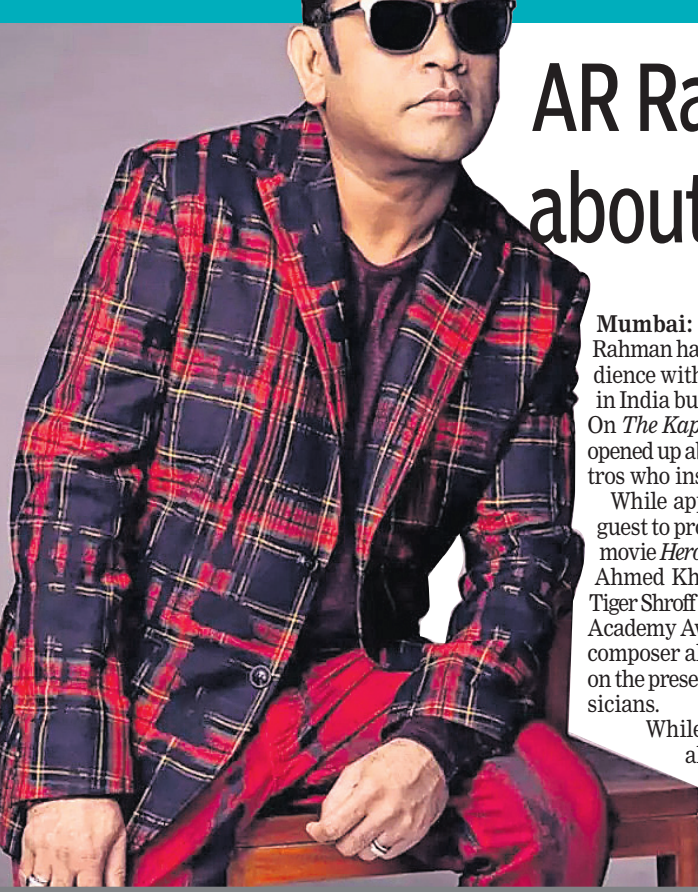
Mumbai: Aamir Khan's daughter Ira Khan is known for openly voicing her thoughts on social media. Saturday, she shared some unfiltered pictures of herself on Instagram and talked about how people often tell her that she looks very serious and said she is not unhappy about it.



In the first picture, Ira wrote, "I turned the camera on and this is what my face looks like right now. This is the expression on my face. People have said that I look very serious. This is my normal face. It's not smiley or happy but it's not unhappy either. I'd say it is pretty neutral."

Sharing another photo, she captioned the photo, "A failed attempt at a fake smile might portray more sadness. However this is a real smile, I tried to fake a smile but right now I am real smiling. So we cannot analyze a fake smile face." Further, concluding, the star kid wrote, "What I was trying to say is happy Saturday and that neutral faces are not sad faces."

Meanwhile, a few years back, Ira made her debut as a theatre director. She directed the play *Euripides' Medea* with Hazel Keech in the lead.



AR Rahman opens up about his inspirations

Mumbai: Music maestro AR Rahman has entertained the audience with his music, not only in India but across the borders. On *The Kapil Sharma Show*, he opened up about the music maestros who inspired him.

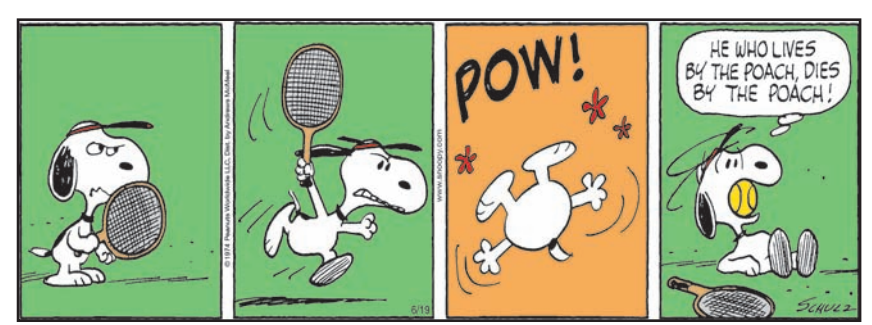
While appearing as a special guest to promote the upcoming movie *Heropanti 2* with director Ahmed Khan, and lead actors Tiger Shroff and Tara Sutaria, the Academy Award winning music composer also shared his views on the present generation of musicians.

While sharing about who all inspired him, AR Rahman says: "There are many people actually. I

have been discovering the old music now like Madan Mohan sahab, SD Burman sahab, Hridaynath Mangeshkar and all the greats. I think in today's time the music is very interesting, it serves the movie but the musicality I think is definitely from the 60's and 50's period. The lyrics and the tune of the singer and everything is like a university by itself."

He further spoke about the today's generation of music composers saying: "People from the younger generation like Shankar, Amit Trivedi, Vishal - Shekhar and Bengali, Malayalam and Tamil composers, are bursting with talent."

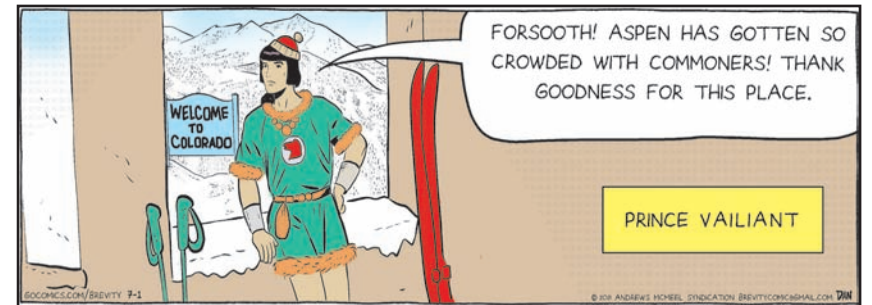
PEANUTS



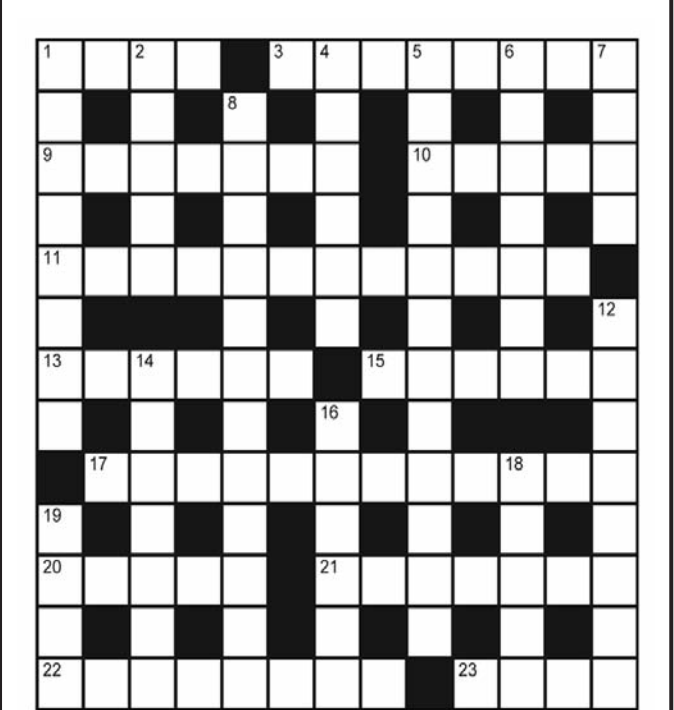
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



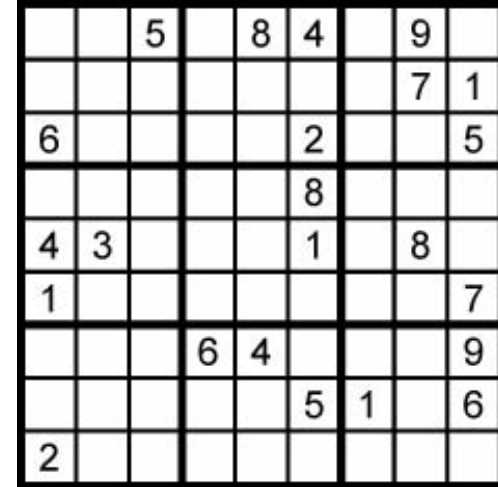
FUN post CROSSWORD



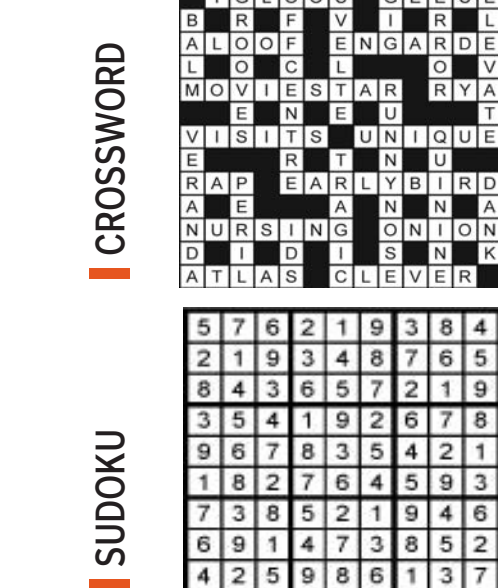
- Across**
- 1 Rooster's headdress
 - 3 Archer's weapon
 - 9 Keyed-up
 - 10 Man-made waterway
 - 11 Total authority to act (5,7)
 - 13 Back streets
 - 15 Decadent; pathetic
 - 17 Type of situation (4-3-5)
 - 20 Rah!, e.g.
 - 21 Hand over
 - 22 Fought back
 - 23 Bond
 - Down**
 - 1 BBQ item
 - 2 Kitchen utensil
 - 4 Consequence
 - 5 Subordinate role (6,6)
 - 6 Female spirit (Irish folklore)
 - 7 Pack animal
 - 8 Type of club, unfortunately (6,6)
 - 12 Aquarium denizen (3,5)
 - 14 Mills about
 - 16 Jittery (2,4)
 - 18 Smithy's tool
 - 19 Melee memento

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



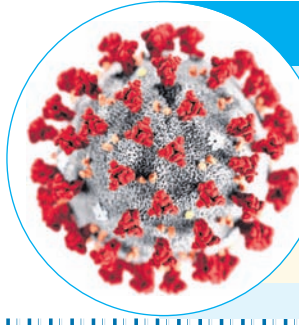
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



SHIELD AGAINST SUN

A vendor sells sunglasses and caps alongside a road near the Orissa High Court in Cuttack as the city witnessed a temperature above 40° Celsius, Sunday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	50,93,62,854	46,18,94,049	62,42,690
India	4,30,57,545	4,25,19,479	5,22,193
Odisha	12,87,989	12,78,737	9,124

CBI arrests Delhi cop in City over bribery

Accused Amit Lahucha was receiving the money on behalf of Sajjan Singh Yadav, an inspector in the EOW of the Delhi Police and the investigating officer in the case in which the complainant Udayanath Sahoo is a witness

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 24: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Sunday claimed to have arrested a constable of the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Delhi Police while accepting ₹2 lakh bribe from a man near Master Canteen Square here.

The accused, Amit Lahucha, was receiving the money on behalf of Sajjan Singh Yadav, an inspector in the EOW of the Delhi Police and the investigating officer (IO) in the case (74/2016) in which the complainant Udayanath Sahoo is a witness, said the CBI.

CBI sources said EOW sleuths of Delhi Police had in January this year arrested Manoj Seth of



Central Bureau of Investigation sleuths carried out a raid on the residence of Sajjan Singh Yadav, an inspector in the EOW, in Delhi

Sadhunagar area under Dhauli police limits here on charges of forging the letterhead of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for seeking donations for his newspaper being managed from the national capital a few years back. Adityanath was then

a Member of Parliament from Uttar Pradesh. Sahoo, a close associate of Seth, has been made a witness in the case. The Delhi Police has recently submitted a charge sheet in the case, it was learnt.

"It was alleged that the IO contacted the Sahoo and demanded a

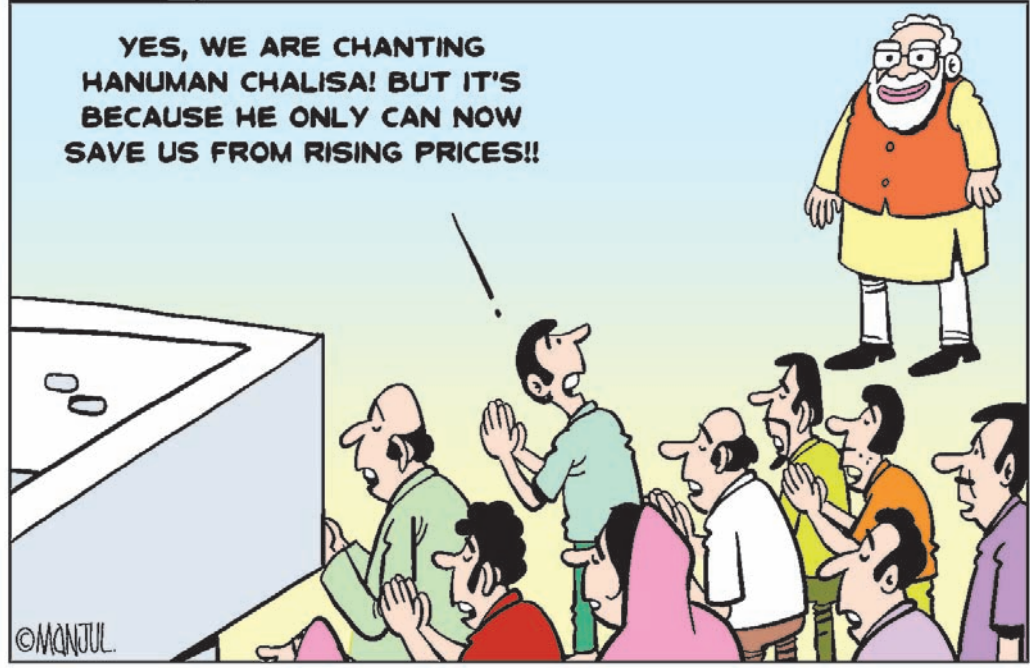
bribe of 4.50 lakh, which was subsequently reduced to ₹4 lakh, and threatened him that they are going to file a supplementary chargesheet in the case wherein they would arraign Sahoo as an accused," CBI sources revealed.

Subsequently, Yadav informed Sahoo that he would be contacted by a constable sent by him at BPIA April 24. Sahoo later lodged a complaint with the CBI accusing Yadav of seeking a bribe from him.

CBI Sunday laid a trap and arrested Lahucha while he was accepting ₹2 lakh on behalf of Yadav. Lahucha was later produced before a special court here.

Meanwhile, CBI sleuths carried out a raid on the residence of Yadav in Delhi.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Tech must for safer mining: Prafulla

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 24: Mining of minerals can be made safer and more efficient by using technologies, including artificial intelligence, machine learning and the internet of things, Odisha Steel and Mines Minister Prafulla Mallik said Sunday.

Speaking at a seminar on 'Technological and Digital Advancements in Mining and Mineral Beneficiation' here, he cited examples of cutting-edge exploration technology using computer vision and sensing applications and predictive monitoring systems that enhance workers' safety.

"Harnessing technology is imperative to make mining safer and more efficient," Mallik said while addressing the event organised by the Mining Engineers Association of India (MEAI). Mines Director Debidutta Biswal said there is a need

for a well-developed mining and mineral beneficiation industry in the country as it provides important raw material to many sectors that are the backbone of economic development.

The Odisha government has adapted to the changing technologies in mining and implemented an "IT-based mineral administration through a software application named Integrated Mines and Mineral Management System (i3MS)," the official said. "Introduction of technology in mining has gained paramount importance over the years to improve safety, environment and production," MEAI vice president Sundara Ramam said.

Tata Steel Mining managing director Pankaj Satija said more use of minerals in existing and emerging applications, coupled with new technologies, could lead to a paradigm shift in the way minerals would be produced and consumed in the future.

Rescue of bear cubs from Khurda still a mystery

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 24: The rescue of as many as seven Asiatic black bear cubs from Khurda area in two separate incidents in April last year is still shrouded in mystery as the Forest department did not launch a probe in this connection.

Wildlife experts have suspected the involvement of any interstate or international racket in the smuggling of Asiatic bear cubs as this particular species is not found in Odisha. Some locals had spotted five bear cubs roaming on a road in Pitapalli area of Khurda April 22 last year. On being informed, officials of the Forest department rescued the bear cubs and sent them to Nandanakan Zoological Park (NZP).

Five days later, two more bear cubs were rescued from Gada Khurda area. Initially, the Forest de-

Wildlife experts have suspected the involvement of any interstate or international racket in the smuggling of Asiatic black bears as this particular species is not found in Odisha

partment officials had claimed that the cubs were from sloth bear species.

Later, experts at NZP made it clear that the cubs belong to Asiatic black bear species. According to wildlife experts, an Asiatic black bear has a distinct white patch on its chest and this particular species is not found in Odisha.

"We mainly find sloth bears in



FILE PHOTO OF THREE RESCUED BEAR CUBS

Odisha. But, our climate is not suitable for Asiatic black bears. We are suspecting the involvement of any interstate or international wildlife smuggling racket in the bear cub rescue incident in Khurda. The Forest department should have launched a probe in this regard or handed over the responsibility

to the Special Task Force (STF) of state Crime Branch to solve the case," said a wildlife expert.

Khurda district honorary wildlife warden Subhendu Mallick said they had earlier pleaded for the DNA tests of the rescued bear cubs and a probe by the state Crime Branch.

"This is a clear-cut case of organised wildlife crime. A proper investigation into the incident could have brought the wildlife criminals to justice," Mallick said.

According to wildlife experts, Asiatic black bears are mainly found in countries like India, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Iran, Japan, South Korea, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, Taiwan, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam.

This species of bears are mostly seen in the hilly areas of Jammu and Kashmir, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura in India.

The Asiatic black bear is considered as an endangered species by the wildlife experts. According to sources, the body parts of bears are used in traditional medicines in countries like China and Vietnam.

25 pilgrims injured as bus turns turtle

AGENCIES

Berhampur, April 24: At least 25 pilgrims were injured when a tourist bus carrying them overturned in Ganjam district Sunday, officials said.

Fifty devotees were on board the bus, which was returning to Chennai from Puri. Twenty-one injured passengers are undergoing treatment at the Chhatrapur sub-divisional hospital. Four others, who were critically injured, have been shifted to the MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur, the officials said.

The accident occurred as the driver lost control over the vehicle on NH-16 near Rambha, where road widening work is underway.

Ganjam Collector Vijay Amrta Kulange said the district administration arranged a bus for the rest of the passengers, but they preferred to travel by train Monday.

INTERSTATE DRUG PEDDLER NABBED FROM MALKANGIRI

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 24: The Special Task Force (STF) of state Crime Branch has arrested an absconding interstate drug peddler from Malkangiri district.

The accused Mnsi Prasad Singh is a resident of Awadhagar under Yadopur police limits in Gopalganja district of Bihar.

The Mathili police in Malkangiri had seized 884 kg cannabis from two pick-up vehicles and arrested a few persons in this regard March 12 last year.

During interrogation, the arrested persons had confessed that they were transporting cannabis as per the direction of Singh, said a source in the STF.

Singh was on the run since the incident, sources said.

In another incident, the STF sleuths have arrested a wildlife criminal and seized three elephant tusks weighing around 10 kg from him during a raid at a place near Jubaranisatapur village in Subarnapur district. The accused has been identified as Ranjan Mahakud.



Women craft bangles at a stall at Adivasi Mela-2022 in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

OP PHOTO

DEFT HANDS

Over 17L contracted HIV in India in last 10 yrs: RTI reply

Over 17 lakh people contracted HIV in India in the last 10 years due to unprotected intercourse, according to the data provided by National AIDS Control Organization in response to an RTI query.

However, the number of people contracting HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) in the last 10 years has come down significantly. HIV transmission by unprotected sex was recorded in 2.4 lakh people in 2011-12, while the number reduced to 85,268 in 2020-21.

In response to the RTI query filed by Madhya Pradesh-based activist Chandra Shekhar Gaur, the National AIDS Control Organization (NACO) stated that 17,08,777 people contracted HIV by unprotected sex between 2011-2021 in India.

Among the states, Andhra Pradesh recorded the highest num-

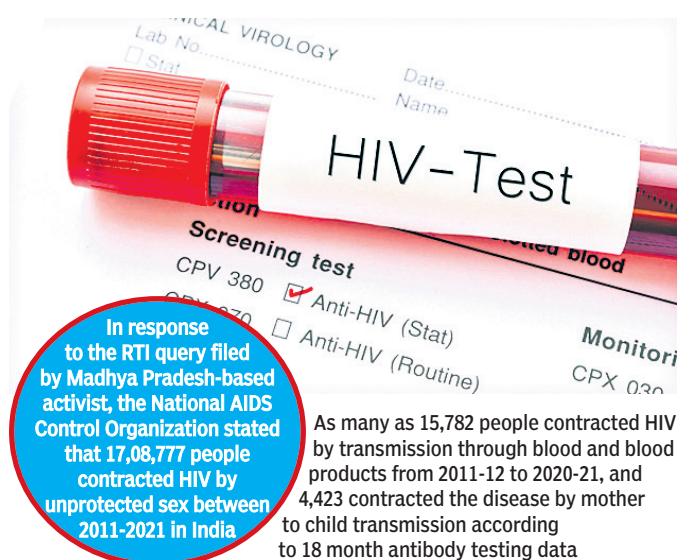
ber of such cases of HIV transmission at 3,18,814 followed by Maharashtra at 2,84,577, Karnataka at 2,12,982, Tamil Nadu at 1,16,536, Uttar Pradesh at 1,10,911 and Gujarat at 87,440 cases.

Also, 15,782 people contracted HIV by transmission through blood and blood products from 2011-12 to 2020-21, and 4,423 contracted the disease by mother to child transmission according to 18 month antibody testing data.

Among all states and Union territories, a consistent decline in cases of transmission of HIV was seen, the data said.

As of 2020, there are 23,18,737 people living with HIV, including 81,430 children, in the country.

The information on modes of transmission of HIV has been recorded by the counselor from the response given by HIV positive individuals during the time



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As many as 15,782 people contracted HIV by transmission through blood and blood products from 2011-12 to 2020-21, and 4,423 contracted the disease by mother to child transmission according to 18 month antibody testing data

of pre-test/post-test counseling so the data is self-reported, the RTI ap-

plication said. HIV attacks the body's immune

system. If HIV is not treated, it can lead to AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome).

The virus can be transmitted through contact with infected blood, semen or vaginal fluids. Within a few weeks of HIV infection, flu-like symptoms such as fever, sore throat and fatigue can occur. Then the disease is usually asymptomatic until it progresses to AIDS. AIDS symptoms include weight loss, fever or night sweats, fatigue and recurrent infections.

HIV has no effective treatment. However, it can be managed with proper medical care.

Satish Koul, Director, Internal Medicine, Fortis Memorial Research Institute, Gurugram said the HIV situation in India has been stabilising in the last one decade.

"India has a very good network of NACO, a Government of India organisation, which is responsi-

ble for managing HIV patients right from his/her diagnosis. With easy availability of Highly Active Anti Retroviral Treatment (HAART), the prognosis of HIV patients has improved over the last two decades. In fact since the year 2000, the prevalence of HIV infected patients is on a declining trend," he told.

On the declining trend in the transmission cases of HIV, Prabhat Ranjan Sinha, Senior Consultant, Internal Medicine, Aakash Healthcare, Dwarka said due to the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown restrictions, HIV detection has been low in the country for the past two years.

"Now that Covid has passed us by, the number of HIV patients is likely to rise. If a person tests positive for HIV, he should begin antiretroviral therapy (ART) as soon as possible," he added.

AWARENESS DRIVE



The Odisha Street Vendors' Union holds a cycle rally at Rasulgarh in Bhubaneswar, Sunday, to create awareness on environment pollution and climate change

Rise in road fatalities mocks state govt's commitment

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 24: Despite strict enforcement of road rules, the state government has failed to curb road fatalities as Odisha witnessed a 15 per cent rise in road mishap deaths in 2021 than 2020, an official said Sunday.

An important meeting was held between Supreme Court Committee and state Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra April 19 over the rising instances of road accidents in Odisha. The committee had made known its displeasure and concerns over the issue and urged the Chief Secretary to focus on curbing road mishaps.

According to a government data, as many as 28 black spots (accident

prone areas) had been identified within the Commissionerate purview between 2017 and 2019. The issues at these spots were addressed by the engineering department. However, 24 more black spots were detected between 2018 and 2020.

The government report itself showed that little to no improvement was observed even after the identification and overhaul of black spots and the engineering and enforcement wings have been told to immediately initiate countermeasures.

The laxity on part of enforcement has raised a lot of eyebrows over the twin city administration's commitment to road safety. Moreover, the engineering wing has spent lakhs of rupees for the claimed improvement in the iden-

tified black spots, albeit with a questionable yield.

The government has identified black spots at Gangapada Square, Aigimia Square, Kolathia, Khandagairi, Patrapara, Kalinga Vihar, batabhuasuni, Acharya Vihar, Jayadev Vihar, Vani Vihar, Satsanga Vihar, Palasuni, Hanspal, Baramunda, Puitapalli, Pratap Nagari, Balikuda Shikharpur, and Kathajodi Bridge due to large number of accidents and road fatalities. Repair works have been carried out at these places but to no avail.

On the other hand, visible improvements at the blackspots identified at Gohira, Tamando, Kesura, Bamphakuda, Chudakhia and Rudrapur areas have brought some sigh of relief.

Put brakes on unfit school buses: STA

SAFETY OF CHILDREN IS PARAMOUNT, SAYS JOINT TRANSPORT COMMISSIONER

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 24: The State Transport Authority (STA) Sunday made an appeal to authorities of all schools to ensure only 'fit' vehicles are engaged in transportation of children.

The STA said it is the school management's responsibility to ensure that Supreme Court guidelines on plying of school buses are complied with. 'Policy on Transportation of School Children' framed in 2016 should be strictly enforced, it said.

"The issue of safety of school children transportation cannot be taken lightly. The concerned school bus operators and school managements are responsible for inconvenience to students, if any,"

Joint Transport Commissioner (Road Safety) Sanjay Biswal said in a press meet here.

Biswal said as many as 1,096 vehicles engaged in transporting school students in the state have been penalised for flouting road safety rules during a week-long drive recently. "820 vehicles were plying sans fitness while 387 were operating without valid permit. Surprisingly, 311 drivers did not have valid Driving License," the senior officer said.

"Safety of children is paramount. No vehicle can ply without absolute compliance to the safety laws. While drivers have been punished and fines have been imposed, the overall responsibility still lies with the schools. The school authorities cannot turn a blind eye to



this. It is their responsibility to ensure that drivers are physically fit and have proper Driving License to ferry schoolchildren," the STA said in a release.

Similarly, schools engaging buses on contractual/hire basis shall abide by the stipulations as applicable to the buses owned

maintain a list of students and their parents' names and contact numbers. There must be an attendant from the school in the bus.

"Under no condition, overloading of vehicles is permissible. The number of children in the bus shall normally be restricted to its seating capacity. The carrying capacity of school buses and three-wheelers that transport school students should be displayed both inside and outside the vehicle," the STA said.

These apart, every school should have a School-Level Transport Committee comprising parents, transport representatives, and school staff to look into matters pertaining to safe transportation of the schoolchildren. If a school does not have such committee, then it should immediately form one, the STA said.

Biswal also requested parents to be careful about commute of their children and know their rights.

Odisha-based start-up to give doorstep healthcare solutions



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 24: Aiming to bring quality healthcare solutions at the fingertip of people, VKareU unveiled its futuristic logo here at Swosti Grand Sunday and announced the start of their operations in the state from April 30.

A leading home healthcare service provider, VKareU is set to offer services as doctor, nurse, physiotherapist, lab testing, sample collection, ambulance service and doorstep medicine delivery serv-

ices to patients via a vis its mobile app on real-time basis.

Observing the smart-phone penetration, the exponential rise in internet usage, and the lack of doorstep medical services, the Odisha-based firm has aimed to provide quality care quickly through technology intervention.

"As a technology-based firm, our mission is to provide complete healthcare delivery at their doorsteps where people realise that home-based healthcare is no longer a luxury but a necessity. We are confident that with services which are available at our platform, many patients and their families will get immensely benefited who would otherwise mostly rely on their fate," said Binod Agarwalla, Co-Founder and Director of VKareU.

The application is set to generate employment for least 30,000 individuals.

'Faces of inequality' unveiled



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 24: Faces of inequality, a collection of stories of the marginalised people from India's grassroots, was launched at Soochana Bhawan here, Sunday.

Authored by senior journalist Pradeep Baisakh, the book goes beyond the intellectual discussion on inequality and attempts to give a human face to it through 44 articles, which are Baisakh's ground reports of over 15 years, covering issues like starvation, distress migration, employment guarantee act, right to information, forest issues,

self-help movement, industrialisation and violence and farmer suicide.

The book depicts the stark reality of discrimination in India through a comparison between the luxurious life in a metro city and a precarious life in a village.

It discusses the plight of the numerous migrant workers who walked hundreds of kilometres during the Covid-induced lockdown in 2020 to reach their homes.

Among others, senior journalists Akshaya Sahoo, Rabi Das and Sharada Lahangir and development professionals Sandeep Patnaik and Umi Daniel were present.

Doc dies in road mishap

AGENCIES

Betanoti, April 24: A senior gynaecologist was killed in a road mishap near Nayapurostampur under Betanoti police limits in Mayurbhanj district Sunday morning.

Anjan Sarangi's car hit a truck from rear near Nayapurostampur at 9:35am. Following the mishap, the truck driver along with the vehicle left the spot with bothering about the car's occupant.

As the spot was away from populated area and located in a dense forest, locals came to know about the accident late. Sarangi was found trapped behind the steering wheel. The impact of the accident was so severe that his car had turned into a pile of mangled metals.

With the help of a gas cutter, the locals rescued Sarangi in a critical condition and rushed him to Baripada hospital. Later, he was referred to the SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack where he died.

PREPARATORY MEET



The Commissionerate Police, Sunday, organised a preparatory meeting for the upcoming Id-ul-Fitr festival in Cuttack

OP PHOTO

How air pollution is heating up Southern Ocean State logs 9 new cases

Researchers have identified a lesser-known form of ozone playing a big role in heating the Southern Ocean - one of Earth's main cooling systems.

Ozone is a gas composed of three oxygen atoms. Many studies have described ozone in the stratosphere, and its role in shielding people from the sun's harmful ultraviolet radiation. Closer to ground level, in the troposphere, ozone is harmful to humans.

In the study led by University of California-Riverside scientists revealed that lower level ozone is adding a great deal of heat to the Southern Ocean -- more than scientists previously understood.

"People haven't paid much attention in the past to tropospheric ozone in terms of ocean heat uptake. Based on our models, they should," said lead author Wei Liu,



climate scientist at the varsity. The finding has been published in the journal Nature Climate Change.

Oceans remove a majority of the carbon and heat that enter the

atmosphere when humans burn fossil fuels.

The Southern Ocean, also called the Antarctic Ocean, collects a third of all excess carbon in the

world's atmosphere, and an estimated 75 per cent of the excess heat collected by the world's oceans. It is important to understand

Historically, about a third of the ocean's warming is attributable to ozone. For this third, about 40 per cent is from the stratosphere, and the rest is from troposphere. Tropospheric ozone is an air pollutant. If we reduce our production of this, we get the dual benefits of less air pollution and most likely, less Southern Ocean warming as well

WEI LIU | CLIMATE SCIENTIST, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, RIVERSIDE

this heating so it can be controlled. Increased ocean warming is contributing to well-documented issues of sea levels rising.

To further this understanding, Liu and an international team of scientists explored climate model simulations with changes in ozone levels between 1955 and 2000.

These model simulations isolated both stratospheric and tropospheric ozone from other influences on Southern Ocean temperatures, allowing them to see how each factor contributes.

While both stratospheric and tropospheric ozone contribute to the Southern Ocean warming, the team found that the latter contributes more. Liu believes the results of this study are useful for showing where people can make further changes that will improve the environment.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 24: Odisha registered nine new coronavirus cases Sunday, eight more than the previous day's count, taking the tally to 12,87,989, the state Health department said in a bulletin. No fatality was reported due to the disease during the day.

The coastal state's daily test positivity rate (TPR) stood at 0.05 per cent and the infections were detected out of 18,879 sample tests. Three children were among those who were afflicted with the disease, the Health bulletin added.

There are 83 active Covid-19 cases in state while 11 patients have recovered from the highly infectious disease Sunday.

The state had logged a single positive coronavirus case and no death Saturday.



The toll remained unchanged at 9,124. Fifty-three other Covid-19 patients have died due to comorbidities so far, according to official data.

The state has registered 12,87,989 cases till now, out of which 12,78,729 people have recovered till date.

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SHORT TAKES

Youth climbs atop train, electrocuted

Rayagada: A youth was electrocuted after coming in contact with a high-tension overhead electrical wire Sunday morning at Jimidipeta Railway Station under Seskhil Tehsil limits in Rayagada district. The deceased is yet to be identified. Police said that the victim climbed atop the 'Jasidih Weekly Superfast Express' (train No-12375) for reasons not known. He was charred to death on the spot after touching the electrical wire. "A guard had spotted the youth while he was climbing on top of the train which was moving slowly. He attracted the attention of the loco pilot and the latter stopped the train at Jimidipeta Railway Station. He asked the youth to get down from the top of the train. Unfortunately, the youth did not pay any heed to the advice. Instead he touched the electrical overhead wire leading to his death instantly," a senior railway official stated. A team of GRP and RPF personnel seized the body for post-mortem. Police have registered a case and launched a probe.

New project to boost irrigation in Koraput

POST NEWS NETWORK

Koraput, April 24: In order to give a boost to irrigation for the agriculture sector in Koraput district, a model watershed project will be set up at Maliguda under Boipariguda block with technical support from ICAR-Indian



Institute of Soil and Water Conservation (ICAR-IISWC). This information was given Saturday by Hemanta Kumar Panda, director of State Soil Conservation

department after making a field visit. He was accompanied by ICAR head (Sunabeda) Dhruva Charan Sahu.

"This model watershed project will be set up to boost irrigation in Maliguda block for economic development of the farmers in the region," said director of the State Watershed Mission, Arun Kumar Das.

The official added that the project will be capable of providing irrigation to 600 hectares of farmland and scores of families will be able to raise mixed crops to augment their income.

Das also said that the ICAR will carry out soil tests in the locality and will advise farmers about the crops suitable for producing on the farmlands.

The officials also held talks with local people about the project and its utility for the agriculture sector.

TRADITIONAL ART EXPO



Visitors taking a look at the decorative and crockery items on display at the National Art and Crafts Mela which was inaugurated, Sunday at PHD ground in Ainthapalli of Sambalpur
OP PHOTO

BJD, BJP workers scuffle in Jharsuguda

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jharsuguda, April 24: Tension ran high after BJD and BJP workers defied Section-144 orders and scuffled with each other in their bid to stage separate demonstrations over the death of Lalit Kumar Das, 22, the cook of Odisha Health Minister Naba Kishore Das here, Sunday. The workers of both parties beat up each other with lathis and hurled tomatoes at each other. Some BJP workers were injured during the scuffle. Police arrested over 50 persons including local leaders and workers of both the parties. However, all were later released on personal bond.

The incident occurred after BJP leaders alleged that Lalit has been murdered and decided to stage a dharna outside the Town police station demanding action against the minister. They had earlier demanded action be initiated against Das. Opposing their move, members of the 'Sachetan Nagarik Manch', a citizens' forum, had decided to

DEATH OF MINISTER'S COOK



stage a parallel dharna over their demand to execute the FIR of the deceased father against the BJP leaders.

Faced with the complex situation, the district administration had denied permission for all sorts of agitation by both the groups and clamped Section-144 from Dharmasala Square to Jhanda Square in this town

The sub-collector and sub-divisional Magistrate of Jharsuguda, Dayamaya Padhi, in his order stated

that section 144 of CrPC is being enforced in front of the Jharsuguda Town police station and from Jhanda chowk to Dharmasala chowk in the town from 6.00am to 6.00pm Sunday to control the law and order situation. The district administration also prohibited any demonstration, agitation, rally or dharana in the places mentioned above.

The move came after the BJP, led by Dinesh Kumar Jain, announced that the party will stage

Workers of both the parties defied Section-144 order, beat up each other with lathis and hurled tomatoes. Police took over 50 persons into preventive custody

a peaceful dharna in front of Jharsuguda police station demanding CBI probe into the death of Lalit. The ruling BJD, led by Tapas Ray Choudhary on the other hand organised a demonstration demanding investigation as per complaint of the deceased's father.

Notably, Lalit Sahu, a resident of Dhenkanal district was staying in the staff quarters at the minister's residence. He was found hanging in his quarters, April 17. Jharsuguda Town police had seized Lalit's body and handed over it to his family members after the post-mortem the same evening.

Janibilli drinking water project still a pipedream

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, April 24: Berhampur Municipal Corporation (BeMC) has still multiple civic problems unresolved while some of them are being sorted out gradually. The work of many developmental projects has started.

However, drinking water has still been an issue in the BeMC area, because the ambitious Janibilli mega drinking project is yet to be completed.

Reports said the BeMC had made a budgetary allocation ₹389.23 crore for 2021-22. Out of this, ₹149 crore was allocated for various developmental projects. Work on some projects like renovation and beautification of ponds, food courts, 20 smart roads and Penduragadia market complex has started.

It was alleged that several other projects included in the 2021-22 budget have not been executed till date while the new council is going to present the budget for 2022-23

in a few days. On the other hand, work on the ₹500-crore Janibilli drinking water project is far from completion. Ahead of the 2019 general elections, the project was hurriedly inaugurated by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.

In fact, the project work is still in progress even three years after this inauguration.

It was alleged that pits have been dug out along various lanes to lay pipelines. Most lanes in the Silk City are in bad shape, making the communication difficult for residents.

Given the status of the work, residents are not sure when the project will be completed and drinking water problem will be sorted out.

Locals alleged that a reputed construction company has been awarded its work. Though the administration has repeatedly directed the company to finish the work, the latter allegedly took a casual attitude towards the project work.

KENDRAPARA: POLLUTION THREATENS CASHEW YIELD

FARMERS SEEK COMPENSATION FOR THEIR LOSSES

POST NEWS NETWORK

Mahakalpara, April 24: Kendrapara's cashew farming is staring at a bleak season due to low yield this summer. Usually by March-April, cashew farmers become very active. However, with increase in pollution levels and climatic changes in the district, production of cashew fruit has been hit hard this season, a report said.

It also should be stated that production had suffered the last couple of years also due to the outbreak of Covid-19.

Farmers have attributed the poor production to the drastic increase in pollution in the district. Due to it, the cashew trees are not producing the fruit the way those normally do. Along with cashew, production of paddy and mango have also been drastically affected, farmers pointed out.

Farmers of Batighara, Rajnagar, Mahakalpara and other blocks in Kendrapara mostly depend on cashew and mango production for their livelihood. Almost all the farmers of Rannagar, Pitapat and



Bahakuda villages are cashew growers. They have been into cashew farming since 1973.

The cashew orchard is spread over approximately 354 acre of land with 10,000 trees in Ramnagar. Similarly, there are around 5,000 trees on 233 acre of land in Pitapat and another 5,000 trees on 182 acre in Bahakuda.

Pollution from factories near the Mahanadi river is severely affecting the crops. The rising pollution has taken a heavy toll on the blossoming, flowering and leafing process of the cashew crop.

"Cashew production has been delayed due to pollution and climate change. Essentially, flowering should have happened by now, but it did not. Pollution must decrease and some steps must be imple-

mented to protect the cashew trees," farmer Bijay Kumar Samal said.

"From mid-2020, all farming activities got suspended due to the national lockdown. We had suffered heavy losses then. Adding to our woes is the rising pollution," another farmer complained.

Cashew is a cash crop and due to the pollution, there is a heavy toll on the production, which has affected the income of majority of the farmers, another farmer pointed out. "One has to also find out ways to control the climatic change," he added.

Considering the loss in crop yield, the administration must ensure that farmers get some compensation through government launched schemes, the farmers opined.

Fake liquor unit busted, 4 held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, April 24: Acting on tip-off, a team of Berhampur Excise officials raided a fake foreign liquor manufacturing unit at Gobind Vihar here and seized a huge consignment of Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL). They also confiscated various chemicals and spirits used in liquor manufacturing, a report said Sunday.

Four persons identified as Deepak Pradhan, 27, Rajaram Sahu, 38, Dipan Sahu, 40 and Satyanarayan Mohapatra, 37, were arrested during the raids. They were produced in the court Sunday from where they were remanded to judicial custody after the court rejected their bail pleas.

Over 696 fake liquor bottles, 15 litres of colouring spirit, 10 litres of white spirit, 11,700 homeopathic tinctures, 5,100 fake labels, 7,404 caps, 1,000 empty liquor bottles, one bottle of artificial colour, 300ml of chemical essence, one auto-rickshaw and a scooter were seized from the possession of the four accused.

Excise officials intercepted scooter rider Deepak, 27 during a routine check at Balipada Square and seized 48 fake liquor bottles from his possession. During questioning, Deepak confessed his involvement in the fake liquor trade. There the officials seized fake liquor bottles of various brands.

ILLEGAL SAND MINING AND SMUGGLING IN BUDHABALANGA RIVER NGT cracks whip on admin



POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, April 24: The Mayurbhanj district administration has found itself in a soup again after a case was filed at the National Green Tribunal (NGT) over illegal sand mining and smuggling from Mahapura sand quarry in Budhabalanga river.

The recent case has added to the woes of the district administration which had earlier been pulled up by the NGT over illegal sand mining and smuggling from two sand quarries in Budhabalanga river. The NGT had earlier sought report from the district administration over illegal sand mining and smuggling from Arapata and Dingira sand quarries in Budhabalanga river.

The matter came up before the NGT after Radha Mohan Singh, a resident of Chhelia village under

Judicial Member Justice B Amit Sthalekar and expert member Saibal Dasgupta admitted the matter for hearing and made three senior officers as party in the case

Badasahi block filed a petition (case no-40.2022/EZ) before the green body in this regard.

Judicial Member Justice B Amit Sthalekar and expert member Saibal Dasgupta admitted the matter for hearing and made three senior officers as party in the case.

The NGT also directed the district administration to form a five member team and conduct a probe

into the charges and file the report within four weeks.

Reports said that the Mahapura sand quarry in Budhabalanga river under Badasahi Tehsil has been leased out for five years since 2016. The environmental clearance was granted for sand mining on 13.72 acre of land (plot no-253 and khata no-175) lift 10 cubic metre of sand daily till March 31, 2021.

However, sand mining continued for over a year even after expiry of the lease term. The quarry had 36, 9127 cubic metre of sand in store, but the tehsildar and mining officer mentioned in record that only 2,000 cubic metre of sand is in store in the quarry.

The environmental clearance was meant for extracting 2,200 cubic metre of sand by digging for one metre depth but the leaseholder has dug up the riverbed for over 10 metre and extracted 2040 cubic metre of sand with heavy equipment like Poclairn.

Meanwhile, over 4, 28,000 lakh cubic metre of sand has been extracted in a year which is much higher than the permissible limits, the complainant has alleged in his petition.

He pointed out that as a result, the state government has lost revenue worth several crores during this period.

The matter has been scheduled for next hearing May 23.

FINE-TUNING MARTIAL ART SKILLS



Girl students of Sarsara Higher Secondary School in Bargarh district learning martial arts at a self-defence training camp on their college premises, Sunday
OP PHOTO

Mega drinking water project soon in Baliapal

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baliapal, April 24: A mega drinking water project will be set up in Baliapal area of Balasore to ensure supply of clean and hygienic water to a large number of people in 144 villages. The project will be set up at Kudamansingh village.

As groundwater in this coastal pocket is saline in nature, people have long been suffering from various ailments due to the lack of clean and hygienic water.

It is expected that the project which is being set up at a cost of ₹172

crore will provide safe drinking water to thousands of people in the locality.

The president of the Balasore district unit of BJD, Rabindra Jena, Basta MLA Nityananda Sahu, superintending engineer of the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (RWSS) department Samir Dey and SDO Seshnag Pradhan visited the project site Sunday where work has already started.

A Mumbai-based company has been awarded the construction work of the project. Its officials said that the project will be completed within 18 to 24 months.

2 friends drown in Nagavali river

Rayagada: Tragedy struck Sunday when two friends met their watery grave while taking bath in Nagavali river to beat the scorching heat here in this district. The two have been identified as Akash Choudhary of Tumbhiguda and Aditya Nayak of Gharakpur village under Kashipur block. Sources said, at least 10 friends of Tumbhiguda Colony had gone to take bath in the river due to the extreme heat. Unfortunately, two of them were washed away into the deep waters and drowned. Seeing their friends being pulled into the deep water, the boys informed their family members. However, before help could reach them, the two boys perished. On being informed, cops and firefighters reached the spot and brought out the bodies. The police have launched a probe while the bodies have been sent for post-mortem.

Woman run over by express train

Berhampur: A woman was killed instantly after being run over by an express train near Kamapalli here, Sunday. The matter came to the fore after the Government Railways Police (GRP) recovered the body from the tracks. The deceased was identified as Runu Panigrahi, 37, originally a native of Ankuli and a resident of Jagabandhu Sahi in Old Berhampur area. Police have registered a case of unnatural death and sent the body for post-mortem. Police suspect that she might have been run over after being hit by Bhubaneswar-bound 'Duranto Express' while crossing the tracks for Ankuli to bring provisions from a dealer.

FOCUS IDEOLOGY

YOUNG & RIGHT-LEANING

For decades, young people's leftward leanings were considered an iron law of politics. "If people are not conservative at 40, they have no head," Winston Churchill probably never said, "but if they are not liberal at 20, they have no heart." From John F. Kennedy, Bill Clinton, and Tony Blair to Barack Obama and Jacinda Ardern, the leading lights of the left have regularly built political careers on the promise of youthful progressivism.



holds elections in May. To be sure, this pattern of young people turning away from the left is not universal – yet. In the United Kingdom and the United States, younger voters remain committed to progressive parties overall. The Democrats are expected to keep a firm hold on younger voters in the US midterm elections this fall. Whereas half of voters aged 65 and older support the Republican candidate in their respective district, this level drops to a mere 29% among voters under 30.

It has long been assumed that younger voters will tend to support progressive and Left-leaning parties, irrespective of the specific issues at stake in any given election. Though this pattern has been borne out historically, it is far from being an iron law, and recent trends suggest that it may be changing

Younger American voters' enduring alliance with the Democrats may be due in part to policies specifically tailored to their economic interests. Leading Democratic politicians have run on proposals to cancel student debt and pursue more robust forms of redistribution to reduce economic inequality.

But while progressive parties around the world should take note of this achievement, that doesn't mean they can ignore the lessons from recent elections elsewhere. Although progressives still generally outperform the right in many Western democracies, the momentum is shifting. Current trends are a stark reminder that success at the polls is not demographically predetermined.

Like their older counterparts, young voters will ultimately support the candidates who offer convincing solutions to the problems that are most pressing in their own lives. If progressive political movements fail to meet this basic condition, they may well lose their longstanding advantage among this electoral cohort. The notion that young people will always go for progressives will become a myth, rather than a reliable model.

The writer serves on the basic value commission of Germany's Social Democratic Party.

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Michael Bröning

EVEN IN AFFLUENT SWEDEN AND GERMANY, YOUNG VOTERS' NATURAL ALIGNMENT WITH PROGRESSIVE PARTIES SEEMS TO BE ENDING

This pattern is so culturally ingrained that it is largely taken for granted. But electoral outcomes in many Western democracies have begun to suggest a very different dynamic. In the first round of the French presidential elections this month, Emmanuel Macron achieved only a narrow victory (27.85%) over the right-wing populist Marine le Pen (23.15%). His success was based not so much on the fervour of the young as on the caution – and alarm – of older voters.

Post-election studies show that Macron carried only one age group comfortably: voters aged 65 and older. Le Pen outperformed him among those aged 25-49. And while the far-left candidate, Jean-Luc Mélenchon, gained slightly more than one-third of the youth vote, Le Pen and the other far-right candidate, Eric Zemmour, received the combined support of an unprecedented 22% of first-time voters. Among voters between the ages of 25 and 34, the far right's support increased to more than 35%. In France, it seems, the kids are not d'accord.

A similar trend appears to be unfolding across southern Europe, with young voters in Italy and Spain also tilting dramatically to the right. Vox, the Spanish right-wing populist party, has quickly emerged as the country's third-largest political force, owing to the support it has received not so much from stereotypical stick-in-the-mud septuagenarians as from

disgruntled, predominantly male, and less educated younger voters.

In Italy, more than half of young voters currently support right-wing parties such as Fratelli d'Italia, former Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini's party, Lega, and former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's party, Forza Italia. Even in affluent Sweden and Germany, young voters' natural alignment with progressive parties seems to be ending. Recent polls in Sweden show "no clear differences in terms of age" among those supporting the far-right Sweden Democrats, meaning that younger voters are as likely as older ones to cast a ballot for the party. While the Sweden Democrats have always had their share of

mainly young male voters, their support among voters aged 18-24 increased from 7% in 2014 to 11.8% in November 2021.

Similarly, in Germany's federal elections last year, the pro-business Free Democratic Party was the surprising top choice for first-time voters, even beating out the Greens. And in recent state elections in eastern Germany, the far-right Alternative für Deutschland gained unparalleled support from young people. In Saxony-Anhalt, the party gained the largest share of votes among the under-30s, as well as among those aged 30-44.

The question now is whether a similar trend will continue in Germany's most populous state, North Rhine-Westphalia, when it

SPECTRUM TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

Heal in India: Ayush gets a fillip

India is leading a global healthcare transformation. It is reimagining critical unhindered access to everyone through an array of traditional medicines by setting up a WHO centre, which is likely to generate billions of dollars of business.

This generates hope for a crisis-ridden economy having over 14 per cent wholesale inflation. Gujarat will not be known only for the visit of UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who is paving the way for a large defence-related deal, but also for establishing a new kind of medicinal, healthcare and yoga, Ayush excellence business. The potential in the sector is immense, according to a US Global Industry Analysis on Herbal Medicines – Global Herbal Market Trajectory and Analytics. It is estimated that the sector shall grow to \$430.05 billion by 2028 at a CAGR of 11.32%.

The healthcare sector may be different by 2030, as both the WHO and India are to usher in a change for a people-centric system of traditional medicines or grandma's prescription. It may revolutionise the pharmaceutical industry and the way the world uses medicines. Importantly, it can make India an international competitor with a surge in its medicinal exports and healing concept. Hope emerges as the country leads this initiative with PM Narendra Modi and WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus inaugurating the \$250

million WHO-funded Global Centre for Traditional Medicine (GCTM) at Jamnagar, Gujarat.

They give it a further push with the simultaneous first Global Ayush Investment and Innovation Summit to 2022 in Gandhinagar. It witnessed Letter of Intent (LoIs) worth more than ₹9000 crore in major categories such as FMCG, medical value travel (Heal in India), pharma, technology & diagnostic and farmers & agriculture. Five significant MoUs were signed with Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Canada, the Philippines for research and new academia and one with Ministry of Defence for promoting Ayush in cantonments.

Modi presented Rosemary Odinga, daughter of former Kenyan Prime Minister Raola Odinga, for regaining her vision, lost in 2017, as the grand success of Ayurveda, which has created a \$18 billion export market during the last few years. The new Ayush visa introduced for Heal in India will create a concept of wellness that encompasses healing through not only just medicine. It gives a holistic approach of different foods and yogic practices to heal the body and mind as appropriate food prepares one for a preventive care through healthy lifestyle. This success can create 5.5 lakh jobs, Minister for Ayush Sarbanand Sonowal estimates.

During the pandemic, the WHO observed that the usage of various kinds of herbs met the global

shortage of synthetic medicines. The occurrence of such consumer preferences was seen more in the Asian region. Herbal tea, coriander, turmeric, cumin and garlic were extensively used to counter 100 to 700% rise in medicine demand. The WHO observes that the alternate medicine people used created a curative system beyond its imagination. "For many millions of people around the world, traditional medicine is the first port of call to treat many diseases," says Ghebreyesus.

The world is now rediscovering the importance of India's traditional medicinal systems in Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, Sowaigpa, homeopathy and yoga. The effort is to make all of this relevant, even fashionable in use today. As the GCTM is supposed to coordinate world activities in such medicines and therapy it may promote studies in Latin America, Africa, elsewhere in Asia and rest of the world. This facility is intended to be a global repository of traditional healthcare knowledge.

Sonowal says that this will change not only healthcare but also alter the approach to India's role in the world's traditional medicine business. Between 2019 and 2020 exports surged 45%. The market for medicinal plants in India stood at ₹4.2 billion in 2019 and is expected to increase at a CAGR 38.5% to ₹14 billion by 2030. The export value of Ayurvedic and herbal

products amounted to about \$539 million from India in 2021. The total global herbal trade is currently assessed at \$120 billion. Overall Ayush exports have reached to \$18 billion from \$3 billion before 2014. The cultivation of medicinal herbs such as shankhpushpi, atis, kuth, kutki, kapikachhu and karanja is changing the Indian agrarian Ayurvedic scenes and would empower farmers with high incomes. There is a huge gap between the supply and demand of medicinal plants to manufacture Ayurvedic medicines in India. According to the 'All India Trade Survey of Prioritised Medicinal Plants, 2019', demand for high-value medicinal plants increased by 50%, while the availability declined by 26%. This led to increased habitat degradation and levels of over-exploitation by pharmaceutical industries. Road development work and destruction of flora and fauna in the Himalayas and remote areas also led to decreasing the availability of 65 species (10% of the total) falling into the critically endangered, vulnerable, and nearly threatened categories.

The GCTM would study the ways to improve it; train farmers adopt technology and a possible new development protocol. The concerted effort is to pave way for the growth of the sector and create a sense for wellness of health and the Indian economy.

INFRA

WISDOM CORNER

- “The good times of today, are the sad thoughts of tomorrow.” **BOB MARLEY**
- “When the power of love overcomes the love of power the world will know peace.” **JIMI HENDRIX**
- “Take care of all your memories. For you cannot relive them.” **BOB DYLAN**

WORDSWORTH

Sphehish

Scholars of ancient languages will immediately spot that this word has something to do with a wasp, since spheh is the name of that insect in classical Greek. In more modern times, it has been given to a genus of solitary digger wasps. Therein lies a tale. When such a wasp returns to its burrow with a paralysed cricket to feed its grubs, it will leave it at the entrance while it checks inside that all is well. It then comes out again and drags its prey inside. This gave a naturalist with a cruel streak an idea for a bit of behavioural research. He moved the cricket a little way away while the wasp was in its burrow. When it surfaced and found its cricket was missing, it searched for it and returned it to the entrance to its burrow. It then repeated its search of the inside. No matter how many times the cricket was moved, the wasp repeated the same steps robotically without working out what was going on. Douglas Hofstadter recounted the story in one of his Metamagical Themas columns in Scientific American in 1982 and coined sphehish for this unthinking deterministic or pre-programmed behaviour, in which the wasp was at the mercy of its instincts and environment.

LOL Working in the garden

A prisoner received a letter from his wife: "I have decided to plant some lettuce in the back garden. When is the best time to plant them?" The prisoner, knowing that the prison guards read all the mail, replied in a letter: "Dear wife, whatever you do, DO NOT touch the back garden! That is where I hid all the gold."



A week or so later, he received another letter from his wife: "You wouldn't believe what happened. Some men came with shovels to the house, and dug up the whole back garden." The prisoner wrote another letter: "Dear wife, NOW is the best time to plant the lettuce!"



Shivaji Sarkar

IT IS ESTIMATED THAT THE AYUSH SECTOR SHALL GROW TO \$430.05 BILLION BY 2028 AT A CAGR OF 11.32%

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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Costlier medicines

Sir, The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority has announced an annual change of 10.76% in the Wholesale Price Index, which could translate into the steepest price increases in years for over 800 scheduled drugs and medical devices in the National List of Essential Medicines. In an order dated March 25, the NPPA said: "Based on the Wholesale Price Index data provided by the Office of the Economic Advisor, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the annual change in the WPI works out as 10.76607% during the calendar year 2021 over the corresponding period of 2020." Every year, the authority announces the WPI change in accordance with The Drugs (Price Control) Order, 2013. Some of the most common drugs and medical devices, including paracetamol tablets, azithromycin tablets, oral rehydration salts, glucose injections, contraceptives like copper IUDs, condoms, insulin injections, Vitamin C tablets, and multivitamin tablets, are in the NLEM. These drugs constitute around 18% of India's aggregate domestic pharmaceutical retail market of approximately ₹1.5 lakh crore. Needless to say that with the fragile healthcare system in place and 50% reduction in the number of medicines available in government hospitals free of cost, this steep hike in medicines in open market would make people bleed white. The prices of 800 odd essential medicines are set to rise by 10.7%. As usual the plea is of increase in the prices of raw materials and the need to protect the profit margins of pharmaceutical companies.

Asit Mohanty, JAJPUR

Social vaccine crucial

Sir, With the new sub-variant of COVID-19 leading to anxiety and speculation that whether this strain will result in a fourth wave of the pandemic, the crucial social vaccine of mask-wearing gains prominence again. In such a scenario, the Tamil Nadu government's move to make mask wearing mandatory and levy a fine of ₹500 for failure to mask-up is most welcome. While it has been sufficiently proved that using face masks greatly reduces the chance of transmitting and getting infected with the coronavirus, there are still challenges in promoting widespread mask-wearing behaviour among the public. The act of wearing a face mask can demonstrate that you have concern for the health of people around you. Apart from strict adherence to wearing masks, there is a need to institutionalise the process of compliance to the other two social vaccines – physical distancing and constant hand-washing with soap.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

national

of the day quote

Massive changes have been made in Tripura Industrial Investment Promotion Scheme (TIIPS)-2022 to increase investment in the state. To avail state subsidy for MSME, the upper limit has been increased to ₹1 crore

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has set a target of making India number one in the world by 2047, when the nation celebrates the centenary of its Independence

Punjabis gave a huge mandate to the Aam Aadmi Party and it will not sit idle until all the aspirations of people are fulfilled

SHORT TAKES

Ranas sent to judicial custody

Mumbai: A Mumbai court Sunday remanded independent MP Navneet Rana and her MLA husband Ravi Rana in 14-day judicial custody, a day after they were arrested in connection with their announcement to recite Hanuman Chalisa outside Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray's residence here. The court sent the politician couple in judicial remand, rejecting the city police's demand for their custody, an official said. While Navneet Rana will be sent to the Byculla women's jail, her husband will be taken to the Arthur Road jail, the official said. Meanwhile, 13 Shiv Sena workers were arrested Sunday for allegedly protesting outside the Khar residence of the Ranas the previous day. The party workers were later released on bail, police said.

Passenger electrocuted

Mandla: A passenger was electrocuted and another injured when a bus came in contact with an overhead high-tension electricity wire in Madhya Pradesh's Mandla district Sunday afternoon, police said. Maneri police post in-charge Pankaj Vishwakarma said the bus was carrying a marriage party and the incident took place when one of the passengers, identified as Bhura Barkade (20), climbed on top of the vehicle to remove a high tension wire using a piece of bamboo.

4 children hurt

English Bazar (WB): Four children were injured as crude bombs, which they started playing with thinking to be balls, exploded in West Bengal's Malda district Sunday, police said. The incident happened in Gopalganj in Kaliachak police station area, they said. Thinking them to be balls, they picked up the crude bombs and started playing, police said. The bombs exploded, injuring the four children. Two of them are critical and undergoing treatment at the Malda Medical College and Hospital, police said.

Child killed

Hamren (Assam): An 18-month-old child was killed and her mother injured Sunday after an elephant attacked them in Assam's West Karbi Anglong district, police said. The incident occurred in Baithalango area when the woman was clearing bushes near her residence in Umseret Ingti village and the child was with her, a senior officer said. The elephant dragged them for a distance before leaving the place, he said.



The arrest of Gujarat MLA Jignesh Mevani by the Assam Police for tweeting against the Prime Minister is an abuse of power. This dictatorial attitude of the central and BJP governments is like a blemish on democracy and is against the Constitution

ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CM

PM HONOURED

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was honoured with the Lata Deenanath Mangeshkar award and remembered the iconic singer as an artiste who was an integral part of nation-building



Trinamool stepping into opposition space in UP

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, April 24: The Trinamool Congress is quietly stepping into the opposition space in Uttar Pradesh.

After campaigning for Samajwadi Party in the recent Assembly elections, the Trinamool is apparently eyeing a bigger role in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. A Trinamool delegation will be visiting Prayagraj Sunday where a family of five was found murdered on Saturday. This is the first party from outside the state to visit the site of crime.

The Samajwadi Party (SP), which is the main opposition force in Uttar Pradesh, has not gone be-



condemning the incident in a press statement. SP MLA Shivpal Singh Yadav, however, did visit

the family of the deceased on Saturday but said that he had come in his 'personal capacity'.

The TMC delegation to Prayagraj comprises Dola Sen, Mamata Bala Thakur, Saket Gokhale, Uma Soren and Lalitesh Tripathi. Lalitesh Tripathi, who joined the Trinamool after quitting the Congress, said that the Prayagraj murders were 'shocking' because they come days after another family of five was murdered in the city.

Sources said that Trinamool had decided to play a more proactive role as an opposition party in Uttar Pradesh and will take on the Yogi government head on.

"It is clear that the opposition in UP lacks the punch needed to tackle the ruling BJP," said a Trinamool state leader. It may be

recalled that five members of a family were killed with sharp-edged weapons in the Khevrajpur village in Prayagraj.

This is the second such case reported in the state in one week.

Last Saturday, the bodies of five members of a family were found inside their house in Prayagraj. The bodies of the woman and three daughters were found with their throats slit open, while the man was found hanging from a noose.

In the recent case, the victims were identified as Rajkumar Yadav, 55, his daughter Manisha, 25, his wife Kusum, 50, daughter-in-law Savita, 30, and Rajkumar's granddaughter Mitakshi, 2.

ASHISH MISHRA RETURNS TO JAIL

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lakhimpur Kheri (Uttar Pradesh), April 24: Ashish Mishra, son of Union Minister Ajay Kumar Mishra Teni and also the main accused in the Lakhimpur Kheri violence of October 3, 2021, surrendered in the court of the chief judicial magistrate Sunday in compliance of the Supreme Court directive.

This comes just a week after the Supreme Court cancelled his bail and further granted him a week to surrender. Ashish surrendered in the court a day ahead of the expiry of his bail term.

He was granted bail by the Allahabad High Court in February 2022. This pertains to the violence that broke out in Lakhimpur Kheri in October 2021, where eight people including four farmers were killed.

Last week, the apex court, while hearing the petitions filed by farmers challenging the accused's bail, ruled against Ashish Mishra.

The three-judge bench noted that the victims of the violence were denied the right of hearing in the Allahabad High Court which had granted bail to Mishra. It also asked the high court to reconsider the bail granted to Ashish Mishra.

The incident dates back to October 3, 2021, when a group of farmers was protesting in Lakhimpur Kheri district against the Centre's three farm laws. However, a violent clash broke out between the farmers following which an SUV reportedly owned by Union MoS Ajay Mishra, ran over the farmers, killing four of them.

As alleged by the protesting farmers, Ajay Mishra's son Ashish Mishra was inside the car when the accident took place.

Following this, a case was registered and the Supreme Court also appointed retired Punjab and Haryana High Court judge Rakesh Kumar Jain to monitor and investigate the incident.

India suspends tourist visas of Chinese citizens

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 24: Following Beijing's reluctance to allow the return of Indians stuck at home since 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, India has also suspended tourist visas for nationals of China.

The government's move came after thousands of Indians including more than 23,000 students, have been stuck in India for over two years as Beijing has suspended the visa process as well as flights from India due to the pandemic situation.

In its latest update on April, global air transport body IATA said that tourist visas issued to nationals of China were no longer valid. But the Indian government is still giving business, employment, diplomatic and official visas to Chinese nationals.

The IATA issues regular travel updates to all airlines to know which nationalities are allowed to be flown to which countries. The latest update on India was about the countries whose nationals cannot



The government's move came after thousands of Indians including more than 23,000 students, have been stuck in India for over two years as Beijing has suspended the visa process as well as flights from India due to the pandemic situation

After a hiatus of over two years, India restored the electronic tourist visa facility for 156 countries last month following the resumption of all scheduled international flights from March 27

travel to India on e-tourist visas.

The officials aware of the development said that students from Thailand, Pakistan and Sri Lanka have been allowed to return to China, but it has continued to remain silent about permitting stranded Indian students and hundreds of businessmen and workers

and their families to re-join their studies and work.

In March, S. Jaishankar had taken up the issue with Wang Yi during the latter's visit to India, while in February Beijing had promised the Indian Embassy to work for the early return of the Indian students and assured that they will no

discrimination in any manner as their resumption of studies.

Explaining China's decision to allow students from some countries to return but not from India, Wang had said on March 22 that on the basis of ensuring sound pandemic prevention and control, the country was coordinating arrangements for a small number of foreign students with actual needs to return to China in light of the changing international pandemic situation.

After a hiatus of over two years, India restored the electronic tourist visa facility for 156 countries last month following the resumption of all scheduled international flights from March 27. According to the April 19 IATA update on India, the nationals of only these countries are allowed to enter the country such as Bhutan, Maldives and Nepal;

those with a residence permit issued by India; those with a visa or e-visa issued by India; those with an overseas citizen of India (OC) card or booklet; those having a PIO card; and diplomatic passport holders.

WHAT A LEAP!



A peacock jumps over a barbed wire in a park, in New Delhi

PTI PHOTO

BJP sweeps Guwahati civic polls

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Guwahati, April 24: The ruling BJP-led alliance on Sunday secured a clean sweep by winning 58 seats in the 60-seat Guwahati Municipal Corporation (GMC) elections while the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) opened its account in the civic body.

According to the results announced by the Assam State Election Commission, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won 52 wards including the three which were earlier elected unopposed by the saffron party candidates while its ally Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) secured six wards out of seven wards it contested.

In a significant development in the civic polls, the AAP and the Asom Jatiya Parishad (AJP), a local party, secured one seat each.



AAP candidate Masuma Begum won ward number 42, while AJP nominee Hukum Shan Ali Boxi secured victory in ward number one, defeating the BJP and AGP candidates, respectively.

The main opposition Congress, which fielded candidates in 54 wards, this time, could not open its account in the GMC elections, which were held after a gap of nine years. The Congress' ally CPI-M, which contested in four wards, also failed to win any ward. In all,

Thank you Guwahati! The people of this lovely city have given a resounding mandate to BJP to build on the agenda of development. They have also blessed the hard work of the state government under CM Himanta Biswa Sarma. My gratitude to every BJP Karyakarta for the hard work

NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

197 candidates had contested the elections in 57 wards.

The GMC election was last held in 2013, when Congress won the prestigious civic body but due to internal wrangling several elected councillors in 2014 and 2015 had shifted to BJP facilitating the saffron party to form the municipal board.

MP's policy of rewarding prosecutors draws SC ire

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 24: The Madhya Pradesh government's policy to reward or give incentives to its public prosecutors for successfully arguing death penalty cases in trial courts has come under the scanner of the Supreme Court.

A bench headed by Justice U U Lalit took note of a submission of Attorney General K K Venugopal that such a practice of rewarding

prosecutors should be "nipped in the bud".

The attorney general is assisting the top court in a suo motu case registered to examine and institutionalise the process involved in collection of data and information to decide award of death penalty.

On being told about the policy or a system in Madhya Pradesh where public prosecutors are being rewarded and paid incentives for successfully arguing



death penalty cases, the bench asked the state counsel to put the related documents on record and be ready to defend it on May 10,

the next date of hearing.

"...There has been policy in Madhya Pradesh wherein the public prosecutors are given incentive/increments on the basis of death sentence awarded in cases argued by them," it said and asked lawyer Rukmini Bobde, appearing for the state, to place the policy on record and defend it.

The bench, which also comprised justices S Ravindra Bhat and P S Narasimha, also said that it was

mullying laying down guidelines to be followed in cases where maximum sentence provided for the offence is death penalty.

To ensure proper legal assistance to the accused facing criminal trials, it said that like public prosecutors, who pursue cases on behalf of the state, the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) can have defence counsel or public defender's office in every district of the country.

BJP gears up for 'Mission Repeat' in Himachal

THE 2023 ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS IN HIMACHAL PRADESH WILL BE CONTESTED UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF CURRENT CHIEF MINISTER AND BJP LEADER, JAIRAM THAKUR

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 24: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is gearing up for the Assembly elections scheduled to be held in Himachal Pradesh by the end of 2023.

Preparing to repeat its poll performance of 2018 Assembly elections, the saffron party's high command is planning "Mission Repeat" in the hilly state which can be gauged from the fact that BJP National President, J.P. Nadda has visited the state twice in April.

The 2023 Assembly elections in

Himachal Pradesh will be contested under the leadership of current Chief Minister and BJP leader, Jai Ram Thakur but it will also be a prestige battle for Nadda's political presence in his own native state.

The main opposition Congress seems to be engrossed in holding discussions regarding the selection of the party's National President, party's policy, poll strategy, Chief Ministerial candidate and role of poll strategist Prashant Kishor for the future elections.

Buoyed by the emphatic victory in Punjab, the Aam Aadmi Party



(AAP) has decided to contest the forthcoming Assembly elections in Himachal Pradesh. During his

two-day visit to Himachal Pradesh, BJP National Chief held a massive roadshow in Kangra on Friday

and addressed a public rally there. He also held a meeting with party leaders to review the preparations ahead of the Assembly polls.

On Saturday, Delhi Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party Chief Arvind Kejriwal, while addressing public rallies in Mandi and Kangra, slammed the ruling BJP government as well as the Congress.

Of the total 68 Assembly seats in 12 districts of Himachal Pradesh, a maximum 15 seats are from Kangra district and therefore it will decide which party will win the elections. Launching a scathing

attack at the BJP government in the state, Kejriwal said Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister was impersonating all the schemes being implemented by the Delhi government, adding that the latter would never succeed in doing so.

Responding to the Delhi Chief Minister's statement, Jai Ram Thakur urged him to speak in a restrained language and said Himachal Pradesh has its own culture and traditions and the former will be given a befitting reply after elections. The AAP is trying to take full advantage of the Congress' weakness in the state.

Palli becomes India's first 'carbon-neutral panchayat'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Palli (Samba), April 24: The non-descript hamlet of Palli in Jammu and Kashmir's border district of Samba Sunday became the country's first 'carbon-neutral panchayat' with Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicating to the nation a 500 kilowatt solar plant, installed in a record time of nearly three weeks.

The Prime Minister said that Palli has shown the way to the country by becoming carbon neutral.

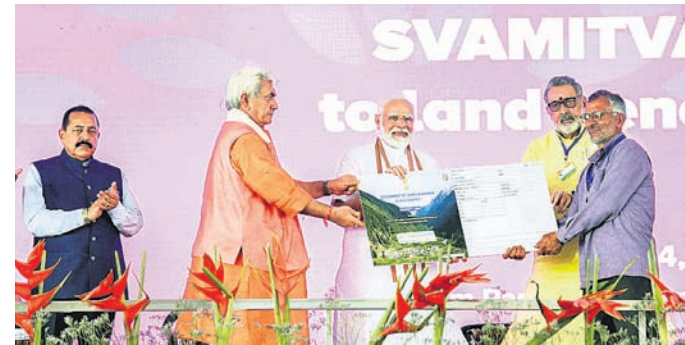
"With the inauguration of a 500 kW solar power plant at Palli, it is moving towards becoming the country's first panchayat to become carbon-neutral. The people of Palli have demonstrated what 'Sabka prayas' can do," Modi said here.

"People of Palli have helped in the project. They have also provided food to people engaged in the project," he said.

All 1,500 solar panels put up in a total area of 6,408 square metres will provide clean electricity to 340 houses in the model panchayat under the central government's 'Gram Urja Swaraj' programme, officials said.

"It is a red-letter day for us. With the blessings of Modi ji, the village has entered into the history of India as the first carbon-neutral solar village. We thank the prime minister for choosing this hamlet across the country," Palli villager Gurdeep Singh said.

From the macadamized roads to the recently launched electric bus service, the village located just 17



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a rally on Panchayati Raj Day, at Palli in Samba district, Sunday. Union Minister for Panchayati Raj Giriraj Singh, Union Minister Jitendra Singh, and Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir Manoj Sinha are also seen

With the inauguration of a 500 kW solar power plant at Palli, it is moving towards becoming the country's first panchayat to become carbon-neutral. The people of Palli have demonstrated what 'Sabka prayas' can do

NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

km from the winter capital Jammu is witnessing a major transformation with an upgraded Panchayat Ghar, renovated government high school building, a new pond and improved playfields and electric bus ride.

Palli's sarpanch Ravinder Sharma, who interacted with the prime minister, told him that village has Led bulbs, solar cookers and solar stoves.

Asked by the Prime Minister whether the village has solar pumps

for irrigation of farmlands, Sharma said that 10 such pumps have been installed and 40 more will be installed in the next phase.

Prime Minister asked the villagers to celebrate the birthday of their hamlet after fixing a date for it. "You should always celebrate the birthday of the village. All people who belong to this village and are living should be called back to participate in the celebrations," Modi said.

Sharma said that April 24 is the Palli village's formation day and they will celebrate its birthday.

The Prime Minister suggested to villagers to go for organic farming which will be beneficial for them.

The solar project was completed at a cost of ₹2.75 crore in a record time, officials said. The electricity generated will be distributed to the village, having a daily requirement of 2,000 units, through the local power grid station.

Minimum wages of daily wagers increased in J&K

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, April 24: The Jammu and Kashmir administration Saturday approved a hike in minimum wages of the daily wagers, including casual labourers, in all government departments from ₹225 per day to ₹300 per day.

The announcement was made by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha as an interim measure till the minimum wage rates are revised by the Labour and Employment Department.

"Daily wagers are playing a significant role in the development of UT with exemplary commitment and dedication to work. The interim measure has been taken to benefit a sizable portion of the workforce. We are firmly committed to ensure the welfare and well-being of all daily wagers and the government will leave no stone unturned to establish principles of equality welfare, and social justice in the governance," the Lt Governor said.



Representational image

"While we are fast-tracking the process on minimum wages, the interim measure reflects the UT administration's concern to make growth and progress inclusive. Together we can confront the challenges of future and there is no doubt that daily wagers and casual labourers will also carry forward the process of social and economic change," he added.

TEMPLE DEMOLITION POLITICAL SLUGFEST CONTINUES IN RAJGARH



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, April 24: In the continued slugfest between the BJP and Congress over the demolition of two temples in the Alwar district, a saffron party MP asserted that the Rajgarh municipality headed by his party had not cleared any proposal to demolish the shrines.

Jaipur (Rural) MP Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore alleged that the temples were demolished in haste without any clearance by any senior government official in the district.

The temples were demolished when Alwar's district collector had been transferred and his successor was yet to assume charge, alleged Rathore.

Sticking to the Congress' charge, Rajasthan's Food and Civil Supplies Minister Pratap Singh Khachariyawas asked the

BJP to tender an apology to the country for allegedly demolishing the temple in a town with its municipal body headed by them.

Two temples were demolished during an anti-encroachment drive in Alwar district's Rajgarh early this week, triggering an exchange of barbs Friday between the Congress and BJP in Rajasthan.

Rajgarh is a BJP-run municipality in the Congress-ruled Rajasthan. In a news conference here, Rathore also accused the Rajasthan government of pursuing the politics of appeasement and hurting the sentiments of the majority community.

He said the demolition of the temples was nowhere in the proposal presented before the municipal committee board and in any case no religious place can be demolished without the permis-

sion of senior officers such as the district collector.

The temple was demolished in a hurry when the previous collector was relieved from duty and the new collector was yet to take the charge, he alleged.

"This action was done with a malicious intention of vengeance. The incident of Alwar and the violence in Karauli are known to everyone. Section 144 is being imposed on Hindu yatras in the state. The way appeasement politics is being done in Rajasthan for a particular community is crystal clear," Rathore said.

He said it seems a 'Talibani' mindset exists in the Ashok Gehlot government in the state where cases of atrocities on women and Dalits are on the rise and the government is miserably failing in providing drinking water to the people.

KPVs sit on dharna demanding panel to probe exodus

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, April 24: Demanding that a commission be setup to investigate the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from the Valley, members of the community sat on dharnas Sunday to draw the attention of Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his visit to the union territory.

Amid tight security arrangements, Modi inaugurated some and laid the foundation for other multiple development initiatives worth around ₹20,000 crore in Jammu and Kashmir, including the opening of the Banihal-Qazigund road tunnel to establish an all-weather connectivity between the two regions.

Another group of KPV members, led by Vikram Kaul, sat on a dharna near the Press Club here, prompting the police to vacate them in wake of Modi's visit to the region.

At least 200 more members of the KPV sat on a dharna at Muthi Ghat here demanding a probe, also

Kashmiri Pandit Volunteers (KPV), led by Sandeep Mawa, have been sitting on a fast-unto-death for the past four days in Srinagar pressing for their demand

into the killings and destruction of temples during the emergence of terrorism in Kashmir in 1990s.

Mawa has threatened to set himself on fire if his demands are not fulfilled in the next few days. He has also been demanding stern action against Farooq Ahmad Dar alias Bitta Karate, who had allegedly admitted to have killed dozens of Pandits during the 90s.

The Kashmiri Pandits also said they wanted an administration devoid of "tainted, anti-national and corrupt" bureaucrats. Divisional commissioner of Kashmir province Pandurang K Pole visited Mawa and asked him to end his fast.

J&K: Frequent power cuts frustrate people

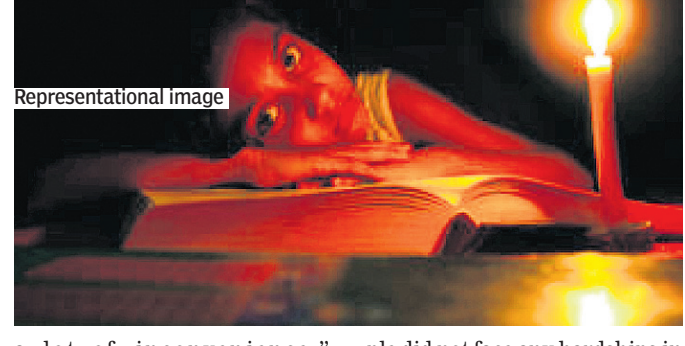
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, April 24: Kashmir is going through one of its worst power crisis as unscheduled and prolonged cuts in supply in the holy month of Ramadan have left the people distraught.

The Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDCL), for its part, said the entire country, and not just Kashmir, was facing power crisis due to "shortage of coal" and imbalance in demand and supply.

"There has been hardly a day when we have had electricity at the time of Sehri or Iftar. During the day, the situation gets worse. We have never faced such a situation before," Javid Ahmad, a resident of Ganderbal, said.

The scenario is not better in Jammu and Kashmir's summer capital Srinagar, where many areas are metered. "In winters, we used to get power supply as per the schedule. But as soon as we entered the holy month, we began facing issues in electricity supply. We pay bills on time, but rarely have we had power (supply) at Sehri and Iftar. This has created



a lot of inconvenience," Mohammad Yusuf, a local, said. People complained that the situation was "far worse" in non-metered areas.

"We have more hours of power cut than supply. Most of the evenings, our areas go dark," Umar Ahmad, a resident of downtown Srinagar said.

The locals have been regularly taking to social media to flag their concerns. However, it has not helped, they alleged.

The National Conference (NC) Saturday said Kashmir was facing a huge power crisis and appealed to Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha to intervene so that the peo-

ple did not face any hardships in the remaining days of the holy month. "The ground situation, the feedback we are getting, what we see in the media... This is a huge crisis, something which has never been seen before. Electricity is snapped at 'Sehri', 'Iftar' and 'Taraweeh' (night prayers)," NC general secretary Ali Mohammad Sagar said here.

KPDCL chief engineer Javid Yusuf said there was coal shortage across the country, leading to frequent power cuts. Officials said the demand for electricity in Kashmir is around 1,600 megawatt (MW), while the supply is only of about 900 to 1100 MW.

J&K admin inks MoU with NHLML

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, April 24: The Jammu and Kashmir administration Saturday inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Highways Logistics Management Limited (NHLML) for the development of ropeway networks, as an alternate solution of mobility, to improve connectivity to remote habitations on higher reaches.

The MoU was signed between Regional Officer, National Highway Authority of India, J-K, Rohin Gupta and Development Commissioner (Works), Public Works Department (Roads and Buildings) J-K, Manzoor Hussain, at Raj Bhavan here, in the presence of Lt Governor Manoj Sinha, an official spokesman said.

Terming this much-awaited project as a potential solution to the existing mobility problem besides promoting tourism, Sinha said in the long run, this sustainable and environment-friendly transport system will play a significant role in decongesting the urban spaces.

He expressed gratitude to the central government and said as future mobility medium, the proposed ropeway project will bring economic prosperity to inaccessible hilly areas.

Terming connectivity as top priority to increase production, trade and to improve the quality of life of people, the Lt Governor reiterated the unwavering commitment of the UT administration towards the rapid socio-economic development of the people living in remote areas of Jammu and Kashmir.



Mercury rises in most parts of Raj

AT 44 DEGREES CELSIUS, BARMER REMAINED THE HOTTEST PLACE



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, April 24: Most parts of Rajasthan recorded an increase of one to two degrees Celsius in maximum temperature Sunday compared to the previous day.

At 44 degrees Celsius, Barmer remained the hottest place in the state. According to a Meteorological

Department spokesperson, the maximum temperature in Baran was 43.2 degrees Celsius on Sunday, 43.1 degrees Celsius each in Dungarpur and Jalore, 43 degrees Celsius each in Jaisalmer, Bikaner, Phalodi and Dholpur, 42.7 degrees Celsius in Nagaur, 42.5 degrees Celsius in Karauli and 42.2 degrees Celsius in Kota.

Other major places in the state recorded temperature between 40 and 41.7 degrees Celsius. He said Phalodi, which recorded 31.4 degrees Celsius, was the hottest place Saturday night while Barmer recorded 29.9 degrees and Sirohi 29 degrees Celsius.

Jaipur Meteorological Centre Director Radheshyam Sharma said the weather will remain dry in the state in the coming days.

Exclusive township for dairy farmers to come up in Kota

AGENCIES

Kota (Raj), April 24: An exclusive township for dairy farmers is set to come up in this city of Rajasthan with 738 houses, fodder stores and a single cattle shade capable to accommodate at least 28 cattle.

The one-of-its-kind township being built under the ₹300 crore-worth Devnarayan Integrated Housing Scheme (DIHS) by Kota Urban Infrastructure Trust (UIT) will be completed by April 30, officials said Sunday.

Preparations are underway to shift the animal rearers into the 738 houses attached with a cattle yard and fodder store in the first week of May, they said.

According to UIT officials, the township is spread over 105.09 hectares of land in Dharmapura and Bandha village amid natural greenery, away from the urban hurly-burly, around 7 kilometers from southern bypass.

"At least 738 houses of 35X90 feet, each with two rooms, kitchen, bathroom, verandah, fodder store



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

and cattle shade capable to accommodate at least 28 cattle, have been constructed in the hi-tech township."

"Besides, a commercial activity zone for dairy units, straw (Bhusa) and 'Khal-Churi' (fodder) has also been developed in the township. School, primary health centre, veterinary hospital, community hall, society office, police

check post, GSS, water tanks, sewer line, park, drains, STP, cattle fair ground, milk mandi and theatre have also been designed in the township," they said.

Apart from it, a biogas plant for the disposal of cow dung from around 15,000 cattle is also being set up here. The plant will provide additional source of income to 'Pashu Paalak' (animal rear-

BOOST TO FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir is on a mission to create an encouraging and conducive environment for promoting a culture of female entrepreneurship. Today, thousands of women have taken the baton and are pioneering business projects across the Union Territory (UT) in many spheres. The biggest reason for their growing confidence is the encouraging push and the financial assistance that the UT government is providing so that they can fall back without fear. The UT administration has rolled out several schemes and incentives to allow enterprising women to expand their horizons and help in rebuilding the brand 'Jammu and Kashmir'. Some schemes have shown incredibly successful tangible, immediate returns! The biggest of all, the UMEED scheme (Jal Rural Livelihood Mission) is turning a new chapter in the lives of rural women.

ers) as they would be able to sell the cow dung to the plant, they said.

Rajasthan Urban Development & Housing Minister Shanti Dhariwal noted that the upcoming township will improve the lifestyle of dairy farmers and provide city residents a sustainable relief from stray cattle menace that had posed a threat to them despite the city being in the list of 'Smart City'.

Commenting on the project,

Kota collector Harimohan Meena, who is also the UIT chairman, said it is a one-of-its kind initiative and special camps will be organised for allotment of drinking water and domestic electricity connection to the dairy farmers from April 25- April 30.

Special arrangements of heavy and loading vehicles will also be made by the Kota Urban Infrastructure Trust for the shifting of household items of the farmers to the township, he added.

of the day quote

A high-level committee will soon be set up to draft a Uniform Civil Code and communal amity in the state will not be allowed to be disrupted at any cost

Besides farmers, the industrial sector especially in Ambala, Yamunanagar, Kundli, Faridabad, Gurugram and Manesar has been hit hard because of insufficient supply of electricity. Haryana at present is facing the worst ever power crisis because of a big gap between the demand and supply of electricity

In the appointment of judges to the High Court and Supreme Court, the Honourable Collegium may kindly ensure that the principle of social justice along with other parameters for appointment is followed. In this way, I consider that the principle of inclusiveness would be ensured in higher judiciary

SHORT TAKES

Farmer found dead

Saharanpur (Uttar Pradesh): The body of a 42-year-old farmer was found allegedly hanging from a tree in Sona Arjunpur village of Uttar Pradesh's Saharanpur district while the mutilated body of his 35-year-old servant was found allegedly stuffed in a sack nearby. Both the bodies have been sent for post-mortem and the report is awaited. The body of the servant is reportedly decomposed.

2 killed in accident

Hyderabad: Two persons from Madhya Pradesh were killed and five others injured in a road accident in Telangana's Peddapalli district Sunday. The deceased and injured were all from Madhya Pradesh, police said. A Scorpio vehicle in which they were travelling from Madhya Pradesh to Hyderabad rammed into a stationary DCM van on Rajiv Rahadari, the Hyderabad-Karimnagar highway. The accident occurred near Paddakalvala in Peddapalli mandal. The deceased were identified as Chaitramukhi (25) and Pula Ram (40).

Four arrested

Gurugram: In a breakthrough, four robbers, who had looted Rs one crore at gunpoint from the employees of a cash collection company on April 18, have been arrested, the police said Sunday. According to the police, the accused had thrown chilli powder into the eyes of the employees and driver of the van and held them hostage before fleeing with the huge cash. Police sources said the fifth accomplice is yet to be arrested.

7 sailors released

Thiruvananthapuram: Seven Indian sailors, in captivity of Yemen's Houthi rebels since January 2 along with their UAE-flagged merchant ship Rwabee, have been released, relatives of some of the sailors said Sunday. The sailors included three Keralites - Dipash of Meppayur in Kozhikode, Akhil of Alappuzha, and Sreejith from Kottayam - and their relatives said that they have got information about their release. The Houthi rebels had then claimed that the UAE-flagged vessel Rwabee was carrying "military supplies" and that it had entered the Yemeni waters of the coast of Hodeidah without any authorisation.



The Congress ruled Himachal for 30 years and BJP for 17 years. I request the public to give just five years to the Aam Aadmi Party. After that, we will not come to ask for votes, people will vote only for our development work

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CM

VIJAYAN LEAVES FOR US

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has left for the US for a follow-up medical treatment. The Chief Minister along with his wife Kamala and personal assistant Suneesh left for New York via Dubai Sunday morning at 4:30 am



NE states declare war on drugs as illicit trade booms

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Agartala, April 24: The north-eastern states of India may have tamed the decades old insurgencies but now the state governments in the region have had to launch a war against the rampant illegal drug trade, which flourished after the 1,643 km long India-Myanmar unfenced international borders turned into a hub of cross-border smuggling. Besides various harmful drugs, especially heroin, highly-addictive methamphetamine tablets, also commonly known as 'Yaba', poppy seeds, opium, ganja (marijuana), morphine, bottles of cough syrup valued at hundreds of crores, various other contraband like gold,

foreign cigarette as well as arms and ammunition are often smuggled from Myanmar to the northeastern states specially Mizoram and Manipur. In addition to the illegal drug trade, illicit poppy cultivation in the mountainous and bordering areas to produce opium drugs has also become a very lucrative affair in Manipur and a few other north-eastern states. Experts said that there is a huge demand for opium, an extract of the poppy, in the pharmaceutical industry. While the cultivators illegally procure poppy seeds from Myanmar, the climatic condition in the north-eastern states is congenial for its cultivation. Former and surren-



dered militants, unemployed and misguided youths are involved in this unlawful trade as it provides a big source of income for them. Officials of the state and central governments said that the smuggling

Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985, except under a license issued by the Central Bureau of Narcotics under NDPS Rules, 1985. Smuggling of poppy seeds from Myanmar is a new item in the illegal trade in various drugs. The Central and state security forces and various other law enforcing agencies during the past three-four years have intercepted drugs and various other contraband worth thousands of crores of rupees in different northeastern states including Mizoram, Manipur, Assam, Nagaland and Tripura. During the past one year, around 2,375 cases related to the illegal drug trade have been registered

in police stations across Assam alone. Around 4,100 people have been arrested and drugs with an estimated value of Rs 450 crore, including heroin, ganja, opium, methamphetamine tablets, approximately two lakh bottles of codeine based cough syrup, 40 lakh tablets and capsules have been seized in Assam since May last year. Drugs, gold and other contraband worth over Rs 1,500 crore, mostly smuggled from Myanmar, were seized in Mizoram, Manipur, Tripura, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh. To check this menace, the authorities in these states have taken various steps.

Cong, BJP trade barbs over Rana's painting allegation



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 24: The Congress and the BJP engaged in a war of words Sunday over Yes Bank co-founder Rana Kapoor's allegation that he was "forced" to buy an MF Husain painting from party leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, with the Opposition party calling it "political vendetta" and the ruling party accusing the Gandhi family of being "extortionists". Kapoor has told the Enforcement Directorate that he was "forced" to buy the M F Husain painting from Priyanka Gandhi and the sale proceeds were utilised by the Gandhi family for the medical treatment of Congress president Sonia Gandhi in New York, according to the charge sheet filed by the federal anti-money laundering agency in a special court in Mumbai. He told the Enforcement Directorate (ED) that he was told by the then petroleum minister Murli Deora that the refusal to buy the painting will not only prevent

him from building a relationship with the Gandhi family but also prevent him from getting the 'Padma Bhushan' award. Kapoor also told the agency that Ahmed Patel, a close confidante of Sonia Gandhi, had told him that by supporting the Gandhi family at an opportune time for medical treatment of Sonia Gandhi, "I (Kapoor) had performed a good deed for the family and it would be duly considered for the 'Padma Bhushan' award". Asked about the allegations at a press conference, Congress spokesperson Abhishek Manu Singhvi said, "This is absolutely astonishing. I don't want to use a strong word, it is absolutely disgusting that a 2010 transaction, a person who is behind bars for years, whose 20-30 bail applications have been rejected, who is called a crook and a fraudster, makes allegations about dead people and the government is jumping with joy only because it suits their political angle."

The government wants to keep the pot boiling for 2022, for a transaction in 2010, when neither Murli Deora is here to deny it nor Ahmed Patel is here to deny, Singhvi said. "What is the objective of this, is it the result of your (government) pressure tactics and coercion on a person behind bars eager to get his freedom to record statements against political opponents and to keep a 12-year-old thing boiling just for convenience of politics," the Rajya Sabha MP said, hitting out at the government. The BJP alleged that the Congress and the Gandhis are "extortionists" and were also selling the Padma Bhushan. Referring to the Congress election symbol of 'hand', BJP spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia said, "The Congress hand is with corruption...While common people were suffering, the Congress and the Gandhi family were enjoying. Addressing a press conference at the BJP headquarters here, Bhatia said that "...When the Congress was in power, members of the Gandhi family used to put pressure on party leaders to ensure the painting is bought". "Priyanka Gandhi put pressure to ensure that the painting worth Rs 2 crore is bought by Kapoor," he said. BJP's IT Cell head Amit Malviya said it is quite clear from Kapoor's confession to the ED that the "Gandhis and Congress are not just extortionist but were also selling the country's highest civilian honour to the highest bidder or durbaris, who did their bidding. It was an instrument to buy loyalty or silence".

Major fire at railway warehouse in Delhi

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 24: A massive fire broke out at a railway warehouse in the national capital on Sunday afternoon but no one was injured, Fire Department officials said. According to the officials, a call was received a call around 4.25 p.m. about a fire in the warehouse at Subzi Mandi Railway Station near Pratap Nagar Metro Station in north Delhi after which 14 fire tenders were immediately pressed into service. "The situation is now under control," Delhi Fire Service



chief Atul Garg said. Initially, the Fire Department had sent 2 fire engines but as the firemen reached the spot and as-

sessed the situation, seven more fire tenders were rushed to the location, and then another seven. A total of 16 machines are dousing the flames, another official said. As per the video recorded by the onlookers and the Fire Department, thick fumes of black smoke along with massive blaze could be seen billowing out of the warehouse. The cause of fire is yet to be ascertained, however, there was certainly a massive loss of property. "It is a railway warehouse so the fire fed on different things present there, including some cables," the official added.

SCORCHING HEAT



Pavement dwellers carry drinking water on a hot day in Kolkata

PTI PHOTO

Terrorists killed in encounter identified

AGENCIES

Srinagar, April 24: The two terrorists killed in a gunfight with the security forces in the Mirhama area of South Kashmir's Kulgam district have been identified as Pakistani nationals belonging to the proscribed Jaish-e-Mohammed, officials said Sunday. "The killed JeM terrorists have been identified as Sultan Pathan and Zabiullah, both residents of Pakistan. "They were categorised terrorists and active since year 2018 in the areas of Kulgam-Shopian districts," the Jammu and Kashmir Police quoting Inspector General Police Kashmir zone Vijay Kumar tweeted. Police said based on specific input generated by the Kulgam police regarding the presence of terrorists in the Mirhama area of Kulgam, a joint cordon and search operation was launched by the police and Army.

3 militants killed

Srinagar: Three militants, including a deputy commander of banned Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), were killed in an encounter with security forces in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama district on Sunday, police said. While the deputy commander of the Pakistan-based terror group was identified as Arif Hazar alias Rehan, the identities of the other two slain militants are being ascertained, they said. Based on specific inputs about the presence of militants in the Pahoo area of Pulwama in south Kashmir, security forces launched a search operation there, a police official said.

During the search operation, as the security team proceeded towards the suspected spot, the hiding terrorists fired indiscriminately upon them which was retaliated effectively leading to the encounter.



Time to amend anti-defection law, says Naidu

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, April 24: Vice President Venkaiah Naidu Sunday expressed concern over the loopholes in the anti-defection law, saying it paved way for wholesale defection and pitched for amendments to the legislation to make it effective. Delivering a lecture on 'Media's role in New India' at the Press Club here, Naidu noted that there are certain loopholes in the anti-defection law which need to be plugged in order to curb defection of legislators from one party to another. "It allows wholesale defection but not retail defection. So people try to mobilise number." The Vice President asked the elected representatives to resign and get re-elected than defecting to any other party. If the elected representatives want to leave the party, they should first resign the post and get re-elected. "I think the time has come when we really amend that anti-defection law because there are certain loopholes," Naidu said. He also expressed unhappiness over the speakers, chairpersons and the courts dragging the anti-defection cases for years. The chairmen and speakers have been vested with power to decide on defection, but in most of the cases they are not effectively dealt with, Naidu pointed out. According to him, sometimes the decision is made even by the courts after the tenure is over.



Nehru stadium to be divested

The Centre has appointed a Transaction Adviser (TA) who will create a model for asset monetization of Capital's prestigious Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium and other major complexes soon. It has put the operation on a fast track so that assets under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and

Sports could be monetized within a stipulated time frame. The government intends to raise around Rs 12000 crores during the next three years, which includes Nehru Stadium, Indira Gandhi Stadium and (Zirakpur) Punjab and (Bengaluru) Karnataka based centers of the Sports Authority of India. The prestigious Nehru Stadium built during the Asiad Games in the 80s, will be monetized as "New Delhi Sports Hub" on the Public Private Partnership basis. The Stadium will have malls and other facilities to raise revenues through the PPP basis.

Opposition unity goes for a toss

The Opposition unity seems to have gone for a toss as the Congress is busy putting its own house in order while other parties are going in their own direction.

The Congress is working hard to win elections in two poll-bound states this year end. It is due to this very reason that Rahul Gandhi has been staying put in India. Surprisingly, other non-BJP, non-Congress parties like the TMC, NCP, SP, BSP, DMK, YSR-Congress, TRS, Janata Dal (S) or even the Left, went solo inside the Parliament this time. The efforts of Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao in forming a third front came a cropper as no one was willing to join hands with the TRS.

BJP cooking Nitish's goose

The BJP is now cooking Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's goose. The BJP wants to establish its supremacy in Bihar and is getting desperate to install its own Chief Minister there. After creating a

history by winning UP second time in a row, the BJP high command has turned ambitious, and rightly so. If sources are to be believed, the BJP is slowly and steadily working towards a game-plan. The BJP won 74 seats in a House of 243 in Bihar Assembly and needs 122 to form its own government. How to cobble a majority is being worked out.

How BJP is taming Kejri

After the historic win of Arvind Kejriwal's party in Punjab, the BJP is extremely worried. It doesn't want the AAP to emerge as an alternative to the Congress in states like Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat and elsewhere. The BJP shocked the Aam Aadmi Party when its chief of the Himachal unit along with other office-bearers was admitted into the party in a midnight coup. As if this was not

enough, the BJP admitted AAP's Mahila Morcha Chief of Himachal Pradesh into the party. A shocked AAP dissolved the entire state unit. Now a search is on for new faces. A similar fate awaits AAP workers and leaders in Gujarat now where Kejriwal is working hard to emerge as an alternative to the Congress.

A public snub for Nitish

The way Nitish Kumar was snubbed by the PM in full public view during the oath-taking ceremony of Yogi Adityanath in Lucknow last month has shocked political observers. The BJP is extremely unhappy with the style of governance of Nitish Kumar as they say that he has turned arrogant, unavailable and master of his own voice. The state is witnessing a turmoil over Nitish Kumar's liquor policy and his failure to check law and order.

international

of the day quote

On Easter, we ask God for great grace to make our dream come true - this is another great day -- the day when great peace will come to Ukraine

VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYI | UKRAINE'S PRESIDENT

Ukraine has asked the International Atomic Energy Agency for a comprehensive list of equipment it needs to operate nuclear power plants during the war with Russia

GENERAL RAFAEL GROSSI | IAEA DIRECTOR

We renew our pledge to remain vigilant against the corrosive influence of hate in all its forms

JOE BIDEN | US PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

Equal pay law in Mississippi

Jackson: Mississippi will become the final state with a law requiring equal pay for equal work by women and men. Republican Gov. Tate Reeves signed House Bill 770 Wednesday, and it will become law July 1. A 1963 federal law requires equal pay for equal work, but Mississippi has the only state without its own law since Alabama enacted one in 2019. The Mississippi law says a lawsuit must be filed within two years of when a worker "knew or should have known" about pay discrepancies.

Two more Polish coal miners dead

Warsaw: The death toll from accidents in recent days at two coal mines in southern Poland has increased to seven after two miners were brought to the surface and pronounced dead, authorities said Sunday. The miners were among 10 who went missing after an underground tremor and methane gas discharge at the Borynia-Zofiowka mine Saturday. Six miners remain missing, and rescuers said they have found two others without saying if they were dead or alive.

Zelensky, Erdogan discuss evacuation

Kyiv: Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky says he has discussed the evacuation of civilians from Mariupol in a call with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Zelensky said on Twitter that he "stressed the need for immediate evacuation of civilians from Mariupol, including Azovstal, and immediate exchange of blocked troops" in Sunday's call with Erdogan. He noted that the call came before Erdogan's planned conversation with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Pope renews call for Easter truce

Vatican City: Pope Francis has renewed his call for an Easter truce as Orthodox Christians celebrated Easter Sunday, when the faithful mark the resurrection of Jesus. Without naming countries, Francis urged aggressors to "stop the attack to help the suffering of the exhausted people." Francis told a crowd gathered in St. Peter's Square that two months had passed since Russia's invasion of Ukraine and said that "instead of stopping, the war got worse."

Slovenians vote

Ljubljana: Slovenians are casting ballots Sunday in a parliamentary election that is expected to be a tight race between the ruling right-wing populist party of Prime Minister Janez Jansa and opposition green-liberals in the politically divided European Union nation.



South Africa has seen worrying signs of a daily spike in Covid-19 infections over the last week. We hope this will not go higher. We are monitoring the situation and will report back to the committee and the public once we have seen the trend

JOE PHAAHLA | SOUTH AFRICA HEALTH MINISTER

NEW THREAT

The World Health Organisation says at least one death has been reported in connection with a mysterious liver disease outbreak affecting children in Europe and the United States



Top US officials to visit Kyiv amid call for heavy arms

REUTERS

Kyiv, April 24: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin were set to visit Kyiv to discuss Ukraine's call for more powerful weapons, two months after Russia's invasion began.

The trip, announced by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Saturday, would be the highest-level by US officials since Russian tanks rolled into Ukraine February 24. The White House has not confirmed any visit by Blinken and Austin. The State Department and Pentagon declined to comment.

As Christians in Ukraine marked Orthodox Easter on Sunday, there was no end in sight to a war that has killed thousands of people, uprooted millions more and reduced cities to rubble, read more

"I pray that this horror in Ukraine ends soon and we can return home," said Nataliya Krasnopolka, who fled to Prague from Odesa last month, one of the more than 5 million Ukrainians estimated to have escaped the country. Serhiy Gaidai, governor of the eastern Luhansk region, said Easter celebrations had been shattered by the conflict. He said with seven churches in his region had been



"mutilated by Russian artillery". Reuters could not independently verify his report. Pope Francis called for an Easter truce: "Stop the attacks in order to help the exhausted population. Stop," he said. Zelensky said in an Easter video message from Kyiv's 1,000-year-old

Saint Sophia Cathedral that Ukraine would not be defeated by "wickedness" and prayed that God returns happiness to children and brings solace to grieving mothers.

He had earlier said talks with his US visitors would cover the "powerful, heavy weapons" Ukraine

needed to retake territory and the pace of deliveries. The United States and NATO allies have shown growing readiness to supply heavier equipment and more advanced weapons systems.

Britain has promised to send military vehicles and said it was considering supplying British tanks to Poland to free up Warsaw's Russian-designed T-72s for Ukraine. Moscow, which describes its actions in Ukraine as a "special military operation", denies targeting civilians and rejects what Ukraine says is evidence of atrocities, saying Kyiv staged them to undermine peace talks.

10 from missing Japanese boat confirmed dead

AGENCIES

Tokyo, April 24: Rescuers said that 10 people who were retrieved Sunday from the frigid sea and the rocky coast of a northern Japanese national park had died, a day after a tour boat with 26 aboard apparently sank in rough waters, triggering questions why it was allowed to sail.

The search for the others is still ongoing after the boat sent a distress call on Saturday afternoon saying it was sinking.

The location near the Kashuni Waterfall is known as a difficult place to maneuver boats because of its rocky coastline and strong tide. There were two crew and 24 passengers, including two children, on the 19-ton Kazu 1 when it ran into troubles while travelling off the western coast of the Shiretoko Peninsula. The coast guard said the 10 victims — seven men and three women — were adults.

The Transport Ministry launched an investigation into the boat's operator, which had two accidents last year. The ministry said it was looking into safety standards and the decision to conduct the tour despite rough weather Saturday.

100 die in Nigeria oil refinery blast

Police said there had been an explosion at the site of an illegal refinery where operators and their patrons had gathered for business



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Abuja, April 24: At least 100 people may have died in a refinery explosion in southeast Nigeria, an official said Sunday as the search intensified for bodies at the site and for two people suspected of being involved in the blast.

The explosion Friday night at the Ohaji-Egbema local government area in Imo state was triggered by a fire at two fuel storage areas where more than a 100 people worked, state officials told The Associated Press.

Dozens of workers were caught up in the explosion while many others attempted to escape the blaze by running into wooded areas.

Those who died in the disaster are estimated to be within "the range of 100", said Goodluck Opiah, the Imo commissioner for petroleum resources. "A lot of them ran into the bush with the

burns and they died there."

Although Nigeria is Africa's largest producer of crude oil, for many years its oil production capacity has been limited by a chronic challenge of oil storage and the operation of oil refineries.

Nigeria lost at least \$3 billion worth of crude oil to theft between January 2021 and February 2022, with shady business operators often avoiding regulators by setting up refineries in remote areas such as the one that exploded in Imo, the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) said in March.

"There are no arrests yet but the two culprits are on the run with the police now looking for them," said Declan Emelumba, the Imo State commissioner for information. Officials did not reveal the identities of the suspects.

A mass burial is being planned for those killed in the explosion, many of who "were burnt beyond recognition", said Emelumba. Environmental officials have started to fumigate the area.

Such disasters are a regular occurrence in Africa's most populous country, where poverty and unemployment — at 33 per cent according to the latest government estimates — have forced millions of young people into criminal activities.

Macron beats Le Pen to win second term

INCUMBENT EMMANUEL MACRON BECAME THE FIRST FRENCH PRESIDENT TO BE RE-ELECTED IN 20 YEARS

REUTERS

Paris, April 24: French President Emmanuel Macron defeated his far-right rival Marine Le Pen on Sunday by a comfortable margin, securing a second term and heading off what would have been a political earthquake.

Cheers of joy erupted as the results appeared on a giant screen at the Champ de Mars park at the foot of the Eiffel tower, where Macron supporters waved French and EU flags. People hugged each other and chanted "Macron".

In contrast, a gathering of dejected Le Pen supporters erupted in boos and whistles at a sprawling reception hall on the outskirts of Paris. Le Pen admitted defeat but vowed to keep up the fight, with the June parliamentary elections in mind. "I will never abandon the French," she said to supporters chanting "Marine! Marine!"

The first pollsters' projections showed Macron securing around 57-58% of the vote. Such estimates are normally accurate but may be fine-tuned as official results come in from around the country throughout the evening.



But Macron can expect little to no grace period after many, especially on the left only voted for him reluctantly to block the far-right from winning. Protests that marred part of his first mandate could erupt again quite quickly, as he tries to press on with pro-business reforms.

"We will not spoil the victory ... but (Le Pen's) National Rally has its highest score ever," Health Minister Olivier Veran told BFM TV. "There will be continuity in government policy because the president has been reelected. But we have also heard the French people's message," he added, pledging change. A first major challenge will be the parliamentary elections in June and opposition parties on the left and right will immediately start a major push to try to vote in a parliament and government opposed to Macron.

Philippe Lagrue, 63, technical director at a theatre in Paris, said earlier in the day he had voted for Macron after voting for the hard-left Jean-Luc

Melenchon in the first round. Ifop, Elabe, OpinionWay and Ipsos pollsters projected a 57.6-58.2% win for Macron.

Victory for the centrist, pro-European Union Macron was immediately hailed by allies as a reprieve for mainstream politics that have been rocked in recent years by Britain's exit from the European Union, the 2016 election of Donald Trump and the rise of a new generation of nationalist leaders.

"Bravo Emmanuel," European Council President Charles Michel, wrote on Twitter. "In this turbulent period, we need a solid Europe and a France totally committed to a more sovereign and more strategic European Union."

Macron will join a small club - only two French presidents before him have managed to secure a second term. But his margin of victory looks to be tighter than when he first beat Le Pen in 2017, underlining how many French remain unimpressed with him and his domestic record.

Beijing goes on high alert to curb Cov clusters

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, April 24: China's capital Beijing has gone on high alert as the situation turned "grim" following the emergence of clusters of COVID-19, while the country's financial hub Shanghai reported 39 more deaths due to the virus, the highest in a day so far during the current outbreak since last month.



The Chinese mainland Saturday reported 21,796 cases, including 1,566 positive cases and the rest asymptomatic cases mostly in Shanghai, China's National Health Commission reported Sunday.



FAMILY REUNION: Man kisses his son and wife as they meet at the train station after more than two months separated for the war in Kyiv, Ukraine

Putin, Pak PM express desire to strengthen ties: Report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, April 24: Pakistan's new Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Russian President Vladimir Putin have quietly exchanged letters to strengthen bilateral relations, a media report said Sunday, amidst allegations by Imran Khan that his maiden visit to Moscow, much against Washington's wishes, led to his ouster.

The letters were exchanged after the election of Shehbaz as Prime Minister but both the sides kept development away from the media glare in what seemed to be a move aimed at avoiding any public attention, The Express Tribune news-

paper reported.

A senior Pakistan foreign office official confirmed to the newspaper that President Putin wrote a letter to the Prime Minister, congratulating him on his election. The official, who requested not to be named because of the sensitivity of the issue, said Putin expressed his desire to deepen cooperation between the two countries. A day after his appointment as Pakistan Prime Minister, President Putin sent a congratulatory message to Sharif which was made public by the Kremlin Press Office.

"Our countries share friendly and constructive relations. I hope



that as Prime Minister you will seek to further promote closer multifaceted cooperation between Russia and Pakistan, as well as partnership in the Afghan settlement and countering international terrorism," it quoted Putin as say-



ing April 12. Shehbaz wrote back to Putin thanking him for his felicitations message and expressed similar sentiments on bilateral ties between the two countries as well as cooperation on Afghanistan, The

LANKAN CRISIS

Protesters surround PM residence

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Colombo, April 24: Student demonstrators surrounded the Sri Lankan Prime Minister's Residence here Sunday, as the anti-government Galle Face protests reached its 16th day and the clamour for the President and Prime Minister to resign grew louder.

Thousands of Inter University Students' Federation (IUSF) students were seen sloganeering outside the Prime Minister's Residence in Wijerama Mawatha. Dozens were demonstrating from the parapet and boundary walls of the official residence - in images similar to that of a seize.

The agitators demanded both President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and



Mahinda Rajapaksa resign. The slogans ranged from soft jibes to strait taunts. Some defaced the boundary walls with graffiti reading "Go home, Rajapaksa!"

Thousands of demonstrators have hit the streets since April 9, as the government ran out of money for vital imports; prices of essential commodities have skyrocketed and there are acute shortages in fuel, medicines and electricity supply.

The protests seemed to take a more belligerent turn on Sunday, a day after Prime Minister Mahinda dismissed calls for an interim government.

A defiant Mahinda Saturday said: "What use of interim governments when people with varying policies can't see eye to eye? There has to be accord which is not possible. If there is a need for an interim government it should happen only under my leadership."

A day after his appointment as Pakistan Prime Minister, President Putin sent a congratulatory message to Sharif which was made public by the Kremlin Press Office

Express Tribune reported. The exchange of letters took place as the former prime minister Khan is adamant he was ousted from power through an alleged US-backed vote of no-confidence

since Americans did not like his visit to Moscow to meet President Putin on February 24, the day the Russian president ordered the invasion of Ukraine.

Khan has repeatedly said that the US did not want him to visit Russia and the National Security Advisor of President Joe Biden called his National Security Advisor Moeed Yusuf, urging him to call of the prime minister's visit to Moscow.

On Saturday, Khan again alleged that Pakistan's former ambassador to the US Asad Majeed Khan held a meeting with senior American diplomat Donald Lu, where the latter used undiplomatic language.

of the day quote

We (India) are fastest (among all nations) in establishing renewable capacities. But, till all countries don't come together, we can't reduce global warming

RK SINGH | UNION MINISTER

Looking at the demand for our products, we expect a total brand sales turnover of Rs 22,000 crore in the steel segment

SATISH AGARWAL | CMD, KAMDHENU GROUP

We are confident of doubling our revenue to Rs 1,000 to 1,200 crore, over the next five years with our expansion. If our plans go as planned, we should be over Rs 1,000 crore entity by FY27

NITIN GUPTA | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SPRINGFIT

SHORT TAKES

No states' opinion sought on GST hikes

New Delhi: They said that the panel of ministers looking into GST rate rationalisation is yet to submit its report to the GST Council. Stating that views have not been sought from states on hiking rates on 143 items, sources said, there is also no proposal to shift more than half of items to the highest tax GST slab of 28 per cent. The Council had last year set up a panel of state ministers, headed by Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, to suggest ways to augment revenue by rationalising tax rates.

FPIs withdraw ₹12,300cr in Apr

New Delhi: Fears of an aggressive rate hike by the US Fed continue to dent investor sentiments with foreign investors pulling out nearly Rs 12,300 crore from the Indian equity market so far this month. Going forward, foreign flows into Indian equities could continue to be under pressure due to an imminent rate hike by the US Fed, uncertainty surrounding the Russia-Ukraine war, volatile crude prices, high domestic inflation numbers and weak quarterly results, experts said.

Record exports of ceramics, glassware

New Delhi: Exports of ceramics and glassware products touched a "record" \$3.5 billion in 2021-22, the commerce ministry said Sunday. It said the exports rose because of increase in shipments of ceramic tiles and sanitaryware products. India is the world's second largest manufacturer of tiles. The main items for export under glassware include articles of glass packing, sanitary fixtures of porcelain, glass mirror, tinted non-wired glass, glass bead and glass wool.

Religare settles cases with Sebi

New Delhi: NBFC Religare Enterprises Ltd (REL) Sunday said it has paid Rs 5.41 crore to market regulator Sebi to settle its past cases. In order to settle another legacy issue and keep REL growing as per its plans, it had submitted an application for settlement under the SEBI (Settlement Proceedings) Regulations, 2018 without admission or denial of SEBI's findings, the company said in a statement. The said application along with the settlement terms proposed by the company were examined by SEBI which having considered the facts and circumstances of the case, approved that the specified proceedings may be settled upon payment of Rs 5.41 crore, it said.



Exporters are struggling to get money from Russia. The RBI should give clear directions to the banks to accept payments from all the sectors

KHALID KHAN | VICE PRESIDENT, FICO

MUSK DECLINES GATES' REQUEST

Tesla CEO Elon Musk has reportedly declined a meeting with Bill Gates. As per a series of leaked text messages, Gates was proposing a potential meeting with Musk "to discuss philanthropy possibilities," but Musk was not willing to do so after Gates admitted he still has not closed out his short position on Tesla



Amid fire mishaps, Ola Electric recalls 1,441 e-scooters

Scooters involving EV start-ups have been involved in fire incidents recently, in what some say could be an early setback for a nascent sector that is key to Modi's carbon reduction and climate goals



INDIA EYES ELECTRIC SCOOTERS AND MOTORBIKES TO MAKE UP 80% OF TOTAL 2-W SALES BY 2030, COMPARED WITH ABOUT 2% TODAY

OKINAWA AUTOTECH HAD RECALLED OVER 3,000 UNITS, WHILE PUREEV DID A SIMILAR EXERCISE FOR AROUND 2,000 UNITS

GOVT'S RAP ON KNUCKLES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 24: Ola Electric is recalling 1,441 units of its elec-

tric two-wheelers in the wake of incidents of vehicles catching fire,

according to a company statement. The company said its investigation into the fire incident on March 26, in Pune, is on-

going and preliminary assessment found that it was an isolated one.

However, it said, "As a pre-emptive measure we will be conducting a detailed diagnostic and health check of the scooters in that specific batch and therefore are issuing a voluntary recall of 1,441 vehicles."

Ola Electric further said, "These scooters will be inspected by our service engineers and will go through a thorough diagnostics across all battery systems, thermal systems as well as the safety systems."

Ola Electric said its battery systems already complies with and is tested for AIS 156, the latest proposed standard for India, in addition to being compliant with the European standard ECE 136.

Recently, there have been widespread incidents of electric two-wheelers catching fire in various parts of the country forcing manufacturers to recall their vehicles.

The fire incidents had prompted the government to form a panel to examine and had warned companies of penalties if they were found to be negligent.

Mcap of 8 of top-10 most valued firms tumbles ₹2.21L cr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 24: Eight of the top-10 most valued firms together lost Rs 2,21,555.61 crore from their market valuation last week in-line with the weak trend in the broader market, with Infosys and HDFC Bank suffering the biggest hit.

The 30-share benchmark index, Sensex, lost 1,141.78 points or 1.95 per cent last week. From the top-10 pack, only Reliance Industries and Adani Green Energy emerged as the gainers.

The market valuation of Infosys tumbled Rs 68,548.8 crore to Rs 6,67,062.55 crore. The market capitalisation (mcap) of HDFC Bank dived Rs 60,536.97 crore to reach Rs 7,51,801.60 crore.

Bharti Airtel's valuation tanked Rs 30,127.49 crore to Rs 4,05,723.51 crore and that of Tata Consultancy Services plummeted by Rs 18,094.01 crore to Rs 13,21,594.47 crore.

The valuation of State Bank of India declined by Rs 15,261.09 crore to Rs 4,46,587.56 crore and that of Bajaj Finance went lower by Rs 13,264.96 crore to Rs 4,30,420.83 crore.

The mcap of ICICI Bank dipped Rs 10,376.97 crore to Rs 5,19,362.62 crore and that of Hindustan Unilever Limited slumped Rs 5,345.32 crore to Rs 5,00,392.45 crore.

In contrast, the market valuation of Reliance Industries zoomed Rs 1,39,357.52 crore to reach Rs 18,66,071.57 crore. The market capitalisation of Adani Green went higher by Rs 3,698.89 crore to Rs 4,51,749.88 crore.

Meanwhile, housing finance company HDFC has been knocked out of the country's 10 most-valued companies in terms of market capitalisation following a significant decline in its share price.

During the week ended April 22, shares of the company tumbled 7.19 per cent. April 4, HDFC announced that it will merge operations with HDFC Bank. Once the deal is effective, HDFC Bank will be wholly owned by public shareholders, and existing shareholders of HDFC will own 41 per cent of the bank.

The shares of HDFC have tumbled nearly 18 per cent since the merger announcement. In the ranking of top-10 firms, Reliance Industries was leading the chart, followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, Infosys, ICICI Bank, Hindustan Unilever, Adani Green Energy, State Bank of India, Bajaj Finance and Bharti Airtel.

POWER CRISIS

Sharp fall in output, no coal crunch: Secy

Heatwaves across India, the consequent increase in power demand, and fears of a coal shortage have triggered planned blackouts in at least seven states in the country, and experts worry that at least some parts of India could face a serious power crisis this summer

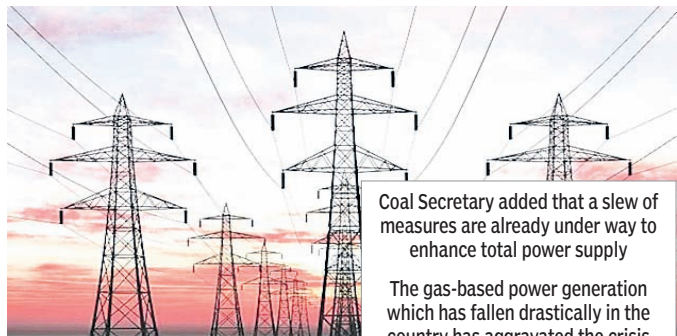
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 24: The current power crisis is mainly on account of sharp decline in electricity generation from different fuel sources and not due to non-availability of domestic coal, a top official said Sunday.

The above statement assumes significance in the wake of reports of many states, including Maharashtra, facing power outages due to shortage of coal.

In an interview to PTI, Coal Secretary A K Jain attributed the low coal stocks at power plants to several factors such as heightened power demand due to the boom in the economy post Covid-19, early arrival of summer, rise in the price of gas and imported coal and sharp fall in electricity generation by coastal thermal power plants.

"Some of the thermal power plants in India were built along the coast so that imported coal



Coal Secretary added that a slew of measures are already under way to enhance total power supply

The gas-based power generation which has fallen drastically in the country has aggravated the crisis

It is not a coal crisis but a power demand-supply mismatch. The power demand has registered an upswing as the economy has bounced back, summers have arrived early and the price of gas and imported coal have shot up sharply

AK JAIN | COAL SECRETARY

The coastal thermal power plants are now generating around half of their capacity because of the sharp rise in the prices of imported coal

Last year, around 18 per cent more coal was supplied by CIL to the power sector, as there was a fuel stock of 100 million tonnes.

Coal India has produced 25 per cent more in the first half of the current month in comparison to the same period in the last year, and accordingly the dispatches were also up by up to 25 per cent.

CIL -- the country's largest producer and supplier of coal -- accounts for over 80 per cent of domestic coal output.

Coal minister Pralhad Joshi had Saturday said that at present 72.50 MT of coal is available at different sources of CIL, Singareni Collieries Company Ltd (SCCL) and coal washeries among others. The Minister had also said that 22.01 MT of coal is available with thermal power plants.

could be used, brought from nearby countries like Indonesia... But with the sharp rise in the price of imported coal, they have reduced the imports," Jain said.

Since last year, the railways has loaded more coal than ever, even by curtailing rake supply to other sectors to meet the enhanced demand of the power sector. There was good loading of rakes in the month of March.

Since Coal India is a government company, it is expected that the PSU will bridge the gap between the demand and supply of fuel by providing additional coal.

TO BOOST OUTPUT

ONGC commissions ₹6K cr projs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 24: State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has commissioned two projects costing Rs 6,000 crore to add 7.5 million tonne of oil production and 1 billion cubic meters of gas output over the life of the Mumbai High fields, as it doubles down efforts to raise productivity from mature and aging fields.

A Rs 3,740-crore spend has been made on a state-of-the-art 8-legged water injection-cum-living quarter platform, as part of the Mumbai High South Redevelopment Phase-IV, while Rs 2,292.46 crore have been spent on Cluster-8 marginal field de-

velopment project at Mumbai High, the company said. "The two projects will result in an incremental gain of 7.5 million tonne of oil and more than 1 BCM of gas," it added.

Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri dedicated the two major projects to the nation at Western offshore April 23. He was accompanied by chairman Alka Mittal, Director (T&FS) O P Singh and Director (Offshore) Pankaj Kumar.

"The minister expressed his appreciation for the ONGC team for implementing the two projects. He exhorted ONGC to further enhance their efforts to add more oil and gas to the kitty of nations, adopting accelerated exploration activities," the statement said.

ESG funds see ₹315cr outflow in FY21-22

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 24: Investors are yet to warm up to the concept of sustainable investing with sustainable or ESG (environmental, social, and governance) funds in India witnessing outflows of Rs 315 crore in 2021-22.

This comes following a staggering inflow of Rs 4,884 crore in FY 2020-21. Prior to that, sustainable funds saw an infusion of over Rs 2,000 crore, according to data compiled by Morningstar India.

Going forward, ESG considerations will become an integral part of the overall investing framework for asset managers in India, experts said. Most flows into sustainable funds



Sustainable funds offer exposure to themes such as renewable energy, low carbon, green transport and environmental protection

so far have come in during the new fund offer (NFO) period and 2020-21 financial year witnessed significant inflows as there were several ESG fund launches, Kaustubh Belapurkar, Director - Manager Research, Morningstar India, said. Currently, markets are volatile and flows are impacted across asset classes due to both macro and

micro conditions, Nakul Zaveri, Managing Partner, Relativity Investment Advisors, said.

However, by definition sustainable funds are required to be long term in nature but these funds better understand long term competitive advantage and now resilience post Covid much better than last year. Such funds will always be

less volatile in nature, he added.

Globally flows into sustainable funds continue at a rapid pace, with assets in sustainable funds globally exceeding \$2.7 trillion as of December 2021. It's still early in India from an ESG perspective, but with the launch of ESG funds in the last few years, there are investable options available for investors, Belapurkar said.

ESG funds are expanding in the Indian mutual fund industry with asset management companies (AMCs) have been launching equity schemes in the ESG space under thematic category. The AMCs are also launching exchange traded funds (ETFs) and ETF fund of funds in ESG space.

Maruti looks to ride SUV wave to drive past 50% mkt share

THE COUNTRY'S LARGEST CARMAKER, WHICH HAS SEEN ITS MARKET SHARE DROP TO 43.38 PER CENT IN FY22 FROM 47.7 PER CENT IN FY21, AIMS TO BRING IN MULTIPLE SUV PRODUCTS WITH FOCUS ON NEW TECHNOLOGIES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, April 24: Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) will keep consolidating its existing product line-up, including hatchbacks, while bolstering presence in the fast growing SUV segment to power its way back to 50 per cent market share in the domestic passenger vehicle market, as per a senior company official.

The company had a market share of 51.22 per cent in 2018-19 and 51.03 per cent in 2019-20.

In an interaction with PTI here, MSI Senior Executive Director (Marketing and Sales) Shashank Srivastava noted that the company will pull out all the stops to gain back the lost market share.

He said that in the non-SUV segment, the company's market share was at 67 per cent level, with leadership positions in both hatchback and MPV segments. He acknowledged that lack of products in the fast growing SUV segment had impacted its overall market share.



Elaborating on the segment dynamics, Srivastava noted that while the company led the entry-level SUV segment with Brezza, it was

only in the robustly growing mid-SUV segment where it lagged behind the competition with tepid response for S-Cross.

It's a war cry..It is there in our organisation..It is like constructive paranoia..Which means you cannot rest easy.. It doesn't take much time for the market dynamics to change, so we are always on our toes as how to improve efficiency, productivity etc

SHASHANK SRIVASTAVA | SENIOR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MSI

"So, overall our market share in the SUV vertical is just 12 per cent. This is where we are now making efforts to bolster our presence," Srivastava said.

He noted that while the company struggled with subpar performance in the segment, some of the competing companies were getting as much as 60 per cent of their sales from SUVs.

When asked if the lack of diesel powertrain option could also be a

part of low offtake in the vertical, with competitors already offering their products with both petrol and diesel powertrains, Srivastava replied in the negative.

Srivastava noted that transition from hybrid technology, which features both internal combustion engine and battery, to pure battery electric vehicles could be a better option for India which currently lacked charging infrastructure.

Archers hit bull's eye

RAI, RIDHI HOLD NERVES TO WIN GOLD IN MIXED TEAM RECURVE EVENT AT WORLD CUP

AGENCIES

Antalya, April 24: India bagged their second gold medal at the Archery World Cup (WC) Stage 1 as the recurve mixed team of Tarundeep Rai and Ridhi Phor came from behind to pip Great Britain in the shoot-off here Sunday. It was grit and determination that helped Rai and Ridhi stand atop the podium.

Pairing up for the first time ever, two-time Olympian Rai and the young Ridhi trailed twice 0-2 and 2-4. However, they held their nerve to close out the tie 5-4 (35-37, 36-33, 39-40, 38-37, 18-17 en route to their maiden gold medal. The Archery Association of India (AAI) congratulated the two for their stupendous feat.

India thus concluded their campaign in the first event of the calendar year with two gold medals. The first one came when the compound men's team of Abhishek Verma, Rajat Chauhan and Aman Saini clinched the title Saturday.

Incidentally for the 38-year-old Rai, who won the Asian Games silver in Guangzhou 2010, this was his first-ever mixed team medal in the World Cup. And for 17-year-old Ridhi, this was her first ever World Cup medal as the duo showed amazing character to come back twice and seal the issue in the shoot-off with two 9s. The British duo of Bryony Pitman and Alex Wise shot 9 and 8.

It was a disastrous start for the new-look Indian pair as they shot the red-ring twice to lose the first



GOLDEN MOMENT: Ridhi Phor (left) and Tarundeep Rai (right) pose with their coach after their gold medal show, Sunday

set by two points. However, Rai and Ridhi were able to level the score in the second set, thanks to two below-par rounds (7-8) by the British pair.

The third set was a high-scoring affair as Rai and Ridhi shot 39/40, but their rivals went ahead by a point, drilling in a perfect 40/40 with two Xs (closest to the centre) to push the Indian duo be-

hind once again.

Not ready to give up, Rai and Ridhi shot two 10s to put pressure on their rivals, who misfired in the red ring once and the match went to the shoot off. In the shoot off, the Indians held their nerves together to emerge victorious.

"It indeed feels great to win the gold, which is also my first World Cup medal," Ridhi said after re-

ceiving the gold. "We never lost hope even though at times we were trailing," she added.

Rai on the other hand stated that he has ticked off one more box in his bucket list. "Yes, the World Cup medal was missing in my closet. I am happy that I have managed to fill it up and that too with the gold medal. It couldn't have been anything better," Rai stated.

SHORT TAKES

Untimely demise

Mumbai: Former Mumbai player Rajesh Verma, a member of the Ranji Trophy winning squad of 2006-07, died here Sunday, following a massive heart attack. Verma, a right-arm medium pacer, was 40. Though he played only seven first-class matches, Verma was a key member of Mumbai's Ranji Trophy winning squad in 2006-07. Verma, who made his first-class debut in the 2002/03 season, played his last game against Punjab at the Brabourne stadium in 2008. In the seven games, he picked up 23 wickets, with a lone five-wicket haul and best bowling figures of 5/97.

Swiatek triumphs

Stuttgart: Top-ranked Iga Swiatek defeated Aryna Sabalenka 6-2, 6-2 in the final of the Stuttgart Open tennis tournament for her fourth title of the year Sunday. The Polish player stretched her winning run to 23 matches by beating last year's finalist in 84 minutes. Swiatek has now won her last seven finals in straight sets. This year she has won tournaments in Doha, Indian Wells and Miami. Swiatek completely dominated her opponent in the summit clash and broke Sabalenka five times in the match and lost her serve only once. This is the second time Sabalenka has lost in the final here.

Creditable show

Imola: India's Jehan Daruvala finished a creditable second in the sprint race of the Formula 2 championships here Saturday. The 23-year-old, who started third, rocketed off the line to slot into second behind Marcus Armstrong, who took the lead after sprint race pole-sitter Logan Sargeant made a tardy getaway and dropped to fifth. Jehan maintained his second position all through the race. He came within a second of taking the lead from Armstrong, but could not do so. Ultimately he finished 1.4 seconds behind the Kiwi driver.

Djokovic shines

Belgrade: World No. 1 Novak Djokovic fought back from a set down to register a 4-6, 6-1, 6-2 win over Karen Khachanov and enter the final of the Serbia Open tennis tournament, here Saturday. He will meet Andrey Rublev who produced another scintillating performance to ease past Fabio Fognini 6-2, 6-2. Djokovic started slowly in his semifinal, but then found his best touch as the match progressed to win in 119 minutes. There were signs that Djokovic was returning to his best during the match.

Record-equalling 10th title for PSG



Lionel Messi (left) celebrates after his goal against Lens

AGENCIES

Paris, April 24: Paris Saint-Germain secured a record-equalling 10th Ligue 1 title here Saturday, despite being held to a 1-1 home draw by 10-man Lens.

Lionel Messi looked to have curled in a fine winner for PSG in the 68th minute, but Lens dampened the already muted title party at the Parc des Princes through Corentin Jean with two minutes left. PSG have an unassailable 16-point lead over second-placed Marseille with four matches remaining.

Mauricio Pochettino's men reclaim the crown from Lille, who were shock champions last season. This season however, will still be seen as a failure for PSG, though. After collapsing to a dramatic loss to Real Madrid in the Champions League last 16, they also suffered a surprise French Cup loss to Nice.

The inevitable league title was confirmed in a strangely non-celebratory atmosphere here Saturday, with some 'ultras' leaving the ground early in protest after the Champions League exit.

"That's something I don't understand," said midfielder Marco Verratti. "I know that they were disappointed about Madrid, but at some point you have to move on."

10th successive crown for Bayern

BERLIN: Bayern Munich completed a decade of domestic dominance by beating main rival Borussia Dortmund 3-1 to seal a record-extending 10th consecutive Bundesliga title. Goals from Serge Gnabry, Robert Lewandowski and Jamal Musiala sent Bayern an unassailable 12 points clear of second-placed Dortmund with three games of the season remaining. It was Bayern's eighth consecutive league win over Dortmund, who haven't won a game in Munich since 2014. Bayern's 10th straight German championship is a record among Europe's top five leagues, eclipsing the nine Serie A titles in a row by Juventus from 2012-20.

Attention in the French capital will now turn to the future of Kylian Mbappe, with the star forward still to decide whether to stay at PSG or leave for Real Madrid before next season.

In the match, the first big chance fell to Mbappe just after the half-hour mark, but the striker blazed wildly over after being played in on goal by Neymar's clever flick.

Mbappe almost broke the deadlock early in the second half after a quick free-kick by Verratti, but his first effort was saved by Leca and his follow-up attempt was blocked on the line.

It was Messi who finally gave the match a moment to remember, bending a trademark finish over Leca from the edge of the box. But, perhaps fittingly, the hosts conceded a late equaliser as Jean slid in at the back post to divert home Deiver Machado's low cross.

Verstappen races to glory in Italy



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Imola, April 24: Formula One (F1) champion Max Verstappen dominated Sunday in a Red Bull rout of Ferrari at the Emilia-Romagna Grand Prix. Verstappen won from the pole, logged the fastest lap and picked up his second win of the season while leading teammate Sergio Perez to the first one-two Red Bull finish since Malaysia in 2016.

"Lovely Sunday," Verstappen radioed his Red Bull team. The Dutchman also won the sprint qualifying race Saturday and earned maximum points on the weekend. Lando Norris was third for McLaren.

It was a disastrous race for Ferrari, racing on its home soil and hoping to celebrate a return to F1 dominance. Charles LeClerc came into Sunday as the championship leader with two wins in the first three races and Carlos Sainz (Jr) celebrated a two-year contract extension this weekend in Italy.

But LeClerc couldn't get the jump on Verstappen at the start and never contended. Sainz spun off course on the opening lap to ruin his race, and LeClerc's bid to salvage the day for Ferrari ended when he spun racing Perez for second. He ultimately finished sixth.

LeClerc had a 46-point lead in the standings over reigning champion Verstappen at the start of the race but the win today reduced the gap to 27 points.

LSG RIDE ON RAHUL TON TO OVERCOME MUMBAI

BATTER HITS 2ND THREE-FIGURE MARK IN THE ONGOING EDITION OF THE IPL

AGENCIES

Mumbai, April 24: Riding on KL Rahul's (103 n o, 62b, 12x4, 4x6) second century in the ongoing edition of the IPL, Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) defeated Mumbai Indians (MI) by 36 runs in their IPL encounter here Sunday. Rahul held the LSG innings together for a fighting total of 168 for six. Then Krunal Pandya (3/19) shone with the ball to restrict MI to 132 for eight in their 20 overs.

It could have been the perfect gift for MI mentor Sachin Tendulkar on his 49th birthday had the side won. But that was not to be. Save for Rohit Sharma (39) and Tilak Verma (38), the only other batter to get to double figures was Kieron Pollard (19). It was Mumbai's eighth defeat in succession, the worst stretch of losses in IPL history.

Earlier Rahul, who had scored a century against MI a few days back in the first meeting of the two sides, again dominated the opposition bowling, but he didn't get enough help from the other batters.

Manish Pandey (22) had a 58-run stand with Rahul but he lacked intent while Marcus Stoinis (0), Krunal Pandya (1) and Deepak Hooda (10) paraded back to the hut in quick succession.

Later, Rahul added another 47 off 25 balls with young Ayush Badoni (14) to take LSG to a competitive score.

For MI, Australian Daniel Sams, who had snapped four wickets the other day against Chennai Super



CAPTAIN'S KNOCK: LSG's KL Rahul steps out to play a lofted drive during his team's IPL game against Mumbai Indians

Kings (CSK), had a forgettable evening as he conceded 40 runs in his four overs.

Kieron Pollard (2/8) pulled things back a bit as he snapped two wickets in two overs, while Riley Meredith accounted for two but conceded 40, runs with Jasprit Bumrah (1/31) once again displaying his brilliance as a bowler in the shortest format of the game.

After deciding to bowl, the MI bowlers were on the money at the start with Bumrah dealing the first blow, removing Quinton de Kock (10) with Rohit Sharma taking a low dipping catch at short cover.

Rahul and Pandey struggled to up the ante as pressure was maintained from both ends. Rahul then sprung into action with a maximum over deep mid-wicket off Unadkat, while Pandey deposited Meredith into the

sightscreen. At the halfway stage, LSG were 72 for one.

Bumrah was brought back into the attack but Rahul send him across deep square leg and then picked up a single to complete another 50. However, Pandey's (22) struggle ended with a top-edge off a short ball from Pollard to Meredith.

Stoinis, Krunal Pandya and Hooda all left in quick succession before Rahul stalled the damage with a counter-attack. Rahul slammed Bumrah for a couple of fours, before smashing Unadkat for three more in the next over. He reached three figures with a six off Meredith.

Brief scores: LSG 168 for 6 (KL Rahul 103 n o, Kieron Pollard 2/8, Riley Meredith 2/40) beat MI 132 for 8 (Rohit Sharma 39, Krunal Pandya 3/19) by 36 runs.

Liverpool continue their Man City chase

AGENCIES

Liverpool, April 24: Liverpool moved back to being one point behind leaders Manchester City in the Premier League following a 2-0 victory at home to Everton in a fiery Merseyside derby. The goals were scored by Andrew Robertson (62nd) and Divock Origi (85th) and both came in the second half after a barren first half. Liverpool now have 79 points in comparison to City's 80 with both having played 33 matches each.

Everton adopted a defensive approach and did excellently to keep Liverpool at bay in the first half. However, Liverpool upped the ante in the second period to win the game by a comfortable margin.

Robertson also made an important defensive contribution to cut out the danger as Everton threatened late in the game.

Liverpool had to be patient to break Everton down but they showed excellent spirit and their hopes of winning the quadruple re-

main very much alive.

Liverpool's improved squad depth has proved extremely useful for manager Jurgen Klopp of late and it proved to be the case again Sunday. The introductions of Luis Diaz and Origi provided Liverpool with extra attacking momentum as they were finally able to break Everton's stubborn resistance.

Origi was involved in the build-up to the first goal as he combined with Salah, who then crossed for Robertson to head in at the far post. Then Origi scored the second himself as he headed in after the ball fell to him following Diaz's overhead kick.

Despite Everton's best efforts, manager Frank Lampard will be concerned about his team's prospects of avoiding relegation. However, one huge positive for Everton at Anfield was the performance of Anthony Gordon. The 21-year-old's direct runs caused numerous problems for Trent Alexander-Arnold and Joel Matip, especially in the first half.



Liverpool's Divock Origi is over the moon after his goal against Everton

Majumdar faces 2-year ban for threatening Saha

JOURNALIST HAD ALLEGEDLY TRIED TO BULLY THE CRICKETER FOR REFUSING TO GIVE AN INTERVIEW

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 24: Sports journalist Boria Majumdar has reportedly been found guilty in the Wriddhiman Saha text case and faces a two-year ban for the same. The news comes after the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) set up a three-member committee in February, comprising vice-president Rajiv Shukla, treasurer Arun Singh Dhumal, and Apex Council member Prabhatej Singh Bhatia to look into the matter where Saha took to Twitter to post a screenshot of threatening messages from Majumdar over an interview request.

"We will be informing all state



Wriddhiman Saha



Boria Majumdar

units of the Indian cricket board to not allow him inside stadiums.

Majumdar won't be given media accreditation for home matches

and we will also be writing to ICC to blacklist him. Players will be asked not to engage with him," a top BCCI official was quoted as saying in the website of a national news channel on condition of anonymity.

Saha wrote on Twitter February 19 while sharing the screenshot of the chat, "After all of my contributions to Indian cricket...this is what I face from a so called 'Respected' journalist! This is where the journalism has gone."

One of the messages in the chat read as, "You did not call. Never again will I interview you. I don't take insults kindly. And I will remember this." Sources said that Saha eventually identified

Majumdar as the journalist in question when he came in front of the committee. "While deposing before the committee, Saha identified Majumdar and alleged that he was 'bullied' for an interview.

Majumdar eventually identified himself through a video on Twitter and claimed that he would take legal action against Saha.

Saha's tweet took the cricketing world by storm, with former India opener Virender Sehwag offering his support to Saha and urging him to name Majumdar, who hadn't been identified till then. Former India off-spinner Harbhajan Singh too had called Saha to reveal the name of the journalist that time on Twitter.

ODISHA EVES IN QUARTERFINALS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 24: The Odisha eves scripted a thrilling two-run victory over Tamil Nadu in a match of the Senior Women's T-20 League played Sunday at Thiruvananthapuram to enter the quarterfinals. The Odisha Cricket Association (OCA) announced an award of Rs 5,00,000 for their excellent performance.

Electing to bat after winning the toss, the Odisha eves posted 133 for the loss of three wickets in their 20 overs. Sarita Meher 61 and Pragyan P Mohanty 59 got excellent half centuries.

In reply Tamil Nadu came close but could manage to score 131 for the loss of eight wickets in their 20 overs. S Anusha with 55 batted well for Tamil Nadu. Priyanka Priyadarshini 4/24 was the pick of the Odisha bowlers.

Odisha Police lose

In a match of the Indian Women's Football League ARA FC tasted their maiden success after three matches, defeating Odisha Police 3-1 in an action-packed match at the Capital Ground here.