



## CRYPTIC RESPONSE

Actor Kiara Advani, on her reported split with Sidharth Malhotra, says she doesn't want to forget anyone in life

LEISURE P2



## RUSSIA WARNS OF WWII

Russia accuses NATO of creating a serious risk of nuclear war by arming Ukraine in a proxy battle

INTERNATIONAL P10



## TITANS FACE SUNRISERS

Gujarat Titans face a stern test when they face Sunrisers Hyderabad, who have won five consecutive matches

SPORTS P12

## 3 Chinese among 4 killed in Karachi varsity explosion

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Karachi, April 26: A burqa-clad woman suicide bomber struck a van inside the premises of the University of Karachi in Pakistan's financial capital, killing three Chinese nationals and their local driver, in what is believed to be the latest targeted attack against Chinese citizens.

The banned Baloch Liberation Army claimed responsibility for the attack that took place near China-built Confucius Institute - a non-profit institute teaching Chinese language to local pupils in the university.

A spokesperson for the university said that three of the victims were Chinese nationals. They were identified as Confucius Institute Director Huang Guiping, Ding Mupeng, Chen Sa and Khalid, the Pakistani driver. The spokesperson added that two others, Wang Yuqing and Hamid, were injured in the incident.

Counter-Terrorism Department official Raja Umar Khattab said that the suicide attack was carried out by a woman, adding that ball bearings were found at the site of the blast, Dawn newspaper reported.



He said the van was properly guarded as a Rangers' team was escorting it. Four Rangers who were behind the van on motorcycles were also injured. However, their condition is stable.

CCTV footage of the attack showed a burqa-clad woman standing outside the entrance of the Confucius Institute. The woman detonated herself just as the van neared the institute's entrance, the paper said. Karachi police chief Ghulam Nabi Memon said that it was unfortunate that teachers had been targeted.

Asked whether a threat had been issued prior to the attack, the senior officer said that there was always a threat. He said tight security arrangements were already in place at the varsity.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Learn it from earthlings... they say this is the only way to stop noise pollution

## Musk buys Twitter; company to be delisted

San Francisco: Billionaire Elon Musk has reached an agreement to acquire Twitter for approximately \$44 billion, the company said. The outspoken Tesla CEO has said he wants to buy Twitter because he thinks it's not living up to its potential as a platform for "free speech". He says it needs to be transformed as a private company in order to build trust with users and do better at serving what he calls the "societal imperative" of free speech. Twitter said it will become a privately held company after the sale is closed.



## KV admissions: Centre scraps MP quota

New Delhi: The Centre has scrapped the discretionary MP quota for admissions to Kendriya Vidyalayas, according to the revised admission guidelines issued by the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS). The move comes weeks after the KVS put on hold all discretionary quotas, including the MP quota, for admissions to various central schools across the country, following a review. The government has also decided that Covid orphans will be considered for admission over and above the class strength in KVs.



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## SERENDIPITY



People look at a giant whale shark which washed ashore at Adimalathura beach in Thiruvananthapuram, Tuesday

## Covaxin cleared for children aged 6-12

DCGI grants EUA to Covaxin for 6-12 age group and Corbevax for those aged 5-12

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 26: India's drug regulator has granted restricted emergency use authorisation (EUA) for Bharat Biotech's Covaxin for children in the age group of six to 12 years, Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said Tuesday. Biological E's Covid-19 vaccine Corbevax also got the regulator's nod for those aged five to 12 years.

The approval by the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) for Corbevax and Covaxin for inoculating children below 12 years paves the way for giving protection to a majority of school going children and assumes significance ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meeting with chief ministers on the emerging Covid-19 situation in the country Wednesday through video conferencing.

The DCGI has also granted emergency use authorisation (EUA) to Cadila for its ZyCoV-D for an additional dose of 3mg with a two-jab inoculation schedule 28 days apart for those aged above 12 years.



## '70 pc of those jabbed with booster didn't get Covid during 3rd wave'

Seventy per cent of the people who received a booster dose of the Covid vaccine did not contract the disease during the third wave, according to a new study that covered nearly 6,000 people in India. The study led by Rajeev Jayadevan, co-chairman of the Indian Medical Association's national task force on coronavirus, said that 45 per cent of the people who did not take a precautionary dose reported Covid in the third wave. The survey covered 5,971 vaccinated people; of which 24 per cent were aged below 40 and 50 per cent belonged to the 40-59 age group. Women accounted for 45 pc of the people surveyed.

## GRS with 59 plots arrested over DA

PNN/AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 26: A gram rojgar sevak (GRS), whose monthly remuneration is ₹8,500, was arrested Tuesday for allegedly possessing assets disproportionate to his known sources of income.

Officials of the anti-corruption Vigilance department had carried out raids Monday at several places belonging to Babuli Charan Padhihari, the GRS of Injana Gram Panchayat, Bhubaneswar.

Assets worth several crores, including 59 plots, were detected during the raids, a statement issued by the Vigilance department said.

A GRS is engaged on contract in every gram panchayat to help a 'nirman sahayak' (technical person) to strengthen the MGNREGA works. A case (9/2022) has been registered with the Bhubaneswar Vigilance police against Padhihari under Sections 13(2) r/w 13(1)(b)/12 PC Act-1988 as amended by Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Act-2018.

According to the Vigilance search report, Padhihari's properties include a triple-storey building near Mausima temple here worth over ₹1.24 crore, a house in Dadha area of the state Capital worth ₹32 lakh, a 2-BHK flat worth ₹14 lakh, and a single-storey building worth ₹14.18 lakh in Bhubaneswar.

"He owns 58 plots in prime areas of Bhubaneswar and one plot in Belgachhia area of Cuttack," the statement said. "His other assets include a four-wheeler worth ₹4.98 lakh, a two-wheeler, cash, bank deposits, gold and silver ornaments, and household articles worth over ₹8.85 lakh," it said.

## PK declines Cong offer to join party

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 26: Poll strategist Prashant Kishor Tuesday declined the Congress offer to join the party and evolve its poll strategy and said more than him, the party needs leadership and collective will to fix deep-rooted structural problems through transformational reforms.

Kishor was asked by Congress president Sonia Gandhi to join the party and be a part of the Empowered Action Group-2024 and take care of its election strategy for upcoming polls.

Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said Kishor has declined the offer and the party appreciates his efforts and suggestions.

Kishor had made a detailed presentation before top Congress leaders, which was discussed at length by senior leadership of the party, after which an offer was made to him.

Within a few minutes of the Congress saying that Kishor has declined the offer, he took to Twitter and said the party needs a collective will to fix deep-rooted structural problems through reforms.

"I declined the generous offer of Congress to join the party as



part of the EAG and take responsibility for the elections. In my humble opinion, more than me the party needs leadership and collective will to fix the deep rooted structural problems through transformational reforms," Kishor said in a tweet.

Kishor was keen to join the Congress and had desired to do so without any expectations. He had also made a presentation to the party on which its top leaders deliberated upon during the last week.

"Following a presentation and discussions with Prashant Kishor, the Congress president constituted the Empowered Action Group-2024 and invited him to join the party as part of the group with defined responsibility. He declined. We appreciate his efforts and suggestions given to the party," Surjewala said on Twitter announcing that Kishor has declined the offer.

## Colleges, varsities, AWCs to remain shut till May 2

PNN/AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 26: A day after suspending classes in schools due to sweltering heat across Odisha, the state government announced closure of Anganwadi Centres (AWCs), colleges and universities for five days.

The AWCs will be closed from Tuesday, while colleges and universities will remain shut from Wednesday.

"In view of the prevailing heat wave condition in Odisha, classroom teaching (UG & PG) in all Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) coming under the Higher Education department shall remain suspended from 27.04.2022 to 2.05.2022," Higher Education department Secretary Saswat Mishra wrote to colleges and universities in state.

"However, other activities of HEIs such as examination, evalu-

ation, administrative and research work, shall continue as usual," the letter added.

Also, teaching and non-teaching employees are required to remain present at their respective HEIs, as in case of a normal working day, to perform the above-mentioned activities or any other activity assigned to them by their authority during this period. Another notification issued by the Women and Child Development department said it has decided to close all AWCs in Odisha from April 26-30.

On Monday, the School and Mass Education (S&ME) department had announced temporary suspension of classes in all schools for five days from Tuesday. The directive applies to government, state-aided and privately managed Odia and English-medium schools across the state.

### MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VAIATION
SENSEX	57356.61 ↑ 776.72
NIFTY	17200.80 ↑ 246.80
DOLLAR	76.85 ↓ ₹0.09
EURO	81.69 ↓ ₹0.47
GOLD	₹51,642 ↑ ₹294
SILVER	₹65,130 ↑ ₹14

### WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	39.6°C	38.8°C
TEMP MIN	28.0°C	27.0°C
Humidity	73%	76%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Thunderstorm very likely	

## Weary of many disasters? UN says worse to come

If current trends continue the world will go from around 400 disasters per year in 2015 to an onslaught of about 560 catastrophes annually by 2030

ASSOCIATED PRESS

United Nations, April 26: A disaster-weary globe will be hit harder in the coming years by even more catastrophes colliding in an interconnected world, a United Nations report issued Monday says. If current trends continue the world will go from around 400 disasters per year in 2015 to an on-

slaught of about 560 catastrophes a year by 2030, the scientific report by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction said. By comparison from 1970 to 2000, the world suffered just 90 to 100 medium to large scale disasters a year, the report said.

The number of extreme heat waves in 2030 will be three times what it was in 2001 and there will be 30% more droughts, the report predicted. It's not just natural disasters amplified by climate change, it's Covid-19, economic meltdowns and food shortages. Climate change has a huge footprint in the number of disasters, report authors said.

People have not grasped how much disasters already cost today,



said Mami Mizutori, chief of the UN Office of Disaster Risk Reduction. "If we don't get ahead of the curve it will reach a point where we cannot manage the consequences of disaster," she said. "We're just in this vicious cycle."

- The number of extreme heatwaves in 2030 will be three times what it was in 2001 and there will be 30% more droughts
- In 1990, disasters cost the world about \$70 billion a year. Now they cost more than \$170 billion per annum, and that's after adjusting for inflation
- In the last five years, disaster deaths are "way more" than the previous 5 years

That means society needs to rethink how it finances, handles and talks about the risk of disasters and what it values the most, the report said. About 90% of the spending on disasters currently is emergency relief with

and prevention.

In 1990, disasters cost the world about \$70 billion a year. Now they cost more than \$170 billion a year; and that's after adjusting for inflation, according to report authors. Nor does that include indirect costs we seldom think about that add up, Mizutori said.

For years, disaster deaths were steadily decreasing because of better warnings and prevention, Mizutori said. But in the last five years, disaster deaths are "way more" than the previous five years, said report co-author Roger Pulwarty, a US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration climate and social scientist.



# leisure



## KIM GOES SOLO ON TIKTOK, GARNERS 3MN FOLLOWERS

Reality star Kim Kardashian has launched a solo profile on TikTok five months after she debuted on the platform with her daughter North. After setting up her own account Monday, Kim has amassed over three million followers, while she follows just 11 in turn.

## JAMEELA TO QUIT TWITTER AFTER MUSK'S ACQUISITION

English actress Jameela Jamil has claimed she's made her last tweet after Elon Musk bought Twitter. Monday night, the Tesla and SpaceX boss announced he had reached an agreement to acquire the firm for a whopping \$44 billion.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Today is payback time. Just look around you and count the marvellous blessings that the almighty has showered on you, both on the personal and professional fronts. You will thus want to arrange a small thanksgiving meeting with those close to you. Ganesha approves of the idea.

**TAURUS**  
Today, you are likely to face it difficult to impress or influence others. If you have set your mind on acquiring something, you may face initial setbacks but eventually you will succeed in getting hold of it. Everything you engage in will work out fine. Be friendly and outgoing to all, more so during the latter half of the day. That will make your fortune smile even more. The day will bring unexpected gains to businessmen, assures Ganesha.

**GEMINI**  
There is every possibility that you will keep your partner in the loop while making important decisions today, predicts Ganesha. And this will prevent a grave misunderstanding. Later in the day, you will benefit from the insights of your soul mate. You will tend to be a little bit on the spiritual side today.

**CANCER**  
The first half of the day may leave you a little flummoxed. You may get discouraged when things are not going your way, predicts Ganesha. But your subconscious mind knows how to handle such situations. You will take a break from the rat race, and take a detour to your home. You may even pack your bags and take your partner to a faraway sojourn.

**LEO**  
Ganesha foresees today as a day full of duplicities, as you foster amazing feelings and astonishing fears. It's like you don't know whether to be happy or scared. At work, you may do well to anticipate a sudden turn of events as hectic business activities take their toll on you. Towards evening, you may want to enhance your outlook and be part of a few social dos, suggests Ganesha.

**VIRGO**  
You might spend most of your day at the table today, planning and mapping your future. Keep your partner in the loop while making important decisions. Take the approval of your family as when required so that no misunderstanding creeps up in the days to come. You will be surprised at the advice you get from your partner and loved ones, says Ganesha.

**LIBRA**  
Today, you touch a new high when it comes to self-reliance. The pledges and promises you make may tend to perplex people at your workplace. Afternoon may see you taking on other people's responsibilities as well. Your vigour reaches its highest point in the evening, expects Ganesha.

**SCORPIO**  
It seems like a fruitful day in business, and to deal in money matters, foresees Ganesha. On the career front, you may be occupied with important meetings. Things will work out for you if you manage to strike a balance between your ideas and implementation. Heavy expenditure may be on the cards as you feel tempted to buy jewellery for your beloved, says Ganesha.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Time is something that once spent can never be earned back, says Ganesha. The importance of time will dawn upon you today as you undertake the massive challenge of organising your life and planning your goals. At the workplace, you will put in a lot of effort, but may fall short of reaching a level that is expected of you.

**CAPRICORN**  
The day bodes well, especially for public servants. An impending business transaction with the government will keep you busy, and suggestions from friends and peers may prove beneficial, says Ganesha. Professionals, however, need to be more proactive, as their expertise will be tested.

**AQUARIUS**  
That is only a reflection and not the moon in your soup bowl! Be reasonable in your expectations, advises Ganesha, and give happiness a chance. You may learn an important lesson from your beloved, while your associates will be friendly.

**PISCES**  
Your peers will be the cause of a few confrontations today. Legal disputes may also arise. Take the advice of your elders to resolve these conflicts. Meditative techniques will help restore your calm, says Ganesha.

## ON 'SPLIT' WITH SIDHARTH

# Don't want to forget anyone: Kiara Advani



**MUMBAI:** Kiara Advani has been in news for her alleged break-up with her boyfriend Sidharth Malhotra. As she arrived for the trailer launch of her upcoming film *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2* Tuesday, she was asked if she would like to forget any bad memories related to a person.

She said, "Every single person who I met in life has added to my life, so, I don't want to forget anyone."

At the event she also reacted to the new term she has been conferred upon by her fans. The actress' well-wishers have been calling her 'Dream Girl', a tag which is much synonymous with Hema Malini. Kiara said, "I feel blessed. I have grown up watching Hemaji and I have loved her. She is the epitome of grace. My fans have started calling me that and I am just excited." "For me, it is Hema Malini who will always be the ultimate Dream Girl," added the *Shershah* actress. AGENCIES

# 'I want my family to be the Kapoors of south'

**HYDERABAD:** Megastar Chiranjeevi revealed in an exclusive interview while promoting *Acharya* that he wants his family to be known as the 'Kapoors' of the south.

Chiranjeevi recalls a conversation with his brother Pawan Kalyan, in which he expressed his desire for their family to be known as the 'Kapoors' of the south.

"There is a Kapoor craze in Hindi cinema. In South Cinema, I also wished for our family to be like that. I'm so happy to see how these kids (from Pawan Kalyan to Allu Arjun and others) have grown up and made a name for themselves in cinema," Chiranjeevi explained.

Chiranjeevi also recalls an incident, when he had previously travelled to the north, where he had felt humiliated.

The Indra actor explained, "Despite

the fact that I had won the Nargis Dutt Award for Best Feature film in National Integration for *Rudraveena*, there was

little mention of the South in the award event. I felt humiliated."

"Now that I see the regional lines slowly perishing, I feel happy," Chiranjeevi conveyed.

Helmed by Koratala Siva, *Acharya* is in theaters April 29.



## ODISHA SANGEET NATAK AKADEMI'S NATAK UTSAV: DAY 2



A scene from the Odia play *Nishiddha Neelachal*, staged by Rangamancha theatre troupe from Rourkela at Rabindra Mandap, Bhubaneswar, Tuesday. Written by Padma Shri Rajat Kumar Kar and directed by Kailash Panigrahi, the drama was about Utkal Gaurab Madhusudan Das's duel with British Raj. He fought an intense legal war with the Raj in support of Puri queen Suryamani Patamahadei to bring the management of Srimandir back in the hands of royals. But, being a non-Hindu, he was not allowed to enter the temple. State Energy Minister Capt. Divya Shankar Mishra and Mo College Chairman Akash Dasnayak were the guests of the evening. OP PHOTO

# Sara Tendulkar likely to shine in showbiz

**Mumbai:** Cricket Superstar Sachin Tendulkar's daughter Sara who recently made her modelling debut is now all set to make it to the silver screen.

One of the most popular celebrity kids in India, Sara enjoys a humongous fan following of more than 1.9

million followers on Instagram. Now, according to a few reports, Sara has been taking acting lessons and is very keen to make her career in acting.

An entertainment portal quoted a source while revealing these details. The report also claims that Sara's parents Sachin and his wife Anjali know of her plans and are supportive of whatever decision she makes.

However, sometime back, when some rumours about Sara's debut made it to headlines, the cricketing legend quashed the rumours and termed all the reports as baseless. For the uninitiated, Sara has done her studies at London University in medicine.



## Spider-Verse sequel adds over 200 new characters

**MUMBAI:** The never-before-seen footage of *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse*, which is a sequel to *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*, was unveiled to a packed audience at CinemaCon, the annual exhibition trade show, which is currently underway in Las Vegas, reports Variety.

They're also upping the body count. While the first movie had 40 characters, the sequel has 240.

After turning *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* into a critical and commercial smash, the filmmakers hyped up a crowd of movie theatre owners by showing an exclusive look at the first 15 minutes of the follow-up *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse*. As per Variety,



producers Phil Lord and Christopher Miller also announced the next instalment, previously denoted as Part II will be titled *Spider-Man: Beyond the Spider-Verse*.

*Man: Beyond the Spider-Verse*. *Across the Spider-Verse* continues the story of Miles Morales (voiced by Shameik Moore). Lord and Miller also teased some details about the sequel before unveiling it to the audience. The new movie will take place in six universes.

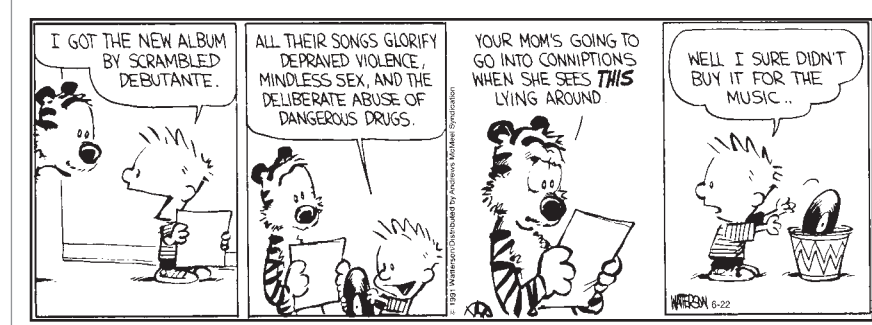
Theatre owners were treated to footage so raw, the computer-generated graphics were not in their final form. Lord and Miller have plenty of time to touch up the animation. *Across the Spider-Verse* is not set to release until June 2, 2023, and *Beyond the Spider-Verse* is not opening until March 29, 2024.

### FUN post

### PEANUTS



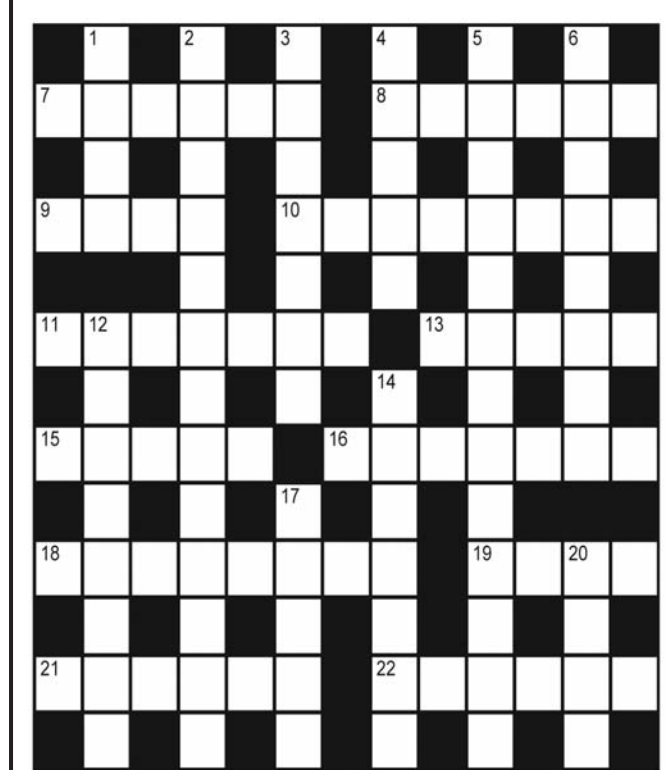
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



### CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Type of cloud
  - 8 Zebra or horse, e.g.
  - 9 Smelting waste
  - 10 Little Corporal
  - 11 Contorts
  - 13 Frequently
  - 15 Dropped a line
  - 16 Teach
  - 18 Medical exams (5-3)
  - 19 Big brass
  - 21 Consolidates
  - 22 Wears away
- Down**
- 1 Pickle flavoring
  - 2 Predict
  - 3 Volcanic eruption aftermath, at times
  - 4 Beguile
  - 5 Caveat
  - 6 Lazy
  - 12 Operator's device
  - 14 Amazing adventure
  - 17 Sign of life
  - 20 Casket

### SUDOKU

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



### SOLUTIONS

**CROSSWORD**

HANGAR SELDOM  
UUR T T R A  
MEDITERRANEAN  
OGTOSU  
UTENSILS EDDA  
R T L S E L  
HARSH SCONE  
W B C A H  
OUST SOMBRERO  
M T U A P A  
BEAUTY PARLOUR  
A I O E E D S D  
TANKER STRESS

**SUDOKU**

8	7	4	1	3	9	5	6	2
3	2	1	7	6	5	8	4	9
5	9	6	8	2	4	3	7	1
6	4	9	3	8	7	1	2	5
7	1	3	9	5	2	6	8	4
2	8	5	6	4	1	7	9	3
9	5	8	4	1	6	2	3	7
4	3	2	5	7	8	9	1	6
1	6	7	2	9	3	4	5	8

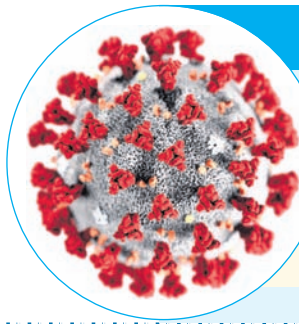
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW





## IN SYNC

Artistes perform at the Adivasi Mela being organised at Idco Exhibition Ground in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	51,02,69,578	46,35,10,881	62,46,343
India	4,30,62,569	4,25,23,311	5,23,622
Odisha	12,88,007	12,78,760	9,124

# Govt to hold annual convention of ULB chiefs



ULB chiefs at a two-day workshop in Bhubaneswar

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 26:** The state government has decided to conduct an annual convention of all mayors and chairpersons of urban local bodies (ULBs) in Odisha.

This decision was taken in the wake of overwhelming response from the ULB chiefs during a two-day orientation workshop organised in the city here. The workshop concluded Tuesday.

For the first time, an induction workshop for the elected chiefs of all the 114 ULBs in Odisha was organised by the state government. The participants were oriented to-

wards their roles and responsibilities and successful implementation of the flagship programmes.

Housing and Urban Development (H&UD) Minister Pratap Jena interacted with the mayors and chairpersons on various urban initiatives of the state government. At the end of the workshop, he handed over certificates to the participants.

Senior officials of the H&UD department familiarised the participants on key functions of the department and focus areas of the state government, including the 5T initiative.

In addition, the elected ULB

chiefs were also informed in detail about the various initiatives in water supply, housing, sanitation and employment generation. The participants in the workshop were told details regarding the drink from tap mission, decentralised solid and liquid waste management, Mukta, Jaga Mission, smart Led streetlight programme and other urban development schemes of the state government.

H&UD Secretary G Mathi Vathanan said the state government will organise such orientation workshops for all the newly-elected councillors and corporators at the regional level.

This decision was taken in the wake of overwhelming response from the ULB chiefs during a two-day orientation workshop organised in the city here

For the first time, an induction workshop for the elected chiefs of all the 114 ULBs in Odisha was organised by the state government

The participants were oriented towards their roles and responsibilities and successful implementation of the flagship programmes

"We are happy to note that the two-day orientation workshop was very well received by the participants and they were keen to know more about the urban development schemes and programmes," he added.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had inaugurated the workshop Monday and advised the mayors and chairpersons of the ULBs to provide better services to the people by adhering to the 5T governance principle of the state government.

## PAYING HOMAGE



Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik pays floral tributes to the first Prime Minister of Odisha Maharaja Krushna Chandra Gajapati on his birth anniversary in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

OP PHOTO

## Uxoricide: Man gets life term

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 26:** The court of the Additional District and Sessions Judge here Tuesday awarded life term imprisonment to a man after holding him guilty of killing his wife over dowry in Rasulgarh area of the City in 2012.

The court also slapped a penalty of ₹13,000 on convict Shrikanta Parida of Balikuda area in Jagatsinghpur district.

**The court also slapped a penalty of ₹13,000 on convict Shrikanta Parida of Balikuda area in Jagatsinghpur district**

According to Additional Public Prosecutor Pradipta Kumar Mishra, Parida had married Laxmipriya Jena of Jagatsinghpur in 2005. The couple and their five-year-old son were residing in a rental accommodation in Rasulgarh area here.

During the marriage, Laxmipriya's family had given ₹1 lakh cash and gold ornaments to Parida, who was into phenyl and bleaching powder business. However, Parida reportedly started demanding another ₹1 lakh from Laxmipriya's family.

Asking her to bring ₹1 lakh cash, Parida sent his wife to her uncle's place. The victim, however, returned empty-handed. Ired, Parida beat Laxmipriya to death at their Bhubaneswar residence November 7, 2012 and later surrendered himself before Mancheswar police.

The Mahila police arrested Parida after registering a case (456/12) on the basis of the complaint lodged by the deceased's uncle Maguni.

# Pradhan seeks Gadkari help to speed up NH projects

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi, April 26:** Union Education, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Tuesday sought the intervention of Union Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari for speeding up National Highway (NH) projects in Odisha.

Pradhan requested the Union Road Transport Minister to speed up the much-delayed construction work of NH-55 from Cuttack to Sambalpur via Angul. The highway is a connecting link between Eastern Odisha and Western Odisha that passes through major

**Pradhan requested Gadkari for speeding up the construction work for the Coastal Highway (from Rameshwar to Digha), Capital Region Ring Road and Paradip-Barbil economic corridor**

industrial towns, agricultural hubs, and important tourist destinations, Pradhan said. "Keeping in mind the urgency and importance of the

project for the socio-economic development of Odisha, I seek your personal intervention for expeditious approval, support and cooperation to NHA for awarding the contract of the work to an alternate agency/contractor to complete the work for NH-55 before the onset of the monsoon," Pradhan said in a memorandum to Gadkari.

Pradhan also requested Gadkari for speeding up the construction work for the Coastal Highway (from Rameshwar to Digha), Capital Region Ring Road and Paradip-Barbil economic corridor.

He claimed that the three projects are among the most important NH

projects undertaken in the history of Odisha and have the potential to boost the socio-economic development of not only the people of Odisha but also the entire eastern region of the country.

"The Purvodaya vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi hinges on the timely completion of these projects," Pradhan said.

Pradhan urged Gadkari for completion of pending processes, extension of support, cooperation and approvals to accelerate the construction work for the Coastal Highway, Capital Region Ring Road and Paradip-Barbil economic corridor projects in Odisha.

# 'New OPCC chief likely in a week'

This was revealed by Congress state in-charge A Chellakumar who held a series of meetings with senior party leaders in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, April 26:** The Congress is likely to appoint a president for its Odisha unit within a week, said the party's state in-charge A Chellakumar who Tuesday held a series of meetings with senior leaders in Bhubaneswar.

Chellakumar met party lawmakers, former MLAs and MPs, former state Congress presidents and chiefs of different front organisations throughout the day.

"As incumbent state Congress president Niranjan Patnaik has submitted his resignation, it is my duty to hear the views of all the leaders, including lawmakers, for selecting someone to lead the party," he told reporters.

"We want a leader who can take all the party leaders together and perform. The objective of making the change of guard in the state Congress is to rejuvenate the party and bring it back to power," he added.

After a series of dismal electoral performances, including the recently-held panchayat and civic polls, the state Congress is saddled with growing resentment.

"I will submit a report to the AICC president and the party will announce the name of the new state Congress president soon. The name may be announced in three-four days or a week," said Chellakumar, the AICC general secretary.

Patnaik had submitted his resignation as the state Congress president after the 2019 elections, but is yet to be relieved from the post. On the suggestion by the party's



Jeypore MLA Taraprasad Bahinipati that a sitting legislator be made the president, Chellakumar said that different names are being considered. However, he dismissed the speculation about the resignation of Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leader Narasingha Mishra. "In politics, rumors do make rounds," he said.

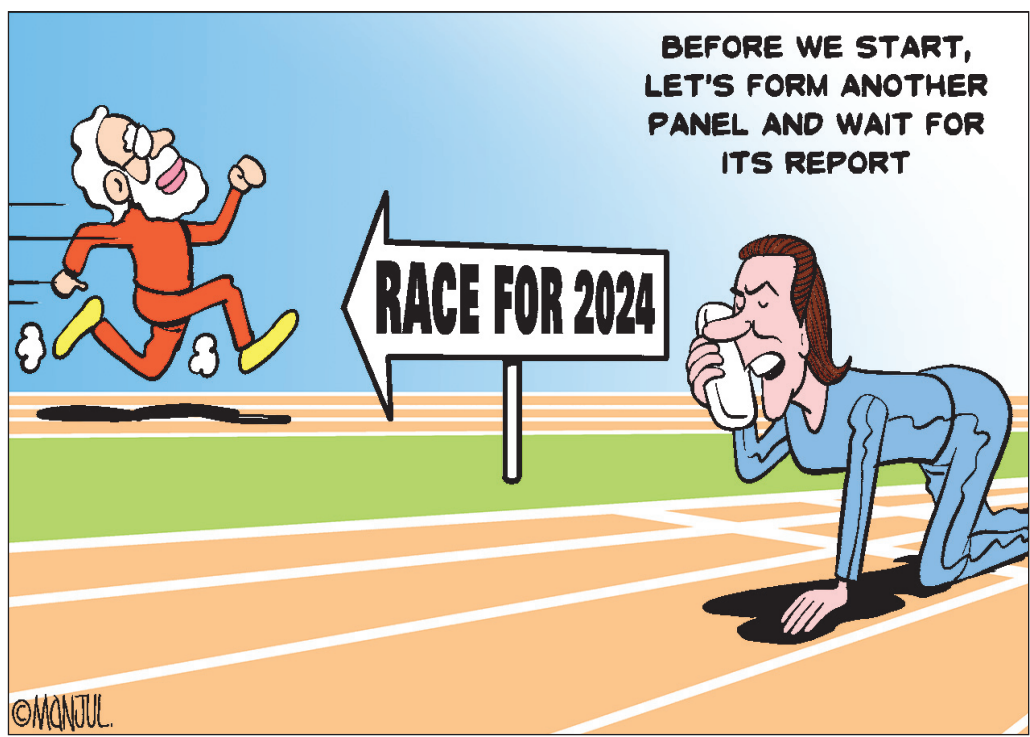
Mishra, who had a one-to-one meeting with Chellakumar, said, "I had a discussion on different important issues. I may say something when the time comes."

Congress MLA from Kantabanji in Bolangir SS Saluja said some MLAs have sought a change of the CLP leader as well.

Meanwhile, Patnaik said that he was happy that the AICC started the process of selecting a new state president. "I will support any leader chosen by the party's high command," he said.

Among the names doing rounds for the post are former state Congress president Sarat Patnaik, Barabati-Cuttack MLA Mohammad Moquim and AICC general secretary Bhakta Charan Das. "We will support whoever the AICC chooses for the post," Moquim said.

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL



BEFORE WE START, LET'S FORM ANOTHER PANEL AND WAIT FOR ITS REPORT

©MANJUL

# City AIIMS to research on snakebite mitigation

ON AN AVERAGE, AROUND 800 PEOPLE DIE OF SNAKEBITES IN ODISHA IN A YEAR

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 26:** In the wake of an upward trend in snakebite deaths in Odisha, the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Bhubaneswar, has decided to conduct a research study to reduce such incidents in the state.

Department of Forensic Medicine & Toxicology of AIIMS, Bhubaneswar will undertake this scientific study to tackle human-snake conflict in the current season, sources said.

Initially, the study will be conducted in Bhubaneswar and its peripheral areas. Around 400 families will be included in the research study. It will be conducted under the title of 'A cross sectional study of knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP) on first aid, treatment and prevention of snakebite in the residents of house from where a snake is rescued', said Dr Sudipta Ranjan Singh, MD, Additional Professor in the department of Forensic Medicine & Toxicology at AIIMS, Bhubaneswar.

Singh is also the investigator of the study while Dr Manoj Kumar Mohanty, Professor & HoD of the de-



Department of Forensic Medicine & Toxicology of the City AIIMS will undertake this scientific study to tackle human-snake conflict in the current season

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This is a cross-sectional observational study which will be conducted in collaboration with volunteers of Snake Helpline, an authorised registered organisation engaged in rescue and rehabilitation of snakes in Odisha

partment, is the co-investigator.

This is a cross-sectional observational study which will be conducted in collaboration with volunteers of Snake Helpline, an authorised registered organisation engaged in rescue and rehabilitation of snakes in Odisha.

The volunteers of Snake Helpline will collect the data through questionnaires from the members of the households from where a call for rescue of the snake was made. The questionnaires will be in Odia and English language. The study will help analyse the level of awareness among respondents about the appropriate first-aid methods, prevailing taboos, healthcare seeking behavior in cases of snakebite and pre-

ventive practice to reduce snake intrusion, breeding and bite in domestic premises, sources added.

For this study, at least 10 volunteers of Snake Helpline were trained by the experts from the Department of Forensic Medicine & Toxicology Monday. The citizens will be asked simple questions on snakes, snakebite, first-aid and prevention methods. After obtaining the data, an awareness leaflet will also be handed over to the respondents to improve their knowledge about snakes and snakebite.

Though the study was approved earlier, it could not be started due to the onset of Covid-19 pandemic. The research team of AIIMS, Bhubaneswar

has finalised all the ethical criteria of the study with the help of Snake Helpline volunteers. Snake Helpline general secretary Subhendu Mallik is the research coordinator for the study, sources said.

"The WHO has declared snakebite as a neglected tropical disease. It is a public health issue in Odisha. Deaths due to this mishap are rising day-by-day. Though there is availability of definite treatment for snakebite, most people seek help from traditional healers and report late to hospitals. There are many other issues which need redressal. However, valid research data regarding all these issues is lacking. The study is designed to identify these less-talked issues and improve the situation in Odisha," Singh said.

On an average, around 800 people die of snakebites in Odisha in a year. Being an issue of public health, the involvement of common people is important to mitigate and improve the situation, Singh added.

It is worth mentioning here that the AIIMS, Bhubaneswar, in association with the Snake Helpline, has developed a mobile application and website to help people on snakebites.

**INAUGURATION OF DIALYSIS CENTRE AT CHC BARBIL, KEONJHAR**

ଡାକ୍ତରୀ ବିଭାଗର ଉପସାହାୟକ ଗୋଷ୍ଠୀ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ କେନ୍ଦ୍ର, ବଡ଼ବିଲ

- 5 Beds Dialysis Center
- Well equipped with advanced technology
- Managed by a Team of Super Specialist Doctors, Experienced Staff Nurses and Trained Technicians
- Hemodialysis service shall be provided 6 days a week

**Date- 27.04.2022**



Medico death: NHRC seeks ATR from DMET

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 26: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has sought action-taken report (ATR) from the Director of Medical Education and Training (DMET) and Bolangir Superintendent of Police (SP) within four weeks in connection with the death of a medico at Bhima Bhoi Medical College and Hospital (BBMCH) April 22 this year.

The NHRC move came in response to a petition filed by rights activist and Supreme Court lawyer Radhakanta Tripathy.

The family of victim, Nishant Kumar, who died after falling off the roof of the hostel at BBMCH, alleged that ragging could be behind his decision to take the extreme step.

Allowing one final chance, Lokayukta tells Revenue min



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 26: The Odisha Lokayukta expressed displeasure Tuesday as the state Revenue and Disaster Management Minister failed to submit his response in connection with a case related to the misappropriation of government fund in Keonjhar district, despite repeated reminders.

The Lokayukta directed the minister to submit his views on the misdeeds committed by the revenue officials of Hatadihi Tahasil in Keonjhar district by the next hearing scheduled May 27.

On March 17, the minister had requested the anti-corruption ombudsman to grant him some more time to present his views on the issue, which was approved by the latter too. However, the minister is yet to submit his response.

"Be that as it may, we deem it proper to allow one final opportunity to the Hon'ble Minister for submitting his views. We make it clear that if the views will not be

On March 17, the minister had requested the anti-corruption ombudsman to grant him some more time to present his views on the issue, which was approved too

submitted on or before the next date, we shall be left with no option but to proceed further with the matter, a situation which the Hon'ble Minister must avoid," commented the Lokayukta in its order.

Notably, the Deputy Director (DSP) of the Inquiring Wing of the Lokayukta, in his preliminary investigation found that Chaimnamcum-Assistant Nazir of Hatadihi Tahasil Avimanyu Bhuyan, in connivance with the Nazir of the Tahasil Srikanta Jena had collected ₹40,000 towards royalty and penalty, both of which were reflected in the original money receipt recovered from Jitendra Routray, owner of the tractor allegedly carrying murrum sans adequate permission. However, they deposited just ₹4,000 as fine amount in the official records while misappropriating the rest amount.

The enquiry officials found the allegations against the accused by the complainant Himanshu Sekhar Nayak to be true.

Budget collection exceeds target in Odisha region

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 26: The budget collection of Odisha region has exceeded the budget target during the last fiscal, said CBDT Chairman JB Mohapatra Tuesday.

The region has collected ₹15,481 crore in the last financial year against a target of ₹14,000 crore, and the collection during FY 2021-22 marked an increase of 52.50 per cent over the Budget collections of previous year. The state has huge potential and is growing at par with national statistics in terms of tax collections, he added.

The net direct tax collections (income tax and corporate tax) reached an all time high of ₹14.09 lakh crore in financial year 2021-22 against ₹9.45 lakh crore collections in FY 2020-21, Mohapatra said.

The net direct tax collection has increased by 49.02 per cent during financial year 2021-22, while it has registered a growth of 34.16 per cent in FY 2021-22 over the collections of 2019-20 when the net collection was ₹10,50,680.56 crore, and



a growth of 23.90 per cent over 2018-19 when the net collection was ₹11,37,718.48 crore, he said.

The gross direct tax collection (before adjusting for refunds) for 2021-22 stands at ₹16,34,454.95 crore compared to ₹12,31,270.52 crore in 2020-21, thereby registering a growth of 32.75 per cent, said Mohapatra.

He also said that the gross collection in 2021-22 has registered a growth of 32.42 per cent over the collections of 2019-20 when the

PRESS BRIEFING BY SRI J.B. MOHAPATRA, IRS, CHAIRMAN, CENTRAL BOARD OF DIRECT TAXES AT BHUBANESWAR

gross collection was ₹12,34,258.42 crore and a growth of 25.84 per cent over the collections of 2018-19 when the gross collection was ₹12,98,797.32 crore. During the last financial year, 2.43 crore refunds were issued compared to 2.37 crore in 2020-21 amounting to ₹2,24,814 crore. This includes 2.01 crore refunds of AY 2021-22 itself due to faster processing of returns.

More than 7.14 crore Income Tax Returns (ITRs) were filed for

AY 2021-22 as on March 31, 2022 on the new e-filing portal, compared to 6.97 crore ITRs filed for AY 2020-21 till May 31, 2021 (extended last date of the preceding year) representing an increase of 2.4 per cent.

Mohapatra said that the tremendous growth in direct and indirect tax collections in the country indicates the strengthening of the Indian economy. A lot of reforms have been undertaken resulting in all these positive results, he added.

Boudh swelters at 44.5° Celsius

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 26: Odisha drooped Tuesday as heatwave roared parts of the state with mercury crossing 40°C in 22 places, the weather office said.

The blistering heatwave scorched parts of Sambalpur, Subarnapur, Angul, Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Deogarh, Bolangir and Mayurbhanj districts, it said. Fourteen weather stations recorded 42°C or more as Boudh town logged the highest of 44.5°C, the Bhubaneswar Meteorological Centre said.

The temperature shot up to 43.9°C in Jharsuguda, three notches above normal. Bolangir broiled in the scorching sun as the district headquarters recorded 43.8°C, while it was 43.5°C in Titilagarh.

The temperature settled at 39.6°C in the Capital, three notches higher than normal. Cuttack recorded 38.2°C, two levels above average, the weather office said.

STF nabs interstate drug peddler in Agra

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 26: A joint team of Special Task Force (STF) and Koraput police has arrested an absconding interstate drug trafficker from Agra district of Uttar Pradesh, STF sources claimed Wednesday.

The accused, Shivnath Singh, is of Agwar Khas village under Etmadpur police station in Agra. STF sources claimed that the joint team nabbed Shivnath from his village April 23.

On August 7, 2021, the Koraput police had seized contraband Ganja of around 80kg by intercepting one Eicher van under Machhakund Police station area. The cops later arrested two persons after registering a case (61/2021) in this regard.

The accused during the interrogation revealed that they were instructed by Shivnath, owner of the seized vehicle, to transport the contraband ganja from Odisha to Uttar Pradesh. He was absconding since the occurrence of the case.

"Soon after his arrest, he was produced before the Hon'ble court of Chief Judicial Magistrate, Agra (UP) for transit remand, and a five-day transit remand has been granted in order to produce him before the trying court i.e. Additional District & Sessions Judge-cum-Special Judge, Koraput," informed STF officials.

'IGNOU should become world's knowledge centre'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 26: Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, while addressing the 35th convocation of IGNOU in New Delhi, said that IGNOU should become the knowledge centre of the world, and called for leveraging technology to reach the unreached.

Utkal University Vice Chancellor Sabita Acharya was present as Guest of Honour at the regional function at Rail Auditorium here.

Pradhan said, "Today's convocation at IGNOU is a big confidence booster as it reflects the immense possibilities of the innovative pedagogy of the university IGNOU has emerged as modern day Lord Hanuman in taking education and learning to the remotest corners and to the poorest."

Pradhan added, "The 21st century is the century of knowledge. He said if we want to establish India as a knowledge-based economic superpower, we must ensure a paradigm shift in our education landscape. The NEP-2020 is a step towards transforming our education



and skills' landscape."

"Technology is the new equaliser. We must ensure empowerment of our population through innovation, especially those at the bottom of the pyramid and also ensure that education reaches the unreached. Digital University and other e-learning initiatives are steps in that direction," he added.

"We have to tap our civilizational wealth and also the immense potential of our Indian knowledge

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, April 26: Senior officials of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs have told the police of the four eastern Indian states - Odisha, West Bengal, Bihar and Jharkhand to remain alert during the next 15 days over possible Maoist activities.

The alert was issued by senior officials of the Union ministry of home affairs at a meeting of the Standing Committee of the Eastern Zonal Council that took place at the West Bengal state secretariat of Nabanna here Tuesday.

Besides senior officers of the

Union Ministry of Home Affairs, the meeting was also attended by the chief secretaries and home secretaries of the four eastern Indian states, among others.

Although, none of the attendees in the meeting was ready to face the media to detail the discussions on the meeting, highly placed sources from the West Bengal government told on the condition of anonymity that as the alerts of MHA officials the next 15 days are extremely crucial for these four states as there are central intelligence inputs of resurgent Maoist activities in the region

during that period.

Although there had been no Maoist activities in West Bengal recently, the West Bengal police is worried about the recovery of Maoist posters in the once Maoist stronghold of Junglemahal area scattered over the three districts of Bankura, Purulia and West Midnapore. Even the state police director general, Manoj Malviya had visited the Junglemahal area and reviewed the security arrangements there.

It is learned that in Tuesday's meeting of the Standing Committee of the Eastern Zonal Council, the

West Bengal government representatives complained about withdrawal of central armed forces from the erstwhile Maoist bastions without prior discussions with the state governments.

The state government also presented the details of the current security arrangements in the Junglemahal area.

In the meeting, the representatives of the West Bengal government also stressed on greater coordination between Border Security Force and local police personnel in the Indo-Bangladesh bordering villages in the state.

BSF DISPLAYS WEAPONS TO COLLEGE STUDENTS



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 26: For the first time, college students in the tribal-dominated Koraput district had the opportunity to witness modern weapons used by the Border Security Force (BSF), Tuesday.

The paramilitary force, deployed in Koraput and some other left wing extremism-hit districts, displayed arms, ammunition, dog training and special equipment used by them at an event in Vikram Deb (Autonomous) College in Jeyapore.

Small arms, assault rifles, hand grenades, UBGL (under-barrel

grenade launcher), mortars, LMGs (light machine guns), MMGs (medium machine guns), HHMD (hand-held metal detectors), thermal imaging devices, night-vision equipment were displayed and their functioning was explained to the students, a BSF source said.

BSF DIG Madan Lal interacted with the students and explained them the evolution of arms and the development of advanced weapons. He also highlighted that medical camps, awareness programmes, sports activities, and distribution of sports items are organised by the BSF to inspire youngsters.

How pandemic contributed to drug overdose risk

The Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted the lives of people who use drugs in ways that hurt their mental health, and changed drug use behaviour, increasing their risk for overdose, according to a study.

Drug overdoses have soared during the Covid-19 pandemic, with US overdose deaths topping 1,00,000 during the 12-month period ending in April 2021.

Researchers noted that the pandemic and strategies for preventing the spread of the virus, such as stay-at-home orders, may have contributed to this increase in deaths, from interruptions to harm reduction programs to isolation and worsening mental health.

Further, people who use drugs and live in rural areas may be disproportionately impacted by changes brought on during the pandemic, given that many rural areas have higher rates of opioid and

methamphetamine use and already have limited drug treatment and harm reduction services.

Between August 2020 and May 2021, the researchers conducted surveys with 50 individuals who use opioids (without a prescription) or inject drugs, and did in-depth interviews with a subset of 17 participants

Only 38 per cent of participants felt confident that they could maintain a stable income during the pandemic, thanks to layoffs, disruptions to their work in service industries, and fewer available jobs

Three-quarters of the survey respondents felt more anxious or on edge during the pandemic, more than half felt more depressed, and nearly half felt lonelier

Anxiety and depression are associated with increased substance use, which in turn can increase the risk for overdose



Half of the survey respondents said they were currently more likely to use drugs alone than prior to the pandemic, which can increase overdose risk

"We know that there has been a tragic increase in overdose deaths during the pandemic. Our study provides insight into why and how there have been more overdose deaths," said Suzan Walters, research assistant professor at New York University's School of Global Public Health.

In a series of surveys and interviews with people who use drugs in rural southern Illinois, the researchers sought to understand their experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic and how disruptions at the structural and community level could affect individuals' overdose risk.

Between August 2020 and May 2021, the researchers conducted surveys with 50 individuals who use opioids (without a prescription) or inject drugs, and did in-depth interviews with a subset of 17 participants.

The study is published in the journal Addiction Science and

Clinical Practice.

Only 38 per cent of participants felt confident that they could maintain a stable income during the pandemic, thanks to layoffs, disruptions to their work in service industries, and fewer available jobs. Moreover, participants reported that the pandemic exacerbated housing and food insecurity.

Three-quarters of the survey respondents felt more anxious or on edge during the pandemic, more than half felt more depressed, and nearly half felt lonelier. Anxiety and depression are associated with increased substance use, which in turn can increase the risk for overdose.

Participants also described how the pandemic changed their everyday drug use behaviour: Half of the survey respondents said they were currently more likely to use drugs alone than prior to the pandemic, which can increase overdose risk.

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SHORT TAKES

Man beaten to death over tender

Keonjhar: Four youths allegedly thrashed a man to death with iron rods at Manoharpur village under Bauripada gram panchayat in Keonjhar district late Monday night. The deceased has been identified as Bhagyadhar Ghana (39), a former Ward member, of the village. He was invited by the four miscreants to a secluded place near the village pond on the pretext of a feast. As soon as Bhagyadhar and one of his friends Tarani Dehury arrived at the spot on a motorcycle, the accused attacked the duo with iron rods. However, Tarani managed to escape from the spot and reached Manoharpur village. He informed the locals and they contacted the police. By the time police reached the spot, miscreants had fled with Bhagyadhar already dead. The murder is suspected to be fallout of a dispute over some tender work. Police have detained two persons.

Siblings die, mom critical due to food poisoning

Ganjam: Two siblings died of food poisoning while their mother was rendered critical after allegedly consuming toxic milk at Gadahuma village under Rambha police station limits in this district, in the wee hours of Tuesday. The deceased were identified as Priyanshi, five, and her two-year-old brother Rudra, daughter and son of Sunita and Ramakanta Moharana who works with the Indian Army. Sunita, who also was critical after consuming the milk, was first admitted to the Ganjam DHH and later shifted to MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur. Dr Banojkanta Kar of Ganjam DHH said food poisoning is the reason behind the death of the siblings.

3 held for firing at forest guards

Baripada, April 26: The Mayurbhanj police Tuesday arrested three wildlife poachers on the charges of opening fire at forest guards. The accused have been identified as Bhaja Singh, Chhatia Singh and Ralia Singh. The trio had fired on forest guards engaged under the flagship of 'Sabuja Bahini' at Bhanjabasa locality of Similipal Tiger Reserve in Mayurbhanj district on the night of April 21. In the firing, Sunaram Singh, a forest protection assistant, suffered serious injuries. Sunaram along with six forest guards had gone patrolling in the reserve forest when they came face to face with the poachers who were setting the forest on fire. On the fear of being arrested, the poachers opened fire at the forest team and fled the spot taking advantage of darkness.

Parala Maharaja was Odisha PM for 3 months

STATE REMEMBERS MAN, WHO WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN CREATING ODISHA, ON HIS 131ST BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

Berhampur, April 26: Former royal Parala Maharaja Krushna Chandra Gajapati Narayan Deb as he is popularly known was regarded as one of the architects of an independent united Odisha province formed on the basis of amalgamation of Odia speaking areas in the then Orissa-Bihar-Bengal province, a report said. The state celebrated his birth anniversary, Tuesday. He became the first Prime Minister of Odisha representing undivided Ganjam district and remained in power for three-and-a-half months. Later, Biswanath Das also from the undivided Ganjam district became the second Prime Minister of an independent Odisha. Parala Maharaja was born April 26, 1892 and breathed his last May 25, 1974. However, his contribution to the freedom struggle and the rich legacy he left behind makes him a person to be remembered forever. He was one of the key personalities in the formation of an independent Odisha state on the basis of Odia language. He attended the roundtable conference held in England by the British government and advocated

LENSMAN MURDER

SETHI'S BAIL PLEA REJECTED AGAIN

POST NEWS NETWORK Bhadrak, April 26: A local court here rejected Tuesday the bail plea of former Information & Public Relation (I&PR) director Niranjana Sethi in the much-hyped lensman Manas Swain kidnap and murder case. The district judge here turned down the bail plea of Sethi as the case is still under investigation by Crime Branch. Earlier, the first class judicial magistrate (JMFC) in Chandbali had rejected the bail plea of Sethi. Sethi's counsel Ramanikant Patnaik appealed to the court seeking bail for him citing that his

client's name has not been mentioned in the FIR. However, the Judge rejected the application. Meanwhile, the court deferred the bail hearing of other accused persons in the case — Parameswar Nayak, Bhagyadhar Nayak, Bibek Nayak and Krushna Chandra Nayak as the Crime Branch failed to file the case diary. Sethi, a retired OIS Officer, is accused of conspiring to murder Swain, assaulting him physically and then disposing of the body after murder. A total of eight persons including prime accused Sarmistha Rout have been arrested in the case.

FARMERS' DEMO



Farmers under the aegis of 'Jay Kishan Andolan' took out a rally Tuesday before staging demonstration outside the District Collectorate in Bargarh demanding hassle-free procurement for Rabi paddy crops in May

ILLEGAL SAND MINING AND SMUGGLING IN MAYURBHANJ

NGT imposes ₹17-cr fine on lease holders

POST NEWS NETWORK Baripada, April 26: A bench of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) held Monday a hearing on illegal sand mining and smuggling from two sand quarries in Budhabalanga river under Badasahi block and imposed a fine of over ₹17 crore on the lease holders. The district administration had earlier been pulled up by the NGT over the illegal sand mining and smuggling from these two particular quarries. The NGT had earlier sought a report from the district administration over illegal sand mining in the Arpata and Dingira sand quarries. Judicial Member Justice B Amit Sthalekar and expert member Saibal Dasgupta vetted all documents and reports related to mining and pronounced the verdict Monday. The hearing of the case was held on virtual mode in the presence of additional officer of the NGT standing committee Tapas



The NGT has also directed the Collector to file cases against the Badasahi tehsildar and two lease holders for illegal sand mining. resident of Chhelia village under Badasahi block filed petitions (case no-30/22 and 31/22 EZ) before the green body in this regard. He alleged illegal mining was being carried out at Arpata and Dingira sand quarries. The NGT also had directed the district administration to form a five-member team and conduct a probe into the charges and file the report within four weeks. The NGT had heard the matter April 22. The court received a report which said that 2,000 cubic centimetres of sand was supposed to be extracted from Dingira mine. However, 83,000 cubic centimetres

of sand has been extracted. The report also stated that sand was mined only 50 to 60 metres from a bridge, posing a threat to it. The NGT assessed the damage done by excess mining to the environment and biodiversity at ₹12,10,77,404. Similarly, 2,400 cubic centimetres of sand was supposed to be mined from Arpata quarry, but 25,000 cubic centimetres had been lifted. The damage to environment and biodiversity was pegged at ₹4,92,38,686. The administration has been directed to install demarcation poles around the leased out sand mines areas. The Road and Building department has been told to repair damaged roads due to frequent mineral transportation. The Mayurbhanj Collector has also been directed to file cases against the tehsildar concerned and the two lease holders under various provisions of the IPC, CrPC and other legal framework.

Man sets minor niece on fire

Berhampur, April 26: A minor girl was left battling for life after her maternal uncle doused kerosene on her and set her ablaze after she left their home in Bangalore over alleged torture by family members. The incident occurred at Baidya Nagar under Baidyanathpur police limits in Ganjam district, Monday night. The girl identified as Gayatri Patra sustained critical burn injuries. She was first admitted to MKCG Medical College and Hospital in the city and later shifted to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack which has a specialised burn unit (SBU). Her condition is stated to be critical. The accused Sipran Diga, 62 was arrested by Baidyanathpur police after a complaint was lodged

by the victim's mother, Tuesday. He was produced in court from where he was remanded to judicial custody after the court rejected his bail plea. Reports said that the girl's mother works as a domestic help. She was finding it difficult to meet the expenses of her family and simultaneously provide education to her daughter. So she left Gayatri in the care of the accused, his son and daughter-in-law at Bangalore after he assured to bring her up like his own daughter and provide education. However, the woman learnt that her daughter was being tortured at Bangalore and was being forced to work as a domestic help. She informed 'Childline' and with their help brought back her daughter home. This angered Diga who visited the girl's house and set her on fire to avenge his humiliation.

Sundargarh emerges best district in curbing disease

POST NEWS NETWORK Sundargarh, April 26: The Sundargarh administration has bagged the first prize at the state level for all-round documentation on Long Lasting Insecticidal Net (LLIN) distribution in the fiscal year of 2020-21 to curb malaria. On the occasion of World Malaria Day, the Health and Family Welfare department awarded the prize to Sundargarh district at a special function Monday at the Jayadev Bhawan in Bhubaneswar. Bolangir and Keonjhar districts bagged the second and third prize respectively. Health & Family Welfare department Minister, Naba Kisore Das presented the trophy and certificate to Chief District Medical and Public Health Officer (CDM & PHO) Dr Saroj Kumar Mishra. "According to Annual Parasite Index (API), Sundargarh was a



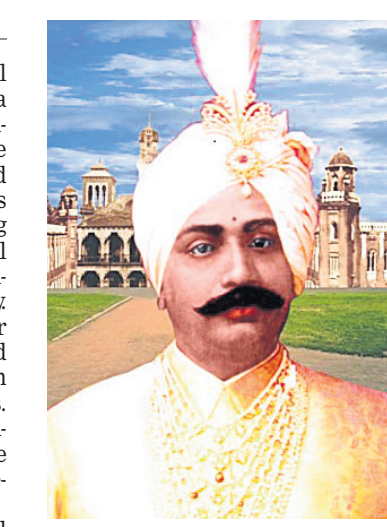
malaria-prone district. But with continuous efforts from the Health department, malaria incidences have been greatly reduced. LLIN distribution in remote areas, tests, treatment and regular supervision helped curb the disease. We aim to make Sundargarh malaria free by 2025," informed Mishra. Sending LLIN to various remote areas, coming up with innovations to expedite distribution and other key steps has been well documented in photos and videos. The same can be used

for information, training and action of other stakeholders when needed. To make the 'Malaria Control Programme' more effective across Odisha, a total of 13 lakh 6 thousand LLIN have been distributed in Sundargarh. LLIN distribution was first started in the district in 2017 with special emphasis on the tribal, mining affected areas and urban slums. Awareness programmes in villages, DDT spray on regular basis and rapid testing are carried out by the administration. The mosquito population is controlled by the release of Gambusia fish in ponds, reservoirs and swampy land. SHG women, Gaon Kalyan Samiti (GKS) members and ASHAs play a key role. 'Hello Points' have been set up in various remote villages for the people to inform the administration about malaria infections. District Collector Nikhil Pavan Kalyan congratulated the officials for such feat.

ODISHA HYDRO POWER CORPORATION LIMITED BALIMELA HYDRO ELECTRIC PROJECT, POST: BALIMELA: DIST: MALKANGIRI (ODISHA). TENDER CALL NOTICE No.: BHEP-08 / 2022-23: DATED-26.04.2022

ODISHA HYDRO POWER CORPORATION LTD. OFFICE OF THE SENIOR GENERAL MANAGER (ELECTRICAL) UPPER KOLAB HYDRO ELECTRIC PROJECT. E-PROCUREMENT NOTICE No.: UKHEP/ET - 02/2022-23. Dated 26.04.2022

REGIONAL OFFICE: CUTTACK GOLD AUCTION NOTICE. M-14, Baramunda Housing Board Colony, Bhubaneswar- 751003. This is to inform the public that in spite of repeated reminders the following gold loan borrowers have not repaid their loan...



In an independent Odisha, the first elections were held in 1937. This sowed the seeds of factionalism and politics of leg pulling within Congress. The Maharaja, who was very much a man of principle, moved away from Congress and floated a separate party to contest in the elections

Congress and floated a separate political party to contest in the elections. He named the new party as 'National Party'. His party won 13 seats while Congress won 37 seats. The United Party headed by Kanika royal Rajendra Narayan won six seats. Pandit Nilakantha Das was then the Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) President. As per the election results, Congress was expected to form the government as the largest party but it failed to do so due to intense factional war within the party. Later, the Governor invited the Parala Maharaja to form the government as the second largest party. As a result, Parala Maharaja took oath as the first Prime Minister (now Chief Minister) of Odisha April 1, 1937 with only three persons in his ministry. The National Party government lasted for only three months and 18 days and Parala Maharaja lost his power, July 19, 1937. In the changed political scenario, Das became the second Prime Minister of Odisha. Both the Parala Maharaja and Das made Ganjam district proud by becoming the first and second Prime Ministers of Odisha.

for the formation of an independent Odisha state. As a result, the England Parliament passed a law to govern India in 1935. This law helped Odisha to become an independent state on the basis of language. Consequently, an independent state of Odisha was formed April 1, 1936. Soon an intense power struggle started to wrest control over the newly-formed state.



FOCUS SCIENCE

# OUR TRICHROMATIC EYE



An ordinary human can see around one million colour hues. It is proven scientifically that every addition of colour sensitive cone increases the colour vision by hundred-fold

Pinglap atoll, a Micronesian island in the South Pacific where everybody is colour blind. But the red-green colour blindness is very common in people which are very similar to dichromatic eyes in mammals. The photosensitive colour receptors originated 550 million years ago in the Cambrian period in the water. Scientists thought that the upgradation of the chromaticity is a gradual evolution for the vision. It is impossible to give a dichromatic eye a trichromatic vision. They argue that the neural wiring is not possible if there is sudden change of dichromatic to trichromatic eye. But this is now possible in a few research studies on mice and owl monkeys (this monkey is nocturnal and does not have red cone). Dr Jeremy Nathans and Dr Jay Neitz in their research papers published in the peer reviewed journal Science and Nature have engineered the trichromatic vision in the dichromatic eye. In this research, they have shown that supplementation of LWS gene to the mice and owl monkey using different delivery techniques causes upgradation of colour vision. Mice and owl monkeys are deficient in LWS gene and hence cannot recognise the red colour. The behavioural test in mice and owl monkey established that they can see the red colour sweet soya flavour or fruit respectively after supplementation of LWS gene. Theoretically, now we can give mice and monkey the colour vision luxury of 10,000 to two million colours. This discovery will pave the way to cure the inherited colour-blindness disease (those who are colour blind from birth).

One of the assumptions is that every upgradation of chromaticity increases the arena of colourful vision to a very vast order. We know now that mantis shrimp has 16 different types of colour cones. I cannot comprehend how they can see the world in colour. But if I could, then this colorful trichromatic vision of ours is just a black and white image to mantis shrimp.

The writer is Senior Research Scientist, University of Massachusetts Medical School, Massachusetts, USA. Views are personal.

The Hubble Space Telescope (HST), the first of its kind, was sent to space to investigate the cosmic matter by analysing the light coming from it. The HST has shown that the distant galaxies are more redder than the nearest galaxy and the phenomena is called redshift. Our trichromatic eye could observe these changes and precisely proved that the universe is expanding and later proposed the Big Bang Theory by reverse calculation of shrinkage of the space and time in the far past 13.7 billion years ago. The Nobel Prize was given to three teams: The Supernova Cosmology Project (Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and University of California, Berkeley, CA, USA), The High-z Supernova Search Team (Australian National University, Weston Creek, Australia) and The High-z Supernova Search Team (John Hopkins University and Space Telescope Science Institute, Baltimore, MD, USA) for the discovery of the expanding universe in 2011.

We humans are trichromatic (tri: three, chroma: colour) living beings who can see the sunlight as a seven-colour rainbow in any rainy day. The white sunlight passes through water droplets and undergoes refraction followed by splitting into different spectrums, and we can see only a few colours which were given seven names by Sir Isaac Newton in 1660 - violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange and red. But basically there are only three colours - red, green, and blue - designated as primary colours. The other colours are derivatives of these three primary colours. But why it is only red, green, and blue, and not any other colour? This is because of three types of receptor genes in our eye expressing at the back surface in the retina. These three receptors are packed in three bags of cells called the cone photoreceptor. These three cone photoreceptor cells are also called the blue cone or short-wave sensitive (SWS) cone, the green cone or medium wave sensitive (MWS) cone and the red cone or long wave sensitive (LWS) cone. The SWS gene is present in autosome (other than the sex

chromosome, in 7th chromosome) but the MWS and LWS are present in sex chromosome (in X chromosome, male has XY chromosome and female has XX chromosome). Since the MWS and LWS genes are present in X chromosome, it is shown that the women can see more colour than men. The SWS, MWS and LWS genes encode three types of proteins called blue opsin, green opsin and red opsin which are sensitised by three wavelengths of light that are blue, green, and red spectra, respectively. The other colours in the rainbow are derivative of these three colours created in our head in the visual cortex.

Except humans and primates (monkey), most of the mammals such as dogs, cats, cows are dichromatic creatures. The dichromatic eyes are deficient of LWS cone. These animals cannot see the seven colours of the rainbow rather can see only two colours that are blue and yellow. The monochromatic animals (seals, sea lions, walruses, dolphins, and whales) who have only one type of cone can only visualise the world in grey scale. Professor Jay Neitz, University of Washington, Seattle, USA, says that an ordinary human can see around one million colour hues. It is proven scientifically that every addition of colour sensitive cone increases the colour vision by hundred-fold. For example, the monochromatic eye can only see 100 shades (though it is invariably grey colour), but for dichro-

matic creatures this is increase to 100-fold that is 10,000 shades (100x100) and for the trichromatic animals the colour shades increase to 1 million (100x100x100).

Linhares et al. in his paper titled "The number of discernible colors in natural scenes" in Journal of Optical Society of America has shown that a normal human can see 2.3 million discernible colours. The photography industry has come up with more shades combination. In the Adobe Photoshop, there are three colour channels that are red, green, and blue and each are having shades ranging from 0-255. The number 0 is black, and number 255 is either blue, green, or red. A normal eye can see 16 million hues, according to Adobe Photoshop photography (255x255x255) in a picture. In this way, theoretically in dichromatic and monochromatic animals the colour visualisation luxury decreases to 65025 (255x255) and 255, respectively. But due to the principle of univariance (comparison of colour in brain), the dichromat can see very less colour as compared to theoretical prediction.

Achromatopsia is a disease where people cannot perceive any colour and for them the world is a dull grey colour. Patients with achromatopsia are deficient of three types of colour photoreceptors. This is a hereditary disease with very rare occurrence. A neurologist, Oliver Sacks, has described in his book "The Island of Color Blind" about a tribe in



Bhubanananda Sahu

EXCEPT HUMANS AND PRIMATES, MOST OF THE MAMMALS ARE DICHROMATIC CREATURES

## War & Economy

The April report of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on the world economic outlook gives a graphic description of the disastrous effects of the sanctions imposed by the US and the European Union on Russia for the latter's invasion of Ukraine. This only reinforces the truth about the strength of the tool of sanctions. The cascading effects are even more devastating as the world has already been ravaged by the COVID-19 pandemic. The war came when some recovery was being made from the economic paralysis due to the pandemic. The first ominous sign that the report mentions is the slashing of its forecast for global economic growth by nearly a full percentage. It has given a grim warning that inflation is now a "clear and present danger" for many countries. The war is expected to further increase inflation, the IMF said, with the cautionary remark that a further tightening of Western sanctions on Russia to target the latter's energy exports would cause another major drop in global output.

The US and its allies were well aware of the economic costs their actions against Russia would cause to the world. The US was being perceived as militarily and economically weak before the Ukraine invasion by Russia took place. The war presented the US with a golden opportunity to make over its sagging global image and, interestingly, China too seems to have been made toothless in this decisive phase of world history. The current layers of sanctions against Russia proved to the whole world that America, especially under the Biden administration, is capable of controlling world affairs even without going to war directly.

There is a marked difference between sanctions against a not so powerful country and a global power-house such as Russia. It could well be that the Western powers knew the shape of things to come, but withheld the knowledge from the world. If Putin's desire for aggrandisement was the cause of the Ukraine crisis, the West was no less culpable for provoking Russia by constantly goading Ukraine to take on the Russian might with the false promise of inducting it into NATO.

Now, the IMF warns rising prices of food, energy and other goods could trigger social unrest, particularly in vulnerable developing countries. Reduced supplies of oil, gas and metals produced by Russia, wheat and corn - produced by both Russia and Ukraine - and fertilisers by Belarus drove up prices sharply in Europe, Asia, the Middle East, North and Sub-Saharan Africa. The effects are most painful in lower-income households around the world.

The IMF has downgraded its forecasts for the second time this year and said it now projected global growth of 3.6 per cent in both 2022 and 2023, a drop of 0.8 and 0.2 percentage points, respectively, from its January forecast because of the war's direct effects on Russia and Ukraine and global spillovers. The words of the IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva sound like a pathos-filled cry: "What has Russian invasion of Ukraine cost? A crisis on top of a crisis with devastating human costs and a massive setback for the global economy." According to the IMF's estimate, Ukraine's GDP will collapse by 35 per cent this year, while Russia's output will shrink by 8.5 per cent in 2022. The decline of Russia's GDP would double and go up to 17 per cent by 2023 if tightening of sanctions against it are to include restrictions on energy exports, according to IMF Chief Economist Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas.

Other effects of this war are escalation in energy prices and financial market turmoil that would cut another two percentage points off the global growth forecasts, it is feared. The war exacerbated inflation that had already been rising in many countries because of imbalances in supply and demand linked to the COVID-19 pandemic. The latest lockdowns in China are likely to cause new bottlenecks in global supply chains. The war compounds the problems created by the series of supply shocks that have struck the global economy during the past couple of years. The IMF uses the metaphor of earthquake to describe the impact that the combined effects of the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the pandemic are causing. "Like seismic waves, its effects will propagate far and wide - through commodity markets, trade, and financial linkages," Gourinchas has warned.

On the other hand, central banks face increased pressure to fight inflation with tighter monetary policy. Further tightening of sanctions could only speed up the process that would bring in more difficulties for developing economies. The IMF says inflation is now projected to remain higher for longer, as it is driven by war-induced commodity price increases and broadening price pressures. The situation could get worse if supply-demand imbalances deepened.

The IMF's report gives an important reminder to policymakers that they need to focus much more attention on encouraging innovation, improving productivity and strengthening other drivers of robust, inclusive economic growth. Failure to do so will make the risk of medium-term growth stagnation uncomfortably high.

The Russia-Ukraine war coupled with the pandemic poses a grave threat to the existing global economic order. The models that are being used are not efficacious enough to tide over the difficulties. In a world that is already plagued by considerable climate, economic, financial, institutional, political and social challenges, the current developments do not augur well.

### WISDOM CORNER

- I love you when you bow in your mosque, kneel in your temple, pray in your church. For you and I are sons of one religion, and it is the spirit. **KAHIL GIBRAN**
- I have realised that the past and future are real illusions, that they exist in the present, which is what there is and all there is. **ALAN WATTS**
- Peace in the world starts with peace in oneself. If everyone lives mindfully, everyone will be more healthy, feel more fulfilled in their daily lives and there will be more peace. **THICH NHAT HANH**

### WORDSWORTH

**Spissitude**  
In brief, the spissitude of a material is its density, thickness or compactness. In January 1924 the Atlanta Constitution reported that spissitude had been added to others, such as thermometer and truly rural, as words the New York police used to test the sobriety of midnight revellers. What the word meant was irrelevant, even if any midnight reveller knew it or was in a fit state to define it. It was enough that it contained those hissing sibilants that make it sound like a curse. In fact, it's respectably scholastic and technical, though hardly common. It is to the molasses chiefly, which gives a spissitude to the beer, that the frothing property must be ascribed. A Treatise on Adulterations of Food, and Culinary Poisons, by Fredrick Accum, 1820. His book described the horrific compounds commonly added to food and eventually led to the first public health legislation. It appears most often in books about the history of philosophy and spiritual thought that discuss the ideas of Dr Henry More. He was a seventeenth-century philosopher, for whom spissitude was a fourth dimension that allowed supernatural spirits to occupy a material place at will. It has always been rare outside such specialist areas.

### LOL

**Dropped your wallet**  
Two fishermen were out on the lake when one of them dropped his wallet. As they watched the wallet float down to the depths of the lake, a carp came along and snatched up the wallet. Soon came another carp who stole it away and then a third joined in. Remarked one of the fisherman, "That's the first time I've ever seen carp-to-carp walletting."



### IN JEST THIS

# Sharing passwords can be costly



Melvin Durai

YES, SHARING PASSWORDS IS GENERALLY NOT A GOOD IDEA, BUT FOR MANY PEOPLE, STREAMING SERVICES ARE AN EXCEPTION

When you open a new bank account and set up online access to your account, a bank employee may say something like this to you: "Do not share your password with anyone!"

And you may find yourself thinking, "Of course not. Do I look like an idiot? I'm just going to save it on my computer in a file called 'Important passwords.'"

Sharing your bank password would be like passing around your ATM card. Before you know it, you'll be writhing on the floor in misery and getting comforted by your pet dog, who knows what it's like to have no money in his name.

Almost every website or app wants you to create an account using a password, and sharing most of these passwords is not advisable. You might find yourself promoting illicit drugs on your social media pages, tweeting anti-vaccine messages, or emailing your friends to let them know that you're raising money to join the armed forces in Ukraine and need them to immediately wire money to a bank account in Nigeria.

Yes, sharing passwords is generally not a good idea, but for many



Refusing to share your Netflix password would be a relationship-breaker, no different than refusing to share a drink

people, streaming services are an exception. When it comes to passwords for Netflix, Amazon Prime, Disney+, and other streaming services, millions of people have adopted a simple philosophy: "Sharing is caring."

To them, a Netflix subscription is like a private swimming pool: it's perfectly fine to allow your friends and family members to enjoy it, as long as they don't all jump in at the same time.

Netflix and other streaming services may frown on password-sharing, but isn't it reasonable to do so, to some extent?

Sharing your password with your spouse or partner is necessary, of course, especially since you share so many other things. Refusing to share your Netflix password would be a relationship-breaker, no different than refusing to share a drink.

But what about your children? If they're still young and live at home, it makes sense to share your password with them, so they can stream their favourite movies and shows to their devices. If they're fully grown-up and living on their own, sharing your password with them is a good way to reward their independence. It's also a good way to maintain the family connection. No need to buy them a house-warming gift.

Your children, of course, would share the password with their partners, who would share the password with their siblings. And soon, two entire families will be sharing a single Netflix subscription, sending blessings in your direction every time they watch "Bridgerton."

What's the harm in this? Well, for starters, Netflix imposes restrictions on the number of devices that can stream content at any given time, depending on the type

of subscription. The basic subscription limits you to a single device, so if you want to share it with friends or family members, you need to coordinate watching times. You can watch in the evening, while your aunt watches in the morning, your parents watch in the afternoon, and your cousin watches from midnight onwards, which is quite convenient for him, because not only does he live in a different time zone across the world, he is also currently unemployed.

But while this arrangement increases viewership considerably, it doesn't make Netflix happy. In recent months, the company has lost more subscribers than it has gained, and it lays the blame partly on password sharing. More than 100 million households around the world are using a shared password, according to Netflix. The company plans to charge a little more for subscriptions that are being used in multiple households.

In other words, it might be time to send a message to your cousin, your aunt and even your parents: "Sharing is caring, so would any of you like to share the subscription fee?"

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

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

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

### Malaria no more

Sir, The observance of the First World Malaria Day was held 25 April 2008 and since then every year on the same date the programme has been observed across the world to spread awareness and prevent malarial contagion and deaths. Globally, there were 241 million cases of malaria in 2020 compared to 227 million cases in 2019. There is a sharp rise in increase in malaria cases in the world and the malarial deaths too reached at 6,27,000 in 2020 which is about 69,000 more deaths than recorded the previous year. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has set a target of 90 per cent reduction of malarial cases and malarial deaths by the year 2030. In addition, it also has built a strategy to eliminate malaria from 35 countries by 2030. According to the World Malaria Report 2019, India accounts for 3 per cent of the global malaria burden. However, compared to 2017, the country managed to reduce malarial cases by 49 per cent and deaths by 50.5 per cent. And likewise Odisha too made a progressive effort to reduce malaria burden to only 25,503 cases in 2021 and observed the World Malaria Day with the 'MALARIA NO MORE INDIA' programme.

### Bulldozing harmony

Sir, Giant bulldozers are known to bring down sturdy concrete structures with ease. But thanks to the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) at the Centre, in a morbid twist, bulldozers in India are now being used to raze down long-cherished ideals of religious harmony and peaceful co-existence. The instant justice apparatus is diametrical to any modern legal system. But such tactics were close to the hearts of all varieties of fascist rulers across the world during the last century. German leader Adolf Hitler used this manoeuvre to terrorise the Jews, Israel demolished numerous villages to horrify the Palestinian Muslims, and Pakistan's General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq resorted to this tactics to crush his political opponents. In the 21st century, the Right-wing forces in the world's largest democracy are now boosting majoritarian anarchy by using the same methods. Unsurprisingly, in most of the cases, the victims belong to the minority community. India needs bridge-builders for religious unity and not bulldozers to tear apart the country's communal and social fabric.

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Santosh Kumar Satapathy, PARALAKHEMUNDI

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI



# national

## of the day quote

If we want to protect mother earth, we will have to eliminate the use of chemicals fertilisers and pesticides



SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN | MP CM

We have never aligned with the RSS, the BJP and their allies directly or indirectly. Our opinions are not formed on the ideology of convenience and short term gains. We have fought and keep fighting authoritarian and anti-constitutional forces that remain aligned with the BJP, the RSS and the charade of the NDA



TEJASHWI YADAV | RJD LEADER

India has made remarkable progress in controlling malaria with 86.45 per cent decline in cases of the vector-borne disease and 79.16 per cent reduction in deaths in 2021 as compared to 2015



MANSUKH MANDAVAYA | UNION HEALTH MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### Himachal gets new Cong chief

New Delhi: The Congress Tuesday appointed former Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Virbhadra Singh's wife and Mandi Lok Sabha MP Pratibha Virbhadra Singh as the president of the party unit in the state, replacing Kuldeep Rathore. Congress president Sonia Gandhi also appointed former Union minister Anand Sharma as the chairman of the Steering Committee for the Himachal Pradesh Congress, with Asha Kumari as its convenor, while former Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) chief Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu was appointed as the chairman of the Campaign Committee. Mukesh Agnihotri has been retained as the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leader in the Himachal Pradesh Assembly.

### Hizbul module busted in Kulgam

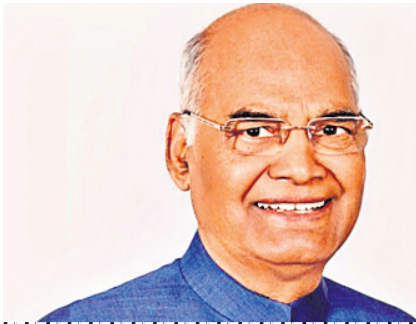
Srinagar: Security forces have arrested five alleged terrorists including three terror associates who were involved in killing of a panch in Kulgam district of Jammu and Kashmir, police said Tuesday. A terror module of proscribed outfit Hizbul Mujahideen was busted by arresting three terrorist associates involved in the case pertaining to the killing of a panch Mohammad Yaqoob Dar in March this year, a police spokesman said.

### Dalit man beaten to death in UP

Firozabad (Uttar Pradesh): A group of people belonging to the upper caste community allegedly attacked a man from the Dalit community and his family members in Uttar Pradesh's Firozabad district while the latter were feeding cattle, police said. Jai Singh suffered head injuries in the incident and died on the spot. Additional Superintendent of Police, Akhlesh Narain, said, "An FIR has been registered against six people. Two of the accused have been arrested."

### Tanzanian held

New Delhi: The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) Tuesday said that it has arrested a Tanzanian national, who had swallowed cocaine capsules valued at over ₹11 crore in order to smuggle them into the country, from Hyderabad airport. This is one of the largest seizures of cocaine in the city. The accused, who was travelling from Johannesburg, was stopped for questioning by the officials at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, during which he broke down.



It is important for India and European Union to engage in strategic and geopolitical avenues such as in the Indo-Pacific, apart from deepening economic relations

RAM NATH KOVIND | PRESIDENT

## MODI TO REVIEW COVID SITUATION TODAY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will interact with Chief Ministers on the emerging Covid-19 situation in the country Wednesday through video conferencing, an official said



# Wake-up call for Europe to look at Asia: Jaishankar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 26: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar Tuesday countered criticism of India's position on the Russian aggression against Ukraine, saying the Western powers have been oblivious to the pressing challenges facing Asia including last year's events in Afghanistan and the pressure on the rules-based order in the region.

In responding to a question by Norwegian Foreign Minister Anniken Huitfeldt at the Raisina Dialogue, he said the crisis in Ukraine could be a "wake up call" for Europe to also look at what was happening in Asia and reminded the West about "what happened in Afghanistan less than a year ago where an entire civil society was thrown under the bus by the world". "When the rules-based order was under challenge in Asia, the advice we got from Europe is to do more trade. At least we are not giving you that advice," he said. "In terms of Afghanistan, please show me which part of the rules-based order justified what the world did there," he added.

India has not yet publicly condemned the Russian attack on Ukraine and has been calling for the resolution of the conflict through dialogue and diplomacy. "Quite candidly, we have been hearing for the last two months a lot of arguments from Europe saying things are happening in Europe and Asia should worry about it because this could happen in Asia," Jaishankar said.



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The External Affairs Minister was responding to a series of questions on the Ukraine crisis by his counterparts from Norway and Luxembourg as well as by former Prime Minister of Sweden Carl Bildt

"Things have been happening in Asia for the last 10 years. Europe may not have looked at it. So this could be a wake-up call for Europe not just in Europe, it could be a wake-up call for Europe to also look at Asia," he said.

The external affairs minister was responding to a series of questions on the Ukraine crisis by his counterparts from Norway and Luxembourg as well as by former Prime Minister of Sweden Carl Bildt.

Norwegian Foreign Minister Anniken Huitfeldt described the Russian aggression as an instance of an authoritarian state attacking a democracy and asked how India would play its role in defending free societies.

The external affairs minister said Asia has been reeling under various challenges and it is not that problems are going to happen and that the continent has been facing the problems. "This is not been an easy part of the world for the last decade and this is a part of the world where boundaries have not been settled, where terrorism is still practised often sponsored by

states," he said. "This is a part of the world where the rules-based order has been under continuous stress for more than a decade and I think it is important for rest of the world, outside Asia to recognise that today," Jaishankar said.

In his question, Bildt asked the external affairs minister what conclusion China could draw from what's happening in Ukraine and whether there was a possibility of Beijing seeing the possibility to do things that otherwise would not be allowed. The Swedish leader said the conclusion that China could draw from the crisis in Ukraine could have major repercussions perhaps for India's security. In his response, Jaishankar said the questions should have been asked to Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi. "I cannot honestly answer that question. But I do not think international relations necessarily function by precedence. People do not need to see something out there and say aha that's what I am going to do," Jaishankar responded.

# 64,827 KP families left Valley in 1990s: MHA



With a view to resettle Kashmiri migrants in the valley, the MHA has approved 3,000 jobs in the J&K government under Prime Minister's Reconstruction Package - 2008, and an additional 3,000 jobs under the Prime Minister's Development Package - 2015 (PMDP-2015)

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 26: Pakistan-sponsored terrorism forced 64,827 Kashmiri Pandit families to leave the Kashmir valley in the early 1990s and settle in Jammu, Delhi, and some other parts of the country, government has said.

According to the annual report of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) for 2020-21, as many as 14,091 civilians and 5,356 security force personnel lost their lives to militancy in Jammu and Kashmir between the 1990s, when militancy first reared its head in the valley, and 2020. "Militancy in Jammu and

Kashmir is intricately linked with infiltration of terrorists from across the border," the report said. Besides Kashmiri Pandits, militancy forced some Sikh and Muslim families too to migrate from Kashmir Valley to Jammu, Delhi, and other parts of the country, it said.

Nearly 1,054 families from the hilly areas of Jammu migrated to Jammu plains, it said.

As per the records of registration available with the Relief and Migrant Commissioner, J&K, at present 43,618 registered Kashmiri migrant families are settled in Jammu, 19,338 families are settled in Delhi and NCR, and 1,995 families in a few other states and the UTs in the country, the report said.

With a view to resettle Kashmiri migrants in the valley, the MHA has approved 3,000 jobs in the J&K government under Prime Minister's Reconstruction Package - 2008, and an additional 3,000 jobs under the Prime Minister's Development Package - 2015 (PMDP-2015).

To house these 6,000 Kashmiri migrant employees in the valley, construction of 6,000 transit accommodations at an outlay of ₹920 crore has also been approved by the MHA.

# SC to list pleas challenging HC's hijab order

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 26: The Supreme Court Tuesday agreed to consider listing pleas challenging the Karnataka High Court verdict which had dismissed petitions seeking permission to wear hijab inside classroom.

A bench comprising Chief Justice N V Ramana and Justices Krishna Murari and Hima Kohli took note of the submissions of senior advocate Meenakshi Arora, appearing for one of the petitioners, that the plea needed an urgent hearing.

"I will list it. Wait for two days," the CJ said. Several petitions have been filed in the apex court against the Karnataka High Court verdict holding that wearing of hijab is not a part of the essential religious practice which can be protected under Article 25 of the Constitution.

The high court had dismissed the petitions filed by a section of Muslim students from the Government Pre-University Girls College in Udipi, seeking permission to wear hijab inside the classroom.

# UP ministers, officers asked to declare assets

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, April 26: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath Tuesday directed his ministers to declare within three months all property owned by them and their families and asked IAS and IPS officials to put similar details online.

He also said that the ministers' family members should not intervene in the government work.

The CM while addressing a special sitting after the cabinet meeting said that the IAS, IPS, and the Provincial Civil Service officers should also declare their and their family members' properties and make it available on an online portal for the people to see it.

"For a healthy democracy, the conduct of public representatives is very important. According to this spirit, all the honourable ministers should make a public declaration of all movable and immovable property of themselves and their family members within a period of next three months after taking oath," Adityanath said.

The code of conduct prescribed for the ministers should be followed in compliance with the provisions of the Representation of the People Act in letter and spirit, he said.

"All ministers should ensure that there is no interference of their family members in the government work. We have to set an example by our conduct," he said.

A presentation of all the departments for the next 100 days, six months, and a five-year work plan has been done, the CM said. "It should now be implemented on the ground," he said.

The CM directed all departments to guide officers to ensure completion of projects in a set time-frame.

"Under guidance of the Prime Minister, we all strive to fulfill the resolution of 'Antyodaya'," he said.

# Congress to remove Jakhar, KV Thomas



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 26: The Congress Tuesday decided to remove former Punjab unit chief Sunil Jakhar and Kerala leader K V Thomas from all party positions and suspended five of its MLAs in Meghalaya for anti-party activities, sources said.

The Congress Disciplinary Committee recommended action against Jakhar and it was initially decided to suspend him for two years but later toned down their decision keeping in view his seniority in the party.

The panel, which met here Tuesday, recommended the suspension of the five Congress MLAs in Meghalaya for supporting the ruling Meghalaya Democratic Alliance (MDA) in the state, defying the party's directives. Congress president Sonia Gandhi has approved the disciplinary panel's recommendations.



Sonia Gandhi has approved the disciplinary panel's recommendations

Sonia Gandhi had received a letter from the president of the Meghalaya Pradesh Congress Committee, Vincent Pala, regarding the five MLAs actions in supporting the present BJP-backed government there.

The committee has said that it discussed the issue extensively and resolved to suspend the MLAs Amraren Lyngdoh, P T Sawkimie, Kimfa Marbaning, Mayralborn Syiem and Mohendro Rapsang for a period of three years from the date of this meeting, the sources said. Regarding Thomas, the panel decided to remove him from the state political affairs committee and the executive committee of Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee.



The Taj Mahal sees low footfall of tourists due to scorching heat in Agra, Tuesday

PTI PHOTO

# Man forced to carry son's body on bike

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Tirupati, April 26: In a heart-wrenching incident, a man carried the body of his 10-year-old son on a motorbike for a distance of 90 km after the driver of an ambulance at a government-run hospital in Tirupati demanded huge money.

Unable to pay the hefty charges, the man sat pillion with the body in his lap while a youngster drove the two-wheeler. The man carried the body on the two-wheeler to Chitvel in Annamaya district, about 90 km from Tirupati. Jesava, son of an agriculture worker, died of ill-health while undergoing treatment at RUIA Government General Hospital on Monday night. Ambulance driver at the hospital demanded ₹10,000 to

transport the body.

As the boy's father was unable to pay the huge sum, he informed his relatives, who arranged another ambulance to bring the body home free of cost. There are allegations that the ambulance driver at the hospital did not allow the other ambulance to carry the body and insisted that the body should be carried in his ambulance.

# 73 LEOPARDS POACHED THIS YEAR: WPSI

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, April 26: The first four months of 2022 haven't gone too well for the Indian Leopard, or so it seems. If figures published by the Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI) are to be believed, 73 of them have been poached this year. In addition to this, 140 were found dead inside forested areas across the country.

It can't be confirmed whether these 140 animals died due to natural causes, such as old age or fights with other Leopards over mating and territorial rights. Some of them may even have fallen victim to human-animal conflicts. In 2021, the total number of Leopard deaths in the country was 614. Of these, 182 animals were poached. "If the trend that we have been

noticing continues throughout 2022, we may surpass the 2021 mark. It is being claimed that India's Leopard population is nearly 13,000. However, government officials need not gloat about this as rampant poaching is continuing. Unless measures are taken, it will take only a few years for the Leopard population to fall at an alarming rate. In India, the Leopard is a major attraction in several forests where there are no Tigers. It's hard to believe that 73 Leopards have been poached in less than 120 days even as the government agencies claim to have taken adequate measures to curb such activities," a wildlife expert said.

WPSI has itself maintained that the poaching figures could be much higher. It has pointed out how Customs officials multiply the figure of seizures by 10 to arrive at a



true picture.

This would mean that for every Leopard skin seized, 10 animals may have been killed. While Leopard pelts are in high demand across

the world, even in the so-called advanced nations who express their concern about environmental issues at international fora, the bones and other parts go towards making

It's hard to believe that 73 leopards have been poached in less than 120 days even as the government agencies claim to have taken adequate measures to curb such activities

WILDLIFE EXPERT

of traditional medicine in several Asian countries, including China.

With human habitation slowly but surely invading forest space, leopards are coming into close contact. Take the forests of north Bengal for instance. There is little in the form of natural prey for the Leopards inside the forests that are accessible to all. It should be the forest department's responsibility to breed and release animals like Cheetal

and Hog Deer inside these forests. The leopards have now shifted to the fringe areas of the forest.

This is where several tea gardens are located in the Terai. The leopards choose the thick undergrowth of tea bushes as a place to deliver their cubs. To sustain themselves and the cubs, they prey on goats, dogs and cattle on occasions. This leads to a conflict between humans and the leopard.

There have been several occasions when enraged villagers have clubbed the animal to death. The death of the mother means the death of the cubs. "Little of this is actually recorded. We get reports but evidence is erased by the time we get to the spot. Everybody talks of a Leopard that attacked a man and was killed. This has to stop," a forest official said.



# RAJ, MP MOST AFFECTED BY HEAT WAVES

AGENCIES

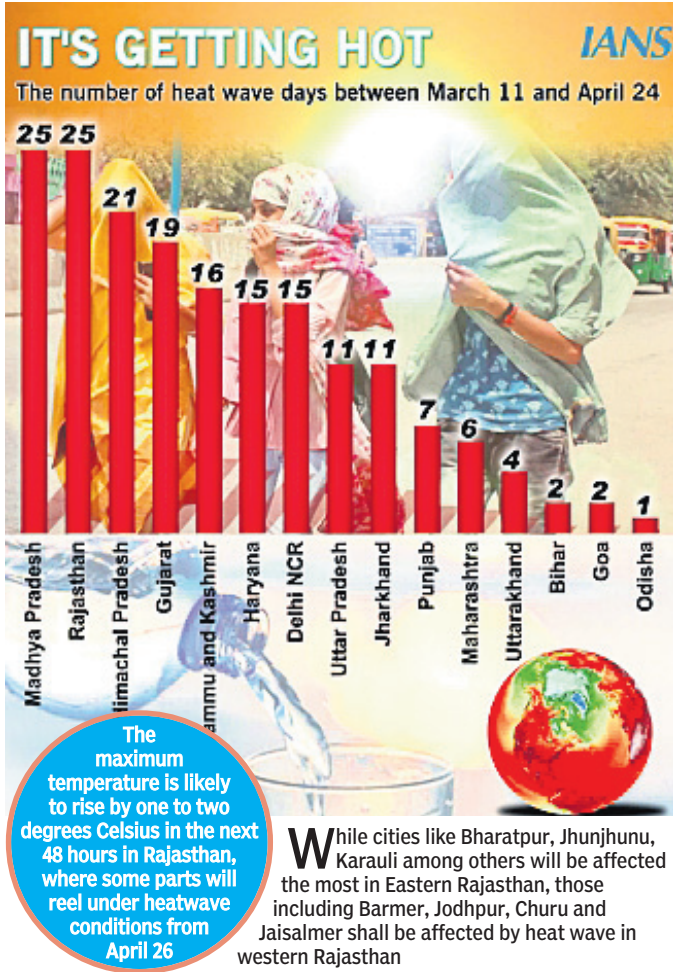
New Delhi, April 26: The early heat waves of 2022, that began March 11, have impacted 15 Indian states and Union Territories, as of Sunday, with Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh suffering the most with 25 heat waves and severe heat wave days each during this period and also has had an adverse impact on the rabi crop.

According to an analysis of India Meteorological Data (IMD) data by the Centre for Science & Environment (CSE) Down to Earth (DTE) on Monday, after Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, the hill state of Himachal Pradesh has been the most affected by heat waves this year with 21 heat wave and severe heat wave days.

Although CSE/DTE counted the heat wave period as single phase from March 11 to April 24, the IMD had held that the first spell was from March 11 to 21 and the second spell started on March 26 and ended between April 20-23 for large parts of India with isolated pockets still witnessing heat wave and severe heat wave conditions.

As per IMD definition, a heat wave is when the temperature of any place crosses 40 degrees Celsius in the plains, 37 degrees in coastal areas, and 30 degrees in the hills. It also declares a heat wave when a place registers maximum temperature that is 4.5 to 6.4 degrees Celsius more than the normal temperature for the area for that day; and it is a severe heat wave if this temperature is over 6.4 degrees.

Another criterion used by the IMD to declare a heat wave is when temperature of a given place touches/crosses the 45 degrees Celsius mark and after 47 degrees Celsius, it is a severe heat wave. "Anti-cyclones over western



parts of Rajasthan in March and the absence of rain-bearing Western Disturbances had triggered the early and extreme heat waves. Anti-cyclones cause hot and dry weather by sinking winds around high pressure systems in the atmosphere," said D Sivananda Pai of the Kottayam-based Institute for Climate Change Studies.

Another climate scientist, Raghu Murtugudde from the University

of Maryland, said: "A north-south pressure pattern, associated with the La Nina phenomenon in eastern and central Pacific Ocean that happens during winters in India, has persisted longer than expected and interacted with warm waves coming in from a rapidly warming Arctic region, leading to the heat waves."

The sea surface temperatures over east and central Pacific Ocean

become cooler-than-average during La Nina. This affects the trade winds flowing over the ocean surface through changes in wind stress. The trade winds carry this weather disturbance elsewhere and affect large parts of the world.

"In India, the phenomenon is mostly associated with wet and cold winters. Therefore, the current impact of La Nina on the spring and summer season in India is completely unexpected," Murtugudde said, adding: "The heat waves may continue till at least the monsoon season begins in June."

The part I of the IPCC's (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) Sixth Assessment Report in October 2021 had warned that every additional 0.5 degrees Celsius of warming will increase hot weather extremes, along with extreme precipitation and drought. Heat waves in India are likely to "last 25 times longer by 2036-2065" if carbon emissions remain high and push global temperature rise to 4 degrees Celsius by the end of the century.

Heat waves exert enormous impacts on health, agriculture and availability of water - all often related to each other in complex ways, the CSE/DTE analysis pointed out and said: "On the other hand, agricultural yields get impacted as well. For instance, the wheat crop in the current rabi season in Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh has been impacted by heat waves. Many farmers have reported losses between 20 and 60 per cent in these states."

"This happened because the heat waves were early this year and the temperatures affected the wheat plants during their growth stage, leading to shriveled grains which fetch lower prices in the market, resulting in losses. To reduce agricultural losses due to heat waves, heat-tolerant varieties of wheat need to be developed," it said.

# MP WHEAT DEMAND SHOOTS UP GLOBALLY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Indore, April 26: The demand for wheat varieties like Sharbati and Kathia grown in Madhya Pradesh has shot up in the international market amid short supply from Russia and Ukraine due to the ongoing war, an official said.

Madhya Pradesh State Agricultural Marketing Board's (MPSAMB) Managing Director Vikas Narwal said that the government procurement of wheat dipped by 30% due to a sharp rise in prices in the open market.

"There is a steep rise in wheat export due to Russia-Ukraine crisis and mandis were seeing huge influx of this foodgrain," he said. Narwal said that 1.76 lakh tonnes of wheat was exported from the state during the last marketing season, whereas about 2.5 lakh tonnes of wheat has been exported in the last one month of this marketing season alone. Two more months are still left for this marketing season to end, he added.

He said that traders were buying Sharbati and Kathia (durum) wheat from farmers and mainly exporting to Bangladesh, Vietnam, the Philippines and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

"This time around, the importers from Africa are also evincing keen interest in MP's wheat. In the coming days, wheat from

Madhya Pradesh might be exported to Egypt, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Tanzania also," he added.

He said that wheat was sown on 95.51 lakh hectares area in the state during 2021-22 Rabi season adding that its production is expected to reach 346.70 lakh tonnes.



Representational image

Meanwhile, good-quality wheat is being bought far above ₹2,015 quintal minimum support price in MP bringing good tidings for the farmers

Russia and Ukraine figure in the list of top exporters of wheat but supplies were hit after the former attacked the latter

As a result of this, many countries are looking at India and other countries for the supply of wheat

THE SANCTION OF THE WEST ON RUSSIA TOO HAS LESSENNED ITS EXPORTS

The Rabi crops are sown around mid-November, preferably after the monsoon rains are over; and harvesting begins in April and May. "This time around, the traders are knocking at the doors of farmers in pursuit of good quality wheat. They are striking deals instantly with the farmers by purchasing Sharbati wheat at a price of ₹2,200 to ₹2,500 per quintal," Banesingh Chouhan, a farmer of Lohari Bujgar village in Dhar district, said in a statement.

"I have not seen such a race

among the traders to procure wheat earlier," he added. Meanwhile, good-quality wheat is being bought far above ₹2,015 quintal minimum support price in MP bringing good tidings for the farmers. Russia and Ukraine figure in the list of top exporters of wheat but supplies were hit after the former attacked the latter. As a result of this, many countries are looking at India and other countries for the supply of wheat. The sanction of the west on Russia too has lessened its exports.

## MP CM lays emphasis on natural farming

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal, April 26: The Madhya Pradesh government has said it will give ₹900 per month to farmers rearing indigenous cows.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan made the announcement on Monday while virtually addressing a Niti Ayog workshop on agriculture.

The CM also announced the constitution of the Madhya Pradesh Natural Agriculture Development Board to promote natural farming.

"Desi (indigenous) cows are essential for natural farming... Farmers should rear at least one desi cow. We have decided to provide ₹900 per month to such farmers. So, a farmer will get a total of ₹10,800 in a year for a desi cow," Chouhan said in his address during this workshop.

He also informed that the MP government is going to start special activities to promote natural farming in 100 villages each across 52 districts of the state.

"With the current Kharif crop season, natural farming activities will start in 5,200 villages of the state. We are looking for such farmers. So far, 1.65 lakh farmers in the state have shown interest in natural farming. Workshops will also be organised in the state to create an atmosphere for natural farming," he said. The CM further said five full-time workers will be appointed in each block to promote natural farming and they will be paid an honorarium.

## RAY OF HOPE FOR BUNDELKHAND

AGENCIES

Bhopal, April 26: Bundelkhand, which has been "synonymous" with drought, migration and unemployment, is now hoping to benefit from several government initiatives.

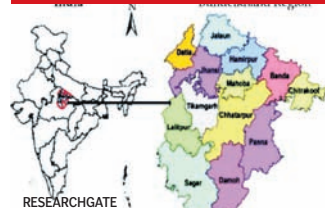
Bundelkhand comprises of 14 districts, seven from Uttar Pradesh and as many from Madhya Pradesh.

But we are talking about the seven districts of Madhya Pradesh -- Datia, Tikamgarh, Niwari, Chhatrapur, Panna, Damoh and Sagar. These districts were a source of prosperity but with the passing of time they got entangled in problems. Though there can be some fallouts of the project but it can be effective in bringing back prosperity and solving the water problem of the region.

Water scarcity is the root cause of all the problems of the region as farming cannot be done due to lack of water; livestock don't get water to drink and even the common people are striving for water. That's the main reason why industries could not be established which led to an unemployment problem in the state.

Work is also being done to improve the transport system in the region. Villages are being connected by roads. National Highway 75 connecting the Gwalior region with Rewa has made commuting pleasant and comfortable.

## GREAT INITIATIVE



After a long time, a scheme is being brought which it is hoped will change Bundelkhand for the better

The Ken-Betwa Link project, which was a dream project of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, has been given the nod by the Narendra Modi government with an outlay of ₹44,000 crore

A huge area has also been connected via the rail network. Panna is the only district which does not have a rail line. To connect Khajuraho with Delhi, there are plans to run the Vande Bharat Express, which was announced by Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw recently.

Khajuraho holds a unique place on the world tourism map. Efforts are being made to enhance its attraction with better facilities for the tourists coming here. A yoga centre and a golf course are also on the cards. A convention centre has already been built here where meetings can be organised.

# Khargone violence: Video calling for boycott of one community surfaces

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Khargone, April 26: Days after communal violence rocked Madhya Pradesh's Khargone town, a video featuring a purported call to boycott members of a particular community has surfaced, leading the police to file a case against unidentified persons, officials said Tuesday, while a second video shows local BJP MP Gajendra Patel goading people to give a 'tit for tat' reply to those who pelted stones during Ram Navami celebrations.

In the first clip, which went viral on social media, an announcement made on a truck-mounted sound system was heard giving the call to boycott the community members, accusing them of spreading violence in the town, which saw arson and stone pelting during Ram Navami celebrations April 10 and where the curfew was relaxed for nine hours.

Khargone's in-charge Superintendent of Police Rohit Kashwani said after they came across the video, a case was registered on Monday night against unidentified persons on charge of spreading enmity between different groups.

Karahi police station in-charge Parmanand Goyal said the case was registered under Indian Penal Code (IPC) section 153-A (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place



PTI FILE PHOTO

of birth, residence, language, and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony).

The police came to know about the video Monday night and its content was being investigated and people involved were being identified, he said.

He said as per preliminary information, the announcement purportedly heard in the video was made April 19 in Katargaon, located nearly 60 km from the district headquarters.

The announcer was heard requesting Hindus to boycott the "adharmi" (impious) and "pakhandi" (hypocrite) shopkeepers and give them a befitting reply while accusing them of stone pelting during a Ram Navami procession and burning the houses of Hindus in Khargone. Another video has also surfaced in which a group of

In a clip, which went viral on social media, an announcement on a truck-mounted sound system was heard about the call to boycott the community members, accusing them of spreading violence in Khargone, Madhya Pradesh

women was purportedly seen taking a resolve to financially boycott "vidharmis" (heretic) by not purchasing from their shops and not selling stuff to them.

When asked about this, Sub-Divisional Magistrate Milind Dhoke

PTI that the administration was looking into the video clip. The video is not clear and after an investigation, further legal steps will be taken, Dhoke said.

The local administration relaxed the curfew in the violence-hit town for nine hours - from 8 am to 5 pm - for the fourth day in a row on Tuesday and allowed plying of passenger buses during the period. Communal clashes had erupted in Khargone April 10, during which shops and houses were damaged, vehicles torched and stones hurled. Subsequently, a curfew was clamped in the city which is being relaxed since April 14.

In the video featuring Khargone's BJP Lok Sabha MP Gajendra Patel that surfaced Tuesday, he is heard prodding people to give a 'tit-for-tat' reply to stone pelters.

## ALWAR TEMPLE DEMOLITION

# Raj govt suspends Rajgarh SDO

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaiapur, April 26: After facing flak, the Rajasthan government has suspended Rajgarh sub-divisional officer Keshav Meena, municipal EO Banwarilal Meena and Rajgarh municipal chairperson Satish Duharia in connection with the demolition of a 300-year-old temple in the name of removal of encroachment in Rajgarh, Alwar.

By suspending the Rajgarh Municipal chairperson, Sub-Divisional Officer and others, the state government is trying to send out a strict message, said officials.

As per information, Keshav Kumar Meena, the SDM of Alwar's Rajgarh, has been accused of demolishing the temple. The Personnel Department issued his suspension order. In fact, his transfer and suspension orders were



taken out almost simultaneously.

On Monday night, the state government also issued transfer orders of 239 RAS officers in a major administrative reshuffle. Meanwhile, BJP Sikar MP Sumedhanand Saraswati, who went to investigate this matter on behalf of BJP, said that the temple of Rajgarh was not under encroachment. He demanded that the government rebuild temples which have been demolished and tender an apology.

# Great Indian Bustard numbers continue to decline

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaisalmer/New Delhi, April 26: Of the less than 100 remaining Great Indian Bustard, yet another has died. It died of collision with a power line in Jaisalmer in Rajasthan, the home territory of this large, fascinating bird.

Incidentally, the death of this "critically endangered" bird three days ago comes exactly a year after the Supreme Court had, in April 2021, directed the power firms and the government to lay underground wires for all new power projects in Rajasthan and go for diverters for existing lines.

However, both the government and the multiple agencies continued to fight their way out, prompting the apex court to recently give the power companies of Gujarat and Rajasthan a deadline of July 20. Incidentally, the majority of these projects are either solar power

plants or wind power plants in these two states.

The Great Indian Bustard (GIB), or Ardeotis nigriceps, is listed in Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and as 'Critically Endangered' on the IUCN Red List and the National Wildlife Action Plan (2002-2016). A large bird of about 1 metre height, the GIB has a wing span of almost 2 metres with the adult weighing between 15-18 kg. In 2018 count, there were only 150 GIBs left in the country, 122 of them in the Jaisalmer area in Rajasthan. The remaining 28 were sighted in Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Karnataka. However, wildlife conservationists have claimed that the number of GIBs is below 100 as of 2022 in the wild.

"Why are the power lines (still) coming up in Thar and Kutch, the last strongholds of the Great Indian Bustards? Ironically because of green power - the wind and solar.



IANS

The Great Indian Bustard (GIB), or Ardeotis nigriceps, is listed in Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and as 'Critically Endangered' on the IUCN Red List and the National Wildlife Action Plan (2002-2016)

A large bird of about 1 metre height, the GIB has a wing span of almost 2 metres with the adult weighing between 15-18 kg

We must site these projects away from endangered bird habitat, consider de-centralised solar and at the earliest, take the existing lines underground," said Neha Sinha, a conservation biologist with the Bombay Natural History Society

(BNHS) and author of a book "Wild and Wilful".

Earlier, hearing a case filed in 2019 by a conservationist, even the National Green Tribunal had on December 23, 2020 ordered all power transmission lines to go under-

ground, especially for the then upcoming renewable power projects in identified habitats of the GIB in Rajasthan. At that time, disposing of the case, it had also asked the Union Environment, Forest and Climate Change Ministry to install bird diverters on "existing solar and wind power lines."

The Ministry had claimed that it was impressed upon by the Ministry of Renewable Energy that the main areas of conservation of GIB in western Rajasthan overlaps with one of the main renewable energy hubs of the country and ultimately, had submitted details of the major works done under the project Habitat Improvement and Conservation Breeding of Great Indian Bustard - an integrated approach.

But with any considerable results and actions on the ground, the death of the latest GIB has led to further anger among the conservation circles.



of the day quote

The Centre is making all efforts to develop the north-east region and tribal areas across the country so that people of these places do not feel that they are left behind

The Punjab government will replicate Delhi's education model in the state in order to provide quality education to students from all economic backgrounds

The Centre is committed to raising the living standards of the people and ensuring inclusive growth for all

SHORT TAKES

Woman killed, 6 hurt

Gurugram: A massive fire broke out in a pile of garbage in Sector 6 of Manesar in Gurugram, fire officials said Tuesday. The incident took place Monday night around 10:45 pm in which a woman was burnt alive while six people, including a kid, were seriously injured.

Seven injured

Srinagar: Seven Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) troopers were injured in a road accident in J&K's Shopian district Tuesday. Police sources said a CRPF vehicle collided with a speeding truck in Soffipora village of Zainapora area of Shopian district.

Girl molested

Maharajganj: A BSc student has alleged that she was molested in the college washroom in Uttar Pradesh's Maharajganj district. A case of attempted rape has been registered. The victim told the police that, "The two men were wearing face masks so I could not recognise them but I had bitten the hand of one of the accused. They even tried to remove my clothes and rape me but I somehow managed to escape."

Two bizmen killed

Patna: Two prominent businessmen of the same family were killed in Jahanabad and Patna Tuesday morning. In Jahanabad, a prominent trader-cum-owner of a marriage garden was gunned down inside his house around 7 a.m. Two assailants arrived at Abhiram Sharma's house on a bike on the pretext of inviting him for a marriage. When they were allowed to go inside the house, while one of them handed over an invitation card to him, the other shot at him thrice on the chest from a close range killing him on the spot.

Woman dies

Tumakuru: Karnataka police Tuesday announced the arrest of a fake doctor couple following the death of a woman who was administered IVF treatment by the accused in Tumakuru district. The accused, who have been identified as Vani and Manjunath, claimed to be doctors and treated hundreds of childless couples, charging them in lakhs. Investigations revealed that the accused couple only possess SSLC (Class 10) certificates and do not hold medical degrees.



We need to explore newer markets to increase our exports and keep our economy flying high

M VENKAIAH NAIDU | VICE PRESIDENT

EXAMS BEGIN

The CBSE Class 10 and 12 board exams for the second term began Tuesday across India and abroad after two years of pandemic-induced disruptions. The first-term exams were conducted in November in a truncated format with multiple-choice questions. The exam duration was one-and-a-half hours



Ensure there is no hate speech at 'Dharam Sansad': SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 26: The Supreme Court Tuesday directed the Uttarakhand chief secretary to place on record that no untoward statement will be made at the 'Dharam Sansad' scheduled in Roorkee and warned that it will hold top officials responsible in case of any hate speech being made. The event is scheduled for Wednesday. A three-judge bench headed by Justice A M Khanwilkar took note of the assurance given by the Uttarakhand government that authorities are confident that no untoward statement will be made during the event and that all steps as per decisions of this court will be taken.

The bench also told the Uttarakhand government that the chief secretary would be asked to be appear before it if the state failed to take preventive steps.

"We will hold the chief secretary, home secretary, IG concerned responsible if any untoward situation happens despite your assurance! We are putting it on record," the bench said.

The apex court voiced concern that incidents of hate speeches keep occurring in the country despite the apex court guidelines on preventive measures to be taken by government authorities.

"We direct the chief secretary of Uttarakhand to place the above position on record and apprise us about the corrective measures," the bench also comprising Justices Abhay S Oka and C T Ravikumar said.

At the outset, senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the petitioner in the matter relating to the Dharam Sansad at Himachal Pradesh, submitted that "dharam sansads" are being held at every other other place from time to time.



End politics of hate, ex-bureaucrats to PM

New Delhi: Over 100 former civil servants have written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi with a hope that he will call for an end to what they termed as "politics of hate" allegedly practised "assiduously" by governments under BJP's control. In an open letter, they said "we are witnessing a frenzy of hate filled destruction in the country where at the sacrificial altar are not just Muslims and members of the other minority communities but the Constitution itself".

"This was held in Una, Himachal Pradesh. This is very shocking. I will not even read it publicly," he said.

The bench told the Himachal Pradesh government that it has to follow the guidelines already in place. "Are you following them or not, you have to answer. If not, then you have to take corrective measures," the bench said.

The counsel for Himachal Pradesh told the bench that it has taken preventive measures and also undertaken investigation.

He said the state had issued a notice under Section 64 of the Police Act to ensure there is no such issue.

20 to 25 Armymen killed by avalanches every year: Rajnath

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 26: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh Tuesday said that he was saddened to learn that every year 20 to 25 Indian Army personnel lose their lives, not in war or terrorist incident but in avalanches.

Interacting with a team of Tiranga Mountain Rescue (TMR) here, he said: "I am very sad to know that every year, 20 to 25 personnel of our Army lose their lives in such accidents. That is, what can be more sad than this, no war, no terrorist incident, yet so many of our soldiers lose their lives in avalanche."

He commended TMR for saving the lives of the Armed Forces personnel from threats like avalanches, besides raising awareness and imparting training to them.

"Tiranga Mountain Rescue" team is a non-profit organisation affiliated with the Indian Army since 2016 and is instrumental in providing dedicated avalanche rescue and training to Indian Army personnel in mountain craft.

The team provides multiple teams of highly motivated and qualified avalanche rescue professionals who are deployed in snow bound and difficult areas during the winter season.

Rajnath Singh termed 'Tiranga Mountain Rescue' as a source of strength to the soldiers who are deployed in difficult areas and are exposed to various threats such as avalanches.

He appreciated the fact that there has been no Army casualty in the locations where it is deployed.

Stressing that 'Tiranga Mountain Rescue' has a big responsibility on their shoulders as in the coming times threats such as avalanche may increase due to climate change, he described the work being carried out by it as a shining example of partnership between the government and civil society.

He emphasised that a nation moves forward on the path of development only when the government and civil society work together.

Mevani sent to 5-day police custody

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Guwahati, April 26: A court in Assam's Barpeta district Tuesday rejected the bail petition of Independent Gujarat MLA and Dalit activist Jignesh Mevani, and sent him to five-day police custody, a day after he was re-arrested by the Assam police on different charges, including "outraging the modesty of a woman police officer".

The Chief Judicial Magistrate's court in Barpeta mandated the Gujarat legislator to police custody after he was re-arrested on Monday, soon after the CJM's court in Kokrajhar district granted him bail, six days after he was arrested by Assam police from his home state in Gujarat in connection with an "objectionable" tweet against Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Mevani's lawyer Angshuman Bora said that they would decide Wednesday whether the bail petition would be moved to a higher court. The Barpeta police, following a complaint lodged by a woman sub-inspector, levelled several charges against Mevani. These include IPC 294 (obscene acts or words in public), IPC 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), IPC 353 (Assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty) and IPC 354 (Whoever assaults or uses criminal force to any woman, in-



The Gujarat legislator was first arrested April 20 in connection with an 'objectionable' tweet against the Prime Minister posted on April 18

tending to outrage or knowing it to be likely that he will there by outrage her modesty).

The sub-inspector in her complaint alleged that on April 21 when she was escorting Mevani from the Guwahati airport to Kokrajhar along with other police officers, the accused used slang words against her and pushed her on her seat with force.

"He (Mevani) thus assaulted me

during the execution of my legal duty of being a public servant and outraged my modesty by touching me inappropriately while pushing," read the complaint accessed by IANS.

The Gujarat legislator was first arrested on April 20 in connection with an "objectionable" tweet against the Prime Minister posted on April 18. Mevani was flown to Guwahati the next day and then taken to Kokrajhar by road. The CJM's court in Kokrajhar district on April 21 rejected the bail petition of the Dalit activist and sent him to three-day police custody.

On Sunday, after hearing his bail petition, the court reserved its order and sent him to one-day judicial custody and asked the police to produce Mevani again in the court on Monday.

After top cop posts video, Rana clarifies



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 26: Hours after Mumbai Police Commissioner Sanjay Pandey tweeted a video of MP Navneet Rana and her MLA husband Ravi Rana sipping tea while in police custody, the parliamentarian Tuesday issued a clarification through her lawyer claiming that "ill-treatment" was meted out to her in the lock-up of the Santacruz police station after her arrest last Saturday, and not at the Khar police station.

Notably, the Independent MP from Amravati had earlier written to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla claiming that she was meted with "inhuman treatment" in the "Khar police station" after her "illegal arrest", wherein she was denied water to drink and faced casteist slurs.

Advocate Rizwan Merchant, representing Navneet Rana and her MLA husband Ravi Rana in courts, said, "It appears that there is some tweet which is being floated around on social

media through police commissioner Sanjay Pandey about the complaint made by (Navneet) Rana in regards to grievances of being subjected to ill-treatment while in police custody by not being provided basic facilities like water, toilet etc..."

"I just want to clarify that the tweet of Sanjay Pandey sir is about the time spent by my client at the Khar police station after being arrested. The officers did offer tea, there is no doubt about it. But they (the Rana couple) were at the Khar police station till 1 AM. Approximately, after 1 AM, they (the Rana couple) were transferred to the lock-up of the Santacruz police station where they were detained for the rest of the night until they were produced before the court," Merchant claimed.

He said the complaint of Navneet Rana being subjected to ill-treatment is not concerning the detention at the Khar police station but regarding the detention at the lock-up of the Santacruz police station.

BSP faced max defections in polls

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, April 26: The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) faced the maximum number of defections by its candidates and MLAs during the recent assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh.

The BSP lost nearly 75 (27 per cent) candidates to other parties during the polls and 12 sitting MLAs crossed over to other parties.

According to a detailed analysis report released by Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), the number of candidates who left the Congress to join other parties was 37 (13 per cent).

In recent assembly elections, 54 (20 per cent) out of the total of 276 re-contesting candidates switched to the Samajwadi Party followed by 35 (13 per cent) candidates who joined BJP and 31 (11 per cent) candidates who joined BSP.

The highest number of MLAs-27 left BJP to join another party. Eighteen candidates left Rashtriya Lok Dal to join other parties while 22 from SP moved to greener pastures.

Among the sitting MLAs, the BJP got 32 from other parties while SP got 19 and BSP had four.

The richest candidates seeking re-election included Nawab Kazim Ali of Congress who contested and lost the Rampur seat and S K Sharma from Mathura who contested on a BSP ticket.



CHARAK ACT

Tribals watch a performance by a devotee during the Charak festival near Illambazar in Birbhum district of West Bengal

Thieves 'bulldoze' ATM, flee without cash

The viral CCTV footage shows a man entering the ATM cabin, leaving suddenly, and moments later a JCB machine shattering the glass doors and then pounding the ATM machine with the giant claws of the bulldozer



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Sangli, April 26: A special squad of the Sangli Police is hot on the trails of a gang of thieves which used a stolen JCB to bulldoze an ATM machine, but suddenly fled without grabbing the Rs 27-lakhs stored in it, an official said here Tuesday.

"We have managed to identify around 3-4 suspects based on the CCTV footage acquired from an

adjoining petrol pump. Our dedicated team is now tracking their whereabouts in the Sangli district or neighbouring districts," Miraj Rural Police Station head Chandrakant Bedre told IANS, around 72 hours after the attempted heist.

The incident happened around midnight on April 23-24 (Saturday-Sunday) in Miraj industrial town

bustling with considerable public movements at that time on the main road and market where the Axis Bank ATM is located.

Hoping to make a quick buck, the thieves stole a JCB parked near the petrol pump and bulldozed it into the ATM cabin, uprooting the machine and damaging all its power connections.

"Hearing the commotion, many

locals rushed there and the thieves panicked. They abandoned the JCB there and fled without touching the case stored in the ATM, Bedre informed.

Police have also seized the JCB belonging to a villager living some 4 kms on the outskirts of Miraj and based on a complaint registered by Axis Bank are now trying to zero in on the gang of thieves.

The viral CCTV footage shows a man entering the ATM cabin, leaving suddenly, and moments later a JCB machine shattering the glass doors and then pounding the ATM machine with the giant claws of the bulldozer.

They managed to dig out the steel ATM machine, estimated to be weighing over 700 kgs and flung it at least 5-6 metres away from the cabin, where it landed with a huge sound.

As a crowd rushed there to inquire, the jittery thieves bolted, leaving behind the JCB and the ATM machine with the unstolen booty intact, said Bedre.

Tejasvi asked to join probe

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 26: The Delhi Police has issued a notice to Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP Tejasvi Surya, asking him to join the ongoing probe into the Delhi Chief Minister's residence vandalism case.

"We have issued him a notice to join the investigation," a senior police official said. When asked whether the police have given any time limit to the BJP leader, the official said that MP Surya is cooperating with the Delhi Police and has assured to meet us once he is in the national capital.

A ruckus was created outside the residence of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on March 30 during an agitation in which some protesters who breached the barricades, carrying a small box of paint, threw it outside the door and wall of the house. In the imbroglio, a boom barrier arm was also vandalised along with a CCTV camera.

The protest was spearheaded



by the BJP's Yuva Morcha over Kejriwal's remarks in the Delhi Assembly on 'The Kashmir Files' that were deemed as 'against the Kashmiri Pandit community' among the saffron clans.

The BJP had been continuously demanding from the AAP government to make 'The Kashmir Files' tax free in Delhi, however, Kejriwal, turned down all such requests in the Assembly and further asked the saffron party to upload the movie on YouTube and spend the earned money on the welfare of the Kashmiri Pandits.



# international

## of the day quote

The obligation to use masks in closed spaces has been completely removed. Mask application will be continued for a while only on public transport vehicles and in health institutions until the number of (daily) cases falls below 1,000

RECEP TAYYIP ERDOGAN | PRESIDENT OF TURKEY

There needs to be more done to invest in smarter security, to have a more effective asylum processing system

JEN PSAKI | WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

I have asked my party members to begin preparations for marching to Islamabad. I have directed party leaders, including those at village level, to prepare for the march for true freedom

IMRAN KHAN | FORMER PAK PM

## SHORT TAKES

### Biden urged to call Shehbaz

Washington: A major US think tank urged President Joe Biden to call Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and reset Washington's ties with Islamabad. Bruce Riedel, one of the writers of the Brookings report, was an adviser to the former Bill Clinton and Barack Obama administrations and is also close to the current Democratic set-up in Washington, says Dawn news. The other writer, Madiha Afzal, is a fellow at the Centre for Middle East policy.

### SK plans to build 'floating airport'

Seoul: South Korea plans to build the country's first "floating airport" in the southern port city of Busan by 2035, the Land Ministry said Tuesday. Last year, the National Assembly approved a bill on a mega state project worth some 13.7 trillion won (\$10.97 billion) to build the new airport on Gadeok Island, the biggest island of Busan, to handle growing air traffic demand and facilitate prosperity in the country's southeast region, reports Yonhap News Agency.

### Global Cov cases top 510.1mln

Washington: The global coronavirus caseload has topped 510.1 million, while the deaths have surged to more than 6.22 million and vaccinations to over 11.24 billion, according to the Johns Hopkins University. In its latest update Tuesday morning, the University's Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) revealed that the current global caseload and the death toll stood at 510,191,435 and 6,220,536, respectively, while the total number of vaccine doses administered increased to 11,246,449,964.

### Kamala Harris tests positive for Covid

Washington: Vice President Kamala Harris tested positive for Covid-19 after returning from a trip to California, the White House announced Tuesday, at a time when the US has largely lifted most of its restrictions against the deadly pandemic. Harris, 57, has exhibited no symptoms and will isolate at home. She has not been a "close contact" with President Joe Biden and first lady Jill Biden. "Today, Vice President Harris tested positive for Covid-19 on rapid and PCR tests. She has exhibited no symptoms, will isolate and continue to work from the vice president's residence," said Kirsten Allen, the vice president's press secretary, in a statement.



However, history teaches that hatred can never become a reliable factor in national unity

NIKOLAI PATRUSHEV | SECRETARY OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

## TRUMP WON'T JOIN TWITTER

Former US President Donald Trump has decided not to join Twitter despite Tesla CEO Elon Musk buying it, saying "Twitter has become very boring". Trump said that he will not return to Twitter and will instead use his own 'TRUTH Social' as the only social media platform



# Russia warns of nuke war danger



AGENCIES

Kyiv, April 26: Russias starting position is that atomic war should be unacceptable and Moscow successfully persuaded the US and other nuclear powers to agree on that back in January, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov outlined in an interview. However, he added that the situation has since deteriorated to the point where there is a real and serious threat. Moscow tried to persuade former US President Donald Trump to recommit to the 1987 statement by the US and Soviet leaders that there can be no winners in a nuclear war, and that such a war should never be fought, Lavrov explained in the interview, RT reported.

While the Trump administration declined to do so, his successor Joe Biden "quickly" agreed with Moscow, and the statement was made at the June 2021 summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Geneva. China, France and the UK - the remaining three nuclear powers that are also permanent members of the UN Security Council - agreed as well, and made a joint statement. "This is our principled position. We start from it," Lavrov said. However, the risks of nuclear war are now "very significant". "I don't want them artificially inflated. There are many who would wish for it. The danger is serious, real. It cannot be underestimated," he said. Lavrov also praised as "good and wise" the Biden administration's first foreign policy move, which was to agree with Russia that the New Start treaty should be unconditionally extended for five years. On the other hand, it is the last arms control agreement left standing, after Washington pulled out of the ABM, INF and Open Skies treaties.

## No one wants to see 3rd World War: China

Beijing: China Tuesday played down Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's warning of a "serious" possibility of nuclear conflict over the Ukraine war, saying no one wants to see a 3rd World War. "No one wants to see the outbreak of a 3rd World War," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told a media briefing here reacting to Lavrov's remarks of the real threat of a 3rd World War breaking out following the Russia-Ukraine conflict. "We hope that relevant parties can keep cool-headed and exercise restraint, prevent escalation of tension, realise peace as soon as possible and avoid inflicting a heavier price on Europe and the world," Wang said.

Beijing tests 20mln residents amid Omicron outbreak

## TRAIL OF DEVASTATION



A theatre building destroyed in the southern port city of Mariupol in Russian invasion of Ukraine

# Lankans intensify anti-govt protests



AGENCIES

Colombo, April 26: Sri Lankan protesters, who have been camping at the main beachfront outside Sri Lankan President's Secretariat here, have now extended their protest to Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa's office, as they intensified their demand for the government led by the Rajapaksa family to step down. 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 street protest opposite the presidential secretariat entered its 18th day Tuesday, demanding the resignations of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, his 76-year-old elder brother. The protesters have set up the 'Gota go home village' there. To give impetus to the protest, the protesters have now set up a protest site 'Mahinda go home village' near Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa's office-cum-residence known as 'Temple Trees'. Earlier, the Colombo magistrate court had refused to issue a police order preventing protests near the Temple Trees. The Rajapaksas are under pressure to resign for their mishandling of the forex crisis which landed the island nation into its worst economic crisis. President Gotabaya Rajapaksa had to drop his older brother Chamal and the eldest nephew Namal from the Cabinet in response to the protests which called for accountability from the family. He is also under increasing pressure to form an interim government. President Gotabaya Rajapaksa had said that he would hand over the government to any group that could muster 113 seats in the 225-member Parliament but would not step down from the presidency. Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa also last week stressed that there was no need for him to resign or to allow the formation of an interim government without his leadership. The Rajapaksa brothers are also facing calls for the restoration of the 19A Constitutional amendment which was adopted in 2015 to curb the power of the president. With Gotabaya's ascendancy to the presidency in 2020, the 19A was annulled to make the presidency more powerful over parliament.

## Tighten monetary policy: IMF to Lanka

Colombo: An official from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Tuesday urged Sri Lanka to tighten its monetary policy, raise taxes and adopt flexible exchange rates to overcome its ongoing debt crisis. "We've had very good, fruitful, technical discussions on preparations for the negotiations with authorities over the past weekend and a couple of days before," Xinhua news agency quoted Anne-Marie Gulde-Wolf, acting director of the IMF's Asia and Pacific Department, as saying at an online event. Finance Minister Ali Sabry and Governor of the Sri Lankan Central Bank Nandalal Weerasinghe recently concluded a visit to the IMF to discuss financing help for the country. Earlier Sri Lanka suspended external debt payments. "The requirement for fund lending will be progress toward debt sustainability. Monetary policy has to be tightened to keep inflation in check. We see a need for flexible exchange rates," she said.

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Beijing tests 20mln residents amid Omicron outbreak



Nearly 3.7 million tests had been carried out, with more than half a million having returned a negative result, city officials said at a late-night news conference. The officials also announced that mass testing would be expanded on Tuesday to all but five outlying districts of the capital, covering about 19.5 million of the city's 21.5 million residents, CNN reported. The announcement came after 29 cases were detected in the 24 hours through Monday, though officials said all the new cases were discovered in areas already under epidemic control. "The outbreak in Beijing is coming fast and furious," Xu Hejian, a spokesperson for the Beijing municipal government, said at the news conference, adding that Beijing's epidemic prevention and control efforts have "reached a critical moment".

## Russian military threatens strikes in Kyiv

Moscow: The Russian military has warned it could strike Ukrainian "decision-making centers" in the Ukrainian capital and said wouldn't be stopped by the possible presence of Western advisers there. The Russian Defense Ministry on Tuesday accused the U.K. Of making statements encouraging Ukraine to use Western weapons to carry out strikes on the Russian territory, warning that if it happens the Russian military could retaliate by hitting government structures in Kyiv. It directly pointed at U.K. Minister for the Armed Forces James Heapey, who told Times Radio that it was "not necessarily a problem" if Ukraine British-donated weapons were used to hit sites on Russian soil. The ministry said in a statement that "the Russian armed forces are ready to deal retaliatory strikes with long-range precision guided weapons on Kyiv centers that would make such decisions."

# Kim Jong-un vows to strengthen N-power

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Seoul, April 26: North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has declared a resolve to further strengthen nuclear capabilities during a military parade held in Pyongyang, state media reported Tuesday. During his speech on Monday night at the parade celebrating the 90th founding anniversary of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army (KPRA), Kim vowed to boost the country's nuclear capabilities at "the fastest rate", according to Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA). The KPRA is the anti-Japanese guerrilla force known to have been created by national founder Kim Il-sung in 1932, reports Yonhap News Agency. The incumbent leader added that the North will make thorough preparations for using nuclear "deterrence" anytime. "Our basic mission regarding nuclear power is to deter war but our nuclear weapons cannot be confined solely within the boundaries of preventing a war until a situation is created that we never hope to witness in this land." He also warned that any forces seeking military confrontation will cease to exist, saying that the North is "thoroughly prepared" to carry out its mission of nuclear deterrence anytime. The parade at the Kim Il Sung



was initially expected to begin earlier in the day, but it did not proceed amid a forecast of rainfall. An informed source said it finally kicked off at around 10 p.m. It marked the North's first military parade to celebrate the KPRA anniversary and 12th major military parade under the leadership of Kim Jong-un, who took power about a decade ago. The North has typically held such parades on the birth anniversary of national founder Kim Il-sung April 15, the founding anniversary of the ruling Workers' Party October 10 or the nation's foundation September 9. Sustainability: 10 strategic recommendations to avert a crisis, released by UNEP's GRID-Geneva team, provides the necessary guidance gathered from world experts to switch to improved practices for the resources' extraction and management. Extracting sand where it plays an active role, such as rivers, and coastal or marine ecosystems, can lead to erosion, salination of aquifers, loss of protection against storm surges and impacts on biodiversity, which pose a threat to livelihoods through, among other things, water supply, food production, fisheries, or to the tourism industry. According to the report's authors, sand must be recognised as a strategic resource, not only as a material for construction, but also for its multiple roles in the environment.

## Four killed in kindergarten shooting in Russia

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Moscow, Russia, April 26: An armed man opened fire in a kindergarten Tuesday in Russia's central Ulyanovsk region, leaving at least four people dead, local authorities told AFP. "According to preliminary information there was a shooting in a kindergarten. As a result, two children, a teacher and the attacker died," the head of the Ulyanovsk region information department, Dmitry Kamal, told AFP. He said investigators were working at the scene to establish further information. The ages of the dead children were not known, but they would be between three and six years old, Kamal said. A source in law enforcement told news agency TASS that the shooting may have been the result of a "domestic conflict". According to Telegram channel Baza - which is known to have sources in Russian law enforcement - the man walked into the kindergarten during nap time with an Izh-27 double-barrelled shotgun. There was no guard on duty. Russia in 2021 was rocked by two separate tragic killing sprees - at a school in the city of Kazan and at a university in Perm - that spurred lawmakers to tighten laws regulating access to guns.

# Sand is world's 2nd most exploited resource: UN

FIFTY BILLION TONNES: ENOUGH TO BUILD A WALL 27 METRES WIDE AND 27 METRES HIGH AROUND PLANET EARTH. THIS IS THE VOLUME OF SAND AND GRAVEL USED EACH YEAR, MAKING IT THE SECOND MOST USED RESOURCE WORLDWIDE AFTER WATER

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

United Nation/New Delhi, April 26: Fifty billion tonnes: enough to build a wall 27 metres wide and 27 metres high around planet earth. This is the volume of sand and gravel used each year, making it the second most used resource worldwide after water. Given by dependency on it, sand must be recognised as a strategic resource and its extraction and use needs to be rethought, a new report by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) said Tuesday. The report, Sand and

Sustainability: 10 strategic recommendations to avert a crisis, released by UNEP's GRID-Geneva team, provides the necessary guidance gathered from world experts to switch to improved practices for the resources' extraction and management. Extracting sand where it plays an active role, such as rivers, and coastal or marine ecosystems, can lead to erosion, salination of aquifers, loss of protection against storm surges and impacts on biodiversity, which pose a threat to livelihoods through, among other things, water supply, food production, fisheries, or to the tourism industry. According to the report's authors, sand must be recognised as a strategic resource, not only as a material for construction, but also for its multiple roles in the environment.



They stress that governments, industries and consumers should price sand in a way that recognises its true social and environmental value. For example, keeping sand on coasts may be the most cost-effective strategy for adapting to climate change due to how it protects against storm surges and impacts from sea level rise - such services should be factored into its value. An international standard on how sand is extracted from the marine environment should also be developed, the report proposes. This could bring about dramatic improvements as most marine dredg-

ing is done through public tenders open to international companies. Meanwhile, the report recommends that the extraction of sand from beaches be banned due to its importance for coastal resilience, the environment and the economy. Sand is critical to economic development, needed to produce concrete and build vital infrastructure ranging from homes and roads to hospitals. By providing habitats and breeding grounds for diverse flora and fauna, sand also plays a vital function in supporting biodiversity, including marine plants that act as carbon sinks or filter water.



## of the day quote

India has size and scale. India can be the cheapest producer of the Green Hydrogen in the world. India is the only climate-blessed country to do it

AMITABH KANT | CEO, NITI AAYOG

We have the third largest startup ecosystem. We have reached a level of 80 startups being registered every day in our country, which is the highest in the world

ANURAG JAIN | SECRETARY, DPIIT

We would urge states and discoms not to differentiate against commercial consumers in power supply. This is critical because growth in industrial production remains muted despite the overall economic recovery

DEEPAK SOOD | SECRETARY GENERAL, ASSOCHAM

## SHORT TAKES

### Chandrasekaran reappointed

**New Delhi:** Shareholders of Tata Sons, the holding company and promoter of Tata group companies, have approved the reappointment of N Chandrasekaran as chairman for another five-year term despite its single largest shareholder the Shapoorji Pallonji family abstaining from voting, according to sources. At the shareholders meeting held Monday, the proposal for Chandrasekaran's reappointment for a second term needed more than 50 per cent of votes as it was an ordinary resolution.

### HDFC Life Q4 net up 12%

**Mumbai:** HDFC Life Insurance Tuesday reported a 12.4 per cent growth in net income at Rs 357.52 crore for the March quarter despite a fall in income, but a steep plunge in investment gains and COVID claims crimped the bottomline for the full year by 11 per cent to Rs 1,208 crore. During the reporting quarter, total income fell to Rs 16,054.94 crore from Rs 19,191.32 crore a year ago, despite a rise in net premium income to Rs 14,289.66 crore from Rs 12,868.01 crore.

### Investors richer by over ₹4.11L crore

**New Delhi:** Equity investors became richer by over Rs 4.11 lakh crore Tuesday as markets returned to winning ways after declining for two straight sessions. The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 776.72 points or 1.37 per cent to end at 57,356.61 points. Reflecting the bullish sentiments, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms jumped Rs 4,11,627.5 crore to Rs 2,69,41,299.15 crore. M&M was the biggest gainer among the Sensex firms, jumping 4.11 per cent followed by PowerGrid, Titan, IndusInd Bank, Bajaj Finance, Reliance Industries, Larsen & Toubro, SBI, Bharti Airtel and HUL.

### Zee Learn stock tumbles over 19%

**New Delhi:** Shares of Zee Learn Tuesday tumbled over 19 per cent after Yes Bank Ltd moved National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) seeking initiation of insolvency proceedings against the firm. The stock plummeted 19.27 per cent to end at Rs 11.27 on the BSE. During the day, it tanked 19.77 per cent to Rs 11.20. At the NSE, it tumbled 19.35 per cent to settle at Rs 11.25. The private sector lender has moved NCLT seeking initiation of insolvency proceedings against Zee Learn, according to a regulatory filing.



**In March-April-May, the temperature rises, then there is some problem with the battery (of EVs). I feel that it (electric two-wheelers catching fire) is a problem of (high) temperature**

NITIN GADKARI | UNION ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS MINISTER

## WTO'S 12TH MC FROM JUNE 12-15

The 12th ministerial conference of the World Trade Organisation will take place from June 12-15 in Geneva. The Ministerial Conference (MC) is the highest decision making body of the 164-member Geneva-based multilateral body



## TWITTER IN MUSK'S GRIP

# Cheers and fears of 'free speech' plan

Elon Musk, world's richest person, has pulled off a swift, and dramatic, corporate coup, virtually bullying Twitter into agreeing to an acquisition for about \$44 billion — likely the single-largest acquisition by an individual and third biggest tech deal ever

AGENCIES

**New York, April 26:** Elon Musk clinched a deal to buy Twitter Inc for \$44 billion cash in a transaction that will shift control of the social media platform populated by millions of users and global leaders to the world's richest person.

It is a seminal moment for the 16-year-old company, which emerged as one of the world's most influential public squares and now faces a string of challenges.

Musk, who calls himself a free speech absolutist, has criticized Twitter's moderation. He wants Twitter's algorithm for prioritizing tweets to be public and objects to giving too much power on the service to corporations that advertise.

Discussions over the deal, which last week appeared uncertain, accelerated over the weekend after Musk wooed Twitter shareholders with financing details of his offer.

Under pressure, Twitter started negotiating with Musk to buy the company at his proposed \$54.20 per share price.

Twitter shares rose 5.7% Monday to finish at \$51.70. The deal represents a near 40% premium to the closing price the day before Musk disclosed he had bought a more than 9% stake. Even so, the offer is well below the \$70 range where Twitter was trading last year.

"I think if the company were given enough time to transform, we would have made substantially more than what Musk is currently offering," said Jonathan Boyar, managing director at Boyar Value Group, which holds a stake in Twitter.

However, he added, "If the public markets do not properly value a company, an acquirer eventually will."

Musk's move continues a tradition of billionaires' buying control of influential media platforms, including Jeff Bezos' 2013 acquisition of the Washington Post.

Twitter said Musk secured \$25.5 billion of debt and margin loan financing and is providing a \$21 billion equity commitment.



**Free speech is the bedrock of a functioning democracy, and Twitter is the digital town square where matters vital to the future of humanity are debated. I also want to make Twitter better than ever by enhancing the product with new features, making the algorithms open source to increase trust, defeating the spam bots and authenticating all humans**

ELON MUSK | CEO, TESLA

"Having a public platform that is maximally trusted and broadly inclusive is extremely important to the future of civilization. I don't care about the economics at all," he said in a recent public talk.

Musk is chief executive of both electric car maker Tesla Inc and aerospace company SpaceX, and it is not clear how much time he will devote to Twitter or what he will do.

Edward Moya, an analyst at currency broker OANDA, said in an email to clients the deal was "great news for Twitter shareholders as it doesn't seem like the company was going to get things right anytime soon."

But he also said: "Tesla shareholders can't be happy that Musk will have to divert even more attention away from winning the EV (electric vehicle) race."

Daniel Ives, an analyst at Wedbush, said the company's board of directors had its back "against the wall" once Musk de-

## RICHEST MAN'S TWITTER PLANS

Elon Musk wants Twitter's algorithm for prioritizing tweets to be public and objects to giving too much power on the service to corporations that advertise

He has advocated user-friendly tweaks to the service, such as an edit button and defeating "spam bots" that send overwhelming amounts of unwanted tweets

Tesla CEO is worth \$268 billion according to Forbes, has said he is not primarily concerned with the economics of Twitter

The social media giant will become a privately-held company after the takeover deal is closed, and the company's board will be dissolved

tailed his financing package and no other bidders emerged.

## TIMELINE OF THE TAKEOVER SAGA

At the start of the year, Elon Musk had no stake in Twitter. In January he quietly amassed shares to become Twitter's largest shareholder with 9.2% stake. Then, 4 April, he put an offer on the table for approximately \$44 billion with shares valued at \$54.20, which was actively rebuffed by Twitter's board. Now, weeks later, the company has signed a "definitive agreement" to sell itself to Elon Musk. The whole saga unfolded in a matter of three months. Here is a timeline of Twitter takeover by Elon Musk.

**Jan 31 to March 14: Musk accumulates 5% stake in Twitter**

Elon Musk reportedly started buying shares in Twitter from January 2022. By March 14, Musk had accumulated an over 5 per cent stake in the company.

**March 24 onwards: Musk slams Twitter in series of tweets**

Elon Musk began criticising Twitter for "failing to adhere to free speech." "Worried about de facto bias in the Twitter algorithm having a major effect on the public; Twitter algorithm should be open source," Musk tweeted March 24. A day later, in a poll post, Musk asked his followers: "Free speech is essential to a functioning democracy. Do you believe Twitter rigorously adheres to this principle?"

**March 26: Musk tweets, "New platform needed?"**

After Twitter free speech criticism, Musk's 79.1 million followers immediately called on him to either buy Twitter himself or build a new platform.

**April 4: Musk buys 9.2% shares of Twitter**

Twitter confirmed that the billionaire entrepreneur has taken a 9.2 per cent share reportedly worth \$2.9 billion. Musk later posted a poll the same day, asking users if they wanted an edit button. Twitter CEO Parag Agrawal urged users to "vote carefully" as "The consequences of this poll will be important."

**April 5: Elon Musk becomes a board member**

Twitter CEO Parag Agrawal

announced that Elon Musk was appointed to Twitter's board in a series of tweets. Former Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey welcomed Musk to Twitter's board.

**April 9: Musk asks, "Is Twitter dying?"**

Elon Musk also tweeted to ask if the social media network was "dying" and to call out users such as singer Justin Bieber, Barack Obama and Katy Perry who are highly followed but rarely post.

**April 10: Musk denies joining Twitter board**

Twitter CEO Agrawal shared a note on Twitter saying that Musk rejected the company's offer to join its board.

**April 14: Musk offers to buy the whole company for \$43 billion**

The CEO of SpaceX and Tesla said April 14 that he is willing to pay \$54.20 per share to buy 100% of the company in an all-cash offer that values the social network at \$43.4 billion.

**April 15: Twitter adopts "poison-pill"**

Musk's offer forced Twitter to adopt a 'poison-pill provision' to make it harder for Musk to acquire more shares and buy the social network.

**April 18: Musk tweets Elvis Presley song "Love me tender"**

Experts linked the word "tender" to a potential tender offer by Musk to shareholders of microblogging giant Twitter in a bid to gain more control. A tender offer is a bid to buy some or all of the shareholders' stock in a specific company publicly - at a higher price than the current value.

**April 24: The board holds discussions with Musk**

Talks between Twitter's board and Musk took place Sunday and continued into the next day, Bloomberg reported. Musk reportedly presented his financial details to the board, after which the social media giant considered Musk's offer seriously.

**April 25: Elon Musk-Twitter \$44 billion deal sealed**

Elon Musk and Twitter finally seal the \$44 billion deal in one of the biggest buyout offers of recent times.

## LIC fixes price band at ₹902-949 a share for ₹21,000 cr IPO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 26:** Insurance giant LIC has fixed the price band at Rs 902-949 per share for the Rs 21,000 crore public offer that is likely to open May 4, sources said.

Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) would offer a Rs 60 discount for policyholders and Rs 40 for retail investors and employees.

The issue is likely to open for subscription May 4 and is expected to close May 9, and the bid lot would be 15. Anchor investors can subscribe to the shares of the insurance company May 2.

With this IPO, the government would offload a 3.5 per cent stake in the insurance behemoth by selling 22.13 crore shares.

LIC has reserved 2.21 crore shares or 10 per cent of the issue size for its policyholders while 15 lakh shares for employees, sources said.

After policyholders and share holders' reservations, the remaining shares will be allocated in the ratio of 50 per cent for qualified institutional buyers (QIB), 35 per cent for retail investors and 15 per cent for non-institutional investors.

Sources said 60 per cent of the QIB portion has been reserved for anchor investors.

The government in February had planned to sell a 5 per cent stake or 31.6 crore shares in the insurance behemoth and had filed draft papers with Sebi. However, the IPO plans faced headwinds from the ongoing market volatility due to the Russia-Ukraine war.

Last week, the government decided to lower the issue size to 3.5 per cent. The government has also filed papers with Sebi seeking exemption from the 5 per cent stake sale norm, sources said.

According to the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) norms, companies with a valuation of over Rs 1 lakh crore have to sell a minimum 5 per cent stake in the IPO.

LIC's embedded value, which is a measure of the consolidated shareholders value in an insurance company, was pegged at about Rs 5.4 lakh crore as of September 30, 2021, by international actuarial firm Milliman Advisors.

Based on investor feedback, the market value of government-owned LIC has been pegged at 1.1 times its embedded value or Rs 6 lakh crore.

# Peak power supply crosses 201GW mark

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 26:** The maximum all India power demand met or the highest supply in a day crossed the record level of 201 GW mark showing spurt on Tuesday amid sweltering heat in large parts of the country.

"The maximum All India power demand met is 201.066 GW at 14:51 hours today," a power ministry statement said.

It has surpassed last year's (record of) maximum demand met of 200.539 GW which occurred 7th July 2021, it informed.

The rising power demand reflects the economic growth in the country, the ministry explained.

In the month of March this year, the growth in energy demand has been around 8.9 per cent as per the



ministry's statement. Further, it stated that the demand is expected to reach about 215-220 GW in months of May-June.

The government and other stakeholders are working together to ensure unhindered power supply and efforts at all fronts are being made and measures are being taken for better utilisation of various resources.

## GADKARI TELLS TESLA CEO

# 'Make in China, sell in India not done'

The road transport and highways minister said his request to Musk is to come and manufacture in India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 26:** Union minister Nitin Gadkari Tuesday said if the US-based Tesla is ready to manufacture its electric vehicles in India then there is 'no problem' but the company must not import cars from China.

In an interactive session at the Raisina Dialogue, Gadkari further said India is a large market and there is a huge potential for all electric vehicles.

"If Elon Musk (Tesla CEO) is ready to manufacture in India then there is no problem ... Come to India, start manufacturing, India is a large market they can export from India," he said.



"But if he wants to manufacture in China and sell in India, then it cannot be a good proposition for India," Gadkari said. According to him, India has got all the competence.

"The vendors are available. We

have all types of technology, we have all the spare parts," he said, adding that it will be a win-win situation for both India and Tesla.

Last year, the heavy industries ministry had also asked Tesla to first

start manufacturing its iconic electric vehicles in India before any tax concessions can be considered.

At present, cars imported as completely built units (CBUs) attract customs duty ranging from 60-100 per cent, depending on engine size and cost, insurance and freight (CIF) value less or above \$40,000.

Last year, in a letter to the road ministry, the US firm had stated that the effective import tariff of 110 per cent on vehicles with customs value above \$40,000 is "prohibitive" to zero-emission vehicles.

It had urged the centre to standardize the tariff on electric cars to 40% irrespective of the customs value, and withdraw the social welfare surcharge of 10 per cent on electric cars.

# With giant mall, Reliance sets sights on next gold rush

LUXURY EXECUTIVES SEE THE MALL AS A SHOW OF STRENGTH IN A LONG-GAME BET FOR RELIANCE THAT IS MUCH MORE THAN A VANITY PROJECT FOR ISHA AND THE AMBANI FAMILY, EVEN THOUGH IT WON'T BE A MONEY-SPINNER ANYTIME SOON

REUTERS

**Mumbai, April 26:** Indian tycoon Mukesh Ambani is betting a shopping palace within a \$1 billion Mumbai business showcase will tap into surging demand for Western luxury goods, installing his Reliance empire as a portal through which most of the biggest brands must pass.

Though still small for a country of its size, India's luxury market is set to nearly double in size to nearly \$5 billion within five years, Euromonitor estimates. Targeting that growth, Reliance is building a mall with dozens of outlets for

powerhouse brands from Louis Vuitton to Gucci, documents reviewed by Reuters showed.

The ritzy mall, Jio World Plaza, is the centerpiece of Reliance's bid to lure uber-rich Indians eyeing expensive bags or shoes. Luxury dominance would come on top of its number one position in India's nearly \$900 billion retail market, where it faces intense competition in e-commerce and supermarkets from the likes of Amazon and Walmart.

The total cost of developing the Jio World Centre - a giant commercial and cultural hub in Mumbai's Bandra Kurla business



district that houses the luxury mall - is upwards of \$1 billion, a person with knowledge of the matter said. The hefty investment by Reliance, with a market value of

\$238 billion, shows the drive of Ambani's family to expand in luxury - especially his 30-year-old daughter Isha, closely involved in directing the push.

Reliance building luxury mall inside \$1 bln Mumbai showcase

Top global luxury brands to open stores inside mall - document

Luxury is Reliance's next retail salvo after supermarkets, e-commerce

Magnate Ambani's daughter Isha helps steer luxury push - sources

"Global brands want to be here (India), Reliance is trying to drive that boom and act as a catalyst," said a second person with knowledge of Reliance's strategy.

The mall, spread across four floors and the size of 10 soccer fields, will come complete with marble floors and golden guardrails, the documents show. After Covid-19 disruptions delayed raw material imports, the mall will likely to open early next year, sources said.

A floorplan in a Reliance document reviewed by Reuters shows some 30 brands as confirmed in recent weeks for the upper ground floor of the mall, including LVMH's Louis Vuitton, Tiffany and Dior. Also present will be LVMH rival Kering's Gucci, Balenciaga and Bottega Veneta, along with Versace, Richemont's Cartier and Hermes.



# PARAG, BOWLERS LIFT RR

# Mukesh's coach praises pacer

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, April 26:** When a gangly teenager named Mukesh Choudhary, all of 16 back in the day, bowled for the first time at the 22-yards academy, there was some spark which convinced former national selector Surendra Bhav to believe that his newest ward will make it big.

Eight years hence, 25-year-old Choudhary has grabbed opportunities provided by Chennai Super Kings with seven wickets from seven games, including a man-of-the-match winning 3/19 against Mumbai Indians.

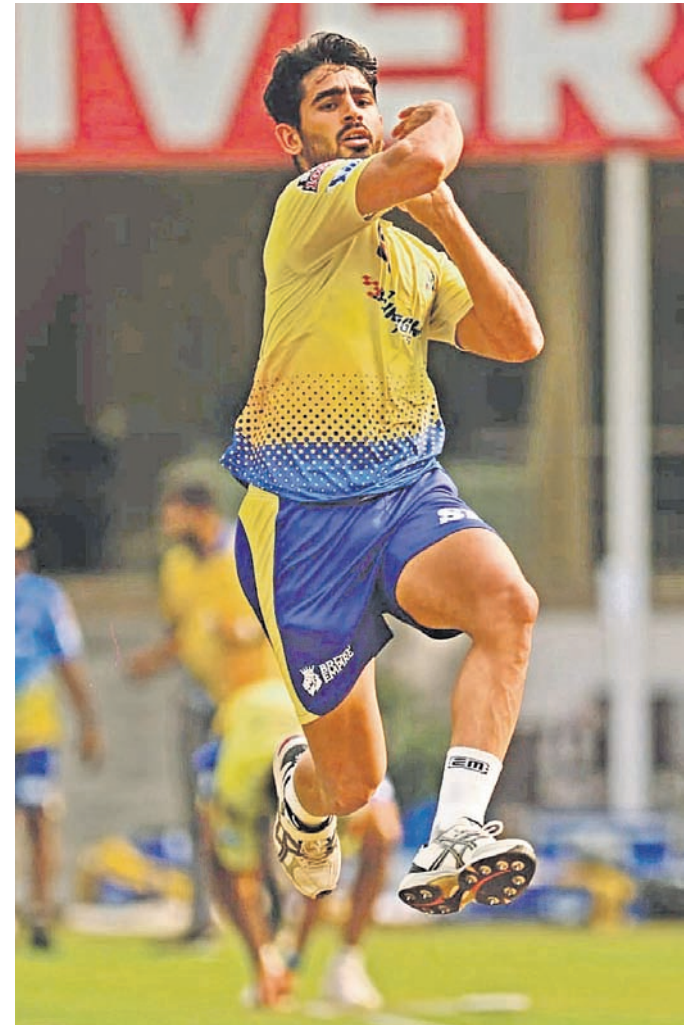
"When I saw him at our academy in the first week, I immediately told our coach Rajesh Mahurkar that I could 100 per cent visualise a first-class player in him. They (academy coaches) still can't believe that what I predicted came true," Bhav, a former first-class heavyweight and current Punjab Ranji team coach told this agency. Bhav recollected the time when young Choudhary came to him after not being satisfied with a couple of academies.

"Mukesh came to my academy after after having visited a couple of academies earlier. I believe somebody suggested that he visit our academy if he wants systematic coaching," Bhav, who has scored nearly 8000 first-class runs for Maharashtra and West Zone, said. But since his academy did not play invitational tournaments which is a norm if one wants to make a case for Ranji Trophy selection.

What worked for Choudhary was his good physique, coupled with a very smooth action. It wasn't long before Bhav laid the first platform for the Rajasthan boy which enabled him to showcase his talent in-front of Maharashtra selectors.

"He had a naturally beautiful action, which was refined, and had a good physique. Then he trained with us on a regular basis.

"When I felt that he was doing well and he needed a platform, that is when I was spoke to officials of the Deccan Gymkhana club and told them that I had a rookie left-



arm pacer and it was necessary for him to get a platform and that is when Deccan Gymkhana took him up," Bhav recalled.

Deccan Gymkhana, one of the oldest clubs in Pune, had produced many state players and when they took Choudhary into their folds, as they say the rest is history. "It is Maharashtra Cricket Association's selection criteria that squads are chosen on basis of performances in the invitational leagues."

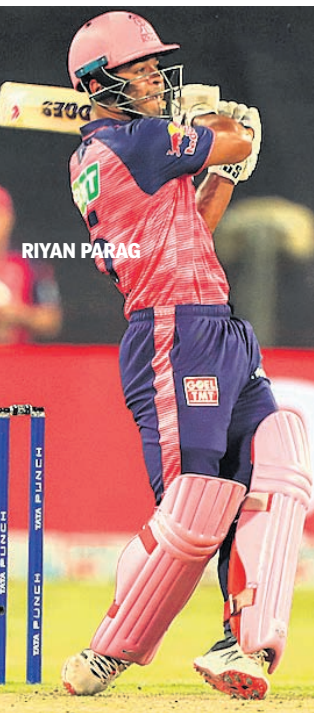
Bhav is happy that despite having a couple poor games, CSK persisted with him and that yielded results when he removed Rohit Sharma and Ishan Kishan first up in their match against Mumbai Indians.

"He (Mukesh) got a good platform

in terms of CSK. He didn't have two great games (but still CSK backed him). He is in right hands and a guy like MS (Mahendra Singh Dhoni) to guide him from behind the stumps, it is like a stuff of dreams (for Mukesh)," Bhav, one of the finest domestic coaches, said.

Nikhil Dixit, his coach at Deccan Gymkhana, insisted that the rookie pacer was taking wickets at ease in the invitational tournaments and that paved the way for him.

"Mukesh was taking wickets at ease during the invitational matches. His consistent performances helped him to break into the U-23 side and then into the Maharashtra Ranji team. He was also net bowler for the CSK, which also helped him make the cut," said Dixit.



RIYAN PARAG



**A SPELL TO REMEMBER:** Kuldeep Sen (2nd from L) is congratulated by his teammates after getting a wicket, Tuesday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Pune, April 26:** Riyan Parag smashed a match-defining unbeaten half century (56 n o, 31b, 3x4, 4x6) before the bowling unit lived up to its reputation to hand Rajasthan Royals a 29-run win over Royal Challengers Bangalore in an IPL match here Tuesday.

Parag single-handedly took his side to 144/8 with his innings, which is his highest score in IPL. Parag marshalled the RR lower-order brilliantly and smashed Harshal Patel (1/33) for a boundary and two huge sixes in the final over to take RR to a decent total after being sent in to bat.

But RCB's chase never got going as RR bowlers, led by young Kuldeep Sen (4/20), Ravichandran Ashwin (3/17) and Prasidh Krishna (2/23), bundled out RR for 115 in 19.3 overs.

Opening the innings on the back of two consecutive first-ball ducks, Virat Kohli started on a cagey note but lit up the stadium and raised

hopes of his fans when he struck two back-to-back boundaries of Trent Boult (0/20) to start his innings.

But as it has been happening in the tournament, Kohli flopped once again when a Prasidh Krishna (2/23) bouncer got the better of him in the next over.

RCB's problems compounded in the seventh over when Sen, who replaced Obed McCoy in the playing XI, picked up two big wickets — of captain Faf du Plessis (23) and Glenn Maxwell (0) — with successive balls.

But Shahbaz Ahmed somehow kept his wicket intact to deny Sen a hat-trick. With RCB struggling at 38/3 in the seventh over, it was match on from here on.

Indian domestic players — Rajat Patidar (16) and Suyash Prabhudessai — failed miserably, leaving the difficult task of finishing the innings once again on the shoulders of Dinesh Karthik (6). But it was not Karthik's day as he was run out cheaply Ahmed (17) was not in his elements and strug-

gled to hit the ball.

Earlier, RCB's decision to bowl first yielded great results as they picked up wickets at regular intervals, not allowing RR any scope of building a big partnership. Josh Hazlewood (2/19), Wanindu Hasaranga (2/23) and Mohammed Siraj (2/30) picked up two wickets each to stifle the Royals' batting line-up.

Devdutt Padikkal (7) and Jos Buttler (8) failed to give RR a good start and the decision to promote Ashwin (17) also backfired. Siraj accounted for both Padikkal and Ashwin in his successive overs, while Hazlewood picked up the all-important wicket of Buttler.

Sanju Samson (27) and Daryl Mitchell (16) tried to forge a partnership, sharing 35 runs for the fourth wicket before Hasaranga went through the gates of RR skipper as the batter went for an extravagant reverse sweep.

Mitchell failed to get going and tried to play the role of an anchor, holding one end up and together

with Parag added 31 runs. But the New Zealander's struggle was cut short by Hazlewood.

At 100/5 after 15 overs, RR's effort to post a decent target received yet another jolt in the form of Shimron Hetmyer (3), who fell to Hasaranga caught in the deep while going for a slog sweep. Boult (5) was the next to depart, courtesy a stunning catch from Kohli at mid-wicket off Harshal.

RR's struggle can be gauged from the fact that they failed to find the fence for seven consecutive overs from 12 to 18th. Parag finally broke it in the 19th over by lifting Hazlewood over the extra cover fence.

### BRIEF SCORES

**Rajasthan Royals 144/8** (Riyan Parag 56 n o, Sanju Samson 27, Josh Hazlewood 2/19, Wanindu Hasaranga 2/23, Mohammed Siraj 2/30) **beat Royal Challengers Bangalore 115** (Faf du Plessis 23, Wanindu Hasaranga 18; Kuldeep Sen 4/20, R Ashwin 3/17, Prasidh Krishna 2/23) **by 29 runs.**

# Djoko gets nod for Big W participation



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**London, April 26:** Novak Djokovic will be allowed to defend his title at Wimbledon, despite not being vaccinated against COVID-19, because the shots are not required to enter Britain, All England Club chief executive Sally Bolton said Tuesday.

Djokovic, a 34-year-old Serb who is ranked No.1, missed the Australian Open in January after being deported from that country because he was not vaccinated against the illness caused by the coronavirus that has led to the deaths of millions during the pandemic that began in 2020.

During the annual spring briefing ahead of Wimbledon, which starts on June 27, Bolton said that "whilst, of course, it is encouraged" that all players get vaccinated, "it will not be a condition of entry to compete" at the grass-court Grand Slam tournament this year.

Djokovic, in addition to being unable to defend his championship at Melbourne Park after an 11-day legal saga over whether he could remain in Australia, had to sit out tournaments at Indian Wells and Miami because he couldn't travel to the United States as a foreigner

who is unvaccinated.

The US Tennis Association has said that it will follow whatever governmental rules are in place regarding COVID-19 vaccination status when the US Open is held starting in late August.

Djokovic — who has said he got COVID-19 twice, once each in 2020 and 2021 — owns 20 Grand Slam singles titles, tied with Roger Federer for the second-most for a man. They trail Rafael Nadal, who won his 21st at the Australian Open.

Six of Djokovic's trophies came at Wimbledon, including victories each of the past three times the tournament was held — in 2018, 2019 and 2021. It was not held in 2020 because of the pandemic.

After what happened in Australia, Djokovic said he would be willing to sit out other Grand Slam tournaments if getting vaccinated were a requirement to compete. The next major event is the French Open, which begins on May 22, and tournament director Amelie Mauresmo said last month there was nothing preventing Djokovic from defending his 2021 title in Paris. The Italian Open, a clay-court tune-up for Roland Garros, also has said Djokovic can play there next month.

# Former eves hockey team captain Britto dead

**BANGALORE:** Former Indian women's hockey team captain Elvera Britto died here on Tuesday due to old age related problems. She was 81. Elvera, the eldest of the three famous Britto sisters (others are Rita and Mae), ruled the domestic circuit from 1960 to 1967, guiding Karnataka to seven national titles. She represented India against Australia, Sri Lanka and Japan. In 1965, Elvera became only the second women hockey player to be conferred with the Arjuna Award after Anne Lumsden (1961). Elvera was single throughout life like her sisters. "It is saddening to learn about the passing away of Elvera Britto. She was ahead of her times and achieved so much in women's hockey and continued to serve the sport as an administrator with the state," HI president Ganendro Ningombam said in a statement. "On behalf of Hockey India and the entire hockey fraternity, we would like to express our deepest condolences to her family."

# MIGHTY TITANS FACE STERN SUNRISERS TEST

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, April 26:** The speed gun radar will be functioning overtime when Lockie Ferguson's 150 click thunderbolts meet their match in rising pace sensation Umran Malik's toe-crushers as table toppers Gujarat Titans clash with close-on-heels Sunrisers Hyderabad in the IPL here on Wednesday.

The IPL newcomers are currently in the midst of a dream inception year with six wins from seven games at the halfway stage and are placed on top of the table.

Interestingly, the only loss that Titans suffered in their campaign so far was against Sunrisers in an earlier meeting and Hardik Pandya wouldn't mind a sweet revenge for that defeat.

However, the 'Orange Army's bowling attack especially their four-prong fast bowling unit has been exceptional as one saw when they demolished RCB for 68 in their previous encounter.

The disconcerting bounce and movement created by Marco Jansen



(6 wickets from 5 games) is ably complemented by Umran's (10 wickets from 7 games) fiery pace, T Natarajan's (15 from 7 games) deceptions off the track and Bhuvneshwar Kumar (9 from 7 games) balancing it all with his experience.

So much so that a lightweight spin department manned by left-arm spinner Jagadeesha Suchith in absence of an injured Washington Sundar, till now hasn't been a cause of worry for Kane



Williamson and his band of men.

In fact, the rub of the green has gone SRH's way in this particular season as they now have five consecutive wins from five games where they have chased targets after the bowlers intimidated the rival batting unit.

For Pandya though, his bowling unit is no inferior to SRH as Mohammed Shami's artistry (10 from 7 games) and Ferguson's (9 wickets from 7 games) aggression has brought them a lot of success,

not to forget Rashid Khan's (8 wickets from 7 games) ability to be more than decent even in a quiet year by his standards.

However, one area where Titans need to lift their game is Powerplay batting as Shubman Gill (207 from 7 games) has gone off the boil after his 96 and Wriddhiman Saha, replacing Matthew Wade, has been downright mediocre.

In fact, Saha's propensity to waste balls upfront has forced skipper Pandya (295 from 6 games) and David Miller (220 from 7 games) to up the ante even before they can take some time to play themselves in.

The chink in Titans armoury is not having a quality keeper-batter for the format as Wade hasn't really had a great time in the first five games that he got and Saha has always been a player who takes time to settle down before he could play some shots.

Abhinav Manohar and Rahul Tewatia would also like to be more consistent in the finishers' role rather than being like a flash in the

**TODAY'S MATCH**

GT vs SRH

Time: 07:30 pm

**TELECAST**

Star Sports channels & Hotstar

pan for a match or two.

However, Titans' bowling attack has the ability to catch the SRH batting unit off-guard considering that it hasn't been tested a lot with young Abhishek Sharma (220 in 7 games) and No.3 batter Rahul Tripathi (212 from 7 games) doing bulk of the scoring in easy chases.

If Titans could breach through the Sunrisers top-order, most of the middle-order batters including the dangerous Nicholas Pooran haven't yet got a decent hit in the middle and the rustiness under pressure could keep Titans interested.

If they manage to upset SRH's rhythm, it will take them closer to play-offs in their maiden year in the championship, no mean achievement in a competition of this class.

# Satwik-Chirag pair in 2nd round



Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty had a comfortable outing Tuesday as they advance in Badminton Asia Championships

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Manila (Philippines), April 26:** India's top doubles pairing of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty cruised to the second round of the Badminton Asia

Championships with a straight game win here Tuesday.

The World No.7 and third seeded Indian duo hardly broke a sweat to register a 21-13, 21-9 victory against the Thai pair of Apiluk Gaterahong and Natchanon Tulamok in 27 min-

utes. Satwik and Chirag will next lock horns with Japan's Akiro Koga and Taichi Saito in the second round.

Ishaan Bhatnagar and Tanisha Crasto also advanced to the second round of the mixed doubles event. The Indian duo got the better of Hong Kong's Law Cheuk Him and Yeung Nga Ting 21-15, 21-17 in 30 minutes.

However, it was the end of the road for the men's doubles duo of Krishna Prasad Garaga and Vishnuvardhan Goud Panjala. Prasad and Panjala fought hard but eventually conceded the first round tie to Kang Minhyuk and Kim Wonho of South Korea 10-21, 21-19, 16-21.

They will take on the winners of the tie between South Korea's Kim Wonho and Jeong Na Eun and the seventh seeded pairing of Tan Kian Meng and Lai Pei Jing of Malaysia.

Later in the day, MR Arjun and Dhruv Kapila will take on fourth seeds Fajar Alfian and Muhammad Rian Ardianto of Indonesia in the men's doubles, while the mixed doubles Venkat Gaurav Prasad and Juhi Dewangan will be pitted against Praveen Jordan and Melati Daeva Oktavianiti of Indonesia.

# Juventus move closer to Champions League

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Reggio Emilia (Italy), April 26:** Moise Kean's 89th-minute winner earned Juventus a 2-1 comeback win in a tricky visit to a talented Sassuolo side, marking a major step in Serie A for the Bianconeri toward securing a Champions League spot.

Kean, a substitute, controlled a pass with his back to the goal then turned his defender before shooting in through the goalkeeper's legs.

With four matches remaining, fourth-placed Juventus moved within one point of third-placed Napoli and eight points ahead of fifth-placed Roma — with the top four qualifying for the Champions League.

Sassuolo, which features Italy forwards Domenico Berardi, Giacomo Raspadori and Gianluca Scamacca, had its range on full display when it took the lead in the 39th.

Berardi used his heel to flick on a through ball from Georgios Kyriakopoulos and Raspadori pounded it in from a sharp angle. Raspadori became the first Italian



Moise Kean (L) celebrates Juventus' winner against Sassuolo, Monday

player born since 2000 to score 10 goals in a single Serie A.

Juventus equalised six minutes later with a solo display of talent from Paulo Dybala, who unleashed a quickfire strike that was clocked at 110 kph (68 mph), which Sassuolo's defense appeared unprepared for.

It was Dybala's 81st goal in Serie A with Juventus, matching Cristiano Ronaldo for 10th place on the club scoring list. Sassuolo remained 10th.