



## TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE

Actor Kangana Ranaut reveals that she was sexually assaulted in childhood by a young boy

LEISURE P2



## US PROMISES MORE AID

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken visits Kyiv and promises more military aid to Ukraine

INTERNATIONAL P10



## RCB FACE RR TEST

Royal Challengers Bangalore aim to stop Jos Buttler juggernaut when they take on Rajasthan Royals today

SPORTS P12

## Heroin worth ₹1,439cr seized

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Ahmedabad, April 25:** The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence has seized 205.6 kg heroin worth ₹1,439 crore from a container near Kandla Port in Gujarat and arrested an importer from Punjab in this connection following an extensive search operation, the DRI said Monday.

According to a senior police official, the contraband was recovered from one of the 17 containers which had arrived at the Kandla Port from Iran between September and October last year.

Earlier April 21, the Gujarat Anti-Terrorist Squad had announced that the DRI in a joint operation with the ATS seized over 200 kg of heroin worth ₹1,300 crore after conducting a raid at a container station near Kandla Port in Kutch district of the state.

## MEVANI GETS BAIL, ARRESTED AGAIN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kokrajhar (Gujarat), April 25:** Independent MLA Jignesh Mevani was rearrested by the Assam Police Monday for allegedly assaulting officials after a court here granted him bail in a case related to a tweet by him against Prime Minister Narendra Modi.



Mevani, an MLA supported by the Congress, was booked under IPC Sections related to voluntarily causing hurt, assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty and others, police said.

Earlier in the day, a Kokrajhar court granted him bail in connection with a case related to his tweet against Modi.

The legislator was arrested April 19 from Palanpur town in Gujarat after an FIR was registered against him in Kokrajhar. He was brought here two days later.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Thanks God, it was not a bullet train!

## MARKET WATCH

INDEX	SENSEX	NIIFTY	DOLLAR	EURO	GOLD	SILVER
INDEX	56579.89	16953.95	76.69	82.15	₹51,441	₹65,216
VARIATION	↓ 617.26	↓ 218.00	↑ ₹0.21	↓ ₹0.38	↓ ₹820	↓ ₹1330

## WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP	MAX 40.8°C	40.2°C
	MIN 27.4°C	27.0°C
Humidity	74%	61%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Mainly Clear Sky	

### 16 more YouTube channels blocked

**New Delhi:** The government Monday blocked 16 YouTube channels, including six operating from Pakistan, and a Facebook account for spreading disinformation related to India's national security, foreign relations and public order. The blocked YouTube channels and the Facebook account had a cumulative viewership of over 68 crore and were spreading 'false, unverified information to create panic, incite communal disharmony and disturb public order in India,' the I&B Ministry said.

### Twitter set to accept Musk's \$43bn offer

**New York:** Twitter Inc is poised to agree a sale to Elon Musk for around \$43 billion in cash, the price the chief executive of Tesla Inc has called his 'best and final' offer for the social media company, people familiar with the matter said. Twitter may announce the \$54.20-per-share deal later Monday once its board has met to recommend the transaction to Twitter shareholders, the sources said. It is always possible that the deal collapses at the last minute, the sources added.

### JSW Cement

The Leaders' Choice

1800 266 266 1 (toll free)

# Ensure non-stop power supply, discoms told



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 25:** As mercury soars high and power cuts return to haunt people, the state government Monday asked the distribution companies (discoms) to ensure uninterrupted power supply to all during the day time.

Reviewing power supply situation in the state through videoconferencing, Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra said the state is reeling under intense heatwave. "Besides, the examination of the Class X and XII students would commence shortly. Therefore, the concerned agencies have been asked to ensure power supply to domestic users and commercial establishments on a priority basis." GRIDCO general manager Trilochan Panda said quoting Mahapatra.

The sudden outage in an 800 megawatt (MW) capacity unit at NTPC's Darlipali plant in Sundargarh district has led to the power crisis in Odisha as it used to get 400 MW from the unit. Besides, the peak power demand has gone up by almost 10 per cent due to the hot weather conditions, said the Energy department. "With the sudden outage of one 800 MW capacity unit (Odisha share 400 MW) of NTPC's Darlipali power station and non-avail-

ability of adequate power in exchange, limited load regulation has become unavoidable. Efforts are being made to minimise inconvenience to the consumers," the department said.

Odisha Hydro Power Corporation (OHPC) has been instructed to ramp up power generation to meet the

## SCHOOLS SHUT FOR 5 DAYS AS HEATWAVE SWEEPS STATE

**BHUBANESWAR:** Odisha continued to be under the grip of a sweltering heatwave Monday, prompting the state government to suspend classes of all schools for five days from Tuesday.

Several districts bore the brunt of the blistering heat, including Cuttack, Khurda, Angul, Subarnapur, Boudh and Nayagarh districts, the Met office said. The maximum temperature rose by 1-3 degrees Celsius at several places, while the minimum temperature was also higher than normal in some areas, it said.

A notification issued by the School and Mass Education department said though classes will remain suspended for five days, Class X and XII examinations would be held as per schedule.

deficit during day time. The discoms were asked to make optimal use of hydro power, Panda said.

The Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) was requested to ensure coal supply to all power producing units in the state, he added. All power producing companies were also instructed to fulfill their power obligation to the state without fail. Railway authorities would be requested to help transport of coal to thermal power stations, Panda said.

Now, Odisha's peak hour power demand (from 7 pm till 11pm) has been estimated at 4,000 to 4,400 MW and there is a shortfall of 450 MW.

However, it is a temporary situation and it would be resolved by the first week of May, claimed the officials.

## FOR MIND & BODY



Union Minister for Civil Aviation Jyotiraditya M Scindia leads the mega yoga event 'Yog Prabha' at Safdarjung Airport runway in New Delhi, Monday

# TN move to clip Governor's wings

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chennai, April 25:** The Tamil Nadu Assembly Monday adopted a bill empowering the state government to appoint Vice-Chancellors to various universities in the state, in an apparent bid to clip the wings of the Governor on the matter.

Chief Minister M K Stalin recalled that the Puncthi Commission on Centre-State relations had, while dealing with the subject of VC appointments, said "there would be a clash of functions and powers" if the authority to choose the top academician was wrested with the Governor.

The ruling DMK's move came on a day when state Governor R N Ravi inaugurated a two-day conference of VCs at Udhagamandalam, attended by among others, Zoho Corporation CEO Sridhar Vembu, whose participation in the event was questioned by the Congress party.

The Governor is the Chancellor of 13 varsities in the state, Stalin pointed out, with the Higher Education Minister being the Pro-Chancellor. Monday, Higher Education Minister K Ponmudy tabled the bill to amend the Tamil Nadu Universities Laws to allow the state government to appoint VCs to the varsities.

The BJP opposed the bill at the introductory stage while the main opposition AIADMK, taking exception to a remark on late Chief Minister J Jayalalitha by Congress



Legislature Party leader K Selvaperunthagai, staged a walk-out ahead of the passage of the bill.

Earlier, Stalin, while appealing for the House's support to the government's initiative, said that even in Gujarat, the home state of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the vice-chancellors are not appointed by the governor but the State. Same was the case with Telangana, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.

Incidentally, the MVA coalition government in Maharashtra, headed by chief minister Uddhav Thackeray had initiated a similar move in December last year: Stalin, in his speech on the floor of the House, said the state government being not empowered to select the vice chancellors created a "big impact" on higher education.

While the practice by the governor earlier was to consult the state government before selecting the vice chancellors, "there has been a change in this in the past few years," he said.

## Nod for ₹248 crore Srimandir budget

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 25:** An annual budget of Rs 248 crore of Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) for financial year 2022-23 was passed Monday.

During the managing committee meeting, discussion was held on signing of an MoU for setting up of an Adarsh Gurukul for the children of the servitors, said SJTA chief administrator VV Yadav.

Meanwhile, breaking silence over the ambitious Heritage Corridor Project, Puri Gajapati Dibyasingha Deb Monday said the 12th century shrine is absolutely safe and everyone should extend their cooperation for hassle-free execution of the mega project.

**Puri Gajapati Dibyasingha Deb says Srimandir is absolutely safe and everyone should extend their cooperation for hassle-free execution of the Heritage Corridor Project**

Speaking to media here after chairing the temple managing committee meeting in Puri, Deb said the Srimandir Parikrama Prakaalpa (Heritage Corridor Project) is highly essential for the security of the temple, in the interest of devotees, beautification of the temple periphery and putting the temple at a proper place at the international level.

"Mahaprabhu's work doesn't belong to any individual, group, party, it belongs to all. Everyone's cooperation is needed for projects being undertaken for the benefit of devotees. And it is not proper to oppose the project through demonstration and protests," Deb said.

If there is any issue, it should be resolved through dialogue and mutual understanding, he suggested.

Notably, the heritage corridor project has been dragged into controversy as a few outfits allege that the project has been undertaken without the approval of ASI and NMA. It was also alleged that the construction activities near the temple may have an impact on the structure. A case on this issue is also pending with the Orissa High Court. The Adarsh Gurukul sub-committee of SJTA has been asked to further study the MoU and it will be put before the Management Committee during its next meeting, he said.

# Girl ends life where fiancé was killed

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Chhatrapur, April 25:** In a heart-wrenching incident, a girl Monday committed suicide at the same place where her businessman fiancé was beaten to death just three days ago at Hansapur village under Chhatrapur police limits in Ganjam.

The deceased was identified as Arati Pradhan.

"Our daughter's fiancé was beaten to death April 22 and she ended her life today, just three days after his brutal murder," said a family member, attributing her taking the extreme step to police inaction in arresting the accused who were

rest has been made yet, it was learnt. Monday morning, several villagers blocked the main road of Hansapur by burning tyres and demanding immediate arrest of the four persons whose names have been mentioned in the police complaint.

Meanwhile, Arati went to the same place where Krushna was killed and consumed poison. "She said that she was going to the temple. She consumed poison on the temple premises, the same spot where Krushna was killed," said one of her relatives. She was rushed to MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur where she died.

Since then, family members have been demanding immediate arrest of the persons involved in the ghastly murder. However, no ar-

# Kendrapara man's solar-powered bicycle fuels hope

PNN & AGENCIES

**Kendrapara, April 25:** An electrician here has rigged up a bicycle with solar power to create an electric cycle which can travel at a speed of 25 km per hour.

Soumya Ranjan Palei from Pagarapada in Rajkanika block, about 120 km northeast of Bhubaneswar, said he put together the bicycle after many trials and errors.

An electrician by training, the 28-year-old fitted solar panels on the bicycle besides an engine which could run the cycle. He took three months to make the bicycle ready for the road.

## GREENER & CHEAPER

- The bicycle has a solar panel on its roof and it is used to charge the batteries
- It needs to be kept under sunlight for five to six hours for a full charge, after which it can run for about 150 km without hiccup
- Even in the absence of sunlight, it can be charged through an electric socket
- If the batteries run out of charge, then one can use the pedal to reach the destination



**WITH PETROL PRICES GOING THROUGH THE ROOF, SOLAR-POWERED BICYCLES WILL COME IN HANDY AS A MAJOR COST-SAVING MODE OF TRANSPORT**

SOUMYA RANJAN PALEI | THE YOUNG INNOVATOR

Palei said he travelled more than 110 km from his home to Balasore Saturday. "It took me seven hours for the journey with periodic rest on the way," Palei said. "On the way, my bicycle drew curious crowds."

The bicycle has a solar panel on its roof and it is used to charge the batteries. The total cost of inputs is around Rs 40,000.

The bicycle needs to be kept under sunlight for five to six hours for a full charge, after which it can run for about 150 km without hiccup. Even in the absence of sunlight, it can be charged through an electric socket. If the batteries run out of charge, then one can use the pedal to reach the destination, Palei said.

"With petrol prices going through the roof, solar-powered bicycles will come in handy as a major cost-saving mode of transport," the young innovator said.

# leisure



## BRITNEY SPEARS TAKING SOCIAL MEDIA HIATUS

Pop superstar Britney Spears has told fans she's going to be stepping away from social media for 'a little while' just two weeks. Britney has been a regular on Instagram over the years, keeping her fans updated with her daily antics.

## FONDA NOT WORRIED ABOUT BEING CLOSER TO DEATH

Octogenarian American actress Jane Fonda isn't bothered about getting older. Speaking on 'CBS Sunday Morning', the 84-year-old said: "I'm super-conscious that I'm closer to death. And it doesn't really bother me that much."



### FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshaSpeaks.com  
accuracy • reliability • trust!  
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181\*

**ARIES**  
You will experience a profound connection with the cosmos today. And you will be very grateful to the almighty for showing his grace on you. Your love for your kith and kin deepens today, says Ganesha, and you will spend extravagantly on them.

**TAURUS**  
You may feel suspicious about the people around you, feels Ganesha. You are also likely to emerge victorious in visa matters. You will take time to let your loved ones know how much you care for them. Have a positive attitude and it will win many hearts for you, advises Ganesha.

**GEMINI**  
You will be seized by a desire to go on a trip with friends and family. This trip may have been some time in the planning as well. The day will be filled with fun and frolic and entertainment. Marital life will be blissful as well, says Ganesha.

**CANCER**  
Though you work with dedication, you will be dejected as higher-ups do not fully appreciate your devotion. Don't take it to heart, says Ganesha, and suggests not to be sad. In the end, you will succeed with your firmness and boldness. By evening, you may have tense moments.

**LEO**  
Your competitors will try to malign your reputation today. They will try to spoil your image and impression in front of others. You need to be courageous and nip their efforts in the bud. You need to delegate decision-making activities to others today. Your wrong decisions need to be buried by you, says Ganesha.

**VIRGO**  
Ganesha says a turning point in life is important if you wish to understand it in a better way. You will excel in whatever you do today. Financial matters and relationships are on top of the priority list, but perhaps not in the same order. You will spend a lot of time praying to God.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesha says that you will be a different person today, full of vigor and enthusiasm. You will be able to showcase your creative skills in your personal life and at the same time you will be able to go ahead in your chosen field and gain prestige too. You will have to make a decision about studying further in the field of higher education abroad.

**SCORPIO**  
Elegance personified, you are loaded with compliments today. This may encourage you to do better work and have good equations with people. However, make sure your success does not go to your head and affect your work, warns Ganesha. Watch your words while communicating.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Upholding all that is right and just will be the high-point today. You will be in the right spirits to fight injustice and discrimination. The day promises to be as splendid as your will. Ganesha advises you to stand up and conquer all today.

**CAPRICORN**  
It is always easy to lose mental balance when going gets tough, but Ganesha advises you to hold on to your patience as it will help you reach your destination. Don't enter into war of words with anyone at work as the conflicts may harm you very badly.

**AQUARIUS**  
Today, you will decide to clean up the pile of files on the desk at work. Also, you will do everything that it requires to lighten the burden. Ganesha advises you to plan out your career wisely and set targets for the future.

**PISCES**  
You are not too much of a money-minded person. Planning your finances for the future may not really be your cup of tea. You take every day as it comes. However, you will have an epiphany of sorts today and decide to become more serious towards life.

## Kangana was sexually assaulted in childhood

Mumbai: Kangana Ranaut shared a traumatic experience in the show *Lock Upp*. The actress shared she had to face sexual assault in childhood and she can never forget this. After listening to the painful story of sexual assault that Munawar Faruqi faced as a child, she got emotional and said: "This happened to me also, a young boy from our town used to inappropriately touch me, when I was very young and I didn't understand what's happening. He was three to four years elder to me. I think he was exploring his sexuality. He used to ask us to strip off our clothes and he used to check us. We were very young at that time."

She later emphasised that like Munawar shared the truth, others can also come forward and people can be made aware of this serious issue and

how to deal with it. "Hence, we are using this platform to say this all. There is a huge stigma behind this especially for men. It is very brave of you Munawar, that you chose this platform to share your experience. I hope there are other kids also who face similar situations come forward and speak about it and make people aware," added the **Manikarnika** actress. **IAN S**



### VICTIM OF VIP CULTURE

## Mumbai Police 'humiliates' Pratik Gandhi

Mumbai: Actor Pratik Gandhi, who rose to fame with his effortless performance in the popular web show *Scam 1992*, took to Twitter and expressed his humiliation over an incident involving him April 24.

The actor took to Twitter, where he shared that he was pushed to some warehouse by the Mumbai Police when he decided to get down from his car on a jammed highway in Mumbai.

He wrote: "Mumbai WEH is jammed coz of 'VIP' movement, I started walking on the roads to reach the shoot location and Police caught me by shoulder and almost pushed me in some random marble warehouse to wait without any discussion. #humiliated."

Currently, on the work front, he has many projects in the pipeline.

The actor will be seen in *Woh Ladki Hai Kahaan* alongside Taapsee Pannu. He also has a Netflix project coming up. He will also be seen in *Phule*, where he will play Mahatma Jyotirao Govindrao Phule. **IAN S**

### FOR A NOBLE CAUSE



Zain Foundation organised a solo art exhibition in Bhubaneswar showcasing the works of 10-year-old painter Samarveer Ray Joshi (3rd from left in denim), Monday. Samar's friends also put up a lemonade and cake stall on the occasion. The fundraising event was organised to meet the needs of special kids. Seventeen of Samar's paintings, which were priced between ₹800 to ₹3,000, fetched about ₹16,000.

### ODISHA SANGEET NATAK AKADEMI'S NATAK UTSAV: DAY 1

## Play *Shunya Purusha* celebrates Bhima Bhoi's indomitable spirit

Bhubaneswar: A five-day theatre festival, highlighting the life and works of all time great personalities of Odisha, kicked off here at Rabindra Mandap, Monday.

The event, a collaboration of Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi (OSNA) and Odia Language, Literature and Culture (OLL&C) department, is part of the celebration of *Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav*, an initiative of the Government of India to celebrate and commemorate 75 years of independence and the glorious history of its people, culture and achievements.

Five renowned theatre troupes of Odisha have been roped for the plays on the life of Santhakabi Bhima Bhoi, Utkal Gaurab Madhusudan Das, Ganakabi Baishnab Pani, Freedom fighter Veer Surendra Sai and Kabi Samrat Upendra Bhanj, said OSNA Secretary Prabodh Kumar Rath.

City-based theatre troupe Manana staged Odia play *Shunya Purusha*, based on the life and works of saint, poet and philosopher Bhima Bhoi. Written by Shankar Tripathy, the one hour and 45 minutes drama depicted how tribal poet Bhoi, despite being blind from birth, enriched



A scene from the Odia play *Shunya Purusha*

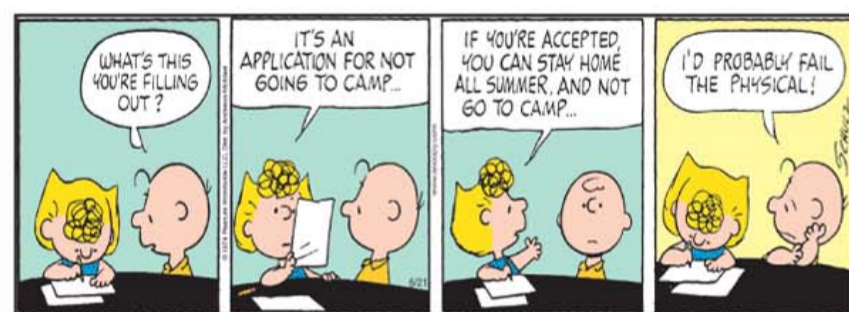
OP PHOTO

Odia literature with his hundreds of bhajans and poems.

Anuj Kumar Patnaik, Saroj Kumar Patnaik, Ayaskanta Swain, Sanjay Mahala, Shubhakanta Padhi, Saunika Sahoo, Kalpana Rout and others performed on stage while Guru Sadashiv Pradhan choreographed

the dances. Odia Language, Literature and Culture Minister Jyoti Prakash Panigrahi and City mayor Sulochana Das inaugurated the festival in the presence of OSNA President Aruna Mohanty, Vice-President Manmath Kumar Satpathy and Secretary Rath. **PNN**

### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

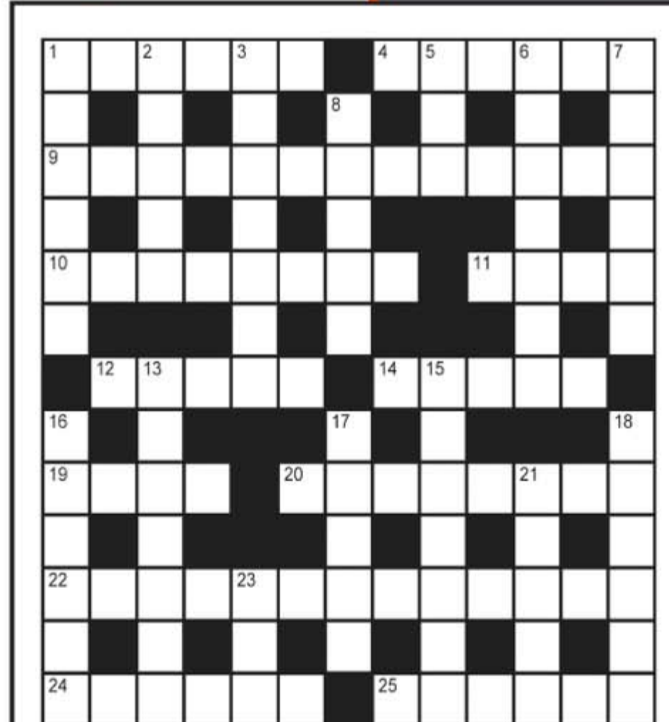


### BREVITY



### FUN post

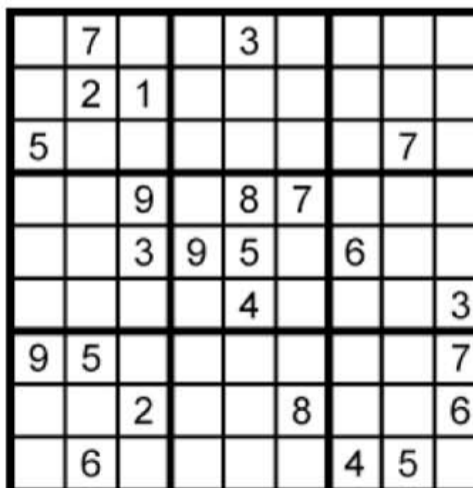
### CROSSWORD



- Across  
1 Airport building  
4 Rarely  
9 Egadi Islands locale  
10 Kitchen items  
11 Icelandic epic  
12 Inclement  
14 Teatime treat  
19 Dethrone  
20 Mexican lid  
22 Salon (6,7)  
24 Cargo ship  
25 Pressure
- Down  
1 Satire  
2 Prod  
3 Duchamp and Arp, e.g.  
5 Capt.'s prediction  
6 Elbe River city  
7 Book of instructions  
8 Fairy tale character  
13 Choose not to  
15 Night club  
16 Australian marsupial  
17 Two-door car  
18 Squirrels away  
21 Lyric poem  
23 Little piggy?

### SUDOKU

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



### SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

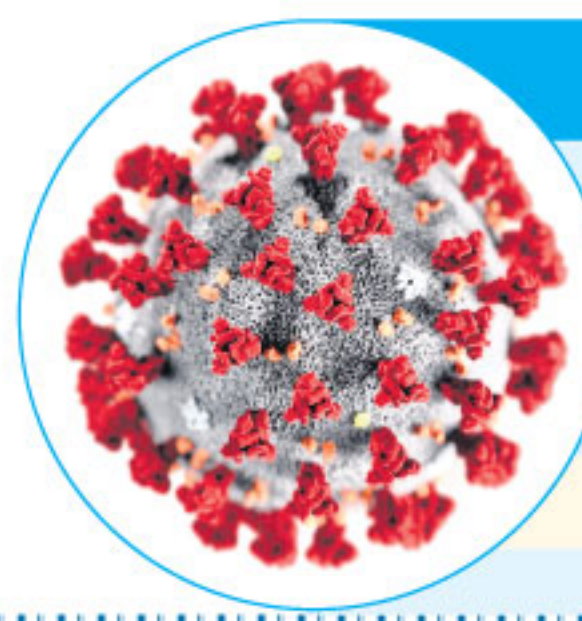
# downtown

## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	50,96,91,132	46,25,83,933	62,43,826
India	4,30,60,086	4,25,21,341	5,22,223
Odisha	12,87,998	12,78,737	9,124

### IN MEMORIAM

A memorial meeting was organised by Manoj Das Smruti Sansad at Soochana Bhawan to mark the eminent writer's first death anniversary, Monday



## CM recounts stepping stones, tells ULB chiefs to follow suit



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 25:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Monday advised the newly elected mayors and chairpersons of different Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) to always remain with the public and work sincerely to address their issues.

Naveen told this while inaugurating a two-day workshop of all mayors and chairpersons of the civic bodies here.

Stating that the 5T principle of the state government has played an important role in the transformation of urban areas, he advised the ULB chiefs to implement the 5T mantra in every step to provide quality services to people. He also advised them to work hard with devotion to make their respective cities best in all fields.

Various initiatives and programmes of the state government have received national and international recognitions, he said, adding that the Jaga Mission has turned out to be a model for the developing countries and Odisha is the only state in the country to have implemented the ambitious 'Sujal-

**The 5T principle of the state government has played an important role in the transformation of urban areas. Implement the 5T mantra in every step to provide quality services to people. Work hard with devotion to make your cities best in all fields**

CM NAVEEN PATNAIK

Drink From Tap Mission'. He also stressed on various flagship initiatives of the state government such as the Mukta Yojana, Aahaar and smart LED lighting undertaken in the urban areas.

The Chief Minister said the state government has given more importance to people than land while starting the Jaga Mission in Odisha for development of the slum areas. Till date, 1.75 lakh families have been given land rights and 585 slums have been transformed into model slums. While the Sujal programme has

been successfully implemented in Puri, work is underway to implement it in 20 more cities of the state, he pointed out.

The CM further said that the Mukta Yojana was started to support the poor and labourers during the pandemic. The scheme will continue and the government has made a budgetary provision of ₹500 crore for it.

Being implemented in association with Mission Shakti and Slum Development Associations, this programme has become very popular. While stressing on sanitation, Patnaik advised the mayors and chairpersons to prioritise solid waste management.

A large number of women have contested and won in the recently concluded ULB polls.

Naveen, while congratulating them all, instructed them to do good work and keep the faith of people intact.

State Housing and Urban Development Minister Pratap Jena advised the newly elected mayors and chairpersons to work towards successful implementation of various urban development programmes and schemes of the state government.

## Binapani Mohanty's body consigned to flames

Her career as a storyteller began with the publication of 'Gotie Ratira Kahani' in 1960. She has more than 100 books to her credit, and her best-known works include 'Pata Dei', 'Kasturi Mruga O Sabuja Aranya', 'Khela Ghara', 'Naiku Rasta', 'Bastraharana' and 'Andhakarara Chhai'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Cuttack, April 25:** The mortal remains of noted litterateur Padma Shri Binapani Mohanty were consigned to flames with full state ho-



nours here Monday. Her nephew Biswadas Mohanty lit the funeral pyre in the presence of hundreds of people and officials, including Cuttack Collector Bhabani Shankar Chayani and Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) Commissioner Ananya Das.

The body of the renowned writer was taken in a procession to the Sati Chaura crematorium here, as people lined up on the streets to pay their last respect to the departed soul.

Mohanty, who was a spinster, and affectionately called 'Pata Dei' (elder sister), died at her residence

Sunday night. She was 85. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Governor Ganeshi Lal, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan among others expressed grief over the demise of the legendary writer.

Mohanty's literary career as a storyteller began with the publication of 'Gotie Ratira Kahani' in 1960. She has more than 100 books to her credit, and her best-known works include 'Pata Dei', 'Kasturi Mruga O Sabuja Aranya', 'Khela Ghara', 'Naiku Rasta', 'Bastraharana' and 'Andhakarara Chhai'.

As an academican, she taught economics at Sallabala Women's College. She was also popular among the masses for being a votary of women's rights and empowerment.

### TRIBAL TINGE



Artistes from Gajapati perform Lanjia Saura tribal dance at Adivasi Mela being held at Exhibition Ground in Bhubaneswar, Monday

## Vigilance finds GRS with 59 plots, DA worth crores



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 25:** The amount of disproportionate assets (DA) acquired by a Gram Rojgar Sevak (GRS) here with his paltry salary of ₹8,500 left the Vigilance sleuths dumbstruck during their simultaneous raids at six different places including the accused GRS's office at Kalarahanga area in the City, Monday.

The Vigilance officials came across properties worth over several crores during the house searches.

The anti corruption officials Monday morning carried out raids at six places and found the GRS Babuli Charan Padhihari and his relatives possessing one three-storied building located at Plot 146/3736 near Mausima Temple valued at around ₹1.24 crore, another single-storied building in Raghunathpur valued at ₹14.18 lakh, a house at plot 419 at Dadha worth ₹32 lakh and one 2-BHK flat at Ashirbad plaza apartment at Kalarahanga worth ₹14 lakh. The building at the Dadha was purchased by Padhihari in 2022.

This apart, the sleuths came across 59 plots worth crores including 58 plots in prime areas of Bhubaneswar and one plot at Belgachia in Barang of Cuttack district owned by Padhihari.

**The raids were carried out by six teams of Vigilance led by three DSPs, ten inspectors and other staff on the strength of search warrants issued by the Vigilance court**

The GRS also owned a four wheeler (Hyundai i-10) worth ₹4.98 Lakh, one two wheeler, cash, bank deposits, gold and silver ornaments and household articles worth over ₹8.85 lakh.

"Shri Padhihari had entered into Government service as GRS on 01.03.2008. With his current salary of ₹8,500/- per month, he is found to have acquired huge properties disproportionate to his known sources of income. He is being examined to ascertain source of the assets. Further searches are underway. Unearthing of more assets is likely and overall valuation is likely to increase," informed the Vigilance officials.

The raids were carried out by six teams of Vigilance led by three DSPs, ten inspectors and other staff on the strength of search warrants issued by the Vigilance court here.

## Fugitive involved in twin frauds gives in

**A HOTELIER SUFFERED A SEVERE BRAIN STROKE AFTER HE CAME TO KNOW THAT THE ACCUSED PERSONS HAD CHEATED HIM OF ₹50 LAKH**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 25:** An absconder involved in two different cases of cheating to the tune of more than ₹3 crore has recently surrendered before the SDJM court here April 22 following the rejection of anticipatory bail plea by the Orissa High Court, informed an Economic Offence Wing (EOW) official here, Monday.

The accused, identified as Bikash Maharana, was on the run since the registration of the cases by the state Crime Branch EOW in 2021.

EOW sources claimed that Maharana along with a self-pro-



claimed godman Bijayananda Choudhury alias Swami Bijayananda Maharaj and Chandan Akash Mohanty duped a special class contractor of around ₹3 crore on the pretext of providing work orders issued by the Odisha Tourism Development Corporation (OTDC) in 2020. Accused Maharana identified himself as a clerk at the OTDC while Chandan impersonated the OTDC Ltd chairman and OTDC assistant engineer respectively to cheat the complainant

contractor Dhanurdhar Champatiray.

"During the period from August to November, 2020, the accused persons handed over 23 fake work orders for the renovation of Panthanivas at Barakul and Rambha, purportedly issued under the seal and signature of executive engineer, OTDC. Out of the amount, more than ₹1.14 crore was deposited through bank account of the accused persons and another ₹1.85 crore was taken as cash from

the complainant by Bikash," EOW sources revealed.

Similarly, in another case, the trio cheated a hotelier of Puri identifying themselves as senior officials of the India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC). The trio told the hotelier Tapan Kumar Mohanty that they were the authorised officers of the Tourism Ministry and took ₹50 lakh in order to sell off Hotel Nilachal Ashok under ITDC located at Puri. To win his trust, the accused first made Mohanty deposit ₹20 lakh in the account of ITDC, New Delhi. Later, Maharana collected ₹30 lakh.

The businessman suffered a severe brain stroke after he came to know that the accused persons had cheated him of ₹50 lakh. Mohanty's wife later lodged a complaint with the EOW in 2021.

"Being deceived, the husband of the complainant suffered a brain stroke and now is bedridden suffering from paralysis with loss of speech and memory," EOW added. EOW had earlier arrested other accused involved in the above cases.

### HEAT WAVE

**8 stations log over 43°C, Bolangir boils at 44°C**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, April 25:** Odisha continued to be under the grip of a sweltering heat wave Monday, prompting the state government to suspend classes of all schools for five days from Tuesday.

Several districts bore the brunt of the blistering heat, including Cuttack, Khurda, Angul, Subarnapur, Boudh and Nayagarh, the Met office said. The maximum temperature rose by 1-3°C at several places, while the minimum temperature was also higher than normal in some areas, it said.

The Met department also said that eight weather stations recorded a temperature of 43°C or more, with Bolangir sizzling at 44°C. The maximum temperature in state Capital Bhubaneswar was 37.6°C.

It also issued a heat wave alert for some places in Subarnapur, Boudh and Bolangir districts of western Odisha for the next four days.

### WORLD MALARIA DAY

## 'Use technology, innovation as eliminating tools'

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 25:** Observing the World Malaria Day, the state government Monday organised an event 'Malaria No More India' at Jayadev Bhavan here, which saw discussions on current prospective approach that can strengthen malaria elimination efforts in state.

Basing its theme on the WHO's 'Harnessing Innovation To Reduce Malaria And Save Lives', the event emphasised on the implementation of new tools, strategies, and approaches amidst rapid and permeating advancement of science and technology for the eradication of malaria.

"With continuous efforts and dedication of all our health staff, we have reduced our malaria burden to only 25,503 cases in 2021. Currently, we are focusing on high case load districts with intensified



approach by targeting CHCs, sub centers, and inaccessible villages. There is a need for involvement of all partners through Malaria Action Coalition to achieve Malaria-free Odisha with innovation and technology on ground and through community engagement, which

will fasten the need-based interventions with last mile connection," said Niranjana Mishra, Director of Public Health.

The event also saw discussions on the use of innovations such as the Highly-sensitive Rapid Diagnostic Testing kits (HsRDT),

Pyrethroid-Piperonyl-Butoxide bed nets, recently approved vaccines, advancements in anti-malarial drugs and advanced data management systems.

Releasing the annual report on NVBDCP, Odisha, state Health and Family Welfare Minister Naba

**With continuous efforts and dedication of all our health staff, we have reduced our malaria burden to only 25,503 cases in 2021**

NIRANJANA MISHRA | DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Kisore Das said, "We have reduced cases to 25,503 in 2021 amid Covid and other challenges from 4,44,842 in 2016. I also wish and encourage all the ASHA, ground health workforce and volunteers for a committed support to end malaria in Odisha with technology and innovation as fighting tool. I extend my heartfelt thanks to people of Odisha for their continuous support in translating into reality the state's mission of a 'Healthy and Happy Odisha'."

## DEMOLITION DRIVE



An eviction drive underway for demolition of the unauthorised constructions over a government plot in Bhubaneswar, Monday

OP PHOTO

## Ulaka in political committee ahead of Cong Chintan Shivir

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, April 25: Koraput MP Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka has been appointed the member of political committee ahead of the All India Congress Committee's (AICC) chintan shivir at Udaipur, Rajasthan scheduled from May 13 to 15.

The AICC has constituted six committees for coordination and deliberate discussion on various issues. The six committees are on politics, social justice and empowerment, economy, organisation, farmers & agriculture, and youth and empowerment.

"The AICC President has constituted the six coordination panels, to prepare the papers and lead the discussion in the respective subjects, in the Chintan Shivir scheduled to be held on the 13, 14 & 15 May, 2022 at Udaipur, Rajasthan," AICC general secretary KC Venugopal said.

## 'Despite debacles, BJP striving to win 120 seats in 2024 Assembly polls'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 25: Despite successive electoral debacles in state, including in the recently concluded panchayat and civic polls, the BJP is striving to win 120 assembly seats in the 147-member House in the 2024 general elections, party state chief Samir Mohanty said.

Mohanty, while visiting a village near Bhubaneswar Sunday for a party programme, said that 'Mission 120' or aim to secure 120 assembly seats in Odisha was set by former BJP chief and Union Home Minister Amit Shah ahead of the 2019 general elections.

The BJP not only bettered its tally in Odisha assembly from 10 seats in 2014 to 23 in 2019, but also replaced Congress as the principal opposition party in the House, and secured 31 per cent of the votes. It also won eight Lok Sabha seats from the state, up from just one in 2014. In an interaction with PTI Monday, Mohanty said, "People from every nook-and-corner of Odisha are saying that BJP is the only alternative to BJD which has 'overstayed' in power since 2000. We have to work hard for the next 24 months towards realising our goal with a fresh strategy. BJP workers will highlight the welfare projects implemented by the Narendra Modi government."

"Congress is no longer a pan-Odisha party, it is only confined to some pockets. The grand old party is losing vote share in every election. If the BJP manages to secure even five per cent of this vote, it will not be difficult to reach our target," he said.

Admitting that the BJP was in a weak position in Koraput and Rayagada districts, where the principal contest is between the BJD and Congress, Mohanty, however, as-

**BJD and Congress are in a secret understanding in some areas to check the growth of BJP. Many senior Congress leaders have admitted that CM and BJD president Naveen Patnaik decides the course of action in the state Congress**

SAMIR MOHANTY | BJP STATE CHIEF

serted that with proper strategy, the saffron party can easily penetrate the tribal hinterland.

The senior BJP leader said that corruption is the main issue in the BJD government, and even a hapless woman in a remote village has to pay PC (per cent commission) to avail a housing unit meant for the poor.

He exuded confidence that "good behaviour" of BJP leaders vis-à-vis "arrogance" of tainted BJD leaders who are allegedly involved in corruption and crime cases will reap electoral dividends for the saffron party.

Reacting to the BJP state chief's statement, BJD spokesperson Lenin Mohanty said, "People of Odisha have witnessed the hollowness of BJP's 'Mission 120', which has fallen on its face. It is laughable to raise it again." The BJD has swept the entire state in the recent panchayat and civic polls, securing 90 per cent and 89 per cent of the seats respectively. It won 766 of 852 zilla parishad zones, and 76 of 108 posts of chairpersons of civic bodies and all the three mayor's posts.

The BJD, on the other hand, managed to win only 42 zilla parishad zones, and 16 civic body chairpersons' seats. It, however, bagged three civic bodies in the Chief Minister's home district Ganjam.

# Resolve NALCO coal supply crisis in 24 hrs: HC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cuttack, April 25: The Orissa High Court (HC) Monday directed three Union secretaries and the Chairman of the Railway Board to resolve the crisis of coal supply to National Aluminium Company's (NALCO) smelter plant at Angul and its Alumina refinery at Damanjodi in 24 hours.

A Division Bench headed by Chief Justice S Muralidhar ordered, "Since the essential dispute concerns two Central PSUs - MCL and NALCO, and also involves the role of the Railways, the court considers it appropriate to direct that the Secretary, Power, the Secretary, Coal, the Secretary, Mines and the Chairman, Railway

Board, will sit together in virtual or hybrid mode with the Managing Directors of the MCL and NALCO not later than 6 pm (April 26) to find the way for resolving the crisis to ensure that the smelter plant of NALCO at Angul and its Alumina refinery at Damanjodi are not pushed to the brink of a shutdown."

The dry fuel scarcity issue was brought to the notice of the High Court by the Nalco Officers' Association and the court had directed the Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) last week to consider the request of the country's biggest aluminium manufacturer on a priority basis.

When the matter came up for adjudication Monday, counsel for



the NALCO informed the Court that coal supply from the MCL had come down by 60 per cent of the contracted demand and coal stocks available with the alumina major can keep its units going only for

three more days.

On the other hand, counsel for the MCL submitted that the coal company should not be compelled to supply dry fuel only to NALCO through rakes as MCL is also re-

quired to supply the fossil fuel to other power plants as well.

The MCL counsel also urged the Court to direct NALCO to lift coal from MCL's pit at Bharatpur, about 20 km from the smelter plant, either by road or by 'Merry Go Round' (MGR), a dedicated rail line connecting the coalmine pit head with NALCO's smelter plant.

Meanwhile, the HC received two other writ petitions in which the Utikal Chamber of Commerce and District Small Scale Manufacturing Enterprises expressed apprehensions that MSMEs in the state would suffer if the power supply was reduced due to the non-availability of coal for thermal power plants.

## OSPB dy chairman reviews drinking water projects in Puri

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, April 25: Deputy Chairman of the Odisha State Planning Board (OSPB) Sanjay Kumar Das Burma Monday took stock of the construction works of the mega drinking water supply project at Bhandarikuda under Brahmagiri block aimed to provide drinking water to 59 villages of the block.

He also made a field visit and inspected the progress of the under-construction mega drinking water project at Kusupur which, when completed, will ensure safe drinking water to dwellers of 69 villages of Brahmagiri block and 30 villages of Krushnaprasad block.

A review meeting on the mega projects was also conducted in the presence of chief engineer of rural drinking water supply department Sarbeswar Barik Monday afternoon at Puri Circuit House conference hall. He stressed upon the completion of pending works of piped water connection to Bhandarikuda, Raibidhar, Golara, Brahmania and Damodarpur zones under Brahmagiri block comprising 59 villages to make them functional at the earliest.

He directed tehsildar to solve the disputes arising in Ambapada, Rebana Nuagaon under Brahmagiri and Panasapada village under Krushnaprasad block through discussions with the villagers.

## Sonowal inaugurates state's 1st riverine jetty

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, April 25: Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Sarbananda Sonowal Monday inaugurated Odisha's first riverine jetty at Paradip.

Sonowal, who was on a two-day visit to port town Paradip, inaugurated the IFFCO riverine jetty and flagged-off the cargo barge at the port in Odisha.

"As a first, we mark the linking of Mahanadi river to the Bay of Bengal, taking another step in our endeavour to join coastal and inland waterways, he said in a tweet. With the merger of inland waterways of Mahanadi with coastal water of the Bay of Bengal via Paradip port, a huge potential for development has been created, said Sonowal.

Under Maritime vision 2030, the Paradip Port Authority (PPA) will become a mega port and for this, employees as well as stakeholders including exporters and importers will have to play a crucial role, he said. Paradip is going to become one of Asia's prominent industrial

hubs as the Central government decided to execute large infrastructure projects of around Rs 10,000 crore, the minister said.

Indian Farmers Fertilizer Cooperative Ltd (IFFCO) has started the riverine jetty to explore the possibility of using waterways as a feasible mode of transport. The riverine jetty will open up a new dimension to the transport sector with the use of a multi-modal transport system.

The jetty was conceptualised by Orissa Stevedores Ltd (OSL). Currently, the jetty can accommodate vessels up to 2,200 Deadweight tonnage (DWT).

It plans to develop and expand the facilities to accommodate larger vessels, which can directly cater to the neighbouring countries, officials said. OSL believes that Odisha's vast river network offers ample opportunities for the trade and commerce in the state which would not only help ease congestion on roads but also reduce carbon footprint, making it one of the most eco-friendly ways of transportation.



Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal (L) among other dignitaries at the inauguration ceremony of Odisha's first riverine jetty at Paradip, Monday

OP PHOTO

# Vitamin-D, Omega-3, exercise can reduce cancer risk by 61%: Study

A combination of high-dose Vitamin D, Omega-3s, and simple home strength exercises can help reduce cancer risk in healthy adults aged 70 or older by 61 per cent, claims a study.

Published in Frontiers in Aging, it is the first study to test the combined benefit of three affordable public health interventions for the prevention of invasive cancers - that has grown past the original tissue or cells where it developed, and spread to otherwise healthy surrounding tissue.

Apart from preventative recommendations such as not smoking and sun protection, public health efforts that focus on cancer prevention are limited, according to Heike Bischoff-Ferrari of the University Hospital Zurich in Switzerland.



"Preventive efforts in middle-aged and older adults today are largely limited to screening and vaccination efforts," Bischoff-Ferrari noted.

Studies have shown that Vitamin D inhibits the growth of cancer cells. Similarly, Omega-3 may in-

hibit the transformation of normal cells into cancer cells, and exercise has been shown to improve immune function and decrease inflammation, which may help in the prevention of cancer.

However, there was a lack of robust clinical studies proving the ef-

The researchers tested the effect of daily high-dose Vitamin D3 (one form of Vitamin D supplements), daily supplemental Omega-3s, and a simple home strength exercise, alone and in combination, on the risk of invasive cancer among adults aged 70 or older

The three-year trial held in Switzerland, France, Germany, Austria, and Portugal involved 2,157 participants

The results show that all three treatments (Vitamin D3, Omega-3s, and exercise) had cumulative benefits on the risk of invasive cancers, Bischoff-Ferrari said

Each of the treatments had a small individual benefit but when all three treatments were combined, the benefits became statistically significant, and the researchers saw an overall reduction in cancer risk by 61 per cent

Switzerland, France, Germany, Austria, and Portugal involved 2,157 participants.

The results show that all three treatments (Vitamin D3, Omega-3s, and exercise) had cumulative benefits on the risk of invasive cancers, Bischoff-Ferrari said.

Each of the treatments had a small individual benefit but when all three treatments were combined, the benefits became statistically significant, and the researchers saw an overall reduction in cancer risk by 61 per cent.

"Our results, although based on multiple comparisons and requiring replication, may prove to be beneficial for reducing the burden of cancer," Bischoff-Ferrari said, adding the need for further studies.

IANS

**FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS**

Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur-9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech-Tankapani Road-9861341488, Bapuji Nagar-Dreamland Studio-977517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics-9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir-9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri-Swosti Mobile Centre-7992914045, World Solution-9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar-9777675867, Nayapalli-The Cake Room-7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookieman-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate-Shreeram Medical Store-8763711714, Net Square-Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)-7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar-Maa Communication-9437353424, Sahini General Store-Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar-9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur-Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion-Jagmara-9938714347, Shree Vision-Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7-LIC Premium Point-9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.

# Ganjam village tense as bride-to-be kills self



Police personnel trying to placate the protesters at Hansapur in Ganjam OP PHOTO

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Chhatrapur, April 25:** Hansapur village under this police limits in Ganjam turned into a battleground when locals staged protests following suicide by a bride-to-be three days after her fiancé was reportedly murdered at the same place. Angry protesters pelted stones at the police personnel and ransacked their vehicles. They chased media persons and the camera crew who were there to cover the news and snatched

their cameras and mobile phones. "Our daughter's fiancé, a businessman, was beaten to death April 22 and she ended her life today, just three days after his brutal murder," a family member of deceased Arati Pradhan burst into tears when he said this. Family members attributed her extreme step to police inaction in arresting the accused who were involved in the murder of her fiancé. According to the case diary, cement trader Krishna Chandra Parida was all set to marry Arati May 13. However, he

was found murdered near a temple at Hansapur April 22 over business rivalry.

Since then, family members have been demanding immediate arrest of the persons involved in the ghastly murder. However, no arrest has been made yet.

Monday morning, several villagers blocked the main road of Hansapur by burning tyres and demanded immediate arrest of the four persons whose names have been mentioned in the complaint.

Meanwhile, Arati went to the same place where Krishna was killed and consumed poison.

"She said that she was going to the temple. She consumed poison on the temple premises, the same spot where her future husband was killed," said one of her relatives.

She was first rushed to Hansapur community health centre. After preliminary treatment, she was shifted to MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Bherampur where she breathed her last.

"Police had detained a few people, but freed them. The prime accused is yet to be arrested," said locals.

## GOING SOLAR



Collector Vijaya Amruta Kulange Monday inaugurated a solar plant at Pochilima High School under Hinjilicut block of Ganjam district. With this, the Pochilima and Makarjhol high schools under this block became the state's first solar-powered schools OP PHOTO

# Bluestone smuggling rampant in Jajpur

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kaliapani, April 25:** Illegal mining and smuggling of bluestones, chromite and iron ore have increased manifold in this region of Jajpur district due to the lethargy of the police and Forest department officials, said sources.

This mining region under Sukinda block and the areas in adjoining Keonjhar district are blessed with huge natural resources like chromite and iron ore. Bluestone, which is used in astrology-related works, is also found in this region. However, the region has turned into a safe haven for smugglers as the district administration has failed to safeguard these minerals. Smuggling of bluestones was first noticed in 2014 and later the then Kaliapani IIC conducted a raid and seized large quantities of the material from Rajasthan and also

arrested some people involved in the smuggling.

The raid unnerved the smugglers for some time and they went into hiding. However, after a brief lull the smugglers surfaced again and started mining the stones and transporting them to other states at premium rates. The district administration has poor control over the border region of Keonjhar and Jajpur districts as these areas are infamous for the presence of Maoists. The stone mafia quarry bluestones from the hilly area without much opposition from the administration or the police.

The mafia gangs also deploy local tribal people in quarrying work and pay them ₹50 for a basket of bluestones. The villagers are aware that the stones fetch good prices. As per law, mining of minor minerals is regulated under the Odisha Minor Mineral Concession

Rules, 2016. Tehsildars are the competent authority to grant lease through the auction process. The lessees are required to obtain mining plan approval from the Directorate of Mines. They also need clearance from the Forest and Environment department. Most of the stone quarries

and crushers in the area, however, operate without permission. They neither have official permission nor follow basic mining, safety and environmental norms, sources said. Rampant quarrying and crushing of rocks cause severe air and sound pollution in the locality.

## 4 nabbed for making videos with weapons

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Berhampur, April 25:** Videos like that of KBN gang in Bhubaneswar wherein some youths were seen brandishing swords and guns went viral in the Silk City too, a report said. The matter came to the fore after Baidyanathpur police arrested four persons including two minors on charge of making short videos by posing with firearms and weapons and threatening people.

The accused were identified as Prasant Sethi and Deepak Das of Kamapalli area of the city. A toy gun, two live bombs and swords have been seized from their possession. A case was registered in this connection and the accused were produced in court. They were remanded to judicial custody after the court rejected their bail pleas. Two minors detained in this connection were produced in the juvenile justice board and remanded to a correction home.

The accused admitted that they watched KGF 2 and were influenced by the movie. Later, they prepared videos by brandishing swords and toy gun and posted it on social media. Later, they unleashed a reign of terror by threatening people.

## Pvt clinic on DHH premises; 2 held

**NAYAGARH:** A child specialist posted at Nayagarh district headquarters hospital (DHH) here was illegally running a private clinic at his government quarters inside the DHH premises. The matter came to light during a surprise check by CDMO Dr Makaranda Beura. The paediatrician, identified as Ashish Dixit, was found running the clinic during his duty hours and was charging ₹300 from each patient. Following the raid, police detained two assistants of Dixit while a further probe is on. More than 50 patients were present during the raid.

# Kuchinda apparel unit to create jobs for women

*An agreement will be signed between Khadi and Village Industries Commission and the Odisha Rural Development and Marketing Society Wednesday*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Sambalpur, April 25:** An apparel manufacturing unit will be set up in the tribal-dominated Kuchinda sub-division of Sambalpur district to provide employment to women throughout the year and also to augment their livelihood, an official said.

The clothing plant will come up at Ardabahal under the Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries of the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME).

It will be the first apparel industry under the scheme in the state and ₹2.79 crore will be spent on the project. The Union government will bear 90 per cent of the cost and the rest will be provided by the state government.

An agreement will be signed Wednesday between the Khadi and Village Industries Commission and the Odisha Rural Development and Marketing Society (ORMAS).

"As many as 250 industrial sewing machines will be installed at the unit," said



FILE PHOTO

Srimanta Hota, the deputy chief executive officer of ORMAS in Sambalpur.

The project will provide employment to more than 500 women from 50 women self-help groups (WSHG). The women, who will be provided training in sewing, will earn not less than ₹8,000 per month, Hota said.

Sambalpur Collector Dibya Jyoti Parida and Kuchinda sub-collector Aditya Goyal have already initiated the process and a land for the project has been identified.

A target has also been set to make the unit operational by March 2023.

The ORMAS will facilitate the marketing of the apparel and contact educational institutions for making their uniforms in the unit, Hota said.

"We will also take steps for export of the apparel in future," he said.

A trust named Ujjwala Apparel Trust has been formed to run and manage the unit, he added.

## Boat capsizes in Balimela; 2 missing

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Malkangiri, April 25:** Two persons went missing after a country boat they were travelling in capsized in Balimela reservoir under Chittrakonda block of the district, Monday.

According to reports, some villagers of Arapadar village in Andrahah panchayat of Chittrakonda block had gone inside the reservoir for fishing. They were returning to Arapadar ghat in the afternoon when they got stuck inside the reservoir due to a sudden thunderstorm. The boat-

man tried his best to ferry the boat to the ghat but the boat lost balance in wind blow and capsized in the reservoir. Some of the villagers swam to the ghat while two of them were went missing.

On being informed, Chittrakonda police and tehsildar rushed to the spot and launched a rescue and search operation to trace the missing persons. However, the search operation was hampered as the area is in the interior pockets of the district and evening descended on the area by the time the operation was launched.

# Rushikulya river linking a non-starter



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Berhampur, April 25:** An ambitious Rushikulya-Mahanadi river interlinking project aimed at controlling flood, providing irrigation facilities and mitigating drinking water scarcity in Ganjam district as well as in most parts of south Odisha has remained a non-starter. Reason: Apathy of the Union and state governments.

Residents alleged that the state government is spending thousands of crores on various projects but has turned a blind eye to linking of Rushikulya with Mahanadi. They also demanded to link Rushikulya with Vamsadhara apart from Mahanadi. Moreover, the Centre has also for-

gotten to implement the river linking project.

Water crisis in Ganjam and other districts in south Odisha has deepened with Rushikulya and other rivers going dry with the onset of summer.

Rushikulya, which is termed as the lifeline of Ganjam district, originates from Rushimala hill near Brahmanigaon in Kandhamal district. It flows by hundreds of villages in Sorada, Dharakote, Aska, Kabisuryanagar, Purussotampur, Hinjilicut and Ganjam before merging into Bay of Bengal near Chhatrapur.

The groundwater level in the district drastically falls during summer for which residents have been demanding renovation of the river for the last 40 years. However, successive govern-

ments have not paid heed to the issue. The district witnessed a massive famine during the British era for which the then government had built an ancient on Rushikulya at Janbili near Dharakote to store the river water.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had laid the foundation stone for a mega drinking water project at Janbili November 30, 2016 for regular drinking water supply to over 50 villages and residents of Berhampur town. Since then more than five years have passed but Janbili project is yet to get completed and become operational.

Meanwhile, the fate of the project has been pushed into uncertainty and nobody has an answer on its completion.

Moreover, farmlands are falling short of water for irrigation due to decline in water level in the century-old Sorada reservoir. The decline in water level in Sorada reservoir had also led to decline in water flow in Dakshinpur reservoir near Berhampur.

Various outfits observed that execution of Rushikulya-Mahanadi and Rushikulya-Vamsadhara link projects has greater significance for flood control and irrigation in southern Odisha. They have demanded that the state government take expeditious steps in this direction.

**Government of Odisha**  
**"E" Procurement Tender Notice**  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER**  
**RAYAGADA (R&B) DIVISION NO-II**  
E-mail ID: eepwd765017@gmail.com, Phone: (06856)299969  
Bid Identification No: RC (RANDB) RGD  
No-II/01/2022-23 (Online tender)  
No.B-81: No.2008, Dated.22.04.2022

- Total No. of the works :- 01 No. of Building work
- Approximate estimated Cost :- Rs.44.80 lakhs
- Period of completion :- 6 (six) Calendar Months
- Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal-11.00 Hrs. of Dtd 29.04.2022 to 17.00 Hrs. of Dtd.11.05.2022 for online bidding.
- Last date/Time for receipt of bids in the portal: -Up to 17.00 Hrs. of Dt. 11.05.2022.
- Name and address of the officer inviting BID: - Executive Engineer, Rayagada (R&B) Division No-II
- Date of opening of Bid at 11.00 Hours on Dt.12.05.2022
- Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal: www.tendersodisha.gov.in
- Further Addendum/Corrigendum if any will be hosted in the above website only.

Sd./- Executive Engineer, Rayagada (R&B) Division No.II  
OIPR-34139/11/0002/2223

**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER**  
**POTTERU IRRIGATION DIVISION, BALIMELA**  
No.A-92: e-mail id : eepid78@gmail.com  
e-Procurement Notice No. - SE-PID-BML-03/ 2022-23

- Type of Works: System Improvement works.
- Total No. of Works: - Twenty three (23) Nos.
- Estimated Cost: - Varies from Rs 7.03 Lakhs to Rs 19.54 Lakhs
- Period of Completion: -180 (One hundred eighty) days

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Bid Amount (Rs. In Lakhs)	Availability & Submission of Bids- online.
Superintending Engineer, Potteru Irrigation Division, Balimela, Malkangiri	SE-PID-BML-03 (1) /2022-23 to SE-PID-BML-03 (23)/2022-23	Varies from Rs 7.03 Lakhs to Rs 19.54 Lakhs	From 26.04.2022 10.00A.M. to 05.05.2022 5.00 P.M.

Date of opening of the Tender /Bid: - 06.05.2022 at 11.00 AM. Further details can be seen from the Govt. Website www.tendersorissa.gov.in.  
Sd./- Superintending Engineer, Potteru Irrigation Division, Balimela  
OIPR-32052/11/0006/2223

**OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER**  
**KHORDHA DIVISION**  
No.MM-19: Email:- dfo.khordha@odisha.gov.in  
INVITATION FOR BIDS THROUGH e-Procurement  
Bid Identification No. 01/2022-23

1. Name of the work	Pitting Works.
2. Total no. of Works	19Nos
3. Estimated cost	Rs. 50,400.00 to 5,04,000 (Approx)
4. Class of Contractor	As Per DTCN
5. Period of Completion	3 (Three week)
6. Type of tender	Single Cover Tender
7. Date and Time of availability of Bid documents in the portal	From 11.00 A.M. of Dt. 27.04.2022 to 17.00 hrs of dt. 10.05.2022
8. Last date/Time for receipt of bids in the portal	Dt. 10.05.2022 upto 17.00 hrs
9. Submission of Original documents (TP cost, EMD, Affidavit etc as per DTCN)	During office hours from 10.30 A.M. on dt. 11.05.2022 to dt. 13.05.2022 up to 17.00 hrs in the office of the undersigned.
10. Date of opening of Bid through online	Dt. 17.05.2022 at 11.00 hrs in the office of the undersigned.
11. Name & address of the O.I.T (Officer Inviting tender)	Divisional Forest Officer, Khordha Division, Khordha

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal https://tendersodisha.gov.in.  
N.B. Subsequent corrigendum/addendum if required shall be available in the website as indicated above.  
Sd./-Divisional Forest Officer, Khordha Division, Khordha  
OIPR-08139/11/0001/2223

**MUTUAL FUND INVESTOR AWARENESS PROGRAM**  
Do join us to learn more about Mutual Funds.  
Date and Venue:  
Wednesday, 27th April, 2022; 6:30 p.m. onwards.  
at Hotel Radhika Regency, Birs Road, Rourkela - 769 001, Odisha.  
For registration, please contact: Ranjit Mallik, Mobile: 99370 88035.  
Registration is compulsory.  
The registration time will be from 9:30 am to 7:00 pm.  
It is mandatory to follow the COVID safety guidelines during the event.  
No walk-ins will be allowed.

**75th Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav**  
**HDFC MUTUAL FUND**  
AN INVESTOR EDUCATION BY HDFC MUTUAL FUND

For KYC, change of address, investor complaints redressal etc. visit https://www.hdfcfund.com/information/key-know-how  
MUTUAL FUND INVESTMENTS ARE SUBJECT TO MARKET RISKS, READ ALL SCHEME RELATED DOCUMENTS CAREFULLY.

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
**E-PROCUREMENT NOTICE**  
No.A-98: Bid Identification No. :  
Online Tender/01/GMID-1/2022-23

Name of Work : Civil Construction Works  
No of Work : 01 (One)  
Estimated Cost : Rs.52.31 lakh  
Period of Completion : 11 (Eleven) Calendar Months  
Time for receipt of Bid (online) : From 26.04.2022 10.00 Hours to 05.05.2022 upto 17:00 Hours

Name & Address of the Officer Inviting Tender : Executive Engineer, M.I.Division, Ganjam-I, Berhampur.

Further Details can be seen from the website : <http://www.odisha.gov.in>, <https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in>.  
OIPR-32104/11/0003/2223

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER**  
**SAMBALPUR (R&B) DIVISION NO. II, SAMBALPUR**  
E-mail - eesbprnbdivision2@gmail.com Phone -0663-2410104  
BID IDENTIFICATION No. SE / R and B / SBP / II / 03 (online) / 2022-23

**E-procurement notice**  
No. 1305 /Dated,22.04.2022  
No.B-79:The Superintending Engineer, Sambalpur (R&B) Division No.II, Sambalpur on behalf of Governor of Odisha, invites Percentage Rate bids in Single cover System in ONLINE MODE.

- No. of work :- 01 (one) nos. of Building work
- Tender Cost :- Rs.6,000/-
- Class of Contractor :- "C" & "B"
- Availability of bid document in the website :- 18:00 Hours of 02.05.2022 to 17:00 Hours of 14.05.2022
- Date of Opening of Tenders :- 11:30 Hours on dt.16.05.2022

6. The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the Website www.tendersodisha.gov.in only. Any Corrigendum / Addendum/ cancellation of tender will be displayed in the website said only.  
Sd./- Superintending Engineer Sambalpur (R&B) Division No.II  
OIPR-34136/11/0004/2223

**OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR**  
**ACHARYA HARIHAR POST GRADUATE INSTITUTE OF CANCER, CUTTACK**  
Tender Notice No. 1537 /AHPGIC, dated the 25.04.2022  
S-38/17-22

No.E-26:- Sealed tenders are invited in two-bid system by the Director, Acharya Harihar Post Graduate Institute of Cancer, Cuttack-753007 for supply of OT linen material. The bid document and all details can be downloaded from the website of AHPGIC, www.ahrcc.in  
The tender schedule dates are as mentioned below:

Sl. No.	Particulars	Date & Time
1	Last date & time of tender submission (by speed post/registered post) only	17.05.2022 by 5 PM
2	Date and time of pre-bid meeting	04.05.2022 at 1 PM
3	Date & time of opening of technical bid (in presence of bidders/their authorized agents)	18.05.2022 at 1 PM
4	Date of opening of price bid	To be informed to qualified bidders

The authority reserves the right to accept/reject any/all bids without assigning any reasons thereof.  
Sd./- Director  
NB: 1. If any of the dates above fall on a holiday, then the next working day shall be the last date of submission of bids, date of pre-bid meeting, or date of opening of bids.  
2. If any changes/modifications are made in the tender paper, then the corrigendum issued if any shall only be uploaded in the website of AHPGIC and no advertisement in newspapers shall be published in this regard.  
OIPR-10171/11/0001/2223

FOCUS CONGRESS

# LOOKING FOR RESCUE

## Is right action



### The Kishor-led rescue project looks like an abdication of sorts by the party, akin to outsourcing to a third-party vendor to deliver a low-cost solution to a burning problem that it does not know how to handle

charges still tend to stick to the party, running right up to its leadership. The latest example is the charge that the party allegedly sold the nation's highest civilian honour to a criminal banker. The charge by the now-jailed Rana Kapoor, the former CEO of Yes Bank who of course carries zero credibility, has been refuted by the party but this is the kind of mud that the Congress will find coming at it again and again.

In 2010, some 18 months after Barack Obama became President, more people thought he was Muslim (18%) than those who thought so in the previous three years (11%-12%), according to Pew. This is in the face of ugly propaganda by his opponents, and even after Obama, an extraordinary communicator, had the national stage as President. The late Colin Powell, a military general and a respected Republican, had risen in Obama's support to say this: "Well, the correct answer is, he is not a Muslim; he's a Christian. He's always been a Christian. But the really right answer is, 'What if he is?' Is there something wrong with being a Muslim in this country? The answer's no, that's not America. Is there something wrong with some seven-year-old Muslim American kid believing that he or she could be President?" The Pew numbers showed all this to be of no help in the face of what people wanted to believe.

The only option is to stick to the message and to live by it - consistently, creatively, and by showing commitment. It has to be a hard grind and the people who run this marathon need to be made of a different mettle. That is precisely the change that the Congress runs away from, because it has lost what the historian Lewis Mumford called "an inner go"; what we see now is "a mere holding on" - not the sort of problem that lends itself to a consulting solution.

The writer is a journalist and faculty member at SPJIMR. Views are personal.  
©THE BILLION PRESS

these internal voices of change carry no credibility. On the other hand, the idea that one outside star, however savvy or smart, can deliver the Congress from all its ills, is also a mirror to the political emptiness that has enveloped the party, much battered and emptied of inner energy in the surcharged climate of today. That emptiness leads to reliance on one hero who is after all a backroom manager. He can at best strategize the campaign, draw up the messaging and help plan the execution. It may work (ex: TMC in West Bengal) or not (ex: TMC in Goa). In many senses, this is a consulting solution to a bread and butter problem for the Congress.

The Kishor-led rescue project then looks like an abdication of sorts by the party, akin to outsourcing to a third-party vendor to deliver a low-cost solution to a burning problem that it does not know how to handle. But if the political reservoir has gone empty, how much can one Prashant Kishor pump in to revive and rejuvenate such a party?

What makes it more difficult is that Kishor is in politics but he is not a political leader of the kind, say, Kanhaiya Kumar, is - in the

thick of the hurly-burly of politics, been to jail, taken aim straight and sharp at Narendra Modi.

Yet, the Kishor option may look tempting from the point of view of a diminished Congress. He is credited with having brought electoral rewards for parties of various hues. And he himself is grounded and will likely agree that his role need not be overstated in the larger and complex game of playing politics and winning elections. It is also true that an outside analyst who can bring some sense of objectivity will be helpful to a party that is known to brook no dissent. The Congress can benefit from some ruffling of the feathers and from some plain speaking that an outsider can do.

But beyond that, the party needs something else to revive its fortunes. That something is not stratagems but some simple commitment to a clean government, a strong stand against corruption and communalism, and young faces who can work with energy and promise. The party needs to recognise that it has to stand on principles and fight for the common person.

In this, the Congress faces an uphill task given that corruption



Jagdish Rattanani

### IF THE POLITICAL RESERVOIR HAS GONE EMPTY, HOW MUCH CAN ONE PRASHANT KISHOR PUMP IN TO REVIVE AND REJUVENATE SUCH A PARTY?

Prashant Kishor is the focus of political attention again as he talks to join or at least work with the Indian National Congress, while at the same time signing to work for KCR in Telangana. For the Congress and a host of political forces, he appears to come across as a saviour, offering the hope of reviving the political fortunes of those being weighed down by the BJP's mix of ugly communal politics and superior management of perceptions. Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot asked for Kishor to be embraced by the Grand Old Party saying he has become a "brand" while some others still hesitate to work with a new star recruit who wants to call the shots.

This one-man obsession, the desperate hunt for a performer to rescue sinking political fortunes and bring back lost friends, signals the extreme frustration of the Opposition, and in particular the Congress, at not being able to make much headway in upping their political game. The focus on what Kishor will or will not do as he prepares his plans for the Congress mirrors the party's pain and the dilemma that flows from lack of clarity on the path and boldness in resolve as it seeks to revive itself. Should the Congress go all out against the communalism being stoked, or should it play a "soft" Hindutva card or jump positions as issue after issue is stoked up? Should it, can it really, jettison one-family control of the party machinery? The answers should be obvious but they are not at all obvious to the party and its leadership.

On one hand, the party is willing and open to change - there appears to be no other option. This necessity is making it talk to someone who called for an end of the culture of sycophancy to the first family that is in the fabric of the party. Worse, those who have spoken against the "high command" are the very ones who, minus any political base, have occupied political positions because they, too, paid obeisance at the durbar -

## SPECTRUM SUSTAINABILITY

# The global methane imperative

One of the most important achievements of last year's COP26 in Glasgow was the Global Methane Pledge, a commitment by more than 100 countries to cut methane emissions by 30% by 2030. Reducing methane emissions is not only among the quickest and most effective ways to stem climate change, it would also go a long way toward improving public health.

A highly potent greenhouse gas, methane traps over 80 times more heat in the atmosphere than carbon dioxide does, and methane emissions account for roughly a quarter of current global warming. They thus bear significant responsibility for climate-related threats like more intense and frequent extreme weather events, increased food insecurity, greater infectious-disease risk, reduced access to clean water, and deteriorating air quality.

The public-health implications are severe, especially for the marginalised and under-resourced communities that already face disproportionate risks owing to factors like lack of access to medical care, poor nutrition, unsafe living or working conditions, discrimination, and exposure to other types of pollution. Beyond undermining public health by exacerbating climate change, methane (and co-emitted pollutants) damages public health, by contributing to ground-level ozone and particulate pollution.

Exposure to such pollution damages airways, aggravates lung diseases, causes asthma attacks, increases rates of cardiovascular morbidity and mortality, and boosts stroke risk. The consequences include lost productivity, higher medical costs, and greater pressure on health systems, owing to the increase in emergency-room visits and hospitalisations. By suppressing crop growth, ozone can also exacerbate food insecurity.

The good news is that, unlike CO<sub>2</sub>, methane doesn't linger in the atmosphere, so the effects of reducing emissions would be felt quickly. And the Global Methane Pledge is clearly a step in the right direction. But, to keep the goal of limiting warming to 1.5° Celsius within reach and improve public health, the world must take even more ambitious action. Cutting methane emissions by 45% by 2030 would reduce warming by 0.3°C by 2040.

To accelerate progress, major philanthropies have come together to create the Global Methane Hub, which launched last year with nearly \$300 million in philanthropic commitments. Already, the Hub has announced that it will allocate \$10 million to the Climate and Clean Air Coalition to assist 30 countries in developing plans to reduce their methane emissions. The Hub has also joined the Agriculture Innovation Mission for Climate to

support "innovation sprints" to mitigate methane emissions.

Consider the oil and gas sector, where the International Energy Agency estimates that methane emissions can be halved almost immediately through the wider adoption of practices already required in many countries, such as the replacement of valves and pumps with more efficient versions. According to the IEA, with additional available measures, it is technically possible to slash methane emissions from global oil and gas operations by up to three-quarters.

We have the technologies to prevent vented and fugitive emissions, and our capacity to identify methane leaks - and thus to grasp the scale of toxic emissions - has improved significantly. By taking full advantage of such tools, and targeting super emitters, policymakers can advance climate action while delivering enormous health benefits to communities living near oil and gas operations. Cutting methane emissions from oil and gas infrastructure is crucial, but it is only the first step. Recent studies have also highlighted the threat posed by gas-fueled stoves and water heaters, which leak methane and contribute to indoor and outdoor air pollution. To address this problem, policymakers must significantly expand renewable-energy capacity and electrification.

Further opportunities to reduce methane emissions lie in agriculture and waste management. Providing higher-quality feed to livestock can reduce enteric methane emissions. Capturing methane from manure, and treating digestate to minimise ammonia emissions, would provide a local source of energy, reduce odors, and mitigate public-health risks. Meanwhile, practices like composting can avert methane from organic wastes and generate valuable resources to improve soil quality.

The case for immediately slashing methane emissions is strong, and the Global Methane Pledge is growing global awareness of such efforts' importance to combating climate change. But translating commitments into real progress will not be easy.

That is why it is crucial also to highlight the health benefits of cutting methane emissions. With the help of researchers and community-health practitioners who understand the issue best, our aim should be to generate the support, collaboration, and investment needed to cut methane emissions and improve public health worldwide.

Sarah Vogel is Senior Vice President of Health at the Environmental Defense Fund. Marcelo Mena is CEO of Global Methane Hub.  
©PROJECT SYNDICATE



Sarah Vogel & Marcelo Mena

### METHANE TRAPS OVER 80 TIMES MORE HEAT IN THE ATMOSPHERE THAN CARBON DIOXIDE DOES



Always do what you know to be the best even if it is the most difficult thing to do.

THE MOTHER



## Macron's Win

Emmanuel Macron has won his second consecutive election and is President once again. The French elections, results of which came out Sunday, showed Macron with a healthy lead of 59 per cent against 41 per cent of his far-Right opponent Marine Le Pen. The robust victory of France's middle of the road President Macron is good news for the Western alliance on behalf of Ukraine while it may be bad news for Russia's Vladimir Putin. Macron's reelection is also a victory for the European Union and a loss for those who wished it weakened or broken. On the other hand, Marine Le Pen's defeat was an important blow against nationalist forces in Europe which are against an open immigration policy, particularly in relation to Moslems.

Macron's victory percentage reflected his success in making the voters aware of the dangers of a Le Pen presidency. Many key French voter groups were frustrated with inflation. The general feeling was that Macron was out of touch with the people's needs. Progressive voters felt that he had reneged on his 2017 poll promise that he would be neither Left nor Right. They felt he became a cheerleader for big industry. All sides agreed that the voter turnout was at its lowest in decades. The reason was fatigue ran high. The voters seem to have rejected Le Pen's call for a shedding of European co-operation and a rapprochement with Russia. Her economically Left wing campaign earned her a better score than in 2017. It is estimated that 17 per cent of the far-Left firebrand Jean-Luc Melenchon's first round voters backed Le Pen in the runoff. Macron's majority did not seem to reflect voter enthusiasm for him, rather rejection of Le Pen, a politician who is constrained by her party's long standing anti-immigration stance as well as a pro-Russia and anti-NATO foreign policy. It was also rumoured that Le Pen's victory could have resulted in the creation of a situation whereby the EU would have witnessed a 'Frexit'. In a campaign that started off with 12 candidates, the final two - Macron as France's youngest leader since Napoleon and Le Pen, the three time aspirant to become the nation's first female president - were always in a tight fight. After a hard fought first round among all 12 candidates two weeks ago, the top two faced-off in the runoff Sunday.

Even after his win, Macron still sits uneasy. The elections to the National Assembly will take place in June this year. The 577 seat House will decide on who will be the Prime Minister of France. Macron and his party Republic on the Move need to secure a comfortable majority in the Assembly to enable him perform effectively. His present victory margin could give Macron some relief that he may do well in the upcoming elections. As the only nuclear power country in the EU, Macron's desire is that France should lead not only the European Union but also NATO and the Free World and be prepared to stand against tyranny.

While his dreams of leading from the front sound good and logical, yet Macron's future seems to be full of challenges. Controlling inflation, reinvigorating the French economy which he had successfully revived in his first term as also tackling the growing refugee and immigrant crisis to keep his original French voter happy will be some of the tough tasks ahead of him. How Macron and France perform in the next five years will greatly matter towards creating stability in Europe that is witnessing a worrisome war at present.

## WISDOM CORNER

- Success is never final, failure is never fatal. It's courage that counts. JOHN WOODEN
- Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear, not absence of fear. MARK TWAIN
- He who is not courageous enough to take risks will accomplish nothing in life. MUHAMMAD ALI

## WORDSWORTH

### Spifflicate

The usual dictionary definition for this now rather rare word - "treat roughly or severely" - hardly does justice to the history of a slang term that has had several meanings. Its origins lie in the eighteenth century in Britain, though where its first users got it from remains a mystery. The experts hazard a guess that it was probably a fanciful conflation - suggestions include stifle + suffocate and spill + castigate. You can spell it with one f or two, as the fancy takes you, though when it first appeared it had only one. Over half a century, it rapidly developed from its initial sense of "confound, silence or dumbfound", through "handle roughly or treat severely", to "crush, destroy or kill". T W E Holdsworth borrowed the last of these in Campaign of the Indus of 1840: "Of the enemy, about 500 were killed, and more than 1500 made prisoners; and of the remainder, who made their escape over the walls, the greater part were cut down by the Dragoons, or spifflicated by the Lancers." Despite these gory associations, by about 1900 it had softened in Britain into a jokey term for some unspecified but vaguely unpleasant punishment with which one might threaten a naughty child ("I'll spifflicate you if you won't be quiet!"). In America at around the same date, the word took on another sense still, that of being drunk. An early example is from the sporting section of the Washington Post of July 1904: "They forced his teeth open, and, while a couple of them sat on his chest, they poured about a quart of corn liquor into his system. He was so spifflicated before they let him up that they had to lift him bodily and plant him in a seat."

### Spintronics

This is a new technological discipline which aims to exploit the subtle and mind-bendingly esoteric quantum properties of the electron to develop a new generation of electronic devices. Its potential is sufficiently great that the US Department of Defense has invested more than \$50 million dollars in spintronics research some years ago. The word is a blend of electronics with spin, the quantum property it exploits. Like so many words applied to the subatomic realm, spin has to be taken figuratively as a convenient label for a property that has no equivalent in gross matter. Every electron exists in one of two states, spin-up or spin-down; it is possible to make a sandwich of gold atoms between two thin films of magnetic material that will act as a filter or valve that only permits electrons in one of the two states to pass. The filter can be changed from one state to the other using a brief and tiny burst of current. From this simple device it's hoped to make incredibly tiny chips that will act as super-fast memories whose contents will survive loss of power. The adjective is spintronic.

## LOL

### Hunters in a plane

Two hunters got a pilot to fly them into the far north for elk hunting. They were quite successful in their venture and bagged six big bucks. The pilot came back, as arranged, to pick them up. They started loading their gear into the plane, including the six elk. But the pilot objected and he said, "The plane can only take four of your elk; you will have to leave two behind." They argued with him; the year before they had shot six and the pilot had



allowed them to put all aboard. The plane was the same model and capacity. Reluctantly, the pilot finally permitted them to put all six aboard. But when the attempted to take off and leave the valley, the little plane could not make it and they crashed into the wilderness. Climbing out of the wreckage, one hunter said to the other, "Do you know where we are?" "I think so," replied the other hunter. "I think this is about the same place where we landed last year!"

### Ban hate speech

Sir, India is a mosaic of cultures. It is a land of divinity and spiritual enlightenment. Indian culture is enriched by thoughts and beliefs of many foreign civilizations. Now a days, hawkish statements and hate speeches made by political leaders have vitiated the secular fabric of our country. India is not a Hindu Rashtra though eighty per cent population of our country is Hindu. Our leaders are forgetting this simple fact. During the Khilafat Movement in 1919, Hindus and Muslims fought unitedly under the guidance of Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi to drive out the British from our country. In many Hindu festivals in our country, Muslims are participating with gusto and enthusiasm. Uncontrolled speech can ruin harmony and national integration. One hate speech against a community and religion can wreak havoc on the country's social fabric. One loose statement can create a riot and lead to disturbance in society. Political leaders should control their speech and emotions and maintain self-restraint while delivering public speech. Self-regulation is the key.

Prabhudutt Dash, BHUBANESWAR

### Crude import surge

Sir, India's crude oil import bill nearly doubled in the wake of the war between Russia and Ukraine as energy prices soared globally following the return of demand and the war in Ukraine. India, the world's third biggest oil consuming and importing nation in the world topped the imports and it almost doubled during the financial year that ended 31-3-2022. According to the Petroleum Planning & Analysis Cell (PPAC), India imported 212.2 million tonnes of crude oil in 2021-22, up from 196.5 million tonnes in the previous year. This was, however, lower than the pre-pandemic imports of 227 million tonnes in 2019-20. The spending on oil imports in 2019-20 was \$101.4 billion. The imported crude oil is turned into value-added products like petrol and diesel at oil refineries, before being sold to automobiles and other users. India, which is 85.5 per cent dependent on imports to meet its crude oil needs, has a surplus refining capacity and it exports some petroleum products but is short on production of LPG which is imported from nations like Saudi Arabia.

CK Subramaniam, NAVI MUMBAI

## 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, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010



**Bengali films are the best in world, deeply rooted to the soil here. The state is a storehouse of talents. Bollywood has money, people to invest. I appreciate that. I would request Shatrughan ji to help the Bengali film industry by bringing more investments**  
MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER

## MP HAS SEEN 17 TIGER DEATHS SINCE JANUARY 8

A total of 17 tigers have died in Madhya Pradesh in the last 107 days, including three due to poaching, an official said Monday. On Sunday, a tigress cub was found dead in the buffer zone of Bandhavgarh Reserve in what may have been the handiwork of an adult tiger



## of the day quote

I have said it earlier too. I am unhappy with the state leadership, not Rahul Gandhi or Priyankaji. My only problem with the state leadership is that the party must give responsibilities to strong and committed people as state Assembly elections are approaching  
HARDIK PATEL | GUJARAT CONGRESS LEADER

The mohalla clinics in Delhi have been praised by the entire world. We too will learn from this model for the betterment of Punjab  
BHAGWANT MANN | PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER

The active cases of coronavirus are once again rising in Uttar Pradesh. Experts are expecting the possibility of a fourth wave. The peak of infection can come in June-July. The BJP-led state government seems to have learned no lesson from the horrors of the last Covid wave. In view of the plight of health services in the state, there is a possibility of panic  
AKHILESH YADAV | SAMAJWADI PARTY CHIEF

## SHORT TAKES

### 5 dead in Maha road accident

**Solapur:** Five persons, including two children, were killed and four injured Monday after their SUV rammed into a truck in Solapur, a police official said. The incident took place near the Agriculture Produce Market Committee complex on Solapur-Hyderabad Highway in the afternoon, he said.

### NGT raps Delhi Jal Board

**New Delhi:** The National Green Tribunal has come down heavily over the Delhi Jal Board over a plea against the dumping of sewage carried by vehicles on roads and drains in various locations in south Delhi, particularly at Chandan Hala Main Road Bus Stand near Pulliya, Gadaipur Bandh Road, DLF, and Vasant Kunj Farm House. The green court observed that even the Delhi Pollution Control Committee has acknowledged that the situation is disturbing, continuous, sustained, and stringent action is required by the statutory authorities, particularly DJB which has given licences that are being misused in violation of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974.

### 'Rusted ball' triggers bomb scare in Delhi

**New Delhi:** Bomb disposal protocols were initiated by the Delhi Police Monday after it was informed about a "grenade-like" object being spotted in southwest Delhi's RK Puram, officials said. A senior police official said they initially suspected it to be a "grenade", but during preliminary inquiry it was found to be a "rusted ball". The officer said senior police officials and a bomb disposal squad have been called at the spot.

### 4 Naxals held

**Raipur:** Four Naxals were arrested in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district when they arrived to put up Maoist pamphlets, a police official said Monday. Gango Kunjami (35), Fagnu Sodhi (40), Hadma Madkani (20) and Baman Kartami (20), militia members of the proscribed movement's Katakalyan Area Committee, were held Sunday evening from Bengalpur under Tonopal police station limits while putting up pamphlets in support of the Naxal bandh call given for Monday, Sukma Superintendent of Police Sunil Sharma said.

## HANUMAN CHALISA ROW

# HC refuses to quash FIR against Ranas

The politician couple, who had threatened to protest outside Matoshree Saturday, was arrested by the Mumbai Police late that night and presented before the Bandra court Sunday



**Mumbai, April 25:** The Bombay High Court Monday dismissed a plea filed by independent MP-MLA couple Navneet Rana and her husband Ravi Rana, respectively, seeking to quash the second of two FIRs registered against them for resisting arrest Saturday after a huge row over their plans to recite Hanuman Chalisa outside the private home of Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray. A division bench of Justice PB Varale and Justice SM Modak also observed that there was considerable merit in the submissions made by Special Public Prosecutor Pradip Gharat. The judges upheld his contention on the FIR pertaining to chant religious verses near the personal home of the CM since such an act at the residence of another person or at a public place is a breach of personal liberty of the other person, and the Maharashtra government was justified in its apprehensions that it could lead to a law and order situation in Mumbai. "Persons in public life are expected to act responsibly. With great power comes great responsibility... that those who are active in public life are expected to act responsibly is not an extra but a basic expectation," the court said in its strong observations while dismissing the Rana couple's plea. The judges said that in case the state government wanted to initiate action against the Ranas under the second FIR, then they would give 72 hours notice to the petitioners (Ranas) before initiating any such measures. The Ranas' lawyer Rizwan Merchant said that after they receive the 72-hour notice from the police, they would decide their further course of action, and moved sessions court for bail. After two days of high political drama, police in suburban Mumbai's Khar booked and arrested the Rana couple Saturday under Indian Penal Code Section's 153(A) (promoting enmity between groups on grounds of religion race, etc), and the stringent IPC Section 124(A), pertaining to sedition. The Mumbai Police also filed a second FIR around 2 a.m. Sunday, against the Ranas invoking IPC's Section 353 for alleged assault of a public servant and obstructing public servant from discharging their official duties. Merchant argued that the second FIR was "an abuse" of the legal process and the subsequent addition of the offence of sedition was unsustainable. SPP Gharat countered this, saying that the second FIR was registered for a separate offence relating to obstructing police from discharging their duties, for which the court has granted relief to the extent of serving the Ranas a 72-hour notice for any action. On Saturday, the Ranas were served with a notice under Bombay Police Act's Section 149, requesting them to refrain from carrying out their plans, but they did not heed, after which they were detained and arrested that evening. SPP Gharat said that despite the notice, the Ranas continued to give media and online interviews, creating apprehensions in society and their statements posing a serious threat to the law and order situation after which the action was taken against them. Later, amid high drama at their Khar home, the Rana couple was arrested on Saturday evening and

produced before a Bandra holiday Magistrate Court which remanded them to 14 days' judicial custody while posting their bail plea for hearing April 29. Through her lawyer, Navneet Rana has written to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla about alleged harassment by the police, even as the couple moved a bail plea before the Sessions Court which is likely to be heard Tuesday. Later, Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnis alleged that in police custody, she was mistreated, abused, subjected to casteist slurs, and even denied water or permission to go to the washroom. However, Home Minister Dilip Walse-Patil denied the allegations as totally "baseless".

Uddhav breaks silence

**Mumbai:** Breaking his silence on the Hanuman Chalisa row, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray Monday said reciting the Chalisa at his home is not a problem but 'dadagiri' won't be tolerated. Thackeray, who heads Shiv Sena, launched a caustic attack on BJP without taking its name and claimed that those teaching him Hindutva were hiding in a "rat hole" when Babri Masjid was demolished. "If you want to recite 'Hanuman Chalisa' at my home, do come. But approach with a proper method," Thackeray said. "But if you want to visit by 'dadagiri' (bullying), Balasaheb (the late Shiv Sena founder and his father) had taught us how to break that 'dadagiri'," he said at the launch of the National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) at the BEST headquarters here.

## E-scooter blast kills AP man

**New Delhi, April 25:** In yet another tragic incident involving an electric two-wheeler, a 40-year-old man has died after a blast occurred in an e-scooter belonging to Boom Motors while being charged at home. The incident in Vijaywada, Andhra Pradesh, also left the deceased Kotakonda Siva Kumar's wife and two daughters with severe burn injuries. According to multiple reports, the police registered a complaint under Section 174 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) against the EV maker and a notice was sent to the Boom Motors dealer that sold the e-scooter to Kumar. Kumar, a DTP designer, had bought the e-scooter for nearly ₹70,000 April 22. The battery exploded within a day of purchase early April 23, according to reports. Boom Motors was yet to respond to the deadly incident. Ironically, the EV maker was among those selected under the government's automotive production linked incentive (PLI) scheme. Earlier, an 80-year-old man was killed and two others injured when the battery of a Pure EV electric two-wheeler exploded in their house in Telangana's Nizamabad district.

# SC seeks Centre's stand on 'Judicial Vista'

**New Delhi, April 25:** The Supreme Court Monday sought Centre's stand on a plea seeking direction for construction of 'Judicial Vista', for better functioning of the apex court. A bench of Justices Vinet Saran and JK Maheshwari orally observed that it is a matter, where the court would not be inclined to pass directions, but would want the Central government to consider it and take a decision. Advocate Ardhendamauli Kumar Prasad, petitioner-in-person, urged the bench to see 'how lawyers are standing outside'. The bench said, "It is a logical and correct thing that there should be judicial vista in a planned manner," and pointed out that the growth of buildings is not well planned. "Just like you have Central Vista," it added. The top court has scheduled the matter for further hearing Tuesday, as it sought the presence of the Solicitor General Tushar Mehta. The bench told the counsel representing the Central government, "We're not asking or making directions that do this or that, we just want to know the stand of the Union of India. Let SG be here... we just need a statement." Counsel mentioned that the Law Minister has sent proposals to all state govern-

ments for their views regarding a central infrastructural committee headed by the Chief Justice NV Ramana. The plea had sought directions for the creation of a 'judicial vista' around the existing premises of the top court, and constitution of a central authority to fund the judicial infrastructure. The plea also sought direction to the Central government ministries to prepare the layout and execute the work of construction of judicial vista over the land adjoining the premises of the apex court. The plea added that the construction of judicial vista will provide access to better and dignified working conditions for the judges, the members of the Bar, top court officials, and the scores of litigants visiting the court premises. The present matter is being filed in public interest, raising several important issues that are faced by the court, the registry, and the advocates primarily practicing at the Supreme Court.

# Grenade, hit & run attacks, standoff firing up in Kashmir

**New Delhi, April 25:** Grenade, hit & run attacks and incidents of standoff firing have increased in the Kashmir valley from January 1 to April 15 this year, officials in the security forces said here. They said that encounters with terrorists have also increased during this period. According to the official data, there were 17 grenade attacks by the terrorists till April 15 this year while there were only nine attacks in 2021 during the same period. Similarly, the incidents of standoff firing and hit and run attacks also increased from five in 2021 to 26 during the above period. As far as the recovery of IEDs (Improved Explosive Device) is concerned, three IEDs were recovered in the last year while two have been found this year till April 15, with the latest recovery on April 13 in Doda in Kashmir valley. However, the number of encounters with terrorists have increased substantially. There were nine encounters from January 1 to April 15 last year whereas there were 34 during the same period this year. Officials also said that a case of abduction was reported in this period in 2022 which was nil in 2021. Also, like the previous year, no case of arms snatching was reported in Jammu and Kashmir. According to CRPF officials, 52 terrorists have been neutralised in this period, with four of them being killed on April 14 in Shopian in Jammu and Kashmir.

Zainapora area of Jammu and Kashmir's Shopian district. There were 31 violent incidents against the security forces recorded in the period from January 1 to April 15. On April 22 morning in Sunjwan area of Jammu two Jaish-e-Muhammad ultras opened fire and lobbed grenade at a Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) bus killing one ASI and injuring several CISF personnel. Later the two JeM ultras were neutralised by the security forces.

## Hybrid LeT terrorist, accomplice arrested

**Srinagar:** A hybrid terrorist and his accomplice, planning to target labourers from outside, have been arrested from Jammu and Kashmir's Awantipora, officials said Monday. Police said on a specific input, police, along with the army and the CRPF, apprehended suspect Rayees Ahmad Mir, resident of Chandhara, and recovered one pistol along with ammunition from his possession. "During preliminary interrogation, the suspect disclosed that he received a pistol with ammunition and instructions from LeT terrorist code name Haji to attack and kill at least two outside labourers in Pampore town. Rayees was promised to be recruited as terrorist after execution of the attack," police said. Police said Mir sought aid of his friend Shakir Hamid Bhat, resident of Alochibagh Samboora, to identify the target and provide him a motorcycle for executing this terror act.



Representational Image

## 15 more SL Tamil refugees reach Rameswaram



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Chennai, April 25:** With the economic crisis continuing to loom large in Sri Lanka, 15 more Tamil refugees from the island nation reached the Indian shores Monday early morning. They have landed in Rameswaram. Tamil Nadu Coastal police received tips that some Sri Lankan refugees have landed at the mount near Rameswaram and that they were dropped off there by a fishing boat. The coastal police reached the spot and took the refugees into custody and shifted them to the Mandapam police station for further inquiry. With the Tamil Nadu government and the Central government going soft on the Tamil refugees reaching Indian shores, the refugees who reached on Monday morning will be shifted to the Mandapam refugee camp after formal inquiries and noting all the details. Notably, after the economic crisis has engulfed Sri Lanka, 75 refugees have reached the Indian shores, including pregnant women and toddlers.



SEARCH FOR SURVIVORS: Rescue operation underway after an under-construction building collapsed at Satya Niketan area in New Delhi. Two people died while four sustained injuries in the incident

PTI PHOTO

## COVID SCARE

## Gear up, TN CM tells officials



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chennai, April 25:** People wearing masks in public places must be ensured, vaccination coverage, including administering booster dose, should be stepped up, Chief Minister M K Stalin told the district Collectors on Monday in a virtual meeting.

The government machinery should be prepared to face any kind of situation, the Chief Minister advised Collectors and top State officials, amid concerns over emergence of a fourth COVID-19 wave. The Chief Minister addressed the

officials through video-conferencing from the Secretariat here. Pointing to a rise in virus cases during the past one week in Maharashtra, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh, he said that according to experts, a new sub-variant of Omicron strain was behind the spike.

"All of us should be prepared to face any kind of situation and that is my appeal," he told the Collectors and senior officials. Reiterating that vaccination is the biggest weapon against coronavirus, Stalin said it should be 'our paramount duty' to see to it that all

eligible persons are vaccinated.

Of the 6.33 crore eligible population, 74.75 per cent of them have received two doses, 91.5 per cent the first dose and 41.66 per cent the booster dose, he said.

There are 1.48 crore people who have not received the second dose of the vaccination. Also, 11.68 lakh people, though eligible, have so far not opted for the booster/precaution dose.

It is a challenge to ensure that such people are duly vaccinated in the coming weeks, he said and underscored the importance of preventing deaths due to the virus

**THE GOVERNMENT MACHINERY SHOULD BE PREPARED TO FACE ANY KIND OF SITUATION, THE CHIEF MINISTER ADVISED COLLECTORS AND TOP STATE OFFICIALS, AMID CONCERNS OVER EMERGENCE OF A FOURTH COVID-19 WAVE**

**THERE ARE 1.48 CRORE PEOPLE WHO HAVE NOT RECEIVED THE SECOND DOSE OF THE VACCINATION. ALSO, 11.68 LAKH PEOPLE, THOUGH ELIGIBLE, HAVE SO FAR NOT OPTED FOR THE BOOSTER/PRECAUTION DOSE**

**THE CHIEF MINISTER SAID ALL THE GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS, DISTRICT COLLECTORS AND OFFICIALS SHOULD TAKE ALL THE NECESSARY STEPS TOWARDS ENSURING COVID-APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR LIKE USE OF MASK**

while making sure that economic growth was not hindered and people's livelihood avenues are not affected. "You should ensure people wearing mask in public places and in locations where people congregate in large numbers."

The Chief Minister said all the government departments, district Collectors and officials should take all the necessary steps towards ensuring COVID-appropriate behaviour like use of mask.

## Himachal CM bats for UCC

Interacting with the media, Jairam Thakur said: "I think UCC is a good decision. We are examining how to implement the UCC in the context of Himachal Pradesh. A decision will be taken in the future"



**In the last four-and-a-half-years, there has not been a single allegation of corruption against our government. AAP's style of politics will not work**

JAIRAM THAKUR | HIMACHAL CM

**INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE**

**New Delhi, April 25:** Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jairam Thakur said Monday that his government is examining the possibility of implementing Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in the state.

Interacting with the media here, Thakur said: "I think UCC is a good decision. We are examining how to implement the UCC in the context of Himachal Pradesh. A decision will be taken in the future."

Thakur, however, is non-committal on whether UCC will be implemented before the Assembly polls or not. "We are not ruling out, we are examining how it will be implemented or how it can be better. We have not constituted a committee for the purpose but told the official to examine it to find out how it will be done. Decision will be made after properly studying it."

He said that after Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh started active consideration to implement UCC. Hitting out at Arvind Kejriwal's

hicle in Kejriwal's road shows. "They have failed to form a state unit after their leaders left the party and sent leaders from Punjab and Delhi to manage its affairs in Himachal Pradesh. During road shows in Mandi Kangra, no AAP leaders allowed to share 'rath' with Kejriwal. Himachal is a small state but people have self-respect and will take any insult from others," the chief minister said.

Referring to Kejriwal's promise to give corruption-free administration, Thakur said: "In the last four-and-a-half-years, there has not been a single allegation of corruption against our government. AAP's style of politics will not work there. Talking about recent Assembly polls in five states, Thakur said: "In recent Assembly polls, the BJP has formed a government in four out of five states by winning a second consecutive term. 'Riwaz Badal gaya hai' (tradition has changed) and in Himachal Pradesh also BJP will form the government for a second term."

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), Thakur said that AAP has no acceptance in Himachal Pradesh. "AAP has left nothing in the name of leadership in the state. AAP state president and its women wing state president joining BJP. AAP has nothing in the name of leadership in the state. One must understand that Himachal Pradesh never accepted a third alternative," Thakur said.

He alleged that in absence of leadership, the AAP is importing leaders from Punjab and Delhi and they insulted people of Himachal Pradesh by not allowing any of their state leaders to share the ve-

## Manali-Leh highway reopens

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Manali, April 25:** The highway that connects Manali in Himachal Pradesh with Leh has been partially reopened for traffic after remaining shut for more than five months owing to heavy snow, an official said Monday.

"The traffic between Manali and Leh has been restored for light vehicles. However, the movement of two-wheelers and trucks would be allowed later when the road be found fit," an official from the 38 Task Force of the General Reserve Engineering Force (GREF) said. GREF is a wing of the BRO that maintains crucial highways in the country. He said work to repair the entire 475-km stretch is on.

A notification by Deputy Commissioner Neeraj Kumar said that the traffic would be allowed on the Manali-Leh beyond Darcha towards Leh via Baralacha Pass every day till 1 p.m. The Manali-Leh highway winds its way through the Baralacha Pass (16,020 ft), Lachlungla Pass (16,620 ft) and Tanglangla (17,480 ft). It is crucial for the movement of the armed forces and their supplies and wares to forward areas in Ladakh.

## How bonded labourers became brick kiln owners

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Chennai, April 25:** The story of a group of villagers in Tiruvattur district of Tamil Nadu was of agony, pain and poverty and they shrug when the old bonded labour days pass through their minds. They were bonded labourers in brick kilns as well as in tree cutting for several years until they were rescued by social activists and the district administration.

Thanks to the timely help and support of the Tiruvattur district collector, Dr Alby John, 'Siragugal Bricks', a brick kiln company in which 300 former bonded labourers are owners was formed in Veeranallur village, around 80 km from Chennai.

Govindhammal (40) and her husband Venkatesh were bonded labourers for ten years in a brick kiln along with the family. They had borrowed ₹15,000 from the owner of a brick kiln who made them work for ten years until they were rescued by Ranipet RDO with the support of NGOs like IJM in 2018. They were excellent brick kiln workers but jobs were rare and most of the time the family was in dire straits.

When John joined as District



**The Tiruvattur district administration pumped in Rs 5.83 lakhs to form a Self Help Group and identified two acres of land for the brick kiln**

**This project started at the behest of a government officer can be a game-changer for several other social initiatives to come up in Tamil Nadu in the future**

Collector of Tiruvattur he conducted a study on the society and found that there were people in dire straits who did not have jobs to maintain their families. He found that they were good at brick making as well as tree cutting as some of these bonded labourers had worked as tree cutters.

He tried to do something differ-

ent for them to get a fixed income and at the same time be independent. The district collector decided to form a brick kiln company with 300 former brick kiln and tree cutting workers as joint owners under the Tamil Nadu Rural Livelihood Mission.

This led to the formation of 'Siragugal Bricks' or Bricks with Wings. Alby John said, "These people were extremely talented and we thought that we could make use of their expertise and in turn provide them a regular income and they can be independent. The government infused the working capital and they don't have

any financial burden. They are the owners of this brick kiln and they will now become financially independent and will get a steady income."

The Tiruvattur district administration pumped in ₹5.83 lakhs to form a Self Help Group and identified two acres of land for the brick kiln. Water for the brick kiln has also been arranged. John said that the bricks made by 'Siragugal Bricks' will be bought for constructing homes under the Central government's Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna leading to a regular income for the company and thereby the 300 people who are the joint owners.

Helen Barnabas, who is with the NGO, International Justice Mission (IJM) and who identified the brick kiln workers and tree cutters said, "We have identified them and had earlier rescued these people from bonded labour. The project funding for the Siragugal Bricks was done through the Tamil Nadu Rural Livelihood Mission and it was only due to the efforts of Tiruvattur district collector Alby John that the project has materialized and people who were deprived of all the basic necessities got wings."

## Inspect Mrikula Devi Temple: Himachal HC

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Shimla, April 25:** The Himachal Pradesh High Court has directed the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to constitute a team of experts within one week to inspect the beautifully carved 11th century dilapidated wooden Mrikula Devi Temple, dedicated to goddess Kali, located in the landlocked Lahaul Valley.

The court sought an estimate report for carrying out the repair, maintenance and preservation of the temple, which has immense historical importance. Listing the matter for the next hearing on May 13, it asked the ASI to ensure adequate funds and commence its maintenance work within a month.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Mohammad Rafiq and Justice Sandeep Sharma, passed this order on a writ petition taken up suo motu as public in-

terest litigation on a report of the Secretary with the District Legal Services Authority posted in Kullu, regarding the dilapidated condition of the temple. It has been reported, that the temple roof can collapse any time. One of the wooden pillars is caving in. The outer roof is falling and the colour of the temple was removed.

During the course of hearing, amicus curiae Vandana Misra produced several photographs of the temple that showed its dilapidated condition. The roof of the temple is temporarily supported by wooden planks with cracks on all sides of walls. Quoting the priest, the amicus curiae said that the temple may collapse, if not immediately repaired. Going by the ASI status report, the court expressed displeasure and observed that the pace at which the respondents are proceeding would surely endanger the existence of the structure.

## Haphazard realty boom threatens ecological balance

**In the state capital most of the buildings are "precariously hanging" on the steep slopes and clinging to one another and are in danger of collapsing like a pack of cards with a moderate intensity temblor**

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Shimla, April 25:** Rampant construction by realtors and amendments to land laws from time to time to attract non-residents have created a concrete jungle across Himachal Pradesh's once scenic towns, starting with its capital Shimla, the erstwhile summer capital of British India.

Geologists warn that this can't be good for the mountains and may amplify ecological risk. Section 118 of the Himachal Pradesh Tenancy and Land Reforms Act of 1972 provides for restriction on transfer of land in favour of a person who is not an agriculturist of the state, even state residents.

This section and rules there have been amended from time to time to further the basic intention behind its enactment of protecting the interests of local inhabitants while ensuring that the development of

the state is not hampered, claims the government.

Contrary to this, the desire to buy an ultra-luxury cottage or a flat in the idyllic settings has been attracting a stream of rich who largely own a piece of paradise to escape the hell of summer and to enjoy a snowy landscape in winter in the hills. And this helps the realtors building business.

In the state capital most of the buildings are "precariously hanging" on the steep slopes and clinging to one another and are in danger of collapsing like a pack of cards with a moderate intensity temblor. This can be catastrophic for congested settlements like Sanjauli, Hira Nagar and Ladakhi Mohalla that could take a heavy toll on lives.

The successive Congress and BJP governments kept on amending the existing Interim Development Plan prepared for Shimla planning area in 1979 just for political gains and are least bothered to set in place a scientific development plan, say local residents.

Planned for a maximum population of 16,000, Shimla now supports 236,000 people, as per the provisional figures of the 2011 census. Under the state's land laws, outsiders who want to purchase a house or a cottage from a builder whose project lies within the municipal limits do not have to seek individual permission under section 118 of the tenancy and land reforms law from the government.



It's the builder who will procure all the permissions. But if a housing project is outside the municipal limits, each buyer of a house or a flat or a cottage has to seek normal permission from the Deputy Commissioner concerned, a revenue official said.

"If you are buying the land in chunk, then only permission from the state cabinet is required under Section 118. In most cases, it is granted to the colonisers only," the official added.

Even non-agriculturists in

Himachal Pradesh seeking to buy property other than what is offered by the Himachal Pradesh Housing and Urban Development Authority (HIMUDA) outside the municipal limits will have to seek permission from the government.

The Himachal Pradesh Town and Country Planning (Amendment) Act 2013 enables the builders to construct and sell flats under various categories. A two BHK flat in Shimla, Kasauli and Dharamsala towns is currently selling for approximately ₹40-Rs

55 lakh, depending upon the location of the property, drive-in facility and availability of the sun. A three BHK is over ₹65 lakh.

In picturesque Dharamsala, famed as the abode of Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama and located in the backdrop of the mighty Dhauladhar range, a two BHK flat costs from ₹35-Rs 45 lakh, while a three BHK flat is from ₹55-₹75 lakh.

A plot in Dharamsala costs from ₹3 lakh to ₹20 lakh per marla, say real estate representatives.



# national

of the day quote

**CONGRATULATIONS TO MY FRIEND EMMAUUEL MACRON ON BEING RE-ELECTED AS THE PRESIDENT OF FRANCE! I LOOK FORWARD TO CONTINUE WORKING TOGETHER TO DEEPEN THE INDIA-FRANCE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP**

**NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER**

**THERE IS A SAYING: RUNNING WITH THE HARE AND HUNTING WITH THE HOUNDS. YOU CANNOT HAVE A DUAL ROLE. YOU (TAMILISAI SOUNDARARAJAN) CAN'T BE TELANGANA BJP LEADER AND AT THE SAME TIME A GOVERNOR**

**KT RAMA RAO | TELANGANA CABINET MINISTER**

**IF EFFORTS ARE MADE TO SPREAD HATRED AGAINST COMMUNITIES OR CLASSES, ADVERSE EFFECTS WOULD BE SEEN IN SOCIETY. MAHARASHTRA NEVER EXPERIENCED THIS (KIND OF SITUATION). OF LATE, SUCH THINGS ARE HAPPENING. I AM SURPRISED OVER THIS**

**SHARAD PAWAR | NCP CHIEF**

## SHORT TAKES

### Malaria deaths in Meghalaya drop

**Shillong:** With malaria deaths in Meghalaya dropping from 40 in 2015 to just three last year, the state government is now moving from the intensified control phase to the elimination phase of the disease, officials said Tuesday. Only 27 malaria deaths were reported in the entire state in the past five years from 2017 onwards, they said.

### Dalit couple denied entry into temple

**Jalore:** While the country is celebrating 'Amrit Mahotsav' on the completion of 75 years of Independence, societal evils like untouchability and social boycott still exist here. Recently, a newly married Dalit couple in Rajasthan's Jalore district was not only stopped from entering a temple here, but were also publicly humiliated. The police have registered a case in this regard. Ukaram Rathod from Sadan village of Ahor tehsil had come to Neelkanth village under Bhadrakun police station here, to marry Santu.

### Chandigarh makes masks compulsory

**Chandigarh:** The Chandigarh administration Monday made a mask compulsory in a closed environment, and non-compliance of the order would invite a fine of Rs 500. The closed environment comprises public transport buses, taxis, cinema halls, malls, shops, educational institutes, all government and private offices and all type of indoor gatherings.

### B'lore records 1.9% Covid positivity rate

**Bangalore:** The Karnataka government is all set to strictly impose Covid guidelines in the state against the backdrop of fear of Covid's fourth wave as cases rise in Bangalore and elsewhere, Health Minister K Sudhakar said Monday. After attending the high-level meeting chaired by CM Basavaraj Bommai, he said that the Covid infection in Bangalore is increasing and steps would be taken to contain the situation.

### Delhi: Over 35 shanties gutted

**New Delhi:** More than 35 shanties were gutted after a fire broke out in a slum in southeast Delhi's Jamia Nagar Monday, officials said. There were no human casualties in the incident, they said. A call about the fire in a slum cluster in Batla House area was received at 3:15 pm and 11 fire tenders were rushed to the spot.



**Jammu and Kashmir despite being a Muslim majority state joined a secular country where people belonging to all religions live together, but that is not the case now. Muslims are feeling low now**

**MEHBOOBA MUFTI | FORMER J&K CHIEF MINISTER**

## MATTER OF CONCERN

The number of coronavirus patients in home isolation in the national capital has seen an over six-fold increase from 447 April 11 to 2,812 April 24, according to official data. The number of patients admitted in hospitals also increased from 17 to 80 during the period. However, the Delhi government has assured people that despite the rise in cases, the hospitalisation rate has remained low



# GOVT BLOCKS 16 YT NEWS CHANNELS

*The blocked YouTube channels account had a cumulative viewership of over 68 crore and were spreading false, unverified information to create panic, incite communal disharmony and disturb public order*

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, April 25:** The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has blocked 16 YouTube news channels, including six Pakistan and ten India based channels having a cumulative viewership of over 68 crore, for spreading disinformation related to the country's national security, foreign relations and public order. The ministry also blocked one Facebook account. "It was observed that these channels were used to spread fake news over social media on matters related to national security, India's foreign relations, communal harmony in the country, and public order. None of the digital news publishers had furnished information to the Ministry as required under rule 18 of the IT Rules, 2021," the I&B ministry said.



of situation in Ukraine, etc," the ministry said.

It said that the content of these channels was observed to be completely false, and sensitive from the perspective of national security, sovereignty and integrity of India, and India's friendly relations with foreign states.

Multiple India based YouTube channels were observed to publish unverified news and videos having the potential to create panic among various sections of the society. Examples include false claims related to announcement of a pan-India lockdown due to Covid-19 thereby threatening the migrant workers, and fabricated claims alleging threats to certain religious communities, etc. Such content was observed to be detrimental to public order in the country.

On April 23, the ministry had also advised private TV news channels against making false claims and using scandalous headlines. "The Government of India remains committed to ensure a safe and secure information environment in India across print, television and online media," the ministry added.

Utilizing the emergency powers under the IT Rules, 2021, the Ministry vide two separate orders on April 22, issued directions for blocking of 16 YouTube based news channels and one Facebook account.

The ministry noted that the content published by some of the India based YouTube channels referred to a community as terrorists, and incited hatred among the members of various religious communities. Such content was found to have the potential to create communal disharmony, and disturb public order.

"YouTube channels based in Pakistan were found to have been used in a coordinated manner to post fake news about India on various subjects such as the Indian Army, Jammu and Kashmir, and India's foreign relations in the light

# India, EU to launch Trade & Tech Council

**IT WILL BE THE SECOND TRADE AND TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL INVOLVING THE 27-NATION EUROPEAN UNION AFTER ITS FIRST ONE WITH THE US**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 25:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen agreed Monday to launch the EU-India Trade and Technology Council, a strategic coordination mechanism to tackle challenges at the nexus of trade, trusted technology and security.

Besides holding talks with the prime minister, the visiting European leader also met President Ram Nath Kovind.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen during a meeting

"Today, our relationship is more important than ever. We have so much in common. We are vibrant

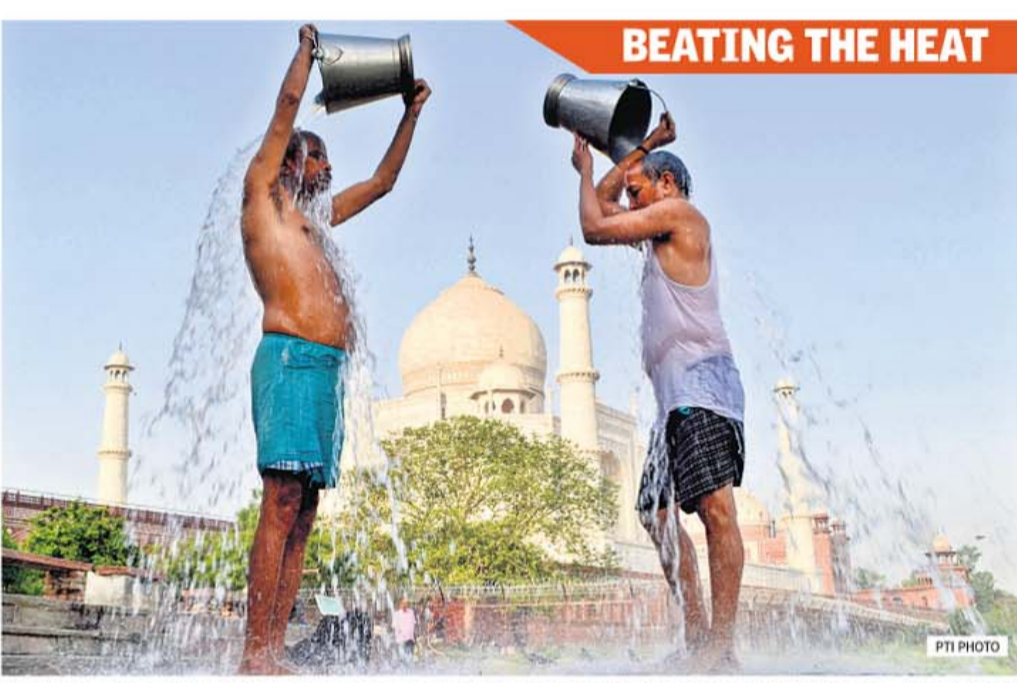
democracies, we both support wholeheartedly the rules-based international order and we have both

large economies, and we are both facing a challenging global landscape," von der Leyen said in her opening remarks at the meeting with Modi. "For the European Union, the partnership with India is one of our most important relationships for the coming decade and strengthening this partnership is a priority," she added.

The European Commission president said she was glad that both sides are starting negotiations toward comprehensive trade and investment agreements.

The European Union said the EU-India Trade and Technology Council will allow both partners to tackle challenges "at the nexus of trade, trusted technology and security, and thus deepen cooperation in these fields."

It said both sides agreed that the rapid changes in the geopolitical environment highlight the need for joint in-depth strategic engagement.



Two men cool themselves with water on a summer day at the Dussehra Ghat behind the Taj Mahal in Agra, Uttar Pradesh

## Apex court stops demolition of jhuggis at Sarojini Nagar

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, April 25:** The Supreme Court Monday stopped demolition of around 200 jhuggis at Sarojini Nagar area in Delhi, saying a model government should take humane approach as fundamental rights are involved.

The top court said no coercive action will be taken by the authorities till the next date of hearing, and scheduled the case for hearing on next Monday.

The top court sought central government response on the slum dwellers' prayer that there shall be no demolition without proper relief and rehabilitation plan.

A bench comprising Justices KM Joseph and Hrishikesh Roy said: "No coercive action. List on Monday." At the outset senior advocate Vikas Singh, representing the residents of jhuggis, submitted that some scheme should be there to rehabilitate the nearly a 1,000 people, which include school going children. Singh said, "They cannot be asked to vanish in the air." Additional Solicitor General KM Nataraj, representing the Centre, contended that somebody has taken over a government land, and enrolled as a voter can get a right to stay. Justice Joseph noted that the government notice said that "hand over the land to the government", and told Nataraj the whole idea is that they have been residing there and the government should deal with people humanly. "When you deal with them, as a model government, you can't say you won't have a policy and simply throw them away. You're dealing with families..." he added. The bench noted that some people have been living on the land in contention since 1995.

Justice Roy said this case has implications on all people and queried Nataraj, "Should it be that only two persons before court are protected and others aren't?" The top court, citing a Delhi High Court judgment, noted that each jhuggi person has individual right, which goes to the fundamental rights.

# SC to hear pleas against Article 370 repeal after summer vacation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 25:** The Supreme Court Monday agreed to consider listing after summer vacation the pleas challenging the Centre's decision to abrogate provisions of Article 370 which had given special status to Jammu and Kashmir.

A bench comprising Chief Justice N V Ramana and Justice Hima Kohli took note of the submissions of senior advocate Shekhar Naphade, appearing for one of the petitioners, that the plea needed an urgent hearing in view of the delimitation exercise being carried out in the state.

"This is the Article 370 matter. The delimitation is also going on," the senior lawyer, appearing for interveners Radha Kumar (academic and author) and Kapil Kak (retired officer of the Indian Air Force), said. "Let me see," the CJI said, adding, "This is a five-judge matter. I will have to reconstitute the bench." The apex court agreed to re-constitute a five-judge bench



hear pleas after summer vacation. Several petitions challenging the Centre's decision to abrogate provisions of Article 370 and the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, which splits J&K into two Union Territories — Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh — were referred to a larger bench on the ground that two judgements of the apex court — Prem Nath Kaul versus Jammu and Kashmir in 1959 and Sampat Prakash versus Jammu and Kashmir in 1970 — which dealt with the issue of Article 370 were conflicted each other and therefore, the current bench of five judges could not hear the issue. Disagreeing with the petitioners, the bench had said it was of the opinion that "there is no conflict between the judgements". The five-judge bench, which would hear the pleas, will have to be reconstituted as Justice Reddy has retired in January this year.

which, on March 2, 2020, had declined to refer to a larger seven-judge bench the batch of petitions challenging the constitutional validity of the Centre's decision to abrogate provisions of Article 370 August 5, 2019. NGO, People's Union of Civil Liberties (PUCIL), Jammu and Kashmir High Court Bar Association, and an intervenor had sought referring of the matter to a larger bench on the ground that two judgements of the apex court — Prem Nath Kaul versus Jammu and Kashmir in 1959 and Sampat Prakash versus Jammu and Kashmir in 1970 — which dealt with the issue of Article 370 were conflicted each other and therefore, the current bench of five judges could not hear the issue. Disagreeing with the petitioners, the bench had said it was of the opinion that "there is no conflict between the judgements". The five-judge bench, which would hear the pleas, will have to be reconstituted as Justice Reddy has retired in January this year.

## Top court junks plea against mandatory vax for students



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, April 25:** The Supreme Court Monday declined to entertain a plea challenging a Karnataka government order, which made Covid-19 vaccination mandatory for students and staff for physical attendance in educational institutions.

A bench of Justices DY Chandrachud and Surya Kant said this is a matter where the court should not interfere. "We will not entertain this. Take your vaccine in wider national interest, there are some matters, where we should not interfere," said Justice Chandrachud. As the bench queried the petitioner's reason for not getting vaccinated, counsel for petitioner Sushma S. Aradhya, insisted that his client has faith in Ayurveda and does not believe in allopathic medicines. At the outset, the bench

**The Karnataka High Court had ordered that no student, 18 years and above, teacher or staff can be permitted to attend school or college unless they have received at least one dose of Covid vaccine**

told the counsel that the high court order regarding the vaccination was passed last year in December, and what is the difficulty in taking the vaccine? The counsel replied that his client was observing social distancing and wearing a mask, but her faith is in Ayurveda. After a brief hearing in the matter, the bench declined to interfere with the Karnataka HC order, which came on a challenge to a government circular issued in July last year by a group of students and teachers of an Ayurveda college, who claimed it is coercive in nature and violative of their fundamental rights.

# 'India's military spending 3rd highest in the world'

*Amid ongoing tensions and border disputes with China and Pakistan that occasionally spill over into armed clashes, India has prioritised modernisation of its armed forces and self-reliance in arms production*

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, April 25:** India's military spending of \$76.6 billion ranked third highest in the world followed by the US and China, stated Sweden based think-tank — Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) — in its report published on Monday.

The report stated that India's military spending was up by 0.9 per cent from 2020 and by 33 per cent from 2012. In a push to strengthen the indigenous arms industry, 64 per cent of capital outlays in the military budget of 2021 were earmarked for acquisitions of domestically produced arms.

"China, the world's second largest spender, allocated an estimated \$293 billion to its military in 2021, an in-

crease of 4.7% from 2020 and 7% from 2012," the report said.

The militaries of India and China have been in a border standoff in eastern Ladakh for the last 23 months following a violent clash in the Pangong lake areas May 5, 2020. Each side currently has around 50,000 to 60,000 troops deployed along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

"India's military expenditure of \$76.6 billion in 2021 was the third highest in the world. Its spending was up by 0.9% from 2020 and by 33% from 2012," the report issued by the Stockholm-based defence think-tank said.

In a drive to strengthen the indigenous arms industry, 64 per cent of capital outlays in the 2021 Indian military budget was earmarked for acquisitions of domestically-

produced arms, the report said. "The five largest military spenders in 2021 were the United States, China, India, the United Kingdom and Russia, which together accounted for 62 per cent of world military spending. The USA and China alone accounted for 52 per cent," it mentioned.

According to the report, military spending in Asia and Oceania totalled \$586 billion in 2021.

"Spending in the region was 3.5% higher than in 2020, continuing an uninterrupted upward trend dating back to at least 1989," the report said. "The increase in 2021 was due primarily to growth in Chinese and Indian military spending. Together, the two countries accounted for 63 per cent of total military expenditure in the region in 2021," the report

added. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh had, April 21, said the ongoing talks with China for a peaceful resolution of the eastern Ladakh row will continue and that the disengagement of the troops and de-escalation of the situation is the way forward. In an address at the biannual Army Commanders' Conference, Singh had also said the Indian troops are standing firm, braving extreme weather and hostile forces, to defend the country's territorial integrity.

In the backdrop of the Russia-Ukraine war, he had asked the top Army commanders to prepare for every possible security challenge that India may face in the future, including that of unconventional and asymmetric warfare.



# international

## of the day quote

The country's current situation is "disturbing and worrying" and the incumbent Shehbaz Sharif-led government will be the "shortest one" in Islamabad's history

I'd like to appeal to all people in Cambodia to get their third doses in order to strengthen herd immunity and ensure that our full reopening will not see any setbacks

The Covid-19 pandemic has taught Singapore valuable lessons "for which we have paid dearly", lessons that must not go to waste

## SHORT TAKES

### Nawaz Sharif issued passport

Islamabad: The Pakistan government Monday issued a new passport to former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to return back to Pakistan, Express Tribune reported. Nawaz Sharif was barred by the Supreme Court in 2017 from holding public office and subsequently went abroad for medical treatment after serving just a few months of a 10-year jail sentence on corruption charges. He has been living in London for the last two years since being let out of jail.

### Two dead in plane crash

Ankara: A single-engine airplane crashed into a neighbourhood in northwestern Bursa province and burst into flames Monday, killing its pilot and a trainee pilot. The plane, which was used for flight training, slammed into a street in the Baglarbasi neighbourhood near the province's Yunuseli Airport, Gov. Yakup Canbolat said. No one was hurt on the ground. Huseyin Gumusoy, the neighborhood's administrator, told NTV television that two homes and five cars were damaged in the crash.

### Four Indians killed in Nepal

Kathmandu: Four Indian tourists were among five people who were killed after their car collided head-on with a bus in Nepal's Dhading district, the police said Monday. The accident occurred Sunday night along the Prithvi Highway in the Thakre area, police said. The four Indian nationals were returning to Kathmandu after visiting Pokhara, a scenic city some 200 km from Kathmandu. The deceased have been identified as Bimalchandra Agrawal, 40, Sadhana Agrawal, 35, Sandhya Agrawal, 40, Rakesh Agrawal, 55, from Uttar Pradesh. They died while undergoing treatment in a local hospital.

### Quake jolts Indonesia

Jakarta: A 5.7-magnitude earthquake jolted Indonesia's eastern Papua province Monday, according to authorities. The quake occurred at 6.50 a.m., with the epicenter at 43 km southwest of Keerom district and the depth at 87 km under-earth, Xinhua news agency quoted the authorities as saying. The intensity of the quake was felt at III to IV MMI (Modified Mercalli Intensity) in Keerom district and Jayapura, the capital of the province, they added.

UN member states, by ratifying or accepting the UN Charter, have committed themselves to the values of multilateralism and diplomacy for peace



ANTONIO GUTERRES | UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

WORLD'S OLDEST PERSON DIES The world's oldest person from the southwestern Japanese city of Fukuoka died at the age of 119 April 19, the government said Monday. Kane Tanaka was born January 2 in 1903, the year Wright Brothers -- Wilbur and Orville Wright -- made the world's first successful flight of powered aircraft, Japan's Kyodo news agency reported



# US promises more Ukraine aid

Kyiv, April 25: The United States will reopen its embassy in Ukraine soon, its top diplomat said Monday after he and the US defense secretary visited Kyiv, promising more military aid and hailing the fight against Russia's invasion.

Both Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said the fact were able to come to Ukraine's capital was proof of its tenacity in forcing Moscow to abandon an assault on Kyiv last month.

"What you've done in repelling the Russians in the battle of Kyiv is extraordinary and inspiring quite frankly to the rest of the world," Austin told President Volodymyr Zelenskyy at a meeting overnight after a train journey from Poland. "We are here to support you in any way possible."

"In terms of Russia's war aims, Russia has already failed and Ukraine has already succeeded," Blinken told a briefing in Poland on their way back. Austin said: "We want to see Russia weakened to the degree that it can't do the kinds of things that it has done in invading Ukraine."

U.S. officials said Austin and Blinken pledged new assistance worth \$713 million for Ukraine



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken shake hands before a meeting, as Russia's attack on Ukraine continues in Kyiv

and other countries in the region. An extra \$322 million in military aid for Ukraine would take the total U.S. security assistance since the invasion to about \$3.7 billion, one official said. It would help Ukraine's armed forces transition to more advanced weapons and air defence systems that were essentially NATO-compatible, the official added.

Russia's ambassador in Washington said Moscow had sent a diplomatic note demanding a halt to U.S. arms shipments to Ukraine. Russia has consistently denied intending to overthrow Ukraine's

government. Western countries say that was its objective from the outset but it failed in the face of Ukrainian resistance.

Just weeks ago, Kyiv was a frontline city under curfew and bombardment, with tens of thousands of Russian troops massing on its northern outskirts and residents sheltering from artillery in its metro stations.

Today, the nearest Russian troops are hundreds of miles away, normal life is returning to the capital. Western leaders have been visiting and countries are reopening their embassies.

# No-trust vote against SL govt on the cards

In a letter to the powerful Buddhist clergy, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa said that while he respects the advice of the clergy, the changes, if any, in the system of governance must be made in line with the specified constitutional provisions



The street protest opposite the presidential secretariat entered its seventeenth day Monday, demanding the resignations of Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Mahinda Rajapaksa

Colombo, April 25: A Sri Lankan dissident lawmaker, fired by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa from the Cabinet for his critical views, claimed Monday that the Opposition has crossed the 113-mark required to win a no-trust motion against the government in the 225-member Parliament.

President Gotabaya, facing fierce public protests against his government's mishandling of the country's worst economic crisis, had said that he would hand over the government to any group that could muster 113 seats but would not step down from the presidency.

Udaya Gammanpila, who held the energy ministry portfolio before being sacked by Gotabaya Rajapaksa along with industry minister Wimal Weerawansa for openly criticising then finance minister and the president's younger brother Basil Rajapaksa, is advocating an all-party interim government with the resignation of prime minister Mahinda Rajapaksa.

Gammanpila said that with enough numbers of MPs breaking away from the government and with support from the main Opposition Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB), Marxist Janatha Vikramuthi Peramuna (JVP) and the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), they are assured of winning the no-trust vote.

"We told the SJB to wait till we could get 113, now we have 120," he claimed. The SJB, which started collecting signatures to move a no-

confidence motion against the government in early April, appeared to have abandoned the effort due to uncertainty of numbers.

Meanwhile, in a letter to the powerful Buddhist clergy, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa said that while he respects the advice of the clergy, the changes, if any, in the system of governance must be made in line with the specified constitutional provisions.

The committee he had appointed to formulate a draft Constitution had given its report after two years of work, he told the monks. Although the monks claimed that Rajapaksa had agreed to form an interim government, the letter makes no direct reference to the monks' request to do so.

Rajapaksa told the monks that he had formed a younger Cabinet after the Opposition failed to respond to his invitation to form a unity Cabinet. The four Buddhist chapters - Malwathu, Asgiri, Amarapura and Ramanya chapters - wield power to influence Sri Lanka's political leaders.

Thousands of demonstrators have hit the streets since April 9, as the government ran out of money for vital imports.

# BEIJING BEGINS MASS TESTING

Beijing/Shanghai, April 25: Beijing Monday began mass COVID-19 testing of over 3.5 million people in one of the city's high-profile districts following a spike in cases, while Shanghai reported a record 51 deaths in a day as the eastern metropolis continued to grapple with the Omicron variant for the fourth week.

Beijing's local government has ordered Chaoyang district, home to some 3.5 million residents, to have three rounds of mass nucleic acid testing starting from Monday after the district registered the most COVID-19 cases in the capital's latest epidemic surge, official media reported.

The test applies to those who are living and working in the district, which will be conducted respectively on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, the Chaoyang disease prevention and control leading team said in a notice on Sunday.

According to China's National Health Commission report released on Monday, Beijing reported 14 cases on Sunday of which 11 of them were in Chaoyang district which is the central part of the city where the top Chinese leadership resides. The Chinese mainland on Sunday reported over 20,190 cases, majority of them being asymptomatic cases.

Shanghai, a vast city of 26 million people, has reported 2,472 positive cases and 16,983 asymptomatic cases.

Sunday, the city's COVID-19 death toll crossed 100 in the current outbreak.

The city reported 51 deaths on Sunday, the highest in a single day, taking the toll to 138.

# CARNIVAL AND COLOURS



A reveller from Unidos da Tijuca samba school performs during the second night of the Carnival parade at the Sambadrome in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

# Israel strikes southern Lebanon

Jerusalem, April 25: Israeli tanks fired into southern Lebanon early on Monday in response to a rocket fired from the country, the Israeli military said.

The incident along Israel's northern border comes at a time of heightened tensions between Israelis and Palestinians. Recent weeks have seen a string of deadly attacks inside Israel, lethal arrest raids by Israel in the occupied West Bank and rocket attacks into Israel launched from the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip, as well as clashes in a key Jerusalem holy site.

# Taliban shifting terrorists: Report

Islamabad, April 25: The Taliban-led government in Afghanistan has started taking steps to shift terrorist groups away from the regions bordering Pakistan following a series of recent cross-border attacks that killed nearly a dozen Pakistani soldiers and prompted a strong reaction from Islamabad, a media report said Monday.

Pakistan, in recent months, has been increasingly frustrated by the Taliban government's reluctance to eliminate the terrorist groups, including the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).



The Taliban leadership is not ready to take action partly because these groups fought alongside the Taliban against the US-led foreign forces and also share the same ideology. A senior Pakistani official familiar with the development told The Express Tribune on Sunday that after the recent spate of cross-border attacks, Pakistan

conveyed in clear terms to the Taliban leadership to take action against the terrorist groups or face the consequences.

"Some of the groups have already been moved out of our border regions," said the senior official, who deals with the issue. Pakistan though does not agree with the approach, it accepts the Taliban's decision to at least stop the immediate cross-border attacks, said the official who did not want to be identified.

"Our demand is clear that these groups must be eliminated or dealt with in a manner that they never pose threat to us again," the report quoted the official as saying.

# No respite for Macron as parliamentary elections loom

Paris, April 25: French President Emmanuel Macron enjoyed no respite from his political opponents Monday as, hours after he won re-election by defeating the far-right's Marine Le Pen, radical parties called on voters to deny him a parliamentary majority.

Macron, who pledged to work harder as a unifying force in a divided country, said his second mandate would be different after his sometimes high-handed manner alienated many voters during his first term in office. But he will now need to win again in legislative elections in June. If he fails to do that, he will struggle to push forward with his pro-business agenda, including unpopular plans to push back the retirement age. Senior politicians on the far left and far right urged the electorate to put a stop to those reforms.

"Don't leave all the power in Emmanuel Macron's hands," said Jordan Bardella, a close Le Pen ally, urging voters to back the far-right National Rally in the two-stage parliamentary vote on June 12 and 19.

"If you want men and women who will... protect you from the brutality of Emmanuel Macron's policies, you must elect hordes of National Rally lawmakers," Sebastien Chenu, a spokesman for Le Pen, told BFM TV. France's unemployment rate dropped to its lowest in 13 years during Macron's first mandate, and its economy outperformed other big European countries as well as the broader euro zone.

But his pro-business and security reforms triggered much discontent, and Macron acknowledged in a low-key victory speech that many had voted for him mainly to thwart his far-right challenger. The hard left's Jean-Luc Melenchon, who came third, just



French President Emmanuel Macron reacts on stage next to his wife, French first lady Brigitte Macron, after being re-elected as President, following the results in the second round of the 2022 French Presidential election, during his victory rally at the Champ de Mars in Paris, France

behind Le Pen, in the presidential election's first round, said Macron had been elected "by default." "Don't give up," he told his supporters. "You can beat Macron (in the parliament elections) and choose a

different path."

## COHABITATION RISK

In recent French legislative ballots, the president's party has always won a majority in parliament.

French President gets 58% in win over Le Pen - final tally

Far right takes biggest ever share of runoff vote

Macron acknowledges many voted for him to keep Le Pen out

Eyes turn to parliamentary election in June

Radical opponents urge voters to ditch Macron then

Should the outcome be different this time, Macron would have little choice but to name a prime minister from another party, ushering in what has traditionally been a tense period of cohabitation during which presidential powers are severely curbed. During a cohabitation, the president remains the head of the armed forces and retains some foreign policy influence but

the government has responsibility for most other day-to-day matters of state and policy.

"The recomposition of the French political landscape is not over. The majority that emerges from the parliamentary elections will be decisive for economic policy," said Amundi Chief Investment Officer Vincent Mortier.

Final results of Sunday's runoff showed Macron won 58.54% of the vote. While a clear win, the result also gave the far right its biggest share of the presidential ballot on record. Macron and his allies pledged to govern differently and listen more to voters, hoping it will help them win a majority in parliament.

"Many in this country voted for me not because they support my ideas but to keep out those of the far-right. I want to thank them and know I owe them a debt in the years to come," Macron said in his late-night speech.

# business



**We are confident that the economy can retain a high growth trajectory this year**  
TV NARENDRAN | CII PRESIDENT

## DUCATI LAUNCHES MULTISTRADA V2

Premium motorcycle maker Ducati Monday announced the launch of its Multistrada V2 range bikes in the domestic market. Available starting Monday at the Ducati dealerships across India, the Multistrada V2 is priced at ₹14.65 lakh while the Multistrada V2 S starts at ₹16.65 lakh (both prices ex-showroom India), the company said in a statement.



### of the day quote

Our partnership with BPCL is yet another step to strengthening the EV charging infrastructure in India to energise and enhance customer confidence in EVs

RAJEEV CHABA | MG MOTOR INDIA PRESIDENT

B2B partnerships will enable the EV industry to exchange and utilize partner expertise and strengths to work toward the Zero-Emission vision.

SOHINDER GILL | HERO ELECTRIC CEO

We have proved as a nation, as a people that we see a value in strong government and there is a direct opportunity between that and economic growth

RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR | UNION MINISTER

## LIC IPO to open May 4



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 25:** The initial public offering of the country's largest insurer LIC will open May 4 and close May 9, sources said.

The IPO, through which the government will sell 3.5 per cent stake in state-owned Life Insurance Corporation (LIC), will fetch Rs 21,000 crore to the exchequer. The IPO values LIC at Rs 6 lakh crore.

The government had in February planned to sell 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.

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

LIC IPO would contribute a major chunk to the budgeted disinvestment proceeds in the current fiscal. The government has pegged disinvestment receipts at Rs 65,000 crore in the current financial year, up from Rs 13,531 crore mopped up last fiscal.

## 'Hiking interest rates to tame inflation is not anti-national'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 25:** Former RBI governor Raghuram Rajan Monday said the central bank will have to raise interest rates to tame inflation and the hikes need not be considered as some 'anti-national' activity.

Known for his frank views, Rajan also said it was important to remember that the 'war against inflation' is never over.

"Inflation is up in India. At some point, the RBI will have to raise rates, like the rest of the world is doing," he said in a LinkedIn post.

Costlier food items pushed the retail inflation to a 17-month high of 6.95 per cent in March, above the upper tolerance level of the RBI, while the wholesale price-based inflation rose to a four-month peak of 14.55 per cent, mainly due to hardening of crude oil and commodity prices.

"... Politicians and bureaucrats will have to understand that the rise in policy rates is not some anti-national activity benefiting foreign investor, but is an investment in economic stability, whose greatest beneficiary is the Indian state," he emphasised. Rajan is currently a professor at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business.

Earlier this month, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) kept borrowing costs unchanged at a record low for the 11th time in a row in a bid to continue supporting economic growth despite inflation ed-



**Inflation is up in India. At some point, the RBI will have to raise rates, like the rest of the world is doing**  
RAGHURAM RAJAN | EX-RBI GOVERNOR

ing higher: While the RBI has raised the retail inflation projection for the current financial year to 5.7 per cent from the earlier forecast of 4.5 per cent, the benchmark interest rate was retained at 4 per cent.

Addressing criticism that higher rates held back the economy during his term, Rajan said he became RBI governor with a three-year term in September 2013 when India had a full-blown currency crisis with the rupee in a free fall.

"Inflation was at 9.5 per cent then, the RBI raised the repo rate from 7.25 per cent in September 2013 to 8 per cent to quell inflation. As inflation came down, we cut the repo rate by 150 basis points to 6.5 per cent," he recalled.

The eminent economist said: "We also signed on to an inflation targeting framework with the government." While noting that these actions not only helped stabilise the economy and the rupee, he said between August 2013 and August 2016, "inflation came down from 9.5 per cent to 5.3 per cent." Rajan said today, foreign reserves have climbed to over USD 600 billion, allowing the RBI to calm financial markets even as oil prices have climbed.

"Recall that the crisis in 1990-91, when we had to approach the IMF, was precipitated by higher oil prices. The RBI's sound economic management has helped ensure this has not happened this time," he noted.

## Air India loses preferential access to bilateral rights

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 25:** Tata Group-owned Air India has lost its preferential access to bilateral rights that are needed to operate flights to another country, according to a circular issued by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).

Air India had preferential access to bilateral rights, which are granted under air services agreements signed between two countries - as it was a government-owned national carrier.

However, the Tata Group took control of Air India January 27, after successfully winning the bid for the airline October 8 last year.

Clause 3.6 of the previous DGCA circular stated, "Due consideration shall be given to the operational plans submitted by Air India Limited before allocation of the traffic rights to the other eligible applicants."

The fresh DGCA circular, which was issued April 19, removed the clause.

"The central government may at its discretion grant or deny allocation of traffic rights to any air transport undertaking having regard to its preparedness to undertake such operations, viability of the operations on a particular route, overall interests of the civil aviation sector etc.," the fresh circular read.

## MCL sets safety target of zero accident level

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sambalpur/Talcher, April 25:** OP Singh, Chairman-cum-Managing Director, Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) has expressed on further strengthening of safety standards in the operational areas and said that the company should aim at achieving zero accident level at the workplace.

Presiding over the Annual Mines Safety Fortnight's awards distribution ceremony hosted by Jagannath Area in Talcher Coalfields last evening, Singh appreciated DGMS for their consistent support and regular monitoring of safety standards, helping MCL in minimizing risks of accidents at the coal mines.

He said MCL was also committed to raise the living as well as workplace standards of employees, particularly at unit level.

Chief guest on the occasion, Parvat Kumar, Director General, DGMS spoke about new mining regulations. Regular bi-partite and tripartite meetings are potent knowledge sharing platforms on safety standards, he added.

Functional Directors of MCL, senior officers of DGMS, members of JCC, Safety & Welfare board and a large number of employees attended the function.

The dignitaries also gave away prizes to the winners of various competitions organised during the Annual Safety Fortnight.



### SHORT TAKES

#### Bol plans ₹2,500cr equity capital raise

**New Delhi:** State-owned Bank of India (BoI) Monday said it will raise up to ₹2,500 crore by issuing fresh equity shares in order to comply with the minimum public shareholding requirement of 25 per cent. "The board of directors of the bank at its meeting held on April 25, 2022, considered and approved the capital raising plan up to ₹2,500 crore by issuing fresh equity capital in the form of QIP/FPO/preferential issue," Bol said in a regulatory filing. The main purpose of the capital raising plan is to increase the minimum public shareholding from the present 18.59 per cent to 25 per cent or above in order to comply with the minimum public shareholding requirements as per the Sebi rules, it added.

#### Akasa Air to start ops in July

**New Delhi:** The commercial flight operations of Rakesh Jhunjhunwala-backed Akasa Air will be launched in July instead of June. "As we get closer to the airline launch date, we can now confirm refined estimates on our timelines. We expect our first aircraft delivery by early June 2022, with the intention to start commercial operations in July 2022," Vinay Dube, CEO, Akasa Air, told PTI. Importantly, there will be no impact on "later aircraft induction" and Akasa Air remains on plan to fly 18 aircraft by the end of March 2023, said Dube, who is also Founder and Managing Director of the carrier. March 26, Dube had at an aviation event said that the airline is planning to launch its commercial operations in June.

#### TVS Motor pact with PETRONAS

**New Delhi:** TVS Motor Company Monday said it has joined hands with PETRONAS whereby the energy company will become the title partner of TVS Racing, the country's first factory racing team. Rebranded as PETRONAS TVS Racing Team, the outfit will don a new livery as part of the alliance effective this season. PETRONAS is also set to supply its high-performance engine oil, PETRONAS Sprinta to the team which will participate in road-racing, supercross, and rally formats of racing, including the Indian National Motorcycle Racing Championship, Indian National Supercross Championship, and Indian National Rally Championship. "PETRONAS comes with many progressive technological solutions, backed by significant wins in prominent racing events," TVS Motor Company CEO KN Radhakrishnan said.

## India's Russian oil purchases since war more than double 2021 total

REUTERS

**New Delhi, April 25:** India has bought more than twice as much crude oil from Russia in the two months since its invasion of Ukraine as it did in the whole of 2021, according to Reuters calculations, as Indian refiners snapped up discounted oil that others have shunned.

Refiners in India have placed orders for at least 40 million barrels of Russian oil since the invasion February 24. Reuters calculations based on information from crude tenders and traders show. The purchases are for loading in the June quarter.

That compares with total imports of Russian oil into India of 16 million barrels in the whole of last year, according to Reuters calculations.

"The world's third biggest oil importer and consumer ships in over 85% of its crude oil needs of 5 million barrels per day (bpd). Its refiners are buying cheaper Russian oil to partly offset the impact of higher official selling prices of some producers like Saudi Arabia, company sources said.

"We try to insulate consumers as much from price shocks as we can, but we need to protect our profits as well... so we are buying Russian oil," an official at one refiner, who declined to be named, said.

According to Reuters calculations, purchases of Russian barrels by private refiners Reliance Industries and Nayara Energy outstrip imports by state refiners Indian Oil Corp, Hindustan



### Russia, India in talks to restart coking coal supplies

**New Delhi:** Russian and Indian officials met last week in an effort to resolve an impasse over the shipping of coking coal to Indian steelmakers, which has dried up since March over payment methods, a trade source and an Indian government source said. Russia usually supplies about 30% of European Union, Japanese and South Korean coking coal needs, while India had planned to double its Russian imports to around 9 million tonnes this year. Imports make up around 85% of India's overall coking coal needs, which total 50-55 million tonnes a year, and New Delhi last year signed a deal to import from Russia. But complications with processing of payments and logistics as a result of sanctions against Russia mean steel mills are opting for alternative sources such as Australia and the United States, pushing up prices in the process. Australia, India's top supplier of coking coal, has raised its prices from \$200 to \$700 per tonne this year, while flows from Russia have dried up completely since March, the two sources said on Monday, raising worries among India's steelmakers over their supplies. As a result, Indian government officials and executives from JSW Steel met a delegation from Russia in New Delhi Friday, the sources said of the previously unreported meeting.

Petroleum Corp, and Bharat Petroleum Corp.

Reliance has purchased at least 15 million barrel of Russian oil so far for the June quarter, trade sources said last week. Reliance did not respond to a request for comment at that time.

Nayara Energy, part owned by Russia's top producer Rosneft, has purchased 8 million to 9 million

barrels of Russian crude for loading in April-May, trade sources said. Nayara did not respond to a Reuters email seeking comments.

Western sanctions against Russia since its invasion of Ukraine, which Moscow calls a 'special operation,' have prompted many oil importers to shun trade with Moscow, pushing Russian crude's discount to other grades to record levels.

## Sensex extends losses amid global sell-off

RIL TANKS AFTER FUTURE DEAL FALLS THROUGH



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, April 25:** The BSE Sensex reeled for the second session running Monday, weighed by heavy selling in index heavyweight Reliance Industries and a drumbeat of negative cues from global markets. Unabated foreign fund outflows and a depreciating rupee added to the bearish sentiment.

The 30-share benchmark opened on the back foot, in line with weak Asian equities, and remained in the negative territory throughout the session before closing 617.26 points or 1.08 per cent lower at 56,579.89.

On similar lines, the broader NSE Nifty slumped 218 points or 1.27 per cent to 16,953.95.

Tata Steel, Tech Mahindra, NTPC, Titan, Reliance Industries, ITC, Larsen & Toubro and Sun Pharma were among the major laggards in the Sensex pack, shedding as much as 4.47 per cent.

Reliance Industries was the biggest drag on the index, tumbling 2.31 per cent, after it called off

its ₹24,713-crore deal to acquire Future Group's retail assets following the secured creditors of the Kishore Biyani-led companies voting against the proposal.

In contrast, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, HDFC, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Nestle, Maruti Suzuki, Bharti Airtel and Axis Bank finished up to 0.75 per cent higher.

ICICI Bank saw good buying after the private sector lender on Saturday reported a 59 per cent jump in standalone net profit to ₹7,019 crore for the fourth quarter of 2021-22.

"Global markets were painted red due to below-par earnings results, adding fresh concerns to elevated inflation, oil prices, war uncertainties and supply issue. Fear of waning demand due to prolonged COVID lockdown in China led to oil prices tumbling. Continued FII selling in India along with other global uncertainties is favouring bear trend in the short-term," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

## Despite policy efforts, half of Indian adults 'credit unserved'

**ONLY 3 PER CENT OF US ADULTS ARE CREDIT UNSERVED, WHILE THE NUMBER IS 7 PER CENT IN CANADA, 44 PER CENT IN COLOMBIA AND 51 PER CENT IN SOUTH AFRICA**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, April 25:** Around 480 million adult Indians till the age of 65, representing half of the over-

all population in the earning segment, are 'credit unserved', as per a report by a credit information company.

An additional 164 million were classified as 'credit underserved' in the global study done by Transunion Cibil, while only 179 million fit into the 'credit served' category.

Specific efforts are being taken by the policy apparatus to deepen the credit culture in the country to ensure that borrowers do not fall prey to unscrupulous moneylenders. The Jan Dhan Yojana, which saw the opening of over 450 million accounts, has accounts that come with a credit overdraft facility.

Only 3 per cent of US adults are credit unserved, while the num-



ber is 7 per cent in Canada, 44 per cent in Colombia and 51 per cent in South Africa, the report said.

"Although India has made great strides in increasing levels of credit inclusion across the country in re-

cent years, the current reality highlights the importance of incorporating enriched credit data into the lending ecosystem, so that fewer consumers find themselves as credit unserved," said Rajesh Kumar, the managing director and chief executive of Cibil.

Admitting that it is a 'chicken and egg' situation when it comes to unserved consumers, the report said a lack of credit score and credit history for unserved consumers is an impediment for getting credit opportunities, as many lenders are hesitant to extend loans to consumers without any credit history or score.

The study found that about 5 per cent of consumers who started as credit underserved were found

to have migrated to becoming more credit active in a two-year window.

The underserved consumers are those who have minimal credit participation, limited to a single type of credit product and no more than two open accounts of that type, and have been active in the credit market for at least two years, it said.

It specifically excluded newly acquired consumers - those who have opened their first product within the past two years - from the underserved population, as many of those newly acquired consumers become more fully credit active soon after opening their first product, the report said, pegging such newly acquired customers' numbers at 63 million.

# KINGS TOP SUPER KINGS

# RCB look to stop Buttler juggernaut



SHIKHAR DHAWAN

They added 49 runs for the fourth wicket and just when it was looking like they will raise the tempo, Gaikwad, who despatched Kagiso Rabada (2/23) to the boundaries off successive deliveries in the first over, was out, caught by Mayank Agarwal while trying to hit Rabada for a second successive four in the 13th over.

Rayudu however, kept up the good work. He struck Sandeep Sharma for fours off successive deliveries as the bowler strayed on legs and blasted Rahul Chahar for a four and a six in the 15th over before hammering Sandeep Sharma for 23 runs in the 16th over, blasting three sixes and a four.

He and skipper Jadeja raised 64 runs for the fifth wicket in 32 balls, Rayudu doing the bulk of the scoring. He got out just when it looked he was good for a century, cleaned up by Rabada with a superb yorker backing away from the leg side but missing the ball completely to see his leg stump re-arranged.

With Arshdeep Singh (1/23) and Rabada bowling two good overs, the equation came down to 27 off the last 6 deliveries.

Earlier, the 36-year-old Shikhar anchored the Punjab innings with a brilliant knock and combined with Sri Lankan Bhanuka Rajapaksa (42, 32b, 2x4, 2x6) for a 110-run stand for the second wicket from 11.3 overs after captain Mayank Agarwal's early dismissal. Punjab added 64 runs in the final five overs. Rajapaksa was out in the 18th over off Dwayne Bravo (2/42) who also ended a 7-ball 21-run cameo, studded with a four and two sixes, of Liam Livingstone in the final over. Jonny Bairstow was run out in the final ball of the innings.

**Brief scores:** Punjab Kings 187/4 (Shikhar Dhawan 88 n o, Bhanuka Rajapaksa 42; Dwayne Bravo 2/42) beat Chennai Super Kings 176/6 (Ambati Rayudu 76, Ruturaj Gaikwad 30; Kagiso Rabada 2/23, Rishi Dhawan 2/39) by 11 runs.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Pune, April 25:** Royal Challengers Bangalore will be aiming to halt the Jos Buttler juggernaut when they take on Rajasthan Royals in the IPL here Tuesday. Attention will be on Virat Kohli as well following his second consecutive first ball duck in the competition.

RCB would be hoping their star batter to be back among the runs besides a much improved performance by the batting unit after a shocker in the previous game.

While the Challengers come into the match on the back of a demoralising nine-wicket loss to Sunrisers Hyderabad, Rajasthan have had two successive wins and are one of the in-form teams this season.

While the focus would be on Kohli, RCB have also power-hitters in captain Faf du Plessis, Glenn Maxwell, Dinesh Karthik and Shahbaaz Ahmed, who can be destructive on their day and if they fire in unison, the RR attack would have a tough time.

Du Plessis, the highest run-scorer for his team, has blown hot and cold with the willow but remains a vital cog for the team. Karthik too with his hitting abilities is playing the finisher's role to near perfection.

They are up against Rajasthan's varied attack, led by Trent Boult, who has troubled Kohli in the past with the delivery that comes in.

Prasidh Krishna and the spin duo of wily Ravichandran Ashwin and Yuzvendra Chahal can also pose problems for the RCB batters. Chahal, with 18 wickets so far, can turn the game on his head.

And ditto for Ashwin, who can be the opposition's nemesis on his day. Add to it the four overs by Obed McCoy; Rajasthan have a decent attack.

For Rajasthan, opener Jos Buttler has been in sublime form, having already hammered three hundreds this season.

Opener Devdutt Padikkal and



skipper Sanju Samson have also been toying with opposition attacks and are among the runs. And so is Shimon Hetymar, who can compound the bowling team's woes with his brutal onslaught.

RR would be hoping that the top order delivers once again at the MCA Stadium, which has witnessed high-scoring games. The weak links in Rajasthan's batting are Karun Nair and Rryan Parag and the duo would need to step up and deliver.

For RCB, they have the best death bowler in Harshal Patel, but he would need support from Mohammed Siraj and Josh Hazlewood. The four overs by Sri Lankan spinner Wanindu Hasaranga, who has eleven wickets, could also change the match's fate.

**TODAY'S MATCH**

RCB vs RR

Time: 07:30 pm

TELECAST

Star Sports channels & Hotstar

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Mumbai, April 25:** A superb, fighting half century by seasoned Ambati Rayudu (78, 39b, 7x4, 6x6) went in vain as a clinical bowling performance saw Punjab Kings beat Chennai Super Kings by 11 runs in a match of IPL at the Wankhede Stadium here Monday.

by Shikhar Dhawan, Chennai were in trouble soon.

Rayudu came in to bat with Chennai struggling at 40/3 and took them to safety with a blazing knock to raise hopes for a CSK victory. He raised 64 runs off 32 deliveries for the fifth wicket partnership.

But in the end, Jadeja (21 n o) could not guide his team to victory as from needing 47 off 24 balls, they reached a stage where they needed 27 off the last six deliveries

with Jadeja and MS Dhoni (12) at the crease.

Dhoni struck Rishi Dhawan for a six off the first ball but was out off the third legal delivery and Jadeja could manage only a six and a single off the final two deliveries as CSK slumped to their sixth defeat in eight matches - ending with 176/6 in 20 overs.

Chennai got off to a poor start and lost opener Robin Uthappa with 10 runs on the board, top-edg-

ing a length ball by Sandeep Sharma (1/40) to Shikhar. It soon became 40/3 as Mitchell Santner (9) and Shivam Dube (8) got out cheaply.

But just when it looked like they will suffer a collapse, Rayudu got together with the other opener, Ruturaj Gaikwad to pull them out of the woods. Both Rayudu and Gaikwad started cautiously but struck some fine boundaries on the right occasions to keep Chennai's hope alive.

# Max, Elaine bag top honours

# Jayawardene hints at changes in MI XI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Seville, April 25:** Reigning Formula One World Champion Max Verstappen and Jamaican Olympic sprint queen Elaine Thompson-Herah won the top honours at the 2022 Laureus World Sports Awards here.

Leading an illustrious group of sports stars honoured by the Laureus World Sports Academy, Verstappen and Thompson-Herah were named World Sportsman of the Year and World Sportswoman of the Year Sunday night.

The Awards recognised the sporting achievements of 2021, one of the highlights of which was the European Championship victory by the Italian men's football team that won its second Laureus Team of the Year Award as a result.

Tennis sensation Emma Raducanu received the Laureus

## 2022 LAUREUS WORLD SPORTS AWARDS

- World Sportsman of the Year Award:** Max Verstappen
- World Sportswoman of the Year Award:** Elaine Thompson-Herah
- World Team of the Year Award:** Italy Men's Football Team
- World Breakthrough of the Year Award:** Emma Raducanu
- World Comeback of the Year Award:** Sky Brown
- World Sportsperson of the Year with a Disability Award:** Marcel Hug
- World Action Sportsperson of the Year Award:** Bethany Shriever
- Lifetime Achievement Award:** Tom Brady
- Academy Exceptional Achievement Award:** Robert Lewandowski
- Sporting Icon Award:** Valentino Rossi
- Sport for Good Award:** Lost Boyz Inc.
- Sport for Good Society Award:** Real Madrid Foundation
- Athlete Advocate of the Year Award:** Gerald Asamoah and the Black Eagles



Breakthrough of the Year Award following her US Open victory at the age of 18. India's star javelin

thrower and reigning Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra was also nominated in the category.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, April 25:** Mumbai Indians coach Mahela Jayawardene has hinted at a few changes after repeated failures of the star-studded batting line-up and is also concerned about the drastic drop in form of star opener Ishan Kishan.

Record five-time champions Mumbai Indians are enduring their worst run in IPL history having lost their first eight games including the one against Lucknow Super Giants Sunday night.

"Good question. I need to review this and have a chat with the rest of the coaches as well and make some plans," said Jayawardene when asked about potential changes in the batting line up going forward in the competition.



"Batting has been a concern for us especially on good wickets where we have batted under par. This is a senior group who understands the

conditions and performed in the past. We need to keep pushing and if we need to make those changes we will do that.

"We had few changes (uptill now) but not a lot. We wanted to keep the batting consistent. Obviously there are concerns as we have not been consistent whether we are batting first or chasing totals down," said the Sri Lankan legend.

Jayawardene also plans to sit down with Kishan whose performance graph has dipped drastically after fifties in the first two games.

"He has struggled a bit, we have given him the freedom to play his natural game. I haven't yet spoken to him today but I will have a conversation with him soon," he said.

Mumbai had bought back Kishan for Rs 15.25 crore at the IPL auction earlier this year. Skipper Rohit Sharma has also not been at his best while veteran Kieron Pollard has also under delivered.

# It's England vs Spain for CL final spots

# BARCELONA SUFFER 3RD SUCCESSIVE HOME LOSS

It's England vs. Spain in the Champions League semifinals. English teams Manchester City and Liverpool are up against Spanish teams Real Madrid and Villarreal, respectively, in Europe's top competition

ASSOCIATED PRESS

## MANCHESTER CITY vs REAL MADRID

Madrid is trying to return to the final for the first time in four seasons and City is looking to reach its second consecutive final and continue its quest for a first Champions League trophy.

A record 13-time champion, Madrid is coming off thrilling series against PSG in the last 16 and defending champion Chelsea in the quarterfinals. Man City is going from one Madrid team to another after knocking out Atlético Madrid in two hard-fought matches in the quarterfinals.



The second leg took its toll, especially on the defense, as Kyle Walker injured his ankle and still



hasn't returned, while João Cancelo picked up another yellow card and is suspended. With

John Stones nursing a hamstring problem, City manager Pep Guardiola will be without a specialist right back for Tuesday's home game.

It's a big concern given that Madrid's dangerman Vinicius Junior plays on the left and will likely be up against an out-of-position defender. It's still unknown if Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti will be able to count on midfielder Casemiro and defender David Alaba because of muscle injuries. Both players will travel to England.

## LIVERPOOL vs VILLARREAL

Juventus, Bayern Munich... Could Liverpool be next on the list of big-name casualties dumped out of the competition by modest Spanish team Villarreal on its thrilling run in the Champions League knockout stage?

Liverpool will likely be the biggest test so far, with the English club having only lost one game in all competitions since December 28 — that being the second leg of the last 16 against Inter Milan at Anfield.

However, Villarreal coach Unai Emery is proving to be a brilliant strategist in European competi-



tions. He led Sevilla to three Europa League titles and then Villarreal to the same title last year.

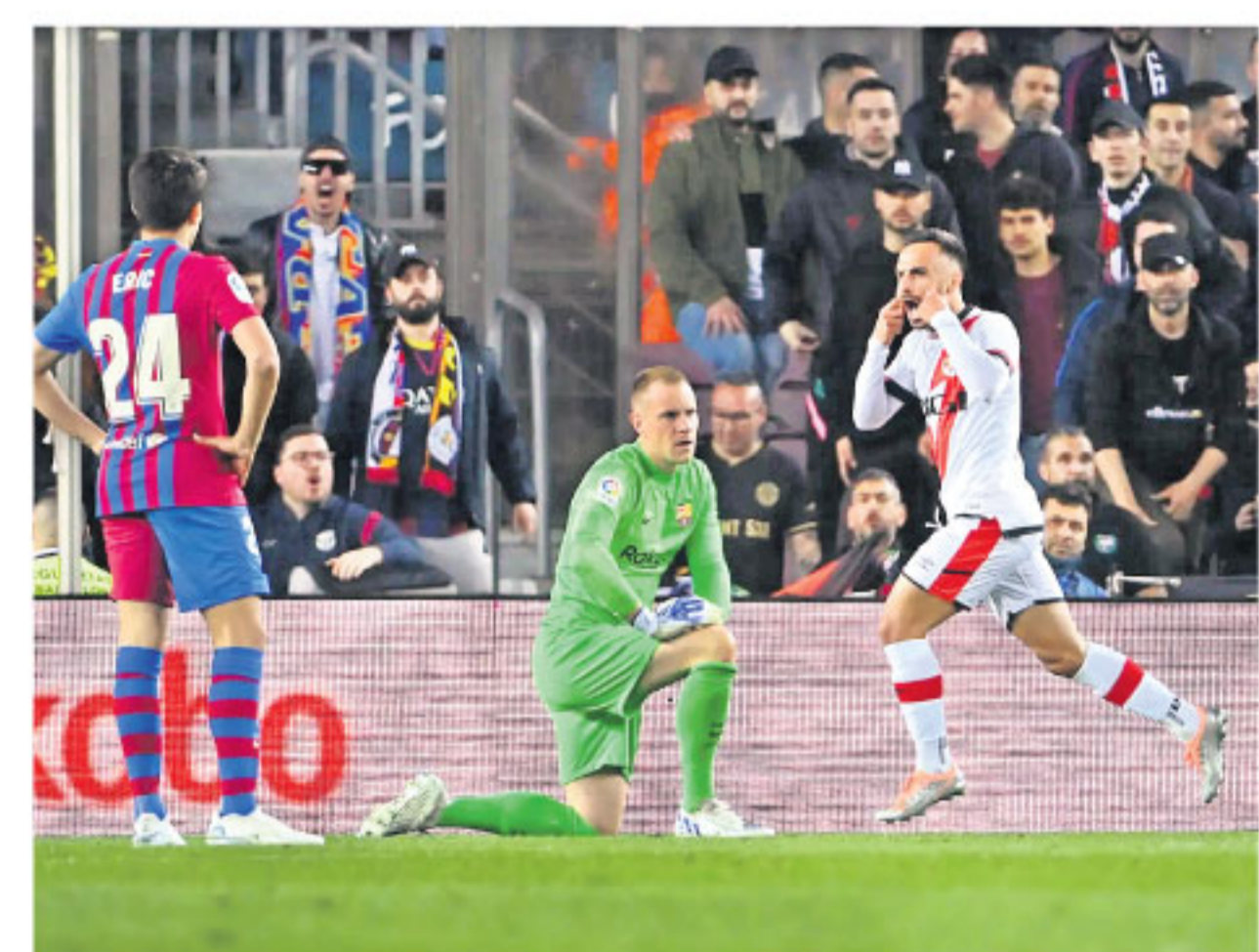
Now Emery has got Villarreal, which is languishing in seventh



place in the Spanish league, to the Champions League semifinals for the first time since the 2005-06 season, where it lost to English opposition in Arsenal.

Liverpool has much more pedigree in the competition and is looking to win it for a seventh time, which would match the total of AC Milan. Only Real Madrid has won more European Cups, with 13.

Liverpool will come up against a number of players who failed to make it big in the Premier League but are integral to the Villarreal team, in the likes of Juan Foyth, Etienne Capoue, Giovani Lo Celso and Arnaut Danjuma. Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp has no major injury concerns, while Emery should also have his team at full strength.



Alvaro Garcia wheels away in celebration after scoring at Camp Nou, while Barcelona goalie Marc-Andre ter Stegen looks dejected, Sunday

a place in the lucrative Spanish Super Cup in Saudi Arabia.

Barcelona won at Real Sociedad on Thursday but was coming off defeats against Cádiz in the league and Eintracht Frankfurt in the Europa League. It hadn't lost two in a row at home since 2003, and had lost three straight only once, between the 1997-98 and 1998-99 seasons.

It was the second straight win for Rayo after enduring a 13-game winless streak in the league. The Madrid club moved from 15th to 11th with the victory, its second this season

against Barcelona. Rayo's win Thursday also came in the city of Barcelona, at Espanyol.

Only Bayern Munich had beaten Barcelona twice this season, in the group stage of the Champions League.

The result practically secured Rayo a spot in the first division next season. The match was postponed from January. No other league games were played this weekend. Real Betis defeated Valencia on penalties on Saturday to win the Copa del Rey.