



GROWING IN STATURE

Actor Deepika Padukone will be a part of the Jury Committee at the 2022 Cannes Film Festival

LEISURE P2



RUSSIA STOPS SUPPLY

Russia halts Wednesday gas supplies to Bulgaria and Poland for rejecting its demand to pay in rubles

INTERNATIONAL P10



BENZEMA SAVES REAL

Karim Benzema's brace keeps Real Madrid's CL final hopes alive despite a 3-4 semifinal first leg loss to Man City

SPORTS P12

Miscreants assault constable, free accused

Balasure: A constable of the Excise Intelligence Bureau was beaten up mercilessly Wednesday by unidentified miscreants who then snatched an accused from his custody at Turigada under Khairia police limits of Balasure district. The constable Basant Mallick suffered critical injuries and is undergoing treatment. Mallick had nabbed the accused and seized his scooter near Mahatipur over the latter's involvement in an offence. When Mallick was going to the Excise office with the accused, six miscreants, intercepted the vehicle and thrashed him and sped away with the accused.

11 electrocuted in TN during festival

Thanjavur: Eight men and three teenage boys were killed and 17 others injured Wednesday near here due to electrocution when a temple chariot came in contact with a High Tension electricity line during a procession, police said. President Ram Nath Kovind, PM Narendra Modi, Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi and Chief Minister MK Stalin expressed shock and grief over the tragedy. Modi announced ₹2,00,000 each from PMNRF (Prime Minister's National Relief Fund) to the next of kin of those who lost their lives. Chief Minister Stalin, condoling the deaths, ordered a solatium of ₹5,00,000 each to the 11 bereaved families. **MORE P9**

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Oppn hits back after PM's fuel 'appeal'



States singled out by Modi demand that their GST dues be cleared and blame the BJP-led govt for the current economic situation in the country

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 27: Flagger higher fuel prices in many opposition-ruled states, Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged them Wednesday to reduce VAT in 'national interest' to benefit the common man and work in the spirit of cooperative federalism in this time of global crisis. His 'appeal' however received a stunning riposte from leaders of some of the states. Modi raised the issue of some states not adhering to the Centre's call for reducing the VAT on fuel after his government slashed excise duties on them in November last

year. He called it an 'injustice' to people living there and also harmful for neighbouring states. His observations came during his meeting with chief ministers to review the Covid-19 situation.

"For some reason, states like Maharashtra, West Bengal, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Jharkhand have not agreed to slash VAT on fuel. The burden of high prices continued to stay on the citizen, affecting them economically," Modi said.

"I am not criticising anyone but am praying to you for the welfare of people of your states... I urge you to reduce VAT now to benefit people. "It is my 'special request to chief ministers of non-BJP ruled states," Modi added. Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray reacted sharply after Modi's appeal. He claimed the Centre owed ₹26,500 crore to the state and accused it of being 'step-motherly' to Maharashtra.

"The Centre owes ₹26,500 crore to the Maharashtra government. Maharashtra's contribution in direct taxes collection at the national level is 38.3 per cent and its share in GST (collection) is 15 per cent, but the Centre gives us step-motherly treatment," Thackeray said.

West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee also retorted sharply after Modi's appeal. "Since Narendra Modi came to power in 2014, the Centre has earned over ₹17 lakh crore from taxes on fuel. So it is wrong to blame the states for the rise in fuel prices," Banerjee asserted. "The West Bengal government has spent ₹1,500 crore for fuel subsidy in the last three years. The PM's speech was misleading," she added.

Finance Minister of Kerala, KN Balagopal hit back saying the increase in petrol and diesel rates was due to the cess and surcharge levied by the Centre. He said Kerala has not increased taxes on petroleum products in the last six years. "When the state government has not increased taxes on petrol or diesel by even one rupee in the last six years, then how it can be asked to reduce taxes," Balagopal asked.

Telangana CM K Chandrababhan Naidu, said the state has not increased fuel prices. So the Centre has no right to ask it to reduce VAT. The Congress also hit out at the Modi government on the issue. It said the excise duty during UPA government was much lower than what it is under the Modi regime and asked the PM to roll back the hike.

DEMANDING RECOGNITION



Paikas under the banner of 'Odisha Bira Mahasangha' participate Wednesday in a rally near Master Canteen Square in Bhubaneswar, demanding the First War of Independence' tag for 'Paika Bidroha'

Tech institutes shut due to heatwave

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 27: After the School & Mass Education and Higher Education departments, the Skill Development and Technical Education department directed Wednesday all engineering colleges and technical institutions to remain shut in Odisha from April 27 to May 2.

In a letter Rojina Das, Joint Secretary of the department said, "I am directed to inform that due to the prevailing heat wave conditions in the State, UG and PG classes in all Technical Universities/ Engineering Colleges shall remain suspended from 27.04.2022 to 02.05.2022. However,

TIMINGS CHANGED

Bhubaneswar: The Board of Secondary Education (BSE) has rescheduled the State Open School Certificate Examination (SOSCE) and the Madhyama exams 2022 in view of the present heatwave condition, BSE president Ramashis Hazra informed here Wednesday. "The SOSCE and Madhyama examinations, which were scheduled to begin from 11.30am May 2 and 4 respectively, will now be held in the first sitting from 8.00 am May 9 and 10," Hazra told reporters.

the teaching and non-teaching employees are required to remain present in their respective institutions in

order to perform administrative work, examination, evaluation, research, etc. as in case of normal working day. This is for your kind information and necessary action.

The Odisha government had earlier said the duration of summer vacation for schools and colleges will be reduced to 11 and 16 days respectively in order to help students make up for lost classes.

Sources however said that the state government is likely to revise its earlier decision. Parents of the students have been seeking the preponment of summer vacation due to the searing heatwave conditions in most districts of Odisha.

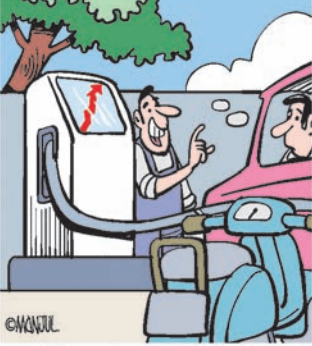
Chief Minister okays ₹100cr master plan for Nilamadhaba temple

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 27: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik approved Wednesday a master plan of ₹100 crore for development of the Nilamadhaba temple at Kantilo in Nayagarh district. After discussions with concerned stakeholders, the CM approved the master plan. The project will be completed within 18 months.

Patnaik has sought cooperation of the local people and servitors of the temple for successful implementation of the project.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



PM has given permission. Now you can criticise govt for fuel price hike... state govt

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	VARIATION
SENSEX	56819.39	↓ 537.22
NIFTY	17038.40	↓ 162.40
DOLLAR	76.64	↑ ₹0.05
EURO	80.78	↓ ₹0.74
GOLD	₹51,438	↓ ₹146
SILVER	₹65,215	↑ ₹247

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
MAX	40.3°C	39.5°C
MIN	27.5°C	26.5°C
Humidity	76%	76%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Thunderstorm very likely	

Man murders cousin for ransom

POST NEWS NETWORK

Titilagarh, April 27: A 13-year old boy was allegedly kidnapped and murdered by his cousin over ₹10 lakh ransom demand at Sirbhatapada here in Bolangir district, police said Wednesday. The deceased Mohan Kumar is the son of Railway employee Dilip Kumar in Sirbhatapada locality of this town, ASP Surendranath Satapathy informed.

The accused identified as Sumit Bihari of Kesinga in Kalahandi district has been arrested and he has confessed to his crime.

The matter came to the fore after police recovered the decomposed body of Mohan from a pit here. The school bag and water bottle of the victim were also found lying near a well at the crime site. A forensic team has also been pressed into service.

Police said that Mohan was kidnapped by Sumit when the former was on his way to attend tuition April 23 (Saturday) afternoon. Family members searched for him after he failed to return home late in the evening. Later, they filed a missing complaint at Titilagarh police station at night. Police accompanied by family members visited Kesinga and searched for the boy on the basis of his mobile location.

Meanwhile, Sumit using the victim's mobile sent a message in Hindi stating that Mohan is in his captivity and demanded ₹10 lakh as ransom. The accused even threatened to kill the boy, in case ransom was not paid to him. Following the development, Titilagarh police launched a frantic search for the teen in all possible locations and finally found him dead, Wednesday. Sources said Mohan may have been killed even before the ransom demand was sent as he had recognised Sumit. Sources said that Sumit was a regular visitor at the house of the victim and was quite close to the family. So the entire turn of events has come as a huge shock to Mohan's family members

forensic team has also been pressed into service.

Police said that Mohan was kidnapped by Sumit when the former was on his way to attend tuition April 23 (Saturday) afternoon. Family members searched for him after he failed to return home late in the evening. Later, they filed a missing complaint at Titilagarh police station at night. Police accompanied by family members visited Kesinga and searched for the boy on the basis of his mobile location.

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Victim Mohan Kumar

Student found dead in hostel

The demise of Pati sparked tension in the university with other students alleging that he is a victim of ragging

POST NEWS NETWORK

Khurda, April 27: A BSc student of a private university in Jatni was found hanging Wednesday at the varsity's hostel room. The death of the student sparked tension among his mates present inside the campus. The deceased was studying in the fourth semester and was a student of the Radiology department. He has been identified as Bishnu Bharadwaj Pati from Jajpur

Some students noticed the body of Pati hanging from the ceiling of the hostel room between 11.00am and 12.00 noon. They immediately

informed the authorities and Pati was rushed to the AIIMS here. Doctors at the hospital declared him brought dead.

One of Pati's classmates said he had appeared in the fourth semester examinations Thursday morning. There were no signs of anything unnatural in the actions of the deceased then.

As soon as the news of Pati's death spread some students locked the main gate of the university. They said Pati may have died due to ragging by seniors and blamed the authorities for not taking timely measures to prevent such incidents. They demanded stringent action against those who are allegedly involved in ragging. Jatni police officials reached the spot and initiated a probe into the incident. They examined the hostel room where Pati was found dead and sealed it.



Notably, 5T Secretary VK Pandian had visited the temple last week and directed officials to prepare the plan after holding discussions with servitors and locals.

In the plan, special emphasis has been given for renovation of the temple, seamless darshan for devotees, development of a circular path, restoration and beautification of Chandan Puskarini (pond), improvement of roads around the temple, plantation of trees, gardening, parking and beautification of the banks of the Mahanadi river.

The steps of the temple will be reconstructed in such a manner that devotees can climb easily and reach the temple, officials said.

Similarly, all the four gates of the temple at the east, west, north and south sides will be renovated. An elevator and skybridge will be installed at the west gate so that old and differently-abled people can easily visit the Lord Nilamadhaba.

Khandalite stones will be laid in and around the temple and in the gardens. In addition, a cloak room and an area of rest will also be established for the devotees, officials informed.

The east and west side roads will be widened while a 400-metre-long protective wall will be built near the Mahanadi riverbed to protect the temple from the floodwater. **MORE P4**

MHA builds database to prevent sexual crimes

The details of people involved and convicted of sexual misdeeds have been provided to all law-enforcement agencies

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 27: The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has gathered details of more than 10.69 lakh sexual offenders in India and their profiles are available with the law-enforcement agencies on a real-time basis to probe new offences.

According to the annual report of the ministry for 2020-21, the National Database on Sexual Offenders (NDSO) has compiled the data meticulously which allows investigating officers to track habitual sex offenders, besides

initiating preventive measures against sexual offences. The details of the sexual offenders convicted under the charges of rape, gangrape, harassing women and provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act are available on the database.

It also contains details such as names, addresses, photos, IDs and fingerprint details of the offenders and the registry can be accessed by the law-enforcement agencies to probe sex crimes across India, the report states.



"The NDSO is available 24x7 to all law enforcement agencies and enables antecedent verification and speedy detection in case of sexual offences," the report said.

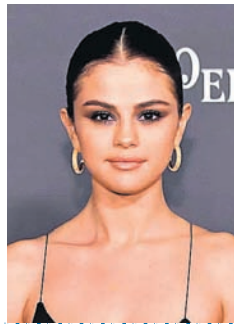
Officials said India is one of the few countries that maintain a sex

offenders' list other than the US, the UK, Australia, Canada, Ireland and New Zealand.

For cases of sexual assault, in which the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2018 has mandated that the investigation should be concluded within two months from the date of the first report, the Home Ministry has developed the Investigation Tracking System for Sexual Offences (ITSSO) portal for the states and Union Territories. The portal helps to track the progress in detection and resolution of sexual offences

based on the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CTNS) data. It is a cloud-based analytics portal available for the law-enforcement agencies with drill-down features starting from the national level up to the FIR level.

The report said the Bureau of Police Reforms and Development has distributed 14,950 Sexual Assault Evidence Collection (SAEC) kits to the states and UTs. The kits will facilitate the efficient collection, handling and storage of forensic evidence in cases of sexual assault.



GOMEZ ON MISSION TO CREATE MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

Pop star Selena Gomez has revealed she's determined to shine a light on mental health issues. The 29-year-old star and her make-up brand Rare Beauty's Rare Impact Fund have joined forces with MTV Entertainment to launch the first-ever Mental Health Youth Action Forum.

BENEDICT CUMBERBATCH PLANS TO HOUSE REFUGEES

English actor Benedict Cumberbatch, aka *Dr Strange*, has revealed he's set to house Ukrainian refugees. The 45-year-old actor has pledged to give them some stability after they recently fled war-torn Ukraine amid the ongoing conflicts with Russia.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You're finally impressed by the yogis. A degree course in Art of Living? Ganesha approves. You may even fulfill a desire to begin lessons in music or dance, or something that has interested you since long. A good, good day, and it smells of sweet success.

TAURUS
You may feel let down as your folks may not extend the support you expected from them, says Ganesha. You should try to remain practical and not get swayed by emotions. It is highly likely that family feuds may erupt today.

GEMINI
Your entire attention will be concentrated on the work-front today. You will be on the lookout for new projects and contracts to spur on your earnings. Opportunities for changing your job will come knocking on your door. You will be afforded the full co-operation of your colleagues today.

CANCER
Control your anger, counsels Ganesha. Or else, it will sadden your near ones. Writers may display creative output of high order. The day augurs well for artists, too. This is the time to take up new challenges, says Ganesha.

LEO
You will not be in the mood to take up significant tasks today. You will want to throw your responsibilities to the wind and pursue leisurely activities. However you will still need to tackle some pressing issues. It is easier to swim with the tide, than against, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
You will be bubbling with ideas today. You may face a dilemma between your obligations and present duties, which could prove to be very perplexing. New contacts turn out to be very useful. Ganesha says blood is thicker than water, and family and friends will cement their relationship with you.

LIBRA
Ganesha says you will learn a lot from your past experiences for a shining future. You will be slightly possessive about some costly item that you own. There will be small concerns during the day about different matters, which will give you mental stress. On the whole the day will pass by nicely.

SCORPIO
No matter how rich and successful you become, it is very important to stay grounded. Never let your success go to your head, advises Ganesha. Rudeness and overconfidence may take away everything from you and may leave you empty handed.

SAGITTARIUS
You become your own judge today. Through introspection, you try to find you the various causes that lead to troubles in your life. Though it may take time, eventually you achieve what you want and try to find reasonable solutions for the same. However, make sure you do not waste your entire day in pondering about the glitches; move on, Ganesha advises.

CAPRICORN
Mounting pressure of work and responsibilities during the day may drain your energy, but not your enthusiasm, feels Ganesha. The second half of the day will be tiring, as you will be fighting a tough battle with your competitors. You'll come out triumphant from the fight as you perform smartly and get your acts right.

AQUARIUS
You need not always put up a brave face, feels Ganesha. You can ventilate your emotions and speak your heart out in front of your loved ones. It will make the pain bearable and you'll probably get a way out of your problems. You will feel better by the evening, and a sweet smile will brighten up your face.

PISCES
You need to nurture your personal relationships carefully today, and give them the attention they are due. You need to control the outbursts of your temper and stop arguing with your partner or spouse over insignificant matters.

Deepika makes it to Cannes jury

Mumbai: Actor Deepika Padukone will be a part of the competition jury at the 2022 Cannes Film Festival, the organisers said. French actor Vincent Lindon will be heading the jury at the 75th edition of the coveted festival, which will run from May 17-28, the official Twitter account of the festival announced late Tuesday evening.

Padukone is part of the eight-member jury which will reward one of the 21 films in competition with the Palme d'or during the closing ceremony Saturday May 28.

Other jury members include actor-filmmaker Rebecca Hall, Swedish actor Noomi Rapace, Italian actor-director Jasmine Trinca, acclaimed Iranian filmmaker Asghar Farhadi, French filmmaker-actor Ladj Ly, filmmaker Jeff Nichols and director-screenwriter Joachim Trier from Norway.

Padukone, 36, was earlier the chairperson of Jio MAMI Mumbai Film Festival for two years.

She featured in several blockbuster and critically-acclaimed movies like *Yeh Jawaani*

Hai Deewani, Chennai Express, Bajirao Mastani, Padmaavat and Piku.

The actor, who was most recently seen in Shakun Batra's *Gehraiyaan*, made her Hollywood debut with the 2017 actioner *xXx: The Return of Xander Cage*, fronted by Vin Diesel.

AGENCIES

Urvashi: It's a dream to share screen with SRK

Mumbai: Actress Urvashi Rautela was spotted with top star Shah Rukh Khan at Baba Siddique's Iftar party April 17. After that fans went to trend the *Pagalpanti* actress on social media along with SRK and wanted to see them romancing on screen.

When Urvashi was questioned about the same. She says: "I feel my fans love me so much that they now know me. I would really wish and wait for the opportunity to share screen opposite Shah Rukh Khan. It's any actress' dream. Hope that happens soon. Keeping my fingers crossed."

Urvashi who was crowned Miss Diva Universe 2015 and later represented India at the Miss Universe 2015 pageant and was also first youngest judge for Miss Universe Pageant 2021 enjoys 48 millions followers on social media.

She adds: "Social media has turned out to be an easy way to stay in touch with fans. I can't be more blessed to have so much of love. I just wish to keep my audience entertained and keep winning hearts. They are like family to me."

The actress will be next seen opposite American singer-songwriter Jason Derulo in upcoming music video and a Hindi film *Inspector Avinash* opposite Randeep Hooda.

Outstanding University Award for AIPH Univ-Bhubaneswar



Prof. Pradeep Kumar Panda received the award

Bhubaneswar: Leading public health institution Asian Institute of Public Health (AIPH) University-Bhubaneswar has bagged Outstanding University Award-2022 for excellence in education across various aspects like innovation, placement, leadership, 'Best in Class' infrastructure and career building.

The award was presented by World Education Congress (WEC), a leading organisation which promotes excellence and sustainability in various fields, at an event titled Odisha Leadership Awards-2022 held at a city hotel here, Wednesday.

AIPH University is a premier destination for education and research in the field of public health in the eastern part of India.

Dean, School of Public Health,

AIPH University Prof. Pradeep Kumar Panda received the trophy on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor AIPH University, Padma Shri Prof. Aditya Prasad Dash.

"We thank the WEC for recognising our efforts and felicitating us with this prestigious award. It's a recognition of the outstanding work done by our university in the area of Public Health Education and Research in Odisha over the last one decade," said Panda in his reaction.

Founder of World CSR Day & World Sustainability Dr RL Bhatia and Hotel Sandy's Tower director Archana Patra were present at the event. Among others, several educationists, media representatives, private and public sector officials also attended the event.

PNN

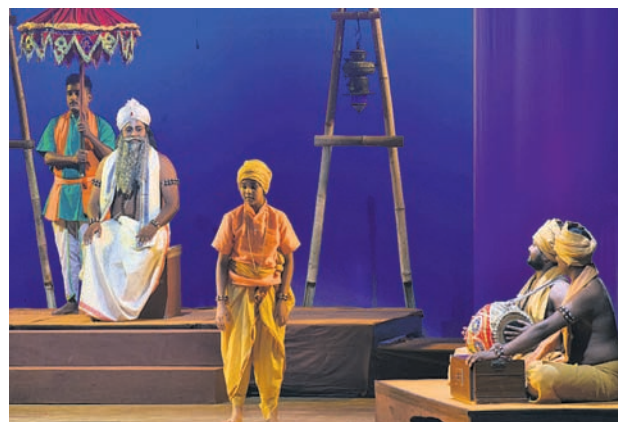
ODISHA SANGEET NATAK AKADEMI'S DRAMA FESTIVAL: DAY 3

Ganakabi's social crusade captivates audience

Bhubaneswar: Satabdira Kalakar, one of the oldest theatre troupes of this city, presented Odia play *Ganakabi Baishnab Pani* here at Rabindra Mandap, Wednesday, the third day of the ongoing drama festival.

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.

Written by Ranjit Patnaik and directed by troupe's secretary Dhira Mallick, the 1.45 hrs play narrated the trials and tribulations of Baishnab Pani, one of the greatest poets and playwrights of Odisha who fought for the survival of Odia language in the 19th century. He also raised voice against social injustice and superstitions through his works. Apart of this, the drama



A scene from the Odia play *Ganakabi Baishnab Pani*, staged at Rabindra Mandap, Wednesday.

OP PHOTO

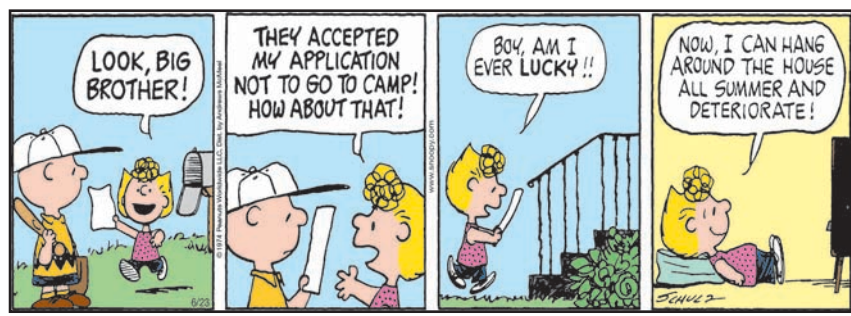
depicted the romantic relationship between Pani, an upper caste Brahmin and Harapriya, a Dalit, their living together against the wish of family and society and tragic deaths of both. Needless to say, the presentation held the audience spell-bound till the last scene.

Srikant Mishra, Monideepa Mallick, Kalpana, Tapaswini, Apurba, Chandra, Satya, Manoj, Gudu, Soumendra Patra performed on stage while Mammath Mishra scored the music. Darpanarayan Sethi did the lighting and Sangram Maharana took care of the stagecraft.

Housing and Urban Development department minister Pratap Jena and Odisha Film Development Corporation Chairman Kuna Tripathy graced the occasion as guests.

PNN

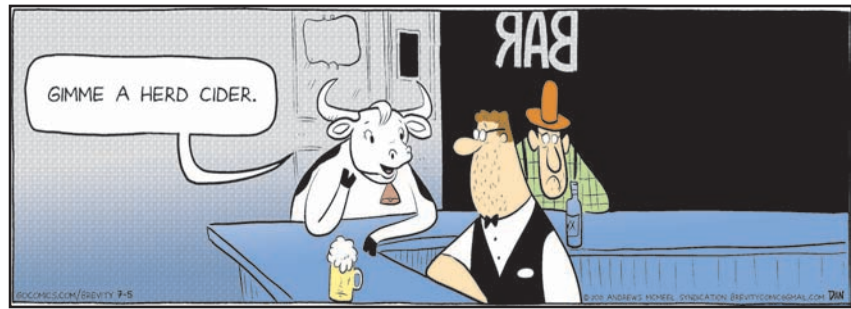
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

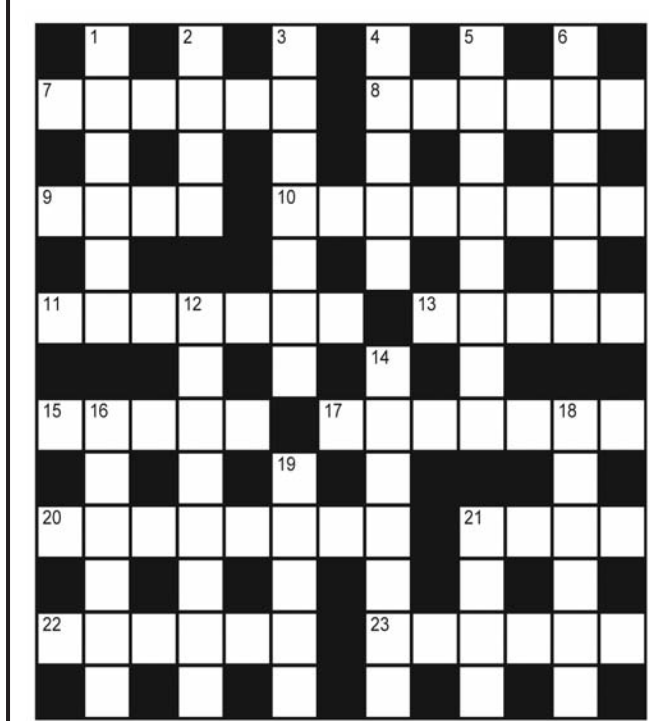


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD

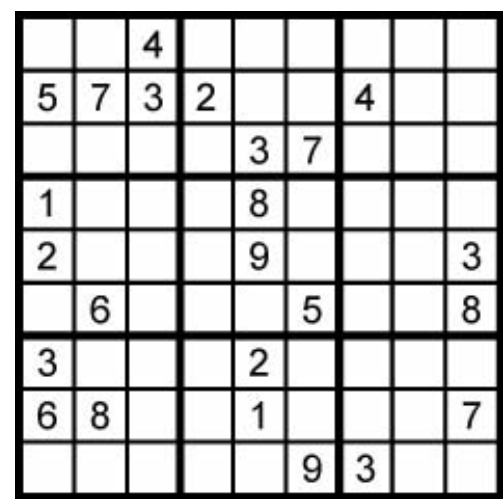


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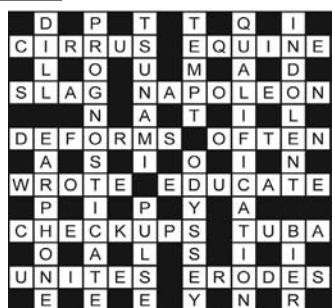
- Across**
- 7 Dig up
 - 8 Free-for-alls
 - 9 Deliberate
 - 10 Sleep disorder
 - 11 Sparrow hawk
 - 13 Willow twig
 - 15 Molten rock
 - 17 Agonising
 - 20 Cute as a button
 - 21 Model's asset
 - 22 Grand
 - 23 Pay no heed to
 - 5 Tortellini topping
 - 6 Kind of skiing
 - 12 Fearful
 - 14 The start of something sweet (4,3)
 - 16 Fervency
 - 18 Stomach woes
 - 19 Taper off
 - 21 Sloughs
- Down**
- 1 Alibi
 - 2 Burlap fibre
 - 3 Chooses
 - 4 Way too weighty

SUDOKU

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

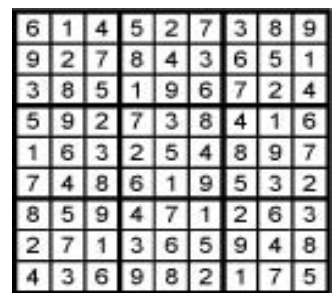


SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD

SUDOKU



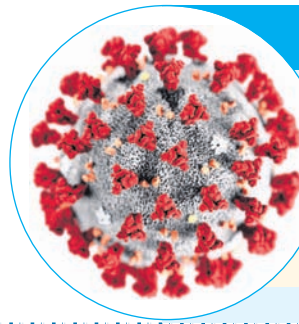
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



FOUNDATION DAY

The SUCI (C) organised a meeting at Saheed Bhawan in Cuttack, Wednesday, to observe its 74th foundation day



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	51,11,55,587	46,43,55,628	62,50,341
India	4,30,65,496	4,25,25,563	5,23,654
Odisha	12,88,017	12,78,767	9,124

Flight ops from Jeypore airport in June 1st week



Joint Secretary to Union Ministry of Civil Aviation Usha Padhee reviewing the airport work

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar/Jeypore, April 27: Flight services from Jeypore airport in Koraput district will start in the first week of June with the state government and Centre providing subsidy to the airport under UDAN (Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik) scheme, as per a report.

In the first phase, flight services will be available from Jeypore to Bhubaneswar and from Jeypore to Visakhapatnam. "A nine-seater aircraft will first take off from the airport before launching of other

flight services," said Joint Secretary to Union Ministry of Civil Aviation Usha Padhee during her two-day visit to Koraput district recently.

Padhee made the remarks after reviewing the construction work and various amenities at Jeypore airport. Padhee left Visakhapatnam and arrived at Chatusa in the district where she reviewed various development projects. Later, she visited the coffee nursery, Mission Shakti Centre, Padua high school and hospital under Nandapur block before leaving for Jeypore airport.

In the first phase, flight services will be available from Jeypore to Bhubaneswar and from Jeypore to Visakhapatnam

A nine-seater aircraft will take off from the airport before launching of other flight services

Joint Secretary to Union Ministry of Civil Aviation Usha Padhee reviewed the progress of the airport work and other development projects in Koraput

There she reviewed the CCTV, hand-held metal detector (HHMD), door frame metal detector (DFMD), X-Ray bag machine, car parking lots, entry and exit points of passengers, boundary wall, perimeter road, light and traffic control system in the airport by holding talks with the officials.

Koraput Collector Abdaal M Akhtar, DRDA project director Hemakanta Ray, air traffic controller (ATC), Bhubaneswar, Saroj Sahu, flight service officer Arun Singh, R&B executive engineer Bhaskar Samantaray, PA, ITDA Gopinath Sarka, tehsildar Pradhan Tulamma and SDPO Arup Abhisek Behera were present during her visit.

INFRA BOOST



DGP Sunil Kumar Bansal inaugurated the new building of Bidanasi police station in Cuttack in the presence of Barabati-Cuttack MLA Mohammed Moqim, Mayor Subhash Singh and senior police officials, Wednesday

No fake varsity found in Odisha: Govt to UGC

The UGC had claimed that two fake institutes—Nababharat Shiksha Parishad, Rourkela and North Orissa University of Agriculture and Technology—are functioning in Odisha and awarding fake certificates to students

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 27: The Higher Education department Wednesday informed the University Grants Commission (UGC) that no fake university in the name of North Orissa University of Agriculture and Technology and Nababharat Shiksha Parishad, Rourkela are functioning and awarding fake/invalid degrees in Odisha.

In a letter to the UGC, Higher Education department Additional Secretary Birendra Korkora said it has been ascertained that no



such fake institutions/universities are functioning and awarding fake/invalid degrees in Odisha. The department has claimed

that it had conducted a detailed inquiry through the Regional Directorate of Education at Bhubaneswar, Berhampur, Balasore, Sambalpur and Jeypore.

Earlier, the UGC had declared that at least 24 fake universities and institutes are functioning in different states across the country. It had claimed that two fake institutes—Nababharat Shiksha Parishad, Rourkela and North Orissa University of Agriculture and Technology—are functioning in Odisha and awarding fake certificates to students.

Based on the complaints re-

ceived from the students, parents, general public and also through the electronic and print media, the UGC has declared 24 self-styled institutes as fake universities.

The commission had written to the Chief Secretaries and Education department Secretaries to take action against the fake universities located in their jurisdictions.

"Showcause and warning notices must be issued to the unauthorised institutes awarding invalid degrees in violation of the UGC Act, 1956," the commission had said in its letter.

H&UD Minister, Mayor inspect Basuaghai STP

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 27: Housing and Urban Development (H&UD) Minister Pratap Jena along with Mayor Sulochana Das Wednesday visited the sewage treatment plant (STP) and faecal sludge treatment plant (FSTP) at Basuaghai in the city here.

They inspected all components of the STP including its inlet, screen chamber, aerated grit cham-

ber, SBR, chlorination house, chlorination contact tank and sludge dewatering unit before checking the quality of water at the point of CCT (Chlorination Tank).

The coverage areas of Basuaghai STP include Bramheswarpatna, Gopaluni Pokhari, Kotitiraha Road, Laxmisagar, BJB Nagar, Bhimpur, Kunjapatna Sahi, Radhakrishna Nagar, Ratnakar Bagh, Pandav Nagar, Shiv Nagar, Megheswar Colony and Raja Rani Colony,

sources said.

The H&UD minister and the Mayor also inspected the STP laboratory, where all the parameters of wastewater are being checked on daily basis. They also discussed with the officials on various issues related to the drainage of wastewater from different residential areas, sources said.

They also enquired about the process of the septage water treatment at the FSTP.

EXAM TIME



Girls underwent thermal screening before appearing CBSE Class X examinations at Kendriya Vidyalaya in CDA area of Cuttack, Wednesday

'Women SHGs managing tourist facilities a win-win situation'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 27: Management of tourist facilities by women self-help groups (SHGs) is a win-win arrangement for both government and the local women, said Western Odisha Development Corporation (WODC) Chairman Asit Tripathy, Wednesday.

Following instructions of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Tripathy is on a two-day visit to Bolangir district. He interacted with the members of block level federation of Mission Shakti group engaged in the management and housekeeping of Harishankar Panthanivas.

After observing the management of Harishankar Panthanivas, Tripathy said, "The women SHG members are well trained. They are also quite hospitable. The local administration has made capital investment for the improvement of hospitality sector at Harishankar. The women SHG members can manage the Panthanivas properly".

Entrusting the management of



WODC chairman Asit Tripathy during his Bolangir visit

the Panthanivas to the local women SHG will go a long way in empowering them, he said.

It is worth mentioning here that Harishankar is a well known tourist place in Western Odisha. Hundreds of tourists, nature lovers, and picnickers from across the state and outside visit the place for most part of the year. The Panthanivas cater to their needs.

"Better management of the Panthanivas is giving a pleasant experience to the visitors. Thus, the management of the Panthanivas

by the women SHG is truly a win-win arrangement for tourism development and women empowerment," said Tripathy.

Tripathy is also scheduled to visit a few agri-business farms, inaugurate a new OMFED parlor, and lay the foundation stone of a new gallery at Gandhi stadium in Bolangir.

After looking into field potentialities, Tripathy will discuss with local entrepreneurs for promoting the agri-business and food processing units in fishery, horticulture, live-stock and cash crop sectors.

Transgender SHG to look after water kiosks

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 27: The Water Corporation of Odisha (WATCO) Wednesday handed over the maintenance of around 25 drinking water kiosks under Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation area to a transgender self-help group (TG SHG).

Members of the city-based Swikruti TG SHG have been assigned by the WATCO to maintain hygiene and cleanliness at the drinking water kiosks from May 1.

For the first time in the country, the day-to-day maintenance of drinking water kiosks has been handed over to the members of a TG SHG, said sources in the WATCO. "This is yet another pioneering move towards giving transgender community a bigger role in mainstream society. We have already handed over the operation and maintenance of one of our water treatment plants (WTPs) located at Pratapnagari near Cuttack to a local transgender SHG," said WATCO CEO Pradipta Kumar Swain.

Extreme heatwave so early is dangerous: Experts

With several places across the country recording a maximum temperature of above 40 degrees Celsius in recent days, public health experts warned the extreme heat so early in the year is particularly dangerous.

They say New Delhi could reach 44-45 degrees - approaching its record April temperature - while some parts of northern India could reach 46 degrees.

A deadly heatwave is building across India and Pakistan - home to around one in five people on earth - and new analysis by climate scientists has directly connected the heatwave with climate change.

Temperatures are forecast to rise to 50 degrees in Jacobabad, located in the Sindh province of Pakistan. It has always been notorious for its scorching summers.

An analysis by Mariam Zachariah and Friederike Otto of Imperial College London found the heat that hit India earlier this month is already much more common as a result of higher global tem-

peratures caused by human activities.

Zachariah, Research Associate at the Grantham Institute of Imperial College London, said: "The recent high temperatures in India were made more likely by climate change. Before human activities increased global temperatures, we would have seen the heat that hit India earlier this month around once in 50 years. But now it is a much more common event. We can expect such high temperatures about once in every four years. And until net emissions are halted, it will continue to become even more common."

Otto, Senior Lecturer in Climate Science at the Grantham Institute of Imperial College London, said, "India's current heatwave has been made hotter by climate change that is the result of human activities like burning coal and other fossil fuels. This is now the case for every heatwave, everywhere in the world. Until net greenhouse gas emissions end, heatwaves in India and elsewhere will continue to be-



come hotter and more dangerous." Otto leads the World Weather Attribution group and was named as one of TIME magazine's most influential people of 2021.

The forecast temperatures are similar to those seen in the deadly heatwaves that hit India and Pakistan in May-June 2015, which killed at least 4,500 people.

In the deadly June 2015 heatwave, the New Delhi airport reached 44.6 degrees C, while the hottest temperatures in India were seen in

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A deadly heatwave is building across India and Pakistan - home to around one in five people on earth - and new analysis by climate scientists has directly connected the heatwave with climate change

Jharsuguda in Odisha at 49.4 degrees.

In Pakistan, Karachi saw temperatures of 45 degrees, while other cities in the Balochistan and Sindh provinces reached 49 degrees.

India has already suffered the hottest March in 122 years of weather data, and parts of the country are seeing wheat yields drop 10-35 per cent in part due to the unseasonal heat - as they try to make up the shortfall caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Some experts in India are also stressing the need for actions to help people survive the climate change-driven extreme heat.

Abhijant Tiwari, Assistant Professor and Programme Manager, Gujarat Institute of Disaster Management, said: "While taking mitigation measures is a must to limit future warming, the extreme, frequent, and long-lasting spells of heatwaves are no more a future risk. It is already here and is unavoidable. Our heat action plans

must ensure adaptation measures like public cooling areas, ensuring uninterrupted electricity, access to safe drinking water, and changing the work hours of labourers for the most vulnerable ones at the bottom of the pyramid, especially during extreme heat days."

Dileep Mavalankar, Director with the Indian Institute of Public Health Gandhinagar (IIPHG) said, "The India Meteorological Department (IMD) is releasing forecast advisories for up to the next five days for 1,000 cities in India. Ahmedabad is on an orange alert on all the days with temperatures ranging between 43-44 degrees and this may increase further."

"People need to watch out for these advisories, stay indoors, keep themselves hydrated and rush to the nearest health centre if they feel moderate signs of heat-related illness. There's a special need to monitor the old and vulnerable, just like we did during the Covid-19 pandemic as they can develop heat strokes even when sitting at home," he added.

Follow 5T initiatives, SSEPD minister tells new officers

POST NEWS NETWORK Bhubaneswar, April 27: Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SSEPD) department cares for the welfare of the vulnerable sections of the society...

ures undertaken by the state government. The officers should have transparency skill and a humane attitude to help the vulnerable sections of the society...



Dignitaries, including Culture Minister Jyoti Prakash Panigrahi and Odisha Sahitya Akademi President Hrushikesh Mallick, at an event organised at Geeta Gobinda Sadan in Bhubaneswar to mark the first death anniversary of litterateur Manoj Das, Wednesday

Man convicted in 38-yr-old DA case

POST NEWS NETWORK Bhubaneswar, April 27: The Court of Special Judge here Wednesday awarded two years of rigorous imprisonment (RI) to a former executive engineer of Command Area Development Agency (CADA-I) after convicting him in a 38-year-old Disproportionate Assets (DA) case.

CONNECTIVITY BOOST FOR NAXAL-HIT AREAS

Nod to upgradation of 2G mobile sites to 4G

POST NEWS NETWORK New Delhi, April 27: The Union Cabinet has approved upgradation of around 480 2G mobile sites in Naxal-hit areas of Odisha to 4G, an official said Wednesday.



Sundargarh, Sonepur, Nuapada, Kandhamal, Kalahandi, Jharsuguda, Deogarh, Bargarh, Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Nayagarh, Jajpur, Dhenkanal, Angul, Rayagada, Nabrangpur, Malkangiri, Koraput, Ganjam and Gajapati districts.

Sonepur sizzles at 44.5° C

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Bhubaneswar, April 27: Odisha sweltered in the blazing sun Wednesday as a searing heatwave engulfed parts of the state for the third successive day and the maximum temperature breached the 40 degrees Celsius mark in 24 places, the Met office said.



Streets were a deserted look as the blistering heat scorched Sonepur, Sambalpur, Angul, Boudh, Bolangir, Jharsuguda, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Sundargarh, Deogarh and Bargarh districts

'18% got Covid-19 precaution dose'

AGENCIES Bhubaneswar, April 27: The state government has so far administered the precautionary Covid vaccine doses to around 18 per cent of eligible population, Health and Family Welfare department Director Bijay Panigrahi said Wednesday.

Continued from P1 ₹100cr master plan for Nilamadhaba temple

Chief Minister okays ₹100cr master plan for Nilamadhaba temple. A total of two acres of land is required to execute the project. So, the Nayagarh administration has been asked to acquire the land in accordance with the rehabilitation and resettlement policy.

SUMMER TREAT



People buy ice apples near Idco Exhibition Ground in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday

HC advances hearing on Puri corridor by a week

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Cuttack, April 27: The Orissa High Court Wednesday advanced the date for hearing of the case relating to the heritage corridor project around the 12th century Jagannath Temple in Puri to May 9.

vocate made an urgent mention and submitted some more documents in support of his argument. "List (this matter) May 9 along with all the connected matters. The next date of May 16 in this and connected petitions is cancelled," the order said.

Wednesday itself. Dilip Kumar Baral, a resident of Puri, had approached the High Court seeking its intervention in the construction of public amenities that would come up within 75 metre radius of the temple.

UP TO 40% OF PLANET'S LAND DEGRADED: UN

The way land resources—soil, water and biodiversity—are currently mismanaged and misused, which threatens the health and continued survival of many species on the earth, including our own, a stark new report from the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) warned Wednesday.



connected and rapidly changing world. We cannot afford to underestimate the scale and impact of these existential threats. "Conserving, restoring, and using our land resources sustain-

Modern agriculture has altered the face of the planet more than any other human activity. We need to urgently rethink our global food systems, which are responsible for 80 per cent of deforestation, 70 per cent of freshwater use, and the single greatest cause of terrestrial biodiversity loss

CLASSIFIED REAL ESTATE SALE

Land sale near Malatipatapur Bus Stand, Puri 1 K.M. distance from NH, Low Cost Plot available. 9692213354.

AFFIDAVIT

I, Ranjan Kumar Naik, R/o. Rengalipali, P.O.-Chiplima, Dist.: Sambalpur declare that my son namely Kshitiz Naik passed the annual 10th Examination-2021 bearing Unique ID No.7481731 and Index No. 1211953/101 through St. Joseph's Convent Higher Secondary School, Sambalpur under ICSE. That 10th original Board Certificate and Mark Sheet has been completely destroyed and it is beyond recovery.

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ATHAGARH BANDH TODAY

Plan to merge 71 villages with CDA kicks up row

POST NEWS NETWORK

Athagarh, April 27: The state government's plan to merge 71 villages under Athagarh sub-division and block with Cuttack Development Authority (CDA) has created resentment among the residents, a report said.

Peeved over the development, the residents have called for Athagarh bandh April 28.

The matter came to the fore after Athagarh Suraksha Manch, an outfit of the residents, opposed the move at a press meet held here, Tuesday. Addressing the meeting, lawyer and manj president Phani Bhushan Rath came down heavily on the local MLA-cum-minister for the anti-people move.

Opposing the move, residents lodged complaints in various forums and demanded immediate rollback of the decision.



It is alleged that the residents were not informed in advance regarding the merger decision of the state government

The police jurisdiction of Khuntuni and Gurudijhatia areas was shown as Choudwar, which the locals say is far away from these places

Rath said, "April 30 has been fixed as the deadline for submission of suggestions and grievances but how can people file their grievances within this short span of time?"

He said that those 71 villages which the state government has planned to merge with CDA are in Khuntuni and Gurudijhatia areas.

He said that the residents will not tolerate such move and have called for a 12-hour Athagarh bandh April 28. He requested all to cooperate for the bandh irrespective of political affiliations.

Among others, outfit secretary Jagadanda Tripathy, advisor Narayan Panda and advocate Shakarshan Mohanty attended the press meet.

Customer shoots grocer for cigarette

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, April 27: A grocery shop owner was critically injured when a customer, infuriated over delay in handing out a cigarette to him, shot at the former at Khadibahali Chhak under Harichandanpur police limits in Keonjhar. The incident took place late Tuesday night.

According to reports, Jagabandhu Mohapatra runs a grocery shop at Khadibahali Chhak. A customer came and asked for a cigarette. Mohapatra could not hand out a cigarette to him immediately. The customer flew into a rage following arguments. He pulled out a pistol and fired at Mohapatra, who was critically injured.

He was rushed to the district headquarters hospital and later shifted to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack. Meanwhile, police have started an investigation and are trying to nab the culprit.



Mineral loot unabated in Jajpur

Activists & mediapersons receiving threat from mining mafia a matter of concern

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, April 27: Illegal loot of granite, laterite stones, sand, murrum and other minerals continues unabated in Jajpur district. Worse, local social activists and mediapersons feel unsafe to raise their voice against such activities as they get death threats from the mining mafia.

Similarly, the reporter of an electronic media was attacked Saturday, when he had gone to Bada Pokhari sand quarry near Bandalo village under Barchana block for collecting these kinds of stories.

People associated with illegal mining have claimed that sand is being quarried for restoration of 'Bada Pokhari' under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment



Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). However, no signage has been put up at the said site mentioning details about the ongoing work. Moreover, machines have been engaged for quarrying instead of employing the job cardholders.

Rathore Thursday and submitted a memorandum to him seeking his direct intervention in the sensitive issue. The residents also contacted local mediapersons for coverage of news.

Illegal quarrying is rampant at Chanditala, Bantala, Khaera, Barchana, Paria and Bairi under Darpan tehsil. Truckloads of minor minerals are being transported on a daily basis, thanks to the negligent attitude of the administration.

SHORT TAKES

Man leaves wife to drown in pond

Parjang: A man, who had been taking care of her paralysed wife for over years, left her in a pond at Ramchandrapur village under this police limits in Dhenkanal district following which the woman drowned.

Passenger train to Nilagiri soon

Balasure: Divisional railway manager (DRM) of South Eastern Railways (Kharagpur Division) Manoranjan Pradhan Tuesday took stock of the ongoing work for passenger train services to Nilagiri area of Balasure.

The DRM directed the officials to expedite the construction work. He stated that a new platform will be constructed at Gopinathpur. The DRM, a senior divisional engineer, a divisional engineer, a senior divisional security commissioner and a senior divisional commercial manager held a meeting with Collector K Sudarshan Chakraborty about the makeover of the Balasure railway station.

BRAVING THE HEAT



Amid sweltering heat, an elderly woman carries a bicycle on her head for her grandchildren at Angul town Wednesday

5-bed dialysis centre opens at Barbil CHC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Barbil, April 27: A five-bed dialysis centre was inaugurated on the premises of Barbil community health centre (CHC), Wednesday.

The project was funded by district mineral foundation (DMF), Keonjhar: Champua MLA Minakshi Mohanta, Collector Ashish Thakare, chairperson of Barbil municipality Laxman Mohanta, Champua sub-collector Pratap Pritimaya, executive officer of Joda municipality Abhishek Panda and the chief district medical officer were present at the inaugural ceremony.

Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said, "The long-standing demand of the people of Barbil has been fulfilled with the functioning of the dialysis centre. Though a dialysis is available at Keonjhar district headquarters hospital, people from remote areas of mineral-bearing Joda and Barbil are unable to avail the facility due to the distance. People of Joda and Barbil will take advantage of the free dialysis service here."



The Collector also stated that a nutrition and rehabilitation centre is already functioning at the Barbil CHC while a 50-bed hospital will come up in the area in the days to come.

The Champua MLA said the demand for the dialysis centre was put forth before Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and he had dedicated it to the public. She thanked the Chief Minister for fulfilling the demand of the people in Barbil.

SBI duped of ₹4.5 cr in 2 years

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, April 27: Miscreants have allegedly duped the State Bank of India (SBI) in Sambalpur town and Rengali areas of around ₹4.5 crore over seven months apparently by tampering with as many as 11 automated teller machines (ATMs) in this district, a police official said.

The fraudulent transactions came to the fore after Santosh Rout, chief branch manager of SBI Sambalpur main branch, lodged a complaint at the Cyber police station. Police registered a case and started an investigation.

Twenty-five cards of different banks were used 4,369 times at 11 SBI ATMs in Sambalpur and Rengali town between September 2020 and March 2021.

The unidentified miscreants used 'exit shutter manipulation fraud' to siphon off the money after manually tampering with the cash dispensing shutters of the ATMs.



Twenty-five cards of different banks were used 4,369 times at 11 SBI ATMs in Sambalpur and Rengali town between September 2020 and March 2021

The unidentified miscreants used 'exit shutter manipulation fraud' to siphon off the money after manually tampering with the cash dispensing shutters of the ATMs.

The miscreants would insert their cards and once the PIN and the requested amount are keyed

in, the machine would authenticate the card and the process of cash dispensation would begin. The robbers would then jam the SBI ATM's cash shutter while it dispenses the money, prompting it to generate an error message.

After collecting money from the ATMs, they would claim the same amount from the bank alleging non-receipt of cash. The money would then be refunded by the SBI, the police officer said.

"A case has been registered and an investigation is underway," Cyber police station inspector Padmasini Meher said. "We are examining the CCTV footage of the SBI ATM kiosks to identify the people involved in the fraud," the police official added.

Joda youth's conferencing app a big hit

POST NEWS NETWORK

Joda, April 27: Debasish Behera, a Plus II student of a college in Bhubaneswar, has brought laurels for the state by developing a videoconferencing mobile app which can facilitate participation of 70 people at a time.

Debasish is the son of Bahadur Behera and Renuka Behera, residents of Azad Bazar in Joda Municipality.

The app, 'Fizby', is available in Google play store since February and is being used in 176 countries now, claims Debasish.

He had earlier developed two other apps, but the latest one earned him a name for its wider usage.

Debasish had a great interest in computer science and technology. That helped him hone his IT skills. His application is equipped with a special feature which is not available on other similar applications. A user can have the facility of special effects in



computer science and technology. That helped him hone his IT skills. His application is equipped with a special feature which is not available on other similar applications. A user can have the facility of special effects in

During the lockdown, I had invested a lot of time in doing research on the application. My mother used to help me and she is my inspiration

DEBASISH BEHERA | APP DEVELOPER

emojis during videoconferencing.

"During the lockdown, I had invested a lot of time in doing research on the application. My mother used to help me and she is my inspiration," he said.

'Fizby' application is fully secure and can maintain confidentiality of the users and could be a precursor to a startup. Surajkanti Pathak, a youth using this application, said that 'Fizby' is highly secured as compared to other applications.

His parents exuded hope that their son will set up a tech company to promote indigenous technology.

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER BOUDH (R&B) DIVISION, BOUDH. INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB) No.1326, Date:22.04.2022. Cancellation of Tender Call Notice No. SE BDH-20/2021-22 dated 30.03.2022.

ODISHA HYDRO POWER CORPORATION LTD. NOTICE INVITING TENDER NO. BHEP/07/2022-23 DATED 25.04.2022. No.CAD-318: The Unit Head, Balimela Hydro Electric Project, Balimela Dist-Malkangiri invites percentage rate bids in double cover system i.e. Cover-I (Technical Bid) & Cover II (Price bid) for the work through e-procurement as detailed in the table below.

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OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER, WATCO DIVISION, CUTTACK. Telephone/Fax: 0671-2547115/gmwatcoct@gmail.com. NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH E-Procurement Bid Identification No. WATCO(W) - 01/2022-23 Dtd.26.04.2022

In concentration and silence we must gather strength for the right action.

THE MOTHER



Expand Safety Net

Russia's war in Ukraine is a humanitarian catastrophe that violates the UN Charter and international humanitarian law, and has exacerbated socioeconomic and environmental crises around the world. It is also the latest manifestation of a global system that does not improve the human condition. Our imperfect responses to climate change, biodiversity loss, COVID-19, rising energy and food costs, and war reveal international systems in dire need of redesign.

An economic model predicated on the pursuit of indefinite production and consumption has confronted us with climate and ecosystem breakdown. The latest reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change underscore the severity of the climate crisis and the narrowing opportunity for more climate-resilient development.

Governments need to deliver on pledges to align public support behind clean-energy investments and deployment, and to phase out subsidies for fossil fuels. But the war in Ukraine is increasing pressure on fiscal authorities to maintain and even increase support for fossil fuels and intensive, protectionist agriculture. Policymakers therefore must recognise that the current crisis is an opportunity to invest in a faster transition to clean energy and resilient agriculture – all of which will create green jobs in the process.

Climate finance should focus on those most affected by, and least able to address, climate change. Rising food and energy prices were already creating hardship for poorer countries before the war. Now, even higher prices have threatened a food-security crisis that the WFP may struggle to address, given that it has historically sourced more than half of its wheat from Ukraine.

Peace is necessary to ensure that all societies and nature thrive. But peace and long-term prosperity rely, in turn, on our ability to create an equitable, net-zero, nature-positive global economy.

The IMF's proposed Resilience and Sustainability Trust can help to ensure that the recently allocated \$650 billion in special drawing rights will channel more cost-effective, flexible finance to the most vulnerable countries. At the same time, increased development finance can help to scale up green industrialisation and employment, while supporting those countries making the shift away from carbon-intensive industries.

For its part, the World Bank must use its financial leverage to fund a faster and more equitable clean-energy transition. It should support countries suffering from the pandemic, the physical effects of climate change, and the economic shocks of war by making a greater commitment to financing adaptation, facilitating concessional lending, and deploying its risk-mitigation tools to help crowd in more private finance.

Beyond supporting a just transition, transforming the global economic and financial system means changing the "rules of the game." Natural resources and nature's services must be properly valued, and externalities properly disclosed, priced, and built into financial markets.

We also need to change how we measure progress, because GDP is no longer fit for purpose. Rather than helping us tackle our biggest problems, it contributes to them by encouraging overconsumption. Replacing GDP with a new yardstick that tracks well-being and prosperity across generations would encourage investment in natural and social capital, as well as a transition to a nature-positive global economy that respects and operates within the biosphere's limits. The UN Sustainable Development Goals were meant to do that, but we have yet to match those commitments with action.

Forging a consensus on new rules will require a new global commission on the economy and nature – a new Bretton Woods to bring together government, business, finance, academia, and civil society. We must acknowledge that our economies are dependent on and embedded in nature. And we must update the IMF and World Bank's governance structures to recognise the economic power of emerging markets, giving a greater voice (and more votes) to underrepresented countries.

To persuade businesses and investors to shift capital toward low-carbon, socially inclusive, and nature-positive activities, governments must integrate natural and social systems into their decision-making. That is the only way to align fiscal and other economic policies with international climate, nature, and development goals. This process should include publishing information on natural capital stocks and associated risks, liabilities, and investment requirements in annual budget reports. Moreover, corporate reporting on climate- and nature-related risks need to be standardised and made mandatory for businesses and financial institutions.

Investment in net-zero, nature-positive action should increase, and environmentally harmful subsidies should be eliminated. Reversing the losses to nature will cost \$700 billion a year, but that is just a fraction of the \$5.9 trillion cost of fossil-fuel subsidies. The same kind of bold economic intervention that was used to manage the pandemic must be brought to bear against climate change and biodiversity loss. As many countries increase their borrowing to recover from the pandemic, now is the time to expand the global financial safety net, nurture green sovereign-debt markets, and promote new financial instruments such as nature-performance bonds.

By reducing the cost of capital for those investing in resilience, we can also drive wider economic reforms to accelerate progress toward greener, more inclusive prosperity. With more than \$44 trillion in economic value at risk from nature loss, and with a net-zero transition that requires investment in nature-based solutions, initiating reform for a fairer, greener world must be a top priority.

While addressing the immediate food and energy crises, finance ministers and central-bank governors at the IMF and World Bank Spring Meetings also must pave the way for longer-term reforms. That way, world leaders gathering for Stockholm+50 this June, and for the COP15 biodiversity conference in Kunming later this year, will have a solid foundation upon which to start building the equitable, net-zero, nature-positive global economy that we need.

The writer is Global Finance Practice Leader at WFF International. @PROJECT SYNDICATE



Margaret Kuhlow

An economic model predicated on the pursuit of indefinite production and consumption has confronted us with climate and ecosystem breakdown



Brahma Chellaney

A KEY PROBLEM IS THAT ALL FOUR COUNTRIES HAVE ALLOWED THEMSELVES TO BE SEDUCED BY THE CHINESE NARRATIVE THAT ECONOMIC RELATIONS CAN BE SEPARATED FROM GEOPOLITICS

When the Quad was first conceived as a strategic coalition of the Indo-Pacific's four leading democracies, many doubted that it would amount to much. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi mocked it as a "headline-grabbing idea" that would dissipate "like the sea foam in the Pacific or Indian Ocean." But continued Chinese expansionism, combined with former Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzō's determination to build broad resistance to it, has produced an increasingly consolidated group, with real potential to bolster regional security. The question is whether it will deliver.

One thing is certain: all four Quad members – Australia, India, Japan, and the United States – are essential to realise the vision of a "free and open Indo-Pacific" introduced by Japan in 2016 and affirmed by the US in 2017. While the Quad took some time to get off the ground – it was resurrected during US President Donald Trump's administration but leaders' summits began only after Joe Biden took office – it has gained considerable momentum. Its members have held three summits since last year (two of them virtual) and are set to meet in person in Tokyo May 24.

But the Quad still has a long way to go, not least because its members' own actions are undercutting its strategic rationale – the need to prevent China from expanding its influence in the Indo-Pacific. A key problem is that all four countries have allowed themselves to be seduced by the Chinese narrative that economic relations can be separated from geopolitics.

China's trade surplus, which reached a record \$676.4 billion last year, is now the main engine of its economy. Without it, Chinese growth would likely stall, especially as President Xi Jinping strengthens state control over private companies. This would also

FOCUS GEOPOLITICS

QUAD AT A CROSSROADS



The Indo-Pacific's four leading democracies can hold as many leaders' summits as they want, but without a clear strategic vision – and an agenda to match – they will have little impact

hinder China's ability to invest in its military and finance its aggressive manoeuvres in the Indo-Pacific and beyond.

And yet the US and India are major contributors to China's trade surplus. The US leads the way: its trade deficit with China swelled by more than 25% in 2021, to \$396.6 billion, and now comprises over 58% of China's total surplus. India's trade deficit with China – which hit \$77 billion in the 12 months through this March – exceeds its defence budget, even as the two countries are locked in a dangerous military confrontation on their long Himalayan frontier.

China's stealth encroachments on some Indian border areas in 2020 triggered deadly clashes, setting in motion a buildup of forces and border infrastructure that continues to this day. This should have been a wake-up call for Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who had been so committed to appeasing China that he was blindsided by its aggression. But India's large and growing trade deficit with China suggests that he is still asleep.

Australia and Japan have similarly built up significant dependency on Chinese trade. China accounts for nearly one-third of Australia's international trade and is Japan's

largest export market. Moreover, both countries are members of the China-led Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership. For them, enabling China to shape trade rules in the Indo-Pacific is apparently a small price to pay for the economic benefits of increased regional commerce.

Rather than continuing to underwrite China's economic and geopolitical power, the Quad should be making economic cooperation – including increased trade among its members – a central feature of its agenda. Unfortunately, though Biden has pledged to unveil an Indo-Pacific Economic Framework covering everything from infrastructure to the digital economy, his administration's unwillingness to commit more resources to the region or offer regional partners better access to US markets severely limits the initiative's potential. Moreover, Biden has pushed an expansive Quad agenda covering topics that have nothing to do with the group's core objectives – everything from climate change to COVID-19 vaccine delivery to supply-chain resilience.

America's deepening proxy conflict with Russia further muddies the strategic picture. Biden is the third successive US president to commit to shifting America's pri-

mary strategic focus to Asia and the wider Indo-Pacific. But the Ukraine war – which he believes "could continue for a long time" – may well cause him, like his predecessors, not to complete that pivot.

The war might also spur Biden to take a more conciliatory approach to China. Even before Russia invaded Ukraine, Biden had begun to ease pressure on China. He effectively let China off the hook for both obscuring COVID-19's origins and failing to meet its commitments under the 2020 "phase one" trade deal with the US. He also dropped fraud charges against the daughter of the founder of the military-linked Chinese tech giant Huawei. US sanctions over China's Muslim gulag remain essentially symbolic.

Now, as Biden attempts to ensure that Xi does not offer Russian President Vladimir Putin an economic lifeline, thereby neutralising the impact of Western sanctions, he is likely to adopt an even more conciliatory approach. Already, the US Trade Representative has reinstated exemptions from Trump-era tariffs on 352 products imported from China. And now the White House is considering a broader reduction of tariffs on non-strategic goods from China.

The Quad can hold as many leaders' summits as it wants, but without a clear strategic vision – and an agenda to match – it will have little impact. The group's purpose is to act as a bulwark against Chinese expansionism and ensure a stable balance of power in the Indo-Pacific. At its May 24 summit, all other issues should take a backseat to this objective.

The writer is Professor of Strategic Studies at the New Delhi-based Center for Policy Research and Fellow at the Robert Bosch Academy in Berlin.

@PROJECT SYNDICATE

SPECTRUM EDUCATION

In defence of liberal arts

The recent decision of the UGC to allow students to pursue dual degrees in different disciplines has received considerable scrutiny. Notwithstanding the reasonable concern of logistics, much of the discourse has unfortunately shifted away from the radical changes that National Education Policy promises to bring to the education sector in particular and Indian society in general. The motive for allowing dual degree is consistent with the overall interdisciplinary framework of NEP.



Anwesh Satpathy

THE MODEL FOR HIGHER EDUCATION, AS LAID DOWN BY NEP, FOLLOWS AN APPROACH SIMILAR TO LIBERAL ARTS IN WESTERN COUNTRIES

Though much of the focus of government policies concerns quantity and accessibility, NEP focuses on quality. It is, of course, crucial to ensure literacy for the widest possible proportion of the population given that it has enormous impact on employment and upward mobility. However, this should not be done by compromising quantity. We can only capitalise on our human resources in the best possible manner when we inculcate and encourage curiosity and research.

For most of India's history, our education system has been successful in generating employment. This is evidenced in the popular consciousness by the plethora of doctors and engineers among the Indian diaspora. Unfortunately, we have not been as successful in generating new research. NEP seeks to correct it.

In order to make headway in contemporary international research landscape, a focus on in-

terdisciplinarity is not merely helpful but absolutely necessary. The emergence of many influential new disciplines of study has blurred the lines between social science and science. For instance, the field of cognitive science emerged from a synthesis of neuroscience, psychology, linguistics, philosophy, artificial intelligence and anthropology. The sheer diversity among the earliest luminaries of cognitive science, which include the philosopher Daniel Dennett, the linguist Noam Chomsky, neuroscientist David Marr and the computer scientist Marvin Minsky reflects the interdisciplinary research that led to its inception. Similarly, the field of anthropology and psychology now involves extensive interdisciplinary sub-fields. Even a relatively insular field like economics underwent a radical transformation to include the insights of psychology into its mainstream models (behavioural economics).

In sharp contrast, most Indians abhor interdisciplinarity that a liberal arts education aims to provide. First, students who are high in openness and seek to explore more are actively discouraged in high school as the only route to good grades is the tried and tested formula of rote learning. Second, parents discourage their kids from pursuing research and academia as it doesn't provide the upward mobility that civil services and skilled jobs do. The attitude that society in

general has towards those who choose to stay in academia was reflected when JNU PhD. students were mocked across social media for presumably choosing to learn at 40. Third, ignorant stereotypes towards social science in particular and liberal arts in general (whether as allegedly fields of ideological indoctrination or lacking specific "expertise") are all too widespread.

Apart from societal factors, the crucial problem remains the dismal state of our institutions. According to a study by Elsevier, most of India's research comes from think tanks and research institutes as opposed to universities. Indian researchers earn 22% less than their counterparts in service sectors.

The first step towards solving these problems is to create incentives. NEP does just that. It provides students enough flexibility to pursue fields as diverse as biology and fashion. The assessment of students too is through flexible and continuous evaluation instead of a single board exam.

The model for higher education, as laid down by NEP, follows an approach similar to liberal arts in Western countries. The undergraduate degree, in particular, allows four exit options providing incentives even for those who study only for a year out of four. The internationalisation of higher education will lead to a proliferation of cross-border research, an area

where India lags behind.

What comes as a pleasant surprise is the language policy in the NEP draft, which seems to be in sharp contrast to the emphasis on a single language that prominent members of the current regime often propagate. Though mandating three languages has been officially part of the national policy on education since 1968, North Indian states managed to conveniently contravene it by teaching Sanskrit and Urdu instead. The NEP draft, in contrast, gave emphasis on foreign languages, native languages as well as classical languages (which include Tamil, Malayalam, Odia, Sanskrit, Kannada and Telugu) while emphasising on no imposition. As the Harvard psychologist and linguist Steven Pinker points out, it is easier for children to acquire multiple languages than adults. It is, therefore, essential that we create the environment and provide incentive to capitalise on this human potential. As the NEP is in its initial phase of implementation, it is important for us to comprehend the sheer magnitude of changes it promises to bring.

For the first time in more than half a century, it marks a radical departure from the status quo in education sector.

The writer is an author, blogger and a student at Jindal School of International Affairs.

WORDSWORTH

Squabash

This comes from a great period of Scottish letters, that of the rivalry between the Edinburgh Review and Blackwood's Magazine from 1817 onwards. The latter was a Tory journal, full of what one contemporary called sentimental Jacobitism, which was created specifically to oppose the Whig policies of its rival. Among its writers were Thomas de Quincey, James Hogg (the Ettrick Shepherd), and John Wilson. The last of these was soon to be appointed by political shenanigans on the part of the Tory council of Edinburgh to be Professor of Moral Philosophy at the local university, a post for which he was entirely unqualified (he relied on his friends to write his lectures for him, though a biographer commented that "he probably managed to become something of an expert on the subject by the time he retired in 1851"). This did nothing to stop his prodigious literary output for the magazine under the pen name of Christopher North, which was by turns fearless, violent, measured and scurrilous; no better word could be imagined to describe its tone than Wilson's own invention in its pages of squabash for the process of utterly demolishing some rival in print. He seems to have made it up, a fanciful compound of squash and bash, though there's a Scots word stramash for an uproar or commotion that might have contributed to its invention. The noun is not recorded outside his own works, but the verb survived as a rarity for a while after his death. It seems to have died out near the end of the nineteenth century.

COVID excess deaths

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

OrissaPOST
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Sir, The World Health Organization (WHO) was set to release an estimate of excess deaths during the pandemic period all over the world. However, the report was delayed because of objections from the Indian government. The report shows that at least 4 million excess deaths occurred in India which is the highest tally in the world. However, the Indian government did not approve of the report citing wrong methodology adopted for the study. Excess deaths are calculated by finding the difference between registered deaths before the pandemic and those that occurred during the pandemic. Most of the developed countries have accurate registration of deaths. In such countries cause of mortality is correctly recorded. So it is easy to find excess deaths in such countries. In contrast to such accurate death registration system in developed countries, India has an inaccurate system of death registration. Further, there is great variation in registration and certification in the states in India. While some states have 100 per cent registration, some others have lower levels of registration. However, India is dismissive of the report made by the WHO. According to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the methodology used for smaller countries cannot be used for India because of its geographical size and population. The authors of the WHO report say that the excess mortality in India was calculated based on the data from India only. They have dismissed the argument by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare that same methodology was used for all countries. Some experts are of the opinion that the Indian government is trying to cover-up the exact facts about deaths caused by the pandemic to create an impression that the government's COVID management was successful. However, the full report by the WHO may give a clear picture of the pandemic's real impact on the country. Venu GS, Kollam (KERALA)

Lankan collapse

Sir, Law and order in Sri Lanka appear to have collapsed, with thousands of protestors taking to the streets and demanding that Mahinda Rajapaksa resign as Prime Minister. Last Sunday, the sixteenth day of protests in the island nation, youths stormed the compound of Rajapaksa's house in Colombo and defaced the boundary walls. Despite losing citizens' confidence and being dumped by several allies, the Rajapaksa brothers have declined to resign over the country's unprecedented economic crisis. But they would do well to see the writing on the wall!

NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

national

of the day quote

Modi ji, Hate-in-India and Make-in-India can't coexist! Time to focus on India's devastating unemployment crisis instead

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

Some cities of China are in a complete lockdown. Almost 40-50 crore people are under lockdown there. In Europe some countries have started bringing lockdowns again

PRAMOD SAWANT | GOA CHIEF MINISTER

We will be holding a large-scale vaccination drive for those between the age group of 6-12 years, those up to 18 years, and those above 60 years of age (precautionary dose). Patients at the hospitals including ILI and SARI cases will be tested and if anyone reports positive their samples will be sent for genomic sequencing

BASAVARAJ BOMMAI | KARNATAKA CM

SHORT TAKES

Militant killed, soldier injured

Srinagar: An unidentified militant was killed while a soldier was injured during an encounter in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama district Wednesday, police said. Security forces launched a cordon and search operation in the Mitrigam area of Pulwama following information about the presence of militants there, a police official said. He said the search operation turned into an encounter after militants opened fire at the security forces. In the exchange of fire, one militant was killed, the official said.

UP man sets mother on fire

Bhadohi (UP): In a shocking incident, a man allegedly set his 60-year-old mother on fire when she tried to stop him from thrashing his wife in Muktapur village of Uttar Pradesh's Bhadohi district. The accused, Mahajan, later consumed poison himself. Inspector Aurai Ajay Seth said that Mahajan's mother, Rajkumari, succumbed to burns at a Varanasi hospital while her son is struggling for life in a private hospital in Varanasi, where his condition is stated to be critical.

Stray dogs maul child to death

Hyderabad: In a horrific incident, a pack of stray dogs mauled a child to death in Hyderabad. The incident occurred Tuesday night in Bada Bazar area of Golconda. Two-year-old Anas Ahmed, who was playing near his house, was attacked by a pack of dogs. They dragged him to adjoining military area. Hearing the screams of the child, his parents and neighbours rushed to his rescue and chased away the dogs. The toddler sustained grievous injuries on his face, throat, and other body parts. The badly injured child was shifted to hospital, where he was declared brought dead.

Seven held in bar brawl case

Noida: Seven people, including five members of the bar staff and two from Mall Security, were arrested for beating a 30-year-old man to death in a brawl at a bar here in the city. The accused were identified as Kumer Singh Bangari, Himanshu Kumar, Bar Staff Managers Devendra Singh and Sundar Singh Rawat, Maddy Thakur, Guddu Singh and Kapil Singh. The scuffle ensued during a party at the bar named Lost Lemons in Garden Galleria Mall over payment of food bill Monday night.



“The best way to deal with the conflict in Ukraine would be to focus on stopping the fighting and getting the talking to move forward, and India's position on the crisis is best placed to advance such an approach”

S JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

MASK MUST

The Kerala government Wednesday brought back the face masks mandate in the state, in the wake of surge in Covid-19 cases reported in many other parts of the country. It also announced that any violation would be punishable under the provisions of the Disaster Management Act and other relevant laws



2nd dose, precaution dose gap to be cut to 6 months

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 27: The government is likely to soon reduce the gap between the second dose of Covid-19 vaccine and the precaution dose from the current nine months to six months, official sources said Wednesday.

A recommendation on lessening the gap is expected to be made by the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (NTAGI) which is set to hold a meeting April 29, they told PTL. Studies at ICMR and other international research institutions have suggested that antibody level wanes after about six months from the primary vaccination with both doses and giving a booster increases the immune response. All those above the age of 18 who have completed nine months after the administration of the second dose are eligible for the precaution dose.

“Taking into account the scientific evidence and findings of the studies done here and internationally, the gap between the second dose of Covid-19 vaccine and the precaution dose will most likely be reduced from the current nine months to six months soon. A final decision will be taken based on the recommendations by the NTAGI which is set to meet Friday,” a source in the know of the developments told PTL.

India began administering precaution doses of vaccines to healthcare and frontline workers and those aged 60 and above with comorbidities from January 10.



Modi interacts with CMs on Covid situation

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacted with Chief Ministers on the emerging Covid-19 situation in the country Wednesday through video conferencing. Several Chief Ministers, including West Bengal's Mamata Banerjee, Chhattisgarh's Bhupesh Baghel and Punjab's Bhagwant Mann, participated in the interaction. With several festivals coming up, Modi had Sunday urged people to stay alert to the threat from coronavirus and continue to follow Covid-appropriate behaviour such as wearing masks and frequently washing hands. In his monthly *Mann Ki Baat* radio broadcast, the prime minister had said in the coming days the festival of Eid, Akshaya Tritiya, birth anniversary of Bhagwan Parashuram and Vaishakh Budh Purnima will be celebrated. “All these festivals are festivals of restraint, purity, charity and harmony. Advance greetings to all of you on the occasion of these festivals. Celebrate these festivals with great gaiety and harmony,” Modi had said.

The government removed the comorbidity clause making all people aged above 60 eligible for the precaution dose in March.

According to health ministry data, 5,17,547 precaution doses have been administered in age group 18-59 years so far. Besides, 4736567

healthcare workers, 7447184 frontline workers and 14545595 individuals aged 60 and above have taken the precaution shot. India April 10 began administering precaution doses of Covid-19 vaccines to all aged above 18 years at private vaccination centres.

Fire at Chennai govt hospital



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, April 27: A fire broke out at one of the buildings of Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital here Wednesday, but no casualties or injuries were reported.

Three oxygen cylinders kept in the old building exploded, trig-

gering panic among the people. Patients undergoing treatment in wards on the floor, where the mishap occurred were quickly moved to safety, hospital sources said.

According to an official of the Fire and Rescue Services department, they received a call about the accident at 11 am and immediately four tenders were pressed into service to douse the flames in one of the blocks.

Minister for Medical and Family Welfare Ma Subramanian, Health Secretary J Radhakrishnan and Corporation of Chennai Mayor R Priya along with senior officials rushed to the spot and supervised the dousing and rescue operation. Electrical failure is the suspected cause of the blaze.

Fire and Rescue services personnel used a sky lift to rescue the patients and others stuck inside the building.

AFRICAN SWINE FEVER OUTBREAK

Mizoram, Tripura, Meghalaya impose restrictions

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Aizawl/Agartala/Shillong, April 27: After the outbreak of highly-contagious African Swine Fever (ASF) and killing of thousands of pigs in Mizoram, Tripura and Meghalaya, the authorities in the three northeastern states have issued several restrictions, including ban on trading of pigs, pig feed, pork and pork products in and around the affected areas.



After Mizoram, the fresh outbreak of ASF was reported from Tripura and Meghalaya. Officials said Wednesday that the state authorities are taking steps as per the guidelines of the National Action Plan of the Union Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying for control, containment and eradication of ASF. In Mizoram, the ASF, which created havoc last year killing over 33,400 pigs, has reappeared in a few districts, killing over 800 pigs over the past two months.

Return of Ambika Soni as Sonia takes front seat

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 27: Veteran Congress leader Ambika Soni (79) has once again taken the centre stage in Congress after interim party chief Sonia Gandhi became active.

A former Union minister, Soni, who has had a long career in politics, is known to be a close confidante of Sonia Gandhi. The veteran politician has been the Youth

Congress President, All India Mahila Congress chief besides being the General Secretary of the party. She was also offered the CMs post in Punjab after the removal of Amarinder Singh, which she had declined saying that only a Sikh should become the chief minister of the state, drawing flak for her remarks from Sunil Jakhar, the top claimant of the post.

Soni was one of the firefighters for the Gandhis when the G-23 lead-



FRAUGHT WITH RISK: A man shields his face from the heat with a cloth while riding a two-wheeler with four kids in Amritsar, Punjab



Soni is now part of all the meetings deemed important for the party

Even in the negotiations with poll strategist Prashant Kishor, which eventually didn't materialise, Soni was present at all the meetings

She was also part of the committee that was constituted to submit a report on the presentation made by Kishor

was also a trouble-shooter for the party in the recent tiff between

former Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda and the Congress.

Soni was once considered No. 2 in the party, but as the late Ahmed Patel gained significance, she was appointed the General Secretary and later a minister in the government.

But ever since the demise of Patel, Sonia Gandhi has been turning to her for advice on crucial matters as she is considered a loyalist in the party.

RAJIV GANDHI ASSASSINATION CASE

Why convict Perarivalan can't be released: SC to Centre

THE TOP COURT APRIL 9, GRANTED BAIL TO CONVICT PERARIVALAN WHO WAS SERVING A LIFE SENTENCE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 27: The Supreme Court Wednesday directed the Centre to clear its stand, within a week, regarding the release of AG Perarivalan, a convict in the assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

“Why don't you just agree to have him released? People who have served over 20 years are released. We are also offering you an escape route,” a bench headed by Justice L Nageswara Rao told Centre's counsel. Perarivalan has served more than 30 years in jail and

currently he is on bail. The top court took strong objection to the Tamil Nadu Governor sitting on the state Cabinet's recommendation to release Perarivalan for over three years, and then forwarding it to the President.

The bench, also comprising Justice BR Gavai, said that the Centre's argument that the Governor does not have the jurisdiction to take a decision on the mercy plea under Article 161 (Governor's power of mercy), strikes a blow on the federal structure of the country. It queried Additional Solicitor General KM Nataraj, rep-



resenting the Centre, as to what is the provision under which the Governor can refer the decision of the state Cabinet to the President?

The bench said if the Governor were to disagree with the state Cabinet decision to release him, then he would refer it back to the

Cabinet and not forward it to the President, who is bound by the aid and advice of the Centre.

Nataraj, however, contended that the Tamil Nadu Governor was right to send Perarivalan's plea to the President, saying “In certain situations, the President, and not the Governor, is the competent authority, especially when a sentence of death has been commuted to life...” Senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi, representing the Tamil Nadu government, submitted that law was settled on the power of Governor to decide mercy pleas under Article 161, and the Centre

is trying to unsettle it. He added that the Governor had to abide by the aid and advice of the state Cabinet, and the Governors were bound by the state governments' decision.

Pointing out that Perarivalan has served over 30 years, the bench queried Dwivedi, “Then why don't you release him..... Why should he be caught in the middle of who has the authority, President or Governor, to decide?” The top court agreed with the suggestion of Perarivalan's counsel that the court should also consider making the Governor's exercise of power under Article 161 “time-bound.”



India too hot, says PM as Delhi landfill burns



A firefighter uses his mobile phone sitting on top of a fire truck as smoke billows from burning garbage at the Bhalswa landfill site in New Delhi

REUTERS

New Delhi, April 27: India is getting too hot too early, raising the risk of fires, Prime Minister Narendra Modi warned Wednesday, as New Delhi sweltered in extreme heat and a burning landfill on the outskirts of the Capital spewed toxic smoke into the air.

A child resource centre for underprivileged children of rag-pickers living near the Bhalswa landfill site in north Delhi, has been closed for a week due to a massive fire in the area which has been raging for over 20 hours.

when temperatures regularly surpass 40 degrees Celsius before the monsoon rains bring relief.

The Capital has been hotter than 40°C for several days this month, with peak summer still to come before the coolness monsoon rains arrive in June.

"We can't make them sit here, it won't be healthy for them at all," Nayna, a part-time teacher who gave just one name, told Reuters' partner ANI.

The cause of the landfill fire was under investigation, though such incidents are commonplace during India's scorching summers,

The India Meteorological Department forecast heatwave conditions in the east, central and northwest of the country - which includes the Capital - over the next five days and flagged risks to the health of infants, the elderly and people with chronic diseases.

People gasp for clean air

The thick black smoke emanating from the Bhalswa landfill site in north Delhi, which went up in flames Tuesday, is choking the people residing in the nearby areas.

The residents have started complaining of sore throat, itchy eyes and breathing problems.

The pollution levels have also soared in the area. According to the System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR), the air quality at the Dhirpur monitoring station, just 6 km from the landfill site, is currently under 'severe' category. The pollutant PM 2.5 was at 316 (severe) and PM 10 at 251 (poor).

Usually, the air quality is categorised as 'good' when the AQI is between 0 and 30; 'satisfactory' at 31-60; 'moderate' at 61-90; 'poor' at 91-120; 'very poor' at 121-250; and 'severe' at over 250.

Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai has also issued directions to the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPC) to investigate the landfill fire incident and submit a report within 24 hours. The directions were issued Tuesday.

The cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained. However, officials said that the rising temperature these days allows the formation of methane gas at the dump yard site which is extremely flammable. "It could have triggered a spark that led to this massive blaze," said an official.

A school in the vicinity of the dump yard has also been closed out of fear that the smoke might affect children's health. At the time of filing this report, five fire engines were still working to douse the blaze.



REUTERS

Lawyers of Bengal violence victims to seek President rule



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 27: Claiming the complete collapse of law and order in the state, lawyers of the victims of violence will meet the President and the Union Home Minister to demand the imposition of President's rule in West Bengal.

Addressing a press conference in the National Capital, convenor of the 'Lawyers for Justice' and counsel for the victims of political violence in West Bengal, Kabir Shankar Bose said, "Lawyers of Supreme Court, Delhi High Court and all District Courts of the city and NCR will hold a peaceful candle march Friday. Family members of victims will also join the march. The voice for justice for Bengal will now echo in Delhi. The fight for justice will now be fought nationally, India will fight for justice, India will fight for Bengal."

Bose said that the delegation of the lawyers of the victims will meet President Ram Nath Kovind and Union Home Minister Amit Shah and give a representation about the complete breakdown of law and order in West Bengal.

"We will also demand imposition of President's rule in West Bengal for breakdown of law and order and state sponsored violence," Bose said. Bose claimed that since 2018, West Bengal has seen unprecedented state sponsored violence targeting particular groups and persons affiliated to certain groups and communities.

"Post May 2, 2021 after the announcement of the assembly polls results a reign of unprecedented terror, lawlessness and violence was

Lawyers of the city and NCR will hold a peaceful candle march Friday. The voice for justice for Bengal will now echo in Delhi. The fight for justice will now be fought nationally, India will fight for justice, India will fight for Bengal

KABIR SHANKAR BOSE | CONVENOR OF THE 'LAWYERS FOR JUSTICE'

unleashed by goons and anti-socials actively supported by the ruling dispensation and the political party in power in West Bengal. Hundreds of thousands were driven out of their homes. Hundreds were murdered. Daughters and mothers of West Bengal were raped," Bose said.

Bose claimed that post May 2, 2021 more than three lakh people have been rendered homeless. "They were driven out of their homes because they belonged to a particular religion or were aligned to particular organizations. Women were dragged out of their homes and raped in front of their families," he said.

YELLOW ALERT: DELHI BRACES FOR EXTREME HEAT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

On the precipice of another punishing heatwave spell, Delhi is predicted to see a jump of two to three degrees Celsius in the maximum temperature Wednesday. The Safdarjung Observatory - Delhi's base station - had recorded a maximum temperature of 40.8 degrees Celsius Tuesday.

It is expected to breach the 42-degree mark Wednesday and soar to 44 degrees Celsius by Thursday, according to the India Meteorological



Department (IMD). The maximum temperature may even leap to 46 degrees Celsius in parts of Delhi, a Met department official said.

The capital had recorded a maximum temperature of 43.2 degrees Celsius April 21, 2017. The all-time high maximum temperature for the month was 45.6 degrees Celsius April 29, 1941.

Northwest India has been recording higher than normal temperatures since March last week, with weather experts attributing it to absence of active Western Disturbances over north India and any major system over south India. The region had got some respite last week due to cloudy weather due to the influence of a Western Disturbance over Afghanistan.

A yellow alert warning of a heatwave spell in the national capital starting April 28 has been issued.

IMD uses four colour codes for weather warnings - green (no action needed), yellow (watch and stay updated), orange (be prepared) and red (take action). IMD said the heatwave could lead to moderate health concerns for vulnerable people - infants, elderly, people with chronic diseases - in affected areas. Hence people of these regions should avoid heat exposure, wear summer clothes and cover the head by use of cloth, hat or umbrella etc, it said.

'Muhammadpur' turns 'Madhavpuram'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Apr 27: The BJP leaders here Wednesday attended a ceremony to rename South Delhi's 'Muhammadpur' village to 'Madhavpuram', saying the locals did not want to associate themselves with any symbol of slavery.



The party's Delhi unit president Adesh Gupta also posed with workers and locals in front of a freshly painted board that welcomed visitors to 'Madhavpuram'.

He said the process to change the name was taken forward by the locals and the BJP workers after a proposal by the local BJP councillor in this regard was passed by the South Municipal Corporation of Delhi.

The proposal to change the name of 'Muhammadpur' to 'Madhavpuram' was passed and sent to the Delhi government in December last year. However, the government is sitting on it for the last six months, Gupta alleged.

Last week, the Delhi BJP had also said the party will send a proposal to the Kejriwal government demanding that the names of 40 villages in the city be changed as they symbolise a period of slavery.

These 40 villages include Humayunpur, Yusuf Sarai, Masoodpur, Zamroodpur, Begumpur, Saidul Ajab, Fatehpur Beri, Hauz Khas, and Sheikh Sarai to name a few, he said.

The Aam Aadmi Part, however, charged that the BJP did not want the government to function as per the due process and it was looking for opportunities to start hooliganism.

TESTING TIME



Class X students undergo thermal screening before appearing in CBSE exams at a school in New Delhi, Wednesday

Project aims to restore central ridge, rid it of 'vilayati kikar'

Considered the green lungs of the National Capital, the ridge is an extension of the Aravalli hill range in Delhi and is a rocky, hilly, and forested area



Capital's environment. We have today launched the pilot project to remove this tree species from 10 hectares of land in the central ridge," Rai told reporters.

The forest department plans to remove 'vilayati kikar', which doesn't allow other species to thrive and leads to water table depletion, through canopy lifting and planting native trees, shrubs, and grasses suitable for the ridge's soil.

The local species include Hingot, Banyan, Bahera, Chamrod, Pilkhan, Amaltas, Mulberry, Palash, Native Acacia, Khair, Bitter gourd, Gular, and Harsingar among others.

The department plans to develop grasslands in the central ridge which will be transformed into a butterfly and bird safari, and a world-class central park.

This will also help alleviate air pollution to a large extent, the minister said.

The project also involves construction of check dams and water bodies to cater to the demand for water in the future.

The government had in March last year set up a six-member advisory committee to monitor the progress of the project and ensure timely and effective on-ground compliance. Considered the green lungs of the national capital, the ridge is an extension of the Aravalli hill range in Delhi and is a rocky, hilly, and forested area.

It has been divided into four zones - south, south-central, central, and north - due to administrative reasons. These four zones make up a total area of around 7,784 hectares.

CBFC asks makers of Bengali film to mute words; sparks row

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, April 27: A controversy has erupted over a Bengali film, with the censor board directing that certain expressions involving words 'Honu' and 'Sitey' be muted to avoid hurting people's sentiments, and some industry honchos objecting to the imposition, terming the decision as completely illogical.

"mute these phrases - two of them used in songs," he said. Flustered over the directive, the filmmaker, also a state government official, maintained that the dialogues were integral to the film.

"The CBFC directive is totally illogical. As a filmmaker, I would not wish to chop any part of the script that is integral to the narrative," Chakraborty stated.

'Ashare Goppo', starring actors Rudranil Ghosh, Abir Chatterjee and Payel Sarkar, is a comedy film directed by Arindam Chakraborty. Shot way back in 2013, the film was held up for eight years due to financial constraints and distribution-related problems.

An official of Central Board of Film Certification's regional office here told PTI Wednesday that four phrases - including 'Honu' and 'Ami Sitey' - were found derogatory with the potential to hurt sentiments.

Ghosh, who plays a lead character in the film, said that the two sides should arrive at a mutual decision. The actor, who had unsuccessfully contested Bhowanipore election on a BJP ticket said 'Honu' is a word that is often used by Bengali people to describe a person who has a superiority complex, he clarified.

Notably, the word 'Honu' is also sometimes used as the shortened form of 'Honuman'. In a similar vein, director Atanu Ghosh said that use of words 'Sitey' or 'Sitey' did not always have to have a sacrilegious context.

of the day quote

Everyone has the freedom to follow his or her religion in this country. It is enshrined in our Constitution that we are a secular country, which means all religions are equal. I do not think any government should interfere in this

OMAR ABDULLAH | NATIONAL CONFERENCE (NC) LEADER

Modi ji, No criticism, No distractions, No Jumla! Please give an account of 22,00,00,00,00,00,00 (22 Lakh Crore) collected by BJP Govt from Tax on Petrol & Diesel

RANDEEP SURJEWALA | CONGRESS CHIEF SPOKESPERSON

Covid cases are increasing continuously in all countries including UK, Germany, and China. There has also been an increase in infections in some parts of the country. In view of its seriousness, I participated in the meeting of all the Chief Ministers being chaired by the Prime Minister on the Corona situation

ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CHIEF MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Delhi: Sex racket busted, 7 arrested

New Delhi: A sex racket being operated from a spa has been busted and seven persons, including five prostitutes, arrested in this connection, Delhi Police said Wednesday. According to the police, information regarding a sex racket being run in a spa and massage parlour named "The Space Spa" was received Tuesday and a raid was conducted by the Special Staff of the Central District and seven persons arrested, including the spa owners - Deepak Kumar and his wife Babita. The police have registered a case under section 3, 4 and 5 of the Immoral Trafficking Prevention Act 1956 at the Patel Nagar police station.

Naxalite dies in police custody

Hazaribag (Jharkhand): Following the custodial death of a member of a banned Naxalite outfit inside a police station in Jharkhand's Hazaribag district, the superintendent of police Wednesday said he has written a letter to the principal district and sessions judge stating that an enquiry into the matter may be conducted by him. Superintendent of Police Manoj Ratan Chothe said 32-year-old PLFI member Nand Kishore Mahto was found hanging in the toilet of Hazaribag Muffasil Police Station lock-up Tuesday morning.

Youth Cong protests Mevani's arrest

New Delhi: Youth Congress Wednesday protested the arrest of Gujarat MLA Jignesh Mevani by Assam police and demanded his release. The protesters wanted to march towards Union Home Minister Amit Shah's residence but were stopped. Srinivas BV, National President of Indian Youth Congress, said Mevani's arrest is illegal. The Assam police should have informed the Speaker of the Gujarat Legislative Assembly about any such arrest on prior basis before arresting the MLA, but he was not even informed, which is against the rules, Srinivas BV said.

No respite

Jaipur: The mercury maintained an upward trend in parts of Rajasthan where most of the cities recorded above-normal temperature Wednesday. The maximum temperature in Vanasthali was 45.4 degrees Celsius, while the Bikaner and Phalodi recorded a high of 45.2 degrees Celsius.



When India went into lockdown, we did not have a single PPE suit in the country and the workforce that made those PPE suit, about 75 per cent of it were Indian women and in just three months we became the second largest exporters in the world and that is an indicator of female potential in Indian manufacturing

SMRITI IRANI | UNION MINISTER

TRAGIC INCIDENT

Two men, including one person who went to rescue the other, died inside a sewer pit in the national capital Wednesday, an official said. The deceased have been identified as Chittaranjan (26) and Abdul Salam (18)



Move to remove loudspeakers gains momentum in UP

Several religious organisations and members of the Muslim community are appealing to the mosque trustees to abide by the Supreme Court guidelines related to playing loudspeakers at religious places



Workers remove loudspeakers from a mosque in Gorakhpur

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, April 27: Over 6,000 unauthorised loudspeakers were removed from religious places and volume of other 30,000 was set to permissible limits across Uttar Pradesh following a government order, a senior police official said Wednesday.

A statewide drive is being undertaken to remove unauthorised loudspeakers from religious places and set the volume of others within permissible limits, Additional Director General of Police (Law and Order) Prashant Kumar said.

He added that loudspeakers are being removed from all religious places without any discrimination. Under this exercise, a total of 6,031 loudspeakers were removed and volume of 29,674 loudspeakers was set within permissible limits till Wednesday afternoon, Kumar said.

Explaining further about the action, he said, "The loudspeakers which are being removed are unauthorised."

"Those loudspeakers which have been placed without taking due permission from the district administration or the ones which are placed in excess of the permitted numbers are categorised as unauthorised," he added. He said, "Orders of the high court regarding loudspeakers are also being considered during the exercise."

The action followed after Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, during a review meeting on law and order

with senior officials here last week, said people have the freedom to perform their religious practices according to their faith.

"Though microphones can be used, it should be ensured that the sound does not come out of any premises. People should not face any problem," he had said.

The home department has also sought a compliance report from the districts over the removal of loudspeakers at religious places by April 30.

As per the information provided by the police department on Wednesday, maximum 1,366 loudspeakers were removed in districts of the Varanasi zone, followed by Meerut (1,215), Bareilly (1,070) and Kanpur (1,056).

In terms of minimising the volume of loudspeakers, the Lucknow zone tops the list with action being taken against 6,400 loudspeakers, followed by Bareilly (6,257) and Meerut (5,976).

The exercise was conducted in the city by a joint team comprising officials of the Lucknow Municipal Corporation and the police.

"The exercise to remove loudspeakers was started on Tuesday and is currently underway. We are conducting the exercise in tandem with members of peace committees and religious heads of different religions. So far, we have not faced any opposition while conducting the drive," Deputy Commissioner of Police (West) Somen Barma said.

TN: 11 DEAD DURING CHARIOT PROCESSION

The top of the chariot came in contact with a high transmission-line, which was about 30 ft high, at a road turning just near its destination

AGENCIES

Thanjavur, April 27: Eight men and 3 teenage boys were killed and 17 others injured Wednesday near here due to electrocution when a temple chariot came in contact with a High Tension electricity line during a procession, police said.

President Ram Nath Kovind, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Tamil Nadu Governor R N Ravi, Chief Minister MK Stalin expressed shock and grief over the killings. Modi announced ₹2 lakh each from PMNRF (Prime Minister's National Relief Fund) to the next of kin of those who have lost their lives and ₹50,000 to those injured.

Chief Minister Stalin, condoling the deaths, ordered a solatium of ₹5 lakh each to the 11 bereaved families. The tragic incident occurred early today when the Appar temple's chariot procession was passing through the Thanjavur-Boodalur Road, local authorities said. The accident happened when the chariot's top portion grazed through the HT transmission line, they said.

The temple car, while negotiating a turn faced some obstacle and when devotees tried to turn its direction it came into contact with the overhead line, police and district revenue department authorities said. All the 17 injured persons including a woman have been admitted to the Thanjavur Government Medical College Hospital for treatment.



Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin along with senior ministers visit to inspect the mangled remains of the chariot

In the Thanjavur District today and meet

the kin of the victims. Also, Stalin said he would visit the hospital and meet those being treated.

As a mark of respect to the departed persons, Stalin moved a resolution conveying the House's condolences and sympathies to the bereaved families and it was unanimously passed. MLAs stood in silence as a mark of respect.

Stalin said the Thanjavur District in-charge Minister Anbil Mahesh Poyyamozhi, elected representatives and senior officials have been sent to the spot. The Appar temple is in Kalimedu under the Melaveli Village of Thanjavur District in Cauvery delta region of Tamil Nadu, about 350 km from Chennai.

BEATING THE HEAT



Boys dive into the cooler River Ganga to beat the heat on a hot summer day in Kolkata

PTI PHOTO

Women more likely to have asthma attacks, deaths than men: Report

Asthma is a condition in which the airways narrow, swell and may produce extra mucus, making breathing difficult. It is characterised by wheezing, breathlessness, tightness in chest, and coughing

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi/London, April 27: Women with asthma who are going through puberty, pregnancy or are menstruating, are at higher risk of severe asthma attacks and deaths due to the lung disease, according to a report.

The study - conducted by a non-profit Asthma and Lung UK - highlights that female hormones can trigger asthma flare-ups, BBC reported.

The findings calls for more research to examine the sex-related differences in the common lung condition.

Asthma is a condition in which the airways narrow, swell and may produce extra mucus, making breathing difficult. It is characterised by wheezing, breathlessness, tightness in chest, and coughing. There are about 136 million women worldwide who suffer from asthma. The report showed that more than 5,100 women have died from an asthma attack, compared with under 2,300 men over the past five years in the UK.

It noted that many people were unaware that fluctuations in female sex hormones can cause asthma symptoms to flare up or even trigger life-threatening attacks. "Asthma tends to be overlooked or dismissed," Dr Samantha Walker, director of research and innovation at Asthma and Lung UK,



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

In childhood, asthma is more prevalent and severe in boys. However, after puberty, the situation reverses, and asthma becomes more prevalent and severe among women

was quoted as saying.

In childhood, asthma is more prevalent and severe in boys. However, after puberty, the situation reverses, and asthma becomes more prevalent and severe among women, the report said. The charity said the current "one size fits all" approach to asthma treatment is "not working" because it does not

take into account the impact that female sex hormones during puberty, periods, pregnancy and menopause can have on asthma symptoms and attacks. More must be done to tackle the "stark health inequality", it added.

"Gaps in our knowledge are failing women, leaving them struggling with debilitating asthma symptoms, stuck in a cycle of being in and out of hospital and in some cases, losing their lives," Sara Woolnough, chief executive of Asthma + Lung UK, was quoted as saying. "There is not enough research into why women are more likely to be hospitalised and die from asthma and what treatments, new and existing, could help women," added Mome Mukherjee, researcher at the University of Edinburgh.

NDMA notifies guidelines for Covid-19 death compensation

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 27: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Wednesday issued guidelines for filling an application for Covid-19 death compensation.

Issuing a public notice, it said that the outer time limit of 60 days to file the claims for compensation in case the death occurred due to Covid-19 prior to March 20, 2022, is with effect from March 24, 2022.

For future deaths, 90 days' time shall be provided from the date of death due to Covid-19 to file the claim for compensation, it said.

The guidelines issued after the decision of the Supreme Court on March 24, 2022.



The earlier order to process the claims and to make the actual payment of compensation within a period of 30 days from the date of receipt of claim shall continue to be enforced, the NDMA said. It also said in case of extreme hardship where any claimant could not make an application within the time prescribed, the claimant shall approach the Grievance Redressal Committee to make the claim.

Over 58K Lankan & 72K Tibetan refugees living in India: MHA

In its recently submitted annual report for 2020-21, the MHA said that as January 1, 2021, there were 58,843 Sri Lankan refugees staying in 108 refugee camps in Tamil Nadu and 54 in Odisha

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 27: The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has informed that a total of 58,843 Sri Lankan and 72,312 Tibetan refugees have been living in India.

Besides, around 34,135 refugees are staying outside the camps, registered with the state authorities in Tamil Nadu.

Pending repatriation, certain essential relief facilities are provided to them on humanitarian grounds. These facilities include shelter in camps, cash doles, subsidised ration, clothing, utensils, medical care and educational assistance. The entire expenditure is incurred by the state government and is subsequently reimbursed by the Centre to the state. An amount of ₹1,154 crore has been spent by the Centre for providing relief and accommodation to these refugees during the period between July, 1983 and December 31, 2020. The Ministry also said that

UNEXPECTED TWIST

'Mafia loan' charge haunts Navneet Rana

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, April 27: The mafia angle has emerged in the ongoing ruckus between Independent MP-MLA couple, Navneet Kaur Rana and her husband Ravi Rana, and the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government.

Late Tuesday, Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut had dropped a Twitter bomb claiming that the Amravati (SC seat) MP, Navneet Rana, had allegedly taken a loan of ₹80 lakh from Yusuf Lakdawala, alleged to be linked to the absconding mafia don Dawood Ibrahim Kaskar and nabbed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in a ₹200 crore money-laundering case a couple of years back.

When questioned, Minister of State for Home, Shambhuraj Desai, said that the police would ascertain the matter and in case a complaint is registered, they



would investigate further and do the needful.

A film financier, realtor and businessman, Lakdawala died while in custody at the Arthur Road Central Jail in September 2021.

Raking up the issue, Raut also posted a purported extract of Navneet Rana's 2019 election affidavit which mentions the loan amount due to (the late) Lakdawala.

"Why has the ED not yet investigated this? This is just one matter that has come to light, there may be other such irregularities that will be exposed in the probe," Raut said.

He also wondered whether there could be an "underworld link" to the ongoing political row over reciting 'Hanuman Chalisa', as it (a link) was found during the March 1993 Mumbai serial blasts.



around 3,04,269 Sri Lankan refugees have entered India in various phases between July, 1983 and August 2012. The Centre's approach is to grant relief on humanitarian grounds with the ultimate objective to repatriate them back to Sri Lanka. Relief is given pending such repatriation.

While 99,469 refugees have been repatriated to Sri Lanka up to March, 1995, there has been no organised repatriation after March, 1995, some refugees have gone back to Sri Lanka or left for other countries on their own.

Similarly, as per the latest census 2019 conducted by Central Tibetan Relief Committee (CTRC), the population of Tibetan refugees in India as on December 31, 2020 was 72,312 wherein the majority of these refugees have settled themselves, either through self employment or with Government's assistance under agricultural and handicrafts' schemes in different states of the country.

international



May the weapons fall silent, so that those who have the power to stop the war hear the cry for peace coming from all of humanity
POPE FRANCIS | HEAD OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

WORLD'S NEWEST OLDEST PERSON

At 118 years and 73 days, Sister André, French nun, was given the title of the world's oldest person by the Guinness World Records. Sister André was already the oldest woman in Europe when she turned 117, but after the death of Japanese woman Kane Tanaka Monday, the title was conferred upon her



of the day quote

Imran Khan was so desperate that he, till his last minutes in power, had begged the establishment to save his government. He even had requested former president and PPP co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari to help him in the wake of a no-confidence motion against him
MARYAM NAWAZ | VICE PRESIDENT, PML-N

The Taiwan issue concerns China's core interest. We will by no means allow — and strongly oppose — any interference by exterior forces
MA XIAOQUANG | SPOKESPERSON, CHINA'S TAIWAN AFFAIRS OFFICE

These indicators show that our children are in great danger and they may turn from productive people in the future to a segment in dire need for help and medical care, which is dangerous for our community and the country as a whole
FIRAS ABIAD | HEALTH MINISTER, LEBANON

SHORT TAKES

Death threat given to Bennett, family

Jerusalem: Israeli police have beefed up security around Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and his family after a letter addressed to them was found to contain a live bullet and a death threat. The Israeli police and internal security agency Shin Bet have launched an investigation into the death threat made against Prime Minister Bennett and his family, the police said Tuesday. The letter intended for Bennett and his family included a bullet, the brief police statement said.

Court extends bail to Pak PM Sharif

Lahore: A Pakistani court Wednesday extended pre-arrest bail to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his son, Punjab chief minister-elect Hamza Shehbaz till May 14 in a Rs14-billion money laundering case. "The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) special court Lahore Wednesday accepted Shehbaz's application seeking exemption from personal appearance for one day. However, the court directed the premier to file a reply in the case otherwise it will initiate indictment proceedings on the next hearing May 14," a court official told PTI.

Israeli attack in Syria claims 9

Beirut: Israeli air strikes near Damascus Wednesday killed nine combatants, among them five Syrian soldiers, in the deadliest such raid since the start of 2022, a war monitor said. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said an ammunition depot and several positions linked to Iran's military presence in Syria were among the targets. Government media in Syria confirmed four of the five casualties in the strikes, on which Israel did not comment.

SpaceX launches 4 astronauts for NASA

Cape Canaveral: SpaceX launched four astronauts to the International Space Station for NASA Wednesday, less than two days after completing a flight chartered by millionaires. It's the first NASA crew comprised equally of men and women, including the first Black woman making a long-term spaceflight, Jessica Watkins. "This is one of the most diversified, I think, crews that we've had in a really, really long time," NASA's space operations mission chief Kathy Lueders said on the eve of launch.

WAR ESCALATION

Russia halts gas to Poland, Bulgaria

MOSCOW SAYS THE GAS CUT-OFF IS TO ENFORCE ITS DEMAND FOR PAYMENT IN RUBLES, NEEDED TO SHIELD ITS ECONOMY FROM SANCTIONS

REUTERS

Warsaw, April 27: Russia halted gas supplies to Bulgaria and Poland Wednesday for rejecting its demand to pay in rubles, taking direct aim at European economies in its toughest retaliation so far against international sanctions over the war in Ukraine.

Ukraine reported on Wednesday that Russian troops had made gains in several villages there. Russia reported a number of blasts on its side of the border, including a blaze at an arms depot. Kyiv called those explosions "karma".

Gazprom, the Russian gas export monopoly, said in a statement it had "completely suspended gas supplies to Bulgargaz and PGNiG due to absence of payments in rubles," referring to the Polish and Bulgarian gas companies. Poland and Bulgaria confirmed the supply had been cut.

"Because all trade and legal obligations are being observed, it is clear that at the moment the natural gas is being used more as a political and economic weapon in the current war," Bulgarian Energy Minister Alexander Nikolov said. Russian President Vladimir Putin demanded last month that buyers from "unfriendly" countries pay for gas in rubles or be cut off. The European Union says this violates contracts that called for payment in euros.

Poland and Bulgaria are both former Soviet-era satellites of Moscow that have since joined the

- EU denounces gas cut-off as 'blackmail'
- Supplies from Gazprom cover about 50% of Poland's consumption and about 90% of Bulgaria's
- Poland said it did not need to draw on reserves and its gas storage was 76% full
- Bulgaria has said it is in talks to try to import liquefied natural gas through Turkey and Greece



Russia bars entry to 287 British MPs

Russia Wednesday imposed personal restrictions on 287 British members of parliament and banned them from entering the country, accusing them of fuelling "unwarranted Russophobic hysteria", the foreign ministry said in a statement. The ministry said the sanctions on members of the House of Commons were in response to Britain imposing similar restrictions on 386 members of its own lower house of parliament March 11.

EU and NATO. Poland has been one of the Kremlin's most vocal opponents over the war. Bulgaria has long had warmer relations with Russia, but Prime Minister Kirill Petkov, an anti-corruption campaigner who took office last year, strongly denounced the invasion of Ukraine.

Petkov was due to travel Wednesday to Kyiv, the latest European leader to meet President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Poland receives its Russian gas through the Yamal-Europe pipeline from Russia's huge gas fields in the Arctic far north, which continues west to supply Germany and other European countries. Bulgaria is supplied through pipes over Turkey. Other European countries, including Germany, the biggest buyer of Russian gas, did not report cuts.

Russia's energy exports had until now continued largely unhindered since the war began, the

The announcement by Gazprom that it is unilaterally stopping delivery of gas to customers in Europe is yet another attempt by Russia to use gas as an instrument of blackmail. This is unjustified and unacceptable. The era of Russian fossil fuel in Europe is coming to an end
URSULA VON DER LEYEN | PRESIDENT, EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Gazprom's suspension of gas deliveries is a gross violation of their contract and blackmail. We will not succumb to such a racket
KIRIL PETKOV | PM, BULGARIA

I think the suspension was revenge for new sanctions against Russia that Warsaw imposed over the war in Ukraine. I vow that Poland would not be cowed by the cutoff
MATEUSZ MORAWIECKI | PM, POLAND

biggest loophole in sanctions that have otherwise cut off Moscow from much of its trade with the West. Kyiv has long called on Europe to stop funding Moscow's war effort by cutting off imports that bring Russia hundreds of millions of dollars a day.

Suu Kyi given 5-yr jail term for graft

The Nobel laureate and figurehead of Myanmar's opposition to military rule is charged with at least 18 offences carrying combined maximum jail terms of nearly 190 years, all but killing off any chance of a political comeback



UNCLEAR IF SUU KYI WILL BE SENT TO PRISON
JUDGE GAVE NO EXPLANATION FOR DECISION

Nay Pyi Taw, April 27: A court in military-ruled Myanmar sentenced deposed leader Aung San Suu Kyi to five years in jail Wednesday after finding her guilty in the first of 11 corruption cases she faces, a source with knowledge of the proceedings said.

The judge in the capital, Naypyitaw, handed down the verdict within moments of the court convening and gave no explanation, said the source, who declined to be identified because the trial is being held behind closed doors, with information restricted.

Suu Kyi, who has attended all of her hearings, was displeased with the outcome and would appeal, the source said.

The 76-year-old led Myanmar for five years during a short period of tentative democracy before being forced from power in a coup in February 2021 by the military, which has ruled the former British colony for five of the past six decades.

It was not immediately clear if she would be transferred to a prison to serve the sentence. Since her arrest she has been held in an undisclosed location, where junta chief Min Aung Hlaing previously said she could stay after convictions in December and January for comparatively minor offences that led to a six-year term.

The military government's spokesperson Zaw Min Tun could not be reached for comment, and made no mention of the Suu Kyi ruling Wednesday during a televised news conference that ran more than 3-1/2 hours.

The latest case centred on accusations that Suu Kyi accepted 11.4 kg (402 oz) of gold and cash payments totalling \$600,000 from her protegee-turned-accuser, former chief minister of the city of Yangon, Phyo Min Thein.

FRIENDS TURNED FOE



A Soviet monument to a friendship between Ukrainian and Russian nations is seen during its demolition, amid Russia's invasion of Ukraine, in central Kyiv, Ukraine

Beijing in race to detect Cov cases

AGENCIES

Beijing, April 27: Millions of people in Beijing took their second Covid-19 tests of the week Wednesday as the Chinese capital tried to keep an outbreak numbering in the dozens from spiralling into a crisis like the one the locked-down city of Shanghai is enduring.

Evidence that Shanghai's month-long isolation has become almost unbearable for many of the city's 25 million people is emerging on an almost daily basis on the country's heavily censored internet.

A widely circulated video - since taken down - showed a foreigner trying to break through metal barriers onto a Shanghai street, before being pulled back and dragged to the ground by four people in protective hazmat suits.

"I want to die," the man shouted repeatedly in Chinese and English. One of the people holding him down responded: "You came to China, you need to respect the laws and regulations here."

Such distressing scenes are being watched with apprehension in Beijing, where officials hope early mass testing will spare them the anguish of Shanghai, where officials waited for about a month as cases



Beijing was testing more than 3.5 million residents of its Chaoyang district Wednesday, all of whom were screened Monday. Tuesday, 16 million from other districts were tested and are due for another round Thursday. In total, 20 million of Beijing's 22 million will be tested three times this week

surged before ordering city-wide screening.

In mass testing in China, multiple samples are tested together in a single tube for speed and efficiency.

Shanghai has been offered a glimmer of hope with officials reiterating that they would soon begin easing restrictions in districts that have stamped out infections, without giving a time frame or other details.

Shanghai reported 48 new deaths Tuesday, down from 52 the day before, taking the city's official death tally since April 17 to 238.

China's zero tolerance policy has provoked rare public anger in an important year for President Xi Jinping, over measures that look increasingly bizarre to much of the outside world that has chosen "live with COVID", even as infections spread.

Woman graduate student behind suicide attack at Karachi university

Separatist group, the BLA, said the mother of two, who held a graduate degree in zoology and was studying for another, had volunteered for the attack targeting China, whose investment projects in Balochistan they oppose



separatist insurgents, a Pakistani official said Wednesday.

REUTERS

Karachi, April 27: A woman suicide bomber who killed three Chinese teachers in Pakistan was a student who had enrolled for a master's degree months before her attack, carried out on behalf of

The blast detonated by the 30-year-old woman Tuesday blew up a minivan outside Karachi University's Confucius Institute, a Chinese language and cultural centre, killing her, the three Chinese teachers and a Pakistani driver. It was the first major attack this year against nationals of long-

time ally China working in Pakistan, and it drew Beijing's condemnation.

"Baloch Liberation Army once again warns China to immediately halt its exploitation projects ... Otherwise our future attacks will be even harsher," the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) said in an email. Baloch separatist guerrillas have been fighting for a

China demands punishment

Beijing: "The blood of the Chinese people should not be shed in vain and those behind this incident will pay the price," the Chinese Foreign Ministry said. The Chinese Foreign Ministry said in a statement that it strongly condemns and expresses great indignation over this major terrorist attack, conveys deep condolences to the victims and sympathies to the injured and bereaved families, Global Times reported.

greater share of their province's natural resources for decades, mostly focusing attacks on natural gas projects, infrastructure and the security forces.

But in recent years they have attacked Chinese projects and workers. Balochistan and its deep-water port in Gwadar are a major link in China's Belt and Road network of infrastructure and energy projects stretching to the Middle East and beyond.

ECONOMIC CRISIS DEEPENS

Nepal bans import of luxurious items

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kathmandu, April 27: Nepal government has imposed a total ban on the import of 10 luxurious goods until mid-July 2022 after the country's economic crisis deepened.

The measure has been taken to stop further depleting the country's foreign exchange reserve. According to a notice issued in the Gazette Wednesday, the goods whose import has been banned include cigarettes and tobacco-related products, diamonds, mobile phone sets, colour TVs with screens bigger than 32 inches, automobiles except for ambulances and hearses, motorcycles above 250cc, toys of all kinds, alcoholic beverages and playing cards.

According to the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies, the ban will not apply to those who complete the banking process before April 30.

Besides this measure, the government has taken other steps to



check the foreign reserve from depleting further.

Earlier in the first week of this month, Nepal's central bank had issued a directive to the traders to "discourage" them from opening letters of credit (LC) to import non-essential goods in an effort to stem the outflow of the country's rapidly depleting foreign exchange reserves. Ballooning imports in recent months have led to massive amounts of foreign currency going out of the country, pushing the balance of payments into the red and raising concerns of a crisis.

The central bank has discouraged the traders not to import 300 different items besides banning the opening of letters of credit.

of the day quote

We now have 150 million people across 40 countries using Google Pay. We're making sure it works across the board, works well, easy to use for all the sites. And then over time, we will innovate and build new digital experiences

We went on a road trip to India, met a lot of travel agents there and have some promising partnerships. Now, our focus is on air carriers. We want to develop routes from India and grow these routes

India exported 13.5 MT finished steel amounting to ₹1 lakh crore and imported steel of around ₹46,000 crore during FY22. Despite Covid, the steel sector in terms of external trade, production and consumption registered a record performance

SHORT TAKES

Air India proposes to acquire AirAsia

Bangalore: Tata Group-owned Air India has proposed to buy the entire equity share capital of low cost carrier AirAsia India, in which Tata has a majority stake, to merge into a single airline, according to an application with India's competition commission. The autos-to-steel conglomerate bought state-run carrier Air India in a \$2.4 billion equity-and-debt deal, regaining ownership of what used to be India's flagship carrier after nearly 70 years.

HUL posts over 5% growth in Q4 profit

New Delhi: FMCG major Hindustan Unilever Ltd Wednesday reported a 5.34 per cent increase in its consolidated net profit to ₹2,307 crore for the fourth quarter ended in March 2022 despite flat volume growth due to unprecedented inflation. Moreover, HUL has now become a ₹50,000 crore turnover company and also the first pure FMCG firm to achieve this milestone. The company now has 16 brands with a turnover of ₹1,000 crore each.

Airtel acquires 7% stake in Cerngee

New Delhi: Telecom operator Bharti Airtel has acquired around 7 per cent stake in cloud-based networking solutions provider Cerngee Technologies under the Airtel Startup Accelerator Program. The stake acquisition will enable Airtel to sharpen its NaaS proposition for Small and Medium Businesses (SMBs), who are looking to accelerate their shift to cloud-based applications, Airtel said in a statement. Navi Mumbai-based Cerngee specializes in integrated networking solutions over cloud for businesses of all sizes.

RIL, Viacom18 tie up with Bodhi Tree

New Delhi: Bodhi Tree Systems, an investment venture of James Murdoch's Lupa Systems and Uday Shankar, ex-Chairman of Star and Disney India, will invest ₹13,500 crore in broadcaster Viacom18 as part of a tripartite partnership with Reliance Industries (RIL), to form one of the largest TV and digital streaming firms in India. Under the partnership, RPPMSL will invest ₹1,645 crore and the popular JioCinema OTT app will be transferred to Viacom18, the companies said.



Clearly Freedom of Speech is cherished. I, too, agree Twitter can permit a greater degree of participation & expression. Because censorship doesn't suppress the hate-mongers & a platform like this can flush them out into public view allowing law enforcers to act against them

ANAND MAHINDRA | CHAIRMAN, MAHINDRA GROUP

ONGC FEELS SANCTIONS BITE

India's Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) is struggling to find a vessel to ship 700,000 barrels of crude from Russia's Far East, in a growing sign that complex trades involving one of Moscow's biggest partners are being interrupted by Western sanctions, sources say



LIC IPO to open from May 4

The government is raising ₹20,557 crore by diluting 3.5 per cent of its stake in LIC entirely through an offer for sale route, and will still be the biggest initial public offering till date, valuing the insurance behemoth at 6 lakh crore



Price band of ₹902-949, with a Rs 60 discount to policyholders and a Rs 45 discount for retail investors and employees

IPO to open May 2 for anchor investors and from May 4 to May 9 for the general public

The floor price is 90.2 times the face value of the equity shares, on the other hand, the cap price is 94.9 times the face value of the equity shares

Mumbai, April 27: The government Wednesday said the share sale of LIC has been trimmed to ₹20,557 crore to "right-size" it so as not to crowd out capital inflow to the market given the present constrained sentiment, and insisted that the issue is value accretive for all, especially for retail investors.

Announcing the LIC share sale through an OFS route, Tuhin Kanta Pandey, the secretary in the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (Dipam), tried to justify the low valuation (about ₹6 lakh crore) of the nation's largest financial sector entity and the biggest market investor and the resultant issue proceeds.

The IPO gives an opportunity to all Indians to participate in wealth creation through the nation's most valuable corporation, he said, adding that the government wants LIC to be a long-term value creator in the equity market.

The government is also not planning to bring in another FPO within the next one year, he clarified.

LIC has fixed the price band at ₹902-949 per equity share for the issue. The share sale is through an offer-for-sale (OFS) of up to 22.13

The LIC share sale is right-sized, considering the present market environment. It will not crowd out capital inflows given the current constraints

TUHIN KANTA PANDEY | SECRETARY, DIPAM

core equity shares and will open May 4 and close May 9. The shares will be listed May 17.

The offer includes a reservation for eligible employees and eligible policyholders. The retail investors and eligible employees will get a discount of ₹45 per equity share and policyholders will get a discount of ₹60 per equity share.

LIC was formed by merging and nationalizing as many as 245 private life insurance companies September 1, 1956, with an initial capital of ₹5 crore.

Its individual product portfolio comprises 32 individual products (16 participating products and 16 non-participating products) and seven individual optional rider benefits. The insurer's group product portfolio comprises 11 group products.

As of December 2021, LIC had a market share of 61.6 per cent in terms of premiums or GWP, 61.4 per cent in terms of new business premium, 71.8 per cent in terms of the number of individual policies issued, and 88.8 per cent in terms of the number of group policies issued.

As all the questions from the media were around low valuation and timing of the share sale, the press conference was hurriedly called off and i-bankers did not take any questions on the sidelines.

Sanjoy Chatterjee, chairman and chief executive of Goldman Sachs Security India, when approached on the sidelines refused to answer any of the questions and instead asked the PTI reporters to approach the Dipam secretary.

The other nine investment bankers handling the issue are Kotak Mahindra Capital, Axis Capital, BofA Securities India, Citigroup Global Markets India, ICICI Securities, JM Financial, JP Morgan India, Nomura Financial Advisory & Securities India and SBI Capital Markets.

IPPB gets additional funding of ₹820cr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 27: The Union Cabinet Wednesday approved an additional funding of ₹820 crore for India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) that will be utilised for expansion of its services to all post offices in the country.

Briefing the media, Union Minister Anurag Thakur said that out of the little over 1.56 lakh post offices, IPPB, currently operates from 1.3 lakh post offices.

He also said the Cabinet has given its in-principle approval for future fund infusion worth ₹500 crore into IPPB for meeting regulatory requirements and technological upgradation.

"IPPB is going to expand its banking service to 1,56,434 post offices and for decision has been taken to invest ₹820 crore in it so that poorest of the poor, mothers and sisters living in rural areas can get access to banking facility," Thakur said.

According to an official statement, the Cabinet has approved the revision of project outlay for setting up of IPPB from ₹1,435 crore to ₹2,255 crore as equity infusion to meet regulatory requirement.

"The objective of the project is to build the most accessible, affordable and trusted bank for the common man; spearhead the financial inclusion agenda by removing the barriers for the unbanked and reduce the opportunity cost for the under-banked populace through assisted doorstep banking. The project supplements the Government of India's vision of a less cash economy and at the same time promote both economic growth and financial inclusion," the statement said.

IPPB has enabled 1.36 lakh post offices to provide banking services. It has also equipped nearly 1.89 lakh postmen and Gramin Dak Sevaks with smartphone and biometric devices to provide doorstep banking services.

India tells states to accelerate coal imports for 3 yrs

The decision to boost imports underscores the severity of fuel crisis as coal inventories are at the lowest pre-summer levels in at least nine years and electricity demand is seen rising at the fastest pace in nearly four decades

REUTERS

New Delhi, April 27: India has urged its states to step up coal imports for the next three years to build up inventories and satisfy demand, four sources told Reuters, a move set to benefit global prices of the fuel, already running high because of war in Ukraine.

India, the world's second-largest coal importer, could drive up global demand until 2025, as Power Minister RK Singh has set a longer timeline for a federal push to increase imports that had until now been seen as a temporary measure.

"The states were asked to continue importing because the private sector will take till at least early 2025 to produce significant output," said a power ministry official who attended Singh's meeting with state officials Tuesday.

In addition, the state-run rail network suffers a persistent shortage of trains to move domestic coal, the official added. The sources, two state officials who attended the meeting and two power ministry officials, declined to be identified, as the matter is private.

At the meeting, states were asked to sign long-term import deals to ensure supply and lower prices, as well as by rail wagons to resolve the logistics problems, said another ministry official who was briefed on it, but did not attend. Higher coal imports could benefit miners such as Indonesia's



INDIA FACES COAL SHORTAGES DESPITE RECORD PRODUCTION BY STATE-RUN COAL INDIA

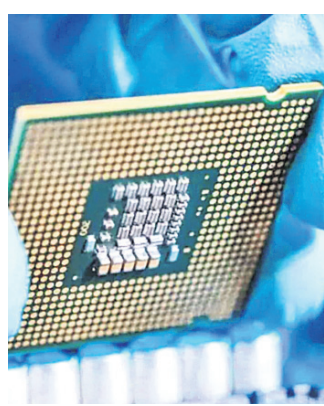
INDIAN RAILWAYS HAS STRUGGLED TO STEP UP SUPPLIES, EVEN AS UTILITIES' INVENTORIES DECLINE

Adaro Energy, Australia's Whitehaven Coal Ltd, and India's biggest coal trader, Adani Enterprises, whose controversial Carmichael mine in Australia started producing coal this year.

But high global prices of coal will strain the debt-laden utilities of Indian states, threatening to add to their financial difficulties.

The minister's remarks to state officials constitute a directive, as New Delhi largely controls domestic output and distribution of coal. Although the energy hungry nation has made international commitments to gradually cut use of the fuel, it has said it will not phase out coal-fired plants in the near future, as they provide cheap electricity.

1st local commercial chipsets by 2023-24



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

December 2023 or early 2024. We want at least a few companies to adopt their product designs to DIR-V products Shakti and Vega before 2023-24 and when the silicon is ready, they start manufacturing and incorporating chips in the products," Chandrasekhar told reporters.

IIT Madras and the Centre for Development of Advance Computing (CDAC) have developed two microprocessors named Shakti (32 bit) and Vega (64 bit) respectively using Open Source Architecture under the aegis of the Microprocessor Development Programme of the Ministry of Electronics and IT.

The government has appointed IIT Madras director Professor V Kamakoti as chief architect and CDAC Trivandrum Scientist Krishnakumar Rao as programme manager of the DIR-V programme.

The DIR-V programme will consolidate and leverage the ongoing efforts in the country with an integrated multi-institutional and multi-location team, finalise the formal architecture and target performance of chipsets, support original equipment makers and design wins in India and abroad. The DIR-V initiative is part of the government's ₹76,000 crore effort to build a semiconductor ecosystem in the country.

New Delhi, April 27: The government has set a timeline to commercially roll out the first indigenous chipsets by 2023-24 under the Digital India RISC-V programme launched Wednesday, Union minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar said Wednesday.

The Minister of State for Electronics and IT said that the Digital India RISC-V (DIR-V) programme aims to create future generations of microprocessors that will serve the need of India's strategic focus on mobility, computing and digitisation.

"One big milestone that I am very focused on is to have the first set of commercial silicon of Shakti and Vega processors available by

BIZ BUZZ

FICCI delegation urges Silicon Valley investors to invest in India



Bhubaneswar: FICCI along with US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) organised a roundtable on 'Investing in India's Digital Revolution' in San Francisco, Wednesday, where Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman highlighted the potential of Indian Startups. The Finance Minister encouraged constant engagement with investors to understand and address their concerns. The minister stressed that in order to promote a robust Startup ecosystem in India, DPIIT has set up a very proactive Startup cell to facilitate potential investors. "India in pursuit of digitization has announced introduction of Digital Currency by 2023. However financial inclusion will not be the sole purpose of digital currency as India is already marching ahead to greater Financial Inclusion, achieved through Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile (JAM) trinity," Nirmala said. Speaking about the meet, Mr Subhrakant Panda, MD, IMFA & Senior VP, FICCI said, "Excellent session on 'Investing in India's digital revolution' organised by FICCI India and USISPF which was addressed by Finance Minister Smt Nirmala Sitharaman. She responded to questions on a wide range of topics & spoke eloquently about India's digitisation drive which will benefit its people." Notably, a FICCI industry delegation, led by Subhrakant Panda, MD, IMFA & Senior VP, FICCI, is on a three-day visit to San Francisco from April 24th to 26th. The mission coincides with the visit of Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to the United States.

IWEC's Women's Business Mela soon

Bhubaneswar: Aiming to promote women entrepreneurs in Odisha, Indian Women's Entrepreneurship Council (IWEC), Wednesday, launched country's first Women's Business Mela at Swosti Premium here which will see more than 100 stall setup by women at Janta Maidan. A part of Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC), the IWEC's women's entrepreneur meet is set to begin from May 4 and will continue until May 8. The event will also feature seminars, workshops, investor pitch, MSME schemes, financial literacy drive, awards, networking, cultural events, fashion shows, food festival among others. "ICC has always been on the forefront of change. IWEC is a true example of our women entrepreneurs making an economic impact in our state. We have lots of star women who through this business mela will inspire every woman, child and family, said MK Gupta, Co Chairman, ICC Odisha. Showcasing the growth of women entrepreneurs in Odisha, the event is targeted to improve awareness among women regarding government schemes and connect with banks and financial institutions thereby empowering women in state. Moreover, about 30 dedicated stalls for women entrepreneurs from SHGs and tribal groups have also been setup.



Bol holds customers' outreach programme



Bhubaneswar: Bank of India (BoI), a leading Public Sector Bank of the nation, organised a customers' outreach programme, Wednesday, at IDCOL Auditorium Hall, here. The event was graced by AK Das, Managing Director, Bank of India. Das, in his deliberations, conveyed gratitude to the customers for their strong bonding with Bank of India. He expressed that Bank of India is fully committed to the process of ongoing economic recovery that is broad based and durable. The programme was attended by more than 100 customers. Bank distributed 30 Sanction letters to the tune of ₹100 crores to the beneficiaries of Bhubaneswar Zone in various segments during the customers' outreach programme imprinting its major role towards Atmanirbhar Bharat. In total, an amount of more than ₹300 crore was disbursed by National Banking Group (East) through its 10 Zones. The amount mainly covered retail, agriculture and MSME segments including government's flagship programme such as Stand Up India, Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana, Loans to Self Help Groups and PM SVANidhi.

RIL becomes 1st Indian company to hit ₹19tn m-cap

Following the gain in the share price, the company's market valuation jumped to ₹19,12,814 crore in morning trade on the BSE. In March this year, the company's market valuation had gone past ₹18 lakh crore. Last year October 13, the company's market valuation went past ₹17 lakh crore mark

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 27: Reliance Industries Limited Wednesday became the first Indian company to hit the ₹19 lakh crore market valuation mark following a rally in its share price. The market heavyweight stock jumped 1.85 per cent to its record high of ₹2,827.10 on the BSE.

Following the gain in the share price, the company's market val-

uation jumped to ₹19,12,814 crore in morning trade on the BSE. In March this year, the company's market valuation had gone past ₹18 lakh crore. Last year October 13, the company's market valuation went past ₹17 lakh crore mark.

Meanwhile, billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd has signed a formal shareholder agreement for the ₹2 billion TA'ZIZ chemical joint ven-



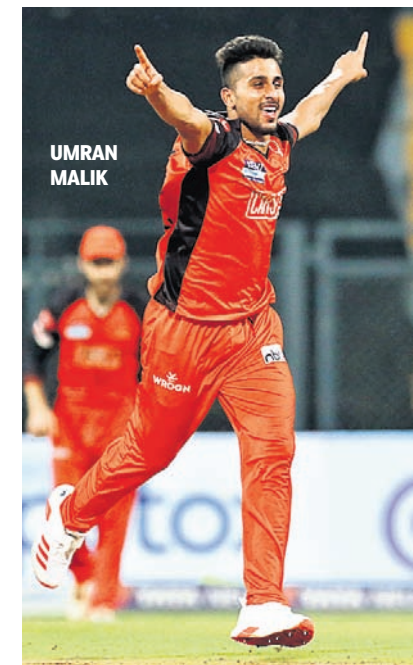
ture in the UAE and inked a pact to collaborate with ADNOC in finding and producing conventional and unconventional resources.

So far this year, the stock has rallied over 19 per cent. According to Santosh Meena, Head of Research, Swastika Investmart Ltd, Reliance industries is firing on all cylinders because its petchem business is doing extremely well on the back

of a surge in Oil and Gas prices where Singapore gross refining margin (GRM) is at an all-time high.

"Its telecom business is unaffected by geopolitical tension and inflation whereas it is exploring synergies in its retail business. It is continuously expanding its path in the renewable energy business, which is opening more opportunities for the company," Mr Meena said.

Rashid, Tewatia ruin Malik party



Rahul Tewatia (L) & Rashid Khan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 27: All eyes were on Sunrisers Hyderabad's Umrans Malik (5/25), but all they could see was a blur. But still, Gujarat Titans had the last laugh as they prised out a five-wicket win in their thrilling IPL match here Wednesday.

Introduced into the attack as late as the eighth over, as Kane Williamson's last resort, the young pace sensation delivered what was expected of him, grabbing five wickets with devastatingly quick deliveries to scythe through the Gujarat Titans top-order and almost propel Sunrisers Hyderabad to their sixth successive win in the ongoing edition of the lucrative league.

But Rahul Tewatia (40 n o, 21b, 4x4, 2x6) and Rashid Khan (31 n o, 11b, 4x6) had other ideas as GT, needing 56 from the last 24 overs after Umrans had completed his quota of four overs, knocked off the required runs, with the star from Afghanistan finishing the game with a six over five leg.

The BCCI, nevertheless, will have again taken serious note of the man from Jammu, who, in one of the best ever exhibitions of fast bowling.

Opener Abhishek Sharma (65, 40b, 6x4, 3x6) and Aiden Markram (56, 40b, 2x4, 3x6) struck sparkling half centuries as Sunrisers posted 195/6 after being asked to bat first. In pursuit of a stiff target, the

Titans were off to a flyer with Wriddhiman Saha (68, 38b, 11x4, 1x6) blazing his way to a flurry of boundaries while putting on 69 runs for the first wicket with a subdued Shubman Gill (22), who played the second fiddle.

After the others have tried and failed, Umrans succeeded in getting the first breakthrough, when he disturbed Gill's off stump in the innings' eighth and his very first over.

Having got himself two fours, GT skipper Hardik Pandya was done in by Umrans' bounce as he top-edged one to the third man. Meanwhile, playing one of his great IPL knocks, Saha raced to his fifty in 28 balls with a single to long-on.

Luck too was on Saha's side as Washington Sundar could not hold on to what would have been an unbelievable catch at mid-on, only for the ball to race to the boundary.

The show then belonged to Umrans before the duo of Tewatia and Rashid swung the match in GT's favour with their astonishing hitting.

Earlier, Abhishek and Markram forged together a third-wicket stand of 96 runs. Then, Shashank Singh (25 n o, 6b, 1x4, 3x6) smashed Lockie Ferguson (0/52) for three successive sixes to score 25 runs in the innings' final over.

To start with, SRH were helped by Mohammed Shami's (3/39) 11-run opening over in which a first-ball beauty was followed by five

leg-side wides, not once but twice. Yash Dayal too conceded 11 runs, thanks to two boundaries by Sharma on the off side, as SRH raced to 22 for no loss in two overs.

The seasoned India pacer went through the gate with a lovely seaming delivery to dismiss Kane Williamson and give his team the match's first breakthrough.

Having got a life at point even before he could open his account, Rahul Tripathi smashed Shami for 6, 4, 4 before a review found that the batter was trapped in front of the wicket in an eventful fifth over, which went for 14 runs.

Unperturbed by the fall of two wickets, Abhishek collected two successive fours off Alzarri Joseph to help SRH score 53 runs in the six power play overs at the Wankhede Stadium.

SRH needed a partnership at that stage and the duo of Abhishek and Markram not just provided them that but also kept the scoreboard moving at a very good rate by regularly finding the boundaries. While Markram dealt with the likes of pacers such as Alzarri, Abhishek went after Rashid Khan.

BRIEF SCORES

SRH 195/6 (Abhishek Sharma 65, Aiden Markram 56, Shashank Singh 25 n o; Mohammed Shami 3/39) **lost to GT 199/5** (Wriddhiman Saha 68, Rahul Tewatia 40 n o, Rashid Khan 31 n o; Umrans Malik 5/25) by 5 wickets.

Delhi, Knights aim to revive campaigns

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 27: Delhi Capitals will look to put the 'no-ball' controversy behind and gain much needed momentum against another side seeking course correction, the Kolkata Knight Riders, in the IPL here Thursday.

Delhi suffered a 15-run loss against Rajasthan Royals, a game marred by a no ball controversy over a high full toss that resulted in a one match ban for assistant coach Pravin Amre.

Head coach Ricky Ponting watched the tight finish in quarantine and felt helpless. Now he is back with the team and is confident of finding momentum which will allow his players to play to their potential.

Delhi Capitals are currently seventh on the points table with three wins in seven outings. KKR are placed eighth having lost their last four games.

With the Delhi batting line-up comprising David Warner, Prithvi Shaw, Rishabh Pant and Powell, KKR's varied attack has to be on guard to stop the rampage.

Warner, after striking three back to back fifties, faltered against the



Royals and would need itching to play another impactful knock. Ditto for Shaw, who needs to convert his starts into big scores.

Delhi's latest option at number three, Sarfaraz Khan, also failed and it remains to be seen whether he is benched or not. Pant will need to take greater responsibility along with the likes of all-rounders Lalit Yadav, Shardul Thakur and Axar Patel.

Pant can single-handedly turn any game, but he hasn't played to his potential and come Thursday at the Wankhede, where the tracks have helped batters, the skipper

would look to come good. Add to it, Powell's six-hitting prowess, Delhi have all the necessary firepower.

Delhi's bowling has fared well, but will need to forget the hammering at the hands of Jos Buttler. Khaleel Ahmed has been taking wickets upfront and has been complemented by Mustafizur Rahman, who can also be effective at the death.

While Kuldeep Yadav has re-deemed himself, the other spinners Axar and Lalit have also played their parts to perfection. The trio has combined 20 wickets and their 12 overs would be vital.

Meanwhile, KKR need to get their combination right and the batters, including skipper Iyer, will have to put up an improved show.

Shreyas failed in the last game and so did the opening pair of Sam Billings and Sunil Narine. If they continue with the same openers, the two would need to give an aggressive start.

For the likes of Shreyas, Nitish Rana, Rinku Singh and Venkatesh Iyer, it won't be an easy task, especially against inform Delhi spinners. Pushing Venkatesh down in the middle order has also not worked yet.

Shreyas has said it was just a matter of time and once KKR get going, they will be unstoppable as a team.

KKR pacers Umesh Yadav and Tim Southee have been right on the money. The only weak link seems to be Varun Chakravarthy who is having an underwhelming season.

TODAY'S MATCH

DC vs KKR

Time: 07:30 pm

TELECAST

Star Sports channels & Hotstar

RR to celebrate Warne's life against MI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Navi Mumbai, April 27: Rajasthan Royals will celebrate the extraordinary life of legendary Australian spinner Shane Warne, who died recently, during their Indian Premier League match against Mumbai Indians here Saturday.

Warne had lifted the inaugural IPL trophy after the Royals beat Chennai Super Kings by three wickets in the final in 2008, and his former franchise said it will pay tribute to its first captain to coincide with the team's triumph exactly 14 years back. The franchise said Warne's brother, Jason will also be part of the celebration as he has accepted an invitation from the Jaipur-based side.

Considered one of the greatest cricketers of all time, Warne died of suspected heart attack at the Thai resort of Koh Samui last month. He was 52. He took 708 wickets from 145 Tests, besides 293 ODI wickets from 194 matches between 1992 and 2007.

"It is befitting that the same stadium where Warne lifted the IPL trophy will see the cricketing world come together to pay their respects and celebrate his life," the franchise said in a release.



"The franchise would like to iterate that it will not be an occasion to mourn, but to commemorate the great man, and salute him for his never-ending contribution to the game of cricket as well as impacting thousands of lives around the world through his words, energy, and actions both on and off the field."

It said the celebrations will be led by the franchise and supported by the BCCI. The Rajasthan Royals playing squad will sport special initials 'SW23' on leading collars of

their official playing kits to pay tribute to the legendary Australian. A special area at the DY Patil Stadium has also been turned into a Shane Warne Tribute Gallery, which all the ticket-holding fans will be able to visit and experience.

"The Royals have also reached out to the Batch of 2008 and are appreciative of everyone who has sent in their tributes for the great leg-spinner of all time. These tributes will be made available on the matchday on Rajasthan Royals' social media."

ECB ADVERTISES FOR SPLIT-COACHING JOB

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, April 27: England are set to return to a split-coaching structure after ECB's new Managing Director Rob Key made his first major decision by advertising for two new head coaches.

The split in roles is on expected lines as Key had previous called for it while working as a pundit. Both coaches will report directly to Key and be "accomplished strategists with clear and ambitious plans for how they will develop and build success for English cricket moving forward," according to the advertisement. The deadline for applications for the head coach roles is May 6.

Key, the former Test batter who was appointed England's new managing director earlier this month, will begin the first-round interviews from May 9 and 10.

England previously had two separate head coaches between 2012 and 2014 with Andy Flower (Tests) and Ashley Giles (T20s and ODIs) at the helm. Chris Silverwood, who was sacked after the Ashes defeat in Australia, had missed multiple limited-overs series due to a packed schedule. Gary Kirsten, Graham Ford and Simon Katich are potential candidates.

Saina, Sindhu, Srikanth win; Sen loses

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Manila (Philippines), April 27: Olympic medallists PV Sindhu and Saina Nehwal fought off strong challenge from their opponents before winning their respective opening matches, but it was curtains for Lakshya Sen and B Sai Praneeth in Badminton Asia Championships here Wednesday.

Two-time Olympic medallist Sindhu was made to toil hard by Chinese Taipei's Pai Yu Po as the fourth seeded Indian came back from a game down to win 18-21, 27-25, 21-9 in a marathon women's singles opening round match, which lasted for one hour and 17 minutes.

London Olympics bronze medalist Saina, who has been on a comeback trail after recovering from some nagging injuries, also had to break her sweat to eke out a 21-15, 17-21, 21-13 win over Sim Yujin of South Korea.

While Sindhu will next play Singapore's Yue Yann Jasyln Hooi, Saina will be up against China's Zhi Yi Wang.

The other remaining Indian in the



PV SINDHU



KIDAMBI SRIKANTH



SAINA NEHWAL

women's singles, Malvika Bansod too squandered a game lead before going down 9-21, 21-17, 26-24 against Yeo Jia Min of Singapore in another hard-fought tie.

It turned out to be a disappointing outing for world championships bronze medal winner Sen, who was stunned by the unseeded Li Shi Feng of China. The fifth seeded Indian lost 21-12, 10-21, 19-21 in his opening round men's singles tie that lasted 56 minutes.

World No.19 Sai Praneeth suffered

a straight game 17-21, 13-21 defeat against Jonatan Christie of Indonesia.

Seventh seeded Kidambi Srikanth, however, kept India's flag flying in the men's singles competition by progressing to the second round with a straight-game win over Tze Yong Ng of Malaysia. Srikanth defeated his rival 22-20, 21-15 to set up a clash against Chinese qualifier Weng Hong Yang in the second round.

It was also the end of the road for Aakarshi Kashyap, who lost 15-21,

9-21 to Japanese top seed Akane Yamaguchi in the women's singles.

Both the women's doubles pair of Ashwini Bhat K and Shikha Gautam, and Simran Singh and Ritika Thaker also made opening round exits after losing in straight games.

While Bhat and Gautam went down 19-21, 12-21 to Anna Ching Yik Cheong and Teoh Mei Xing of Malaysia, Singh and Thaker lost 15-21, 11-21 to seventh seeded Malaysian pair of Pearly Tan and Muralitharan Thinaah.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Manchester, April 27: It was the coolest of penalties at the end of one of the wildest matches in Champions League history. With his cheekily dispatched 'Panenka', Karim Benzema might just have kept Real Madrid's chances alive against Manchester City in the semifinals.

City won a breathless first-leg match 4-3 at Etihad Stadium on Tuesday but squandered so many chances in an end-to-end, basket-ball-style epic that it hardly felt like a victory for the English club.

City built a two-goal lead three times but just couldn't shake off Madrid, the kings of the competition — as City manager Pep Guardiola calls them.

So it felt inevitable that when Aymeric Laporte gave away a penalty with 10 minutes remaining, Madrid wouldn't waste the opportunity to return to Santiago Bernabeu for next week's second leg with, somehow, only a one-goal deficit.

Just when many inside the stadium were losing their heads, Benzema kept his, chipping the ball high and straight down the middle before wheeling away in front of Madrid's jubilant fans with his arms outstretched.

With the France striker in its team, Madrid will never lose hope. His double here — after back-to-back hat tricks earlier in the knockout stage — took his total in the Champions League this season to a competition-high 14 goals. Benzema now has 41 goals in all competitions in the most prolific season of his career. Without him, Madrid probably would not be still in with a chance of a record-extending 14th European Cup title.

Guardiola didn't have a bad word to say about his team, though. "Exceptional" was his verdict. But he surely knows City should be out of sight and already preparing for a second straight appearance in the final and the chance to avenge last year's loss to Chelsea.

The English champions led 2-0



Carrying forward his brilliance: Karim Benzema chips from the penalty spot to score an outrageous 'Panenka' against Man City, Tuesday

after 11 minutes, with Kevin De Bruyne making a late run into the box to head home Riyad Mahrez's cross and Gabriel Jesus — retained in the team after scoring four goals against Watford in the Premier League Saturday — producing a coolly taken finish after spinning David Alaba following De Bruyne's cross.

City cut through the visitors at will and should have been further clear before Benzema steered a volley in off the post from Ferland Mendy's cross in the 33rd.

Riyad Mahrez wasted gilt-edged chances either side of Benzema's goal to leave Guardiola enraged on the sideline, the first in the 26th when he swung wildly when one-on-one with goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois and hit the sidenetting, and then just after the restart when he raced through again and curled against the post.

It would have come as a relief to Mahrez that Foden restored City's two-goal lead in the 53rd, heading home a cross from the overlapping

Fernandinho — the 36-year-old club captain who went on at right back for the injured John Stones near the end of the first half.

Back came Madrid two minutes later, with Vinicius Junior turning Fernandinho — showing his fallibility in an unfamiliar position — near the halfway line and sprinting down the left before cutting in and placing a shot beyond Ederson. Laporte chose not to close down Vinicius, instead covering the potential cross into a middle, though that wouldn't be his biggest mistake of the night.

The chances kept coming, mostly for City, before Bernardo Silva curled a rising shot inside the near post after quick-witted referee Istvan Kovacs decided to play the advantage following a foul on Aleksandr Zinchenko outside the area.

Benzema had the final say, however, like he has so many times in this season's competition, and Madrid has renewed belief of reaching a first final since 2018.

PYARI HAT-TRICK HELPS SPORTS ODISHA CRUSH SIRVODEM SC 9-1

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 27: Pyari Xaxa struck a hat-trick as Sports Odisha secured a thumping 9-1 win over Sirvodem Sports Club in an Indian Women's League (IWL) match at the seventh Battalion ground here Wednesday.

Satyabati Khadia opened scoring with a brace (2nd and 14th minute) before Pyari opened her account in the 28th minute. Jabamani Tudu (37th) fired in the fourth goal for the local outfit.

After the break, Pyari continued her assault on the rivals box and got her second in the 58th minute, while she completed her hat-trick in the stoppage time (90+4). Jasoda Munda (59th, 63rd) and Deepa

Nayak (61st) were also on target for the Odisha outfit.

For SSC, Ernestina Tetteh (53rd) pulled one back. Sports Odisha now have seven points to be at fourth position in the table, while SSC slumped to 10th place in the 12-team standings.

However, it was a tough outing for Odisha Police as they suffer a 0-4 hammering by Indian Arrows at the Capital Ground. Indian Arrows rode on Apurna Narzary's hat-trick (13th, 19th, 76th) to script the win.

Sunita Munda (36th) was the other goal-scorer for the All India Football Federation's developmental outfit who are also now on seven points, behind Sports Odisha on goal difference.

ASIAN CUP MEN'S HOCKEY

India to begin campaign against Pakistan May 23

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jakarta, April 27: Defending champions India will open its campaign against arch-rivals Pakistan in the Asia Cup men's hockey tournament to be played here from May 23 to June 1. India and Pakistan will face each other in the last match of the opening day of the tournament.

Tokyo Olympics bronze medalist India is placed in a tough Pool A alongside Japan, Pakistan and hosts Indonesia, while Pool B consists of Malaysia, Korea, Oman and Bangladesh.

After Pakistan, India will play Japan May 24 followed by final pool game against Indonesia May 26. The tournament will be played in a Super4s pool format with top two teams from each pool progressing to the next stage. The final of the tournament will be played June 1.

India and Pakistan have won the Asia Cup three times each, while South Korea is the most successful team with four titles. India's titles came in 2003 in Kuala Lumpur, in 2007 in Chennai and in 2017 in Dhaka.