



PC'S PHILOSOPHY

Actor Priyanka Chopra Jonas reveals about the one thing she considers 'non-negotiable' while choosing projects

LEISURE P2



IS COMMANDER KILLED

A drone strike by the American-led coalition in northwestern Syria kills a senior member of Islamic State group

INTERNATIONAL P10



RR FACE PBKS TODAY

Rajasthan Royals would bank on their near-perfect combination when they face Punjab Kings

SPORTS P12



SEARCH FOR LIFE: Rescue operations underway after seven tourists were killed when a massive avalanche hit Sikkim's Nathu La area, Tuesday (Report P7) AP PHOTO

Trump's 'Stormy' arrest

FIRST FORMER US PRESIDENT TO FACE SUCH IGNOMINY

AGENCIES

New York, April 4: Former President Donald Trump pleaded not guilty to all charges against him in Manhattan criminal court Tuesday, the CNN reported.

Trump arrived at the Manhattan district attorney's office earlier Tuesday afternoon, where he was placed under arrest and in police custody before his upcoming arraignment.

The arraignment in the Manhattan courtroom Tuesday was quick and routine - but represents a surreal and historic moment in US history.

The proceedings were underway when the last report came in.

The indictment returned last week by a grand jury against Trump is also expected to be unsealed Tuesday, providing the public - and Trump's legal team - with the first details about the specific charges he will face. The investigation stemmed from a hush money payment made to adult film actress Stormy Daniels during the 2016 presidential campaign.

It remains to be seen whether Trump will speak in New York. Chris Kise, one of Trump's lawyers, said he expects the former president to speak to the cameras in the hallway outside of the courtroom before and after his arraignment, and multiple people familiar with



The former US President leaves Trump Tower for Manhattan Criminal Court

Trump's thinking tell CNN that he has weighed saying something while still in Manhattan. Advisers have warned him, however, that any unplanned remarks put him at high risk of hurting his case.

Trump would fly back to Florida following his court appearance and will hold an event at Mar-a-Lago that gives the 2024 Republican presidential hopeful a chance to respond to the charges.

While Trump's comments will signal how he intends to fight the charges against him in the political arena, the former president is also preparing for the fight in court. He added a new attorney, Todd Blanche, to serve as lead counsel on his defense team Monday.

Manhattan District Attorney

Alvin Bragg's indictment marks the first criminal charges against Trump. But it's not the only potential legal trouble in front of the former president. Special counsel Jack Smith is still moving forward with an investigation into Trump's role in the January 6, 2021 attack on the Capitol and the handling of classified documents at Mar-a-Lago. And a Fulton County special grand jury has completed its investigation into efforts to overturn the 2020 election in Georgia.

Trump arrived in New York Monday afternoon, flying up on his jet from Palm Beach. He stayed overnight in Trump Tower, and will head 4 miles south to the courtroom in downtown Manhattan Tuesday afternoon.

3 Bhadrak students meet watery grave

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhadrak, April 4: Three college students drowned in Nalia river, a distributary of Salandi river under Sadar block in Bhadrak district, Tuesday.

The deceased were identified as Pranay Lenka, 17, of Haripur village, Smrutiranjana Swain, 18, and Rajat Jena, 17, of Sridharpur village. The three were students of Plus II first year Arts at Charampa College.

The three accompanied by two other friends had gone to Hataban ghat of the river to bathe at around 1pm.

While bathing Pranay, Smrutiranjana and Rajat fell into a whirlpool and slipped into deep water. They tried their best to come out but failed as they did not know swimming.

On being informed by the two friends, villagers rescued the three boys from the river and rushed them into the district headquarters hospital in an ambulance. However, the doctors pronounced

Five youths from two nearby villages had gone to the river to bathe near Haripur village and were swept away by the current

them 'dead on arrival'.

After reports surfaced, a huge crowd swelled up on the hospital premises and mourned the untimely death of the boys. Bhadrak Rural police registered a case of unnatural death and sent the bodies for autopsies.

Local MLA Sanjib Kumar Mallick, block chairperson Urmila Nayak, Zilla Parishad member Malay Jena and youth leader Priyabrata Nayak met the bereaved family members at the hospital and consoled the deaths. Later the cremation was done at their respective villages.

The Zilla Parishad member said the five students had slipped into a deep end in the river and three of them drowned.

Patient dies as BJP leader's car 'blocks' ambulance in UP

AGENCIES

Sitapur (UP), April 4: A BJP leader from Sitapur has been accused of blocking a road with his unattended car, resulting in the death of a man who was being rushed to a hospital in an ambulance.

Family members of the patient have alleged that the BJP leader, Umesh Mishra, threatened them with dire consequences when they questioned him.

According to reports, the patient, Suresh Chandra, complained of chest pain after which he was immediately referred to a Lucknow hospital.

The patient with his family had just left the district hospital, where doctors said he was having a heart attack. They were forced to stop as Umesh Mishra had parked his Wagon R car on the road and left.

The ambulance could not move for more than 30 minutes, and Suresh Chandra died inside, writhing in pain.

The BJP leader returned later and started hurling expletives in a fit of rage when confronted.

CM meets Nippon Steel prez

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 4: On the first day of his visit to Japan, Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik met Nippon Steel Corporation president Eiji Hashimoto in Tokyo, Tuesday.

During the meeting, the Chief Minister and Hashimoto discussed about company's plan to build one of the world's largest steel plants along with ArcelorMittal in Odisha. The 30 million tonne per annum (MTPA) plant will produce specialty steel, the chief minister's office (CMO) said in a tweet.

Patnaik has assured complete support to the proposed mega plant, which will give huge boost to the socio-economic development of Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Bhadrak, Jajpur and Keonjhar districts and generate thousands of jobs for youths of Odisha, it said.

Notably, the ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel (AM/NS) India Limited, a joint venture of ArcelorMittal and Nippon Steel, has proposed for setting up of an integrated steel mill of 24 MTPA in Kendrapara district with an investment of Rs 1.02 lakh crore.



Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik with Nippon Steel president Eiji Hashimoto in Tokyo

Odisha govt will Wednesday host Odisha Business Meet 2023 at The Okura Tokyo which is expected to be attended by over 200 industrialists and investors from across Japan and the Indo-Pacific Region

In January this year, the state government had approved another proposal of the AM/NS India for setting up a 7 MTPA steel plant in Jagatsinghpur district. The plant will be set up with an investment

of Rs 38,000 crore.

Earlier in the day, the Ambassador of India to Japan, Sibi George, and officials of the Embassy gave a warm welcome to the Odisha CM on his arrival in Tokyo along with the high-level delegation.

The CM expressed his confidence that the visit would further strengthen the relationship between Japan and Odisha and provide an opportunity for both sides to explore avenues of mutual interest.

BLOW TO PUTIN AS FINLAND ENTERS NATO

AGENCIES

Brussels, April 4: Finland joined the NATO military alliance Tuesday dealing a major blow to Russia with a historic realignment of the continent triggered by Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

The Nordic country's membership doubles Russia's border with the world's biggest security alliance and represents a major change in Europe's security landscape. The nation adopted neutrality after its defeat by the Soviets in World War II. But its leaders signalled they wanted to join the alliance just months after Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine sent a shiver of fear through Moscow's neighbours.

The move is a strategic and political blow to Putin, who has long complained about NATO's expansion toward Russia and partly used that as a justification for the invasion. Russia warned that it would be forced to take "retaliatory measures" to address what it called security threats created by Finland's membership.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



I think we should remove history from the syllabus. Students already have WhatsApp

Deepest-ever fish caught, filmed off Japan

Scientists from University of Western Australia and Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology release footage of snailfish filmed by sea robots

AGENCIES

Sydney, April 4: Scientists have filmed a young snailfish swimming at an extraordinary depth of 8,336 metres (over 27,000 feet) just above the seabed, making it the deepest observation of this nature that has ever been made.

Scientists from University of Western Australia (UWA) and Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology released footage of the snailfish filmed last September by sea robots in deep trenches off Japan. Along with the filming the deepest snailfish, the scientists physically caught two other specimens at 8,022 metres and set another record for the deepest catch.

Previously, the deepest snailfish ever spotted was at 7,703 metres in 2008, while scientists had never been able to collect fish from any-



where below 8,000 metres.

The expedition's chief scientist, Professor Alan Jamieson, said that snailfish was caught in traps set 8,022 metres underwater in the Japan Trench, south of Japan, during a two-month voyage by a team from the UWA and the Tokyo University of Marine Science.

The snailfish, of the

Pseudoliparis belyaevi species, is the first to be caught below 8,000 metres, the expedition said. It wasn't immediately clear how big the fish were, but the species has been recorded as reaching a length of close to 11 centimetres (4.3 inches).

Remotely operated cameras lowered from the DSSV Pressure Drop by the joint expedition, part of a 10-

year study into the deepest fish population on the planet, also recorded an unknown snailfish species swimming 8,336 metres deep in the Izu-Ogasawara Trench off southern Japan.

"The Japanese trenches were incredible places to explore; they are so rich in life, even all the way at the bottom," said Jamieson, founder of the Minderoo-UWA Deep Sea Research Centre.

"We tell people from the very early ages, as young as two or three, that the deep sea is a horrible scary place that you shouldn't go and that grows with you with time," said Jamieson.

"We don't appreciate the fact that it (the deep sea) is fundamentally most of planet Earth and resources should be put into understanding and how to work out how we are affecting it and how it works," Jamieson pointed out.

Musk changes Twitter's logo to 'Doge' meme

AGENCIES

San Francisco, April 4: Twitter CEO Elon Musk Tuesday replaced the micro-blogging platform's blue bird homepage logo with the 'Doge' meme.

Musk tweeted, "As promised" and attached a screenshot of his tweet conversation of last year with a user in which they had asked him to buy Twitter and change the bird logo to a doge.

Several users expressed their thoughts on Musk's announcement.

While one user commented, "Promises made, promises kept," another said, "Thanks for making Twitter fun again! #DogeCoin to the moon!"

Last month, the Twitter CEO had said that his interest has been switched from cryptocurrencies to artificial intelligence (AI).



Meanwhile, in June last year, the tech billionaire had said he would keep supporting and buying Dogecoin, a cryptocurrency he had been vouching about for years.

Called 'Dogefather', Musk had long been a vocal proponent of Dogecoin and tweeted several times in the past to help spike the price of the digital token.

WEATHER	
	BHUB CTK
TEMP MAX	35.6°C 35.6°C
TEMP MIN	26.0°C 25.6°C
Humidity	79% 85%
Rainfall	Nil Nil
Forecast	Light to moderate rain



leisure



JACKMAN BATS FOR SAFETY AFTER HIS SKIN CANCER SCARE

Hugh Jackman has revealed he is undergoing further skin cancer tests after a recent medical check-up. Soon, the 54-year-old actor took to social media to urge his followers to keep applying sunscreen while getting exposed for a tan, reports *mirror.co.uk*.

RATAJKOWSKI ADMITS DATING SINCE 2 MONTHS

The visuals of Harry Styles locking lips with actress Emily Ratajkowski sent many in a frenzy. After the image of the two kissing in Tokyo went viral, Emily now has admitted she is secretly dating Styles for the last two months, a report said.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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accuracy • reliability • trust
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES
Some cheerful news could put you in really high spirits today. The news could either be of a personal or professional nature - perhaps about your career, or a social gathering, or some monetary profit. You always give your best, and Ganesha says today it will lead to rich dividends.

TAURUS
It is more than likely that you will emerge victorious in all your meetings and outings today, predicts Ganesha. Your calm temperament will not let you flinch in the face of pressure. It is in your best interest to take some time to cope with all the stress, advises Ganesha.

GEMINI
Today will be a day of joy, happiness and festivities on the home-front. You will try and spend as much time as possible with the children and will enthusiastically participate in home improvement projects. You will be able to solve pending issues at home by taking an intelligent interest in them, says Ganesha.

CANCER
Ganesha says that you will feel tiredness and weakness but in the office or business you will be relaxed, with less tension. Ganesha suggests that you should be careful to fulfil new responsibilities entrusted to you.

LEO
You may not get the desired results in spite of working hard. You need to keep your weaknesses in mind, and your mistakes, before starting anew again. You will need to do more than necessary, if required, to make sure that your business relationships stay strong.

VIRGO
Ganesha advises you to quantify your worth in the spheres of emotions and sentiments. You will prepare yourself for everything, from games to peers to family. However, at the same time you will realise your shortcomings.

LIBRA
Ganesha says your nature of spending wisely is highly appreciated as it is a good thing to save money for the future. This nature of yours will not allow you to spend money on useless things.

SCORPIO
Don't run from your troubles, learn to face the challenges and try to solve your problems. This piece of Ganesha's advice is going to help you today. And you very well know why. Take all the tips that come to you sportingly and try to implement it in your practical life.

SAGITTARIUS
You are a social butterfly as you attend a series of parties and events today, says Ganesha. You may even bump into old pals and relive good old days. Also, you meet your extended family! It's time for soiree and merry-making.

CAPRICORN
You are a bighearted person and you love to help others in every possible way. But, people may take you for a ride, warns Ganesha. You may realise that if you would have been extra careful, you could have stopped others take advantage of you.

AQUARIUS
You will try everything to please your colleagues and bosses, but they will still have something negative to say about your performance. In order to be in the good books of everyone you end up hurting your own interests, feels Ganesha.

PISCES
If you are the leader of a project or a team, then today is your day. Your enthusiasm and creativity will give a sense of purpose and direction to your colleagues. You are more concerned about the means rather than the ends. Today is a good day to progress on the work-front. While no remarkable events are likely to occur in your personal life, your family will expect you to pay attention to their needs, says Ganesha.

'Never felt the need to boast about my work'

Mumbai: The evergreen actress, Tabu, has been on top of her game with her recent few releases. Last year, two of her films, *Drishyam 2* and *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2*, proved to be massive box office hits. In a recent interview, she was asked why she enjoys her success quietly, unlike other actors in the industry who flaunt their achievements.

The actress responded, "Everybody said that the films were successful and made money; then why should I talk about it? Others were talking on my behalf, so I should let them. I am a senior actor, and I should use my position and not talk about my own work when others are already doing it for me."

She further said, "I have never felt the need to boast about my work. I have done my job and others are talking about it. See, ultimately people should do what they enjoy doing and what really reflects their personalities. I have always been like this. I have not changed."

The actress was last seen in *Kutty* (2023). She is now working on *The Crew* with co-stars Kareena Kapoor, Kriti Sanon and Diljit Dosanjh.



Kubbra exudes confidence

Mumbai: Kubbra Sait who came into the limelight of Indian cinema with her bold and thought provoking portrayal of a transgender in crime thriller *Sacred Games*, said that she just wants to play solid characters without bothering about its length, director, platform and other external factors. Last seen in *Farzi*, the actress seems to be in a happy zone after completing four projects.

Shedding light on the upcoming roles, she said, "My upcoming roles are very diverse, grounded and women-centric. In Suparn Verma's series, *The Good Wife*, my character is part of urban fabric. I am playing a junior cop in Navdeep Singh's series *Shehar Lakhot*, and in Prakash sir's (*Jha Laal Batti*, I play an IPS officer. So, everything's going good!"

The actress said that she just wants to play solid characters. "Beyond that, length of role, director and platform does not matter as no one is in my control. Then, let Allah decide its fate. I know it's my time and I am putting in my best effort. I am happy and fortunate that I am working and am satisfied with what I am doing", the 39-year-old said.



Priyanka shares what's non-negotiable for her

Mumbai: Priyanka Chopra and Richard Madden are currently gearing up for the release of their much-anticipated series *Citadel* which will stream on Prime Video later this month. Chopra and Madden will be seen essaying the roles of agents Nadia Sinh and Mason Kane respectively in the global spy series helmed by the Russo brothers. Both actors recently attended the Asia Pacific press conference for *Citadel* in Mumbai, India. During the event, Priyanka Chopra was asked about the one thing she considers 'non-negotiable' while choosing projects. Find out what she had to say.

Responding to the question, *The Matrix Resurrections* actress revealed, "I think for me what would be non-negotiable now - it's actually really true. I can't work with people I don't like anymore. It's really non-negotiable for me. I have to admire, look up to, like the people I am surrounded with. I have been doing this for a very long time. I want to be excited about going to work, I want to be inspired about going to work, and that has become non-negotiable for me."

Adding further, the actress said, "So when I meet the people I am going to work with, I take notes, in my little. But that truly is something that, as I have evolved, has become truly important to me."



I want to be a global actor: Adarsh Gourav

Los Angeles: Strolling around New York streets with a cup of coffee in his hand, *The White Tiger* actor Adarsh Gourav says shooting for sci-fi series *Extrapolations* in the US was a dream trip. The actor, who became famous globally for his performance in the Ramin Bahrani's 2021 film adaptation of the Aravind Adiga novel of the same name, hopes the critical acclaim of the movie and now his role in the Apple TV+ climate change series will help him find good roles in India as well as the West.

"*The White Tiger* really put me on the map. I feel like I am getting the best of both worlds, best of what's happening in India and what's happening in the West. I am just hoping to capitalise and make the most of my opportunities right now because I want to be a citizen of the world. I want to be a global actor," Gourav said in an interview.

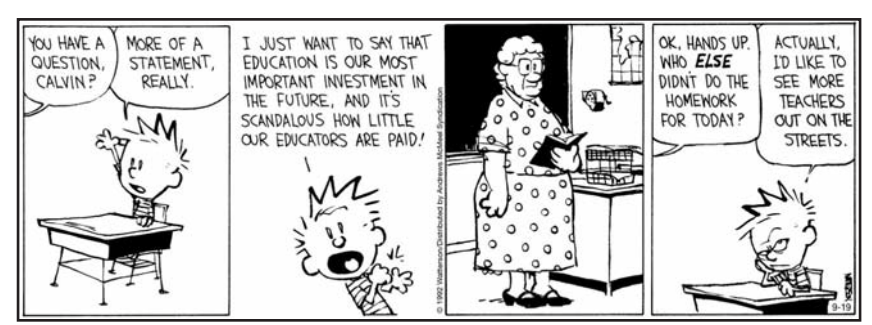
The White Tiger helped Adarsh land the lead role in *Extrapolations*, a starry series by Scott Z Burns of the *Contagion* fame that meditates on what life would be in the future if climate concerns are not addressed urgently.



PEANUTS



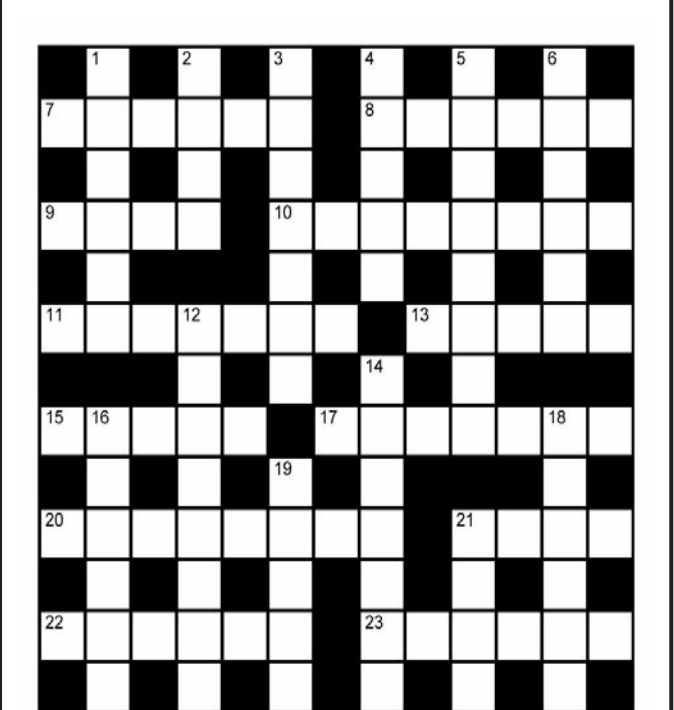
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



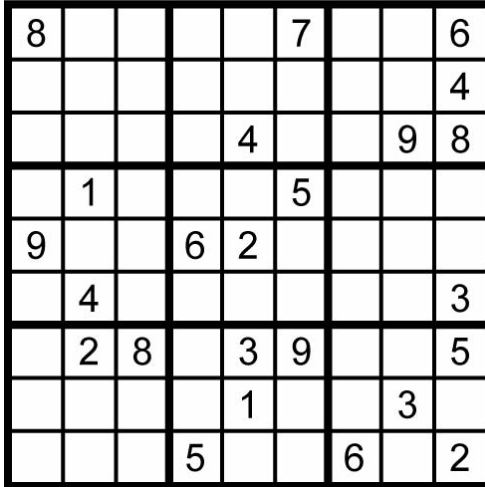
FUN post CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Merciful
 - 8 Fuel-saving auto
 - 9 Baseless
 - 10 Bullfighter
 - 11 South Pacific beach wear
 - 13 Wine bottle measurement
 - 15 Cherubic
 - 17 Land's opposite
 - 20 Unstable (3-5)
 - 21 Rough terrain vehicle
 - 22 Medium's session
 - 23 Enkindle
 - 4 Avoid, like a duty
 - 5 Sandpaper, e.g.
 - 6 Harshness
 - 12 Like a roof eave
 - 14 Watch a tot
 - 16 Timbered
 - 18 Elaborate party
 - 19 Hen, for one
 - 21 Middle of the calendar month
- Down**
- 1 Arctic plain
 - 2 Diminish
 - 3 Just a trace

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

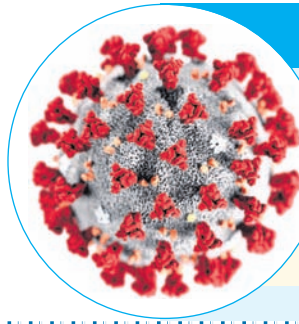
- CROSSWORD**
- CART FORTRESS
H U S P B I B W
A S S A U L T G A B L E
N T T U E T D
C R Y P T S A R D I N E
E E E A D N
F I B R E O G R E S
H L L M A S
A L L E G R O Z E B R A
M W E R E O D
M O I S T S U B D U E D
E L U E O N L E
R O L Y P O L Y E D G E
- SUDOKU**
- | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 9 | 1 | 3 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 7 |
| 6 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 8 | 9 |
| 3 | 2 | 8 | 7 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 6 | 5 |
| 9 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| 1 | 8 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 7 | 9 | 4 |
| 2 | 4 | 7 | 1 | 3 | 9 | 6 | 5 | 8 |
| 7 | 6 | 9 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 8 | 1 | 2 |
| 4 | 3 | 5 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 9 | 7 | 6 |
| 8 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 3 |

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



COLOURFUL ACT

An artiste performing traditional dance during Sahi Jata in Puri, Tuesday

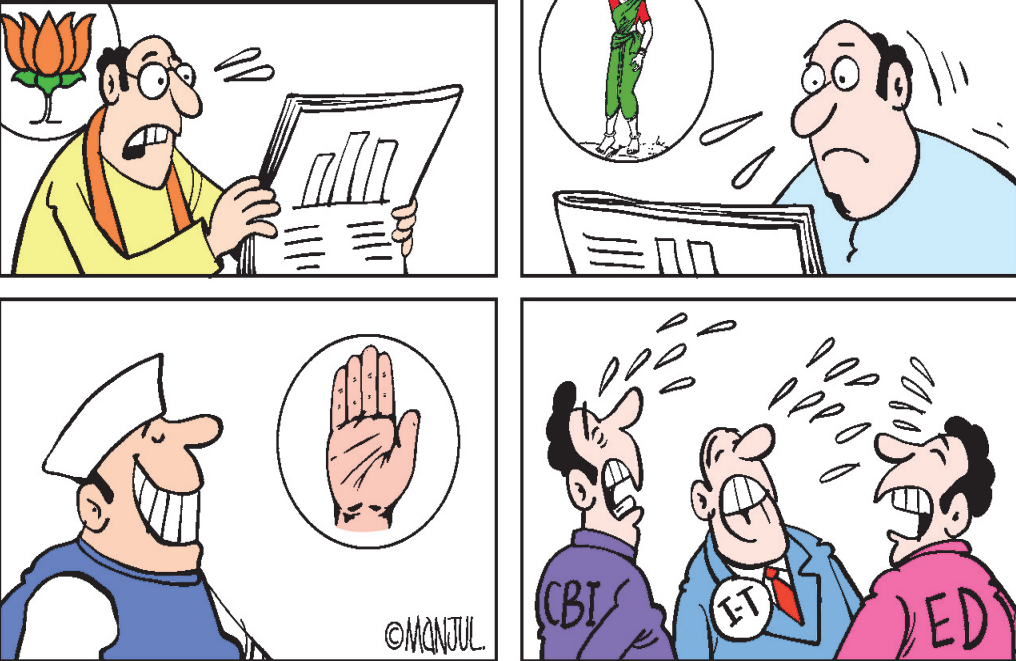


COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	68,41,65,170	65,71,66,947	68,32,776
India	4,47,29,284	4,41,77,204	5,30,901
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

POLITICKLE by MANJUL

REACTIONS TO KARNATAKA POLL SURVEY RESULTS...



Guv releases poetry book

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 4: A bilingual poetry book titled "My World of Words (MoMoSabdaVishwam)", originally written in English by Bishnupada Sethi and translated into Sanskrit by Rabindra Kumar Panda was released by Governor Ganeshi Lal in Raj Bhavan, Tuesday. Lal appreciated the book and was of the opinion that it would definitely enrich modern Sanskrit literature. Bishnupada Sethi, belongs to the 1995 batch of Indian Administrative Service and currently serving as the State Higher Education department Principal Secretary. His earlier works include 'Beyond Here and Other Poems', 'Beyond Feelings', 'Where Shall I Go' apart from other research based works.



Panda, the Vice Chancellor of Shri Jagannath Sanskrit University, Puri is an acclaimed writer in Sanskrit literature and has 45 numbers of books to his credit. He has got many accolades from organizations of national and international repute.

Prasanna Patsani, Member, State Planning Board attended the function as a guest of honour and expressed his pleasure by saying that Sanskrit should not be considered as a dying language anymore. The DevBhasa is very rich in itself and good works of other languages getting translated into Sanskrit is definitely an encouraging step in this direction.

JHARSUGUDA BYPOLL

BJD appoints 3 senior leaders as observers

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 4: Ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) Tuesday appointed three senior leaders of the party as observers for upcoming by-election for Jharsuguda Assembly seat.

Veteran leaders Prasanna Acharya and Debi Prasad Mishra and MLA and ex-minister Sarada Prasad Nayak who is BJD's Jharsuguda district observer have been handed over the charge of the crucial bypoll ahead of the 2024 general election, party sources said. The BJD has fielded Dipali Das, daughter of slain Minister Naba Kishore Das, as its candidate for the bypoll. Now, the appointment of observers indicates that the regional party is in serious mood for the poll.

"Whenever there is an election, all BJD leaders and workers fight in unity and ensure victory for the party. The same will be repeated in Jharsuguda bypoll," claimed BJD leader Prasanna Acharya.

BJP and Congress are yet to announce their candidates for the bypoll. As per sources, BJP is likely to nominate youth leader Tankadhar Tripathy for the bypoll. Tripathy has already started campaigning in the constituency.

State BJP President Mammoan Samal said, "A candidate selection



PRASANNA ACHARYA DEBI PRASAD MISHRA SARADA PRASAD NAYAK

Prasanna Acharya, Debi Mishra and Sarada Nayak have been handed over the charge of the upcoming by-elections

BJP is likely to nominate youth leader Tankadhar Tripathy for the bypoll

A committee led by MLA Santosh Singh Saluja will select a suitable candidate for Congress

team consisting of senior leaders including Jual Oram, Suresh Pujari, Surama Padhi and Rabi Naik have submitted their report yesterday. We will submit our recommendation to central BJP and they will take the final call."

Congress has formed a committee led by senior leader and MLA Santosh Singh Saluja to select a suitable candidate for the bypoll.

Singh said the panel will submit its recommendation to Pradesh Congress Committee President Sarat Pattanayak, who will announce the candidate's name after

getting a nod from the All India Congress Committee.

The bypoll to Jharsuguda was necessitated after the murder of Naba Kishore Das January 29.

The bypoll will be held May 10 while the result will be declared May 13. Formal notification for the bypoll will be issued April 13. Candidates can file nominations till April 20 while scrutiny of the papers will be done on the next day (April 21).

Last date for withdrawal of nomination papers is set for April 24. The entire election process will be completed by May 15.

EOW begins probe into ₹8.01 crore loan fraud

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 4: The economic offences wing (EOW) of the state crime branch has initiated a probe against alleged financial irregularities to the tune of over ₹8 crore by one of the staff of State Bank of India's Regional Business Office (RBO) at Phulbani. EOW has registered a case on the basis of a complaint filed by Prasanta Kumar Behera, the regional manager of the RBO, Phulbani.

Behera in his complaint alleged that the field officer Ashutosh Acharya reportedly recommended for the sanction of 59 Xpress Credit loans (personal loans to salaried persons) and 26 pension loans meant for pensioners without properly verifying and executing required documents. He also alleged that many of the account holders against whom loan amount have been disbursed were found non salaried and non pensioners.

Acharya allegedly disbursed loan worth around ₹8.01 crore through illegal means from September 2021 to September 2022. Subsequently, Acharya transferred huge amount of money into the bank accounts of Samaresh Ranjan Das, Srikant Kumar Biswal, Sarojini Das and his relatives including his mother and deceased father-in-law without the consent of the original loan holders.

The bank came to know about the irregularities during the scrutiny of defaulter loan accounts or Special Mentioned Accounts by its Credit & NPA team.

Odisha ranks 10th in India Justice Report

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, April 4: Taking a jump of one notch, the state of Odisha ranked 10th among the 18 large and mid-sized states in India Justice Report (IJR), 2022, which ranks the states on the parameters of justice delivery in the country. In 2020, Odisha was ranked 11. The third edition of IJR, which was initiated by the Tata Trust in 2019, was released Tuesday in New Delhi. While the state of Karnataka topped the chart among large and mid-sized states, Sikkim was top among the small states.

The IJR ranked states after tracking their performance on four pillars of the justice delivery system - police, judiciary, prisons and legal aid. The report analyzed each pillar through the prism of budgets, human resources, workload, diversity and infrastructure. It tracked the performance of states in capacitating their justice delivery structures to effectively deliver mandated services.

The report highlighted a staggering gap in male-female ratio in Odisha police. It stated that as of January 2022, the share of women in the state police was only 10.5 percent. In judiciary, women judges in subordinate courts form 44.4 percent of total strength while in High Court the strength was 4.5 percent till December 2022, the report stated, adding that there were



ACCORDING TO THE REPORT, AS OF JANUARY 2022, THE SHARE OF WOMEN IN THE STATE POLICE WAS ONLY 10.5 PERCENT

IN JUDICIARY, WOMEN JUDGES IN SUBORDINATE COURTS FORM 44.4 % OF TOTAL STRENGTH WHILE IN HIGH COURT THE STRENGTH WAS 4.5 % TILL DECEMBER 2022

11 percent SC judges in subordinate courts against the reserved number as on July 2022. Shockingly, the state has no ST category judge against the reserved number as on July 2022, the report stated.

In Odisha, the population per police was 1,227 as on January 2022, which is much below the international standards, the report highlighted. It further stated that the spend on police per person in the state was ₹763 in 2020-21 while in Punjab it was ₹2,055.



ON A MISSION: CMC Mayor Subhash Singh and Commissioner Nikhil Pavan Kalyan flagging off an awareness vehicle, as a part of state government's cleanliness drive, from Saheed Bhawan premises in Cuttack, Tuesday

Wastewater ideal breeding ground for antibiotic resistance

The unique characteristics of wastewater, which allow resistance genes to grow against harmless bacteria to those that cause disease, provide a potent breeding ground for antibiotic resistance to evolve, according to a new study.

Researchers at the Centre for Antibiotic Resistance Research (CARE) in Gothenburg, Sweden, presented evidence for where the genes could gain their ability to move in a study published in the journal Communications Biology.

It is not enough for the antibiotics alone to drive the process, they acknowledged.



For the movement of resistant genes, the species carrying the resistance genes in their chromosomes need to be present, along with the specific DNA sequences providing for their movement.

The researchers analysed DNA from thousands of samples across different environments and found that all these key components came together not in the gut of humans or animals, but in wastewaters.

"In order to fight antibiotic resistance we cannot focus only on preventing the spread of those types of resistant bacteria that are already in circulation, we also need to prevent or delay the emergence of new ones", said Fanny Berglund, researcher at the Sahlgrenska academy at University of Gothenburg, and the lead author of the study.

Previous studies published by the same research team showed that the environment harboured a huge variety of different resistance genes, many more than the resistance genes seen today in bacteria causing disease, making it a vast source for these genes to jump between species, gaining more resistance.

The authors said that favouring this by polluting the environment with antibiotics is not a good idea.

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FIRECRACKER EXPLOSION

Bomb squad inspects house of dead man



THE DECEASED SIVANANDA DID NOT HAVE LICENCE FOR PREPARING CRACKERS AND IT IS SUSPECTED THAT HE WAS ILLEGALLY CARRYING OUT SUCH ACTIVITIES

■ The team collected evidences along with raw materials and firecrackers manufacturing equipment from Sivananda's house

sons that Sivananda had recently started making firecrackers by building a small set-up at his home. So, none could find out about the illegal set-up in the locality.

He said that the cops are trying to ascertain from where the deceased had procured the gunpowder and to whom he was planning to sell the firecrackers. On the other hand, some claimed that Sivananda had received an order for the supply of firecrackers for a marriage function.

Monday evening, the 38-year-old Sivananda was reportedly checking the firecrackers when one of the crackers suddenly exploded leaving him seriously injured. The locals who reached the spot immediately rushed him to a private medical college. He was declared brought dead by the doctors upon arrival.

Police later found out that Sivananda had no license for making firecrackers.

idences along with raw materials, firecrackers manufacturing equipment from Sivananda's house in Gjobayani slum during the inspection.

Police sources later revealed that the bomb making materials were disposed of by the team. A case (132/23) has been registered in this regard by the police.

Police assistant commissioner Sanjiv Satpathy told media per-



VENTING FIRE: Members of Odisha State Farmers' Friend Association engage in heated argument with the police during a protest organised by the Association to press for salary hike and social security near PMG Square in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 4: The bomb disposal squad of Commissionerate Police and officials of the forensic science team Tuesday carried out inspections at the house of Sivananda Tada who died in a fire cracker explosion accident at a slum in VSS Nagar area here Monday evening. The team reportedly collected ev-

Pact inked to build social resilience in KBK region

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 4: The Centre for Youth and Social Development (CYSD), a Bhubaneswar-based NGO, signed an agreement with Mission Samridhi, a social impact enterprise, to build socio-economic resilience among the people of five backward districts of the state.

The pact aims at supporting social and economic recovery of the vulnerable sections of society including migrant labourers belonging to 60 Gram Panchayats in five Kalandi-Bolangir-Koraput (KBK) districts, said Jagadananda, CYSD co-founder.

Measures would be taken to empower the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) to facilitate inclusive planning through IT tools to improve the quality of life of 2,50,000 people. Ensuring food security, providing proper livelihood options and building disaster resilience among the indigenous communities by developing community leadership, strengthening community-based organisations and encouraging support from CSOs constitute the major objectives of the agreement, he added.

Arun Jain, founder of Mission Samridhi signed the pact.

Summer camp in City for budding hockey players

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 4: To instill passion for hockey among youngsters, the Odisha Naval Tata Hockey High Performance Centre (ON-THPC) is organising the first-ever 'Hockey Summer Camp 2023' for children aged 6-16 at Kalinga Stadium here from April 3 to April 22 in association with the Sports and Youth Services department.

With hockey being the central focus of the summer camp, participants will receive training from Hockey India and Fédération Internationale de Hockey (FIH) certified coaches. A total of 300 budding players have enrolled in the camp, each of whom will be awarded a certificate upon completion.



"Some meritorious trainees will also be recognised for further streamlined hockey training, as the Department of Sports and Youth Services and the hockey HPC plan to conduct weekend classes year-round if the response is positive," informed an official familiar with the developments.

In addition to hockey instruction, the camp includes recreational ac-

■ 300 youngsters have joined the camp organised in collaboration with Sports and Youth Services department

■ A similar camp is scheduled to take place at Birsamunda Hockey Stadium in Rourkela from April 10 to April 22

tivities designed to foster teamwork and leadership abilities. In-house nutritionists and physiotherapists will share their expertise through engaging sessions involving both participants and their parents.

"Featuring swimming and other fitness sessions, the camp aims to offer a well-rounded athletic experience. With the registration fee being minimal, the camp aspires to make top-quality hockey training accessible to a wide range of bud-

ding athletes in the state," added the official. A similar camp is scheduled to take place at Birsamunda Hockey Stadium in Rourkela from April 10 to April 22, 2023, in partnership with the Sports and Youth Services department.

This initiative by the Odisha Naval Tata Hockey HPCA and the Sports and Youth Services department underscores their commitment to nurturing young talent and promoting hockey throughout the state. The Odisha Naval Tata Hockey HPC has already partnered with the department to provide coaches and processes in their new HTC initiative across the state. This partnership will give younger children early exposure to hockey on AstroTurf.

Govt fails to attract adequate FDI: Cong

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 4: As CM Naveen Patnaik began his Japan tour to woo investors, the opposition Congress Tuesday alleged that the state government has "failed to attract adequate foreign direct investments" even after spending a lot of taxpayers' money for the purpose.

In a press conference here, Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee president Sarat Pattanayak claimed that there are "no satisfactory results" from state delegations' foreign tours.

Senior Congress leader and former chief secretary Bijay Patnaik, who was also present at the press meet, pointed out that "Odisha has received only five FDI worth ₹1,386.54 crore between 2016 and 2022 according to RTI data".

The Chief Minister had taken delegations to countries like Italy, United Arab Emirates and now, he is in Japan seeking FDI, he said.

"We hope that they return safely but do not expect any satisfactory investment from the land of the rising sun," Patnaik, also a former close aide of the CM, said.

However, Odisha's industries minister P K Deb had in the assembly said that the state has attracted ₹22,000 crore after the chief minister's Dubai visit in June 2022.

"The amount spent in holding conclaves, road shows and meetings in different countries and also in India hardly gives any return to the state. The flow of investment from abroad is very low. The government failed to attract adequate foreign direct investments," Patnaik told reporters.

OPCC president said Odisha is "lagging behind other states" in the country in attracting FDI despite the CM's visits to foreign countries.

Responding to the Congress allegations, BJD vice-president and MLA S R Patnaik said the senior Congress leader should first reveal the achievements when he had served the state as a top bureaucrat.

"Patnaik held important positions in the state government. Apart from being the principal secretary to the chief minister, he was also the chief secretary. Therefore, he should first tell about the achievements during his tenure as the top bureaucrat before raising questions over the present situation," the BJD leader added.

According to the state government data, Odisha had received 84 investment proposals worth ₹2.03 lakh crore with potential employment to over 80,000 people in the 2016 business conclave.

The state government got 202 investment proposals worth ₹4.13 crore in the summit two years later, and the employment potential was more than 2.41 lakh.

CONTINUED FROM P1

CM meets Nippon...

Naveen also conveyed his appreciation for the warmth and hospitality extended by the Japanese government and people towards the delegation and expressed his hope that the visit would contribute to strengthening the cultural ties between the two nations. On April 5, Odisha government will be hosting the Odisha Business Meet 2023 at The Okura Tokyo which is expected to be attended by over 200 industrialists, business persons and investors from across Japan and the Indo-Pacific Region.

The Chief Minister will address the investors and showcase the vast existing and emerging business opportunities in Odisha. In the evening, Patnaik will hold an interactive meeting with the Odia Diaspora in Japan.



HOLY MARCH: Devotees carry water-filled earthen pots during a 'Kalas Yatra' for the 24th annual puja at Unit-I Mangala temple in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

CLASSIFIED

AFFIDAVIT

I, Prasanti Panda changed my name to Prasanti Panigrahi vide affidavit dated 03.04.2023 shown before Executive Magistrate, Bhubaneswar.

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Notary Public, Sambalpur: I, Ankita Pattanayak, D/o-Ashok Kumar Pattanayak, R/o-Hindalco Colony, PO/P.S.-Hirakud, Dist.-Sambalpur declare that my actual DOB is 22.03.1997 but in my Father's service records my DOB has been wrongly written as 22.04.1997 instead of 22.03.1997.

'Preserving biodiversity is essential'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 4: The Central University of Odisha (CUO) organised a seminar on 'Conservation of Biodiversity: Need of the Hour' under the G20 Working Group of Education Programme.

The CUO has been selected as an 'Anchor Institution' under the G20 Working Group of Education Programme.

The programme was inaugurated by CUO vice-chancellor Chakradhar Tripathi who highlighted the importance of traditional knowledge and 'adhyatmikata' in our country. The special lecture was delivered by two eminent scientists Sudhendu Mandal, advisor, academics & administration, CUO and Siba Prasad Adhikary, former vice-chancellor, Fakir Mohan University, Balasore.

While delivering the chairman's address, Tripathi said that every species is born on the earth for a spe-

'Delivery Boy' team thanks CM for tax exemption

POST NEWS NETWORK



cial purpose. The conservation of biodiversity is maintained depending on the existence of the species. So conservation of biodiversity is the need of the hour, he said. Our tradition always tries for its conservation but the western countries spoil it and cry for conservation at the international level.

Mandal in his talk focused on biodiversity and food security. He said that if biodiversity equivalence is destroyed, it will lead to food shortage making conservation very essential. Adhikary, in his talk, said that Koraput is a biodiversity hotspot and we should find new areas of biodiversity development in Koraput.

Bhubaneswar: The makers of Odia movie 'Delivery Boy', in a press meet organised Tuesday at the Press Club of Odisha, expressed heartfelt gratitude towards Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik for exempting the movie from entertainment tax. Producer of the movie, Jyoti Ranjan Mohanty said such initiative by state government will help in development of Odia film industry. "Such steps will motivate makers to develop good stories which will give audience the opportunity to watch good Odia content," Mohanty said.

Patnaik Monday approved the proposal of waiving entertainment tax on the movie. Shailendra Samantary, Suryamaye, Buddhadhitya Mohanty and Sushant Das Mohapatra play key roles in 'Delivery Boy' which is set to hit the screens April 7.

Prediabetic state reversible: Experts

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 4: Sedentary lifestyle without physical activities often leads to many diseases. However, as India harbours the second-largest population of people with diabetes, the precursor to it, prediabetes, has become a concern across the nation.

Prediabetes is a state, just before diabetes. It gradually progresses to clinical diabetes mellitus, if not checked at the right moment.

"Individuals in the prediabetes state have a 3.6-8.7 per cent chance of progressing to diabetes with each passing year. All the cardiovascular adverse events increase steadily in the prediabetes range of blood glucose and so are the chances of a heart attack. But fortunately, the prediabetic state is reversible or at least checked, if intervened properly," said Sambit Das, endocrinologist and senior

consultant at KIMS Super Speciality Hospital and a fellow of the American Association of Clinical Endocrinology.

According to medical literature, when fasting blood glucose in an individual is greater than 100 mg/dl (milligram per deciliter) and less than 126 mg/dl, it is known as impaired fasting glucose (IFG) and when postprandial sugars after 75 gram of glucose load is greater than 140 mg/dl and less than 200 mg/dl is known as impaired glucose tolerance (IGT). Both IFG and IGT are known as prediabetes. Nowadays glycosylated haemoglobin (otherwise known as HbA1C) level between 5.7 per cent and 6.4 per cent is also taken as prediabetes or borderline diabetes.

However, Das explained that since the condition of prediabetes is clinically asymptomatic, it needs regular screening of people who are at maximum risk.

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Landless former Mesco workers suffer in silence

MANY OF THESE PEOPLE HAD GIVEN UP THEIR LAND HOPING FOR A BETTER FUTURE AFTER INDUSTRIALISATION



POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur/Kalinganagar, April 4: People displaced for establishment of the Mesco Steel plant in Kalinganagar in Jajpur district are now facing acute hardships due to poverty. Most of them have lost means of their livelihood following the closure of the plant three years back. Mesco Steel had acquired 530.68 acre of land to set up its plant. In the process, many residents had given up their land after being promised that locals will be given jobs in the plant. However, the promise was forgotten in due course of time. The Kalinganagar Industrial Complex (KIC) was set up in the 1990s. Mesco Steel was the first steel company to set up a plant in Kalinganagar. The then Chief Minister Biju Patnaik had imposed a condition that firms wishing to acquire mines in Odisha

ple do not know whether they will get their land back. Mesco Steel was established on 428.15 acre of private and 102.53 acre of government land at an initial investment of ₹530 crore. The firm managed to acquire two mines in Joda in Keonjhar district. However, it later transpired that the company had illegally acquired the mines for which the state government imposed a fine of ₹900 crore on it. To evade paying the amount, it has been alleged that Mesco closed down its plant. What has irked the locals however, is the silence of the Odisha government on this issue. They said that people who have lost their jobs due to the closure will benefit if the government takes over the plant and resumes operations. Despite protests and pleas most of the people who were working with Mesco Steel are facing daily pangs of hunger. Now however, they have gone silent. They are just waiting to vent out their frustrations during the Assembly elections next year. When contacted, Kalinganagar ADM Santosh Kumar Mishra said that the higher-up authorities of the Odisha government have been informed of the plight of the jobless workers of Mesco Steel. He said that the matter is not in his hand any more and it is for them to take a call on the issue.

will have to establish plants in the state. The lure of raw materials brought many companies to Odisha. The Odisha government had then claimed that Kalinganagar will become the steel hub of India over the next 20 years and will produce at least 20 million tonne of steel annually. However, that goal is yet to be achieved even though more than 30 years have elapsed. The Odisha government had also claimed that industrialisation will usher in development and employment for locals. That also did not materialise. Based on the assurances of the state government, many people in Kalinganagar had willingly given up their land for Mesco to set up its plant. However, the company allegedly duped people during land acquisition. The result has been that despite the plant remaining closed for more than three years now, peo-



SOAKED IN FAITH: A large crowd of devotees visited the Maa Hingula shrine at Gopalprasad in Talcher of Angul district and paid obeisance to the deity as the nine-day long Maa Hingula Yatra and 19th Lok Mahotsav started Tuesday

Fake docus: 12 teachers suspended

POST NEWS NETWORK

Phulbani, April 4: School and Mass Education (SME) department of the Odisha government has suspended a total of 12 teachers in Kandhamal district for allegedly using fake certificates during the recruitment process, a source said here Tuesday. The source stated that since the 'fake certificate' scam has been busted in the state, the district authorities are verifying the authenticity of all the documents submitted by the teachers while procuring jobs. All documents including mark sheets, caste, birth and academic certificates are being scrutinised meticulously. The scrutiny work is being carried out by officials of the district education office in association with other staff.



The source informed that the district education department has sent letters to authorities of a number of universities in Odisha as well as to those in Andhra Pradesh, J&K and Kurukshetra Varsity for verification of BEd certificates and mark sheets of teachers. During the verification, it was found that 12 teachers in Kalahandi district had submitted fake documents while getting jobs in state-run schools. Accordingly they have been suspended, informed the source. It should be noted that in 2022,

the Orissa High Court ordered the state government to sack teachers who used fake certificates while getting recruited in schools. The School & Mass Education department had then instructed the DEOs, BEOs and DPCs check the information provided by the teachers. They had been asked to take necessary action against teachers who had used false documents to get jobs. The S&ME department had also asked the various district authorities to initiate police action against the errant teachers.

Man allegedly killed by jackals in Bhadrak

Bhadrak: Jackals usually are not thought of as a dangerous predator. Wrong, they can be deadly too when they operate in packs. A man identified as Sarat Sahu (44), a resident of Kumarpur village has allegedly been killed by a pack of jackals in Basudevpur area of Bhadrak district, officials said Tuesday. Usually, jackals feast on decomposed bodies of animals and human beings. In this case, Sarat was killed before parts of his body was devoured by the jackals. According to sources, the body of the 44-year-old was spotted Tuesday morning near a pond in Kumarpur village under Basudevpur police limits. Jackals were tearing the flesh from his body and eating it when other villagers chased the animals away. Forest department officials said the bite marks on the body of the deceased are of jackals.

10 years RI for 5 ganja smugglers

POST NEWS NETWORK

Koraput, April 4: A local court here sentenced Tuesday five persons to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment after convicting them in a case of cannabis smuggling. Additional District and Sessions Judge Mahalat Shah also slapped a penalty of ₹1

lakh each on the convicts. In default, the convicted persons will have to undergo an additional two years of imprisonment each, the judge said in his order. The convicts were identified as Sangi and Laxman from Punjab, Deepak Ram and Pujari from Haryana and local youth Santosh

Kumar Choudhury of Nandapur village in this district. The judge passed the order after examining the charge-sheet filed by the police and the statements recorded by 10 witnesses. Advocate Jayant Kumar Mishra pleaded the matter on behalf of the Odisha government.

12 injured in lightning

POST NEWS NETWORK

Aska, April 4: Twelve persons were injured and an identical number of goats were killed due to a lightning strike Tuesday afternoon in Rishipur village under this block of Ganjam district. The condition of some of the injured are stated to be critical. The incident happened when various domestic animals including more than 200 cattle and goat were grazing on an open field under the supervision of herdsmen Sambari Goud, Babuli Goud, Bahana Goud and Budhiram Goud of Balichai village. All the four suffered injuries while 12 goats died on the spot due to the lightning strike. Lightning also struck Borasingi village causing injuries to eight people. Among those critically injured were devotees Niranjan Kamp, Niranjan Nahak, Trinath Sahu and Bhagaban Moharana while they were performing 'Paani Danda' in the village pond. However, their condition is stated to be stable now. However, Madhusmita Pradhan was shifted to the MKCG Medical College & Hospital in Berhampur as her condition deteriorated.

3 including woman held for murder bid on youth



POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, April 4: Personnel from the Bada Bazaar police arrested Tuesday three persons including a woman for their murder bid on a youth in Srikhetra Vihar locality in this town, March 27 over past enmity.

The accused have been identified as Pinky Patra, 30, a resident of Cheena Bazaar in this city, her accomplice Ajit Kumar Nayak, 28, alias Aju of Sukunda Mashanipada under Sadar police limits and Biren Bisoi, 27, of Pandavnagar area under Bada Bazaar police limits. Police said that Pinky is the mastermind behind the crime. A case has been registered in this connection and the accused were produced in court Tuesday. Officials said that Pinky was not on good terms with the victim P Rajesh Rao. So she hatched a plan to eliminate him with the help of her accomplices, Ajit and Biren. The victim was travelling on his bike with another woman when he was attacked March 27 night by sword-wielding Ajit and Biren. Rao suffered injuries on his head and other parts of his body. When the woman tried to fend off the attackers, she too suffered injuries. Rao took shelter in a nearby grocery store before being rescued by the police who took him to the MKCG Medical College and Hospital. Later as Rao's condition deteriorated, he was shifted by his family members to a hospital in Srikakulam.

BAUXITE MINING IN RAYAGADA DISTRICT Villagers seek cancellation of lease

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rayagada, April 4: The Odisha government's move to grant lease for bauxite mining from Sijimali and Kutumali hills in Rayagada district has met with stiff opposition from locals. The matter came to the fore after residents of 30 villages recently participated in a meeting at Sarambai village under Kashipur block in this district and voiced their opposition to mining of bauxite. The villagers alleged that the Odisha government has illegally granted lease for mining of bauxite on the hills without conducting gram sabhas. They vowed to fight against the government's decision during the meeting held recently. The government's decision is pushing them into darkness as they stare at a bleak future ahead, the villagers said. 'Lokshakti Abhiyan' president Prafulla Samantara addressing mediapersons Sunday alleged that the Sijimali and Kutumali hills, when excavated for bauxite, will result in extinction of over



REPRESENTATIVE PICTURE

30 perennial streams. Mining will also dry up perennial rivers like Nagabali and Jhanjabati that flow through the area. He demanded the Odisha government to reconsider its decision. He also threatened that the government will face protests over its decision if the order is not retracted. The villagers alleged that the Odisha government has auctioned the hills on the pretext of increasing revenue col-

lection in violation of mining and mineral rules. The illegal lease is also violating the Forest Rights Act, they added. "The decision to allow mining of bauxite will affect the people living on the periphery of the hills. They will be displaced and rendered jobless," the local villagers said. The villagers asked as to why companies are only interested in extraction of minerals and not ready to invest in industries in the area.

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In sincerity is the certitude of victory. Sincerity! Sincerity! How sweet is the purity of thy presence? THE MOTHER

Judicial Coup-in-Waiting

Within three months, Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu has managed to turn his best-ever electoral showing into Israel's worst nightmare.

Netanyahu's coalition has persisted in advancing its plan to weaken the judiciary, despite escalating street protests and a growing stream of warnings from business leaders, economists, and tech entrepreneurs.

Yet Netanyahu vowed to press ahead. By the end of the Knesset's winter session in late March, the coalition was poised to pass two major amendments to the country's Basic Laws that would have given the executive branch exorbitant powers.

At the same time, the coalition has rushed through more than 150 radical bills serving the interests of ultra-religious and far-right parties, as well as those of Netanyahu and his family.

Officially, Netanyahu is barred from dealing with the judicial overhaul because it could affect his ongoing trial for bribery and corruption.

Immediately after the Knesset passed the bill preventing his removal, however, Netanyahu seemingly decided he was no longer bound by his earlier promise.

The following week, after Gallant held his own press conference to call for the legislation to be paused, Netanyahu sacked him. An hour later, hundreds of thousands of Israelis took to the streets in the largest spontaneous protest the country has ever seen.

In April, Israel will celebrate Passover and Independence Day, two holidays that usually bring Israelis together. But the past few weeks have torn the country apart.

Although Netanyahu himself called for a timeout, he did not scale back or cancel the overhaul. In fact, the coalition has placed a loaded gun on the table by advancing the two most critical amendments to the point that it could enact them within 24 hours.

Meanwhile, Netanyahu's extremist partners are unlikely to back away from the parts of the overhaul that would cripple the Supreme Court and give the executive branch unfettered power.

Netanyahu promised to pass the overhaul by the end of the Knesset's summer session on July 30. Given the narrow window for negotiations and the rigid approach of the overhaul's architects, this summer may be the hottest Israel has ever known.

The writer is Director of the Louis Brandeis Institute for Society, Economy, and Democracy.

WISDOM CORNER

- People with courage and character always seem sinister to the rest. HERMANN HESSE
We have all a better guide in ourselves, if we would attend to it, than any other person can be. JANE AUSTEN
Monsters are real, and ghosts are real too. They live inside us, and sometimes, they win. STEPHEN KING

WORDSWORTH

Gyre
Many people seeing this word would at once recall Lewis Carroll's poem Jabberwocky from Through the Looking-Glass: "Twas brillig, and the slithy toves / Did gyre and gimble in the wabe."

JOURNALISTS AS ACTIVISTS

FOCUS MEDIA

Should journalists say and write what they think? Recent controversies have given new urgency to old questions about journalists' professional ethics and political role in democracy.

An ongoing defamation lawsuit has exposed how - and how often - Fox News anchors lied to their viewers about claims that the 2020 US presidential election was "stolen."

Yet the conventional distinction between "journalist" and "activist" is badly conceived, because there has never been anything passive about journalists' role. At a time when autocrats are consolidating power by attacking "the media" (or dismissing all critical reporting as "fake news"), those who refuse to call out such behaviour are effectively tolerating rising authoritarianism.

As many media critics have rightly pointed out, the traditional practice of mechanically reproducing "both sides" of a political dispute often distorts reality. Hence, a 2014 headline in The Atlantic warned, "Yes, polarization is asymmetric - and conservatives are worse."

According to media critic Jay Rosen, this "both-sidesism" is driven not so much by a professional ethics of objectivity as by a journalist's preemptive effort to avoid accusations of "partisanship."

Conversely a journalist who becomes a self-styled member of the democratic "resistance" can lose credibility if such resistance translates into a particular position on



At a time when autocrats are consolidating power by attacking "the media," old debates about journalism's role in a democracy and how journalists should conduct themselves need to be revisited. Advocacy is no less legitimate and valuable than reporting, as long as it is based on a commitment to truth

dal is not that it showed Fox to be openly partisan; it's that the network's "stars" and producers knew that claims of a "stolen" election were false and chose to amplify them anyway.

Professional news organisations (a category that obviously does not include Fox) can have both advocates and reporters. What matters is that a news organisation's audience can assess what it is about - how it makes editorial choices and how it makes money.

To be sure, as Pippa Norris of Harvard University notes, trust is not a good in itself. Plenty of people trusted online quacks and COVID deniers during the pandemic, and some people are still reaching for patently unsuitable medications like Ivermectin because Donald Trump and Jair Bolsonaro endorsed it as a "cure."

By engaging with audiences and being transparent about advocacy and reporting, media organisations can increase trust by proving their own trustworthiness. Reporters and advocates - alongside columnists and freelancers like Lineker - must be objective, which is to say they must strive for accuracy.

The writer is Professor of Politics at Princeton University.

WHEN PROTECTIONS FOR FREE SPEECH AND THE PRESS ARE UNDER RELENTLESS ASSAULT FROM AUTOCRATS, THE VIRTUE OF IMPARTIALITY CAN BECOME A VICE



Jan-Werner Mueller



Ido Baum

While Netanyahu bought himself some time, public trust in his leadership has dropped to a record low

IN JEST THIS

You need dedication to spot shrinkflation

You don't have to be an economist to know what 'inflation' means. But most people are not familiar with a related term: shrinkflation. Shrinkflation is a term coined by economist Pippa Malmgren to describe what happens when your shrink (or therapist) starts charging you more.

Actually, shrinkflation is what happens when your shrink cuts your sessions from one hour to 45 minutes, but still charges you an arm and a leg. The term is most often applied to consumer goods. You buy an item for the same price as you paid before, but discover that it has shrunk. It has become smaller in size or quantity - or even declined in quality.

We have all been victims of shrinkflation, whether we realise it or not. It happened to me the other day when I bought a frozen pizza. It came in a large box, and when I opened the box, I was surprised to find that the manufacturer had given me, free of charge,

a great amount of air. After looking deeper in the box, I managed to find the pizza, which was large enough to be an after-school snack for my teenage son.

Shrinkflation is a way of raising prices without being too obvious about it. Manufacturers have been resorting to shrinkflation for many years, hoping that consumers will continue to pay the same price for less product.

Back in 2015, Cadbury Fingers, a popular chocolate biscuit made in the UK and distributed around the world, went on a diet and itself dropped from 125 grams to 111 grams. Each finger is a rod-shaped biscuit covered in chocolate. Consumers were accustomed to getting 24 fingers in each pack, but suddenly found that they were missing two fingers.

Husband: "I'm not going to take it. I'm going to visit Cadbury and see how the CEO feels about losing

two fingers!"

Wife: "Calm down, Ralph. Why are you so upset? You still have 22 fingers!"

Husband: "Yes, but there are 24 hours in a day."

Wife: "It's just two fingers, Ralph."

Husband: "It's just two fingers today, honey, but tomorrow, it'll be two arms."

Wife: "Good point, Ralph. Remind me never to buy Cadbury Arms."

If you love a particular food product, it can be quite disconcerting to see it shrink before your eyes. You may have noticed this with your favourite snacks. For example, a few years ago, a packet of Haldiram's Aloo Bhujia weighed 55 grams. Then one day, it had shrunk to 42 grams, and people all over India were arguing over the missing Aloo Bhujia.

Wife: "What happened? The Aloo Bhujia is already over. Did you eat it all?"

Husband: "No, I didn't. It must be you."

Son: "Stop fighting! Look at the

label. It says 42 grams. It has shrunk by almost 25 per cent. This is happening to all the snacks. I think it's called snackflation."

A reduction in size or quantity may not be easy to spot, but at least manufacturers are required to disclose the weight on the label. When the quality declines, it's harder to detect. In the case of food products, consumers may be able to taste the difference, but only those who are truly dedicated to spotting shrinkflation will be able to detect quality reductions in some products, such as Purina dry dog food.

I would never advise anyone to taste dog food, but if you ever feel the need to do so, please don't do it in front of your dog. This might confuse your dog. One day, your dog spots your tasting Purina; the next day, you spot your dog lying in bed next to your spouse.

If that happens, the only shrinkflation you'll be worrying about is how much you need to pay your therapist.

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 B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Railway safety

Sir, The very shocking and tragic incident in which a man, travelling by the Alleppey-Kannur Express, set fire to his co-passengers is one laden with mystery and suspicions and leads to a lot of questions regarding safety of railway journeys. That it has happened in a state which is known for safe journeys raises curiosity. The police and the investigation team comprising of the Central, state and railway departments are already on the chase to catch the culprit. The man sprayed petrol on the passengers of the D1 coach of the running train and lit fire ending up in total panic and commotion resulting in many getting seriously injured and also in the tragic death of a man, a woman and a child who police doubt would have jumped off the train to escape from the fire.

Reprieve for Rahul

Sir, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi got a reprieve after a sessions court in Surat granted him bail and suspended the sentence in a defamation case filed by a BJP legislator over his 2019 remark about the Modi surname. The Congress leader said he is battling to protect democracy, and his only weapon is truth, while the BJP labelled it as a ploy to influence the judiciary. Gandhi was convicted and sentenced in the case March 23. He was removed as a Lok Sabha member the following day.

Sad development

Sir, It's sad that the Gujarat High Court has dismissed the Central Information Commission's order directing the Gujarat University to provide Prime Minister Narendra Modi's educational documents to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. Additionally, the High Court imposing a fine of ₹25,000 on Kejriwal for just seeking such information is uncalled for. There have been significant questions raised about Modi's educational credentials.

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M Pradyu, KANNUR

NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

Bishal Kumar Saha, MURSHIDABAD



national



On the directions of Punjab and Haryana High Court the state will soon initiate action against those named in report pertaining to drug trade and those who have ruined youth through drugs won't be spared

CHIRAG'S CHALLENGE

After Union Home Minister Amit Shah claimed that his party will contest all 40 Lok Sabha seats of Bihar in 2024, Lok Janshakti Party Ram Vilas LJP (R) supremo Chirag Paswan hinted that his party will also contest on all 40 seats as well



of the day quote

Delta areas should be excluded from the coal bidding process. No approval was obtained from the state government before issuing the notification in this regard and the state government was not even consulted. Unfortunately, the Union Coal Ministry is acting arbitrarily

It will be known once the results are out. With the people's support, one can become an MLA. What Siddaramaiah had said was nothing new. Looking at the developments of the last three to four days, the BJP will get an absolute majority in the Assembly polls

Modi government betrays Karnataka on one hand and the Bommai government brazenly loots Karnataka on the other hand

SHORT TAKES

Flight services hit at B'lore airport

Bangalore: Fourteen flights were diverted and six departures were delayed Tuesday evening due to a heavy downpour and bad weather in Devanahalli on the city outskirts where the Kempegowda International Airport is located, airport authorities said. Strong crosswinds and heavy rains with thunder and lightning impacted flight operations from 4.05 PM to 4.51 PM, an airport official said.

Kerala train fire: SIT intensifies probe

Kannur: A Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the Kerala Police on Tuesday intensified its probe into an incident of arson aboard an express train in Kozhikode district of Kerala, and was verifying information received about the suspect in the case, police said. Two days after the incident rocked the state, senior officials of various investigating agencies, including the NIA (National Investigation Agency) and the Railway Protection Force (RPF) today inspected the coaches of the Alappuzha-Kannur Express train.

Kerala tribal man murder: 14 found guilty

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Palakkad (Kerala), April 4: A Special Court for Scheduled Castes and Tribes at Mannarkkad in Palakkad district Tuesday found 14 of the 16 accused guilty in the "inhuman" killing of 27-year-old Madhu, a tribal youth.

The verdict comes two months after the fifth anniversary of his murder. While two of the accused have been acquitted, the court has found 14 others guilty. The quantum of punishment will be delivered Wednesday. Madhu of Chindukuru in Attappadi in Palakkad was lynched by a crowd on February 22, 2018, for allegedly stealing some provisions from a shop.

A class seven dropout, Madhu learned carpentry but then started to live a nomadic life. He used to wander in the plains, hills and forests here and visit his house occasionally.

Trouble started for Madhu when some provisions were stolen from a shop. A person, who frequented the forests to collect wood, informed the locals about a man hiding in a forest cave.

Villagers, along with the shopkeeper, reached the forest and found out that it was Madhu. On seeing the stolen items worth ₹200, irate villagers made Madhu walk around 4 kms with the provisions on his head. On the way, he was assaulted and abused.

After they reached a place called Muukkali, police arrived and took Madhu to the station where he collapsed and died soon after.

At one point, even the Kerala High Court intervened, directing speeding up of the trial. When the trial began, many witnesses turned hostile but Madhu's mother and his sister bravely fought the case with the support of some well wishers.

7 dead in Sikkim avalanche

The avalanche hit the arterial Jawaharlal Nehru Marg, which connects state capital Gangtok to Nathu La at the China border, around 11.30 am, trapping five-six vehicles with about 30 people under the snow

AGENCIES

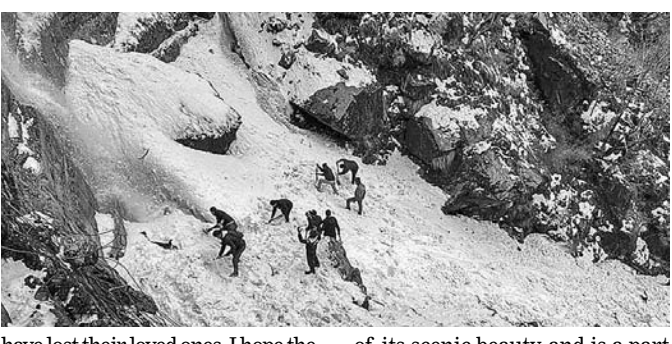
Gangtok, April 4: Seven tourists were killed as a massive avalanche hit East Sikkim's Nathu La area Tuesday morning, burying their vehicles under the snow, officials said.

The avalanche hit the arterial Jawaharlal Nehru Marg, which connects state capital Gangtok to Nathu La at the China border, around 11.30am, trapping five-six vehicles with around 30 people under the snow, the Army said in a statement.

Seven bodies were brought out of the snow and 23 people were rescued alive, including six tourists from a deep valley, a state government official said, quoting reports from the Army. Those injured were admitted to different hospitals in Gangtok, around 55 km away, he said. Among those dead are a woman and a child, he added.

The search operation was called off in the evening due to inclement weather, another official said.

Condoling the deaths, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he hopes the injured recover soon. "Distressed by the avalanche in Sikkim. Condolences to those who



have lost their loved ones. I hope the injured recover soon. Rescue ops are underway and all possible assistance is being provided to those affected," Modi said in a tweet by his office.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah said the Centre was closely monitoring the situation. "My sincerest condolences to the families of those who have lost their lives in the tragic avalanche in Sikkim. We are closely monitoring the situation and the teams of NDRF will reach the affected area soon. I pray for the speedy recovery of those injured," he tweeted. Nathu La, situated at 14,450 feet above sea level, is one of the three open trading border posts between India and China. It is a major tourist destination because

of its scenic beauty, and is a part of the centuries-old silk route. Several permits are required to visit the area.

The tourists were not permitted to travel beyond Milestone 13 due to inclement weather, but they forced the tour operators and the drivers to take them to the area - between Milestones 13 and 17 - where the avalanche struck, a police officer said. Some 350 people in 80 vehicles, stranded on the road because of the snow, were brought back to Gangtok after the snow was cleared in the afternoon, officials said. Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang condoled the deaths, and said that he was praying for the speedy recovery of those injured. "My heart goes out to the be-

reaved family and friends in this hour of grief and I pray that the departed souls rest in eternal peace," Tamang said. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said he was deeply distressed by the news of the avalanche and expressed grief over the loss of lives. "My thoughts are with the victims of this terrible tragedy, and their families. Wishing all the best to the teams involved in the rescue mission," he said in a Facebook post. Chief Minister of neighbouring West Bengal Mamata Banerjee said she was deeply pained by the tragedy. "Owing to the avalanche, the nation has lost several precious lives. I offer my sincerest condolences to the bereaved families and pray for the speedy recovery of those who were injured. Praying for the safety and security of all," she tweeted.

The East district has been experiencing rainfall and snowfall in the higher reaches since Friday, a weather official said.

Forecasts and nowcasts on rainfall, thunderstorms and lightning have been issued, he said.

In the 24 hours till 8.30 am Tuesday, 50 mm rainfall was recorded by the Gangtok weather station, he added.

MAHA SEES 711 COVID CASES, 4 FATALITIES IN 24 HOURS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 4: Maharashtra Tuesday reported 711 fresh coronavirus cases, a sharp rise of 463 compared to the previous day, and four fatalities, the health department said. With new additions, the state's Covid-19 tally has gone

up to 81,46,301 and the death toll to 1,48,449. Maharashtra is now left with 3,532 active cases, it said. The state had logged 248 Covid-19 cases and one fatality a day before.

Of the four fatalities, two deaths were reported in Satara and one each in Pimpri-Chinchwad city and Ratnagiri district. The Covid-

19 fatality rate in the state is 1.82 per cent, as per the health department bulletin. A total of 447 patients recovered from coronavirus infection in the state in the last 24 hours, taking the overall count of recoveries to 79,94,060. The recovery rate is 98.13 per cent. A total of 8,951 tests were conducted in

the state in the last 24 hours, taking the count of samples examined so far to 8,66,55,385.

Coronavirus figures in Maharashtra are as follows: Fresh cases 711, fresh fatalities 4; active cases 3,532, tests 8,951, total cases 81,46,301, total fatalities 1,48,449, recoveries 79,94,060.

Access to justice highest in K'taka: Report

According to the India Justice Report (IJR) 2022, which ranks states on delivery of justice in the country, Karnataka is at the top followed by Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Gujarat, and Andhra Pradesh. Uttar Pradesh is at rank 18 which is the lowest

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 4: Karnataka ranks at the top of the 18 large and mid-sized Indian states, with a population of over one crore each, in justice delivery - police, judiciary, prisons, and legal aid - in the country, as per the India Justice Report (IJR) 2022.

However, the latest data also indicated that as of December 2022, India had 19 judges per million population, a backlog of 4.8 crore cases, and prisons were over-occupied at over 130 per cent, more than two-thirds of the prisoners (77.1 per cent) are undertrials, and vacancy among high court judges is at 30 per cent.

The report said that in the list of seven small states, with a population less than one crore each, Sikkim is at the top followed by Arunachal Pradesh, and Tripura is at rank three and Goa is at rank seven.

The report has tracked the performance of states in capacitating their justice delivery structures to effectively deliver mandated services and based on latest official statistics, from authoritative government sources, it brought together other well-siloed data on the four pillars of justice delivery - police, judiciary, prisons, and legal aid. Each pillar was analysed through the prism of budgets, human resources, work-



load, diversity, infrastructure, and trends (intention to improve over a five-year period), against the state's own declared standards and benchmarks. The IJR also separately assessed the capacity of the 25 state human rights commissions. The report stressed that vacancy is an issue across police, prison staff, legal aid, and the judiciary.

It further added that for 1.4 billion people, India has about 20,076 judges with about 22 per cent sanctioned posts vacant and vacancy among high court judges is at 30 per cent. It said that as of December 2022, India had 19 judges per million pop-

ulation when calculated against the sanctioned strength, and a backlog of 4.8 crore cases. The Law Commission had desired, as early as 1987, it should be 50 judges per million in a decade's time from then, it added.

The report said prisons are over-occupied at over 130 per cent and more than two-thirds of the prisoners (77.1 per cent) are awaiting the completion of investigation or trial. It further added that in the police, women are only about 11.75 per cent, despite their numbers doubling in the last decade and about 29 per cent of the officer positions are vacant. The police to population ratio is 152.8 per lakh, whereas the international standard is 222.

According to the report, most states have not fully utilised funds given to them by the Centre and their own increase in spending on the police, prisons, and judiciary has not kept pace with overall increase in state expenditure.

1 in 6 globally affected by infertility: WHO

Infertility is a disease of the male or female reproductive system, defined by the failure to achieve a pregnancy after 12 months or more of regular unprotected sexual intercourse



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Geneva, April 4: Around 17.5 per cent of the adult population - roughly 1 in 6 worldwide - experience infertility in their lifetime, according to a new report published on Tuesday by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The report shows limited variation in the prevalence of infertility between regions. Lifetime prevalence of infertility was 17.8 per cent in high-

income countries and 16.5 per cent in low and middle-income countries.

"The report reveals an important truth - infertility does not discriminate," Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the Director-General of WHO, said in a statement.

"The sheer proportion of people affected shows the need to widen access to fertility care and ensure this issue is no longer sidelined in health research and policy, so that safe, effective, and affordable ways to attain parenthood are available for those who seek it," he added.

Infertility is a disease of the male or female reproductive system, defined by the failure to achieve a pregnancy after 12 months or more of regular unprotected sexual intercourse. It can cause significant distress, stigma, and financial hardship, affecting people's mental and psychosocial well-being. Despite the magnitude of the issue, solutions for the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of infertility - including assisted reproductive technology such as in vitro fertilisation (IVF) - remain underfunded and inaccessible to many due to high costs, social stigma and limited availability.

Currently, fertility treatments, in most countries, are largely funded out of pocket, which often results in devastating financial costs. High costs frequently prevent people from accessing infertility treatments or alternatively, can catapult them into poverty as a consequence of seeking career, according to the report. "Millions of people face catastrophic healthcare costs after seeking treatment for infertility, making this a major equity issue and all too often, a medical poverty trap for those affected," said Pascale Allotey, Director of Sexual and

Reproductive Health and Research at WHO.

In addition to high global prevalence of infertility, the report also highlights a persistent lack of data in many countries and some regions. It calls for greater availability of national data on infertility disaggregated by age and by cause to help with identifying infertility, as well as knowing who needs fertility care and how risks can be reduced. The re-

port is based on 133 studies, from 1990 to 2021, that provides insight into global and regional infertility prevalence.

EAST COAST RAILWAY Tender Notice No. ST-OT-RECHARGE-TV-ORH-309, Dt. 28.03.2023

EAST COAST RAILWAY PUBLIC NOTICE FOR CLOSURE OF MANNED LEVEL CROSSING GATE BETWEEN GANJAM-CHATRAPUR STATION

FEDERAL BANK LCRD/KOLKATA DIVISION No.91A/1, Park Street, 1st Floor, Avani Signature, Kolkata-700016

UTKAL GRAMEEN BANK (Sponsored by State Bank of India) CORRIGENDUM

EAST COAST RAILWAY Tender Notice No. 79-KUR-TRD-OT-2022-23

EAST COAST RAILWAY PUBLIC NOTICE FOR CLOSURE OF MANNED LEVEL CROSSING GATE BETWEEN GANJAM-CHATRAPUR STATION

POSSESSION NOTICE For Immovable Property Appendix-IV (Rule 8(1))



Women security personnel of Quick Reaction Team stand guard during a surprise search operation at Lal Chowk in Srinagar

J&K's Basohli painting gets GI tag

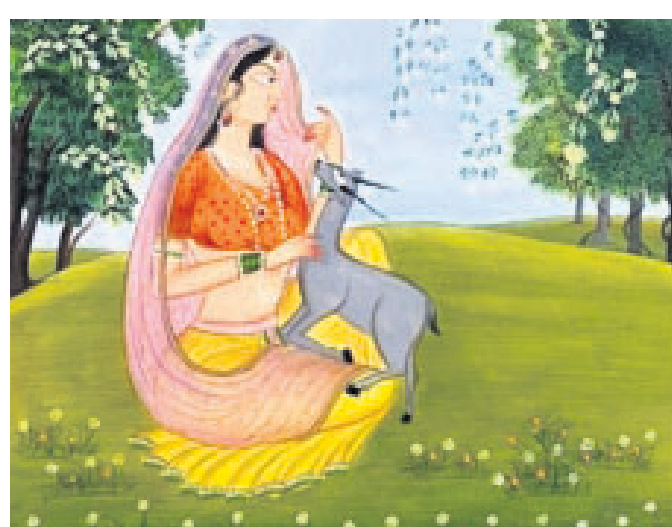
Geographical Indication (GI) is a form of intellectual property right that identifies goods originating from a specific geographical location and having distinct nature, quality and characteristics linked to that location

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, April 4: The world-famous Basohli painting from Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district has obtained the Geographical Indication (GI) Tag following an approval by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD).

The GI tag to a product, goods or speciality grants legal protection to the original producers and prevents their unauthorised use by third parties. It also boosts exports, promotes the goods at the international level and brings economic prosperity to producers and stakeholders.

"The process for GI-tagging of nine products was initiated by NABARD in consultation with the Department of Handicrafts



and Handloom (J&K) in December 2020. The GI tags have now finally been granted to these products after a long legal process," the spokesman said.

Union minister Jitendra Singh said it was a proud moment for the Basohli region of Kathua. "This unique painting known for evocative colors and deep-set facial patterns will now gain more prominence globally," he tweeted.

Besides the Basohli paintings, Basohli pashmina woolen products (Kathua), Chikri wood craft

(Rajouri), Bhaderwah rajma (Doda), Mushkbadji rice (Anantnag), Kaladi (Udhampur), Sulai honey (Ramban), Anardana (Ramban) and Ladakh wood carving (Ladakh) were the other products pitched for the GI-tagging.

These products from Jammu and Kashmir have been included among 33 others, highest-ever in a single year, cleared for GI-tagging on March 31. "Basohli painting of Kathua is the first independent GI tagged product from Jammu region," the spokesman said.

UP girl students to be trained in self-defence

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, April 4: Nearly two lakh girl students studying in more than 45,000 state-run schools in Uttar Pradesh will be specially trained for self-defence in a six-day programme.

This aims to ensure safety and well-being of the girls. The state government will impart self-defence training to girl students under the Rani Laxmibai Self-Defence Training Programme as a part of the Mission Shakti launched alongside the 'School Chalo Abhiyan'.

According to the government spokesman, the girls will also be made aware of things like cyberbullying and acid attacks through various group discussions. They will also be made physically aware of their health through sports.

The state government will conduct the campaign in collaboration with the Government of India with the aim of making the girl students enrolled in Council and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas run under the basic education department mentally and physically strong.

Under the scheme, girls of 11 to 14 years will be given self-defence training. The girl students will also be trained to be mentally balanced and empowered against any unexpected incident. A one-hour session will be conducted every working day by instructors posted in the schools. In the session, training related to self-defence along with exercise, yoga and cleanliness has been included. Initially, a six-day training programme will be organised at the district level for instructors/teachers.

Under this module, 1,200 physi-



The state government will impart self-defence training to girl students under the Rani Laxmibai Self-Defence Training Programme as a part of the Mission Shakti launched alongside the 'School Chalo Abhiyan'

cal teachers will be given special weekly training in a batch of 50 each. Its duration will be 6-8 hours daily (Monday-Saturday). Under primary coverage, girl students of Classes 6, 7 and 8 (11-14 years of age) will be trained in 45,000 government schools run in all 75 districts. After the training of the trainers, they will also be provided with an evaluation and certificate.

Residential schools of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya for girls will also be included in the training. As per the training module, one instructor and one assistant will be appointed for 50 trainees. Women and child security wing 1090 has been roped in as a consultant agency for the project. The Rani Laxmibai Self-Defence Training module has been prepared with the help of experts from various fields.

It has been prepared with the advice of experts from self-defence instructors, legal counsel, women and child security wing, UP Police, education department, Uttar Pradesh Development Systems Corporation Ltd (UP-DESCO) and UNICEF.

Why no heritage city status to Agra?

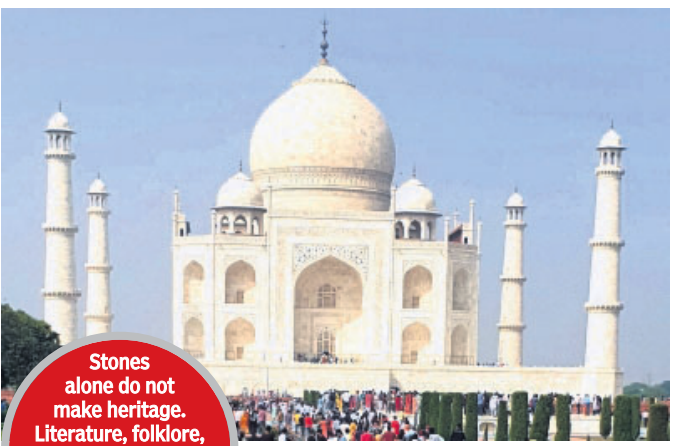
INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Agra, April 4: Several years after the local bodies submitted detailed status reports to the Supreme Court, the demand for heritage city status still eludes Agra.

The Agra Development Authority (ADA) engaged the Delhi School of Architecture and Town Planning to prepare the report called 'Vision Document' for the Taj city, in 2018. The apex court had ordered the Uttar Pradesh government to present a vision document on the TTZ, (Taj Trapezium Zone, spread over 10,400 sq km). Delhi's School of Planning and Architecture was asked to - and drew up - a draft vision document to restore and conserve Agra's heritage. The Uttar Pradesh Tourism Department and the Agra Divisional Commissioner, who heads the TTZ, supported the demand for declaring Agra a heritage city.

Once again, the local Green activists and conservationists have demanded that the Union government approach UNESCO to secure World Heritage City status for Agra. The Supreme Court has already seized the matter.

Local Heritage Conservation Society activist Mukta Gupta said,



Stones alone do not make heritage. Literature, folklore, traditions, and festivities are all part of the glorious Agra heritage

Once again, the local Green activists and conservationists have demanded that the Union government approach UNESCO to secure World Heritage City status for Agra

"If not Agra, with three World Heritage monuments and dozens of smaller historical buildings, then which other Indian city qualifies for this status? Agra is unique not just architecturally but for its culture, for its history, cuisine and its lifestyle. Mandarins in the Agra Development Authority and a caucus of so-called builders want to destroy the past by snapping the umbilical cords that connect Agra to

a glorious past." Medieval historians have described Agra as a cosmopolitan city bigger than London and Paris at the time. "Agra soaks in history. Home to the Taj Mahal, two other Unesco World Heritage sites - the Agra Fort and Fatehpur Sikri - every nook and corner tells a story of its splendid past," conservationist Rajiv Saxena pointed out. "A city so rich in culture and ar-

Kashmiri content creator on a mission

Muneer sees his content as his contribution to society, hoping that future generations will learn from his videos, preserving the cultural heritage of the valley

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Srinagar, April 4: In a world where many are forgetting the beauty of their mother tongue, one young content creator is on a mission to revive the Kashmiri language.



Muneer Ahmad Dar, a native of Khag in central Kashmir's Budgam district, is determined to bring back the cultural richness of the valley through his content in pure Kashmiri language. Known by his social media handle "Muneer Speaks", this young visionary has captured the hearts of people of all ages, boasting over 3,00,000 followers on social media and over

3,03,000 subscribers on his YouTube channel, "Mr Koshur". According to Dar, his captivating content includes everything from extracting 'Nadur' (Lotus Stem) in Dal Lake to showcasing the seven-storey house, 'Tilwein-e-Wan', and even making 'Pulhor' (grass slippers). Muneer's unique approach of creating content solely in Kashmiri language has gained him a special audience, he said. His videos get millions of views and engagement, making him the only content creator in Kashmir to produce content in this language. Muneer has become a household name, not just in the valley, but across the globe.

Banarasi Paan among four foods to get GI tag

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Varanasi, April 4: The celebrated Banarasi Paan has received the geographical indication (GI) tag.

This tag signifies that products from a specific geographical location possess qualities that are due to that origin. Known for its delicious taste, the Banarasi Paan is made using special ingredients in a unique way. Along with the Banarasi Paan, three other Varanasi-based products - Banarasi Langda Mango, Ramnagar Bhanta (Brijnal) and Adamchini Rice - have also received the GI tag, said Padma Awardee GI expert Rajinikant.

With this development, the Kashi region now boasts of 22 GI tag products. In collaboration with NABARD (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development) Uttar Pradesh, GI



applications were filed for 20 state-based products during the Covid phase. Of these, 11 products - including seven ODOP and four products of Kashi region - have received GI tag this year with the

help of NABARD and the Yogi Adityanath government. Rajinikant further said that a total of 20 lakh people, including artisans, are involved in making the GI products of the eastern Uttar Pradesh region, including those from Varanasi. The annual turnover of these products is pegged at ₹25,500 crore. He also expressed hope that by the end of the next month, the remaining nine products will also be included in the country's intellectual property.

These include - Banarasi Lal Peda, Chiraigaon Gooseberry, Tirangi Barfi, Banarasi Thandai and Banarasi Lal Bharwa Mirch, among others.

Before this, the Kashi and the Purvanchal region had 18 GI products - including Banarasi Brocade and Sarees, Handmade Bhadohi Carpets, Mirzapur Handmade Carpets, Banarasi Metal Reposi Craft, Varanasi Gulabi Meenakari, Varanasi Wooden lacquerware and Toys, Nizamabad Black Patri, Banarasi Glass Beads, Varanasi Softstone Jaali Work, Ghazipur Wall Hangig, Chunar Sandstone, Chunar Glaze Patari, Gorakhpur Terracotta Craft, Banarasi Zardozi, Banarasi Hand Block Print, Banarasi Wood Carving, Mirzapur Brass Utensils and Mau Saree.

More than 1,000 farmers would be registered and given GI authorised user certificate.

J&K project to create robust market ecosystem

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, April 4: Jammu and Kashmir administration has announced a ₹560-crore project under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) to strengthen the existing market infrastructure and create a robust market ecosystem to boost the region's economy and benefit farmers.

The project aims to improve the terms of trade (ToT) in favour of farmers, improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the market ecosystem, and minimize value loss while maximizing societal welfare. "Jammu and Kashmir government announces ₹560 crore investment in agriculture and allied sectors under HADP to strengthen the market ecosystem and benefit farmers and consumers", Additional chief secretary Agriculture production department, Atal Dulloo said.

Jammu & Kashmir is implementing this project under the programme that aims to strengthen the existing market infrastructure and create a robust market ecosystem that caters to the needs of all stakeholders, he said.

- The official said that the project will create a robust marketing ecosystem including market reforms, infrastructure development, institutional and capacity building, branding, digital marketing, and market research information system
- The project aims to improve the terms of trade (ToT) in favour of farmers, improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the market ecosystem, and minimize value loss while maximizing societal welfare

The agriculture and allied sectors in the Union Territory are poised for significant growth, thanks to technological advancements and extension programmes. "These interventions, incentivized through various schemes and projects, have already led to improvements in the quality and quantity of produce".

"However, the challenge remains in integrating smallholder produce with market systems that are both effective and transparent. This will ensure that farmers receive a fair price for their goods while consumers get good value for their money", Dulloo said.





national



My dear Prime Minister, why did you not appoint a Lokpal for five years to combat corruption after the UPA passed the Lokpal Bill? The constant silence of the Lokpal since its appointment (in 2019) shows how serious his government is to deal with corruption
KAPIL SIBAL | RAJYA SABHA MP

IIT-K TO HOST YOUTH20 SUMMIT

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur will be hosting the Youth20 (Y20) Consultation under the G20 Presidency of India, April 5 and 6. Navneet Sehgal, Additional Chief Secretary, Sports, will be the chief guest. More than 1,200 youth delegates from across India and abroad will attend the Y20 Consultation at IIT Kanpur



of the day quote

Arunachal Pradesh has always been and remains an integral and unalienable part of India. The people of Arunachal Pradesh are proud and patriotic citizens of India. There should be no doubt whatsoever on the collective resolve of India, and of all Indians, to ensure that these realities are not disturbed in any way
JAIRAM RAMESH | CONGRESS GENERAL SECY

A war between two countries is one thing but creating such a situation in our own country, in Bihar and Bengal, where you are not allowed to take out a procession peacefully on Ram Navami and forced to commit arson, stone pelting and murder, raises many questions
ANURAG THAKUR | UNION MINISTER

The BJP is behind the violence in Hooghly and Howrah. They had brought in hired 'goondas' from other states to unleash violence in Bengal, which is not in our culture. Rioters have no religion, they are just political goons. I appeal to everyone to maintain calm
MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CM

SHORT TAKES

4 students die in road mishap

Hazaribag: Four students died and two more were seriously injured in a collision between their two motorcycles in Jharkhand's Hazaribagh district. The accident occurred Monday evening in Dohar Nagar area under the Barkagaon Police Station limits, when their two motorcycles collided head-on, a senior officer said. Three students died on the spot, while one breathed his last when he was taken to Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS), Ranchi from Hazaribag, Barkagaon SDPO Amit Kumar Singh told PTI.

Gehlot, Raje test positive for Covid

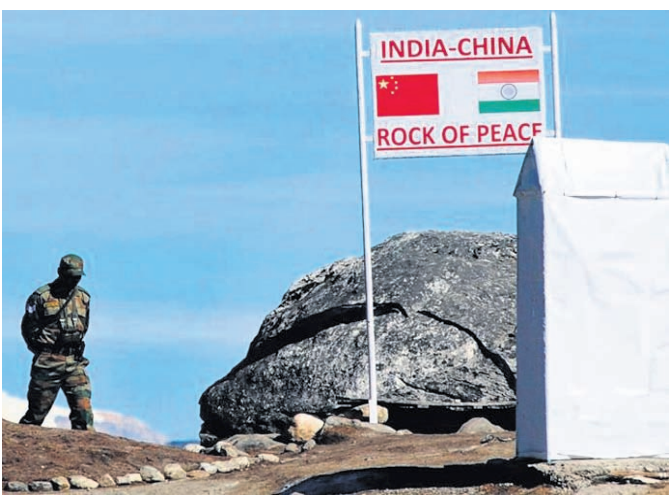
Jaipur: Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and former Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje tested Covid positive Tuesday. Both leaders shared the news themselves from their Twitter handles. Gehlot said: "In the last few days, the cases of Covid have increased across the country. I myself have been infected with Covid with mild symptoms". Raje said: "My report has come positive in Covid test. I am in complete isolation on the advice of doctors."

Mansoor quits as AMU V-C

Aligarh (UP): Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) Vice-Chancellor Tariq Mansoor resigned from the post Tuesday, a day after he was nominated as a member of the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Council. Pro Vice-Chancellor Mohammad Gulrez will officiate as the Vice-Chancellor till Mansoor's successor is appointed, a notification issued by AMU Registrar Mohammad Imran said.

India rejects China's attempt to rename places in Arunachal

India's reaction came in response to Beijing announcing Chinese names for 11 more places in Arunachal Pradesh which the neighbouring country claims as southern part of Tibet



China's renaming of the places in Arunachal came in the midst of the lingering eastern Ladakh border standoff that began in May 2020

New Delhi, April 4: India Tuesday outrightly rejected China renaming some places in Arunachal Pradesh, asserting that the state is an integral part of India and assigning "invented" names does not alter this reality.

India's reaction came in response to Beijing announcing Chinese names for 11 more places in Arunachal Pradesh which the neighbouring country claims as southern part of Tibet. Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said India outrightly rejected China's renaming of the places in Arunachal Pradesh.

"We have seen such reports. This is not the first time China has made such an attempt. We reject this outright," Bagchi said. "Arunachal Pradesh is, has been, and will always be an integral and inalienable part of India. Attempts to assign invented names will not alter this reality," he said.

It was the third batch of standardised geographical names for Arunachal Pradesh issued by China's civil affairs ministry. The first batch of the standardised names of six places in Arunachal Pradesh was released in 2017 and the second batch of 15 places was issued in 2021. The official names of the 11 places were released on Sunday by China's ministry of civil affairs.

It also gave precise coordinates, including two land areas, two residential areas, five mountain peaks and two rivers, and listed the category of places' names and their subordinate administrative districts, Chinese state-run Global Times reported Monday. Reacting to India's criticism of China announcing the names for 11 locations in Arunachal Pradesh, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning claimed at a media briefing in Beijing that "Zangnan (the Chinese name for Arunachal Pradesh) is part of China's territory."

"In accordance with relevant stipulations of the administration of geographical names of the State Council, competent authorities of the Chinese government have standardised the names of some parts of Zangnan. This is within China's sovereign rights," she said. China's renaming of the places in Arunachal Pradesh came in the midst of the lingering eastern Ladakh border standoff that began in May 2020. Following the standoff, India bolstered its overall military preparedness along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Arunachal Pradesh sector as well. Last month, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said that the situation along the LAC in eastern Ladakh remained "very fragile" and is "quite dangerous" in military assessment because of close deployments of troops of both sides in some pockets, though "substantial" progress has been made in the disengagement process in many areas.

The Indian and Chinese troops are locked in a nearly three-year-long confrontation in certain friction points in eastern Ladakh even as the two sides completed disengagement of troops from several areas following extensive diplomatic and military talks. India has been maintaining that its ties with China cannot be normal unless there is peace in the border areas.

PM holds talks with Bhutan King

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 4: The talks Tuesday between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bhutan King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck covered entire gamut of bilateral ties including issues of respective national interests.

Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra, when asked whether the Doklam issue figured in the talks, said India and Bhutan remained in close touch relating to security cooperation. At a media briefing, Kwatra said the visit of the Bhutanese King to India provided an opportunity to sketch a roadmap to further expand co-operation in diverse areas.

The meeting between Modi and the Bhutan King covered entire gamut of bilateral ties including issues of respective national interest, Kwatra said. The King began his two-day visit to India Monday amid some concerns in New Delhi over China's attempts to expand influence over Thimphu.



Certain remarks by Bhutan Prime Minister Lotay Tshering on the Doklam tri-junction were seen by many as the Himalayan nation cosy up to Beijing though Bhutan maintained that there is no change in its stance on the border dispute.

Bhutan is a strategically important country for India and the defence and security ties between the two sides have witnessed significant expansion in the last few years.

The strategic ties witnessed an upward trajectory in the last few years in the backdrop of a 73-day face-off between Indian and Chinese troops in Doklam tri-junction in 2017. The Doklam plateau is considered an important area for India's strategic interest.

Thackeray demands Fadnavis' resignation



Workers of Shiv Sena (Uddhav Thackeray faction) gather at party office after a party worker was allegedly attacked by workers of Shiv Sena (Eknath Shinde faction) in Thane

Uddhav Thackeray dubbed Devendra Fadnavis a 'worthless' home minister after a woman worker from the Thackeray-led faction was allegedly attacked by activists of rival Shiv Sena

AGENCIES

Thane, April 4: Shiv Sena (UBT) President and former Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray demanded the resignation of Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis - who holds the home department - and suspension or transfer of Thane Commissioner of Police Jai Jeet Singh, here Tuesday.

Thackeray, along with his wife Rashmi and son Aditya Thackeray, rushed to Thane where a party activist Roshani Shinde-Pawar was attacked allegedly by workers of the rival Shiv Sena of Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, in his hometown.

Thackeray, his wife Rashmi, and son Aditya Thackeray met the injured woman at a hospital in Thane city, the bastion of his bete noire Eknath Shinde who toppled the MVA government last June to become the chief minister by joining hands with BJP. Talking to reporters,

Thackeray said the woman party worker was kicked in her stomach despite her pleading that she was undergoing fertility treatment.

"Maharashtra has got a worthless home minister. A helpless and servile man is the home minister here. He was not ready to act when his own party men were attacked by the 'Mindhe' (a term Thackeray's party uses for Chief Minister Eknath Shinde) group. 'Should one call him (Shinde) the chief minister or a goonda mantri? I am not saying that, but people will decide. They should have a minister in charge of the goonda department when they expand their cabinet," Thackeray said. Thackeray said Shiv Sainiks and the common people are capable of uprooting the BJP-Shiv Sena combine from Thane.

Speaking in Nagpur, Fadnavis said "Thackeray was a 'weak' chief minister who couldn't ask two ministers in his cabinet who were jailed to resign, an apparent reference to Anil Deshmukh and Nawab Malik (both NCP MLAs).

Fadnavis said the people of Maharashtra and the country know him (Thackeray) as the chief minister who reinstated blackmailer (Sachin) Waze into the police force and tried to save him. The BJP leader said he didn't give importance to the person who abandoned ideology for the CM's post.

Nearly 14L applications for CUET-UG, max for DU

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 4: Nearly 14 lakh applications have been received for the Common University Entrance Test-Undergraduate (CUET-UG) this year, registering a 41 per cent increase from the debut edition last year, UGC Chairman M Jagadeesh Kumar said Tuesday.

"In 2023 CUET-UG, a total of 16.85 lakh students registered (themselves). Out of 16.85 lakh, 13.995 lakh paid the application fee and submitted the application form - an increase of 4 lakh students (from last year). In 2023, there is a 41 per cent increase in the total number of students who will sit for CUET-UG," Kumar said.

Ch'garh: Two killed as wedding gift explodes

Kawardha: A newly married man and his elder brother were killed and four others injured after a home theatre music system they had received as wedding gift exploded in their house in Chhattisgarh's Kabirdham district, police Tuesday said adding that prima facie it seems an explosive was planted in the electronic device. The incident took place Monday in Chamari village under Rengakhar police station limits when Hemendra Merawi (22), who got married last week, was trying to switch on the music system, Kabirdham Superintendent of Police (SP) Lal Umed Singh told PTI. The impact of the explosion led to the collapse of walls and roof of the room where the music system was kept, according to police. On Monday, Merawi and the other family members were unwrapping the wedding presents inside a room in his house, Additional Superintendent of Police Manisha Thakur said.



lowed by Banaras Hindu University, Allahabad University, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University and Jamia Millia Islamia. Among the applicants, the maximum are from Uttar Pradesh, followed by Delhi and Bihar.

"We have also seen an increase in the number of participating universities. In 2022, it was 90, but in 2023 it rose to 242. This significant rise indicates that CUET-UG is becoming a popular option for admissions in undergraduate programmes," Kumar said. There is a considerable jump in the number of applicants from Jammu and Kashmir.



READY TO STUDY: Students wearing masks attend a morning assembly on the first day of the new academic session in Jammu

Periodic boosters can keep Covid in check: Study

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi/New York, April 4: Updated Covid booster shots will be important for shoring up population immunity as new variants emerge, suggests a study.

However, the trick is to target a variant for the booster that is so different from the original strain of the virus that it triggers the maturation of new and diverse antibody-producing cells, said scientists from the Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis.

The first Covid vaccines reduced the risk of severe illness and death by more than 90 per cent. But then the virus changed. The antibodies that had worked so well against the original strain proved less effective at recognising and neutralising emerging variants, lead-



ing to breakthrough infections. The obvious solution was to update the vaccines to target new variants, but the success of the first vaccines against the original strain made designing an effective variant booster shot tricky, said Ali Ellebedy, Associate Professor of pathology and immunology, of medicine, and of molecular microbiology at the varsity. In the study, published in the jour-

nal Nature, the team showed that it's possible to design a variant-specific booster that doesn't just strengthen the antibodies people already have but elicits new antibodies. "This means that periodically giving boosters targeting new variants would allow population-level protection to be maintained even as the virus evolves," Ellebedy said.

"The whole point of making boosters against new variants is to teach the immune system to recognise features in the new variants that are different from the original strain. "But the new variants still share a lot of features with the original strain, and it's possible that the response to these shared features could dominate the response to new features. The boosters could end up just engaging immune memory cells that are already

present rather than creating new memory cells, which is what we need for protection against new variants," he said.

To gauge the effectiveness of boosters at eliciting new antibodies, the researchers looked at 39 people who had received the two-shot primary sequence of the Pfizer/BioNTech or Moderna Covid-19 vaccines, followed by an experimental booster shot targeting the Beta and Delta variants.

All participants produced antibodies that neutralised the original virus strain and the Beta and Delta variants. But none of the antibodies studied were unique to Beta or Delta. The absence of such antibodies indicates that the variant booster had failed to trigger the development of detectable new antibody-producing cells, Ellebedy said.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
"e"PROCUREMENT NOTICE
Bid Identification No.52 of 2022-23
No.O-06:The Superintending Engineer, RWS&S Division, Balangir on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites Percentage bid through e-Procurement in single and double cover system according to norm of e-Procurement system in online mode for the different work in different blocks under Balangir District.

- Nature of Work: Supply of drinking water and sanitation facilities to Adarsha Vidyalaya, Jharni under Turekela block under Balangir District.
- Total No. of Work: 01 No.
- Estimated Cost : Rs. 18.20 Lakh
- Eligible Class of Contractor : "D" and "C"
- Period of Completion : Two Months
- Other details

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of tender online for bidding	
Superintending Engineer, RWS&S Division, Balangir	52 of 2022-23	From	To
		Dt. 11.04.2023 At 11.00 Hrs.	Dt. 24.04.2023 upto 17.00 Hrs.

Further details can be had in the DTCN available in the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in.

Sd./- Superintending Engineer
RWS&S Division, Balangir
OIPR-25033/11/0001/2324

RAYAGADA MUNICIPALITY
e-Procurement Notice
e-Mail: rayagadam.hud@nic.in
No.C-14:1. Bid Reference No. : RGDA-MUN-I/2023-24. 2. Tender Call Notice No. : 1381, dtd.03.04.23. 3. Name of Work: 1 No. (One). 4. Bid Value: 10000. 5. Period of Completion: 120 Days.

Critical Dates:

Sl. No.	Description	Critical Dates
(i)	Period of availability of tenders online for bidding	From Dt. 5.04.2023 from 11.00 AM to Dt. 3.05.2023 upto 1.30 PM.
(ii)	Last date & time of seeking clarifications (if any)	Dt. 3.05.2023 upto 1.30 PM
(iii)	Last date & time of bidding online	Dt. 3.05.2023 upto 1.30 PM
(iv)	Last date and time of Original Document Submit	Dt. 8.05.2023 (1.30 PM onwards)
(vii)	Date & Time of opening of the Technical Bids received online	Dt. 9.05.2023 (11.00 AM onwards)
(viii)	Date & Time of opening of Price Bid/Financial Bid/DTCN Part-II	To be intimated later to the bidder (s) found qualified after checking and evaluation of Technical Bids received online.

6. Tender details can be seen for the e-Procurement portal <https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in>.

OIPR-13150/11/0001/2324 **Sd./- Executive Officer, Rayagada Municipality**

international



We have been clear with China that its position on Russia's atrocities and war crimes will determine the quality of our relations with Beijing

JOSEP BORRELL | EUROPEAN UNION'S FOREIGN POLICY CHIEF

AUSTRALIA BANS TIKTOK

Australia has become the last of the "Five Eyes" security partners to ban the Chinese-owned video-sharing app TikTok from its federal government's devices



of the day quote

The Christchurch Call is a foreign policy priority for the government and Jacinda Ardern is uniquely placed to keep pushing forward with the goal of eliminating violent extremist content online

CHRIS HIPKINS | NEW ZEALAND PM

Germany is firmly on Romania's side. This also means (...) the goal of Romania finally obtaining full Schengen membership this year

OLAF SCHOLZ | GERMAN CHANCELLOR

The alliance will discuss a multi-year support program for Ukraine

JENS STOLTENBERG | NATO SECRETARY-GENERAL

NATO's border with Russia doubles as Finland joins

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Brussels, April 4: Finland joined the NATO military alliance Tuesday, dealing a major blow to Russia with a historic realignment of the continent triggered by Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

The Nordic country's membership doubles Russia's border with the world's biggest security alliance and represents a major change in Europe's security landscape. The nation adopted neutrality after its defeat by the Soviets in World War II. But its leaders signalled they wanted to join the alliance just months after Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine sent a shiver of fear through Moscow's neighbours.

The move is a strategic and political blow to Putin, who has long complained about NATO's expansion toward Russia and partly used that as a justification for the invasion.

Russia warned that it would be forced to take "retaliatory measures" to address what it called security threats created by Finland's membership. It had also warned it would bolster forces near Finland if NATO sends any additional

THE MOVE IS A STRATEGIC AND POLITICAL BLOW TO PUTIN, WHO HAS LONG COMPLAINED ABOUT NATO'S EXPANSION TOWARD RUSSIA AND PARTLY USED THAT AS A JUSTIFICATION FOR THE INVASION



Finnish and NATO flags flutter at the courtyard of the Foreign Ministry, ahead of Finland's accession to NATO, in Helsinki, Finland

troops or equipment to what is its 31st member country.

The alliance says it poses no threat to Moscow.

Neighbouring Sweden, which has avoided military alliances for more than 200 years, has also applied. But objections from NATO

members Turkiye and Hungary have delayed the process.

Alarmed by Moscow's invasion of Ukraine last year, Finland, which shares a 1,340 kilometre (832 mile) border with Russia, applied to join in May, setting aside years of military non-alignment to seek pro-

THE NORDIC COUNTRY'S MEMBERSHIP DOUBLES RUSSIA'S BORDER WITH THE WORLD'S BIGGEST SECURITY ALLIANCE AND REPRESENTS A MAJOR CHANGE IN EUROPE'S SECURITY LANDSCAPE

tection under the organisation's security umbrella.

"I'm tempted to say this is maybe the one thing that we can thank Mr. Putin for because he once again here precipitated something he claims to want to prevent by Russia's aggression, causing many countries to believe that they have to do more to look out for their own defence and to make sure that they can deter possible Russian aggression going forward," US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said just before accepting the documents that made Finland's membership official.

The US State Department is the repository of NATO texts concerning membership.

Earlier, Russia's Foreign Ministry said the country "will be forced to take military-technical and other retaliatory measures to counter the threats to our national security arising from Finland's accession to NATO."

It said Finland's move marks "a fundamental change in the situation in Northern Europe, which had

previously been one of the most stable regions in the world."

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov, meanwhile, Tuesday said Finland's membership reflects the alliance's anti-Russian course and warned that Moscow will respond depending on what weapons NATO allies place there.

But Peskov also sought to play down the impact, noting that Russia has no territorial disputes with Finland.

It's not clear what additional military resources Russia could send to the Finnish border. Moscow has deployed the bulk of its most capable military units to Ukraine.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg earlier said that no more troops would be sent to Finland unless it asked for help.

"There will be no NATO troops in Finland without the consent of Finland," NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg told reporters at the alliance's headquarters in Brussels a few hours before the country joins.

LSE to review student elections

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, April 4: An Indian student has claimed that he was disqualified from the London School of Economics (LSE) Students' Union elections as a result of a deliberately orchestrated smear campaign because of his Indian and Hindu identity.



Karan Kataria, who is from Haryana and is studying for a postgraduate law degree at the leading university in London, said he was motivated by the support of his peers to contest the post of General Secretary of the LSE Students' Union (LSESU). However, he was disqualified last week over what he believes are baseless allegations and without being given a chance to fully state his case.

The LSESU issued a statement Monday to say that the body operates in a fair and democratic manner and has a firm zero-tolerance stance towards any form of harassment and bullying. It has also ordered an external review of this year's elections.

"Unfortunately, some individuals could not bear to see an Indian-Hindu leading the LSESU and resorted to vilifying my character and very identity in what was clearly in line with the alarming cancel culture which is uprooting our social communities," said Kataria.

"When I started my postgraduate studies at LSE, I sincerely hoped to strive for and further fulfil my passion for student welfare. But my dreams were shattered when a deliberately orchestrated smear campaign was launched against me solely because of my Indian and Hindu identity," he said.

The 22-year-old student comes from a middle-class farming background and describes himself as a first-generation university-level graduate in his family. Soon after arriving in the UK for his Master's from the LSE Law School last year, he was elected as his cohort's Academic Representative and also a delegate to the UK's National Union for Students (NUS).

SHORT TAKES

1 dead, 19 injured

Voorschoten (Netherlands): A passenger train slammed into a construction crane and derailed near The Hague in the early hours of Tuesday, sending two carriages into a field next to the tracks. One person died and 19 were hospitalised, Dutch emergency services said. Police opened an investigation to establish if any crime was committed. Another independent probe was opened into the cause of the crash. Television images showed people using temporary bridges and ladders to cross a narrow drainage canal running alongside the rails to reach the stricken train in the darkness.

TikTok fined

London: Britain's privacy watchdog hit TikTok with a multimillion-dollar penalty on Tuesday for a slew of data protection breaches, including misusing children's data. The Information Commissioner's Office said it issued a fine of 12.7 million pounds (USD 15.9 million) to the short-video sharing app, which is wildly popular with young people. It's the latest example of tighter scrutiny that TikTok and its parent, Chinese technology company ByteDance, are facing in the West, where governments are increasingly concerned about risks that the app poses to data privacy and cybersecurity.

Climber killed

Geneva: A German climber has died after falling some 500 metres (1,640 feet) in the Alps in southern Switzerland, police said Tuesday. The accident happened near the resort of Zermatt on Sunday, police in Valais canton (state) state in a statement. Authorities were alerted on Monday that the 26-year-old man, who lived in Germany, was missing, and rescuers in a helicopter found his body on a glacier.

China warns McCarthy not to meet Taiwan Prez

REUTERS

Beijing/Taipei, April 4: China warned US House Speaker Kevin McCarthy Tuesday not to "repeat disastrous past mistakes" by meeting Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen, saying it would not help regional peace and stability, only unite the Chinese people against a common enemy.

The Republican McCarthy, the third-most-senior US leader after the president and vice president, will host a meeting in California on Wednesday with Tsai, during a sensitive stopover in the United States that has prompted Chinese threats of retaliation. China, which claims Taiwan as its own territory, staged war games around the island last August after then-Speaker Nancy Pelosi, a Democrat, visited the capital, Taipei.

Tsai will make what is formally called a "transit" in Los Angeles on her way back to Taipei after a trip to Central America. The United States says such stopovers are common practice and there is no need for China to overreact. But China's consulate in Los Angeles said it was "false" to claim it as a transit, adding that Tsai was engaging in official exchanges to "put on a political show".

No matter in what capacity

- McCarthy, Tsai to meet in Los Angeles Wednesday
- Taiwan says China's criticism 'increasingly absurd'

McCarthy meets Tsai, the gesture would greatly harm the feelings of the Chinese people, send a serious wrong signal to Taiwan separatist forces, and affect the political foundation of Sino-U.S. ties, it said in a statement.

"It is not conducive to regional peace, security nor stability, and is not in the common interests of the people of China and the United States," the consulate added. McCarthy is ignoring the lessons from the mistakes of his predecessor, it said, in a veiled reference to Pelosi's Taipei visit, and is insisting on playing the "Taiwan card".

"He will undoubtedly repeat disastrous past mistakes and further damage Sino-U.S. relations. It will only strengthen the Chinese people's strong will and determination to share a common enemy and support national unity." Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said China will closely follow developments and resolutely and vigorously defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity, without giving details.



Locals help firefighters to douse a fire at a popular market in Dhaka, Bangladesh

Senior IS commander killed: US

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Beirut, April 4: A drone strike carried out by the American-led coalition in northwestern Syria has killed a senior member of the Islamic State group who was in charge of planning attacks in Europe, the United States military said Tuesday.

The man killed Monday in the strike was identified by a U.S. Military statement as Khalid Aydd Ahmad al-Jabouri. The military statement added that his death "will temporarily disrupt the organisation's ability to plot external attacks."

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitor, said

on Monday that one person was killed in a drone strike near the rebel-held village of Kefteen. The opposition's Syrian Civil Defense, also known as the White Helmets, said it evacuated the man from the scene of the attack and he later succumbed to his wounds.

The strike was the latest in a series of attacks over the past years



targeting al-Qaida-linked militants and senior members of the Islamic State group in northwestern Syria. Most of those killed by US strikes in the rebel-held Idlib province over the past years were members of al-Qaida offshoot Horas al-Din, which is Arabic for "Guardians of Religion." The group includes hardcore al-Qaida members who broke away from Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, the strongest insurgent group in Idlib province.

In February a drone strike killed two men, whom local activists initially identified as Horas al-Din members. The Observatory later said that one of the two killed was a senior member of the Islamic State group that was defeated in Syria in March 2019.

DIFFERENT ENDEAVOUR

Professor to live underwater for 100 days

AGENCIES

London, April 4: As nightmares go, being trapped in a small box deep underwater is probably high on many peoples' lists. But one US professor is doing this on purpose. Joe Dituri, a former US navy diver and expert in biomedical engineering has been living in a 55 square meter space 30 feet below the surface of the Florida Keys since March 1, and plans to stay for 100 days. If he manages this, he will break a record for most time spent in a habitat beneath the surface of the ocean.

Dituri conducts research into the effects of hyperbaric pressure – when air pressure is greater than it would be at sea level – on the human body. He is hoping to use his time spent below the surface to ex-

amine what impact living in this high-pressure environment has on his health.

Interestingly, Dituri's endeavour will be very different from living on a submarine. Submarines are sealed when submerged and maintained at sea level pressure. This means there's no significant difference in pressure, even when a submarine is at depths of hundreds of meters.

But Dituri's underwater habitat won't have any solid hatches or air locks between the ocean and the dry living space, as a submarine does. Think of it like when a glass of water is turned upside down and pushed into a sink full of water. A pocket of air will still exist at the top of Dituri's living space, with a pool of water in the floor of one room that comes from the ocean



outside. This means that the air inside his habitat is squeezed by the ocean's weight, increasing the air pressure around him. At a depth of 30 feet, the air pressure inside

this habitat is about twice as much as what he'd be used to on land.

Under pressure
Little research has investigated

what effect long-term exposure to hyperbaric pressure has on the body. As every certified diver is well aware, though, hyperbaric pressure can pose a very real threat to us. Our bodies have been adapted by generations of evolution for sea level conditions, where the two major gases involved in breathing (oxygen and carbon dioxide) are the only two that freely cross between our lungs and our blood.

But as pressure increases, nitrogen in the air is forced across the delicate walls of our lungs and into our blood. This can cause a range of adverse effects. At depths of ten to 30 meters, this may cause mild euphoria and positive moods. After about 30 meters below sea level and beyond, it can lead to intoxicated-like behaviour – hence the name "nar-

cosis". Scientists don't fully understand why this happens, but it could be due to changes in the way neurotransmitters signal between neurons in our brain. Fortunately, this won't be a risk to Dituri, as he's only at a depth of ten meters.

Health changes

But Dituri can expect to experience other physical changes while living in his underwater habitat. Although the habitat has large windows, Dituri will still only be exposed to half the amount of sunlight as on land. This could cause issues with his circadian rhythm – the internal "clock" that controls many body functions, including our sleep-wake cycle – which relies on daylight. This may mean disrupted sleeping.

'Unconstitutional': Pak Supreme Court on poll body's decision

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, April 4: Pakistan's Supreme Court Tuesday termed as "unconstitutional" the election commission's decision to postpone polls in the Punjab province till October 8, in a major blow to the federal government that has been trying to delay the provincial election citing security issues and the economic crisis.

The apex court also fixed May 14 as the date for polls in the politically crucial Punjab province, in a boost to ousted prime minister Imran Khan-led Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party. On March 22, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) delayed assembly polls in the politically crucial Punjab province by more than five months, citing the deteriorating security situation in the cash-starved country, a move criticised by Khan's PTI.

The verdict on the issue was delivered by a three-member bench – headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial and comprising Justice Munib Akhtar and Justice Ijazul Ahsan.

Heavy security was deployed outside the apex court's building, with a large contingent of police guarding the main entrance. The top court declared the ECP decision as "illegal" and "unconstitutional". "The impugned order dated 22.03.2023 ("EC Order") made by the Election Commission of Pakistan ("Commission") is declared to be unconstitutional, without lawful authority or jurisdiction, void ab-initio, of no legal effect and is hereby quashed," the ruling said.



Today, India has achieved financial inclusion in about seven-eight years with homegrown technologies like Aadhaar, UPI, QR code and more. The next step is to connect millions of small retailers to mainstream ecommerce with ONDC to create a robust digital public infrastructure
NANDAN NILEKANI | INFOSYS CHAIRMAN AND CO-FOUNDER

VIRGIN ORBIT FILES FOR BANKRUPTCY

Richard Branson's Virgin Orbit Holdings filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy Tuesday after the satellite launch company failed to secure the long-term funding following a January rocket failure.



of the day quote

To bridge the cost in logistics, we need to look at scale, efficiency and the building blocks through technology
PIYUSH GOYAL | COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER

With a revenue of around ₹3,400 crore in 2022, India is the fourth largest market for the company in terms of group revenue. But in terms of people, India is the co-number one with our home country employing 5,000 of our 38,000 people.
BENOIT COQUART | GLOBAL CEO, LEGRAND GROUP

It cannot be that expenditure in the economy is largely public expenditure. The private sector has to participate and with the environment that is being created today
AJAY SINGH | ASSOCHAM PRESIDENT

WB, ADB slash India growth forecast

BOTH PROJECT MODERATION IN INDIAN GDP GROWTH BETWEEN 6.3 PER CENT AND 6.4 PER CENT DUE TO A SLOWDOWN IN CONSUMPTION AND CHALLENGING EXTERNAL CONDITIONS



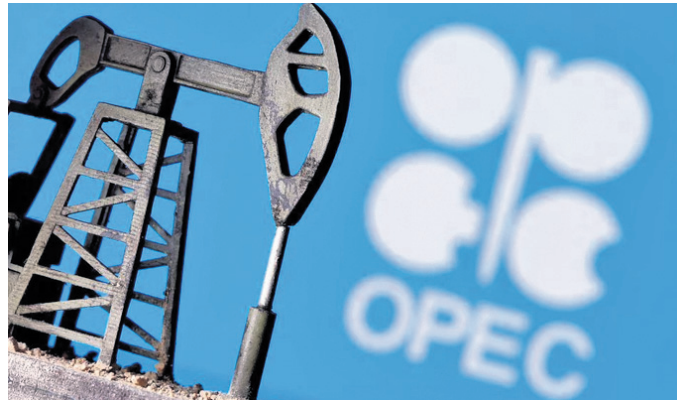
AGENCIES
New Delhi/Washington, April 4: The World Bank and the Asian Development Bank Tuesday projected moderation in the Indian economic growth between 6.3 per cent and 6.4 per cent due to a slowdown in consumption and challenging external conditions. The World Bank in its latest India Development Update (IDU) slashed the GDP forecast to 6.3 per cent against the earlier estimate of 6.6 per cent in 2023-24 (FY24). "In India, South Asia's largest economy, high borrowing costs

and slower income growth are expected to dampen consumption and lower growth to 6.3 per cent in FY 2023/24," the World Bank said in a report for South Asia released Tuesday ahead of the annual spring meeting of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Growth is likely to be constrained by slower consumption growth and challenging external conditions, it said, adding that government consumption is projected to grow at a slower pace due to the withdrawal of pandemic-related fiscal support measures.

Multi-lateral funding agency Asian Development Bank also said India's economic growth is expected to moderate to 6.4 per cent in the current financial year due to tight monetary conditions and elevated oil prices as compared to 6.8 per cent expansion for the financial year ended March 2023. The projections are part of the latest edition of ADB's flagship economic publication, Asian Development Outlook (ADO) April 2023. ADB, however, made a slightly optimistic projection of 6.7 per cent for FY2024-25 ending March

2023 driven by private consumption and private investment on the back of government policies to improve transport infrastructure, logistics, and the business ecosystem. Echoing similar views, the World Bank report said India was one of the fastest-growing economies in the world despite significant challenges remaining in the global environment. "The Indian economy continues to show strong resilience to external shocks. Notwithstanding external pressures, India's service exports have continued to increase, and the current-account deficit is narrowing," said Auguste Tano Kouame, World Bank's Country Director in India. Although headline inflation is elevated, it is projected to decline to an average of 5.2 per cent in 2023-24, amid easing global commodity prices and some moderation in domestic demand, the IDU said. The ADB report projected moderation in inflation to 5 per cent while Current Account Deficit to 2.2 per cent in the current financial year. With regard to inflation, the World Bank Report expects it to ease to 5.2 per cent, against 6.6 per cent in the current fiscal.

Why did OPEC cut oil production?



REUTERS
London, April 4: OPEC and its allies, including Russia, agreed on Sunday to widen crude oil production cuts to 3.66 million barrels per day (bpd) or 3.7% of global demand. The surprise announcement helped push up prices by \$5 per barrel to above \$85 per barrel. Here are the main reasons why OPEC+ is cutting output:

OPEC+ has criticised the International Energy Agency, the West's energy watchdog, for releasing oil stocks last year, a move it said was necessary to bring down prices amid fears sanctions would disrupt Russian supply

CONCERNS ABOUT WEAK GLOBAL DEMAND
Saudi Arabia has said voluntary output cuts of 1.66 million bpd on top of the existing 2 million bpd cuts were made as a precautionary measure aimed at supporting market stability. Russian deputy prime minister Alexander Novak said the Western banking crisis was one of the reasons behind the cut as well as "interference with market dynamics," a Russian expression to describe a Western price cap on Russian oil. Fears of a fresh banking crisis over the past month have led investors to sell out of risk assets such as commodities with oil prices falling to near \$70 per barrel from near an all-time high of \$139 in March 2022. A global recession could lead to lower oil prices. Redburn research said the size of the latest cut was probably overdone unless OPEC feared a major global recession.

Rystad predicted a jump back to \$100. However, excessively high oil prices represent a risk for OPEC+ as they speed up inflation, including for goods the group needs to purchase. They also encourage speedier production gains from non-OPEC members and investments in alternative sources of energy. Goldman Sachs said OPEC's power has increased in recent years as U.S. shale responses to higher prices have become slower and smaller, in part because of pressure on investors to stop funding fossil fuel projects.

PUNISHING SPECULATORS
The cut will also punish oil short sellers or those who bet on oil price declines. Back in 2020, Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman warned traders against betting heavily in the oil market, saying he would try to make the market jumpy and promising that those who gamble on the oil price would be "ouching like hell". Prior to the latest cut, hedge funds had reduced their net position in U.S. benchmark WTI oil to just 56 million barrels by March 21, the lowest since February 2016. Their bullish long positions outnumbered bearish short ones by a ratio of just 1.39:1, the lowest since August 2016.

TENSIONS WITH WASHINGTON
Washington has called the latest move by OPEC+ inadvisable. The West has repeatedly criticised OPEC for manipulating prices and siding with Russia despite the war in Ukraine. The United States is considering passing legislation known as NOPEC, which would allow the seizure of OPEC's assets on U.S. territory in the event market collusion is proved. OPEC+ has criticised the International Energy Agency, the West's energy watchdog in which the United States is the biggest financial donor, for releasing oil stocks last year, a move it said was necessary to bring down prices amid fears sanctions would disrupt Russian supply. The IEA's prediction never materialised though, prompting OPEC+ sources to say it was politically driven and designed to help boost U.S. President Joe Biden's ratings. The United States, which released most stocks, said it would buy back some oil in 2023 but later ruled it out. JP Morgan and Goldman Sachs said the U.S. decision not to buy back oil for reserves might have contributed to the move to cut output.

SHORT TAKES

Windfall tax on crude cut to zero

New Delhi: The government has cut the windfall profit tax on domestically produced crude oil to zero and halved the levy on the export of diesel to ₹0.50 per litre in line with softening international oil prices, according to an official order. The levy on crude oil produced by companies such as Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has been reduced to nil from ₹3,500 per tonne (USD 5.8 per barrel), the order dated April 3 said. Alongside, the government cut the tax on the export of diesel to ₹0.50 per litre from ₹1, and the same on overseas shipments of ATF remains at nil. The new tax rates come into effect from April 4, the order said.

IEX trade volume dips 4 per cent YoY

New Delhi: Indian Energy Exchange's total trade volume declined by 4 per cent to 9,212 million units (MU) in March compared to the same month a year ago. On a month-on-month basis, the trade volume rose by 12 per cent, a statement said. Indian Energy Exchange achieved 9,212 MU overall volume in March 2023, including green market trade of 391 MU, 8.69 lac RECs (equivalent to 869 MU) and 22,881 ESCerts (equivalent to 23 MU), a statement said. The (average spot power) price during March 2023 was ₹5.25 per unit, lower 23 per cent on MoM basis, due to cooler weather conditions, it explained. The IEX achieved 26,052 MU volume across all segments during Q4 FY '23 (January-March 2023), growing 7 per cent over the previous quarter.

PhonePe forays into local commerce

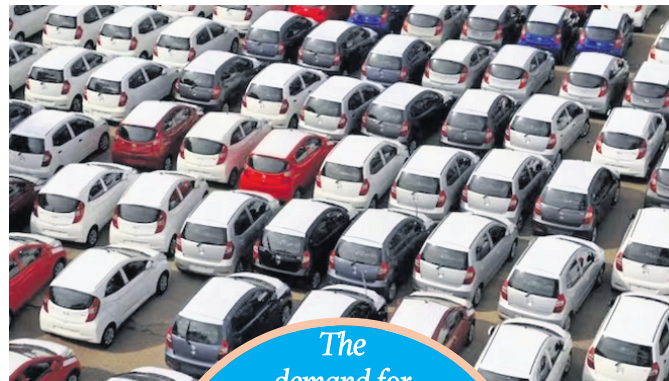
New Delhi: Walmart-backed PhonePe Tuesday announced its foray into local commerce with the launch of its consumer app Pincode, built on the government's Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) platform. PhonePe Founder and CEO Sameer Nigam said the Pincode app will be available initially in Bangalore and it will expand to other cities after the app achieves transactions of around 10,000 per day. "PhonePe is launching a new shopping app that puts stores at the heart of interaction. Pincode is going to open up in Bengaluru. We are going to launch it city by city. We are going to first take transaction volumes like 10,000 a day before we open the next city. We are looking at 100 thousand per day by December," Nigam said.

Odisha, MP doubled in size in 6 years to FY22: Report

AGENCIES
Mumbai, April 4: Madhya Pradesh and Odisha more than doubled their gross state domestic product (GSDP) on a nominal basis in six years to FY22 despite the pandemic, a report said Tuesday. Madhya Pradesh has shown a 'remarkable journey' on economic growth by doubling in size in FY22, as compared with what it was in FY16, India Ratings and Research said in a note. It added that Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan's state also entered into the top 10 states by GSDP because of this performance, and was the only new entrant in the list. Kerala has dropped off the list, it said. The medium-term growth prospects of Odisha and Madhya Pradesh look bright as they have stepped up their capital outlay to GSDP significantly during FY16-FY22. While Odisha's capital outlay to GSDP averaged 4.3 per cent during FY16-FY22, that of Madhya Pradesh averaged 3.6 per cent, it said. Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Gujarat, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Kerala were the 10 largest subnational economies in FY16, while in FY22 Kerala was replaced by Madhya Pradesh, it said. Maharashtra led the list with the highest GSDP, and was followed by Tamil Nadu, it said, adding that both the states have retained their top positions in FY22. Karnataka replaced Uttar Pradesh as the third-largest subnational economy in FY22. Gujarat also moved up to fourth position.

Automobile retail sales see double-digit growth in FY23

AGENCIES
New Delhi, April 4: Automobile retail sales grew in double-digits in the country last fiscal, driven by a record offtake of 36 lakh passenger vehicles, the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) said Tuesday. Total retail sales rose to 2,21,50,222 units last fiscal, up 21 per cent from 1,83,27,326 units in FY22. The passenger vehicle registrations rose by 23 per cent to 36,20,039 units, as against 29,42,273 units in 2021-22. Two-wheelers retail sales rose by 19 per cent to 1,59,95,968 units in FY23 compared to 1,34,94,214 units in 2021-22. Commercial vehicle retail sales rose 33 per cent while three-wheeler registrations witnessed an 84 per cent increase as compared with 2021-22. Tractor retail sales grew by 8 per cent last fiscal as compared with FY22. "FY23 was the first full year without any impact of Covid after a gap of two years. Consequently, overall retail sales during the year experienced double-digit growth of 21 per cent," FADA President Manish Raj Singhania said. He noted that last fiscal the retail sales of passenger vehicles reached a record high of 36 lakh vehicles, a growth of 23 per cent as compared with FY22. The previous high was in FY19 when retail sales were at 32 lakh units. The segment benefitted from numerous new launches and better product availability due to the



ease of the semiconductor shortage, Singhania said. The demand for higher-end variants remain under pressure as customers in this category are still affected by high inflation. The domestic passenger vehicle registrations rose to 3,35,266 units last month, from 2,93,016 units in March 2022. Two-wheeler retail sales rose to 14,45,867 in March, up 12 per cent from 12,86,109 units in the year-ago period. Similarly, the commercial vehicle registrations last month rose to 92,790 units, up 10 per cent from 84,124 units in March last year. Three-wheeler retail sales rose 69 per cent year-on-year to 86,857 units in March. The cut will also punish oil short sellers or those who bet on oil price declines. Back in 2020, Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman warned traders against betting heavily in the oil market, saying he would try to make the market jumpy and promising that those who gamble on the oil price would be "ouching like hell". Prior to the latest cut, hedge funds had reduced their net position in U.S. benchmark WTI oil to just 56 million barrels by March 21, the lowest since February 2016. Their bullish long positions outnumbered bearish short ones by a ratio of just 1.39:1, the lowest since August 2016.

Ambani regains Asia's richest person spot



cent. The drop lopped USD 57 billion from Bezos' fortune and knocked him from No. 2 in the world in 2022 to No. 3 this year. This year's second-biggest loser, Elon Musk, had it worse. He lost his title of world's richest person after his pricey purchase of Twitter,

THE 25 RICHEST PEOPLE IN THE WORLD ARE WORTH A COLLECTIVE USD 2.1 TRILLION, ACCORDING TO FORBES' WORLD'S BILLIONAIRES LIST, DOWN A COMBINED USD 200 BILLION FROM USD 2.3 TRILLION IN 2022

AGENCIES
New Delhi, April 4: Mukesh Ambani has regained his spot as Asia's richest person after rival Gautam Adani tumbled to No. 24, Forbes said in its Billionaire 2023 list released Tuesday. "Adani was the world's third-richest person on January 24, when he was worth nearly USD 126 billion. A report issued by US short-seller Hindenburg Research later that day, however, sent his companies' shares plum-

meting," Forbes said. His net worth is now USD 47.2 billion and is the second richest Indian behind Ambani. With a net worth of USD 83.4 billion, Ambani, 65, was ranked at No. 9 on the world billionaire list. "Last year, Ambani's oil-to-telecom behemoth Reliance Industries became the first Indian company to surpass USD 100 billion in revenue," Forbes said. Ambani, it said, sidestepped speculation about succession by giving his children key roles last year: Older son Akash is the chairman of telecom arm Jio Infocomm; daughter Isha is the head of the retail business; and younger son Anant works in Reliance's new energy ventures. The 25 richest people in the world are worth a collective USD 2.1 trillion, according to Forbes' World's Billionaires list, down a combined USD 200 billion from USD 2.3 trillion in 2022. "Two-thirds of the top 25 are poorer than they were last year, compared to around half of the list overall," it said. No one lost more than Jeff Bezos as Amazon shares crashed by 38 per

which he funded in part by the sale of Tesla shares, helping to spook investors. Musk, who is worth USD 39 billion less than a year ago, is now No. 2. With USD 211 billion net worth, Bernard Arnault, the French luxury goods tycoon, tops the list for the first time on the back of a banner year at LVMH, which owns Louis Vuitton, Christian Dior and Tiffany & Co., among others. Musk, 51, with USD 180 billion net worth, is ranked No. 2, followed by Jeff Bezos with USD 114 billion net worth. "There are a record number of Indians on Forbes' 2023 list of the World's Billionaires - 169 in all, up from 166 last year. But their combined wealth faced a reality check, dropping 10 per cent to USD 675 billion, from USD 750 billion on the 2022 list," Forbes said. The majority of that decline came from one high-profile saga: the stock rout of companies in the Adani Group, following a January report of fraud allegations by short-seller Hindenburg Research (allegations the Adani Group has denied).

Amazon removes 6mn counterfeit items from supply chains

AGENCIES
New Delhi, April 4: E-commerce major Amazon removed six million counterfeit items globally from the supply chain in 2022, the company said in a report Tuesday. The e-commerce firm said that it stopped over 800,000 attempts to create new selling accounts in 2022, preventing bad actors from publishing a single product for sale. The figure has come down from 2.5 million attempts in 2021, and six million attempts in 2020. "The strategic combination of industry-leading technology and experts are successfully stopping bad actors and making an impact beyond Amazon's marketplaces and stores—identifying, seizing, and appropriately disposing of over six million counterfeit products in 2022, preventing them from reaching customers and being resold elsewhere in the global supply chain," the report said. The report said that Amazon's Counterfeit Crimes Unit sued or referred for investigation over 1,300 criminals in the US, UK, EU, and China in 2022.

TITANS OVERPOWER DELHI

Royals lock horns with Kings



Rashid Khan and Mohammed Shami celebrate a wicket



SAI SUDHARSAN

New Delhi, April 4: The inept technique of young Indian batters against top quality fast bowling compounded Delhi Capitals' worries as they succumbed to an embarrassing six-wicket defeat at the hands of defending champions Gujarat Titans in an IPL match here Tuesday.

Mohammed Shami (3/41) and Alzarri Joseph (2/29) intimidated the Delhi top-order in the first 10 overs while Rashid Khan (3/31) hardly faced any trouble keeping the batters under check to restrict the home team to a below-par 162/8. Despite Anrich Nortje's (2/39) best efforts, young Sai Sudharsan (62 n o, 48x, 4x4, 2x6) anchored the chase calmly with Titans winning their second successive game in 18.1 overs. David Miller's (31 n o, 16x, 2x4, 2x6) two sixes and four off Mukesh Kumar in the 16th over towards the end sealed DC's fate decisively.

Axar Patel (36, 22x, 2x4, 3x6) was DC's saving grace with bat but since left-handers were batting, David Warner (37, 32x, 7x4) couldn't give him a single over as the match-up wasn't compatible.

DC have now lost two matches on the trot and while it is early days in the tournament, it will be surpris-

ing if this team, with the kind of Indian talent it has, finish in top five let alone be a title contender.

Just a month after Kotla produced a turner for the Test against Australia, the change in nature of the track was palpable as the balls literally flew off the surface. At times, it felt that it wasn't Warner or a Sarafaraz Khan's (30) bat that hit the ball but the other way round.

Shami literally beat Warner's bat for fun in his first two overs, often cutting him into half while Alzarri twice forced umpires to call for concussion checks as Sarfaraz and Abhishek Porel (20) were hit on the head by well-directed bouncers.

To be fair, both looked dazed.

Even an international like Rilee Rossouw (0) got a Test match like bounce first up and was snapped brilliantly at backward point by a diving Rahul Tewatia. Not being able to avoid the short ball was more due to lack of technique and not regularly facing bowlers of Shami or Alzarri's quality became their undoing.

Even Prithvi Shaw isn't inspiring confidence while facing a bowler of Shami's calibre. Shaw's (7) inept technique against fast rising deliveries was once again exposed by the seasoned Shami. Mitchell Marsh was bowled for the second time, this time played on off Shami's bowling.

While Gujarat chased, Nortje bowled Wriddhiman Saha with a lethal off-cutter and another fast delivery that moved enough to knock back Shubman Gill's off-stump. DC had some hope when Khaleel Ahmed had Hardik Pandya caught behind but Sudharsan and Vijay Shankar (29) added 53 off 7.2 overs to keep the chase on track. Miller then added finishing touches.

BRIEF SCORES: DC 162/8 (David Warner 37, Axar Patel 36; Rashid Khan 3/31, Mohammed Shami 3/41, Alzarri Joseph 2/29) lost to GT 163/4 (Sai Sudharsan 62 n o, David Miller 31 n o; Anrich Nortje 2/39) by 6 wickets.

IPL AT A GLANCE DHONI WARNS BOWLERS OVER EXTRAS

Chennai: Chennai Super Kings skipper MS Dhoni has issued a stern warning to his bowlers to drastically cut down on no-balls and wides in their upcoming IPL matches, saying if they continue to give away free runs to the opposition, they will have to play under a new captain. Dhoni's warning came even as the four-time IPL champions defeated Lucknow Super Giants by 12 runs at the MA Chidambaram stadium Monday. The wicketkeeper-batter was not amused with the way his bowlers sprayed the ball all over the place, sending down three no-balls and 13 wides. CSK had conceded four wides and two no-balls in the opener against defending champions Gujarat Titans. "They'll have to bowl no no-balls and less wides. We are bowling too many extra deliveries and need to cut them out otherwise they'll be playing under a new captain," Dhoni said bluntly at the post-match presentation.

RCB'S PATIDAR RULED OUT OF IPL 2023

BANGALORE: Bangalore Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) top-order batter Rajat Patidar was Tuesday ruled out of the entire IPL season due to an Achilles heel injury, dealing a big blow to the team. The 29-year-old was RCB's third-highest scorer last year with 333 runs in eight matches at 55.50, including two fifties. He hit the fastest century by an Indian in IPL in the Qualifier 1. "Unfortunately, Rajat Patidar has been ruled out of IPL2023 due to an Achilles Heel injury," said RCB in a statement. "We wish Rajat a speedy recovery and will continue to support him during the process. The coaches and management have decided not to name a replacement player for Rajat just yet," it added. Initially, it was thought that Patidar, who had picked up the injury prior to joining the RCB camp, would at least be available for the second half of the IPL season, but the announcement Tuesday has added to the team's problems.

WPL LIKELY TO SEE A CHANGE IN FORMAT IN 2024

New Delhi: Buoyed by the success of the inaugural Women's Premier League (WPL), IPL chairman Arun Dhimal Tuesday said that they plan to introduce the home and away format from season two but the number of teams will remain five for the next three years. Dhimal said having home and away games immensely help teams in building a fan base and the board wants to take that route as early as next season. "It has been a great beginning for WPL and going forward it is going to be much better than what we have seen so far. We have started with five teams but going forward there is scope for additional team. We are hoping increase in the number of teams but for the coming three seasons will remain five. We are surely looking at home and away format, we will see which time slot is available considering India's international commitment and take a call."

PLAN TO INTRODUCE HOME AND AWAY FORMAT IN WPL FROM SEASON 2: IPL CHAIRMAN ARUN DHIMAL BY BHARAT SHARMA

Xavi tries to repeat Pep's feat vs Madrid

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madrid, April 4: Xavi is on the verge of leading Barcelona back to the Copa del Rey final and repeating a feat last achieved when Pep Guardiola was in charge more than a decade ago.

Barcelona, the 2021 champion eliminated in the round of 16 last year, can return to the final with just a draw against Real Madrid at the Camp Nou Wednesday but a win would make it four straight triumphs over its rival for the first time since Guardiola won five in a row from 2008-10.

The Catalan club has never defeated Madrid four times in a row in the same season. It beat Madrid four times in 1982-83 but not in consecutive matches.

Barcelona lost 3-1 to Madrid in the first "clasico" of the season in the Spanish league, but since then it won 3-1 in the Spanish Super Cup final, 1-0 in the first leg of the Copa semifinal and 2-1 in the other league match. "I think they are hurt and will be wanting to get revenge after losing the last three games," Xavi said Tuesday. "But they always compete well."

The last time Barcelona had won three in a row was in 2011-12. Madrid won five consecutive against its rival in a period from 2020-22. Guardiola's winning run included a 6-2 rout at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium and a 5-0 triumph at the Camp Nou.

Barcelona's most recent league win against Madrid left the club close to its first league title since 2018-19. It has a comfortable 12-

point lead over Madrid with 11 matches remaining.

After winning the Spanish Super Cup, advancing to the Copa final would give Xavi a chance to lead Barcelona to its second title of the season. It would come after a gloomy period in which it struggled amid a financial crisis that led to the departure of Lionel Messi to PSG.

Carlo Ancelotti is also hoping to keep alive Madrid's chances of winning another trophy in addition to the UEFA Super Cup and FIFA's Club World Cup. Madrid is also alive in the Champions League, where it faces Chelsea in the quarterfinals.

Madrid hasn't won the Copa since 2014, when it beat Barcelona the last time it made it to the final. Barcelona is the competition's most successful club with 31 trophies. Its triumph two years ago marked the team's last title with Messi in the squad.

Barcelona has succeeded in the recent "clasicos" under Xavi with a formation that includes four midfielders and Gavi in a more advanced position. The coach could also opt to use three forwards, with Ansu Fati or Ferran Torres playing up front along with Raphinha and Robert Lewandowski. Franck Kessie, who scored the late winner in the last league "clasico," would drop from the lineup in that scenario.

Xavi still won't be able to count on four important players because of injuries — Ousmane Dembélé, Pedri, Frenkie de Jong and Andreas Christensen. Ancelotti will have all of his regular starters available with the exception of injured left back Ferland Mendy.



Sanjita Chanu slapped with 4-year ban

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 4: Two-time Commonwealth Games champion Indian weightlifter Sanjita Chanu has been handed a four-year ban by the National Anti Doping Agency's (NADA) Disciplinary Panel for failing a dope test last year.

The 29-year-old had tested positive for an anabolic steroid — Drostanolone Metabolite — that features in the World Anti-doping Agency's (WADA) prohibited list. Her dope sample was collected in competition on September 30, 2022 during the National Games in Gujarat last year.

"It is held that the Athlete has violated Article 2.1 & 2.2 of the NADA ADR, 2021, she is hereby sanctioned with an ineligibility of four (04) years as per Article 10.2.1 of the NADA ADR, 2021," the three-member NADA Anti-Doping Disciplinary panel headed by Chaitanya Mahajan said in the order.

Sanjita's ban will commence from November 12, 2022, the date of her provisional suspension. "The period of ineligibility shall commence from the date of provisional suspension i.e. 12.11.2022. It shall be noted that the athlete has failed to satisfy the panel that the ADRV was non-intentional as per Article 10.2.1.1 of the NADA ADR, 2023."

EVERTON, SPURS PLAY OUT DRAW

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Liverpool, April 4: Michael Keane made amends for conceding a penalty by scoring off a long-range thunderbolt in the 90th minute to earn Everton a 1-1 draw with Tottenham in a feisty English Premier League game that saw both teams finish with 10 men.

Some Everton fans jumped over the advertising hoardings to celebrate Keane's dipping strike that took their team out of the relegation zone Monday and stopped Tottenham from jumping to third place in its first match since the departure of manager Antonio Conte.

Harry Kane put Tottenham ahead at Goodison Park, converting a penalty past England teammate Jordan Pickford in the 68th for his 22nd goal of the season.



This is a huge setback for Sanjita, who will be stripped of the National Games silver medal as a result of the positive test.

"As per Article 10.10 of the NADA ADR, 2021, the athlete is hereby disqualified of all of the individual results obtained in the said Event with all Consequences, including forfeiture of all medals, points and prizes since 30-09-2022," the order, dated March 31, read.

Sanjita, who represented herself in the disciplinary panel hear-

ings, could not be reached for her comments. Sanjita had won gold in 48kg ahead of Tokyo Olympics silver medalist Mirabai Chanu at the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. At the 2018 edition of the CWG in Gold Coast, she was crowned champion in the 53kg category.

The Manipuri has the option to appeal against the decision of the disciplinary panel. She can do that by approaching to the appeals panel of the NADA within 21 days from

the date of receipt of the decision.

During the hearing, Sanjita had denied intentionally taking any prohibited substance and submitted that she had taken all due care and caution while consuming food and supplements.

The panel said that "the present case appears to be a case of systematic doping where the prohibited substance was used by the athlete".

"In the absence of any medical evidence that the athlete has consumed such prohibited substance through adulterated food, supplement or medicine, the only reasonable conclusion (is) that the athlete has intentionally consumed the said prohibited substance to enhance strength and power," the panel, which also has former India hockey forward Jagbir Singh and R K Arya as its members, ruled.

It is not the first time that the 2011 Asian Championship bronze medalist finds herself embroiled in a dope controversy. She had been banned by the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) in 2018 after she tested positive for anabolic steroid testosterone prior to the World Championships in the US in November 2017.

In 2020, the world body, however, dropped the doping charge against Sanjita due to "non-conformities" in the handling of her sample.

Nadal, Alcaraz pull out of Monte Carlo Masters

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Monaco, April 4: Rafael Nadal pulled out of the clay-court Monte Carlo Masters Tuesday, saying he is not yet able to compete at the highest level. The 22-time Grand Slam champion has been sidelined with a left hip flexor injury since the Australian Open. The Monte Carlo Masters begins April 8.

"I will not be able to play in one of the most important tournaments of my career, Monte Carlo," Nadal wrote on Twitter. "I am not yet in conditions to play with the maximum guarantees and I continue my preparation process, hoping to be back soon."

Second-ranked Carlos Alcaraz also withdrew from the event because of "physical discomfort" after his semifinal loss in Florida



last week. Alcaraz had been so dominant recently, he hadn't lost a set since February before that defeat.

"I have post-traumatic arthritis in my left hand and muscular discomfort in the spine that needs rest to prepare for everything that is to come," the 19-year-old from Spain said. Nadal has won the tournament a record 11 times, including an Open Era record streak of eight consecutive titles from 2005-12. The 36-year-old Spaniard generally uses the event as a key part of his preparations for the French Open, which takes place May 28-June 11.

Nadal has won 14 of his major titles on clay at Roland Garros, including last year while dealing with chronic pain in his left foot. In January, Nadal hurt his hip flexor during a second-round loss at the Australian Open.