



## TABU'S REVELATION

Actor Tabu shares about the most difficult role of her acting career and the reason thereof

LEISURE P2



## MILITARY DRILLS

China begins drills around Taiwan in anger at President Tsai Ing-wen's meeting with the speaker of the US House of Representatives

INTERNATIONAL P10



## TITANS TAKE ON KKR

Gujarat Titans look for a hat-trick of wins when they take the field against KKR in IPL today

SPORTS P12

## SHORT TAKES

### Rijiju's car meets with mishap in Jammu

**Banihal/Jammu:** Law Minister Kiren Rijiju's car grazed a truck on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway in Ramban district Saturday evening, officials said. However, he was not hurt in the accident. The truck had suffered a breakdown and the minister's car grazed it before coming to a halt, they said. The accident took place near Sita Ram Passi in the Maroo area around 6pm when he was on his way to Srinagar after attending two functions in Jammu and Udhampur, the officials said.

### Ukraine minister's 1st India visit today

**New Delhi:** Ukraine's First Deputy Foreign Minister Emine Dzhaparova will pay a four-day visit to India from Sunday, the first official visit from the East European country since the Russian invasion began last year. Dzhaparova will hold talks with Sanjay Verma, Secretary (West) in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). It is expected that the Ukrainian deputy foreign minister may extend an invitation for Prime Minister Narendra Modi to visit Ukraine.



**CRUISING EXPERIENCE:** President Droupadi Murmu took a historic sortie in a Sukhoi-30 MKI fighter aircraft at Tezpur Air Force Station in Assam PTI PHOTO

## Prez takes maiden sortie in Sukhoi-30

Murmu becomes the third President after APJ Abdul Kalam and Pratibha Patil to take a sortie in a fighter aircraft

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Tezpur (Assam), April 8:** President Droupadi Murmu Saturday took her maiden sortie in a Sukhoi-30 MKI fighter aircraft at Tezpur air base in Assam.

Group Captain Naveen Kumar Tiwari flew her in the fighter aircraft that took off from the Indian Air Force base.

"Achcha laga (felt good)," Murmu told reporters after completing her 25-minute sortie.

Murmu reached Tezpur from Guwahati. She was received at the air base by Air Marshal SP Dharkar, Governor Gulab Chand Kataria and Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

After landing at Tezpur, Murmu received a guard of honour by IAF personnel, followed by an official briefing on her flight aboard the Sukhoi aircraft. She then reached the hangar wearing the flying suit, and waved

to the waiting journalists before climbing the ladder. After sitting in the cockpit, a woman officer helped her put on the helmet and complete other technicalities. She waved from the cockpit just seconds before the aircraft canopy was shut. Alighting from the aircraft after the 25-minute sortie, she again posed with the group captain and waved to the waiting journalists.

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### 5-yr-old girl mauled to death by dogs

**Baikunthpur (Chhattisgarh):** A five-and-a-half-year-old girl was mauled to death by stray dogs in Chhattisgarh's Koriya district, police said Saturday. The incident took place at Talwapara village adjoining Baikunthpur town Friday when Sukanti Majhi, the girl, had gone to a shop to buy snacks, a police official said. After she was attacked by dogs, she was taken to the district hospital where doctors declared her brought dead, he said. The girl's father Ajay Majhi works at a brick kiln in the village.

### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



The govt has decided to rename the department

### WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	37.5°C	37.2°C
TEMP MIN	25.0°C	25.0°C
Humidity	85%	56%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Clear sky mainly	

## Tiger not burning bright in Odisha

India's first-ever interstate translocation of tigers failed as male tiger Mahavir was killed by poachers and tigress Sundari was returned to Madhya Pradesh

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 8:** Despite excellent habitat and vast forests for tigers to live and flourish, the state has witnessed nearly 40 per cent decline in the big cat population between 2006 and 2018, largely due to failure of Forest department officials in curbing rampant poaching and lack of community involvement in protection of the striped animals, said sources.

Odisha has two tiger reserves - Similipal located in Mayurbhanj district and Satkosia in Angul district. Apart from the two tiger reserves, Bargarh Forest Division, Keonjhar Wildlife Division, Kuldiha Wildlife Sanctuary, Rourkela Forest Division, Sunabeda Wildlife Sanctuary and Sundargarh Forest Division had also reported presence of big cats in the past.

According to reports of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), the number of tigers in India has increased from 1,441 in 2006 to 2,967 in 2018, the last census conducted.

There were 45 big cats in Odisha in 2006, which went down to 32 in 2010. When the NTCA conducted another census in 2014, it found only 28 tigers in the state, which re-

### FIGURES SAY IT ALL

► As many as 192 tigers were estimated in the state during 2004, which plunged to 40 in 2016

► From 2004 to 2016, the number of male tigers decreased from 57 to 13, while the female tiger count slashed to 24 from 75

► NTCA census in 2014 found only 28 tigers in the state, which remained constant in the last census conducted in 2018



maintained constant in the last census conducted in 2018. So, the eastern state has witnessed a fall of nearly 40 per cent in the tiger population during 12 years.

However, the Odisha government had raised a dispute on the 2016 NTCA report, raising questions on its census methodology.

If one goes by the census conducted by the state government, as many as 192 tigers were estimated in the state during the year 2004, which plunged to 40 in 2016.

From 2004 to 2016, the number of male tigers decreased from 57 to 13, while the female tiger count slashed to 24 from 75. There were 60 tiger cubs found

in the state during 2004. Surprisingly, only three tiger cubs were found during the estimation conducted by the state government in 2016. This shows the failure of the state government to protect the big cats.

In an effort to raise the tiger population, the Odisha government, with support of NTCA and Madhya Pradesh government, had decided for translocation of three-pairs of tigers to the state.

Thus, India's first inter-state translocation project was launched in 2018. Under the project, a pair of tigers (Mahavir and Sundari) was translocated to Odisha from Madhya Pradesh.

Contd...P4

## Gymnastics HPC in City soon

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 8:** The state government Saturday entered into a partnership with Arcelor Mittal Nippon Steel India to set up a high performance centre (HPC) in gymnastics in Bhubaneswar to promote and develop the sport of gymnastics in the state.

Odisha Sports & Youth Services Secretary Vineel Krishna and deputy director (HR & Admin), AM/NS India, Keiji Kubota signed the memorandum of understanding (MoU) in the presence of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik in Kyoto city of Japan.

As part of this agreement, academies will also be set up in Puri, Jeypure in Koraput district and Rourkela in Sundargarh district.

The HPC is aimed at promoting and developing sport of gymnastics in the state. As per provisions of the MoU, the Odisha govern-

**As part of an agreement with Arcelor Mittal Nippon Steel India, academies will be set up in Puri, Jeypure and Rourkela to create a vibrant gymnastics ecosystem in state**

ment will create and maintain the infrastructure for the HPC and academies while AM/NS India will operate and manage these centres and train gymnasts, in particular women gymnasts, and provide coaching development and certification, and judge certification.

"The Government of Odisha is dedicated to the development of sports in the state. Gymnastics as an Olympic sport is evolving and has always had mass appeal. Odisha has a pool of talent who under expert guidance and a holistic support system can be nurtured to become

international gymnasts over the next five years," Patnaik said while expressing happiness over the MoU. He said the partnership will go a long way in creating a vibrant gymnastics ecosystem in the country and help us identify and develop young talent for the future.

Odisha's earlier collaboration with AM/NS India during the Ultimate Kho Kho League proved very fruitful with team Odisha Juggernauts emerging champions. The company's efforts in promoting hockey were also commendable. The government recognises the importance of public-private partnerships in encouraging sports development, the CM said.

"We value AM/NS India's continued support in this endeavour with Odisha state emerging as a hub for promoting sports culture in India," he said.

More P3

## Lightning kills 4 in state

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Baripada/Soro, April 8:** Altogether four people were killed and five others rendered critical when lightning struck them in Mayurbhanj and Balasore districts Saturday, police said.

The deceased were identified as Subhasini Das, 70, and a pregnant woman Hemalata Ho, 25 of Ankura village, and Jibati Naik, 30, of Sarojpasi village in Mayurbhanj district, and Baidyanath Rout, 25, of Mitrapurpatana under Nilagiri police limits in Balasore. In the first incident, some women

had gathered at a cremation ground in Ankura under ward no-15 of Karanjia notified area council (NAC) in Mayurbhanj district, Saturday, to attend the last rites of Mukta Munda, 70, who died in the morning, when the tragedy struck, said Suchendu Mahalik, inspector in-charge of Karanjia police station. Lightning struck a shanty where they had sheltered during rain, the police said. Villagers rushed them to Karanjia sub-divisional hospital where the three women were declared dead.

The five injured persons are being treated. Contd...P4

## LOAN FRAUD CBI chargesheets Kochhars, Dhoot

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, April 8:** The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has filed a charge-sheet against former ICICI Bank MD and chairperson Chanda Kochhar, her husband Deepak Kochhar and Videocon Group Chairman Venugopal Nandlal Dhoot in connection with the ICICI-Videocon loan case.

The case was first registered January 22, 2019 against Videocon International Electronics Limited Videocon Industries Limited, VN Dhoot, Chanda Kochhar, Deepak Virendra Kochhar, NuPower Renewables Limited, Supreme Energy Private Limited and Unknown public servants U/S 120-B read with 420 IPC and Section 7 read with section 13(2) read with 13(1)(d) of the PC Act.

"During investigation it was found that in furtherance of criminal conspiracy with other accused persons, Chanda Kochhar sanctioned various loans to Videocon Group despite having business dealings with Dhoot. That investigation revealed that September 8, 2009, an amount of ₹64 crore was transferred out of a disbursed amount of ₹233.45 crore, sanctioned to Videocon International Electronic Limited by a committee headed by Chanda Kochhar, to the company's account of her husband. Thus Chanda Kochhar has committed criminal breach of trust punishable under Section 409 of IPC, by sanctioning ₹100 crore and later on converted the funds of ₹64 crore for her own use," the CBI has alleged.

## Clean sweep of northeast still a far cry for BJP

THE RECENTLY CONCLUDED POLLS DO NOT HAVE MUCH TO OFFER THE PARTY OVER WHAT IT ALREADY HAD THERE

KULDEEP SINGH, OP

**New Delhi, April 8:** On the foundation day of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) April 6, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had asked the party cadres to not be a victim of over-confidence. In the wake of recently concluded polls in three states of northeast, the Prime Minister's statement had a significant message to party workers.

As the election results for the three states - Meghalaya, Tripura and Nagaland - were announced March 2, the internet was flooded with remarks such as 'a clean sweep for the BJP in the polls'. The saffron party celebrated the victory and later formed governments in three



■ **Apart from Assam, in the seven northeast states - Sikkim, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram, Meghalaya and Manipur - the BJP has 37.7 per cent of total legislative seats**

■ **The BJP lost four seats in Tripura and the numbers remained the same in Nagaland and Meghalaya**

northeast states, with or without alliance.

While the BJP has been successful in spreading its footprints in the northeast, a clean sweep of

the region is still a way ahead for the saffron party if numbers are taken into account.

Apart from Assam, in the seven northeast states - Sikkim, Tripura,

Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram, Meghalaya and Manipur - the BJP has 37.7 per cent of total legislative seats in its bucket. Out of the 371 Assembly constituencies in the region, the BJP has 140

seats in its tally.

Well, it can be a matter of pride for the BJP and its followers, in contrast to its presence in the region a decade ago when it was merely a marginal force. But the recently concluded elections didn't have much to offer the party over what it already had there.

The BJP lost four seats in Tripura and the numbers remained the same in Nagaland and Meghalaya. The results, in fact, were a cause of concern for the saffron brigade as the party's vote share plummeted in Tripura and Meghalaya.

While the BJP succeeded in its endeavour to gain a majority and form government in Tripura, its tally plummeted by four seats in the

2023 polls. From 36 seats out of 60 in 2018, the BJP went down to 32 seats in 2023. The party's vote share declined by around 5 per cent.

In Meghalaya, the tally remained the same as it was in 2018. The BJP won two seats in 2023, though it had contested all 60 seats. Its vote share recorded a mild drop. It, however, become indispensable in formation of government as the outcome was a hung Assembly. The BJP extended support to National People's Party (NPP), which won 26 seats in the polls, led by CM Conrad K Sangma. Significantly, the BJP had dumped the NPP before elections and had decided to go solo in the elections.

Contd...P4

# leisure



## DUCHESS MEGHAN IGNORED QUEEN ELIZABETH'S ADVICE

Duchess Meghan reportedly ignored advice from Queen Elizabeth to seek counsel from Sophie, Duchess of Edinburgh before the royal wedding. The queen was also said to be 'mystified' by Harry and Meghan's criticisms of the Royal Family, according to Robert Jobson's new book *Our King: Charles III – The Man And The Monarch Revealed*.

## HEATHER GRAHAM DOESN'T REGRET NOT HAVING KIDS

American actress Heather Graham doesn't feel she has missed out by not having kids and says it has given her more time to devote to her career. She's happy with the way her life has turned out, claims the 53-year-old.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
The ruling emotion today will be passion. You will feel like chatting with your beloved the whole day. However, you will incur expenses and Ganesh advises you to remain balanced. But if you have decided already to go the whole hog, make fully sure you are in the right trappings.

**TAURUS**  
The fates smile on you this day, assures Ganesh. You have a great chance of going for a new car, may be an SUV and go for a long spin. If that, for some reason doesn't materialize, you are sure to board a luxury bus and take a tour. Financial gains are strongly indicated.

**GEMINI**  
You will break free of your routine work today and spend the day having fun with your family and friends. Plans for dinner or for a picnic with your loved ones are strongly indicated, and should see you filled with enthusiasm. Waiting for a couple of days before proposing to that special someone should net you a favourable response, says Ganesh.

**CANCER**  
Some days require you to slow down, and assess your relationships. Today may be one of such, says Ganesh. You will earnestly wish to spend time with your spouse or an intimate relation to discuss certain key issues. This need will be magnified with the ardent affection you receive from your loved one.

**LEO**  
You will interact with many people today. Your friend circle could expand. Businessmen will make new contacts. The later half of the day will see you experience uneasiness and stress, however the source of this will likely fade away in a short while. Hence there is no need to worry, says Ganesh.

**VIRGO**  
The only thing you have to do is begin what you want to do; don't bother about results, they will come automatically. Ganesh says monetary dealings will be beneficial, but warns that things may not turn out to be as stimulating as you would have wished. Ganesh therefore advises you not to expect too much, just flow with the tide.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesh says that today you should not only look after your outward appearance but also your inner self. You shall be in demand in the office or at social gatherings. Today you will be spending money on entertainment. You will also be getting some form of good news from relatives or friends abroad which will make you happy

**SCORPIO**  
The day begins with challenges at work, predicts Ganesh. But, don't worry as you have all the zest to tackle your career front. Evenings will be full of social exchanges and attending parties and dinner with friends is on the cards.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Good and bad; highs and lows is what the day has to offer you. According to Ganesh, you may come across unexpected monetary gains, but you plan to spend the extra income on renovating your home. All in all, a tedious day at home as well as office.

**CAPRICORN**  
You are in for a windfall, predicts Ganesh. Patience is the key for you. Your patience and composure will enable you to put yourself in others' shoes and understand their problems. If you're a student or planning to enrol yourself for a course, Ganesh ensures tremendous growth for you in that direction.

**AQUARIUS**  
You'll go on a cleanliness drive, today! Cleaning up the mess will bring clarity to your mind and you will have an idea about what needs to be done at the earliest and what can be put on the back burner. With the wit and intelligence you possess, you will be able to solve problems in minutes, foresees Ganesh.

**PISCES**  
You will be successful in defeating your enemies and seeing your capabilities some people might try to involve you in illegal activities. Ganesh advises you to be cautious of these people.



## Kiara slays in red ensemble

**Mumbai:** Actress Kiara Advani always manages to steal attention with her fashionable avatar.

At a recent event in Mumbai, Kiara made heads turn in a red ensemble. Dressed in a ravishing red metallic cutout dress from the clothing label Aadnevik, Kiara looked stylish. The outfit featured an asymmetrical waist with a thigh-high slit. She accentuated her look with bronze makeup and nude lipstick. She kept her hair tied into a neat high bun.

Fans loved Kiara's red spicy look. Reacting to her look, a social media user commented, "Stunning."

"Uff...so hot," another wrote. Speaking of Kiara's work projects, she is currently shooting with Kartik Aaryan in *SatyaPrem Ki Katha*.

Helmed by Sameer Vidhwans, and produced by Sajid Nadiadwala, the film is all set to hit the theatres June 29, 2023. In the film, Kartik will be seen romancing Kiara Advani. The film marks the actor's second collaboration after the blockbuster *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2*, which was released in 2022. The film sparked controversy due to its earlier title *Satyanarayan Ki Katha*, which translates to the story of Satyanarayan, which is another name for the Hindu god Vishnu.

AGENCIES



## Tabu's most challenging role till date

**Mumbai:** Since a few years Tabu has been making waves with her on-screen performances. From *Drishyam*, *Kutty to Bholaa* the actress has won praises for the way she pursued her roles in her films. It might look as if it all

comes naturally to her. But the *Chandini Bar* actress says it takes blood and sweat to perform these characters.

Asked which was the role that was difficult to crack, she picks her double role from *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2*. Talking about what made it difficult to pull off her character from Aneez Bazmee's film, she says, "It was quite a challenge. I think I played some 10 characters in one film (laughs).

"What made it challenging was the fact that firstly it was a dual role (Manjulika and Anjulika). Then I had to play the young version and the present-day version of the characters. Then I had to play the bhoot (possessed part) and the normal part. Then there was a bhoot who is not the bhoot and then the actual bhoot and so on...", Tabu further says. AGENCIES

## Tina shares difficult days as an actor

**Mumbai:** Actress Tina Datta, who is gearing up for her upcoming new television show *Hum Rahe Na Rahe Hum*, has opened up about facing differences in her initial days as an actor.

Going by the theme of the show aam aur khas (common and special), IANS asked Tina, who gained the spotlight with her impeccable performance in the 2009 show *Uttaran*, if she has ever faced any such differences.

Tina said: "Yes, as an actor in the initial stages of my life 'aam aur khas'... A newcomer compared with a senior actor, who has already been a part of the industry. Those differences I have faced. I have seen

those hurdles and have gone through all of that."

Her upcoming show, *Hum Rahe Na Rahe Hum* is a remake of the popular Turkish drama *Istanbulu Gelin* (Bride of Istanbul) that will air on Sony Entertainment Television from April 10.

*Hum Rahe Na Rahe Hum* focuses on the human nature to resist change as it tends to create fear and the usual reactions to it are to either fight, or flight. It also stars Jay Bhanushali and Kitu Gidwani.

IANS



## Salman turns 'Brother Teresa'

**Mumbai:** Salman Khan's picture from the gym has gone viral on social media and the comments are hilarious.

In the image, Salman is seen flaunting his quads dressed in black shorts, fitted T-shirt and a white coloured hand towel on his head.

He captioned the image: "21st APRIL #KBKJ"

However, fans could not stop commenting on his picture, where they re-imagined several versions of the same picture.

A fan commented: "Who Said Brother Teresa."

"Bhai is Teresa noww," said another. "Salman Teresa Khan," a user wrote. One said: "Bhai 57 hogaye lekin but aaj bhi 30 se ziyada ke nhi lagte."

A meme page even drew parallel between Salman's *Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan* to the Nun from the *Conjuring* universe. As they called it: "Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Nun."

IANS

### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

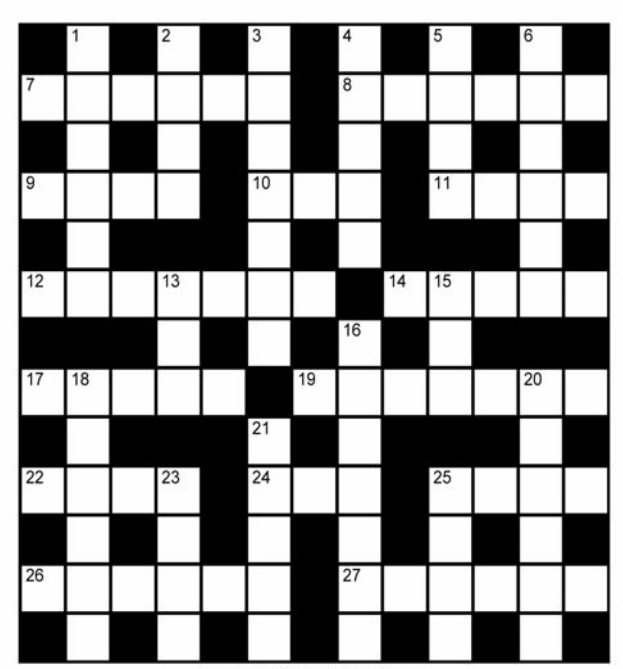


### BREVITY



### FUN post

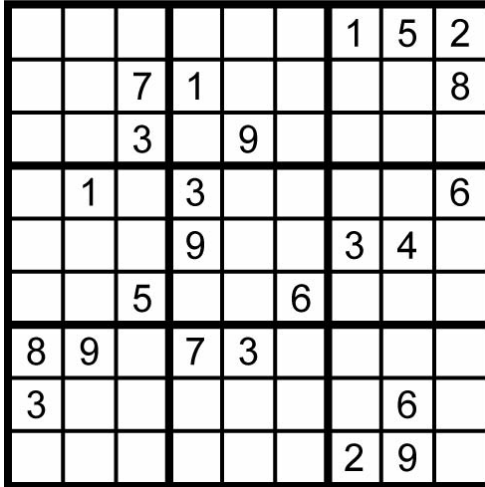
### CROSSWORD



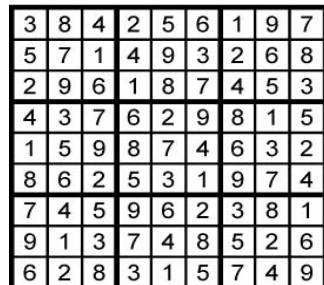
- Across**
- 7 Feeble
  - 8 Prompt the grey cells
  - 9 Bubble over
  - 10 Sty resident
  - 11 Pace
  - 12 Engraving
  - 14 Far and wide
  - 17 Bellyache
  - 19 Fin
  - 22 Border
  - 24 Drunkard
  - 25 Repeat
  - 26 On fire
  - 27 Songbird
  - Down**
  - 1 Open up
  - 2 Window part
  - 3 Comical
  - 4 Move about in predatory manner
  - 5 Self-satisfied
  - 6 Heart condition
  - 13 Jump up and down
  - 15 \_\_\_ music
  - 16 Army unit
  - 18 Snub
  - 20 Breathe out
  - 21 Theatre employee
  - 23 Lacerate
  - 25 Wickedness

### SUDOKU

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



### SOLUTIONS



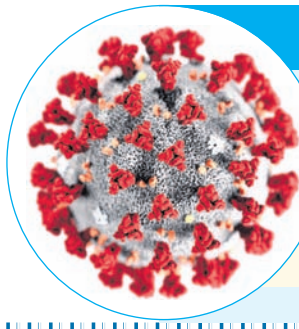
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown



## COOLING OFF

Pigeons play with water in Bhubaneswar, Saturday, as daytime temperature soars



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	68,49,06,699	65,76,35,742	68,37,598
India	4,47,45,104	4,47,45,104	5,30,943
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204



Supreme Court justice BR Gavai felicitates former Orissa High Court judge and Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra during the celebration of the 75th year of the HC at JN Indoor Stadium in Cuttack, Saturday, as HC Chief Justice S Muralidhar looks on

# Naveen promotes state's Buddhist sites in Japan

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, April 8:** Projecting Odisha's Buddhist heritage sites as international tourist destinations, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik called upon the Japanese tour operators to collaborate with the state, according to an official statement Saturday.

A large number of people in Japan are Buddhists.

**Representatives of the tourism and hospitality sector in Japan expressed interest in exploring the possibilities of collaboration with Odisha**



Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Industries Secretary Hemant Sharma and 5T Secretary VK Pandian during the meeting at Kyoto in Japan, Saturday

Patnaik, while attending a meeting at Kyoto in Japan, highlighted the immense potential of Odisha as a tourist destination, with a particular emphasis on the state's Buddhist heritage sites in Dhauli, Lalitgiri, Ratnagiri and Udayagiri.

During the discussion, he also spoke about the various initiatives undertaken by the Odisha government to promote tourism and improve tourism infrastructure in the state. The representatives of the tourism and hospitality sector in Japan expressed interest in exploring the possibilities of collaboration with Odisha, given the state's unique cultural heritage and natural beauty, the statement said.

Odisha Industries Secretary Hemant Sharma made a detailed presentation on the tourism sector in Odisha. Patnaik is on a tour of Japan to seek investment.

## 3 'Odisha AM/NS Gymnastics Academies' soon

The Odisha AM/NS Gymnastics High Performance Centre will be a facility housed in Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar for senior athletes participating in 'Elite Senior Gymnastics Programme' while the three 'Odisha AM/NS Gymnastics Academies' will be located in Puri, Jeypore, and Rourkela for grassroots level athletes, an official said.

The HPC and academies will focus on creating a robust scouting framework, develop talent from Odisha to compete at National and International levels with competent coaching teams, quality equipment and sports science support.

It will develop a gymnastics ecosystem with long term suste-

nance, with coach development and certification, judge certification and with a special focus on female gymnasts. The athletes will receive international and national exposure in addition to academic support. The programme will help develop the sport in India and build a strong foundation of skilled coaches, trainers, and support staff, the official said.

Odisha has already set up gymnastics centre in Puri and Bhubaneswar and an additional centre in Rourkela will be operational soon.

Gymnasts who have represented Odisha at national and international level have commenced their training at these centres.

# NHRC seeks detailed info from Chief Secy

POST NEWS NETWORK

## SUNDARGARH DISPLACEMENT

**Bhubaneswar, April 8:** The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has asked the Chief Secretary and Sundargarh Collector and district magistrate (DM) to submit a detailed report on alleged denial of right to exercise franchise and resettlement with basic amenities to the families displaced mainly due to Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP), Mandira dam, Rukuda dam and railway projects in the tribal-dominated district.

While hearing a plea filed by

rights activist Radhakanta Tripathy, the NHRC told the Collector to submit the detailed report within four weeks.

Tripathy had informed the NHRC that the families, who have been displaced by the development projects like RSP, were denied of basic necessities. Though he has highlighted the issue on numerous occasions, the state government has turned a blind eye to it, the rights activist said.

Taking cognizance, the commission asked the Sundargarh

Collector to probe the allegations and submit a report in this connection.

In his report to the NHRC, the Collector claimed that the displaced families were paid monetary compensation as per the prevalent market rate at the time of disbursement. "Around 942 families who were displaced for RSP have been provided with resettlement and rehabilitation benefits," the Collector told the rights body.

The petitioner, however, raised objections to the Collector's report, saying that the compensa-

tion awarding process is yet to over. "Although the affected families were given a designated place of worship, they are yet to exercise their right to franchise," Tripathy said, adding that over 32 villages are neither included in NAC nor in gram panchayat.

"Apathy, inaction, negligence, corruption, denial and deprivation of bare necessities of life and basic amenities to the tribals displaced as mentioned violates right to life and right to be rehabilitated and resettled with fair compensation, with bare necessities of life and basic amenities," Tripathy alleged.

## Nayagarh admin to celebrate World Chhena Poda Diwas

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, April 8:** The birth anniversary of late Sudarsan Sahu, who first prepared the sweet delicacy Chhena Poda, will be celebrated in all government offices of Nayagarh district as World Chhena Poda Diwas April 11.

'Chhena Poda' is a sweet delicacy prepared with paneer and sugar as the main ingredients and is available across the state. The Nayagarh administration has already applied for a GI tag for the Chhena Poda. All government offices in the district will celebrate the day on the birth anniversary of Sudarsan Sahu by cutting Chhena Poda at 11am in the presence of the officials and public, a letter issued by Nayagarh district Collector RN Sahu said.

# '10 regional parties received ₹852 crore in electoral bonds'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 8:** Ten regional parties, including the DMK, BJD, YSR Congress, JDU and the AAP, have declared receiving Rs 852.88 crore donations through electoral bonds in 2021-22, according to an NGO working for electoral reforms.

The total income of 36 regional parties for the financial year was Rs 1,213 crore, the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) said in a report, citing official data.

The report analysed the total income and expenditure incurred by 36 out of 54 regional parties during 2021-22, as declared by these parties in their audit reports submitted to the Election Commission on India.

"Ten regional parties -- DMK, BJD,

THE BIJU JANATA DAL, WHICH GOVERNS ODISHA, REPORTED THE HIGHEST INCREASE IN ITS INCOME OF ₹233.941 CRORE

TRS, YSR-Congress, JDU, SP, AAP, SAD, MGP and TDP -- have declared receiving donations through electoral bonds worth Rs 852.88 crore...For 2021-22," it said.

The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), which is currently in power in Tamil Nadu, reported having the highest income among the parties at Rs 318 crore, which forms 26.27 per cent of the total income of all the parties analysed, followed by the BJD with an income of Rs 307 crore and the TRS Rs 218 crore, according to the report.

The Biju Janata Dal (BJD), which governs Odisha, reported the highest increase in its income of Rs 233.941 crore, followed by TRS and DMK which declared a total increase of Rs 180.454 crore and Rs 168.795 crore respectively, it stated.

# Rare earth elements discovered in AP

Rare earth elements are key components in many electronic devices like cellphones and various industrial applications, including medical technology, clean energy, aerospace, automotive and defence



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Hyderabad, April 8:** Scientists at CSIR-National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI) in Hyderabad have found the presence of light rare earth elements (REE), key components in many electronic devices and various industrial applications, including medical technology, aerospace and defence, in Ananthapur district of Andhra Pradesh.

The Light Rare Earth Element minerals include Lanthanum, Cerium, Praseodymium, Neodymium, Yttrium, Hafnium, Tantalum, Niobium, Zirconium, and Scandium.

"We found strong anomalous (enriched) Light Rare Earth Elements (La, Ce, Pr, Nd, Y, Nb and Ta) in whole rock analyses, confirming the minerals host-

**We found strong anomalous (enriched) Light Rare Earth Elements (La, Ce, Pr, Nd, Y, Nb and Ta) in whole rock analyses, confirming the minerals hosting these REE**

PV SUNDER RAJU | SENIOR PRINCIPAL SCIENTIST IN NGRI

ing these REE," senior principal scientist in NGRI Dr P V Sunder Raju told PTI. REEs are 15 elements referred to as the lanthanide and Actinide series in the periodic table of elements, together with scandium and yttrium.

REEs are key components in many electronic devices we use daily (like cell phones) and various industrial applications, including medical technology,

clean energy, aerospace, automotive and defence.

He said manufacturing permanent magnets is the largest and most important end use for REEs.

Permanent magnets are essential to modern electronics used in cell phones, televisions, computers, automobiles, wind turbines, jet aircraft and many other products.

Because of their luminescent and catalytic properties, REEs are widely used in high technology and "green" products.

"To reach net zero, Europe will require up to 26 times the amount of rare earth metals in 2050 compared to present demand. Demand is also increasing because of digitalisation," he said.

The discovery of the REEs was part of a study funded by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR-India) under a project called SHORE (Shallow subsurface imaging Of India for Resource Exploration).

Sunder Raju said the scientists had a multi-disciplinary approach to the SHORE project.

"Under this project umbrella, our focused objective was 'Detailed understanding of RM (Rare Metals)-REE metallogeny, assessment of resources and identifying economically potential sites, especially from the carbonatite-syenite complexes of Andhra Pradesh,'" he said.

Following the discovery of the REEs, deep drilling for more than at least one km will ascertain the consistency of REE presence in depth, he added.



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**BOOK RELEASE:** *Jayanta Mahapatra-A Journey*, a photographic biography of eminent Indian English poet Jayanta Mahapatra (3rd from left), was released at the Press Club of Odisha, Bhubaneswar, Saturday. Veteran English poet Rabintra K Swain, poet Jyoti Swain and publisher Ashwani Kumar are also seen in the frame. The book is published by Ketaki Foundation. Mahapatra is the first Indian poet to win a Sahitya Akademi award for English poetry. OP PHOTO

# OMC breaks record in iron ore mining & sales

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 8:** Odisha Mining Corporation (OMC), one of the largest mining companies in India, breaking its record from the previous year, has produced 29.7 million tonnes (MT) of iron ore in the last financial year (2022-23), a 17 per cent year-on-year growth over the last FY's (2021-22) 25.31 million tonnes.

In the last FY, OMC recorded total ore production of 33.76 million tonnes, with 29.68 MT iron ore, 3 MT bauxite and 1.08 MT of chrome ore, registering 14.9 per cent total growth compared to the previous FY 2021-22.

Similarly, OMC's sales of total ores stood at 28.6 million tonnes, with a 3.1 per cent year-on-year growth over FY 2021-22. In the last fiscal (FY 2022-23), the iron ores sale was 23.8 million tonnes whereas sales of bauxite and chrome ores



were 3.61 and 1.16 million tonnes respectively. In 2022-23, OMC's 80,328 meter of drilling surpassed its previous highest drilling meterage achieved in FY 22.

OMC presently has 18 operating mines in the state. The major minerals mined by the company are chrome, iron and bauxite ore which cater to the requirement of mineral based industries such as steel, sponge iron, pig iron, aluminium,

ferro-manganese and ferro-chrome. The Daitari and Kodingamali mines of the company have received the prestigious IBM 5 star rating in the last financial year for fostering sustainable mining practices that lay emphasis on scientific and systematic mining, community welfare programmes, progressive mine planning and adoption of international standards.

# Rain with lightning likely in 11 districts

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 8:** The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a yellow warning with a forecast of light to moderate rain with thunderstorm, lightning and gusty winds for 11 districts during the next 24 hours.

According to the IMD report, Sunday morning, light to moderate rain or thunderstorm is very likely at a few places over the districts of Bargarh, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, Sundargarh, Deogarh, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Balasore and at one or two places over the rest of the districts.

Similarly, thunderstorm with lightning and gusty surface wind speed reaching 30-40 kmph is likely at one or two places over Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Deogarh,

Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, and Angul. Thunderstorm with lightning are also likely at one or two places over the districts of Dhenkanal, Jajpur, Sambalpur, Bargarh, Bhadrak, Kandhamal, Koraput, Rayagada, Gajapati, Cuttack and Nayagarh.

For the rest of Sunday, the weather agency predicts light to moderate rain or thunderstorm at a few places in Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj and at one or two places over the rest of the districts of the state.

Similarly, yellow warning for likely thunderstorm with lightning has been issued at one or two places over the districts of Balasore, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Sundargarh, Sambalpur, Deogarh, Jharsuguda, Angul, Dhenkanal, Malkangiri,

Koraput and Rayagada. IMD forecasts likely light to moderate thunderstorm and rain at one or two places over Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Coastal Odisha, Dhenkanal, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Rayagada, Koraput, Malkangiri, Nabarangpur for rest of Monday and dry weather to prevail over the rest of the districts.

Likewise yellow warning has been issued for thunderstorm and lightning at one or two places over Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Rayagada, Malkangiri, Gajapati, Nawarangpur, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Koraput for the rest of Monday. Odisha will not witness any major change in day temperatures over the next four days. However, temperature will rise thereafter by 2 to 3 degrees, the IMD further stated.

## CIPET students clean premises; plant trees



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 8:** In an effort to reflect India's G20 Presidency and to speed up the on-going programme titled "People's Participation", Central Institute of Petrochemicals Engineering & Technology: Institute of Petrochemicals Technology (CIPET: IPT) Bhubaneswar, Saturday, organised a cleanliness drive and tree plantation programme. The cleaning programme was held on the premises of the institution in the presence of all the students, faculty and staff of the institution.

Later, trees were planted in the garden. On the occasion, the Principal of the institute, Pratap Chandra Padhi, made the students aware about G20 Presidency and gave information about the programme to be held in the coming days.

## PNB employees hold farewell meeting

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 8:** The Bhubaneswar Chapter of All India Punjab National Bank Officers' Association (AIPNBOA) convened a meeting under the chairmanship of the association president Rabi Narayan Mahali here Friday to express its gratitude and to show solidarity with all its members superannuated till March this year. Besides, the Circle Head of Bhubaneswar, Chittaranjan Prusty & the Circle Head of Cuttack Jitendra Swain were given farewell on their promotion and placement of Odisha Zone.

Odisha Zone general manager Uday Bhaskar Reddy joined the



programme. All senior officials of zonal office and all three advisors of association, Pramod Kumar Mekap, Sarat Kumar Mishra & Arabinda Satapathy, also attended the meeting. The members of Executive Committee led by Bailochan Sahoo, Circle Secretary & AGS of Odisha were present.

The leaders of association re-

counted memories and contributions of all outgoing & superannuated members. They were presented with a memento each by the dignitaries as a mark of gratitude. The Association wished them all the best and assured them co-operation always. The meeting ended with a lunch in the honour of all outgoing members.

## CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By an affidavit before the Executive Magistrate, Boudh, I, Bimalendu Satapathy, R/o. Vill./P.O. Laxmiprasad, Dist. Boudh declared that the birth certificate of my daughter Kritika Katayanees Satapathy vide Regd. No. 192/2012/13. In which the name of my daughter has not been mentioned. But in name column only "Baby of Bimalendu Satapathy" has been mentioned. Subsequently after giving the name of my daughter as Kritika Katayanees Satapathy, the Bausuni CHC issued a new birth certificate vide Regd. No. 31/2018 dated 27.03.2018.

I, Anila Kumar Patnaik, S/o late Kanhu Charan Patnaik, presently residing at Qr. No. 1a-693, hal Township, Post.: Sunabeda-2, p.s.-Sunabeda, Dist.: Koraput (Odisha) do hereby declare that by virtue of affidavit dt.07.4.2023 before the Notary, Sunabeda, I have changed my name from Anila Kumar Patnaik to Anil Kumar Patnaik. Hence in future I will be known as Anil Kumar Patnaik in all official and other purposes.

## Continued from P1

### Lightning kills 4 in state

The critically injured were identified as Jubati Naik, Malati Naik, Sonali Baske, Bhuban Ho and a 1.5 year old child Tejeshwari Naik.

On being informed, state Women and Child Development and Mission Shakti Minister Basanti Hembram, who was at her Ankura residence, rushed to the spot and made arrangements to send the injured to the hospital. In the second incident, Rout was supervising the road work near Tinapola under Gopinathpur panchayat in Soro block of Balasore when lightning struck him in the noon.

who was at her Ankura residence, rushed to the spot and made arrangements to send the injured to the hospital.

In the second incident, Rout was supervising the road work near Tinapola under Gopinathpur panchayat in Soro block of Balasore when lightning struck him in the noon.

### Tiger not burning bright in Odisha

Officials brought Mahavir from Kanha Tiger Reserve and Sundari from Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve in June 2018 and released them into Satkosia Tiger Reserve (STR).

The forest department was hopeful that the tigers may mate. But Mahavir was found dead in STR only five months later.

The tiger died due to metal snares laid by poachers that caused deep wounds on its neck. The NCTA investigation found that Mahavir had been killed by poachers. Sundari, after roaming in the wild of Satkosia, attacked local villagers from the periphery villages. She killed two people which triggered protests and resentment from the locals. Later, she was again returned to her origin in Madhya Pradesh. With these, the first ever interstate translocation of tigers failed. Odisha has excellent habitat and vast forests for tigers to live and flourish.

### Clean sweep of northeast still a far cry for BJP

Amid the mild losses in the two states, the party had a reason to cherish in Nagaland, a Christian majority state, where it not only formed the government but also saw an increase in its vote share by three per cent. In Nagaland, the BJP won 12 seats and formed government along with its ally NDPP which bagged 25 seats.

Interestingly, in both Meghalaya and Nagaland the regional parties - NPP and NDPP gained seats in contrast to 2018 elections. The NDPP in Nagaland added seven members as it had 18 MLAs in 2018. In Meghalaya too, the NPP's tally increased by six seats.

Apart from these three states, the BJP has governments in Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Manipur. The saffron party's strategy of mainstreaming the northeast and launching development projects in the region has provided it much ground in the region over the years. But the BJP's presence in Mizoram is still unnoticeable. In Mizoram, the BJP has just one member in Assembly. In Meghalaya too, the party couldn't expand its base, the results say. It is perhaps the party's pro-Hindutva image which has become an apple of discord in the region.

# What is 'eldest daughter syndrome'?

Have you heard of "eldest daughter syndrome"? It's the emotional burden eldest daughters tend to take on (and are encouraged to take on) in many families from a young age.

From caring for younger siblings, helping out with everyday chores, looking after sick parents to sorting shopping orders or online deliveries, eldest daughters often shoulder a heavy but invisible burden of domestic responsibility from a young age.

What's wrong with that? You might ask, shouldn't the eldest children, who are supposed to be more grown-up, help out and look after their younger siblings? Aren't girls "naturally" better at caring?

But #EldestDaughterSyndrome is now trending on TikTok, with adolescent girls speaking out about the unfair amount of unpaid (and unappreciated) labour they do in their families, as well as discussing its adverse effects on their lives, health and wellbeing.

Despite women's rise in education and employment, they still shoulder the lion's share of housework. Indeed, progress towards gender equality in the workplace has not translated into gender equality at home. And eldest daughter syndrome can go some way to explain why this is the case.

Research shows that children make a notable but often overlooked contribution to domestic labour.



#EldestDaughterSyndrome is trending on TikTok, with adolescent girls speaking out about the unfair amount of unpaid labour they do in their families, as well as discussing its adverse effects on their lives, health and wellbeing

Research shows that children make a notable but often overlooked contribution to domestic labour. Mirroring the gender divide among adults, girls between five and 14 years old spend 40% more time on domestic work than boys

Mirroring the gender divide among adults, girls between five and 14 years old spend 40 per cent more time on domestic work than boys.

As voiced by many on TikTok, the syndrome can impair eldest daughters' wellbeing and "steal" their childhood as they are rushed into assuming a disproportionate amount of adult responsibilities - also known as parentification. In doing so, it reproduces gender inequality in domestic labour from one generation to another.

**Why it happens?** At least three behavioural theories underlie eldest daughter syndrome and they are often simultaneously

at play, reinforcing one another: First, the role modelling theory which suggests that eldest daughters often follow their mother as a role model in learning to "do" gender. Second, the sex-typing theory proposes that parents often assign different, gendered tasks to girls and boys.

Sex-typing often builds on parents' gendered understanding of domestic work as something associated with femininity. For parents who consciously strive to instil gender equality in their children, sex-typing can still occur as eldest daughters unconsciously join their mothers in gendered activities such as cooking, house cleaning

and shopping. And third, the labour substitution theory suggests that when working mothers have limited time available for domestic work, eldest daughters often act as "substitutes". As a result, they end up spending more time on care provision and housework.

Consequently, mothers' progress towards gender equality at work can come at the cost of their eldest daughters picking up the domestic slack at a young age. As we look further afield, the issue of eldest daughter syndrome has far-reaching implications for global gender inequality and an ongoing global care crisis.

**What can we do?** The "cure" might seem simple - we need families to recognise the unfair burden that may have been placed on the eldest daughter and to redistribute household responsibilities more equally.

Yet, doing so is far from straightforward. It requires male family members in particular to step up their contribution to domestic work. In turn, it requires us to "undo" centuries of thinking about housework and care as something gendered and "feminine".

To achieve that, we need to first recognise the problem that domestic labour, particularly labour performed by children and eldest daughters, which goes largely unseen, unpaid and under-valued. PT

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MINING PLAN VIOLATION

# DGPS survey mooted in minor mineral quarries



It is alleged that illegal extraction and smuggling of minor minerals have been prevalent in violation of the mining plan in Keonjhar district for years. While the rule mandates digging up to 6 metre down the surface level, most miners are digging up 10 metre below the ground for minerals even beyond the lease area. In the first phase, the DGPS survey was carried out in Bolangir, Kalahandi and Kandhamal districts by Odisha Space Application Centre (ORSAC)

2016 if found during joint verification. It is alleged that illegal extraction and smuggling of minor minerals have been prevalent in violation of the mining plan in Keonjhar district for years. At many places, the miners have carried out extraction beyond their lease areas. There are hundreds of stone and sand quarries in the district but only 65 of them are functional. The Revenue department has no clue about the exact quantity of murrum, soil, sand and stone extracted during mining as it is yet to carry out mapping and measurement of the quarries. While the rule mandates digging up to 6 metre down the surface level, most miners are digging up 10 metre below the ground for minerals. This has posed threat to the wild animals and livestock. Miners are also mining beyond their sanctioned limits outside the demarcated areas of their mines. They are neither planting trees within the protective zones as required for environment protection, nor sparing the protective zones from excavating minerals. Environmentalists said that the DGPS survey if conducted before handing over the minor mineral quarries to the Mining department will expose illegal mining that has been going on unabated for years. Advocate Suraj Mohapatra said that the rule when implemented will be able to put a curb on illegal mining and mining beyond the sanctioned areas. This will help reduce smuggling and increase revenue for the state government. Moreover, this will also help in protection of the environment, he added. Social activist Akshaya Patnaik said the new rule will certainly help in curbing illegal mining and earning more revenue to the state government.

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Keonjhar, April 8:** With illegal mining and smuggling of minor minerals running rampant, demand for use of differential global positioning survey (DGPS) of minor mineral quarries has gained momentum in Keonjhar district, a report said Saturday. The state government has framed new rules for proper management of minor mineral quarries. This has become a cause of concern for people involved in illegal mining of stones and sand. Under this new rule, the state government has handed over the management of minor minerals from the Revenue department to the Mining department. The Mining department will look into every aspect of minor minerals' mining starting from grant of lease to its management. The new rule is now being implemented in three districts. People here have demanded for DGPS survey of the mines as large scale irregularities and norm viola-

tions have been reported from various quarries. In the first phase, the DGPS survey was carried out in Bolangir, Kalahandi and Kandhamal districts by Odisha Space Application Centre (ORSAC) in the presence of mining and revenue officials. The status report of the survey will be handed over by the Mining department to the district level committee formed under the chairmanship of the Collectors. The SP, DFO, Sub-Collectors of all subdivisions, joint directors of geology department and mining officers are members of the committee while Deputy Director, Mines is its convener. The map records of the survey will be jointly signed by the tehsildars and ORSAC before being handed over to notified mining officer or assistant mining officer. The district level committee will be informed of any kind of irregularity in mining which has been done in violation of OMMC (Odisha Minor Minerals Concession) Rules,



**TRIBAL BALLET:** Artists perform a tribal dance at Aadi Mahotsav showcasing tribal culture and heritage at Sector-5 Exhibition Ground in Rourkela, organised by Rourkela Steel Plant and Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited (TRIFED)

## OMDC employee found shot dead

**BARBIL:** Miscreants shot dead an employee of Orissa Minerals Development Company (OMDC) Limited here in Keonjhar district, police said Saturday. The matter came to the fore after the bullet-ridden body of Dushasan Barik, 55, a resident of Thakurani Dalki slum, was found under a high tension electric tower near Damu hutting electric grid under Barbil police limits in Keonjhar district, Saturday. Police rushed to the spot and launched an investigation. A scientific team was also pressed into service. Police also seized two 9mm live bullets and three empty beer bottles from the spot. Preliminary inquiries indicated that Barik might have been murdered by his relatives over property feud as he had a dispute with his sister and brother-in-law over sharing property. According to sources, Barik did not return home after his office Friday and his body was found near the electric grid Saturday morning.

## UNDER-CONSTRUCTION BRIDGE COLLAPSE 3 ENGINEERS SUSPENDED

AGENCIES

**Kendrapara, April 8:** Three engineers have been suspended by the state government in connection with the partial collapse of an under-construction bridge over the Gobari river in Kendrapara Town last month. The Principal Secretary of Works department placed these engineers under suspension with immediate effect for violation of Odisha Government Servants' Conduct Rules, 1959, gross negligence in duty, technical flaw and compromising with the quality of work. The action was taken after one pre-stressed concrete girder caved in along with incidental damage to the bridge March 15 morning. The suspended engineers are Khirod Chandra Behera, executive engineer (EE) of Kendrapara R&B Division -1, Nihar Ranjan



Majhi, assistant executive engineer (AEE), Sub Division-1 and Prasan Kumar Samal, assistant engineer (AE). The mishap occurred when the contracting agency ARSS Infrastructure Projects Limited, was placing a girder over the main bridge. It collapsed due to some technical and operational faults. The labourers engaged in construction work, however, had a close shave. Kendrapara district Collector Amrit Raturaj had directed the executive engineer of Works department to hold a detailed inquiry into the lapses in the construction

and fix responsibilities for the flaws. A 12-member high-level technical team of the Works department led by Narayan Chandra Pal, engineer-in-chief (Designs), and Durga Prasanna Mishra, chief engineer, R&B visited the bridge collapse site to conduct an inquiry. The Odisha Lokayukta March 17 had directed the Director of Vigilance, Odisha, Cuttack to inquire into the alleged substandard work leading to the collapse of a portion of the under-construction bridge. Taking suo motu cognisance of the news extract, the anti-corruption ombudsman asked the Director of Vigilance to find out if there exists a prima facie case of any corruption or misconduct on the part of the public servant and the contractor for proceeding further in the matter. The Odisha Lokayukta has directed that the preliminary inquiry report by the Vigilance be submitted by June 26.

## FAKE CERTIFICATE 4 held in Jeypore; FIRs against 6 in Sambalpur

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Koraput/Sambalpur, April 8:** Police Saturday arrested as many as four postal job aspirants for submission of fake educational certificates to secure Gramin Dak Sevaks jobs in Jeypore town of Koraput district. The accused have been identified as Dami Harijan and Gopal Krushna Patnaik of Nabarangpur district, Kishore Khara of Malkangiri district, and Sarathi Halba of Koraput district. The matter came to the fore during the document verification process of the aspirants. Subsequently, the Postal department officials filed an FIR at Jeypore Town police station. Later, police arrested the four culprits, said sources. Meanwhile, the superintendent of Sambalpur Postal Division has filed an FIR against six aspirants at the Town police station, Saturday for allegedly using fake certificates to get Gramin Dak Sevaks (Postal) jobs. After the FIR, police has started a probe into the incident. According to sources, the six aspirants are from Bargarh, Bhadrak, Jagatsinghpur, Kalahandi, and Deogarh districts. All of them applied for the posts of branch postmaster (BPM) and assistant branch postmaster (ABPM). The certificates submitted by these aspirants were from some educational institutions in Uttar Pradesh, added the sources. Notably, many cases of fake certificate submission have been reported from several parts of the state such as Kandhamal, Bolangir, Nuapada, Kalahandi and Kendrapara districts after a major fake certificate racket was busted in Bolangir.

## 3 die as vehicle rams into truck

The accident took place at Charinangal Chhak on National Highway-53

PNN & AGENCIES

**Jajpur, April 8:** At least three persons, including two women, were killed and six others injured Saturday when their vehicle rammed into a truck in Jajpur district, police said. The accident took place at Charinangal Chhak on National Highway-53 under the Balichandrapur police station limits when the pick-up van with nine people on board crashed into the truck from behind, a senior officer said.



One of the nine occupants of the dry fish-laden pick-up van died on the spot, while others, including the driver of the vehicle, were taken to Barchana Community Health Centre, Jajpur Road SDPO SK Patnaik said. Later, critically injured people

were referred to the SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack, where two of them succumbed to their injuries, he said. The deceased have been identified as Manas Dehury (28), Mummy Behera (35) and Mani Behera (39). The pick-up van with fish sellers on board was going towards Paradip from Chandikhole in the morning, and the driver apparently lost control over the vehicle, he said. Police seized both the pick-up van and the truck, and started an investigation into the accident, the officer added.

## Tusker death: DFO lays blame on Railways

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Chhendipada, April 8:** Two days after a tusker was mowed down by a speeding train on the tracks near Jarpada village on Angul-Sambalpur rail route, the Forest department held the Railways responsible for the animal's death, Saturday. The tusker died on the spot Thursday night after being hit and dragged by the Sambalpur-Shalimar-Mahima Gossain Express for about 30 metre. The Forest department has alleged that the negligence of the Railways is to be blamed for the tusker's death. This was stated here by Vivek Prakash, divisional forest officer (DFO), Angul following a probe into the animal's death, Friday. The DFO has alleged that the Forest department had issued a letter to the Railways urging them to slow down the trains along the track as the animal which had strayed into nearby areas was being driven back to the jungle. However,



despite all the effort, the tusker died after being hit by a speeding train on the rail route connecting Angul with Sambalpur. The DFO said that the tusker was roaming around the Budha Budhi Thakurani hill near Jereng under Jarpada forest range for quite some time. The animal while moving often strayed into nearby areas and destroyed crops and properties. On being informed, forest officials arrived at the spot and tried to drive away the tusker towards Adishila hill which is across the railway track. The animal had to cross the railway track and move towards the Adishila hill. The Forest department in a letter

(no-9302) to the deputy controller, Railways urged for a reduction in the trains' speed to less than 50 km per hour within Boinda to Jarpada stations from 6.30pm, Thursday to 6am the next day. However, due to negligence of the Railways, the Sambalpur-Howrah Shalimar Express train which was moving at a very high speed hit the animal while crossing the railway tracks at Jarpada at 9.30pm, Thursday. On being informed, Angul, RCCF M Jogajayananda, wildlife conservator Ranjan Kumar Behera, DFO, Jarpada ranger Madhab Nayak and other officials rushed to the spot and launched an investigation. The railways officials also visited the spot where talks were held between the two sides. The carcass was buried near the railway tracks after veterinarians conducted a post-mortem, the DFO said. When contacted, Railways officials remained tightlipped and refused to speak on the issue.

## Acid attack injures 4 as families fight over poultry theft

**BOLANGIR:** As many as four people of a family received burn injuries after they were attacked with acid by a neighbouring family over the allegation of poultry theft in Bangomunda area of Bolangir district, Saturday. The injured persons were identified as Jagabandhu Sahu, Khageswar Sahu, Subash Sahu, and Sanju Sahu. All the four victims were admitted to the Bhima Bhoi Medical College and Hospital (BBMCH). Sources said, the two neighbouring families got into a heated argument Friday over a missing chicken. At first, women from both sides attacked each other. Afterwards, the male members joined the brawl. During the quarrel, Tulasi and his son Nepal threw acid on four members of Jagabandhu's family. As a result, they got burn injuries, sources added. After being informed, Bangomunda police reached the site and tried to resolve the issue. They first sent the injured to Kantabanji CHC from where they were later shifted to the BBMCH. On the basis of an FIR filed by Jagabandhu Sahu, police have arrested Nepal Sahu and his father Tulasi Sahu. After their medical examination, they will be forwarded to a local court.



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## Woman loses money to cyber frauds, gets 'triple talaq'

The woman's husband, who is currently in Gujarat, uttered 'talaq' three times April 1 after knowing from her over the phone that she lost ₹1.5 lakh to cyber frauds

PNN & AGENCIES

**Kendrapara, April 8:** The Odisha Police booked a 45-year-old man for allegedly handing out instant 'triple talaq' to his wife after she confessed to losing ₹1.5 lakh to cyber criminals, an official said Saturday. The practice of 'triple talaq' is illegal in India since 2017.

A 32-year-old woman of Kendrapara district lodged a complaint with the police alleging that her husband, who is currently in Gujarat, April 1 uttered 'talaq' three times after knowing from her over the phone that she lost ₹1.5 lakh to cyber frauds, thus divorcing her illegally. The woman is married for the last 15 years and mother of three

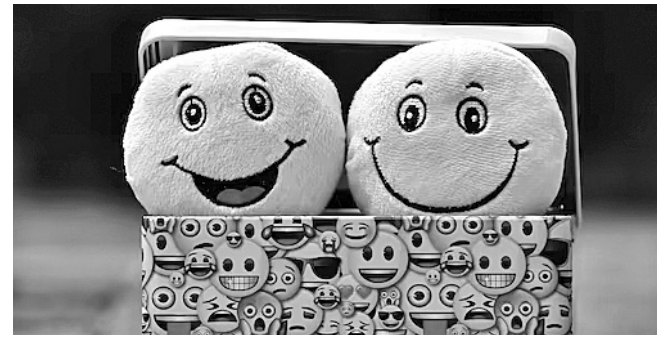


teenage children. A case was registered against the accused under the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, said Kendrapara Sadar Inspector Saroj Kumar Sahoo. The Act bans the practice of instant 'triple talaq' and invites im-

prisonment of up to three years. As the complainant stated that she was also subjected to dowry-related torture, cases under various sections of the IPC and Dowry Prevention Act have also been registered, Sahoo said. The details of how the woman lost the money to cyber criminals are not yet clear till now. The Supreme Court in 2017 banned the controversial practice of instant divorce, setting it aside on several grounds including that it was against the basic tenets of the Holy Quran and violated the Islamic law Shariat.

FOCUS SOCIETY

# IN SEARCH OF SMILE



**Notwithstanding the fact that ranking based on certain parameters cannot be foolproof and there will be some inconsistencies, to have a ranking over 125 continuously for four years provides causes for concern**

sufficient. A functioning system with strong and transparent accountability is required to ensure that the appointed medical staff perform their duty.

Some 20 million children are born every year in our country. The Constitution envisages universal elementary education as a public good. The National Education Policy 2020 reiterates this. There are as many as 12.22 lakh schools imparting elementary education (out of which 9.47 lakh are government or government aided). Even as enrolment has been improving over the years, drop outs of students and absenteeism of teachers continue to be big challenges. The State has the responsibility of providing good quality education to all students. Some of the relatively bright students have access to Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya or to the recently announced PM SHRI Schools; get quality education and end up with something noteworthy in their lives. But in the multilayered education system the Doons and the likes cannot be compared with about a million government-run schools imparting elementary education to over 100 million students with negligible infrastructure. We cannot progress as a nation if we continue with the multilayered school system and deprive millions of children of quality education. We need to remove these distortions in both health and education sectors. Happiness will come later.

There are many global indices released by various agencies at different points. Some bring cheer, some just pass by and some others result in debates and discussions, at times uproarious! Happiness index is bound to generate a lot of heat. Be that so; but we cannot delay removal of basic anomalies from our system.

*The author, a former banker, is senior advisor with the Indian Banks' Association. Views are personal.*

age, tax benefits, and incentives given to the rich high-income earners, business owners and corporates will result in overall economic growth. It will gradually benefit everyone in the hierarchy including the middle class, the lower class, and the poorest section of the society. But the trickle-down effect does not work as expected in real-life situations. It has led to increase in wealth and prosperity of the top 20% of the population and making the bottom fifth receive negligible benefits from tax cuts of the rich.

The percentage of people living below poverty line, notwithstanding the debatable definitions and benchmarks being used from time to time, has come down substantially. According to the World Bank, extreme poverty has reduced between 2011 and 2019 from 22.5% to 10.20%. Although the continuation of pandemic situation for nearly two years did add to misery of millions of people, due to focus of both the central and state governments on food security, food grains are being made available at subsidised/no cost and the number of people in abject poverty has come down over the years. But then happiness involves

much more than just bare necessities - food. There is a growing feeling that the better-off are flourishing even as the rest trail far behind. Enlarging people's financial means would be a big help and for that equitable growth is the key. There are two basic facilities - health and primary education - which are prerequisites for any kind of transformation in a nation.

As per the rural health statistics of 2021-22 released by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW) in the three-tier hierarchy system there is staggering paucity of medical staff. In the Community Health Centers (CHCs) which is the block level hospital for some 100-odd villages catering to over 1,60,000 people the shortage is as high as 82% for surgeons, 82% for paediatricians and 79% for general physicians. The CHCs are 30-bed block level health facilities that are supposed to provide basic healthcare relating to surgery, gynaecology, paediatrics, and general medicines. The situation is no different in other two tiers of the rural health infrastructure; the sub-centers, the primary health centers (PHCs). More funds are no doubt needed to fix this complex issue; but funds alone may not be

The World Happiness Report 2023 was released recently. This report is published by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network and submitted to the United Nations (UN). The ranking is done according to factors, both material and social, such as GDP per capita, social support, health, life expectancy, social freedom, charity and absence of corruption.

How do we rank? We were ranked 144th in 2020, 139th in 2021 and 136th in 2022. With the pandemic over and economy bouncing back it was expected our ranking will improve substantially this year. Unfortunately, this has not happened. At 126th rank in 2023 we continue to be one of the least happy nations! We are lagging our neighbours Nepal, Bangladesh, China and even Sri Lanka.

At the bottom is Afghanistan at 137. Finland continues at the top for the sixth consecutive time, followed by Denmark and Iceland. Finland, with thousands of lakes and forests, is known for its extensive welfare system, high trust in authorities and low level of inequalities among its 5.5 million inhabitants. Israel and Netherlands occupy 4th and 5th positions respectively.

Notwithstanding the fact that ranking based on certain parameters cannot be foolproof and there will be some inconsistencies, to have a ranking over 125 continuously for four years provides causes for concern. Perhaps we are more concerned and obsessed with growth rate. The Hindu growth rate of 3.5% in the first three decades since Independence is history now. We have come a long way. We are now one of the fastest growing economies in the world. Our policies are more focused on expanding the economic pie than sharing it. That is necessary no doubt given our ecosystem to lift the multitudes. But then there is a concept called the trickle-down effect. This signifies an economic theory in which all financial lever-



Bikash Narayan Mishra

**HAPPINESS INVOLVES MUCH MORE THAN JUST BARE NECESSITIES**



Aakar Patel

**In no real democracy does the government empower itself to determine what is fact and what is misleading when it comes to reporting on the government**

## This Is Censorship

On 6 April 2023, the Union government passed new rules, allowing it to identify what it thought was any fake or false or misleading content online related to the government. This would be done by a "fact check unit" set up by the government which would send takedown orders to social media platforms. This determination that news was false or misleading would be solely at the government's discretion. The rules would give the government authority to force social media firms to take down such content or face action.

The Internet Freedom Foundation, which is an Indian digital liberties organisation, said that "assigning any unit of the government such arbitrary, overbroad powers to determine the authenticity of online content bypasses the principles of natural justice, thus making it an unconstitutional exercise. The notification of these amended rules cements the chilling effect on the fundamental right to speech and expression, particularly on news publishers, journalists, activists."

The Editors Guild of India said it was "deeply disturbed" and that there was not even a mention of "what will be the governing mechanism for such a fact-checking unit," what the judicial oversight, if any, was, or the right to appeal. "All of this is against principles of natural justice and akin to censorship," it added.

The target is digital media, particularly the small and independent websites that have developed a following in the recent past because the mainstream is seen as totally aligned with the government. The fact that the government is going after them so specifically also shows that their work is effective.

The new rules also arrive with a particular background. For the last few years, India has led the world in internet shutdowns. India had 6 shutdowns in 2014, 14 in 2015, 31 in 2016, 79 in 2017, 134 in 2018, 121 in 2019, 109 in 2020, 106 in 2021 and 84 in 2022. To put this in perspective of 213 total global shutdowns in 2019, India accounted for 56 per cent (12 times more than the next nation, Venezuela). Of 155 global shutdowns in 2020, India accounted for 70 per cent, denying people - patients access to telemedicine and children access to online learning during the pandemic.

India imposed 17 months of internet blockade on Kashmiris, and then targeted the farmers' protests outside Delhi with shutdowns but this has become common elsewhere also. Many people from Punjab currently have had their social media handles "withheld" by the Indian government and even BBC's Punjabi service was halted for some time.

What is happening is unnatural in a democracy where freedom of expression is a fundamental right, meaning a right that enjoys a high degree of protection from encroachment by the State. In New India, the constant targeting of dissent through new and innovative mechanisms, the misuse of criminal law and the fear of mob violence have curbed free speech all but totally. Where law, process and mob have not visited, self-censorship has.

One feels as an individual that saying certain things will get one into trouble. In the age of social media what these things are become apparent rather quickly because the pushback is immediate. One is aware of things that one believes are true but saying even those things will get one into trouble. What sort of trouble? The filing of criminal cases, not just by the State but also individuals who register FIRs; abuse and hatred on social and other media; violence by mobs that are not controllable by the State, even if it wants to control them. It is best to avoid the problem by not saying what one feels, even if it is truth. Visible action by the State, especially harsh and intimidatory action, against critics and dissenters acts as a deterrent. It stops others from saying the same thing, and it gives pause to those who want to say something, but are now concerned about the fallout against them. In India, the mainstream media has for the most part not required intimidation. The reliance on government for licences and advertising, the popularity of the government's majoritarian ideology and the ownership of large swathes of media by corporate interests has meant that it has toed the line quite enthusiastically.

Indian users of social media have not followed suit and that is why this problem has required attention, which has come through the new IT Rules. What used to be a dozen or so takedown notices to Twitter annually from the government before 2014 now number in the thousands. When fact-checkers post hate speeches by people, including those inside or associated with the ruling party, it is the fact-checker's post that gets taken down.

India has a problem with being told that it is falling on global indices that measure freedom. The usual response is that those compiling the index are biased or ignorant or following some sort of agenda. Honest engagement with the data would show that what they are saying is indeed true because every day brings news of further restriction. It is important that this be written about and discussed because armed with the new rules, the government is set to ratchet things up further. In no real democracy does the government empower itself to determine what is fact and what is misleading when it comes to reporting on the government.

### WISDOM CORNER

- For small creatures such as we the vastness is bearable only through love. **CARL SAGAN**
- People don't notice whether it's winter or summer when they're happy. **ANTON CHEKHOV**
- Never lose an opportunity of seeing anything beautiful, for beauty is God's handwriting. **RALPH WALDO EMERSON**

### WORDSWORTH

#### Habiliments

It means clothes. It was more widely used centuries ago, because it had several senses, based on its Old French source, habillement or abillment, which come from the verb habiller, to fit out or render some item fit for service. The form without the initial h shows its link with English able, which comes from the related French habile or hable. One early sense was of the outfit of a warrior - his weapons, munitions and other equipment of war (Shakespeare's Richard II says: "Marshal, ask yonder knight in arms, / Both who he is and why he cometh hither / Thus plated in habiliments of war.") This died out in the seventeenth century but another survived, the garments or vestments appropriate to some occupation, occasion or season. Madame Lavalliere afterward admitted, that Maria Monk did arrive at her house at the time specified, in the usual habiliments of a Nun, and made herself known as an eloped Nun (Awful Disclosures, by Maria Monk, 1836). That association might make one think that habit, another word for the costume of a nun, was a short form of habiliments. Habit is certainly a shortening, but of habitual, because the costume or uniform was one that was customarily or habitually worn. Habiliments is too pompously formal to fit our age and most dictionaries mark it as archaic. However, it also became a jokey way to refer to one's everyday clothes and it may still be found as a humorous, dismissive or sarcastic way to refer to clothing: You know the kind of cyclist I mean: all its vanity. ... He wears wicked shades, an insect-head helmet, and has athletic signage on his inappropriate habiliments (The Herald (Glasgow), 20 Jun. 2014).

### SPECTRUM DEBT SERVICING

# A silent revolution in sovereign finance



Simon Zadek

**IF THE COMBINATION OF GREATER DEBT SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPROVED NATURE AND CLIMATE OUTCOMES BOLSTERS RESILIENCE AND PRODUCTIVITY, SOVEREIGN RISK WILL FALL FURTHER**

In a world beset by crises, one is not getting nearly enough attention: the sovereign-debt emergency faced by half of the world's emerging and developing economies. Fortunately, a new innovation in sustainable finance has emerged that may help countries to avert debt disaster, while tackling other crucial challenges, especially nature degradation and climate change.

To be sure, there have been valiant efforts to use traditional political and technocratic channels to address the looming wave of sovereign-debt crises. Bodies like the G20 have produced frameworks, instruments, and initiatives aimed at providing a lifeline to debt-distressed countries, and institutions like the World Bank have attempted to convince major creditors, including the new generation of major sovereign creditors such as China, to offer debt relief. But, with sovereign-debt risk taking a back seat to what are widely viewed as more imminent domestic and regional systemic crises, little meaningful progress has been made.

The consequences of inaction are far-reaching. Fiscally strained governments cannot meet their populations' fundamental needs, with ever-larger numbers of people confronting food and fuel insecurity. Beyond the humanitarian dimensions of this situation, the resulting social and political distrust and instability undermines global

cooperation on shared challenges, from climate change to conflicts like the Ukraine war.

Against this dire backdrop, sustainability-linked sovereign debt could be a game-changer. The mechanism is simple: sovereign borrowers define performance targets in relevant areas, such as greenhouse-gas emissions and deforestation. If they meet the targets, they are rewarded with lower debt-servicing costs.

For example, last year, Uruguay issued \$1.5 billion in sustainability-linked bonds (SLBs), maturing in 2034, and could see its associated debt-servicing costs fall by up to 60 basis points. The project-based "green bonds" of the past, by contrast, delivered an advantage of just a few basis points, at best, while requiring debtors to bear the considerable costs of defining, monitoring, and reporting the "use of proceeds."

Debt-distressed countries can secure even larger reductions in debt-servicing costs if sustainability-linked performance agreements are backed by public guarantees to lenders. In fact, of the seven pathways for scaling up the sustainability-linked sovereign financing approach presented in a new report from the Sustainability-linked Sovereign Debt Hub (for which I am Convener of the Advisory Board), the one with the highest potential for tackling the current crisis is credit enhancement.

Along this pathway, sovereign credit risk is transferred to guarantors such as multilateral development banks, bilateral development-finance institutions, and private insurers. A credit guarantee, insurance policy, or other credit-enhancement mechanism improves the debt's rating, thereby reducing the sovereign issuer's servicing costs and unlocking additional funds. This in turn expands debtor countries' fiscal space, unlocking more resources to invest in both meeting performance targets and advancing other priorities.

Already, credit enhancement has facilitated debt-refinancing in Barbados and Belize, with both countries channeling some of the cost savings toward financing coastal restoration. Best of all, if the combination of greater debt sustainability and improved nature and climate outcomes bolsters resilience and productivity, sovereign risk - and overall debt-servicing costs - will fall further, setting in motion a much-needed virtuous cycle.

Scaling up credit enhancement to support sustainability-linked sovereign financing would require cooperation involving multilateral development banks, the OECD countries, and other major sovereign creditors, such as China. While ambitious in today's fractured world, such a mechanism would underpin a value-for-money approach to addressing both the debt crisis and broader sustainability challenges.

Other pathways identified in the Sustainability-linked Sovereign Debt Hub report include standardisation of instruments and metrics - crucial to lower the cost of issuance and oversight of performance-based strategies, and to reduce the likelihood of greenwashing. Strengthening institutional capacity is also essential, especially for under-resourced low-income issuers. And efforts must be made to increase market awareness of, and private sector appetite for, sustainability-linked debt.

Of course, performance-based sovereign-financing instruments are nothing new, and their track record is far from perfect: debt-distressed countries have often faced contentious forms of macroeconomic, fiscal, and institutional conditionality. And when it comes to debt, development, or sustainability, there has never been a silver bullet.

Nonetheless, by linking debt relief with efforts to address broader challenges like climate change, and enabling debtors to set their own performance targets, SLBs may be able to succeed where traditional political approaches have failed to mitigate short-term sovereign-debt risks and bolster long-term sustainable development. A silent revolution in sovereign financing may already be in the making.

*The writer is Executive Director at NatureFinance. @PROJECT SYNDICATE*

#### Financial illiteracy

Sir, That a whopping Rs 35,012 crore unclaimed deposits of public sector banks (PSBs) as of February 2023 was transferred to RBI is both shocking and surprising. These unclaimed deposits were in respect of deposits which have not been operated for 10 years or more, belonging to 10.24 crore accounts. The country's largest bank SBI tops the list with Rs 8,086 crore unclaimed deposits, followed by PNB Rs 5,340 crore, Canara Bank Rs 4,558 crore and Bank of Baroda Rs 3,904 crore. That such a huge sum of deposits remained unclaimed with the PSBs is really a cause for concern. When the data for private banks, RRBs, state co-operative banks and urban banks are put together, it will be an astronomical figure. Considering the huge population, low literacy rate, financial illiteracy, distance between brick and mortar branch and the customer and no awareness of the benefits of nomination facility and banking rules for claim settlement of legal heirs in case of death of the depositor, are reasons for this huge amount unclaimed deposits. Banks often launch special drives for account opening, loan melas and cross selling. Likewise, banks need to launch special drives to find out the whereabouts of the customers/legal heirs in respect of accounts which have become inoperative, i.e. where there are no transactions over a period of two years. Banks should put the list of such accounts on the branch notice board and try for early disposal by contacting the depositors/nominees/legal heirs. **Pratap Nayak, BHUBANESWAR**

#### Elephant protection

Sir, This refers to "Train runs over jumbo" (OrissaPOST, April 8). Blame games are on, but half-hearted measures to prevent elephants being hit by trains have apparently not helped. Proper track signals, locomotive sensitisation, periodic review and maintenance of elephant corridors, and a unique elephant detection system should safeguard the lives of elephants. Overpasses and underpasses, solar powered fences and elephant proof trenches are vital to minimise deaths due to any cause. Shrinking elephant habitats is one of the root causes of the big mammals succumbing to different causes. More and more elephant corridors and enhanced budgetary provisions for ensuring elephants are in the safe confines of their homes, and hence away from human interference, cannot be over-stressed. While using modern technologies, it is imperative for the officials to correctly identify the elephant corridors in regions of the country where elephants abound. **Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA**

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

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

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Law must have the touch of humanity to serve the interests of all people and should always be used with sensibility to address the roots of problems  
D Y CHANDRACHUD | CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA

### RESEARCH REVELATION

Researchers have uncovered details about the mechanism by which broccoli helps protecting the lining of the small intestine, thereby inhibiting the development of disease in mice



### of the day quote

There will be change of power after the 2024 Lok Sabha polls with West Bengal, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh deciding the "destiny" of the country  
SANJAY RAUT | SHIV SENA (UBT) RAJYA SABHA MP

The state government should look into the COVID-19 situation immediately, as cases have been on the rise and apprise citizens  
AJIT PAWAR | MAHARASHTRA LEADER OF OPPOSITION

I am not going to make any comment on it (the Hindenburg-Adani issue) as the Supreme Court has already formed a committee and is looking into it. But I want to say that this all is being done to brighten the political career of Rahul Gandhi  
KIREN RIJUJU | UNION LAW MINISTER



Congress workers clash with security personnel during a protest in Agartala

## Rahul's K'taka visit postponed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, April 8: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's event, which was supposed to take place on April 10 has been postponed further and now it will be held on April 16 at Kolar, Karnataka Congress unit president D K Shivakumar said Saturday.

Rahul Gandhi had planned to address people on April 10 at the same place where his speech during 2019 Lok Sabha elections had led to his disqualification from the lower house of the Parliament, Shivakumar told reporters here.

However, due to the Assembly election related works and the selection of candidates, the party leaders requested him to extend it by a week. "We had requested Rahul Gandhi to extend the public meeting by a week and he gave his consent. Gandhi and all leaders will come on April 16 for the 'Jai Bharat' event at Kolar," Shivakumar said.

He added that this will be Gandhi's first public address in Kolar after his disqualification from the Lok Sabha. He also said that Gandhi's disqualification was



an insult to democracy. "Cancelling the Lok Sabha membership of Rahul Gandhi, who had won with a margin of seven lakh votes, is an insult to the entire democracy," Shivakumar said.

According to the Congress sources, Gandhi's event was earlier planned on April 5, which was changed to April 6. Then it was again planned on April 9, which clashed with Prime Minister's 'Project Tiger' event in Mysuru. The date was then rescheduled to April 10 and now once again it has been postponed to April 16.

## Vijayvargiya draws flak for 'misogynist' remarks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 8: BJP leader Kailash Vijayvargiya Saturday drew flak over his remark that women in "bad clothes look like 'Shurpanakha'", with the opposition parties alleging that he has insulted every woman with his "sexist and misogynist" statement and it reflects his party's mindset.

Vijayvargiya, a BJP general secretary, made the controversial remark at a religious function in Madhya Pradesh's Indore on Thursday. "When I leave for home at night, I see educated young people and children under the influence of drugs...I feel like getting down (from the car) and slapping them five to seven times to sober them up," the BJP leader said.

"We see goddess in women. But (with) the kind of bad dresses the girls wear and move around, they do not embody goddesses but look like Shurpanakha. God has given you a good and beautiful body....Dress well, friends," said Vijayvargiya who has often courted controversies over his remarks.

Shurpanakha was the sister of the demon king Ravana in the epic Ramayana. "Are we living in Taliban rule that the government will tell women what to wear, what to eat and whom to meet," All India Mahila Congress chief Netta D'souza said.

Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinete alleged that it seems the BJP has no respect for women. "What Kailash Vijayvargiya is saying at some level shows the love for 'Shurpanakha' within the BJP. This is the character of the BJP and this is why you find so many BJP legislators facing criminal charges as far as offences against women are concerned," she said.

The Trinamool Congress described the BJP leader's comments as "sexist and misogynist" and said India is "walking backwards"



Vijayvargiya, a BJP general secretary, made the controversial remark at a religious function in Madhya Pradesh's Indore Thursday

Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinete alleged that it seems the BJP has no respect for women

under the BJP's rule. The party's Rajya Sabha MP Jawhar Sircar tweeted: "This openly sexist remark reveals the low mentality of the party."

Another TMC Rajya Sabha MP Sushmita Dev asked: "Who defines dirty clothes? Shameless & shameful."

Kailash Vijayvargiya. "India continues to walk backwards under the leadership of PM @narendramodi. Senior @BJP4India leaders are now comparing women to demones for simply choosing to wear what they please!" the TMC said on its Twitter handle. The CPI (M) alleged that the BJP was "anti-women".

"BJP-RSS ideology is deep-rooted in patriarchy," the Left party said on its Twitter handle. "Insulting women, harassing them and making objectionable comments about them is becoming the identity of the BJP," former Madhya Pradesh chief minister Kamal Nath alleged. "I request the mothers, sisters and daughters of the country to come forward in the fight for their rights, Congress party stands with them in the fight for their rights," he said.

## Dalit woman raped, set afire in Raj, dies

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, April 8: A Dalit woman who was allegedly raped and set afire by a man in Rajasthan's Barmer district died during treatment at a government hospital in Jodhpur, police said Saturday.

The 30-year-old woman, a mother of two, was allegedly raped and set ablaze by Shakoor Khan at her house April 6. The woman suffered around 50 per cent burns, according to police. The opposition BJP in the state accused the Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot-led government of trying to suppress the incident and said it showed 'jungle raj' was prevalent in the state. Union Jal Shakti Minister and Jodhpur MP Gajendra Singh Shekhawat alleged the woman died due to a delay in treatment.

Barmer Superintendent of Police Digant Anand said the woman died late Friday at a hospital in Jodhpur and the accused



The 30-year-old woman, a mother of two, was allegedly raped and set ablaze by Shakoor Khan at her house April 6

The woman suffered around 50 per cent burns, according to police

he has been arrested. Khan, who hails from the same village as the victim, has booked under IPC sections 376 (rape), 326 (voluntarily causing grievous hurt by dangerous weapons or means), 450 (house-trespass to commit offence) and some sections of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, police said.

Later, the charge of murder under IPC Section 302 was also added to the FIR, they said. According to a complaint lodged by the victim's husband, Khan broke into their home on

Thursday and raped his wife when she was alone. The accused poured an acid-like chemical on her and set her on fire.

"The delay in treatment of the victim woman shows how concerned the administration and the government are about the lives of common people," Shekhawat said in a tweet in Hindi. Leader of Opposition in Rajasthan Assembly Rajendra Rathore blamed Gehlot for "poor" law and order in the state. The incident is "a blot on the government", he said.

"It shows the jungle raj prevalent in the state. Chief Minister Ashok

Gehlot, who is also the home minister, is completely responsible for the poor law and order in the state," he added.

BJP state president CP Joshi said in a tweet that Congress government "is sitting with folded hands". "The administration and the government should investigate all aspects of this incident impartially and provide justice to the family of the victim. If there is even an iota of morality, then the government should take strict action against the guilty officers."

Former Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje tweeted that this incident has made it clear that "no one is safe" in Rajasthan. "Dalits and women are certainly not safe. Suppressing the issue, which shames humanity, for a day makes it obvious the condemnable and insensitive attitude of the government in Rajasthan. Strictest action should be taken against the culprits."

### SHORT TAKES

#### Timings changed

Chandigarh: In a historic decision, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Saturday announced change in the timings of government offices from the existing 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. to 7.30 a.m. to 2 p.m. in larger public interest. Announcing the decision, Mann said that the revised timings will come into effect from May 2 and will remain in place till July 15. The Chief Minister said the decision has been taken to benefit the common people for easily getting their work done at government offices during the scorching heat in the ensuing summer season.

#### 2 Naxalites held

Sukma: Two Naxalites were arrested and explosives were allegedly seized from them in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district, a police official said Saturday. Muchak Sukhram (28) and Madvi Kosa (30), who carry rewards of Rs 1 lakh each on their heads, were planning to plant the explosives to target security personnel, he said. "They were apprehended on Friday on a tip-off from a hill near Kunna village under Kukanar police station limits, some 400 kilometres from Raipur, by a joint team of the District Reserve Guard and local police. We had received information of Naxalites making improvised explosive devices in Kukanar," he said.

#### Three drown

Singrauli: Two brothers and their friend, all three in the 7-9 age group, drowned in a pond in Madhya Pradesh's Singrauli district, a police official said Saturday. Sunil (9) and Ajit (7), sons of one Maniram Kewat, and Sandeep (8), son of one Mahesh Kewat, drowned in a pond in Siddhikala village under Vaidhan police station limits on Friday, he said.

#### Youth found dead

New Delhi: A 19-year-old youth was found dead under mysterious circumstances at a banquet hall in Delhi's Alipur area, an official said Saturday, adding that the police have taken one suspect into custody. The deceased has been identified as Bunty, a native of Bulandshahar in Uttar Pradesh. According to the official, a PCR call was received by the police informing that a youth, who had slept at the Suryadev Rajwara Farms on Friday night, was not giving any response following which a police team was dispatched to the spot. "At the banquet hall on GT Karnal Road, Bunty's body was found on a sofa in a temporary tent. No visible injury mark was found on the body," a senior police officer said.

## Chilli growers of Ferozepur setting an example

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ferozepur, April 8: Chilli growers in Punjab's border district of Ferozepur are setting an example for other farmers for coming out of the wheat-paddy crop cycle and successfully reaping rich dividends without depending on the traditional crops.

With not many people knowing Ferozepur as one of the biggest cultivators of chilli crops in the state, the Punjab government has recently announced to set up a chilli cluster in the border district as part of its campaign to promote crop diversification programme.

Under the chilli cluster development programme, a group of chilli growers will be provided technical support for reducing input costs and further improving crop quality to tap its export and domestic markets, said officials.



Chilli crop is planted in October-end and November, while harvesting starts in March-end and April, said farmers

Close to 10,000 hectares of land is under chilli crop in Punjab with about 20,000 metric tonnes per annum of output. Ferozepur has the maximum area under the chilli crop in Punjab. Andhra Pradesh is

one of the leading states in the country as far as cultivation of chilli crop is concerned, said farmers.

According to chilli growers, they earn around Rs 1.50 to 2 lakh per acre out of chilli crop after de-

ducting input costs and other expenses. The income is way above an average of Rs 90,000 per acre one can make out of wheat and paddy, they said.

Chilli crop is planted in October-end and November, while harvesting starts in March-end and April, said farmers. Some growers even continue with the crop till August thus a need does not arise for transplanting water-guzzling paddy during the Kharif season.

Manpreet Singh, a progressive grower of chilli crop, said he earns Rs 2 lakh per acre income from the crop. Singh grows chilli over 100 acres of land at village Lumbrwala, Ghal Khurd block in Ferozepur.

Singh said red chilli fetches Rs 230-240 a kg while green chilli gets Rs 20-25 per kg. "We used to grow chilli till June but last year we took it to August. Therefore, there was no need for sowing paddy as

chilli fetches more returns," said 32-year-old farmer.

Singh said chilli of Ferozepur is now being recognised and traders from other places like Ganganagar in Rajasthan and even Andhra Pradesh have started coming to buy the crop from here. Parrot green chilli has demand in places like Gujarat while dark green chilli is supplied to places like Nagpur, Indore and Bhopal.

In the Ferozepur district, three blocks — Ghal Khurd, Ferozepur and Mamdot are known for cultivating the chilli crop. Punjab Horticulture Director Shalinder Kaur said a cluster development approach has been adopted to increase income and reduce the input cost of farmers. She said the department will do handholding of chilli growers and help them further improve crop quality for tapping export potential.

## 21 cops accused of gangrape acquitted

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Visakhapatnam, April 8: As many as 21 policemen accused of gang-raping 11 Kondh tribal women 16 years ago at a village in Alluri Sitarama Raju district in the state have been acquitted by a Special Court.

The Court held the accused were primarily acquitted because of the failure of the two investigating officers to conduct a fair and impartial investigation.

The women were allegedly gang-raped by the police personnel who belonged to Greyhounds, a special team, in August 2007.

The trial commenced in Visakhapatnam in 2018 and culminated on Thursday with the XI Additional District and Sessions Judge-cum-Special Court under the SC & ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act acquitting the policemen because of mala fide investigation.

Meanwhile, the Court ordered that the survivors of rape be paid compensation through the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA). According to a Human Rights Forum (HRF) member, none of the accused policemen was arrested and some of them went on to successfully superannuate while some died.

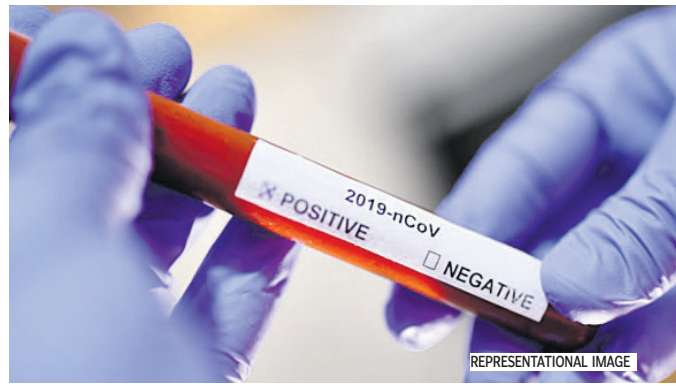
M Sarat, vice-president of HRF-Andhra Pradesh State Committee, alleged the "Greyhounds forces had raped 11 tribal women in August 2007 and a police complaint was filed against them but not even a single accused person was arrested."

The forum alleged that a 21-member special police party had gone to Vakapally village on August 20, 2007 for combing operations, and sexually assaulted the 11 tribal women belonging to the particularly vulnerable tribal group (PVTG).

"The very fact that the Court has ordered compensation to be paid to the Vakapally rape survivors shows that the Court reposed faith in their depositions," HRF said.

COVID SURGE

# Delhi hospitals, clinics asked to ramp up testing



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 8:** Hospitals, polyclinics and dispensaries in Delhi have been instructed by health department authorities to scale up testing amid an upward trend in COVID-19 cases here in the past several days, sources said Saturday. More than 3,800 coronavirus cases have been recorded in the city during the March 30-April 7 period. Delhi logged 733 Covid cases - the highest in over seven months - on Friday, with a positivity rate of 19.93 per cent, according to data shared by the city government's health department.

The sources said the department has instructed hospitals, polyclinics and dispensaries in the city to increase Covid testing.

"Authorities at these facilities have been told that anyone who visits such facilities and exhibits ILI (influenza-like illness) symptoms, such as fever, cough, body ache is to be tested as cases have risen and the daily count is growing steadily," a source said. At present, the city's COVID-19 death toll stands at 26,536, according to Friday's health bulletin.

With the new cases Friday, Delhi's infection tally has risen to 20,13,403. The data showed that 3,678 Covid tests were conducted Thursday.

Delhi has witnessed a spurt in the number of fresh Covid infections over the last several days amid a sharp rise in H3N2 influenza cases in the country.

The Delhi government is keeping an eye on the spurt in Covid cases in the national capital and is "prepared to face any eventuality", Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said last week. Addressing re-

porters after chairing a review meeting on the Covid situation, Kejriwal had said there was no need to worry for now and that the city government was taking all required steps.

However, they maintained that there is no need to panic and people should follow Covid-appropriate behaviour and get booster shots of the vaccines. Another source claimed that Covid vaccine doses at city government facilities are "not in stock" at present.

Doctors said as testing is to be ramped up, more kits and equipment will be used, and the health department is making preparations for it. The national capital had recorded 620 cases August 26.

On Thursday, 606 cases were logged with a positivity rate of 16.98 per cent. One fatality was also reported.

On Wednesday, the city logged a positivity rate of 26.54 per cent, the highest in nearly 15 months, with 509 people testing positive in a single day. In January last year, the positivity rate had touched the 30-per cent mark. The number of fresh cases had dropped to zero on January 16, the first time since the outbreak of the pandemic. It has risen again in the past several days.

In the March 30-April 7 period, 3,802 cases and six fatalities have been recorded, including two deaths April 3. Nearly 120 of the 7,989 beds in dedicated Covid hospitals in the city are occupied while 1,491 patients are in home isolation, the health department said on Friday.

The number of active cases currently stands at 2,331, a rise of over 150 per cent since March 30 when the corresponding figure was 932.

Amid a gradual increase in the number of Covid cases in Delhi, medical experts say the new XBB.1.16 variant of the virus could be driving the surge

# 1.5L farmers to be certified under PK3Y

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Shimla, April 8:** About 1.5 lakh farmers practising natural farming in Himachal Pradesh would be certified under Prakritik Kheti Khushhal Kisan Yojana (PK3Y) in 2023-24.

According to a study, 28 per cent farmers have adopted natural farming techniques on their own through peer-to-peer learning without any training and therefore the focus of PK3Y in this financial year will be consolidation of farmers practising natural farming, said



Agriculture Secretary Rakesh Kanwar. Addressing a meeting of

28 % farmers have adopted natural farming techniques on their own through peer-to-peer learning without any training

the agriculture department officials to discuss the cluster-based

agriculture development programme in the state, he said efforts would be made in 2023-24 to certify about 1.5 lakh farmers practising natural farming, a statement issued here on Friday said.

He said focus should be on consolidation of the existing farmers, increasing their area under natural farming, conducting refresher workshops, capacity building training and exposure visits.

The response and success in results on ground show that everyone is convinced that natural farming technique is beneficial and "we

just need to take the practice further for overall benefits in agriculture," he added.

Kanwar asked the department of officers to identify clusters, prioritise the issues and come out with a specific need-based budget for each cluster.

State Project Director, PK3Y, Naresh Thakur said PK3Y achieved the earmarked targets in 2022-23. He said over 51,000 farmers have been certified under PK3Y for natural produce and that the natural farming model villages in the state will also be strengthened.

## MAJOR BLOW TO BEER LOVERS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 8:** Summers are approaching and beer lovers are on the lookout for chilled bottles of their favourite brands. But most liquor vends in the city seem to be turning them back empty-handed.

Even as consumers in different parts of the city raised the issues at the vends, officials concerned refuted the complaints about popular brands missing from the shelves but admitted that tenders have been placed by corporations for refrigerators and chillers and they will be available at the shops soon.

Under the current excise regime in Delhi, four undertakings of the Delhi government - DSIIDC, DTTDC, DSCSC and DCCWS - are engaged in retail liquor sales through more than 550 stores across the city. No reaction was available from the corporations on the lack of refrigeration facilities at the vends run by them.



A consumer outside a liquor store near the DSIIDC office in Connaught Place complained about the unavailability of beer brands.

Another consumer in Laxmi Nagar complained that the liquor shops were not selling chilled beer. "I used to pick up a couple of bottles and drink them after reaching home. Now, they are selling beer at room temperature," he added. Vinod Giri, director general of the Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies, said consumers in Delhi drink nearly 15 crore bottles of beer every year.

The demand is skewed towards the three months of summer which accounts for nearly six crore bottles, he said. Delhi shops have limited stocking space and a low number of shops in the city naturally means low total stock holding. Some companies are hesitant to supply to government-owned shops due to compliance-related concerns.



Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Education Minister Atishi during the foundation stone laying ceremony of new school building at East Vinod Nagar in New Delhi

# HP becoming big cat's new home

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Shimla, April 8:** In a first, a camera trap captured an adult tiger sauntering in Himachal Pradesh, raising hopes of wildlife enthusiasts to see translocation of the big cat to a new home in the state's 27.88-sq-km Simbalbara National Park, lying in the 810-km Terai Arc landscape, comprising the Shivalik Hills, between the river Yamuna in the west and the river Bhagmati in the east.

They believe tigers are making a new habitat in Simbalbara as the current one in neighbouring Uttarakhand gets crowded.

A wildlife expert favours reintroduction of more tigers in the western part of Rajaji National Park in Uttarakhand that could allow movement of tigers in the wider landscape comprising neighbouring states - Himachal Pradesh and Haryana - by restoring the original corridor in the Terai Arc Landscape to facilitate dispersal and the migration processes, which



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

are critical to species persistence.

A state wildlife official told IANS there had been many oral narratives of tigers occasionally roaming forests of Simbalbara and Renuka, both in Sirmour district, until this February when the first-ever picture of the tiger was captured. This photo could be the concrete base on which a detailed study on ecosystem and migration of tigers from Rajaji National Park in

highway and a rail line. Besides, the wildlife official plumps for including Simbalbara under the translocation of tigers project as the park supports dense Sal forests with grassy landscape and a healthy herbivore prey species base.

However, Uttarakhand foresters claim the tiger that was spotted in Simbalbara in February strayed from the Rajaji park and travelled over 120 km across in search of new territory by passing through several human habitations in less than three months.

Records say tigers and elephants are the sporadic visitors to the Simbalbara park in the Paonta Valley that lies in the Shivalik hills, adjacent to Haryana's Kalesar National Park.

According to the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), the Simbalbara National Park is the only conservation area in Himachal Pradesh where the occurrence of tiger and elephant has been reported.

# '90% urban people don't have adequate water supply in HP'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Shimla, April 8:** With 90 per cent urban and 40 per cent people in Himachal Pradesh yet to get adequate water supply, the mountainous state endowed with five important perennial rivers fed particularly by glaciers did not frame a long-term comprehensive water security plans at state level, according to a new report by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG).

The state aims to provide 135 litres per capita per day (lpcd) to all urban and 70 lpcd to rural population by 2030.

However, the CAG's performance audit of drinking water services from 2016 to 2021 says only 10.39 per cent of urban population and 61.43 per cent of rural population is being supplied water of at least 135 lpcd and 70 lpcd, respectively.

According to the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, 135 lpcd has been suggested as the benchmark for urban water supply. For rural areas, a minimum service delivery of 55 lpcd has been fixed under Jal Jeevan Mission, which may be enhanced to higher level by states. The requirement of water in the state was projected to increase to 726.46 million litres

- The state aims to provide 135 litres per capita per day (lpcd) to all urban and 70 lpcd to rural population by 2030
- The requirement of water in the state was projected to increase to 726.46 million litres per day (MLD) -- 575.97 MLD in rural areas and 150.49 MLD in urban areas -- in 2021
- The requirement in 1999 was 454.53 MLD with rural areas having 384.32 MLD, while urban areas 70.21 MLD



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

per day (MLD) -- 575.97 MLD in rural areas and 150.49 MLD in urban areas -- in 2021. The requirement in 1999 was 454.53 MLD with rural areas having 384.32 MLD, while urban areas 70.21 MLD.

According to the national auditor, the water supply schemes had not been transferred to communities and Panchayati Raj Institutions for their management and augmentation.

It said residual chlorine levels were not tested through chloroscopes to monitor the bleaching of the drinking water. Also, bleaching powder was issued for chlorination after their useful life.

The auditor said funds received

under the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), Jal Jeevan Mission and National Rural Drinking Water Programme were diverted outside the scope of programmes.

The CAG recommends the state may like to ensure that village water and sanitation committees participate in planning, monitoring, implementation and operation and maintenance of rural water supply schemes and the schemes are monitored regularly. It should be ensured that allocated funds are optimally utilised and irregular diversion of drinking water funds for other areas or works may be avoided.

## Ensure hygienic milk supply: HC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 8:** The Delhi High Court has asked the city government to ensure supply of clean and hygienic milk to citizens and see to it that cattle do not feed on garbage as it can have a detrimental effect on the quality of milk and those who consume it.

The order by a bench headed by Chief Justice Satish Chandra Sharma came on a petition by a lawyer seeking directions to the authorities to take all measures for ensuring clean and hygienic milk for the people of Delhi.

He further said if the petitioner files a representation with the authorities about her grievances, it will be considered in accordance with law. Observing that "no further orders are required to be passed" in the matter in view of the stand of the government, the court said the petitioner is at liberty to file a representation before the authorities.



## G20 SUMMIT Flower pots, foliage to adorn MCD roads

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 8:** The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) is planning to install various types of foliage and flower pots on sidewalks and kerbs of over 20 roads under its jurisdiction as part of the beautification ahead of the G20 summit here, an official said.

He said the installation of potted plants would be completed in the next four months. Authorities are working on identifying the roads in all 12 zones which are "popular and connect tourist places" for the installation of potted plants. It is the first time after the 2010 Commonwealth Games that such a proposal is being considered.

"We have decided to use potted plants because we don't have much space on the sides of roads. Potted plants are the best options. We are looking for shrubs that have been flowering for a long time. At least they should have four-six months of flowering," the official told PTI.

"We will identify over 20 stretches in the areas under our jurisdiction. In the next four months, we will install potted plants. This will ensure the beautification ahead of the G20 summit," he added. The G20 Leaders' Summit at the level of Heads of State and Government is scheduled to be held here on



Last month, the MCD was directed by Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena to ensure the planting of flowers and aesthetically appealing plants on the sidewalks and kerbs of roads owned by it

September 9 and 10.

Some of the shrubs that have been chosen by the officials are bougainvillea, champa and cassia

biflora. These varieties are drought tolerant, have flowered for several months and are well-suited for Delhi weather conditions.

The potted plants won't be effective in tackling pollution but we are hopeful that they will enhance the beauty of the city and control the dust, he asserted. Flower pots were installed on a large scale last time during the 2010 Commonwealth Games here.

On March 16, Saxena chaired a meeting to review the horticulture divisions of various departments and agencies and their future preparedness about flower plantation and other activities.



## of the day quote

Criminals, who earlier had little regard for authorities, shake like a leaf when law takes its course



YOGI ADITYANATH | UP CHIEF MINISTER

Historical facts cannot be denied by just cutting out portions that are inconvenient (to someone) from textbooks



PINARAYI VIJAYAN | KERALA CHIEF MINISTER

There has been a vast change in the Indian society after independence and this social and economic change has to be given the form of a revolution through education



OM BIRLA | LOK SABHA SPEAKER

## SHORT TAKES

### BIHAR TO GET NEW PRISONS

**Patna:** Keeping in view the excessive load on jails due to liquor offenders, Bihar government has decided to construct 13 new prisons across the state. Sources said that the new jails will be constructed at Madhepura, Kahalgaon, Nirmali, Narkatiaganj, Rajgir, Madora, Rajauli, Siwan, Gopalganj, Chakia, Pakdi Dayal, Mahnar, and Simri Bakhtiyarpur. The capacity of each prison will be 1,000 inmates. Besides these, the prison authority has also decided to construct new buildings in Bhabhua, Jamui, Aurangabad, Arwal and Paliganj.

### MURDER CONVICT HELD IN DELHI

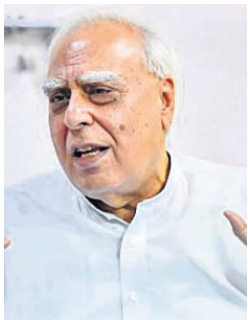
**New Delhi:** A murder convict, who jumped parole in 2020 and then brutally killed his former girlfriend, was arrested by the Delhi Police's Crime Branch in the city's Mangolpuri area, an official said Saturday. The accused was identified as Deepak (37), a resident of Mangolpuri area. The police had also announced a reward of Rs 50,000 on information of his whereabouts. According to the police, Deepak and his four associates in 2010 had kidnapped the son of a doctor in Rohini and took him to Gharanda, Haryana.

### WOMAN KILLED

**Agartala:** Eight people have been arrested on the charges of kidnapping and killing a 45-year-old tribal woman suspecting her to be a "witch" in Tripura's Khowai district, police said Saturday. Police said that the accused kidnapped Kaushalya Ghatwal, hacked her to death and dumped her body in an abandoned safety tank at Lengtibari village under Champahar police station. The incident occurred Thursday night and the police recovered the body and arrested all the eight accused late on Friday. The accused included the victim's in-laws and husband, who is the prime accused in the case.

### TWO INJURED

**Greater Noida:** A Pitbull attacked two brothers in Greater Noida's Liyana village, sources said, adding that a case has been registered against the dog's owners -- a father-son duo. The incident took place Friday evening. According to the sources, the dog first attacked the younger brother, identified as Raj Bhati, when he was standing outside his home. When the older brother, Narayan Bhati tried to save him, the Pitbull attacked him as well.



Now the government will decide what is fake and Union Home Minister Amit Shah says democracy is not in danger

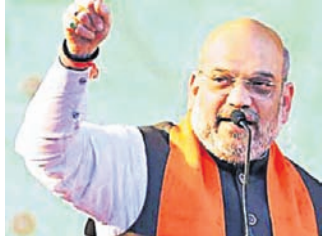
KAPIL SIBAL | MEMBER OF RAJYA SABHA

## Shah to visit Arunachal

In his first visit to Arunachal Pradesh as Home Minister, Shah will inaugurate nine micro hydel projects of the state government constructed under the 'Golden Jubilee Border Illumination Programme' in Kibithoo

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 8:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah will visit Arunachal Pradesh on April 10 and 11 where he will launch the 'Vibrant Villages Programme' in Kibithoo, a village along the India-China border.



Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the government of India has approved the 'Vibrant Villages Programme' (VVP) with central components of Rs 4,800 crore, including Rs 2,500 crore exclusively for road connectivity for the financial years 2022-23 to 2025-26, a home ministry statement said on Saturday.

The VVP is a centrally sponsored scheme under which 2,967 villages in 46 blocks of 19 districts abutting the northern border in the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh and Union Territory of Ladakh have been identified for comprehensive development.

In the first phase, 662 villages, including 455 in Andhra Pradesh, have been identified for priority coverage. The VVP will help in im-

proving the quality of life of people living in identified border villages and encourage people to stay at their native locations, thereby reversing the outmigration from these villages and adding to the security of the border, the statement said.

The district administration, with the help of appropriate mechanisms at block and panchayat levels, will prepare action plans for the identified villages to ensure 100 per cent saturation of central and state schemes. The focus areas of interventions identified for the development of villages include road connectivity, drinking water, electricity including solar and wind energy, mobile and internet connectivity, tourist centres, multi-purpose centres and healthcare infrastructure and wellness centres.



CHOOSING THE BEST: Women sort out onions at their courtyard in Nadia

PTI PHOTO

# Court gave shock to Oppn, says PM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Hyderabad, April 8:** Taking a dig at political parties who approached the Supreme Court alleging arbitrary use of central probe agencies against opposition leaders, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Saturday said the court gave them a "jolt" by refusing to entertain their plea.

Modi, who addressed a public meeting here after laying foundation stone and inaugurating several development projects, also said the lack of cooperation from the state government is leading to delay in the completion of several central projects in Telangana.

Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrababoo Naidu did not attend the inauguration of Vande Bharat train between Secunderabad and Tirupati, and also Modi's event dedicating to the nation and laying the foundation stone for several development projects in Telangana. Rao has stayed away from the events of Modi during the latter's visits to the state for more than a year now.

Observing that it is the people of Telangana who are at a loss, PM Modi urged the state government to not allow any hindrance in the works related to the development.

Modi, who slammed dynastic politics, said his government has attacked the real root of corruption of dynastic forces who want to keep their control over every system.

"Should we fight against corruption or not? Should we fight against the corrupt or not? Should



A few days ago, some political parties went to the court seeking protection that no one should seek to inquire our (parties) books filled with corruption. They went to court, but court gave them a shock

NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

the country be liberated from corruption or not? Should legal steps be taken against the corrupt however big or not? Should the law be allowed to work against the corrupt or not," he asked the gathering. "That's why 'these people' are upset and they are doing anything out of anger, Modi said.

"A few days ago, some political parties went to the court seeking protection that no one should seek to inquire our (parties) books filled with corruption. They went to

court, but court gave them a shock," Modi said, without taking any names.

Recently, as many as 14 political parties led by the Congress filed a petition in the apex court alleging that there has been an alarming rise in the use of coercive criminal processes against opposition political leaders and other citizens exercising their fundamental right to dissent. However, the Supreme Court, refusing to entertain the plea, observed that politicians do not have "higher immunity".

On April 5, a bench of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justice JB Pardiwala expressed disinclination to entertain the petition, saying courts are always there for taking up the grievances of political leaders as they do for common citizens. Modi, who said corruption and 'parivarvaad' (dynasty) are not different from each other, stated that every type of corruption begins to grow where there is 'parivarvaad'.

The main mantra of dynasty and dynastic politics is control of all, he opined. The dynasts want to keep their control over every system and does not like it at all that someone challenges their control, he said.

Giving the example of the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system promoted by his government and the promotion of digital payments across the country, the Prime Minister said the dynastic forces did not to give up their control on the system earlier.

## Pawar 'clarifies', bats for SC panel

The NCP chief said he was not aware of the antecedents of United States-based Hindenburg Research, which has alleged stock manipulation and accounting fraud in firms belonging to billionaire Gautam Adani

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, April 8:** Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) president Sharad Pawar Saturday said he is not completely opposed to a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) probe into the charges against the Adani group, but a Supreme Court committee will be more useful and effective.

Pawar said if a JPC has 21 members, 15 will be from the ruling party and six from the opposition due to numerical strength in Parliament, which will create doubts on the panel. He said the apex court decided to appoint a panel of retired Supreme Court judges with a direction of submitting the report in a specific time period.

"I am not completely opposed to the JPC...there have been JPCs and I have been a chairman of some of the JPCs. The JPC will be constituted on the basis of majority (in Parliament). Instead of a JPC, I am of the opinion the Supreme Court committee is more useful and effective," Pawar said.

The NCP chief also said he was not aware of the antecedents of United States-based Hindenburg Research, which has alleged stock manipulation and accounting fraud in firms belonging to billionaire Gautam Adani.

It has resulted in strident protests by the opposition Congress, led by Rahul Gandhi, and others against the Narendra Modi government



seeking a JPC probe. The Adani group has refuted the allegations.

"One foreign company takes a position about the situation in the country. We should decide how much focus should be on this. Instead of this (JPC), a Supreme Court panel is more effective," Pawar added.

In an interview, Pawar came out in support of the Adani Group and criticised the narrative around Hindenburg Research's report on the conglomerate. "Such statements were given by other individuals earlier too and there was a ruckus in Parliament for a few days but this time out-of-proportion importance was given to the issue," he said.

"The issues that were kept, who kept them, we had never heard of these people who gave the statement, what is the background. When they raise issues that cause a ruckus across the country, the cost is borne by the country's economy, we cannot disregard these things. It seems this was targeted," Pawar had said.

## EAT NOW, PAY LATER

### Pune trader offers mangoes on EMI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Pune, April 8:** With the prices of Alphonso mangoes eye-wateringly high, a trader in Pune in Maharashtra is offering the king of fruits on Equated Monthly Instalments or EMI.

If refrigerators and air-conditioners can be purchased on instalments, why not mangoes, reasons Gaurav Sanas of Gurukripa Traders and Fruit Products. Alphonso or Hapus mangoes from Devgad and Ratnagiri in the state's Konkan region, considered to be the best, are currently being sold at Rs 800 to 1300 per dozen in the retail market.

Sanas claimed his family's outlet is the first to sell mangos on EMI in the whole country. "The prices are always very high at the start of the season. We thought if refrigerators, ACs and other appliances can be bought on EMI, why not mangoes? Everyone then can afford mangoes as well," he said.

The procedure for buying the fruit at his outlet on EMI is similar to buying mobile phones on instalments. The customer needs to use a credit card and the purchase amount is converted into EMIs of three, six or 12 months. But the scheme is available for a minimum purchase of Rs 5,000. Sanas said, adding four consumers had availed of the scheme so far.

## CR Kesavan joins BJP



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 8:** CR Kesavan, great grandson of noted freedom fighter and India's last governor general C Rajagopalachari, joined the BJP Saturday as the party aims to boost its presence in southern India.

Kesavan, who was in the Congress earlier, heaped praise on Prime Minister Narendra Modi for ushering in "tectonic" transformation in India with his people-centric policies, and corruption-free and inclusive governance.

National security has been given primacy and India's history and traditions are being celebrated with various events, Kesavan, who hails from Tamil Nadu, said, referring to the recent Kashi-Tamil Samagam.

He praised the BJP for the "deep respects" it has for the country's founding fathers and mothers. Kesavan also lauded the government's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and credited it for India's rise in global stature.

# HIGH MORTALITY RATE WORRIES EXPERTS

WHILE INDIAN TIGERS HAVE THE HIGHEST GENETIC VARIATION COMPARED TO OTHER SUBSPECIES ACROSS THE WORLD, INBREEDING AND LOSS OF POTENTIAL HABITATS HAVE BEEN LEADING TO LOSS OF TIGERS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Bhopal, April 8:** Potential habitats with dense forest areas and proper corridors between tiger reserves located at distant places are considered key aspects to ensure long term conservation of tigers, says Alok Kumar, a former IFS officer who retired as Principal Chief Conservator of Forests of Madhya Pradesh. He is now one of the key members of the "Cheetah Project" at Kuno National Park.

In 2000 when Madhya Pradesh was divided into two, it had around 250-300 tigers, which have now reached up to 700. At that time, the tiger census was done on the basis of their footmarks count, which had always been questionable. Now, new technologies like the radio collar system and close monitoring



as well as high visibility have brought more authenticity.

Kumar said although the entire central Indian landscape is considered as a potential habitat for wild animals due to its dense for-

est areas, Madhya Pradesh has more potential because of its connectivity between the forest zones located within the state and also in neighbouring states Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Gujarat,

Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka.

While Indian tigers have the highest genetic variation compared to other subspecies across the world, inbreeding and loss of potential habitats have been leading to loss of tigers.

"Inbreeding may be good in terms of safety of tigers, but relocation is a much more important step to ensure the long term conservation of tigers. In Madhya Pradesh, the tigers' presence is there now at each national park besides seven tiger reserves. Because all forest zones or animal habitats are well connected they are being shifted from one to place to another," Kumar said.

He claimed that Madhya Pradesh has achieved 100 per cent growth of tigers in the last few decades, but on the other hand, challenges have also increased and the conflict between

wild animals and human beings is the result of it. "Strong force to protect wild animals is the need of the hour. Besides, proper monitoring and awareness among people living in the forest zones can play an important role in minimising animal-human conflicts," Kumar added.

Bhopal based wildlife activist Ajay Dube said Madhya Pradesh has the highest number of tiger reserves and plays a crucial role in the conservation of tigers. On the other hand, poaching of tigers has also been growing in the state. "No doubt Madhya Pradesh is a tiger state and because of the earlier efforts made in the state, it has been given the title of 'Tiger State'. Unfortunately in the last few years tiger deaths are on the rise and at a very high rate. As many as 270 tigers have died between 2012 and 2022," Dube said.

# international

## of the day quote

It's exciting to see someone from my organisation doing great & amazing things  
**KAMALA HARRIS** | US VICE PRESIDENT

The Republic of Cyprus has made it clear that it cannot contribute militarily (to Ukraine) as it cannot remain without arms  
**KONSTANTINOS LETYMBIOTIS** | CYPRUS SPOKESMAN

We made a small escalatory move and offered to extend the deal only for 60 days on the assumption that if there is no change in removing the obstacles to the exports of Russian fertilisers and grain, we would think whether the deal is needed  
**SERGEY LAVROV** | RUSSIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### Missing Texas boy feared dead

**Houston:** A missing 6-year-old boy from Texas, whose parents fled to India from the US and face felony charges of abandoning and endangering their child, is believed to be dead, a top police official has said. Noel Rodriguez-Alvarez, who has special needs, was last seen in November shortly after his twin sisters were born in October last year. Everman Police Chief Craig Spencer said Thursday that the search for the missing boy is now a death investigation and they are attempting to locate and recover his body.

### 6 wounded in shooting

**Isle of Palms (US):** Gunfire erupted on a South Carolina beach during a "senior skip day" event involving numerous teenagers Friday, wounding six people and prompting charges against two for unlawful possession of guns, police in South Carolina said. The shots broke out around 5:20 p.m. On Isle of Palms, 94 miles (151 kilometers) south of Myrtle Beach. Police are still investigating the shooting, and are asking for the public to provide additional information or video footage.

### 30 people killed in Nigeria attacks

**Abuja:** At least 30 people were killed in an attack on an internally displaced person's camp in north-central Nigeria, the second major attack in the area this week. Gunmen attacked civilians in Mgban village in Benue state Friday evening and an investigation is underway, said a local police officer.

## Iran installs cameras to monitor non-hijab wearers

A growing number of Iranian women have been ditching their veils since the death of a 22-year-old Kurdish woman in the custody of the morality police last September

REUTERS

In a further attempt to rein in increasing numbers of women defying the compulsory dress code, Iranian authorities are installing cameras in public places and thoroughfares to identify and

penalise unveiled women, the police announced Saturday.

After they have been identified, violators will receive "warning text messages as to the consequences", police said in a statement.

The move is aimed at "preventing resistance against the hijab law," said the statement, carried by the judiciary's Mizan news agency and other state media, adding that such resistance tarnishes the country's spiritual image and spreads insecurity.

A growing number of Iranian women have been ditching their veils since the death of a 22-year-old Kurdish woman in the custody



Australians should be optimistic about the future of our country but realistic about the challenges we face, and how the slowing global economy will affect our own prospects  
**JIM CHALMERS** | AUSTRALIAN TREASURER

## CHINA LASHES OUT AT WHO

Chinese health officials defended their search for the source of the COVID-19 virus and lashed out Saturday at the World Health Organisation after its leader said Beijing should have shared genetic information earlier



## Nepalese, Chinese officials discuss joint cooperation



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kathmandu, April 8:** Officials from Nepal and China have held a high-level meeting to discuss existing bilateral ties and cooperation and deliberated on the ways to further expand and consolidate cooperation in various areas like trade promotion, investment and connectivity.

The 15th meeting of the Bilateral Diplomatic Consultation Mechanism between the Foreign Ministries of Nepal and China was held in Beijing Friday.

The two sides discussed existing bilateral ties and cooperation and deliberated on the ways to further expand and consolidate partnership in various areas such as economic cooperation, trade promotion, investment, tourism and connectivity among others.

The meeting also reviewed the progress of different infrastructure development projects under China's grant assistance as well as Chinese-contracted projects and agreed to expedite the implementation of the projects so as to complete them in time, according to a statement issued by Nepal's Ministry of Foreign Affairs here.

However, the statement did not mention Beijing's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which could not take off even six years after the two countries signed the agreement.

During the high-level meeting Bharat Raj Paudyal, Foreign Secretary of Nepal, and Sun Weidong, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of China, led their respective delegations to the meeting, the statement said.

## China begins military drills around Taiwan

The drills come a day after Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen returned from a 10-day visit to Central America and the US where she met House Speaker Kevin McCarthy

AGENCIES

**Beijing, April 8:** China Saturday began military exercises around Taiwan to test the capabilities of its forces to "seize control of the sea, air and information," days after a meeting between the US House Speaker and the President of the self-ruled island in defiance of repeated threats by Beijing.

China views Taiwan as a break-away province. Beijing has not ruled out the possible use of force to reunify the self-ruled island with the mainland.

The Chinese military announced the start of three-day "combat readiness patrols," asserting that it is testing the capabilities of its forces to "seize control of the sea, air, and information."

The multi-day exercises coincided with the return of Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen to Taipei after her high-profile visit to the US earlier this week when she met US House Speaker, Kevin McCarthy, a move denounced by Beijing. China Friday slapped sanctions on two American organisations that hosted Tsai besides Asia-based groups - The Prospect Foundation and the Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats - for their involvement in promoting Taiwan's independence.

China views any official exchanges between foreign governments and Taiwan as an infringement on Beijing's claims of sovereignty over the island. The aggressive exercises were launched after French President Emmanuel Macron concluded his high-profile visit to China Friday, during which he held wide-range talks with his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping, prodding him to use his friendship with Russian leader Vladimir Putin to end the ongoing war in Ukraine.

Tsai's predecessor and pro-Beijing politician, Ma Ying-jeou, also returned to Taiwan Friday, ending a 12-day trip to the Chinese mainland, where he sought to promote the one-China framework as the basis for improving cross-strait



An aircraft of the Air Force under the Eastern Theatre Command of China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) attends a combat readiness patrol and "Joint Sword" exercises around Taiwan, from an undisclosed location in this handout image released

- China starts three days of drills around Taiwan
- Taiwan says 71 Chinese planes crossed Taiwan Strait median line
- Taiwan says it will respond calmly
- China angered by Taiwan president meeting US House Speaker
- Announcement comes shortly after French president left China

ties and holding talks.

The Chinese military's patrol and exercises are taking place in the maritime areas and airspace of the Taiwan Strait, off the northern and southern coasts of the island, and to the island's east, said Shi Yi, a spokesperson for Eastern Theatre Command of the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

These operations serve as a stern warning against the collusion between separatist forces seeking "Taiwan independence" and external forces and against their provocative activities, Shi said, adding the operations are necessary for safeguarding China's national sovereignty and territorial integrity

Video and images published by the state media showed that the exercise included a long-range rocket unit from the Eastern Theatre Command, destroyers, frigates, missile boats, fighter jets, bombers and electronic warfare planes.

The troops are conducting patrols "surrounding and approaching" the island to encircle it, according to state broadcaster CCTV, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post newspaper reported.

Taiwan's defence ministry said 42 sorties from PLA warplanes were detected, 29 of which crossed the median line - an unofficial dividing line in the Taiwan Strait - entering the island's southwest air defence identification zone. It said that a total of eight warships were detected, the ministry said, adding the island's forces "closely monitored and responded."

Hours before the PLA's announcement, the maritime safety administration in the south-eastern province of Fujian, just across the strait from Taiwan, announced live-fire military drills at two areas off its coast over several days. The notice said drills would be held between 8 am and noon Saturday off the coast of Fuzhou, the capital of Fujian.

## Pak President Alvi returns bill curtailing CJP powers

AGENCIES

**Islamabad, April 8:** Pakistan's judicial imbroglio intensified on Saturday after President Arif Alvi returned to Parliament for reconsideration of a bill aimed at clipping the powers of the chief justice, saying the proposed legislation is beyond the jurisdiction of the legislative body.

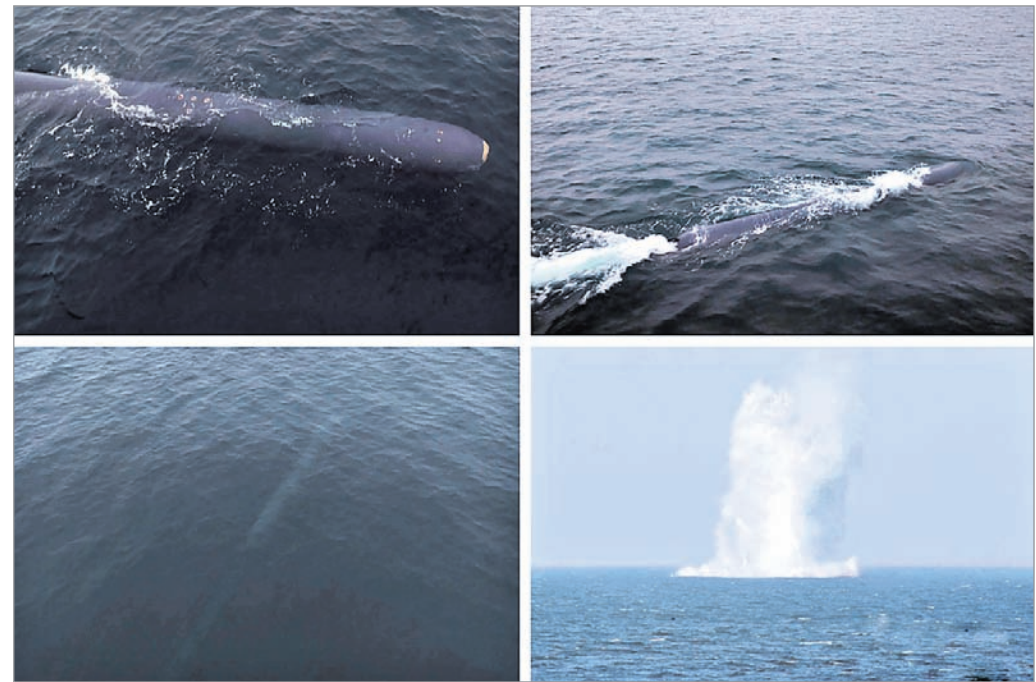
Pakistan is witnessing a rift between the judiciary and the government after a three-member bench of the Supreme Court headed by Chief Justice Uma Ata Bandial Tuesday fixed May 14 as the new date for elections to the Punjab Assembly and quashed the Election Commission's decision to extend the date of the poll from April 10 to October 8.

The apex court's verdict was criticised by the coalition government led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party, which has refused to accept it. The government also is keen to curb the suo moto (on its own) powers of the Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP), Bandial. The Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Bill, 2023

## IMF DEAL WELL ON TRACK: DAR

**Islamabad:** Pakistan's Finance Minister Ishaq Dar Saturday assured a jittery nation that the much-delayed ninth review of the USD 7 billion IMF programme was well on track, a day after he cancelled his visit to Washington for the spring meetings of the IMF and World Bank. Cash-strapped Pakistan and the IMF have failed to reach a staff-level agreement on the much-needed USD 1.1 billion bailout package aimed at preventing the country from going bankrupt. The funds are part of a USD 6.5 billion bailout package the IMF approved in 2019, which analysts say is critical if Pakistan is to avoid defaulting on external debt obligations.

was approved by both houses of Parliament last month and sent to the President for assent. The president said that the proposed legislation was prima facie beyond the jurisdiction of the parliament as only the Supreme Court has the power to make laws to regulate its business.



ANOTHER UNDERWATER TEST: This combination of photos provided by the North Korean government, shows what it says a test of underwater strategic weapon system held during April 4 - 7 in the waters off South Hamgyong province, North Korea. Independent journalists were not given access to cover the event depicted in this image distributed by the North Korean government

## MAJOR BREAKTHROUGH

# Vaccines for cancer, heart disease to be ready by 2030, say experts

AGENCIES

**London, April 8:** Millions of lives could be saved by a groundbreaking set of new vaccines for a range of conditions including cancer, experts have said.

A leading pharmaceutical firm said it is confident that jabs for cancer, cardiovascular and autoimmune diseases, and other conditions will be ready by 2030, the Guardian reported.

Studies into these vaccinations are also showing "tremendous promise", with some researchers saying 15 years' worth of progress has been "unspooled" in 12 to 18 months thanks to the success of the Covid jab.

Paul Burton, the chief medical officer of pharmaceutical com-



pany Moderna, said he believes the firm will be able to offer such treatments for "all sorts of disease areas" in as little as five years.

The firm, which created a leading coronavirus vaccine, is developing cancer vaccines that target

different tumour types, the Guardian reported.

Burton said: "We will have that vaccine and it will be highly effective, and it will save many hundreds of thousands, if not millions of lives. I think we will be able to

A leading pharmaceutical firm said it is confident that jabs for cancer, cardiovascular and autoimmune diseases, and other conditions will be ready by 2030, the Guardian reported

The firm, which created a leading coronavirus vaccine, is developing cancer vaccines that target different tumour types

offer personalised cancer vaccines against multiple different tumour types to people around the world."

He also said that multiple respiratory infections could be covered by a single injection - allowing vulnerable people to be protected against Covid, flu and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) - while mRNA therapies could be available for rare diseases for which there are currently no drugs, the Guardian reported.

Therapies based on mRNA work by teaching cells how to make a protein that triggers the body's immune response against disease.

## US abortion pill access in doubt

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Austin, April 8:** Access to the most commonly used method of abortion in the US plunged into uncertainty Friday following conflicting court rulings over the legality of the abortion medication mifepristone that has been widely available for more than 20 years.

For now, the drug the Food and Drug Administration approved in 2000 appeared to remain at least immediately available in wake of two separate rulings that were issued just minutes apart by federal judges in Texas and Washington.

US District Judge Matthew Kacsmaryk, a Trump appointee, ordered a hold on federal approval of mifepristone in a decision that overruled decades of scientific approval.

But that decision came at nearly same time that US District Judge Thomas O. Rice, an Obama appointee, essentially ordered the opposite and directed US authorities not to make any changes



that would restrict access to the drug in at least 17 states where Democrats sued in an effort to protect availability.

The extraordinary timing of the competing orders revealed the high stakes surrounding the drug nearly a year after the US Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade and curtailed access to abortion across the country.

The Justice Department swiftly gave notice it would appeal the

Texas ruling and said it was reviewing the decision from Washington.

Abortion providers slammed the Texas ruling, including Whole Woman's Health, which operates six clinics in five states and said it would continue to dispense mifepristone in person and by mail over the next week as they review the rulings.

"FDA is under one order that says you can do nothing and another that says in seven days I'm going to require you to vacate the approval of mifepristone," said Glenn Cohen of Harvard Law School.

The abortion drug has been widely used in the US. Since securing FDA approval and there is essentially no precedent for a lone judge overruling the medical decisions of the Food and Drug Administration. Mifepristone is one of two drugs used for medication abortion in the United States, along with misoprostol, which is also used to treat other medical conditions.

## of the day quote

As part of our strategy at Skoda, there is no compromise on safety for our customers. I am delighted to share that our second India 2.0 car – Slavia has received a 5-star rating in the Global NCAP safety test

PETR SOLC | SKODA AUTO INDIA BRAND DIRECTOR

Hyundai has been one of the forerunners to induce new mobility experiences and we are all set to once again excite customers with an all-new SUV that is coming soon to take you places

TARUN GARG | HYUNDAI MOTOR INDIA COO

We are aiming for 20 to 25 per cent growth in volumes in AC business this year

B THAGARAJAN | BLUE STAR MANAGING DIRECTOR

## SHORT TAKES

### REC raises \$750mn via green bonds

**New Delhi:** State-owned non-banking finance firm REC Ltd Saturday said it has raised USD 750 million (about ₹6,138 crore) through issuance of green bonds. The net proceeds from the issue of the bonds will be applied to finance, in whole or in part, the eligible green projects in accordance with the approvals granted by Reserve Bank of India from time to time and in accordance with the ECB guidelines, according to a statement. "REC Ltd has successfully raised USD 750 million through 5-year 144A/ RegS green bonds under its global medium-term programme of USD 7 billion," the statement said.

### GCPL to invest ₹100cr in Early Spring

**New Delhi:** FMCG major Godrej Consumer Products Ltd (GCPL) has announced investing ₹100 crore in Early Spring, a new early consumer fund set up by Spring Marketing Capital (Spring). Spring is creating a brand-first investment franchise that aims to support founders who are building the brands of tomorrow. The Godrej group's FMCG arm GCPL will anchor a new ₹300 crore early-stage consumer fund being set up by Spring, in addition to offering its expertise and experience to help founders build strong, sustainable companies. "Enabling companies to leverage marketing expertise along with capital, Spring's first fund of Rs 150 crore continues to invest in companies at Series A and beyond," a statement said.

# India's digital infra worth emulating by many nations: IMF

The use of digital payments has expanded the customer base of smaller merchants, documenting their cash flow and improving access to finance

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 8:** India has built a world-class digital public infrastructure which is transforming lives and economy and can be a lesson for many countries to follow, an IMF Working Paper said.

India Stack is the collective name of a set of commonly used digital public infrastructure (DPIs) in India.

It consists of three different layers – unique identity (Aadhaar), complimentary payments systems (Unified Payments Interface, Aadhaar Payments Bridge, Aadhaar Enabled Payment Service), and data exchange (DigiLocker and Account Aggregator). Together they enable online, paperless, cashless, and privacy-respecting digital access to a variety of public and private services, a working paper titled 'Stacking up the Benefits: Lessons from India's Digital Journey' said.

The benefit of this investment is felt across the country and served India well during the pandemic,

it said, adding, Aadhaar, helped facilitate the transfer of social safety net payments directly from the government treasury's accounts to beneficiaries' bank accounts, helping to reduce leakages, curb corruption and providing a tool to effectively reach households to increase coverage.

The government of India estimates that, up to March 2021, about 1.1 per cent of GDP in expenditure was saved due to the digital infrastructure and other governance reforms.

"Using this digital infrastructure India was able to quickly provide support to an impressive share of poor households during the pandemic. In the first months of the pandemic about 87 per cent of poor households received at least one benefit," it said.

India Stack has been used as a platform to foster innovation and competition; expand markets; close gaps in financial inclusion; boost government revenue collection; and improve public expenditure efficiency.

Digital payments are now ubiquitous,



UPI accounts for 68 per cent of all payment transactions by volume.

The use of digital payments has expanded the customer base of smaller merchants, documenting their cash flow and improving access to finance.

Roughly 4.5 million individuals and companies have benefited from easier access to financial services through the Account Aggregator, since it was first launched in August

2021, and adoption is increasing rapidly, it said.

Digitalisation has also supported formalisation of the economy, as around 8.8 million new taxpayers registered for the GST between July 2017 and March 2022, contributing to buoyant government revenues in recent years.

The government service provision is streamlined; for example, citizens can access documents issued by state and central government

# Banks sanction ₹23.2L-cr under Mudra Yojana

About 68 per cent of the 40.82 crore loan accounts under the scheme belong to women entrepreneurs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 8:** Banks and financial institutions have sanctioned ₹23.2 lakh crore to over 40.82 crore beneficiaries under the Mudra Yojana launched to fund the unfunded eight years ago.

Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY) was launched April 8, 2015, by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to facilitate easy collateral-free micro-credit of up to ₹10 lakh to non-corporate, non-farm small and micro-entrepreneurs for income-generating activities.

Loans under PMMY are provided by Member Lending Institutions (MLIs) – banks, non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), microfinance institutions (MFI) and other financial intermediaries, the finance ministry said in a statement Saturday.

Speaking on the occasion of the 8th anniversary, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said, "Since the launch of the scheme, as of March 24, 2023, about ₹23.2 lakh crore has been sanctioned in 40.82 crore loan accounts".

About 68 per cent of accounts under the scheme belong to women entrepreneurs, and 51 per cent of ac-



counts belong to entrepreneurs of SC/ST and OBC categories. This demonstrates that easy availability of credit to the budding entrepreneurs of the country has led to innovation and sustained increase in per capita income, she added.

Highlighting indigenous growth through MSMEs, the finance minister said, "The growth of MSMEs has contributed massively to the 'Make in India' programme, as strong domestic MSMEs lead to

increased indigenous production both for domestic markets as well as for exports. The PMMY scheme has helped in the generation of large-scale employment opportunities at the grassroots level, and also has proved to be a game changer while boosting the Indian economy".

Minister of State for Finance Bhagwat K Karad said the PMMY scheme aims to provide collateral-free access to credit in a seamless

# Parl panel asks govt to revive loss-making PSUs

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, April 8:** Out of the 16 operational central public sector enterprises (CPSEs) under the administrative control of the heavy industries ministry, five CPSEs including Heavy Engineering Corporation (HEC) and Hindustan Machine Tools (HMT) are making losses.

A high-level Parliamentary panel of Rajya Sabha has expressed concern over this fact and also noted that a number of CPSEs under the ministry's administrative control are gradually decreasing.

The panel has asked the heavy industries ministry to work towards enhancing the performance of CPSEs under its control and adopt restructuring measures to revive the loss making

units, so that no further closure of PSUs takes place.

The Parliamentary standing committee on industry which is headed by DMK MP Tiruchi Siva, in its report, presented in the Parliament during the recently concluded budget session, said that HEC has been a loss-making enterprise continuously for the past several years, yet a meagre token amount of ₹0.01 crore has been kept as a budgetary support for it for 2023-24.

The committee thus has recommended that the ministry should make concerted efforts to improve the situation of HEC and if need arises, may seek additional funds at the 'revised estimate' stage.

The ministry should also give details of the steps taken and plans

# Easing commodity inflation to boost FMCG

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 8:** Easing of commodity inflation is favourable for the overall consumption trend for FMCG products, especially in rural markets, which have remained muted for the last five to six quarters, according to leading manufacturers Dabur and Marico.

Godrej Consumer Products Ltd (GCPL) also expects margins to show an improvement in the March quarter.

"During the quarter, the sector continued to witness gradual recovery with year-on-year volume trends improving in each quarter. While urban and premium categories were stable, easing of

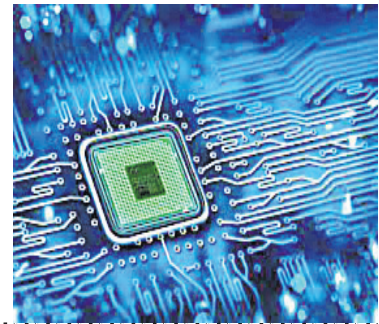


broader commodity inflation bodes well for overall consumption trends, especially in rural markets," Marico said.

Among key inputs, copra prices

## SAMSUNG TO CUT CHIP OUTPUT

Samsung Electronics Co Ltd has said it would make a 'meaningful' cut to chip production, following the lead of smaller rivals, as it grapples with a sharp global downturn in semiconductor demand that has sent prices plummeting.



# India surpasses ₹85,000cr worth mobile phone exports



India is likely to produce 45-50 per cent of Apple's iPhones by 2027, at par with China, where 80-85 per cent of iPhones were produced in 2022

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, April 8:** The government's push towards local manufacturing of consumer electronics items has helped India cross record more than ₹85,000 crore in mobile exports in the fiscal year ending March 31, industry data showed Saturday.

Buoyed by attractive government incentives towards local manufacturing, India surpassed a remarkable \$10 billion worth smartphone exports in the fiscal year 2022-2023, according to the data provided by the India Cellular and Electronics Association (ICEA) to IANS.

Smartphone exports from India have doubled from a corresponding period from the last fiscal year, driven by production-linked incentive (PLI) schemes.

The top five global destinations India currently exports mobile phones to are the UAE, the US, the Netherlands, the UK and Italy, according to the ICEA data.

"The mobile phone industry will cross \$40 billion manufacturing output and 25 per cent exports at \$10 billion is a stellar performance," Pankaj Mohindroo, Chairman of ICEA, had earlier told IANS.

More than 97 per cent of the smartphones sold in India are now being produced locally.

India is now the second largest mobile phone manufacturer in the world.

According to Minister of State for Electronics and IT, Rajeev Chandrasekhar, the year 2023 will be a milestone as the country will cross ₹1 lakh crore in mobile phone exports this year.

India is likely to produce 45-50 per cent of Apple's iPhones by 2027, at par with China, where 80-85 per cent of iPhones were produced in 2022.

According to estimates, India and Vietnam are to become the biggest beneficiaries of smartphone supply chain migration out of China.

India accounted for 10-15 per cent of iPhones' overall production capacity at the end of 2022.

Apple became the first smartphone player in India to have exported \$1 billion worth iPhones in the month of December. It currently manufactures iPhones 12, 13, 14 and 14 Plus in the country.

The country is now moving in a different direction, which is largely export-focused and led by the government's performance-linked scheme (PLI) push.

# Microsoft to pay \$3mn fine for selling software to sanctioned Russian firms

AGENCIES

**San Francisco, April 8:** Microsoft will pay \$3 million in penalty in the US for selling software to sanctioned companies in Russia, Cuba, Iran and Syria from 2012 to 2019.

The majority of the apparent violations involved blocked Russian entities or persons located in the Crimea region of Ukraine, and occurred as a result of the Microsoft Entities' failure to identify and prevent the use of its products by prohibited parties, according to the US Department of the Treasury.

"The settlement amount reflects Office of Foreign Assets Control's (OFAC) determination that the conduct of the Microsoft Entities was non-egregious and voluntarily self-disclosed, and further reflects the significant remedial measures Microsoft undertook upon discovery of the apparent violations," it said in a statement.

According to an enforcement notice from OFAC, Microsoft, Microsoft Ireland, and Microsoft Russia failed to oversee who was buying the company's software and services through third-party partners.

Between July 2012 and April 2019, the Microsoft Entities engaged in 1,339 apparent violations of multiple OFAC sanctions programmes when they sold software licenses, activated software licenses, and/or provided related services from servers and systems located in the US and Ireland to SDNs, blocked persons, and other end users located in Cuba, Iran, Syria, Russia, and the Crimea region of Ukraine.

"The causes of these apparent violations included the lack of complete or accurate information on the identities of the end customers for Microsoft's products," said the Treasury. The total value of these sales and related services was \$12,105,189.79.

Microsoft Russia employees may have also intentionally tried to defeat the company's due diligence efforts.

through one platform.

Similarly, the India Stack has digitised and simplified Know Your Customer procedures, lowering costs; banks that use e-KYC lowered their cost of compliance from USD 12 to USD 6 cents, it said.

The decrease in costs made lower income clients more attractive to service and generated profits to develop new products, it said.

Citing an example of financial inclusion, the paper said, there was a push by the government in 2014 to provide access to a no-frills, low-cost bank account, that doubled the coverage of individuals with bank accounts.

The Jandhan scheme targeted the financially underserved, especially rural women. Under this initiative 462.5 million bank accounts were opened in both urban and rural areas as of August 2022.

Using a digital backbone allowed India to scale its vaccine delivery quickly and overcome challenges such as large-scale internal migration, it said, adding, the technology underlying CoWIN has been deployed in Indonesia, Philippines,

improvement sequentially, although it falls short of a full recovery.

"While urban markets have returned to positive volume growth, rural markets still remain muted," the homegrown FMCG major, which owns power brands such as Dabur Chyawanprash, Dabur Honey and Real, said.

However, it also added that despite "near-term consumption pressure", there are some "green shoots which are emerging such as moderating inflation, improving consumer confidence and increase in government spending".

Inflation continued to cool off for most of the commodities and gross margins for its India business are expected to show an improvement.

# TITANS AIM FOR HAT-TRICK OF WINS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, April 8: Defending champions Gujarat Titans would be eyeing a hat-trick of wins, while Kolkata Knight Riders, fresh from their decimation of Royal Challengers Bangalore, would be keen to show the win was not a flash in the pan when the two sides clash in the IPL here Sunday.

The home advantage apart, the Titans have the players to achieve the goals, and it has been all too visible in the first two games of the season.

If their opening match against Chennai Super Kings gave an insight into young Shubman Gill's form with the bat and the tie against Delhi Capitals threw up an unlikely hero in Sai Sudharsan.

With two young and in-form batters in the side, and a bowling de-



partment overflowing with the experience of pace bowlers Mohammed Shami, skipper Hardik Pandya and the craftiness of Afghan spinner Rashid Khan, KKR could find the going tough in the away match. With

opener Wriddhiman Saha, Gill has forged a potent partnership, which, on any given day, can tackle the best bowling attacks in the IPL and generously monetize the powerplay overs.

With Rahul Tewatia almost always dealing in maximums and Rashid displaying his batting prowess in ample measure last year, the batting lineup looks sorted. To add to that, David Miller also showed that the South African is also in good nick.

While the likes of Shami, Rashid and Alzarri Joseph have been effective, with the Indian pacer emerging as the leading wicket-taker with five scalps in the two games, the inability to contain runs in powerplay overs is something the bowling stalwart will have to figure out ahead of the clash against the two-time IPL champions.

KKR, on the other hand, have an interesting puzzle to solve before they take the field against Titans. With Jason Roy being roped in to give the side a boost following in-

jury to regular captain Shreyas Iyer and the pullout of Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, it remains to be seen how KKR fit the England opener after young Afghan wicketkeeper Rahmanullah Gurbaz's exploits at the top.

Gurbaz scored a quick 22 against Punjab Kings, which KKR lost by seven runs (DLS method). But the 21-year-old was a revelation against RCB. There is a likelihood that Roy will replace Gurbaz.

However the 81-run win against the star-studded RCB, aided by Shardul Thakur's all-round show, the dream debut by Delhi teenager Suyash Sharma and the brilliance of slow bowlers Varun Chakravarthy (4/15) and Sunil Narine (2/16) will give enough confidence to skipper Nitish Rana to go into the game with a positive frame of mind.

# Sunrisers look to bounce back vs Punjab Kings



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad, April 8: Smarting from back-to-back defeats, Sunrisers Hyderabad will have a lot to ponder, especially addressing their batting frailties, when they take on a high-flying Punjab Kings in the IPL here Sunday.

For a team that finished at the eighth spot in the last two editions, SRH would have hoped for a better start to the season but they ended up suffering two crushing defeats at the hands of Rajasthan Royals and Lucknow Super Giants respectively.

A poor show with the bat despite some exciting players in the line-up is the prime reason behind their failure. Losing wickets in a heap has proved to be their bane as they failed to get any momentum against LSG.

The return of new skipper Aiden Markram too didn't change their fate as he made a duck. The ability to play spin was behind the rise of Harry Brook but he got out to spinners in both the matches.

In the top-order, SRH tried wicketkeeper Anmolpreet Singh as an opener instead of Abhishek Sharma in their last match and he looked promising, but Mayank Agarwal and Rahul Tripathi have been inconsistent.

In fact, it took two cameos from Abdul Samad to take SRH to a decent total in the two matches. With big-hitting Heinrich Klaasen waiting in the wings, it remains to be seen what combination they go for to prop up the batting.

Afghan pacer Fazalhaq Farooqi has been most consistent for them but to be fair, the bowlers didn't have enough total to defend, something which SRH will have to fix at the earliest.

Punjab, on the other hand, are soaring high after two comprehensive wins. Punjab have produced a fine display of their bowling and batting prowess. Captained by the experienced and calm Shikhar Dhawan, PBKS rode on their superior batting and then defended the totals with Arshdeep Singh producing the goods in the two matches.

Dhawan has led from the front with two fifties, while Prabhsimran Singh and Bhanuka Rajapaksa raised their hands when needed as the top order has looked solid.

Among foreign recruits, Nathan Ellis was sensational against RR in the last match but pace bowling all-rounder Sam Curran - the most expensive buy ever in IPL history at Rs 18.50 crore - has so far leaked a lot of runs. However, on paper PBKS has the edge and it will take a special effort from SRH to outwit them at their own den.



Telecast: Star Sports channels

# Rahane, Jadeja guide CSK past MI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 8: Ajinkya Rahane (61, 27b, 7x4, 3x6) smashed the fastest half century of IPL 2023 - off just 19 balls - and Ruturaj Gaikwad struck an unbeaten 40 (36b, 2x4, 1x6) to power Chennai Super Kings to a seven-wicket win over Mumbai Indians here Saturday.

An ordinary MI succumbed to their second consecutive defeat in as many matches while CSK recorded their second win on the trot, moving to the fourth spot in the points table while the five-time winners remained at eighth.

The 34-year-old Rahane made a cracking debut for CSK in the IPL, producing one of the most brutal knocks in the competition while recording the fastest fifty of the league this year.

Rahane's blitz and Gaikwad's knock, combined with the efforts of Chennai spin duo of Ravindra Jadeja (3/20) and Mitchell Santner (2/28) who shared five wickets earlier, fuelled CSK's win over arch rivals MI. CSK finished at 159/3 in 18.1 overs chasing 158, winning with 11 balls to spare.

Rahane collected 23 runs hitting Arshad Khan for four boundaries and a six in the fourth over while



CSK's young gun Gaikwad happily took the backseat. Rahane truly looked at home on his 'home ground' Wankhede Stadium, unleashing delightful strokes that reaffirmed CSK's command on the game.

Rahane and Gaikwad came together in the first over of CSK's

chase with Devon Conway playing one onto his wickets off Jason Behrendorff (1/24). They added 82 runs for the second wicket before Rahane perished in the eighth over off Piyush Chawla (1/33).

shared five wickets to lead CSK's charge as MI hobbled to 157/8. The pair halted Mumbai's advance after the home side had raced to 61/1 in the powerplay, with MI's fight petering out against CSK's spinners who made up for the absence of strike bowler Deepak Chahar.

An opening stand of 38 runs between skipper Rohit Sharma (21) and Ishan Kishan (32) was the best partnership for MI, with Suryakumar Yadav's struggle continuing and young batters flopping again.

With a strong start, Mumbai looked well-positioned to launch for a big total, but instead, collapsed to 84/5 in 10 overs, losing four wickets for just 23 runs in 24 balls with Jadeja and Santner causing the damage.

Jadeja pinned Tilak Verma (22) in front of the wickets to keep the hosts under the pump. With pressure piling up, Tristan Stubbs (5) perished in the 16th over. However, vital contributions from Tim David (31) and Hrithik Shokeen (18 n o) took MI past the 150-run mark.

**BRIEF SCORES:** MI 157/8 (Ishan Kishan 32, Tim David 31; Ravindra Jadeja 3/20, Mitchell Santner 2/28, Tushar Deshpande 2/31) lost to CSK 159/3 (Ajinkya Rahane 61, Ruturaj Gaikwad 40; Kumar Kartikeya 1/24) by 7 wickets.

# Rajasthan Royals hammer Delhi Capitals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, April 8: Delhi Capitals' 'Summer of Horrors' continued as they crashed to a 57-run loss against Rajasthan Royals, completing a hat-trick of lopsided defeats in this edition of IPL, here Saturday.

While Yashasvi Jaiswal (60, 31b, 11x4, 1x6) reaffirmed his status as the brightest talent among India's gen-next batters, Jos Buttler showed no signs of finger pain en route a chiselled 79 (51b, 11x4, 1x6) in Royals' challenging 199/4 after David Warner committed a tactical 'harakiri' by opting to field on a batting shirtfront.

The Australian couldn't be blamed as his pencil-thin Indian batting unit was put on its haunches as they managed only 142/9 in the end after being out-batted by the two Royals openers with Shimron Hetmyer (39 n o, 21b, 1x4, 4x6) adding a bit of icing on the cake.

In the Royals' innings, there were 23 boundaries and seven sixes while DC in their entire innings failed to hit a single six on what was considered to be batting paradise. The Royals thus earned their second win in three games, having



lost a high scoring thriller against Punjab Kings at this very venue. Trent Boult (3/29) then did what he does for a living. He got one to move a shade, squaring up Prithvi Shaw (0) and exposing his poor technique once again. The very next ball jagged back enough and found Manish Pandey (0) rooted to his crease for a plumb leg before decision. There was not much left in the game after that kind of horrendous start.

Earlier, it was a case of 'Afternoon showing fate of evening' as Jaiswal hammered a hapless Khaleel Ahmed into submission by crunching five boundaries in the opening over. His 31-ball innings laid the foundation before Buttler finished

with a flourish. The fate of DC bowlers could have been sealed in the first six overs, which yielded 68 runs, but Kuldeep Yadav (1/31), Mukesh Kumar (2/36) and Rovman Powell (1/18) did well to control the damage to some extent at the back-end.

# India reach AFC Women's Olympic Qualifiers Round 2

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bishkek, April 8: The Indian women's team registered their second successive win, defeating hosts Kyrgyz Republic 4-0 at the Dolen Omurzakov Stadium to seal qualification for Round 2 of the 2024 AFC Women's Olympic Qualifying Tournament.

Having defeated the hosts 5-0 in their first match earlier this week, India exerted their dominance over the Kyrgyz Republic once again, with Sandhya Ranganathan netting a brace, and Anju Tamang and substitute Renu scoring a goal each Friday.

The Blue Tigresses got off to a good start, and it did not take them long to get the lead as Sandhya scored in the 18th minute, beating two defenders before tucking her shot past the rival goalkeeper.

A few minutes later, India suffered a setback when Karthika Angamuthu was sent off for an off-the-ball challenge on Kyrgyz



Sandhya (C) celebrates India's opener as Anju (R) and Karthika smile in delight

captain Aizhan Boronbekova. However, that did not deter their resolve as Anju Tamang slammed it home on a half-volley, to double India's lead in the 24th minute. The score remained 2-0 as the teams headed inside for the breather. India picked up where they had

left off in the second half as Indumathi Kathiresan surged up-front on the left and sent in a low cross that Sandhya blasted into the top corner, to make it 3-0. Renu headed in a corner by Dalima Chhibber, looping it over the opposition goalkeeper's head, to make it 4-0.

# Shankar wins decathlon silver, misses nat'l record by whisker



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 8: Commonwealth Games medalist high jumper Tejaswin Shankar bagged a decathlon silver and came close to breaking the national record at the Jim Click Shootout competition in Arizona, USA.

Tejaswin, who won the high jump bronze in the 2022 CWG in Birmingham, competed in the gru-

elling 10-event decathlon and scored a cumulative 7,648 points - 10 less than Bharatinder Singh's national record of 7,658 set in 2011.

Till Steinforth of Nebraska stood first with 7,845 points after two days of gruelling competition over 10 events. The 24-year-old Tejaswin, who is currently working in the US after completing college at the Kansas State University, competed as an unattached athlete. He won high jump (2.19m) and 400m race (48.41 sec). The other eight events are 100m race, long jump, shot put, 110m hurdles race, discus throw, pole vault, javelin throw and 1500m race.

Though he missed the national record by a whisker, his 7,648 points breached the Asian Games standard of 7,500 set by the Athletics Federation of India.

# Priyanshu cruises into Orleans Masters final

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Orleans, April 8: India's Priyanshu Rajawat stormed into the finals of the Orleans Masters Super 300 badminton tournament with a straight game demolition of Ireland's Nhat Nguyen in the semifinals here Saturday.

The 21-year-old, who was part of the India team that won the 2022 Thomas Cup, dished out an attacking game to outplay the world number 35 Nguyen 21-12, 21-9 in a lopsided men's singles semifinals to progress to his maiden final of a super 300 world tour event. He will face either Denmark's Magnus Johannesen or China's Lei Lan Xi in the summit clash.

Rajawat was sharp at the net and precise in his returns. He ex-



ploited his opponent's forehand and the Indian's flat drives and cross court flicks troubled Nguyen, who committed many errors.

After an initial fight, Rajawat moved into the mid-game break with an 11-9 lead. However, after resumption, he dominated the rallies to swiftly move to 17-11.

In the end, another steep return from the Indian ended in his opponent hitting out as Rajawat grabbed 10 game points and sealed it with another over-the-head precise return on his opponent's forehand.

After the change of sides, Rajawat started on the same note as the Irish huffed and puffed across the court. The Indian produced some powerful smash from deep into the court to keep marching ahead.

At the interval, the Indian was 11-3 up, leaving his opponent in deep sea. Rajawat punished his opponent every time he erred or lifted short as points kept coming thick and fast.

Rajawat's solid backhand and options to play many strokes helped him to wriggle out of a tight situation as Nguyen looked clueless. The Irish, in his pursuit to corner the Indian, ended up committing far too many errors as Rajawat reached 18-3 in a jiffy.

Another short lift was disposed with a flat cross court return by Rajawat, who moved to 14 match points when his opponent went long. Nguyen saved three match points before Rajawat unleashed another attacking return to complete the job.