



BUSTING MYTH

Actor Pooja Hegde dismisses rumours of dating co-star Salman Khan, says she is single and she loves it

LEISURE P2



PENSION REFORMS

France's Constitutional Council approves Friday the unpopular plan to increase the retirement age from 62 to 64 years

INTERNATIONAL P10



DC FACE RCB TODAY

Winless Delhi Capitals need to fire in unison if they have to break the jinx against RCB

SPORTS P12

Baripada country's hottest at 44°Celsius

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 14: Severe heatwave continued to prevail across the state Friday with the highest temperature of 44 degree Celsius registered at Baripada in Mayurbhanj district. In the process, Baripada beat its own record of 43.5 degree Celsius which it had recorded Thursday to become India's hottest place. The town continued to be the hottest Friday also. Jharsuguda with a temperature of 42.8 degree Celsius was a close second.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD) bulletin issued Friday, at least 25 places in Odisha recorded a maximum temperature of 40 degrees Celsius or above, of which 10 places witnessed a day temperature of 42 degrees.

Talcher at 42.6 degree Celsius was the third highest in terms of temperatures recorded. It was followed by Boudh and Titlagarh (42.5 degrees each), Sambalpur and Bolangir (42.2 degrees each) and Angul and Sonepur (42.1 degrees each). The western Odisha town of Sundargarh sizzled at 42 degree Celsius.

Capital city Bhubaneswar and Cuttack city recorded maximum day temperatures of 40.5 degrees and 41.2 degrees, respectively. The IMD has issued yellow warnings for Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, Sundargarh, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Deogarh and Angul for Saturday. It also said that similar heatwave condition will prevail in some places of Deogarh, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, Angul and Boudh districts, April 16.

At the same time, the IMD has said that there may be some respite from the extreme heat April 17 onwards. It said that thunderstorms are likely to occur in some parts of Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Keonjhar, Dhenkanal, Angul, Koraput, Nabarangpur, Gajapati, Khurda, Puri, Ganjam, Malkangiri, Nayagarh and Kalahandi districts.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Every politician who visits us wants his photo or statue. Nobody is interested in his writings and speeches!

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
MAX	40.6°C	41.2°C
MIN	25.0°C	25.5°C
Humidity	65%	68%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Dry	very likely



SEEKING DIVINE BLESSINGS: A man with a kid in his arms, walks on a burning coal bed as part of Jhamu Yatra at Bastari Mutt in Buxi Bazar area of Cuttack, Friday

PIC: RAJKISHORE MOHANTY

Kids 'married' off to dogs in Balasore

PNN & AGENCIES

Balasore, April 14: Human-dog marriages may sound bizarre, but a tiny tribal hamlet in Balasore district Thursday witnessed not one, but two simultaneous tying of the nuptial knot between dogs and children in keeping with a local superstition that this would ward off evil spirits.

Machua Sing had to arrange a female dog as 'bride' for his 11-year-old son Tapan Sing while Manas Sing had to arrange a male dog as 'groom' for his seven-year-old kid Laxmi.

The Sings are 'Ho' tribals from Bandhsahi village in Soro block. Their search for dogs to wed their children came after the kids developed first teeth on the upper jaw, which local tribals believe can have an 'evil' effect on children's lives.

"According to community traditions, the two 'marriages' were performed and the rituals continued from 7.00am till 1.00pm along with a community feast," said Sagar Sing, a graduate from the village.

"The community believes that the evil which may happen will pass to the dogs once the 'marriage' is solemnised. This of course has no scientific basis but continues to be a superstition passed on by elders," Sagar added.

Fresh clashes leave 1 dead in Sambalpur

Despite promises by concerned groups, the Hanuman Jayanti procession was again pelted with stones leading to escalation of violence

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, April 14: Despite all possible precautions being taken, violence once again flared up in this town during Hanuman Jayanti celebrations Friday. The clashes left one person dead and one injured. The deceased has been identified as Chandra Sekhar Mirdha, 25, a resident of Sanasihari village under Town Police Station limits.

Mirdha was returning home when he was chased by a group of sword and knife-wielding youths belonging to a particular community near the Mangala temple close to Daleipara. He was stabbed repeatedly leading to his death. Biswajit Sikha, 30, who was with Mirdha also suffered serious injuries in the attack.

Sources informed that another youth had been attacked late Thursday night and he is currently undergoing treatment at VIMSAR in Burla. The attack had created palpable tension in the city.

It should be stated here that Sambalpur SP, Battula Gangadhar



A shop set on fire at Golbazar Chowk during the violence Friday; (Inset): An injured Biswajit Sikha at the hospital

OP PHOTO

had earlier said in the day that the 'law and order situation in the town is gradually returning to normalcy'. However, the incidents that took place Friday evening proved otherwise.

The fresh clashes erupted when the Hanuman Jayanti procession, which started at around 5.30pm, was pelted with stones near the Zilla School Chowk. Immediately, the situation turned for the worse and widespread vandalism and arson took place. Four shops at Golbazar Chowk and two at Church Square were set on fire. A total of 10 shops have been vandalised and set ablaze so far since violence first

began Wednesday. Heavy security arrangements had been put in place on the procession route. Although police arrived at the spot where the alleged murder took place, they did not arrest anyone, the friends of the deceased alleged.

Gangadhar had informed that 40 platoons of police have been stationed throughout the city. He also said drones and CCTVs were in place to take stock of the situation. Gangadhar stated that so far 32 persons have been arrested since the law and order situation in this town deteriorated Wednesday.

Contd...P4

Nagaland killings: Centre against trial of soldiers

AGENCIES

Guwahati/New Delhi, April 14: The Centre has denied sanction to prosecute 30 Indian Army personnel allegedly involved in a botched counter-insurgency operation in Mon district of Nagaland in December 2021. The soldiers had opened fire on a group of people suspecting them to be terrorists and in the process 14 civilians lost their lives.

The Army men were named in a charge sheet filed by a Nagaland Special Investigation Team (SIT) that investigated the shooting.

"The competent authority (Department of Military Affairs,

TIMELINE

- DEC 4, 2021: 13 people shot dead by soldiers, one security personnel killed
- DEC 21, 2021: SIT team headed by Nagaland police chief formed to probe killings
- MARCH 24, 2022: SIT seeks permission to prosecute soldiers
- MAY 30, 2022: SIT files charge sheet naming 30 soldiers as accused
- APRIL 13, 2023: Defence Ministry denies sanction to prosecute soldiers

Ministry of Defence, Government of India) has conveyed its denial to accord sanction for prosecution against all 30 accused," said a statement issued by the Nagaland police. The denial of sanction has been conveyed to a court, the police said Thursday. It added that now it is the responsibility of the state government to follow up on the matter with the Centre.

Six local coal miners at Tiru-Oting area of Mon district were shot dead December 4, 2021 by soldiers of the 21 Para Special Forces of the Indian Army. The soldiers who had fired at a pickup truck carrying the miners, claimed it was a case of mistaken identity.

Contd...P4

SAVADI DECIDES TO JOIN CONGRESS

BANGALORE: Former Karnataka Deputy CM, Laxman Savadi who announced his decision to resign from the primary membership of the BJP after being denied a ticket to contest in the May 10 Assembly elections, said Friday that he is joining the Congress. Savadi's decision came after a meeting with Karnataka Congress chief DK Shivakumar, Leader of Opposition in the Assembly, Siddaramaiah and Congress general secretary and party in-charge of the state Randeep Singh Surjewala. "Our meeting with Savadi took place in a cordial manner. He has agreed to become a member of Congress family of his own volition," Surjewala informed.

P7

CBI summons Kejriwal

The probe agency had earlier arrested the Delhi CM's deputy Manish Sisodia in the same case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 14: The CBI has summoned Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in connection with the excise policy scam case April 16, officials said Friday. Kejriwal has been asked to be present at the agency headquarters here at 11.00am to answer queries of the investigating team, the officials informed.

Sources said that this is the first instance in recent memory where a Chief Minister has been summoned by the probe agency in an investigation. They added that CBI has uncovered fresh evidence and has grounds to question the Delhi CM now. The questioning has been fixed for Sunday so that it does not disrupt Kejriwal's work on weekdays.

The CBI has already arrested former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia in connection with the case.

It is alleged that the Delhi government's excise policy for 2021-22 to grant licences to liquor traders favoured certain dealers who had allegedly paid bribes for it, a charge strongly refuted by the AAP. The policy was later scrapped.

Meanwhile the AAP alleged



that CBI has summoned Kejriwal as he spoke about the Adani issue and asserted that such notices will not deter their fight against corruption.

Delhi CM has been called by the CBI as he spoke on the Adani issue. However, this will not stop Kejriwal's fight against corruption

SANJAY SINGH | AAP LEADER

Narendra Modi-led Centre is corrupt from head to toe and Kejriwal's fight against corruption won't stop due to such notices," Singh asserted.

The senior leader said Kejriwal will appear April 16 before CBI. "This notice is a conspiracy to arrest Kejriwal. This notice will neither be able to silence the AAP nor Kejriwal," Singh stated.

Staff at anti-poverty World Bank struggle to pay bills

A LARGE SECTION OF WORKERS BELIEVE THE BANK SHOULD FIRST HELP ITS OWN PEOPLE BEFORE PROVIDING AID TO OTHER COUNTRIES

AGENCIES

Washington, April 14: Andre Blount has been serving food to dignitaries at the World Bank headquarters for nearly 10 years. However, for him it is not a satisfactory job, as he has got exactly one raise - for 50 cents in the last decade.

This week, as leaders from around the world are here for the spring meeting of the poverty-fighting organisation, Blount and his co-workers are trying to attract attention to what they see as a galling situation. They also want the world leaders to know that the workers who put food on the table for an organisation whose mission is to fight poverty are themselves

struggling to get by.

Union leaders said a quarter of the World Bank food workers employed as a contract labourers through 'Compass Group' receive public benefits, like SNAP, or food stamps, just to make ends meet.

"It's sickening," Blount, 33, said as he joined red-shirted union members on a picket line outside the bank on a hot afternoon Thursday. "They go around the world looking for how to help people, but you have hundreds of employees in DC who are struggling to make both ends meet," he added.

Inside meanwhile, professionals were striding through a lobby where 'End Poverty' T-shirts and tote bags are for sale. The building's expansive cafeteria overlooks an in-



door pond and caters to even the most particular palates. There's a soup station called 'Ladle and Crust', a 'Mediterranean Table' station serving 'Hummus' and 'Tabouli', and a sushi chef offering made-to-order rolls and sashimi.

As the union members protested, a nearby fine dining room for diplomats and special guests of the bank was hosting lunch for delegations

from India, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Sri Lanka. Many of the food service workers, it turns out, come from countries to which the development bank sends missions.

Blount and his friend Terry Skinge, after a decade on the job, said they get paid USD 18 an hour, above DCs minimum wage of USD 16.10. They both said that they should get much more than what they are currently getting.

World Bank spokesperson David Theis said that while the organisation is not a party to talks between the union and 'Compass Group', the bank's staff has 'deep admiration and respect' for their food service colleagues.

While USD 18 per hour may seem

like a lot in some areas, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's 'living wage' index lists USD 22.15 per hour for DC.

"The World Bank says its mission is to promote shared prosperity by increasing the incomes of the poorest 40 per cent of people in every country," 'Unite Here' president D Taylor said on a call with reporters. "We think that first starts in the US, by compensating food service workers in the bank."

Blount said he believes that his job should pay him what he's worth. "If I were to get a raise from Compass Group, it will help with saving up emergency funds and paying my bills on time instead of being late."



BRITNEY READY TO 'SHAKE THE WORLD' WITH HER MEMOIR

Criminal hitmaker Britney Spears could be expected to unleash a bombshell memoir in the near future. The 41-year-old would tell all in a 'brutally honest' book that 'will shake the world', and it was alleged to be hitting the shelves in the fall of 2023, reports *aceshowbiz.com*.

RADCLIFFE INSISTS PARENTS TO TRUST THEIR CHILDREN FOR GENDER IDENTITY

'Harry Potter' Daniel Radcliffe insists adults must 'trust trans children' to tell them how they identify so they don't seem 'condescending'. The 33-year-old actor made the remarks to a group of trans and nonbinary children in a new series of talks for LGBTQ+ charity *The Trevor Project*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Set today aside for your hobbies and pass-times. Ganesha says doing things that you like will put you in high spirits, and it will show up in the way you behave with people you love. You may not be able to fully involve yourself in work but your seniors will be understanding.

TAURUS
This day you are likely to face some health problems. Ganesha urges you not to expose your self to any kind of risk and take even the faintest symptom of illness seriously. Visit a doctor without delay. You could, otherwise, be bedridden for quite some time. Today, you may, unfortunately, be running after greater profits at the cost of family welfare. Do remember.

GEMINI
You need to guard against hurting the feelings of others today. You will need to carefully listen to what people confide in you and help people with their problems by providing your considered opinion on the subject. You will be busy with religious and intellectual pursuits in the evening, says Ganesha.

CANCER
An enterprising day! You may have a chance of foreign travel, which could benefit you. Your health will not help you in your efforts. You will learn an important lesson of life in the afternoon.

LEO
You will take important decisions relating to some partnership today. A progressive day at the workplace awaits. Traders may face some financial constraints however. The stress of over-work may tie you down. So do not bite off more than you can chew, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
Sorting out long-pending issues will be a lengthy process today. However, Ganesha advises you to be persistent as the results will make all your efforts worthwhile. You will gain the ability to look at things through other peoples' eyes, so to speak. Be generous, as you may have to take your beloved out for shopping in the evening.

LIBRA
Ganesha says you will get fame and prestige in the field of broad casting media and in the world of art. This is the evening where you will have to make a choice and decision regarding higher studies. Luck will be with you. Ganesha showers you with his blessing and grace.

SCORPIO
Today is one of those days when you will go through tremendous highs and lows, predicts Ganesha. There are chances of heated arguments with your peers, so keep a check on your tongue. However, evening will be cheerful as you sit back and relax with your group of friends, go for dinner or watch a movie.

SAGITTARIUS
Kids and their demands top your priority list today, says Ganesha. They will come out with flying colours in academics and related activities. Today, you will also plan your schedule in a way that you will give a lot of time to meditation and yoga. A peaceful day, a peaceful you!

CAPRICORN
Keep your fuel tanks ready as you are heading for a very active and exhausting day, today. The long list of activities will keep you occupied for the whole day and you'll enjoy the energy floating around, says Ganesha. Your career will be on the go, too, especially if you are freelancer. You will end up having projects of your choice.

AQUARIUS
You love to be on the spending spree, but here comes the bad part of it. Bills and payments! You dislike paying hefty amount for the things which you don't know why you have purchased in the first place. It, however, has a brighter side, too. You will now realise the importance of being organised and balanced, feels Ganesha.

PISCES
You will be in an extremely sensitive frame of mind today. You need to strike a balance between your head and your heart. Your financial situation might be the cause of some worry. Do not let this affect your family life, says Ganesha. You will also need to be on guard against trying to make a quick buck and against losing your temper.

POOJA ON DATING SALMAN

'I Love being single'



Mumbai: *Cirkus* actress Pooja Hegde, who is playing the love interest of Salman Khan in their upcoming film *Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan*, finally addressed the growing news about their dating rumours.

When asked about rumours of dating her co-star Salman Khan, Pooja Hegde denied claims of being in a relationship.

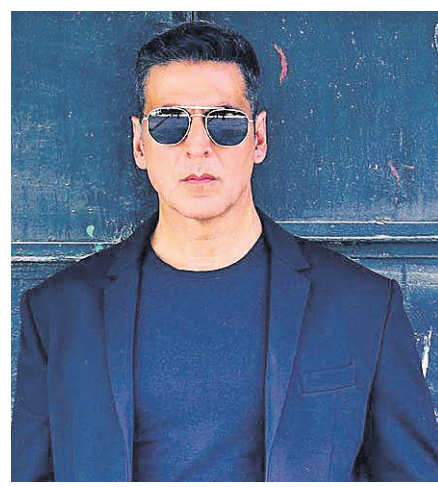
ship.

She responded to a news portal, during an interview, "What do I say to that? I keep reading things about me. I am single. I love being single. I am genuinely concentrating on my career right now. I am hopping from one city to the other city, that's my goal right now. I can't even sit and address these rumours anymore because what do I do now?"

On dating logbook, she was earlier associated with Tara Sutar's ex-boyfriend Rohan Mehra in January 2020. That time as well, the actress denied stating that the two are just good friends.

In the upcoming film, *Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan*, Pooja plays character of damsel in distress where she and her family is getting death threat from some people. Salman is seen in his fierce avatar as he fights baddies to protect them. The film is set for theatrical release April 21.

AGENCIES



Nagaland minister's shout out to Akshay

Mumbai: Khiladi Akshay Kumar is known in the Hindi film industry for his punctuality and commitment to deliver projects within the deadline. The actor, who will be soon seen in *OMG 2*, has recently received praise from Nagaland's Minister of Tribal Affairs, Temjen Imna Along, who said that he was inspired by Akshay Kumar's punctuality.

A few days back, Temjen had gone to attend an event where Akshay arrived earlier than everyone else. The minister shared that he was inspired by Akshay Kumar since the actor is known to be punctual. He tweeted a picture of himself from the event as he wrote, "Dekho! I am not a VIP; I come earlier than the audience. Inspired by @akshaykumar!"

Akshay responded to the minister and wrote, "Haha! Thank you. And I'm very inspired by your sense of humour, @AlongImna." After this, Temjen Imna Along took to Twitter to share another hilarious tweet in his classic style. In his reply to the tweet, he mentioned that he is also a follower of Akshay Kumar's fitness; however, he finds it difficult to exercise.

AGENCIES

Rhea returns to set

Mumbai: Three years after her actor-boyfriend Sushant Singh Rajput's mysterious death, Rhea Chakraborty is back on the sets, as she will be seen in *MTV Roadies Season 19* as a gang leader. Sharing her experience, the actress took it to Instagram and shared a post.

The actress dropped a video with the caption, "It's been

a long waiting game. Being back on set and back to work is a joy I can't describe. Heart full of gratitude, raring to go. Thank you all for your love and support. Times have been hard, but your love has been real. BRB, crying happy tears."

Netizens too reacted to the video. While some praised her, others trolled her, saying, "Looks like someone from *Roadies* is going to be the prey this time. Stay safe". Another one wrote, "Back on set, to kill someone again."

Sushant Singh Rajput died in 2020 in mysterious circumstances, which created a nationwide uproar: He was found hanging in his flat in Juhu. Days after his death, the actor's father filed a case against Rhea, the actor's then-girlfriend, accusing her of abetment to suicide and money laundering.

AGENCIES



Sherlyn files FIR against bizman for molestation

Mumbai: Actress Sherlyn Chopra Friday filed a molestation case against a financier in Mumbai. In her complaint, the actress stated that the accused molested her on the pretext of giving her money for a video recording, when she opposed it, the accused hurled expletives and also threatened to kill her. The actress organised a press

conference and spoke about her sexual harassment episode in detail with the media.

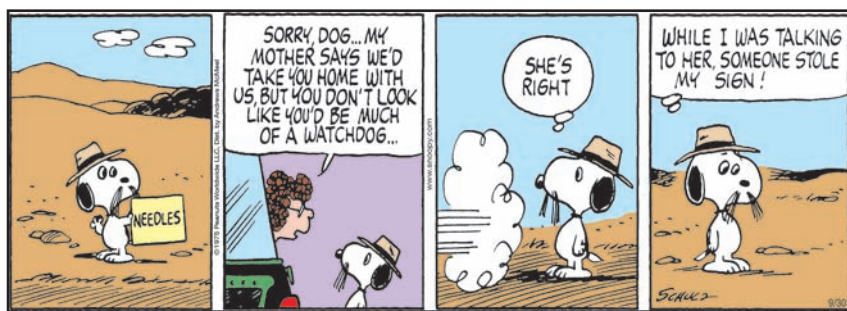
Sharing details she said that April 12, Sunil Parasmani Lodha, a business man came to her place in the evening to talk about investment in her project. However, when they sat on the couch talking about a music album, he suddenly touched her chest and she immediately recoiled. She told him she didn't like that and he apologised. He said she was hot and he was unable to

control himself around her. Sherlyn told him that she is hot but she is not a public property.

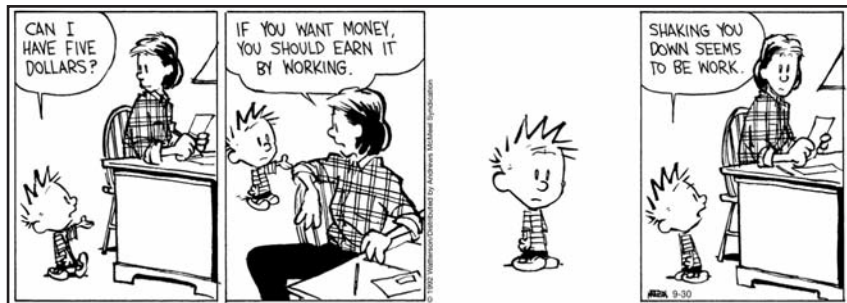
According to the actress, Lodha started misbehaving with her once again soon after claiming that he paid to her manager to spend time with her and not to invest in her music video. He also abused and threatened her.

A case was registered against the accused under several sections of IPC. Further probe is underway. AGENCIES

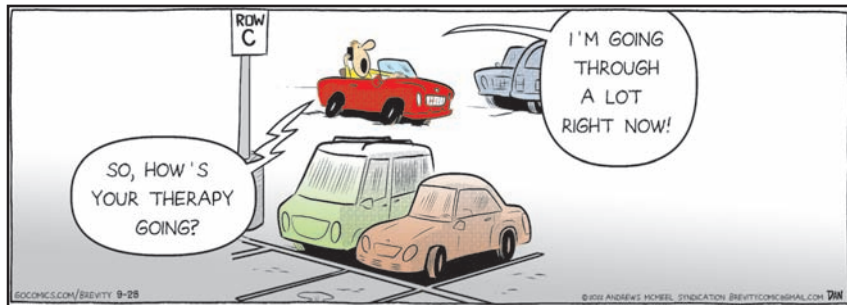
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

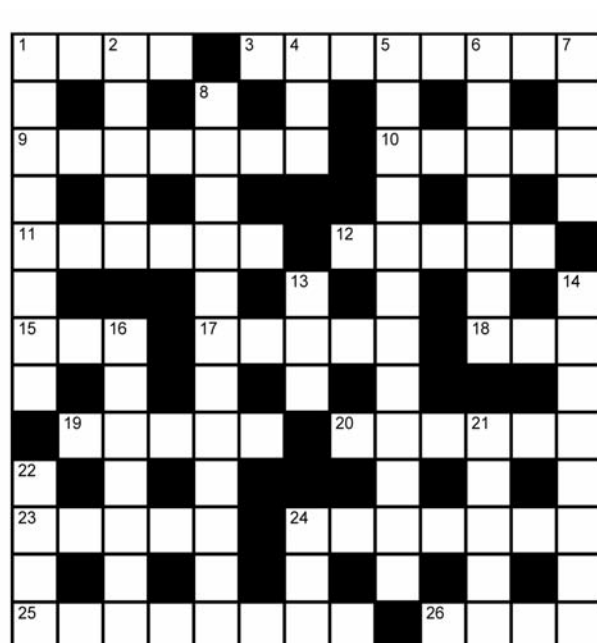


BREVITY



FUN post

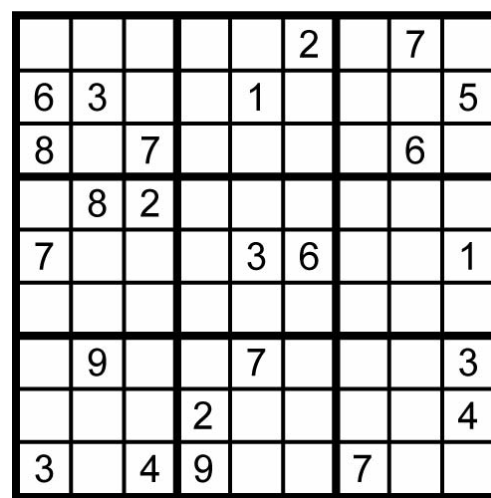
CROSSWORD



- Copyright ©2023 PuzzleJunction.com
- Across**
- 1 Confront
 - 3 Bawl out severely
 - 9 Submerge
 - 10 Gullible
 - 11 Soapbox
 - 12 Brackish
 - 15 Silent assent
 - 17 Mayhem
 - 18 Ultimate degree
 - 19 Toothsome
 - 20 Arctic treeless plain
 - 23 Aquarium fish
 - 24 Lobster part
 - 25 Alias, for some
 - 26 Sleeveless garment
- Down**
- 1 Like some remarks
 - 2 Caravan beast
 - 4 Logger's tool
 - 5 Money movers (4,8)
 - 6 Infatuated
 - 7 Ablutionary vessel
 - 8 Cargo carrier (7,5)
 - 13 Vine
 - 14 Ring-necked bird
 - 16 Severe
 - 21 Impenetrable
 - 22 Leave speechless
 - 24 Escort's offering

SUDOKU

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

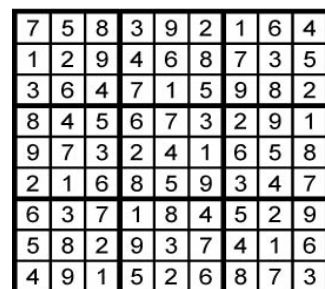


SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



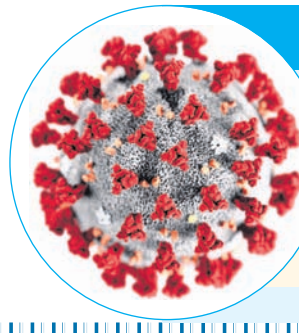
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



FOUNDATION DAY

A cultural programme was organised at Utkal Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Friday, as part of the Capital Foundation Day celebrations



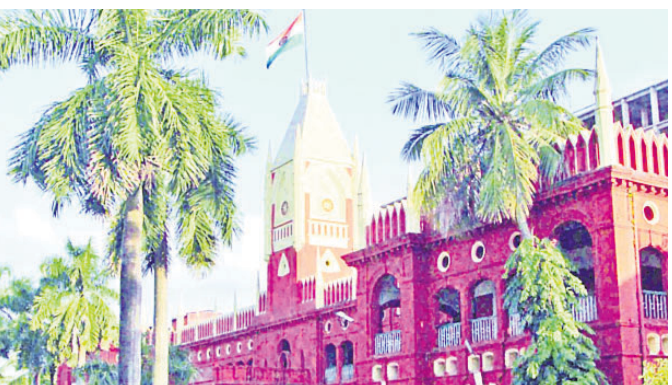
COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	68,54,63,832	65,81,89,975	68,41,443
India	4,47,97,269	4,42,16,583	5,31,064
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

BALIPATNA MURDER CASE

Orissa HC pulls up trial courts on default bail

Court not supposed to act as agent of prosecution: Justice Sashikanta Mishra



AGENCIES

Cuttack, April 14: The Orissa High Court has pulled up two trial court judges for rejecting default bail of two accused in connection with a murder under Balipatna police limits even though the chargesheet was not filed within the statutory period.

According to the case details, the accused were arrested by Balipatna police July 11, 2022 on the basis of a case (183/2022) registered against them under Sections 302, 364, 120B, 114 and 34 of the IPC July 7. On the same day, they were remanded to judicial custody after a local court rejected their bail pleas.

On November 11, 2022, the case was put up for consideration before the Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC), Bhubaneswar following an application filed by the duo for release on default bail under Section 167(2) of CrPC, on the ground that chargesheet was not filed even after lapse of the statutory period of 120 days.

The JMFC found that a chargesheet had in fact been submitted by the investigating officer November 5, 2022, but for some reasons, it was not placed before the court. The JMFC directed the court sub-inspector

The HC says the JMFC committed a glaringly manifest illegality by condoning the delay of the prosecution in submitting the chargesheet

(CSI) to place the chargesheet in the open court forthwith.

Subsequently, a staff of CSI placed the chargesheet in presence of both the parties. Observing that the chargesheet had been submitted November 5, 2022 but could not be placed before the court, the JMFC held that the right of the accused to statutory bail came to an end.

Aggrieved by the JMFC decision, the accused moved the Sessions Judge Court. The Sessions Judge upheld the JMFC decision and rejected their application.

With no way out, the accused approached the HC. A single-judge bench of Justice Sashikanta Mishra observed that the chargesheet was placed before the JMFC for the first time November 11, 2022, which is five days after the stipulated period of 120 days.

"It is reiterated that an indefeasible right to be released on bail

accrued to the petitioners on the 121st day, i.e., 08.11.2022. In view of the well settled legal position, it was incumbent upon learned JMFC, to have directed production of the accused persons to inform them of their right to be released on default bail," it observed.

The court was of the opinion that the JMFC committed a glaringly manifest illegality by condoning the delay of the prosecution in submitting the chargesheet.

"It is unfortunate that learned Sessions Judge, despite taking note of the manifest illegality chose to turn the other way instead of exercising his jurisdiction appropriately. The bail application was thus mechanically rejected without so much even entering into a discussion as regards the illegality committed by the Court below. Learned Sessions Judge ought to have exhibited the sensitivity required of a senior officer in such a situation," he noted.

While setting aside the orders of both the courts, Justice Mishra said, "It must be kept in mind that the Court is not supposed to act as an agent of the prosecution so as to be left at its mercy. When the question of liberty of a person is involved, it is expected that the Court shall rise to the occasion to dispense justice without in the least aligning itself with any party whatsoever. It has been emphasized time and again that right to default bail is akin to the fundamental right of liberty guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution of India."

The court held that both the courts below have committed gross illegality in rejecting the petition filed by the petitioners for default bail, despite non-submission of chargesheet within the stipulated period.

The HC ordered immediate release of petitioners on default bail.



SUMMER SOLACE: Volunteers of Bhubaneswar-Central Assembly constituency distributed pana, a sweet drink prepared with fruits, sugar, cheese, cashew and spices, on the occasion of Maha Bishuba Sankranti at Cuttack Road in the City, Friday

Prez, PM greet people on Odia New Year

CHIEF MINISTER NAVEEN PATNAIK ALSO EXTENDS GREETINGS TO THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 14: President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday greeted people on the occasion of Odia New Year.

"I wish prosperity and happiness to the beloved people of Odisha on the occasion of this Odia New Year. I extend my heartfelt greetings," Murmu wrote on Twitter in Odia language.

"Happy Maha Bishuba Pana Sankranti and Odia New Year. Have a healthy and happy year ahead," Prime Minister Modi said in a tweet.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik also extended greetings to the people of the state.

"My greetings to the people of Odisha on the occasion of sacred Maha Bishuba Sankranti and

Special rituals were performed at the Srimandir in Puri where astrologers recited the new 'panjika' (almanac) before the Trinity

Odia New Year: May the immense grace of Lord Jagannath bring new opportunities and possibilities for everyone in this New Year," Patnaik tweeted.

Sand artist Sudarsan Pattnaik created a sand sculpture of Lord Hanuman on the occasion at Puri beach to greet people.

Special rituals were performed at the Srimandir in Puri where astrologers recited the new 'panjika' (almanac) before the Trinity — Lord Balabhadra, Lord Jagannath

Celebrations at Panthanivas

Bhubaneswar: A special art exhibition and cultural programme was inaugurated at Panthanivas here on the occasion of Maha Bishuba Sankranti and Odia New Year, Friday. Gracing the event as chief guest, Odisha Tourism Development Corporation (OTDC) chairman Lenin Mohanty congratulated the artists for their creation on the theme 'Odia Naba Barsa'. "This programme represents Odisha's art and cultural heritage that brings together Odias from across the

globe. I urge everyone to keep our traditions alive through such celebrations," Mohanty said.

Around 42 members of Cuttack Artists' Organisation were felicitated during the event for their artworks. The event was followed by a cultural programme while a special Sankranti dinner was served to guests. Odisha Tourism joint secretary Rajkishore Palei, OSD to Tourism Ansuman Rath, DM (Finance) Abhijit Swain, DM (Marketing) Prasanta Panda and DM (Transport) Ranjan Mishra were present.

and Devi Subhadra. 'Maha Bishuba Sankranti' is also called 'Pana Sankranti' in Odisha, as 'Pana' — a sweet drink prepared with fruits, sugar, cheese, cashew and spices — is distributed among the people.

People perform special pujas on this day, which is also celebrated as Hanuman Jayanti in the state.

Devotees also take baths in rivers to mark the day.

Centre: 8 cases of attacks on Christians in Odisha

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, April 14: The Union government has informed the Supreme Court (SC) that a total of eight cases of attacks on Christians were reported in Odisha during 2021-22.

According to an affidavit filed in the apex court, the Centre submitted that against the claims made by Christian organisations in Odisha about 14 such attacks, only eight were found to have been reported. Out of the eight cases, one

incident was resolved amicably with mutual agreement between both parties.

The Union government further said that FIRs were registered in seven cases and in five cases, out of seven, investigation was completed. At least six accused were arrested and summons issued to others, the Centre informed the SC, adding that chargesheets have been filed in six cases.

Significantly, the petitioners had claimed in the apex court that 2021-2022 witnessed as many as 495 in-

cidents of targeted attacks on Christians across eight states — Odisha, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. The Centre, however, rebuffed the claims and said that only 155 incidents warranted registration of FIRs.

The Centre said that there were no reports regarding 263 out of 495 incidents.

"Further, out of 232 incidents which have been reported to the concerned state governments, the mat-

ters in 73 incidents were resolved amicably. These 73 incidents were related to land dispute, family dispute, superstitious practices, violation of Covid-19 guidelines and other trivial issues. FIR/Non-FIR complaints were registered in the remaining 155 cases," the affidavit filed by the Centre reads.

The Centre also informed the apex court that 44 FIRs out of 70 reported incidents were registered in Uttar Pradesh and 31 FIRs out of 34 reported incidents were lodged in Karnataka.

3 from Odisha held with ₹1cr ganja in WB

AGENCIES

Kolkata, April 14: The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of the West Bengal Police Friday claimed to have arrested four people, including three from Odisha, with 6 quintals of marijuana in a late night operation.

CID sources said their sleuths, acting on a tip-off, conducted raid and search operations at a location near Kona Expressway Highway at Liliuah in Kolkata adjacent to Howrah district late Thursday night.

"We had information that a huge

quantity of marijuana had been brought from Odisha and was stocked at a warehouse in that area. The aim was to market them in different districts adjacent to Howrah. However, before it could be done, our sleuths seized that marijuana consignment and arrested a total of four, including three from Odisha," a CID source said, adding that estimated market value of the consignments seized will be around ₹1 crore.

"We doubt that the arrested are part of an interstate narcotics smuggling racket and we need to interrogate them further to track their associates," the CID official said.

Fire Services Martyr's Day observed in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 14: Odisha Fire and Emergency Services Friday observed Fire Service Martyr's Day at a special programme organised at Odisha Fire and Disaster Response Academy here. Minister of State, Home Tusharkanti Behera attended the meeting as the chief guest.

Fire & Emergency Services DG Santosh Upadhyay, read out the names of martyrs and the dignitaries laid wreath at Shaheed Statue followed by two minutes' silence.

Y20 CONSULTATIONS 2023 AT KIIT

Youths' role crucial for a prosperous India: Min

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 14: The Y20 Consultations 2023, a two-day event organised under the aegis of G20, began at KIIT Deemed to be University here Friday where policymakers from around the world gathered to highlight the pivotal role of youth in building a prosperous and peaceful society.

The event was inaugurated by Union Minister of State for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, and Environment, Forest and Climate Change Ashwini Kumar Choubey, who encouraged the youth to emulate the life and principles of Swami Vivekananda and strive to make India a leading nation in 21st century.

Choubey said, "Youths hold the future of this great nation. They have a crucial role to play in the development process that will bring peace and prosperity to society."

He also applauded the accomplishments of KIIT and its students in various sectors.

The participants were welcomed and felicitated by the founder of KIIT and KISS Achyuta Samanta.



The Y20 Consultations brought together students, educators, business leaders and spiritual leaders from across India and G20 countries. The forum provided a platform for youths to raise awareness about global issues, exchange ideas, share innovative thoughts, engage in discussions, and nego-

tiations, and reach a consensus. The outcomes of the deliberations will be presented at the G20 meeting later this year that would be presided over by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Minister of State for Home, Sports, and Youth Services, Odisha, Tusharkanti Behera highlighted

the importance of the theme of the Y20 Consultations, "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" (the world is one family), and emphasised the need for youths to come together and work towards preserving cultural heritage and promoting national integrity.

Behera also lauded the sport-

Policymakers highlighted the role of youth in ensuring sustainable growth and development

The outcomes of the deliberations will be presented at the Y20 summit to be held at Varanasi in August

ing achievements of Odisha's youths, mentioning that three out of six students have been selected from the state to participate in NASA Rover Challenge 2023 in the USA.

Union secretary of Youth Affairs and Sports Meeta Rajivlochan expressed her admiration for the transformation of KIIT into one of the country's top institutes in just 25 years.

She stated that KIIT was the "appropriate institute" to host the Y20 Consultations, as young people are shaping the future in various ways. The outcomes of the deliberations will be presented at the Y20 summit to be held in Varanasi in August.

'HARASSMENT' CASE

BJP wants Labour minister's scalp

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 14: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Friday demanded removal of state Labour Minister Srikanta Sahu from the Cabinet for allegedly harassing a woman leader of ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD).

Addressing a press conference here, state BJP general secretary Lekhashree Samantsinghar said, "A woman cadre of BJD has brought sexual harassment allegation against her own party leader and Labour Minister Srikanta Sahu."

The victim had to wait at Bhubaneswar Mahila police station from 10 am till midnight Thursday to file her complaint against the minister. Later, she was sent for medical examination, Samantsinghar said.

However, the police neither made any statement on this sensitive issue nor the minister was interrogated on the basis of the allegation levelled by the woman, she claimed. "As Sahu is a minister, is

he above the law?" asked the BJP leader.

As it is a matter of a woman, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik should immediately remove Sahu from his portfolio, she demanded.

Samantsinghar also demanded the arrest of the minister. "Otherwise, the life of the victim might be at risk," she said, adding that neither the police nor the minister has commented on this allegation yet.

When asked by the media Thursday the woman did not reveal anything about the complaint. She only said that she had some allegations against the Labour minister.

Termining it as her personal matter; the woman further said that she had full faith in BJD supremo and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and the legal system.

Reacting on the issue, senior BJD leader Ramesh Chandra Chyau Patnaik said, "Since a woman has lodged a complaint, a thorough investigation is needed to ascertain the truth."

FS&CW dept hailed for bagging award

PADDY PROCUREMENT



Bhubaneswar, April 14: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Friday congratulated Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare department on winning the 'Global Planet Purpose Award: Drive for Results' at Planet Explore2023-Transparency to Action Conference held recently in Washington DC, US, for farmer benefitting technology-led governance in paddy procurement.

In his Twitter account CM said, "Congratulations Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare department on winning 'Global Planet Purpose Award: Drive for Results' at Planet Explore2023-Transparency to Action Conference held recently in Washington DC, US, for farmer benefitting technology-led governance in paddy procurement."

at the Planet Explore2023-Transparency to Action Conference in Washington DC, US. Odisha is proud to ensure technology-led governance in paddy procurement for greater farmer welfare.

Chief Minister added that using real time satellite image, the validity of paddy crops at farms is checked, ensuring transparent disbursement of minimum support price (MSP).

Naveen said that technology-led transparency as part of 5T governance has substantially improved farmers' participation in MSP scheme.

Odisha Paddy Land Monitoring System Application, a geo-spatial

surveillance system for tracking and monitoring crop cultivation with the help of technology. The Odisha Paddy Land Survey Mobile App enables authorized users to collect survey data and take action on the survey request. It ensures secured and real-time surveillance of the paddy cultivation in the State of Odisha.

Planet Explore2023 organised by Planet Labs, a leading provider of daily data and insights about Earth, hosted customers and partners, investors, media, innovators, government officials and more at its annual user conference, Explore 2023 from April 12 to 13, 2023.

Being held in Washington, D.C. on April 12-13th, Explore 2023 marks Planet's first in-person user conference since 2019. The event showcased how Earth observation technologies are enabling digital transformation, supporting sustainability transitions, and advancing global peace and security. Attendees and speakers spanned a diverse range of industries, including agriculture, civil government, defense and intelligence, finance, and insurance.

The theme of the conference, From Transparency to Action, was showcased through a myriad of novel insights and solutions powered by the company's unique satellite data and solutions. In over 16 breakout sessions, Planet customers and partners shared how they are making data-informed decisions and taking action to create value, save time and money, protect borders and citizens, and help the planet.



TRYST WITH TRADITION: A 26-member foreign delegation, under the supervision of Indian Council for Cultural Relations, visited the maritime museum at Jobra in Cuttack, Friday

Guv, Chief Minister pay tributes to Ambedkar

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 14: Governor Ganeshi Lal and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Friday paid tributes to Baba Saheb Ambedkar, the 'Architect of the Constitution of India', on his 132nd birth anniversary.

In his Twitter account CM said, "Humble tributes to Dr Baba Saheb Ambedkar, the 'Architect of the Constitution of India', on his birth anniversary. He was a great economist, jurist & politician. His lifelong crusade to protect the rights of underprivileged will continue to inspire us all."

Governor paid floral tributes to Bharat Ratna Baba Saheb Ambedkar on his birth anniversary at his statue near AG Square, Bhubaneswar.

The Central University of Odisha (CUO) celebrated the birth



Anniversary of Ambedkar in its campus at Sunabeda. On this occasion, a special programme was

organised by the Dr Ambedkar Centre of Excellence (DACE) of the University. Vice chancellor Chakradhar Tripathi inaugurated the programme by lighting the lamp and paying floral tributes to Ambedkar. He highlighted the relevance of Ambedkar's contributions to contemporary India. He emphasised on forgetting the past injustice to marginalised communities and marching towards a future India with mutual cooperation and co-existence. He also advised the students to study and research on the contributions of the father of the Indian Constitution.

DACE coordinator BK Srinivas elaborated on the various areas of Ambedkar's contribution and highlighted the responsibility of youths towards the vision of modern India. He also revealed the contributions of Baba Saheb's contributions specifically towards governance, ad-

ministrations, public policy, social justice and democracy.

Utkal University also celebrated Ambedkar Jayanti by hosting a national seminar on "Babasaheb Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar on Indigeneity and Tribal Rights in India". The seminar was organised by the Centre for Ambedkar Studies at PG Council Hall of the University. Vice-Chancellor Sabita Acharya, the chief guest of the occasion, garlanded the photo of Babasaheb with other invited guests. Acharya delivered the inaugural address of the seminar and said, "Dr Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was the architect of the Constitution of India. He was a sociologist, anthropologist, economist, political scientist, social reformer and lawyer. He was first law minister of India and a true advocate of social development and social transformation."

Continued from P1 Nagaland...

Soon after the incident, angry villagers set ablaze two security vehicles, sparking off another round of firing by the forces, in which at least seven villagers and one security personnel were killed. Amid tension and protests, another Naga youth was shot dead by security forces in Mon town the next day.

A special investigation team (SIT), headed by the Nagaland police chief, probed the incident and March 24, 2022, sought the Union Defence Ministry's sanction to prosecute the Army men. The SIT submitted the names of 30 personnel in its charge sheet in court May 30, 2022. The charges against them included murder,

attempt to murder and destruction of evidence. The SIT said the miners were 'shot with a clear intention to kill'.

Fresh clashes...

He also said that 25 miscreants have been identified and they will be arrested soon. The SP said that 40 others had been detained, but have been let off with a warning.

The police officer said that two persons have been arrested for setting shops on fire while three accused in a stabbing case earlier have been held. "After examining various video footages and pictures, we have identified another 25 people who are involved in the violence. We will nab them soon," the SP said.

HC says 'no' to experience relaxation for civil judge

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, April 14: The Orissa High Court has disagreed with the suggestions pertaining to reduction in minimum requirement of experience as a Civil Judge (senior division) and restoration of 25 per cent quota in limited departmental competitive exam (LDCE).

The Registrar General of Orissa High Court filed an affidavit in the Supreme Court through advocate Sibho Sankar Mishra submitting that the full court of the High Court unanimously resolved that the high court is not agreeable to the suggestions of amicus curiae Sidhartha Bhatnagar.

Significantly, the amicus curiae has filed an application in the apex court with two prayers that the LDCE quota, which was initially determined at 25 per cent and subsequently reduced to 10 per cent should be restored to 25 per cent. The amicus curiae also prayed that the minimum requirement of having an experience of five years as a Civil Judge (Senior Division) should be brought down to two years.

The top court had February 28 issued notice to all the state governments and high courts seeking their responses by April 4.

DoWR, IIT Roorkee join hands for better water management

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 14: In a move to integrate state machinery with technology for providing better management of water resources, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) has been recently signed between Odisha's Department of Water Resources (DoWR) and Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Roorkee.

The agreement, signed in the presence of Water Resources, Commerce & Transport Minister Tukuni Sahu and DoWR development commissioner & additional Chief Secretary Anu Garg in the

DoWR conference hall at Rajiv Bhawan here, is aimed at Preparation of State Specific Action Plan (SSAP) on water sector for Odisha.

Speaking on the occasion, Sahu said, "Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has always emphasised on the development and better management of water resources. Our aim is to meet the requirement of water for all. While we are getting plenty of water during the rainy season, we are facing water scarcity after a few days. I hoped today's MoU signing will help to meet the water requirement of our state in the coming days."



'Pana Sankranti' fest at Esplanade



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 14: Premier retail shopping centre Nexus Esplanade, celebrated Odia New Year and the festival of 'Pana Sankranti' at the mall premises here Friday.

The mall has always believed in the policy of making a strong local connect by celebrating Odia culture and its festivals, said a mall executive. Odisha Tourism Development Corporation chairman Lenin Mohanty, Odisha Film Development Corporation chairman Satyabrata Tripathy, Institute of Hotel Management, Bhubaneswar principal Sharda Ghosh, Officer on Special Duty at Odisha Tourism Ansuman Rath and other dignitaries graced the occasion with their presence.

15 food bloggers of the City attending the event gave it intense coverage on various social media platforms.

Realtor held for duping two investors of ₹12L

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 14: The Commissionerate Police Friday arrested a realtor for allegedly duping two investors of Rs 12 lakh on the pretext of providing them landed plots in his project at Pahal on the outskirts of the City. The accused was identified as Manoj Kumar Sahoo, 42, of Patakura area in Kendrapada district.

The accused Sahoo who has been staying at Satya Vihar in Manchewara area is engaged in real estate business through his firm Bajrasena Constructions. One of the lady staffers of the firm reportedly contacted the victim Saurabh Acharya who was searching for suitable residential plot to buy for construction of house in the Capital city last year.

December 9, 2022, Saurabh was shown a plot at the Sibshakti Nagar in Pahala area. The accused asked Saurabh that he had to pay Rs 43, 00,000 to buy a plot measuring around 2000 sqft.

The complainant later transferred Rs 2 lakh into the account



MANOJ KUMAR SAHOO

of Sahoo as advance payment. Following the payment, Sahoo neither proceeded further to register the plot in Saurabh's name nor returned the advance amount paid by him.

Saurabh subsequently lodged a complaint with the Manchewara police seeking action against Sahoo. During the probe, another victim also registered a case against Sahoo on the allegations of duping him of Rs 10 lakh following similar modus operandi. The Manchewara police Friday arrested the accused and produced him before court that later sent him to judicial custody.

Virus infecting 90% of world's population unleashes cancer

Researchers have described in a study how the Epstein-Barr virus (EBV), the ubiquitous virus easily spread through bodily fluids, not only exploits genomic weaknesses to cause cancer, but also reduces the body's ability to suppress it.

The researchers at the University of California (UC) San Diego, US, said that more than 90 per cent of the world's population has been infected by the EBV, usually during childhood, and that while most of the infections it causes are mild and pass, the virus persists in the body, becoming latent or inactive, sometimes reactivating.

The EBV spreads easily through bodily fluids, primarily saliva, through activities such as kissing, sharing drinks or using the same eating utensils.

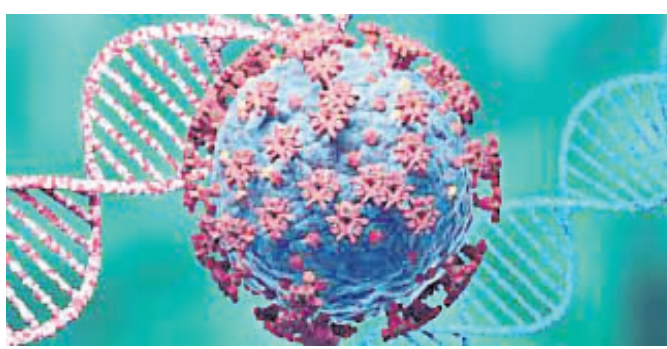
The researchers' findings showed "how a virus can induce cleavage

of human chromosome 11, initiating a cascade of genomic instability that can potentially activate a leukemia-causing oncogene and inactivate a major tumour suppressor," said senior study author Don Cleveland, professor at UC San Diego School of Medicine.

They have published their findings in the journal Nature.

Chromosome 11, one of the 23 pairs of chromosomes in humans, spans about 135 million base pairs (the building material of DNA) and represents between 4 and 4.5 per cent of the total DNA in cells.

Throughout every person's genome or full set of genes are fragile sites, which are specific chromosomal regions more likely to produce mutations, breaks or gaps when replicating. While some are rare and some are common, all are associated with disorders and disease, sometimes heritable con-



ditions, sometimes not, such as many cancers. "The study is the first demonstration of how cleavage of a fragile DNA site can be selectively induced," said Cleveland.

In this study, Cleveland and colleagues focused on EBNA1, a viral protein that persists in cells infected with EBV.

Previously known to bind at a specific genomic sequence in the

EBV genome at replication, the researchers found that EBNA1 also binds a cluster of EBV-like sequences at a fragile site on human chromosome 11.

An increasing abundance of the protein at this fragile site was found to trigger chromosomal breakage.

Prior research has shown that EBNA1 inhibits p53, a gene that

■ The Epstein-Barr virus (EBV) spreads easily through bodily fluids, primarily saliva, through activities such as kissing, sharing drinks or using the same eating utensils

■ Researchers found that cancer tumours with detectable EBV revealed higher levels of chromosome 11 abnormalities, including in 100% of the head and neck cancer cases

searchers found that cancer tumours with detectable EBV revealed higher levels of chromosome 11 abnormalities, including in 100 per cent of the head and neck cancer cases.

"For a ubiquitous virus that is harmless for the majority of the human population, identifying at-risk individuals susceptible to the development of latent infection-associated diseases is still an ongoing effort," said the study's first author Julia Li, a postdoctoral fellow in Cleveland's lab.

"Going forward, this knowledge paves the way for screening risk factors for the development of EBV-associated diseases. Moreover, blocking EBNA1 from binding at this cluster of sequences on chromosome 11 can be exploited to prevent the development of EBV-associated diseases," said Li.

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Growth eludes state's oldest civic body sans master plan

Close shave for 11 infants as hospital roof plaster falls in

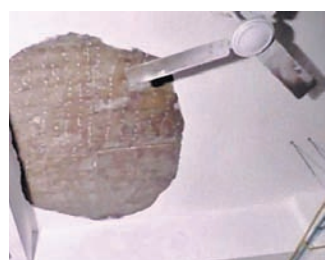
AGENCIES

Kendrapara, April 14: As many as 11 infants admitted at the Nutri Rehabilitation Center in the Infection unit of Kendrapara district headquarters hospital premises had a close shave as a portion of roof plaster collapsed Thursday. Only one infant sustained injuries, District Collector Amrit Raturaj said.

Panic struck among the patients and their attendants after a portion of plaster of the Nutri Rehabilitation Center roof that was constructed a few months back collapsed.

The locals alleged that sub-standard work has been done in the construction of the new district headquarters hospital. The hospital authority soon after the incident shifted the infants and children to other wards.

District Collector Amrit Raturaj has directed the executive engineer of Works department to rush to the spot and submit a report after an inspecting the portion of collapsed roof plaster.



It may be noted here that the principal secretary of Works department last Thursday placed three engineers under suspension with immediate effect for gross negligence in duty as one prestressed concrete girder in HL bridge over Gobari river recently caved in.

Relocated Lodha families seek legal right to shelter

Lodha tribe is one of the three 'Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups' (PVTGs) found in Mayurbhanj district



POST NEWS NETWORK

Udala, April 14: In a bid to free the Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR) from human-animal conflict, the Forest department officials forcefully relocated 28 families of the Lodha tribe staying at Jampani of Ambikadeipur village under Udala police limits, April 13.

In a recent development, the relocated Lodha families in Similipal have demanded a permanent settlement or legal right to shelter.

Reacting to the situation, hundreds of males including females and children of this tribe demanded permanent settlement Monday after discussing the matter with sub-collector Sushanta Kumar Barik, tehsildar in-charge Priyaranjan Jena and additional collector Manoj Kumar Sahoo.

Notably, the Lodha tribe is one of the 'Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups' (PVTGs) found in Mayurbhanj district. The tribe has been residing in the region for generations, but the authorities relocated them after locals demanded to make way for the Similipal National Park and Tiger Reserve. It is pertinent to mention here that the locals had taken the forest officials hostage when the Forest department ignored their demand to relocate the tribe from the core area of STR. Later, the Forest department forcefully relocated 28 families.

On the other hand, Lodha families were promised proper rehabilitation and compensation for their displacement, which they have not yet received. They have been living in makeshift houses and facing numerous hardships due to the lack of basic amenities like water and electricity. They have also demanded compensation for their loss of land and livelihood. The families had been living in the region for generations and had a strong cultural and emotional attachment to the land. It is essential to address their demands and provide them with a sustainable livelihood and basic amenities.

KENDRAPARA MUNICIPALITY



The office of the regional development trust is only limited to a signboard and no work is being taken up to improve the town's landscape, alleged locals

Tinimuhani Square being the connecting route to Cuttack-Chandbali state highway is crying for urgent renovation and expansion

tion of the civic body in near future.

The planning and development of any region is done by taking into account its future in the next 50 years. Keeping these things in mind, the district administration and the state government should consider improving roads to ensure better drainage facilities, construction of night shelters and vending zones.

Unfortunately, nothing has been done so far. The office of the regional development trust is only limited to a signboard and no work is being taken up to improve the town's landscape and ensure better facilities for the residents and visitors to the town, alleged the local residents Chittaranjan Sahu, Manoj Kumar Singh, Bijay Kumar Mandal, Asit Kumar Mohapatra and Kshitish Kumar Singh.

The ever crowded Tinimuhani Square, which is the entry point to Kendrapara town, is struggling with burgeoning traffic problem. The Tinimuhani Square being the connecting route to Cuttack-Chandbali state highway is crying for urgent renovation and expansion. Sensing

the problem, construction of a new road has been undertaken near the Chatipola.

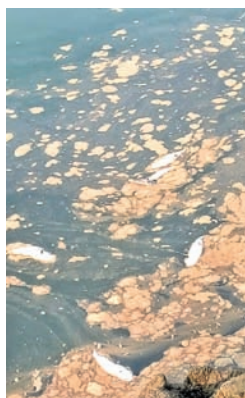
However, construction of several projects has added to the traffic woes at Tinimuhani Square. Construction of a Mahatma Gandhi memorial, a toilet complex and a selfie point titled 'I Love Kendrapara' and a vending zone at the entry point of Tinimuhani Square has worsened the lingering problem of heavy traffic jam in the area.

They claimed these projects could have been constructed at the industrial area which is nearby. Moreover, the state government should think about the immense tourism potential of the district and develop the town and district accordingly. This apart, it should lay stress on construction of a museum to preserve the rich heritage of the district, they added.

When contacted, Kendrapara Municipality Chairperson Sarita Sahu said she will undertake a review of the under-construction projects and efforts to develop Kendrapara into a beautiful town will continue.

Fish kill in Rushikulya river

Ganjam: A large number of dead fish were found floating in Rushikulya river near Potagada area of Ganjam. The incident has caused concern among locals and environmentalists. The exact cause of the fish kill is yet to be discovered. Local intelligentsia suspect that the soaring heat could be the primary reason behind the incident. With the rise in temperature, the oxygen levels in the river may have decreased, causing the death of the fish. On the other hand, some have blamed the climatic conditions and the rampant water and air pollution in the nearby area. The mass death of fish in the Rushikulya River is a cause of concern, and the authorities must take immediate steps to prevent such incidents in the future. The incident also serves as a wake-up call to all of us to protect our environment and take measures to preserve our natural resources.



Stray dog attack leaves 17 injured

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rayagada, April 14: A stray dog attacked and injured as many as 17 people Friday in this district. The incidents were reported from Govind Chandra Dev High School playground area and near the office of the District Education Officer in Rayagada town.

As per sources, the injured have been admitted to the Rayagada district headquarters hospital. Panicked locals have demanded swift resolution to stray dog menace as such incidents of dog bites are being reported frequently these days in the area.

Doctors suspected that a single dog has attacked all the victims after receiving multiple dog bite cases on a single day.

Sec-144 extended for 48 hrs at FACOR plant

Bhadrak: Prohibitory orders under Section-144 around the FACOR plant has been extended for 48 hours Friday at Randa under Rural police limits in this district. The imposition of prohibitory curbs will continue till April 16 morning, sources said. Reportedly, two labourers were critically injured Tuesday while charging a furnace in the plant leading to tension. Apprehending law and order situation, Sub-Divisional Magistrate Manoj Kumar Patra had clamped prohibitory order under Section-144 of CrPc within a 200-metre radius of the plant, Wednesday. The incident also led to a face-off between the police and agitators.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, April 14: Kendrapara Municipality, the oldest in the state, was formed 154 years back comprising only 14 villages. Meanwhile, with passage of time, the civic body, which also encompasses the district headquarters, has grown in size and population accommodating more and more people in the area under its jurisdiction.

However, lack of a master plan has scuttled the implementation of various welfare and developmental projects in the town. Unplanned construction and rampant encroachment of land have shrunk the ancient town and robbed it of its beauty. Moreover, sans proper management, drainage of waste water has posed serious problems in the area. The development that Kendrapara town should have achieved by now is missing owing to absence of a master plan.

Development and proper planning have eluded the civic area despite the district being home to the world famous Bhitarkanika National Park (BNP), state's only goetube wall on Penth coast and the Hukitola island which bears testimony to the advancement made in construction technology in the 19th century. The town also has the ancient shrine of Lord Baladevjeev. There is also a proposal for construction of riverine port on the mouth of Mahanadi in Kendrapara district.

Meanwhile, the town's population has grown over one lakh while its territorial jurisdiction presently extends from Duhuria to Jajang and from Gop to Shungudia. The state government is planning to increase the territorial jurisdiction



TRADITIONAL SUMMER DRINK: Women members of Chitragupta Kalyan Sangh distribute 'pana' on the occasion of Mahabishuba Sankranti and Odia New Year near Narasingha Temple in Bolangir, Friday

'Bagha Nacha', a crowd-puller to Maa Budhi Thakurani Yatra

THE BIENNIAL FESTIVAL WHICH CONTINUES FOR A MONTH SHOWS CLOSE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN THE LOWER CASTE PEOPLE AND MAINSTREAM HINDUISM

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, April 14: Tiger dance or 'Bagha Nacha' is one among the many attractions that draw thousands of devotees and visitors to Maa Budhi Thakurani Yatra, a festival dedicated to the presiding deity of Berhampur.

'Bagha Nacha' is also prevalent in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal. However, the 'Bagha Nacha' of Berhampur, a traditional dance form, attracts one and all with its unique decorations, dance style and musical instruments.

Devotees observing penance before the deity also dress up in tiger attires and dance all the way while participating in the procession. They perform the dance to appease the Goddess and get her blessings.

Sources said that the Goddess is one of the most revered deities in Berhampur. The city has a long history and rich cultural heritage and the worship of Maa Budhi Thakurani is an integral part of that culture. The deity was originally worshipped by the Dera people, members of weaver community from Rajmuhendry in Andhra Pradesh.

In its early days, the community people migrated to Berhampur and established the Thakurani temple, which is located near Bada Bazaar in Silk City. With passage of time, worship of the Goddess has spread to other communities and now, she is regarded as the presiding deity of all residents in the city.

Maa Budhi Thakurani Yatra is a biennial festival which continues for around a month every two years. The temple is unique in the sense that it shows



close association between the lower caste people and mainstream Hinduism.

The priests in the temple are from barber caste while the devotees come from various castes. During the festival, the Goddess leaves the temple and stays at a temporary shrine at Desibehara street like a daughter returning to her parental house after marriage.

One has to become an expert in the dance style to participate in 'Bagha Nacha'. It is a dance form which requires a lot of expenses.

The dance necessitates four 'Changus', a kind of traditional musical instrument. People playing 'Changu' are required to warm up the instrument in fire every hour for which a vehicle laden with haystacks follows the performers during the procession. Earlier petromax lights were being used to light up the procession but now big generators

are in use mostly.

The person who performs the dance dresses in tiger costume, paints his body, head in varnish with stripes resembling a tiger and puts on garlands of flowers. They have to spend a good amount of money on body painting and costumes and to get their body hair shaved off before painting.

The dance starts after the mask of the Goddess is worshipped at her transit shrine. They dance to the beats of musical instruments like 'Changu' and other instruments and visit the transit shrine to pay obeisance to the deity.

As many as 20 persons roam the streets the whole night and visit the houses of their kin and relatives performing the dance. Earlier, the dance was performed the whole night but with restrictions in place, it has been banned from 11pm till 5am.

MCL MAHANADI COALFIELDS LIMITED
(A Subsidiary of Coal India Limited)
JAGRUTI VIHAR, BURLA-760020, DIST: SAMBALPUR (ODISHA)
Tel. Phone (EPABX): 0663-2542461 to 469, Website: www.mahanadicoal.in

Notice

"All the tenders issued by CIL and its Subsidiaries for procurement of Goods, Works and Services are available on websites of Coal India Ltd. www.coalindia.in, respective Subsidiary Company (MCL, www.mahanadicoal.in), CIL e-procurement portal <https://coalindiatenders.nic.in> and Central Public Procurement Portal <https://eprocure.gov.in> in addition, procurement is also done through GeM Portal <https://gem.gov.in>."

R-5150

EAST COAST RAILWAY

File No. DRM/Engg/KUR/22-23/
E-Tender/183, Dt. 11.04.2023

1.Tender No. etender-CEN-KUR-01-2023,
Date: 04.04.2023

Description: CONSULTANCY SERVICE FOR PREPARATION OF ARCHITECTURAL PLAN, ELEVATION, SOIL EXPLORATION, STRUCTURAL DESIGNING, INTERIOR DESIGNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF OUTER SPACE FOR THE WORK OF "SOFT UP-GRADATION OF DHENKANAL, TALCHER ROAD, TALCHER, ANGUL, MANCHESWAR AND PARADEEP STATIONS OVER KHURDA ROAD DIVISION." (FROM THE ANNEXED EMPANELLED CONSULTANTS ONLY).

Approx. cost of the work: ₹9.58 lakhs, EMD: ₹19,200/-

2.Tender No. etender-East-KUR-05-2023,
Date: 05.04.2023

Description: UP-GRADATION OF FREIGHT WAGON MAINTENANCE FACILITIES AT SICK LINE NEAR ROH DEPOT/PARADEEP (FOR B WAYWORK).

Approx. cost of the work: ₹31.75 lakhs, EMD: ₹63,500/-

3.Tender No. etender-East-KUR-06-2023,
Date: 05.04.2023

Description: WATER LEVEL MONITORING SYSTEM OF BRIDGE NO. 66 (NAYAGARH-PORJANPUR SECTION), BRIDGE NO. 144 & 242 (CUTTACK-PARADEEP SECTION) AND SCOUR MONITORING OF BRIDGE NO. 544 DN UNDER THIRD PARTY AUDIT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF MODERN TECHNOLOGIES FOR INSPECTION/MONITORING OF BRIDGES OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.

Approx. cost of the work: ₹40.91 lakhs, EMD: ₹81,800/-

Completion Period of the work: 03 (Three) Months (For sl. no. 1), 08 (Eight) Months (For sl. no. 2) and 12 (Twelve) Months (For sl. no. 3).

Date & time of Tender Closing: 26.04.2023, 1500 hrs (For All Tenders).

No manual offers sent by Post/ Courier/Fax or in person shall be accepted against e-tenders, even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.

Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-Tenders is available in website <http://www.irgcs.gov.in>

Note: The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 10 (ten) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/ corrigendum issued for this tender.

Divisional Railway Manager (Engg./ PR-60/O/23-24) Khurda Road

BANK OF MAHARASHTRA
ZONAL OFFICE: BHUBANESWAR
First Floor, Door Sanchar Bhavan, Unit-IX, Near Rupali Square, Bhubaneswar -751022, Email Id: dzmbbsr@mahabank.co.in

E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE

(E-Auction) Sale of secured immovable Assets under SARFAESI Act, 2002

E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE ASSETS UNDER THE SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002 READ WITH PROVISIO TO RULE 8 (6) OF THE SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower/Co-Applicant /Guarantor that the below described immovable properties mortgaged/charged to the Bank of Maharashtra, the possession of which have been taken by the Authorised Officer of Bank of Maharashtra, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is" and "Whatever there is" basis on Auction Date mentioned hereunder, for recovery of balance due to the Bank of Maharashtra from the Borrower/Co-Applicant /Guarantor as mentioned in the table. Details of Borrower/Co-Applicant /Guarantor, amount due, short description of the immovable property and encumbrances known thereon, possession type, reserve price, earnest money deposit and Bid increment amount are also given as under.

Sl. No.	BERHAMPUR BRANCH (BRANCH PH.NO.: 6370704853) / Name and Address of Borrower/ Co-Applicant /Guarantor	Short Description of the Immovable properties with known encumbrances / Possession Type	Amount Due (Rs.)	Reserve Price / EMD / BID Increment Amount	Date & Time of Auction
1.	Borrower: M/s. Shree Krishna Agency, Prop.: Mr. Kiran Kumar Sahu, S/o.: Mr. Abhimanyu Sahu, Address: At: Malu Behera Street, Near Raja Street, P.O.: Panigrahipentho, Berhampur, Dist.: Ganjam- 760006 / Guarantor: Mr. Manoj Kumar Sahu, S/o.: Mr. Abhimanyu Sahu, Address: At: 63, Balmikipetakolini (Balinkipeta Street), Panigrahipentho, Berhampur, Dist.: Ganjam - 760006	All that Part & Parcel of Equitable Mortgage of Residential Land and Building Situated at Plot No.: 1115/ 8641 & 1141/8642, Khata No.: 243/ 5896, Mouza: Madhusudanpur, At P.O.: Truptinagar 2nd Line, Near Shanti Nagar, Haridakhandi, Berhampur, Area: Ac.0.020 Dec together with the Buildings and Structures/Residential Block constructed to/to be constructed thereon admeasuring 870 Sq.Ft (Carpet) i.e. 1740 sq.ft. (Built up) in aggregate consisting of 8 rooms on G+1 floor/s and all the fixtures annexed thereto, standing in the name of Mr. Kiran Kumar Sahu, S/o.: Mr. Abhimanyu Sahu & Mr. Manoj Kumar Sahu, S/o.: Mr. Abhimanyu Sahu, Bounded(As Per Document)by East: House of Sibha Mohanty (As Per Sale Deed House of Mrs. Purnima Patro), West: House of Manjula Behera, North: Land of Sri Ram Rao, South: Road / Physical	₹49,28,050.93 + Future Interest w.e.f 12.09.2022	₹ 37,69,000/- / ₹ 3,76,900/- / ₹ 50,000/-	16.05.2023 between 1.00 PM to 5.00 PM with auto extension for 5 minutes in case bid is placed within last 5 minutes
2.	Borrower: Mrs. Narmada Kumari Beja, W/o.: Late Trinath Beja, Address: At/PO.: Khariaguda, P.S.: Jarada, Dist.: Ganjam, Odisha, PIN- 761209 / Co-Applicant: Mr. Ranjan Kumar Beja, S/o.: Late Trinath Beja, Address: At/PO.: Khariaguda, P.S.: Jarada, Dist.: Ganjam, Odisha, PIN- 761209 / Guarantor: Mr. Ratnakar Beja, S/o.: Late Trinath Beja, Address: At/PO.: Khariaguda, P.S.: Jarada, Dist.: Ganjam, Odisha, PIN- 761209	All that Part & Parcel of Equitable Mortgage of Land and House situated at House site property bearing Khatian Sl. No.: 250/206, Survey/PLOT No.: 163/855, SRO: Patrapur, situated at Mouza: Mukundapur, P.O.: Khariaguda, Tahasil: Patrapur, Dist.: Ganjam, Area: 1394 sq.ft. together with the Buildings and Structures/Residential Block constructed to/to be constructed thereon admeasuring 1918 Sq.Ft (Carpet) i.e. 1918 sq.ft. (Built up) in aggregate consisting of 4 rooms on 2 floor/s and all the fixtures annexed thereto, standing in the name of Mrs. Narmada Kumari Beja, Bounded(As Per Document)by East: Site of Dilip Kumar Guru, West: Road, North: Main Road, South: Govt. Land (R.I.Office) / Physical	₹ 28,13,639/- + Future Interest w.e.f 06.09.2022	₹ 21,04,000/- / ₹ 2,10,400/- / ₹ 50,000/-	16.05.2023 between 1.00 PM to 5.00 PM with auto extension for 5 minutes in case bid is placed within last 5 minutes

Last Date & Time for Submission of Bid / Deposit of EMD & Proof: 16.05.2023 upto 1.00 PM

Date & Time of Inspection of Properties: on or before 15.05.2023 during banking hours on any working day between 11.00 AM to 5.00 PM

Note: This Notice is treated as 30 days Notice for M/s. Shree Krishna Agency & Mrs. Narmada Kumari Beja Account. The Auction Sale will be online E-Auction/Bidding through Website <https://www.msteccommerce.com>. For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link "<https://www.bankofmaharashtra.in/propsale.asp>" provided in the Bank's website and also on e-Bikray (e-Beᳵ) portal (www.ibapi.in)

Place : Bhubaneswar
Date: 15.04.2023

Authorised Officer
Bank of Maharashtra



For a happy and effective life, the essentials are sincerity, humility, perseverance and the insatiable thirst for progress.

THE MOTHER



Question of Allegiance

Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi has trodden on many toes in the state government and the ruling party, be it withholding important bills or speaking his mind on Centre-state relations. Some may say that the situation seems to mirror a similar tussle in neighbouring Kerala, also a non-BJP-ruled state.

The latest salvo from the Governor has left Chief Minister MK Stalin fuming, and his party colleagues pushing for Ravi's ouster. Ravi's advice recently to IAS and IPS officers to prioritise the Centre's policies over those of the state has raised the question of allegiance: whom do the babus serve? This is particularly concerning given that officers are assigned to a state cadre until their retirement, but the Centre has the power to bring them to the Central services on deputation. So while officers are meant to serve the people in their respective states, they are also required to adhere to the policies of the Central government. This often creates conflict between the Centre and the states, especially when officers are called to the Centre for deputation.

Observers have pointed to the recent controversy in West Bengal as an example of strife. In this case, the then Chief Secretary was recalled to the Centre after he failed to receive Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a visit to the state. Not surprisingly, such tussles are being witnessed in West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Kerala—all non-BJP-ruled states. The ongoing political battles often leave hapless babus in these states in the middle of the crossfire.

IOCL faces leadership crisis

The Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) is currently facing a leadership crisis, with several high-level positions set to become vacant in the coming months. In addition to the Director of Finance appointment being stalled due to a court case, three board-level positions are also falling vacant with the PESB putting its recommendation for the post on hold, in response to a Delhi High Court ruling.



BABUDOM BYTES

Dilip Cherian

The Director of Pipelines, DS Nanaware, and the Director of R&D Dr SSV Ramakumar will retire in June and July respectively, while the tenure of the Chairman and Managing Director Shrikant Madhav Vaidya is ending in August. Curiously, the Director of Human Resources, RK Mohapatra, completed his tenure in February but is still serving!

The court case surrounding the appointment of the Director of Finance has halted the selection process, with the Public Enterprises Selection Board (PESB) putting its recommendations on hold. The petitioner, a chief general manager at IOCL, has contested the shortlisting process, claiming that he too fits the eligibility criteria but was denied, and that preference was given to chartered accountants over cost accountants. Whatever the truth or merit of his claims, the court case has created a further delay in the already depleted leadership of the IOCL.

Whatever the government decides to do with him, in the weeks ahead the IOCL board is staring at five vacancies! The government will need to move quickly to ensure the smooth functioning of IOCL.

No private awards for officials without approval

The recent instruction issued by Kerala Chief Secretary VP Joy prohibiting IAS and IPS officers in the state from accepting awards from private organisations or individuals without prior approval from the government has sparked a conversation about the ethics of receiving awards in public service. The move comes after a section of the Kerala Police personnel protested against an IAS official receiving an award from a private organisation for the successful handling of worshippers at a famous temple in the state.

The order not only stresses the need for transparency and accountability in public service but also highlights the importance of public officials focusing on their duty to serve the people rather than personal gain or recognition. The widespread practice of government officials accepting awards from private entities has become so common that it rarely raises eyebrows anymore. However, it raised questions about the motives behind these awards and whether they are truly deserved.

Joy's order has set an important precedent for babus across the country. However, the bigger question remains; can he make it stick? It will require a change in mindset and a willingness to place public service ahead of personal gain for this directive to be effectively implemented. Further, it would benefit everybody if the approval process is transparent and impartial, with no room for favouritism or nepotism. Ideally, while the hard work and dedication of officials must be duly recognised, the recognition should come from the government or independent bodies rather than private organisations.

Share a babu experience! Follow [@dilipthecherian](https://twitter.com/dilipthecherian) on Twitter. Let's multiply the effect

WISDOM CORNER

- In this common man's century, only the common man can change the profile of this country. **BABA AMTE**
- Risk comes from not knowing what you're doing. **WARREN BUFFETT**
- Success is a lousy teacher. It seduces smart people into thinking they can't lose. **BILL GATES**

WORDSWORTH

Arenaceous

It means to have the appearance or consistency of sand. Unlike sabulous and its close relative arenose, both of which also refer to something sandlike and which rarely appear outside lists of rare words, arenaceous is still very much with us. But it's a term you're most likely to find in a deeply technical article that discusses matters such as "the influence of matrix conduction upon hydrogeophysical relationships in arenaceous aquifers" or refers to the "squamous lichen of both calcareous and arenaceous soils". The rest of us can make do with sandy. If its spelling reminds you of arena, a public entertainment space, that is no accident. Both derive from arena or harena, the Latin word for sand. The English word arena comes from the name for the central part of a Roman amphitheatre in which gladiatorial fights and the like took place and which was strewn with sand to absorb the blood. Very rarely you may find arenaceous used figuratively. James Russell Lowell did so in *Among My Books* in 1876 when writing of William Wordsworth: "He seems striving to bind the wizard imagination with the sand-ropes of dry disquisition, and to have forgotten the potent spell-word which would make the particles cohere. There is an arenaceous quality in the style which makes progress wearisome."

Vaccary

You won't find this in any modern dictionary except the largest, as it has quite gone out of use except when speaking of historical matters. The word meant a cow pasture, not some peasant's patch where one cow was kept for her milk, but larger-scale pasturage where cattle were kept and bred and as a source of working oxen. The word is usually linked to grazing land in the moors and valleys of Yorkshire and Lancashire. In the 13th century numbers of vaccaries were carved out of the old private hunting chases of the nobility, who created them in an attempt to get some revenue back from their holdings. The word comes from the mediaeval Latin vaccaria, derived from vacca, a cow.

ROLE OF DEVELOPMENT BANKS

FOCUS CLIMATE CRISIS

We live in a world assailed by crisis, with war, disease, and economic hardship taking a terrible toll on human welfare in recent years. Most alarming of all is the worsening impact of climate change, which threatens the very existence of countless species, including our own.

Time is running out to fix the problem. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change recently warned that the planet's temperature will likely rise 1.5° Celsius above pre-industrial levels within the next decade, and will shoot past that critical threshold without immediate and massive emissions reductions. We could be entering a doom loop in which the consequences of climate change distract attention and divert resources from tackling its causes, further impeding progress as the effects worsen.

Billions of dollars are being invested to avoid this fate, but trillions are needed. Where will it come from? High public-debt levels constrain many countries' policy options, and there aren't enough bankable projects to generate the necessary private investment.

Multilateral development banks (MDBs) like the Asian Development Bank (ADB), of which I am president, can deliver critically needed financing and expertise for climate progress. But we cannot take bold action without making sweeping changes to our operations. I believe that MDBs must do more, and faster, with the substantial resources that we manage. Simply placing climate action at the top of the development agenda is not enough. The climate crisis demands a dramatic shift in our mindset as development professionals.

The stakes are highest in Asia and the Pacific. In addition to accounting for more than half of the world's greenhouse-gas emissions, the region is warming faster than anywhere else and is acutely vulnerable to rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and biodiversity loss. These trends will only escalate if MDBs continue to pursue business as usual.



MDBs should make greater use of concessional finance, including grants, to improve project bankability. This is especially important for middle-income countries, which produce significant emissions but typically cannot access soft loans for development projects

To improve the odds that humanity wins the battle against climate change, MDBs must change in three ways. For starters, some basic principles of their operations, namely the traditional country-focused approach, must be recast. The costs of climate change and the benefits of adaptation and mitigation investments extend beyond national borders, so we need a more regional and global perspective that leverages MDBs' unique convening and coordinating power across political jurisdictions.

Initiatives such as the Energy Transition Mechanism, a collaborative and scalable blended-finance instrument to accelerate the retirement of coal power plants across our region, are a step in the right direction. Led by ADB, it combines concessional resources from donors, philanthropic sources, and others with market-priced funds from development-finance institutions and commercial investors.

But much more is needed. Greening trade policies and agreements can reduce the negative environmental effects of trade, including from the export of waste and plastics to developing countries. Likewise, more accurate pricing of manufacturing emis-

sions in trade agreements can help prevent "brown" industries from relocating to poorer countries with weaker environmental regulations. Greater coordination on cross-border carbon-pricing mechanisms will also be necessary to encourage greener manufacturing and energy production.

The second change MDBs must embrace is to scale up climate investment significantly. The G20's members have argued that, by implementing reforms to manage capital more effectively, MDBs could increase lending by hundreds of billions of dollars without jeopardising their triple-A credit rating.

I agree that we need to do more with what we have. The ADB is reviewing its capital-adequacy framework to explore how adjustments such as redefining risk tolerance and optimising balance sheets can create more headroom for increased lending. This is an important step, but more innovation is needed both to generate additional resources and to ensure that they incentivize bold climate action.

To this end, it is vital that MDBs expand their capacity to mobilise private investment for a broader range of climate programs, in-

cluding through blended-finance mechanisms. They should lead a global expansion of innovative financing structures, spurring more cross-border and public-private collaboration on climate action.

Another way to free up additional capital for climate-related investments is to share financial risk, which could take the form of conditional guarantees from donor countries. Capital that MDBs would otherwise set aside for default risk could instead be leveraged to generate additional resources.

MDBs should also make greater use of concessional finance, including grants, to improve project bankability. This is especially important for middle-income countries, which produce significant emissions but typically cannot access soft loans for development projects.

Finally, our institutions must become more efficient and effective. Embedding global and regional development priorities at the core of our business model requires stronger climate and sectoral expertise that can be mobilised across borders. Private-sector and public-sector experts, whose work rarely overlaps at most MDBs, need to collaborate to identify impediments to private investment in areas like renewable energy and to design policies that could unlock downstream investment.

ADB's forthcoming new operating model will radically change our structure to reduce organisational silos and increase climate-related and private-sector work. I see this as only the first step on a path of reform that all MDBs must take in order to respond effectively to rapidly evolving challenges like global warming.

The sheer scale of climate change can make us feel helpless. But if we act boldly now, we can avoid the doom loop. I believe MDBs can rise to the challenge, as they have done in response to other global crises. Averting a catastrophe of this magnitude demands nothing less.

The writer is President of the Asian Development Bank. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE

SPECTRUM DIPLOMACY

Twists & roundabouts in Indo-US ties

A revelation was made on 11th of April in New Delhi by General Kenneth S Wilsbach, Commander, US Pacific Air Forces (COMPAFAF) that they had discussed with New Delhi the shooting down of the Chinese spy balloon. The idea was to initiate inter-operability and the process of two air forces working together.



DK Giri

THE US HAS A GENUINE CONCERN ABOUT INDIA NOT SEVERING ITS TIES WITH RUSSIA AND NOT TAKING A VOCAL STAND AGAINST THE WAR IN UKRAINE

The increasing defence cooperation manifested in Wilsbach's statement may warm up the hearts of those believing that Americans would aid and defend the biggest democracy of the world; as Washington expects New Delhi to work as a countervailing force to Beijing.

The perception that America, the super power, will defend a rule-based order and individual democracies is endorsed by Howard W. French, a professor at Columbia University. He analyses, "The west's urge to counter China should not mean ignoring democratic erosion among its own coalition members." In order to support his arguments, French quotes RSS ideologues like Savarkar and the books written on them. Admittedly, the nature and content of India's democracy is debatable like many others in the world.

However, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been claiming

that India is the oldest home of democracy in the world.

But, the moot point in French's contention is that the US is less concerned about India than Taiwan because the democracy variable is incredible and unconvincing. The argument flies on the face of facts.

There is a plethora of evidence to show how the US has propped up patently anti-democratic regimes in its national interests.

In fact, the latest trend in American foreign policy is more surprising as it borders on self-contradiction. The biggest contradiction the US is facing now is the threat from China not Russia. Targeting Russia is perhaps a misplaced strategy. Some would argue as I have said in the column mentioned above that the US is feeding its national economic interests by letting the war on Ukraine continue. Therefore, the US needs to undergo a radical shift in identifying its rivals and dealing with them. That is how India and the US relations can be firmed up. That is also in the interest of both democracies.

In fact, there are two main issues between both the countries. One, does the US want India to be a counterweight to China? If yes, a whole lot of policies in various

sectors would have to follow. Quite a bit is happening in areas like critical and emerging technology, defence and industrial cooperation, cyber and maritime security, India-Pacific cooperation, under the Quad platform. But these are not enough. It has to be a complete partnership.

India's economy is five times less than that of China. That has to be bridged. There have been talks about shifting the supply chains from China. India is the natural alternative in terms of its skill-base, demography, and size of the market. But is it happening? There has been critical support from the US in the past on the green revolution making India food-sufficient, raising India as an IT superpower. Indians' success stories in the US trickle back to their home country, climate change collaborations, space technology and so on. Yet it is not enough to counter China from India's platform. The US must realise it.

The second issue is that the US has inspired less trust in the past when it backed Pakistan to the hilt in the name of containing Taliban, whereas Islamabad was harbouring terrorists operating across the world including the USA. Not to forget that Osama Bin Laden was given sanctuary in Pakistan; like-

wise, the US suddenly pulled out of Afghanistan leaving democratic forces in the lurch.

That said, the US has a genuine concern about India not severing its ties with Russia and not taking a vocal stand against the war in Ukraine. At the same time, Russia treats India and China as its allies. It may broker peace between the two countries, whether Moscow can prevail on Beijing is another matter. But New Delhi can still turn to Moscow vis-à-vis Beijing. Can it do so with Washington? Although India is always prepared to defend her sovereignty by herself, we are discussing friends and partners. Can the US give that assurance to New Delhi as it has done to Israel and Taiwan?

That assurance calls for many operative policies and concrete actions vis-à-vis China. Has the US begun to act on those? Answers to these questions will determine the future of India-US relations, which are interestingly and inevitably getting closer whether one likes them or not. So let a conscious, frank and transparent dialogue begin!

The writer is Secretary General, Association for Democratic Socialism. INFA

Curb 'manja' sale

Sir, Even though the National Green Tribunal has imposed a ban on the 'manja' string it is still widely and boldly being used in many states. Because 'manja' is coated with glass, metal, and other sharp materials, these strings act as good conductors of electricity, making it more likely that a cut 'manja' cord will snag on power lines. 'Manja' maims and kills thousands of pigeons, crows, owls, endangered vultures and other birds each year, tearing their wings and sometimes cutting off their legs. Humans are not safe either. Many people have had their throats cut while walking, riding a motorcycle or scooter, or getting into a car with their head stuck out the window. Also, when one of the power lines is cut by 'manja', it can affect thousands of people. According to reports, it's hard to believe the authorities are still allowing 'manja' in the country. Without laws banning their production, sale, and use, no one is safe from deadly sharp lines.

Vijaykumar HK, RAICHUR

Opposition unity

Sir, Having seen the Indian political scenario over the years, we are not convinced about any opposition unity taking place in the light of 2024 General elections. We never call it a 'khichdi' combination or a 'gathbandhan' but it is just a build up before the real fight is on. Instead of a consolidation of the Opposition against the BJP, at least three factions have emerged. One headed by the Congress as alliance maker; if not alliance lynchpin, the others are permutations and combinations of smaller regional parties pivoting around different leaders. The permutations and combinations of the faction-ridden Opposition is a treat for a math geek. Finding an answer to how India's Opposition, with over 20 political parties, will arrange and rearrange itself to coordinate its strategy of challenging the Narendra Modi-led Bharatiya Janata Party is a mind-boggling puzzle. Thus the possibility of a unified fight against the BJP that calls for adjustments and accommodations between factions is a challenge as much to math geeks working on permutations and combinations as it is to political parties and the voter. It appears as though the so-called opposition unity is just a buildup.

CK Subramaniam, NAVI MUMBAI

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

Orissa POST

B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

of the day quote

Haryana is the first state in the country that is procuring 14 crops at minimum support price

There is no chance of going into the NDA. I have taken an oath to stay with Nitish Kumar till the last breath. Nitish Kumar has all the ability of a Prime Minister and he is making honest efforts to unite the opposition parties of the country

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is working to fulfill the dream of Bhimrao Ambedkar by working for the development and prosperity of all sections of the society

SHORT TAKES

Modi inaugurates AIIMS, Assam

Guwahati: Inaugurating the first All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) of the northeastern region in Guwahati, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday slammed the previous governments for doing precious little to uplift the healthcare infrastructure of the country.

Mobile snatcher brutally thrashed

Patna: A man, who allegedly snatched a mobile in Bihar's Bettiah on Friday, was brutally thrashed by a mob after he could not escape the spot, police said.

Bizman arrested

Mumbai: The Nashik unit of Maharashtra's Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) has arrested a 47-year-old businessman for making a hoax call to police claiming that three terrorists with Pakistan links had entered Mumbai, an official said Friday.



The Bharatiya Janata Party government in Uttar Pradesh is carrying out encounters with an eye on polls

SC unhappy with delay in processing mercy petitions



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

A bench of Justices MR Shah and CT Ravikumar said even after the final conclusion by the top court, there is an inordinate delay in not deciding the mercy petition, the object and purpose of the death sentence would be frustrated

The observations came on a petition filed by the Maharashtra government challenging an order of the Bombay High Court which commuted the death sentence awarded to a woman and her sister

accused which was kept pending for about seven years and 10 months. A local court had awarded the death sentence to them in 2001 for kidnapping 13 children and killing nine in Kolhapur, which was confirmed by the high court in 2004.

Refusing to interfere with the high court order, the top court said the gravity of the offence can be a relevant consideration while commuting the death sentence to life imprisonment. However, inordinate delay in disposal of the mercy petitions can also be said to be a relevant consideration while commuting the death sentence to life imprisonment.

In view of the above, the impugned judgment and order passed by the high court commuting the death sentence to life imprisonment is not required to be interfered with, it said. Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, appearing on behalf of the Union of India, submitted that looking at the seriousness and gravity of the offence committed by the accused, the high court ought to have passed an order to commute the death sentence to life imprisonment for natural life without any remission.

New Delhi, April 14: Death row convicts are taking advantage of an inordinate delay in deciding mercy petitions, the Supreme Court has said while directing the state governments and authorities concerned to see such pleas are decided and disposed of at the earliest.

A bench of Justices MR Shah and CT Ravikumar said even after the final conclusion by the top court, there is an inordinate delay in not deciding the mercy petition, the object and purpose of the death sentence would be frustrated.

"Therefore, as such, all efforts shall be made by the State Government and/or the concerned authorities to see that mercy petitions are decided and disposed of at the earliest, so that even the accused can also know his fate and even justice is also done to the victim," the bench said.

The observations came on a petition filed by the Maharashtra government challenging an order of the Bombay High Court which commuted the death sentence awarded to a woman and her sister. The high court commuted the death sentence to life imprisonment on grounds that there was an inordinate and unexplained delay on the part of the State/Governor of the State in not deciding the mercy petitions preferred by the



Fire force personnel take part in a mock drill on the National Fire Day celebrations in Thiruvananthapuram

RAHUL STARTS VACATING MP BUNGALOW

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 14: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has started shifting his belongings from his 12, Tughlaq Lane residence as he was asked to vacate the premises by April 22 following his disqualification from Lok Sabha.

Two trucks were seen parked outside his residence and the belongings were later shifted to his mother's 10, Janpath residence. Sources said Rahul Gandhi is likely to soon vacate the official bungalow allotted to him.

While Rahul Gandhi has seen a number of houses, he may also opt to stay with his mother and Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi.

The Lok Sabha Secretariat had sent Gandhi a notice asking him to vacate the premises by April 22 following his disqualification as MP after his conviction and two-year sentence by a Surat court in a defamation case.

A few years ago, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra was also asked to vacate her Lodhi Estate bungalow as SPG cover was removed from her security.

TN BJP chief alleges graft

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, April 14: Tamil Nadu BJP president K Annamalai Friday alleged that "kickbacks of Rs 200 crore" had been channelled by a multinational company through two shell firms to "Chief Minister M K Stalin for DMK's 2011 election fund".

The ruling DMK dismissed the allegation as "laughable, baseless and unfounded" and said legal action would be initiated against Annamalai. Top DMK leader Duraimurugan dismissed the allegations as a mere political stunt.

Annamalai, referring to the DMK rule between 2006 and 2011, alleged that payments were received by the party as kickbacks from a company that won a bid related to the execution of Chennai Metro Rail Phase I project.

The BJP leader told reporters at the state party headquarters here that the Central government had notified a policy on May 5, 2010 stipulating norms for evaluation of bids submitted by foreign companies.

Days before the closure of bids for the project, an addendum was brought in and a "second firm"



came up to the "first position", which won the bid, Annamalai alleged. The specific change made was withdrawn later. The TN BJP leader alleged that the company which won that bid paid "Rs 200 crore" to Stalin for "DMK's 2011 election fund" through two shell companies, one Singapore-based and another based in Hong Kong. Though late M Karunanidhi was the chief minister at that time, the subject related to the Metro project came under Stalin's purview, he claimed. "I am going to lodge a complaint today to the CBI Director to probe the receipt of Rs 200 crore bribe through two shell companies. This is a direct allegation against the Chief Minister by us," he said. CBI had the authority to probe into it, he added. In a note of warning, Annamalai said that the mobility provider Alstom had been sentenced to pay USD 772 million as criminal fine to resolve foreign bribery charges by the United States government.

The ruling DMK dismissed the allegation as 'laughable, baseless and unfounded' and said legal action would be initiated against Annamalai

Denied ticket by BJP, Savadi joins Congress

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, April 14: Former Deputy Chief Minister Laxman Savadi, who announced his decision to resign from the primary membership of the BJP after being denied a ticket to contest in the May 10 Assembly elections, joined the Congress Friday.

He would now be the grand old party's candidate in Athani in Belagavi district, Congress leaders said. Savadi, a Lingayat leader in Belagavi district, on Friday resigned from the Legislative Council and the BJP before heading to the office of the Congress, his new political home.



"From today onwards, I have no connection with the BJP... I will be a devoted and loyal worker of Congress just as I was in the BJP for 20 to 25 years," Savadi said at a press conference after joining the party. He was flanked by Congress state president D K Shivakumar, Congress national general secretary and Karnataka

in charge Randeep Singh Surjewala and Election Campaign Committee Congress and MLA M B Patil.

Savadi said he had helped BJP candidates Shrimant Patil in Kagwad and Mahesh Kumathalli in Athani to win the 2019 bypolls following the disqualification of 17 MLAs, which led to the fall of the HD Kumaraswamy-led Congress-JD(S) coalition government.

"I was also instrumental in the BJP's victory in 13 constituencies due to which I was made the deputy chief minister. The BJP had promised that I would contest the 2023 assembly election but they backtracked," Savadi said. Savadi said the BJP leadership

had promised to give tickets to all the 17 people who helped BJP form the government in 2019 but R Shankar was "dumped". He said the BJP was using different yardsticks, which forced him to quit the party with which he had been associated for more than two decades.

Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai said he was "saddened" by Savadi's decision to part ways with the BJP and join the Congress. "I'm feeling very sad, we shared a close bond. Sometimes such political situations arise," Bommai said. "He might have found his political future in the Congress. We will do our job in our party."

'Climate change increasing man-animal conflict'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 14: Climate change is increasing the intensity of wildfires, reducing vegetation and making poor people more reliant on forests, resulting in an increase in conflict between wildlife and humans over habitat and resources, conservationists said Friday.

In its latest all-India tiger estimation report, released recently by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) highlighted the "silent and surmounting" threats of climate change-related impacts on habitats and the loss of the quality of forests over time.

It said climate change threatens the survival of tigers in the Sunderbans and is one of the major challenges facing the wildlife in the Western Ghats. While the big cat population in the Sunderbans is steady, it has come down substantially in the Western Ghats



where 824 tigers were recorded in 2022 as against 981 in 2018. Mohammad Sajid Sultan, the NTCA's assistant inspector general of forests, said the wildlife is being affected by climate change with new pests and diseases emerging. "Rain patterns are also

changing subtly and gradually rather than all at once. Reports have emerged of tigers moving to higher altitudes and overlapping territories with snow leopards, which has never happened before. "This suggests that changes are occurring in the ecosystem, including shifts in monsoon rain patterns, more dry spells and forest fires, which will likely impact vegetation and organisms in the forest, including top predators like tigers," he said.

While empirical evidence is needed to fully understand the impact of climate change, it is undeniable that it is affecting the wildlife as well as the migration and breeding cycles of organisms, the official added. According to a study carried out by scientists at the University of Washington's Center for Ecosystem Sentinels, a warming world is increasing human-wildlife conflict by altering animal habitats - like sea

ice for polar bears - as well as the timing of events, wildlife behaviours and resource availability.

A report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reveals around half of the global population is facing severe water scarcity for at least a month per year as a result of climatic and other related factors. This forces the wildlife and people to venture out and look for new sources of water.

Anish Andheria, the president of the Wildlife Conservation Trust and a member of the NTCA, said climate change is having a devastating impact on both wildlife and communities. "Climate change has led to erratic weather patterns, causing crop yields to diminish and making farmers increasingly dependent on forests for their livelihoods. "As a result, poor people are becoming even more reliant on forests for food and fuelwood, which in turn is leading to a rise in human-wildlife conflicts," he said.



Devotees swing using ropes during an acrobatic performance on the occasion of the 'Charak puja' festival, at Kedarchandpur in Murshidabad district

Amarnath Yatra to commence on July 1

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, April 14: The annual pilgrimage to the Amarnath shrine, located at a height of 3,880 metres in south Kashmir Himalayas, will begin on July 1 and continue till August 31, authorities said Friday.

Registration for the pilgrimage will start April 17. The schedule of the pilgrimage was decided at the 44th meeting of the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB) chaired by Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha at the Raj Bhavan. Announcing the schedule, Sinha said the administration is com-

mitted to ensuring a smooth and hassle-free pilgrimage. "A hassle-free pilgrimage is the top priority of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah. The administration will provide best-in-class healthcare and other essential facilities to all visiting devotees and service providers", he said.

Sinha also said that telecom services will be made operational before the commencement of the pilgrimage to the cave shrine. "All stakeholder departments are working in lodging, power, water, security and other arrangements for the smooth conduct of pilgrimage," the L-G said.

183 criminals killed in police encounters since March '17 in UP

The UP Police data showed that more than 10,900 police encounters have taken place in the state since March 2017

AGENCIES

Lucknow, April 14: With the killing of gangster-politician Atiq Ahmad's son Asad and his aide in Jhansi, the number of alleged criminals gunned down in police encounters in Uttar Pradesh has risen to 183 in the six years of Yogi Adityanath's government, officials said.

The UP Police data showed that more than 10,900 police encounters have taken place in the state since March 2017, when Adityanath took over as the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh for the first time. In these encounters, 23,300 alleged criminals were arrested and 5,046 were injured.

The number of policemen injured in them was 1,443 and 13 were killed, the data showed. Of the 13 policemen killed in encounters since March 2017, eight were ambushed in a narrow lane in a village in Kanpur district by the aides of notorious gangster Vikas Dubey.

Dubey was shot dead by police when he tried to escape while being brought to UP from Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh. Police said Dubey's vehicle had overturned during the transit and he had snatched a policeman's gun.

"As many as 183 criminals have been gunned down in police encounters in the state since March 20, 2017," Special Director General of Police (Law and Order) Prashant Kumar told PTI.

However, the opposition parties and the critics of the government have alleged that many of these encounters were "fake" and demanded a high-level probe to bring out the facts. The UP government and the police have denied these allegations and said law and order has improved since the BJP came to power in 2017.

The demand for a thorough probe

was most recently raised by Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav and Bahujan Samaj Party supremo Mayawati after Asad and his aide Ghulam were shot dead in Jhansi Thursday.

Hours after their killing in Jhansi, Yadav suggested the police encounter could be "fake".

"By doing fake encounters, the BJP government is trying to divert attention from real issues. The BJP does not believe in courts at all. Today's and other recent encounters should be thoroughly investigated and the culprits should not be spared. The government does not have the right to decide what is right or wrong. The BJP is against brotherhood," he said in a tweet in Hindi.

Shortly thereafter, Mayawati too demanded a "high-level" investigation to bring out "complete facts and truth" of the incident as "many types of discussions" were happening. She also linked the encounter to Dubey's killing. But Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya has congratulated the police on the action.

Some activists too have raised questions over the high number of police encounters in the state.

Thursday's encounter killing of Atiq Ahmad's son and his aide was the seventh under Prayagraj police commissionerate. It was also the third such encounter in the Umesh Pal murder case. In February and March, two men who allegedly took part in Umesh Pal's killing were gunned down.

Asad was caught on CCTV when Umesh Pal was killed and was on the run for 50 days, police said.

Atiq Ahmad, a former SP legislator, has expressed fear that he himself could be killed by UP Police while being brought to Prayagraj from an Ahmedabad prison, where he was lodged in connection with another case.



Police personnel inspect a two-wheeler at the site of the encounter in which jailed mafia Atiq Ahmad's son Asad was killed by the UP STF in Jhansi. PTI PHOTO



OUT OF GEAR: Traffic jam owing to the celebrations of Ambedkar's birth anniversary in Noida, Uttar Pradesh. PTI PHOTO

The opposition parties and the critics of the government have alleged that many of these encounters were "fake" and demanded a high-level probe to bring out the facts. The UP government and the police have denied these allegations and said law and order has improved since the BJP came to power in 2017.

Cyber training to be compulsory for UP police

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, April 14: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has said that cyber training course, CYTRAIN would now be mandatory for all police personnel for improving the quality of investigation in cases of cybercrime, along with training on how to tackle cases registered at Cyber Crime Prevention against Women &



Children (CCPWC) portal.

The chief minister said that pending investigations should be completed in a time-bound manner with quality and confidentiality.

He said that the Vigilance Establishment should inform the Chief Minister's Office every month about pending investigations. He further said that the personnel of the investigating agencies should be skilled with modern technical knowledge and their infrastructure and logistics needs. "The state government has been working for a strong law and order and security system in the state for the past six years. Before 2017, only two cyber-crime police stations were functional in the state for investigation of cybercrime," he said.

Cyber Helpline is functional 24x7. Effective action is being taken on cybercrime through the Cyber Safe portal. Cyber Awareness Day is organised on the first Wednesday of every month, the government spokesman said.

Iftar culture of UP political parties ends

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, April 14: The Iftar politics, that was once an important part of Uttar Pradesh politics, has gone missing.

A large part of the month of Ramadan is over and not a single political party has hosted Iftar yet.

The Samajwadi Party (SP) was known to host the biggest and best attended Iftar party at its party headquarters. Its founder, late Mulayam Singh Yadav would personally attend to guests and ensure that each one had a full meal. The menu on the table was equally lavish.

SP sources now claim that Akhilesh Yadav is wary of hosting an Iftar party since his rivals would brand him as anti-Hindu.

"We would rather focus on the municipal polls instead of wading into a new controversy," said a party MLA.

However, Akhilesh has been attending Iftar parties that are being



hosted by his leaders and MLAs.

The Bahujan Samaj Party has been known to host Iftar parties only when it is in power and the guest list is extremely restricted.

The Congress had earlier hosted Iftar parties on a regular basis and its leaders from Delhi also made it a point to attend the same.

However, in recent years, the party has abandoned the tradition and insiders claim that it is mainly paucity of funds that has made it stop hosting Iftar parties.

The only time that the BJP hosted an Iftar party was when Rajnath Singh was the chief minister. Other leaders have avoided playing host

For the past three years, it was Covid that prevented such events and now it is apparently the focus on Hindutva that is making political parties shy away from hosting Iftar parties

on such occasions.

Iftar parties were started in Uttar Pradesh in the early seventies by the then Chief Minister Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna. Thereafter, it became an annual tradition.

"The Iftar party is aimed at giving a message of communal harmony. Clerics and political leaders would come together, rising above political affiliations, and break bread. It created a sense of mutual trust," said veteran Congress leader Arun Kumar Singh.

750 villages to have streetlights in Haryana

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, April 14: Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar Wednesday said streetlights will be installed in 750 villages with more than 10,000 population across the state.

He also said CCTV cameras will be installed in the big villages of the state from security point of view.

A decision for making arrangement for installation of CCTV cameras will be taken soon, he said while interacting with the residents of Dhatir village in Palwal district, during a 'Jan Samvad' programme.

Describing the Parivar Pehchan Patra (family ID scheme) as "permanent protection of poor people", the chief minister said that according to the 2011 census, 15 lakh Ayushman cards were made in the



state, but after the PPPs were made; the names of 14.5 lakh people have been added to it.

Khattar visited Palwal as part of his 'Jan Samvad' programme during which he visits villages and interacts with the people.

During the Jan Samvad programme organized in Bagpur village, Palwal, Khattar announced to upgrade the girl's primary school in the village, besides sanctioning ₹4.15 crore for Solra road and ₹2.10

crore for Bagpur road.

On the demand of employment for women of the village, the chief minister ordered the formation of two self-help groups.

He said that through self-help groups, the government is providing interest-free loans to women for employment.

Earlier this month, Khattar had held Jan Samvad at several villages in Bhiwani as part of his three-day tour to the district.

Khattar started the Jan Samvad programme in Rohtak district last year. After that, the programmes were organised in Sirsa, Sonapat, Karnal, Kurukshetra and Fatehabad districts, where a large number of people shared their grievances with him and he had given instructions to the officials concerned on the spot to resolve most of the problems.

Haryana govt hikes pension of media personnel



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chandigarh, April 14: Taking another decision in the interest of journalists, the Haryana government on Tuesday announced to increase the pension of the accredited media personnel under the Journalist Pension Scheme already being run by the state.

Amit Agrawal, Additional Principal Secretary to Chief Minister, said the Chief Minister has accorded approval to a proposal for an annual increase in the pension amount.

"Now pension amount of journalists will be increased in proportion to the increase in DA according to the norms fixed by the Central government," he said.

He said on October 26, 2017, the Chief Minister started the Journalist Pension Scheme, a monthly pension being given to accredited media personnel above the age of 60 years.

According to the eligibility criteria for the scheme, journalists must have 20 years of experience and must have media accreditation given by the state government for five years.

Agrawal said the Chief Minister is constantly implementing new schemes for the welfare of journalists. The demand for providing pension to journalists was being raised for a long time, which was fulfilled by the present government.

Apart from this, along with an insurance scheme for journalists, free travel facility in Haryana Transport buses and media centres have also been set up in every district to enable the mediapersons to work without facing any inconvenience, added Agrawal.

Haryana: 5K% jump in cybercrime complaints

THE AVERAGE MONTHLY RECEIPT OF COMPLAINTS INCREASED FROM 272 IN 2019 TO 956 IN 2022, 1,313 IN 2021, 5,565 IN 2022, AND 8,553 IN THE FIRST THREE MONTHS OF 2023

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, April 14: Haryana saw a jaw dropping rise of almost 5,000 per cent in cyber crime incidents since 2019, registering 66,784 such complaints in 2022, officials said.

The state in 2019 had logged 1,362 cyber crime complaints, which rocketed by 4,803.40 per cent by the end of 2022, according to the data.

In the first three months of 2023 alone 25,659 complaints of cyber crime have been recorded, the officials said.

According to the police, the number of complaints have increased because helpline 1930 was operationalised in 2022, making it easy for the people to report.

To deal with the rising number of complaints received on cyber crime helpline number '1930', Haryana police has increased call lines from six to ten and number of people manning the lines from 18 to 40. Haryana's Additional DGP (Crime) O P Singh said the vic-



tims of cyber crime were being attended to round-the-clock by police.

Haryana Police recovered ₹56.9 crore from the cyber frauds in the past one year, arresting 1,377 of them, 1,239 from outside Haryana, he said.

Singh said that people must keep their Operating System, web browser, and all other software regularly updated to the latest versions to prevent any sort of hacking.

"People should use strong and unique passwords. Avoid using common passwords and use long,

complex passwords that include a mix of uppercase and lowercase letters, numbers, and special characters."

"Do not click on links or download attachments from unknown or suspicious emails. Be wary of unexpected emails, especially those that request personal or financial information and verify the authenticity of the sender before taking any action," he said.

He further said that people should enable "two-factor authentication as it adds an extra layer of security

to their online accounts by requiring an additional verification step."

"Be mindful of the information you share on social media and adjust your privacy settings to limit the amount of personal information that is publicly visible"

"Be cautious of friend requests or messages from unknown individuals and avoid sharing sensitive information online. Always make online purchases from reputable websites and avoid clicking on links in unsolicited emails or ads," he said.

The officer also urged the public to regularly review their bank and credit card statements for any unauthorised transactions and report any suspicious activity to their financial institution immediately.

"Besides, stay informed about common types of cyber fraud, such as phishing, ransomware and identity theft," he added.

COVID SURGE Mask rule returns

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, April 14: As Lucknow and many other districts of Uttar Pradesh have continued to witness a spike in fresh Covid cases, authorities have issued guidelines for offices, schools, colleges, hospitals, marriage halls and public places.

In case of symptoms of cold, fever or flu, individuals should be directed to remain quarantined at home and get Covid test done, said a press release by the administration.

Children/students/teachers in schools/colleges should be directed to wear masks and follow social distancing.

Students should be seated in the class keeping sufficient distance between them while arrangements for thermal scanning should be made at the entrance of schools/colleges.

Arrangement of hand washing soap and water, or hand sanitizer should be ensured on the campus. Doors, railings, swings etc. should be sanitized from time to time.

If any child is suffering from cough, cold, fever etc, they should not be sent to school/college

and be given medical advice and treatment.

Covid protocol should also be followed in hospitals. Compliance of mask, sanitizer and social distancing protocols should be ensured. Entry should not be given to individuals without a mask. Thermal scanning should be arranged at the entrances.

Fever help desk and Covid help desk should be established while Covid test should be done for symptomatic patients.

Wearing mask and social distancing is also compulsory at cinema hall/malls, railway stations, bus stations and airports. Thermal scanning should be ensured at the entrances of all these places.

Lucknow District Magistrate Suryopal Gangwar said medical kits should be made available to symptomatic patients, and daily feedback of home isolation patients should be taken by calling them through the command centre.

If any patient needs hospitalisation, it should be ensured immediately.



national

of the day quote

Chief Minister KCR failed to fulfill the promise to make a Dalit the first chief minister of Telangana. KCR also went back on his promise to give three acres of land to every Dalit family

BANDI SANJAY KUMAR | TELANGANA BJP PRESIDENT

In Telangana, KCR's constitution reigns supreme, where there is no freedom of speech and right to protest. KCR's constitution is all about corruption, nepotism, and fake promises. From Dalit Chief Minister to Dalit Bandhu, Dalits have been cheated and neglected

YS SHARMILA | YSRTP PRESIDENT

If BJP returns to power in 2024 by winning more than 35 seats in West Bengal, no one would dare to attack Ram Navami rallies in the state

AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

79 phones seized

New Delhi: With the arrest of a notorious thief, the Delhi Police claimed to have busted a mobile phone theft racket operating in Delhi-NCR and Bihar, an official said Friday. The accused identified as Rohit alias Vishal Kumar (22), a resident of Shalimar Bagh, operated mainly in the night and had several associates. The raiding team recovered 79 stolen mobile phones, a button actuated knife, and a stolen scooter. According to police, based on a specific input, Rohit was nabbed from near Satyawati Flyover on Thursday around 5 p.m.

20 youths booked

Lucknow: At least 20 youths have been booked by the Barabanki police for allegedly harassing the wife and daughter of a police sub-inspector outside the gate of police lines. Six teams have been pressed into service to nab the accused. SHO Kotwali, Sanjay Maurya, said, "The woman and her 15-year-old daughter were returning after buying vegetables from the market on Wednesday night when 10-12 youths made obscene gestures. When the mother and daughter raised an alarm, the youths sexually harassed them." Later, the cop's wife narrated the incident to her family members who reached the spot.

Two electrocuted

Palghar (Maharashtra): Two men were electrocuted and four more injured when they were returning home after the Ambedkar Jayanti celebrations, officials said here Friday. The tragedy took place in the Kargil Nagar area of Virar town around 11 p.m. on Thursday, after a colourful procession of Baoddhhan Panchayat Samiti and other groups to mark the 132nd birth anniversary of B.R. Ambedkar being celebrated all over the country on Friday (April 14).

Man arrested

Noida: The cyber police have arrested a man for online fraud of ₹1.68 crore from Uttar Pradesh's Basti district. The accused, who had been absconding since two years, was arrested Thursday. Station in-charge Rita Yadav stated that the accused - Durga Prasad Mishra, a resident of Nindaur police station area used to contact people through Facebook as a mediator of Taro Pharmaceutical Industries Limited Company based in Canada and used to lure them to engage in online business of dry fruits.



Firefighters saved the lives of seven persons and properties worth Rs 169.53 crore in 2022-23 during which they worked tirelessly to tackle many blazes, including the recent wildfires in the coastal state

PRAMOD SAWANT | GOA CM

AMBEDKAR STATUE UNVEILED

Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Reddy unveiled the 125-ft tall statue of B R Ambedkar in Hyderabad, Friday, on the occasion of the birth anniversary of the architect of the Constitution, on a grand scale. The statue was built using 360 tonnes of stainless steel and 114 tonnes of bronze, at a cost of ₹146.50 crore



Nitish targets BJP Two cow vigilantes arrested for murder



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, April 14: Launching a veiled attack on the BJP-led NDA, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar Friday said those who vote for them in the next year's Lok Sabha elections will bring "destruction" on themselves.

Kumar, who dumped the BJP in August last year and formed the Mahagathbandhan government, claimed that he has been working to forge opposition unity. "I am working towards forging opposition unity... But I am not a claimant for the prime minister's post. All opposition parties are united over forming an alliance against the BJP-led government at the Centre before the 2024 general elections," the JD(U) supremo said.

He was addressing party workers at a JD(U) office here on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Bhim Rao Ambedkar, the architect of India's Constitution. "I must tell one thing that those who will vote for them (BJP) in the coming general elections will bring destruction on themselves and the country... and those who will vote for us will ensure the well-being of themselves, the country and the state," Kumar said.

The Chief Minister claimed that his only goal was to work for "unifying the opposition to unseat the BJP from power". On several oc-

casions in the past, Kumar said he was looking forward to play a "positive" role in forging opposition unity against the ruling NDA at the Centre.

"I met several opposition leaders, including the Congress and the Left parties, in Delhi. We had very positive and constructive meetings... Now I will talk to other non-BJP parties and will go on a visit across the country," the CM said.

During his two-day visit to Delhi earlier this week, Kumar and Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav met AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi. Kumar also held discussions with several other opposition leaders, including Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

Accusing the BJP of indulging in dividing society into religious lines, Kumar said that the "BJP is desperate to rewrite history and people know what they did during the freedom struggle". "They had no contribution in the fight for the country's freedom. They are simply trying to spread hatred. They need to be wiped out from the entire country. People should remain alert about such forces," Kumar claimed.

The JD(U) leader also alleged that the "BJP-led government at the Centre has done nothing for the country or Bihar, other than propaganda". "What happened to the special status of Bihar?" he asked.

Kumar also raised his voice of disapproval over central agencies' actions against the RJD, the largest constituent of the 'Mahagathbandhan' government in Bihar.

"The central agencies are creating trouble for them (RJD leaders), after we came together to form a new government in the state. Similar actions are being initiated against non-BJP leaders in other states also," he said.

Jaipur, April 14: The Rajasthan Police has arrested two of the eight accused wanted in the alleged abduction and murder of two Muslim men from Bharatpur in Rajasthan by suspected cow vigilantes in Haryana, an official said Friday.

Inspector General of Police (Bharatpur) Gaurav Srivastava said that the accused Monu Rana alias Narendra and Gogi alias Monu were detained from an isolated hilly area in Dehradun.

The accused involved in the case have connections with Bajrang Dal as well as other organisations including Haryana Gau Raksha Dal, he said.

Nasir (25) and Junaid alias Juna (35), both residents of Ghatmeeka village in Rajasthan's Bharatpur district, were allegedly abducted by cow vigilantes on February 15.

Their bodies were found inside a burnt car in Loharu in Bhiwani in Haryana on the morning of February 16.

During the initial interrogation, both the accused revealed that Junaid and Nasir were abducted on



Inspector General of Police (Bharatpur) Gaurav Srivastava said that the accused Monu Rana alias Narendra and Gogi alias Monu were detained from an isolated hilly area in Dehradun

Nasir (25) and Junaid alias Juna (35), both residents of Ghatmeeka village in Rajasthan's Bharatpur district, were allegedly abducted by cow vigilantes February 15

suspicion of cow smuggling. They were badly thrashed and when they failed to fetch any information regarding the smuggling from them, they took them to a local police station in Haryana but the policemen refused to take action

seeing the condition they were in, the IG said.

"When Haryana police refused to take action against the duo seeing their condition, the accused took Nasir and Junaid and murdered them. The bodies were put



A woman performs Bihu dance at the annual Mukali Bihu programme in Guwahati

in a vehicle and it was burnt," he said.

On February 17, one of the accused Rinku Saini was arrested and based on his disclosure and other evidence collected by the police, eight others were identified and teams were sent to several states in search of them.

The other six accused, each carrying a cash reward of ₹10,000 each, are still absconding and being searched.

Apart from them, the police have issued notices to several other suspects including officer bearers and members of Haryana Gau Raksha Dal but no one has turned up. However, the arrest of the two accused will expedite the investigation of the case, IG Srivastava said.

On the involvement of cow vigilante Monu Manesar, the IG said that he was on the suspect list and his role will become clear after the questioning of Monu Rana and Gogi.

The officer said that several teams of the Rajasthan police camped in different districts under cover in search of the accused.

Minor stripped, made to chant religious slogans

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhopal, April 14: A 12-year-old boy was allegedly stripped and forced to chant religious slogans in Madhya Pradesh's Indore, a senior police official said Friday.

The accused, who are also minors and known to the victim, have been detained, the official said Friday. According to police, the incident came into light late Thursday after a video of the incident surfaced on social media. The victim was playing near Star Square when one of the accused approached him and took him to another location.

The victim told police that upon reaching near a flyover in Mahalaxmi Nagar area, another boy joined them. The duo forced him to chant religious slogans. They also allegedly beat him and made him take off his clothes.



He managed to escape and narrated the entire incident to his parents. Following which, the parents took him to a nearby police station and lodged a complaint Thursday.

"Accused and the victim were known to each other. We have detained the accused and booked them under relevant IPC. We have also requested people not to make the video of the incident viral on social media, as both accused and victim are minor. We are trying to find out what made the accused do such an act," police said. Further investigation is underway," a senior police official said.

'Tried to capture Asad alive'

When Asad and Ghulam were confronted near the Parichha embankment, they abused the policemen loudly and opened fire at them with an intent to kill, the FIR stated

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jhansi (UP), April 14: UP Police tried to capture gangster-politician Atiq Ahmad's son Asad and his accomplice alive during the encounter in Jhansi but they opened indiscriminate fire at STF officials and were killed in retaliatory firing, according to the FIR filed in the case.

The FIR was filed at Badagaon police station of Jhansi after the encounter Thursday. It said police teams had received a specific input that Asad and his aide Ghulam were seen in the area on Wednesday night. On Thursday, they were intercepted moving on a motorcycle without a registered number. When police teams asked them to stop, they tried to speed away via an unpaved road and slipped into a roadside bush. However, the two were surrounded.

When Asad and Ghulam were confronted near the Parichha em-



bankment, they abused the policemen loudly and opened fire at the policemen with an intent to kill, the FIR stated. "The members of both the (STF) teams, who had surrounded them, tried to reach within their firing range without caring for their lives and tried to

catch them alive, but had to return fire in self-defence in view of the indiscriminate firing from the miscreants," it stated.

When the firing stopped from the other side, policemen approached the two and found them wounded and wincing in pain. They were identified through the pictures circulating in the media as Atiq Ahmad's son Asad and his aide Ghulam. Since there were still alive, the two were immediately rushed to a hospital for treatment. When the team reached the hospital, they came to know that both had died, according to the FIR.

The FIR stated that a gun, empty shells, live cartridges, a motorcycle and other evidence were collected from the spot. It said the police had received information that Asad and Ghulam were seen in Chirgaon township in Jhansi a night before the encounter.

Asad and Ghulam were accused in the Umesh Pal murder case and carried a bounty of ₹5 lakh each. They had been absconding ever since Umesh Pal, a key witness in then BSP MLA Raju Pal's murder case in 2005, was killed in February outside his home in Prayagraj.

Ex-Punjab CM Channi slams AAP govt over summons



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, April 14: Former Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi Friday appeared before the Vigilance Bureau in connection with a disproportionate assets matter and was questioned for several hours by the officials even as he described the probe as "totally political".

Ahead of entering the bureau's Mohali office around 11 am, the Congress leader slammed the state's Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government over his date of appearance being advanced and claimed that Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann's regime was indulging in "vendetta politics".

The bureau had initially asked Channi to appear for question-

ing on April 12. He, however, requested for another date to join the investigation, which the bureau allowed, asking him to appear on April 20. Later, the Vigilance Bureau advanced it to Friday.

The bureau has been inquiring into allegations of Channi amassing assets disproportionate to his known source of income. Last month, the bureau had issued a lookout circular against the former chief minister.

Asked about being questioned in the matter before he entered the bureau's office, Channi rubbished that he had accumulated any disproportionate assets and said, "The probe is totally political. Let them do what they want."

Addressing a press conference before he reached the bureau's office, Channi launched a scathing attack on the state's AAP government and said he "may be tortured, arrested or even killed", but he is prepared to face it.

"Hang me if even one person says Channi was indulging in any corrupt practice," the former CM said breaking down in tears.

Flash droughts are the 'new normal' in droughts: Study

While they start quickly, the droughts can last for months, damaging vegetation and ecosystems, and triggering heat waves and wildfires

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 14: Flash droughts, or droughts that start and develop rapidly, have become more frequent due to human-caused climate change and the trend is predicted to accelerate in a warmer future, according to a new research.

An international team of researchers, including those from the University of Southampton, UK, said that flash droughts are fast becoming the 'new normal' for droughts, making forecasting and preparing for their impact more difficult.

Their research is published in the journal Science. Flash droughts,



caused by low precipitation and high evapotranspiration and leading to quick depletion of soil of water, can develop into severe droughts within a few weeks.

and triggering heat waves and wildfires. The researchers wanted to understand if there had been a transition from conventional 'slow' droughts to flash droughts and also how the trend would develop under different carbon emissions scenarios.

The researchers found that the transition was most notable over East and North Asia, Europe, the Sahara, and the west coast of South America. They said that while some areas, such as eastern North America, Southeast Asia and North Australia, saw fewer flash and slow droughts, the speed of drought onset had increased.

"Climate change has effectively

sped up the onset of droughts," said Justin Sheffield, professor of Hydrology and Remote Sensing at the University of Southampton and co-author of the paper. Further, they found that while the Amazon saw an increase in slow droughts, West Africa saw an increase in the frequency and extremity of both fast and slow droughts.

"While it varies between different regions, there has been a global shift towards more frequent flash droughts during the past 64 years," said Sheffield. "As we head towards warmer future, flash droughts are becoming the new normal. Our models show that higher-emission scenarios would lead to a greater

risk of flash droughts with quicker onset which pose a major challenge for climate adaptation," said Sheffield.

The transition to flash droughts, the researchers said, could have irreversible impacts on ecosystems owing to their inability to adapt to a sudden lack of water and extreme heat. Current approaches to predicting droughts use longer time scales, making forecasting flash droughts difficult. The researchers say new approaches are needed to provide early warnings of flash droughts, as well as a better understanding of how natural ecosystems and humans will be impacted.

international

of the day quote

Honoured to call on President Filipe Nyusi of Mozambique. Agreed to work together to voice the concerns of Global South, especially on issues like terrorism and climate change

S JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER OF INDIA

We should rise above partisan petty interests and keep national integrity and communal harmony and promote brotherhood

RAMCHANDRA POUDEL | NEPAL PRESIDENT

Last year, amid the unprecedented economic crisis which disrupted our daily lives, we partook in the new year rituals with untold hardship and were confined to a struggle in alleviating from this adversity

RANIL WICKREMESINGHE | LANKAN PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

Yemen rebels, Saudi begin prisoner swap

Sanaa (Yemen): An exchange of more than 800 prisoners linked to Yemen's long-running war began Friday, the International Committee for the Red Cross said. The United Nations-brokered deal, in the works for months, comes amid concerted diplomatic efforts to negotiate an end to the conflict. It is most significant prisoner exchange in Yemen since both sides freed more than 1,000 detainees in October 2020. Thousands of people are believed to be held as prisoners of war by all sides since the war erupted.

8 killed by drone attack in Myanmar

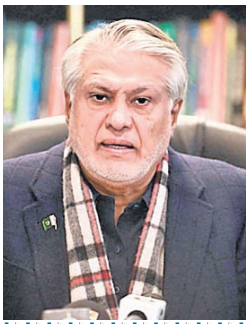
Naypyidaw: Eight people, including five children, were killed and 31 others injured by a drone attack in Myanmar's Sagaing region, the Information Team of Myanmar's State Administration Council reported Friday. The bomb attack carried out by a drone happened at around 5:40 p.m. local time Thursday near a government school at a village in Sagaing township of Sagaing region, the report said, Xinhua News Agency reported. Four bombs were dropped by a drone in the attack on the eve of the traditional Thingyan water festival, it added.

Iranians mark Jerusalem Day

Tehran: Tens of thousands of Iranians, some chanting "Death to America" and "Death to Israel," marched in the capital of Tehran Friday to mark Jerusalem Day, an annual show of support for the Palestinians. Senior Iranian officials attended the rally, including President Ebrahim Raisi. Since Iran's Islamic Revolution in 1979, the rallies marking what is also known as al-Quds Day have typically been held typically held on the last Friday of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

N Korea tests new long-range missile

Seoul (South Korea): North Korea said Friday it flight-tested a solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missile for the first time, a possible breakthrough in its efforts to acquire a more powerful, harder-to-detect weapon targeting the continental United States. North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency issued the report a day after the country's neighbours detected a launch of a long-range missile from near Pyongyang, which extended a run of weapons displays involving more than 100 missiles fired into the sea since the start of 2022.



UAE authorities have confirmed to IMF for their bilateral support of USD 1 billion to Pakistan

ISHAQ DAR | PAKISTAN'S FINANCE MINISTER

XI, LULA MEET IN BEIJING

Chinese leader Xi Jinping met with visiting Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva Friday as part of a push to boost ties between two of the world's largest developing nations. The meeting came on the second day of Lula's visit to China



US DOCU LEAK SUSPECT APPEARS IN COURT

Jack Douglas Teixeira of North Dighton, Massachusetts, who was arrested by a team of heavily armed FBI agents at his home Thursday, appeared in federal court

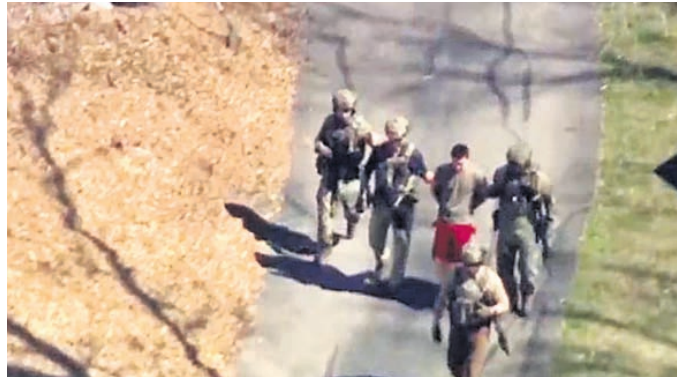
AGENCIES

Boston, April 14: Billing records of an Internet social media platform and interviews with another user helped the FBI identify a Massachusetts Air National Guardsman as a suspect in the leak of highly classified military documents, according to court records unsealed Friday.

The new details came as Jack Teixeira, 21, appeared in court to face charges under the Espionage Act of unauthorised removal and retention of classified and national defence information.

A federal magistrate judge ordered him held until a detention hearing next week.

Teixeira was arrested by heavily armed tactical agents on Thursday following a weeklong criminal investigation into the disclosure of the government records, a breach that exposed to the world unvarnished secret assessments on the war in Ukraine, the capabilities and geopolitical interests of other nations and other national security issues. He appeared in



court Friday in tan jail clothes for a brief proceeding at which US Magistrate Judge David Hennesy ordered him held pending a hearing next Wednesday.

Investigators believe Teixeira was the leader of an online private chat group on Discord, a social media platform popular with people playing online games.

Billing records the FBI obtained from Discord, which has said it was cooperating with the bureau, helped lead investigators to Teixeira, according to an FBI affidavit unsealed Friday. According to the

document, the FBI interviewed someone familiar with Teixeira's online posts Monday. That person, who is not identified in the affidavit, told the FBI that a username linked to Teixeira began posting what appeared to be classified information roughly in December.

The affidavit suggests Teixeira switched from typing out documents in his possession to taking them home and photographing them because he "had become concerned that he may be discovered making the transcriptions of text in the workplace."

Investigators believe Teixeira was the leader of an online private chat group on Discord, a social media platform popular with people playing online games

Billing records the FBI obtained from Discord, which has said it was cooperating with the bureau, helped lead investigators to Teixeira, according to an FBI affidavit unsealed Friday

Teixeira was arrested by heavily armed tactical agents Thursday following a weeklong criminal investigation

That's different from what posters have told The Associated Press and other media outlets, saying the user they would call "the O.G." started posting images of documents because he was annoyed other users weren't taking him seriously. The affidavit also alleges Teixeira was detected on April 6—the day The New York Times first published a story about the breach of documents—searching for the word "leak" in a classified system. The FBI says that was reason to believe Teixeira was trying to find

information about the investigation into who was responsible for the leaks. The Biden administration has scrambled to contain the potential diplomatic and military fallout from the leaks since they were first reported, moving to reassure allies and assess the scope of damage. The classified documents—which have not been individually authenticated in public by US officials—range from briefing slides mapping out Ukrainian military positions to assessments of international support for Ukraine and other sensitive topics, including under what circumstances Russian President Vladimir Putin might use nuclear weapons.

In previous Associated Press stories, the leaker was identified as "the O.G." by a member of the online chat group. Known as Thug Shaker Central, the group drew roughly two dozen enthusiasts who talked about their favourite types of guns and also shared memes and jokes. The group also held a running discussion on wars that included talk of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Russia's Pacific Fleet put on high alert for snap drills

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Moscow, April 14: The entire Russian Pacific Fleet was put on high alert on Friday for snap drills that will involve practice missile launches in a massive show of force amid tensions with the West over the fighting in Ukraine.



Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu said the goal of the war games was to test the capability of Russia's armed forces to mount a response to aggression. Along with the missile launches, the drills will also involve nuclear-capable strategic bombers and other warplanes besides the naval aviation of the Pacific Fleet, Shoigu said.

The Russian military has concentrated the bulk of its forces on the front lines in Ukraine, but also continued conducting regular drills across Russia to train its forces and demonstrate their readiness. The Russian Defence Ministry released videos showing warships and submarines sailing off to take part in the maneuvers. As part of the drills, marine units deployed to amphibious landing vessels and coastal defense missile systems moved to firing positions.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov described the war games as part of regular training intended to "maintain the necessary level of the armed forces' readiness".

Shoigu noted that the maneuvers' scenario envisages a response to an adversary's attempt to make a landing on Sakhalin Island and the southern Kuril Islands. Japan asserts territorial rights to the Kuril Islands, which it calls the Northern Territories. The Soviet Union took them in the final days of World War II, and the dispute has kept the countries from signing a peace treaty formally ending their hostilities.

Last year, Russia announced it had suspended peace talks with Japan to protest Tokyo's sanctions against Moscow over its action in Ukraine.

Macron cleared to raise French retirement age

FRANCE'S CONSTITUTIONAL COUNCIL FRIDAY APPROVED AN UNPOPULAR PLAN TO RAISE THE RETIREMENT AGE FROM 62 TO 64

REUTERS

Paris, April 14: French President Emmanuel Macron's flagship pension reform will enter into force swiftly, officials said Friday after it received the Constitutional Council's approval despite months of street protests and strikes.

The legislation, which pushes up the age at which one can draw a pension to 64 from 62, remains deeply unpopular, and spontaneous protests broke out when the Constitutional Council's decision was announced.

Protesters gathered outside Paris City Hall holding banners reading "climate of anger" and "no end to the strikes until the reform is withdrawn", in a sign the Council's verdict was unlikely to end widespread anger with Macron and his reform.

Opinion polls show a vast majority reject the policy changes, as well as the fact that the government pushed the bill through parliament without a final vote it might have lost. "All the labour unions are calling on the President of the Republic to show some wisdom, listen and understand what is happening in the country and not to promulgate this law," the leader of the CGT union Sophie Binet said. In a joint statement, unions said this was "the only way to soothe the

anger in the country."

But officials shrugged off the request, saying the text would be turned into law in the coming days. Labour Minister Olivier Dussot said it should enter into force on September 1 as initially planned.

'THE FIGHT CONTINUES'

The Constitutional Council said the government's actions were in line with the constitution and approved raising the legal retirement age, with only peripheral measures meant to boost employment for older workers struck down on the grounds that they did not belong in this legislation.

The opposition has tabled another bid for a referendum, which is expected to be reviewed by the Council in early May.

Far-right leader Marine Le Pen wrote on Twitter that "the political fate of the pension reform is not sealed," urging voters to back those who oppose it in the next election so that they can scrap it.

Macron says the French must work longer or else the pension budget will fall billions of euros into the red each year by the end of the decade. But the pension system is a cornerstone of France's cherished social protection model and trade unions say the money can be found elsewhere, including by taxing the rich more heavily.



HAPPY NEW YEAR: Locals and tourists play with water as they celebrate the Songkran holiday which marks the Thai New Year in Bangkok, Thailand

Supreme Court asked to preserve abortion pill limits

Mifepristone was approved by the FDA more than two decades ago and is used in combination with a second drug, misoprostol

AGENCIES

Washington, April 14: The Biden administration and a drug manufacturer asked the Supreme Court Friday to preserve access to an abortion drug free from restrictions imposed by lower court rulings, while a legal fight continues.

The Justice Department and Danco Laboratories filed their emergency requests with the high court less than two days after an appeals court ruling in a case from Texas that had the effect of

tightening the rules under which the drug, mifepristone, can be prescribed and dispensed.

The new limits would take effect Saturday unless the court acts before then. The justices are being asked for a temporary order to keep in place Food and Drug Administration regulations governing mifepristone. Such an order would give them time to more fully consider each side's arguments without the pressure of a deadline.

A ruling from the 5th US Circuit Court of Appeals late Wednesday



would prevent the pill, used in the most common abortion method, from being mailed or prescribed without an in-person visit to a doctor. It also would withdraw the Food and Drug Administration's approval of mifepristone for use beyond the seventh week of pregnancy. The FDA says it's safe through 10 weeks.

Still, the appeals court did not entirely withdraw FDA approval

of mifepristone while the fight over it continues. The 5th circuit narrowed an April 7 ruling by US District Judge Matthew Kacsmaryk, whose far-reaching and virtually unprecedented order would have blocked FDA approval of the pill. He gave the administration a week to appeal.

Attorney General Merrick Garland said Thursday that the 5th circuit did not go far enough to "protect Americans' access to safe and effective reproductive care."

Adding to the uncertainty, a separate federal judge in Washington on Thursday clarified his own order from last week to make clear that the FDA is not to do anything that might block mifepristone's availability in 17 Democrat-led states suing to keep it on the market.

Athlete emerges into daylight after 500 days in cave

REUTERS

Madrid, April 14: A 50-year-old Spanish extreme athlete who spent 500 days living 70-metres (230 feet) deep in a cave outside Granada with no contact with the outside world has told how the time flew by and she did not want to come out.

Beatriz Flamini, an elite sports-woman and mountaineer, is said by her support team to have broken a world record for the longest time spent in a cave in an experiment closely monitored by scientists seeking to learn more about the capacities of the human mind and circadian rhythms. She was 48 when she went into the cave, and celebrated two birthdays alone underground.

She began her challenge Saturday, Nov. 20, 2021 - before the

outbreak of the Ukraine war; the resultant cost of living crisis, the end of Spain's lengthy COVID mask requirement and the death of Britain's Queen Elizabeth II.

She emerged into the light of spring in southern Spain on Friday wearing dark glasses, carrying her equipment and smiling broadly. She was greeted by a phalanx of cameras and her support team who, wearing masks, encircled her in a hug. She described her experience as "excellent, unbeatable", adding that time had flown by.

"When they came in to get me, I was asleep. I thought something had happened. I said: 'Already? Surely not.' I hadn't finished my book."

Asked if she ever thought about pressing her panic button or leaving the cave, she replied: "Never. In



fact I didn't want to come out."

WOOLLY HATS Flamini spent her time underground doing exercises, painting

and drawing and knitting woolly hats. She took two GoPro cameras to document her time, and got through 60 books and 1,000 litres

of water, according to her support team.

There were hard moments - such as when the cave was invaded by flies - and some "beautiful ones", she said. "If this is your dream, and you're realising it, why are you going to cry?"

She said she had focused on retaining "coherence", eating well and relishing the silence. She looked

forward to treats such as avocados, fresh eggs and clean t-shirts that her support team sent down before, "like gods", also removing her waste.

"I didn't talk to myself out loud, but I had internal conversations and got on very well with myself," she joked.

The Guinness Book of Records website awards the "longest time survived trapped underground" to the 33 Chilean and Bolivian miners who spent 69 days 688 m (2,257 ft) underground after the collapse of the San José copper-gold mine in Chile in 2010.

A spokesman for Guinness was not able to immediately confirm whether there was a separate record for voluntary time living in a cave and whether Flamini had broken it.

of the day quote

Apple itself has exported about \$5 billion worth of goods last year from India and they are planning to have 25 per cent of their global production coming out of India in the next 4 or 5 years

PIYUSH GOVAL | COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER

Launching a range of adventure touring and superbike tyres is a big milestone for us, further augmenting our product range, which is already the widest in the category

P MADHAVAN | EXECUTIVE VP (SALES AND MARKETING), TVS SRICHAKRA LTD

It is heartening to see growth in the folio numbers and AUM as we are not a bank sponsored asset management company

SUNDEEP SIKKA | CEO, NIMF

SHORT TAKES

Gold jumps ₹480 to record high

New Delhi: The gold price jumped ₹480 to touch a lifetime high of ₹61,780 per 10 grams in the national capital Friday amid a strong global trend, according to HDFC Securities. In the previous trade, the precious metal ended at ₹61,300 per 10 grams. Silver also climbed ₹410 to ₹77,580 per kg. "Spot gold prices in the Delhi markets traded at ₹61,780 per 10 grams, up ₹480 per 10 grams," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. In the overseas market, both gold and silver were trading higher at \$2,041 per ounce and \$25.88 per ounce, respectively. Gold prices traded higher in Asian trading hours Friday. Comex spot gold prices surged to a 13-month high as bullish sentiment was boosted by a decline in the dollar index and yields, Gandhi said.

Future Retail gets 90 days extension

New Delhi: The NCLT has granted Future Retail Ltd (FRL) an extension of 90 days for concluding the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) of the company. Allowing FRL's plea the Mumbai bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) has extended the deadline to July 15, 2023, for concluding the CIRP of FRL. "... NCLT on April 13, 2023, heard the application and granted the said exclusion of 90 days from CIRP of FRL and consequent extension for completion of CIRP till July 15, 2023," said a regulatory filing from the company. This order was pronounced orally by NCLT April 13, 2023, and a "written order is awaited", FRL added.

NSE to bring two futures contracts

New Delhi: National Stock Exchange (NSE) Friday said it will launch futures contracts on underlying WTI crude oil and natural gas in the commodity derivatives segment from May 15. This comes after the exchange, last month, received approval from markets regulator Sebi to launch the rupee-denominated Nymex WTI crude oil and natural gas futures contracts in its commodity derivatives segment. These contracts will expand NSE's product offering in the energy basket and its overall commodity segment. Experts believe that these contracts would provide the market participants with an efficient avenue to hedge their price risk.



Signing of India-EU free trade agreement could be a catalyst for further enhancing India-Italy relationship

SANJIV PURI | VICE PRESIDENT, CII

RINL DISINVESTMENT ON TRACK

There is no freeze on the disinvestment process of Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL), the Steel Ministry clarified Friday. Clarifying some media reports regarding the hold on the disinvestment process of the state-owned steel maker, the ministry, in a statement, said that the disinvestment process of RINL is in progress



India not to import dairy items

To meet the growing demand, Centre said it will tap into domestic sector to improve supplies

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 14: Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Parshottam Rupala Friday made it clear that the country will not import dairy products like butter and the supplies will be improved with the help of huge untapped domestic sector.

Rupala's statement comes even as his ministry's top official had last week stated that the stocks of dairy products, especially butter and ghee etc., were lower than previous year and the country might import if the need arises.

The ministry official had also said that the country's milk production is estimated to be static in 2022-23 due to lumpy skin disease in cattle and rebound in post-Covid-19 demand.

When asked about meeting the shortages of dairy products through imports, Rupala said: "There is no truth in it (shortage of dairy products). No import will take place." "The demand has increased. We have a huge untapped area, we will try to tap that... We will manage it properly and there is no need to worry," he said and urged farmers and consumers not to worry about it.

On the rise in retail prices of dairy products, the minister said there is no need to worry about the prices. Farmers are getting good rates. Last week, former agricul-



There is no shortage of milk in the country and the government is regularly monitoring

PARSHOTTAM RUPALA | UNION MINISTER FOR FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING

- India last imported dairy products in 2011
- In 2021-22, milk output stood at 221 million tonne, while it was 208 million tonne in the previous year

ture minister and NCP leader Sharad Pawar had written to the government urging it not to consider import of dairy products, saying it will directly affect the income of the domestic milk producers. Earlier, Rupala launched two animal health initiatives - the Animal Pandemic Preparedness Initiative (APPI) and the World Bank-funded Animal Health System Support for One Health (AHSSOH) in order to control zoonotic diseases transmitted from animals to humans.

APPI aims at tracking animal diseases through large-scale digital surveillance, bringing synergies in advancement in vaccines for human beings and institutionalising targeted early response to animal and human health emergencies. The AHSSOH project of ₹1,228 crore which is jointly funded by World Bank will initially be implemented in Assam, Odisha, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.

The AHSSOH project aims to strengthen 75 district laborato-

Govt has launched two animal health initiatives APPI and AHSSOH. The AHSSOH project of Rs 1,228 crore which is jointly funded by World Bank will initially be implemented in Assam, Odisha, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra

ries, provide 100 mobile veterinary units in remote locations and high-risk areas, and upgrade 300 dispensaries and hospitals besides training 5,500 veterinarians as well as 9,000 private diagnostic professionals.

These two initiatives will also be showcased at the G20 Health Working Group meeting scheduled to be held April 20 in Goa.

Minister of State for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying L Murugan, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh, Director General of Health Services Atul Goel, Principal Scientific Advisor to Government Ajay Kumar Sood, and World Bank Head (Agriculture and Food Global practices) Oliver Braedt were also present at the launch event.

Tata hikes PV prices for 2nd time in 2023

Vehicles across segments in India have gotten costlier with the govt mandating automakers to fit their vehicles with a special device to monitor emissions, leading to extra costs

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 14: Indian automaker Tata Motors said Friday it will raise prices of its passenger vehicles due to an increase in input costs and regulatory changes that make it costlier to produce cars, the second time this year it will make such a move.

"The weighted average increase will be 0.6%, depending on the variant and model," the car maker said in a press release, adding it will come into effect from May 1.

"Tata Motors has been absorbing a significant portion of the increased costs on account of regulatory changes and rise in overall input costs and is hence compelled to pass on some proportion through this hike," it said.

Tata Motors previously hiked the price of its passenger vehicles by 1.2% in January this year, citing the same reason.

Vehicles across segments in India have gotten costlier with the government mandating au-



Weighted average hike will be 0.6%, depending on the variant and model

Tata Motors previously hiked the PV prices by 1.2% in January this year

tomakers to fit their vehicles with a special device to monitor emissions, leading to extra costs.

These fuel emission norms, known as Bharat Stage VI norms, came into effect at the beginning of the month.

India marked its highest-ever sales of passenger cars in the fiscal year ended March 31, despite multiple price increases through the year, led by sales of larger and pricier sports utility vehicles. Tata's Nexon and Punch SUVs were among top-selling cars in 2022.

However, auto sales growth is expected to taper to a low single-digit percentage in the current fiscal year, mainly due to inflation, price hikes by car makers and regulatory changes, auto dealers' body Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) said earlier this month.

BLEAK SALES

Tesla expands discounts in Europe, S'pore, Israel

Tesla's Q1 deliveries up just 4% from the previous quarter despite offering discounts in the US, China, Japan, Australia and South Korea aimed at spurring demand

REUTERS

Singapore, April 14: Tesla Inc Friday slashed prices for its electric vehicles in Europe, Israel and Singapore, expanding a global discount drive it began in China in January while raising concerns about its industry-leading profit margin.

Tesla last week reported first-quarter deliveries up just 4% from the previous quarter despite offering discounts in the United States, China, Japan, Australia and South Korea aimed at spurring demand.

Days after releasing the disappointing delivery data, Tesla announced its fifth vehicle price reduction this year in the US market, as Washington prepares to introduce tougher standards that

will limit EV tax credits.

In 2022, the world's most valuable automaker also missed CEO Elon Musk's delivery target of 50% growth, held to a 40% increase due to logistical issues and slowing demand. Tesla said Friday it cut prices in numerous European markets including Germany and France because of a scaling up and improvement in its production capacity.

In Germany, Tesla has lowered the price of its Model 3 and Model Y vehicles by between 4.5% and 9.8%, data on its website showed Friday, marking its second price reduction this year after a price reduction of 1-17% in January.

In Singapore, it cut prices of its Model 3 and Model Y vehicles between 4.3% and 5%, its local website showed.

Tesla also cut prices in Israel, with the price of the base rear-wheel drive Model 3 slashed by 25% after an initial round of global price cuts in January.

Musk has said Tesla would focus on bringing prices down to drive demand and that it had seen success in sparking orders with January's discounts.

In the United States, Tesla has cut the price of its base Model 3 by a cumulative 11% since the start of the year, with a 20% reduction on its base Model Y.



Forex kitty jumps to 9-month high

FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES RISE \$6.30 BILLION TO \$584.75 BILLION

AGENCIES

Mumbai, April 14: India's forex reserves increased by \$6.306 billion to \$584.755 billion for the week ended April 7, the highest in nine months, the RBI said Friday.

In the last reporting week, the forex kitty snapped a two-week rising trend to decline by \$329 million to \$578.45 billion.

It can be noted that in October 2021, the country's forex kitty reached an all-time high of \$645 billion. The reserves have been declining as the central bank deployed the kitty to defend the rupee amid pressures caused by global developments.

The central bank intervenes in



the spot and forwards markets to prevent runaway moves in the rupee. Changes in forex reserves also stem from valuation gains or losses.

For the reported week, the rupee ended 0.3% higher against the US dollar. The Indian unit traded in a wide

range of 81.8300 to 82.4550 to the dollar. The rupee closed at 81.85 Thursday and clocked its fourth consecutive weekly rise for the holiday-shortened week ending April 14.

For the week ended April 7, the foreign currency assets, a major

component of the reserves, increased by \$4.74 billion to \$514.431 billion, according to the Weekly Statistical Supplement released by the RBI Friday.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Gold reserves rose by \$1.496 billion to \$46.696 billion, the RBI said. The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were up by \$58 million to \$18.45 billion, the apex bank said.

The country's reserve position with the IMF was up by \$13 million to \$5.178 billion in the reporting week, the data showed.

2022 saw highest sovereign defaults since '83

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, April 14: Global credit rating agency Moody's Investors Service Friday said that 2022 saw a spike in the annual sovereign bond defaults with seven countries defaulting on repayments.

In a report, Moody's said the year 2022 saw the highest number of defaults since 1983. In 2023, there were two sovereign defaults - Argentina and Mozambique.

"Seven sovereigns defaulted during the year, namely Mali (Caa2 stable), Russia (rating withdrawn), Sri Lanka (Ca stable), Belarus (Ca negative), El Salvador (Caa3 stable), Ukraine (Ca stable) and Ghana (Ca stable)," the report states.

"The annual sovereign bond default rate jumped to nearly 5 per cent in 2022, more than five times the average default rate in 1983-2022.



Annual sovereign bond default rate jumped to nearly 5% in 2022, more than five times the average default rate in 1983-2022

There have been two defaults, by the governments of Argentina (Ca stable) and Mozambique (Caa2 positive), in 2023 to date," Moody's said.

As more emerging and frontier market sovereigns face credit stress amid a tightening monetary environment post-pandemic, the share of Caa-C rated sovereigns has increased, said Claire Li, Vice President Senior Analyst, Credit Strategy and Research.

According to Li, a growing share of sovereign ratings at the lower end of the rating distribution signals elevated default risk.

"Economies with significant financing requirements that are heavily dependent on external funding and holding a considerable amount of foreign currency-denominated public debt, with low foreign exchange reserves, are among the most vulnerable," she added.

Bodhi Tree slashes planned investment in RIL's Viacom18

REUTERS

Bangalore, April 14: Reliance Industries Ltd's (RIL) Viacom18 will receive an investment of \$43.06 billion (\$527.84 million) from Bodhi Tree, about 70% less than what was planned by the joint venture between James Murdoch and a former Star India executive.

Viacom18 said in a statement late Thursday that Reliance was now leading the investment in the media company with a ₹108.39 billion infusion. Last year, Indian billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance had said Qatar Investment Authority-backed Bodhi Tree would spend ₹135 billion out of a planned ₹151.45 billion investment in Viacom18, also backed by Paramount Global.

The investment amount from Bodhi Tree was reduced due to a broader funding squeeze amid a slowdown in dealmaking, a source familiar with the matter said Friday.

Global mergers and acquisitions (M&A) activity shrank to the lowest level in more than a decade in the first quarter of 2023, as rising interest rates, high inflation and fears of a recession soured the appetite for dealmaking.

Reliance, which is expanding in every sector from retail to e-commerce, made a big splash in the Indian streaming space last year, with its acquisition of digital streaming rights for the Indian Premier League T20 cricket tournament from 2023 to 2027.

All IPL matches are currently streamed free of cost for viewers on Viacom18-owned JioCinema. The FIFA World Cup in Qatar last year was also streamed for free.

World has reached 'beginning of the end of fossil age'

NEARLY 40% OF GLOBAL ELECTRICITY IS NOW POWERED BY RENEWABLES AND NUCLEAR ENERGY, MARKING A NEW RECORD HIGH

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

London, April 14: A boom in wind and solar has pushed the amount from markets regulator Sebi to launch the rupee-denominated Nymex WTI crude oil and natural gas futures contracts in its commodity derivatives segment. These contracts will expand NSE's product offering in the energy basket and its overall commodity segment. Experts believe that these contracts would provide the market participants with an efficient avenue to hedge their price risk.

The use of coal, oil and gas to produce electricity is expected to fall in 2023, according to the report, published by energy think tank Ember. This would mark the first year to see a decline in the use of fossil fuels to generate electricity, outside of a global recession or pandemic, the report noted.

Levels of planet-heating pollution from fossil fuel electricity gener-

ation may have already peaked, the report found.

The findings show the world has reached the "beginning of the end of the fossil age," the lead author of the research, Malgorzata Wiatros-Motyka, said in a statement. "We are entering the clean power era," she added.

Ember analysed data from 78 countries representing 93 per cent of global demand for electricity, for the fourth edition of its annual Global Electricity Review.

Nearly 40 per cent of global electricity is now powered by renewables and nuclear energy, marking a new record high, according to the report. Wind and solar made



up 12 per cent of global energy generation in 2022, up from 10 per

cent the previous year. Solar energy was the fastest-growing source of

electricity in 2022 for the 18th year in a row, rising by 24 per cent compared to the previous year. Wind generation increased by 17 per cent.

Ember forecasts that in 2023, clean energy will be able to meet the total growth in electricity demand.

Fossil fuels do still dominate, however, coal power remained the single largest source of electricity across the globe, accounting for 36 per cent of global electricity production in 2022. This is because overall demand for electricity rose, and not all of it was met from renewable sources, according to Wiatros-Motyka.

RCB test awaits winless Delhi PBKS look to fix batting woes against LSG

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, April 14: Winless in the tournament so far, Delhi Capitals need to fire as a unit if they have to effect a turnaround as they gear up to clash with Royal Challengers Bangalore in their IPL match here Saturday.

The Capitals are enduring a poor start to the season as they have lost all their four games to remain pointless in the tournament so far. Nothing is going right for the David Warner-led side and the team's think-tank is struggling to stem the rot that has set in.

Warner and his deputy Axar Patel have carried the team's batting attack with all others failing miserably. Axar's comeos have been the only silver lining for Delhi this season. Warner is second in the leading run getters' list but his strike rate of 114.83 is a concern. He has been struggling to score runs at rapid rate and DC losing wickets in heaps has only made the Australian's task harder.

Prithvi Shaw's technical problems against top-quality pace attacks have come to the fore, which is something that can't be fixed quickly. Manish Pandey, who came in place of Sarfaraz Khan, has also failed to contribute. Handed a debut Yash Dhull lasted just four balls against MI. The team's poor bench-



strength in terms of Indian talent means the coaching staff now only has Rival Patel to fall back on. DC, however, could bring in Phil Salt in place of Rovman Powel. The hard-hitting English batter is known for his attacking innings at the start and could keep the run-rate in check while Warner plays the anchoring role.

Delhi's pacers have been taken to the cleaners although Anrich Nortje and Mustafizur Rahman did well against MI albeit in a losing cause. But more will be expected of them at the Chinnaswamy Stadium, which is a belter of a track. Spinners Axar and Kuldeep Yadav are also yet to churn out match-winning performances.

RCB, on the other hand, will look to get back to winning ways.



After making a winning start, RCB lost their way, falling to back-to-back defeats.

The likes of Virat Kohli and Faf du Plessis have contributed with the bat and would be eyeing another good show come Saturday. Glenn Maxwell being back amongst runs is also a good sign for the hosts. Mohammed Siraj has been exceptional with the new ball but death bowling woes continue to plague RCB as their bowlers have leaked runs at an alarmingly high rate. Death overs specialist Harshal Patel has looked a jaded version of himself and RCB would hope others step up.

Star spinner Wanindu Hasaranga has linked up with the squad and is expected to walk right into the playing XI, strengthening the bowling department.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, April 14: Let down by below-par batting in their recent twin defeats, Punjab Kings will want their batters to improve their dot-ball count when they take on a rampaging Lucknow Super Giants in the IPL here Saturday.

After a flying start to the new season with two wins, Punjab endured two back-to-back losses following their failure to post good totals on the board.

If skipper Shikhar Dhawan was left to carry the team on his shoulders against Sunrisers Hyderabad, the day he failed the other batters could only manage 153/8 against Gujarat Titans.

The main reason behind PBKS's underwhelming total was their failure to push the scoring in the middle overs between 10 and 15. They ended up playing 56 dot balls, an area where the team will have to get better.

With scores of 40, 86 not out and 99 not out in his first three innings, Dhawan remains undoubtedly Punjab's most impactful player but it is the inconsistency of the other batters that is a reason for worry.

Young opening partner Prabhsimran Singh exploded in



the opening match but has failed since, whereas the other batters - Matthew Short and Jitesh Sharma, have not been able to consolidate on their starts.

While the batters disappointed, the bowling unit, led by young Arshdeep Singh, has looked in fine fettle. It was Arshdeep and England's Sam Curran, who took the game to the last ball while defending a modest total on a belter of a wicket before Rahul Tewatia intervened Thursday.

Among spinners, Harpreet Brar



has used his resources well, while Rahul Chahar remains a wily customer but to be fair to the bowlers, they just didn't have enough runs to play with.

The Super Giants, on the other hand, have won their last two games, and another win on Saturday will take them to the top spot in the IPL standing. While skipper KL Rahul has struggled with his strike-rate so far, the Super Giants have found new heroes to take the team home.

If Krunal Pandya produced an

all-round show against Sunrisers, Nicholas Pooran's breath-taking 19-ball 62 helped them to chase down a difficult 212 against RCB in their last match.

LSG has a balanced batting line-up with opener Kyle Mayers producing the goods in the first two matches, while the lower middle order comprising Marcus Stoinis, Pooran and Ayush Badoni has shown the other day they can win crunch games.

However, Deepak Hooda has failed so far. Losing three wickets in powerplay almost jeopardised their chase against RCB and LSG will hope it was just an aberration. Among bowlers, they have a good mix of pace and spin. While Mark Wood and Avesh Khan have looked good, leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi, veteran leggie Amit Mishra and Krunal have also shone in their respective roles.



Mulling possibility of holding WPL in Diwali window: Shah

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 14: The Women's Premier League (WPL) will be played in the home-away format from the next edition onwards with a bigger window, most likely during Diwali, BCCI secretary Jay Shah said Friday. The inaugural edition of the tournament was held here from March 4-26 across two venues in Mumbai.

"We are mulling the possibility of scheduling the WPL, in the home and away format, in the Diwali window; not two seasons in a year but just a different time window," Shah said during an interaction with mediapersons.

ASIA CUP VENUE

While Shah had earlier made it clear that India will not travel to Pakistan to play the Asia Cup, he also said that feedback from other nations have been sought on a possible replacement venue.

"We are awaiting feedback from other nations to finalise the venue for the 2023 Asia Cup and clarity on the India-Pakistan match," Shah added.

'HISTORIC MILESTONE'

Under Shah's leadership, the Asian Cricket Council has earned USD 26.2 million. "We have achieved a historic milestone of generating additional revenue for the ACC, creating new avenues of income such as NFT, Hybrid Graphics, and Pathway Tournament rights.

"This has resulted in a record-breaking 26.2 million USD earned. This incredible milestone was achieved by creating, exploring, and monetizing new opportunities. This goes to show that the ACC is doing a great job of innovating and expanding its reach in the global market," Shah added.

WORLD CUP FIXTURE

On the World Cup fixture, Shah said that all existing infrastructure will be upgraded before the World Cup. "All existing infrastructure in the country will be upgraded before the World Cup."

NEW NCA PROPOSAL

On the proposed new NCA, Shah said: "I will be travelling to NCA Bangalore to take stock of progress of the National Centre of Excellence."

The new NCA will have about 40 pitches with 20 having floodlight facility, a 16,000 square feet gymnasium and a host of other world-class facilities including a residential block to ensure all-round holistic development.

The Board has already secured land on lease from KIADB for a period of 99 years. The new NCA will be a Centre of Excellence which will be ready in July-August 2024.

"Another major development has been the approval of a third international cricket stadium set to be built in Uttar Pradesh (Varanasi)," Shah said.

He also informed that refurbished NCAs infrastructure will be all inclusive and will ensure access for the specially-abled.

BROOK TON SEALS SRH WIN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, April 14: England's new batting sensation Harry Brook brought a high-flying Kolkata Knight Riders down to earth with a sensational 55-ball 100 not out (12x4, 3x6) as Sunrisers Hyderabad cantered to their second victory by 23 runs in an IPL match, here Saturday.

Young Brook finally managed to crack the IPL code in style with SRH managing a massive 228/4 in their stipulated 20 overs on a batting beauty. Their bowlers despite some hammering from home skipper Nitish Rana (75, 41b, 5x4, 6x6) and Rinku Singh (58 n o, 31b, 4x4, 4x6) were restricted to 205/7.

Brook, who was roped in after his exploits in Pakistan, finally announced his arrival in style, when he smashed four fours and two sixes inside first three overs to give SRH the best start of the season.

Bought by SRH for a whopping Rs 13.25 crore, Brook had managed only 29 in first three games but found his rhythm. This was 16th edition's first century.

In reply, it was always going to be difficult for KKR to maintain a run-rate of 11 plus per over but skipper Rana did launch into SRH bowlers and had Rinku for company in their 69-run stand-off only 6.2 overs. This was after KR were reduced to 96/5 within first 10 overs.

Once T Natarajan got rid of Rana, it was left to Rinku to pull off yet another heist as 57 were needed off last three overs. But Bhuvneshwar Kumar (1/29) gave 10 in the 18th over while Natarajan (1/54) went for 16 in the penultimate over.

With Rinku on strike and 32 needed off last over, Umrani Malik (1/36) came back well to dismiss Shardul Thakur with the first delivery and effectively sealing the game.

Earlier, having got a reprieve on 45, when he was dropped by rookie leg-spinner Suyash Sharma



an easy chance off his own bowling, Brook got to his 50 off 32 balls.

Brook also overturned a caught-behind decision off Lockie Ferguson

when on 61, as he hammered the Kiwi fiery pacer in the same over five fours.

Opted to bowl, KKR fielding was

also a big letdown. Skipper Aiden Markram also played an impactful innings (50, 26b, 2x4, 5x6) in the middle as the duo - Markram and Brook - stitched together 72 runs from 47 balls.

After Markram's departure, young left-handed batter Abhishek Sharma (32, 17b, 3x4, 2x6) gave a fine support as the duo also added 72 runs (33b) to pile on KKR's misery.

Barring Caribbeans, Sunil Narine (0/28) and Andre Russell (3/22) who pulled a muscle and could not complete his overs, none of the KKR bowlers failed to impress.

The day fully belonged to the English batter, who carried his bat replicating his success in Pakistan Super League (PSL), where he had scored 264 runs for Lahore Qalandars in eight innings.

KKR may have missed the trick by giving him some easy pace fodder to begin with as Brook was happy to take Yadav to cleaners, while the fiery Ferguson was wayward, both conceding 14 runs in their opening overs.

From 43 for no loss in three overs, Narine managed to drag them in a tidy fourth over that perfectly set it up for Russell to inflict a double blow. Bowling for the first time this season, the Jamaican dismissed Mayank Agarwal (9) straightway before pulling a muscle.

Russell however managed to finish the over and took the wicket of in-form Rahul Tripathi in the last ball to give KKR the vital opening. But Brook and skipper Markram batted sensibly. The SRH skipper gave Brook a fine support and negotiated the middle overs well.

BRIEF SCORES: SRH 228/4 (Harry Brook 100 n o, Aiden Markram 50, Abhishek Sharma 32; Andre Russell 3/22) beat KKR 205/7 (Nitish Rana 75, Rinku Singh 58 n o, Narayan Jagadeesan 36; Mayank Markande 2/27, Marco Jansen 2/37) by 23 runs.

MUSETTI SENDS DJOKO PACKING



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Monaco, April 14: For the third year in a row, Novak Djokovic has been knocked out early at the Monte Carlo Masters. Playing in only his second match on clay this season after a one-month pause, the top-ranked Serb lost 4-6, 7-5, 6-4 against Lorenzo Musetti Thursday.

Still adapting to the slow surface, Djokovic struggled with his movement in a sloppy display, dropped his serve eight times and could not find a solution to counter his Italian rival's solid baseline shots.

Djokovic is expected to resume his preparations for the French Open next week at the Srpska Open in Bosnia-Herzegovina. A two-time champion at Monte Carlo, Djokovic lost his opening match on the French Cote d'Azur last year and exited the tournament in the third round in 2021. Djokovic got off to a strong start but lost control of the match in the second set when he was broken five times as both players struggled with accuracy in windy conditions.

Djokovic led 4-2 but could not hold onto his lead as Musetti's mix of clever drop shots and deep groundstrokes put the 22-time Grand Slam winner on the back foot. Djokovic was broken at love in the 11th game and was furious

at the changeover, stomping on his racket and destroying it.

Musetti kept his cool in the next game to serve out the set and force a decider. The match was suspended by rain for about an hour with the score 6-4, 5-7, 1-1 and Djokovic up 40-30 on his serve. Musetti broke for a 4-3 lead and concluded on his fourth match point.

The 16th-seeded Musetti - who led 2 sets to love against Djokovic at the 2021 French Open before retiring in the fifth set, will take on Jannik Sinner in the quarterfinals.

The seventh-seeded Sinner came from behind and saved a match point to get past No.10-seeded Hubert Hurkacz 3-6, 7-6(8-6), 6-1. Sinner trailed by a set and a break then came out on top of a 22-shot rally when down 6-5 in the tiebreaker to remain in the match.

Hurkacz lost the next two points and threw his racket in anger, then totally lost his focus in the decider. Also, third-seeded Daniil Medvedev saved two match points in the deciding-set tiebreaker to rally past Alexander Zverev 3-6, 7-5, 7-6(9-7).

Medvedev advanced to the quarterfinals in Monte Carlo for the second time and will next face Holger Rune. The sixth-seeded Rune advanced without playing when Matteo Berrettini withdrew due to an injury.

Own goals stall Manchester United

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Manchester, April 14: Two goals up and seemingly cruising toward the Europa League semifinals, Manchester United is now counting the cost of a late meltdown against Sevilla.

Own goals from Tyrell Malacia and Harry Maguire in the 84th and 92nd minutes Thursday left the quarterfinals in the balance at 2-2 ahead of next week's second leg in Spain.

Meanwhile, injuries to center backs Raphael Varane and Lisandro Martinez added to a bad night for Erik ten Hag. The United manager is already without injured leading scorer Marcus Rashford at a critical point of the season. Bruno Fernandes is also suspended for the second leg after picking up his third yellow card of the competition.

It was Sevilla's visiting supporters who could be heard singing loudest at the final whistle, with Old Trafford stunned by the Spanish team's fightback.

United can expect a hot reception at Ramon Sanchez-Pizjuan Stadium next week after giving the Spaniards a lifeline at a time when they looked



A Sevilla player reacts after a goal, while Manchester United players look dejected during their match at Old Trafford

to be headed out of a competition they have dominated in recent times.

There is a reason why Sevilla has won the trophy six times between 2006 and 2020 and that is because it finds a way through diffi-

cult moments. And while it may sit 13th in the Spanish league, it refused to give up, despite being outplayed for the majority of the match.

Marcel Sabitzer scored in the 14th and 21st to give United a 2-0 half-

time lead. Antony hit the bar after the break, before Sevilla made Ten Hag's team pay for failing to kill the game off, with Malacia turning Jesus Navas' cross into his own net to spark the late comeback.

I'm recovering well, says Pant

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, April 14: Sorely missed in a forgettable campaign so far, Delhi Capitals' Rishabh Pant Friday said he is "getting better with each passing day", months after being treated for multiple injuries arising out of a horrific car accident.

Pant suffered multiple injuries when his car collided with a divider on the Delhi-Dehradun highway last December. When asked about his recovery, Pant said, "I am recovering very well and I'm getting better with each passing day. I came to visit the NCA and the Delhi Capitals happened to be there. So I met the team."

Though he is recovering, he is unlikely to make a comeback anytime soon. Pant caught up with his teammates on the sidelines of the training session at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium ahead of their IPL match against Royal Challengers Bangalore.

Pant further added, "I just saw how the team's practice is carrying on. I really love to be around the boys and I am missing it." The wicket-keeper-batter also wished the team ahead of its next game.