DRIVING SEAT

VOLUME 13. ISSUE 24 | www.orissapost.com

Priyanka Chopra Jonas feels responsible for bringing South Asian cultural representation to forefront **LEISURE**



RESCUE OPERATIONS

The United States and the United Kingdom say their armed forces helped staff from both embassies get out of Sudan

INTERNATIONAL P10



SACHIN TURNS 50

Accolades pour in from all quarters ahead of Sachin Tendulkar's 50th birthday today SPORTS P12

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BHUBANESWAR | MONDAY, APRIL 24 | 2023



Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, in presence of other dignitaries, lights the ceremonial lamp to mark the inauguration of exhibition on 'Future of Work' at CSIR-IMMT in Bhubaneswar, Sunday (See Page-5)

Bhubaneshwar, April 23: Skills and competencies will drive the future rather than degrees as old jobs have begun to vanish due to disruptive innovation and technology, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said Sunday.

Pradhan was addressing a conference here ahead of the third G20 Education Working Group meeting later this week.

"Skills and competencies will drive the future rather than degrees. There will be a constant

competition between God gifted human intelligence and Artificial Intelligence (AI)," Pradhan said in the keynote address at the conference themed 'Deep Tech with a Focus on Advanced Technology in Future of Work.'

'Old jobs are vanishing due to disruptive innovation and technology. New jobs are emerging but our workforce needs continuous skilling, reskilling and upskilling. Hence, we must think of new approaches to prepare youth for future jobs," he added.

The minister said that the 21st

century will be knowledge-based

and technology-driven. "Guided by its civilisational ethos and as a natural hub of talent, captive market and resources, India is going to play a leading role in fulfilling the global aspirations of the 21st century," he asserted.

"Internet, mobility and global connectivity provide us with an opportunity to think about global requirements. We have to come together to convert this opportunity for India's youth as well as for those belonging to the Global South," he said. Contd...4

Skills, not degrees: Pradhan Amritpal arrested, sent to Assam jail

IG SUKHCHAIN SINGH GILL COUNTERED THE PREACHER'S CLAIM THAT IT WAS A 'SURRENDER', AND **SAID THE FUGITIVE WAS CORNERED**

AGENCIES

Chandigarh, April 23: The Punjab police arrested Sunday Amritpal Singh in Moga district and sent him to a jail in Assam, ending an over a month-long manhunt against the radical preacher who styled himself after slain Khalistani militant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale.

The preacher was taken into custody at 6.45 am as he came out -- in the traditional attire that included a sheathed sword -- of the gurdwara in Rode, Bhindranwale's native village and also the place where he himself took over last year as the chief of Waris Punjab De.

The 29-year-old was detained under the stringent National Security Act and flown to Assam on a special flight and lodged



at the Dibrugarh Central Jail, where nine other associates picked up over the past several weeks are kept.

Shortly after his arrest, a video surfaced online in which the extremist preacher is seen delivering a brief address, indicating that he is surrendering.

Another clip showed him sitting before a portrait of Bhindranwale, who died in a controversial Army operation in 1984 to flush out militants holed up in-

side Amritsar's Golden Temple. Inspector General of Police Sukhchain Singh Gill countered the preacher's claim that it was a 'surrender', and said the fugitive was cornered.

"A joint operation was conducted by Amritsar police and the intelligence wing of Punjab Police. He was located in village Rode based on operational inputs with Punjab Police. He was surrounded from all sides. The village was surrounded by the Punjab Police," he said.

He said police did not enter the gurdwara. "It was very important to maintain the sanctity of the gurdwara and police in uniform could not enter inside.

A message was conveyed to the preacher that he had no chance of making his escape, Gill said. "National Security Act warrants

were issued against Amritpal Singh and these have been executed today morning. Further, law will take its own course," he said.

In a video message hours after the arrest, Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann said those who disturb peace and harmony in the state will face the law, and innocent people will not be disturbed.

Mann said he continuously monitored developments during the night, leading to the arrest.

Net restored in violence-hit Sambalpur

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, April 23: The Odisha government Sunday lifted a curfew during daytime and withdrew a ban on internet services in Sambalpur city which had recently witnessed violence during Hanuman Jayanti celebrations, an official said.

Internet services were fully restored after 10 days, while the administration relaxed the curfew from 5 am to 8 pm, he said. These decisions were taken after "significant improvement of the law and order situation" in the Western Odisha city, the Sambalpur district official said. Internet services were suspended April 13, while the curfew was imposed the next day in the wake of a clash between two groups during the Hanuman

Jayanti celebrations. Later, broadband and leased internet services were resumed between 10 am and 5 pm, but the suspension of mobile internet was extended till April 22. The administration had also come out with a toll-free number for the public to report "circulation of inappropriate messages or posts carrying hatred speech or false news". The western Odisha city had witnessed a clash between two communities during a motorcycle rally in the run-up to the Hanuman Jayanti April 14. As the clash spilled over to the streets, many vehicles were damaged and

'To get even with neighbour': Man held for death threat to PM



Chennai, April 23: A man in Kerala's Kochi was arrested Sunday for issuing a death threat to Prime Minister Narendra Modi - only to get even with his neighbour with whom he had a quarrel, police said.

The arrested man was identified as Xavier, a catering contractor from Kathrikadavu.

The state BJP office had received a threat letter last week before stating that the Prime Minister would be assassinated during his visit to the state April 24 and 25. The letter addressed to BJP

Kerala state president, K Surendran was signed by a person called NJ Johny and his phone number was also mentioned in the letter.

When police questioned Johny based on a complaint filed by

The accused revealed *before the police that he* had himself sent the letter in the name of his neighbour to create problems for the latter

Surendran, he was not aware of the threat letter but said that he had a dispute with his neighbour

Police took Xavier in custody and he revealed that he had himself sent the letter in the name of Johny, to create problems for his neighbour. A scientific verification of his handwriting also proved that it was indeed Xavier who had sent the letter.

Xavier was arrested and questioned for long hours but only stated that he had no intention to threaten the Prime Minister but instead had used this route to get even with his neighbour.

Ernakulam Police Commissioner, K. Sethuraman led the investiga-

Naveen unveils new BJD office

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 23: On the occasion of Akshaya Tritiya, Chief Minister and BJD supremo Naveen Patnaik Sunday inaugurated a grand Biju Janata Dal office named 'Sankha Bhawan' here.

Addressing a gathering on this occasion, Patnaik said that Sankha Bhawan will be a meeting place for all those who love Odisha, who are interested in working for the development of the state and for building a new and strong Odisha.

The Bhawan will work for Odisha's development and pride, and it will also work for promotion of the state's rich cultural heritage, he said, adding all the works of the new BJD office will be dedicated to the people of Odisha.

"A new era had begun in Odisha in the year 1997 with the birth of the Biju Janata Dal, which was formed as per the principles and guidance of legendary leader late Biju Patnaik. The BJD, which was formed as the regional party to serve people of Odisha, has now been transformed into a social movement," Patnaik said.



Chief Minister and BJD president Naveen Patnaik takes stock of the newly-inaugurated party office 'Sankha Bhawan' in Unit-VI area of Bhubaneswar, Sunday (See Page-3)

The Bhawan will connect the future with the past of Odisha and it will bring together the four and a half crore people of

Odisha, he added. The Chief Minister further said that the Sankha Bhawan will be devoted to the development of art, literature, and culture of Odisha.

The office will also continue to

work for spreading the great culture of Lord Jagannath and will continue to spread the message of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'.

Attending the Sankha Bhawan inauguration, former MP Tathagata going to rejoin electoral politics.

Satpathy made it clear that he is not Responding to media queries, Satpathy said: "I have been invited to the inauguration ceremony by the BJD president. I respect him a lot. I accepted his invitation and came to attend the ceremony out of respect."

The four-time MP further said that he is neither in any party nor is interested to enter electoral politics again. "I am so happy now," he added.

Second cheetah dies in a month at Kuno

some shops were set on fire.

Bhopal/Sheopur, April 23: One of the cheetahs translocated to Madhya Pradesh's Kuno National Park (KNP) from South Africa died Sunday, a senior forest official said. The deceased cheetah 'Uday'

was six years old. This is the second such incident

at KNP in almost a month. Earlier, Namibian cheetah 'Sasha' died due to a kidney ailment March 27. "During the inspection in the

morning, a cheetah brought from South Africa was found dull with head down following which veterinarians attending him alerted senior officials and the feline was taken out from the large enclosure for treatment. Unfortunately, around 4 pm, the cheetah passed away? Principal Chief Conservator of Forest Wildlife, JS Chauhan told PTL





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WEAT	HER		
	BHUB	СТК	
≜ MAX	31.2°C	42.0°(
₩IN	19.6°C	26.5°	~ ≍ Forecast
Humidity	62%	71%	Light rain
Rainfall	21.3mm	7.4mm	very likely

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, April 23: Odisha, one of India's most natural calamity-prone states, has diverted 62,016 hectare of forest land and 19.50 lakh trees have been cut down for non-forestry purposes till 2022.

This information was given by Forest, Environment and Climate Change Minister Pradip Kumar Amat during the recently concluded Budget Session of the

As per the provisions made under the Forest Conservation Act, 1980, a total of 62,016 hectare of forest land was diverted for different industrial and socio-economic developmental projects in Odisha till 2022. The forest areas were diverted after receiving the final nod from the Ministry of Forest, Environment and Climate Change, Amat said.

Apart from this, the state government is waiting to divert another 888 hectare of forest land for execution of 107 different projects.

The highest 14,466 hectare of forest land was diverted in mineral-rich Keonjhar district while 10,025 hectare of forest land was diverted in tribal-dominated Sundargarh district, which also has a good number of mining projects.

Similarly, 6800 hectare of forest land in Angul district, 5045 hectare in Jajpur, 4529 hectare in Bolangir, 2735 hectare in Jharsuguda, 2676 hectare in Mayurbhanj, 2338 hectare in Koraput and 2167 hectare of forest land in Rayagada district were diverted for non-forestry purposes. These districts also have several big industries and mining projects.

The lowest three hectare of forest land was diverted in coastal Puri district while 18 hectare was diverted in Subarnapur district.

The state government has also cut down 19,50,686 trees for execution of industrial, mining and developmental projects. The largest number, 4,44,592 trees were felled in



State diverts 62K ha forest land, fells 19.5L trees

Sundargarh district, followed by Jagatsinghpur, where 2,98,906 trees were cut down for different projects.

Similarly, over 2 lakh trees were felled in Keonihar and Sambalpur districts while over 1 lakh trees were cut down in Nayagarh, Bolangir and Angul.

The Forest Minister also mentioned that the state government has carried out a compensatory afforestation programme in 75,278 hectares of land and planted

2,93,79,423 seedlings. As per the report, 178 hectares of forest land has been diverted and 424 trees felled in Bhadrak district for non-forestry projects. However, the government is yet to

under compensatory afforestation. In Kendrapara district too, the state is yet to carry out a plantation drive against diversion of 140 hectare of forest land and the felling of 322 trees.

plant a seedling in the district

Eco-damaging

- Odisha has a forest area of 52,156 square kilometre, which is about 33.50 per cent of its total geographical area, according to India State of Forest Report 2021
- About 33,154 hectare of forest land is under encroachment
- Keonjhar and Sundargarh top in forest area conversion, while Sundargarh and Jagatsinghpur top in tree felling
- 19,267.47 hectare of forest land was diverted for mining activities in the country in the past five years, of which the highest 7,928.62 hectare was diverted in Odisha

As per a statement made by Union Minister of Coal, Mines and Parliamentary Affairs Pralhad Joshi in the Rajya Sabha February 13 this year, 19,267.47 hectare of forest land was diverted for mining activities in the country in the past five years, of which the highest 7,928.62 hectare was diverted in Odisha.

During the period 2017-18 to 2021-22, 41 mining projects including 35 by private firms have been approved in Odisha.

"Majority of the forest areas are destroyed for mining and industrial projects. We can implement developmental projects, no one is opposing it. But we have to think about the future generations and its impact on our environment. Is there a real need to exploit such a huge amount of our natural resources," said environmentalist Jayakrushna Panigrahi.

Though the state government \(\times \) is planting seedlings as compensatory afforestation, it cannot be treated as forest. This is because the ecosystem, food chain, wildlife and other habitats affected due to degradation of forest cannot be compensated with new plantation, he said.



leisure



SCARLETT BIDS ADIEU TO MARVEL FRANCHISE

Actress Scarlett Johansson, who was introduced as Black Widow in *Iron Man 2* before going on to star in *The Avengers* movies along with 2021's Black Widow, said in a recent interview that she has no plans to return to the Marvel Cinematic Universe in the future, reports aceshowbiz.com.

AFFLECK REVEALS WIFE LOPEZ'S BEAUTY SECRET

Actor Ben Affleck talked about his wife Jennifer Lopez's incredible work ethic, which keeps her fit, in the Drew Barrymore Show. Revealing her beauty secret, he said that her work ethic and discipline are too real. He highlighted how Lopez doesn't even worry about the food that she eats.





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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181*

You are not so much in a mood to socialise today. Something unsavoury may also be hard to overcome. Although you are industrious. Ganesha advises you not to bite off more than you can chew A bit of faith in providence can go a long way in your life

TAURUS

Ganesha sees you preferring your outer appearance, having a good time over getting internally organized. You will seek your comfort level from creature com forts, not from within. You are due to spend most of the day, dressed in you best and going out to your favourite haunts for good food and company.

GEMINI

It is possible that the start of the day may not see you in the best of moods and some mental distress is the likely reason behind it. You need to consult ar expert to find out the best way out o

CANCER

A perfect day in store for you, says Ganesha! You mav begin the day on a positive note, and may decide to express you gratitude towards the God by visiting a temple. Religious feelings may also keep you preoccupied.

LEO

Whether you are an entrepreuner or an employee. you will spend more time at the office as compared to home. This is primarily because you will be full of energy and enthusiasm towards your work. Events will conspire to draw your attention towards work as well.

VIRGO

All big businessmen may expect a very beneficial and progressive day. The loans for which you have applied may be sanctioned by the financial institutions today. However, Ganesha advises you not to neglect your beloved and near and dear ones, for without them there is little cause for interest in life

Ganesha says today is a good day to start out with new ventures. You shall be interested in fine arts like drawing, classi cal music, dance etc as the artistic streak in your nature comes to the fore, and their pursuit shall make you happy. Ganesha wishes you luck and success in all your ventures.

SCORPIO

A series of events will keep you occupied, physically and mentally. You will enjoy meeting like-minded people and intellectual discussions with them. You are charged up and look forward to soiree and merry making with loved ones. However, make sure that too much enthusiasm and overexertion does not deteriorate your health.

SAGITTARIUS

All things bright and beautiful in store for you today, predicts Ganesha. Your focus improves as your vision becomes clear and ideas innovative. You may even sort out the troubles that you are going through, since past few days

CAPRICORN

You have high expectations from all, says Ganesha. Not only that, you also expect miracles from yourself. Naturally, with such high expectations you raise the chances of getting disappointed, also, A stitch in time saves nine. You need to plan out how you want to go about ideas and projects well in advance

AQUARIUS

It is not only important to ideate, but also to get those ideas executed is equally important. Don't worry though, you are good at both, assures Ganesha. Icing on the cake will be your communication skill which gets you through the door every time. For students, it will be an amazing day.

PISCES Your energy levels will be at their peak today, and that. coupled with your extraordi nary enthusiasm, will give you the momentum you need to implement your plans, says Ganesha.

PC takes up the Urvashi serves legal notice on journalist baton for India Mumbai: Actress and model Urvashi Rautela announced that she was serving a legal notice for defamation against a journalist who had posted. Urvashi was spotted with Jalebi Baby singer Jason against a journalist who had posted.

Mumbai: Actress-producer "It has been my aim to represent Priyanka Chopra Jonas, who is India on the international canall set to be seen in the upcomvas. People from the South Asian ing streaming series Citadel, community have been working feels the responsibility for culin the west for very many years, tural representation of India in but, for some reason, they were global platform. never given a chance to head-Though the actress might line a project or to feature on

have been in the West for quite

pride in being

born in a coun

try that boasts

an ancient

culture

and such a mind-

blowing

mix of

people.'

Indian

in a sea

American

Hollywood

also gives her

a sense of

purpose.

added

talents who

call the shots in

Being

the posters of an interna-

some time, she holds her Indian values close to her heart. Talking to a news portal, PC said, mieres "India is my iden-Amazon tity. Wherever I go in the world, I am April 28 an Indian first and then everything else. I take a lot of

Citadel pre-Prime Video

tional film, in most

Europe Last month

against a journalist who had posted false information about her on Twitter. Sharing journalist Umair Sandhu's fake tweet on Instagram, she stated that he was not her 'official spokesperson' and had made her and her family uncomfortable with his allegations. On Instagram, the actor

shared, "Defamation legal notice has been served by my legal team. I am definitely disgruntled with indecent journalists like you for your spurious and ridiculous tweets. You're not my official spokesperson. And yes, you're a very immature journalist

who made me and my family extremely uncomfortable, #love #UrvashiRautela #UR1." She also shared an image of Umair's tweet, which she said was fake. The tweet alleged that actor Akhil Akkineni, the son of Nagarjuna, had harassed Urvashi while she filmed a song from his upcoming film Agent

'I'm scared to talk on social media'

Mumbai: Social media is a place where celebrities get instant attention for whatever they post. But it also has a flipside, as there can be occasions where a celebrity is trolled, sometimes through no fault of his or her own. Veteran actor Suniel Shetty recently spoke about how nasty

social media can be at times. Speaking on the podcast recently, Shetty said, "Today's time of social media, there is no privacy; it destroys your life. One sentence edited in 15 different ways and put out in 15 different ways has destroyed our lives. You know, it's made it impossible. I'm scared to talk?

Shetty added that it is be cause of the atmosphere on social media that celebrities are forced to be diplomatic in their opinions. "We've been forced to be diplomatic because you're hammering me otherwise for something that I have not done, and who's hammering me? Somebody I don't even know on Twitter or Facebook. That hurts

FUN

school." On the work front. Shetty was last seen in the

I come

from the

Samantha's cryptic reply to producer

of her search along

with the hashtag,

"#IYKYK (If you

believe that it was a

sneer at Chitti Babu.

The producer

heavily

trolled

Samantha

Social media users

know, you know)".

Mumbai:

with Jalebi Baby

Derulo, who had

arrived in India

for work. She

and Jason are

said to be work-

ing on a music

video titled

Soniye that is

going to be re-

leased soon.

Shaakuntalam actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu has cryptically clapped back at Telugu producer Chitti Babu, who severely criticised the actress for her box office failure. The producer claimed that the former's career 'as the heroine is finished and she cannot get back to stardom' and should accept whatever roles are given to her and not be 'selective'.

In retaliation, the actress shared a post on her Instagram Stories, which got her fans scratching their heads, believing that it was a jibe at Chitti Babu.

now-

deleted Instagram to "gain sympathy." Story, Samantha On the work front, shared a post revealing Samantha is working that she was searching alongside Varun 'How do people have Dhawan on the Indian hair growing from their ears?" on Google. The answer was because of 'increased testosterone'. She shared the screenshot Madden.

original series within the *Citadel* franchise. whose flagship show features Priyanka Chopra and Richard



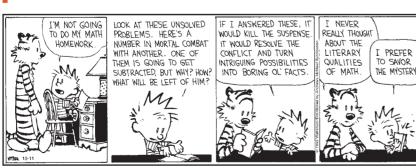
PEANUTS







CALVIN AND HOBBES



BREVITY



UCST **CROSSWORD** 24

Across

- 7 Slalom course (3,3)
- 8 Free of charge Fishing tackle
- 10 Pioneer; start something new
- 11 Five o'clock
- shadow 13 Panache
- **15** Spy 17 Wet weather

gear

- 1 Used in soups or stews

Down

20

21

23

24 Bury

- 2 Ready-made,
- like a house

Mediterranean

island native

Rash reaction?

Tartans

- 3 Baseball diamond part
- 4 Maturing 5 Express
- astonishment 6 Off-road
- vehicle (4,4)
- 12 Concrete;
- touchable
- 14 Besmirch 16 Ancestry
- 18 Brightly printed fabric
- 19 Blotto
 - 22 Deep sleep, medically

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

Amazon

Tootega

Todega. It

Nahin

series Hunter:

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.

starred

AGENCIES

Deol

Esha

Singh.

Bisht, Karanvir

Sharma and Teena

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			1	4					6
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							1	7	
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	9	5				3			2
Ì	2							5	

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD LUCIDBEDROOM

5	0	0	0	4	1	4	1	9
8	2	7	1	9	5	6	4	3
2	6	4	5	1	3		9	7
5	7	8	4	2	9	3	6	1
3	9	1	7	6	8	5	2	4
6	8	9	3	7	1	4	5	2
1	5	2	6	8	4	7	3	9
7	4	3	9	5	2	1	8	6

2 3

Naveen dedicates Sankha Bhawan to people of Odisha



Chief Minister and BJD president Naveen Patnaik inaugurates party's newly-built office, Sankha Bhawan, in Unit-VI area of Bhubaneswar, Sunday. (Inset: The swanky building)

As Chief Minister and Biju Janata Dal (BJD) supremo Naveen Patnaik inaugurates party's newly-built office, Sankha Bhawan, in Unit-VI area of Bhubaneswar on the auspicious occasion of Akshay Tritiya Sunday, **OrissaPOST** brings you a few snapshots from the mega event



Artistes perform outside Sankha Bhawan



Interior view of the building



BJD workers at the inaugural event







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JYOTE MOTORS

BHUBANESWAR: LEWIS ROAD: 9798190190. NAYAPALLI: 9798190190. KEONJHAR: 9798190190. NAYAGARH: 9798190190. BALUGAON: 9798190190. ANANDPUR: 9798190190.

KENDRAPARA: 9798190190. BALASORE: 9798190190. BHADRAK: 9798190190. BARIPADA: 9798190190.

UDALA: 7064499950, RAIRANGPUR: 9853446906. JALESWAR: 7064499950. BASUDEVPUR: 9798190190.

SKY AUTOMOBILES

BHUBANESWAR: PATIA: 7381045356. CUTTACK: 9776677771, 7381873818, DHENKANAL: 7381045357, NARSINGHPUR: 7381045357 KAMAKHYANAGAR: 7381045357. JAJPUR: 9776900777 SALEPUR: 9583544555. CHANDIKHOL: 9583544555. TANGI: 7381045356. BERHAMPUR: 9778202019. BHANJANAGAR: 9778202019.

PARALAKHEMUNDI: 9778202019.

PHULBANI: 9778202019.

CUTTACK: 9078076450. PANIKOILI: 9078076450 ATHAGARH: 9078076450

TUSHI MOTORS | NARAYANI MOTORS

RASULGARH: 9583022019 JAGATSINGHPUR: 9583022090 PURI: 9583022035. NIMPARA: 7381094851. PARADEEP: 9583022034/48. PURI HIGHWAY PIPLI: 9583022013.

ODYSSEY MOTORS

ANGUL: 7752076136, 9776901481. PALLAHARA: 7873565435, 9437831123. LPUR (AINTHAPALI): 7381433909 BOLANGIR: 9438068327. BARGARH: 9556352943 NUAPADA: 7381017851 SONEPUR: 9438068327 JHARSUGUDA: 9439892153. BOUDH: 8594908009.

LEGEND CARS

JEYPORE: 7894406481 RAYAGADA: 9692883042 BHAWANIPATNA: 7894442907

APARNAA MOTORS

SAMBALPUR (PARDHIAPALI) 9237395001.

ORBIT MOTORS

ROURKELA: 9040404444, 9437041155. SUNDARGARH: 9437049161, 9437131074. DEOGARH: 9437061223, 7064400290.

PADAMPUR: 7381661837. *Offer includes consumer offer, exchange bonus, institutional offer or rural offer, Gold voucher and spot booking offer (wherever applicable) on selected models. *Terms and conditions apply. Terms and conditions apply. Terms and conditions are subject to change without any prior notice. "As certified by Test agency under Rule 115(G) of CMVR 1989. This funder Standard fitment. Black Glass Shade on the vehicle is due to the lighting effect. Images used are for illustratic purposes only. Car color may vary due to printing on paper. Offers vary across variants. Maruti Suzuki India Limited reserves the right to discontinue offers without notice. Above offers are valid till 30th April, 2023.

CM launches projects to mark 'Akshaya Tritiya'



CM participated in 'Akhi Muthi Anukula' at OUAT in Bhubaneswar, Sunday ор РНОТО

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 23: On the auspicious occasion of Akshaya Tritiya Sunday, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched several projects for the farmers of the state and the government employees.

The Akshaya Tritiya, which is an agrarian festival, marks the commencement of agricultural activities and is observed by farm-

traditional sports fest

Bhubaneswar, April 23: Prime

Minister Narendra Modi has show-

ered praises on the Indian Traditional

Sports Festival' organsied at the

Central University of Odisha,

The 'Bharateeya Paramparik

Kreeda Mahotsava' (Traditional

Sports Festival of India) was or-

ganized on the university campus for

Union Minister of State for

Education Subhash Sarkar had in-

augurated the programme and ad-

dressed the gathering and the news

was widely reported in the media.

Minister lauded this innovative

sports festival organised by the uni-

versity. He said, "The initiative taken

by the university to spread the mes-

sage of awareness about India's rich

sporting traditions and its diversity

Sarkar shared his experience with

multiple photos from the festival on

his Twitter handle. "I am impressed

to see so many traditional sports

forms and young sportspersons of our

country and its enthusiastic par-

ticipants perform brilliantly and

It is worth mentioning that PM

Modi has expressed these views on

the sports festival for the second time.

Govt urged to cancel

Bhubaneswar: National Alliance of

urged the government to cancel the

auctioned mine leases of Iron ores

generations. The outfit alleged that

illegal auctions of mines have taken

without consent of Gram Sabhas,

People's Movements of Odisha

and Bauxite to protect and

conserve the mines for future

place in Karlapatin Kalahandi,

Gandhalpada in Keonjhar, Virgin

forests in Sundargarh, Kuturmali and Siji Mali in Rayagada district,

Balada and Maliparbat in Koraput and Ketameta and Uskalvag in Malkanagiri. The mines were allotted to different companies disobeying constitutional directions, it added.

During the conference, indus-

try, academia, startup ecosystem

and other stakeholders will brain-

storm on reimagining the skilling

ecosystem, creating future-ready

global citizens, and making India

a global hub of skilled manpower.

meracy, tech-enabled learning, fu-

ture of work and research collabo-

ration are among the priority areas

for deliberations during the third G20

Education Working Group meet-

ing scheduled from April 27 to 29.

Foundation literacy and nu-

Continued from P1

leases of mines

achieve success," he noted.

is highly appreciated.

Taking to Twitter, the Prime

two days from April 21 to 22.

PM lauds CUO's

POST NEWS NETWORK

ers across the state

Patnaik participated in 'Akhi Muthi Anukula', the ceremonial act of sowing seeds in paddy fields and ploughing, at the farm of the Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT) in Bhubaneswar. He greeted the people, especially farmers, on the occasion, wishing them a good

The Chief Minister later inau-

KISS girl students

of the Upanishad,

actions of the mantra

symbolizing the light

ignorance and give a

tribute to their lights

Bhubaneswar, April 23: On the

occasion of the two-day C20

Working Group Summit on Gender

Equality and Disability, hosted by

Kalinga Institute of Industrial

Technology (KIIT) and Kalinga

Institute of Social Sciences (KISS),

3,000 girl students from KISS came

together to create a stunning logo

of C20 with 'torch' at KISS Ground.

mation is based on the idea of the

"One Million Lights" campaign,

which was launched on

International Women's Day, March

8, to recognize and honour indi-

The beautiful human logo for-

POST NEW NETWORK

of knowledge removing

manifested the

"Tamas-oma

Iyotirgamaya,"

the darkness of

KISS girls create magical C20 logo

gurated a Millet Shakti cafe in the Lok Seva Bhawan. The government which has launched Millet Mission to fight malnutrition and promote millets in the state, have so far opened 142 such millet outlets to create a platform for millet

The Chief Minister also inaugurated an Agriculture Review Centre in Krushi Bhawan, which will function as a central command and control system. The centre will collect real-time information

viduals and organizations that

have made a significant contribu-

tion towards gender equality and

women's empowerment. Mata

Amritanandamayi, the Chair of

C20, had invited online nomina-

tions for this pan-world event to

raise awareness about the subject.

fested the actions of the mantra of

the Upanishad, "Tamas-oma

Jyotirgamaya," symbolizing the

light of knowledge removing the

darkness of ignorance and give a

KIIT and KISS Founder Achyuta

Samanta, welcomed the dignitaries

and spoke about how KISS has

transformed the lives of 80,000 in-

digenous tribal students. "All my

students of KISS are like diamonds,

and we are shaping their lives with

care, dedication, and zeal as I have

realized that empowerment through

education transforms the life of

an individual, especially girls," he

The Vice-Chairman of Mata

Amritanandamayi Math and

President of Amrita Vishwa

University and Representative of

the C20 Chair, Swami

Amritaswarupananda Puri, was

also present on the occasion. He was

welcomed with a traditional tribal

dance by the members of the sub-

junior groups from KISS.

Vidvapeetham-Deemed-to-be-

tribute to their lights.

The KISS girl students mani-

from the field level through the application of computer and information technology and help in improving the quality of decision-

The centre will play an important role in the implementation of various schemes and help the farmers.

Patnaik then inaugurated a crèche "Kalika" for the babies of employees working in Lok Seva Bhawan. In the initial stage, an arrangement has been made to accommodate 20 babies in the crèche.



Chief Minister inaugurated a Millet Shakti cafe at Lok Seva Bhawan in City

WORLD BOOK DAY

Books true guide of human being: CM

Bhubaneswar, April 23: Books are the best friend and true guide of human being. Good books enrich our minds with knowledge and change the way we live our life. Let's celebrate the transformational power of reading and promote the habit of reading in our daily lives, said CM Naveen Patnaik Sunday on World Book day.

In his Twitter account, CM asked people to celebrate the transformational power of reading and promote the habit of reading in daily lives.

On the occasion, Sujit Mahapatra of Bakul Foundation and Bakul Library said that Mark Twain had said, "One who does not read has no advantage over one who cannot read". Unfortunately, we have a huge population that can read but does not read. We do not read because we do not understand the value of reading beyond the text book. As a result most of us end up

with poor reading skills. Bakul Foundation started the Library Movement in Odisha and till now operates without any separate office but from the libraries. The Bakul Children's Library in Bhubaneswar is the first outcome of that movement. The library set up after a successful online campaign to donate books, stands testimony to the power and potency of volunteerism. It has been set up and is running without any institutional funding but with book donations and small contributions

of many individuals. Meanwhile, Satabdi Mishra and Akshava Bahibala Walkingbookfairs, an independent bookstore in Bhubaneswar, have announced the Bookseller of the Year award, the first-of-its-kind, to recognise bookstore workers across India.

Puri, April 23: Construction of three chariots for the annual Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath his elder brother Balabhadra and sister Devi Subhadra began on the auspicious occasion of Akshaya Tritiya Sunday. workers - carpenters, blacksmiths, roopakaras, chitrakaras and tailors beside laborers take 55-57 days

As per tradition, Brahmins performed a yajna at the Rath construction yard located in front of the temple office along the Badadanda about five hundred metres from the Simhadwar. Thereafter three sets of servitors brought ajnamally as of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra and Debi Subhadra in a procession from the Srimandir and handed those to three Biswakarmas as a mark of entrustment of responsibility for the construction of the

POST NEWS NETWORK

Biswakarmas were presented

tive cloth for turban). Three Dhaura timber logs were consecrated and Biswakarmas with their gold and silver axe began work. Later iron axe was used. The concerted work of about two hundred different

grand event. This year the nine-day-long fete is to begin June 20. As many as 865 pieces of timber are used in the

HOLY START: Logs for the construction of chariots for Srimandir deities being consecrated in Puri, Sunday

Construction of chariots

begins for Puri Rath Yatra

with ceremonial sarees (decora-

construction of the chariots. While the strong, straight and hard logs of Phasi tree are used for making axles, Asan and Dhaura species of timber are used for making hubs, spokes and wheels. There are other soft species of timber used for the

to complete the chariots before the

Blacksmiths fix iron sockets in the hub and reinforce wheels with iron rim. Roopakaras carve images of parswa debates (guarding deities) of three chariots while Chitrakaras paint them with appropriate lively colours. At the end, tailors stitch cloths of the three chariots as per their colour specification and florists decorate the chariots before the fete begins.

A team appointed by the temple administration monitors progress of the workwhile the executive engineer of public works department (PWD) and his deputies ensure use of quality material in construction. executive engineer (transport) issues road-worthy certificates to the three chariots before those

SAI & FICCI to empower underprivileged women

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 23: With an aim to eradicate hunger from state, 'So AM I Foundation Trust (SAI)' under its 'Hunger Free Odisha' Initiative has signed a MoU with the FICCI FLO, Bhubaneswar.

FLO is the women's wing of Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) with 19 chapters across India representing around 9.000 women entrepreneurs. For over 39 years, FLO has been promoting entrepreneurship and professional excellence among women through workshops, seminars, conferences, training and capacity building programmers

SAI Foundation Trust is a nonprofit working for eradicating hunger from the state by 2025 under its 'Hunger Free Odisha' initiative and has been dedicatedly working towards development of the underprivileged sections of society. The organisation has set up food banks in different locations of the state to feed

construction of the top portion of ICC ODISHA STATE COUNCIL AGM HELD

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 23: In the general body meeting of ICC Odisha State Council organised Sunday, JB Pany, Director, Javastra Technology Pvt Ltd, Rajib Sekhar Sahoo, Chartered Accountant & Principal partner, SRB & Associates and MK Gupta, Managing Director, Gupta Power Infrastructure Ltd (GPIL) were appointed as new chairman, senior vice-chairman & vice-chairman for the year 2023-24. The new officebearers vowed to work closely with the state government to make it a preferred destination for investors.

Pany is an industry veteran with more than 40 years of professional experience. He exudes a rare combination of leadership energy, passion and a strong vision. He is also President, TIE (The Indus Entrepreneurs), Bhubaneswar. Pany also currently holds positions as Managing Director of Radiant Telesystems Limited & also Promoter



& Director, MECHEM Pvt. Ltd. As well as Director of Swosti Group & Ortel Group.

Gupta is a dynamic personality in-

fused with an entrepreneurial spirit. Born December 6, 1952 in Jaipur, Rajasthan, Gupta started looking after the business just after completing his graduation. Since then, it has been a story of unprecedented growth, leadership, far-sighted vision and keen business acumen. GPIL, under his leadership has managed to clock an annual turnover of ₹3,230 crore. The Chamber takes pride in its association with the state government and pledges to actively work in sync with the state policy obiectives to co-create the emerging Odisha of tomorrow.

Key player that helps prevent 'insulin shock'

University Of California San Diego School Of Skills, not degrees...

Medicine has identified a key player that helps prevent "insulin shock" and may lead to a therapeutic alternative to the hormone used by millions of persons with diabetes.

Although insulin is one of the most essential hormones, whose insufficiency can result in death, too much insulin can also be deadly.

"Patients who are treated with insulin or drugs that stimulate insulin secretion often experience hypoglycemia, a condition that if gone unrecognised and untreated can result in seizures, coma and even death, which collectively define a condition called insulin



shock," explained Michael Karin, distinguished professor of pharmacology and pathology at UC San Diego School of Medicine.

In the study, published in the online edition of journal Cell Metabolism, Karin and Li Gu, a

postdoctoral scholar in Karin's lab, and colleagues described "the body's natural defense or safety valve" that reduces the risk of insulin

That valve is a metabolic enzyme called fructose-1,6-bisphosphate phosphatase or FBP1, which acts to control gluconeogenesis, a process in which the liver synthe-

sises glucose. Some anti-diabetic drugs, such as metformin, inhibit gluconeogenesis but without apparent ill

Children born with a rare, genetic disorder in which they do not produce sufficient FBP1 can also re-

main healthy and live long lives. But in other cases, when the body is starved for glucose or carbohydrates, an FBP1 deficiency

can result in severe hypoglycemia. Without a glucose infusion, convulsions, coma and possibly death can ensue.

To better understand the roles of

FBP1, researchers created a mouse model with liver specific FBP1 deficiency accurately mimicking the human condition.

Like FBP1-deficient children, the mice appeared normal and healthy until fasted, which quickly resulted in the severe hypoglycemia and the liver abnormalities and hyperlipidemia.

FBP1 has multiple roles. Beyond playing a part in the conversion of fructose to glucose, FBP1 had a second non-enzymatic but critical function: It inhibited the protein kinase AKT, which is the primary conduit of insulin activity.

"Basically, FBP1 keeps AKT in check and guards against insulin hyper-responsiveness, hypoglycemic shock and acute fatty liver disease," said first author Gu.

Working with Yahui Zhu, a visiting scientist from Chongqing University in China and second author of the study, Gu developed a peptide (a string of amino acids nicknamed E7) derived from FBP1 that disrupted the association of FBP1 with AKT and another protein that inactivates AKT.

"This peptide works like insulin mimetic, activating AKT," said Karin.

The researchers would like to further develop E7 as a clinically useful alternative to insulin "because we have every reason to be lieve that it is unlikely to cause insulin shock."

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EXHIBITION ON 'FUTURE OF WORK'



Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan along with dignitaries poses for a photograph during the inaugural session of the 3rd G20 Education Working Group Meeting at CSIR, Institute of Minerals and Materials Technology in Bhubaneswar, Sunday



Kids enjoying Metaverse experience at a stall in the exhibition



Artistes perform traditional 'Medha' dance



On the sidelines of the 3rd Education Working Group Meeting under the G20 presidency, an exhibition on the 'Future of Work' was kicked off Sunday and will continue till April 28 at CSIR-Institute of Minerals and Materials Technology (IMMT), Bhubaneswar, More than 100 exhibitors from India and G2O member countries will showcase their products that would drive the future of work. **OrissaPOST** presents some glimpses

PICS- BIKASH NAYAK



from the event...

Audience during the inaugural session



Exhibitors making a demonstration on specific learning disabilities

DESCRIPTION : NEW WORKS, ADDITIONS AND ALTERATIONS TO THE EXISTING STRUCTURES, ALL ORDINARY REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE WORKS OF MISCELLANEOUS NATURE AND SUPPLIES EACH COSTING RS.5,00,000/- OR LESS IN THE SECTION KHURDA ROAD (EX) TO BALUGAON (IN) FOR THE PERIOD UPTO 30.06.2024. Approx. Cost of the Work : ₹ 60.20

(2) Tender No. etender-South-KUR-15-2023, Dtd.: 12.04.2023 DESCRIPTION : NEW WORKS, ADDITIONS AND ALTERATIONS TO THE EXISTING STRUCTURES, ALL ORDINARY REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE WORKS OF MISCELLANEOUS NATURE AND SUPPLIES EACH COSTING RS.5,00,000/- OR LESS IN THE SECTION BALUGAON (EX) TO GANJAM (IN) FOR THE PERIOD UPTO 30.06.2024.

Approx. Cost of the Work: Lakhs, <u>EMD:</u> ₹1,19,700/-

DESCRIPTION : NEW WORKS, ADDITIONS AND ALTERATIONS TO THE EXISTING STRUCTURES, ALL ORDINARY REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE WORKS OF MISCELLANEOUS
NATURE AND SUPPLIES EACH
COSTING RS.5,00,000/- OR LESS IN THE SECTION AT PALASA UNDER

(4) Tender No. etender-Central-KUR-20-2023, Dtd.: 12.04.2023 DESCRIPTION PROVISION OF 12M WIDE FOOT OVER BRIDGE WITH PASSENGER LIFTS AT ANGUL, MERAMANDALI, LINGARAJ TEMPLE
ROAD, MANCHESWAR AND
KENDUJHARGARH STATION OF

KHURDA ROAD DIVISION Approx. Cost of the Work:

Tender Closing Date and Time : At 1500 Hrs. of 04.05.2023 (for all the Tenders). against such 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

Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-Tender is available in website:

https://www.ireps.gov.in Note: The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 10 (Tendays before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / corrigenda issued for this tender. The tenderers/bidders must have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate and must be registered on oidder can participate on e-tendering. Divisional Railway Manager (Engg)









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Innovation is critical and it has to be indigenous; Imported goods can't be a source of innovation

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi

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To hope for a true change of human life without a change of human nature is an irrational and unspiritual proposition.

SRI AUROBINDO



Course Correction

inally, the government has broken its silence on the explosive disclosures on the Pulwama terror attack by former Jammu & Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik. The response in the form of Union Home Minister Amit Shah's remarks during a media outlet's programme April 22 came about a week after the revelations that stunned the nation. Even then, what the minister has said is too little too late. In fact, he has not answered any of the crucial questions raised by the former Governor. Instead, he questioned why Malik had not spoken up when he was J&K Governor. "If what he is saying is true, we should also ask why such people remember these things only after parting ways with us. Why do not their consciences awaken when they are in power?" Shah said. He also wants the public and media to question "such people's credibility." However, it may be recalled that Satya Pal Malik had spoken out while he was in the Governor's chair about various issues including asking the government to pay heed to the farmers' protest on the Farm Bills.

This is a typical attempt at obfuscation and brazening it out. The timing of the disclosures is not as important as what has been stated. More than the people or the media, it is the responsibility of the government to expose the former Governor if he had lied. This is because he alleged the Union Home Ministry had refused to give aircraft for ferrying the jawans instead of road travel which exposed them to the attack. He also leveled a serious and shocking allegation that the Prime Minister himself, followed by the National Security Adviser Ajit Doval, had asked him within hours after the attack to keep his mouth shut.

Mere assertion by the Home Minister that the BJP "has not done anything that needs to be hidden" is not enough. The government needs to answer why no inquiry had been held into the deaths of the jawans in the Pulwama attack. This is a question also raised by Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar recently.

Before the public scrutinises the allegations made by someone not in power, as stated by the Home Minister, the relatives of some of the killed jawans have torn the government into pieces for its perceived incompetence and complicity in the horrific attack. For example, Parashuram, the father of one of the slain soldiers, Bhagirath, told the media that several questions had been bothering him since the fateful day on February 14, 2019, suggesting that Malik's revelations validate his belief that the Pulwama attack was a 'political stunt orchestrated by the government.' "I am 100% confident that it is all about being in power and the Modi government has done this to get the chair (to get re-elected)," Parashuram said seemingly unable to conceal his rage. The Pulwama attack led to the surgical strikes by the Indian Air Force on Balakot in Pakistan that was used by the BJP to project the PM's strongman image during the run-up to the elections, it is said. It is during this air strike that Abhinandan, an Indian pilot, was captured after his aircraft was shot down.

The martyred soldier's father also asked, echoing what Malik had charged, how a vehicle loaded with nearly 200 kg of explosives could make its way out of nowhere and blow up the bus ferrying the jawans. He wondered if "the PM was then sleeping."

More recently, five soldiers were killed and another critically injured in a terror attack in the Rajouri-Poonch sector, close to the Line of Control (LoC) in the Jammu division. The fact that the Army vehicle was on an unaccompanied drive and remained unattended immediately after the attack is reminiscent of the government's dubious handling of the Pulwama attack.

First, during Demonetisation in November 2016, the nation was told that the sudden economic blow will break the backbone of terror activities in India. Second, when the abrogation of Article 370 happened in 2019, Indians were again told that grave mistakes of the past would be rectified and while Kashmir would truly be integrated into India, the terrorists operating in that state will be crushed and destroyed. Time has belied all such false claims. From Pulwama to Poonch, attacks have been vicious and determined. Damage to India has been immense. The concentration of paramilitary and the Army in Kashmir has affected overall border security of India. It has to be remembered that India has a vast border in unending unfriendly terrain. The constant incursions by China and the huge tracts of land the People's Liberation Army is successfully occupying every time it comes in demonstrates the lack of Indian firepower and manpower. On the other hand, even those Kashmiris who favoured India earlier are now alienated. Lack of essential commodities like medicines, strict control over daily activities like commuting, long closure of educational institutions, internet clampdown and closing down of businesses have crippled the common Kashmiri instead of the terrorist.

Admittance of wrong policies may go a long way in bringing about course correction

correction.

WISDOM CORNER

The hours of folly are measured by the clock; but of wisdom, no clock can measure.

WILLIAM BL.

The only way to make sense out of change is to plunge into it, move with it, and join the dance.

ALAN WATT:

What the caterpillar calls the end of the world the master calls a butterfly.

WORDS**WORTH**

Heiligenschein

t's a German word — literally holy light — for an aureole or circle of light around an object. Applied to people it's a halo. The word has been borrowed in a particular and specialist sense for a sheen that, if you're very lucky, you may see around the shadow of your head. The sun must be low in the sky and your shadow must be cast on grass that's damp with dew, so you have to be an early bird to stand much chance of seeing it. It's caused by internal reflection within the drops of water on the blades of grass (a related process in other circumstances makes a rainbow). The rays of the sun are reflected most strongly at or near the point that's exactly opposite the sun. As your head's in the way at that point, the brightness is visible around the edges of its shadow. You can see it best if you move your head a little, because the increased brightness moves with you. Only you can see it; other people with you will each have one of their own which, likewise, you can't see. The word first appears in this sense in 1834, in a German book with the title Abhandlung über den Heiligenschein, in which Dr Caspar Garthe wrote about the phenomenon. When writers in English followed it up, they naturally borrowed his name for it. This is a rare appearance outside books on optics: With the sun behind him, the shadows were flattened, or disappeared altogether, as if he was looking down at the bleached floor of some dead ocean. In fact, when the sun was right behind him, the lunar landscape seemed to brighten suddenly. Heiligenschein, the lunar scientists called it. The saint's halo: some obscure effect of the dust (Moonseed, by Stephen Baxter, 1998). A related optical effect, but like a circular rainbow, is called a glory. You can sometimes spot it if you're looking out of a plane's window at its shadow cast on a cloud. Natural phenomena like the famous Spectre of the Brocken, an extended shadow of a person cast on fog or cloud from a high place when the sun is low in the sky, often have a glory around the person's head.

FOCUS ENERGY

WISDOM OF NUCLEAR PHASE-OUT



Steffi Lemke

NO NUCLEAR
POWER PLANT
IN THE WORLD
IS SO SECURE
THAT A
CATASTROPHIC
ACCIDENT CAN
BE RULED OUT

ith the shutdown of its last three nuclear power plants, Germany has completed its phase-out of nuclear power. As the minister responsible for nuclear safety in Germany, I believe that this was an excellent – indeed, visionary – move. There are many important justifications, but five are especially compelling.

First, phasing out nuclear power makes Germany safer. No nuclear power plant in the world is so secure that a catastrophic accident can be ruled out. Such an accident could be caused by human error (as in Chernobyl in 1986) or a natural disaster (as in Fukushima, Japan, in 2011). It could be caused by a terrorist attack, plane crash, or simply an overlooked weakness in our safety strategies. Or, in the worst case, it could arise from a military attack. like those Russia has carried out in Ukraine.

Whatever the cause, an accident in a nuclear power plant can be catastrophic, causing devastation on a scale that no other form of energy generation could match. No insurance policy covers this risk, in Germany or anywhere else. The Environment Ministry, the country's highest nuclearsafety authority, has spent decades ensuring that power plants adhere to the highest standards. But no matter how hard we work, there is no absolute safety with nuclear power, which is why the phaseout is a relief for me

A second reason to welcome Germany's nuclear-power phase-out is that we will no longer be producing highly radioactive nuclear waste. Nuclear power has provided electricity for three generations, but its legacy of radioactive waste will be a burden for the next 30,000. How a technology with such long-lasting consequences could be classified as sustainable is a mystery to me.

In fact, despite the phase-out, the legacy of waste means that Germany still has a long road ahead on ensuring nuclear safety. There is currently no final repository to store spent fuel rods safely in operation anywhere in the world, and finding a site for one is hugely difficult and costly.



Germany's government was right to respect the broad societal consensus in favour of shutting down the last of its nuclear reactors. Solar and wind power are not only much cheaper than nuclear to generate; they are also safer, more sustainable, and more climate-friendly

Third, despite what advocates claim, nuclear power is neither climate-friendly nor particularly reliable. Even if it contributes less to the climate crisis than coal or gas, it is clearly bad for the climate, not least because reactors must be cooled with large amounts of water. This puts significant pressure on local rivers, which are already under stress from climate change. France had to import considerable amounts of electricity from Germany last year, owing to technical problems with its reactors and a lack of sufficient water to cool them. In some cases, rivers became so overheated that water for cooling reactors could be neither withdrawn nor discharged.

As temperatures rise and droughts proliferate, limitations on the use of river water for cooling nuclear reactors will intensify. We need a resilient energy supply that not only avoids contributing to climate change, but also can withstand the unavoidable effects of higher temperatures. In this

sense, nuclear power is not fit for the future.

The fourth point worth highlighting is that nuclear power is not cheap, especially when one accounts for the costs of uranium extraction, waste management, and insurance. In the United States, 12 nuclear power plants were taken off the grid between 2009 and 2021, because they were not economically viable.

New nuclear projects are not worthwhile without significant government subsidies. The Flamanville-3 project in northern France is running 12 years behind schedule, and will cost well over €10 billion (\$11 billion) more than originally planned. The costs of nuclear power are also exploding in the United Kingdom and Finland. And if Europe wants to end its dependence on Russian energy imports, it will have to end imports of uranium and nuclearfuel elements as well.

The final reason to welcome the shutdown of Germany's remaining nuclear plants is that we simply do not need nuclear power. There are better alternatives. Solar and wind power are now much cheaper to generate. They are also safer, more sustainable, and more climate-friendly. With the right standards in place, they are also compatible with nature conservation.

This helps to explain why nuclear power's share of total global primary energy consumption has been falling since 2000, accounting for only 5 per cent in 2019. In contrast, renewable energy has been on the rise for years. Production costs are falling, and installed capacity is growing – including in Germany since the current government took office.

Recognising the critical importance of a safe and affordable energy supply, particularly for a country whose prosperity is also based on energy-intensive industries, from mechanical engineering to automobile manufacturing, German policymakers are making large-scale investments in renewable energy. We are also investing in green hydrogen, storage technologies, energy efficiency, and energy savings.

The expansion of renewable energy is undoubtedly challenging, and we must admit that we are not yet as far along as we would like. At the same time, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has forced us to return temporarily to coal and liquefied natural gas. But none of this amounts to a convincing argument in favour of keeping, let alone expanding, nuclear power.

Successive German governments, all of our country's democratic parties, and even the operators of the nuclear power plants agreed to phase out nuclear power, persuaded by the same compelling logic that drove countless citizens, farmers, winegrowers, and mayors to spend decades advocating for a phaseout. It would be truly irresponsible to turn our backs on this broad societal consensus.

The writer is Germany's
Federal Minister
for the Environment
and Nuclear Safety.

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SPECTRUM SOCIETY

Democracies die by different means



Santosh Kumar Mohapatra

DEMOCRACY IS
MUCH MORE THAN
PRESSING A
BUTTON OR
MARKING A BOX
ON A BALLOT
PAPER. IT IS A WAY
OF LIFE

ecently, in an article in a national daily, former Congress president Sonia Gandhi accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP of "systematically dismantling all three pillars of India's democracy." She hit out at the BJP for its alleged misuse of central agencies like the CBI and ED to target political rivals and harass them into silence or submission. Gandhi also said "over 95 per cent of political cases (are) filed only against Opposition parties,' adding that the cases against those who join the BJP are "miraculously evaporating.'

Reacting, and rebuffing her views, two Union ministers stated that "Indian democracy died only once... in 1975... and never thereafter." They were referring to the Emergency during Indira Gandhi's rule.

during Indira Gandhi's rule.

According to the Democracy Index produced by the Economist Intelligence Unit, over the past decade, India has slipped or stayed still on every measure except political participation. India is dubbed a flawed democracy and placed at 46th position (out of 167 countries) in the Global Democracy Index 2022.

India has been termed a "partly

free" country for the third year in a row in the annual report of Freedom House, a US governmentfunded non-profit. The report also states that democracy in India is 'losing ground." Democracies Die" is a 2018 comparative politics book by Harvard University political scientists Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, which is about how elected leaders can gradually subvert the democratic process to increase their power. They argue that democracies still die but by different means. "less at the hand of men with guns and more by elected leaders.

In his book, "The Life and Death of Democracy", political scientist John Keane deals with the meaning and institutions of democracy. its historical roots, its present-day trends, and all the ways in which democracies have gone wrong over the course of history. He has pointed out a new type of pseudo-democratic government led by rulers skilled in the arts of manipulating and interfering with people's lives, arranging their support, and winning their conformity. It operates in sneaky ways by superficially embracing the trappings of democratic politics. Some think that India has a similar situation.

The World Press Freedom Index prepared by Reporters Without Borders highlights the degree of freedom that journalists, media, and netizens have in each country, and the government's attitude to respect such freedom. Last year:

India was considered as the most

dangerous place in the world for journalists. India's press freedom ranking has fallen from 133 out of 180 countries in 2016 to 150 in 2022 index. In 2021, India ranked 142.

The Human Freedom Index is an important resource measured by the Cato Institute (America) and Fraser Institute (Canada) for observing the relationship between freedom and other social

constructs that govern a society.

The last seven years have seen

India slithering in its rank from

90 in 2013 and to 119 in 2019 out of

165 countries in the Human Freedom Index Report 2021. Human rights are rights intrinsic to all human beings, irrespective of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other identity. These include the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of

opinion and expression, the right

to work and education, and many more. Recently, the Human Rights Watch in its World Report 2023 (33rd edition) said that Indian authorities had "intensified and broadened" their crackdown on activist groups and the media throughout the year 2022.

the year 2022.

According to a report in "The Economist," (February 12, 2022), the organs of India's democracy are decaying. "It takes more than elections for a country to be democratic. While the face of Indian democracy, in the form of elections, looks healthy, the rest of the body is not. From courts and police to politicians and parties to campaign finance and the mechanics of legislation, the bones, sinews, and organs of Indian democracy look alarmingly unwell."

Democracy is much more than pressing a button or marking a box on a ballot paper. It is a way of life. Democracy must ensure freedom from hunger, destitution, squalor, humiliation, discrimination, dehumanisation, and violence.

The writer is an Odisha-based economist and columnist.
Views are personal.

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

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Demographic dividend

Sir, After over two centuries of being the world's most populous country, China is expected to be overtaken by India on July 1. The epochal potential of this estimate is rooted in the idea that while India's demography shall keep pushing growth, China's shrinking population shall shrink its future. But this idea of demography being destiny has a huge caveat, related to the quality of the human capital concerned. The statements coming out of Beijing are seeking to downplay the population trend, but they make a fair point in underlining their 'high-calibre workforce'. India simply cannot afford any complacency about being the country with a 254 million cohort aged 15-24 years but must instead work with full energy to ensure many more of them can cash the 'talent dividend' advantage that Chinese officials are currently boasting. For a country with the largest youth cohort, coming up with solutions for the huge workforce is the key. A big challenge is the substandard learning that is the norm at a vast majority of institutions, churning out armies of unemployable or inadequately skilled passouts. It is a self-inflicted injury that limits job choices, slows down innovation, accentuates socio-economic distress and worst of all, is a chance wasted to make inroads into the global market. The India growth story is the shared journey of a billion and a half Indians. The cherished goal is to make it more inclusive, enlightening and rewarding.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Preserve greenery

Sir, The Supreme Court penalising the Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Ltd with a fine of Rs 10 lakh for seeking permission from the Tree Authority to fell more trees at Aarey Colony for Metro-3 car shed project is not the final answer or solution to the decadelong battle to save Mumbai's green lung. Aarey forest is home to around 10,000 tribals, and many of whom have already lost their lands and their livelihoods due to increasing encroachment by the state on forest lands. One of the greatest challenges has been to educate ordinary Mumbaikars about the significance of the Aarey forest and why it should be protected at all costs. In fact, it was recently revealed that the loss of trees will result in heavy floods in the Mumbai international airport area, since the excess water during heavy rainfall would be directed to Mithi river. This adds to the list of consequences -Mumbaikars have to face for giving up the greenery. Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

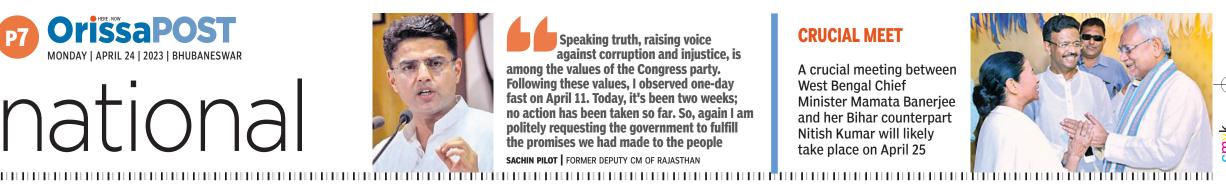
national



Speaking truth, raising voice against corruption and injustice, is among the values of the Congress party. Following these values, I observed one-day fast on April 11. Today, it's been two weeks; no action has been taken so far. So, again I am politely requesting the government to fulfill the promises we had made to the people SACHIN PILOT | FORMER DEPUTY CM OF RAJASTHAN

CRUCIAL MEET

A crucial meeting between West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and her Bihar counterpart Nitish Kumar will likely take place on April 25



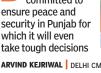


country is witnessing something that was never imagined before.... India has become the fifth

Britishers who had ruled us for 200 years, and farmers and workers have a major contribution in this

JAGDEEP DHANKHAR VICE PRESIDEN





The BJP had



to win the Lok Sabha polls that year MANIK SARKAR | FORMER TRIPURA CM

SHORT **TAKES**

Several injured

Jaipur: Several people were injured after a clash broke out between members of two communities over a petty issue in Rajasthan's Tonk district Sunday, police said. They said police personnel in large numbers have been deployed to maintain law and order. Both the groups pelted stones at each other and about a dozen people, including three policemen, were injured, police said, adding a few vehicles were also damaged.

Trekkers rescued

Dehradun: All 14 trekkers, including 13 foreigners and one Indian, who were trapped in an avalanche near the Pindari Glacier in Uttarakhand's Bageshwar district, reached Kapkot safely on Sunday, an official said. The Uttarakhand State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) said here that on receiving the information about trekkers, their team left from Bageshwar on Saturday, bypassing the challenges of extreme conditions and heavy snowfall and safely brought the trekkers to Kapkot. They all are in good health, SDRF said. Shikha Suyal, District Disaster Management Officer, Bageshwar, said on April 3, the team, which set out on a month-long trek towards the Milam Glacier, got trapped in an avalanche near the Pindari Glacier on the night of April 20.

Man arrested

Muzaffarnagar: A man was arrested in Shamli district on Sunday for sexually harassing his nine-year-old daughter, police said. The victim's mother, in her complaint, alleged that her husband had sexually harassed the girl at their home, SHO (Kairana) Shvamveer Singh said, A case has been registered against the accused, in his 30s, under Section 354 (assault of criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty) of the IPC and POCSO Act.

POONCH ATTACK: 30 DETAINED, **HUNT ON FOR TERRORISTS**

Poonch/Jammu, April 23: Around 30 people have been detained for questioning so far as security forces conducted a massive search operation to track down the terrorists who ambushed an Army truck in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch killing five personnel last week, officials said Sunday.

Necessary action is being taken against the terrorists responsible for the deadly attack, the Army's Northern Commander Lt Gen Upendra Dwivedi said during an interaction with the personnel who survived the ambush in the dense forest area of Bhata Dhurian on Thursday.

A stretch of the Jammu-Poonch national highway which was closed following the ambush was reopened for vehicular traffic on Sunday. In a tweet on its official handle, the Army's Northern Command shared Lt Gen Dwivedi's visit to the Command Hospital in Udhampur and interaction with the survivor.

'Dwivedi interacted with the survivor...And assured that necessary action is underway," it tweeted along with two pictures of the soldier. Five soldiers were killed and one was injured after the terrorists attacked the lone Army truck, which was carrying eatables for iftar to a nearby village.

The Armv's northern commander visited the attack site on Saturday. The Bhata Dhurian forest area has for long remained a preferred infiltration route for terrorists from across the Line of Control because of its topography, dense forest cover and natural

Dwivedi reviewed the security in the border area and the ongoing combing operation to track down



the terrorists. The Northern Command said in a tweet that he was briefed on the actions undertaken so far and exhorted the troops to be steadfast in their resolve.

While the search operation was underway amid a high alert in the twin border districts of Poonch and Rajouri, vehicular movement on the Jammu-Poonch highway resumed Sunday morning after remaining suspended since Thursday evening, officials said.

They said traffic was earlier diverted to other routes to secure the highway which connects the twin border districts with Jammu. Some of the people who passed through the scene of the attack said a traffic signboard put up by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) bore three bullet marks and the road stretch was strewn with vegetables and fruits.

The officials said around 30 people have been detained for questioning so far. "Among those rounded up are two couples from Degwar in Poonch -- Iqbal and his wife Mudifa and Salam Din and his wife Rashida." an official source

said, adding further investigation was underway

The slain soldiers were from a Rashtriya Rifles unit deployed for counter-terror operations. Sources earlier said the attack was suspected to have been carried out by a group of three to four terrorists. The attackers possibly spent more than a year in Rajouri and Poonch and had adequate knowledge of the terrain, they added.

The Jammu and Kashmir Gaznavi Force (JKGF) is said to be active in the area and its "commander", Rafiq Ahmed alias Rafiq Nayi, hails from the region. Currently, three-four terrorist groups are active in the region of Rajouri and Poonch, the sources said.

The terrorists who ambushed the Army truck used steel core bullets, capable of piercing an armoured shield, and decamped with the soldiers' weapons, officials said on Sunday. They said a sniper is believed to have targeted the truck from the front before the other terrorists sprayed bullets and lobbed grenades on it

Bindal appointed Himachal BJP chief

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Shimla, April 23: The BJP Sunday appointed its seasoned leader Rajeev Bindal as its Himachal Pradesh state unit president, replacing Lok Sabha MP Suresh Kumar Kashyap.

Bindal, who hails from Solan, has been a minister and assembly speaker and is seen as a solid and dynamic organisational leader. He headed the BJP state unit earlier as well. An MLA for several terms, Bindal lost the assembly poll this time with the party failing to open its account in Solan district.

The BJP suffered defeat in the assembly polls in the state in November last year as the Congress came back to power. The party is now gearing up for the Shimla Municipal Corporation polls slated for May 2. In other appointments, the BJP has made Siddharthan and Pawan Rana as its general secretary (organisation) in Himachal Pradesh and Delhi units respectively.

Both leaders will be swapping their places. Talking to reporters in Shimla, Kashyap said he had requested the party leadership to re-



lieve him of the charge of Himachal Pradesh state unit president.

"My tenure is over and I want to devote more time to my constituency as the 2024 Lok Sabha polls are nearing and I have requested the party high command to entrust the responsibility to some other leader," he said.

According to party sources, Kashyap submitted his resignation on April 20, citing "personal reasons". He was appointed as the chief of the BJP's Himachal Pradesh unit on July 22, 2020, following the resignation of Rajeev Bindal

SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

Apex court must let legislature decide: BCI



New Delhi, April 23: The Bar Council of India (BCI) Sunday expressed its concern on same-sex marriage issue being heard in the Supreme Court, saying it would be "catastrophic" to overhaul something as fundamental as the conception of marriage by the court and the matter should be left to

In a resolution, the lawyers' body said that any decision by the apex court in such a sensitive matter may prove very harmful for the future generation of our country."India is one of the most socioreligiously diverse countries of the world consisting of a mosaic of beliefs. Hence, any matter which is likely to tinker with the fundamental social structure, a matter which has far reaching impact on our socio-cultural and religious beliefs should necessarily come through legislative process only, the meeting unanimously opined. "Any decision by the apex court in such a sensitive matter may prove very harmful for the future generation of our country," it said in a resolution.

The resolution was adopted in a joint meeting attended by representatives of all the state bar councils. "Certainly the laws made by the legislature are truly dem-

ocratic as they are made after undergoing thorough consultative processes and reflect the views of all sections of the society. The legislature is accountable to the public," it said.

"The joint meeting, thus, is of the unanimous opinion that in view of the sensitivity of the issue of same sex marriage, having a spectrum of stakeholders from diverse socio-religious background, it is advisable that this dealt with after an elaborative consultation process involving different social, religious groups by the competent legislature.

The BCI said that law is a "codified societal norm" that reflects the collective conscience of its people, and religion being intertwined with culture, greatly influences the codification of law and societal norms in any civilised society.

The BCI said though it welcomes the Supreme Court's step in furthering the debate on the matter, it wants the issue to be "left for the legislative consideration."

The council said that according to documented history, ever since the inception of human civilization and culture, marriage has been typically accepted and categorised as a union of biological man and woman for the twin purpose of procreation and recreation

EASTERN LADAKH ROW

India, China hold 18th round of military talks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 23: Days ahead fence Minister Li Shangfu's planned visit to India, the militaries of the two countries Sunday held a fresh round of highlevel talks to resolve issues at the remaining friction points in eastern Ladakh as the border row spills

over to the fourth The 18th round of military talks be-

tween India and China took place at the Chushul-Moldo border meeting point on the Chinese

side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh, people familiar with the dialogue said. It was not immediately known whether there was any forward movement at the talks in the resolution of pending issues

It is learnt that the Indian side insisted on resolving the issues at the remaining friction points of Demchok and Depsang in eastern Ladakh as soon as possible. The Indian delegation at the dialogue was led by Lt Gen Rashim Bali, Commander of the Lehbased 14 Corps that takes care of security along the LAC in the

The talks took place ahead of Chinese Defence Minister Li's visit to New Delhi to attend a defence ministerial meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation on April 27 and 28. India is hosting the meeting under its presidency of the grouping.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh is likely to hold a bilateral meeting with his Chinese counterpart on the sidelines of the SCO conclave. Sunday's military talks came around four months after the last round of

the dialogue between the senior Army commanders of the two sides. The 17th round of military talks

was held on December 20. Following the dialogue, the two sides, in a joint statement, said they exchanged views in an "open and constructive" manner to resolve the "relevant issues" and that it was agreed to maintain "security and stability" on the ground in the region.

The statement said the two sides agreed to stay in "close contact", maintain dialogue through military and diplomatic channels and work out a mutually acceptable resolution of the remaining issues at





Vehicles wade through a waterlogged road after heavy rainfall at Chandmari in Guwahati

MP's mass marriage scheme sparks row

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dindori, April 23: A mass marriage scheme of the Madhya Pradesh government stirred a row after some of the would-be brides were found to be pregnant during medical tests, with the opposition Congress seeking to know under which guidelines these tests were conducted and demanded an inquiry into the incident which it termed as an "insult" to the poor. A district official said there was

no directive from the administration to conduct pregnancy tests but doctors at the site decided to medically examine those brides who complained of some gynaecological issues.

The issue is related to the marriage of 219 couples in Gadasarai town in Dindori district under the 'Mukhya Mantri Kanya Vivah Yojana' on Saturday to mark Akshaya Tritiya, an official said Sunday. Calling such testing an insult to the poor, Congress legisla-

tor Omkar Singh Markam said the state government must clarify what are the guidelines or rules for such pregnancy tests.

Dindori collector Vikas Mishra said that directives were issued during the mass marriage event for the detection of sickle cell (anaemia) among participants. During medical examinations, some brides spoke of period issues after which doctors at the site took a decision to conduct pregnancy tests on those with such complaints, Mishra said.

there is no legal impediment for ac-

cepting the terms of settlement".

band paid a total sum of Rs 12,

51,000 to the petitioner-wife who

has acknowledged the receipt of

the demand drafts. "In the cir-

cumstances, we exercise our power

under Article 142 of the Constitution

It also took on record that the hus-

Official dies after being hit by helicopter's tail rotor

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Rudraprayag (U'khand), April 23: An official of the Uttarakhand Civil Aviation Development Authority died Sunday after being hit by the tail rotor of a helicopter in Kedarnath.

The incident occurred at the Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam helipad in Kedarnath, Rudraprayag Superintendent of Police Vishakha Ashok Bhadane said. Amit Saini (35), who was on his way to board the helicopter, suffered severe neck injuries after being hit by the helicopter's tail rotor and died on the spot, Rudraprayag District Magistrate Mayur Dikshit told re-

Saini worked as a finance controller in the Uttarakhand Civil Aviation Development Authority and was part of a team that had visited the helipad to inspect the arrangements for the heli-services to the Himalayan temple, scheduled to open on April 25.

District Disaster Management Officer Nandan Singh Rajwar said the accident occurred around 2.15 pm when the team was about to return after its inspection.

The authorities are busy finalising the arrangements for the pilgrimage to Kedarnath amid snowfall and intermittent rain in Kedarnath.

SC ADVICE TO TECHIE COUPLE SEEKING DIVORCE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 23: The Supreme Court has told a couple, who are software engineers seeking divorce, why don't they give a second chance to the marriage as both of them were not able to devote time to their union.

A bench of Justices K M Joseph and B V Nagarathna said, "Where is the time for marriage. Both of you are software engineers posted in Bangalore. One goes to duty in the day and the other in the night. You have no regret for divorce but have regret for marriage. Why don't you give a second

chance to the marriage. Justice Nagarathna said that

Bangalore is not a place where divorces take place so frequently and the couple may give a chance towards their union. However, the counsels for both the husband and wife told the bench that during the pendency of this petition the parties were referred to the Supreme Court Mediation Centre in order to explore the possibility of a settlement between them.

The bench was informed that both husband and wife have agreed upon a settlement agreement in which they have decided to dissolve their marriage by a decree of divorce by mutual consent under Section 13B of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 on certain terms and conditions.



The counsels informed the bench that one of the terms being that the husband would pay a total sum of Rs 12.51 lakh towards full and final settlement of all monetary claims of the wife as a permanent alimony. The bench noted in its order dated April 18, "When queried by this Court, the parties stated that they have indeed agreed to settle their disputes amicably by parting ways and seeking divorce by mutual consent. They also state that the terms of settlement would be adhered to by them and hence the marriage may be dissolved by a decree of divorce by mutual consent.'

cumstances, "we have taken on record the settlement agreement as well as the application filed under Article 142 of the Constitution. We have perused the same. On perusal, we find that the terms of the set tlement agreements are lawful and

The bench added that in the cir-

and dissolve the marriage between the parties by a decree of divorce by mutual consent under Section 13B of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955," the top court said. It also quashed various other proceedings lodged by husband

and wife in Rajasthan and Lucknow under the Dowry Prohibition Act, domestic violence Act and other connected cases.

UP URBAN LOCAL BODY ELECTION

SP looking to consolidate Dalit-OBC vote bank

Lucknow, April 23: The Samajwadi Party is redrawing its strategy to expand the party's base beyond its Muslim-Yaday core constituencies and win over Dalits and Other Backward Castes (OBCs) to counter the BJP in the upcoming urban local body polls in Uttar

SP president Akhilesh Yadav is working with Azad Samaj Party chief Chandrasekhar, who is said to hold influence among Dalits in west Uttar Pradesh, in this bid to consolidate the new vote bank.

This repositioning has been in the works for a while now. The SP conducted a campaign in the state to demand a caste census. In December, Akhilesh Yadav said the SP will conduct a caste census within three months if it is voted to power in Uttar Pradesh. Earlier this month, he unveiled a statue of Dalit leader Kanshi Ram and attended an event to commemorate the birth anniversary of social reformer Bhim Rao Ambedkar in Madhya Pradesh's Mhow. The SP is also counting on its increased heft in the wake of Shivpal Singh Yadav returning to

the party fold. The SP did not fare well in the 2017 urban body polls and could not



The recent killing of gangster-politician Atig Ahmad and his brother Ashraf in Prayagraj might help consolidate Muslim votes against the BJP and benefit the SP

open its account in any of the 16 mayoral seats. While 14 of these seats were won by the BJP, two went to the BSP. Shivpal Yadav exuded confidence that the SP will win the urban local body polls this time.

"Responsibilities have already been given to senior party leaders in their respective areas. We will certainly win the urban local body polls," the SP national general secretary said.

"We don't do politics of religion but Muslims of the state were with the SP and will remain with us,' a senior party leader said. Political analyst Siddharth Kalhans said of the 213 candidates who were in the

fray for the 16 posts of mayor in 2017,

only 18 could save their deposits. This time, however, the SP has fielded good candidates keeping all factors, including local demographics, in mind, he said.

According to State Election Commission data, SP candidates lost their deposits on 10 of the 16 mayoral seats in the 2017 polls, while Congress and BSP candidates lost deposits on 11 seats each. Every candidate deposits a fixed amount at the time of filing nominations. The deposit is forfeited if the candidate fails to secure

Akhilesh-Shivpal to campaign together

Lucknow: For the first time since 2016, walls have been demolished and bridges have been built as Samaiwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yaday and his uncle Shivpal Yadav will now campaign together for the upcoming municipal elections in Uttar Pradesh, The party is likely to announce the campaign schedule of its top leaders soon. It has already announced that Akhilesh Yadav and Mainpuri MP Dimple Yaday will hold three public meetings each for the party's Lucknow mayoral candidate Vandana Mishra.

one-sixth of the total valid votes. Of the total 652 seats, the BJP won 184. Asked about the SP's Dalit-OBC outreach, BJP spokesperson Manish Shukla said, "People see (a party's) track record. When the SP was in power in the state, it did nothing for Dalits and OBCs. In fact, the maximum cases of atrocities against Dalits were witnessed during the SP's tenure be-

tween 2012-2017." The urban body polls in Uttar Pradesh will be held in two phases -- May 4 and 11. The counting of votes will be taken up May 13.

As summer intensifies, UP scales up beer production

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, April 23: Uttar Pradesh is scaling up beer production by 15 to 20 per cent to meet the increased demand amid the intense summer heat.

In the last fiscal year, more than 60 crore units of 500-ml beer cans were consumed in the state and officials are confident of a spurge in demand this season.

The sixth brewing unit that has come up in Sonbhadra, has launched the homebred product in the market earlier this month and it will compete with existing brands. The state's first brewery was established in 1959, while the fifth came up in

August 2015. Various domestic and international beer companies have introduced 162 different products (330-ml pint, 500-ml can and 650ml bottle).

Of these, 15 are imported while 96 brands being marketed in the state are bottled and manufactured in breweries in other states. The remaining 51 brands are from six breweries in Uttar Pradesh.

the last fiscal Senior excise officials said that year, more than 60 the sale of beer crore units of 500-ml beer will pick up between May cans were consumed in the and July. "Last state and officials are vear, several beer brands confident of a were not availspurge in demand

able in the market till mid-May, so this season we got in touch with the five breweries in the state to see if they could scale up production. Out of five, four

wanted to increase their daily capacity," said a senior excise official.

After the Sonbhadra unit, another brewery in the state is slated to get operational in a few months in Barabanki. Sharing the timeline of the brewing units, officials of the department said the first unit in the state came up in Ghaziabad in 1959.

The second one in Meerut was established in 1976. Another brewerv in Ghaziabad came up in June 2003. Aligarh and Unnao became beer producers in October 2011 and August 2015, respectively.

Farmers to get grants to build small polyhouses

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dehradun, April 23: The Uttarakhand government last Tuesday decided to give grants to farmers for building cluster-based naturally ventilated small polyhouses for growing vegetables and flowers.

The decision was taken by the state cabinet at a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, Chief Secretary S S Sandhu said at a press conference.

A fund of ₹304 crore has been sanctioned under NABARD Rural Infrastructure Development Fund for the establishment of 17,648 polyhouses of 100 square metre size in which farmers will be given 70 per cent as grant, Sandhu said.

The move will also lead to a 15 per cent rise in vegetable production and



25 per cent rise in flower production, Sandhu said. The cabinet also decided to build Rishikesh-Neelkanth ropeway project on public-private partnership mode, he said.

The cabinet also made prior map approval mandatory for building any type of structures within 50 metre aerial distance (in hilly areas) and 100 metre aerial distance (in plain areas) right of way of national highways, state highways and roads identified by local civic bodies.

The state government

has urged the pilgrims

to check the weather

forecast before starting

the yatra and to carry

enough warm clothes

Rishikesh, April 23: The regis

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

UP tops in excise revenue collection



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, April 23: Excise remains a top revenue grosser in Uttar Pradesh for the second consecutive year.

The revenue was higher by 14 per cent as compared to the previous fiscal year (2021-22) when the state registered a collection of Rs 36,321 crore. The Uttar Pradesh excise de-

partment has created a record by generating revenue of ₹41.250 crore during the 2022-23 financial year.

The excise revenue collection is not only the highest in the state so far but it has also surpassed all other states in the country.

Another major achievement was that not a single death was reported in the state due to consumption of illicit liquor in the past one year.

According to officials, in 2017-18, the department started working to make the excise policy robust as well as flexible to allow more players to make the market competitive. At that time, UP touched a revenue of ₹17,320 crore. Removal of unnecessary entry barriers brought an increased number of foreign liquor, beer, country-made liquor and alcoholic beverages brands, an official said. Riding on positive sen-

KEDARNATH YATRA

Registration suspended till Apr 30

The revenue was higher by 14 per cent as compared to the previous fiscal year (2021-22) when the state registered a collection of ₹36,321 crore

The Uttar Pradesh excise department has created a record by generating revenue of ₹41,250 crore during the 2022-23 financial year

The excise revenue collection is not only the highest in the state so far but it has also surpassed all other states in the country

timents, the department achieved the highest compound annual growth rate over the past six years in the country (by notching 15.5 per cent of mean annual growth).

Additional chief secretary, excise, Sanjay Bhoosreddy said, "While revenue is one part, strong enforcement drives helped us in curbing bootlegging. The Russia-Ukraine war disrupted the supply of soda ash due to which a shortage of glass bottles persisted for three months last year.'

"Manufacturing and supply of UP liquor (premium country-made liquor sold in glass bottles) came to a standstill, otherwise our revenues would have been even higher," he said. Excise commissioner. Senthil C Pandian, said that switch $ing\,to\,an\,end\text{-}to\text{-}end\,online\,regime$ for approvals and compliances brought in more transparency and helped in attracting new companies and players.

In 2022-23, Karnataka could garner ₹29,790 crore through excise duty. During the same period, Uttar Pradesh took a big leap from ₹17,320 crore to ₹41,250 crore.



People visit Tai Mahal as clouds hover in the sky in Agra, Uttar Pradesh

JOSHIMATH DISASTER

'Measures yet to be taken to address land subsidence issue'

MORE THAN 100 DAYS HAVE PASSED SINCE THE CRISIS REARED ITS HEAD IN EARLY JANUARY BUT CRACKS HAVE STILL NOT STOPPED APPEARING IN THE HILL TOWN, WHICH IS SITUATED ON OLD LANDSLIDE RUBBLE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dehradun, April 23: Nearly four months since Joshimath made headlines as the "sinking town", the gateway to Himalayan pilgrimage sites is yet to see enough curative steps that address the land subsidence issue, environmental ex-

perts have said. The cracks that appeared in buildings, roads and public facilities in Joshimath have not widened further of late but sporadic appearances of newer ones leave no room for complacency, said locals.

Atul Sati, the convenor of the Joshimath Bachao Sangharsh Samiti, told PTI, "Cracks are still appearing here and there." Sati was the first to raise the issue of land subsidence in the town.

During this pilgrimage season, which started with the opening Yamunotri and Gangotri temples Saturday, the state government expects a record-breaking influx of devotees in Joshimath. The locals fear that the huge influx of pilgrims would further increase the

The pilgrimages to Badrinath and the Sikh shrine of Hemkund Sahib begin April 27 and May 20, respectively. Joshimath Municipality Chairman Shailendra Panwar noted that there was a marked improvement in the conditions.

The people are safe in the relief camps, unsafe hotels and rest houses demolished, buildings in danger zones vacated and the distribution of compensation among the affected people is underway. However, the danger continues to persist, he said. Prefabricated 2-BHK houses have been built in Dhak for people living in temporary relief camps but they do not seem interested to move there, Panwar added.

The two major reasons for this are the lack of basic facilities in these houses and their location about 10 kilometres from Joshimath, the Joshimath Municipality chairman said. "How can people go so far from their lands, leaving their livestock behind?" Panwar asked.

Forty-eight affected families received a cumulative compensation of ₹11.69 crore as part of a rehabilitation package by April 20 and the process is still underway but the kind of urgency with which longterm steps should have been taken



People in unsafe zones have been moved to safety, cracks in the roads filled and unsafe buildings demolished but environmentalists feel long-term measures to save the town from further damage are yet to be initiated

to save the town from further subsidence is not visible on the ground. experts said.

Saving Joshimath is not being accorded the kind of priority it deserves, Chandi Prasad Bhatt, the pioneer of the Chipko movement, told PTI.

The need to strike at the root cause of the crisis seems to have taken a backseat, Bhatt said, adding that rehabilitation of the people and active steps to address the core

problem should go side by side.

Expert panels with representa-

tives from organisations such as the Geological Survey of India and the National Institute of Remote Sensing have examined the subsidence issue from different angles and submitted their reports to the Centre.

The cracks appeared in 868 houses in Joshimath, of which 181 are located in the 'Unsafe Zone'. According to data from the state government's Disaster Management department, 586 people from 152 families have been living in the temporary relief camps built around the town for months.

(Administration) of Garhwal Division and Additional Chief Executive Officer of Chardham Yatra Administration Organisation Narendra Singh Kaviriyal said that in view of the bad weather and heavy snowfall, the registration

tration of pilgrims for the Kedarnath yatra was Sunday suspended till April 30 in Rishikesh and Haridwar due to rain and snowfall in the upper reaches of the Garhwa Himalayas, officials said. The Kedarnath Dham will be opened to the public Tuesday. Additional Commissioner

of pilgrims for the Kedarnath yatra has been suspended till April 30 in Rishikesh and Haridwar.

The government will review the weather conditions in the coming days and accordingly take a decision in the interest of the pilgrims, he said

Due to incessant rain and snowfall in the upper reaches of the Garhwal Himalayas, the mercury in the region has dropped significantly and authorities are facing problems in clearing the snow that keeps accumulating on footpaths.

An official spokesperson said the state government has urged the pilgrims to check the weather forecast before starting the yatra and to carry enough warm clothes.

The government also said that due to the weather, the pilgrims might have to face all sorts of problems during the yatra. However, adequate medical arrangements have been made along all the yatra routes, it said. It added that it is committed to

ensuring smooth, safe and uninterrupted travel for the pilgrims and the arrangements are being regularly monitored at the highest level.

The registration of pilgrims for the other three dhams -- Badrinath, Gangotri and Yamunotri -- is While the shrines of Gangotri

and Yamunotri opened on the oc-

casion of Akshaya Tritiya on

Saturday, the Badrinath Dham will

open April 27. So far, more than 16 lakh people from India and abroad have registered for the Chardham Yatra. according to officials.

pressure on the hill town.



national



are trying to divide the country and practise politics of hate ... I am ready to give my life but will not allow any division of the country MAMATA BANERJEE

PRESIDENT TO VISIT HARYANA TODAY

President Droupadi Murmu will visit Karnal and Hisar in Haryana Monday, an official statement said Sunday. At Karnal, the President will grace the 19th convocation of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research -**National Dairy Research Institute**



The erstwhile Maha Vikas government had red dispensation is

committed to fast-track various projects DEVENDRA FADNAVIS MAHARASHTRA

The Aam Aadmi Party in Punjab by selling lies to the people. Today, the people of Punjab are feeling



NAVJOT SINGH SIDHU CONGRESS LEADER

Who would not like to be chief Ajit Pawar is capable of becoming chief minister. He has beer in politics for so

many years now and has been SANJAY RAUT

SHORT TAKES

Man killed

New Delhi: A 39-year-old man was beaten to death by two persons in Delhi's Shadipur area, police said Sunday. The official said that they got a PCR call of the incident at around 11.30 pm on Saturday night. The caller said that a man was lying on the street in injured condition. A police team reached at the spot and learnt that the injured was taken to a nearby government hospital by locals. The victim, who was later identified as Pankaj Thakur, was declared dead on arrival by the doctors.

Nine Customs officials dismissed

Chennai: Nine Customs officials, including a senior superintendent, were dismissed from service for alleged links with gold smuggling gangs operating out of the Karipur airport in Kerala's Kozhikode. The action was taken by the Customs Department after the airport turned out into a smuggling hub and the failure of these officials to curb the criminal activities. An internal investigation by the Department found that the officers were hand in glove with the smuggling gangs. Several smuggling gangs have been operating out of the airport turning the Malabar area into a major smuggling hub of Kerala.

Four injured in roof collapse

Hathras: Four people, including a woman, suffered serious injuries after they got buried under the debris of a newly-constructed roof of a house in Uttar Pradesh's Hathras district. The incident took place in Samadpur village, under Sadabad police station of Hathras district late Saturday night. All four have been admitted to Hathras district hospital in a critical condition, Sadabad SDM Saniav Kumar said that the beam broke suddenly and the roof collapsed.

Man stabbed to death in Delhi

New Delhi: A 32-year-old man was brutally stabbed to death in Delhi's Raj Park area, a police said Sunday. The official said that they received a PCR call at 12.23 a.m. The caller said that a man had been stabbed near Rai Park Rathi Hospital street. The stabbing was so brutal that his intestine had fallen out. The victim was identified as Virender Singh, a resident of Hathras, with the help of his Aadhaar card, Police informed his wife Asha about the incident. Jitender was taken to a hospital where he was declared dead on arrival.

2 IAF planes on standby to shift Indians from Sudan



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 23: India has positioned two heavy-lift military transport aircraft in Jeddah and a naval ship at a key port in violence-hit Sudan as part of its contingency plans to evacuate stranded Indians from the African country.

In a related development, Saudi Arabia said it has evacuated from Sudan 66 citizens from "brotherly and friendly" foreign countries that included a few Indian nationals. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said contingency plans for evacuation of Indians have been put in place but noted that any movement on the ground would

depend on the security situation. It said the security situation in Sudan continues to be "volatile" with reports of fierce fighting coming from various locations in the country's capital Khartoum. The government on Friday said it was focusing on the safety of over 3,000 Indian citizens currently located throughout Sudan.

"As part of our preparations, and in order to move swiftly, the Government of India is pursuing multiple options," the MEA said in a statement on Sunday. "Two Indian Air Force C-130J are currently positioned on standby in Jeddah. And, INS Sumedha has reached Port Sudan," it said.

"Contingency plans are in place but any movement on the ground would depend on the security situation, which continues to be volatile with reports of fierce fighting at various locations in Khartoum," the MEA said.

Sudan has been witnessing deadly fighting between the country's army and a paramilitary group for the last 10 days that has reportedly left around 400 people dead. The MEA said India is making all-out efforts to ensure safety and security of Indians stranded in Sudan.

"We are closely monitoring the complex and evolving security situation in Sudan," it said. The MEA said India is also coordinating closely with various partners for the safe movement of those Indians who are stranded in Sudan and would like to be evacuated.

Apart from the Sudanese authorities, the MEA and the Indian embassy in Sudan are also in regular touch with the UN, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt, and US among others.



like a wildfire across the city and

soon SHO of the Town police sta-

tion and a large number of po-

licemen reached the spot and ar-

under relevant sections of IPC. He

is facing the charge of hurting the

sentiments of a large community.

The accused is injured and we have

admitted him to Sadar hospital for

treatment," said an official

spokesperson of Muzaffarpur po-

police forces around temple prem-

ises and also asked the reserve bat-

talions to be on standby. Intelligence

officers are asked to stay alert at

their respective zones and inform

us at the earliest to take preventive

measures," he said.

"We have deployed additional

"We have arrested the accused

rested the accused.

Painted storks catch fish at a lake in Sriharikota

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

rested, police said Sunday.

Patna, April 23: A man, who uri-

nated inside Maa Durga temple lo-

cated at Kalyani Chowk in Bihar's

Muzaffarpur city, has been ar-

Moinuddin, a resident of Diwan

road of the city. He went inside

the temple premises without re-

moving his sleepers and headed

towards the idol of Maa Durga.

The temple priest spotted him and

raised an alarm. However, by that

time, he went to another side of

the temple and urinated there on

Saturday evening. Agitated over

the incident, the devotees present

inside the temple assaulted the ac-

The news of the incident spread

The accused is identified as

Man urinates in temple, held

Kerala to get India's first Digital Science Park

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, April 23: Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is scheduled to visit Kerala on a two-day trip on April 24, will lay the foundation stone for the country's first Digital Science Park, a Rs-1,500-crore project, here Tuesday, April 25.

The third-generation Science Park (they are located in bustling city centres) will come up close to the Digital University of Kerala at Technopark Phase IV -Technocity, a government release said.

Governor Arif Kerala Mohammed Khan, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, Union Minister for Railways Ashwini Vaishnaw,



various ministers of the Left gov-

ernment and Congress's

Thiruvananthapuram MP Shashi

Tharoor would be attending the

The Digital Science Park project

had been conceived as a multidis-

ciplinary cluster-based interactive-

event, the release said.

■ The third-generation Science Park (they are located in bustling city centres) will come up close to the Digital University of Kerala at Technopark Phase IV - Technocity, a government release said

■ In the 2022-23 budget, the state government had announced the establishment of a Digital Science Park in an area of 10 lakh square feet in two blocks, the release added

innovation zone focused on digital technologies and is expected to be completed in two years, it said. In the 2022-23 budget, the state government had announced the establishment of a Digital Science Park in an area of 10 lakh square feet in

two blocks, the release added. "The

Kumar also told the leaders that

after meeting with Sonia Gandhi

in 2017, he kept waiting for almost

park will initially have two buildings with a total area of 2,00,000 square feet. The first one in 1,50,000 square feet will have five floors, housing the Centre of Excellence (CoE) including research labs and digital incubator, while the second building will house the administrative as well as Digital Experience centre."

The Digital Science Park will start its operations from a 10,000 square feet space in Kabani located at Technopark Phase IV within the next couple of months, it added. Out of the total project outlay of over Rs 1,500 crore, Rs 200 crore has already been allotted by the state government and the remaining amount will be generated from other sources including industry partners, the release said.



Congress may play Dalit card

The Congress super high com-**⊥** mand is toying with the idea of playing the Dalit card during the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. The super high command comprising three Gandhis (Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi) sees

Mallikarjun Kharge as a potential Prime Ministerial face. It was perhaps part of this strategy that Kharge was first brought by the Gandhis as Congress president last year and also allowed him to stay put as Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha. The Congress strategists say that the Dalits were the party's backbone until the 90s. Gradually, the BSP led by late Kanshi Ram and regional parties swallowed its Dalit vote bank in polls after polls. Since 2024 Lok Sabha polls will be a waterloo for the Congress as it is facing existential crisis, Kharge may turn out to be its savior. The Gandhis are facing many cases in courts and with the BJP targeting the family, it is felt

that Kharge will be its best bet. In the current scenario, the Congress cannot expect to emerge as the single largest party in 2024 as was the case 20 years ago in 2004. If the Gandhis play the Dalit card, the Opposition parties may find it difficult to oppose Kharge. He may even emerge as a unifying force given the current political situation.

Salman Khurshid's surprise entry

Ever since Salman Khurshid, former External Affairs Minister, lost the last Lok Sabha polls, he was virtually in political wilderness. He had started focus-

ing on his law practice. But one fine morning he was found sitting on the high table of Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Rahul Gandhi, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and a handful of other leaders. It was the first formal meeting between the Congress and Nitish Kumar to bring about unity among all Opposition parties. But why Khurshid was called at the crucial meeting suddenly out of the blue. It transpires that Kharge had invited Khurshid to join the meeting. It is learnt that Khurshid and Nitish Kumar have cordial relations for sometime and Kharge may utilize his services in respect of Bihar. It would be interesting to mention that Nitish

a month whether the Congress is ready to work with him at the national level. In the absence of any response, he was virtually left with no option but to swim with the

AAP not averse to seat adjustment

The Aam Aadmi Party has sig-■ nalled it is not averse to seat adjustment with the Congress in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. In a major deviation from its earlier stand of having no truck with the Congress, the AAP leadership is inclined to do business in the larger interest of Opposition unity. If sources in both the parties are to be believed, the AAP may sacrifice three out of seven Lok Sabha seats in Delhi provided the Congress comes to terms with political reality in Punjab and other states. The thorny issue is Punjab where the Congress had won eight Lok Sabha seats in 2019 while the AAP could win one with the remaining four going to the BJP-SAD. The shocker came in 2022 Assembly polls when AAP decimated the Congress and SAD. The AAP wants to contest a maiority of Lok Sabha seats in Punjabnow and this may take more time to resolve.





Assam cops issue notice to IYC chief

A police team from Assam issued a notice to Srinivas at his Bangalore residence, with the order stating that failing to comply with it could lead to his arrest

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, April 23: The Assam police Sunday asked Indian Youth Congress president Srinivas B V to appear before it by May 2 for questioning in connection with allegations of harassment and gender discrimination against him by now-expelled party leader Angkita

A police team from Assam issued a notice to Srinivas at his Bengaluru residence, with the order stating that failing to comply with it could lead to his arrest. "A five-member team of Guwahati Police is in Bengaluru. The notice was pasted on the door of his residence as he was not present," Joint Commissioner Prateek Thube said over phone.

"He has been given time till May 2 to appear at Dispur police station," Thube, who is a part of the Guwahati police team in Bengaluru,

The notice said that during investigation, "reasonable grounds" Srinivas in the case and, hence, he has been asked to appear before the investigating officer, at 11 am on May 2.

A set of 10 directions was given to Srinivas for compliance during the period, including not tampering with evidence, not allowing destruction of any evidence rele

vant to investigation and cooperating with the probe. "Failure to attend/comply with the terms of this notice can render you liable for arrest under Section 41 A(3) and (4) of CrPC," it added.

Dutta, who was the Assam Youth Congress chief, had filed a case at the Dispur police station last week, claiming that Srinivas has been "harassing and torturing her for the last six months by making sexist comments, using slang words and also threatening her with dire consequences if she keeps complaining against him to the senior party office bearers"

She had earlier made similar allegations against him in a series Dutta, who was issued a show-

cause notice by the party, was expelled from the primary membership for six years on Saturday for "anti-party activities". Srinivas had issued a legal notice to Dutta within hours of her tweets, demanding an apology for her remarks. The National Commission for Women (NCW) had also taken suo motu cognisance of Dutta's allegations and written to the state police for taking necessary action.

Student injured as lover pours boiling oil on her INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Amaravati, April 23: A student of the Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University (JNTU) in Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh, was critically injured after her boyfriend allegedly poured boiling oil on the girl's hands and legs after confining her to a room in his house in Eluru district.

The shocking incident came to light after the victim escaped early Sunday and lodged a complaint with the police. She has been admitted to the government hospital

According to police, the victim is a third year engineering student. A resident of Eluru, the girl was entrapped in love by one Anudeep, a resident of Duggirala. He had promised to marry her. Five days ago, Anudeep had taken the girl to his house in Duggirala



He confined her to a room, where he was torturing her. He had threatened to kill her. The victim told police he had planned to kill her after midnight by hanging. She, however, managed to escape and reached her house. With the help of her parents, she lodged the complaint.

Police registered a case and launched a hunt for Anudeep, who was absconding. The accused is said to be addicted to marijuana and other psychotropic substances and had allegedly cheated several girls in the name of love.

international



accelerated climate action with deeper, faster emissions cuts to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius ANTONIO GUTERRES | UN

EAM MEETS GUYANESE PM

Minister of External Affairs S Jaishankar has called on **Guyanese Prime Minister Mark** Phillips and vowed that India will partner with the South American country in its developmental journey





When the political and constitutional system fails, extraconstitutional





industrialisation of India is happening fast, especially in some areas. You find Gujarat, Maharashtra and other one in southern India. especially in Tamil Nadu

RANIL WICKERMESINGHE SRI LANKA PRESIDENT





LUIZ INACIO LULA DA SILVA



BRAZILIAN PRESIDENT

SHORT **TAKES**

Israel arrests Jordanian lawmaker

Amman: Jordan's Foreign Ministry Sunday said a Jordanian lawmaker has been arrested by Israel on suspicion of smuggling weapons and gold into the occupied West Bank. The ministry's spokesman, Sinan Majali, said Jordanian officials are following the case "to find out the merits of the situation and address it as soon as possible." The lawmaker was identified as Imad Al-Adwan and said to have been arrested crossing the border into the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Israel's Foreign Ministry

Poll official assassinated

declined comment.

Bangkok: A top election official in Myanmar was fatally shot in his car in Yangon, the country's commercial capital, in the latest attack attributed to militants opposed to military rule. Sai Kyaw Thu, deputy director-general of the military-appointed Union Election Commission, was shot multiple times Saturday, according to the military's information office, media reports and a statement of responsibility from an urban guerrilla group.

60 % voter turnout in Nepal byelection

Kathmandu: Nepal witnessed around 60 per cent voter turnout in its three constituencies of Tanhun-1, Chitawan-2 and Bara-2 where by-polls were held Sunday. Journalist-turned-politician Ravi Lamichhane is contesting the election from Chitawan-2 while prominent economist Swornim Wagley and former Deputy Police Chief Ramesh Kharel are contesting from Tanhun-1 and Bara-2 constituencies respectively.

China renews weather alert

Beijing: China's meteorological authority Sunday renewed an alert for severe convection weather in parts of the country. From Sunday morning to Monday morning, thunderstorms and hail will strike parts of south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Xinhua news agency quoted the National Meteorological Centre as saying.

Suspect arrested in German gym attack

Berlin: A suspect has been held over last week's stabbing attack at a gym in the western German city of Duisburg in which four people were seriously wounded. The man, was arrested shortly after midnight, police and prosecutors said in a statement.

'Limit access to most secret US documents'



US Senator Mark Warner

REUTERS

Washington, April 23: Too many people have access to the US government's closest secrets and a central entity should oversee the classification process, the chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee said Sunday, addressing leaks of documents in an online chat group.

A US Air National Guardsman was charged April 14 with leaking classified documents online in what is believed to be the most serious US security breach since more than 700,000 documents, videos and diplomatic cables appeared on the WikiLeaks website in 2010.

Senator Mark Warner, a

"once we get to that highest level of classification, we maybe have too many folks taking a look at them, over 4 million people with clearances." The Virginia senator's powerful position gives weight to his recommendations as President Joe Biden's administration examines the handling of intelligence and looks for ways to clamp down on future leaks.

The United States has numerous intelligence gathering entities and Warner said the situation needed to be dealt with.

'We need somebody fully in charge of the whole classification process and I think for those classified documents there ought to be a smaller universe," he said.

As an example, Warner said the National Security Agency has suffered leaks in the past and internal controls limit the copying of documents.

The Pentagon has called the latest leak a "deliberate, criminal act." Warner also said that not everyone handling a document needs to see the whole document and that just seeing the header could be enough.



SHOW OF STRENGTH: Serbian army helicopters MI-8 and MI-171 perform during the military exercises at Batajnica military airport near Belgrade, Serbia

SUDAN CRISIS

Govts race to rescue retaliate against diplomats, citizens



AGENCIES

Khartoum (Sudan), April 23: officials out of Sudan Sunday and international governments raced to evacuate their diplomatic staff and citizens trapped in the capital as rival generals battled for control of Africa's third-largest country for a ninth day.

Fighting raged in Omdurman. the city across the Nile from Sudan's capital, Khartoum, residents reported. The violence came despite a declared truce that was to coincide with the three-day Muslim holiday of Eid al-Fitr.

Thick black smoke filled the sky over Khartoum's airport. The paramilitary group battling the Sudanese armed forces claimed the military unleashed airstrikes on the upscale neighbourhood of Kafouri, north of Khartoum. There was no immediate comment from the army. After a week of bloody battles that hindered rescue efforts, US special forces swiftly evacuated some 70 US embassy staffers from Khartoum to an undisclosed location in Ethiopia early Sunday.

Although American officials said it was still too dangerous to carry

US EVACUATES STAFF IN OPERATION FROM DJIBOUTI

ITS EMBASSY STAFF OUT FIERCE BATTLES HAVE CONTINUED DURING **EID HOLIDAY**

MANY TRAPPED RESIDENTS TRYING TO FLEE KHARTOUM

out a government-coordinated mass evacuation of private citizens, other countries scrambled to evacuate their citizens and diplomats. France, Greece and other European countries said Sunday they were organizing evacuations for embassy employees and nationals, along with some citizens of allied countries. French Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Anne-Claire Legendre said France was undertaking the operation with the help

of European partners. The Greek foreign minister said the country had dispatched aircraft and special forces to its ally, Egypt, in preparation for an evacuation of 120 Greek and Cypriot nationals from Khartoum. Most of them have sought shelter in recent days at a Greek Orthodox cathedral in the capital, Nikos

The Netherlands sent two air force Hercules C-130 planes and an Airbus A330 to Jordan ahead of a possible rescue mission. "We deeply sympathise with the Dutch in Sudan and will make every effort to evacuate people where and when possible," said Defence Minister Kajsa Ollongren.

Italy has dispatched military jets to the Gulf of Aden nation of Djibouti to prepare for the evacuation of 140 Italian nationals in Sudan, many of whom have already taken refuge in the embassy. Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani said the ministry's crisis unit was in touch with stranded citizens.

Overland travel across areas contested by the warring parties has proven dangerous. Khartoum is some some 840 kilometres (520 miles) from Port Sudan on the Red Sea.

But some countries have pressed ahead with the journey. Saudi Arabia Saturday said the kingdom successfully evacuated 157 people, including 91 Saudi nationals and citizens of other countries.

Saudi state TV released footage of a large convoy of Saudis and other foreign nationals travelling by car and bus from Khartoum to Port Sudan, where a navy ship then ferried the evacuees across the Red Sea to the Saudi port of Jeddah.

The power struggle between the Sudanese military, led by Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan, and the Rapid Support Forces, led by Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo, has dealt a harsh blow to Sudan's heady hopes for a democratic transition.

More than 400 people, including 264 civilians, have been killed and more than 3,500 have been wounded in the fighting.

Ukrainian forces Russia's aggression



Kviv. April 23: Ukrainian military forces have successfully established positions on the eastern side of the Dnieper River, according to a new analysis, giving rise to speculation Sunday that the advances could be an early sign of Kyiv's long-awaited spring counteroffensive.

The Institute for the Study War, a Washington-based think tank, reported late Saturday that geolocated footage from pro-Kremlin military bloggers indicated that Ukrainian troops had established a foothold near the town of Oleshky, along with "stable supply lines" to their positions.

Analysts widely believe that if Ukraine goes ahead with a spring counteroffensive, a major goal would be to break through the land corridor between Russia and the annexed Crimean Peninsula, which would necessitate crossing the Dnieper

River in the country's south. Responding to Ukrainian media reports proclaiming that the establishment of such positions indicated the counteroffensive had begun, Natalia Humeniuk, the spokeswoman for Ukraine's Operational Command South, called for patience. While neither confirming nor denying the ISW report, she said only that details of military operations in the Dnieper delta couldn't be disclosed for operational and security reasons. Speaking on Ukrainian television, Humeniuk added that it was "very difficult work" when "it's necessary to overcome an obstacle such as the Dnieper, when the front line passes through a wide and powerful river."

After more than a year since the Russian invasion, recent fighting has become a war of attrition, with neither side able to gain momentum. But Ukraine has recently received sophisticated weapons from its Western allies, and new troops freshly trained in the West, giving rise to growing anticipation of a counteroffensive.

The fiercest battles have been in the eastern Donetsk region, where Russia is struggling to encircle the city of Bakhmut in the face of dogged Ukrainian defense.

On Sunday, Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov claimed Moscow's forces had captured two more neighborhoods in the western part of Bakhmut, without providing further details or clarifying what areas were still in Ukrainian hands.

In the south, the Dnieper has for months marked the contact line in the Kherson region, where its namesake capital is regularly pummeled by shelling from Russian forces stationed across the river. In addition to having established a foothold near the town of Oleshky, across the Dnieper delta from Kherson, ISW said that Ukrainian troops were also approaching the nearby village of Dachi, citing data from Russian military bloggers.

Imran's party to **launch election** campaign today

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, April 23: Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party on Sunday announced that it will formally launch its election campaign in Punjab Monday though there is no clarity on the date of the polls in the politically crucial province.

'Tehreek-e-Insaf will officially launch its election campaign tomorrow. They (Pakistan Democratic Movement) may not be ready but we are ready," PTI Secretary General Asad Umar tweeted. The Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) is a coalition of political parties headed by the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) currently ruling the country.

Interestingly, PTI's announcement of launching the election campaign comes despite uncertainty surrounding the elections in Punjab, the most populous province which also sends nearly 150 lawmakers to the National Assembly. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) is waiting for funds from the federal government to conduct the elections. The Defence Ministry has informed the ECP that the Pakistan Army will not be

available for providing security. Parliament and the judiciary have also locked horns over the holding of elections in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces as the cash-strapped government has refused to authorise the funds to meet the expenditures amidst the economic crisis facing the country

The Supreme Court has directed the federal government to release Rs 21 billion in funds for the ECP by April 10 and provide security for the elections.



How King Charles's coronation dodged a Kohinoor debate

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, April 23: Buckingham Palace would have been conscious about the potential for controversy around the colonial era Kohinoor diamond claimed by India and averted it becoming a side story of King Charles III and Queen Camilla's Coronation ceremony next month, a royal expert has said.

Camilla Tominey is the Associate Editor of 'The Daily Telegraph' and has an inside track to the British royal family as the newspaper's royal expert.

In an interview with PTI, she reflected upon the significance of Camilla choosing to forgo the traditional crown used for the monarch's partner as the "consort crown" due to it being embedded

with the Kohinoor - also known as Koh-i-Noor. Among the crown jewels unveiled by the palace for the Coronation ceremony on May 6, it was confirmed that Queen Mary's Crown has been chosen by Camilla.

"I think the palace were concame into Queen scious about the Victoria's possession Koh-i-Noor perfrom the treasury of haps being controversial and Maharaja Ranjit Singh a few therefore have years before she was to be decided that they don't want crowned empress of India there to be a side in the wake of the story about the provenance of these

diamonds," said Tominey. "Basically, [the palace have] decided to do the safe and sensible

Kohinoor

thing, to not have a separate debate about the jewels in the crown,' noted Tominey. 1857 Revolt

Earlier this month, the palace said that minor changes and additions to Queen Mary's Crown are being undertaken, such as the inclusion of the Cullinan III, IV and V diamonds which were part of Queen Elizabeth II's personal jewellery collection for many years. The design has been inspired by Queen Alexandra's Crown of 1902 – which was originally encrusted with the Kohinoor, which now sits in the crown of the Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, the mother of Queen Elizabeth II, since 1937

Last month, Historic Royal Palaces, the charity that manages Britain's palaces, said that the infamous diamond will instead be part of a new Jewel House exhibition at the Tower of London classed as a "symbol of conquest" for the first time. According to its assessment, the diamond probably originated from the Golconda mines in southern India and weighs 105.6 carats. It was once much larger but was re-cut in 1852 to improve its brilliance and conform to

contemporary European tastes. Kohinoor, which means mountain of light in Persian, came into Queen Victoria's possession from the treasury of Maharaja Ranjit Singh a few years before she was to be crowned empress of India in the wake of the 1857 Revolt and has played a starring role in British coronations of the past until its conspicuous absence in next month's ceremony.

Camilla's choice of Queen Mary's Crown also marks the first instance in modern times of an existing crown being used for the Coronation of the monarch's consort, with all past crowns being specially made for a new consort. It is among a series of departures from tradition made by Charles, 74, and Camilla, 75, in an attempt to strike a more sustainable tone that resonates with the times and also incorporate modern elements into the ceremony.

business



Any kind of regulation on crypto assets would require every nation's consent; otherwise it would not be effective NIRMALA SITHARAMAN UNION MINISTER

CENTRE TO RELEASE NEW ₹100 COIN

The government will be issuing a special commemorative ₹100 coin to mark the completion of 100 episodes of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's radio show Mann ki Baat April 30. The coin is to weigh 35 grams and is to be 50% silver. The rest of its composition will include copper (40%), Nickel (5%), and Zinc (5%)





perspective for products in the market has improved a little bit but challenges still

persist and a good monsoon can help see a better second half of the year in smaller towns and rural areas

VINEET AGRAWAL | CEO, WIPRO CONSUMER CARE AND LIGHTING

For the industry, in 2018 around 18 per cent of the cars sold in India were above ₹10 lakh, Last vear it was at around 40 per cent and this year in first

about 43 to 45 per cent ASHISH GUPTA DIRECTOR, VOLKSWAGEN PASSENGER CARS INDIA

guarter it has already moved to

Our focus firmly remains on multipurpose vehicles and sports utility vehicles. We do not have any plans to



introduce sedans in the market HARDEEP SINGH BRAR | HEAD (SALES AND MARKETING), KIA INDIA

SHORT **TAKES**

Crude steel output grows 4% in FY23

New Delhi: India's crude steel production rose by 4.18 per cent to 125.32 million tonne (MT) in 2022-23, according to research firm SteelMint. In the preceding 2021-22 fiscal, the country produced 120.29 MT of steel, the research firm stated. The production of finished steel was 121.29 MT, up 6.77 per cent from 113.60 MT a year ago. Domestic consumption of steel rose by 12.69 per cent to 119.17 MT against 105.75 MT in 2021-22. A SteelMint analyst attributed increasing infrastructure activities to higher production and consumption of steel in India. Steel exports fell by 50 per cent to 6.72 MT from 13.49 MT a year ago. Imports surged about 29 per cent to 6.02 MT in FY23 from 4.67 MT in 2021-22. The production of pig iron was at 5.85 MT in FY23, down 6.53 per cent from 6.26 MT in the preceding year.

Lenders of RCap to meet today

New Delhi: Ahead of the second round of auction scheduled April 26, lenders of debt-ridden Reliance Capital (RCap) will meet Monday to resolve concerns raised by bidders, sources said. Both the potential bidders, Torrent Investment and IndusInd International Holdings Ltd (IIHL) of Hinduja Group, have expressed multiple reservations on the proposed auction and its terms and conditions. According to sources, both the bidders have made it clear to the Committee of Creditors (CoC) that unless the issues raised by them are duly resolved to their complete satisfaction, they are unlikely to participate in the second round of

India jumps 6 spots on WB's LPI

The report quotes modernisation and digitalisation as a reason for emerging economies, like India, to leapfrog advanced countries

New Delhi, April 23: India has climbed six places on the World Bank's Logistic Performance Index (LPI) 2023, now ranking 38th in the 139 countries index, as a result of significant investments in both soft and hard infrastructure as well as technology.

Prime Minister Narendra Modiled government had announced PM Gati Shakti initiative, a National Master Plan for multimodal connectivity in October 2021 to reduce logistics cost and boost the economy by 2024-25.

In 2022, the prime minister had launched the National Logistics Policy (NLP) to ensure quick lastmile delivery, end transport-related challenges, save time and money of the manufacturing sector and ensure desired speed in the logistics sector.

These policy interventions are fructifying, which can be seen in India's jump in LPI and its other parameters. According to the report, India's rank moved up five places in infrastructure score from 52nd in 2018 to 47th in 2023. It climbed to 22nd spot for international shipments in 2023 from 44th in 2018 and moved four places up to 48th in logistics competence and equality.

In timelines, India witnessed a 17-place jump in rankings, whereas it moved up three places in rank in tracking and tracing to 38th.

The report said: "Since 2015, Government of India has invested



in trade-related soft and hard infrastructure connecting port gateways on both coasts to the economic poles in the hinterland."

Technology has been a critical component of this effort, with implementation under a publicprivate partnership of a supply chain visibility platform, which contributed to remarkable reductions of delays.

NICDC Logistics Data Services Limited applies radio frequency identification tags to containers and offers consignees end-toend tracking of their supply chain, it added. According to the report, the av-

erage dwell time for containers between May and October 2022 was three days for India and Singapore, much better than some of the in-

time for the US was seven days and for Germany it was 10 days.

The report said: "The emerging economies with the shortest delays have gone beyond these packages and have implemented bold tracking and tracing solutions. India's very low dwell time (2.6 days) is one example"

Further the report said: "With the introduction of cargo tracking, dwell time in the eastern port of Visakhapatnam fell from 32.4 days in 2015 to 5.3 days in 2019."

Dwell time is how long a vessel spends at a specific port or terminal. It may also refer to the amount of time that a container or cargo spends at a port or terminal before being loaded onto a vessel or after being unloaded from a vessel. Shipping container vessels operate on schedules and delays in any

ndia was ranked 44th on the index in 2018 and has now climbed to 38th in the 2023 listing

ndia's performance has drastically improved from 2014, when it was ranked 54th on the LPI

particular port are felt across the

The shorter the dwell time, the lower the vessel and marine-terminal operating costs. The LPI covers 139 countries, measures the ease of establishing reliable supply chain connections and the structural factors that make it possible, such as the quality of logistics services, trade and transport-related infrastructure, and border controls.

"End-to-end supply chain digitalisation, especially in emerging economies, is allowing countries to shorten port delays by up to 70 per cent compared to those in developed countries. Moreover, demand for green logistics is rising, with 75 per cent of shippers looking for environment-friendly options when exporting to high-income countries," the report said.

'While most time is spent in shipping, the biggest delays occur at seaports, airports, and multimodal facilities. Policies targeting these facilities can help improve reliability," said Christina Wiederer, senior economist, the World Bank group's macroeconomics, trade & investment global practice and the report's co-author.

PUSH TO GST-REGISTERED TRADERS

Retail trade policy, accident insurance scheme on cards

■ India is the world's fifth-largest global destination in the retail space

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 23: The government is expected to announce a national retail trade policy and an accident insurance scheme soon with a view to supporting GSTregistered domestic traders, an official said.

The official said the proposed

policy would help provide better infrastructure and more credit to the traders. It may include provisions related to ensuring easy and quick access to affordable credit, facilitating modernization and digitisation of retail trade; modern infrastructural support for subjects like distribution chain; promotion of skill development and improving labour productivity, and providing an effective consultative and grievance redressal mechanism.

The commerce and industry ministry along with the department of financial services is also working on framing an insurance scheme for all the GST-registered retail traders. "The government is trying to do policy changes not only in e-commerce but is also bringing a national retail trade policy for physical traders which will be introducing ease of doing business, providing better infra-



The retail trade policy will certainly help the sector widen their business as it will have definite parameters and fundamentals within which the retail trade would be conducted

PRAVEEN KHANDELWAL | SECRETARY GENERAL, CAIT

structural facilities, providing more credit and all sorts of benefits to traders," the official added.

Under the proposed policy, a single window clearance mechanism for traders may be developed, besides a centralised and computerized inspection management system.

Retail trade is the only vertical of the economy which does not have a policy so far, Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) Secretary General Prayeen Khandelwal said. "Likewise, awarding an insurance scheme to traders will recognise their magnificent contribution to the national ex-

Reliance Retail inks JV for toy manufacturing

Indian toy market was estimated to be around \$1 billion in 2019-20 and is expected to double to \$2 billion by 2024-25

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 23: Reliance Retail, the country's leading retailer which owns iconic British tov brand Hamleys and home-grown tov brand Rowan, has entered into a joint venture with a Harvanabased firm for local manufacturing to meet the growing demand.

The company has entered into a joint venture with Sonipat, Haryana-based Circle E Retail to vertically integrate its toy business.

"We also had a JV with Circle E retail for toy manufacturing for vertical integration for our toys retailing business," said Reliance Retail CFO Dinesh Taluja during an earnings call last week. The company is now working

on a strategy of integrating processes from design to shelf, according to industry sources.

Under this, Reliance Retail would have control over the entire aspects of the toy ecosystem, right from designing and manufacturing to retailing of the product. This will also help Reliance reduce dependency on third-party manufacturers in phases.

This new venture will cater for both the toys brands - Hamleys and Rowan, which Reliance Retail



owns, the sources added. Besides, Reliance Retail is a major player in the B2B toy segment, where it operates through Rowan.

Circle E Retail has a specialisation in toy manufacturing. It has a modern manufacturing unit in Haryana and has a licence to manufacture and distribute a wide range of toys.

Last year, Reliance Retail expanded its brand Rowan from the B2B wholesale to the normal retail market also. The idea was to tap the fast-growing affordable branded toy market with smaller shop floors.

Reliance Retail acquired Hamleys, the world's oldest toy retailer, in 2019. This was the first acquisition of a global retail brand by Reliance Retail.

Hamleys currently has a global footprint in over 15 countries. In India, Hamleys is the largest chain of toy stores operating 100+ stores in 36 cities. In June 2022, Reliance Brands Ltd (RBL), a unit of RRVL, announced a joint venture with Italian company Plastic Legno SPA and acquired a 40 per cent stake in the latter's toy manufacturing busi-

8 of top 10 firms lose ₹1.17L-cr in market valuation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 23: Eight of the 10 most valued firms faced a combined erosion of ₹1.17.493.78 crore in market valuation in an overall weak trend in equities last week, with Infosys taking the biggest hit.

Reliance Industries, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank were among the eight companies that suffered a decline in their valuation. ITC and State Bank of India were the only gainers.

Last week, the 30-share BSE Sensex fell by 775.94 points or 1.28

The market valuation of Infosys plummeted by ₹66,854.05 crore to ₹5,09,215 crore. Infosys Ltd April 13 reported lower-thanexpected growth in the fourth quarter net profit and gave a weak 4-7 per cent revenue growth guidance for FY24 amid tightening of IT budgets by clients following turmoil in the US banking sector

HDFC Bank's valuation tumbled ₹10,880.5 crore to ₹9,33,937.35 crore. ICICI Bank lost ₹10,462.77 crore from its valuation which stood at ₹6.17.477.46 crore and the market capitalisation (mcap) of TCS tanked ₹10,318.52 crore to ₹11,56,863.98 crore.

Reliance Industries remained the most valued firm, followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Hindustan Unilever, Infosys, ITC, HDFC, State Bank of India and

FM WARNS OF ACTION AGAINST FINFLUENCERS

FinMin working with MeitY, RBI to clamp down on ponzi apps

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 23: Union Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Sunday said the finance ministry is working with MeitY and RBI to clamp down on ponzi apps to prevent them from taking away hard earned money of gullible investors.

Cautioning investors against ponzi apps, Sitharaman said investors should do their due diligence and should not be lured by claims of lucrative returns made

"There are also apps which are coming out and reaching out to people saving we can do this, we can do that. Your money will fetch you this much. Many of them are ponzi, the apps on which we are working with the Ministry concerned, the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) and with the Reserve Bank and clamping down on them like never before, so that we don't get those ponzi apps, taking away hard earned money," she said.

Speaking at the Thinkers Forum at Tumakuru (Karnataka), she said, social influencers and financial influencers (finfluencers) are all out there but a strong sense of caution is reguired in each one of us to make sure we do double checking, counter checking, don't go as a flock into something and therefore protect hard-earned money.



Asked about regulating social influencers and financial influencers, she said, "I'm not having any proposal before me for regulating them at this stage.

Asserting that investors should be cautious of influencers, she said if there are three or four people giving us very objective good advice; there may be seven others out of 10 who are probably driven by some other considerations.

In 2019, the government enacted a law called the Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Act, 2019, which looks to prevent unregulated entities from collecting deposits and duping the poor and gullible of their hard earned savings.

As per the Act, any deposit taker who solicits deposit in contravention of Section 3, shall be punishable with imprisonment of not less than one year and up to five years.

As per the law the first claim on the recovered money will be of depositors and the proposed legislation also has some exclusion including money collected by real estate firms and from friends and relatives.

It seeks to help tackle the menace of illicit deposit-taking activities in the country, which at present are exploiting regulatory gaps and lack of strict administrative measures to dupe poor and gullible people of their hard-earned money, according to the government.

Twitter reinstates blue tick on high-profile accounts

WHILE THERE IS NO OFFICIAL WORD FROM TWITTER ON THE REINSTATED BLUE TICKS. THE COMPANY IS REPORTEDLY RESTORING THE VERIFIED STATUS FOR ACCOUNTS WITH HIGH FOLLOWER COUNT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 23: In a surprising turn of events, Twitter has restored verification badges on several high-profile celebrity accounts with millions of followers, just days after the microblogging platform culled the legacy blue checkmarks for non-paying users.

The move assumes significance as Indian celebrities and top politicians from Shah Rukh Khan and Salman Khan to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi lost verified blue ticks on their Twitter accounts this week after Elon Musk-led microblogging site started removing checkmark icons from accounts that did not pay a subscription fee.

The coveted blue ticks have now made a surprising comeback on accounts of these celebrities. Top cricketers such as Sachin Tendulkar and Virat Kohli who lost the blue tick mark on their Twitter handles, have also got them back. It was not immediately clear whether or not these accounts have paid for the verification.

In fact, accounts of some global celebrities who are no more, like Chadwick Boseman, Kobe Bryant and Michael Jackson, too have got the blue tick back

Earlier this week, Twitter began



removing the check mark, which had for years meant that Twitter had verified the identity of the user behind an account, from the

profiles of thousands of celebrities, politicians and journalists. This led some of the biggest and most popular names losing the blue tick

mark on their Twitter handles. However, a few high-profile personalities including American author Stephen King, US professional basketball player LeBron James and legendary actor William Shatner, ended up retaining their blue tick as Musk announced he will personally pay for these accounts.

Twitter CEO Elon Musk had announced that those who do not pay for the service would have their blue tick disappeared from April 20. Twitter Blue was launched in India February 8 and is available on a monthly subscription fee of ₹650 on the web, and ₹900 on mobile devices.

REASONABLE VALUATION OF STOCKS

FPIs invest ₹8,643cr in April

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 23: Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have infused ₹8,643 crore in the Indian equity markets so far this month on the reasonable valuation of

stocks, according to analysts. FPIs infused a net sum of ₹7,936 crore in equities in March mainly driven by bulk investment in the Adani Group companies by the

US-based GQG Partners. FPIs started the current financial year on a positive note and invested ₹8,643 crore in Indian eq-

uities from April 3, data showed. Apart from equities, FPIs have invested ₹778 crore in the debt market during the same period.



In terms of sectors, FPIs heavily bought financial stocks for ₹4,410 crore during the fortnight that ended April 15. Overall, FPIs had pulled out a net sum of ₹37,631 crore from Indian equities in 2022-23 on aggressive rate hikes by central banks globally and a record ₹1.4 lakh crore in 2021-22. Before these outflows, FPIs invested a record ₹2.7 lakhcrore in equities in 2020-21 and ₹6,152 crore in 2019-20.

Well played innings

THE ICONIC INDIAN **BATTER COMPLETES LIFE'S HALF CENTURY MONDAY AND BRINGS BACK INDELIBLE MEMORIES OF HIS FEATS ON THE CRICKET FIELD**

SAKYASEN MITTRA

hen he started his international career in November 1989 against Pakistan in Pakistan in 1989, no one doubted his talent. However, there were many who doubted his longevity, especially after that bloodied nose from a Wagar Younis delivery in Sialkot, save one man... one of the gatekeepers at Manchester. After Sachin Tendulkar got his first international hundred (119 to be precise on August 14, 1990) and helped India save the game against England, the veteran guardian of the gate (no one remembers his name, but his comment) had said, "Believe you me, I have seen (Sir) Donald Bradman... this kid will be better than Bradman."

Since then calamities have hit India, riots have broken across the country, religious strifes have rocked India, governments have come and gone, but even then one name has always brought solace to the country... Sachin Tendulkar. As he completes his half century in life Monday, one can just say THANK YOU for giving the country innumerable moments of joy and ecstacy. Never had anyone, not even the hockey greats had brought India under one platform, the way Tendulkar did. The nation prayed for him and with him everytime he hit the 22 yards with his ever-broadening willow.

West Indian legend Vivian Richards was once asked as to whether Tendulkar was a greater batsman than him. Interestingly Viv had a very funny answer to the question. "You know there are two names synonymous with cricket. We often say 'let's play cricket'. Well vou can always say instead of

the word 'cricket', 'let's play 'Gary' (Sir Garfield Sobers) or 'let's play 'Sachin'. They have made cricket the hearthrob of millions, so I should not be compared to someone like an iconic Tendulkar. He has

redefined the game," Richards had told the journalist. Coming from a man like Richards the com-

ends, the debate as to who should be considered the greatest batter in the last 50-60 years.

Twenty four years, 200 Tests, 463 ODIs, one T20 International and more than 34,000 thousand runs don't necessarily describe 'Sach' as many people call him. What makes him a standout among others is to face the challenges and evolve as a player during his international tenure. Here was a man who transformed his game as per the needs of the hour, a man who set benchmarks for others to follow and one who overcame everything including career-threatening injuries. Nothing, and literally nothing could disturb his focus from the game. A couple of years back, Mahendra

Singh Dhoni was asked as to who were the most hard-working cricketers he had seen in his career. It did not take MSD, one second to answer. "In my career, I would sav that Sachin was the most hardworking I have seen, close behind is Virat (Kohli)," Dhoni had stated. "Just dump all those therories like 'Sachin is god-gifted... etc'. What he has become is due to his sheer hard work... a player who had great cricketing ethics and one who made positive use of every practice session, who always had something to learn from every training period." For those who have Sachin

from close quarters, there couldn't

have anything closer to the truth. Coming back to the man him-

self, Tendulkar hated to lose... be it on the cricket arena, badminton or squash courts and table tennis board. And mind you he could hold his own against the top badminton or table tennis players of India, such was his game sense. There have been many occasions, when Tendulkar has vented out his frustrations at the way bowlers have let the team down, but never in public. He has lamented the fact that he never had the pace attack that a Dhoni or a Sourav Ganguly had during his tenure as Indian captains. More than anything else, he has never allowed the pressure of 100 million Indians who always wanted a century from him whenever he took guard, get to him.

It probably would take a whole newspaper to describe the quintessential humble man that Tendulkar is. Despite his cricket-god stature. and in India that can be pretty unnerving, 'Sach' has always been very down to earth and his humbleness somewhat symbolises his greatness. However, behind all that soft and demure exterior, Tendulkar had a 'killer'

'stubborn' attitude whenever he walked on to the field. His steely determination can just be summed up by the century in the 1999 World Cup against Zimbabwe only a few days after his father's demise. There couldn't have been a more poigant moment in the annals of the game in the 20th century when Tendulkar looked heavenwards after reaching the three-figure mark

Till today, this very moment, Tendulkar has remained a servant of the game. "It gave me the opportunity to represent the country for 24 years. What more can I want from the game," Tendulkar told Ravi Shastri during a recent interview. "I couldn't have asked for anything more. It is the game that has given me everything, so I am forever indebted to the game," he added.

As he reaches the half century milestone in life, one can just wonder at his longevity and incredible feats A champion in the true sense of the word.

Sachin

- People throw stones at you, don't get bothered, just convert them to milestones
- It is important to be humble, if you remain humble, people will give you love and respect even after you have finished with the game
- Don't stop chasing your dreams, because dreams do come true
- The key to handling pressure situations is to keep ourself steady, follow your instincts and think clearly.

I fail sometimes, I succeed sometimes, so that's fair enough. It's a package deal. It comes with that package: failures and success

I was part of a band of 11 fortunate men who had been given

duty of representing close to a billion Indians. It was an honour every aspiring cricketer lives for, to play for his country against the best of world

Quotes

I hate losing and cricket being my first love, once I enter the ground, it's a different zone

altogether and that hunger for

winning is always there

■ I feel it is the conscious mind that messes things up. The conscious mind is constantly telling you, this might happen, even before it has happened. So always be prepared for the unexpected





I've said forever, Sachin's technically the best batter that I've ever seen, and played with or against. Whatever plan that we came up with as a bowling group, he found a way to combat it, whether it was in India or Australia. So comparisons with Virat

Kohli can wait RICKY PONTING



he is

marvellous. I think he

will fit in whatever

category of cricket

or will be played,

from the first ball

that has ever been

bowled to the last ball

that's going to be. He

can play in any era and

at any level. I would say

that has been played

SIR VIVIAN RICHARDS

The only batsman I would love to see by paying for the tickets and sitting in the stand just to watch him is none other than Sachin Tendulkar. He has always been my inspiration and I wanted to emulate him

BRIAN LARA





Cutting the birthday cake during MI's game Saturday



Receiving the Bharat Ratna from President Pranab Mukherjee

STAT FACTS

Batting

R-15,921 100s-51 Avg-53.80 **ODIs-463** R-18,426 100s-49 50s-96 H-200 Avg-44.80

Tendulkar has played only 1 T20I game for India

Bowling

Ecn-3.52 **ODIs-463** Ecn-5.10

Tendulkar is the only player in the world to have scored more

Archers bag recurve silver



SILVER LINING: The Indian archers are all smiles as they pose with their silver medals in Antayla

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Antayla, April 23: The Indian men's recurve team clinched a silver medal after losing to China by the thinnest of margins in a shootoff at the Archery World Cup Stage 1 here Sunday. In pursuit of their first World Cup gold medal since 2010, the men's recurve team, comprising Tarundeep Rai, Atanu Das and Dhiraj Bommadevara, bounced back from 0-4 deficit to level the scores and force a shoot-off. But the Indian trio went down 4-5 (54-55, 50-56, 59-58, 56-55, 28-28) against the Chinese team of Li Zhongyuan, Qi Xiangshuo and Wei Shahoxu. In the shoot-off both teams had 28 points each, but the Chinese team were declared the winner for hitting a higher number of 10s.

Dhiraj then went on to grab a second medal in his World Cup debut when the 20-year-old Army man defeated Ilfat Abdullin of Kazakhstan 7-3 (28-28, 29-26, 28-29, 29-27, 29-27) to bag the bronze in individual recurve section.

Dhiraj would regret missing out on a silver as earlier in the day, he squandered a 4-0 lead against Dan Olaru of Moldova to go down 6-4 (27-26, 28-27, 28-29, 26-28, 28-30) in the semifinal.

Indian archers thus ended their campaign with two gold, one silver and one bronze medal from the event.

India had a slow start and China took the first set by a slender one-point margin. It was only in the third set the team bucked up to drill in a series of five 10s, including three Xs. China then cracked under pressure in the fourth set which India won by a one-point margin.

It was so near yet so far for the Indians as a gold medal continued to elude the Olympic recurve archers for another time. In 2014, India came close to winning the gold twice in Stage 2 at Medellin and Stage 4 at Wroclaw, but on both occasions they

ended up losing in the final. 'We were distinctly unlucky today," Rai said after the final. "We did not start well and that cost us the gold medal. However, we are happy with our overall show.'

Bangalore win battle of Royals

MAXWELL, DU PLESSIS LEAD THE CHARGE WITH BRILLIANT KNOCKS

Bangalore, April 23: A late charge

AGENCIES

led by a cameo from Dhruv Jurel (34 n o, 16b, 2x4, 2x6) was not enough for Rajasthan Royals (RR) as a century stand between captain Faf du Plessis (62, 39b, 8x4, 2x6) and Glenn Maxwell (77, 44b, 6x4, 4x6) set up a thrilling seven-run win for Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) in their IPL match here Sunday.

Invited to bat, Maxwell and Du Plessis put on 127 runs for the third wicket in 66 deliveries to power RCB to 189 for nine in 20 overs.

Devdutt Padikkal (52, 34b, 7x4, 1x6)) struck his maiden fifty of the season and Yashasvi Jaiswal (47, 37b, 5x4, 2x6) put on 98 runs for the second wicket but RR were always struggling to maintain the required run rate. In the last five overs RR scored 61 runs riding on Jurel's knock, but that did not prove to be enough. In the end they finished

on 182 for six in 20 overs. The Royals needed 20 runs off the final over bowled by Harshal Patel but could score only 12. RR thus suffered their third defeat in seven matches but remained at the top of the points table due to a superior net run rate (0.844).

Harshal (3/32) was the pick of the RCB bowlers while David Willey (1/26) and and Mohammed Siraj (1/39) also played their parts. Siraj in fact sent back dangerman Jos Buttler for a duck to put RCB in the driving seat. The second wicket partnership was broken by Willey who had Padikkal caught by Virat



Glenn Maxwell plays a falling reverse sweep during his belligerent knock

Kohli. It was Kohli's 100th catch in IPL. Only two players, Suresh Raina (109 catches in 205 matches) and Kieron Pollard (103 catches in 189 matches) have taken more catches than Kohli in IPL history.

Earlier, Du Plessis and Maxwell threatened to take RCB to a massive total, but RR fought back well in the death overs. This was Du Plesis' fifth half century in the tournament while Maxwell got his third. Both of them played belligerant knocks to take the game away

Brief scores: RCB 189 for 9 (Glenn Maxwell 77, Faf du Plessis 62: Trent Boult 2/41) beat **RR182** for 6 (Devdutt Padikkal 52, Harshal Patel 3/32) by seven runs.

Kings drub Knights

Kolkata: MS Dhoni, probably playing his last game at the iconic Eden Gardens, made it a memorable outing as CSK drubbed hosts KKR by 49 runs here Sunday. After being put in, CSK scored 235 for the loss four wickets riding on half centuries by Ajinkya Rahane (71 n o), Devon Conway (56) and Shivam Dube (50). In reply KKR could manage only manage 186 for 8 to go down by 49 runs. Jason Roy (61) and Rinku Singh (53 n o) were the two batters only to offer some resistance for the hosts.

action against WFI chief Grapplers want probe

Wrestlers demand prompt

report to be made public

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 23: India's top wrestlers, including Bajrang Punia and Vinesh Phogat, returned to protest site Jantar Mantar here Sunday and demanded that the government makes public the findings of the oversight panel that investigated into sexual harassment allegations against WFI chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh.

The wrestlers, surrounded by a huge posse of police personnel, also demanded that an FIR be lodged against the WFI boss, who has denied the allegations that first surfaced in January this year when grapplers had staged a 'sitin' protest and demanded that federation be disbanded.

The six-member oversight panel, headed by legendary boxer MS Mary Kom, had submitted its report in the first week of April but the government has not yet made it public. "How long is it going to take for the (government) committee to submit its report. It's already been three months and we are still waiting to hear from them. Will the report come out after the girls, who have filed complaints, die?," questioned Vinesh, a World

Championship medallist. "We are tired of asking the government to release the findings. We have filed a complaint at a police



(From left): Bajrang Punia, Vinesh Phogat and Sakshi Malik speak to the media Sunday in New Delhi ртгрното

station in Connaught Place and want an FIR to be filed against Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh (former WFI president). We have nothing to do with the WFI election process. We are more concerned about our careers. The (Paris) Olympics are upon us and we want to begin preparations in right earnest," she added.

Singh, who has completed 12 years as WFI president, has confirmed that he will not contest for the top post in the WFI elections May 7.

However, multiple sources have confirmed that the wrestlers couldn't prove the sexual harassment charges against the WFI chief.

"We will not budge from Jantar Mantar," said Rio Olympic bronze medallist Sakshi Malik. "This fight will not stop. The girls have appeared before the committee, but the report hasn't come. The federation is running as before, organising (nationals in their region. So what has changed?" she asked.

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