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योजनाओं के गारंटी कार्ड ज़रूर लेकर जाएं।



FREDDIE'S BELONGINGS TO BE AUCTIONED OFF

More than 1,500 personal items, including rare song lyrics and other exquisite belongings of Queen frontman Freddie Mercury, are to be auctioned off. The *Bohemian Rhapsody* singer built up a collection of flamboyant stage costumes, furniture and artwork throughout his remarkable life, reports *mirror.co.uk*.

KIM'S LOOK-ALIKE MODEL CHRISTINA DIES AT 34

Christina Ashten Gourkani, a Kim Kardashian look-alike and OnlyFans model has died after suffering a cardiac arrest. Her family confirmed the passing of the 34-year-old model, who promoted herself as a Kim Kardashian look-alike, April 25, reports *aceshowbiz.com*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You may get all nostalgic and wistful today, predicts Ganesh. You will go out of your way to improve your relationships. To you, your commitment is an investment for the future. The result is loving life-long bonds.

TAURUS
Financial gains are on the cards today, predicts Ganesh. Happiness will fly in as you receive some good news from an overseas friend. If you have feelings that you haven't expressed to someone you dearly love, today is a good day to go ahead and let them know.

GEMINI
Some of your personal belongings are very dear to you. You may have to grudgingly share them with someone else. A mild pang of jealousy may kick in. But, you are merely being protective of something very personal, so there is nothing wrong with that, says Ganesh.

CANCER
You will be in high spirits today, foretells Ganesh. It is a favourable day to engage in household activities, like gardening, cooking or even washing laundry. In the evening, work will be eclipsed by the pleasures of love.

LEO
Time is one thing that you have in short change today, says Ganesh. There is every possibility that you shall remain extremely busy. The tasks may be small — like writing a letter to revive old contacts — but it is important that you do them. Chances are that you may also end up giving a few interviews over the phone.

VIRGO
Family matters will matter today. They hold more weight in your thoughts than everything else, says Ganesh. Business will be good today. Spend the evening relaxing and chilling out. On the cards is a visit to a place of worship.

LIBRA
Your concern for your family surmounts all else, that much Ganesh knows. Today, you will fulfil your filial duties in all that you undertake. As Ganesh rightly points out: All good things begin at home, including your fortune and good luck.

SCORPIO
A healthy and hectic day is in store for you today. You are likely to finish your pending tasks with new zeal. But the chaotic day will blossom into a fabulous evening when you hang out with your sweetheart, says Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
Chances of you hitting a roadblock today are high. But remember the saying, "When the going gets tough, the tough get going." So don't succumb to pressure, advises Ganesh, but rise up to the occasion and show who's the boss.

CAPRICORN
The achievements of the day may make you feel like you were born to succeed in life. Yes, you will be successful in whatever you do today, even if you don't try too hard for it, says Ganesh. But it's important that you at least take an initiative and not expect rewards to come for no reason. Make the most of the day for fortune may not be as favourable tomorrow. Your friends and those you socialise with will praise you for your sterling quality and powerful personality.

AQUARIUS
You will prove yourself today by staying ahead of your rivals in all ways. You will conquer your frustrations, and will soon be raring to go. Your pleasing demeanour endears you to others and you win admiration from all quarters, says Ganesh.

PISCES
You probably jumped out of bed this morning itching to talk to someone. And why not, since all your latent power of expression will spring out like a jack-in-the-box today. The pearls of wisdom you shower on people who are down-in-the-dumps today will make them feel good about their bluesy, taciturn selves, says Ganesh.



Priyanka: An actor's job is always unstable

Mumbai: Global star Priyanka Chopra has come a long way in her acting career in the span of two decades. Not only has she been a part of numerous Hindi and South Indian blockbusters, she has also carved a niche for herself in the West. She is currently gearing up for the release of the Russo Brothers' spy thriller series *Citadel*, co-starring

Richard Madden. While she is now one of the most successful actresses, Priyanka Chopra revealed that she used to do four movies a year initially because she didn't want to lose an opportunity.

In a recent conversation on a radio podcast, Priyanka Chopra was asked whether she ever doubted she would succeed. She said, "My filmography is almost 70 movies; I used to do four movies a year because I didn't want to lose an opportunity. I thought I'd wake up one morning and it would be taken away from me."

Aiding on the topic of instability in an actor's career, the actress responded, "An actor's job is always unstable. To have stability, you need to be able to create credibility with your work and to consistently deliver. That takes time!" AGENCIES



'A woman cop doesn't have to be masculine'

Mumbai: Actress Sanya Malhotra, who will soon be donning the role of a police officer on a mission to find two missing jackfruits in Netflix's upcoming *Kathal: A Jackfruit Mystery*, has opined on the characterisation of the role. She said that female cops can fire a gun and be feminine.

This is the first time Malhotra will be seen playing a police officer, a role that has been portrayed by macho and aggressive males. The actor said working on the film helped her understand that a woman cop doesn't have to be 'masculine' to do her job. The 31-year-old said to a news portal, "Wherever women go, they bring so much empathy to whatever they are doing. That was so special to see. Even if I'm playing a woman cop, she doesn't have to be masculine in her demeanour or posture. She can be very feminine too."

Inspired by true events and set in a fictional town called Moba, the film will premiere on the OTT platform May 19. Malhotra will next be seen in Meghna Gulzar's *Sam Bahadur*, starring alongside Vicky Kaushal in the title role and Fatima Sana Shaikh.

AGENCIES

Devdas regales City audience



Bhubaneswar: In a first, the theatre lovers of Bhubaneswar got the taste of a musical play at Rabindra Mandap, Thursday. Written by eminent poet Devdas Chhotray, the play titled *Devdas*, a collaboration of Auomira Entertainment and Mitu's Music, was adapted for the stage by Dev Meher

The musical, with 10 soul-stirring songs, breathed life and added fresh perspective into the classic tale of *Devdas* by Sharat Chandra Chattopadhyay. It also showcased protagonist Devdas and his beloved Paro's eternal love which was childlike, stubborn and pure.

The love birds adore each other. But Dev's father wouldn't let him marry her because she belongs to a lower status.

Anguished by his father's obstinacy, Dev writes a letter to Paro and leaves. In the letter he laments that he doesn't love her the same way as she does and their marriage is not meant to be.

He suggested Paro should forget him. At this juncture Chandramukhi, a courtesan, enters Dev's life and seeing his passion, she falls for him. How destiny plays with their fate forms the rest of the narrative.

Starring Rano Joy as Devdas, Sheetal Patra as Paro, and BM Baisali as Chandramukhi, the timeless classic left the audience in awe, claimed the makers. The songs were composed by Om Prakash Mohanty and rendered by Susmita Das, Arvind Dutta and Debasmita Mishra. PNM

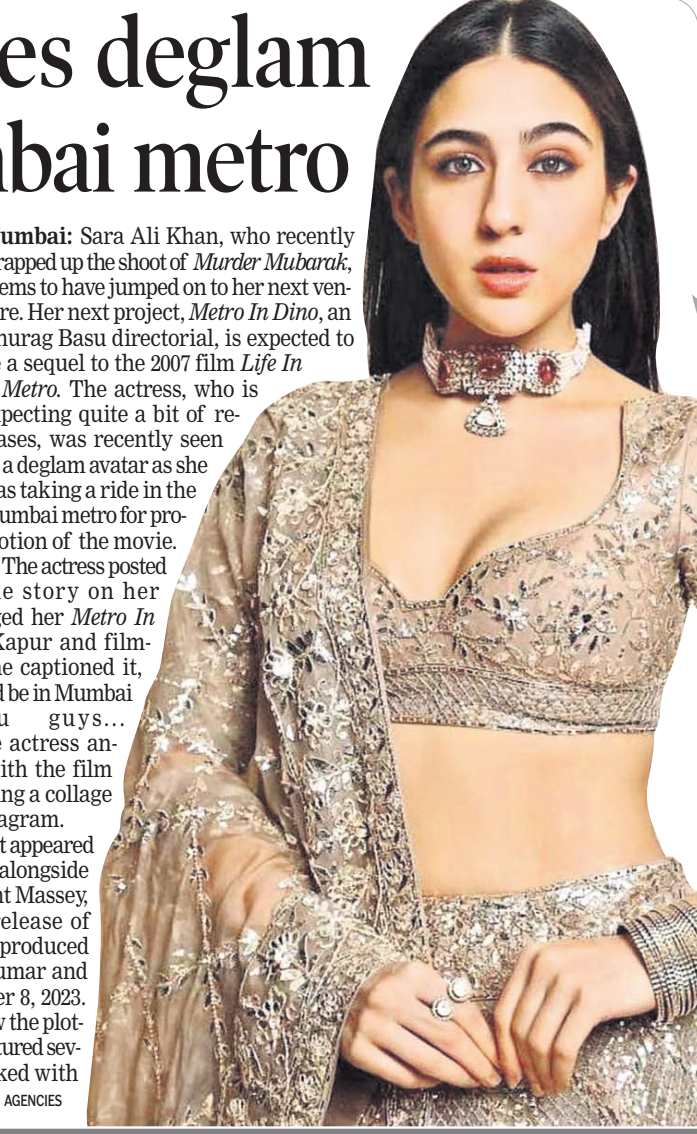
Sara goes deglam in Mumbai metro



Mumbai: Sara Ali Khan, who recently wrapped up the shoot of *Murder Mubarak*, seems to have jumped on to her next venture. Her next project, *Metro In Dino*, an Anurag Basu directorial, is expected to be a sequel to the 2007 film *Life In A Metro*. The actress, who is expecting quite a bit of releases, was recently seen in a deglam avatar as she was taking a ride in the Mumbai metro for promotion of the movie.

The actress posted the story on her Instagram handle and tagged her *Metro In Dino* co-star Aditya Roy Kapur and filmmaker Anurag Basu as she captioned it, saying, "Didn't think I would be in Mumbai Metro before you guys... #MumbaiMeriJaan". The actress announced her association with the film earlier this January by sharing a collage of the entire cast on her Instagram.

The *Atangi Re* star, who last appeared in Disney+Hotstar's *Gaslight* alongside Chitrangda Singh and Vikrant Massey, announced the theatrical release of *Metro In Dino*, which will be produced by T-Series and Bhushan Kumar and is slated to release December 8, 2023. The film is expected to follow the plotline of its prequel, which featured several short stories interlinked with one another.



AGENCIES

FUN post

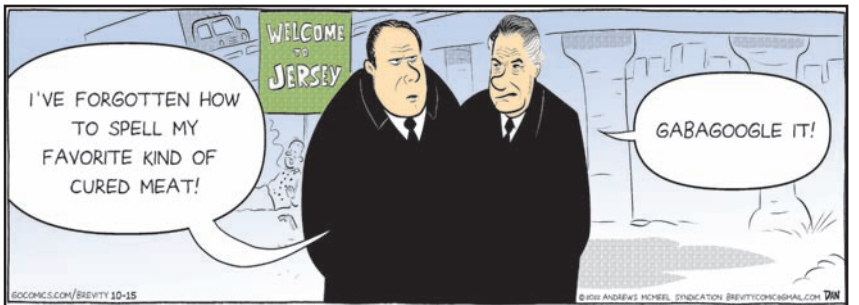
PEANUTS



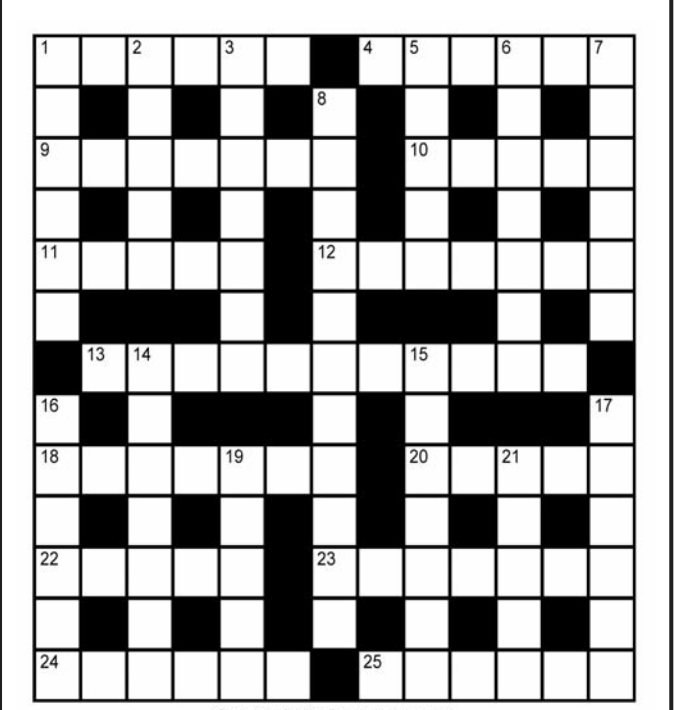
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



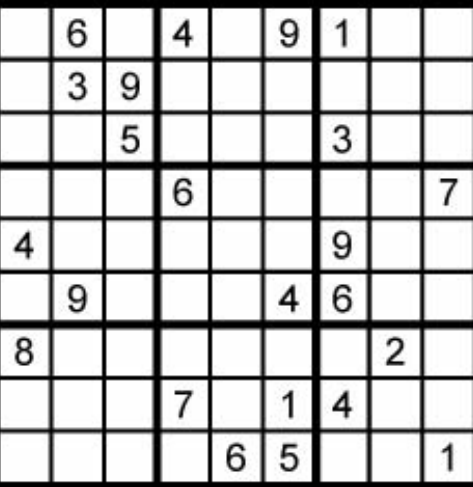
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Cleric's stand
 - 4 Gabled extension
 - 9 Napoleon Bonaparte's birthplace
 - 10 Implied
 - 11 Large naval unit
 - 12 Beseech
 - 13 Money man?
 - 18 Soothing drink (4,3)
 - 20 Exhilarate
 - 22 Below
 - 23 Support
 - 24 Puts forth effort
 - 25 Emeralds. e.g.
 - Down**
 - 3 Nutty
 - 5 Musical group
 - 6 Large heavy knife
 - 7 Spin
 - 8 Live wire (5,6)
 - 14 Old sewing machine part
 - 15 Delinquent
 - 16 Dense
 - 17 Adjoin
 - 19 Gypsy's deck
 - 21 Come to terms

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



PEECEE MANTRA

Priyanka Chopra says an actor, for stability, needs to create credibility with his/her work and deliver consistently

LEISURE



SHEHBAZ WINS TRUST VOTE

Pakistan PM Shehbaz Sharif wins vote of confidence with 180 lawmakers expressing 'full support' in his leadership

INTERNATIONAL P8



ODISHA FC RUT CRPF

Odisha FC kick off their Indian Women's League campaign in style thrashing CRPF FC 6-0

SPORTS BACK PAGE

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BHUBANESWAR | FRIDAY, APRIL 28 | 2023

P1

3 including ex-chief of bank held for fraud

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 27: The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Odisha police arrested Thursday three persons including two former bank employees in connection with a ₹4.13 crore bank fraud case. The three held have been identified as Abdul Hayee, retired manager of Urban Cooperative Bank Ltd, Nuapatna branch, Prakash Kumar Mohapatra, a former employee of the same organisation and Mustakim Raza, loanee and former LIC agent.

The arrests were made with regard to the case registered on the allegation of Priyabrata Panda, chief executive officer of the same bank.

As per the complaint, during the period from 2019-21, Hayee and Kumar working in tandem with

three loanees had sanctioned eight loans against fake LIC policies amounting to ₹3.82 crore, which has now increased to ₹4.13 crore.

During investigation, the EOW found that the accused in violation of banking guidelines deliberately did not verify the authenticity of the pledged insurance policies. They also did not get it ratified with the concerned branch of LIC. Further, they renewed the loans by sanctioning new loans to close the previous ones.

Raza was working as an LIC agent from 2002 to 2022. He forged the LIC policies by putting the name of the loanees including himself. In conspiracy with the accused officials, Raza managed to avail the loan against the forged insurance policies. The arrested bank officials were very much aware of such forgery, EOW sources said.



DREAMING BIG: Kids queue up during the inaugural ceremony of the All Odisha Junior and Sub-junior badminton tournament at the Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Stadium in Cuttack, Thursday

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Getting an Olympic medal was easier than getting justice in this country

Red camp busted in Nabarangpur

■ Maoists are indulging in acts of violence just to prove their existence as they are losing ground across India

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nabarangpur, April 27: In the last few days there has been a sudden spurt in terrorism and extremism-related violence in the country. Peace has been shattered with a terrorist attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch which left five Army men including one from Odisha dead, followed by the death of 10 policemen and a civilian in a Maoist ambush Wednesday in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada and finally the busting of a Naxalite camp in this district of Odisha.



Materials seized from the Maoist camp in Nabarangpur

The busting of the Maoist hide-out in Nabarangpur along the Odisha-Chhattisgarh border following an exchange of fire between security forces and the Red Rebels led to the seizure of huge cache of arms and ammunitions, Maoist literature and most surprisingly a large number of condoms, contra-

ceptive pills and pregnancy test kits. This came as a surprise to the police who were quick to blame the Maoists for sexually exploiting women. But then is the story as simple as that. It is a known fact that Naxalites, wherever they may be, thrive with the support of the locals. Hence, it would be perti-

nent to say that they will not do anything to antagonise the locals.

A former Odisha DGP however, is quick to point out that the recent attack in Dantewada and the gun-fight in this Odisha district is an effort by the Red Rebels to prove their existence.

Former DG of Odisha Police GC Nanda stated that in the last couple of years, Maoist-related violence across the country has decreased due to the concerted efforts of states including Odisha.

"The Naxalites know that there is no future for them in India. So once in a while, they take the route of violence to show that they still exist. The ambush in Dantewada took place as the Chhattisgarh government had failed to take preventive steps," Nanda said.

Contd..P2

Lightning kills 8 in West Bengal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIAN

Kolkata, April 27: Eight people were killed in lightning strikes in three districts of West Bengal, which witnessed moderate to heavy rainfall Thursday evening, an official said. Lightning claimed lives of four people in Purba Bardhaman district, and two each in Murshidabad and North 24 Parganas, a disaster management department official said. He added that a number of people were injured, but the exact figure is yet to be ascertained.

"Deaths of eight people from three districts have been reported so far. They died due to lightning strikes," the official informed. "The victims were mostly farmers who were killed after being struck by lightning while working in their farmlands," he added.

Thunderstorms with lightning occurred in several south Bengal



districts, including, Kolkata, Howrah, North 24 Parganas, Purba Bardhaman and Murshidabad, the official informed.

"Gusty wind was reported at Alipore at 16.45 hours and the duration was less than one minute with the highest wind gust of 79 kmph. This is not a squall. However, some of the districts suffered damages," said an official at Regional Meteorological Centre here.

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VAIATION
SENSEX	60649.38 ↑ 348.80
NIFTY	17915.05 ↑ 101.45
DOLLAR	81.95 ↑ ₹0.10
EURO	90.10 ↓ ₹0.13
GOLD	₹59,762 ↓ ₹131
SILVER	₹73,821 ↑ ₹2

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP		
MAX	37.3°C	38.8°C
MIN	25.5°C	26.0°C
Humidity	70%	72%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Light to moderate rain	

Vande Bharat trial today

Bhubaneswar: The first trial run of the Vande Bharat Express train from Howrah to Puri will take place Friday, sources in ECoR stated Thursday. The second trial run will take place Sunday (April 30) from Howrah to Bhadrak.

In both cases the train will have a two-minute halt at Kharagpur station, sources informed. The date of the final trial run will be taken in the first week of May after assessing the reports of the first two journeys.

Sources however, confirmed that the services will begin from May itself. They stated that the train will leave Howrah at around 6.00am in the morning and reach Puri at around 12.30pm. On its return journey, the train will start from Puri at around 1.50pm. They added that the train will have six halts including one at the Odisha capital.

Pele dribbles his way into Brazil dictionary

The word will be used to describe someone unique, extra-ordinary

AGENCIES

Rio de Janeiro, April 27: Pele, the nickname of the late football legend, has officially become synonymous with words like 'extra-ordinary, incomparable, unique'. To honour the 'greatest' footballer the world has ever seen, the Portuguese-language 'Michaelis' dictionary, has added 'Pele' as a new adjective to its online edition, local media reported. Incidentally 'Michaelis' is the most popular dictionary in Brazil.

The decision to include Pele in the dictionary came after a campaign by the 'Pele Foundation' to honour the football great had gathered more than 1,25,000 signatures. Pele died in last year in December, aged 82.

Pele is the only player to have won the World Cup three times. During his playing career spanning two decades, he scored a record 1,281 goals with Brazilian club Santos, Brazil's national team, and the New York Cosmos. Many say that it was Pele who transformed football into a 'beautiful' game through his sublime skills.

Since Pele's death due to complications from colon cancer, his former club, Santos, sports channel 'SporTV' and the 'Pele Foundation' had been pressing

for the football star's name to be recognised with its entry in the dictionary.

The publishers behind Michaelis dictionaries announced Wednesday here that the word 'Pele' would be included in the digital edition of their Portuguese-language dictionary immediately and in the printed version once the next edition is published.

The entry reads: "pele adj. That or someone who is out of the ordinary, who or who by virtue of their quality, value or superiority cannot be equalled to anything or anyone, just like Pele, nickname of Edson Arantes do Nascimento (1940-2022), who is considered the greatest athlete of all time; exceptional, incomparable, unique and extra-ordinary."

The 'Pele Foundation', a charitable organisation created to preserve the player's legacy, said it was a fitting tribute to 'the King'. "The expression already used to refer to someone who is the best at what they do has been [made eternal] on the pages of the dictionary!" the foundation tweeted.

Pele was voted 'World Player of the Century' by the International Federation of Football History & Statistics (IFFHS) in 2000. He was one of the two joint winners of the FIFA 'Player of the Century' award.

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Hailstorm in state till May 2

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 27: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) Thursday said thunderstorms with lightning will occur at many places of the state till May 2 morning. Thunderstorm with lightning, hail and gusty surface wind speed reaching up to 40-50 kmph is very likely to occur at one or two places of Nabarangpur, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Rayagada, Gajapati, Ganjam, Malkangiri, Koraput, Nuapada, Bolangir, Subarnapur, Sambalpur, Boudh, Angul, Nayagarh, Cuttack, Dhenkanal, Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj districts, April 28.



Heavy rainfall is very likely to occur at one or two places in Nabarangpur, Kalahandi and Kandhamal districts, Friday, said the IMD. Similar weather condition would prevail at some places of Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khurda, Nayagarh, Ganjam, Gajapati, Malkangiri, Gajapati, Ganjam, Bhadrak, Balasore districts.

The IMD has also predicted hailstorm and heavy rainfall at a few places of Koraput, Rayagada, Kalahandi, Kandhamal and Bolangir districts, April 30. Some places of Malkangiri, Koraput, Rayagada, Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khurda, Nayagarh, Ganjam and Gajapati districts would experience thunderstorm and lightning May 1.

Thunderstorm with lightning, hail and gusty surface wind speed reaching up to 40-50 kmph is very likely to occur at one or two places in 19 districts Friday. Similar weather condition would prevail at some places of Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khurda, Nayagarh, Ganjam, Gajapati, Malkangiri, Koraput, Rayagada, Kandhamal, Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj, April 29.

51st doctorate to Samanta

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 27: Eminent educationist, Kandhamal MP and founder of KIIT and KISS, Achyuta Samanta has been conferred with honorary doctorate by Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva University of Assam.

He was conferred with D.Litt. by the university on the occasion of its 5th convocation ceremony. The honorary doctorate has been awarded to Samanta for his outstanding contribution in the field of education and social service. He received the honour from Assam Governor Gulab Chand Kataria. This is the 51st doctorate for Samanta. He expressed his gratitude to the authorities of the university for the recognition. It will motivate me to do more, he said. Union MoS, External Affairs, Rajkumar Ranjan Singh, Chancellor Bhabendra Nath Deka, V-C Mrudul Hazarika and Registrar Mrinal Kumar Borah were present.



Make judicial panel report on Ratna Bhandar public: Oppn

BJD says the opposition parties are playing with the religious sentiment of people by raising sensitive issues



Bhubaneswar, April 27: Taking a pot shot at the BJD government over the issue of missing keys of Srimandir Ratna Bhandar, Opposition BJP and Congress Thursday demanded the state government to make public the report of Justice Raghubir Das Commission of Inquiry set up to probe the issue. Addressing a presser here, senior BJP leader Pitambar Acharya said, "April 3, 2018, on the order of the High Court, a big team of senior officials and architects entered the Puri Srimandir to inspect the Ratna Bhandar, but they did not have the key." On April 4, the then Puri Collector Arvind Agarwal announced that the key to the treasure was not found, he said. Later, the Collector said a duplicate key

of the Ratna Bhandar was found. It is yet to be proved whether the key found at a later stage is a duplicate key of the temple treasury or not, he added. "The government is claiming it has a duplicate key of Ratna Bhandar for the last five years. I have serious doubts about the government's claims. The government must have a clarification before the public soon," Acharya said. Following hue and cry across the state, the government had constituted a Commission of Inquiry headed by Justice Raghubir Das. But the state government is yet to make the report of the commission public, Acharya said.

Third EdWG Meeting of G20 begins in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 27: The Third Education Working Group Meeting (EdWG) under India's G20 presidency commenced in the Capital City here, Thursday. Day 1 of the meeting witnessed the inaugural address by Union Minister of State for Education Subhas Sarkar. Secretary of Higher Education K Sanjay Murthy, Secretary of School Education and Literacy Sanjay Kumar and Secretary of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Atul Kumar Tiwari along with other senior officials of the ministries attended the meeting. More than 60 delegates from 27 countries including G20 members were invited and delegates from international organisations including United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (Unicef), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and Organisation for Economic Cooperation & Development (OECD) were present on the occasion. Sarkar stated that Education Working Group under India's presidency is working collectively to

'Utsav Odisha' to kick off at Utkal

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 27: Utkal University, in association with Institute of Media Studies (IMS), Bhubaneswar, is organising a two-day long cultural festival 'Utsav Odisha', April 28 and 29, to commemorate Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav and India's G20 Presidency at MKCG Auditorium on the university premises. This festival, which aims to promote the rich cultural heritage of Odisha and its role in national integration, will celebrate the lives of unsung heroes of the state in Indian freedom struggle. It will have five plenary sessions where historians, researchers, academicians and experts will share their thoughts and ideas on contemporary issues relating to Odisha. Chief Electoral Officer and additional chief secretary to government Nikunja Bihari Dhal will inaugurate the festival in presence of Utkal University vice-chancellor Sabita Acharya, PG Council chairman Durga Shankar Pattanaik and Avaya Kumar Nayak, registrar. Former additional chief secretary, Gujarat SK Nanda will present keynote address. Director of students' welfare, Utkal University Mitali Chinara will moderate the inaugural ceremony. Programme coordinator and IMS director Upendra Padhi Thursday said the inaugural ceremony will be followed by three plenary sessions where discussions will be held on themes like 'Unity in Diversity: Role of Odisha in National Integration', 'Revisiting History: Our Roots & Unsung Heroes of Odisha' and 'India's G20 Presidency & The World: Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (One Earth-One Family-One Future)'.



Red camp busted...

armed CPI (Maoist) cadres including Murlidhar (central committee member), Kartik, Guddu, Akash, Nandal and others at east of village Saibin Kachhar in Udanti sanctuary. A shootout ensued and it lasted for half-an-hour following which the rebels fled. There were no injuries suffered by the security forces. However, the Maoists managed to escape taking advantage of the dense forest cover," Sushree said. "Along with guns, detonators and dry food items, condoms, contraceptive pills and pregnancy test kits were found. There is sufficient evidence that women were being sexually exploited in Maoist camps. We are looking into this aspect. The discovery of such items has come as a huge surprise to us," Sushree added. As of now patrolling around the forest has been increased, she said.

Ex-accountant gets 4-yr RI for graft

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 27: A special vigilance court here Thursday sentenced a former accountant to four years of rigorous imprisonment after finding him guilty of accepting bribe worth ₹35,000 for release of the final bill towards construction of road and drain in Jatni municipality. The convict, Sarat Kumar Dash, has also been directed by the court to pay a fine of ₹20,000. He would serve additional jail term for two months if he fails to deposit the fine amount. The Cuttack vigilance cell registered a case in this matter on his basis of a complaint lodged by one

Pradeep Kumar Baral, a contractor, January 16, 2015. Baral, in his complaint, mentioned that the Jatni municipality had issued two work orders in his favour for the construction of



roads in the Jatni area. Following the completion of the projects, the junior engineer prepared the final bill for release of payment after due scrutiny of the construction work. But, Dash, who was then working as the accountant in Jatni municipality demanded ₹35,000 from him to start the process for clearance of the final bill and release of cheques for payment. An aggrieved Baral informed the vigilance about the unlawful de-

mand by the convict. Following which the anti-corruption sleuths laid a trap and caught Dash red-handed while issuing two cheques in favour of Baral after receiving the bribe amount. He was later arrested by the cops. The court, after examining statements of ten witnesses and other documentary evidences, held Sarat guilty, pronouncing the judgment against him. The case was conducted by special public prosecutor Hemant Kumar Swain. Following the conviction, Dash was sent to custody and the vigilance sleuth informed that they would move to the competent authority asking for cancellation of the convict's pension.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Executive Magistrate, Bhubaneswar, 27 April 2023, I Ashish Kumar Sethi, R/o Plot No.1484/85, New Forest Park Colony, Bhubaneswar- 751009 have changed my name from Ashish Kumar Sethi to Ashish Kumar Sethi. Henceforth, I shall be known as Ashish Kumar Sethi for all future purposes.

100TH EPISODE OF 'MANN KI BAAT'

Projection mapping show at Sun Temple

New Delhi, April 27: The Union Ministry of Culture will be organising a state-of-the-art projection mapping show at the Sun Temple in Konark to mark the completion of 100th episode of Prime Minister's 'Mann Ki Baat'.



the projection on each of the monuments will showcase the historic, architectural importance and the distinctiveness of the region highlighting the diversity of India as a country, on the lines of diverse topics and themes addressed by

the Prime Minister in his radio show 'Mann Ki Baat'. The projection mapping show, which will be in regional languages and will elaborate the history and heritage of our country, to be the centre of attraction, the secretary said, adding that the visitors will be able to enjoy it from 7pm onwards. The show will highlight the theme of 'Mann Ki Baat' along with the historical and architectural marvel of the monument, in the spirit of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat, he said. The secretary further stated that

in another initiative, the Ministry of Culture in collaboration with National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) has curated an art exhibition called 'Jana Shakti' which will be inaugurated April 30 at NGMA, New Delhi. It will showcase paintings by 12 renowned artists, he added. The third key initiative of the Ministry of Culture involves publication of Amrit Chitra Comics which will highlight the heroic stories of the common people mentioned by the PM in his 'Mann Ki Baat'.

IFA tablets for schoolchildren

Bhubaneswar: The School and Mass Education department has directed all the district education officers to ensure distribution of iron and folic acid (IFA) tablets to the students of Class I to XII during the summer vacation. A decision in this regard was taken at a review meeting of PM POSHAN scheme here April 24. Raghuram R Iyer, State Nodal Officer of PM Poshan, in the notification said, "Anaemia Mukta Lakshya Abhiyan (AMLAN) was launched in November 2022 by CM Naveen patnaik to address the severe issue of nutritional anaemia within the state. Taking this into account, the school teachers are requested to distribute IFA tablets for each student during summer vacation. The students from Classes I to XII of government and government-aided schools need to be provided with prophylactic doses (one IFA tablet every week on Monday) during the entire summer vacation," the notification read. While IFA (pink) tablet will be distributed to students of Classes I to V, IFA (blue) tablet is meant for the students of Classes VI to XII. "The IFA tablets must be handed over to the parents at the doorstep after verifying the expiry date of the tablets. Expired tablets should not be distributed. If the IFA tablets are expired, they should be returned to the health facility," the notification stated. "Each student must consume one IFA tablet every Monday after lunch/dinner in the presence of their parent/guardian along with a glass of water."

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Illegal mining booms in Nayagarh

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION FAILS TO UPDATE LEASED MINES STATUS EVERY 3 MONTHS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nayagarh, April 27: Government rule mandates to carry out the measurement of leased mines and update their status within a period of three months of their auction. However, officials in Nayagarh district often overlook these rules. As a result, illegal mining has been running rampant on hills such as Mayurjhalia and Puania in Nayagarh district.

After the intervention of Kolkata bench of National Green Tribunal, the district administration has taken some action on illegal mining in Mayurjhalia hills.

However, it has failed to curb illegal mining in 45 black granite stone quarries and six laterite stone quarries despite knowing that the state government is losing precious revenue due to illegal mining. The administration has become a silent spectator at a time when it needs to act tough against the errant miners.

Sources said that the district



has 45 black granite stone quarries on 45 hills in seven tehsils except Gania. The district administration has auctioned 13 black stone quarries in Ranpur tehsil, 10 in Khandapara tehsil, five in Bhapur and Daspalla tehsils, seven in Nayagarh, two in Nuagaon tehsil and four in Odagaon tehsil while no quarry has been leased out in

Gania tehsil.

Similarly, there are two laterite stone quarries in Odagaon tehsil and four in Ranpur tehsil. It is regularly alleged that the lessees are extracting stones beyond their lease area. Moreover, they are extracting stones exceeding their annual target in just one month.

All this is happening as the revenue and mining officials do not regularly update status of the mines. Theft in the mines is only increasing day by day due to negligence of the officials.

Rampant illegal mining of black granite stone and laterite stone quarries in Mayurjhalia hills is a case in this point. The district administration had given four acre of laterite stone quarry on plot no-1689 in Mayurjhalia mouza on five-year lease to one Susant Kumar Barad of Champagarh village.

The administration had also given transit permit of two acre land for extraction and transportation of ordinary earth to one Shashank Agarwal, the director of Agarwal Infrabuild Pvt Ltd on

lease. The two leaseholders illegally extracted laterite stones and ordinary earth beyond their lease area, and earned crores of rupees while destroying the rural forests in the process.

They also lodged ₹25 lakh bribery complaint against the Nayagarh Collector when the administration tried to conduct a verification of mines on the direction of National Green Tribunal (NGT). Their wrongdoing was caught after the NGT cracked its whip and quashed the ₹25 lakh bribery charge against the Nayagarh Collector and four other persons. Residents claimed that the NGT order has come as a relief for them and given them the courage to speak against such illegalities.

Locals alleged that similar illegal mining is also rampant in Puannia hill under Odagaon tehsil. The smugglers have constructed a separate road to smuggle stones from the mines. However, the Odagaon tehsildar except ordering for a probe has neglected in conducting a verification of the mines

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Elderly couple found dead in closed Baripada house

Baripada: Police Thursday recovered the bodies of an elderly couple from a closed house in Mayurbhanj district, an officer said. Umakanta Patra (65) of Swarup village was suspected to have died by suicide by hanging himself after killing his wife Subuni Patra (55) with a sharp weapon, police said. The incident could be a sequel to a family dispute said Madhusmita Mohanty, inspector in-charge of Baripada Sadar Police Station. Police have registered an unnatural death case and sent the bodies to PRM Medical College and Hospital here for post mortem, Mohanty added.



Mega steel plant soon at Mahakalapara: Pandian

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara/Mahakalapara, April 27: State 5T Secretary VK Pandian announced Thursday that a mega steel plant will be set up in Mahakalapara block of Kendrapara district.

Over 10,000 acre of land spread in 11 villages of three panchayats will be acquired for establishment of the steel plant, he said.

Pandian made the announcement during his visit to the district, Thursday on the direction of the Chief Minister. He also said that the Marshaghai-Jambu road

will have six lanes for which ₹100 crore has been sanctioned. He reviewed various developmental projects at different places and directed the concerned officials to accelerate the ongoing works and complete projects within the deadline.

He also offered prayers at Baladevjeu temple, Dadhibamanjeu temple and Ramchandi temple during his visit. He held discussions with the members and servants of Baladevjeu temple and asked the district Collector to prepare a master plan for its beautification and development.

Fake drug case: 5 from UP brought in remand

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bargarh, April 27: A special team of Bargarh Police brought in transit remand five persons from Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh with the help of Special Task Force (STF) personnel in connection with fake drug trading case in Bargarh, police said Thursday.

The accused were identified as Subham Jaiswal, 30, of Bhelupur police limits in Varanasi; Ritesh Kumar Jaiswal, 42, of Sarnath police station area; Chandrasekhar Singh, 49, of Jaitpur police limits; Gourab Sharma, 40, of Adampur police station area, and Abhishek Kumar Singh, 35, under Chowk police limits in Varanasi. The accused have been arrested in a separate case in Uttar Pradesh registered in the month of March. They were produced in a local court and brought on transit remand to Bargarh. This was stated here by SDPO Amrit Kumar Panda at a press meet held at the Town PS in Bargarh, Thursday.

Minor dies as boat turns turtle; another missing

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, April 27: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik condoled the death of a minor boy who drowned Thursday morning when a mechanised boat overturned in Brahmani while it was going from Ekmania to Keradagada in this district. There were 30 passengers on the boat when it capsized. Even though locals rescued majority of the passengers and others swam to safety, the 14-year-old boy, identified as Debendra Behera, drowned. Police said that one of the boatmen Sudarshan Swain is still missing.

Patnaik expressed his profound grief over the incident and announced ex-gratia of ₹4 lakh to the family members of the deceased. He also directed the Kendrapara district collector to pay the amount to the family of the deceased by Thursday evening. Police informed that the passengers were going to the other side to catch a private bus to go to Cuttack. Eight bikes had also been loaded on the boat, they said.

Endangered blackbuck found dead in Ganjam



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Berhampur, April 27: The carcass of a blackbuck, an endangered antelope, was found at a roadside in Digapahandi forest range in Ganjam district, an official said.

The endangered animal might have died after being hit by a vehicle, Digapahandi forest range officer Kanhu Charan Patnaik said.

The carcass of the four-year-old male blackbuck was recovered from Bhalajhola, around 40 km from Berhampur city, he said.

A post mortem examination of the carcass was conducted, and the report is

awaited, the forest official said.

Ganjam district blackbuck protection committee president Amulya Upadhyaya said, "The animal might have died in a road accident, as it might have come out of its habitat in search of water. Major water bodies in the habitats have become dry due to heat conditions."

The blackbuck is a Schedule-1 animal according to the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 (amended in 1992), he said.

Ganjam is the only district in the state, where blackbucks are sighted, and according to a census conducted in February, the antelopes numbered 7,745.

The people of the region believe that sighting of a blackbuck in a paddy field is harbinger of luck for them, Upadhyaya added.

Reach of AIR FM RADIO

expanding in remote areas

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Inauguration

By
Prime Minister
Narendra Modi

28th April, 2023, at 11:00 am
(Through Video Conferencing)

In the august presence of

Anurag Singh Thakur

Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Youth Affairs and Sports

L. Murugan

Union Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting, Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying

“ Be it at home, during journeys and otherwise, the radio remains an integral part of people’s lives. It is an amazing medium to connect people. **-Narendra Modi** ”

Live Telecast of the programme on AIR and DD News

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What the soul sees and has experienced, that it knows; the rest is appearance, prejudice and opinion.

SRI AUROBINDO



Long Road Ahead

Over the past three years, the COVID-19 pandemic has dominated headlines and spurred scientific research, with experts around the world focusing resources and any potentially useful technology on the problem. While the spotlight on COVID-19 has dimmed slightly, it remains a high global priority, sometimes to the detriment of infectious diseases linked to poverty and primarily affecting the Global South. For example, Malaria killed an estimated 619,000 people – most of them children in Sub-Saharan Africa – in 2021, when there were 247 million cases worldwide.

Malaria is an entirely preventable and treatable disease, and researchers have made great strides on both fronts. In March, for example, the World Health Organization recommended two new dual-ingredient insecticide-treated bed nets to protect against malaria-transmitting Anopheles mosquitoes, one with a more lethal cocktail of insecticides, and the other able to disrupt mosquito growth and reproduction.

Cost-effective antimalarial medicines are another important tool. In 2021, seasonal malaria chemoprevention was administered to around 45 million children aged three months to five years, who received monthly doses of therapeutic drugs at a cost of less than \$4 per person. The recent news of a groundbreaking vaccine, GSK's Mosquirix (also known as RTS,S), offers some hope, although the cost is still relatively high, at around \$40 per child for the first year.

Despite these efforts, malaria continues to pose a threat to public health. Even after an investment of \$26 billion to tackle the disease in Sub-Saharan Africa, the number of cases increased slightly between 2000 and 2019 (although the number of deaths decreased). New prevention measures – tailored to children, in particular – are clearly needed. Further innovation should take a page from the pandemic playbook: one benefit of the flood of COVID-19 research is that it demonstrated the enormous potential of monoclonal antibodies.

These drugs are laboratory-made copies of the proteins that a person's immune system produces to attack specific foreign invaders. Historically, monoclonal antibodies have served as a powerful weapon against cancer and autoimmune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis and lupus. While not often used as a prophylactic, the deployment of monoclonal antibodies to prevent COVID-19 and respiratory syncytial virus has shown great promise. Moreover, their exquisite selectivity enables them to discern between closely related molecular targets, resulting in fewer off-target effects. This makes it a medication with an appropriate safety profile for children (as well as other at-risk populations).

A research group at the United States National Institutes of Health, led by Robert Seder, has identified two antibodies against CSP-1, the protein that the malaria parasite uses to invade liver cells where it first establishes infection. Blocking CSP-1 should thus prevent infection. The more advanced of the two antibodies, L9LS, is currently being tested for its safety and efficacy in children in Mali and Kenya. The Mali study is assessing its success in a setting of seasonal malaria, whereas the Kenya study focuses on an area where year-round infection is possible.

Monoclonal antibodies could be a game-changer for preventing malaria and advance the long-sought goal of eradication. The current generation of antimalarial antibodies has been modified so that a single dose can protect a child for at least three months – possibly longer. The clinical trials will determine the extent and exact duration of protection, and provide useful guidance on how much improvement is needed to achieve a dosage that can be injected once per year.

Although antibodies have a reputation for being expensive, with those used to treat cancer priced at over \$20,000 per month in Europe and the US, increasing the potency of this cutting-edge treatment could significantly decrease costs. Some believe an injection as small as one milliliter of the antibody drug being trialed in Mali and Kenya could protect children at a cost of only \$5-10 per person.

To date, demand for monoclonal antibodies has primarily come from high-income countries; Africa accounts for only 1 per cent of global sales. This disparity highlights the need to work with national regulatory agencies to ensure that submitted product data adequately address public-health concerns, and, in the longer term, to involve affected countries in the production of these biologics. Although manufacturing antibodies is a complex and highly regulated process, investing in the technology to do so now would be a boon for developing economies burdened by endemic malaria.

Monoclonal antibodies may be the new frontier in the fight against malaria, but getting the word out won't be easy: stakeholders from government, academia, and industry must come together to coordinate advocacy efforts and raise awareness. (The same groups should be encouraging the development of these types of biologics for all infectious diseases.)

We are only just embarking on a long road: the first generation of antimalarial antibodies will not be deployed until 2027 at the earliest. They offer tremendous promise as one of many weapons to fight this child killer, alongside bed nets, medicines, and emerging vaccines. The clinical trials will tell us whether this potential can be realised, but we would be wise to begin preparing for success now.

Cristina Donini is Vice President of Programme Leadership and Strategy at Medicines for Malaria Venture. Doreen Akiyo Yomoah is Communications Officer at Medicines for Malaria Venture. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE



Cristina Donini & Doreen Akiyo Yomoah

Monoclonal antibodies could be a game-changer for preventing malaria and advance the long-sought goal of eradication



DK Giri

TO A GREAT EXTENT, POPULATION PLAYS AN IMPORTANT PART IN DETERMINING THE FOREIGN POLICY OF A COUNTRY

India has just become the largest populated in the world. It is said to be the biggest democracy as well. Today we talk about how India leverages its demography in her foreign policy. Democratic dividends and determinants have been discussed by scholars across the world. Population can be a bane as well as a boon for any country depending on how one perceives and promotes it.

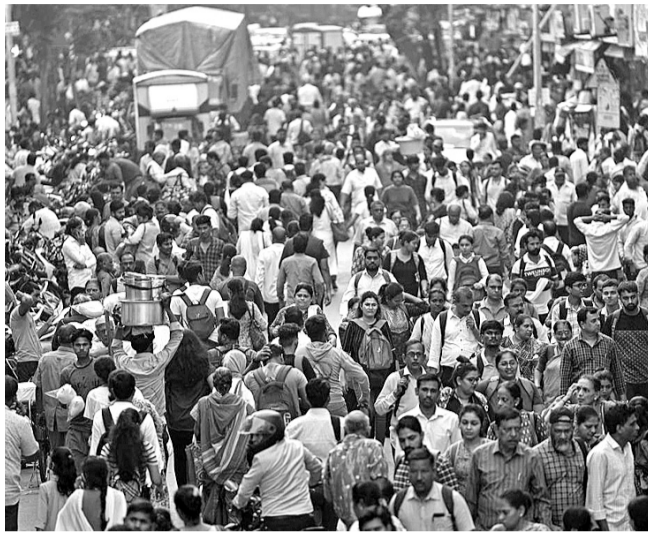
To share a slice of statistics, India's population has reached 142.86 crore, leaving China behind which has 142.57 crore. According to the Pew Research Centre, India's population has grown by one billion since 1950, the year the United Nations began gathering population data. Indian population is said to peak at 1.7 billion by 2064. It was estimated that India would overtake China to be the most populous country by 2027. For a variety of reasons it has happened four years faster.

Today, an average 86,000 babies are born a day in India compared with just 49,000 in China. The average age of Indians is 29. It is also observed that India will soon have plenty of people between the years 40 to 65 and will remain so for 50 years or so. That is "quite a lot of capital rich people out of about 1.5 billion," according to American Indologist Peter Zeihan. That is promising. Will this prospect be automatic?

There are two perspectives on population growth: some would call it controlling population growth, others would talk about population development. On the former, attempts have been made in India and elsewhere to control population growth. During the Emergency period, there were stories of forced sterilisation and compulsory family planning. Although the idea was perhaps constructive, it became controversial as it was executed. Without adequate healthcare and education such gigantic population growth could have wider ramifications. Less than 50 per cent of working-age Indians are in the workforce, for women, it is about 20 per cent. So, simply looking after such a large population is a challenge.

FOCUS NATION

DEMOGRAPHY & DEMOCRACY



Mere size of the population is not an index of one's economic and military power. The amount of social capital, skill level and mobility define the power of a population

In earlier times, donors used to treat Bangladesh as a "basket case," and India too large a population to handle. To share an anecdote, a World Bank official was visiting a farming community in Haryana. He was talking in dismay to his Indian escort. Observing the WB official's discomfiture, one farmer asked the Indian official what was his problem? The Indian official said: "He is wondering how one could feed such a large number of people." The farmer humorously retorted, "Ask the visiting official, why is he looking at our stomach, not our hands." That was a profound Indian rural wisdom which indicates how growth and development should proceed. The policy planners must focus on generating work and productivity not a consumer culture.

On the other hand, there is a saying in management that "quantity makes quality." This would mean if you produce more and more of one particular thing, you will become good at it. So, if India can produce massive workforce for the world that would add to India's economy by making it a human resource provider. Only recently New Delhi was planning

to make India the skill capital of the world, but it has not happened at the pace it was expected and not at par with a country like China. China's skilled workforce made it the manufacturing hub of the world. After COVID, as business from China is moving away, it goes to countries like Vietnam and Bangladesh, not India because of an assured workforce in those countries.

It is for the South Block to devise an ingenious policy to use Indian population as a determinant of our foreign policy. To a great extent, population plays an important part in determining the foreign policy of a country. One of the European diplomats in Delhi, in a discussion on balancing human rights and trade, said, "when we talk to India, we are talking to the biggest democracy (now the largest population), not to a small country of a couple of million in some parts of the world." This shows the power of population whether one views it as a production source or a market destination.

Admittedly, the size, nature and distribution of population determine the power of a country manifesting in its foreign, economic and military policies. At the same time,

mere size of the population is not an index of one's economic and military power. The amount of social capital, the skill level and mobility define the power of a population. Also, the human resource emanates from the degree of industrialisation, depth of development and the stability of political systems in a country.

Nevertheless, the dynamics of population constitutes an important domestic as well as foreign policy consideration. European countries have suffered because of sudden demographic crunch. Japan's economy is affected by its aging population. Population stabilisation is hitting the Chinese economy. India will not have such demographic difficulty. At the same time, India is industrialising, a lot later and quite slower compared to its peer countries. As India's economy is not fully globalised, it does not suffer the setbacks happening off and on in the global market.

To sum up, India's foreign policy has traversed through several phases -- de-colonisation, non-alignment, self-reliance and import substitution, globalisation, technological upgradation, and a masculine nationalism (current). The next phase is perceived to be demonstrating the power of Indian demography and democracy. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has on a couple of occasions claimed the inherent and the oldest roots of democracy in India. He has also emphasised the autonomy of our foreign policy with tactical alignments. Now perhaps is the time to project India as the biggest country by dint of the size of its population.

The population however needs to be built with technical skill (India has quite a bit of it in software), social capital, cultural heritage marked by pluralism as well as syncretism. Indian culture embodied by its huge population is considered unique in the world. So, the biggest population could contribute to economic, technical, scientific and above all cultural bases for our foreign policy.

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

SPECTRUM UNCLAIMED DEPOSITS

Financial literacy imperative



Bhaskar Nath Biswal

AS PER RBI NORMS, A SAVINGS OR CURRENT ACCOUNT SHOULD BE TREATED AS DORMANT IF THERE ARE NO TRANSACTIONS FOR OVER TWO YEARS

In a written reply to the Lok Sabha, Bhagwat Kisanrao Karad, Union Minister of State for Finance, informed that the total amount of unclaimed deposits of public sector banks (PSBs) was ₹35,012 crore from 10.24 crore accounts, at the end of February 2023. He further informed that State Bank of India (SBI) tops the chart with unclaimed deposits worth ₹8,086 crore followed by Punjab National Bank ₹5,340 crore, Canara Bank ₹4,558 crore and Bank of Baroda ₹3,904 crore. To this the figures of unclaimed funds of foreign banks and other scheduled commercial banks is to be added.

The huge unclaimed amounts with insurance organisations and banks question our awareness levels. Opening a bank account is important and maintaining the account is equally important. The role of bank is also important as ethically they are responsible to return the funds parked in their accounts to the legitimate claimer or legal heir. They should be more careful about the return of the matured amount to the account holder or nominee. This aspect should be included in financial education pro-

grammes of all our regulators.

The country is striving hard for inclusive growth and making all round efforts to push financial literacy levels. The National Strategy for Financial Education 2020-25 highlighted the need to educate the existing policyholders or customers to claim their legitimate funds. There is every need to make them aware of the necessity of nomination which will help in smooth transfer of their money to their legal heirs. After all, it is their hard earned money and the legal heirs possess a right on these funds. Apart from that, it is also the responsibility of banks to complete the nomination details carefully and locate them to hand over the money. It will raise their goodwill and help in increasing their market share.

As per RBI norms, a savings or current account should be treated as dormant if there are no transactions in the account for over two years. If the bank account remains dormant or inoperative for a period of 10 years the money is transferred to Depositor Education and Awareness Fund Scheme (DEAF) which will be utilised for promotion of depositors' interests or for such

other purposes as may be specified by RBI.

At the end we are making efforts for increasing financial literacy of our people and on the other, the financially literate people who have invested money in banks and insurance companies for future use are leaving their funds unclaimed. There may be different reasons but it is a matter of concern to be taken note by financial educators. The overall literacy in the country stood at 77.7% as per the results of recent NSSO survey, which is still below the world literacy rate of 86.5%. However, according to the National Financial Literacy and Inclusion Survey 2019, only 27% of Indian population is financially literate, indicating a huge gap and potential for financial services industry. The survey defines financial literacy as the combination of awareness, knowledge, skill, attitude and behaviour necessary to make sound financial decisions and ultimately achieve individual financial wellbeing.

RBI has advised banks to play a more proactive role in finding the whereabouts of accountholders of unclaimed deposits and inoperative

accounts vide its circulars dated 07.02.2012, 21.11.2014 and 02.02.2015 but still the volume of unclaimed funds is growing. The RBI's initiative of opening a separate web portal for accessing information of unclaimed funds and inoperative accounts will help the beneficiaries instead of searching them through multiple bank websites. This portal is expected in three to four months and as per the announcement made by RBI will ease the task of identifying the accounts.

It is also the responsibility of banks to inform customers from time to time through emails and messages if their account is found dormant for a period of more than 12 months. A separate wing should be created to service such accounts and policies to make them reach their final destination. The amount unclaimed is used for a noble cause by the government, no doubt, but the legitimate beneficiary is put at loss. A suitable action plan needs to be chalked out.

The writer is Principal, Nowrangpur College, Nabarangpur. Views are personal.

WISDOM CORNER

Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is not to stop questioning. ALBERT EINSTEIN

Pursue some path, however narrow and crooked, in which you can walk with love and reverence. HENRY DAVID THOREAU

A man is but the product of his thoughts, what he thinks he becomes. MAHATMA GANDHI

WORDSWORTH

Higgler

Higgler has survived in the West Indies, especially Jamaica, in the sense of a market trader, but has disappeared everywhere else. But only a century ago, most English market towns had their higgles. They were middlemen – they went round the farms of the local area, buying up produce such as poultry, rabbits, eggs and cheese to sell in the market. In return they supplied goods the household needed. Some of the trade was done by barter rather than by money changing hands, but all of it involved haggling – which is where the name came from, as it's just a variant spelling of haggler. In some places, higgles had a bad reputation, because they were thought to manipulate prices to their own benefit. The Times of London dated 10 June 1800 reports a small-scale consumer revolt against them: *A Meeting was held at Poole, on Friday last, to take into consideration the propriety of the inhabitants in general refraining from the use of Butter, till the price is reduced to One Shilling a pound; when it was unanimously resolved by all present, not to purchase any till the price shall be so reduced, and even then, to use it in their families with great economy and moderation ... and proper people are appointed to keep a constant watch on the Higgles on Market-day, who are the principal cause of the great prices of many of the necessaries of life.*

Warning bells

Sir, According to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the average Earth temperature has risen by 0.8 degree Celsius since 1880. The emission of greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide has largely contributed to the climate change. That ocean temperature sees a spike more slowly than in land due to evaporation has resulted in regional temperature variations. In India, heat waves are ever increasing with a reduction in the cold waves which makes the spiraling heat difficult to control. Air quality and water quality suffer during the fluctuation in temperature. Unhygienic water brings in many diseases. The dying of crops augments the woes of our farmers. Infections and diseases lead to absenteeism in work places. All this can have a telling effect on our economy which anyway is nothing much to boast about. It is incumbent upon India, which has been in the forefront of the Paris Climate Agreement, to leave no stone unturned to reduce carbon emissions and ensure low carbon production.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Cooperative federalism

Sir, In recent times the conduct of the Governors in the non-BJP ruled states, especially in southern India, has become an intense debate due to their estranged acts with the respective state governments and the Chief Ministers. Such cases were seen in states like West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The Governors indefinitely hold the Bills that have been duly passed by the state legislatures and sent to them for approval. The role of the Governor is paramount in the state's progress and it is indispensable. But over the years the powers of the Governors are being misused by the ruling party at the Centre in one way or the other. The Governors must be appointed from outside the field of politics and the process must result in the complete de-politicisation of the post of the Governor. The Governors must not conform to one political ideology that the ruling party at the Centre practices. The Central government must not subvert the democratic process of the country by using the Governors as means to achieve the ends of political gains. There must be checks and balances on the conduct of the Governors, and only then cooperative federalism will sustain as envisaged in our Constitution.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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national



Coming to power again in Telangana is not a big task. The priority is to win more seats than before

ARMIES OF INDIA, UK BEGIN MILITARY EXERCISE

India and the UK Thursday kick-started a two-week military exercise in Britain's Salisbury Plains as part of efforts to consolidate the overall military ties.



of the day quote

We have sent a draft agreement to the faction of ULFA that is already in talks with the government. I hope an agreement can be signed next month

I defeated Rahul Gandhi on his home turf. Rahul Gandhi was there for 15 years and the Gandhi family for 40 years. I hail from an ordinary family and went there to defeat him

There's no happiness that equals one's satisfaction. Hence, officials should pay attention to implementing projects that provide satisfaction to the people

Rajnath holds talks with Chinese counterpart Li



AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 27: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh Thursday conveyed to his Chinese counterpart Li Shangfu that development of India-China ties is premised on prevalence of peace at the border and all issues must be resolved in accordance with existing bilateral agreements.

Organisation (SCO) being hosted by India on Friday. In a statement, the defence ministry said the two ministers had "frank" discussions about the developments in the India-China border areas as well as bilateral relations.

AIKS calls off long march

Pune, April 27: The All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) Thursday called off its ongoing long march in Ahmednagar district after the Maharashtra government assured that its demands over farmers' issues will be met.

Kharge's 'poisonous snake' remark on Modi stirs row

ADDRESSING A POLL RALLY AT RON IN GADAG DISTRICT OF KARNATAKA, THE CONGRESS PRESIDENT LIKENED PRIME MINISTER TO A POISONOUS SNAKE, DRAWING THE BJP'S IRE



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 27: Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge backtracked from his "poisonous snake" remark against Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a poll rally in Karnataka and said his intention was not to hurt anyone's feelings.

unknowingly someone's feelings were hurt, then it was never my intention and nor has it been the conduct of my long political life," he further said.

and suffering of the poor and downtrodden. "For five decades, I have always been opposed to the divisive ideology of the BJP and the RSS and their leaders. My political fight was, is and will always be against his politics," the Congress chief said.

SHORT TAKES

AAP to hold protest today

New Delhi: The AAP Thursday said it will hold a protest against the central government April 28 against alleged wastage of taxpayers' money for the construction of a new official residence for the "country's ruler".

Court extends Sisodia's custody

New Delhi: A court here Thursday extended till May 12 the judicial custody of former Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia in a corruption case related to the alleged excise scam.

Notice to IAS officer

New Delhi: The Delhi government's vigilance department has served a notice to senior IAS officer Udit Prakash Rai for the construction of an official accommodation following the demolition of a 15th-century monument during his tenure as DJB's chief executive officer.



Devotees try to protect themselves as it snows at the Kedarnath temple

PTI PHOTO

Cong seeks FIR against Shah

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, April 27: Congress leaders Thursday complained to the police against Union Home Minister Amit Shah for his alleged statement that if their party won the upcoming elections, then Karnataka would be "afflicted with riots".

An "urgent and immediate" FIR be lodged against the former BJP chief and others for the "offences". The complaint was made by AICC General Secretary in-charge of Karnataka Randeep Singh Surjewala, state Congress president D K Shivakumar and former Deputy Chief Minister G Parameshwara to the Station House Officer, High Grounds police station here.

Vijayapura, Shah made flagrantly false statements aimed at tarnishing the image of the Congress by levelling false and unfounded allegations, with a clear objective of trying to create an atmosphere of communal disharmony amongst the gathered crowd and the individuals viewing it on other media platforms.

Amit Shah reviews facilities at airports

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 27: Union Home Minister Amit Shah Thursday reviewed passenger facilities at airports across the country and directed the authorities concerned to ensure ease of travel for passengers during the coming summer season, officials said.

SUNDARAM HOME advertisement regarding a corrigendum for a property sale.

Rail Wheel Plant/Bela advertisement regarding an e-open tender for material supply.

EAST COAST RAILWAY advertisement regarding a tender for civil works.

Eating walnuts daily may boost attention in teens: Study

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Walnuts have a significant amount of alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), an omega-3 fatty acid essential for the body and which plays a key role in brain development, especially in early stage



tion deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) had better behaviour in class, paying more attention to the teacher and being less hyperactive.

closely the recommended dose of walnuts and the number of days of consumption showed improvements in neuropsychological functions, they said.

including diet, from which it requires a large amount of energy and nutrients for proper development," said Jordi Julvez, principal investigator and coordinator of the Neuro Epi Research Group of the Institut d'Investigacio Sanitaria Pere Virgili (IISPV), Spain.

the body and its development. For this reason, walnuts are a great ally of adolescent health," says Julvez. This study involved 700 volunteers, specifically, high school students between 11 and 16 years of age from 12 different high schools.

Participants who consumed walnuts for at least 100 days showed improvements in attention functions and those with symptoms of at-

OFFICE OF THE NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL, BANKI E - PROCUREMENT NOTICE advertisement.

EAST COAST RAILWAY advertisement regarding a tender for water supply.

Sudan returnees narrate ordeal



Indians evacuated from violence-hit Sudan under 'Operation Kaveri' arrive at Chennai airport

PTI PHOTO

Chennai, April 27: With all her money and valuables taken away during the conflict in Sudan, Divya Rajasekharan who arrived from the African country said she lost all hopes of returning to Sudan. "A pair of dress and passport is all that I have now," she said displaying them at the airport here on Thursday afternoon after she was flown to Chennai from the national capital. Divya, among the first

batch of 9 Tamils who were evacuated from the conflict-hit Sudan under Operation Kaveri, said the image of Sudan that she cherished during eight years of her life in that country took a steep plunge since the last 15 days. "We thought that the war would end in a couple of days but our miseries increased from the third day," she said accompanied by Sophia from Vellore. Her house was located close to the office of the para-military head. "My car, dol-

lars, and other valuables were taken away and on the eighth day of the conflict we became nomads," she said narrating her ordeal. Fortunately, the Indian embassy got in touch with her and other Indians living in similar conditions and evacuated them to New Delhi. While four who were from Madurai left directly for their hometown, five from Chennai and Vellore were flown to the airport here. "Now I have to start my life from scratch. I have no

hopes of returning to Sudan," Divya who hails from Madipakkam, here, said and thanked the central and state governments for their valuable help in rescuing them. "We managed with curd rice and pickles but later got stranded without food and water. I am pregnant... It was at this juncture, the Indian embassy officials contacted us and advised us to reach the outskirts to remain safe till we were taken to port Sudan," Sophia said. Rajasekharan was shocked to see the military forces banging on his door. Anticipating trouble if he did not open, Rajasekharan mustered courage and opened the door. "I was asked if I was Indian. They assured that they would not harm us. They asked for food, water, and money and took our car away," the IT professional said. For its part, the state government set up control rooms at the Tamil Nadu House in Delhi and at the Commissionerate of Rehabilitation and Welfare of non-resident Tamils, Chennai, to facilitate the rescue operation. Those from the State stranded in Sudan or their relatives could contact the Commissionerate on phone number: 9600023645 or mail to nrtchennai@gmail.com, it said.



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath with BJP MP Hema Malini during a public meeting in support of BJP candidate ahead of UP municipal elections in Mathura

PTI PHOTO

NO ISSUES WITH ANNAMALAI: EPS



New Delhi/Chennai, April 27: AIADMK General Secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami (EPS) Thursday said his party's alliance with the BJP continued and insisted there were no issues with the saffron organisation's Tamil Nadu President K Annamalai.

The AIADMK chief's remarks came in the backdrop of reported differences between the two parties, who had fought the 2019 Parliamentary polls and the 2021 Assembly elections as allies. The AIADMK leader was addressing reporters in Chennai a day after he met BJP veteran and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, along with that party chief JP Nadda in the national capital. "We had aligned with the BJP for 2019 Lok Sabha polls and it continued during the 2021 (TN) Assembly polls, as well in the Erode by-poll (earlier this year). It (alliance) does continue," he asserted.

Asked if his "differences" with Annamalai figured in his meeting with Shah on Wednesday night, EPS dubbed the question as "wrong." "We have no issue with Annamalai. If that be the case, would he have campaigned during the (recent) Erode East bypoll. Only the media is asking such questions to create rift," Palaniswami alleged. Whether it is AIADMK or the BJP, everyone will look at ensuring their party's growth. "The parties in our alliance are ones which function independently, unlike those in the DMK-headed coalition... Everyone has their ideology and will function accordingly. As an alliance we will work unitedly and AIADMK's policy is to ensure the victory of alliance parties' candidates," he said. Incidentally, Annamalai had late on Wednesday tweeted a picture of EPS's meeting with Shah and Nadda, where the Tamil Nadu BJP president was also present. Palaniswami was accompanied by senior party leaders and former ministers SP Velumani, C Ve Shanmugam, P Thangamani, K P Munusamy and D Jayakumar during his meeting with the BJP leaders. To a question on his rival and deposed party leader O Panneerselvam, EPS charged the former was functioning as the ruling DMK's "B-team."

UP police to acquire 84 specialised drones

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, April 27: The UP Police has signed a contract with a Pune-based robotics startup to deliver 84 specialised drones with day and night visual capability and thermal imaging features to detect hidden arms and ammunition. The drones will also help the UP police to control rioting and improve aerial surveillance. The Pune company Sagar Defence Engineering bagged the contract through the Make in India route GEM portal at a cost of less than Rs 10 lakh per drone during the reverse auction to support natively developed drone technologies, where the actual cost of such drones was envisaged to be up to ₹24 lakh. Though the Uttar Pradesh gov-



ernment had acquired simple drones earlier too for surveillance purposes during the Kumbh Mela, this is the first time the state government has ordered specialised drones as these have two advanced cameras and one microphone for generating awareness, issuing

warnings and making announcements for effective policing. Sagar founder and MD Capt Nikunj Parashar said, "These drones that weigh around 6.5 kg can operate for an hour and for a distance of 5 km on a single charge. Drones of the same plat-

THE DRONES WILL HELP THE UP POLICE TO CONTROL RIOTING AND IMPROVE AERIAL SURVEILLANCE

THE COMPANY HAS INDIGENOUSLY DEVELOPED AND DEPLOYED A ONE-OF-A-KIND TECHNOLOGY THAT ENABLES DRONES TO PERFORM AUTONOMOUS LAUNCH AND RECOVERY FROM ANY MOVING PLATFORM, MARINE OR LAND

form with different payloads were earlier acquired by the Indian Navy from us. The Navy uses these drones on high seas for keeping surveillance around its warships and for keeping an eye on enemy vessels, pirates, gun-runners and drug smugglers." Capt Nikunj said his company "will deliver all 84 drones to the UP Police by the last week of May". He also said that the UP Special Task Force had recently acquired some drones from his company for anti-criminal operations. "Our products have always proven to be path-breaking for all the security needs of various security forces, including the Indian Navy, Indian Air Force, Indian Army, BSF and DRDO," the Sagar Defence MD said. The company has also indigenously developed and deployed a one-of-a-kind technology that enables drones to perform autonomous launch and recovery from any moving platform, marine or land.

Divyang park in Lucknow soon

THE PARK WILL HAVE UNDERWATER TREADMILLS, RESISTANCE JETS, OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS AND HYDROTHERAPY CONSULTATION CENTRES

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, April 27: A divyang park is being planned in the CG City in Lucknow, designed especially for persons with special abilities. The park will have underwater treadmills, resistance jets, occupational therapists and hydrotherapy consultation centres. The tender to establish the first of its kind park in the country with a budget of Rs9.16 crore was floated by Lucknow Smart City on Tuesday. Officials said once the contractor and suitable agency which can create the infrastructure gets identified, it will take 10-12 months to get the park fully operational. To be developed adjacent to the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Medical University site in Chakgajaria, the park for individuals with disabilities will be spread over a 10-acre wide land parcel. Though divyang parks have been set up in Visakhapatnam and Bhubaneswar recently, the ele-



ments that will be introduced in the Lucknow park will cater to the needs of 21 disabilities that have been defined by the central government. The park will also have something to offer to the parents of such children and grown-up individuals.

Additional chief executive officer of Lucknow Smart City Limited, Pankaj Singh said, "Counselling sessions and consultation services will be organised for parents and primary caregivers. We will find and depute a team of professionals at the park who will work closely

with the caregivers to ensure treatment plans are implemented appropriately and the child keeps progressing towards his or her goals." The park will be open only for children detected with such disabilities and their caregivers and charges of the experts to be deputed in the park will be decided once the facility and infrastructure is ready. Officials said that reasonable fees will be taken from the parents. A senior officer said that a basketball court, skating track, jogging track, play area, amphitheatre and open-air gym will be set up to improve the sporting and outdoor experience of the children. Also, a sensory area and plants with fragrances, meditation and yoga centre, physiotherapy educational training and hydrotherapy options will be provided to enrich the educational experience of the children.

Man booked for 'cheating' TN CM Stalin

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, April 27: The Tamil Nadu Police have registered a case against a person, who cheated Chief Minister M.K. Stalin and his son, Minister for Sports & Youth Affairs Udhayanidhi Stalin, by claiming to be the captain of the Indian cricket team for persons with disabilities. The wheelchair bound person Vinoth Babu met the Chief Minister and later Udhayanidhi Stalin and claimed that he was the captain of the Indian cricket team for persons with disabilities. He also got his pictures clicked with the Chief Minister and Sports minister with a fake trophy.



He had claimed that his team had won the world tournament for disabled hosted in Pakistan. The photograph of Vinoth Babu with the Chief Minister and Udhayanidhi Stalin went viral and led the original Indian team members to sound an alert. Following an investigation, the Ramanathapuram police registered an FIR against Vinoth Babu under Sections 416, 420 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) on Wednesday. Police said that he had taken money from several persons claiming that he was the captain. The police on verification found that he has never been abroad.

UP'S FIRST TABLETOP AIRPORT NEARING COMPLETION



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Banda (UP), April 27: The first tabletop airport of Uttar Pradesh in the Vindhya hill range of

Chitrakoot will be operational in the coming months, giving a big boost to tourism and pilgrimage especially in this temple town and the entire Bundelkhand region.

The 'Tabletop Airport' is an airport located and built on top of a plateau or hilly surface, with one or both ends of the runway overlooking a drop.

The 'Tabletop Airport' is an airport located and built on top of a plateau or hilly surface, with one or both ends of the runway overlooking a drop.

The Chitrakoot airport will be managed by the Airport Authority of India as part of an agreement with the UP government

According to a government spokesman, currently, the work on approach roads is going on at the airport construction site and it will take some months to finish that work

According to a government spokesman, "currently, the work on approach roads is going on at the airport construction site and it will take some months to finish that work." Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has been giving special impetus on the development of Bundelkhand region, may inaugurate the Rs 146.5-crore airport project once it is ready. Chitrakoot holds great impor-

tance among Hindu pilgrims. Legend has it that Chitrakoot was the place where Lord Rama, his wife Sita and his brother Lakshmana stayed for 11-and-a-half years of their 14-year exile, making it a revered site among pilgrims. The Chitrakoot airport will be managed by the Airport Authority of India as part of an agreement with the UP government. After getting a licence from the

DGCA, 20-seater aircraft will start flying from Chitrakoot under the Union government's UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik) scheme, which is a regional airport development programme of the Centre and is meant to upgrade regional air connectivity of towns and cities. The Chitrakoot airport will boost air connectivity with other areas of UP and also increase the flow of tourists and pilgrims from other places in the country.

of the day quote

The "mashal" (flaming torch which is the Shiv Sena (UBT) symbol) will wipe out injustice. Allurements are short-term but relationships are everlasting

UDDHAV THACKERAY | SHIV SENA (UBT) CHIEF

Mohan Bhagwat ji is a source of inspiration and energy for us and everyone else. He always supports people who carry out good work. Hence, Devendra ji (Fadnavis) also said that Sangh stood as an inspiration in building the NCI. When the entire RSS and its chief provide support, building grand projects becomes possible

EKNATH SHINDE | MAHARASHTRA CM

If the people of UP want to get rid of their day-to-day problems... they will have to come out of the illusion of BJP government's tempting promises and paper claims. This is the appeal of the BSP

MAYAWATI | BSP CHIEF

SHORT TAKES

Six injured as vehicles pile up

Mumbai: Six persons were injured Thursday in a pile-up caused by a truck hitting more than 10 vehicles after its brakes failed on the Mumbai-Pune Expressway, a police official said. The incident took place at 12:55pm near Khopoli in Raigad district, some 75 kilometres from here, and the injured include a man, his wife and mother, the official said.

Badrinath opens for pilgrims

Badrinath: The portals of the Badrinath temple in Uttarakhand were opened Thursday and the first puja was done on behalf of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the shrine's committee said. Thousands of pilgrims had gathered at the Himalayan shrine amid light snowfall and rain to witness the opening of the temple at 7:10 am. The first puja was done on behalf of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Badrinath-Kedarnath Temple Committee said.

Sasikala files caveat in SC

Chennai: Expelled leader and former interim general secretary of AIADMK, V.K. Sasikala has filed a caveat petition in the Supreme Court on the party general secretary post issue. It may be noted that the Madras High Court had earlier dismissed the caveat that she had filed in the issue and now she has moved the apex court.

BJP leader found hanging from tree

Ranchi: The body of a BJP leader was found hanging from a tree in Jharkhand on Thursday, an official said. The deceased has been identified as Pramod Singh, a resident of Manatu block in Palamu district. Pramod, the president of the BJP's Scheduled Tribe Morcha cell had left home at 5 p.m. Wednesday and was missing since then.

250 evacuated as fire breaks out at IGMCH

Shimla: A fire broke out at the Indira Gandhi Medical College and Hospital (IGMCH) here Thursday after two cooking gas cylinders exploded in the cafeteria, leading to the evacuation of about 250 people from the new OPD building, officials said. No casualty has been reported in the incident that took place in the new Outdoor Patient Department (OPD) building of the hospital, they said.



The Prime Minister and those laughing heartily at his joke ought to educate themselves better and create awareness rather than ridicule mental health issues in this insensitive, morbid manner

PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA | CONGRESS LEADER

'CITY BEAUTY COMPETITION'

The Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry has launched a 'City Beauty Competition' that aims to encourage and recognise transformational efforts made by cities and wards to create beautiful, innovative and inclusive public spaces



How can same-sex couples avail social benefits: SC to govt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 27: The Supreme Court Thursday asked the Centre to find a way to give same-sex couples basic social benefits, like joint bank accounts or nominating a partner in insurance policies, even without legal recognition of their marital status, as it appeared that the court could be agreeing that granting legal recognition to same-sex marriages falls within the domain of legislature.

A bench headed by Chief Justice of India and comprising Justices SK Kaul, S Ravindra Bhat, Hima Kohli, and PS Narasimha said: "Look at the profound nature of our culture, what happened that in 1857 and thereafter, you got the Indian Penal Code, we imposed as it as a code of Victorian morality... our culture was extraordinarily inclusive... very broad and it is possible one of the reasons why our religion survived even after foreign invasions because of inclusion, the profound nature of our culture."

The bench told Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre: "We understand our limitation as a court, no question about it. There are so many issues, of course you have made your argument on the legislative side, so many issues on the administrative side... we do not have a model, it will not be appropriate to devise a model but we can certainly tell the government that look, how law has gone so far now..."

Mehta said that class specific problems can be addressed. The Chief Justice said, "We take your

point, look if the court were to go in the legislative arena, you have made a very powerful argument on that, look you will be legislating. This is not your remit, this is for Parliament or state legislatures... but short of that, our law has gone so far now."

"Now what the government can do to ensure that these relationships based on cohabitation or associations, they must be recognised in terms creating conditions of security, social welfare, and while doing that, we also ensure for future that these relationships should be ostracised in the society."

Mehta contended that while same-sex persons have the fundamental right to cohabit, choose a partner etc, the same cannot be given the label of marriage.

The Chief Justice said: "Once you recognize the right to co-habit, homosexual relationships are not really one off incidents in the life of persons, they may also be symptomatic of a sustained emotional, social, and physical relationship. Once you recognise that right to cohabit is a fundamental right, then to say to you cannot seek any legal recognition at all... because once we accept the fact that same sex couples have a right to cohabit then there is a corresponding duty on the state to at least recognise that cohabitation must find recognition in the law... we are not going into marriage at all."

The bench observed that long cohabitation raises the presumption of marriage, because in old times where were the marriage certificates or registration.

THE SUPREME COURT, WHICH IS HEARING ARGUMENTS ON A BATCH OF PLEAS SEEKING LEGAL SANCTION FOR SAME SEX MARRIAGES INDICATED IT MIGHT REFER FOR ADJUDICATION BY A TWO-JUDGE BENCH THE CHALLENGE TO THE 30-DAY PRIOR NOTICE PROVISION IN THE SPECIAL MARRIAGE ACT, 1954



Commuters ride a horse cart during a strike of auto rickshaw drivers in Patna, Bihar

PTI PHOTO

Anand Mohan walks out of jail

AGENCIES

Patna/Saharsa, April 27: Gangster-turned-politician Anand Mohan, who was serving a life sentence for killing an IAS officer in Bihar three decades ago, walked out Thursday amid protests by family members and well-wishers of the slain bureaucrat.

Mohan, who had been an MP prior to his conviction in 2007, was released from Saharsa jail Thursday morning after being behind the bars for 15 years.

The gangster-turned-politicians supporters who believe that their leader was "framed" in the murder of G Krishnaiah, the then district magistrate of Gopalganj, had planned a celebratory procession but the release was done in a manner which precluded any such gathering.

Krishnaiah, who hailed from Telangana and was from a scheduled caste, was beaten to death by a mob in 1994 when his vehicle tried to overtake a funeral proces-



The Bihar govt is claiming that the release of Anand Mohan was done on the basis of good conduct in jail

sion in Muzaffarpur district. Mohan, who was the sitting MLA from Mahishi, was leading the procession taken out upon the death of his close associate Chhotan Shukla, another dreaded gangster who fell to bullets of his rivals before realizing his political ambitions.

Mohan's name figured in a list of more than 20 prisoners who were

ordered to be set free by a notification issued by the state law department earlier this week as they had spent more than 14 years behind bars. His remission of sentence followed an April 10 amendment of Bihar Prison Manual by the Nitish Kumar government whereby the restriction on early release of those involved in killing of a public servant on duty was done away with. The relaxation has predictably been opposed by the wife and daughter of Krishnaiah.

Red-faced over the controversy, the government got chief secretary Amir Subhani to address a press conference and assert that the release was in accordance with norms.

When some journalists asked whether alleged recovery of mobile phones from the possession of Mohan in 2021 was taken into account while certifying his good conduct in jail, the chief secretary said he was not aware of such a charge against the former MP.

Badal cremated



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Badal (Pb), April 27: Akali stalwart Parkash Singh Badal was cremated with full state honours at his ancestral village in Punjab's Muktsar district Thursday with thousands of mourners and leaders across the political spectrum paying their last respects to the five-time chief minister.

SAD chief Sukhbir Singh Badal lit the funeral pyre at a special platform erected for the last rites. Badal's mortal remains were taken to the family's farmland, around a kilometer from his residence, on a flower-decked tractor-trolley with his son Sukhbir Singh Badal and other family members standing with folded hands as the vehicle moved past the mourners on the route. Overcome by emotions, Sukhbir Badal and his sister Parmeet Kaur Kairon broke down before the body was consigned to flames. Badal died at a private hospital in Mohali on Tuesday, nine days after being admitted there with breathing problems.

People from all walks of life including politicians and religious leaders turned up at the village to pay tribute to the leader whose political career began seven decades ago when he became the sarpanch of Badal panchayat.

Multiple HCs get new judges

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 27: Eleven judicial officers and two advocates were Thursday elevated as additional judges and judges in four high courts, including Delhi.

Separately, while Justice Sanjeev Prakash Sharma was transferred from the Patna High Court to the Punjab and Haryana HC, Justice Atul Sreedharan of the Madhya Pradesh HC stood transferred to the Jammu and Kashmir High Court.

The 13 fresh appointments were made in the high courts of Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Law Minister Kiren Rijiju tweeted about the appointments and transfers.

"In exercise of the power conferred by clause (1) of Article 224 of the Constitution of India, the President is pleased to appoint S/Shri (i) Girish Kathpalia and (ii) Manoj Jain, to be Additional Judges of Delhi High Court, for a period of two years, with effect from the date they assume charge of their respective offices," one of the orders read. According to another order, Roopesh Chandra Varshney, Anuradha Shukla, Sanjeev Sudhakar Kalgaonkar, Prem Narayan Singh, Achal Kumar Paliwal, Hirdesh, and Avinandra Kumar Singh have been appointed as judges of the Madhya Pradesh High Court. Similarly, Rakesh Thapliyal, Pankaj Purohit, and Vivek Bharti Sharma have been made judges of the Uttarakhand High Court. Sanjay Kumar Jaiswal has been elevated as an additional judge of the Chhattisgarh High Court. Additional judges are usually appointed for a period of two years before being made judges or as they are popularly called permanent judges.

POONCH TERROR ATTACK CASE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Poonch/Jammu, April 27: A 50-year-old man who allegedly consumed poison on being called by police for questioning in connection with last week's terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch died Thursday, sparking protests by agitated locals, an official said.

Mukhtar Hussain Shah, a resident of Nar village in the district's Mendhar tehsil, was disturbed as he was facing some domestic is-

Man who consumed poison dies

sues, he said, adding that he was not summoned as a suspect.

However, in a video message which went viral after his death, Shah alleged harassment. He also called for stern action against the real culprits behind the attack and a united fight against terrorism.

Shah allegedly consumed poison Tuesday evening and was admitted to the Government Medical College, Rajouri, where he died Thursday morning, the official said. Shah took the extreme step within hours of

being asked to report for questioning in connection with the April 20 ambush by terrorists in the Bhata Dhurian forest that left five soldiers dead, he said. The slain soldiers were from a Rashtriya Rifles unit deployed for counter-terror operations.

Soon after Shah's body reached near his house, his relatives and neighbours blocked the Jammu-Poonch national highway between Bhimber Gali and Bhata Dhurian to press for an inquiry into the circumstances leading to his death.

Security forces have detained over 60 people as part of an ongoing anti-terrorist operation following the attack in Bhata Dhurian, a notorious infiltration route for terrorists from across the Line of Control because of its topography, dense forest cover and natural caves. The massive search and cordon operation has been extended to many areas of both Poonch and nearby Rajouri but there has been no contact with the terrorists who fled the scene after the deadly ambush.

Army to launch command cyber ops & support wings

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 27: The Army Thursday said it has decided to operationalise command cyber operations and support wings as part of an overall approach to absorb niche technologies and modernise its online networks.

The decision to have dedicated cyber operations wings was taken at the Army Commanders Conference that took place from April 17 to 21.

With rapid migration towards net centricity, which entails an increased reliance on modern communication systems, the Army commanders reviewed the requirement to safeguard the networks and decided to operationalise Command Cyber Operations and Support Wings (CCOSW) in the immediate future, the Army said.

Sources said a large number of niche technology-enabled equipment are being inducted into the Indian Army including swarm drones, loitering weapon systems and ant-drone equipment.



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

A large number of niche technology-enabled equipment are being inducted into the Indian Army including swarm drones, loitering weapon systems and ant-drone equipment

The expansion of cyber warfare capabilities by India's adversaries has made the cyber domain more competitive and contested than ever before, they said.

"In order to augment the capabilities of the forces by absorption of niche technologies and equip-

tional preparedness and readiness of the Indian Army.

It said the Army Commanders' Conference also approved a new technical entry scheme (TES) for officers and it will come into effect from January 2024.

For the officers' entry to the Indian Army as B Tech graduates, a five-year TES model is currently being followed.

Under this model, one year military training is imparted at the Officers Training Academy (OTA), Gaya. Thereafter, three years B Tech degree is imparted at the Cadet Training Wings (CTWs), followed by one year at the three engineering colleges of Indian Army.

It is now decided to have a four-year tenure with three years of training focused on technical training at the Cadet Training Wings (CTWs), followed by one year of basic military training at Indian Military Academy in Dehradun.

The four-year training model will ensure that young officers are available in the Indian Army units to serve the country for one additional year.

In a significant step towards welfare of specially-abled children of those soldiers who die in harness, it was decided to double the sustenance allowance to such children through AGIF (Army Group Insurance Fund).

"In order to harness the indomitable spirit and never say die attitude of the soldiers who are battle and physical casualties, it was decided to identify and train selected motivated soldiers for paralympic events by training them at Army sports and mission olympic nodes in nine sporting events," the Army said.

The Army Commanders' Conference is an apex-level biannual event that is held in April and October every year. The conference is an institutional platform for conceptual-level deliberations, culminating in making important policy decisions for the Indian Army.

international

of the day quote

The India-US partnership is at a moment where it will not only be good for the two countries' interests but also for the world



TARANJIT SINGH SANDHU | INDIA'S AMBASSADOR TO THE US

Tehran wants Lebanon's rivals to reach an agreement to elect a new President in the crisis-hit country that has been without a head of state since October



HOSSEIN AMIRABDOLLAHIAN | IRAN'S FOREIGN MINISTER

The budget to be announced next month will focus on cost-of-living support, cyclone recovery, and investments in skills, science and technology, and infrastructure to propel economic growth



CHRIS HIPKINS | NEW ZEALAND PM

SHORT TAKES

Violence continues

Cairo: Armed fighters rampaged through a main city in Sudan's war-ravaged region of Darfur Thursday, battling each other and looting shops and homes, residents said. The violence came despite a fragile three-day truce between Sudan's two top generals whose power struggle has killed hundreds. The mayhem in the Darfur city of Genena pointed to how the rival generals' fight for control in the capital, Khartoum, was spiraling into violence in other parts of Sudan.

Seven killed

Karachi: At least seven people, including three children and a woman, were killed when a fire broke out in a coach of an express train in Pakistan's Sindh province, an official said Thursday. The incident happened late Wednesday night when a fire broke out in a business-class coach of the Karachi Express train shortly after midnight as it travelled from Karachi to Lahore.

Tense face-off

Malabrigo: A Chinese coast guard ship blocked a Philippine patrol vessel steaming into a disputed shoal in the South China Sea, causing a frightening near-collision in the latest act of Beijing's aggression in the strategic waterway. The high seas face-off on Sunday between the larger Chinese ship and the Philippine coast guard's BRP Malapascua near the Second Thomas Shoal was among the tense moments it and another Philippine vessel encountered in a weeklong sovereignty patrol in one of the world's most hotly contested waterways.

Ukraine allies sent 1,550 combat vehicles: NATO

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kyiv, April 27: NATO allies and partner countries have delivered more than 98 per cent of the combat vehicles promised to Ukraine during Russia's invasion and war, the military alliance's chief said Thursday, giving Kyiv a bigger punch as contingents launching a counteroffensive.

Along with more than 1,550 armoured vehicles, 230 tanks and other equipment, Ukraine's allies have sent "vast amounts of ammunition" and also trained and equipped more than nine new Ukrainian brigades, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said.

More than 30,000 troops are estimated to make up the new brigades. Some NATO partner countries, such as Sweden and Australia, have also provided armoured vehicles. "This will put Ukraine in a strong position to continue to retake occupied territory," Stoltenberg told reporters in Brussels.

His comments came a day after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he and Chinese leader Xi Jinping had a "long and meaningful" phone call in their first known contact since Russia's full-scale invasion more than a year ago.

Though Zelenskyy said he was encouraged by Wednesday's call and Western officials welcomed Xi's move, the development didn't appear to bring about any immediate shift in peace prospects. Russia and Ukraine are far apart in their terms for peace, and Beijing — while looking to position itself as a global diplomatic power — has refused to criticise Moscow's invasion.

The Chinese government sees Russia as a diplomatic ally in opposing US influence in global affairs, and Xi visited Moscow last month. Stoltenberg said the 31 NATO allies



NATO SECRETARY-GENERAL JENS STOLTENBERG SAID THE 31 NATO ALLIES WERE COMMITTED TO SHORING UP UKRAINE'S MILITARY

AT LEAST SEVEN CIVILIANS WERE KILLED AND 33 WERE INJURED BETWEEN WEDNESDAY AND THURSDAY, UKRAINE'S PRESIDENTIAL OFFICE SAID THURSDAY

were committed to shoring up Ukraine's military, adding that taking back land occupied by the Kremlin's forces would give Kyiv a stronger negotiating position if peace talks occur.

Ukrainian officials said China's overture was encouraging. Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal on Thursday described the call between Xi and Zelenskyy as "very productive". "I'm convinced it is a good beginning for our relations in the future," Shmyhal said after visiting Pope Francis at the Vatican.

But the Kremlin's response was lukewarm. Asked if the call could help end the fighting, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters: "We are ready to welcome anything that could lead to the



America needs to show some strategic patience with India on its ties with Russia

JIM MATTIS | FORMER US DEFENCE SECRETARY

REVAMP SOON

Australia proposed on Thursday overhauling its immigration system to speed up getting highly skilled workers into the country and smoothening the path to permanent residency



Imran names 6 persons plotting to kill him

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lahore, April 27: Pakistan's ousted Prime Minister Imran Khan Thursday dismissed the claim made by the government that his life is under threat from "foreign agencies", and instead said he has identified a total of six persons within the country, including three fresh ones, who plotted to kill him.

Referring to a new video that he claims his team has sent to his associates abroad, Khan, 70, said that its content talks about the people who want to kill him and would be out in public in case he is assassinated.

"Among the six, three are those whom I had named in the FIR after an assassination attempt on my life in Punjab in November last year," Khan said in a series of tweets Thursday.

After a gun attack on his rally in the Wazirabad area, some 150 kms from Lahore, in which he suffered bullet injuries to his leg, Khan blamed Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Interior Minister



Rana Sanaullah and ISI's top officer Major General Faisal Naseer for hatching a plot to assassinate him.

"Interior minister (Sanaullah) says my life is under threat from foreign agencies. Let me make it clear to the entire country that the only threat to my life is from the 3 people I named after Wazirabad assassination attempt. Same 3, + 3 more I have identified in a video statement, tried to eliminate me on March 18 in ICT Judicial Complex," Khan said.

Khan has not identified the three additional persons named by him.

Shehbaz secures vote of confidence



When Shehbaz Sharif was elected as the Prime Minister in April last year, he had secured the support of 174 lawmakers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, April 27: Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Thursday secured a vote of confidence from the National Assembly with 180 lawmakers expressing "full confidence" in his leadership, in a surprise development amidst an increasing confrontation between the government and the top judiciary.

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, the chairman of the Pakistan Peoples Party, tabled a resolution in the lower house stating that the National Assembly of Pakistan "reposes its full confidence in the leadership of" Prime Minister Sharif.

The National Assembly Speaker, Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, ordered voting which was conducted with lawmakers rising from their seats in favour of adopting the resolution. The resolution was supported by 180 lawmakers in the 342-member National Assembly. The Prime Minister needed 172 votes to become the leader of the house.

When Sharif was elected as the Prime Minister in April last year, he had secured the support of 174 lawmakers.

"Consequently Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has obtained the vote of confidence from the National Assembly and commands the confidence of the majority of the members of the National Assembly as prime minister of the Islamic

Republic of Pakistan," Speaker Ashraf announced, amid thumping of desks by lawmakers.

Later, Prime Minister Sharif addressed the House and thanked the lawmakers for reposing confidence in him and assured them that he would "always maintain their trust in his leadership".

He also assailed the 2018 elections which he said were rigged to assure the success of Imran Khan.

He asked the speaker to probe those elections so that the facts are brought before the nation.

The symbolic vote of confidence is an indication that the prime minister enjoys the full confidence of the lawmakers when it is feared that a three-member bench of the Supreme Court may target the prime minister for allegedly not implementing the directives to provide Rs21 billion for provincial elections.

The development comes after the Supreme Court observed that it would not force political parties to hold parleys to end the impasse on the issue of elections.

In a related development, the government and Khan's party indicated to hold talks for which Chairman Senate, Sadiq Sanjrani, invited them.

Prime Minister Sharif in his address said that talks were expected to begin in the evening.

"The talks will be held on holding the election in the entire country on the same day," he said.

US sanctions ex-SL Navy commander

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Colombo, April 27: The US has sanctioned former Sri Lankan Navy Commander Wasantha



Former senior Sri Lankan Navy Commander Wasantha Karannagoda

Karannagoda for "gross violation" of human rights during the brutal conflict with the LTTE, evoking a strong reaction from Colombo which said the "unilateral" move was "counter-productive".

The 70-year-old former Navy commander from 2005-2009 is the second senior defence official of such stature to be sanctioned by the US for human rights violations during the final battle with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in 2009.

Karannagoda was later appointed Sri Lanka's Ambassador to Japan and currently is a gov-

ernor of a province in the island nation. In 2020, the US State Department similarly sanctioned the current chief of defence staff General Shavendra Silva. He was a divisional head of the Army during the final battle with the LTTE and later became the Commander. "The US State Department has designated the former Navy Commander Wasantha

Karannagoda for 'a gross violation of human rights,' US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement on Wednesday. "The US continues to seek truth and justice for victims of the Sri Lankan civil war," the statement further added. Reacting sharply to Washington's move, Sri Lanka said that such unilateral action by the US without following due process is counter-productive."



French President Emmanuel Macron meets children at a school in La Cluze-et-Mijoux, near Besancon, eastern France

Iran seized oil tanker in Gulf, says US Navy

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dubai, April 27: The US Navy said Iran seized a Marshall Islands-flagged oil tanker in the Gulf of Oman on Thursday amid wider tensions over Tehran's nuclear programme.

The Navy's Mideast-based 5th Fleet identified the vessel as the Advantage Sweet. Satellite tracking data for the vessel from MarineTraffic.Com showed it in the Gulf of Oman just north of Oman's capital, Muscat, on Thursday afternoon. It had just come from Kuwait and listed its destination as Houston, Texas.

"The oil tanker issued a distress call during the seizure," the 5th Fleet said. "Iran's actions are contrary to international law and disruptive to regional security and stability. Iran should immediately release the oil tanker."

The vessel's owners could not be immediately reached for comment. Iran did not immediately acknowledge the seizure and Iran's mission to the United Nations did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Thursday's seizure by Iran was the latest in a string of hijackings and explosions to roil a region that includes the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf through which a fifth of all traded oil passes.

The incidents began after then-President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew the United States from Iran's nuclear deal with world powers, which saw Tehran drastically limit its enrichment of uranium in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions.

Also, the US Navy has blamed Iran for a series of limpet mine attacks on vessels that damaged tankers in 2019, as well as for a fatal drone attack on an Israeli-linked oil tanker that killed two European crew members in 2021.

Tehran denies carrying out the attacks, but a wider shadow war between Iran and the West has played out in the region's volatile waters. Tanker seizures have been a part of it since 2019.

New image reveals violent events near a supermassive black hole

REUTERS

Washington, April 27: Expanding upon the historic first images of black holes, scientists have unveiled the first picture showing the violent events unfolding around one of these ravenous cosmic behemoths, including the launching point of a colossal jet of high-energy particles shooting outward into space.

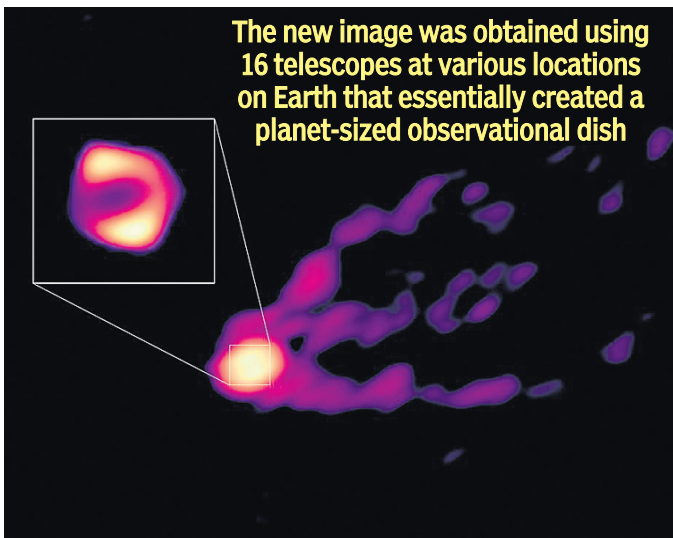
The new image was obtained using 16 telescopes at various locations on Earth that essentially created a planet-sized observational dish. The supermassive black hole pictured resides at the center of a relatively nearby galaxy called Messier 87, or M87, about 54 million light-years from Earth.

A light year is the distance light travels in a year, 5.9 trillion miles (9.5 trillion km). This black hole, with a mass 6.5 billion times that of our sun, was the subject

of the first image of such an object ever obtained, released in 2019, with another black hole pictured last year.

Those images, which showed just the darkness of the black hole and a ring of bright material plunging into it, and the new one all arise from observations using multiple radio telescopes worldwide. But the new one shows light emitted at a longer wavelength, expanding what can be seen.

Hard to observe by their very nature, black holes are celestial entities exerting gravitational pull so strong no matter or light can escape once caught in their grasp. Most galaxies are built around supermassive black holes. Some are known not only to guzzle any surrounding material but also to unleash huge and blazingly bright jets of high-energy particles far into space - beyond the very galaxy from which they originate.



The new image shows how the base of such a jet connects with matter swirling around the black hole in a ring-like structure. The entire system around a black hole is captured in the image for the first time. It shows the base of the jet of hot plasma, a fuzzy ring of light

from hot plasma falling into the black hole, and a central dark area - sort of a donut hole - created by the black hole's presence. Plasma - the fourth state of matter after solids, liquids and gases - is material so hot that some or all its atoms are split into high-energy subatomic particles.

"The image underlines for the first time the connection between the accretion flow (material pulled inward) near the central supermassive black hole and the origin of the jet," said astrophysicist Ru-Sen Lu of the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Shanghai, lead author of the study published in the journal Nature. Seeing the entire scene in the vicinity of a supermassive black hole can be insightful.

"This helps to better understand the complicated physics around black holes, how jets are launched and accelerated and how matter inflow into the black hole and mat-

ter outflow are related," said astrophysicist and study co-author Thomas Krichbaum of the Max Planck Institute for Radio Astronomy in Germany.

"This is what astronomers and astrophysicists have been wanting to see for more than half a century," said astrophysicist and study co-author Kazunori Akiyama of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Haystack Observatory. "This is the dawn of an exciting new era."

Lu, Krichbaum and Akiyama are members of the Event Horizon Telescope (EHT) project, an international collaboration begun in 2012 with the goal of directly observing a black hole's immediate environment. A black hole's event horizon is the point beyond which anything - stars, planets, gas, dust and all forms of electromagnetic radiation - gets swallowed into oblivion.

business

of the day quote

While India has established itself as a pharmacy of the world, integrated healthcare would require equal emphasis on medical devices

AJAY SINGH | PRESIDENT, ASSOCHAM

India is pressing for expanding the scope of common reporting standard at the G20 to include non-financial assets, like real estate properties, under the automatic exchange of information among OECD countries

SANJAY MALHOTRA | REVENUE SECRETARY

Given Swiggy's presence across 500 cities for food delivery and over 25 cities for Instamart, we continue to focus on onboarding partners from tier 2 and 3 cities

KEDAR GOKHALE | VP OF OPERATIONS, SWIGGY

SHORT TAKES

Citi deal drags Axis Bank's profit

Bangalore: Private sector lender Axis Bank Thursday reported a net loss of ₹57 crore for the March 2023 quarter on account of the retail consumer business of Citibank. The bank earned a net profit of ₹4,118 crore on a standalone basis in the same quarter the previous year. During the quarter, the bank's total income increased to ₹28,865 crore from ₹22,000 crore a year ago, Axis Bank said. Interest income grew to ₹23,970 crore during the period under review against ₹17,776 crore in the corresponding quarter a year ago.

HUL net profit up 12.74% in Q4

New Delhi: FMCG major Hindustan Unilever Ltd Thursday reported an increase of 12.74 per cent in its consolidated net profit at ₹2,601 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 31, 2023. The company had posted a net profit of ₹2,307 crore in the January-March quarter of the previous fiscal. Its revenue from sales during the quarter under review stood at ₹14,926 crore, up 10.83 per cent, as against ₹13,468 crore in the corresponding period a year ago, Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL) said.

Wipro Q4 net profit dips 0.4%

New Delhi: IT major Wipro Thursday reported a marginal year-on-year decline of 0.4 per cent in net profit to ₹3,074.5 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 2023 and announced a share buyback of up to ₹12,000 crore. The Wipro board approved the buyback of 26.96 crore equity shares at a price of ₹445 apiece. "Board...Of Wipro...Has approved a proposal to buyback up to 26,96,62,921 equity shares, being 4.91 per cent of the total paid-up equity shares of the company, for an aggregate amount not exceeding ₹120,00,00,00,000 at a price of ₹445...Per equity share," the company said.

Shoppers Stop swings to profit

Bangalore: India's Shoppers Stop Ltd reported a quarterly profit from a year-ago loss Wednesday, as the department store operator benefited from strong demand for beauty products and higher margin private-label clothing. The company reported a consolidated net profit of ₹142.6 million for the quarter ended March 31, compared with a loss of ₹158.5 million a year ago.

IN A FIRST

OYO turns cash flow positive in Q4, may mark its 1st profitable year

New Delhi, Apr 27: Hospitality tech firm OYO turned cash flow positive for the first time in the fourth quarter of FY2023.

The company's Founder & Group CEO Ritesh Agarwal shared the update with OYO employees addressing a townhall virtually Thursday, sources told PTI. The company is anticipated to end the quarter with nearly ₹90 crore surplus cash flow, sources said, at-



We have the lowest debt in the world for a group of our size. We are very comfortable. We have never defaulted to make any payment. We always have a plan to make the payments

ANIL AGARWAL | FOUNDER AND CHAIRMAN, VEDANTA RESOURCES

IPO-bound OYO becomes profitable

tributing the increase in bookings across all key geographies, especially in the Europe homes business that is witnessing unprecedented advance bookings both for the upcoming summer season peak and the relatively off-season period from November to March. The company's last reported treasury or cash corpus on the balance sheet is around ₹2,700 crore. The IPO-bound company was now on track to end FY23 with adjusted earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortisation (EBITDA) of around ₹245 crore in FY23, making it Oyo's first profitable year since its inception around 2013. That rise in adjusted



EBITDA was because the company likely tripled its adjusted EBITDA in H2FY23 to around ₹185 crore, a jump from when Oyo reported a

negative adjusted EBITDA of ₹190 crore in H2FY22, and because of an improvement in operational efficiencies that helped Oyo register an adjusted EBITDA of ₹63 crore in H1FY23, according to an addendum that the company filed with capital markets regulator, the securities and exchange board of India (SEBI). Oyo also witnessed an increase on the revenue front. It likely exited the previous financial year with a 19 per cent increase, from ₹4,780 crore in FY22 to ₹5,708 crore in FY23. Oyo was hopeful of maintaining that pace of growth. Its adjusted EBITDA is likely to increase from ₹245 crore in FY23 to

about ₹800 crore in FY24, the presentation estimated. The company -- which refiled its draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) with the SEBI under the recently introduced pre-filing route and is looking to raise over ₹8,400 crore through a mix of primary and secondary shares -- was sitting on a cash reserve of around ₹2,700 crore, according to the presentation. Oyo's IPO would include a fresh issue of equity shares up to ₹7,000 crore and an offer for sale (OFS) of ₹1,430 crore. Oyo was looking to hit the public markets at a valuation much lower than \$10 billion that it was initially eyeing, according to reports.

Raymond sells 3 consumer care brands to Godrej

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 27: Gautam Singhanian-run Raymond Group Thursday announced the sale of its three consumer care brands -- the Kamasutra condoms and the grooming brands of Park Avenue perfumes and the KS deodorants -- to the Godrej group for ₹2,825 crore.

The company's Chief Financial Officer Amit Agarwal said the deal is on a slump sale basis. The company will continue to manufacture all these brands on a contract basis and sell them to Godrej Consumer Care from its Aurangabad plant. It will also continue to export these brands, especially the condoms, apart from continuing the B2B sale in the domestic market, he added.

The entire proceeds from the sale, which comes at almost 5x (5-fold) of its sales in FY22 (₹522 crore), will go to the company, Singhanian said. With the sale, the parent Raymond will become a debt-free company, he added.

As of December 2022, the company had gross debt of ₹2,400 crore and a net debt of ₹930 crore.

Gautam Singhanian owns 49 per cent in Raymond Consumer Care and the rest is held by Raymond Ltd, which will be demerged from Raymond and listed after regulatory approvals, which he expects to be over in the next 12-15 months.

Smartphone mkt sees historic dip

India's smartphone market records steepest plunge of 19% in the first quarter of 2023

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 27: India's smartphone shipments dipped to about 31 million units in the January-March quarter, thereby recording the steepest fall of 19 per cent in the first quarter on year-over-year basis, market research firm Counterpoint said Thursday. Mobile phones priced below ₹30,000 apiece recorded a sharp decline while shipment in the premium and ultra premium category registered 60-66 per cent increase.

"This was the highest ever Q1 decline seen by India's smartphone market, besides being the third consecutive quarterly decline. Sluggish demand, high inventory build-up carried over from 2022, growing consumer preference for refurbished phones and pessimistic channel view of the market contributed to this decline," Counterpoint's market monitor service report said.

5G smartphones' contribution to total smartphone shipments reached a record of 43 per cent. "With a 20 per cent share, Samsung led the Indian smartphone market for the second consecutive quarter. It was also the top 5G brand," the report said.



- WITH 20% SHARE SAMSUNG LED THE SMARTPHONE MARKET FOR SECOND YEAR IN A ROW
- VIVO MAINTAINED ITS SECOND POSITION WITH 17% SHARE FOLLOWED BY XIAOMI WITH 16%
- APPLE AGAIN LEADS OVERALL PREMIUM SEGMENT AS WELL AS ULTRA-PREMIUM SEGMENT

Samsung's new 5G-capable A series performed well in the off-line market, contributing 50 per cent of the shipments. Samsung's ultra-premium segment (priced above ₹45,000) grew 247 per cent YoY in March 2023 quarter driven by the successful launch of the S23 series and financing options, the report said.

Apple grew 50 per cent YoY and acquired a 6 per cent share in March 2023 quarter. Apple maintained its lead in the overall premium segment (₹30,000) as well as

Samsung logs worst quarterly earnings in 14 years globally

Samsung Electronics Thursday reported its worst quarterly profits in 14 years, blaming slowing consumer spending on electronics and a global microchip glut that hit its core memory business. The South Korean company -- one of the world's largest makers of memory chips and smartphones -- said in a statement that operating profit fell 640 billion won (\$478.6 million) -- down 95 per cent from a year earlier. The company's first-quarter net income fell 86.1 per cent to 1.57 trillion won, and sales dropped 18 per cent to 63.75 trillion won. The company said that "overall consumer spending slowed amid the uncertain global macroeconomic environment". Samsung also blamed weakening demand for memory chips -- which usually generate about half the firm's profits -- and falling chip prices.

Xiaomi experienced a 44 per cent YoY drop from first quarter 2022, falling to the third spot during the reporting quarter with a 16 per cent share.

OnePlus was the fastest growing brand with 72 per cent YoY growth in the March 2023 quarter.

The quarter's silver lining came from 5G smartphones, whose contribution (43 per cent) crossed 40 per cent for the first time, registering a 23 per cent growth YoY as consumers kept upgrading to 5G devices.

US BANKS' COLLAPSE

AGENCIES

Mumbai, April 27: Governor Shaktikanta Das Thursday said the Reserve Bank is having a closer look at domestic lenders' business models as it feels that poor strategies can trigger a crisis.

The Governor of the Indian central bank also said that the recent developments in the US, which has seen the implosion of lenders like Silicon Valley Bank and a rush to limit the contagion of stress across the system, may be because of poor business models.

He added that Indian banks have been able to stay resilient and have not been impacted adversely by

RBI raises monitoring of banks' biz models



the "recent sparks of financial instability seen in some advanced economies" courtesy the work done in this aspect by RBI and the banks themselves. "The RBI has started looking at the business models of banks more

The recent developments in the US raise a question whether the business model of individual banks that have faced challenges and whether the business models were right

SHAKTIKANTA DAS | GOVERNOR, RBI

closely ... deficiencies (in it) can spark a crisis," Das said, speaking at the inaugural global conference on financial resilience organised by the College of Supervisors which the central bank started last year.

Business models can sometimes create risks in certain parts of the balance sheet of a bank which going forward can blow up into a

bigger crisis, Das said. Recent events in the banking landscape of the US and Europe suggest that risks could crop up from segments of its balance sheet which might have been considered relatively safer, Das said, amid several analysts suggesting the implosion of Silicon Valley Bank was triggered by lapses on something as basic as asset liability mismatches.

CCL, MCL win big at CSR Conference



Sambalpur: A two-day CSR Conference 2023 from April 25-26 was concluded successfully at Central Coalfields Limited with a positive note that best practices of corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities carried out across Coal India Ltd, Central Coalfields Limited (CCL) and other subsidiaries would be implemented with same zeal and enthusiasm across the companies. CSR Conference 2023 was organised by CCL under the aegis of CIL. The theme of the much-awaited conference was "Re-Engineering CSR". An exhibition where the CIL and its subsidiaries showcased their CSR initiatives was also organised at CCL headquarters. CCL along with Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) jointly won the first prize for the best stall, while Eastern Coalfields Limited stood second. A brainstorming session amongst the participants was also organised on the occasion where deliberations were held on various facets of CSR and two groups were awarded first and second prize.

French spirits giant Pernod marred by challenges in India

PERNOD HAS OPERATED FOR MORE THAN 20 YEARS ACROSS INDIA AND HAS SECOND-LARGEST CUSTOMER BASE IN THE COUNTRY

REUTERS

New Delhi, April 27: From tax notices to allegations of illegally boosting market share, French liquor giant Pernod Ricard faces business and regulatory challenges in India, which it says is "among the top three most-win markets".

The maker of Chivas Regal and Absolut vodka is the second-largest spirits company globally and in India. It accounts for 17% of the alcohol market by volume in India, where its competitors include Diageo, IWSR Drinks Market Analysis says.

Pernod has operated for more than 20 years across India, where licences to operate are individually granted by states or in this case, the national capital territory,

and mostly have to be renewed every year.

LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

Pernod Ricard's managing director for India Paul-Robert Bouhier resigned from his position, a decision that sources said was announced internally April 26. Bouhier only took over the India job in January. He joined Pernod Ricard in 1995.

DELHI CITY INVESTIGATION

Pernod has since last year been under scrutiny from India's Enforcement Directorate as part of an investigation into how retailers, manufacturers and politicians allegedly colluded to illegally profit from the 2021 auction of liquor retail licences in New Delhi.



The capital city's liquor policy prohibited manufacturers from participating in retail sales, directly or indirectly. Pernod was "in contravention" as it effectively used bank guarantees to invest in retailers, the agency says. The agency also accuses Pernod of illegally making profits of ₹23 million by giving false price information to Delhi authorities.

Pernod has strongly denied the allegations.

SHUT OUT OF DELHI MARKET

New Delhi city authorities in April rejected Pernod's application to renew its liquor sale licence, citing ongoing investigations into the company. Pernod told a Delhi court it has been "suffering massive losses" as its brands have not been available in the city for six months.

Pernod has challenged the rejection and says it is "keen to restart supplies as soon as possible".

FEDERAL TAX DEMAND

Pernod faces a nearly \$250 million federal demand for allegedly undervaluing imports for over a decade to avoid full payment of duties.

India's customs authority in a court filing last year called the company a "habitual litigant" and accused it of a conspiracy "to defraud the Government of India of its legitimate revenue".

Pernod, which challenged the demand, says it has "always endeavoured to act with full transparency" and complies with all local laws.

IMPACT ON INVESTMENTS AND BUSINESS

Pernod says that since 1994, its tax disputes have made it tough to do business in the country. In a letter written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2021, the company said that "ever-lasting litigation has been a big strain on our ease of doing business and has inhibited fresh investment by

our group headquartered in Paris (France) for expansion of business in India".

In July 2022, Pernod wrote a letter to the federal tax authority saying it was "facing significant business continuity challenges" and that operational challenges were choking its supply chain.

HIGH IMPORT TAXES

India's alcohol market is heavily regulated and Pernod - like much of the industry - has been concerned about the 150% tax on imported liquor.

In April last year, the company urged the government to drop the tax it said poses a "large challenge" for Pernod Ricard and puts many of its drinks out of reach of consumers.

Pernod's revenue from operations in India stood at \$2.4 billion in 2020-21, but taxes and duties - which include federal, import and state levies - accounted for 79% of that. Its India net profit for the year stood at \$130 million.

