



BHUMI'S FASHION FAD

Actor Bhumi Pednekar says she loves to take risks even as some social media users ridicule her attire

LEISURE P2



SUDAN STRUGGLING

The sounds of air strikes and artillery could be heard in Khartoum as fighting in Sudan entered a third week

INTERNATIONAL P10



TITANS BEAT KKR

Defending champions Gujarat Titans defeat Kolkata Knight Riders to climb to the top of the IPL standing

SPORTS P12

BYJU'S raided over FEMA violation

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 29: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) Saturday said it has searched the Bangalore office and residential premises of Edtech major BYJU'S and its CEO and co-founder Raveendran Byju and seized "incriminating" documents and digital data as part of a foreign exchange violation probe.

A total of three premises, two business and one residential, including that of the registered company — Think & Learn Pvt Ltd — were raided under the provisions of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), it said.

The federal financial investigation agency said in a statement it has seized various "incriminating documents and digital data".

A spokesperson for BYJU'S legal team said the ED action was a "routine inquiry" and the company has been "completely transparent with the authorities and have provided them with all the information they have requested."

The ED alleged the company (Think & Learn Pvt Ltd) has not prepared its financial statements since 2020-21 fiscal and has not got the accounts audited, which is mandatory. Hence, the genuineness of the figures provided by the company are being cross-examined from the banks, it said.

It said the action was taken on the basis of "various complaints" received by private people and alleged Raveendran Byju was issued "several" summons but he remained "evasive and never appeared" before the ED. The searches found that the company received foreign direct investment (FDI) to the tune of Rs 28,000 crore during 2011-2023.

Contd...P4

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



I don't know the reason but he has been doing it once a month for the past 100 months

WEATHER	
	BHUB CTK
TEMP	MAX 38.4°C 37.8°C
	MIN 23.4°C 24.5°C
Humidity	65% 60%
Rainfall	Nil Nil
	Forecast
	Light rain very likely



IN SYNC: Members of a dance troupe perform on the occasion of International Dance Day in Nadia of West Bengal, Saturday

PTI PHOTO

State to lease out 6 tourism properties

The accommodation properties of the Tourism dept will be handed over to select private firms on lease basis for a period of 30 years for their redesigning and redevelopment

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 29: The state government has initiated the process to lease out six accommodation units under the Tourism department for development, augmentation, operation and maintenance through public-private partnership (PPP) mode.

The Tourism department has invited tenders to lease out the Panthanivas Paradip, Panthanivas Keonjhar, Yatriniwas Satapada, Yatriniwas Konark (part), TRC Gopalpur and BN Palace Paralakhemundi.

Among the properties, four properties — Yatriniwas Satapada, Yatriniwas Konark (part), Panthanivas Keonjhar and Panthanivas Paradip — are presently operational whereas other properties — TRC Gopalpur and BN Palace Paralakhemundi — are not in operational mode, official sources said.

All the properties will be handed over to selected private firms and operators on lease basis for a period of 30 years. The lease period can further be extended by another 30 years subject to mutual agreement between the Tourism department and the lessee.

Six months prior to the end of the



The lessee, if required, may demolish a part or whole of the property, other than BN Palace Paralakhemundi, for re-development purposes with prior approval from the department

lease period (30 years), the lessee and the department may mutually agree to extend the lease period by another 30 years. The lessee will not be required to pay any additional premium for such extension. Only the rate of biennial escalation in the annual lease rental shall be negotiated for the additional lease period, they said.

The lessee will have to design, redevelop, upgrade, augment, finance, manage, market, operate, maintain and repair/refurbish the property and project assets at its own expenses in accordance with the prescribed provisions, standards and specifications, applicable laws,

- The Tourism department has invited tenders to lease out the Panthanivas Paradip, Panthanivas Keonjhar, Yatriniwas Satapada, Yatriniwas Konark (part), TRC Gopalpur and BN Palace Paralakhemundi
- The lessees will have to design, redevelop, upgrade, augment, finance, manage, market, operate, maintain and repair/refurbish the property and project assets at their own expenses

terms of applicable permits and good industry practices.

The lessee, if required, may demolish a part or whole of the property, other than BN Palace Paralakhemundi, for re-development purposes with prior approval from the department.

For BN Palace, the lessee can develop the property into a Heritage Hotel without compromising the heritage nature of the property and in compliance with the norms specified in guidelines for Classification of Heritage Hotels issued by the Union Ministry of Tourism.

Contd...P4

CHINESE VESSELS IN INDIAN OCEAN

The 'large presence' of Chinese vessels in Indian Ocean Region is a threat to national security as the Indian Navy says it keeps a close watch on the situation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 29: There is a "large presence" of Chinese vessels in the Indian Ocean Region and India keeps a "very close watch" on the developments in the region to protect and preserve its national interests in the maritime domain, Navy Chief Admiral R Hari Kumar said Saturday.

During an interaction at a conclave here, he also said that the Indian Navy is seized of the docking of various PLA Navy ships at ports in Pakistan, and it is "keeping a watch on it".

Asked about the threat aspects, the Navy chief spoke of both conventional and non-conventional threats, besides those emerging from what he described as "silent and inclusive paradigm" resulting in a "web of threats" that are emerging.

The Indian Navy's role is to protect, promote and preserve national interests in the maritime domain, wherever they are, and it assesses the threats and challenges.

On a daily basis, it is being seen that there is a certain amount of contestation happening at sea. It is well below the threshold of conflict, but possibility of a full-fledged can-

LURKING THREAT



FILE PHOTO

not be ruled out, the Navy chief said.

On a question on PLA Navy ships docking at ports in Pakistan, he said, these ships are docking at ports in various countries, and not just in Pakistan.

As far as their visit to ports in Pakistan are concerned, "we are seized of it, and keep a watch on it," he said.

Admiral Kumar said the Pakistan Navy is modernising itself at a good pace and seeks to become a 50-platform force in 10-15 years, and they are adding new corvettes and frigates to their fleet.

As far as China is concerned, in the last 10 years, a large number of ships and submarines have been commissioned by it in the last 10 years, the third aircraft carrier is under construction, and much larger destroyers they are working on, he said, adding, "we feel this will plateau at some time".

Contd...P4

SHORT TAKES

Priyanka JEE-Main Odisha topper

Bhubaneswar:

Priyanka Sar of KIIT International School (KIIT-IS) has made her alma mater proud by becoming the Odisha topper in the JEE Main



exams, the results of which were declared Saturday. Priyanka scored 99.98 per cent. Besides Priyanka, 17 other students from the school have cleared the exam with flying colours. This is for the second time a KIIT-IS student has topped JEE Main. "It is indeed a proud moment for all of us as Priyanka is not only a product of our school, she has also made the state proud with her impeccable performance," said Achyuta Samanta, founder of KIIT & KISS.

P7

Low pressure area likely around May 5

Bhubaneswar: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) Saturday said a low pressure area is likely to take shape over south Bay of Bengal around May 5. Speaking to the media in New Delhi, Director General of IMD Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said a low pressure area is likely to develop over south Bay of Bengal around May 5. There is a possibility that the low pressure area may intensify into a depression, he added.

P3

Ranjan Das is SJTA chief administrator

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 29: The state government Saturday appointed IAS officer Ranjan Kumar Das as chief administrator of Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA).

As per a notification issued by the General Administration and Public Grievances department, Das will take the charge from incumbent SJTA chief administrator VV Yadav.



The post of SJTA chief is declared as equivalent (in status and responsibility) to the post of special secretary in the IAS cadre in the state. Das will be the first chief administrator, who will look only into the affairs of the Srimandir in Puri. Similarly, IAS officer Srikanta Prusty has been appointed special secretary to Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water department.

Another IAS officer Dillip Routray was posted as director, Odia Language, Literature and Culture. He is also allowed to remain additional charge of director of newly-formed Directorate of Odisha Paribar.

China rover finds evidence of water in Mars

THE FINDING HIGHLIGHTS NEW AND POTENTIALLY FERTILE AREAS IN THE WARMER REGIONS OF MARS WHERE CONDITIONS MIGHT BE SUITABLE FOR LIFE TO EXIST, THOUGH MORE STUDY IS NEEDED

AGENCIES

Cape Canaveral, Fla, April 29: Water may be more widespread and recent on Mars than previously thought, based on observations of Martian sand dunes by China's rover.

The finding highlights new, potentially fertile areas in the warmer regions of Mars where conditions might be suitable for life to exist, though more study is needed.

This news comes days after mission leaders acknowledged that the Zhurong rover has yet to wake up since going into hibernation for the Martian winter nearly a year ago.

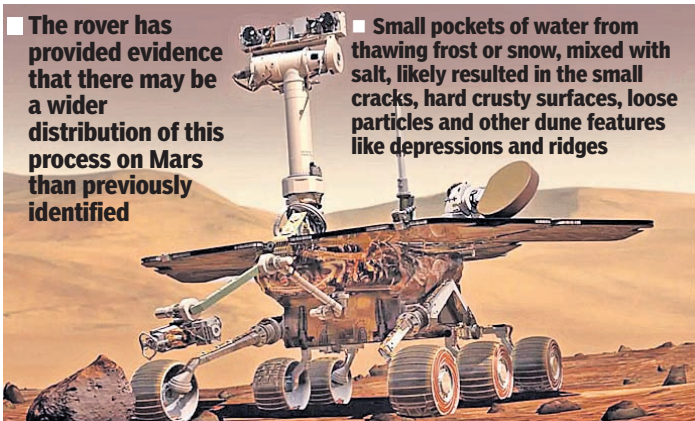
Its solar panels are likely covered with dust, choking off its power source and possibly preventing the rover from operating again, said

Zhang Rongqiao, the mission's chief designer. Before Zhurong fell silent, it observed salt-rich dunes with cracks and crusts, which researchers said were likely mixed with melting morning frost or snow as recently as a few hundred thousand years ago.

Their estimated date range for when the cracks and other dune features formed in Mars' Utopia Planitia, a vast plain in the northern hemisphere: sometime after 1.4 million to 4,00,000 years ago or even younger.

Conditions during that period were similar to now on Mars, with rivers and lakes dried up and no longer flowing as they did billions of years earlier. Studying the structure and chemical makeup of these dunes can provide insights into "the possibility of water activity" during

■ The rover has provided evidence that there may be a wider distribution of this process on Mars than previously identified



this period, the Beijing-based team wrote in a study published in Science Advances.

"We think it could be a small amount

■ Small pockets of water from thawing frost or snow, mixed with salt, likely resulted in the small cracks, hard crusty surfaces, loose particles and other dune features like depressions and ridges

... no more than a film of water on the surface," co-author Xiaoguang Qin of the Institute of Geology and Geophysics said in an email.

The rover did not directly detect any water in the form of frost or ice. But Qin said computer simulations and observations by other spacecraft at Mars indicate that even nowadays at certain times of year, conditions could be suitable for water to appear.

What's notable about the study is how young the dunes are, said planetary scientist Frederic Schmidt at the University of Paris-Saclay, who was not part of the study. "This is clearly a new piece of science for this region," he said in an email.

Small pockets of water from thawing frost or snow, mixed with salt, likely resulted in the small cracks, hard crusty surfaces, loose particles and other dune features like depressions and ridges, the Chinese scientists said.

Contd...P4

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RIHANNA CAST AS SMURFETTE IN THE SMURFS MOVIE

Rihanna will lend her voice for Smurfette in a new live-action hybrid feature from Paramount Animation, *The Smurfs Movie*. The superstar made a surprise in-person appearance at CinemaCon, Las Vegas' annual convention of movie theatre owners, to make the announcement.

MARVEL'S BLADE TO BE PENNED BY PIZZOLATTO

True Detective writer Nic Pizzolatto is set to pen Marvel Studios' *Blade* starring Oscar winner Mahershala Ali. Pizzolatto will be working on a draft of the script by Emmy nominee Michael Starrbury, which has been said to be 'darker than most Marvel Cinematic Universe movies.'



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

Your sportsman spirit will find its way into both your professional and personal life. Today may be an important day in your life, and Ganesh says you must not forget your special quality.

TAURUS

You will put your heart and soul into whatever you do today, says Ganesh. But there may still be dark clouds hovering over the results. Don't let that bother you. You must keep up the hard work throughout the day. Finally, you will hit the deck with a feeling of happiness and satisfaction, predicts Ganesh.

GEMINI

Dress to kill today! People around you may or may not comment, but they will definitely notice you. Your sense of style and taste will bowl everyone over. People would scramble for a glimpse of you. In short, you will be a celebrity.

CANCER

You are at your industrious best today. You will be able to think the unthinkable, achieve the unachievable, and impress an emotionally impregnable boss. Your confidence level will be sky-high; in fact, it will make overconfidence wallow in self-doubt.

LEO

The thing with skills is that they are not static; they are as dynamic as anything else. It is akin to being on a treadmill — you need to continuously keep moving just to stay in the same place, says Ganesh. So keep refreshing yourself by learning new things in order to sustain your progress.

VIRGO

Get out of your self today, for a change, and try to look at things from a loved one's perspective. It's good to be confident, but over confidence is a different matter altogether, reminds Ganesh. Listening to others, absorbing their expressions and viewing things differently shall do you and your loved ones a world of good.

LIBRA

Today promises to be a joy ride for your hidden gourmand side. Relish what you eat, and thank God for the good luck. Career wise, however, you may find yourself standing at a crossroads. But, the good part about that is there shall be many paths to choose from. And, who knows the art of balancing better than you. The latter half of the day promises to bring some monetary gains.

SCORPIO

Today promises to be a joy ride for your hidden gourmand side. Relish what you eat, and thank God for the good luck. Career wise, however, you may find yourself standing at a crossroads. But, the good part about that is there shall be many paths to choose from. And, who knows the art of balancing better than you. The latter half of the day promises to bring some monetary gains.

SAGITTARIUS

Your dedication to work is set to shift to the top gear. Find yourself swamped by excess of workload in the forenoon. Things, however, will lighten as the afternoon progresses. Expect a fun-filled, exciting evening.

CAPRICORN

Opportunities are rare, and good opportunities rarer still. Today, you will run to grab an opportunity and will make the most of it, says Ganesh. This move will yield instant results, and place you better in comparison with your opponents. Rivals, in fact, will try to do you down but will fail miserably in their attempt. Your social standing, on the other hand, will grow manifold and all because of your extraordinary traits.

AQUARIUS

You roar with absolute bliss today! Simplicity is your new avatar, and naturally, friends and acquaintances are mystified. You may wish to commune with the higher spirit and will seek solace in a quiet temple. Ganesh approves and predicts peace in plenty.

PISCES

Staying afloat needs about as much effort as swimming. Cryptic as this may sound, what it means is you need to constantly reinvent yourself if you wish to keep going.

'Phalguna Chaitra celebrates core values of a typical Odia household'



BHUBANESWAR: Carrying forward the trend of having original content in Odia movies set by recent releases like *Adieu Godard*, *Daman* and *Pratikshya*, another much-awaited movie is set to hit the big screens May 12.

"The days of copy-paste formula seem to be over as the young filmmakers of today are rejecting the idea. I'm excited to see the viewers' response to *Phalguna Chaitra*," said actor Partha Sarathi Ray, who is playing the protagonist in the movie, during a media interaction programme held here at a City hotel ahead of the release.

Asked about the USP of the project, director duo Peenakee Singh-Sisir Sahu said, "The story is the USP of the movie. It celebrates the core values of typical Odia families."

On the unusual title, they explained, "The plot revolves around an incident that takes place during February-March which corresponds to the 'Phalguna-Chaitra' month of Hindu calendar. We stuck to the latter as traditional Odia names are gradually fading into oblivion."

Speaking about the idea behind making such a movie, producer Sakti Jagdev said, "A couple of years ago, I was quite upset over blatant criticism of movies made in Odia language. Annoyed, I decided to present something fresh to bring about a change instead of lashing at the makers. *Phalguna Chaitra* is a baby step in that direction."

Among others, actors BM Baishali, Ananya Mishra, Bhaswati Basu and lyricists Shittha Pattnaik and Sumit Panda of the film also spoke to the media. A presentation by Aadya Jagdev Films, the movie is co-produced by top actor Babushaan Mohanty while Sulagna Mohanty has written the story.

Ananya Nanda, Rituraj Mohanty, Kuldeep Pattanaik, Gaurav Anand, Aisharwya Kumar have lent their voices to the songs.

Choudhury Jayprakash Das, Sukanta Rath, Kailash Panigrahi and Chandan Biswal and Manisha Manjari Mishra play other key roles in the movie. **PNN**

Bhumi opens up on her fashion journey

Mumbai: Bhumi Pednekar has been on a fashion crusade by trying out new looks for every occasion. However, her peculiar fashion choices have garnered both admiration and criticism. Some social media users ridiculed her attire at several events. Nonetheless, Bhumi appeared undisturbed and confessed that while she always possessed the inclination to take risks, she acquired the confidence to fully express herself through fashion only recently.

She further added, "I've just become a lot more comfortable with myself now. I have accepted myself a lot more. All that is translating into my appearances at whatever events and red carpets that I attend. I have realised that I have always loved myself."

I have been a confident girl. It is a journey for everyone. Today, I'm more upfront and I am a little more carefree about showing people who I really am."

When Bhumi was asked whether fashion police bother her, she replied, "Not at all." She added, "For me, fashion and beauty is so therapeutic. My journey, I would like to believe, started in the lockdown when I started putting out beauty blogs and makeup videos."



I've utmost respect for porn stars: Neha

Mumbai: Singer and songwriter Neha Bhasin who is known for her playback in India movies also remains in news for her bold fashion choices.

She recently spoke about the negativity she faces from netizens when she uploads her pictures on social media.

"Now, I am so bored of all the negativity about my body or choice of clothes", the singer reportedly told a news portal.

Further when she was probed about people tagging her as a porn star on some of her recent pictures, Neha said "I have the utmost respect for porn stars. They work in the adult film industry out in the open. They don't have any facade, or are not hiding behind any hypocrisy of the society who watches these porn stars behind closed doors and then passes judgments about them. I think I pretty much live my life like them. I am what I am."

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AGENCIES

Amrin upset being compared to Kiara

Mumbai: Amrin Qureshi is making her acting debut in Rajkumar Santoshi's *Bad Boy* along with Namashi Chakraborty. Daughter of producer Sajid Qureshi, Amrin is frequently compared with Kiara Advani because of their similar looks.

This comparison, however, angers Amrin, as she believes it is unjust and she wants to establish her own unique identity as an actor.

Amrin told a new channel, "I used to share my pictures on social media, and someone called me Kiara Advani. It started and then everyone started commenting in a similar manner. People say I copy her. It did not stop there.

Even a few news websites addressed me like that. I would like to appeal to everyone, please stop giving me this tag (of Kiara Advani copy). I am still in the growing phase of my features and haven't got any surgery done."

She added, "Kiara is very beautiful, and I like her. But I get angry when people constantly compare me with her. There's a limit to everything. My target is to establish an identity of my own. I work towards it daily."

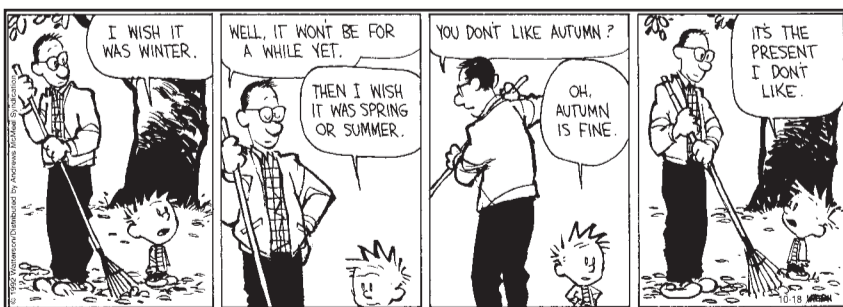
Ahead of the film's release, Amrin spoke about her debut at the film's trailer launch. She said, "As a newcomer, it's my privilege to debut with *Bad Boy* and get directed by one of the greatest directors of the industry, Rajkumar Santoshi. **AGENCIES**



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

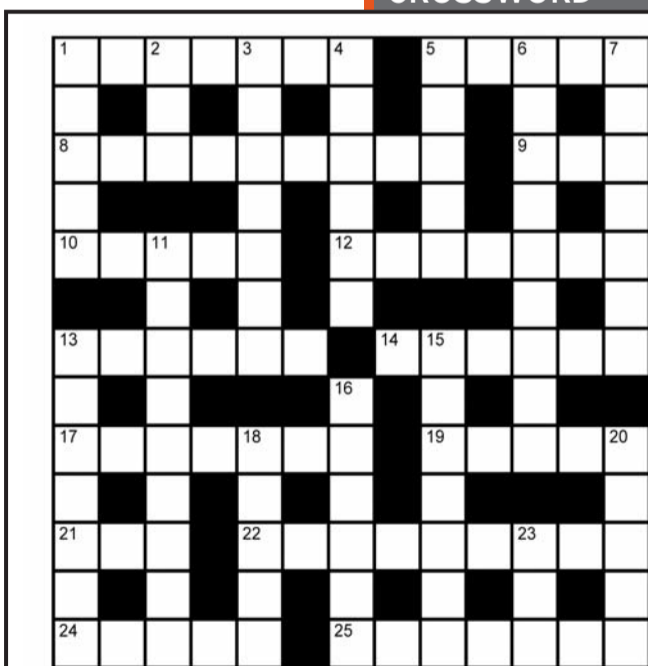


BREVITY



FUN post

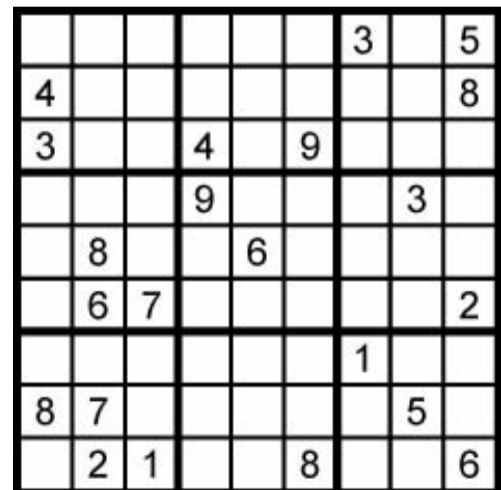
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Building materials
 - 5 Jerusalem
 - 8 Fall guy
 - 9 Napkin's place
 - 10 Spicy Mexican sauce
 - 12 Sushi ingredient
 - 13 Las Vegas locale
 - 14 Smart as a whip
 - 17 Impressive country home
 - 19 Painting support
 - 21 Cigar residue
 - 22 Adversaries
 - 24 Like the beach, usually
 - 25 Frog-to-be
 - Down**
 - 1 Boar feature
 - 2 Extinct flightless bird
 - 3 Beryl variety
 - 4 Relative
 - 5 Brightly coloured tropical fish
 - 6 Swan Lake dancer
 - 7 Quickly
 - 11 Huge mythical monster
 - 13 Ambrosias
 - 15 Elegant
 - 16 Marionette
 - 18 Black
 - 20 Come to pass
 - 23 Modern (Prefix)

SUDOKU

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

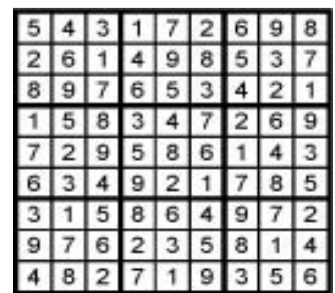


SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD

SUDOKU

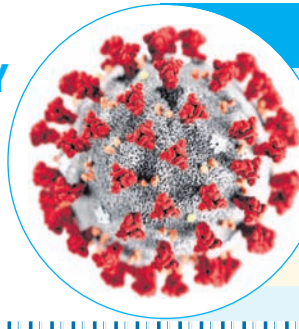


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



WORLD VETERINARY DAY

Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology Vice-Chancellor Pravat Roul speaks during an event to mark World Veterinary Day on the institution premises in Bhubaneswar, Saturday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	68,70,46,739	65,95,63,397	68,63,620
India	4,49,32,344	4,43,47,024	5,31,468
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204



LORD'S WATER SPORT: Srimandir deities enjoying Chandan Yatra at Narendra pond in Puri, Saturday

IMD: Low pressure likely over BoB around May 5

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 29: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) Saturday said a low pressure area is likely to take shape over south Bay of Bengal (BoB) around May 5.

Speaking to media in New Delhi, IMD director general (DG) Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said a low pressure area is likely to develop over south BoB around May 5. There is a possibility that the low pressure area may intensify into a depression, he said.

"However, only after formation of the low pressure, we can say whether it will further intensify into a cyclone or not," said Mohapatra.

On the likelihood of its further intensification into a cyclone, the IMD DG said a clear picture of the system can be known only after the low pressure forms. It is expected to emerge around May 1, he informed the media.

Making it clear that no forecast about any cyclone has been made so far, the IMD DG appealed to the people not to panic.

Mohapatra further informed

I appeal to people not to panic as no forecast relating to cyclones has been issued. IMD is keeping a close watch and necessary information will be shared only after the low pressure area develops

MRUTYUNJAY MOHAPATRA | IMD DG

that the low pressure, which will form around May 5, is unlikely to affect Odisha. There will be no impact on Odisha as it may affect Andaman Islands, he added.

Stating that IMD is keeping a close watch on the situation, he said accurate information will be shared only after the low pressure area develops.

"I appeal to people not to panic as no forecast relating to cyclones has been issued. IMD is keeping a close watch and necessary information will be shared only after the low pressure area develops," he added.

The conditions generally remain conducive for formation of cy-

clones during May in the pre-monsoon season in the region, he maintained.

Meanwhile, the weather office said that parts of eastern India, including Bihar, Jharkhand and Odisha, are likely to face above-normal temperatures in May with a likelihood of heat wave conditions on some days.

However, parts of northwest and west-central India may experience warmer nights and below-normal temperatures during the day, the India Meteorological Department said in the monthly outlook for temperature and rainfall for May.

It said normal to above-normal rainfall is expected in the northwest and west central parts of the country in May, including in Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and parts of western Uttar Pradesh. Large swathes of the northeastern region, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and south Karnataka, are expected to witness below-normal rains.

According to the weather office, the average rainfall in May is likely to be 91-109 per cent of the Long Period Average of 61.4 mm.

ED attaches ₹54cr Rose Valley assets

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Bhubaneswar, April 29: The total value of assets attached in the 2014 money laundering case linked with the Rose Valley Group has risen to more than ₹1,171 crore with the Enforcement Directorate (ED) saying it has seized properties worth ₹54 crore in the case.

The attached properties comprise insurance policies in the name of Rose Valley Group chairman Gautam Kundu and his wife, buildings and plots of land in West Bengal, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar, which were



found to have been acquired by the companies of the group from the funds collected from the gullible investors, the probe agency said. Gautam Kundu, who was arrested by the ED in March 2015, continues to be in judicial custody. "The Rose Valley Group collected funds from the common gullible public by floating fake and

fictitious schemes and defaulted on the re-payments," the agency said.

The total value of assets attached in this case to date is ₹1,171.71 crore, including fresh properties worth ₹54 crore seized provisionally under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), it said.

The ED has filed two charge sheets in this case and has secured the conviction of Arun Mukherjee, a debenture trustee who was responsible for the acts and affairs of the company, as a trial court sentenced him to 7 years imprisonment and a fine of ₹2.5 lakh under various sections of the PMLA.

Base remuneration of MCH tutors enhanced

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 29: The state government has enhanced the base remuneration of tutors, senior residents (SRs) and junior residents (JRs) working in medical college and hospitals (MCHs), Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) commissioner-cum-secretary Shalini Pandit said Saturday.

According to Pandit, the state government has also approved location-based incentives for the MCH teachers posted in far flung areas.

"The enhancement of base remuneration and location-based incentives will help attract best teachers to the state-run MCHs and will subsequently go a long way improving healthcare in Odisha," Pandit pointed out. She said for location-based incentives, places have been cate-



The state government has also approved location-based incentives for the medical college and hospital teachers posted in far flung areas

gorised under three zones.

"While Koraput, Nabarangpur, Malkangiri, Rayagada, Bolangir, Nuapada, Kalahandi and Kandhamal fall under Zone-A, Keonjhar, Boudh, Balasore, Gajapati, Sonepur, Deogarh, Bargarh, Sambalpur, Jharsuguda, Angul, Sundargarh and Mayurbhanj come under Zone-B," the H&FW commissioner-cum-secretary said.

Similarly, Zone-C has Dhenkanal, Puri, Nayagarh, Kendrapada, Jajpur, Bhadrak and Jagatsinghpur, Pandit said, pointing out that there

is no provision of location-based incentives for those getting posted in Cuttack, Khurda and Ganjam.

Both the in-service and directly recruited faculties would get the place-based incentive, she said.

According to Pandit, enhanced base remuneration would be applicable for all tutors, SRs and JRs who were either direct candidates (Post PG bound period) or engaged through advertisements when they were posted in any health institution.

According to the H&FW de-

partment, tutors with PG (pre and para clinical departments) and SRs will get an additional ₹10,000 after the enhancement. JRs, on the other hand, will get extra ₹5,000 after the hike.

"Tutors with PG (pre and para clinical departments) and SRs will get ₹80,000 and ₹75,000 respectively after the enhancement. JRs will get ₹60,000 after the hike," the H&FW department said.

About location-based incentives, the Health department said tutors with PG (pre and para clinical departments) and SRs will get ₹60,000 on being posted in Zone-A, ₹40,000 in Zone-B and ₹20,000 in Zone-C. SRs will receive ₹50,000 in Zone-A, ₹30,000 in Zone-B and ₹10,000 in Zone-C as place-based incentive.

JRs, on the other hand, will receive ₹20,000 for being posed in Zone-A, ₹20,000 in Zone-B and ₹5,000 in Zone-C.

Chit fund: OPID court orders attachment of ₹7 crore of firm

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 29: The Odisha Protection of Interest of Depositors (OPID) court in Balasore Friday ordered attachment of ₹7 crore worth property of M/S Lakshya Level Marketing Pvt. Ltd, a chit fund company.

Special OPID Judge Biswajit Das directed the district administration of Balasore to attach around ₹7 crore of the firm deposited in different banks and distribute it among the depositors after verification, Special Public Prosecutor (PP) Pranab Kumar Panda said.

About the case details, the Special PP said the company had collected over ₹10 crore from at least 6,715 depositors of Balasore and other

parts of Odisha on the promise of hefty returns but did not turn up.

Naresh Mundra, Hamendra Kumar Gherewal, Dharmendra Gajendra Kothari and Satish G Kothari, the directors of the company, had siphoned about ₹10 crore from 6,715 depositors giving false impression that they were marketing for branded products and would pay high returns against their deposits, the special PP said.

He pointed out that the gullible depositors lodged a complaint against the firm after failing to get back even the principal.

The court, after examining the witnesses and exhibits, directed the district administration (petitioner) for attachment of about ₹7 crore of the firm, Panda said.

RSP sets record with longest casting sequence of 222 heats

Rourkela: The Continuous Casting Machine-2 (CCM-2) of the Steel Melting Shop-2 of Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) has set a fresh record in casting the longest ever sequence of heats. RSP sources said the unit registered an all time best castings of 222 heats during the record sequence which is also the best sequence performance among all SAIL units. The CCM-2 started the sequence April 17 at 15.42 hours and completed April 28 at 14.42 hours with a record total casting time of 263 hours. In the process, the unit produced 35,275 tonnes of Crude Steel (2,071 slabs) with 25 Tundish flying and total cast length of 16,407 metres. The secondary steel units and basic oxygen furnace of SMS-2 played an instrumental role in the success.

SOA Chancellor Debi Ray dies

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 29: Noted agricultural scientist and Siksha 'O' Anusandhan (SOA) Deemed to be University Chancellor Debi Prasad Ray passed away here Saturday. He was 73.

Ray was undergoing treatment for some ailments at the Institute of Medical Sciences and SUM Hospital here.

Ray, who served as Vice-Chancellor of Orissa University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT) in Bhubaneswar for two terms, was associated with SOA for a long time.

He pioneered the establishment of the Institute of Agricultural Sciences under SOA which became the first such institute to be set up in the private domain in the entire eastern and north-eastern region.



Ray's research areas included enhancement of fruit and plantation crops, orchard efficiency management, varietal and nutritional improvement, water management, propagation techniques, post harvest management of tropical and sub-tropical fruits and improvement of vegetables.

He had more than 200 scientific papers published in journals of national and international repute and served as chairman of several national committees of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Department of Science and Technology (DST) and the Planning Commission of Government of India.

SOA Founder and President Manojranjan Nayak visited IMS and SUM Hospital after being informed about Ray's demise and paid his last respects to the departed soul.

16 detained for spreading rumours in Sambalpur

Police, however, released them after issuing warnings and receiving undertakings that they would not indulge in such activities in future

PNN & AGENCIES

Sambalpur/Jharsuguda, April 29: As many as 16 people were detained by police for spreading inflammatory messages on social media after communal violence rocked Sambalpur city in western Odisha during Hanuman Jayanti processions earlier this month.

Police, however, released them after issuing warnings and receiving undertakings that they would not indulge in such activities in future.

"Those found sharing hateful messages were questioned and warned. Moreover, we warned admins of two social media groups for allowing members to share such messages," Sambalpur Superintendent of Police (SP) B Gangadhar told reporters. "They were released after sign-

Curfew has been lifted from four police station areas and it remains imposed in two police station areas, which will be lifted after reviewing the situation

B GANGADHAR | SAMBALPUR SP

ing PR bonds. We have formed a social media monitoring cell and have been thoroughly monitoring the social media after the violence," the Sambalpur SP said.

The SP also appealed to people to use social media responsibly and refrain from posting hateful messages.

Internet services were suspended in Sambalpur district April 13 following violence. Curfew was also imposed in the city. Mobile internet services were

restored gradually as the situation improved.

The SP said that normalcy was returning to the city and over 100 people were arrested in connection with the violence.

"Curfew has been lifted from four police station areas and it remains imposed in two police station areas, which will be lifted after reviewing the situation," he said.

Meanwhile, BJP Odisha unit president Manmohan Samal said that a four-member MP team formed by the saffron party will visit the state May 2 to probe the Hanuman Jayanti violence.

He said the committee comprises Rajya Sabha members Brij Lal, Samir Oraon, Aditya Sahu and Lok Sabha MP Jyotirmay Singh Mahato. They will prepare a report after conducting a thorough probe.

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Desire to build an institute like KISS: Jharkhand CM



Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren along with his wife at Srimandir in Puri

Soren, wife offer prayers at Srimandir

Puri Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren and his wife offered prayers to the Trinity... Lord Jagannath and His siblings, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra, at Srimandir here, Saturday.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 29: Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren visited the Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) Friday and was all praise for it.

like KISS is established. "KISS has made me think about it a lot. KISS and Samanta will guide us in involving the tribal community in the development process.

Samanta and the teachers of KISS, you can definitely reach your goal. She advised students to always keep confidence in life.



ANNIV DAY: Orissa High Court Chief Justice S Muralidhar among guests during the 49th Foundation Day celebration of Odisha Association for the Blind in Cuttack, Saturday

Privilege card launched by HCG Panda Cancer Hosp

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar/Cuttack, April 29: As part of its ongoing mission to provide hassle-free cancer care to the transgender community, HCG Panda Cancer Hospital launched 'Pride and Privilege Card' in an event organised at a City hotel, Friday.



packages, and multiple deals and markdowns. The card aims to motivate and encourage individuals to prioritize their health by undergoing screening, proactively managing cancer, and seeking treatment when needed.

its perks and to keep their health in check. Prateek Jain, Regional Business Head of HCG Hospitals -East & AP, said, "We are delighted to introduce the HCG Pride & Privilege Card in Cuttack through HCG Panda Cancer Hospital."

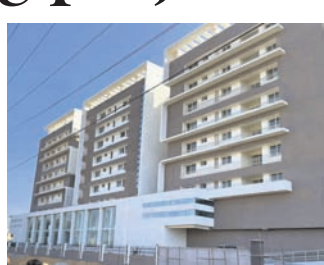
ments of our community, particularly in terms of cancer care services. The newly introduced Pride & Privilege Card is a commendable effort that grants us access to superior healthcare and enables us to feel acknowledged and integrated into society.

BDA's premium housing projects on the anvil

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 29: Emerging among the top five livable cities in the country according to the Ease of Living index constantly since 2018, it will come as no surprise that there is a high demand for housing in the fast growing city of Bhubaneswar.

is to deliver three significant projects this year. The three projects are namely, Daya Enclave at Kalinga Nagar (K9B), Kharavela Complex at Kalinga Nagar (K9A) and Ekamra Residency at Subudhipur.



four floors (S+4), and within a fortnight, it will start luring in residents with advertisements. The complex has been designed to cater to the modern-day needs of its residents and offers a range of basic

and modern facilities, including 24x7 power supply, lifts, and ample parking space. The 2bhk flats are spacious and well-designed, catering to the needs of modern working professionals who are always on the lookout for such spaces.

MoU signed between Mo College and SkillKart

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 29: An MoU was signed between 'Mo College' and SkillKart (UET Manpower Resources Pvt. Ltd) Friday to encourage and help the students of government colleges of state in skilling up for better employability and to make them more ready and competent for employment.



field, UET Manpower Resources Pvt. Ltd (UETMRPL) is an HR services company having brilliant past records devoting in area of education, agriculture, health, livelihood and alternate energy.

other skill-development organizations to affect employability positively. Whereas, TeamKart, with a mission to impact employment strives to connect skill to opportunity. Lastly, BlueKart, the last vertical of UETMRPL, is purely into contractual labour staffing.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Notary, Bhubaneswar I have changed my surname from Sarmistha Das to Sarmistha Mohanty, D/o-Prasanna Ku. Mohanty, Lewis Road, Khordha both are the same and one, for all purpose.

LOST

I, Bhabani Sankar Patnaik lost following original documents. 1. Sale deed in name of Nandini Patnaik, Registration No.5651, dated 11.7.85, Govind Prasad. 2. Patna No.-1057/64, Govind Prasad, Nandini Patnaik. 3. Patna No.- 1986/152, Laxmisagar-30 in name of Bhabani Sankar Patnaik. Any commercial business with respect to above lost documents will be at your own risk. Contact: 9178195733.

Y2O brainstorming session at Centurion University

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 29: Young Indians Bhubaneswar Chapter with the collaboration of Youth20 (Y2O) engagement group recently organised a brainstorming session on the theme "A dialogue between young Indian achievers and governance institutions of urban and rural local bodies on participatory models of governance".

along with Team Yuva Yi members organized the Y2O Brainstorming session at Centurion University. During the session various topics were discussed like - It is important to understand how things were 5 years back, now and how things will be 5 years down the line with respect to the Municipal Corporation/sector.

of Cure-bay, Debi Project manager, PWM UNDPand KVD Prakash, Dean HRD. Suryavanshi Mayur Singh Additional Commissioner BMC,said that Odisha has led by an example in participatory governance, where citizen inputs are being taken from all points, with Twitter, social media and even helpline numbers readily accessible to let citizens express their inputs.

CONTINUED FROM P1 BYJU's raided...

"The company also remitted about Rs 9,754 crore to various foreign jurisdictions during the same period in the name of overseas direct investment," the agency said. "The company has booked around Rs 944 crore in the name of advertisement and marketing expenses including the amount remitted to foreign jurisdiction."

Gokulnath, provides early learning, middle school education and test preparation. It was valued at USD 22 billion in a funding round in March 2022. In October, it announced it will retrench 2,500 employees and hire 10,000 teachers over six months to rationalise cost. Byju's showed a loss of Rs 4,588 crore for 2020-21—19 times more than that of Rs 231.69 crore in 2019-20. Revenues during the financial year 2020-21 dropped to Rs 2,428 crore from Rs 2,511 crore in FY20.

Chinese rover... They ruled out wind as a cause, as well as frost made of carbon dioxide, which makes up the bulk of Mars' atmosphere. Martian frost has been observed since NASA's 1970s Viking missions, but these light dustings of morning frost were thought to occur in certain locations under specific conditions. The rover has now provided "evidence that there may be a wider distribution of this process on Mars than previously identified," said Trinity College Dublin's Mary Bourke, an expert in Mars geology.

State to lease out... The construction of any new component shall be in compliance with the prevailing by-laws and other regulatory frameworks being stipulated by various governing authorities and development authorities from time to time over the construction phase. All planning, designing and other interventions will be done with prior approval from the Tourism department.

Chinese vessels... "There is a large presence of Chinese vessels. At any point of time, there are 3-6 Chinese warships in the India Ocean Region," he said, adding some are close to

the Gulf of Oman, and some in the eastern part of the IOR, among other places. Chinese research vessels are ever present, numbering from 2-4 and Chinese fishing vessels as well. So, there is a large presence of Chinese vessels in the Indian Ocean Region, and India Navy keeps track of it, the Navy chief said.

When they operate, close to "our areas of national interest", the Indian Navy keeps an eye, and it has its ships which "monitor them very very closely".

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38 villages in Ganjam get revenue status under FRA

POST NEWS NETWORK

Ganjam, April 29: As many as 6,000 villagers who live in 38 forest and unsurveyed villages in Ganjam district will be benefited as their villages have been granted revenue status under the Forest Rights Act and Orissa Survey and Settlement Act.

In a major development, the Ganjam District Magistrate recently announced the conversion of these 38 forest villages into revenue villages after approval from the Board of Revenue, Odisha.

These are now revenue villages under Section 2 (14) of the Orissa Survey and Settlement Act, 1958 and in pursuance of Section 3(1)(h) of the Scheduled Tribes and other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 or FRA, the notification by the Magistrate stated.

These villages have received their new status after over five years with the process to achieve it being started in 2017, according to a statement by the district administration.

This has come as a sign of relief for the dwellers as previously they required permission from the Forest department even for a small developmental activity to be taken up in these villages. The villages are identified as 'zero' villages in the census report, but inhabited by people.



The newly recognised revenue villages are spread across two subdivisions — Chhatrapur and Bhanjanagar. While 13 of these villages each are in Sorada and Polasara tehsils, seven are situated in Dharakote tahsil and five in Kodala tehsil. With these 38 unsurveyed villages in Ganjam district getting revenue status, only one unsurveyed village is left in the district to be mainstreamed.

Previously, 14 other forest villages of three Odisha districts — 12 in Dhenkanal and one each in Angul and Deogarh—have already been converted into revenue villages. Notably, there are as many as 458 forest and unsurveyed villages in Odisha, as per state government data.

Barna Baibhaba Panda, Senior Programme Manager, Foundation for Ecological Security (FES), which facilitated the process of conversion under FRA, said, "Life is tough in

unsurveyed villages. Most of these villages do not have basic facilities such as drinking water supply, schools and anganwadi centres and more importantly an all-weather road."

However, the residents of the villages, mostly tribals, will now be able to avail of all government benefits such as rights over land and employment guarantee under MGNREGS, caste, income and residence certificates and the right to purchase and sell land without depending on permissions of the Forest department. Government institutions can also be established now in these villages.

It should be noted that the 1878 amendment to the Forest Act divided India's forests into three categories — reserved, protected, and village forests.

According to the new regulations, some people were allowed to live in restricted forests as long as they offered the Forest department free labour to chop and transport trees and guard the forest against fires. These woodlands eventually earned the name 'forest villages'.

The former United Progressive Alliance government in 2013 acknowledged the settlement and conversion of all forest villages and unsurveyed villages into revenue villages under Section 3(1)(h) of the FRA, 2006.

One dead, 9 hurt in 2 separate mishaps

Bhadrak: At least one person died and nine other sustained serious injuries in two separate road accidents which occurred Saturday in Bhadrak district.

As per sources, one accident took place near Bhandaripokhari tehsil office in the morning when a car coming from Balasore collided with a speeding truck. One person died on the spot and four others were injured. The injured were admitted to the Bhadrak district headquarters hospital for treatment.

A separate accident took place near Tisalpur Square under Bhadrak Rural police limits where a truck from Kolkata carrying chickens from Odisha overturned after hitting a stationary truck on the road. Five persons in the truck, who hail from West Bengal, were injured in the accident. They were first admitted to the Bhadrak DHH and later three of them were shifted to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack as their condition deteriorated.

LOOT, MURDER OF GOAT TRADER 7 arrested, 2 pistols seized

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sundargarh/Lefripara, April 29: Police have arrested seven persons in connection with the loot and murder of a goat trader near Suruguda Tarini temple in Sundargarh district, April 13. Two bikes, two country-made pistols along with six rounds of live cartridges, seven mobile phones, and ₹9,500 in cash were also seized from their possession.

Addressing a presser here Saturday, Sundargarh SP Pratyush Dibakar informed that the accused have been identified as Sudhir Kisan of Chaurndhal village under Bhasma police limits, Pramod Majhi, Sujit Majhi, and Pradip Singh of Gudiali village



under Rajgangpur police limits, Kheswar Gop and Arun Oram of Gumla in Jharkhand and Mohanty Badaik of Salangabahal under Raiboga police limits.

Reports said, three miscreants on a bike had followed goat trader Pravat Naik and two of his associates who were going to the Handpani goat bazaar on a motorcycle April 13 morning. They threatened Pravat to stop showing him the pistol near the temple.

Failing to stop Pravat, they kicked his motorcycle following which he fell down and tried to escape with the bag containing money.

The miscreants fired while Pravat was trying to flee with the money bag killing him on the spot. They looted the money bag which reportedly contained ₹9 lakh.

Following the incident, Sundargarh SP formed a team headed by SDPO Himanshu Chandra Behera to nab the culprits. The SP told reporters that the incident was pre-planned and as Pravat resisted, they fired at him leading to his death.

He said that the accused persons had even done a recce before committing the crime.

Woman, 3 sons get life term in 2018 murder case

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhawanipatna, April 29: A woman and her three sons were awarded life imprisonment by the Additional District Judge (ADJ) of Dharmagarh in Kalahandi district for killing a peon posted at Atigaon RI office under Junagarh police limits over land dispute in 2018.

The court has also imposed fine of ₹50,000 each on all four convicts. Failing to pay the fine amount, the jail term of the convicts will be increased by a year each.



as Kuchita Dandasena, and her three sons Pita Dandasena, Radhu Dandasena and Jadu Dandasena. As per sources, the victim peon, Chhayakanta Dandasena, was

hacked to death by the three sons after getting instructions from their mother in 2018. Sources further added that at that time Kuchita and her sons

were trying to build a house on a piece of government land near the RI office. When the peon Dandasena objected to them he was murdered, added the source. The police at that time had registered a murder case and arrested all four of them.

LEGAL NOTICE: FORM No. 13 BEFORE THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL, CUTTACK, ORISSA. C-71, SECTOR - 7, CDA, CUTTACK, ODISHA. O. A. No. 684/2022. Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd. ... Applicant. Versus. M/S Amar Kumar Shah And Another ... Defendant(s).

EAST COAST RAILWAY. File No. DRM/Engg/KUR/23-24. E-Tender/14. Dt.: 19.04.2023. (1) Tender No. etender-Estate-KUR-24-2023 Dt.: 15.04.2023. Description: NEW WORKS, ADDITIONS AND ALTERATIONS TO THE EXISTING STRUCTURES...

EAST COAST RAILWAY. File No. DRM/Engg/KUR/23-24. E-Tender/14. Dt.: 19.04.2023. (2) Tender No. etender-Estate-KUR-25-2023 Dt.: 15.04.2023. Description: NEW WORKS, ADDITIONS AND ALTERATIONS TO THE EXISTING STRUCTURES...

EAST COAST RAILWAY. File No. DRM/Engg/KUR/23-24. E-Tender/14. Dt.: 19.04.2023. (3) Tender No. etender-Estate-KUR-26-2023 Dt.: 15.04.2023. Description: NEW WORKS, ADDITIONS AND ALTERATIONS TO THE EXISTING STRUCTURES...

EAST COAST RAILWAY. 1) e-Tender Notice No. e-Tender-Elect-G-05-23. DESCRIPTION OF WORK: OPERATION OF DA SET OF POWER CARS AND MANNING OF EOG POWER CARS INCLUDING TRIP MAINTENANCE OF POWER CARS AT COACHING DEPOT BHUBANESWAR OF EAST COAST RAILWAY FOR 03 YEARS.

FORM No. 13 BEFORE THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL, CUTTACK, ORISSA. C-71, SECTOR - 7, CDA, CUTTACK, ODISHA. O. A. No. 726/2022. Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd. ... Applicant. Versus. MD. MONIRUL SHEIKH AND OTHERS ... Defendant(s).

Bank of Baroda. Regional Office (Sambalpur Region). 1st Floor, G.M. College Chowk, Christian Para, Sambalpur-768001. (As per Appendix IV read with rule 8(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002).

POSSESSION NOTICE (Immovable Property). Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the BANK OF BARODA under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002...

Table with 4 columns: ROURKELA BRANCH / Name & Address of the Borrower/Co-Borrower/Mortgagor, Description of the Immovable Property, Demand/Possession Notice Date, Total Dues as on.

Bank of India. Zonal Office : Star House, 1/1D, Jayadev Vihar, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751015. (Rule-8(1)) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules-2002.

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER CUTTACK (R&B) DIVISION NO.1, CUTTACK. E-mail I.D. - eepwdcuttack@gmail.com, Tel./Fax No. (0671)- 2304128. No.B-129. GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA. Auction Sale Notice No. 01 of 2023-24.

CHOLAMANDALAM INVESTMENT AND FINANCE COMPANY LIMITED. Corporate Office : 1st Floor, 'Dare House', No. 2, N. S. C. Bose Road, Chennai - 600 001. Regional Office : 55 & 55/1, Chowringhee Road, 5th Floor, Chowringhee Court Opp. Nehru Children's Museum in Rabindra Sadan, Kolkata - 700 071, W.B.

Bank of India. Zonal Office : Star House, 1/1D, Jayadev Vihar, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751015. (Rule-8(1)) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules-2002.

POSSESSION NOTICE. Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the Bank of India, Khorda Branch under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002...

Table with 4 columns: KHORDA BRANCH / Name & Address of Borrowers, Liabilities due as per Notice, Date of Demand Notice/ Date of Possession, Description of the Immovable Property.

CHOLAMANDALAM INVESTMENT AND FINANCE COMPANY LIMITED. Corporate Office : 1st Floor, 'Dare House', No. 2, N. S. C. Bose Road, Chennai - 600 001. Regional Office : 55 & 55/1, Chowringhee Road, 5th Floor, Chowringhee Court Opp. Nehru Children's Museum in Rabindra Sadan, Kolkata - 700 071, W.B.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA. DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES. OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, DEO CANAL DIVISION, KARANJIA. AT/PO- KARANJIA, DIST-MAYURBHANJ-757037. Tel: 06796-220124, e-mail: eedcd2016@gmail.com.

CHOLAMANDALAM INVESTMENT AND FINANCE COMPANY LIMITED. Corporate Office : 1st Floor, 'Dare House', No. 2, N. S. C. Bose Road, Chennai - 600 001. Regional Office : 55 & 55/1, Chowringhee Road, 5th Floor, Chowringhee Court Opp. Nehru Children's Museum in Rabindra Sadan, Kolkata - 700 071, W.B.

Chola. Enter a better life. CHOLAMANDALAM INVESTMENT AND FINANCE COMPANY LIMITED. Corporate Office : 1st Floor, 'Dare House', No. 2, N. S. C. Bose Road, Chennai - 600 001.

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE UNDER RULE 8(1). Whereas: The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of M/s. Cholamandalam Investment And Finance Company Limited, under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002...

Table with 4 columns: Sl. No., a) Loan Account Number b) Name and Address of Borrower / Co-borrower, Description of the Immovable Property, a) Date of Demand Notice b) Outstanding Amount c) Date of Symbolic Possession.

CHOLAMANDALAM INVESTMENT AND FINANCE COMPANY LIMITED. Corporate Office : 1st Floor, 'Dare House', No. 2, N. S. C. Bose Road, Chennai - 600 001. Regional Office : 55 & 55/1, Chowringhee Road, 5th Floor, Chowringhee Court Opp. Nehru Children's Museum in Rabindra Sadan, Kolkata - 700 071, W.B.



FOCUS GREENWASHING

SAYING & DOING



One does not need to be a sleuth to figure out that when a company can claim that a barrel of oil, a cargo of liquefied natural gas, or some tar sands bitumen is carbon-neutral, something has gone wrong

set a decarbonisation pathway compatible with the 2015 Paris climate agreement's targets. Such plans must include measures to reduce emissions along the entire value chain, phase out fossil fuels, invest in renewable energy, abstain from lobbying for high-carbon industries, disclose emissions annually, have reductions data independently verified, and so on. An ad campaign, a cheery speech, and some tree-planting will no longer do.

Companies without detailed transition plans in place can expect regulatory as well as legal action, as more and more countries require corporations to disclose climate-related risks. The European Union, India, New Zealand, and Switzerland are expected to join the UK and China by introducing such measures this year, followed by Canada and South Korea in 2025. The International Organization for Standardization has also recently published its own set of net-zero guidelines, providing regulators with clear rules and criteria for credible climate strategies.

But if the world is to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, regulators must insist on independent verification of corporate claims, interim targets, and binding commitments to phase out fossil fuels. In countries where national net-zero plans rely on offsets and wishful thinking, citizens must use all the legal tools at their disposal possible to force their governments to do the hard work that a credible decarbonisation path demands.

While there is still much work to be done, a carbon-neutral future is within reach. Net-zero targets now cover 91% of global GDP, compared with 16% just four years ago. But to have any hope of meeting the Paris agreement's targets, the first step is to ensure that governments and companies are setting realistic goals that they can back up with credible data. We can see the right path ahead, but the right decisions are still needed to ensure it is taken.

The writer, a Senior Associate at the Energy & Climate Intelligence Unit, is Co-Lead of the Net Zero Tracker.
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Judging by the growing number of companies vowing to reduce their greenhouse-gas emissions to zero these days, it may seem like the corporate world is finally taking the climate crisis seriously. According to the Net Zero Tracker, more than one-third of the world's largest publicly traded companies have announced such targets, up from one-fifth in late 2020.

While some of these corporate pledges appear to be genuine, others are clearly a fig leaf to obscure pollution as usual. One can easily imagine an oil executive telling an airline boss: "A net-zero target, some ads featuring trees, and everyone will love us."

If that was the plan, it is rapidly falling apart, owing to a slew of regulatory decisions and court actions that signal a crackdown on corporate greenwashing. And last year's report by the United Nations High-Level Expert Group on Net-Zero Emissions Commitments, which provided detailed recommendations for maintaining the integrity of such pledges, heralds limits on companies' ability to make promises they have no intention of keeping.

New regulations in France and the United Kingdom, for example, aim to prevent advertisers from making extravagant claims about the carbon neutrality of their products. Research commissioned by the UK's Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) found that when people hear such a claim, they assume that an absolute reduction in emissions has occurred. So, the ASA's updated guidelines instruct companies to avoid claiming carbon neutrality if the emissions associated with the advertised product were merely offset.

The French climate law, passed in 2021 and amended last year, goes further. To claim carbon neutrality, the product must be neutral across its entire life cycle. Companies must disclose how emissions were avoided, reduced, and offset (the order is important). They must also show how these offsets qualify as measurable, verifiable, permanent, and additional. Companies that get it wrong could face a €100,000 (\$110,000) fine for misleading consumers.

Underlying this trend is the obvious mismatch between what some companies say and what they do. After all, one does not need to be a sleuth to figure out that when a company can claim that a barrel of oil, a cargo of liquefied natural gas, or some tar sands bitumen is carbon-neutral, something has gone wrong.

A spate of recent lawsuits promises to draw a line in the (tar) sand. Over the past year, companies such as food giant Danone Waters, cement maker Holcim, oil companies TotalEnergies, BP, and Shell, cosmetics manufacturer Beiersdorf (Nivea), and KLM have been sued in various countries for making misleading sustainability claims. The Australia Institute, a nonpartisan think tank, has filed a complaint with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission claiming that the government's own certification scheme, Climate Active, is misleading under national consumer law, because it assures people that products are carbon-neutral when they are not.

Companies' net-zero pledges look just as flimsy under scrutiny. For example, a recent report by the Corporate Climate Responsibility Monitor examined the net-zero plans of 24 major corporations purporting to be "climate leaders" and found numerous flaws, loopholes, and omissions. On average, according to the report, these companies will cut just 36% of their emissions by their net-zero target year. Moreover, their plans imply a median reduction of 15% by the end of the decade, rather than halving emissions, as the current science says is necessary. Similarly, an earlier report by CDP found that fewer than one in 200 companies that submitted climate data to its environmental-disclosure platform have devised credible transition plans.

The UN group's recommendations, commissioned and endorsed by Secretary-General António Guterres, are a potential game changer. As they become mainstreamed, companies will no longer be able to claim that they have a credible net-zero plan unless they have



Richard Black

COMPANIES WITHOUT DETAILED TRANSITION PLANS IN PLACE CAN EXPECT REGULATORY AS WELL AS LEGAL ACTION, AS MORE AND MORE COUNTRIES REQUIRE CORPORATIONS TO DISCLOSE CLIMATE-RELATED RISKS



Aakar Patel

In how many democracies is the political rhetoric this disjointed from the reality of the nation? One cannot think of any, really

The fly that touches honey cannot use its wings; so too the soul that clings to spiritual sweetness ruins its freedom and hinders contemplation.

SRI AUROBINDO



Three Monkeys

Sabka Saath is a lie or a delusion. More likely a lie because exclusion is deliberately perpetrated and institutionalised in the BJP. It has no Muslim MP or MLA but says Sabka Saath. Its ministers garland those who are convicted of lynching minorities, but it says Sabka Saath. Who is it fooling? Nobody, but it wants to say the words because it is not honest. Or perhaps it was a nice-sounding jumla at the time. Or perhaps that time was not right for the party to openly claim what it really stands for. Whatever we conclude as the reason, it is inescapable that the slogan itself is untrue because the numbers do not lie. Beti Bachao is not a convincing phrase in the mouths of those who free convicted rapists for coldly-calculated political benefit. Beti Bachao is a jumla when BJP supporters, national heroines in their field, must sit in protest to beg for action against their oppressor. The government is reluctant to act because the man is a long-term party MP and it senses there might be political benefit in not acting. This is the only reason it looks away from, and in that sense condones and encourages harassment of India's daughters. And it claims to promote Beti Bachao, though in court it is unwilling to reveal the reasons for choosing to release rapists. Again, mark the reluctance to reveal oneself honestly.

In how many democracies is the political rhetoric this disjointed from the reality of the nation? One cannot think of any, really. Of course hypocrisy and lies are a part of all political activity, and that is the reason why many people are not attracted to it. But this level of fake piety and pretend virtue while the deception is visible for all to see is likely unique to us and that is why we have to talk about it.

It is remarkable that a political party can do this and assume it can get away with it forever, but such is the arrogance of power and this time the delusion is likely real. On the one hand there is a mass media that is feeding at the trough and happy to be seen as a cheerleader for the government, if not aching to be an actual part of the official propaganda machine. From them we can expect no honest survey or assessment. Add to this a set of the world's most craven celebrities, film stars, musicians and cricketers. Unwilling to stand up even for their own when they are tortured and persecuted. Both too afraid to speak and too selfish and greedy to put at stake the riches they have gathered through their fame. And so externally there is no large dissenting, authoritative and popular voice to point out that what is being shown as day is really night. And on the other the leader is shielded by those who line up to say in public the opposite of what is manifest and apparent and what probably even they believe to be true. This works in particular with those leaders who have convinced themselves that they can only ever do the right thing. They want to be shown the evidence of this and there is no shortage of people available to do this.

If the leader holds gigantic rallies when the second wave of the pandemic devastates the land, the aides will prove that his rallies do not spread COVID. The BJP first passed a resolution, just before the second wave started, declaring that the Prime Minister had defeated the COVID pandemic and then deleted the resolution from its website.

When religious bigotry is exposed as the fundamental pillar of BJP politics, they will show that in the distribution of entitlements, the party does not discriminate against minorities (as if such a thing were even possible, and as if anyone had ever accused them of doing this, but let us set that aside for now). If joblessness and low wages are being experienced by crores of people and being reported on daily, they will conjure data that show this is not the case and India is in fact not only marching into 'amritkaal' but already in it. The government's own data that shows poverty increasing and consumption, including on food, decreasing between 2012 and 2018 is discarded because it is inconvenient. No reason is given and the findings not put out in the open for scrutiny. We must accept the government's word that the data it collected itself is so bad it cannot be revealed. The government's own finding that joblessness hit record levels in 2019, before the pandemic, was discredited by the courtiers, till the election was over and then released without change or comment. This is the ethics and morality of those who surround the king and whisper into his ears that all is well. The same people, including women in positions of power, are complicit in what is happening around them, and choose complicity over integrity.

In such a place, perhaps it becomes easy to believe in what one says though the evidence all points in the other direction. It is a variant of the actions being taken by those three monkeys: See no evil, speak no truth and listen to no criticism. The chant continues: Beti Bachao and Sabka Saath.

WISDOM CORNER

- Be a yardstick of quality. Some people aren't used to an environment where excellence is expected. **STEVE JOBS**
- If you are lonely when you're alone, you are in bad company. **JEAN-PAUL SARTRE**
- The world is full of magical things patiently waiting for our wits to grow sharper. **BERTRAND RUSSELL**

WORDSWORTH

Hippodroming

The original hippodromes were chariot-racing circuits of classical Greece (the term is from hippos, horse, plus dromos, a race or course). The term was imported from France to Britain in the early nineteenth century for a related spectacle and was later applied in Britain to a theatre that offered a varied bill. Hippodromes, these days conventional theatres, survive in some British cities, notably London, Bristol and Birmingham. In America travelling entertainments often advertised themselves grandly as hippodromes after the French model. An early example was Franconi's Hippodrome, which ran in New York for two seasons in 1853 and 1854. Contemporary illustrations show that this featured indoor chariot races in a circuit similar to those of ancient Greece. The idea was taken up by travelling shows, which often advertised themselves as both circuses and hippodromes. Since the original circus was the Roman equivalent of the hippodrome, that sounds like an etymological tautology, but they were different entertainments. The circus rings featured the familiar animal acts, clowns and acrobats and were surrounded by a hippodrome track. Since the races on these hippodromes were designed as entertainments rather than serious sporting contests, we may guess that who won and lost was supervised by the management to maximise the audience's pleasure. When serious contests were fixed, it wasn't a huge jump for people to call the practice hippodroming. The first examples date from the 1860s. A direct link with horses was quickly lost, since even early examples refer to boxing, athletics and other sports. In the twentieth century, car and aeroplane racing were added. The term was still occasionally to be found as late as the 1970s.

SPECTRUM TAXATION

The case for GST overhaul

Would the economic fundamentals change with the Karnataka elections? They just might. The Assembly polls have drawn a serious debate on the GST rates. The clamour is now for one rate against the four prevailing.



Shivaji Sarkar

THIS IS NO MORE AN ECONOMIC ISSUE BUT IS TURNING POLITICAL AS THE CONGRESS IS RAISING IT FREQUENTLY DURING ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

The issue has become a key controversy and has been blamed for high prices even as collections are swelling to almost an average of ₹1.40 to 1.50 lakh crore a month. The issue has been catching up the imagination of the business class, which is bearing the brunt. The penalty provisions are stated to be atrocious and any failure, even for ignorance of the law, means extraction of heavy multiple penalty payments.

The traders are raising the issue. This resulted in the issuance of 869 corrective notifications, 143 circulars and 38 orders. It's a complicated task for seeking correction. The pleas have to include all the points to justify an argument that should have been a natural process.

Since the GST structure is turning political and many state elections follow, the victory or loss in Karnataka would not bury the hatchet. Whosoever wants to be in

the saddle, has to drastically change the law Indian businesses would prefer to have the changes fast.

The FICCI says there is no need for a separate classification for capital goods, input and input services in the GST laws. It reiterates that for minimising disputes, the scope for interpretation should be eliminated.

The CII is for the central government reducing the 28% GST rate and decriminalisation of the said law. It suggests that the applicability of the prosecution provisions must not be on the basis of the total amount of the evasion of the tax but "on real intent to evade the taxes along with a certain percentage of the tax payable."

The ASSOCHAM is for further streamlining the system. Almost all want fuel being covered by GST to reduce the tax burden on fuel. Petroleum fuel has 32% cess; till November 4, 2021, excise duties were ₹27.90 per litre on petrol and ₹21.80 on diesel. It was cut to ₹19.90 and ₹15.80 respectively. It has a heavy component of road cess too. The amount being collected by the Centre as excise duty/cess for each litre of petrol is ₹32.90 and ₹31.8 per litre on diesel. There is a com-

ponent of state taxes on average of 25 to 28%.

The break-up of retail prices of petrol and diesel in Delhi, shows that around 54% of the retail price of petrol comprises Central and states taxes. In the case of diesel, this is close to 49%. If it is subsumed in GST, as suggested by most business associations, it would substantially lower the fuel price. The Centre and many states have reservations.

This is no more an economic issue but is turning political as the Congress is raising it frequently during election campaigns. It has taken the affront to change the law to suit the needs of the people and possibly put it in tune with what the UPA had envisaged. Raising it at a rally on April 24 at Beglavisi's Ramdurga, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said the party would effectively change the law. He promised to change the GST structure and ensure remunerative prices to farmers if his party "is elected to power at the Centre." Further, he said that contrary to the concept of the GST to help all, it has been "brought only to help the influential and it is complicated. Small businesses have been shut. We shall

better farm marketing too."

Rahul asserts, "There will be one tax and it will be a minimum." He says the current slabs 5, 12, 18 and 28% would be done away with. His party is for a maximum slab of 18%. But that is a catch. An 18% high cannot be the one rate. The minimum now is too high at 5%. It has to come down to 2%. So, the debate will go on, but it creates pressure for change.

The simple looking issue has touched the sentiments of the voters, more so as the BJP has not challenged the Congress contention. The BJP is facing sharp attacks on its governance issues in the state amid many allegations. The Congress is also raking up the issues of destruction of the medium and small industries, breakdown of trust between the states and the Centre and "consensus" in GST as a sham as the "Centre pushes through decisions."

Since then, counter-charges have become acerbic. Whatever be the results, it is certain that the GST might go through drastic changes.

The writer is Professor, Indian Institute of Mass Communication.
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Perils of lithium mining

Sir, No doubt the recent discovery of 5.9 million tonnes inferred resources of lithium (Li) in the Salal-Haimana area of Reasi district, Jammu & Kashmir, by the Geological Survey of India has been received as a game-changer in India's impending transition to a green economy but the environmental affect from the mining is inevitable. Extracting Li entails open-pit-mining followed by roasting the ore using fossil fuels which consumes 170 cubic metres of water and releases 15 tonnes of CO2 for every tonne of Li extracted. This depletes and contaminates waterways and groundwater, diminishes biodiversity, and releases considerable air pollution. Even the Himalaya (which is the youngest mountain range in the world) becomes much more unstable. Incidents of land sinking will also be reported if mining is carried out.

Gender equality in Army

Sir, The Indian Army's decision to introduce a common selection board for male and female officers for promotion to the rank of colonel from 2024-25 aimed at bringing equality in the force is a significant move. A gender-neutral selection board will select officers from 2009 batch onwards for promotion from the rank of lieutenant colonel to colonel. When a common selection board is constituted, men and women will compete on merit. With the introduction of the selection board, women officers will be treated on a par with male officers. In addition to this, women officers will be considered for selection as brigadiers along with male officers. The Army's granting of permanent commission to women has enabled women to assume challenging roles like that of their male counterparts. Several steps have been taken by the Army to bring inclusivity in the force and the most significant one is empowering women officers for leadership roles. Orientation course is conducted to develop operational, intelligence, logistics and administrative qualities in women. The latest step taken by the Army to bring gender-neutrality is the commissioning of women into the regiment of artillery. The steps taken by the Army to make the force gender-neutral are commendable. Women officers are no longer on the borderline. This is a positive sign and it will help to a great extent to put an end to prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination against women in our country.

Venu GS, KOLLAM (KERALA)

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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Vijaykumar HK, RAICHUR (KARNATAKA)

of the day quote

Nitish Kumar needs to realise that there is no vacancy for the country's top post in 2024 as Prime Minister Narendra Modi will return to power for yet another term in office

RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD | BJP LEADER

In the coming days, we will bring many pro-Punjab, pro-people initiatives

BHAGWANT MANN | PUNJAB CM

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Mann ki Baat' conversations have been instrumental in giving Ayush a positive thrust, leading to an increase in awareness about the benefits of traditional Indian systems of medicine

SARBANANDA SONOWAL | AYUSH MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Dogs kill woman

Seoni (MP): A 55-year-old woman was mauled to death by a pack of stray dogs at a village in Madhya Pradesh's Seoni district Saturday, police said. The incident took place at Mundrai village under Kanihwada police station limits, around 20 km from the district headquarters, an official said. "A post-mortem conducted on the woman's body revealed that she had sustained deep wounds from animal bites. The doctor who conducted the procedure has said that the woman may have died due to dog bites. No other injury marks were found on the body," Kanihwada police station in-charge Monis Singh Bais said.

Cocaine seized

Mumbai: Mumbai Customs officials arrested a Nigerian national and a small-time supplier after 99 gm of cocaine was found concealed in their consignment of slippers at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport here, an official said Saturday. The special intelligence and investigation branch of the Mumbai Custom Zone III on Friday arrested the accused after their consignment sent from Liberia was seized at the airport, the official said.

Ex-BJP MLA held

Patna: Former BJP MLA Jawahar Prasad has been arrested by Bihar Police in connection with its investigation into communal clashes that erupted during a Ram Navami procession in Sasaram district in March this year. The BJP alleged that the former Sasaram legislator was arrested to "appease" the minorities. Prasad, a five-term MLA from Sasaram assembly seat, was arrested from his house on Friday night.

Man arrested

New Delhi: A 26-year-old man was arrested for allegedly killing his live-in partner with the help of his brother and sister in Delhi's Teliwara area, police said Saturday. The accused has been identified as Vineet Panwar, a resident of Uttar Pradesh's Baghpat, they said. On April 12, police received information that an unidentified woman's body was found lying near Krishna Public School in Karawal Nagar, they said.

Two killed

Basirhat: Two persons were killed after being hit by a truck in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas district Saturday, police said. The incident happened on Basanti Highway near Laugachi in Haroa police station area, they said. Two van-rickshaw drivers were waiting on the roadside when the driver of the truck loaded with sand lost control and hit them, they added.



When both of us were Chief Ministers, he (Modi) used to say a law on MSP should be enacted in the country. You have become the Prime Minister of the country twice now, I want to ask you why is the law not being made

ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CM

SEN'S LAWYERS MOVE COURT

Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen's lawyers have moved Bengal's Birbhum district court challenging a fresh eviction order by Visva Bharati, asking the celebrated economist to vacate a portion of "encroached land" within his ancestral property situated on the university campus by May 6



Nitish may host Oppn meet in Patna

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, April 29: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar Saturday hinted that a meeting of opposition leaders may take place in Patna after the crucial Karnataka assembly polls were over as many would be busy electioneering there. The JD (U) supreme said issues related to forging opposition unity could be expected to be discussed at length at this meeting. "We will definitely sit together and discuss the issue pertaining to the formation of an alliance of opposition parties to take on the BJP in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

"Currently, some leaders are busy in the assembly poll (Karnataka). Once it is over, we will finalise the venue of our meeting. If Patna is unanimously decided as the next venue of the meeting of opposition leaders, it will be held here," Kumar said.

"We will be happy to organize this meeting in Patna," he added. It may be recalled that West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, after meeting Nitish Kumar and his deputy Tejashwi Yadav, in Kolkata on April 24, had requested her counterpart to organise a meeting of all non-BJP parties in Patna to discuss opposition unity before the coming Lok Sabha elections.



"I have made just one request to Nitish Kumar. Jayaprakash ji's movement started from Bihar. If we have an all-party meeting in Bihar, we can then decide where we have to go next. Banerjee had said after the meeting with Kumar in Kolkata.

Kumar, acknowledging this friendly demand by his TMC counterpart said "Unhone-Mamta Banerjee-to Bola Hin Tha Patna mein meeting ke liye (Mamata Banerjee had sought the meeting in Patna)." "We are making efforts to unite more and more parties in the country against the BJP-led central government. I recently met several opposition leaders. Now I will talk to other non-BJP parties... My aim is to unite opposition parties before the general elections," he said.

After meeting Mamata, Nitish Kumar and Tejashwi had met Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav in Lucknow on the same day and discussed the formation of an alliance of opposition parties.

TMC and SP which earlier wanted to keep both Congress and BJP at equi-distance seem to have changed their stance and conveyed as much after the separate meetings the two parties leaders had with Kumar.

Prior to this Kumar and his deputy Yadav had also met Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge in Delhi on April 12. Besides, Kumar met Delhi Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party chief Arvind Kejriwal, who had conceded that it was "extremely

Currently, some leaders are busy in the Assembly poll (Karnataka). Once it is over, we will finalise the venue of our meeting. If Patna is unanimously decided as the next venue of the meeting of opposition leaders, it will be held here

NITISH KUMAR | BIHAR CM

necessary" that the entire opposition and the country came together and change the government at the Centre.

Kumar, on several occasions in the past, had appealed to all opposition parties, including the Congress, to join hands to defeat the BJP in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. "A united front" would be able to reduce the BJP to less than 100 seats", Kumar had said while speaking at the 11th general convention of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation or CPI-ML, which has extended outside support to the Kumar-led Mahagathbandhan government, in February in Patna. He had also reiterated that he does not have any ambitions to become the Prime Minister, or was a contender for the post.

Night curfew in Manipur districts amid violence



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Imphal, April 29: The situation in violence-hit Churachandpur in Manipur remained "grim", with unidentified miscreants setting fire to forest department building, even as night curfew was imposed in the district from Saturday, officials said.

A group of people torched the office building of the Range Forest Officer in Tuibong area around midnight, and several fire tenders were pressed into service to douse the flames, they said. Public property worth lakhs were reportedly destroyed and official documents burnt in the blaze, a police officer said.

Local tribals have been agitating for the last few months against a drive to evict villagers from reserve forest areas. Night curfew has been imposed in the district from 5 pm to 5 am from Saturday until further orders, according to an official notification.

Prohibitory orders under Section 144 of CrPC and suspension of mobile internet services will also continue in the district, the officials said. "The situation is still grim. Security has been bolstered at all major junctions and large localities of the town to prevent any untoward incident," the police officer said.

Fresh clashes had erupted between demonstrators and police personnel in Churachandpur town on Friday night, with the security forces using batons, tear gas and

Local tribals have been agitating for the last few months against a drive to evict villagers from reserve forest areas

Night curfew has been imposed in the district from 5 pm to 5 am from Saturday until further orders, according to an official notification

rubber bullets to disperse the mob. Locals claimed that some people were killed and many injured in the police action, hours after a bandh called by Indigenous Tribal Leaders Forum (ITLF) concluded at 4 pm. However, there was no official confirmation on casualties or injuries to people.

The eight-hour shutdown, called to protest against the eviction of Kuki villagers from protected forests, paralysed normal life in the tribal-dominated southern Manipur district. Earlier on Friday, clashes broke out between protestors and police at Sadbhavna Mandap in New Lamka in Churachandpur district, the venue where Chief Minister N Biren Singh was scheduled to address a public meeting, police said. Singh, however, deferred the visit following protests and the call for bandh.

Large scale protests and vandalism really started on Thursday when a protesting mob had attacked the venue of the chief minister's planned function and set fire to about 100 chairs and other equipment.

Girl dies after being washed away in drain

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad, April 29: An 11-year-old girl died after she accidentally fell into a pit on the road near her home following a heavy spell of rain on Saturday morning here, police said.

Two civic body officials were suspended from duty in the aftermath of the incident. Police said the girl died after being washed away in the drain at Secunderabad here. The girl's body was taken out after police, rescue personnel and local residents joined hands to take her out of the drain.

The girl had stepped out of her home along with her 15-year-old brother to buy a milk packet from a nearby store, they said. Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) Mayor Vijaya Lakshmi R Gadwal visited the site of the incident and expressed her anger with officials over the death of the girl.

Vijaya Lakshmi, who met the family members of the girl, announced an ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh to the next of kin, a GHMC release said. The mayor said regular meetings are held with GHMC officials on the condition of roads and other civic issues in the city. The officials are regularly told that such incidents should not happen, she said.

Union Minister G Kishan Reddy, who is Lok Sabha member from Secunderabad, visited the place and alleged that lack of coordination between GHMC and the water board in executing civic works led to the girl's death.

Telangana Animal Husbandry Minister T Srinivas Yadav, however, took exception to the remarks about lack of coordination and other issues. Yadav said Reddy should spell out what he has done as Member of Parliament during the last four years. Massive works are happening in the city under the Strategic Nala Development Programme, he said. Meanwhile, a GHMC release said two officials were suspended for their alleged negligence in the incident.

3 dead, 11 rescued after godown collapses

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thane, April 29: Three persons, including a minor girl, were killed and at least 11 others have been rescued from the debris after a two-storey godown collapsed Saturday in Bhiwandi in Maharashtra's Thane district, while 10 persons are still feared trapped, a civic official said.

The ground-plus-two-storey godown situated in Wardhaman Compound in Valpada in Mankoli, which collapsed at 1:45 pm, had four families occupying the upper floors while workers were present on the ground floor. Regional Disaster Management Cell chief Avinash Sawant said.

Rescue operations underway



since the last eight hours were carried out manually initially after which a dog squad and two earth-movers were deployed late in the evening, Sawant said.

"The bodies of a four-and-a-half-year-old girl, a 40-year-old man, and a 26-year-old woman have been taken out from the debris, while 11 persons have been rescued and are being

treated for injuries. We fear some 10 persons may still be trapped underneath," Sawant said in the night.

Chief Minister Eknath Shinde announced a compensation of Rs 5 lakh each to the kin of the deceased, while medical expenses of the injured would be borne by the state government. Shinde visited the spot in the night.



A cadet celebrates during the Passing Out Parade at Officers Training Academy in Chennai

PTI PHOTO

43 bag perfect 100 score in JEE-Main

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 29: Forty-three candidates have bagged the perfect 100 score in the engineering entrance exam JEE-Main with maximum of them being from Telangana, the National Testing Agency announced Saturday.

The result of at least 15 candidates has been withheld on account of usage of unfair means. The 43 toppers include 32 from the general category, seven from the OBC category and three from gen-EWS and one SC category. While Dipen Sojitra is the PwD topper with 99.99 NTA score, the SC topper is Deshank Pratap Singh with 100 NTA score and ST topper is Dheeravath Thanuj with 99.99041.

"The National Testing Agency (NTA) scores of 15 candidates have been withheld as they are under scrutiny. The cases of these candidates are being placed before a committee separately. Their NTA scores will be declared once the committee finalises its report," a senior NTA official said.

NTA score is not the same as percentage of marks obtained but normalised scores.

Country's first cable-stayed rail bridge in Reasi completed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, April 29: The work on the country's first cable-stayed railway bridge at Anji Khad in Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir has been completed. Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav said.

The completion of the bridge drew praise from Prime Minister Narendra Modi who is keenly monitoring the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Railway Link (USBRL), which will provide rail connectivity between the Kashmir Valley and the rest of the country.

"In 11 months, India's first cable-stayed rail bridge (Anji Khad) is ready..." Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav tweeted on Friday, shar-

ing a video of the completed bridge. The total length of the cable strand used in the bridge is 653 km.

Reacting to Vaishnav's tweet, the prime minister wrote "excellent". The completion of Anji Khad bridge, having a single pylon with a height of 331 metres above the river bed on Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL), is yet another major breakthrough achieved by the Indian Railways, which is expecting to complete the ₹37,000 crore project by the end of this year.

Minister of State for Railways Darshana Vikram Jardosh, who recently inspected the USBRL project by visiting various key locations including Anji Khad bridge and the



nearby iconic Chenab bridge, termed the completion of the country's first cable-stayed bridge as "an

other milestone" despite difficult geographic conditions.

"I visited the bridge site and

congratulated everyone for successfully installing all 96 cables of the bridge in a record time of 11 months. This asymmetrical cable-stayed bridge crosses the deep gorges of Anji river, a tributary of river Chenab," she said.

Jardosh said the bridge connects tunnel T2 on the Katra side and Tunnel T3 on the Reasi side. "It has been the PM's vision to make Indian railways the best in the world. Overcoming geographic and climatic challenges, our engineers and railway officials have conquered the invincible," the minister said.

Described as a "true engineering marvel", the bridge has 48 cables each on lateral and central spans with work on its pylon

started in 2017, officials said, adding the pylon is standing 191 metre from its foundation level.

They said it is the second highest railway bridge after the iconic arch bridge over Chenab at Kauri, which is the highest railway bridge in the world being 359 metres above the river bed level - 35 metres higher than the iconic Eiffel tower in Paris.

Anji Khad bridge has a total length of 473.25 metres, while the length of the viaduct is 120 metres. The central embankment has a length of 94.25 metres, the officials said. They said the bridge has been designed to handle heavy storms of strong winds and even explosions.

Mukhtar Ansari, brother Afzal convicted in MLA murder case

The verdict could lead to Afzal losing his Lok Sabha membership

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ghazipur, April 29: A court here Saturday sentenced gangster-politician Mukhtar Ansari and his brother and BSP MP Afzal Ansari to imprisonment for 10 years and four years, respectively in a 2007 Gangsters Act case.

"The court of Additional Sessions Judge/First MP-MLA Court Durgesh also imposed a fine of Rs 5 lakh on Mukhtar and Rs 1 lakh on Afzal," ADGC Criminal Neeraj Srivastava said.

Afzal, the MP from Ghazipur, was produced in the court, while his brother Mukhtar attended the proceedings via video conferencing.

Afzal was later taken into custody and sent to jail. The verdict could lead to Afzal losing his Lok Sabha membership. According to the Representation of the People Act, any member will be disqualified if convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for two years or more.

Congress MP Rahul Gandhi (from Wayanad in Kerala) and UP legislators, including Azam Khan (Rampur), his son Abdullah Azam (Suar) and BJP's Vikram Saini (Khatauli-Muzaffarnagar), had recently lost their memberships under the provisions of the same Act.

A statement issued by Special



Director General (Law and Order) Prashant Kumar said, "Several cases against mafia and head of IS (Inter State)-191 gang Mukhtar Ansari and his brother Afzal Ansari are being heard in various courts of the state. In one of these cases, due to effective prosecution, the duo was sentenced Saturday."

November 22, 2007, a case was filed under the Gangsters Act against the Ansari brothers at the Muhammadabad Kotwali police station.

The duo was booked under the UP Gangsters Act in connection with the murder of the then MLA from Ghazipur, Krishnanad Rai November 29, 2005 along with the kidnapping and murder of Varanasi-based trader Nand Kishore Rungta in 1997.

September 23, 2022, prima facie charges were framed against the

two. After hearing the arguments of both the sides, the court reserved its decision which was pronounced Saturday.

After the court's verdict, Rai's nephew Anand Rai expressed his gratitude to the court as well as Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. He said, "Today, (Yogi) has made Uttar Pradesh fear-free, whereas in the previous governments of the opposition, goons used to act like mafia."

Mukhtar is presently lodged in Banda jail. He had been an MLA for five consecutive terms from Mau Sadar assembly seat in neighbouring Mau district of Uttar Pradesh.

The gangster-politician did not contest the 2022 assembly elections and his seat was won by his son Abbas Ansari from the Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party.

West Eurasian genetic imprints in Kerala

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE AT PATTANAM IS BELIEVED TO BE PART OF THE ANCIENT PORT CITY OF THE MUZIRIS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad, April 29: The recent evidences from the archaeological site at Pattanam, on the South-Western coast in Kerala's Ernakulam district, and their ancient DNA analyses strengthen the belief of historians that Pattanam played an 'instrumental role' in trade and cultural exchanges between India and the Middle East and others, scientists said Friday.

The archaeological site at Pattanam is believed to be part of the ancient port city of the Muziris.

Historians consider the city of Pattanam to have played an instrumental role in trade and cultural exchanges between India and the Middle East, North Africa and the Mediterranean regions.

The belief stems from the classical Greco-Roman records as well as Tamil and Sanskrit sources.

"The recent and more conclusive archaeological evidences from Pattanam, and their ancient DNA analyses led by chief scientist at CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) Kumarasamy Thangaraj and PJ Cherian strengthen the belief, and is now published in the journal, Genes," the city-based CCMB said in a release.

At the Pattanam Archaeological Site, scientists and archaeologists have found, among others, human bones, storage jars, a gold ornament, glass beads, stone beads, utilitarian objects made of stone, copper and iron, pottery, early Chera coins, brick wall and a six-meter-long wooden canoe parallel to the wharf structure about 2.5



m below surface level, it said.

"These structures indicate a vast 'urban' settlement. The excavations suggest that the site was first occupied by the indigenous 'Megalithic' (Iron Age) people, followed by the Roman contact in the Early Historic Period. It appears that the site was continuously occupied at least from the 2nd century BC to the 10th century AD," said PJ Cherian, from PAMA Institute for the Advancement of Transdisciplinary Archaeological

Sciences, Ernakulam district of Kerala.

Scientists used the DNA from the human skeletons to pinpoint the genetic ancestry of the people found in the region.

Niraj Rai, co-corresponding author of the paper, and a Senior Scientist, DST-Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences, Lucknow said, "We have analysed the mitochondrial DNA of 12 ancient skeletal samples. We found that these samples show the pres-

ence of both South Asian and West Eurasian-specific lineages." The harsh climatic conditions of India are not always favourable to ancient DNA research. "Most of the excavated skeletal remains from the Pattanam site were in a very fragile state due to the tropical, humid, and acidic soil conditions. However, we have adopted the best practices in the field of ancient DNA and successfully analysed the samples. The unique imprint of West Eurasian and Mediterranean signatures found in these samples exemplify a continuous inflow of traders and multicultural mixing in ancient South India," said Kumarasamy Thangaraj.

"This is the first genetic data generated, so far, to infer their origin and genetic makeup of Pattanam Archaeological Site. And the findings reinforce the early historical occupation of culturally, religiously, and ethnically diverse groups at the Pattanam Archaeological Site," said Vinay Kumar Nandicoori, Director, CCMB.

UP IS FREE OF ANARCHY: YOGI

Over 10,900 police encounters have taken place in the state since March 2017, when Adityanath took over as CM for the first time

AGENCIES

Gorakhpur, April 29: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath Saturday claimed that the mafia and other criminals used to forcibly occupy the land of the poor and demand 'goonda tax' under previous governments, but now the state is free of anarchy under the BJP and there is rule of law.

Adityanath, who was addressing public meetings in eastern Uttar Pradesh - one of poorest regions and a hotbed of mafia and gangsters, sought to woo voters for the upcoming urban body elections by harping on the planks of law and order and development.

The chief minister asserted that security was now guaranteed in the state. "Earlier, the mafia used to demand goonda tax, but today, they are begging



for their lives," he said.

The BJP leader alleged that earlier, the SP, BSP and the Congress used to hand out pistols to the youths of the state, but the incumbent government gives youngsters tablet computers.

Earlier, the mafia used to demand goonda tax, but today, they are begging for their lives.

YOGI ADITYANATH | CHIEF MINISTER

"SP and BSP used to spread corruption and encouraged criminalisation of politics, diversion of funds and embezzlement in welfare schemes, but today the benefits of development schemes reach every poor," the chief minister said at an election meeting in Deoria.

The chief minister said that the atmosphere of fear that used to be created during festivals till six years ago is no longer there.

The BJP government in Uttar Pradesh has maintained that it follows a zero-tolerance policy against the mafia and over 180 criminals have been killed so far in encounters with the police in the state. However, it has been accused by the Opposition and others of high-handedness and bias.

The criminals killed in encounters in the six years of Yogi Adityanath government included gangster-turned-politician Atiq Ahmad's son Asad and his accomplice.

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

'The Kerala Story' unites traditional political rivals

The ruling Left and the Congress-led Opposition are up in arms against the controversial Hindi film

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, April 29: For a change, the traditional political rivals in Kerala, the ruling CPI-M led Left and the Congress led Opposition, are up in arms against the controversial Hindi film 'The Kerala Story'.

While state Minister for Culture and Films, Saji Cherian, has said that people should boycott the film, leader of Opposition VD Satheesan demanded that the film should not be allowed to be released.

The reactions came after the release of the teaser of the film, which is slotted for global release May 5.



Starring Adah Sharma, the film's narrative claims that around 32,000 women went missing from Kerala after being brainwashed, converted and sent for terror missions in other parts of the country and abroad.

The film directed by Sudipto Sen traces the journey of four female college students in Kerala who become part of the Islamic State.

Meanwhile, Cherian also said that legal steps will be taken to see

that the film is not released in the state. "This is an attempt to create friction and divide the society by injecting communalism. I am sure people will deal with it appropriately while the state government will explore all legal steps to see what can be done," Cherian said.

Satheesan said the film tells blatant lies against Kerala and the state government should take steps to see that it is banned.

FIRs against hundreds for offering 'namaaz' on roads

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kanpur/Aligarh, April 29: The police have registered five FIRs at different police stations in Kanpur and Aligarh against more than hundreds of unidentified people for offering namaaz on the roads on the day of Alvida Namaz (April 21) and Eid-ul-Fitr (April 22), officials said.

In Kanpur, the police have registered three FIRs against 1,700 people for offering prayers on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr on the road at Badi Eidgah, Benajhabar, Jajmau and Babupurwa.

In Benajhabar, an FIR was lodged against 1,500 people. Similarly, FIR was lodged against 200 to 300 in Jajmau and 30 to 40 people in Babupurwa. Members of Eidgah managing committees are among the accused.

Sub-Inspector Brijesh Kumar, who lodged an FIR in Kanpur's Babupurwa, said it had been de-

cidated during a peace committee meeting that prayers would be offered inside the Eidgah and those who could not offer prayers due to congestion would do so in the second shift that the police were to arrange.

Similarly, the FIR lodged with Bajaria police states that despite prohibitory orders, hundreds of people placed their mats on the roads and participated in Eid prayers. Police tried to dissuade them from doing so, but they did not pay heed to it.

Kanpur's Deputy Commissioner of Police, Central, Pramod Kumar, said the police were examining the CCTV and drone footage.

In Aligarh, two cases were registered at two different police stations against unidentified people for offering namaaz on the road on the day of Alvida Namaz and Eid-ul-Fitr. Police investigations are on in connection with the matter.



Rice-eating tusker finally tranquilised

'MISSION ARIKOMBAN' HAD GONE THROUGH SEVERAL CONTROVERSIES, WITH ANIMAL RIGHTS ACTIVISTS OPPOSING THE MOVE OF THE FOREST DEPARTMENT TO CAPTURE AND TAME IT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Idukki, April 29: After months of uncertainty and confusion, Arikomban, a rogue elephant notorious for breaking into the ration shops to steal rice and also causing damage to the human settlements in Chinnakanal and Santhanpara areas in this hill district, was finally tranquilised Saturday.

The Mission Arikomban, which started at 4 AM today, went on till 6 PM.

The elephant is being taken in a truck to an undisclosed location from the forest area near Suryanelli where it was spotted.

The High Court had earlier directed the Kerala Forest Department not to reveal the location of the release of the tusker.

The task force had a complicated day tranquilising the elephant and shifting it to the truck with the help of four Kumki elephants. They also had to brave heavy rain and fog when they were trying to shift the tranquilised elephant into the truck. However, the experienced Kumki elephants successfully managed to push the tusker into the truck.

Kumkis are captive elephants trained for use in trapping and



capturing wild elephants.

The task force spotted Arikomban near Suryanelli in the morning, and a tranquillising team led by Dr Arun Zacharia surrounded the area.

Fortunately for the task force team, the elephant did not go deeper inside the forest, and the first tranquilliser shot was done at 11.55 AM. The first booster dose was shot at 12.40 PM and another five boosters were given subsequently.

The elephant, however, put up

great resistance when the Kumki elephants tried to push him into the vehicle.

The task force members also could not cover its eyes with a black cloth, a procedure usually done during animal rescue, to keep it calm.

The officials used the arm of an earthmover to reach the top of the animal in the truck to fix a GPS-enabled radio collar, which was insisted on by the Kerala High Court. Mission Arikomban had gone

through several controversies, with animal rights activists opposing the move of the forest department to capture and tame it to become a Kumki elephant at Kodanad Elephant centre in Ernakulam district.

They petitioned the High Court, and the court, after hearing the plea, stopped the department's move.

The High Court appointed an expert committee to study the issue, and the committee suggested the

translocation of the elephant to a safer wild area where conflict with humans would not be there.

The committee had suggested shifting the elephant to the Parambikulam Tiger Reserve. Soon, protests erupted in the Parambikulam area, with residents fiercely opposing the move.

Then the High Court asked the government to release it in a place of its choice and asked them to keep the location a secret.

The local people of Chinnakanal and Santhanpara had been up in arms against the rogue elephant and had been demanding its translocation from their area. The place, which is trapped between the Anayirangal Dam on one side and several tribal settlements on the other, has many more elephants that were denied their corridors of passage.

of the day quote

The government is committed to save people from drug menace. Poppy cultivation in the state will be eradicated completely

N BIREN SINGH | MANIPUR CM

One should ensure that development projects do not cause any damage to the environment

AJIT PAWAR | NCP LEADER

The use of technology in the judicial system can ensure transparency, productivity and efficiency

SUKHVINDER SINGH SUKHU | HIMACHAL CM

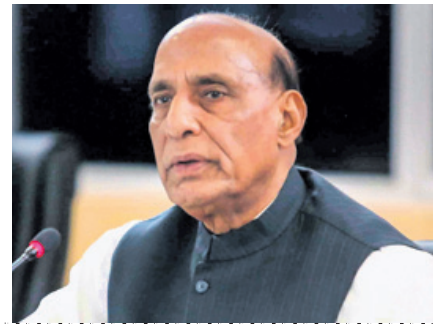


The allegation of Jungle Raj by a section of politicians is an attack on you (bureaucrats) as well. Therefore, it becomes our collective responsibility to counter such allegations and set things right

TEJASHWI YADAV | BIHAR DEPUTY CM

RAJNATH TO VISIT MALDIVES

Defence minister Rajnath Singh is set to embark on a three-day visit to the Maldives beginning Monday with an aim to bolster bilateral defence and strategic ties, people familiar with the matter said Saturday



DEFAMATION CASE

Rahul's appeal to be heard May 2

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, April 29: The offence for which Congress leader Rahul Gandhi was awarded the maximum sentence of two years in jail was not serious nor did it involve any "moral turpitude", his lawyer told the Gujarat High Court Saturday while seeking a stay to his conviction in the 2019 defamation case.

If a bypoll was conducted for the Wayanad constituency which Rahul Gandhi represented before he was disqualified, its result cannot be undone even if the Congress leader won his appeal against the conviction, said his lawyer Abhishek Singhvi.

After hearing Singhvi's arguments, the HC adjourned the hearing to May 2 as advocate Nirupam Nanavati, the lawyer of complainant and Bharatiya Janata Party MLA Purnesh Modi, sought time to file a reply. Justice Hemant Prachhok of the High Court on Saturday began hearing Gandhi's revision application against the Surat sessions court April 20 order declining a stay to his conviction for criminal defamation over his 'why all thieves have the Modi surname' remark.

He also questioned why complainant Purnesh Modi did not challenge Gandhi's application in the sessions court for a stay to the sentence, but challenged his plea for a stay to the conviction. He questioned Modi's "possible interest in Gandhi's disqualification."

If Rahul Gandhi obtains a stay, it would pave the way for his reinstatement as a Lok Sabha MP

Rahul Gandhi was disqualified under the Representation of the People Act March 24, a day after the Surat magistrate's court convicted and sentenced him to two years' imprisonment for criminal defamation

non-cognisable offence. "In the case of a public servant or a legislator, it has very serious additional irreversible consequences - to the person, the constituency, and also drastic consequences of re-election," he told the court.

If the Election Commission notified a bypoll for Wayanad seat and someone else got elected, then the situation becomes irreversible as this person cannot be unseated even if Rahul Gandhi wins his appeal, he said. If this situation "is not enough to suspend conviction, then what additional circumstances can anybody have?" Singhvi asked.

He also questioned why complainant Purnesh Modi did not challenge Gandhi's application in the sessions court for a stay to the sentence, but challenged his plea for a stay to the conviction. He questioned Modi's "possible interest in Gandhi's disqualification."

Rahul was disqualified under the Representation of the People Act March 24, a day after the Surat magistrate's court convicted and sentenced him to two years' imprisonment for criminal defamation.



Tourists participate in river rafting on the Beas river in Manali

PTI PHOTO

Congress has hurled 91 abuses at me: PM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Humnabad/Vijayapura/ Kudachi (Karnataka), April 29: Training guns on the Congress over its president M Mallikarjun Kharge's 'venomous snake' barb at him, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Saturday said the party and its leaders have hurled at him different types of abuses 91 times till now.

Accusing the Congress of also abusing the dominant Lingayat community in poll-bound Karnataka, the Prime Minister further said the grand old party had even abused Babasaheb Ambedkar and were engaged in abusing Veer Savarkar, and people will respond to their abuses with votes.

Modi - on his first visit to the state for campaigning after elections were declared on March 29 - gave a new slogan 'Ee baariya nirdhara, Bahumatada BJP Sarkara' ('This time's decision; majority BJP government) for the party, as he stressed on the party coming back to power with a full majority.

Modi's stress on BJP getting a clear mandate in May 10 Assembly polls is significant, as the party had not got majority both in 2008 and 2018, when it emerged as the single largest party, and had to form government with the backing



of MLAs from opposition ranks who switched loyalty to it and Independents.

Addressing a public rally at Humnabad in Bidar district, he said, "Someone has made a list of such abuses against me and it has been sent to me. Till now, Congress people have abused me 91 times with different types. Had Congress people put efforts in good governance and boosting the morale of its workers, instead of wasting time on this dictionary of abuses, Congress would not have been in

such a pathetic plight."

Making a speech in a campaign rally in Karnataka on Thursday, Kharge likened Modi to a venomous snake. As a row erupted, he later backtracked stating that his intention was not to hurt anyone's feelings and the "statement was not for PM Modi, but for the ideology he represents."

Modi said: "Insulting those who work for the poor and the country is Congress' history". "I'm not the only one who has been attacked like this. Last election, they ran a

campaign 'Chowkidar chor hai' (Watchman is a thief), then they said 'Modi Chor', then they said 'OBC community are chor', and now as the election season has started in Karnataka they showed the guts of calling my Lingayat brothers and sisters 'chor'."

Earlier addressing a rally in the district headquarters town of Vijayapura, the Prime Minister took a swipe at former Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah saying that the Congress leader was seeking votes in the name of his retirement from active politics.

He said the people of Karnataka will not choose a "tired and defeated" Congress but a BJP teeming with enthusiasm. Modi's jibe was aimed at 75-year-old Siddaramaiah who recently announced that this will be his last election and he would not contest polls anymore.

SHORT TAKES

Woman beaten up

Sambhal (UP): A woman was tied to a pole and beaten up allegedly by five people over a land dispute in a village here, police said Saturday. Ten people including two women have been arrested in this connection, police said. Friday, a video of the incident surfaced on social media following which Syoraj, Bhure, Viroj, Sherry and a woman, Manju, were arrested, SP Chakresh Mishra said. In the video, these five people were seen beating Sunita, a resident of Virkware village, in front of her seven-year-old daughter, police said.

Cop arrested

Durg: A policeman has been arrested for allegedly repeatedly raping a woman on a false promise of marriage in Chhattisgarh's Durg district, police said Saturday. An inspector posted in District Special Branch (DSB) Durg was Friday arrested under section 376 2(n) (repeated rape) of the Indian Penal Code, Superintendent of Police (SP) Durg Abhishek Pallav said. According to the police, the accused cop was posted at Amleshwar police station six months ago, when he established physical relationship with a woman from the area by promising to marry her. However, the woman later found out that the accused was already married to someone else, they said.

Five held

Kohima: The Assam Rifles has arrested five cadres of the NSCN-IM and rescued six people kidnapped by members of the insurgent outfit in Nagaland's Dimapur district, an official said. The six people, including a headmaster of a school, were kidnapped by NSCN-IM insurgents between April 13 and April 27, and kept at a house in Bamanpukhri area, with ransom being demanded from family members, he said.

Three drown

Badaun (UP): Three brothers drowned while taking a bath in the Ramganga river here Saturday, police said. The deceased have been identified as Sahil (16), Rohit (18) and Bhupendra (21), all residents of Shahpur village, Superintendent of Police (City) Amit Kishor Srivastava said. The brothers had come to attend the funeral of their aunt.

Woman ends life

Chennai: A 33-year-old woman died by suicide after jumping off from the fourth floor of the airport car park here, police said Saturday. The victim was apparently suffering from depression and undergoing treatment, police said. The woman had come with her two children to watch a movie at a theatre in the complex when she took the extreme step, police added.

Galwan hero's wife becomes Army officer

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 29: Lt Rekha Singh, the wife of Naik Deepak Singh who was killed in Galwan Valley clashes with Chinese troops in June 2020, was Saturday commissioned into the Army as an officer and has been posted to a frontline unit in eastern Ladakh, officials said.

29-year-old Rekha has been deployed with the Army Ordnance Corps after she completed her training at the Chennai-based Officers Training Academy (OTA). The officials said Lt Rekha Singh has been posted at a frontline unit in eastern Ladakh.

Her husband, Naik Singh was from the Army Medical Corps, and he was later attached to the 16th Battalion of Bihar Regiment. Naik Singh was posthumously awarded

Vir Chakra in 2021 for showing indomitable courage in rendering medical support to the injured soldiers during the clashes.

Vir Chakra is the country's third-highest wartime gallantry award after Param Vir Chakra and Maha Vir Chakra. Twenty Indian Army personnel laid down their lives in the fierce hand-to-hand combat in eastern Ladakh's Galwan Valley clash on June 15, 2020, an incident that marked the most serious military conflict between the two sides in decades.

According to his Vir Chakra citation, he played a pivotal role in rendering treatment and saving the lives of more than 30 Indian soldiers. "Naik Deepak Singh displayed unmatched professionalism in hostile conditions, unflinching devotion and made supreme sacrifice for the nation," it said.

Wife of slain IAS officer moves SC

Mohan was released from Saharsa jail Thursday morning following an amendment in Bihar's prison rules

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 29: The wife of slain IAS officer G Krishnaiah, who was lynched by a mob led by former Bihar MP Anand Mohan in 1994, has moved the Supreme Court challenging his premature release from prison.

Mohan was released from Saharsa jail Thursday morning following an amendment in Bihar's prison rules. Uma Krishnaiah, the wife of G Krishnaiah, has contended that the sentence of life im-



Anand Mohan

prisonment awarded to the gangster-politician meant incarceration for his entire natural course of life and it cannot be mechanically interpreted to last just 14 years.

"Life imprisonment, when awarded as a substitute for death penalty, has to be carried out strictly as directed by the court and would

be beyond application of remission," she said in her petition before the Supreme Court.

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's law department earlier this week as they had spent more than 14 years behind bars.

The remission of his sentence followed an April 10 amendment to the 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.

This, the critics of the state government claim, was done to facilitate the release of Mohan, a Rajput strongman, who could add heft to the grand alliance led by Nitish Kumar in its fight against the BJP.

Sisodia's judicial custody extended

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 29: A Delhi court Saturday extended till May 28 the judicial custody of AAP leader Manish Sisodia in a money laundering case related to alleged excise scam.

Sisodia, who was produced before the court on the expiry of his judicial custody, said before the media that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will not be able to stop Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's work in Delhi.

"Modi ji may try as much as he wants, but he won't be able to stop the work of Kejriwal ji in Delhi. Modi ji may conspire as much as he wants," Sisodia said while he was being brought out of the courtroom after the judge pronounced the order.

The court has on Friday dismissed the bail plea of Sisodia, saying "the case of economic offences has serious repercussions upon the general public and society at large as the evidence collected during investigation speaks volumes of his involvement in the commission of the said offence".

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on March 9 arrested former Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia in the liquor policy case. Sisodia was arrested by the CBI earlier in its ongoing investigation of a case related to alleged irregularities in the framing and implementation of the excise policy of the National Capital Territory of Delhi (NCTD).



5 women officers commissioned into artillery regiments

Lt Mehak Saini, Lt Sakshi Dubey, Lt Aditi Yadav, Lt Pious Mudgil and Lt Akanksha have joined the Army's premier artillery units after successfully completing their training at the Officers Training Academy in Chennai

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 29: In a historic first, the Indian Army has inducted five women officers into its Regiment of Artillery and three of them have been posted to frontline formations along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China,



military sources said Saturday.

Lt Mehak Saini, Lt Sakshi Dubey, Lt Aditi Yadav, Lt Pious Mudgil and Lt Akanksha have joined the Army's premier artillery units after successfully completing their training at the Officers Training Academy (OTA) in Chennai.

Out of the five women officers,

three are posted to units deployed along the borders with China and the other two in "challenging locations" near the frontier with Pakistan, the sources said.

The Regiment of Artillery is a major combat support arm and it has around 280 units that handle various gun systems including Bofors

howitzers, Dhanush, M-777 howitzers and K-9 Vajra self-propelled guns. The sources said the young women officers are being posted to all types of key artillery units, where they will get adequate training and exposure to handle rockets, field and surveillance and target acquisition (SATA) systems as well as key equipment in challenging conditions.

Lt Saini has been commissioned into a SATA regiment, Lt Dubey and Lt Yadav into field regiments, Lt Mudgil into a medium regiment and Lt Akanksha has been inducted into a rocket regiment, they said. The commissioning of women officers into the Regiment of Artillery is a testament to the ongoing transformation in the Indian Army, a source said.

In January, Chief of Army Staff

Gen Manoj Pande announced the decision of commissioning women officers into artillery units. The proposal was later approved by the government. "The Indian Army has expanded the role of women by allowing women officers into the Regiment of Artillery. Five Women Officers have joined the Regiment of Artillery after successful completion of training at the Officers Training Academy (OTA) in Chennai on April 29," the source said.

The women officers (WOs) are being provided exactly the same opportunities and challenges as their male counterparts, said an official. Nineteen male officers have also been commissioned into the artillery units after completion of the training at the OTA. The passing out parade at the OTA took place on Saturday.

international

of the day quote

Whether it is the US, Europe, Russia, or Japan, we are trying to ensure that all these ties advance without seeking exclusivity. China falls in a somewhat different category because of the boundary dispute and the currently abnormal nature of our ties



S JAISHANKAR |
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER, INDIA

It is important that the US restores, for Pakistan, Foreign Military Financing and Foreign Military Sales, suspended by the previous administration



MASOOD KHAN | PAKISTAN'S ENVOY TO US

Saudi Arabia and Iran will reopen embassies in each other's capitals within days



HOSSEIN AMIRABDOLLAHIAN |
FOREIGN MINISTER, IRAN

SHORT TAKES

Indian embassy in Dominican

Santo Domingo: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has formally inaugurated the Embassy of India in the Dominican Republic and said it will mark a new phase of bilateral cooperation as New Delhi expands its footprint in Latin America and the Caribbean. Jaishankar arrived here Thursday on his first official visit to the country. "Privileged to join Vice President of Dominican Republic @RaquelPenaVice in inaugurating the Embassy of India in the Dominican Republic," tweeted Jaishankar.

Ex Indian-origin Apple techie jailed

Washington: A former Apple employee of Indian origin was sentenced to three years in prison and ordered to pay more than \$19 million in restitution for conspiring to defraud the tech giant of millions of dollars and for related tax crimes. Dharendra Prasad, 55, was charged last year in March with one count of conspiracy to commit mail fraud and wire fraud, two counts of conspiracy to commit money laundering, one count of conspiracy to defraud the United States, and one count of tax evasion, the US Department of Justice (DOJ) said in a statement Wednesday.

Oz shuts oldest coal-fired plant

Canberra: After almost 52 years of operation, the Liddell Power Station, Australia's oldest coal-fired power plant located in state of New South Wales (NSW), was shut down. Australia's electricity generator and retailer AGL issued a statement confirming the shutdown of the coal-fired power plant, saying the site would be repurposed into an industrial renewable energy hub, including a 500-megawatt grid-scale battery, reports Xinhua news agency.

Man shoots down 5

Austin: A Texas man went next door with a rifle and began shooting his neighbours, killing an 8-year-old and four others inside the house, after the family asked him to stop firing rounds in his yard because they were trying to sleep, authorities said Saturday. San Jacinto County Sheriff Greg Capers told reporters at the scene that authorities were still searching for 39-year-old Francisco Oropeza following the overnight shooting in the town of Cleveland, about 45 miles (72 kilometers) north of Houston. He said Oropeza used an AR-style rifle in the shooting.

BARBARISM ON HEIGHTS

Padlocks on girls' graves to avoid rape in Pakistan

EVEN DEAD ARE NOT SPARED IN PAKISTAN AS WOMEN'S BODIES HAVE BEEN UNEARTHED AND DESECRATED ON MULTIPLE OCCASIONS IN THE PAST

AGENCIES

Islamabad, April 29: In a shocking revelation, more and more people are keeping the graves of women members of family under lock and key as necrophilia cases are on the rise in Pakistan, according to reports.

While necrophilia cases have been reported in Pakistan before too, some social media users, including activists and authors, raised the matter once again.

That a woman is raped every two hours in a country taking great pride in its family-oriented values has been hammered to the point of repetition in our collective conscience. But the heart-wrenching sight of padlocks on the graves of females is enough for the entire society to hang its head in shame and never dare to look at the so-called vessels of honour, read Daily Times editorial.



Harris Sultan, an ex-Muslim atheist activist and the author of

the book "The Curse of God, why I left Islam" blamed hardline Islamist ideology for such depraved acts. "Pakistan has created such a horny, sexually frustrated society that people are now putting padlocks on the graves of their daughters to prevent them from getting raped. When you link the burqa with rape, it follows you to the grave," Sultan tweeted Wednesday.

This is being done as a desperate bid to ensure the sanctity of dead bodies in case some randy monsters cherry-pick them to satiate their lust. Considering the rampant rise in necrophilia, one can't help but understand the urge to protect loved ones, reported Daily Times.

Another Twitter user Sajid Yousaf Shah wrote, "The social environment created by #Pakistan has given rise to a sexually

charged and repressed society, where some people have resorted to locking their daughter's graves to protect them from sexual violence. Such a connection between rape and an individual's clothing only leads to a path filled with grief and despair."

The scariest necrophilia case ever reported in Pakistan was in 2011 when a gravekeeper named Muhammad Rizwan from North Nazimabad, Karachi was arrested after he confessed to raping 48 female corpses. Rizwan was caught running away after desecrating a corpse. He had caught the attention of the nearby grave diggers and some other people.

According to National Commission for Human Rights, more than 40% of Pakistani women have experienced some form of violence at least once in their lifetime.

TENSIONS RISING

US confiscates Iran oil cargo on tanker

REUTERS

Washington, April 29: The U.S. confiscated Iranian oil on a tanker at sea in recent days in a sanctions enforcement operation, three sources said, and days later Iran seized another oil-laden tanker in retaliation, according to a maritime security firm.

As oil markets remain jittery, the cargo seizure is the latest escalation between Washington and Tehran after years of sanctions pressure by the US over Iran's nuclear program. Iran does not recognise the sanctions, and its oil exports have been rising.

Tehran says its nuclear program is for civilian purposes while Washington suspects Iran wants to develop a nuclear bomb.

Maritime security company Ambrey said the US confiscation took place at least five days before Iran's action Thursday. "Ambrey has assessed the seizure by the Iranian Navy to be in response to the US action," it said in an advisory to clients. "Both tankers were Suezmax-sized. Iran has previously responded tit-for-tat following seizures of Iranian oil cargo."

The sources familiar with the matter, who declined to be identified due to the sensitivity of the issue, said Washington took control of the oil cargo aboard the Marshall Islands tanker Suez Rajan after securing an earlier court order. The tanker's last reported position was near southern Africa April 22, ship tracking data showed.

The US Navy said Iran seized a Marshall Islands-flagged tanker in the Gulf of Oman Thursday, the latest seizure or attack by Tehran on commercial vessels in sensitive Gulf waters.

Iranian state TV said Friday the tanker ignored radio calls for eight hours following a collision with an Iranian boat, which left several crewmen injured and three missing. "Before using force, we tried to call the vessel ... to stop but they did not cooperate," Iranian deputy navy commander Rear Admiral Mostafa Tajdini told the broadcaster.



NUCLEAR THREAT North slams US-SK pact

Biden's meeting with Yoon in Washington came amid heightened tensions in the Korean Peninsula as the pace of both the North Korean weapons demonstrations and the combined US-South Korean military exercises have increased in a cycle of tit-for-tat



Russia joins chorus

Russia's foreign ministry Friday criticised a nuclear agreement between the United States and South Korea, saying it would destabilise the region and the wider world, and warned of a potential arms race as a result. Russia has repeatedly rallied against what it sees as the United States' growing military presence across Asia. "This development is clearly destabilising in nature and will have serious negative consequences for regional security, impacting on global stability," Russia's foreign ministry said in a statement. Moscow said the United States and NATO's drive for "decisive military superiority" would "bring nothing but escalating tensions" and could "provoke an arms race".

its nuclear arms capabilities.

She said it would be especially important for the North to perfect the "second mission of the nuclear war deterrent," in an apparent reference to the country's escalatory nuclear doctrine that calls for pre-emptive nuclear strikes over a broad range of scenarios where it may perceive its leadership as under threat. She lashed out at Biden over his blunt warning that North Korean nuclear aggression would result in the end of its regime, calling him senile and "too miscalculating and irresponsibly

The more the enemies are dead set on staging nuclear war exercises, and the more nuclear assets they deploy in the vicinity of the Korean Peninsula, the stronger the exercise of our right to self-defence will become in direct proportion to them

KIM YO JONG | SISTER OF KIM JONG UN

brave." However, she said the North wouldn't simply dismiss his words as a "nonsensical remark from the person in his dotage."

Since the start of 2022, North Korea has test-fired around 100 missiles, including multiple demonstrations of intercontinental ballistic missiles designed to reach the US mainland and a slew of short-range launches the North described as simulated nuclear strikes on South Korea.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is widely expected to up the ante in the coming weeks or months as he continues to accelerate a campaign aimed at cementing the North's status as a nuclear power and eventually negotiating US economic and security concessions from a position of strength.

During their summit, Biden and Yoon announced new nuclear deterrence efforts that call for periodically docking US nuclear-armed submarines in South Korea for the first time in decades and bolstering training between the two countries.

They also committed to plans for bilateral presidential consultations in the event of a North Korean nuclear attack, the establishment of a nuclear consultative group, and improved sharing of information on nuclear and strategic weapons operation plans.

Struggle for Sudan enters third week

AT LEAST 512 PEOPLE HAVE BEEN KILLED AND CLOSE TO 4,200 WOUNDED, ACCORDING TO UN, WHICH BELIEVES THE REAL TOLL IS MUCH HIGHER

REUTERS

Khartoum, April 29: The sounds of air strikes, anti-aircraft weaponry and artillery could be heard in Khartoum early Saturday and dark smoke rose over parts of the city, as fighting in Sudan entered a third week.

Fighting between the army and a rival paramilitary force continued despite the announcement of a 72-hour ceasefire extension Friday, when strikes by air, tanks and artillery rocked Khartoum and the adjacent cities of Bahri and Omdurman.

Hundreds have been killed and tens of thousands have fled for their lives in a power struggle between the army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) that erupted into violence April 15, derailed an internationally-backed transition toward democratic elections.

The fighting has also reawakened a two-decade-old conflict in the western Darfur region where scores have died this week.

The army has been deploying jets or drones on RSF forces in neighbourhoods across the capital.



Many residents are pinned down by urban warfare with scant food, fuel, water and power.

More than 75,000 people were internally displaced within Sudan just in the first week of the fighting, according to the United Nations. Only 16% of hospitals were operating as normal in the capital.

The latest ceasefire, brokered by foreign powers, is supposed to last until Sunday at midnight.

The RSF accused the army of violating it with air strikes on its bases in Omdurman, Khartoum's sister city at the confluence of the Blue and White Nile rivers, and Mount Awliya. The army blamed the RSF for violations.

The violence has sent tens of thousands of refugees across Sudan's borders and threatens to stir instability across a volatile swathe of Africa between the Sahel and the Red Sea.

Foreign governments have evacuated diplomats and citizens to safety over the past week, including with airlifts. Britain said its evacuations would end Saturday as demand for spots on planes had declined.

US set to modernise H-1B visa registration

US DETECTS FRAUD & ABUSE IN COMPUTERISED H-1B LOTTERY SYSTEM



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, April 29: A US federal agency has announced plans to modernise the H-1B registration process after detecting abuse and fraud by some companies to artificially boost their chances of winning the coveted visa for their skilled foreign workers in the computerised drawing of lots.

The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in speciality occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. Technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China.

In an unusual statement, US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Friday said, based on evidence from the Financial Year 2023 and Financial Year 2024 H-1B cap seasons, it has already undertaken extensive fraud investigations and denied and revoked petitions.

The USCIS, the federal agency that awards H-1B visas, said it is in

the process of initiating law enforcement referrals for criminal prosecution. It said that it has found that a small number of companies are responsible for entering the same applicants into the lottery multiple times, with the alleged goal of artificially boosting their chances of winning a visa.

"The H-1B programme is an essential part of our nation's immigration system and our economy, and the USCIS is committed to implementing the law and helping meet the ever-changing needs of the US labour market," it said. "We are working on an upcoming H-1B modernisation rule that will propose, among other improvements, bolstering the H-1B registration process to reduce the possibility of misuse and fraud in the H-1B registration system," it added.

The USCIS said during the registration period for the FY 2024 H-1B cap, it saw a significant increase in the number of registrations submitted compared to prior years. It said there were 7,80,884 applications for H-1B visas in this year's computer-generated lottery, against 4,83,927 in 2023 and 3,01,447 in 2022 and 2,74,237 in 2021. The number of registrations tied to people who applied more than once rose to 408,891 this year from 165,180 last year and 90,143 the year before, it said. H-1B visas are issued for three years and can be extended another three years.



BURNING BLAZE: A massive fire erupted at an oil depot in Crimea after it was hit by two of Ukraine's drones. It is the latest in a series of attacks on the annexed peninsula as Russia braces for an expected Ukrainian counteroffensive

Sperm donor ordered to stop after over 500 kids

REUTERS

The Hague, April 29: A Dutch court Friday ordered a man who judges said had fathered between 500 and 600 children around the world to stop donating sperm.

The 41-year-old Dutchman, identified by de Telegraaf newspaper as Jonathan Meijer, was forbidden to donate more semen to clinics, the court ruling said. He could be fined 100,000 euros (\$110,000) per infraction.

The court also ordered Meijer to write to clinics abroad asking them to destroy any of his semen they have in stock, except doses reserved for



parents who already had children by him. The decision came after a civil case started by a foundation representing the interests of donor children and Dutch parents who

had used Meijer as a donor:

They argued that Meijer's continued donations violated the right to a private life of his donor children, whose ability to form ro-

mantic relationships are hampered by fears of accidental incest and inbreeding.

Meijer's mass donations first came to light in 2017 and he was banned from donating to Dutch fertility clinics, where he had already fathered over 100 children.

However, he continued to donate abroad, including to the Danish sperm bank Cryos which operates internationally. Meijer also continued to offer himself as a donor on sites matching prospective parents with sperm donors, sometimes using a different name, according to the Algemeen Dagblad daily.

of the day quote

It's very unfortunate that in the last 2 years, animal husbandry departments in the states/UTs have not been able to utilise central funds. Every year, we have to surrender funds allocated under the central budget

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

Garuda Kisan drones are the most affordable in the market priced at ₹4.50 lakh each, we have already received booking orders for 6,000 drones indicating the success of the Drone Yatra

AGNISHWAR JAYAPRAKASH | FOUNDER-CEO, GARUDA AEROSPACE

When compared to Q1-2022, we are overall pleased with the performance of the first quarter of 2023 and have generally met our expectations, regardless of a large decline in the number of projects and units registered in March 2023

S SIVAGURUNATHAN | PRESIDENT, CREDAI CHENNAI



If we talk about 4G saturation project, about 38,000-40,000 villages don't have signal. We have kept target to complete 4G saturation by 2024

DEVUSINH CHAUHAN | MINISTER OF STATE FOR TELECOM

TWITTER TO TAKE 10% CUT ON CONTENT SUBSCRIPTIONS

Twitter Inc CEO Elon Musk said that the social media platform will take a 10% cut on content subscriptions after the first year, as the company looks to monetize content on the website in a bid to diversify its revenue sources



ADANI-HINDENBURG ROW

SEBI seeks extension to complete probe

Adani Group stocks had taken a beating on the bourses after Hindenburg Research made a litany of allegations, including fraudulent transactions and share-price manipulation, against the business conglomerate which the firm denies



ulations and/or fraudulent nature of transactions", it would take six more months to complete the exercise.

New Delhi, April 29: Market Regulator SEBI has moved the Supreme Court seeking a six-month extension to complete its probe into the allegations of stock price manipulation by the Adani group and any lapses in regulatory disclosures.

The top court had March 2 asked SEBI to probe the matter within two months and also set up a panel to look into the protection of Indian investors after a damning report by a US short seller wiped out more than \$140 billion of the conglomerate's market value.

In an application moved before the court, SEBI submitted that for ascertaining possible violations related to "misrepresentation of financials, circumvention of reg-

which has been witnessed in the recent past.

The court-appointed Justice Sapre panel is to be provided assistance by the Centre and other statutory agencies including the SEBI chairperson.

On February 10, the top court had said the interest of Indian investors needs to be protected against market volatility in the backdrop of the Adani Group stocks rout and asked the Centre to consider setting up a panel of domain experts headed by a former judge to look at strengthening the regulatory mechanism.

The Centre had agreed to the apex court's proposal to set up a committee, to be headed by a former Supreme Court judge, to go into the regulatory regimes. Till now, four PILs have been filed in the top court on the issue by lawyers ML Sharma and Vishal Tiwari, Congress leader Jaya Thakur and Mukesh Kumar, who claims to be a social activist.

Adani Group stocks had taken a beating on the bourses after Hindenburg Research made a litany of allegations, including fraudulent transactions and share-price manipulation, against the business conglomerate. The Adani Group has dismissed the charges as lies, saying it complies with all laws and disclosure requirements.

FPIs remain net buyers in April

FOREIGN INVESTORS WERE SELLERS IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY BUT THEY HAVE TURNED BUYERS IN MARCH AND APRIL

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 29: Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have remained net buyers in Indian stock markets for the second straight month, latest data from the National Securities Depository (NSDL) noted.

FPIs bought assets worth ₹7,695 crore in Indian stock markets in April 2023 till April 27, as per the data. In March, they bought assets worth about ₹7,936 crore in Indian stock markets. They were net sellers in the initial two months of the year. In January and February, FPIs sold equities worth ₹28,852 crore and ₹5,294 crore, respectively. NSDL data showed. Foreign investors were apparently cautious amid risks from the then volatility in Indian stock markets.

Barring some exceptions, FPIs had been selling equities in the Indian markets for over a year, which started in October 2021 for various reasons.

In 2022, foreign portfolio investors sold ₹121,439 crore worth of stocks in India on a cumulative basis, data available on the NSDL website showed.

"There were huge delivery volumes in stocks like HDFC Bank, HDFC and Tata Motors. It can be



safely assumed that bulk of this delivery buying was done by FPIs. FPIs have also increased their holding in ITC. Stocks in which FPI holding is steadily rising are showing resilience even during market weakness," VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services recently said in a note.

The banking crisis in the US that emanated after the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank in early March and the relatively strong economic outlook for India seemed to have made renewed appetite for domestic stocks.

Centre appoints Karnatak as Bol MD; Chand to head BoB

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 29: The government Saturday appointed Rajneesh Karnatak as managing director of Bank of India (BoI) while Debadatta Chand as head of Bank of Baroda (BoB).

The central government appoints Karnatak, Executive Director, Union Bank of India, as managing director and CEO of Bank of India for three year with effect from date of assumption of office, Department of Financial Services said in a notification. Karnatak replaces Atanu Kumar Das who completed his three-year term in January this year.

In a separate notification, DFS said Chand, currently ED of BoB, has been appointed as managing director of the same bank for a period of three years. However, Chand would assume charge July 1 after incumbent Sanjiv Chadha superannuates June 30.

The notifications for the two appointments came after the approval of the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The Financial Services Institutions Bureau (FSIB), the headhunter for directors of state-owned banks and financial institutions, in January had selected their names and recommended it to DFS for seeking necessary approval.

Q4 RESULTS

IDFC First Bank PAT rises 134%

Mumbai: Private sector lender IDFC First Bank Saturday reported a 134 per cent jump in profit after tax (PAT) to ₹803 crore for the March 2023 quarter, driven by strong growth in core operating income. The bank's net profit was ₹343 crore in the year-ago period. "Net Profit for the year stood at ₹2,437 crore compared to ₹145 crore in FY22," the lender said in a statement. The bank's core operating profit grew by 61 per cent year-on-year to ₹1,342 crore. The bank has registered its highest-ever quarterly profit in Q4 FY23 and highest-ever yearly profit in 2022-23.

Central Bank net profit surges 84%

Mumbai: Central Bank of India Saturday reported 84.19 per cent jump in net profit at ₹571 crore for the quarter ended March 2023 as bad loans fell. The bank's net profit was ₹310 crore in January-March 2021-22. Net Interest Income (NII) grew 45.35 per cent on annual basis to ₹3,513 crore in fourth quarter of FY23 as against ₹2,417 crore.

Kotak Mahindra profit up 14.29%

Mumbai: Kotak Mahindra Bank Saturday posted a 14.29 per cent increase in its consolidated net profit at ₹4,566 crore for the March 2023 quarter. The private sector lender's standalone net profit grew to ₹3,496 crore for the January-March 2023 period against ₹2,767 crore in the year-ago period. For FY23, the bank's consolidated net profit rose 23 per cent to ₹14,925 crore. Its core net interest income came at ₹6,103 crore compared to ₹4,521 crore, helped largely by an expansion in the net interest margin to an impressive 5.75 per cent.

RBL Bank net profit rises 37%

Mumbai: Private sector lender RBL Bank Saturday reported a 37 per cent growth in the March 2023 quarter net profit to ₹271 crore on lower provisions. For the entire FY23, the bank posted a net profit of ₹883 crore against a loss of ₹75 crore in the year-ago period, which also witnessed a management change at the firm after regulatory actions.

FM asks CBIC to begin automated GST return scrutiny

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 29: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Saturday asked the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) to increase the taxpayer base and introduce an automated GST return scrutiny system by next week.

The total Indirect Tax collections for the 2022-23 fiscal stood at ₹13.82 lakh crore, up from ₹12.89 Lakh crore in 2021-22.

The average gross monthly GST collection for 2022-23 stood at ₹1.51 lakh crore and monthly GST revenue collections exceeded ₹1.4 lakh crore for 12 months in a row.

In a review meeting with the CBIC, Sitharaman desired that the indirect tax body may undertake a comprehensive root cause analysis of fake billing and input tax credit claims by studying the typology of cases already booked and come up with recommendations on technology-based solutions to address the menace and prevent its recurrence.

The Finance Minister emphasised the need for continuously improving taxpayer services.

JUMPS ABOVE 2021'S BUYING

Wheat procurement gains pace

IN ALL, INDIA PLANS TO BUY 34.15 MILLION TONNE OF NEW-SEASON WHEAT FROM LOCAL FARMERS



REUTERS

Mumbai, April 29: The Indian state has procured more wheat so far in the current marketing year than total purchases made in the previous year, two government officials said Friday.

Higher procurement will help the world's second biggest wheat producer bring down wheat prices, which jumped to a record high earlier this year and lifted food inflation. Wheat procurement jumped to

19.5 million tonne as of April 26th, above the more than 18.8 million tonne procured last year, said a senior government official who declined to be named.

"Procurement has gained momentum in the last few days," the official said.

Rain and hail in March and April damaged India's wheat crop just before harvesting, forcing the government to ease procurement norms to rebuild stocks and help farmers, who were getting lower

prices on the open market for the damaged crop.

In all, India plans to buy 34.15 million tonne of new-season wheat from local farmers.

In the first half of April procurement gained momentum in central state of Madhya Pradesh, while in the second half of this month northern states of Punjab and Haryana contributed significantly, said another government official.

Farmers have been selling damaged wheat to state-run procurement agencies and their good quality crop to private players, said a New-Delhi based dealer with a global trade house.

"It seems at the current pace, government procurement can reach 30 million tonne. That would be enough for the government to run welfare schemes but won't allow it to lift a ban on the exports," the dealer said.

India, also the world's second-biggest consumer of wheat, banned wheat exports in May 2022 after a sharp, sudden rise in temperatures clipped output, even as export demand picked up to meet the global shortfall triggered by the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

US Fed points finger at Trump-era rollback for SVB demise

According to the report, the 2018 law caused the Fed to raise the supervisory threshold for large banks, i.e. those smaller than the "global systemically important banks," to \$100 billion in assets from \$50 billion - delaying stricter oversight of SVB "by at least three years"

REUTERS

Washington, April 29: The Federal Reserve Friday blamed the deregulatory zeal that occurred during the Trump era for contributing to the second-largest bank failure in US history, appearing to take a clear stand on an acrimonious policy divide in Washington.

Amid the turmoil that Silicon Valley Bank's implosion unleashed on the financial system last month, some Republicans and industry advocates have argued strenuously that a 2018 roll-back of post-financial-crisis safeguards was not to blame.

But the Fed's searing 100-page post mortem says bipartisan legislation in 2018 loosened post-financial crisis safeguards, undermining oversight by hindering the work of bank supervisors and encouraging the capital weakness that ultimately proved fatal to SVB. Greg Baer, president of the Bank Policy Institute, a lobby group, said the Fed had blamed the 2018 changes when the results of its own review showed "the fun-

The collapse of SVB and Signature Bank last month burned a \$23 billion hole in a government fund for deposit insurance, which officials are preparing to recoup in special fees expected to fall most heavily on the largest US banks

damental misjudgments made by its examination teams."

According to the Fed, SVB's management bore significant blame and bank examiners also made grave missteps. The report, however, also pointed to the Fed's vice chair for supervision at the time, without naming him, for creating what it said was a culture of weak and lax supervision that favored inaction.



Randal Quarles, who was appointed to the Fed by President Donald Trump in 2017, oversaw the Fed's bank supervision until his resignation in 2021.

Quarles rejected the report's findings about his work, saying it cited "no evidence at all" that Fed supervisory policy had gone astray during his tenure.

"Having acknowledged that there is no evidence, the rest of the 102-page report makes no effort to

pretend to find any," Quarles said in a statement.

Elsewhere, the report appeared only to harden long-set policy positions. Democratic Senator Elizabeth Warren, who serves on the Senate Banking Committee and has led post-crisis reforms to rein in financial sector excesses, said the report "clearly identified" 2018 legislation "among the major contributors" to SVB's demise.

In 2018, a significant number

MORE TROUBLE FOR FIRST REPUBLIC

The US Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation is preparing to place First Republic Bank under receivership imminently, a person familiar with the matter said Friday, sending shares of the lender down nearly 50% in extended trading. The US banking regulator decided the troubled regional lender's position has deteriorated and there is no more time to pursue a rescue through the private sector, the source told Reuters, requesting anonymity because the matter is confidential. Big banks including JPMorgan Chase & Co and PNC Financial Services Group are vying to buy First Republic following its seizure by the government, which could come as soon as this weekend, the Wall Street Journal reported Friday. If the San Francisco-based lender falls into receivership, it would be the third US bank to collapse since March. First Republic said this week its deposits had slumped by more than \$100 billion in the first quarter. Shares of the bank closed down 43%, worsening a stock rout that has wiped out 75% of its value this week. The stock lost more than half of its value on Friday and touched a record low of \$2.99. At its lowest, the bank had a market capitalization of nearly \$557 million, a far cry from its peak valuation of more than \$40 billion in November 2021.

of Senate Democrats joined all Republicans in rolling back key provisions of the 2010 Dodd-Frank Wall Street reforms enacted after the global financial crisis. Among other things, the new law raised the threshold at which the most intensive oversight is required to \$250 billion in assets, from \$50 billion, a key point cited in the report.

The reforms ultimately meant looser regulation and lower capital requirements at precisely the wrong time, according to the report. "While higher supervisory and regulatory requirements may not have prevented the firm's failure, they would likely have bolstered the resilience of Silicon Valley Bank," the report said.

Brij Bhushan ‘ready for probe but won’t resign’

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gonda (UP), April 29: Facing allegations of sexual harassment by seven women wrestlers, WFI chief Brij Bhushan Singh Saturday said he is ready for “any kind of investigation” but won’t resign from his post as it would mean he has accepted the charges against him.



Brij Bhushan Singh during an interaction with the media at his residence at Bishnoharpur village in Gonda, Saturday

“I am completely innocent and have full faith in Supreme Court and Delhi Police. I am ready to face any kind of investigation,” Singh told reporters at his residence in Bishnoharpur, about 40 km from Gonda city. “Resigning as president of Wrestling Federation of India is not a big deal for me, but I will not resign as a criminal.”

Taking a strong exception to Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra’s meeting with the wrestlers Saturday morning, Singh said, “Today it has been seen who is behind this controversy. I have been saying from the beginning that an industrialist and the Congress have a hand in this. They are upset with me.” He, however, did not elaborate.

Priyanka Gandhi visited the wrestlers at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi and expressed solidarity with them, accusing the government of “protecting” the WFI chief. Several wrestlers have resumed their agitation and sat on a dharna since April 23, demanding that an FIR be filed against the “Gonda strongman”. They also demand that Singh be removed from all posts he holds. The Congress has said that he should be arrested immediately.

Friday night, Delhi Police registered two FIRs against Singh. While the first FIR pertained to allegations of a minor wrestler and was registered under the POCSO Act, the second was related to outraging modesty.

“I’m not a criminal. Resigning means I have accepted their allegations,” Singh, the BJP MP from Kaiserganj in Uttar Pradesh, said. He claimed all the demands of women wrestlers have been accepted. “An FIR has been lodged against me, yet they are sitting on dharna. Why?” he asked.

Singh, a sixth-term lawmaker, said his tenure as the WFI chief is complete and he will automatically resign with the election of the new president. He is only playing the role of a “caretaker” till the election.

Singh has completed 12 years as WFI chief and is ineligible to contest for another term. He asked why are the wrestlers still sitting on dharna now when an FIR has been registered against him. “Why are they constantly speaking against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Sports Ministry?”

Singh said the ongoing dharna by the wrestlers is not a protest of sportspersons but a protest of the “conspirators”. “They did not wait for the investigation report to be made public and went to the Supreme Court and there raised a new allegation. They are saying that the sport has to be saved but they are not saving the game (by doing this). They have caused a huge loss in the last four months,” he said.

He also asked if he had been sexually abusing players for 12 years, why they never took a complaint to the police station, federation or the government till date.



Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal speaks during his meet with the protesting wrestlers at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi

“They went straight to Jantar Mantar,” he said.

Singh said he has submitted an audio clip to the probe committee, in which a man is heard speaking about arranging a girl to implicate him. Stressing that he fully respects the decision of the Supreme Court and the government, Singh alleged the protestors are coming up with new demands everyday.

“First they demanded an FIR and now that the FIR has been lodged, they are demanding to put me in jail. I am a member of Lok Sabha. It has not been by the grace of Vinesh Phogat (one of the wrestlers protesting at Jantar Mantar) but the people of my area have made me an MP,” Singh said.

Claiming that the entire Haryana and UP “akhadas” are with him, the MP said it is only “one family’s akhada” which is against him. “I have full faith in the law of the land. I will definitely be proved innocent. It has been troubling me for a long time. I and my family are being abused. Our supporters are also being targeted but my supporters and family have full faith that I am innocent. Soon, the court will also come to know about it,” he added.



Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi with wrestlers Vinesh Phogat, Sakshi Malik and Sangita Phogat during their protest, Saturday

Bajrang claims of political conspiracy

NEW DELHI: The protesting wrestlers Saturday claimed that a few people have entered their movement with a motive to lead it to a different direction but did not clarify who they were. Bajrang Punia said the wrestlers won’t let anyone use their platform for political gains. “A few people are trying to take our movement to a different direction and we strongly refute it. This is a fight for justice for India’s daughters,” said Bajrang, though he was silent when asked who was doing it. Probably, Bajrang was referring to the group of people who were heard raising slogans against Prime Minister Narendra Modi. A group of people was heard shouting ‘Modi teri kabir khudegi’ (Modi your grave will be dug here) Friday. “A lot of people have entered the protest site and trying to project it as a ‘bhadrakau andolan’ but this is fight to save Indian wrestling. People who are here (assembled) are in our support but not for any political gains,” said Bajrang. “Politics and other things are secondary, the dignity and honour of women is first, so please don’t indulge in politics. This is players’ movement, so do not link to any political party,” he added.

VINESH’S REQUEST TO BABITA

NEW DELHI: A war of words broke out Saturday between Phogat cousins Vinesh and Babita with the former asking the latter not to “weaken” the ongoing protest by the wrestlers against WFI chief Brij Bhushan Singh. The country’s top wrestlers have been protesting since Sunday, demanding criminal action against Singh over alleged sexual harassment and intimidation. “If you are not standing for the rights of aggrieved female wrestlers, Babita sister, I request you with folded hands not to weaken our movement. It has taken years for female wrestlers to speak up against their abusers. You are also a woman, try to understand our pain,” Vinesh tweeted.

Satwik-Chirag duo in Asia Badminton C’ships final

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, April 29: Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty became the first Indian men’s doubles pair to enter the final of the Badminton Asia Championships after their opponents retired midway through the semi-final match, here Saturday.

After winning the first game, Satwik and Chirag were trailing 13-14 in the second when the Chinese Taipei duo of Lee Yang and Wang Chi-Lin retired, handing the match to the Indians.

They face the eighth-seeded Malaysian pair of Ong Yew Sin

and Teo Ee Yi, who defeated fourth seeds Takuro Hoki and Yugo Kobayashi of Japan 21-6, 26-24 in the other semifinal, in the final Sunday.

Rankireddy and Shetty had earlier made it to a historic semifinals after outplaying Indonesia’s experienced duo of Mohammad Ahsan and Hendra Setiawan 21-11, 21-12 in the quarterfinals Friday. This will be India’s first men’s doubles medal at the continental event after 52 years.

PV Sindhu and HS Prannoy had lost in the quarterfinals in the women’s and men’s singles respectively.



ODISHA FC SEAL AFC CUP SPOT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kozhikode, April 29: Super Cup champions Odisha FC beat I-League winners Gokulam Kerala FC 3-1 in a playoff match to seal a spot in the 2023-24 AFC Cup group stage, here Saturday.

The result gave Odisha FC, who finished sixth in the Indian Super League, their chance to debut in the second tier continental club competition on the back of an outstanding two weeks at the fag end of the domestic season.

In the ISL, they played in fits and starts, never really putting together a good enough run of form to really challenge for the title. But over the last two weeks, Odisha enjoyed tremendous success as they laid siege of Kozhikode. Having won the Super Cup title, Saturday’s playoff win put a continental cherry on a brilliant cake.

It didn’t take long for Odisha to stamp their authority on the game. They were quicker on the ball and even more authoritative without it.

The first chance, however, didn’t fall Odisha’s way. Gokulam, who played most of the game as a counter-attacking unit, came at them through a Thahir Zaman corner, perfectly curled for Aminou Bouba in the six-yard area. The Cameroonian put his header high and wide.

Very soon Gokulam were made to pay for their errors, in more ways than one. In the 18th minute from a seemingly innocuous throw-in on the left touchline, Nandha Kumar dummied, Victor Romero spun and Diego Mauricio was through one-on-one. The Brazilian

finished to find his 20th goal in all competitions giving Odisha the lead.

In the 31st minute, Mauricio got his second goal, dribbling but also bulldozing his way through Gokulam’s left side to double the lead. The second goal woke up Gokulam, and roused them from their inept slumber into something resembling passing football.

Suddenly, Zaman and Sergio Mendiguitia were playing combinations and throwing Odisha’s defence off their game. When the goal arrived in the 36th minute, it came off the head of Farshad Noor, Zaman doing all the work on the

Titans inch closer to playoffs



Vijay Shankar reacts after reaching half century, while David Miller looks on

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, April 29: Defending champions Gujarat Titans once again came up with a clinical display to prevail over Kolkata Knight Riders by seven wickets and climb to the top of the table in the IPL here Saturday. It was sweet revenge for Titans, who lost their home game due to Rinku Singh’s heroics.

First it was the Titans pace duo of Mohammad Shami (3/33) and Josh Little (2/25) picked five wickets between them, while left-arm spinner Noor Ahmad (2/21) continued his fine run to restrict KKR to a below-par 179/7 after Hardik Pandya opted to bowl.

On a batting-friendly strip, Rahmanullah Gurbaz’s scintillating 39-ball 81 (5x4, 7x6) set the tempo, but KKR managed just 45 runs and lost three wickets in the

final five overs to miss the psychological 200-run mark. In reply, GT raced to the target in 17.5 overs with Vijay Shankar remaining unbeaten on 51 (24b, 2x4, 5x6).

Defending the paltry total, the home side had their moments when they dismissed a flawless Shubman Gill one run shy of fifty (49, 35b, 6x4) and almost had David Miller (32 n o) on 26. But they made a harakiri of sorts as Miller’s skier, which would have been a straightforward catch by their wicketkeeper, was attempted by Suyash Sharma from third man and he ended up grassing it.

GT at that time still needed 51 runs from 29 balls but it turned out to be a game-changing moment as Shankar and Miller sealed the issue in an unbroken 87-run unbroken partnership that came off 39 balls.

The win took GT to top spot in the table with 12 points from eight matches as they need to win two more matches to seal the playoff berth for a second time on the trot. KKR on the other hand staring at early elimination after enduring their sixth defeat from nine matches as they now face must win all their remaining five matches.

Returning to the side after Jason Roy pulled out because of a back spasm, the Afghanistan opener struck his second fifty of the season. But once rookie Afghanistan spinner Noor Ahmed (2/21) dismissed his teammate, KKR didn’t make good use of the final few overs as Mohammed Shami (3/33) and Irishman Josh Little (2/25) did play their part to perfection. The match had begun after a 45-minute rain interruption.

BRIEF SCORES: KKR 179/7 (Rahmanullah Gurbaz 81, Andre Russell 34; Mohammed Shami 3/33, Noor Ahmad 2/21, Josh Little 2/25) lost to GT 180/3 (Vijay Shankar 51 n o, Shubman Gill 49, David Miller 32 n o; Sunil Narine 1/24) by 7 wickets.



Sunrisers prevail over Delhi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

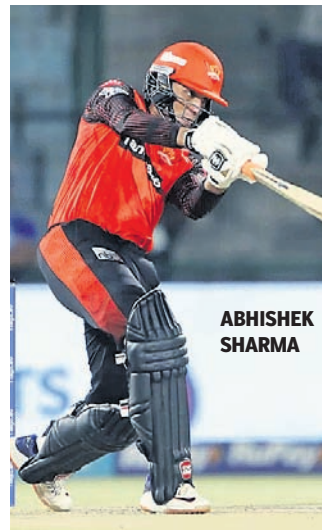
New Delhi, April 29: Mitchell Marsh (4/27; 63, 39b, 1x4, 6x6) dished out one of his finest all-round performances but it wasn’t enough as Sunrisers Hyderabad returned to winning ways with a comprehensive nine-run win over Delhi Capitals in the IPL here Saturday.

The hard-hitting Australian all-rounder conjured up hopes of a successful chase but once he was out, things went downhill for the hosts on the sluggish Kotla track.

Batting first, Abhishek Sharma slammed a 36-ball 67 (12x4, 1x6) to set the stage for Heinrich Klaasen (53 n o, 27b, 2x4, 4x6), who provided the final flourish as SRH posted an impressive 197/6.

In reply, Delhi lost skipper David Warner for a second-ball duck but Philip Salt (59, 35b, 9x4) and Marsh took the attack to the opposition with a 112-run partnership off just 66 balls to lay a solid ground to their run chase.

An incredible caught and bowled effort from Mayank Markande (2/20) finally broke the partnership with Salt back in the pavilion. Soon, Abhishek got rid of Manish Pandey and when Marsh holed out to Markram off Hosein, it left DC at 125/4 in the 14th over. Needing 69 off 36 balls, SRH tightened the screws to limit DC to 188/6.



ABHISHEK SHARMA



HEINRICH KLAASEN

With the win, SRH snapped their three-match losing streak to remain alive in the competition. They are bow in the eighth spot with six points, while DC stayed at the bottom.

Earlier, back at the top, Abhishek seemed to be batting on a different track, even as the others struggled on the two-paced wicket. But Klaasen’s 27-ball-knock ensured that momentum is not lost with as many as 62 runs coming off last five overs. The South African added 53 of 33 balls with Abdul Samad (28) and 35 with Akeal Hosein (16 n o) as SRH posted the highest score

at the Kotla this season.

For DC, Marsh was the best bowler in display. The stylish Abhishek was particularly harsh on Ishant Sharma. Abhishek was finally dismissed in the 12th over when he tried to go for a slog off Axar Klaasen then teed off during the death overs to ensure an above-par score for visitors.

BRIEF SCORES: SRH 197/6 (Abhishek Sharma 67, Heinrich Klaasen 53 n o; Mitchell Marsh 4/27) beat DC 188/6 (Mitchell Marsh 63, Phil Salt 59; Mayank Markande 2/20) by 9 runs.