

Professional integrity
Actor Saiee Manjrekar prioritises earning roles based on merit, not family connections

LEISURE | P2

Six months of war
The war in Gaza has been raging for six months and the patience of Israel's allies is running out with no end in sight

INTERNATIONAL | P10

Tesla's robotaxi
Elon Musk reveals that Tesla will pull back the curtain on a robotaxi in August

BUSINESS | P11

India lose to Aussies
Indian men's hockey team kick off the Australia tour on a disappointing note as they lose 1-5 in the first Test of the 5-match series

SPORTS | P12

Iran set to hit Israel, asks US to stay away

AGENCIES

Tehran, April 6: Iran said it asked the US to 'step aside' as the country prepares a response to a suspected Israeli attack on its consulate in Syria while Hezbollah, its main proxy in the Middle East, warned the Jewish state it's prepared for war.

In a written message to Washington, Iran "warned the US not to get dragged into Netanyahu's trap," Mohammad Jamshidi, the Iranian president's deputy chief of staff for political affairs, wrote on X, referring to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The US should "step aside so that you don't get hit."

"In response, the US asked Iran not to hit American targets," Jamshidi said.

The US hasn't commented on the alleged message Iran had sent.

CNN reported that the US is on high alert and is preparing for a 'significant' response from Iran against Israeli or American targets in the region. The network cited an unnamed US official.

NBC, citing two unnamed US officials, said President Joe Biden's administration is concerned that any attack could be inside Israel, specifically



SENSITISATION DRIVE: School students take part in a painting competition organised as part of a voting awareness campaign, ahead of Lok Sabha elections, in Moradabad, Saturday

against "military or intelligence targets, rather than civilians."

The Biden administration did take the unusual step of communicating directly to Iran that the US was unaware that Monday's strike in Damascus would happen, *Bloomberg* reported. That suggested the US was trying to prevent its own forces and bases in the Middle East being attacked.

The Islamic Republic has said it will deliver a 'slap' to Israel, its arch enemy. Still, it's unclear when that would happen or whether Iran would try to attack Israel directly or through one of its proxy groups such as Hezbollah, based in Lebanon.

The airstrike hit the Iranian consulate in Damascus, killing at least seven Iranians, including two generals. While Israel has repeatedly targeted Iran-linked assets in Syria over the past few months, this was the first time an attack struck an Iranian diplomatic building.

Israel has been on alert since then, canceling home leave for combat troops, calling up reserves and bolstering air defences. Its military scrambled navigational signals over Tel Aviv Thursday to disrupt GPS-navigated drones or missiles that might be fired at the country.

Folk artistes among 4 killed in road mishaps

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 6: At least four persons were killed and 15 others injured in two separate road accidents in the state, police said Saturday.

Two members of a Danda Nata (folk art) group were killed and 15 others injured when the van in which they were travelling overturned at Sompur Chhak in Ganjam district Saturday morning, police said.

The injured persons were rushed to Hinjili hospital. Seven of them were later shifted to MKCG Medical College Hospital in Berhampur as their condition deteriorated.

The artistes were returning from Dahimundali village to Kheti Berhampur in two pickup vans after completing a show.

In another incident, a father-son duo lost their lives in a road accident near Baruhan square in Jajpur district. The deceased have been identified as Sainda Jena (60) and his son Muna Jena (27), residents of Simulia village in the district.

DEMOCRACY IN DANGER: SONIA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, April 6: Chairperson of the Congress Parliamentary Party (CPP) Sonia Gandhi Saturday said that India is not the property of a few people but belongs to everyone.

"This country is not the property of a few people. It belongs to everyone. Our ancestors have watered it with blood," Gandhi said while addressing a massive rally on the launch of 'Nyay' manifesto for the Lok Sabha 2024 elections in Jaipur.

She said that for the last 10 years, the country has been in the hands of a government which has left no stone unturned in promoting unemployment and economic crisis.

"Whatever the Modi government has done is in front of us. This time is full of despair but we know that with despair, hope is also born. I have full confidence that our colleagues will light the lamp of justice and will move ahead braving thousands of storms," she said.

She said that PM Modi considers himself great but the (BJP government) is violating democratic norms and instilling fear in the entire system.



"This is dictatorship. Our democracy is in danger," Sonia said.

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge and General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi were also present on the occasion.

Kharge attacked PM Modi, saying that he has been taking credit for everything without doing anything.

"Is it PM Modi's job to take credit without doing any actual work? This man goes everywhere and says I did this, I did that. How many guarantees have they given to us before?" Kharge asked.

Priyanka said that unemployment is at its highest.

She said that paper-leak has become a common problem in all states and it is one of the reasons that youths are not getting jobs.

PM doesn't know his history: Cong

New Delhi: The Congress Saturday hit back at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his remarks that the party's manifesto bore a Muslim League imprint, saying the Prime Minister "does not know his history" as it was none other than Jan Sangh founder Shyama Prasad Mookerjee himself who was part of a coalition government in Bengal with the League in the early 1940s. The Opposition party also accused the BJP of practising "politics of divisiveness".

Addressing an election rally in Saharanpur, Modi said the Congress manifesto bears a Muslim League imprint while a part of it is dominated by the leftists. The Prime Minister's attack on the Congress came a day after it released its manifesto, focusing on five 'pillars of justice' and 25 guarantees.

YouTuber's hubby held for paper leak

DEBADURLLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

Bhubaneswar, April 6: In a major breakthrough, the Cyber police here claimed to have cracked a case where question papers of primary school examinations were leaked about a month ago.

City Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Prateek Singh said they have arrested Jagannath Kar, 29, a resident of Jajpur district. The accused is a teacher at Gopinathjew Nodal Upper Primary School in the district.

"Jagannath's wife Rutupurna Pati, 27, who is a co-accused in the case and runs an education-based YouTube channel, was not arrested as she was found to be pregnant," Singh stated adding that a notice has been served on her asking her to cooperate with the investigation.

Elucidating more, the DCP shared, "Jagannath, in a bid to

8 hospitalised due to heatwave

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 6: Eight people have been hospitalised after falling ill due to intense heat in the state, a senior official said Saturday.

Public Health director Niranjan Mishra said that from Friday evening to Saturday afternoon, five people were admitted to hospitals in Angul district due to over-exposure to sun and heat, while one such case each was reported in Khurda, Mayurbhanj and Sundargarh districts.

However, no report of any death due to sunstroke has been reported so far, he said.

He said hospital authorities across the state have been instructed to keep facilities ready to treat sunstroke patients.

"Special beds and adequate medicines have also been kept ready at primary health centres (PHC), community health centres (CHC) and district headquarter hospitals (DHH) for the treatment of sunstroke patients," he said.

Meanwhile, the maximum temperature in the state rose to above 43 degrees Celsius, and as many as 21 places recorded temperatures above 40 degrees Celsius, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

The industrial town of Angul in central Odisha was the hottest at 43.5 degrees Celsius, closely followed by Malkangiri (43.2) and Titlagarh and Boudh (both 43).

The twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack registered the maximum temperature of 39.6 and 40.1 degrees Celsius respectively.

The IMD forecast that there will be no major change in the maximum temperature over the next 24 hours, and in the subsequent two days, it may dip by two-four degrees Celsius, with no major change thereafter.

It also issued a yellow warning and predicted heatwave conditions at one or two places in Angul, Nayagarh, Bolangir, Malkangiri, Bhadrak, Gajapati and Boudh districts till Sunday.

Warm night conditions are likely to prevail at a few places in Bolangir, Kandhamal, Nayagarh, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur and Malkangiri, the weather office said.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

I had a plan for the future. But with the electoral bond scheme struck down, joining politics seems pointless

WEATHER

BBSR	CTC
Max Temp 39.6°C	40.1°C
Min Temp 27.1°C	26.2°C
Humidity 91%	89%
Rainfall Nil	Nil

FORECAST

PARTLY CLOUDY SKY

Mahindra offers job to girl who foiled monkey attack

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 6: Mahindra Group Chairman Anand Mahindra, Saturday, offered a job to a girl who saved herself and her niece from a monkey attack.

The incident took place when 13-year-old Nikita had gone to her sister's place in Mau's Awasiya Colony. She was playing with her one-year-old niece near the kitchen on the first floor of the house.

A monkey suddenly entered the home and made its way to the kitchen. All family members in the house were in the other room,



unaware of the monkey. The monkey started throwing utensils in the kitchen and even tried to approach and attack the girls.



The baby, unable to understand what was happening, started calling for her mother. This is when Nikita spotted the

Major fire breaks out at NTPC

Bhubaneswar: A fire broke out at NTPC's Kaniha plant in Angul district, Saturday. The mishap took place at 8.10 am in the coal transporting conveyor belt of the plant in Talcher area, fire services officials said.

The NTPC in a statement said that the fire call was quickly responded to by the CISF fire wing and plant's disaster team.

The fire has been doused fully and there was no report of any injury, it added.

Alexa device kept on the fridge and commanded it to 'bark'. The device then made loud barking noises, scaring the monkey away.

The girl's family was relieved and proud of Nikita for her swift action that not only saved her, but also her niece. One of the family members, Pankaj Ojha, said that he was surprised that Alexa could be used like this.

Alexa is Amazon's cloud-based voice assistant used for many everyday activities such as setting timers, asking queries, playing music, and much more.

Reacting to the incident, Anand Mahindra took to his official X handle and wrote: "The dominant question of our era is whether we will become slaves or masters of technology. The story of this young girl provides comfort that technology will always be an enabler of human ingenuity. Her quick thinking was extraordinary."

He said the girl showed "potential for leadership in an entirely unpredictable world".

"After she finishes her education, if she ever decides to work in the corporate world I hope we at MahindraRise will be able to convince her to join us!" the chairman added.

leisure



I DON'T READ ANYTHING ABOUT MYSELF: MARIAH

Singer-songwriter Mariah Carey does not like to read anything about her, as she treats it like a coping mechanism for her global fame. "I don't read anything written about me. That's one of my coping mechanisms," she told *people.com*.

RACHEL MCADAMS AFRAID OF MAKING BROADWAY DEBUT

Actress Rachel McAdams expressed her deep fear about her Broadway debut but remains optimistic about future opportunities. Despite feeling intimidated initially, she acknowledges her apprehension and hopes to conquer it, aiming for more stage performances beyond her role in *Mary Jane*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Today is payback time. Just look around you and count the marvellous blessings that the almighty has showered on you, both on the personal and professional fronts. You will thus want to arrange a small thanksgiving meeting with those close to you. Ganesha approves of the idea.

TAURUS
The desire to rule your community, your neighbourhood is likely to get hold of you, today. Don't get carried away by the idea and go bossing around. No one is likely to appreciate your acting high and mighty. Be sure. You will be creating a lot of enemies. Ganesha urges you to reject such thoughts and wait for the evening.

GEMINI
Your career is finally on track and your dreams don't look too distant any more. A card-dilett dinner with your spouse will leave you wanting for more. And you shall get more. A night to remember indeed. Ganesha, however, warns you to hold your horses or an imminent accident awaits you.

CANCER
Today, you will be keenly observing the games that people play. But your paranoia will work against you. Certain people are likely to use it to manipulate you and influence important decisions. Ganesha advises you to stay level-headed and jump to conclusions only after an unbiased analyses of the situation.

LEO
You will demonstrate your skills of networking at the workplace today. At the end of the day you will be afforded the help of some friend or colleague to reduce your workload. You will be able to tide through the day easily if you are able to make some compromises, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
You will end up spending the whole day at work today, making detailed plans for the future. While taking important decisions, Ganesha says, keep your partner informed. Whenever needed, also take the consent of your family to avoid any misunderstandings in the future.

LIBRA
Ganesha says today you will wish to get away from the monotony of daily life and take a break from your work and go off on a vacation. This trip, which you will take, will be beneficial to you and will increase your knowledge and experience. You will find satisfaction and happiness in your personal relationship.

SCORPIO
According to Ganesha, you may just be happy basking in the glory of successful business deals. Focus on your target and there's lot more in store for you on the career front. Sometimes, it's all right to pamper your beloved with precious gifts, and for this you may end up splurging today.

SAGITTARIUS
In your case, the progress will grow two folds today. You will accomplish all the tasks that you take up. Also, you will acknowledge all the people you have contributed in your success story. Keep a watch when splurging on your near and dear ones, says Ganesha.

CAPRICORN
Every venture is fraught with risks and accompanied by uncertainties, but if you have any inclination to start one of your own today, you won't be in two minds about it, says Ganesha. For the professionals, the day may bring recognition and accolades. This aside, your innate talent and knack for completing work on time will earn you the respect and goodwill of your seniors.

AQUARIUS
It's time to have a riot with friends! You don't always have to be goody-two-shoes. Do something you've never done before and break a few of those self-made rules. Watch how you suddenly become irresistible to one and all, says Ganesha.

PISCES
You will be busy dealing with minor conflicts throughout the day. You will need time to come out these conflicts even after they have been resolved. You need to guard against your mood swings if you wish to make progress on the work-front. The later half of the day should see your worries melt away and everything will fall into place, says Ganesha.

Kriti calls out male actors

Mumbai: Actress Kriti Sanon, who is currently enjoying the success of her films *Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya* and *Crew*, criticised male actors for not taking impactful roles in female-led projects and praised Shah Rukh Khan for embracing such roles. "Female actors have often supported many films where they agree to do small yet impactful roles, but not many male actors do the same," the *Mimi* actress told an entertainment portal and added, "There are times when the impact of the female character is maybe 60 percent and the male part is about 40 percent in the script, and the male co-star says, 'Isko flip kar de?'" The National Award-winning actress praised Shah

Rukh Khan for being one of the few male superstars to embrace such roles. "SRK has done a smaller yet impactful role in *Dear Zindagi*, and he brought so much gravitas to that role. He played a psychologist in the film, where the main focus remained on Alia's character," she said. On the work front, Kriti has *Do Patti* in her kitty alongside Kajol.



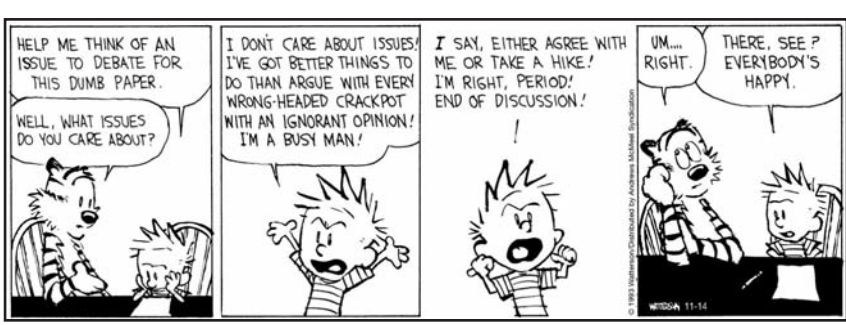
Nora on juggling diverse roles

Mumbai: Actress and dancer Nora Fatehi, who is making headlines with her recent movie *Madgaon Express*, revealed how she manages her time as an actor, producer, singer, and dancer. In an exclusive interview with a news portal, the actress opened up about her work ethic and how she manages her multifaceted career. Asked about balancing her roles as an actor, producer, singer, dancer, and performer, she said, "I just work. I'm alive for work. I work in the morning, I work at night." "This is my dream, my aspiration, to direct, produce, act, and dance. So I'm very lucky to be in this position. There are many people in this industry and in this country whose dream this is, so I just feel very grateful that all these opportunities come to me," the *Street Dancer 3D* actress concluded. On the work front, Nora was last seen in *Crakk* alongside Vidhut Jammwal and Arjun Rampal.

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



'Still don't feel like an insider'

Mumbai: Actress Sonali Bendre, who made a full-fledged comeback to acting after a break with the web series *The Broken News* in 2022, talked about why she still feels like an outsider in the film industry and her insecurities as an actor. The actress credits her upbringing for making her the way she is. Reflecting on it, she said, "I am the proverbial outsider. I come from a family that's into education. Also, since my father was in government service, the entire family would move to a new city every two years and start all over again. Being able to be with myself and not needing people constantly gave me immense inner strength when I entered this industry." She added, "On a film set where people knew each other, I was a complete outsider. Even today, when the Behls (her husband Goldie Behl's family) get together and discuss movies, I still don't feel like an insider. Goldie asks me for my opinion about a script as he finds that I still have that outsider's point of view, which aligns more with the audience. Now, I am getting more involved with our production house." "I was not trained in acting, and I miss that. I am insecure about not having all the tools I need as an actor. *The Broken News* was very important for me because I wanted to make a comeback with a certain kind of role that set the tone for my next chapter, and that's exactly what it has done," she signed off.



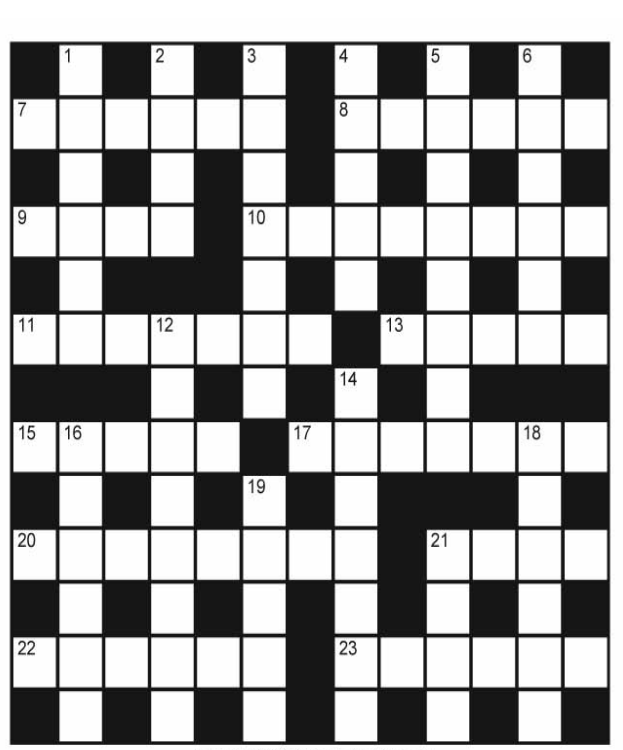
Saiee: I don't use my family name to get work

Mumbai: After her Hindi film debut in 2019 with the Salman Khan-starrer *Dabangg 3*, it took Saiee Manjrekar four years to do her second film as a lead in *Kuch Khattaa Ho Jaay*. She confessed that the wait wasn't deliberate, but she preferred doing a film that she got on her own and not because of her background (she is filmmaker Mahesh Manjrekar and Marathi actress Medha Manjrekar's daughter). She said, "I didn't want anyone to feel that I am using my family's name to get work and am privileged. I want to work my way into showbiz on my own. At this point, I am nowhere near where I would like to be in terms of making my parents proud." The *Major* ac-



FUN post

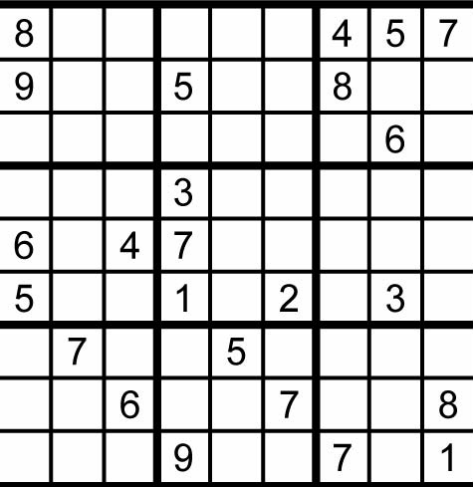
CROSSWORD



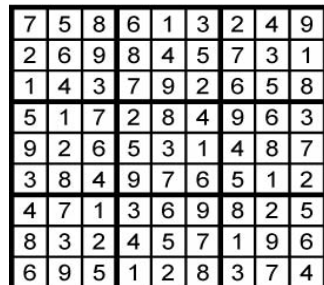
- Across**
- 7 Ottoman was one
 - 8 Hindu incarnation
 - 9 Fair game
 - 10 Sluggishness
 - 11 Dense fog (3,4)
 - 13 Solar radiation
 - 15 Vineyard fruit
 - 17 Welcome to the fold
 - 20 Opening
 - 21 Detective's assignment
 - 22 Yachtsman
 - 23 Calculating
- Down**
- 1 Crop up
 - 2 Compassion
 - 3 Green-eyed
 - 4 Stitch
 - 5 Similar
 - 6 Closet item
 - 12 Divide
 - 16 Bird of prey
 - 18 Renounce
 - 19 Pungent spice
 - 21 Ringlet

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown

Thunderstorm forecast amid sweltering heat



AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 6: Amid blistering heatwave conditions across the state, the regional centre of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) here Saturday predicted moderate thunderstorm activity with lightning, hailstorms, and heavy rainfall in some districts April 7 and 8.

The weatherman has attributed the prediction to the expected interaction between the trough aloft in middle and upper tropospheric westerlies and the hot and humid air from the Bay of Bengal.

Consequently, the state is likely to experience rain, thunderstorms, lightning, and gusty winds, the regional centre of the IMD said, advising people to monitor the weather closely and seek shelter during thunderstorm activity to protect themselves from lightning and hail-

storms.

Light to moderate rain and thundershowers are expected in a few places in the districts of north Odisha and one or two places in the districts of south Odisha.

Hailstorms are likely to occur in one or two places in the districts of Angul, Keonjhar, Dhenkanal, Jajpur and Cuttack April 7, as per the IMD bulletin.

Thunderstorms accompanied by lightning and gusty surface winds reaching 40-50 kmph are expected in one or two places in the districts of Angul, Dhenkanal, Jajpur, Keonjhar, Cuttack, Khurda, Boudh, Mayurbhanj, Deogarh and Nayagarh April 8, it said.

The IMD bulletin said that the strong winds may damage plantations, horticulture, and standing crops, and cause partial damage to vulnerable structures.

The Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) has im-

posed restrictions on outdoor sports activities in the state during peak hours.

"The SRC has directed the Sports and Youth Services department to restrict outdoor sports activities due to the prevailing heatwave conditions in many parts of the state," an official said.

Warm nights have been observed in one or two places in the Bolangir, while dry weather persists in the rest of the districts.

The maximum temperatures have risen significantly in a few places in coastal Odisha and appreciably in one or two places in interior Odisha.

Meanwhile, the maximum temperature in the state rose to above 43 degrees Celsius, and as many as 21 places recorded temperatures above 40 degrees Celsius.

The industrial town of Angul was the hottest at 43.5 degrees Celsius, closely followed by Malkangiri (43.2) and Titlagarh and Boudh (both 43).

The twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack registered the maximum temperature of 39.6 and 40.1 degrees Celsius, respectively.

Some areas in coastal Odisha have experienced above normal temperatures.

Earlier, the Labour department had put restrictions on workers in labour-intensive work between 11am and 3pm. The Khurda district administration also reduced school timings to 6.30am to 10.30am.



PHOTO: MANORANJAN MISHRA

MAKING A POINT: Editor, *Dharitri* and *Orissa POST* Tathagata Satpathy speaks at a discussion on 'How Fascism Rises to Power Using Parliamentary System' at Lohia Academy in Bhubaneswar, Saturday. Senior journalist Prafulla Das, Editor, *The Wire* Seema Chishti and CPI(M) leader Janardan Pati are seen

4 months after man's murder, cops arrest friend

DEBADURLLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

Bhubaneswar, April 6: Four months after a man died due to a mysterious wound on his stomach, the Commissionerate Police Saturday arrested his friend in connection with the murder. The incident took place under the jurisdiction of Infocity police station limits, December 6.

DCP Bhubaneswar Prateek Singh identified the accused as Kalia Swain, 40, a resident of Sikharchandi Nagar in Patia area of the Capital City. The victim, Seema Saibal, lived in the same neighborhood and was a good friend of Kalia. However, their friendship turned sour after Seema allegedly passed

lewd remarks about Kalia's wife, resulting in the vengeance crime, Singh added.

Giving more details about the case, Singh said in the months preceding the murder, Seema would get drunk and pass uncouth comments about Kalia's wife.

"For this, Kalia warned Seema on several occasions to stop and even threatened him with dire consequences," the DCP added.

On the fateful day - December 6 evening - Kalia had a heated argument with Seema over the same issue. "It later escalated into a scuffle between the two.

Later, locals intervened and separated them. Kalia left for his home in a huff, only to return after a while (around 11 pm). Seema was then loitering around with some friends near the local market," Singh said, adding that Kalia took no time to stab Seema with a knife he was carrying on the stomach before fleeing.

Locals rushed to Seema's help after hearing his cries and took him to a private hospital with the help of his wife. He was later shifted to SCB Medical College and Hospital where he breathed his last the same night, Singh said.

Significantly, Investigating Officer (IO) Kshyamsagar Nayak of Infocity police station said that the incident, though occurred in public, went unnoticed. "Even locals told Seema's wife that her husband had suffered the injury in a road mishap," Nayak said.

He said days after the incident police got a tip-off that Seema had been stabbed by Kalia, resulting in his death. "We launched an investigation and arrested Kalia today. The murder weapon has also been recovered," Nayak said.

The police have booked Kalia under Sections 302 and 201 of IPC and produced him before a local court today for remand.



₹6L per baby; CBI busts child trafficking ring

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 6: The CBI has busted a syndicate of child traffickers, arresting seven persons engaged in peddling infants to childless couples through ads on Facebook and WhatsApp channels, officials said Saturday.

The agency executed the crackdown last evening and rescued two newborns - a two days old and another 15 days old, they said.

Acting on a tip-off, CBI sleuths swooped down at seven locations in Delhi and Haryana where they stumbled upon the babies whom the syndicate schemed to sell for Rs 4-6 lakh, sources said.

Subsequently, the CBI rounded up seven racket members who were later arrested.

Among the arrested, master-



minds Neeraj hails from Sonipat and Indu Pawar from Paschim Vihar, Delhi.

Their associates Aslam from Patel Nagar, and Pooja Kashyap, Kavita and Ritu were tasked with

taking care of the children.

Anjali of Malviya Nagar allegedly used to bring customers, they said.

According to CBI's spokesperson, the syndicate purportedly liaised with childless couples seeking adoption prospects via advertorial engagements on platforms such as Facebook pages and WhatsApp clusters.

During the ensuing searches, the CBI confiscated a stash of Rs 5.5 lakh in cash, alongside incriminating documents.

The CBI has filed FIR charges against ten individuals, including the arrested, under various sections of the Indian Penal Code and Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2015.

The arrested accused were sent to CBI remand for four days, the spokesperson said.

Zuckerberg edges past Musk

Mark Zuckerberg has passed Elon Musk to become the third-richest person in the world, the first time since 2020 the arch-rival billionaires have held those positions.

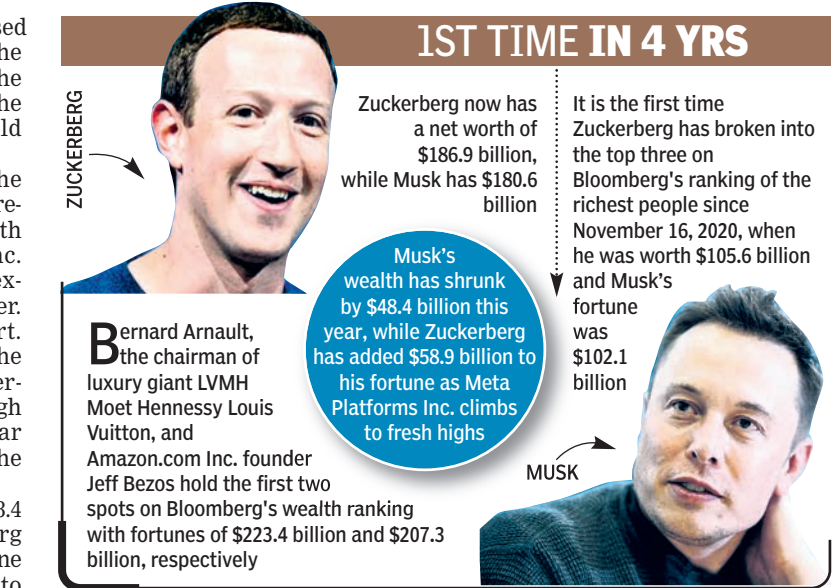
Musk, who ranked first on the Bloomberg Billionaires Index as recently as early March, fell to fourth after Reuters reported Tesla Inc. had cancelled plans for a less-expensive car, sending shares lower. Musk, however, denied the report. That followed news earlier in the week that Tesla's vehicle deliveries fell in the three months through March, their first year-over-year decline since the early days of the Covid pandemic.

Musk's wealth has shrunk by \$48.4 billion this year, while Zuckerberg has added \$58.9 billion to his fortune as Meta Platforms Inc. climbs to fresh highs, including a new record Friday.

It's the first time Zuckerberg has broken into the top three on Bloomberg's ranking of the richest people since November 16, 2020, when he was worth \$105.6 billion and Musk's fortune was \$102.1 billion. Musk now has a net worth of \$180.6 billion, while Zuckerberg has \$186.9 billion.

The reversal of the wealth gap between Musk and Zuckerberg, which was as big as \$215 billion in November 2021, illustrates how on-hot electric vehicle stocks have been usurped by big tech, and particularly anything involving artificial intelligence.

Tesla shares have fallen 34 per cent



this year, making it the worst performer in the S&P 500 Index. It's been battered by a global slowdown in EV demand, growing competition in China and production problems in Germany. Meta, meanwhile, has surged 49 per cent thanks to strong quarterly earnings and excitement about the company's AI initiatives. It's the fifth-best performer on the S&P 500.

The two billionaires' rivalry extends beyond their wealth: Musk and Zuckerberg have been engaged in an ongoing public spat that intensified when Meta launched Threads, a social-media platform that competes with Musk's X. The two even traded barbs last year about a possible cage fight. Musk,

recently revived the idea on X, saying he would fight Zuckerberg, 39, 'anywhere, anytime'.

Musk's net worth could take a further hit after his \$55 billion Tesla pay package was struck down by a Delaware judge. The Bloomberg Billionaires Index continues to use the options from that pay package, which are one of Musk's largest assets, in its calculations of his wealth.

Bernard Arnault, the chairman of luxury giant LVMH Moet Hennessy Louis Vuitton, and Amazon.com Inc. founder Jeff Bezos hold the first two spots on Bloomberg's wealth ranking with fortunes of \$223.4 billion and \$207.3 billion, respectively.



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STA steps up efforts to seize election freebies



Cuttack, April 6: In order to strictly implement the guidelines issued by the Chief Election Commission (CEC) to prevent undue pressure and illegal distributions during forthcoming elections, State Transport Commissioner Amitabh Thakur chaired a review meeting with all Regional Transport Officers (RTO), Saturday.

In accordance with the directives concerning the model code of conduct, the State Transport Authority (STA) is conducting rigorous inspections in various districts, in collaboration with

Income Tax department, Enforcement Directorate, both the state and Central Goods and Services Tax (GST) authorities, Commercial Tax department, Excise department and Police department.

The review meeting was attended by senior officials of STA and all RTOs of the state, who participated via video conferencing. While expressing satisfaction over the ongoing inspection programme, the commissioner suggested expanding the scope by maintaining proper coordination with other nodal agencies.

So far, more than 25,610 vehicles

Transport Commissioner directs all Regional Transport Officers to strictly adhere to instructions

Stringent checks conducted in bordering districts in coordination with RTOs of neighboring states

Postal ballot facility provided for vehicle staff employed on election duty

cles have been inspected at over 142 locations, resulting in seizures of illegal liquor, cannabis, hard cash, sarees, gas stoves, automobile parts and shoes, with collected fines totaling ₹12,84,585.

Notably, regular checks have been intensified at state borders. Teams comprising RTOs from neighboring states, along with RTOs from Balasore, Mayurbhanj, Rourkela, Bargarh, Nuapada, Nabarangpur and Ganjam are rigorously inspecting vehicles entering from both sides. Daily checks are conducted at shaded checkpoints at the entrances. As of April 5, fines have been imposed on illegal goods worth ₹27 crores and 72 lakhs. ₹2 lakh cash was seized from a vehicle in Jagatsinghpur.



PRESTIGIOUS AWARD: Well known academican Pabitra Mohan Nayak receives the Gangadhar Meher Award-2024 at a function organised at Rabindra Mandap here to observe the death anniversary of Swabhaba Kabi Gangadhar Meher, Saturday.

Transformative impact of Nand Ghar healthcare

Bhubaneswar, April 6: On the World Health Day, amidst global reflections on healthcare access and empowerment, Nand Ghar emerges as a shining example of transformative change.

Nand Ghar, flagship women and child welfare project under the Anil Agarwal Foundation (AAF), the social impact arm of Vedanta, is weaving a brighter future for countless citizens across India. This project consists of a network of modern Anganwadis that goes beyond traditional childcare, offering a comprehensive approach to well-being. By addressing early childhood education, nutrition, and health needs alongside skill development and economic empowerment of women, Project Nand Ghar empowers communities and fosters a healthier tomorrow.

At the heart of Nand Ghar's mission lies a steadfast commitment to improve healthcare outcomes and increase its access for local communities across India, through various interventions.

One such initiative is specialised camps organised at Nand Ghar under the 'Village Health and Nutrition Day' (VHND) across India every month. At one such camp, Nitanjali Pradhani, a local resident, brought her son, Harpit for a regular check-up. Harpit is physically challenged and during the check-up, a Nand Ghar staff member found out that he was severely malnourished, and his weight was quite low compared to the average for his age. After a discussion between the Anganwadi worker at Nand Ghar and his family, he was referred to the Nutrition Rehabilitation Centre (NRC) in Bhawanipatna, where he was given comprehensive treatment for 15 days with the help of the 'Rashtriya Bal Suraksha Karyakram'.

With the care received at the NRC, Harpit's weight increased from 5.6 kg to 8.1 kg. Now in good health, Harpit is continuing his early education at Nand Ghar where he also receives continuous counselling and care from the field staff to maintain his health and well-being.

SOA holds first E-Summit

Bhubaneswar, April 6: Atal Incubation Centre-SOA Foundation and Centre for Innovation and Incubation (SOA-CII) jointly organised 'SOA E-Summit-2024' at the Siksha 'O' Anusandhan Deemed to be University (SOA) here, Saturday.

Executive Chairman of Start-up Odisha Omkar Rai inaugurated the event and motivated the students to seek more interest in startups. "India has become the third largest start-up economy in the world, ranked

behind the USA and China. It is time for students to evince greater interest in start-ups to become self-dependent and position themselves as job providers instead of seeking employment," Rai said.

"The startups had been creating enormous opportunities for students who could make their initiatives profit-oriented with less investment," he added.

The event was organised at the Institute of Technical Education and Research (ITER). Rai said, "Odisha had 1940 recognised startups, which in-

cluded 151 in the agricultural sector, 25 in Artificial Intelligence, 27 in automotive, 13 in telecommunication and networking, 133 in the education sector, 2 in conventional energy and 22 in renewable energy." Rai also inaugurated a startup expo and 24-hour idea prototype hackathon on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, SOA VC Pradipta Kumar Nanda said that the university was laying stress on innovation not only in engineering and technology but in other curriculum as well.

Yi Bhubaneswar hosts eastern council meet



Bhubaneswar, April 6: In order to empower the youth of the country to lead, co-create and shape the nation's future, Young Indians (Yi) organised Eastern Regional Council Meet (ERCM) where leaders from nine different chapters across eastern India took part.

Yi, an integral part of Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), is an influential movement converging the youth of India to meet, discuss and set affirmative action on several issues.

ERCM featured eminent speakers, principal secretary of the department of Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities

(SSEPD), Bishnupada Sethi and the founder of Mitti Cafe and a social entrepreneur, Alina Alam. Their insights in social entrepreneurship, community empowerment and inclusive development inspired attendees to take proactive steps towards a positive change.

Chitrant Bhabhra hosted an interesting business story telling session. The event was moderated by Aditya Dash. The event included panel discussions, keynote sessions and interactive workshops. More than 200 members including top industrialists of the city participated in the ERCM and contributed to vibrant discussions and shared best practices to drive sustainable growth in the region.

JE gets 3-yr RI over DA

Bhubaneswar, April 6: A Vigilance court in Jeypore Saturday awarded three years of rigorous imprisonment (RI) to a junior engineer (JE) of Rayagada district for possessing disproportionate assets (DA).

The court also slapped a penalty of ₹2 lakh on the convict, Saroj Kumar Panda. Failure to pay the fine would entail additional six months of RI, the court ordered.

According to special public prosecutor Sashidhar Patnaik, Panda, who had been posted as a JE at the Gunupur block office in Rayagada district, was arrested by the Vigilance sleuths on charges of possessing assets disproportionate to his known sources of income in 2013.

"Subsequently, a chargesheet was filed with the Special Vigilance Court in Jeypore against Panda under Sections 13(2) r/w 13(1)(e) of the PC Act, 1988 and 109 of the IPC," Patnaik said.

80% CO2 emission from fossil fuel by 57 countries

According to a new report released by the thinktank, InfluenceMap, 57 companies and nation states were responsible for generating 80 per cent of the world's CO2 emissions from fossil fuels and cement over the last seven years.

This finding suggests that net zero targets set by the Paris climate change agreement in 2015 are yet to make a significant impact on fossil fuel production.

The report uses the Carbon Majors database, established in 2013 by Richard Heede of the Climate Accountability Institute, to provide fossil fuel production data from 122 of the world's largest oil, gas, coal and cement producers. The InfluenceMap report tells a sobering but informative story of the state of production in these high-emitting industries. Cement and fossil fuel production has reached unprecedented levels, with most of the emission growth traceable to a relatively small number of large companies.

The troubling reality is the lack of progress of these large

fossil fuel companies means the world will need to undertake ever more stringent and steep decarbonisation trajectories if countries are to meet the Paris agreement goal of keeping warming well below 2 degrees Celsius.

The Carbon Majors database highlights how critical it is for companies and countries to be held accountable for their lack of progress on emission reductions. Companies need to define exactly how best to align with the Paris goals, and then monitor and track their progress.

To address this need, our team of researchers from the Universities of Queensland, Oxford and Princeton developed a framework that outlines strict science-based requirements for tracking the progress of companies against Paris-aligned pathways. By applying this framework to the Carbon Majors database in a follow-up study, our team mapped production budgets for 142 fossil fuel companies against several Paris-aligned global scenarios of the intergovernmental panel



on climate change.

We considered the 'middle-of-the-road' future scenario whereby business carries on as usual - this is commonly used by investors to evaluate a company's climate risks. With this scenario, we found that between 2014 and 2020, the coal, oil and gas companies produced 64, 63 and 70 per cent respectively more than their budgets allow.

Over the seven-year period covered by the InfluenceMap report, nation states and state-owned companies are responsible for most of this growth. It is not yet clear whether such government-run companies will move towards improved reporting against climate stan-

dards, but further interventions by governments will clearly be required to meet stated national emission-reduction goals.

Fortunately, more transparency will be available for investor-owned companies. In 2023, International Financial Reporting Standards Foundation, a non-profit which aims to standardise global accounting, released new climate-related disclosure standards.

These should provide investors, politicians and the public with access to more transparent and consistent data, making it much easier for them to accurately judge companies' climate performance - or lack thereof.

It will be interesting to read the

climate reporting of the 57 companies identified by InfluenceMap in coming years. The release of the Carbon Majors data, along with the new climate-related disclosure standards, will hopefully make a huge difference. Companies being more accountable for their emissions should help reduce green washing in corporate sustainability reports.

Quantifying fossil fuel and cement production, and associated emissions, is a crucial step. But companies also need to act. Achieving net zero by reducing the emissions of a relatively small number of companies will be much easier than persuading 8 billion people to take collective action on climate. Such drastic reductions in fossil fuel production must also be matched by investment in abundant and increasingly cheap sources of clean renewable energy. Without these steps, the Paris goals will be unachievable - and that's very risky for all of us.

15 hurt in Mo Bus mishap

Bhubaneswar, April 6: As many as 15 passengers were injured, including five seriously, when a speeding Mo Bus fell into a canal near Pitapalli on National Highway-16, Saturday.

The seriously injured passengers, including a 13-year-old boy and a woman, are undergoing treatment at AIIMS-Bhubaneswar. According to reports, the mishap occurred when the bus was on its way to Khurda from Master Canteen Square with 30 passengers onboard.

Eyewitnesses said while the recklessly driven speeding bus fell into the dry canal when the driver tried to overtake a passenger auto-rickshaw. The driver abandoned the vehicle and fled, while some passengers managed to come out by breaking the emergency exit window glasses.

Locals and police later joined the rescue operation and shifted the injured to the Khurda DHH. The seriously injured were later shifted to AIIMS-Bhubaneswar. The Khurda industrial police is investigating the case.

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Sunflower farming finds few takers in Kendrapara



The air, water and soil of Kendrapara district are conducive for sunflower cultivation but the need of the hour is proper training and sponsorship

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, April 6: Sunflower cultivation has failed to find many takers in Kendrapara district due to lack of training and sponsorship by the state government.

The highly profitable sunflower farming is being ignored in Kendrapara district despite the district's immense potential for cultivation of the crop and heavy market demand for its oil.

The members of Maa Mangala Women Self-Help Group (SHG) at Koilipur's Charipokharia village under Rajkanika block have cultivated sunflower on seven acre of land for the second year on a row. The experience which they gained in the first year of cultivation has matured them and prepared them better to take up the farming in a more organised manner.

The sunflower oil produced by them has received wide acceptance from the customers in the local market. The women have become an example for others to emulate.

However, their success has

failed to stir up any interest among other farmers towards the cash crop due to lack of training and sponsorship by the state government.

Local intelligentsia claimed that the cultivation done during the Rabi season can lead to establishment of small scale industries and contribute to the economy of the district if it is encouraged.

Local intelligentsia Ashis Kumar Senapati said that the price of edible oil is witnessing a constant increase in the country. The price rise of the edible oil along with petrol, diesel and LPG cylinders has become a cause of concern for the common man. India is laying stress on import of palm oil from Malaysia and Indonesia after a stoppage in import of sunflower oil from Russia and Ukraine.

Indonesia has imposed restrictions on export of palm oil while Malaysian government has increased its prices. To combat such a situation, the then Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri had called for green revolution in 1968. As a result, India has now become a leading exporter of wheat, Senapati said.

Similarly, sunflower cultivation should be encouraged in order to tide over the edible oil crisis plaguing the country, he said. The air, water and soil of Kendrapara district are conducive for sunflower cultivation

but the need of the hour is proper training and sponsorship for the farmers to take up the cash crop, he added.

Pabitra Kumar Pati, a resident of Patisahi village under Garadpur panchayat, said sunflower cultivation was first done on experimental basis over 30 hectare of land in four panchayats of Garadpur block under Rashtriya Krushi Vikash Yojana. However, the absence of proper marketing facilities or mandis is weaning the farmers from sunflower cultivation, he added.

A farmer leader Rashmikiran Choudhury said that agricultural investment makes up the lion's share of the district's annual plan. However, this is not done in reality. The district can be an example in sunflower farming if water management is strengthened in the district.

Farming can be taken up on over 40,000 hectare land in the district. Around 55 per cent of oil can be collected from sunflower seeds which will lead to establishment of small and minor industries.

The Agriculture and Horticulture departments, Krushi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), local political representatives, administrators, voluntary outfits, pani panchayat and farmers club should join hands to take up sunflower farming to a greater height. The engagement of women SHGs in more numbers could usher in a revolution in production of sunflower oil. Similarly, proper training and financial assistance to the farmers through Agriculture Technology Management Agency (ATMA) can take the cultivation forward, he added.

When contacted, deputy director Debadas Dutta of district Horticulture department and senior scientist Prabhanjan Mishra of KVK said that the state government has launched various schemes for sunflower cultivation. It has also planned to provide training to the interested farmers through ATMA and constructing 118 godowns to collect the harvested sunflowers. The farmers can reap this benefit from this year, they added.



SIMULATED EXERCISE: NDRF jawans and personnel of Rourkela Steel Plant participate in a joint mock drill on gas leakage at RSP blast furnace-5 department in Rourkela, Saturday

Joda mining division brings ₹21k-cr to state exchequer

POST NEWS NETWORK

Joda, April 6: Joda mining division in Keonjhar district has contributed ₹21,000 crore as revenue to the state exchequer in this financial year (FY).

The state earned a total of ₹45,000 crore as revenue from mines while the contribution of Joda mining division to the state exchequer has increased this year than the previous years, sources from the state Mining department said.

According to reports, the state government earned ₹45,000 crore as revenue from mines in 2023-24 financial year while Joda mining division alone contributed ₹21,000 crore so far this year as revenue.

The mining division had contributed ₹17,000 crore as revenue in the previous financial year. Every year ₹1,500 crore is



deposited in the District Mineral Foundation (DMF). The funds in the DMF are used to protect the interest of the communities and benefit the people in areas of the district affected by the mining operations.

Notably, Joda mining division has 97 mines out of which 33 are operational. As many as 54

mines have been shut down due to various reasons. According to an estimate, the revenue collection could touch ₹50,000 crore if all the 97 mines under the Joda mining division become fully operational.

This will also lead to an increase in collection of funds for the DMF.

Ex-JE sentenced to 3-yr RI for DA

PNN & AGENCIES

Jeypore, April 6: Special Judge, Vigilance, Jeypore Saturday convicted a former Junior Engineer (JE) in a disproportionate assets (DA) case and sentenced him to three years of rigorous imprisonment (RI) with a fine of ₹2 lakh.

The judge ordered that the former JE will further undergo rigorous imprisonment for a period of six months if he fails to pay the fine amount imposed on him under Section 13(2) r/w 13(1)(e) PC Act, 1988.

Former JE Saroj Kumar Panda of Gunupur block in Rayagada district was charged by the Vigilance in a case under Section 13(2) r/w 13(1)(e) PC Act, 1988/109 IPC, for possession of disproportionate assets (DA).

The Vigilance will now move the competent authority for dismissal of the engineer from service following his conviction.

Major fire breaks out at NTPC's Kaniha plant



AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 6: A fire broke out at NTPC's Kaniha plant in Angul district Saturday, fire service officials said.

The fire broke out at 8.10am in the coal transporting conveyor belt of the plant in Talcher area of the district, they said. There was no report of any injury in the fire, they said.

The NTPC in a statement said that the fire call was quickly responded to by the CISF fire wing and plant disaster team. The fire has been doused fully and there was no report of any injury, it said. "No person has received

any injury apart from minor first aid to one CISF personnel during fire fighting," the NTPC statement said, adding that as a precautionary measure, Unit-3 of 500 MW was taken under shutdown for a brief time to contain the fire. However, the same will be brought to bear shortly. All other units are normal."

The cause of the fire and damage is being assessed, an NTPC official said, adding that necessary repair work will be started soon.

The NTPC appreciated timely help from all quarters of the state and district administration like the police and fire department.

The fire services officials said that a portion of the conveyor belt was damaged in the fire. Two fire tenders were engaged to extinguish the blaze.

Decomposed elephant carcass recovered



POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, April 6: Forest department officials under Balibandh beat of Champua range Saturday morning recovered the

decomposed carcass of a sub-adult female elephant from Chamakpur forest in the district.

The female elephant is believed to have died two weeks ago, officials said. However, the Forest de-

partment has not confirmed whether the jumbo has been poached or has died due to natural reasons.

After being informed, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) of Keonjhar forest division Dhanraj HD rushed to the spot and started an investigation into the matter. The official ruled out heat wave as the cause of death as it is assumed to have died about 20 days back and the area is near river Baitarani.

"Preliminary inquiry suggests that it is a female elephant. Hence there is no doubt of the theft of tusks. The cause of the death could be ascertained only after a probe. As the area is inhabited by tribals, we are inquiring about the possibilities of death from all angles," the DFO said.

Sources alleged that due to extensive mining activities and deforestation, the habitations of the wild elephants has been destroyed. Due to lack of food and shelter, the elephant herds move into human habitations and conflicts occur.

Youth hacked to death in sleep



POST NEWS NETWORK

Purusottampur, April 6: In a gruesome incident, a youth was allegedly hacked to death by unknown miscreants while he was sleeping at his house at Pandia Pandara Sahi under this police limit in Ganjam district late Friday night.

The deceased youth has been identified as Muna alias Murali Badatya, 25, son of Babula Badatya, a resident of Pandia Pandara Sahi village.

According to sources, after finishing their dinner as usual Murali and his father Babula went to sleep. As it was a hot summer night, Babula was sleeping on the verandah of the house while his son Murali was sleeping inside the house with the door open. When Babula went inside to have water in the late hours, he found his son lying in a pool of blood and raised an alarm.

He along with other villagers then immediately rushed Murali to Hinjilicut Sub-Divisional Hospital where the doctors declared him dead.

It is suspected that someone hacked Murali on the head

with a fatal weapon during his sleep and fled the scene.

On receiving information, Purusottampur SDPO Rajanikanta Samal along with IIC Bipin Bihari Hota reached the village and initiated an investigation into the incident. A police team also reached the hospital, seized the body and sent it to the district headquarters hospital at Berhampur for post-mortem.

A case has been registered at Purusottampur police station and police are investigating the case to ascertain the reason behind the gruesome murder.

Though the exact reason behind the murder is obscure and miscreants are at large, a clash that occurred two days back during a 'danda' dance at the village is suspected to have a link with the murder of the youth.

Notably, a week ago the brother-in-law of former Sarpanch of Shikula village was chased and stabbed to death in the village. Frequent incidents of murder under this police station limits have created panic among the locals.

Baruni Yatra starts at Gonasika in Keonjhar

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, April 6: Thousands of devotees from different areas took the holy dip called 'Mahabaruni Buda' in local parlance, and offered puja to Brahmehwar Mahadev on the eve of three-day long Baruni Mela which starts from Saturday in Gonasika under Banspal block of Keonjhar district. The devotees also witnessed the Baruni festival being organised by the Endowment department on this occasion.

Famous sacred shrine Gonasika, from where river Baitarani, also called 'Maa Ganga', originates, is situated about 22 km from here.

Juangs, a local primitive tribe known as the original settlers of this district are said to be key devotees of Lord Brahmehwar Mahadev. Baitarani river is the life line of people in Keonjhar district as it is the only robust source of water here.



Devotees from across Keonjhar and outside the district come to witness the festival and offer worship despite the mercury level remaining high.

"This year arrangements have been made for peaceful conduct of the festival. Many spend the whole night in this place. Security arrangements have been made

Devotees throng Tribeni Sangam to take holy dip

Kendrapara: Thousands of devotees from Kendrapara and its neighbouring Jajpur district took a holy dip Saturday at the confluence of three rivers at Indupur on the occasion of Baruni Snana. According to locals, every year in the Odia month of Chaitra, the Baruni mela is held at Indupur near the bank of the Birupa river, popularly called Tribeni Sangam, as three rivers - Brahmani, Birupa, and Kelua - converge at this point. Locals believe that a person will attain salvation and wishes are fulfilled if one takes a dip at the Tribeni Sangam on the occasion of Baruni Snana. Hundreds of women come every year on this occasion to take a dip in the confluence of the three rivers on the occasion of Baruni Snana. Elaborate arrangements were made at the riverbank to prevent people from drowning in the river and to control any potential law and order situation. Fire brigade personnel, along with police personnel, were deployed at the riverbank, Pattamundai SDPO Khyamasagar Panda said.

like earlier years. Many people come here to witness the traditional dance 'Changu' of the Juang and Bhuyan communities here" said Panchanan Sahu of the Endowment department, who is supervising the festival.

Sub-Collector, Keonjhar, and in-Charge of Endowment department as executive officer Trilochan Mohanty said, "All arrangements have been made for the devotees to witness the three-day festival safely and peacefully."

It is a sacred place because river Baitarani originated from Gonasika hill. After its origin, it flows under the ground and later emerges after a mile where the shrine of Lord Brahmehwar Mahadev was established many years back by the then king.

In Jajpur, the Baruni festival is observed on this day here. In Ghaspura of Keonjhar district, the festival is observed on the bank of river Baitarani where thousands of devotees take holy bath and offer puja.

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No political rallies in strife-torn Manipur

THE ONLY VISIBLE HINT OF THE IMPENDING ELECTION IS THE HOARDINGS PUT UP BY LOCAL ELECTION AUTHORITIES, URGING CITIZENS TO EXERCISE THEIR FRANCHISE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Imphal, April 6: Posters of political parties, mega rallies and visible movement of leaders - the traditional elements of campaigning - are conspicuously missing in violence-hit Manipur where polling for Lok Sabha elections are due in less than two weeks.

The only visible hint of the impending election is the hoardings put up by local election authorities, urging citizens to exercise their franchise.

Amid the muted election fervour, major party figures have refrained from visiting the conflict-ridden state to canvass for votes or make electoral pledges.

While the BJP has enlisted prominent figures like Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah as star campaigners, the Congress lineup includes Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, and other key leaders. However, none of them have made any appearance in Manipur yet.

Though the Election Commission of Manipur maintained that there are no official restrictions on campaigning activities, party representatives emphasised the need for subdued campaigning to avoid aggravating the delicate situation in the state.

"There are no restrictions from the Election Commission's side on campaigning. Anything



which is within the boundaries of the model code of conduct is allowed," Chief Electoral Officer of Manipur, Pradeep Jha told PTI. To tackle the tricky situation, the candidates - BJP's Thounaojam Basanta Kumar Singh, Congress' Angomcha Bimol Akoijam, Republican Party of India's Maheshwar Thounaojam and Rajmukar Somendro Singh, who is backed by the Manipur Peoples' Party (MPP), have come up with a unique solution.

They are reaching out to the voters in a non-conventional way which includes holding meetings at their residence or party offices and their supporters indulging in door-to-door campaigns.

"It would have been better if I addressed public meetings and

held rallies, but I have decided to keep the campaign low-key," Maheshwar Thounaojam, who has deployed teams of volunteers for door-to-door campaigning, said.

"The voters know the importance of their vote in the current situation and will make an informed choice," he added.

Basanta Kumar Singh, the sitting Education and Law Minister of the state, who is contesting the Lok Sabha polls this time, is holding small meetings at his residence and the party office. Similarly, Akoijam, a professor at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, mostly meets people at his residence.

Posters of Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra and those seeking voters for Akoijam have also been put up at the Congress office

in Imphal. "Elections are important for us but we cannot rub salt in people's wounds by doing pomp and show. Elections are also like a festival but we cannot celebrate the festival in a loud manner because of the current situation," BJP Manipur president A Sharda Devi told PTI.

"People are living away from their homes, we want them to have faith in us but we are not campaigning," the BJP leader added. A senior state government official asserted that any kind of loud campaign can be detrimental to the law and order situation in the state.

"Though the situation seems to be under control at the moment, any kind of loud campaign can be detrimental to the law and order of the state and no party wants to take that risk," the

official said requesting anonymity.

At least 219 people have been killed in the ethnic strife in the state that started May 3 last year after a 'Tribal Solidarity March' was organised in the hill districts to protest against the Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status. A majority of over 50,000 internally displaced people are currently staying at relief centres across five valley districts and three hill districts.

Scheduled in two phases April 19 and 26, the Lok Sabha elections in Manipur have garnered attention for the displaced population's voting arrangements.

Special polling stations will be set up at relief camps to enable the displaced people to cast their votes.

UP's double-engine govt running low on fuel: Cong

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 6: Taking a swipe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Congress Saturday claimed that the double-engine government in Uttar Pradesh is running 'dangerously low' on fuel and that the PM must answer key issues of the state before the engine comes to a 'sputtering halt June 4'.

Ahead of the PM's rally in Saharanpur, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh posed three questions to the PM including one on Saharanpur's wood-carving industry.

"Today, PM Modi visits Saharanpur in Uttar Pradesh, a state where the double-engine sarkar is running dangerously low on fuel. Before the engine comes to a sputtering halt on June 4th, we hope the PM can answer these three questions on why the machinery is breaking down," Ramesh said on X.

Noting that Saharanpur is globally acclaimed for its wood-carving industry and is popularly known as the Wooden City, Ramesh said the industry is more than 200 years old and is crucial to the economic health of the city as it employs more than 7 lakh people.

"Unfortunately, the wood-carving industry has been hit hard by successive blunders of the Modi government. First, demonetisation, then GST, and finally, the unplanned pandemic lockdowns have decimated the industry, which has been struggling to recover ever since," he said.

At its peak, it was exporting more than 1,500 crores worth of goods but today, this number has reduced by almost 90 per cent, he claimed.

"The 'double-engine' sarkar has been found triply guilty in Saharanpur. What does PM Modi have to say to the lakhs of artisans who are suffering because

of his blunders? What have the BJP governments at the state and Centre done to support this age-old industry?" he said.

Noting that Uttar Pradesh is the largest sugarcane producer in the country, Ramesh said farmers in Western UP have been demanding a hike in the fixed price (SAP) of sugarcane citing increased costs of fertilisers and pesticides.

"Yet, the BJP government has raised the price to just ₹360/quintal, which is grossly inadequate according to UP's farmers. This latest price hike lags far behind inflation and is much lower than Punjab's ₹386/quintal and Haryana's ₹391/quintal," he said.

"As Sudhir Panwar, a former member of UP Planning Commission, remarked, [In UP, the SAP, which was earlier determined by input cost, is now dictated by election schedule], said. Can the PM tell us why the BJP government has been so unwilling to fairly compensate farmers for their work?" Ramesh said. Despite repeated promises of action, the UP government has failed to address the growing stray cattle menace, he claimed.

The lack of adequate animal shelters has led cattle rearers to avoid caring for them by simply releasing their animals, he said.

"These cattle have now become a nightmare for farmers - routinely destroying crops, and given their affinity for higher-value crops, even blocking efforts at crop diversification. Farmers now have to keep vigil around the clock, and some have even died from bull attacks," he said.

"Instead of diverting public discourse, can the Prime Minister address the issues that are actually concerning the local people: what is his vision to solve this problem?" Ramesh said.

LS polls: Small parties have big stakes in UP

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, April 6: They are small parties and many of them do not even have a presence outside Uttar Pradesh. Yet, for most of them, these elections have high stakes because their future in UP politics depends on their performance in these elections.

These smaller parties are caste-centric and the BJP plans to earn the support of their respective caste groups in the polls.

To begin with, the Rashtriya Lok Dal which recently snapped ties with Samajwadi Party and joined the BJP-led NDA, is working overtime to ensure success in the polls so that it can consolidate its relationship with the BJP.

The RLD, a Jat-centric party -- has been given two seats in UP -- Baghpat and Bijjor.

The BJP mainly allied with RLD to strengthen its position in western UP. RLD chief Jayant Chaudhary, on the other hand, is also said to be eyeing a berth in the Union Cabinet as he had managed a Rajya Sabha seat during his alliance with SP.

The RLD has nine members in the state Assembly.

The Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party (SBSP) is another party



that prides itself on its following among the Rajbhar community. The SBSP, which has six legislators in the UP Assembly, has been given the Ghosi Lok Sabha seat and its president Om Prakash Rajbhar has fielded his son Arvind Rajbhar on the seat.

Om Prakash Rajbhar is known as a troublemaker. He created trouble for BJP in 2019 and quit the alliance to join SP. After the 2022 Assembly polls, Rajbhar made uncalculated statements against the SP and snapped ties. He laboured for several months before the BJP finally took him back into the fold.

Ghosi will now decide the extent of influence he wields over the Rajbhar community.



The Apna Dal (S) is one of the BJP's most trusted allies in Uttar Pradesh. The Apna Dal (S), led by Union Minister Anupriya Patel, contested and won two seats, both in 2014 and 2019. The Apna Dal (S), according to sources, is seeking four seats but the BJP is willing to give only two. The seats have not yet been announced.

The Apna Dal (S) is a Kurmi-centric party and has been instrumental in helping the BJP expand its base among non-Yadav OBCs.

The Nishad Party, which claims to be the custodian of the riverine community in the state, is still clamouring for an entry into the Parliament on its own symbol. Party president Sanjay Nishad insists that his vote bank has an influence over 27 Lok Sabha seats but the BJP, as of now, is in no mood to give seats to the Nishad Party.

Sanjay Nishad's son Parveen Nishad is a sitting MP from Sant Kabir Nagar on a BJP ticket and the party has again named him as its candidate for 2024 polls.

The Apna Dal (K), a break-away faction of Apna Dal (S) is now placed on nowhere land. Led by Krishna Patel, the party snapped ties with Samajwadi Party over seat-sharing, expressed its desire to join the NDA and finally ended up in alliance with AIMIM.

The party's future is a matter of speculation because the lone MLA, Pallavi Patel, was elected in 2022 on a SP symbol.

Some other smaller parties like Azad Samaj Party, led by Chandra Shekhar, Jansatta Dal led by Raghubir Pratap Singh a.k.a. Raja Bhairya and Swami Prasad Maurya's Rashtriya Shoshit Samaj Party are contesting on their own without support from bigger parties.

'Nation forgot Manipur': Traders at world's only women-run market

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Imphal, April 6: Amid the lingering aftermath of ethnic conflicts, the women traders at Manipur's iconic 'Ima market' - the only market in the world run entirely by women - have expressed a deafening lack of enthusiasm towards the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

Questioning the relevance of the electoral process amid the ongoing turmoil, the women traders from various market associations are contemplating a boycott of the polls with their major grievance being - 'the nation forgot Manipur'.

Nema Devi, a seasoned fish vendor at the market, reflects the sentiment shared by many, emphasising the absence of tangible change despite months of unrest.

"Even 11 months after violence broke out, there has not been a resolution and no restoration of peace. We continue to live by the rule of taking one day at a time. What will change with the elections? The nation, the government, everybody forgot Manipur," 52-year-old Devi, who has been running the shop in the market for over a decade, told PTI.

Debjani, a vendor selling fruits and vegetables, succinctly said, "Elections nai chahiye (elections not needed)," echoing the prevailing scepticism.

At first glance, the 500-year-old 'Ima Keithel' is much like any other popular market - lines of vendors selling everything from fresh fruit to fish and fabrics from dusk until dawn. But after walking through its long lanes with more than 4,500 stalls spread across three multi-story buildings and a sea of surrounding tin shacks, one unique aspect becomes hard to ignore: every single trader, without exception, is a woman, a fact they take pride in.

The famous market was also the theme of the state's Republic Day tableau this year. Priya Kharaibam, a third-generation pottery trader, questioned the purpose of elections if the status quo remains unchanged.

"If everything has to go on the way it is going on, why do we need elections? What will



Questioning the relevance of the electoral process amid the ongoing turmoil, the women traders from various market associations are contemplating a boycott of the polls

These polls are being enforced at the very wrong time. We are contemplating whether we should either not vote or vote in unison against the government in power and give other parties a chance and see if there is restoration of peace. I am trying to counsel the women in the market but they are not keen on voting," she told PTI.

Ima Keithel Joint Coordinating Committee convener Laisram Ongbi Memma said it was ironic that the government can arrange voting in camps but cannot help the displaced voters in returning to their homes even after 11 months.

"For the last 11 months, the government has not been able to make arrangements for the displaced people to return to their homes but they have alternative arrangements for them to cast vote. The women vendors are not against the upcoming Lok Sabha election but the government should prioritise peace instead of election so that each and every citizen can enjoy their voting rights," said Memma.

Some traders find themselves at a crossroads, contemplating whether to vote collectively against the incumbent government in pursuit of peace restoration. As many as 75 'Imas' or 'mothers' (elderly women traders) from the famed market had visited Delhi in June last year and staged a sit-in protest at Jantar Mantar, demanding a solution and opposing any territorial division of the state on ethnic lines.

Every vote helps in changing India's destiny: Yogi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Saharanpur, April 6: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given us the 'vision of a developed India in the Amrit Kaal', Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath Saturday said.

"A new debate has started in the country. Every vote of the public can prove to be helpful in changing the destiny and picture of the country. The foundation of this is the continuous change that has occurred in the country since 2014," Adityanath said.

"We should vote not based on caste, religion, appeasement or any other agenda, but for the vision of a developed India and a bright future for the next generation," he added addressing a public meeting here for BJP candidates Raghav Lakhnupal (Saharanpur) and Pradeep



Chaudhary (Kairana). Adityanath appealed to every voter to exercise their franchise by casting their votes at the polling booth.

The CM highlighted how, amidst the challenges posed by COVID-19, Prime Minister Modi had instilled the mantra of 'sevaa

hee sangathan' in crores of BJP workers, urging them to serve the public.

Adityanath underscored the pivotal role being played by the BJP workers in realising PM Modi's vision on the ground by earning people's trust across the country.

"We are building the future of the coming generations within the new India," he said.

The CM also congratulated crores of workers on the holy land of Maa Shakumbhari on the foundation day of the BJP. He said Saharanpur is the number one Lok Sabha constituency of Uttar Pradesh and expressed hope that this order would also be seen in the election results.

"We are fortunate to have witnessed the changing India. We are witnessing India that is being recognised on the global stage as a global leader and for world-class infrastructure," Adityanath said.

"This India is providing a model of development and welfare for the world. This model of India is giving young people the guarantee of livelihood and respect for faith," he added.

PM: Cong manifesto completely bears imprint of Muslim League



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Saharanpur (UP), April 6: The Congress manifesto carries the imprint of the Muslim League with "every page reeking of breaking India", Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Saturday, virtually equating the Congress to the party which is blamed for the Partition.

Modi, who addressed BJP's election rallies in Saharanpur in western Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan's Ajmer, also criticised the Congress for staying away from the consecration ceremony of Ram temple in Ayodhya and for remarks against 'Shakti'.

"Opposing the visit to the consecration of Ram temple? Is it appropriate? Not only this, if someone visited, he was expelled from the Congress party for six years. Can this happen in this country, can you imagine the country without Lord Ram?"

"Lord Ram has got a permanent abode. Ram Navami is coming and people are going to celebrate. Let's see how much you will oppose it," Modi said.

Prime Minister Modi said the Congress which existed at the time of the freedom movement is long gone and the party today neither has policies nor the vision for the nation's development.

government in Bengal with the Muslim League."

The Hindu Mahasabha was also in coalition with the Muslim League in Sindh and North-West Frontier Province. "It is the BJP, not the Congress, that believes in and practices the politics of divisiveness," Ramesh said.

Stepping up his attack on the opposition INDIA bloc including Congress on the issue of corruption, Modi said their aim is to earn "commission" after coming to power while the BJP-led NDA is working with a "mission" to make India a developed nation.

Modi called the Congress a party of "dynasts and corrupt" that is bereft of both principles and policies.

"Wherever there is Congress, there cannot be any development. The Congress never thought about the poor, marginalised and youths.... These people considered looting public money as their ancestral right. In the last 10 years, Modi has provided a permanent cure for the disease," the prime minister said in Ajmer.

Modi said that the third term of his government is not far and the government is going to take even bigger decisions against corruption in the first 100 days. Modi said Muslim women will bless him for centuries to come as he has removed the "sword" of triple talaq hanging over them and their families.

Addressing the election rally in Saharanpur, Modi reached out to the Muslim community, which has a sizeable population in the Lok Sabha constituencies of western Uttar Pradesh, saying real secularism is when all get the benefit of government welfare schemes irrespective of their caste and religion as has been seen during the BJP rule.



BJD's Nabarangpur MP nominee Pradeep Majhi and party's Malkangiri MLA candidate Manas Madkani participate in a road show at Malkangiri, Saturday

Will CM again contest from 2 constituencies?

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 6: The people of the state are set to witness big battles in western Odisha, which has turned into the arena for the upcoming Lok Sabha and Assembly elections. It has become a hot topic in various spheres that the epicentre of the state politics has shifted westwards.

Rumours are flying in the political circles that Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik is again going to contest from two seats this time. Chatters are abuzz that the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) is planning something like this in 2024 as it did successfully in 2019.

According to political experts, with the western region of the state now in BJD focus, party supremo Naveen may contest the polls as a candidate



from Kalahandi district. This discussion has spread throughout the western district like wild fire.

The ruling BJD has announced its candidates from all the Assembly seats under the district barring Narla constituency. So it is being evidently assumed

that Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik may contest the election as a candidate from Narla.

Narla is a major Assembly segment of Kalahandi district. Senior BJD leader Bhupinder Singh is the sitting MLA here. Singh was an MLA even when he was in the Congress. Later, he joined the BJD and was re-elected from here.

However, veteran leader and former Union minister Bhakta Charan Das has been nominated by the Congress in this constituency. Similarly, BJD has fielded Aniruddha Pradhan from this seat. So there is every possibility of a close contest here in the upcoming elections.

Therefore, political commentators are assuming that the BJD President and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik himself will fight from here. Such a decision will be a masterstroke

by the BJD supremo in order to strengthen the party in western Odisha.

While BJP and Congress have announced their candidates from this seat, among the major aspirants from BJD are sitting MLA Bhupinder Singh, Zilla Parishad Chairman Pushpendra Singhdeo, Block Chairperson Manorama Mohanty, and BJD coordinator Babuli Mandal. However, although there is no clear indication, there is a buzz doing the rounds that the Chief Minister himself will fight from this seat.

It is pertinent to mention here that Patnaik had contested from two seats in the 2019 elections for the first time in his over two-decade long political career. One was Hinjili Assembly constituency of Ganjam district, while the other was Bijepur segment of Bargarh district.

10,000 BJD workers join hands against Anandapur sitting MLA

POST NEWS NETWORK

Hatadihi, April 6: With the elections around the corner, there is no let-up in opposition to re-nomination of sitting MLA Bhagirathi Sethy from Anandapur Assembly constituency under the Keonjhar Lok Sabha segment.

The ruling BJD is yet to announce its candidate from the constituency but the stiff opposition to Bhagirathi's re-nomination is increasing day by day. The local BJD workers have been demanding a new face from the constituency. Party workers revolting against Sethy's candidature have appraised about their demand to the party supremo.

Over 10,000 dissidents of the party had convened a meeting at Chhenapadi under the block to discuss fielding a new face from the constituency. However, the meeting was cancelled at the last minute by the local administration. The party workers alleged that the meeting was cancelled by the administration owing to the pressure



sembled. However, with the help of some of his accomplices, the MLA lodged a complaint with the Anandapur Sub-Collector and foiled the meeting, a BJD worker Kishore Jena alleged.

The opposition and anger against Bhagirathi was palpable even though the meeting was cancelled. To vent their ire, the BJD workers were seen giving away slogans demanding to replace Bhagirathi and field a new face from this constituency.

When contacted, Anandapur Sub-Collector Phalguni Majhi and Nandipada IIC Rabindra Patra said two people had lodged a complaint over phone. Later, the workers' meeting which was scheduled to be held without any permission was cancelled after taking various aspects into consideration.

It is apprehended that the face-off between the MLA and party workers may flare up in future. Political analysts claimed that the opposition BJP or Congress may win from this constituency if the ruling party fields its old face from this constituency.

to the tune of several crores from every sphere.

They demanded that their ill-gotten properties should be probed by the Enforcement Directorate, Vigilance or Income Tax departments. The BJD workers here have organised several meetings in the past demanding to replace these two MLAs and have openly opposed the re-nomination of the sitting MLA.

In this backdrop, they convened a meeting Saturday where over 10,000 party workers as-

CPI releases Lok Sabha election manifesto, promises to scrap CAA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 6: The Communist Party of India (CPI) released its manifesto for the Lok Sabha elections Saturday, promising to scrap the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, remove the 50 per cent cap on reservations for SCs, STs and OBCs, and enhance the daily wage under MGNREGA to ₹700.

The Left party called for the defeat of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to save secular democracy. It said the 10-year BJP rule has proven to be a disaster for the country.

If elected to power, the CPI promised to scrap the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, remove the 50 per cent cap on reservations, conduct a caste census, introduce taxation measures such as wealth tax and inheritance tax, increase corporate tax, introduce reservation in the private sector, and raise the daily wage under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) to ₹700.

General elections for the 18th Lok Sabha are going to be very



crucial and critical for our secular democratic republic, its future and to our constitutional ethos, the CPI manifesto stated.

After releasing the manifesto, CPI general secretary D Raja said, "The elections are very critical for the country and its future. (Prime Minister Narendra) Modi's rule has been disastrous for the country."

The Constitution is under attack. BJP being the political army of RSS is trying to change the Constitution and ultimately replace it, he alleged.

While calling for the BJP's defeat, Raja said the CPI would play its role by raising people's issues when the opposition government comes to power. The CPI is part of the opposition's INDIA bloc.

The Left party also said that

it aims to bring central investigative agencies like the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) under the purview of Parliament, and added that it will intensify its struggle for the abolition of Governor's office to strengthen federalism by removing Union's interference. Elected governments in states should be empowered to take major policy decisions.... the manifesto stated.

The CPI said it will continue to fight politically and legally to remove the arbitrary cap of 50 per cent on reservations for SCs, STs and OBCs, and implement women's reservation immediately by removing the clause relating to delimitation and census.

The party promised to increase the available work days under the MGNREGA to 200 in a calendar year as well as introduce an Urban Employment Guarantee Act and social security for gig workers. Raja added that the CPI is likely to fight between 25 and 30 seats in the upcoming polls.



Union Education Minister and BJP's Sambalpur Lok Sabha candidate Dharmendra Pradhan addressing the party workers at the foundation day celebration of the saffron party at its district office at Kacheri Road in Sambalpur, Saturday



Congress leaders participate in a meeting aimed at reuniting the party workers at Kalyan Mandap in Hirakud town of Sambalpur district, Saturday

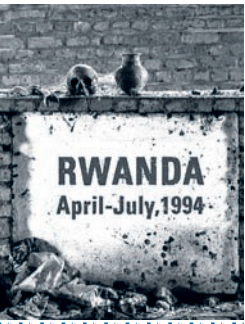
international



One day the president is 'angry' at Netanyahu, the next day he is 'very angry,' the next day he is 'very very angry.' So what? At the same time there is support for more military aid (to Israel) in a supplemental bill
BERNIE SANDERS | SENATOR, US

ANNIV OF RWANDA GENOCIDE

Rwanda is preparing to mark the 30th anniversary of the East African nation's most horrific period in history – the genocide against its minority Tutsi. To this day, new mass graves are still being discovered across the country of 14 million people, a grim reminder of the scale of the killings



of the day quote

The Chinese living here do not want to follow security discipline. They are resentful when they are asked to follow security protocols. They don't want to come under any discipline as they fret over it
MARYAM NAWAZ | PUNJAB CM, PAKISTAN

Taliban officials should live a brotherly life among themselves, avoid disagreements and selfishness
HIBATULLAH AKHUNDZADA | SUPREME LEADER, TALIBAN

The US and China will hold intensive exchanges on balanced growth in the domestic and global economies
JANET YELLEN | TREASURY SECRETARY, US

ISRAEL-HAMAS CONFLICT

Gaza war enters 6th month

FOR FAMILIES OF HOSTAGES, IT'S A RACE AGAINST TIME AS ISRAEL FACES DEEPENING ISOLATION FROM ITS ALLIES

Jerusalem, April 6: Six months into the war in Gaza, the killing of a group of aid workers by an Israeli air strike summed up both the dire humanitarian crisis and the lack of a clear way out of a conflict that is leaving Israel increasingly isolated. The attack Monday night that killed seven staff of the World Central Kitchen (WCK) aid group, including six foreigners, has angered even some of Israel's closest allies, adding to growing pressure for an end to the fighting. Israel's military has acknowledged the strike was conducted mistakenly by its forces and apologised for the "unintentional" deaths of the seven, who included citizens of Britain, Australia and Poland, a dual US-Canadian citizen and a Palestinian colleague.



We have arrived at a terrible milestone. The immediate prospect of a shameful man-made famine
MARTIN GRIFFITHS | HUMANITARIAN CHIEF, UN

But that has done little to ease growing alarm abroad, where public opinion even in traditionally friendly countries like Britain, Germany or Australia has swung against the Israeli campaign in Gaza, launched after the Hamas-led attack on Israel October 7. With Gaza in ruins, most of the 2.3 million population has been forced from their homes and now depend on aid for survival, a bitter humiliation during the

holy month of Ramadan when Muslims around the world consume traditional Ramadan meals and desserts to break their fast after sunset. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has so far resisted pressure to change course, insisting that Hamas remains an existential threat to Israel that must be destroyed before lasting peace can return. "Victory is within reach. It's very close, and there is no substitute for victory," he told a delegation of Republican Congress members in Jerusalem Thursday, appealing for more budget support, hours before the call with Biden.

bringing home 134 hostages still held in Gaza. But Netanyahu himself faces a growing protest movement and demands for new elections that opinion polls indicate he would lose heavily. While peace talks have been going on, hopes of a breakthrough that could secure a pause in the fighting and enable the return of the hostages have been repeatedly dashed and Hamas leaders say they can keep fighting for much longer.

■ TOTAL EVACUATIONS: 2.3MN
■ TOTAL CASUALTIES: 33,000

SHORT TAKES

UK sexting scam

London: A second British lawmaker has acknowledged receiving explicit messages on his phone in what police are investigating as a malicious phishing attempt against politicians, their staff and journalists. Conservative legislator Luke Evans said he had been a victim of "cyber flashing and malicious communications" a month ago, when an unknown individual sent him "an explicit image of a naked lady". Evans said in a video message Friday that he'd immediately reported the incident to police and parliamentary authorities. Another Conservative MP, William Wragg, revealed Thursday that he had disclosed some colleagues' phone numbers to an unknown individual who contacted him on a gay dating app.

Judicial commission

Islamabad: Pakistan's top lawyer's watchdog has demanded a judicial commission comprising sitting Supreme Court judges to look into complaints about the alleged meddling by the powerful intelligence agencies in judicial affairs. The Pakistan Bar Council (PBC) said the formation of a judicial commission was necessary for an impartial investigation, devoid of any external interference, which was crucial to finding the truth. The demand came on a day when former Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) president Abid Shahid Zuberi also approached the apex court to become a party in the suo motu proceedings on the issue.

Pak denounces Rajnath's remarks

INDIAN DEFENCE MINISTER SAID FRIDAY THAT THE COUNTRY WOULD ENTER PAKISTAN TO KILL ANYONE WHO ESCAPES OVER ITS BORDER AFTER TRYING TO CARRY OUT MILITANT ATTACKS



Islamabad, April 6: Pakistan Saturday said it stands resolute in its intent and ability to safeguard its sovereignty, a day after Defence Minister Rajnath Singh made it clear that India will enter Pakistan if terrorists run away to the neighbouring nation after carrying out terror strikes in the country. A statement by the Foreign Office here said that Pakistan has always demonstrated its commitment to peace in the region but its desire for peace should not be misconstrued. "History attests to Pakistan's firm resolve and ability to protect and defend itself," the Foreign Office said in a statement while criticising India's ruling dispensation for resorting to hateful rhetoric for electoral gains. The Foreign Office's statement came in response to

Singh's statement Friday that if terrorists try to disturb peace in India or carry out terror activities, a befitting response will be given and if they (the terrorists) run away to Pakistan, India will enter the neighbouring country to kill them. Singh was responding to a question on a report by the UK daily, 'The Guardian,' that claimed Indian intelligence agencies carried out assassinations of terrorists in Pakistan as part of an emboldened approach to national security after 2019. The Foreign Office said that Pakistan stands resolute in its intent and ability to safeguard its sovereignty against any act of aggression and dismissed India's claims of military superiority. "India's assertion of its pre-emptiveness to extra-judicially execute more civilians, arbitrarily pronounced as 'terrorists', inside Pakistan constitutes a clear

admission of culpability." "It is imperative for the international community to hold India accountable for its heinous and illegal actions," the statement said, adding that such "irresponsible behaviour not only undermines regional peace but also impedes the prospects of constructive engagement in the long term." In his response, Singh also asserted that India always wants to maintain good relations with its neighbours. "Whatever it is, they (Pakistan) are our neighbouring country. Look at the history. To date, we have neither attacked any country in the world nor tried to occupy an inch of the land of any country. This has been the nature of India. But if anyone shows India angry eyes, again and again, comes to India and tries to promote terrorist activities, we will not spare them," Singh asserted.

Mexico suspends ties with Ecuador

QUITO, April 6: Ecuadorean authorities arrested former Vice President Jorge Glas Friday evening, seizing him from the Mexican embassy and prompting Mexico to suspend bilateral relations. Glas, convicted twice for corruption, had been holed up in the embassy in Quito since seeking political asylum in December, a request Mexico granted earlier Friday. Police forcefully entered Mexico's embassy in Quito before making the arrest, Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador posted on X. The Ecuadorean president's office said in a statement it had arrested Glas, who was vice president under the leftist government of Rafael Correa between 2013 and 2017. There was a heavy military presence at the magistrates court in the Andean capital, where the former vice president was taken. The arrest caps a week of escalating tensions between Mexico and Ecuador, which Thursday declared Mexico's ambassador in Quito persona non grata, citing "unfortunate" comments from the leftist President Lopez Obrador. Ecuador contends that Mexico's asylum offer was illegal.

Another Indian dies in US; 10th in 2024

The incident marks yet another episode in a concerning trend of deaths involving Indian-origin students in the US. New Delhi, April 6: An Indian student has died in the US state of Ohio, the Indian Consulate in New York said Friday, adding that an investigation is underway to ascertain the cause of death. The student, identified as Uma Satya Sai Gadde, was pursuing his education in Ohio's Cleveland. The Indian Consulate expressed deep sorrow over the loss and extended condolences to the bereaved family. They assured that every possible support, including facilitating the transportation of his body to India, is being provided to the family during this distressing time. "Deeply saddened by the unfortunate demise of Mr Uma Satya Sai Gadde, an Indian student in Cleveland, Ohio," the Indian Consulate in New York wrote in a post on X. "Police investigation is underway. @IndianNewYork continues to remain in touch with the family in India. All possible assistance is being extended, including to transport Mr Uma Gadde's mortal remains to India at the earliest." Last month, a 34-year-old trained classical dancer from India, Amarnath Ghosh, was



shot dead in St Louis, Missouri. Another Indian student, Mohammed Abdul Arafat, went missing from the Cleveland area under mysterious circumstances. His family then received a ransom call demanding payment for his release. Earlier this year, Syed Mazahir Ali, a student from Hyderabad, was brutally attacked in Chicago, leaving him severely injured. The Indian Consulate in Chicago promptly intervened, offering support to Ali and his family. The death of Neel Acharya, a student at Indiana's Purdue University, and the brutal killing of Vivek Saini in Georgia, sent shockwaves among the Indian community in the US. Since the beginning of 2024, there have been at least half a dozen deaths of Indian and Indian-origin students in the US. The alarming rise in the number of attacks has caused concern among the community.

SNIPPETS

Maldives thanks India for allowing export of essential commodities

Male: Maldivian Foreign Minister Moosa Zameer Saturday said India's gesture to renew the quota to allow the export of certain quantities of essential commodities for his nation signifies the longstanding bilateral friendship and the commitment to further expand trade and commerce. India allowed the export of certain quantities of essential commodities for the year 2024-25 at the request of the Maldives government, the Indian High Commission said here Friday. Announcing the move through a post on social media platform X, the Indian High Commissioner said that this was being done "under a unique bilateral mechanism" under which the quotas for each of these items have been revised upwards. "The approved quantities are the highest since this arrangement came into effect in 1981," the notice by the mission said. Zameer took to X to thank India for the move. "I sincerely thank EAM @DrSJaishankar and the Government of #India for the renewal of the quota to enable #Maldives to import essential commodities from India during the years 2024 and 2025," Zameer wrote. The announcement for the renewal of the quota comes amidst a diplomatic row between the two countries since November last year when President Mohamed Muizzu, known for his pro-China leanings, within hours of taking the oath demanded India to repatriate its 88 military personnel from his country.

US raises automatic extension of EAD

Washington: The US has increased the automatic extension period for employment authorisation and EADs available to certain categories of renewal applicants from a maximum of 180 days to up to 540 days, a move that would benefit thousands of technology professionals from India. The move has been welcomed by Indian Americans. A recommendation in this regard was first made by Ajay Bhutoria, advisor to President Joe Biden on the White House Asian American and Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Commission.

Alien fever dreams fuel Peruvian grave robbings

Archaeological materials including human remains command high prices on a black market controlled by well-organised criminal groups, experts said

Nazca, April 6: Leandro Rivera says he chanced upon the cave in Peru's remote Nazca region that contained hundreds of pre-Hispanic artifacts – including human bodies with elongated heads and what appeared to be only three fingers on each hand. The plateau is famous for the Nazca lines, incisions on the desert floor forming birds and other animals visible from the air. The ancient geoglyphs have long intrigued anthropologists and exert a powerful fascination over some believers in extraterrestrials. Nazca is also known for salt flats that dehydrate and preserve human and animal remains, making it the site of important archeological finds that have deepened modern understanding

of ancient cultures – and attracted grave robbers. Rivera was convicted in 2022 of assault on public monuments for unearthing the artifacts. He received a four-year suspended sentence and was fined about 20,000 Peruvian soles (\$5,190), short of the maximum penalty of an eight-year prison term. His haul was thrust into the spotlight last year when two of the mummies ended up in Mexico as the centerpiece of congressional hearings on UFOs and extraterrestrial life. Mexican journalist Jaime Maussan presented the bodies as a sign of life beyond Earth – a claim dismissed by scientists. In an interview with Reuters, Rivera said he removed as many as 200 sets of remains from the cave, and some bodies had been smuggled out of Peru to France,



Spain and Russia. The presentation of bodies in Mexico – as well as Rivera's claims to have dozens more – have prompted some experts to ask whether Peru is losing the battle to stop the plunder of its archaeological sites to feed a lucrative black market for mummies and other pre-Hispanic artifacts. "Peru has done a lot of work to try and control this trade," said Christopher Heaney, a Latin

American history professor at Penn State University and author of a book on Peruvian mummies. "But this implies that these claims for government success need to be re-examined a bit if objects like (the bodies in Mexico) can leave the country." Peru's Culture Ministry did not respond to questions about the effectiveness of its efforts to control trafficking. Reuters was granted rare ac-

cess to the ministry's anti-smuggling unit at Lima's international airport and spoke to four government officials who said stricter penalties, more resources and better coordination were needed to fight the looting. The news agency was unable to verify independently key details of Rivera's account. The public prosecutor's office of the culture ministry said in a statement to Reuters that its investigation into Rivera yielded just two altered bodies and two partial sets of bones. Evelyn Centurion, head of cultural heritage recovery for the ministry, said the government is working on a task force with police, the attorney general, the foreign ministry and other departments to toughen penalties for looting cultural artifacts. "The looting has not stopped," Centurion said in an interview. "We need greater collaboration from local governments and local authorities to prevent these illicit acts."

business

of the day quote

Now is the time for Indian EV companies like Ather to not only make 2 two-wheelers for the domestic consumers but also for the world
AMITABH KANT | SHERPA, G20

An important trend in FPI activity is the big selling in the FMCG segment and big buying in telecom and realty
VK VIJAYAKUMAR | CHIEF INVESTMENT STRATEGIST, GEOJIT FINANCIAL SERVICES

Our revenue has grown 50 per cent CAGR (compounded annual growth rate) in the past two fiscal years. We have become cash flow positive from October-December quarter of 2023-24 in India business, which is 80-85 per cent of our total revenue
RAMAKANTH SHARMA | FOUNDER, LIVSPACECO



It is a clear sign that India's journey to become a major player in the global EV market is accelerating
LIZ LEE | ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, COUNTERPOINT RESEARCH

AMAZON LAUNCHES BAZAAR

Amazon India has launched a new vertical called Bazaar featuring low-priced, unbranded fashion and lifestyle products. It is an online market place that will feature unbranded products, which will be priced below ₹600. Bazaar puts the Jeff Bezos-founded company in direct competition with Softbank-backed Meesho, while Flipkart also runs a separate app called Shopsy for similar offerings



Veggie prices pose risk to food inflation

Vegetable prices, especially potato and onion, continue to pose considerable upside risk to food inflation



On a YoY basis, BoB ECI inched up to 5.9% in March 2024, the sharpest pace of increase in the index observed since August 2023

gained considerably. From 5.3 per cent and 28.9 per cent increase respectively seen in February 2024, it inched up to 22 per cent and 40.1 per cent in March 2024 (on YoY basis). Other items where price build-up was visible were wheat (atta), edible oils such as sunflower oil, soya oil and mustard oil. Some components of pulses such as Gram dal, Masoor and Urad also showed some bit of upward correction, the research said. On month-on-month (MoM) basis, BoB ECI rose by 0.4 per cent in March 2024 from 0.2 per cent decline seen in February 2024. Notably, on a sequential

basis, BoB ECI has been on a path of increase for the first time since December 2023. A sequential momentum was seen in 13 out of 20 commodities. The YoY and sequential picture broadly mirrored the same trend, the analyst said. For the first 4 days of April 2024, BoB ECI has inched up further by 6.7 per cent, on YoY basis. On MoM basis, it has inched up by another 0.5 per cent. The sequential pick up in prices was visible for edible oils, sugar and milk. Amongst vegetables, tomato prices reversed their trajectory noting an upward correction in April 2024. Potato prices also increased moderately while onion prices moderated, as per Bank of Baroda research.

New Delhi, April 6: BoB Essential Commodity Index (BoB ECI) has increased at the fastest pace since August 2023 by 5.9 per cent in March 2024, on YoY basis and by 0.4 per cent, on a sequential basis, says Dipanwita Mazumdar, Economist, Bank of Baroda.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, the increase is sharper at 0.8 per cent. Much of this is attributable to the rise in prices of vegetables such as potato and onion. Apart from this, edible oils and pulses have also provided some bit of discomfort on food inflation, the research said.

High-frequency price data showed that vegetable prices, especially potato and onion continue to pose considerable upside risk to food inflation. Potato prices were impacted as production was hampered due to unseasonal rains in December, the research said.

On a year-on-year (YoY) basis, BoB ECI inched up to 5.9 per cent in March 2024, the sharpest pace of increase in the index observed since August 2023. This is higher compared to last month's increase of 4.2 per cent in the index.

Nine out of 20 commodities have registered some momentum in prices. Vegetables such as potato and onion prices have

WORLD FOOD PRICES RISE FOR FIRST TIME IN 7 MONTHS: FAO
Global food prices rose in March, the first increase since July, pulled higher by cooking oil prices despite the cost of grains continuing to ease, the UN's Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) said Friday. The FAO's overall Food Price Index climbed 1.1 percent over the month to stand at 118.3 points in March 2024. On an annual comparison it was 7.7 percent lower. The sub-index for vegetable oils jumped by 8.0 percent over the month to reach one-year high. The FAO said prices for palm, soy, sunflower and rapeseed oils all climbed higher. Rising palm oil prices were driven by seasonal drops in output in leading producing nations that coincided with strong demand in Southeast Asia, while demand from the biofuel sector pulled up soy oil prices. Dairy prices rose by 2.9 percent in March on a monthly basis, while meat prices climbed 1.7 percent. Meanwhile, cereals prices slid 2.6 percent on a monthly basis, while sugar prices fell 5.4 percent. Food prices reached a record high after Russia invaded agricultural power Ukraine in February 2022 but have dropped since then. Last month's uptick comes as inflation has slowed dramatically in many countries but a recent rebound in global oil prices has sparked concern it may persist at a level that could discourage central banks from cutting interest rates.

SHORT TAKES

Tata Steel posts record output

New Delhi: Tata Steel India recorded its highest annual crude steel production at 20.8 million metric tonne in 2023-24, which represents a 4 per cent increase over the corresponding figure of the previous year, provisional data released by the company shows. In the January-March quarter crude steel production was broadly stable and stood at around 5.38 million tonne. Domestic deliveries grew by 9 per cent year-on-year driven by the higher demand for steel in the country. However, Tata Steel continued to face headwinds in its overseas operations. The company's production in the Netherlands was 4.8 million metric tonne during 2023-24, down 24 per cent compared to the previous year, while production in the UK was 3.02 million metric tonne, which was the same as the previous year, the company said.

Wipro CEO quits

New Delhi: Indian IT major Wipro Saturday announced the resignation of Thierry Delaporte as CEO and named Srinivas Pallia as the new Chief Executive Officer of the company, effective immediately. The announcement comes days before the Bangalore-headquartered company is scheduled to announce its Q4 and full-year earnings for 2023-24 on April 19. Wipro has been trailing its peers on the performance front with subdued report card and weak guidance and saw a spate of senior-level departures including CFO Jatin Dalal and chief growth officer Stephanie Trautman last year. According to a Wipro release, Pallia brings to the CEO role extensive institutional and industry knowledge, as well as a strong track record of leadership through some of the most significant technological shifts the industry has seen.

TIDBITS

Nestle hikes royalty to parent company

New Delhi: The Nestle India Board of Directors has approved a staggered hike of 0.15 per cent per annum in royalty payment to its parent company. "The Board of Directors, on the recommendation of the audit committee, approved the payment of general licence fees (royalty) by the company to Societe des Produits Nestle SA (licensor), being a related party as per Regulation 2(1)(zb) of the Listing Regulations, at the rate not exceeding 5.25 per cent, net of taxes, of the net sales of the products sold by the company as per the terms and conditions of the existing general licence agreements," Nestle India said in a statement. The fees are payable in a staggered manner over five years by making an increase of 0.15 per cent per annum over the current licence fees of 4.5 per cent per annum effective from July 1, 2024, the company added.

Vi to raise ₹2,075cr from Aditya Birla

New Delhi: Debt-ridden telecom firm Vodafone Idea Saturday said its board has approved raising of ₹2,075 crore from promoter Aditya Birla group and increasing its authorised share capital to ₹1 lakh crore. The company will seek shareholders' approval at an extraordinary general meeting May 8 on the proposals, it said in a regulatory filing. The Vodafone Idea board has approved "issuance of up to 1,395,427,034 equity shares of face value of ₹10 each at an issue price of ₹14.87 per equity share (including a premium of ₹4.87 per equity share), aggregating to ₹2,075 crore to Oriana Investments Pte. Ltd (Aditya Birla group entity forming part of the promoter group), on a preferential basis," the filing said. The board also approved an increase in the authorised share capital of the company from existing ₹75,000 crore, divided into ₹70,000 crore equity share capital and ₹5,000 crore preference share capital, to ₹1 lakh crore, the filing said. The increased authorised share capital of the company will be divided into ₹95,000 crore equity share capital and ₹5,000 crore preference share capital.

Hydro power to jump 50% by 2031-32

THE IMD PREDICTION OF A GOOD MONSOON IN FY24-25 SUGGESTS A POTENTIAL REVERSAL OF THE DECLINING TREND IN THE HYDRO PRODUCTION



New Delhi, April 6: Hydroelectric power projects with an aggregate capacity of 15 GW are under construction in the country, which will increase the hydro capacity by more than 50 per cent from 42 GW to 67 GW by 2031-32, the Ministry of Power said Friday. The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted higher rainfall in the current financial year. Further, hydropower projects located in the Himalayan region get base flow from the melting snow and any rise in temperature will increase the flow from this source, the Ministry said. Moreover, given the ongoing energy transitions in the country, the development of Pumped Storage Projects (PSPs) assumes importance for providing greater inertia and balancing power to the grid. PSPs are also known as 'the Water Battery', which is an ideal complement to modern clean energy systems. Currently, PSPs with an aggregate capacity of 2.7 GW are under construction in the country and another 50 GW is under various stages of development. It is projected that PSP capacity shall increase from 4.7 GW to around 55 GW by 2031-32, the official statement said. According to the ministry, the fall in hydropower generation in 2023-24 as compared to 2022-23 cannot be attributed solely to less rainfall. In the southern region, which contributes approximately 22% of the total hydro energy generated, low rainfall has indeed played a role. However, the hydroelectric power projects in Northern and Eastern regions, comprising over 60% of total hydro energy gen-

eration, have been severely impacted by natural disasters in 2023-24. In July 2023, Himachal Pradesh experienced flash floods, disrupting the operation of many power stations in the area. Besides, flash floods in the Eastern region in October 2023 have further hindered the operation of several hydropower stations, thus affecting the generation severely. While the lightest rainfall since 2018 resulted in reduced water levels in a few reservoirs, the government is reasonably optimistic about the future. The IMD prediction of a good monsoon in FY 2024-25 suggests a potential reversal of the trend. This anticipated increase in rainfall could contribute to the replenishment of reservoir capacities that were lost during the scarce rainfall in the previous year. India is in the midst of an energy transition, marked by significant additions of solar and wind power to the current energy mix. Further, power from solar energy is available during the time of the day that does not coincide with the peak power demand.

FIRST-EVER EQUITY RAISE SINCE LISTING

JSW Energy raises ₹5K-crore

New Delhi, April 6: JSW Energy Limited has raised Rs 5,000 crore by selling shares to institutional investors, including Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA), to accelerate its growth plans. In a regulatory filing Friday, the company informed that it has successfully completed its Rs 5,000-crore Qualified Institutions Placement (QIP). JSW Energy said, the proceeds from the QIP will further bolster its capital structure, enhance financial flexibility and enable the company to accelerate its ambitious growth plans. "The issue garnered a very strong interest from marquee

global long-only investors, domestic mutual funds and insurance companies..." it added. The QIP witnessed more than 3.2 times subscription. Some of the largest global asset managers, such as GQG, Blackrock, Nomura, Wellington, UBS and ADIA, participated in the QIP issue. "This marks the first-ever equity raise by the company since its listing in 2010," JSW Energy said. This is the largest primary equity raise in the Indian power sector in the last decade and among the top three largest primary equity raises in the history of the Indian power sector, the company said.

TESLA TO ROLL OUT ROBOTAXI IN AUGUST

THE CANCELLATION OF THE AFFORDABLE CAR PROJECT DEALS A BLOW TO TESLA'S AMBITIOUS SALES TARGETS, WHICH AIM TO RIVAL THE OUTPUT OF INDUSTRY GIANTS LIKE TOYOTA BY 2030



ing vehicles hits speed bumps over safety concerns. The billionaire boss of the electric car maker did not provide details, saying only in his post on X that the "Tesla Robotaxi unveil" will come August 8. Tesla shares rose more than three percent in after-market trades following the post, after finishing the day down. Musk has long boasted of work

serve as robotaxis, rather than remain idly parked. Despite its potential, rollout of self-driving vehicles in the United States has been tentative and rocky so far as both regulators and the public voice safety concerns. San Francisco has been a testing ground for the technology. Robotaxis from Google's Waymo in the city have been targeted by vandals opposed to autonomous vehicles, while GM-owned Cruise indefinitely suspended its robotaxi service at the end of October after several accidents sparked a crackdown by California regulators. Tesla's "autopilot" feature has also come under scrutiny, facing accusations the marketing of the feature oversold its actual capabilities. Tesla's robotaxi reveal came on the heels of a Reuters report that the company had abandoned Musk's long-touted plan to manufacture an electric car model selling close to \$25,000 to drive adoption in the mass market. Tesla this week reported sharply lower first-quarter auto sales amid an underwhelming demand outlook for electric vehicles, while legacy players including Toyota rode improved US inventories to higher sales. Musk's auto giant reported global deliveries fell 8.5 percent in the quarter, reflecting in part a weak sales market in China, where it faces heavy competition from local electric vehicle makers.

India hammered by Australia

Buttler bosses 'King Kohli'



RAJASTHAN COME OUT ON TOP IN 'ROYAL SHOWDOWN' AGAINST BENGALURU

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Perth, April 6: The Indian men's hockey team was expected to put up at least a decent fight but was hammered 1-5 by Australia in the first Test of the five-match series here Saturday.

The Australians controlled the tempo of the match from start to finish. The Indian team showed some sparks in the final quarter but it was too late by then.

Tom Wickham (20th, 38th minute) scored a brace, while Tim Brand (3rd), Joel Rintala (37th) and Flynn Ogilvie (57th) were the other goal-getters for the winners. India's lone goal was scored by Gurjant Singh in the 47th minute.

The Kookaburras showed positive intent from the start and took the lead as early as the third minute through Brand, who shocked India early with brilliant individual skills from the left flank.

He received a long pass from the deep and outfooted Jarmanpreet Singh with his

stick work and pushed the ball past veteran India goalkeeper PR Sreejesh.

Australia continued to press hard on the Indian defence and secured their first penalty corner in the eighth minute but could not breach Sreejesh's defence this time. Sreejesh made a reflex save with his extended right leg to deny Joel Rintala.

A minute later, an alert Sreejesh used his razor-sharp reflexes to again keep Rintala out of target from Australia's second penalty corner. India secured their first penalty corner in the 10th minute but failed to utilise the chance. Soon, Jake Whetton's reverse shot was parried away by Sreejesh.

Australia were at their attacking best as their moves outwitted the Indian defence. The home team increased their lead just five minutes into the second quarter through Wickham, courtesy some sloppy defending by the Indians.

Australia denied India to settle into a rhythm with their attacking hockey and relentless

pressure to go into the halfway break with a 2-0 cushion.

The hosts continued in the same vein after the change of ends as Rintala was in the right place at the right time to get a neat deflection off Ky Willott's reverse hit seven minutes into the third quarter.

The Indian defence was caught napping by the ever-attacking Australians as Wickham scored his second of the day with a fierce shot from the right corner past Sreejesh's extended right foot.

Down by four goals, the Indians showed urgency thereafter but lacked ideas as they failed to create clear cut chances from field play. Twice in the third quarter India came close to registering goals but on both occasions Australia goalkeeper Andrew Charter easily kept the rivals at bay.

Australia continued to play high-pressure hockey and secured another penalty corner just at the start of fourth quarter but failed to cash in on the opportunity.

In turn, the Indians made quick counter-attack and reduced the

margin through Gurjant, who scored with powerful strike from the top of the D after receiving an inch-perfect pass from Mohammed Raheel.

India made some terrific incisive moves through the mid-field to expose Australian defence in fourth quarter but failed to create any scoring chances as the Australian defence stood tall.

The Indians earned back-to-back penalty corners in the 51st minute, but on both occasions skipper Harmanpreet Singh failed to get past Charter in front of Australian goal.

Australia secured another penalty corner three minutes from the final hooter. Jeremy Hayward's initial flick was saved by second Indian goalkeeper Krishan Bahadur Pathak but Ogilvie sounded the board from the rebound to register the comfortable win for the hosts.

The two teams will meet again Sunday in the second Test of the Perth International Festival of Hockey, considered as a preparation for the upcoming Paris Olympics.

Jaipur, April 6: Jos Buttler roared back to form with a masterful century (100 n o, 58b, 9x4, 4x6) that overshadowed Virat Kohli's record-extending 113 (72b, 12x4, 4x6) as Rajasthan Royals defeated Royal Challengers Bengaluru by six wickets for a fourth win in as many matches in the IPL, here Saturday.

Royals now have four wins out of four and sit on top of 10-team table with eight points, ahead of Kolkata Knight Riders on net run-rate, while RCB slipped to eighth spot with fourth defeat and three on trot.

While Kohli enhanced his status as RCB's lone ranger by notching up his eighth IPL century but RCB could only manage a below-par 183/3 after the home side opted to bowl.

Then, the England white-ball skipper in his 100th IPL appearance chose to ruin Kohli's evening by playing a knock that was way better compared to former India skipper's effort both in intent and quality.

Buttler, who ended IPL 2023

with three successive ducks and scored a highest of 13 in his last three innings, anchored the chase with five balls to spare. Buttler finished the chase with a six off Cameron Green over deep square leg in the last over that also notched up his sixth IPL century.

Skipper Sanju Samson (69, 42b, 8x4, 2x6) gave a fine support to Buttler in a record 148-run partnership – the highest of the season – that virtually killed the contest.

On a day, Royals spin duo of Yuzvendra Chahal (2/34) and Ravichandran Ashwin (0/28) turned it around for the home side, by choking RCB in the middle overs, RCB bowling looked woefully short.

Following a watchful start, Buttler made his intention clear in the last over of the power-play when he picked rookie left-arm spinner Mayank Dagar to unleash his fury in a 20-run over: From being 10 from 10 balls at the start, Buttler raced to his fifty from just 30 balls.

Samson also stepped it up in Dagar's second over, the 11th of the innings, spanking him for two fours and one six with an inside

out loft shot to notch his second fifty this season.

Siraj finally gave the much-needed breakthrough dismissing Sanju in the 15th over but by then the chase was just a formality, reducing the equation to 32 needed from last five overs.

Earlier, Kohli didn't get any support barring the assistance received from his skipper Faf du Plessis (44, 33b, 2x4, 2x6). After reaching his fifty in 39 balls, Kohli stepped up well and took just 28 balls for his next fifty. Credit should go to RR spin duo of Ashwin and Chahal who stifled the proceedings in the middle overs.

BRIEF SCORES: RCB 183/3 (Virat Kohli 113 n o, Faf du Plessis 44; Yuzvendra Chahal 2/34) lost to RR 189/4 (Jos Buttler 100 n o, Sanju Samson 69; Reece Topley 2/27) by 6 wickets.

MATCHDAY
Indian Premier League
MI vs DC; 03:30 pm
LSG vs GT; 07:30 pm
Telecast: Star Sports Network
Stream: Jio Cinema

Mohammedan Sporting bag I-League title



Shillong, April 6: Century-plus old Mohammedan Sporting Club Saturday clinched their maiden I-League title after they beat Shillong Lajong FC 2-1 in their penultimate match here, a result which also promoted them to the top-tier Indian Super League (ISL).

Alexis Gomes put Mohammedan Sporting in the front in the first minute of the game itself before the home side's Douglas Tardin restored parity in

the 15th minute. Evgeni Kozlov scored the decisive goal for Mohammedan Sporting in the 62nd minute.

With the win, Mohammedan Sporting have secured 52 points from 23 matches with one game left to play. They are eight points ahead of second-placed Sreenidi Deccan (44 points from 22 matches). Sreenidi Deccan cannot catch Mohammedan Sporting even if they win both their remaining matches.

The Kolkata side's road to

the I-League title was made easier after NEROCA FC held Sreenidi Deccan FC to a 1-1 draw here Thursday.

If Mohammedan Sporting are found to fulfill the Indian Club Licensing Premier 1 criteria, three Kolkata teams will play in the ISL, the country's top-tier league, next season. Mohun Bagan and East Bengal are the other two teams from Kolkata.

This also completes a golden treble for the Big Three of the Maidan as the season with-

nessed East Bengal winning the Super Cup, followed by Mohun Bagan's Durand Cup triumph. They are also in the running for the ISL Shield and title.

Mohammedan Sporting, the third Kolkata giant, which had finished runners-up in 2021-22 I-League season, have come into Saturday's match after a 1-1 draw with Inter Kashi. They have been for unbeaten for the last 10 matches before Saturday.

Alexis scored in the very first minute for the ultimate champions, as Douglas Rosa Tardin equalised in the 15th minute for the home team. Evgeni Kozlov scored the winner for Mohammedan in the second half, to secure the title.

The equation was simple. Mohammedan Sporting needed one point to secure their maiden I-League title. But it was never going to be a walk in the park.

Om, Tophan show helps Ganjam rout Kandhamal

Bhubaneswar, April 6: Om T Munde (77, 85b) and Tophan Gouda (5/22) let their willow and cherry talk respectively to help Ganjam comprehensively beat Kandhamal in a third phase league match of the Kalahandi Cup Senior Men Inter-District Cricket Preliminary League one-day cricket tournament, Saturday.

At the MGM Sports Ground, Ganjam posted 327/7 after winning the toss and opting to bat first. Om was the top scorer, while Soumya R Biswal (62, 87b) and Debasish Sahu (53, 37b) also made crucial contributions with the bat.

In response, Kandhamal were bundled out for 118 in 27.5 overs with Tophan being the wrecker-in-chief. Rasmil R Sahoo (31, 37b) was the top scorer for the losing side.

At the KIIT Stadium, Sonepur defeated Jagatsinghpur by four wickets. Sonepur first bowled Jagatsinghpur out for 167, courtesy Suman Maharana (4/29) and Ritik Chaudhary (4/52). Biswajit Sutar (40, 48b) batted

well for Jagatsinghpur. In response, B Purusottam B Patra (52, 48b) led Sonepur to victory.

OTHER RESULTS
At Ravenshaw Ground-I: Malkangiri 156 (Dinesh Halba 58; Dipti B Bihari 5/42) lost to Kendrapara 159/7 (Gaurav Choudhury 44, Abinash Behera 39 n o) by 3 wickets.
At Ravenshaw Ground-II: Gajapati 155 (Aravinda Singh 77; Ayushman Gupta 4/30, Prayash K Singh 3/27) lost to Nuapada 156/8 (Baleswar Majhi 35 n o, Abhiroop Das 33; Subham Routo 4/41) by 2 wickets.
At Nimpur Ground: Bolangir 197 (Sailesh Patnaik 65; Pradeep K Pradhan 3/15, Prashant Thakkar 3/43) lost to Sambalpur B (Shresth Singh 54, Aman K Behera 48; Satyajit Singhdeo 5/46) by 2 wickets.
At Barabati Stadium: Kalahandi 146 (Dinesh Kumar Majhi 37; Uma S Sahu 5/21) lost to Rayagada 147/8 (Abdul M Khan 29, Kunal Verma 29; Sai P Patnaik 2/22) by 2 wickets.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Anupama, Tharun triumph
ASTANA: Indian shuttlers Anupama Upadhya and Tharun Manneppalli emerged champions in the women's and men's singles competition at the Kazakhstan International Challenge tournament in Uralsk Saturday. The 19-year-old Anupama from Almora, who won the Polish International challenge last month, claimed her second successive title with a 21-15, 21-16 win over compatriot Isharani Baruah. The 22-year-old Tharun beat eighth-seeded Malaysian Soong Joo Ven 21-10, 21-19 to register his maiden international title. In mixed doubles final, the Indian pair of Sanjai Srivatsa Dhanraj and Maneesha K lost 21-9, 7-21, 12-21 to Malaysia's Wong Tien Ci and Lim Chiew Sien to sign off with a runner-up finish.

Gujrathi, Gukesh script wins
TORONTO: Indian Grandmaster Vidit Gujrathi crashed through the defences of world number three Hikaru Nakamura of United States, while R Praggnanandhaa went down to compatriot D Gukesh in the second round of Candidates chess tournament here. After four draws in the first round, all the four games in the second round ended decisively Saturday. In the women's section, R Vaishali went down fighting against Zhongyi Tan of China, while Russian Aleksandra Goryachkina proved superior than Ukrainian Anna Muzychuk. Gujrathi along with Caruana, Nepomniachtchi and Gukesh emerged as the early co-leaders of the event with 1.5 points apiece while Nakamura, Praggnanandhaa, Abasov and Alireza share the fifth spot on half a point each.

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MS. SWIKRUTI KAR
MBA Gold Medalist BATCH: 2018-20

MS. NEEYATI KASHYAP
MBA GOLD MEDALIST, BATCH: 2019-21

MS. SHIRAN DASH
MBA GOLD MEDALIST, BATCH: 2020-22

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