

Nora's dream man
Dancer-actress Nora Fatehi shares her perspective on the attributes she seeks in a romantic partner

LEISURE | P2

Talks inconclusive
Hamas officials say no progress has been made in the new Gaza ceasefire talks in Cairo also attended by Israel, Qatar and US

INTERNATIONAL | P10

BSE's new milestone
Market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies reaches an all-time closing high of ₹400.86 lakh crore Monday

BUSINESS | P11

Nagal's massive feat
Sumit Nagal stuns Matteo Arnaldi and becomes the 1st Indian to win a singles main draw match at an ATP Masters event on clay

SPORTS | P12

Delhi High Court stays Dilip Ray's conviction

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 8: The Delhi High Court stayed Monday the conviction of former Union Minister Dilip Ray, who was sentenced to a three-year jail term in a coal scam case pertaining to irregularities in the allocation of a Jharkhand block in 1999, to enable him to contest the upcoming Odisha Assembly elections.

Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma allowed Ray's application in which the latter sought a stay on the conviction and said if it is not suspended, it would lead to an irreversible consequence in case he is acquitted at a later stage.

"In case the applicant's (Ray) prayer is not allowed, he will lose chance to contest the election and an irreversible consequence and damage to his political career and desire to serve his constituency will be caused to him...." the court observed.

Ray was sentenced to three years in jail October 26, 2020 by a trial court which had also imposed a fine of ₹10 lakh on him. Ray, 71, was Minister of State (Coal) in the erstwhile Atal Bihari Vajpayee government.



CELEBRATORY MOOD: Women in traditional attire take part Monday in a procession to celebrate Marathi New Year, on the eve of 'Gudi Padwa' in Nagpur

Youth arrested for murdering girlfriend

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 8: Police arrested Monday, Raju Sheikh, 30, a resident of Murshidabad town in West Bengal for allegedly murdering his live-in partner whose body was found on the banks of the Daya river close to the Dakshina Kali Temple at Lingipur under Dhauli police limits in this city. Sources indicated that the alleged murder may have occurred due to 'love gone awry'.

The deceased has been identified as Bhagya Dakua, 18, a resident of Hinjilicut in Ganjam district. She was residing in Sisupalgarh locality, on the outskirts of the Capital city. Police recovered the body Monday and sent it for post-mortem. They are waiting for the report to ascertain the real reason behind the woman's death.

It should be stated here Bhagya had eloped with Raju from her

village a little over three months back. The two were in a live-in relationship and were residing near Badada hospital for the last three months.

Meanwhile, the deceased's father confirmed that Bhagya had indeed run away with Raju. He alleged that the youth had murdered Bhagya. "I was informed about the death of my daughter at 4.00am in the morning Monday. She has been murdered and the guilty should be given exemplary punishment," said Hina Dakua.

Police sources stated that there is every possibility Raju, a mason by profession, had murdered the girl with the help of his friends. "We are probing the case from all angles," stated Pradipta Kishore Nayak, IIC of Dhauli police station. "At this moment we cannot rule out the involvement of others in the case," he added.

3 dead as scooty falls off bridge

POST NEWS NETWORK

Raikia, April 8: Three persons were killed when the scooter on which they were travelling fell off Budamaha bridge near Mandakia under Raikia police limits in Kandhamal district, police said Monday.

The accident occurred late Sunday night and locals after spotting the bodies Monday morning informed the cops. The deceased were returning from Paburia when the driver lost balance and the two-wheeler fell off the bridge after breaking through the barricades.

According to information available, the three deceased were returning to Raikia village after witnessing 'Danda Nacha' (folk dance) Sunday night when their scooter hit a roadside pole and fell off the Budamaha bridge.

The deceased trio was identified as Brahmananda Bhoi (25) of Kajurinaju village, Basant Panda (30), a trader at Raikia



and native of Birikote in Ganjam district and Kushal Digal (25) of Beredakia village.

Police have sent the bodies for post-mortem after registration of a case and are waiting for the report to ascertain if the two-wheeler was being driven in an inebriated condition by the driver.

G Udayagiri SDPO Bijay Kumar Bishi and Raikia police station IIC Ashutosh Paikaray also rushed to the spot and took stock of the mishap.

Police said that the three fell from a height of more than 10 metres and suffered serious injuries that led to their deaths. They added that the place where the accident occurred was deserted as it was late into the night.

How many more in jail: SC

As popularity of various social media platforms have grown so have state-run oppression of users. Many of the state governments as well as the Centre have repeatedly clamped down on users criticising them. A case in point is stand-up comedian Kunal Kamra who was banned from flying for confronting a journalist. Kunal has also filed a petition in the Bombay High Court challenging the amendment to IT rules as those affect his means of livelihood as a political satirist

► Stand-up comedian Munawar Faruqui arrested in January 2021 for a joke he didn't crack

► Lalit Yadav arrested by the police in Raipur for criticising Chhattisgarh CM Bhupesh Baghel on social media in 2019



► Independent MLA Jignesh Mevani arrested for criticising Prime Minister on 'X' in 2022

Minister MK Stalin in 2021. "If before elections we start putting behind bars everyone who makes allegations on 'YouTube', imagine how many will be jailed?" a bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan told senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for the Tamil Nadu government, as it set aside the order cancelling A Duraimurugan

Sattai's bail. Sattai and three others were arrested by Tiruchi police in June 2021 for comments against Stalin.

The apex court asserted that the accused did not misuse his liberty by protesting and expressing his views and also rejected the request of the Tamil Nadu government to impose a condition on Sattai to refrain

from making scandalous remarks while on bail.

The court was hearing Sattai's plea challenging an order of the Madras High Court which cancelled his bail as he had made certain derogatory remarks against Stalin in violation of an undertaking given to the court.

"Scientific inventions are made for the welfare of mankind. The internet is one such wonderful invention which has transformed the lives of many. Even an ordinary man is uploading his day-to-day activities, skills, thoughts, travel experiences on 'YouTube', the SC bench observed.

The SC bench also did not entertain the request to impose a condition on Sattai to refrain from making scandalous remarks while on bail. Justice Oka challenged Rohatgi, asking who would determine whether a statement is scandalous or not.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Of course, the govt has done very well. During my party's tenure, my own assets have increased 50 times

MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	74742.50 ↑ 494.28
NIFTY	22666.30 ↑ 152.60
DOLLAR	83.36 ↓ ₹0.01
EURO	90.30 ↓ ₹0.10
GOLD	₹70,609 ↓ ₹27
SILVER	₹81,447 ↑ ₹584

WEATHER		
	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	34.3°C	33.4°C
Min Temp	22.2°C	21.5°C
Humidity	71%	63%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

FORECAST
LIGHT TO MODERATE RAIN

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 8: The Supreme Court observed Monday that everyone who makes allegations on social media cannot be put behind bars. It then restored bail to a 'YouTuber' who was accused of making derogatory remarks against Tamil Nadu Chief

SHORT TAKES

New SPs appointed for Khurda, Berhampur

Bhubaneswar: The Election Commission of India (ECI) appointed Monday Awinash Kumar as the new SP of Khurda district. In a similar move, the ECI posted Dr Sarthak Sarangi as Berhampur SP. Earlier, a few days back the ECI had directed the Odisha government to transfer former Khurda SP Jugal Kishore Banoth and ex-Berhampur SP Saravana Vivek M.

Yadav chosen new SJTA administrator

Bhubaneswar: Vir Vikram Yadav, a 1996 batch IAS officer was appointed Monday as the chief administrator of the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA). He replaces Ranjan Kumar Das who had been appointed to the post in May last year. Yadav's tenure will start the day he takes charge, the Law department said in a notification.

'Superman' costliest comic book

AGENCIES

Los Angeles, April 8: A historic copy of 'Action Comics No 1', featuring the world's first introduction to 'Superman', has shattered records after fetching a staggering USD 6 million at an auction last week, the CNN reported Monday. The sale, conducted by 'Heritage Auctions', marks the most expensive comic book ever sold.

'Superman' may not be that popular in India, but across the world is adored in huge numbers. Hence it is no surprise that the comic book fetched such a staggering price, the auction house said.

This near-pristine 1938 issue, graded 'Very Fine+8.5' by CGC, is one of only a handful in such exceptional condition. Experts estimate just 100 copies of 'Action



Comics No 1' remain in existence, making this a true collector's dream, as per CNN.

The previous record holder for the most expensive comic book was also another 'Superman' book which was sold privately in 2022 for USD 5.3 million dollars. This latest auction surpasses that mark by a significant margin, solidifying 'Superman's' reign as a pop culture icon.

"Without 'Superman' and 'Action Comics No 1', who knows whether there ever would have

been a golden age of comics, or if the medium would have become what it is today," Heritage Auctions' vice-president Barry Sandoval said in a statement.

The story by Siegel and Shuster unveils Superman's alien roots, sent to Earth as a baby from a doomed planet, and introduces his future love interest, 'Lois Lane'.

Remarkably, this well-worn but vibrantly coloured comic from decades ago remains in 'very good' condition. Only two unrestored copies are documented in better shape, and 'Heritage Auctions' said that just 100 of the original 2,00,000 printed comics survive.

This record-breaking sale highlights the ever-increasing value of vintage comic books.

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leisure



KIM MADE SEX SCENE PARTNER NERVOUS

Kim Kardashian's *American Horror Story* co-star Dominic Burgess has admitted he felt nervous and body-conscious before filming sex scenes with the reality TV regular. Kim has made her first foray into acting with a role in the TV series where she also has locked lips with her co-actress Emma Roberts.

HURLEY'S 'MUMMY RULE' THAT ISN'T VERY POPULAR

British actress Elizabeth Hurley shares that she still has a 'very annoying mummy rule,' which she makes her 22-year-old son Damian stick to even now. "We're never allowed to put the TV on until 6 pm. We try to work all day, but at 6, we'll go into the TV room," Hurley revealed.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES
Feeling sentimental always gets in the way. If things don't go your way, life seems glum. But take a look at the food on the table. Levi's in the cupboard and your spaniel licking your toes, and you will thank God for a blessed life. You're welcome, says Ganesh.

TAURUS
You will notice significant development in your business dealings, predicts Ganesh. Your progress may slow down in the afternoon. Later in the day, financial opportunities will knock at your door. You will also make worthwhile progress in relationship matters, predicts Ganesh.

GEMINI
There are indications that you will most certainly guard against going off on a tangent in important meetings today, foresees Ganesh. You are also likely to let your brains on an overdrive to get things done at the workplace. You will have a fabulous dinner with your sweetheart in the evening.

CANCER
Chances are that your day will be filled with a lot of fun and celebration, says Ganesh. In the afternoon, you can expect a breakthrough in a very important business deal. At night, you will be busy partying.

LEO
You need to be on guard against making promises that you can't keep. For otherwise your reputation and image may suffer. Leisure activities, picnics and short journeys are possible. The evening will spent in an atmosphere of joviality, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
A roof, a cloth and two square meals a day is what you obviously provide for your family; but today, your thought will be burdened by how you can deliver the luxury too. Think on a new line at work today. You may host your loved ones to a fabulous dinner in the evening, says Ganesh.

LIBRA
Ganesh sure hopes that you packed your kit right and are ready to take on anything, as today promises to be an action-packed day. Most of this action might concentrate around your family members. Towards the afternoon, you may begin to feel weighed down by household responsibilities.

SCORPIO
You shall be magical with relationships today. Wave your wand and rebuild bridges, says Ganesh. You might even be involved in some cloak-and-dagger stuff. You are likely to be cavalier and bold in all the moves you make. Ganesh sees you blazing a trail and winning in your path to glory.

SAGITTARIUS
Expect to be on the go for business related work. Money matters will be a pressing issue in the afternoon. Be the team player and catch all that comes your co-workers' way. Expect to relax and end the day on a cheerful, romantic note.

CAPRICORN
In all probability, you will be in a bizarre frame of mind. At work, there will be a sudden turn of events that shall suddenly create a tottering pile of tasks on your table. In financial matters, you are likely to remain very cautious. In the evening, you can relax and enjoy yourself with your sweetheart, suggests Ganesh.

AQUARIUS
Today, you will realise the importance of time in the business world. Ganesh says you will understand how much risk is involved in going about things in a haphazard manner. As a natural corollary, you will ramp up and reschedule a lot of your plans, whether it's business or travel or just a family vacation.

PISCES
Your decision-making ability will be at its finest today, with all your spontaneous split-second decisions hitting the mark. However, do not get carried away by your early successes and temper your responses, for there could be implications later.

Nora seeks good heart, genetics in her partner

Mumbai: Nora Fatehi, who made an appearance in the *Madgaon Express*, has candidly shared her perspective on the attributes she seeks in a romantic partner.

The *Batla House* star, despite her successful career as an actor-dancer, revealed a desire for women to prioritise marriage and family alongside their professional and financial independence. She elaborated on her partner preferences during an interview with *Connect FM Canada*, indicating that her perception of an ideal man has evolved over time.

The actress said, "I am looking for a man who fears God and has a good heart and up-bringing. Money and financial stability come after that," said Nora adding, "I need someone who is really good from the inside because there are really bad people running around, who are opportunists and use you. There are liars, too. Some people will be with you for years and won't even want you. They want your money, your crowd or your network. There

are really weird people around. If I find someone with a good heart I will be happy."

When questioned by the interviewer about the significance of physical appearance, Nora responded with laughter, stating, "After all this, good looks come. I mean, I need good genetics because I want to have beautiful babies."

AGENCIES

Mrunal: I'm finally here

Mumbai: Mrunal Thakur, known for her versatile performances, is earning praise for her recent release *The Family Star*. The actress said that it took a long time but finally, she has made a place in the hearts of the audience.

During her latest visit to Siddhivinayak Temple here, the actress said: "I want to say 'thank you' to everyone for giving me so much love. It took me a long time to reach the hearts of the audience but now when I am finally here, I am very grateful."

Talking about doing *The Family Star*, she said: "I had never thought this film would be received like this. I

have never done a rom-com before. This is my first and people are loving it. I really enjoyed doing comedy. All my previous roles were serious ones. Working on this film was really like a breeze for me. Soon the film will be released in Hindi as well and the Hindi audience will also be able to enjoy it."

The Family Star is a Telugu language romantic family drama written and directed by Parasuram and produced by Dil Raju and Sirish under Sri Venkateswara Creations. The film also stars Vijay Deverakonda in a lead role, and it was released April 5, 2024.

AGENCIES



Raveena: Patriarchy still a challenge

Mumbai: Actress Raveena Tandon, who is receiving lots of positive response for her work in the streaming movie *Patna Shukla*, feels that despite progressive laws and the improved thought process of society, patriarchy is still very prevalent in the current times.

The actress also said that women continue to face the challenges thrown by patriarchy in both their personal and professional circles.

Elaborating on the same, Raveena, who plays lawyer Tanvi Shukla in *Patna Shukla*, said, "Patriarchy is something that every woman has faced and is still facing, be it at work or at home. *Patna Shukla* is a journey of a woman commanded by patriarchy and one who breaks

away from it." Describing her role in the series, the actress added, "Tanvi doesn't see patriarchy as a challenge, she chases justice

and breaks the glass ceiling of patriarchy along the way. I want the audience to take in Tanvi's courage, warmth, and determination because no challenge will sustain for long then," she added.

The film dives into the education scam of fake roll numbers that affects the lives of thousands of earnest students in India.

Produced by Arbaaz Khan Productions and directed by Vivek Budakoti, the courtroom drama is currently streaming on Disney+ Hotstar.

AGENCIES

RAHUL'S TAKE ON TODAY'S SUPERSTARS

Mumbai: Rahul Bose is known for his experimental choices when it comes to working in niche cinema. The *Bulbul* actor recently spoke about stardom culture.

In an interview with *Times Now*, the actor was quizzed about Kangana Ranaut's remarks where she mentioned Shah Rukh Khan and herself as 'last generation of superstars.'

When asked if the boom of OTT has diminished the star culture, Rahul said that people don't care whether stars act well as they just want to see them.

He opined, "People don't care whether the 'superstars' are playing a villager, an industrialist, a cricketer or an aeronautical scientist. They just want to see the stars. They don't care how these stars act. They just want to see them."

"The charisma of stars becomes so strong that you only want to see them and you believe that you know them and that you were linked in your previous life together. That's the stuff. Outside of that, everybody else is an actor with degrees of charisma. You know you can't be non-charismatic. There are some very good actors who have zero charisma. They're not going to get very far. You know, there are some very bad actors who have lots of charisma. They'll get very far because cinema is a visual medium. You have to see it."

He concluded by mentioning Madhubala and present day superstars as hyper-charismatic human beings who will always remain massive stars.

AGENCIES



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

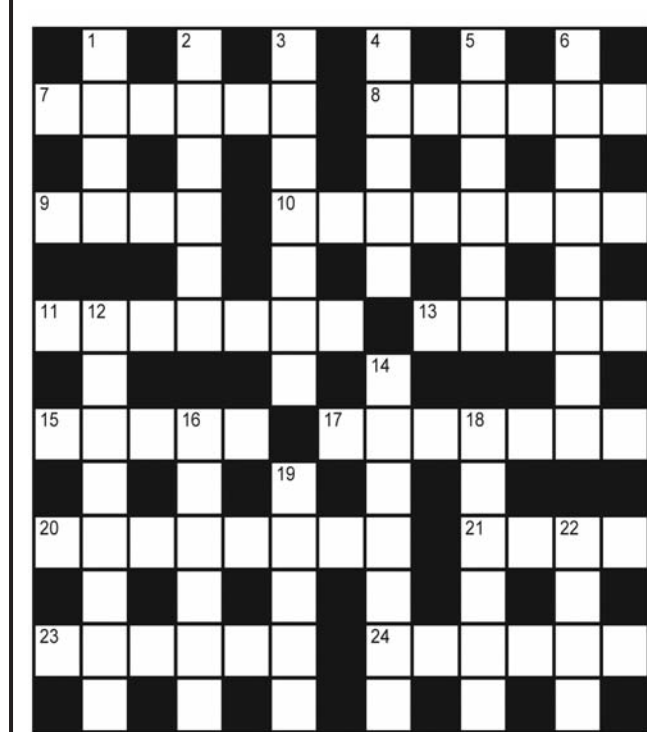


BREVITY



FUN post

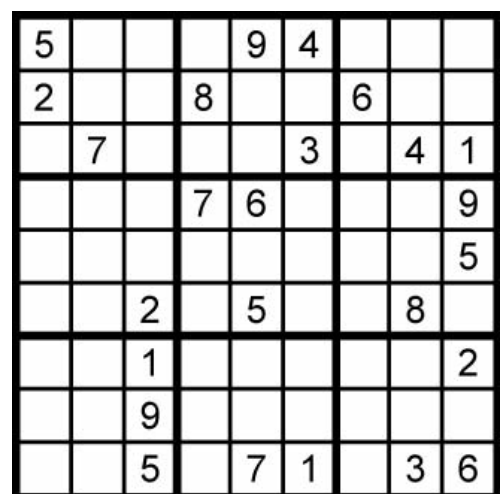
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Voyage
 - 8 Agreement
 - 9 Persian spirit
 - 10 Rabble
 - 11 Ring-shaped
 - 13 Breakwater
 - 15 Impure form of quartz
 - 17 Vanity
 - 20 Draw
 - 21 Stiff and sore
 - 23 Pester
 - 24 Beethoven's "Moonlight"
- Down**
- 1 Elder or alder
 - 2 Environs
 - 3 Rumor
 - 4 Gulp
 - 5 Savage
 - 6 Parade clean-up
 - 12 Bedtime drink
 - 14 Bewilder
 - 16 Destroyer, in Navy slang (3,3)
 - 18 Crevice
 - 19 Crow
 - 22 Detest

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD

SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown

A fire broke out at a thatched house at Chengeila village in Biratunga panchayat of Gop late Sunday night. Properties worth over ₹5 lakh were reduced to cinders.



NCERT warns against pirated school books

New Delhi, April 8: The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) Monday issued a warning against pirated school textbooks, flagging possibilities of factually incorrect content.

It also warned against copyright infringement of its educational materials, cautioning the public against unauthorised printing and commercial sale of school textbooks.

"A few unscrupulous publishers were printing NCERT school textbooks available on its website under their own name, without obtaining permission from the NCERT. Anyone found publishing NCERT textbooks, either in whole or in part, for commercial sale or using NCERT textbook content in their publications without obtaining explicit copyright permission, will face legal repercussions under the Copyright Act of 1957," a senior council official said.

"The general public is requested to kindly stay away from such textbooks or workbooks as their content may be factually incorrect as well as against the basic philosophy of NCF (National Curriculum Framework for School Education) 2023. We also urge individuals who come across such pirated

PARENTS' BODY DEMANDS ACTION

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, April 8: The Odisha Parents' Federation (OPF) Monday wrote to the Director, NCERT over the shortage of text books in the state and demanded immediate action against sale of fake Council books by reputable publishers.



President OPF, Basudev Bhatt in a letter to NCERT said, "Odisha Parents' Federation would like to bring to your kind attention about the shortage of NCERT books in Odisha. With the start of the current academic year, new books are al-

ways needed for children to receive education," he said.

"Parents are worried and it is becoming difficult for children to study this year. Central school, Navodaya, Adarsh Vidyalay, DM schools and private schools affiliated to CBSE are teaching from NCERT books, while in some private schools, private publication books are being taught regularly. So, children are facing undue and unnecessary educational burden," he added.

In his letter to the NCERT Director Bhatt raised suspicion about a nexus between private publishers and private schools which is responsible for the problem in the country. "We are fighting for use of NCERT books in all private schools. If appropriate action is not taken immediately by NCERT, the Odisha Parents' Federation will be forced to protest agitation and fight the law," he said.

textbooks or workbooks to immediately report it to the Council," the official added.

The NCERT last week announced that textbooks for Class 3 will be available by the last

week of April and for Class 6 by mid-May. It had said that 1.21 crore copies of the 2023-2024 editions of textbooks for classes 1, 2, 7, 8, 10 and 12 have been released nationwide.

HC summons top edu official

Cuttack: The Orissa High Court Monday directed the principal secretary, School and Mass Education (S&ME) department, to appear before it Tuesday in connection with the alleged denial of admission to children belonging to economically weaker section in private schools under state government's 25 per cent reservation rule. Selection of children belonging to economically weaker section of society wishing to take admission into nursery, LKG and UKG in private schools under RTE was being done through lottery system. While there were 4,264 such schools last year, the figure dropped to 2,700 this year. Following hue and cry by Odisha Parents' Federation (OPF), the government enhanced the number of schools. However, due to the delay in enhancement of additional schools, many children were deprived of admission. This apart, lottery was held twice though norms mandate it thrice.

Top design institute among Santrupt's plans for Cuttack

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 8: Santrupt Misra, BJD's Lok Sabha candidate and former HR head of Aditya Birla group, said he has plans to make silver filigree of Cuttack a major industry and set up a world-class design institute.

The silver filigree work of Cuttack has received the geographical indication (GI) tag in March this year.

"We can create a world-class design institute in Cuttack someday, not only for silver filigree but for textiles and other works as well," Misra said.

Like the Gold Market of Dubai, a dedicated silver filigree market can be set up in Cuttack where international tourists will come and have a first-hand glimpse of the product, he said.

After taking voluntary retirement from the Aditya Birla group, Misra joined the BJD recently and was made a candidate for the Cuttack seat. He is pitted against six-time MP Bharatruhari Mahtab, who had defected to BJP from the ruling party in Odisha.

Misra told PTI Video that he felt humbled for being nominated from Cuttack where he grew up.

To a question, he said that the decision to enter politics was not sudden but a well-thought-out one.

After serving a company for over 28 years, "I felt that the time has come to extend the best support and service to the state



and city where I grew up and which has given me so much," Misra said.

The new life "has been exhilarating... seeing people's expectation, earning their trust and seeing an enormous opportunity to build Odisha, its economy, making future of young people of Odisha," he added.

Lok Sabha and Assembly elections will be held simultaneously in Odisha.

Misra banks on the development works done by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.

"The achievements of the Chief Minister are there for everyone to see. The electorate of the state has reposed faith and confidence in his leadership five times in a row," he said.

MAN LOSES ₹7K SCOUTING HOUSE ON RENT; TWO HELD

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 8: The twin city Commissionerate Police Monday claimed to have arrested two persons on charges of duping a Puri resident of ₹7,000 on the promise of providing him a rented accommodation in Saheed Nagar area here.

The accused were identified as Manoj Behera, 24, and Satya Prakash Dalai, 21, both residents of Malandapur under Sadar police limits in Jajpur district.

Giving details of the case, an officer from Saheed Nagar police station, that made the arrests, said Sunil Kumar Mohanty, 34, a resident of Bharatipur in Puri district, was browsing through OLX when he came across an

advertisement offering a rented accommodation near Maharishi College of Natural Law (in Saheed Nagar area) April 2.

"After Mohanty dialed the number shared in the advertisement April 4, he had an initial round of discussion with one of the accused, who identified himself as Tanmay. The Puri resident later had another round of discussion with the second accused who identified himself as Chandan, the landlord," the official said.

The deal was sealed over phone, and the accused asked Mohanty to transfer ₹2,000 as brokerage, and a month's rent advance of ₹8,000 via UPI, said the official.

Unable to pay ₹10,000 at once, Mohanty allegedly requested the accused to manage with ₹7,000

that he later transferred them in two installments.

The fraud, however, came to the fore when Mohanty came all the way from Puri to the City to take the house keys in the evening.

"After reaching Vani Vihar, Mohanty tried calling the accused. However, they were incommunicado. With no way out, a hapless Mohanty approached the Saheed Nagar police that registered a case (203/24) under Sections 419, 420 and 34 of IPC and launched a probe," the officer said.

Following investigation, the Saheed Nagar police managed to nab the duo. "Three mobile phones, six debit cards and ₹7,000 cash were recovered from their possession," said the officer.

CHOCKING: Musa river in Puri covered with water hyacinth, Monday

BJD alleges misuse of EC's name by BJP

A SAFFRON PARTY DELEGATION, ON THE OTHER HAND, MOVES THE ELECTION WATCHDOG CLAIMING POLL CODE VIOLATION BY AN IPS OFFICER AGENCIES



Bhubaneswar, April 8: The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) Monday lodged a complaint with the Election Commission (EC) alleging that certain leaders and candidates of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) are exploiting the poll panel's name and intimidating state government officials on election duty with transfers if they do not support saffron party nominees in the elections.

Six IPS and two IAS officers from the state were recently transferred by the EC.

According to BJD general secretary and national spokesperson Sasmit Patra, state BJP candidates and leaders are leveraging these transfers as a means to threaten government officials involved in election duties.

Patra claimed that BJP leaders are warning officials that their failure to support the saffron party would result in their transfers through false complaints to the EC, a practice that violates the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) and constitutes criminal behaviour by attempting to influence the election

process. "This conduct not only undermines our democratic process and the integrity of our electoral system but also tarnishes the reputation of the EC," Patra emphasised.

The BJD leader criticised such practices as detrimental to democracy and the electoral process.

Moreover, he accused BJP leaders of misusing the EC's name for their political ends.

The BJD urged the EC to take prompt action to ensure a free, fair, transparent, and healthy election in Odisha.

In a separate petition to state's Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), the BJD alleged that BJP leaders were employing underage children in election campaigning in Jatni Assembly segment in Khurda district despite the adverse weather conditions.

They provided photo and video evidence to support their claim and requested immediate action.

On the other hand, a delegation of state BJP, led by former president Samir Mohanty, also moved the poll body and lodged complaints of MCC violations by a senior IPS officer working in the Chief Minister's Office (CMO).

Mohanty accused the IPS officer of partisan behaviour, making calls to IICs, SPs, and political leaders, which he deemed a violation of MCC.

The BJD demanded action against the officer, including the seizure of his mobile phone for examination of call details, with the results made public for transparency.

41% segments have 3 or more candidates with criminal cases

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 8: Forty-two (41 per cent) of the 102 Lok Sabha seats going to polls in the first phase are constituencies that have three or more candidates facing criminal cases, according to a poll rights body.

The Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) has analysed the self-sworn affidavits of 1,618 candidates out of the 1,625 contesting the elections in its first phase April 19.

Out of the 1,618 candidates, 16 per cent or 252 candidates are named in criminal cases, with 10 per cent or 161 candidates facing serious criminal charges, according to the analysis of their affidavits by the organisation.

Seven candidates have murder cases lodged against them, while 19 are implicated in attempt to murder cases.

Eighteen candidates have declared in their affidavits cases related to crimes against women, and one of them, faces rape charge under section 376 of the IPC, the ADR, which did the analysis along with National Election Watch, a coalition of civil society groups for domestic election monitoring, said.

The organisation said that 35 candidates are linked to cases of hate speech.

The analysis showed that 42 or 41 per cent of the 102 seats scheduled to go to polls in the first of the seven-phase elections are 'red alert' constituencies.

'Red alert' constituencies are those where three or more contesting candidates have declared criminal cases in their affidavits.

The analysis showed that

among major parties, there are criminal cases against all four candidates of the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), 13 (59 per cent) of 22 candidates of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), three (43 per cent) of seven candidates of the Samajwadi Party (SP), two (40 per cent) of five candidates of the Trinamool Congress (TMC), 28 (36 per cent) of 77 candidates of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and 19 (34 per cent) of 56 candidates of the Congress.

The number stood at 13 (36 per cent) out of 36 candidates of the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) and 11 (13 per cent) out of 86 candidates of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP).

In tandem with the revelations on criminal backgrounds, the ADR said the analysis also highlights wealth disparities among candidates.

It said, according to affidavits, around 28 per cent of candidates in the polls' first phase are 'crorepatis' with assets exceeding Rs 1 crore. The average assets per candidate stands at Rs 4.51 crore, with notable discrepancies observed across party lines, the ADR found.

The analysis showed that among the major parties, more than Rs 1 crore assets have been declared by all four candidates of the RJD, 35 (97 per cent) of 36 candidates of the AIADMK, 21 (96 per cent) of 22 candidates of the DMK, 69 (90 per cent) of 77 candidates of the BJP, 49 (88 per cent) of 56 candidates of the Congress, four (80 per cent) of five candidates of the TMC and 18 (21 per cent) of 86 candidates of the BSP.

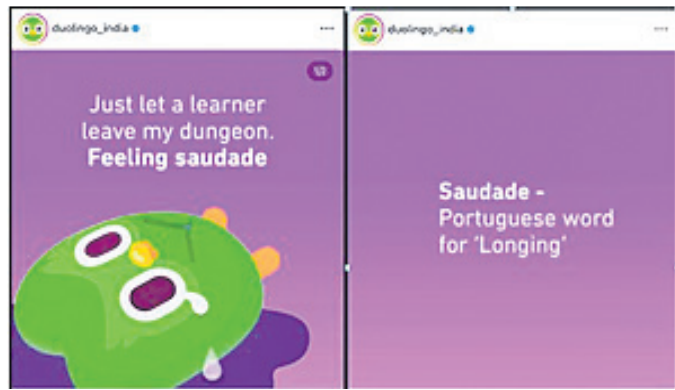
Mind your English: 51% Indians use untranslatable words

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 8: Over half of urban Indians (about 51 per cent) use words or phrases from specific regional languages to express love or in humorous or witty situations, which cannot be fully translated into English, according to a report, Monday.

The report by Duolingo, a language learning platform, is based on a survey done in collaboration with YouGov to gauge the attitudes of urban Indians towards language and expression.

The findings revealed that over half (51 per cent) of Indians often incorporate unique phrases (from different languages) into their daily conversations.



About 68 per cent of urban Indians said that there are certain phrases or words in a language that convey nuanced meanings which cannot be fully

translated, or expressed in English; while 69 per cent admitted to using language-specific phrases or words that cannot be fully translated into

English to articulate emotions/feelings (happy/sad) or engage in conversations with family and friends.

Further, 51 per cent confessed to using these expressions as terms of endearment or love language or to inject humour and wit into their interactions.

To celebrate this linguistic diversity, the platform recently launched the '#EnglishMeinNahiJanta' campaign on Duolingo India's Instagram page, inviting users to embark on a journey of linguistic discoveries.

The users guided by beloved characters Duo and Lily shared treasured words from their regional dialects that lost their

magic when translated into English.

"At Duolingo, we understand that languages are more than just communication tools -- they're expressions of culture, emotion, and identity," said Karandeep Singh Kapany, Regional Marketing Director, Duolingo.

"Our '#EnglishMeinNahiJanta' campaign celebrates this beauty by highlighting words that defy translation and reflect a growing appreciation for linguistic diversity. Through initiatives like this, we empower individuals to embrace expression, enrich lives, and foster global connections," he added.

'CONTINUED INCARCERATION LIKE CAPITAL PUNISHMENT'

SC favours release of 96-yr-old lifer Habib Ahmed Khan in terror case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 8: The Supreme Court Monday favoured remission to an ailing 96-year-old convict, serving life term in 1993 train blast case in Rajasthan and is currently on parole, saying continued incarceration is 'like capital punishment'.

Habib Ahmed Khan had moved the top court seeking permanent parole given his deteriorating health condition and age. A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan asked the Rajasthan government to consider his case from the human rights angle.

The counsel for Khan said he has been in jail for over 27 years after which he was granted parole thrice. The third parole is being now extended by this court.

The bench, which perused the medical reports of Khan, said at this juncture what purpose will be served by his incarceration.

"Just see his medical report, where will he go. Yes, he was convicted for a terror offence but he was not awarded capital punishment. Continued incar-



ceration for him is like capital punishment," the bench told Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Vikramjeet Banerjee, appearing for the Rajasthan government.

The bench asked Banerjee to consider his remission and see the case from a human rights angle.

The ASG submitted that for remission, the convict has to make an application to the state government but in the instant case, his conviction for terror offence would be a hindrance.

"Then what is Article 21 in the Constitution for," Justice Oka told the ASG, adding that

Khan can neither walk nor see properly according to his medical reports.

Justice Bhuyan said that at 96, Khan is just counting his days and the law cannot be so insensitive.

Banerjee argued, "This court has all the powers in the world and if it were to use the power under Article 142 of the Constitution for remission, then I would urge not to do so. Remission can only be granted by the state government."

Justice Oka said, "Not all the powers in the world but all the powers under the Constitution. Ultimately, there has to be some balance."

The bench asked Banerjee to seek instruction on whether Khan could be granted remission or permanent parole and listed the matter after two weeks.

Khan was arrested in 1994 for connection with a series of train blasts in 1993 and was convicted in 2004 by the Ajmer Trial Court along with 14 others under the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA).



ENCHANTING MOVES: Artistes perform Odissi dance during Utkal Prativa Ratna Samman organised by Happy Moments India at Soochana Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Monday

IAS Probationers visit SSEPD dept



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, April 8: Six Indian Administrative Service (IAS) Probationers, on an exposure trip, visited Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SSEPD) department, Monday.

The officers exchanged views with Principal Secretary Bishnupada Sethi and other senior officers. On this occasion, they were shown a power-point presentation on various activities and programmes of SSEPD department.

Later, they visited various agencies working under the department viz State Institute for Empowerment of PwDs (SIEP), State Institute of Special Education and Research (SISER) and State Institute for Disability Rehabilitation (SIDR).

EC to install GPS in poll vehicles

Kolkata: The Election Commission has decided to install GPS location tracking system in all vehicles that will be used for polling purposes in West Bengal, an official said Monday. "The GPS tracking system will be used to monitor the movement of EVMs and other polling materials from the distribution and receipt centre to the polling station on the day before the elections and to ensure that no tampering occurs while bringing them to the strong room after polling," the official said. The seven-phase Lok Sabha elections in the state will commence April 19.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

I, Ashok Kumar Mohanty, S/o Late Kasinath Mohanty, Village ATAMALA, P.O./P.S./Dist.- Jagatsinghpur, PIN-754103 declared by this affidavit No.- 541, Dt. 06.04.2024 that Ashok Mohanty and Ashok Kumar Mohanty are one and same person.

KIIT inks MoU with UNV programme

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, April 8: Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) Deemed to be University, signed an MoU with the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme Monday.

This historic collaboration paves the way for KIIT students to engage directly with the United Nations (UN), offering them a platform to serve as National UNV across various UN agencies. This initiative marks a significant milestone, being the first-of-its-kind for a private university in South Asia.

The MoU was exchanged between UNV country coordinator Sushil Chaudhury and KIIT



VC Saranjit Singh in presence of KIIT and KISS founder Achyuta Samanta, UN Resident Coordinator in India Shombi Sharp and Chief of Staff at the UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) Radhika Kaul Batra.

Sharp also extended congratulations to KIIT on its numerous accolades, including prestigious UNESCO award, underlining the global recognition of its educational model. He commended the institute for emphasising on education in mother tongue, which plays a crucial role in preserving culture and enhancing learning experiences.

Samanta said, "This initiative will provide young people with first-hand experience and enable them to contribute to sustainable development efforts alongside UN partners and local communities. It will also be an opportunity for them to gain valuable professional experiences in international development, shaping their future career paths."

CUO HOLDS INT'L SEMINAR ON SANSKRIT LANGUAGE



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, April 8: A three-day international seminar on 'Science and Technology in Ancient Indian Literature in

Modern Perspective' was inaugurated at the Central University of Odisha (CUO) Monday, organised by the department of Sanskrit. The event was graced by vice-chancellors (VCs) of five

universities including delegates. The event, to continue till April 10, was formally inaugurated by CUO VC Chakradhar Tripathi.

Tripathi conveyed his best wishes to the participant and hoped that discourses would be very much fruitful. CUO Registrar NC Panda, in his welcome speech, said that the seminar is unique due to the presence of five VCs on the same days.

Speaking on the occasion, Central Sanskrit University, New Delhi VC Shrinivasa Varakhedi focused on development of Sanskrit language not only in the field of literature but also in de-

velopment of science and technology. "If we want to achieve developed India, we should revive the ancient Indian traditions of all disciplines including science and technology", he said.

National Sanskrit University, Tirupati VC GSR Krishna Murty, in his speech, urged for reviving of Sanskrit language and literature for development of overall literature in the nation. "Sanskrit language should be multi-faceted and mixed with all disciplines for studies. Plantation and science are inter-related, therefore plantation would lead to scientific development," Murty said.

700 yrs old inscription in Khurda deciphered



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, April 8: Kalinga Epigraphical Research Group (KERG) deciphered nearly 700 years old stone inscription from Khurda district, recently.

The inscription is found in Pancha Mahadeva temple at Sarapari village, Tangi. A local heritage enthusiast, Deviprasad Samantary informed the KERG about the inscription and it was later deciphered jointly by Bishnu Mohan Adhikari, Bikram Nayak, Mihir Bahinipati and Deepak Kumar Nayak.

"The team found 9 lines of inscription on the right wall to the entrance, to the Jagamohan. The inscription is identified as Proto-Odia script used during the 13th and 14th century in the Kalinga Utkal region," Deepak said.

The inscribed script found to have connections with Pateswar temple inscription of Eastern Ganga King Bhanudeva III, found in Pattangi village of ancient Kalinga (now in Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh).

The temple construction style and iconographical details of the subsidiary sculptures indicate it was built during the Eastern Ganga's ruling era, added Deepak.

"The inscription is damaged and some parts are covered with plaster. However, we were able to decipher it partially. The inscription is indicative of a donation to a Malakara (gardener) sevayata named Damodara on the merit of Bhogakhanja for the deity. Possibly, Damodara was the very first Malakara sevayata to carry out rituals associated with the temple. We have no information on the donor or any precise date," Adhikari said.

"This medieval era inscription puts some interesting information on the writing style and usage of Odia script in that era. From the first line of this inscription, we see the usage of a word 'Sarapadi', possibly after so many years, this is now corrupted to 'Sarapari' which is the name of this village," Mihir said.

Gravitational collapse of dense clouds gave birth to Sun

Our solar system today is mainly composed of a central star - the sun - along with an inner solar system with rocky planets, and an outer solar system with gas and ice giant planets.

Our solar system formed from the gravitational collapse of a 'dense' giant molecular cloud of gas and dust, composed mainly of hydrogen, a bit of helium, and about one per cent of heavier elements. After the cloud collapsed, the majority of the mass concentrated onto the centre, creating our sun.

The star continued to contract until it reached its final size and density. Hydrogen fusion ignited the sun's core, causing the star to emit light and heat.

Around the sun, the leftovers - about 0.5 to one per cent of the

mass of the sun - created a protoplanetary disk, where planets subsequently formed.

Protoplanetary disks in the process of making planets are not just theory - they have actually been observed, such as the disk around HL Tauri, a young star with rings and gaps that are likely signs of forming planets.

We have a pretty good idea of when that collapse took place in our solar system because we can analyse the first (or oldest) solids that condensed out from the protoplanetary disk gas.

These solid fragments, called calcium-aluminum rich inclusions (CAIs), have been found in some of the oldest meteorites, and age-dated to 4,567.3 million years. This is when our solar system came into being, and pro-



vides the age for the birth of our sun.

Very dense molecular clouds can collapse due to their own gravity. However, the collapse of our protosolar nebula was likely triggered by the perturbation from the passing shock wave of an exploding massive star, called a supernova.

The evidence for this hypothesis is found in the isotope

composition of some chemical elements in pre-solar grains. Pre-solar grains are tiny silicon-carbide minerals (under a micrometre in size), and can be found in parts per million quantities in some meteorites. These pre-solar grains have

isotope compositions that cannot be explained by chemical or physical processes occurring in our solar system, and are better explained by these grains forming elsewhere.

However, after the formation of CAIs, it likely took tens to a few hundreds of millions of years for Earth to form. Although we have determined the age of our solar system very precisely, debates still persist regarding the age of our own planet Earth. The challenge comes from the

fact that the Earth is an active planet, and is very efficient at recycling and reworking its oldest rocks, resetting their geochronological information.

More than 98 per cent of the proto-Earth's mass might have been already melted together by the time a giant impact hit the proto-Earth. That giant impact added the remaining two per cent to Earth, and also led to the formation of our moon.

The giant impact, occurring somewhere between 70 to 120 million years after the CAIs formation, could provide the best determination for the age of the Earth. Independent age estimates can also be obtained from estimating the timing of Earth's magma ocean solidification, a consequence of the moon-forming giant impact.

OUR SOLAR SYSTEM FORMED FROM THE GRAVITATIONAL COLLAPSE OF A 'DENSE' GIANT MOLECULAR CLOUD OF GAS AND DUST, COMPOSED MAINLY OF HYDROGEN, A BIT OF HELIUM, AND ABOUT 1% OF HEAVIER ELEMENTS

AROUND THE SUN, THE LEFTOVERS - ABOUT 0.5 TO 1% OF THE MASS OF THE SUN - CREATED A PROTOPLANETARY DISK, WHERE PLANETS SUBSEQUENTLY FORMED

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RPF nabs T'gana conman for duping women online

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, April 8: The Railway Protection Force (RPF) here has arrested a conman from Rourkela Railway Station Monday for impersonating as an RPF sub-inspector and defrauding women financially after allegedly tricking them into romantic relationships and winning their confidence.

The arrested person was identified as Sadashiv Kadam, 29, a resident of Potra in Telengana. Impersonating as an SI of RPF on his Instagram handle, Kadam had established romantic relationships with 10-12 women. Later, he allegedly tricked the gullible women into paying him money giving them false prom-



ises of marriage.

A woman constable of the RPF station unit received a complaint in this regard Sunday and soon passed the case to her superiors. The RPF came to know that the person was at Rourkela

Railway Station. The RPF's station team and CIB from Chakradharpur conducted a joint action and finally spotted Sadashiv standing at the entrance of the station Monday afternoon through CCTV. Soon, they pounced on him and after finishing the initial enquiry handed him over to GRP Rourkela for further enquiry.

Speaking about the arrest, SDPO, GRP Rourkela, Prakash James Toppo said, "He has been involved in such crimes for the last couple of years and has many complaints registered against him." A case was registered in the Rourkela GRP after a written complaint and he was forwarded to the court Monday after his arrest, he added.



MATTER OF FAITH: Chandaneswar Mahadev shrine bordering West Bengal under Bhograi block in Balasore district witnessed a footfall of over 40,000 devotees ahead of the famous Chadak Mela, Monday

Kin try to resurrect dead infant in Balasore



POST NEWS NETWORK

Baliapal, April 8: In a shocking incident, family members of a deceased nine-month-old girl tried to resurrect her by performing rituals at a crematorium with the help of sorcerers at Gengutia village under Baliapal police limits in Balasore district, sources said Monday.

The family members of Mantu Jena allegedly kept the infant's body inside a mosquito net for two days in the crematorium and tried to resurrect her with the help of the sorcerers. Sources said, the villagers also assembled at the crematorium waiting with bated breath to see the dead girl come back to life.

However, their efforts were frustrated after Baliapal police reached the spot and seized the in-

fant's body. Later, they directed the family members to bury her at the crematorium. The sorcerers reportedly managed to escape before police could arrive at the spot.

Sources said Mantu Jena and his family members at Gengutia village had gone to visit Baruni Mela, Saturday. However, after returning home the baby experienced severe breathing problem. Family members rushed her to the Baliapal community health centre where doctors pronounced her brought dead.

Family members refused to believe the words of the doctor and took the help of a sorcerer to resurrect the baby. Later, family members carried the body to the crematorium and were trying to resurrect it with the help of a sorcerer when the police intervened.

Day after escape from jail, UTP held from native village

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhawanipatna, April 8: Day after two under-trial prisoners (UTPs) escaped from Kalahandi district jail here after scaling the boundary wall, police arrested one of them from his native village, Monday.

The arrested UTP has been identified as Sikandar Jal. According to sources, the jail authorities launched a manhunt search to find out the UTPs identified as Sikandar Jal and Neelmani Majhi. Sikandar is from Nuapada district while Neelmani is a resident of Dharmagarh area in Kalahandi district. They were put behind bars after being booked under the POCSO Act.

Following the escape of the UTPs, Town police registered a case in this connection. The joint team of Town police and jail officials conducted raids to nab the UTPs. Sikandar Jal was arrested during a raid at his village and taken into police custody. On the other hand, another UTP Nilamani is still on the run.



2 awarded 20-yr RI in separate POCSO cases

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar/Balasore, April 8: A fast track court in Keonjhar district Monday sentenced a youth to 20 years rigorous imprisonment (RI) after convicting him for rape of a 12-year-old girl in 2021.

The convicted youth was identified as Mantri Sardar, 29. Judge, Bijay Kumar Mishra also slapped a fine of ₹20,000 on the convict apart from the punishment.

In case of default, Sardar has to undergo an additional six months of rigorous imprisonment.

The fast track court pronounced the order based on the statements recorded by 15 witnesses and police investigation report, special public prosecutor Gyanendranath Jena said. He also said that the court has recommended the district legal services authority (DLSA) to provide assistance of ₹5 lakh to the survivor.

According to the case diary, Sardar barged into the house of the survivor when she was alone and kidnapped



her to an isolated place September 27, 2021. Later, he raped her several times. Unable to trace his daughter, the girl's father lodged a missing complaint at the Sadar police station. Sadar police rescued the girl from the clutches of Sardar after two days.

The girl was taken for interrogation where she confirmed that she was raped by the youth. Based on her statement, police arrested Sardar and produced him in the court under

Section 6 of POCSO Act.

In another case, Special POCSO Judge Ranjan Kumar Sutar Monday convicted a rape accused in Balasore and sentenced him to 20 years rigorous imprisonment (RI) along with ₹5,000 penalty.

The court further ordered two years RI in case of default in payment of the fine amount by the convict.

According to the Special Prosecutor Pranab Kumar Panda, the convict identified as Ajay Behera, resident of Daradia village under Khantapara police station limits, and a shopkeeper, sexually assaulted a 7-year-old girl of the same village in May last year when she went to fetch chocolate from his shop.

The grandfather of the victim lodged an FIR with police alleging sexual assault against Behera after learning about the ordeals from the victim.

"The accused was tried under 376(AB) IPC and Section 6 of POCSO Act and the court after examining 17 witnesses and 20 exhibits announced the verdict Monday," Panda said.

IRB jawan from Nuapada dies in TN

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nuapada, April 8: An Indian Reserve Battalion (IRB) jawan from Dharambandha village in this district reportedly died in a road accident in Tamil Nadu, sources said Monday.

The deceased jawan has been identified as Pramod Majhi, a resident of Dharambandha village. He was posted under Boden block in Nuapada district as an IRB jawan. However,



he was assigned election duty at Tamilnadu and had to move there.

Majhi met with an accident while he had gone outside for some work and died

while undergoing treatment at a hospital. Hearing the news of the death, his family members have completely broken down with grief. A pall of gloom prevailed in Dharambandha village and Nuapada district after the news spread.

Pramod is survived by his wife Samantini Majhi and their 3-year-old son Siyans Majhi. The body of the jawan will first reach Bhubaneswar and then it will be taken to Dharambandha, sources said.

EAST COAST RAILWAY
Tender No. 02-KUR-TRD-OT-2024-25
Name of Work: OHE MODIFICATION IN CONNECTION WITH PROPOSED REPLACEMENT OF GIRDERS OF MAJOR BRIDGES (BG/ML AND RBG) (BRIDGE NOS. 550 DN, 559 DN, 567 DN AND 567 UP) IN CUTTACK-KHURDA ROAD (CTC-KUR) SECTION IN CONNECTION WITH MISSION-3000 MT UNDER KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.
Advertised Value: ₹ 13,45,311.93, Earnest Money: ₹ 26,900.00, Period of Completion: 180 Days.
Bidding Start Date: 11.04.2024, Date & time of tender closing: At 1300 hrs. on 25.04.2024.
Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.
Complete information including e-tender documents are available in website: www.irps.gov.in
Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (TRD) PR-07/P/24-25 Khurda Road

Labourer falls to death from under-construction house

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nuagaon, April 8: A labourer at Nuagaon Gadadharpur died after falling off an under-construction building under this police limits in Nayagarh district, Monday.

The deceased has been identified as Rabindra Pradhan, 55, a resident of Kalamba village under Polsara police station limits in Ganjam district.

According to sources, Rabindra had come to Nuagaon Gadadharpur village as a labourer employed in construction of the building along with his brother-in-law Pradipta Pradhan.

While working on the roof Monday, he accidentally fell off the building as his foot slipped. Locals rescued Rabindra in a critical condition and rushed him to the district headquarters hospital at Nayagarh in a fire brigade vehicle where the doctor pronounced him dead.

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

POSESSION NOTICE [Rule-8(1)]

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the Bank of Maharashtra under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (54 of 2002) and in exercise of the powers conferred under sub-section (12) of section 13 read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice calling upon the Borrowers/Guarantors to repay the amount mentioned in the notice plus interest and expenses thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The Borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to Borrowers/Guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic Possession of the property described herein below in exercise of the powers conferred on him under Sub-section (4) of the section 13 of Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules. The Borrowers/Guarantors in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Bank of Maharashtra for an amount stated below with interest & expenses thereon. The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

BRANCH / Name & Address of the Borrower(s) / Co-Applicant(s) / Guarantor(s)	Description of the Security Interest taken over possession	Liabilities due on the specified date as per Notice	Date of Demand Notice / Date of Possession
BERHAMPUR BRANCH / Borrower(s)/Co-Applicant(s)/ Guarantor(s): 1) Mr. Kalina Raula, S/o- Braja Raula, 2) Mrs. Labanya Raula, Both are at Address: Shanti Nagar, New Police Line, Chatrapur, Chatrapur, Dist.: Ganjam, Odisha, PIN-761010.	Equitable mortgage: All those pieces and parcels of Land & Building house situate being and lying at Plot No.: 591/2057, area admeasuring Extent: Ac.0.012 dec. & Plot No.: 592/2038, area admeasuring Extent: Ac.0.008dec. Total admeasuring Area Extent: Ac.0.020dec., Khata No.: 93/589, Tahasil: Chatrapur, Berhampur, Dist.: Ganjam, Odisha, PIN-760002.	₹ 29,37,112.79 as on 07.12.2023 + interest & other charges thereon	07.12.2023 / 05.04.2024
BERHAMPUR BRANCH / Borrower(s)/Co-Applicant(s)/ Guarantor(s): 1) Mr. Kalina Raula, S/o- Braja Raula, 2) Mrs. Labanya Raula, Both are at Address: Shanti Nagar, New Police Line, Chatrapur, Chatrapur, Dist.: Ganjam, Odisha, PIN-761010.	Equitable Mortgage: All those pieces and parcels of Land & Building house situate being and lying at Plot No.: 591/2057, area admeasuring Extent: Ac.0.012 dec. & Plot No.: 592/2038, area admeasuring Extent: Ac.0.008dec. Total admeasuring Area Extent: Ac.0.020dec., Khata No.: 93/589, Tahasil: Chatrapur, Berhampur, Dist.: Ganjam, Odisha, PIN-760002.	₹ 24,35,072.28 as on 11.12.2023 + interest & other charges thereon	11.12.2023 / 05.04.2024

Mouza: Lingarajpur, Dist.: Ganjam, State: Odisha, PIN-761020. Bounded by: East: Road, West: Site of P. Narasinga Rao, North: Site of E. Alvaris, South: Site of Kuni Sahu. (Symbolic Possession)
Date: 05.04.2024
Place: Bhubaneswar
Authorized Officer, Bank of Maharashtra

Bank of India DEMAND NOTICE
BARIKUDA BRANCH
Lal Bazar, Baripada, Dist: Mayurbhanj, PIN-757001

Notice under Section 13 (2) of SARFAESI Act, 2002 for Enforcement of Security Interest
The Bank has granted following various credit facilities to the under mentioned Borrower & the amount outstanding dues mentioned below has not been paid in time. Therefore Demand notices under Sec. 13 (2) of Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 was issued by the Authorized Officer against the following Borrower of the Bank of India, Baripada Branch but the same could not be served on the below mentioned parties which was sent by Regd. Post A.D. Therefore, the contents of the same including the amount outstanding, Loan amount and details of the secured assets are herein furnished below.

Name and Address of Borrower/ Guarantor/Mortgagor	Nature / Limit	Date of NPA/ Date of Demand Notice	Amount as per Notice under SARFAESI Act	Details of the mortgaged property
Borrower : Mr. Subham Mohapatra / Guarantor: Mrs. Sabita Mohapatra, At: Tulasicourra, Ward No.: 14, Baripada, Mayurbhanj	Loan Against Property / ₹ 7,00,000/-	29.03.2024 / 04.04.2024	₹10,98,770.25 + Interest & expenses thereon	Mortgage of Landed property situated at Mouza: Baripada Town Unit No.: 14 (Sungadisaahi), Khata No.: 332/1165 under Plot No.: 41/956, KISSAM: Gharabari, measuring Area: Ac.0.060 Dec., in the name of Sabita Mohapatra.

As the above mentioned Borrower of the Baripada Branch have defaulted in repayment of the principal loan/ facility in installments/ interest/ both, the account has been classified as NPA, in accordance with the directions and guidelines issued by the RBI. In spite of our repeated demands you (borrower) have not paid any amount towards the amount outstanding in your account, you have not discharged your liabilities. Hence, we are now constrained to make this publication of Demand Notice, required u/s 13(2) of the said Act and Rule 3 of the security interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. You are hereby called upon to pay the aforesaid amount alongwith further interest, cost, incidental Expenses, Charges etc. within a period of 60 days from the date of Notice, failing which we will take necessary action under the provisions of sec 13(4) of the said Act. against all or any one or more of the secured assets including taking possession of your secured assets and sale them. If the dues are not fully recovered in the course of these actions against secured assets, then the Bank reserves the right to take action by filing recovery action against you before DRT/Court for recovery of the same. It may be noted that under the provisions of section 13(8) of the Act, right of redemption is available to you, by paying the dues of the Bank together with all cost, charges and expenses incurred by the Bank, at any time, before the date of publication of notice for public auction or inviting quotations or tender from public or private treaty for transfer by way of lease, assignment or sale of the secured assets. Please take note that as per sub section (13) of the aforesaid Act. after receipt of this notice, you are restrained from transferring or creating any encumbrances on the aforesaid secured assets whether by way of sale, lease, license, gift, mortgage or otherwise. This notice is issued without prejudice to the rights of the Bank available under any other law.

Place : Baripada
Date: 08.04.2024
Authorised Officer
Bank of India

Indian Bank E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE
ZONAL OFFICE: SAMBALPUR
2ND FLOOR, SHYAM ARCADE, KHETRAJAPUR, SAMBALPUR - 768003, e-mail: zosambalpur@indianbank.co.in

Sale of Immovable property/ies mortgaged to Bank under Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (No. 54 of 2002)

Whereas, the Authorised Officer of Indian Bank had taken possession of the following property/ies pursuant to the notice issued under Sec 13(2) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 in the following loan accounts with right to sell the same on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS", "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" and "WITHOUT ANY RECOURSE BASIS" for realization of Bank's dues plus interest as detailed hereunder and whereas consequent upon failure to repay the dues, the undersigned in exercise of power conferred under section 13(4) of the said Act proposes to realize the Bank's dues by sale of the said property/ies. The Sale will be done by the undersigned through e-auction platform provided at the Website <https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/bapi/index.jsp>.

Sl. No.	BRANCH / Name & Address of Borrowers / Guarantors / Mortgagors	Description of the Immovable Properties	Date of Demand Notice / Date of Possession Notice/ Outstanding Dues	Reserve Price / EMD / Bid Increment Amount
1.	SONEPUR BRANCH. Mob No.: 9776109109/ Borrower: Mrs. Sasmita Bhue, W/o: Shiba Bhue, under Khata No.: 290/44, Plot No.: 885, Area: Ac.0.45 Dec., Mouza: Mayurudan, P.O/GP.: Mayurudan, Tahasil: Sonapur, Dist: Sonapur, Bounded by North: Govt Land, South: Harisankar Dani, East: Govt Land, West: Road	All that piece and parcel of Land and Building recorded in the name of Smt.Sasmita Bhue, W/o: Shiba Bhue, under Khata No.: 290/44, Plot No.: 885, Area: Ac.0.45 Dec., Mouza: Mayurudan, P.O/GP.: Mayurudan, Tahasil: Sonapur, Dist: Sonapur, Bounded by North: Govt Land, South: Harisankar Dani, East: Govt Land, West: Road	28.07.2023 / 21.10.2023 / ₹ 23,95,997/- as on 07.04.2024 + further interest, costs, other charges and expenses thereon	₹12,60,000/- / ₹1,26,000/- / ₹10,000/-

DATE AND TIME OF E-AUCTION: 24.04.2024 from 11.00 AM to 5.00 PM with unlimited extension of 10 Minutes duration
LAST DATE AND TIME FOR SUBMISSION OF EMD AND DOCUMENTS ON OR BEFORE 23.04.2024 upto 05.30 PM by online
Date & Time of Inspection of Properties: 15.04.2024 to 23.04.2024 between 11.00 AM to 4.00 PM (with prior appointment from bank) at their own expenses.
TERMS & CONDITIONS: 1) For detailed terms and conditions of the sale please refer to the link: <https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/bapi/index.jsp> and <https://bapi.in>. Prospective bidders may also contact the Authorised Officers / Branch as mentioned in above list. 2) This is a statutory 15 days sale notice to the above mentioned borrowers/guarantors under Rule 9(1) of the SARFAESI Act, 2002. 3) This is a 15 days' notice to the Borrower / Guarantor / Mortgagor of the above said loan about holding of this sale on the above mentioned date. 4) All expenses relating the stamp duty and registration of Sale Certificate/conveyance, if any, shall be borne by the successful bidder. 5) The Authorized Officer will not be held responsible for any charge, lien, encumbrance, property tax or any other dues to the Government or anybody in respect of the property under sale. 6) The Authorized Officer has the absolute right to accept or reject any bid or adjourn/postpone/cancel the sale without assigning any reason thereof. It may be noted that nothing in this notice constitute or deemed to constitute any commitment or representation on the part of the bank to sell the property.
STATUTORY 15 DAYS SALE NOTICE UNDER RULE 9(1) OF THE SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002.
Borrowers/Guarantors/Mortgagors are hereby notified to pay the total dues along with up to date interest and ancillary expenses before the date of E-Auction, failing which the property will be auctioned/ sold and balance dues, if any, will be recovered with interest & cost.
Place: Sambalpur, Date: 08.04.2024
Sd/-Authorized Officer, Indian Bank

FOCUS NATION

A LARGER COLLAPSE



We have GDP growth but government spending remains a significant part of this growth. The private sector, reticent as ever, still has to and is equally happy and willing to negotiate the corridors of power and pay speed money to those who matter

growth story, a self-imposed colonisation of a nation that has lost its standing, never mind the growing GDP.

What AR Antulay as Chief Minister set up in Maharashtra can be described as an early version of the electoral bonds scheme, save that his collections were meant for the poor and not funds to fight elections. Antulay was forced to resign in 1982 when what was then universally regarded as a monumental scandal about "donations" to trusts he controlled came to light. It was the BJP that filed the case against Antulay, who collected Rs 50-odd crore in trust funds, partly in return for cement allocations to builders at a time of shortages. As the scandal hit the national headlines, the BJP was at the forefront raising issues of corruption. LK Advani led efforts to highlight the scandal. Today, the same party has reached a stage where its leadership talks of a pro-rata justification of the collections: we got this much with so many MPs versus the amount that the Opposition got with lesser MPs, as the attempted justification offered by Amit Shah goes.

Yet, the deep damage caused to the nation by electoral bonds is not captured in all of the

above. The bigger twist is that India must come to terms with the realisation that its directional 1991 turn to the era of liberalisation and privatisation has failed.

India's liberalisation was meant to free the private sector from the license-control-Raj, fire up "animal spirits," the term given to us by John Maynard Keynes, and provide the economic escape velocity to enable us float high above the so-called Hindu rate of growth. Pre-reforms, businesses kept liaison offices in New Delhi to ease the process of business-government interaction. In one case from a long time ago, the Chief Executive of Unilever in India was asked to meet the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to help put an end to price control on soap, which had been brought in a desperate bid to control inflation in the light of the "oil shock" of the 1970s. None of this would be required after Dr Manmohan Singh under Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao abolished industrial licensing on 24 July, 1991, and declared: "As a whole, the Indian economy will benefit by becoming more competitive, more efficient and modern and will take its rightful place in the

world of industrial progress."

What has this turn yielded? We have GDP growth but government spending remains a significant part of this growth. The private sector, reticent as ever, still has to and is equally happy and willing to negotiate the corridors of power and pay speed money to those who matter. The ones closest to power have grown the most. Worse, the inefficiencies this builds into the system will not allow the private sector on the one hand to mature and on the other hand to stand up to authority, build governance systems, take bold decisions and the risks that must come with "animal spirits." Why risk it all when there is a side gate to manage the process? With a bent spine, it is entrenched players who will continue to rule and what we have in the name of the private sector (barring some exceptions) is money-making at all costs and with the least risks to the money-makers. This cannot be the dream of an India firing away on all cylinders to solve the burning problems of society. It is therefore no surprise that with liberalisation, we have built wealth and income inequality higher than that obtained during the British Raj, as the World Inequality Lab's working paper titled "Income and Wealth Inequality in India, 1922-2023: The Rise of the Billionaire Raj" by Bharti, Chancel, Piketty and Somanchi notes. It should also be clear that India's private sector has not really matured and remains comfortable only as a handmaiden of the government.

It may therefore not be a stretch to argue that there is not a strong and purposeful private sector worth the name in India. It is no surprise that many Indians still don't trust private enterprises. In India even today, the working system is to pay a price, buy peace and make money-government and those with the means stand together in an anti-people agenda.

The writer is a journalist and faculty member at SPJIMR. Views are personal. @THEBILLIONPRESS



Jagdish Rattanani

THE BIGGER TWIST IS THAT INDIA MUST COME TO TERMS WITH THE REALISATION THAT ITS DIRECTIONAL 1991 TURN TO THE ERA OF LIBERALISATION AND PRIVATISATION HAS FAILED

This much should be now clear and settled to any reasonable person: the scheme of electoral bonds was an extortion racket, even if it is granted that (to be charitable to the designers of this ignominy) that was not the intention with which it was devised. The legalised corruption that the scheme unleashed will be studied and analysed for a long time and will go down as a milestone in the history of scandals, one that leaves nothing to the imagination given the remarkable and audited documentation that it leaves behind. Specifics of the transactions in all their horror, particularly when it comes to a) pharma companies and their donations in the wake of investigations into the quality of drugs, b) assorted investigations that began and stopped after "donations," one of these kinds leading to the process against Arvind Kerjirwal, c) long-pending clearances and other accommodation in favour of business houses against payments and d) a clear path for foreign funds coming in as donations, are just the headline concerns. They point to not only the anti-national character of the scheme but also stand out as an invitation to corruption – an open doors policy that lays out a clear path to tamper with the Indian system.

What can a business leader or a vested interest not do when the price is known, legal cover is guaranteed, secrecy is written into the law and the party of the Prime Minister of India is the recipient of the booty? It legitimises the "rate-card" method of corruption that makes rent seeking an efficient, predictable and quantitative enterprise, only that this one is legalised, works at the highest echelons of power, and gets your job done, whatever that job be. It marks the collapse of India as a modern democratic nation and a firm entry into the territory of a banana republic, with an outer sense of clam barely concealing an inner dealing room where the dirty jobs are done. This is the inner rottenness of India's

SPECTRUM MONETARY POLICY

Why inflation forecasts have been so wrong



Willem H. Buijter & Ebrahim Rahbari

THE GREAT INFLATION WILL BE AS TRANSFORMATIONAL FOR CENTRAL BANKS' MODELS AS THE 2008 FINANCIAL CRISIS WAS

Last year, following the Great Inflation of 2021-22, central banks, leading academics, and international institutions issued a smattering of post-mortems. Yet even before the ink was dry on their analyses, inflation forecasts were being revised down almost as fast as they had been revised up during the two preceding years.

For example, in June 2023, the US Federal Reserve's median projection for core year-on-year personal-consumption-expenditures inflation (excluding food and energy prices) in the fourth quarter was 3.9%, with the Federal Open Market Committee's projections ranging from 3.6% to 4.5%. In the event, it was 3.2%.

Before addressing what forecasters are missing, two clarifications are in order: First, central banks' inflation forecasts are no worse, and may be somewhat better, than private-sector forecasts, on average – which is what one would expect, given that they tend to have better access to data and more expertise. Second, inflation forecasts have not obviously gotten worse. Yes,

the International Monetary Fund, among others, has noted that inflation forecast errors were 2.5 and five times larger for 2021 and 2022, respectively, than the average for 2010-19. But the levels of annual inflation in 2021 and 2022 were 1.3 and 2.5 times larger than the 2010-19 average, and the changes in annual inflation rates were 2.6 and 7.1 times larger.

The benign interpretation is that the shocks got bigger; not that inflation forecasting became less competent. But an obvious rejoinder is that forecasts don't particularly matter when the variable being forecast doesn't change much. We still need to know why forecasts continue to miss the mark.

Two factors are now well-documented. First, forecasts underestimated the demand impact of massive monetary and fiscal easing, alongside high spending multipliers associated with significant pandemic-related transfers to households. Second, major demand stimulus hit just as supply chains were under major, unexpected strain, owing first to the pandemic and then to Russia's invasion of

Ukraine. Shocks are by definition difficult to predict, and they were particularly large in 2020-22.

But the forecasts also had a more fundamental flaw: they lacked realistic representations of price and wage setting. Large shocks differ from small shocks in that they change key features of the transmission mechanism. For example, firms tend to change prices more frequently when faced with large shocks. According to the Fed, during the second half of 2021 and again during the second half of 2022, firms updated prices twice as often as they did before the pandemic.

Large shocks may well have been the reason. But firms also find it more straightforward to raise prices when others are already doing so, and the combined pandemic and energy shocks probably were an effective coordination device for price increases.

The Great Inflation will be as transformational for central banks' models as the 2008 financial crisis was. Back then, the models were adapted to include a more realistic mapping of financial impacts. Now, we need a

more realistic treatment of price and wage setting. Specifically, three changes are in order.

Most importantly, understanding inflation requires analysis at the sectoral or sub-sectoral level, ideally in a way that also reflects supply-chain linkages. This will make forecasts even more complex, but there is no way around it.

Second, forecasts should account for the level (or size) of shocks to capture non-linearities, especially for profit mark-ups. And lastly, forecasts should regularly re-examine changes in circumstances and assumptions.

Fed Chair Jerome Powell, paraphrasing Winston Churchill, recently called forecasters "a humble lot – with much to be humble about." Though they will have learned many useful lessons from the Great Inflation of 2021-22, remaining humble may be the best way to avoid being humbled again.

Willem H. Buijter is an independent economic adviser; Ebrahim Rahbari is an independent strategist and economist. @PROJECTSYNDICATE

The highest aim of the aesthetic being is to find the Divine through beauty; the highest Art is that which by an inspired use of significant and interpretative form unseals the door of the spirit.



SRI AUROBINDO

Vanishing Tongues

Most disturbing report has been made public through the collaborative efforts of Australian and British institutions that between 50 per cent and 90 per cent of the world's nearly 7,000 languages will disappear by 2150. Already, half of the people of the world now speak just 24 of these languages. Languages, it has been noticed, are steadily becoming extinct since 1700. Nine languages are reported to be disappearing every year. This has caused so much concern worldwide that the United Nations has declared the current decade as International Decade of Indigenous Languages. In this backdrop, some good news has come. It has been recently discovered that a small ageing population of a few thousand people near Turkey's Black Sea coast still speak the old Greek language that Greeks in the Homeric age used. This language is called Romeyka which is different from modern Greek. Linguists are calling it a "living bridge" to the ancient Hellenic world. They claim if this language vanishes from the earth, it would be a great blow to human civilisation. However, the stark reality is some languages are in even bigger trouble, with 350 that have fewer than 50 native speakers and 46 that have just one.

In such a bleak scenario, a sort of easy-to-use recording technology is being employed to save Romeyka language. The plan is to find out if there are pockets of Romeyka speakers in other parts of the world.

One of the reasons for the disappearance of languages is colonialism and political persecution, which disperse populations and suppress them. The paradox is that big cities that have grown as a result of colonialism have helped the survival of even the smallest of languages. The Endangered Language Alliance (ELA) has tracked down and mapped hundreds of languages in New York. Among its more startling findings is that of 700 surviving speakers of the language called Seke, which originated in a cluster of mountain villages in Nepal, more than 150 can be traced to two apartment buildings in Brooklyn.

It is laudable indeed to record and archive endangered languages even though, among linguists, a debate is raging whether they deserve to be preserved at all costs. According to one school of opinion, losing any language is "like dropping a bomb on the Louvre." On the other hand, a Cambridge professor working on the Romeyka project, says it is entirely up to the speakers of a language to decide whether to pass on their tongue to future generations.

Language is a universal and democratic fact cutting across all human societies. No human group is without it, and no language is superior to any other. More than race or religion, language is a window on to the deepest levels of human diversity. Some languages may specialise in talking about melancholy, seaweed or atomic structure. Other languages represent thousands of ways of seeing, understanding and living that should form part of any meaningful account of what it is to be human.

Users of Sanskrit, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, Persian, Mandarin, English and the like have often proclaimed their languages holier, more perfect or more adaptive than the unwritten, unstandardised dialects. But from a linguistic point of view, no language as used by a native speaker is in any way inferior. The vast majority have always been oral.

Perceptions of linguistic superiority or inferiority are not based on anything real about the languages themselves, but on the power, class or status of the speakers. India is no stranger to this phenomenon. While there are attempts to promote Hindi as the country's main lingua franca, virulent protests are often made from South India, against what is clearly imposition of Hindi.

At a time when catastrophic environmental changes are engulfing the planet, it is heartening that a project has been undertaken for recording the wisdom of linguistic communities that might be vanishingly small on their own, but which together speak more than half of the world's surviving languages. From the Arctic to Australia's Indigenous peoples, the ways in which people express themselves reveal ancient ways of living in nature. Concerted efforts need to be made by governments if the vanishing languages are to survive.

WISDOM CORNER

Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less.

MARIE CURIE

Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul - and sings the tunes without the words - and never stops at all.

EMILY DICKINSON

One of my favorite philosophical tenets is that people will agree with you only if they already agree with you. You do not change people's minds.

FRANK ZAPPA

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1388: The Battle of Nâfels culminated in a major victory for the Swiss Confederation in the first century of its struggle for self-determination against Habsburg overlordship.

1939: African American contralto Marian Anderson sang to an Easter Sunday crowd of 75,000 at the Lincoln Memorial after the Daughters of the American Revolution refused to allow her to sing at Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C.

1940: Germany invades Denmark and Norway. The rationale of Operation Weserübung was to secure access to Swedish iron ore. In Norway, a resistance group around Max Manus and Gunnar Sonstebj successfully sabotaged the German war effort.

1952: The Bolivian National Revolution overthrows Hugo Ballivián's government. The nationalist movement initiated radical reforms, including universal suffrage, the nationalization of tin mines, and the inclusion of previously marginalized ethnicities into national life.

2003: Baghdad fell to U.S.-led forces on this day in 2003, several weeks after the start of the Iraq War; a conflict begun to oust Iraqi President Saddam Hussein because of his supposed possession of weapons of mass destruction.

LOL
Boss in the house



A retiring farmer in preparation for selling his land, needed to rid his farm of animals. So he went to every house in his town. To the houses where the man is the boss, he gave a horse. To the houses where the woman is the boss, a chicken was given. He got toward the end of the street and saw a couple outside gardening. "Who's the boss around here?" he

asked. "I am," said the man. "I have a black horse and a brown horse," the farmer said, "which one would you like?" The man thought for a minute and said, "The black one." "No, no, no, get the brown one," the man's wife said. "Here's your chicken," said the farmer.

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST
B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Tribal rights

Sir, In the vibrant tapestry of India's cultural heritage, there exists a poignant chapter that often goes unnoticed – the plight of vulnerable tribal groups. These marginalised communities, scattered across remote and inaccessible regions of the country, endure a lot of challenges that threaten their lives. Their struggle for recognition, rights and a dignified livelihood demands our attention and collective action. Tribals in India are an integral part of the nation. They consist of around 8 per cent of the total population of the country. Tribals do face a number of challenges like exploitation of their natural resources, forced displacement and higher rates of diseases, etc. Despite well over seven decades since India's Independence, this marginalised community is subjected to severe brutalities coupled with economic quandary. However, by implementing various welfare measures towards empowering this community and promoting a comprehensive approach to tribal welfare, India can work towards protecting the rights and preserving the rich cultural heritage of its tribal communities. **Ranganathan Sivakumar**, CHENNAI

Pensioners' plight

Sir, I draw your kind attention, across the country there are lakhs of EPS-95 (EPF) pensioners and are living with inadequate monthly pension after their retirement and are facing hardships in their advanced age. They had contributed to nation building in their productive ages. The Prime Minister may consider the enhancement of the monthly pension of EPS pensioners. It is very hard to survive when the prices of all essential commodities are increasing these days. EPS-95 pensioners are suffering and living with a low amount of pension – Rs 1,000 per month. Their simple demand is rupees Rs 7500 plus Dearness Allowance. The upcoming new government must take care of the millions of EPS-95 pensioners, and may consider for the enhancement of their monthly pension. **Venkatadri Suresh**, CHENNAI

United fight

Sir, This refers to "AAP leaders' day-long fast protesting Kejriwal arrest" (**OrissaPOST**, April 8). This degree of protest against the arrest of Kejriwal suggests that the people no longer tolerate the tyranny of the Modi government. This united fight against the onslaught on democracy will make the ruling party realise that time has come near to topple the government. **Arun Gupta**, KOLKATA

CPI-M, Cong spar over CAA in Kerala

The issue continues to take centre stage in the election campaign of the state's two traditional political rivals - who are part of the INDIA bloc at the national level but fierce competitors in the state

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, April 8: Weeks before the single-phase polling to Kerala's 20 Lok Sabha seats, the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) continues to take centre stage in the election campaign of the state's two traditional political rivals - who are part of the INDIA bloc at the national level but fierce competitors in the state.

A reason why the CAA is now one of the most discussed and debated poll issues between the ruling CPI-M-led Left Democratic Front and the Congress-led United Democratic Front is the state has nearly 24 per cent Muslims in its over 3.30 crore population.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan took up the issue right after the CAA was passed by the Parliament in 2019, asserting that it would not be implemented in Kerala. On the last day of 2019, his government, with the support of the Congress-led Opposition, got a resolution demanding the scrapping of the provision passed nearly unanimously by the Assembly, with the lone BJP legislator O. Rajagopal being the only one opposing it.

Since then, the issue was lying dormant but regained focus with the announcement of the Lok Sabha polls, and Vijayan again used it to attack the Congress.



The Chief Minister has been consistently slamming the Congress' national leadership in general and Rahul Gandhi, who is an MP from the state, in particular over their 'silence' on the CAA.

But when he claimed that the issue was also missing in Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, the state leadership of the Congress, including the Leader of Opposition VD Satheshan and veteran legislator Ramesh Chennithala, hit back at him, alleging that he was shedding crocodile tears and pleasing the BJP leadership by attacking Rahul Gandhi.

However, Vijayan is refusing to abandon the issue, noting in the election campaign that right from 2019 when this issue first surfaced, the Left, inside and outside the Parliament, had strongly come out against it but the Congress 'played hide and seek', showing some inclination for a joint protest, but backing out later.

His tirades intensified when the Congress manifesto came out and he pointed out that while his CPI-M's manifesto is clear that the CAA will be repealed, the Congress is still 'silent' on it.

"Just look at the Congress manifesto, there is total silence

on what they will do if they come to power with regards to the CAA. Is it not clear that they are hand in glove with the BJP with regards to the CAA," he claimed.

But the Congress is hitting back at Vijayan, with acting state Congress President MM Hassan accusing the Chief Minister of attacking Rahul Gandhi and the Congress to keep Prime Minister Narendra Modi 'happy' as he has grave cases against him and his family.

Hassan also said that Vijayan is 'engaged in spreading lies' against Rahul Gandhi, but the truth is that the Congress leader has 18 cases in various states because he protested and spoke against the CAA.

The BJP, starting from PM Modi to the grassroots party workers, is also seeking to capitalise on the issue, accusing the two fronts of hypocrisy by being part of the INDIA bloc but fighting in Kerala.

State BJP President K Surendran contended that times have changed and the people of Kerala have now understood that the CPI-M and Congress are two sides of the same coin and both these parties have just one agenda of garnering the Muslim votes and will go to any extent for this.

"They hug in Delhi and they fight in Kerala. This tactic will not work anymore," he said.

SC hears Karnataka's plea for drought funds release

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 8: Let there not be a 'contest' between the Union and the state, the Supreme Court said Monday while hearing the Karnataka government's plea seeking a direction to the Centre to release financial assistance from the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) to the state for drought management.

A bench of Justices BR Gavi and Sandeep Mehta was told by Attorney General R Venkataramani and Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, who were appearing for the Centre, that they would seek instructions in the matter.

The apex court, which observed that various state governments were required to approach the court, initially asked the Centre to file a response to Karnataka's plea.

Urging the court to take up the matter after two weeks, the solicitor general said they would take instructions in the matter. "Let there not be a contest between the Union and the state," the bench said.

Mehta said instead of filing a petition in the top court, if somebody would have spoken to the authorities on the issue, the problem could have been resolved.

"We have seen various state governments are required to approach the court," the bench observed.



THE PETITION SAID THE STATE IS REELING UNDER 'SEVERE DROUGHT', AFFECTING THE LIVES OF ITS PEOPLE AND FOR THE KHARIF 2023 SEASON, WHICH STARTS IN JUNE AND ENDS IN SEPTEMBER, A TOTAL OF 223 OUT OF 236 TALUKS ARE DECLARED AS DROUGHT-AFFECTED

Mehta said, "I don't wish to say why, but this is a growing tendency..."

When the bench orally said it would issue notice to the Centre, the solicitor general said, "Your lordships may not issue notice. It also becomes news. We are here."

The bench noted that the top law officers, who were appearing on advance notice, have stated that they would seek instruction and make a statement before the court on the next date.

It posted the matter for hearing after two weeks.

The petition has also sought to declare that the Centre's action in not releasing the financial assistance for drought arrangement as per the NDRF is 'ex-facie violative' of the funda-

mental rights of the people of the state guaranteed under Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution.

It said the state is reeling under 'severe drought,' affecting the lives of its people and for the kharif 2023 season, which starts in June and ends in September, a total of 223 out of 236 taluks are declared as drought-affected.

The plea said 196 taluks are categorised as severely affected and the remaining 27 as moderately affected.

"Cumulatively for kharif 2023 season, the agriculture and horticulture crop loss have been reported in more than 48 lakh hectares with the estimated loss (cost of cultivation) of Rs 35,162 crore," the plea, filed through advocate DL Chidananda, said.

It said the assistance sought from Government of India under the NDRF is Rs 18,171.44 crore.

"In terms of the Disaster Management Act, 2005, Union of India is under obligation to render financial assistance to the state governments," the plea, settled by senior advocate Devdatt Kamat and state's Advocate General K Shashi Kiran Shetty, said.

It said the state is constrained to move the apex court against the 'arbitrary actions' of the Centre in denying the financial assistance for drought management to Karnataka under the Disaster Management Act, 2005 and the manual for drought management updated in 2020.

Prominent Lingayat seer to contest against Pralhad Joshi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, April 8: A prominent Lingayat seer Monday announced his decision to contest as an independent candidate against Union Minister Pralhad Joshi in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls, accusing the BJP leader of misusing the Lingayat mutts and causing disrespect to them to stay in power.

Fakira Dingaleshwar Swami of Shirahatti Fakkireswar mutt said he has decided to fight the election as an independent from Dharwad Lok Sabha segment against Joshi. The seer also accused Congress of neglecting Lingayats after coming to power, and not giving suitable positions to leaders of calibre from the community.

Responding to the Swami's decision, Joshi said: "There is no reaction to Dingaleshwar Swami... Whatever he says, it is blessings for me."

Repeatedly targeting Joshi, the seer accused him of 'suppressing' Veerashaiva-Lingayat and other communities, and also misusing the Lingayat mutts and causing disrespect to them to stay in power.

"I am announcing my candidature as an independent from the Dharwad Lok Sabha constituency. As you are aware, the national parties have announced their candidates and people in the Dharwad constituency and nearby segments feel that both parties have entered into election fixing like match fixing," Dingaleshwar Swami alleged.

Speaking to reporters here, he accused both national parties of having betrayed the people of the Dharwad constituency.

"While the two parties have fielded their candidates, voters of Dharwad have decided to field me as their candidate. This is a 'Dharma Yuddha' declared by those who value their dignity and 'Kaavidhaaris', against two national parties and selfish politicians," the swami said, adding, he is entering politics to create political awareness among people.



Coastal Karnataka on alert over movement of Maoists



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bangalore, April 8: The Anti-Naxal Force (ANF) and police were on high alert following the tracking of Maoist movements in the villages of coastal Karnataka, sources stated Monday.

Sources said that it was confirmed in the investigation that a team of six Maoists with weapons had visited a local's house between Thursday and Sunday. Preliminary probe has confirmed that the Maoists were in boots, clad in uniforms and had big bags in which weapons were suspected.

The authorities said that the Maoists barged into the house near Cheru in Bilinele village in Kadaba taluk in Dakshina Kannada district recently. After barging into the house they switched off the light and asked the members to switch off their

cell phones as well.

They asked the family to increase the volume of the television. During this time, some of the members of the Maoist team were keeping a watch on the front and back of the house. The Maoists had asked the family to cook rice and chicken curry.

They watched a TV soap opera while having dinner. They also charged their mobile phones, laptops and other equipment. The Maoists spoke in Kannada, Hindi and other languages. They then vanished into the jungle after having dinner and recharging their gadgets, the sources stated.

After gathering news about the development, the ANF launched a search operation in the region and also in the forests of Dakshina Kannada, Udipi and Chikkamagaluru districts.

The sources said that the trend of movement of the Maoists is being reported after 10 to 12 years in Karnataka. The police have also increased the patrolling and vigilance in the area. The movement of armed Maoists was reported in different parts of the neighbouring Udipi district recently.



FOR A CAUSE: Officers and workers take part in a bullock cart rally organised by the district administration to create awareness about voting ahead of Lok Sabha elections, in Chikkamagaluru district, Monday

Christian diocese screens 'The Kerala Story' for teens

DESPITE A STRONG PROTEST RAISED BY THE RULING CPI(M) AND CONGRESS IN KERALA, DOORDARSHAN LAST WEEK AIRED THE CONTROVERSIAL MOVIE

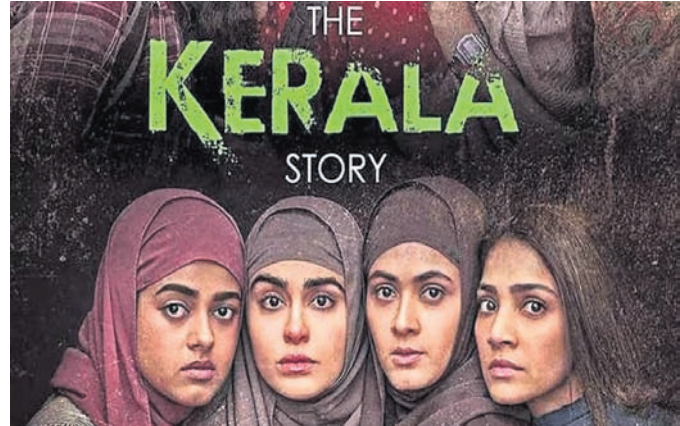
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, April 8: Amidst a raging row over national broadcaster Doordarshan airing the controversial movie 'The Kerala Story', a Catholic diocese in Kerala has screened the film for teenagers as part of an 'intensive training programme'.

The Idukki Diocese, under the prominent Syro Malabar Catholic Church, screened the movie last week for its children studying in Classes 10, 11, and 12, and asked them to discuss the film and write a review about it.

Directed by Sudipto Sen, the film is about a group of women from Kerala who were forced to convert to Islam and join ISIS. As news of the screening of the controversial movie hit headlines, the Diocese Monday came out with an explanation, claiming that the movie was shown to 'create awareness about love relationships and its consequences and dangers.'

Fr Jins Karakkat, the media in-charge of the Diocese, said



they conduct an intensive training programme for children every year during vacation. Specific topics are selected for the programme and books prepared for it, he said.

"This year, the programme was held April 2, 3 and 4. The theme of the textbooks prepared for the children of Classes 10, 11, and 12 was love relationships," the priest said.

The objective of selecting the topic was to create awareness

about falling in love and their consequences, he said.

"Nowadays, there are circumstances in which teenagers are largely falling in love and facing dangers. So, we intended to create awareness among our children about such dangers," he explained. To bring the idea to the children more effectively, the movie 'The Kerala Story' was shown, Fr Karakkat further said.

The children, who participated in the intensive training

programme, were also asked to discuss the film in their WhatsApp group and compile reviews, he said.

When quizzed about the controversy surrounding the film, the priest said he had no idea about it and only knew that it was released on an OTT platform.

Despite a strong protest raised by the ruling CPI(M) and Congress in Kerala, Doordarshan last week aired the controversial movie.

Cutting across politics, leaders of various political parties in Kerala including Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and Leader of the Opposition VD Satheshan strongly criticised the screening of the movie by the public broadcaster.

Vijayan had condemned Doordarshan's decision and asked it to withdraw the decision, saying it would only 'exacerbate communal tensions' ahead of the Lok Sabha polls.

Vijayan had also asked the national broadcaster not to become a 'propaganda machine' for the BJP and the RSS.

Media freedom has disappeared under BJP rule, says CM Vijayan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pathanamthitta, April 8: Media freedom has disappeared under the BJP rule, with the Sangh Parivar relentlessly targeting those outlets that do not sing praises for the regime, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan alleged Monday.

He was reacting to news reports that the BBC's Indian newsroom has ceased operations.

The UK-based BBC had recently restructured its operations in India to comply with the country's foreign investment rules.

Addressing the media here, Vijayan said reports claimed that BBC was compelled to take this decision due to persistent vindictive actions by the Income Tax Department.

"Media freedom has disappeared under the BJP rule, with the Sangh Parivar relentlessly targeting media outlets that do not sing praises for the regime. The BBC's ordeal serves as a stark reminder that this election is an opportunity to address and resolve such issues," Vijayan said.

He further said authoritarian regimes always try to control the media and the reminiscent



symptoms of India's Emergency era are resurfacing under BJP rule.

"Their agenda leans towards a compliant media, which is ready to comply without question. Generally, such regimes resort to suppression if the media fails to comply with their demands and threats as seen in the BBC incident," Vijayan claimed.

He said since the BJP government came to power in 2014, India's ranking in the World Press Freedom Index has steadily declined.

"According to a 2023 report by the Paris-based Reporters Without Borders, India's press freedom ranking dropped from 150 to 161 out of 180 countries," the senior Left leader said.

He said the nation witnesses the relentless targeting of journalists who dare to report against the Sangh Parivar.



Berhampur Lok Sabha seat: Prestige battle for BJD, BJP

BJP's Pradeep Kumar Panigrahy, once a top BJD leader in Ganjam, will face Bhruhu Baxipatra, who quit the BJP and joined the ruling party in state



Pradeep Kumar Panigrahy



Bhruhu Baxipatra

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, April 8: Battle lines are drawn for the Lok Sabha elections in Odisha with the ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) and Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) announcing candidates for almost all the constituencies. While the BJP has fielded its candidates on all the 21 parliamentary seats in the state, the BJD has so far released the names of 20 nominees for the Lok Sabha elections.

Ganjam district's Berhampur Lok Sabha seat is among the high-profile constituencies in the state which will remain in the focus during the upcoming elections. It is the home turf of Chief Minister and BJD supremo Naveen Patnaik.

The BJD is leaving no stone unturned to retain the seat while an exuberant BJP is putting all the efforts to wrest it from the ruling party.

It is a battle of prestige for both the parties in Berhampur keeping in view the rivalry between BJP candidate Pradeep Kumar Panigrahy, once a top BJD leader in Ganjam, and the ruling party leadership.

Berhampur Lok Sabha constituency includes Chhatrapur, Gopalpur, Berhamapur, Digapahandi and Chikiti Assembly segments in Ganjam district and Mohana and Paralakhemundi Assembly segments in Gajapati district.

The number of voters in this constituency stands at around

15.67 lakh as per the latest estimate.

Both BJP and BJD have posed their faith in party hoppers for the Berhampur constituency. The BJD has nominated former BJD heavyweight and sitting Gopalpur MLA Pradeep Kumar Panigrahy, while the ruling BJD fielded BJP rebel Bhruhu Baxipatra for the seat.

Baxipatra was nominated just a few hours after he walked out of the BJP.

Baxipatra had fought the Lok Sabha elections in 2019 from the same seat on a BJP ticket but lost to BJD's Chandra Sekhar Sahu who won by a margin of 94,844 votes. Sahu had secured 4,43,843 (44.83 per cent) votes out of the total 9,90,087 votes polled.

Once a trusted lieutenant of the BJD supremo, Panigrahy turned a foe after he was expelled from the party over the charges of anti-people activities. He had won from Gopalpur Assembly seat on a BJD ticket in 2019.

Political analysts predict a neck-to-neck fight in Berhampur this time as Panigrahy and Baxipatra will strive hard to capture the seat.

"It is hard to predict the winner this time as the political sce-

nario in the constituency has changed. Panigrahy used to oversee all the party-related affairs of BJD in Ganjam district and his strong support base in the district is still intact despite the allegations of corruption. Panigrahy's hold may give some advantage to the BJP apart from the party's craze among the electors this time, especially among younger voters, said Rajiblochan Mishra, a Berhampur-based senior journalist.

Similarly, Baxipatra has been visiting various Assembly segments under the constituency and has also managed to create a good support base during the past couple of years, he added.

It will also be interesting to see how Panigrahy manages to gain a foothold in Paralakhemundi and Mohana segments in Gajapati district where Baxipatra, as a BJP candidate, had secured more votes than his BJD opponent in 2019, Mishra said.

"The current BJD representative of the constituency has failed to address various concerns of the locals, including infrastructural transformation, unemployment, inadequate health services as well as other economic and cultural issues.

We will fight on these issues... There are several long-held demands of people in Berhampur, such as the establishment of an airport in Ganjam and complete upgradation of Gopalpur Port, which are yet to be fulfilled," Panigrahy told IANS.

Similarly, BJD candidate Baxipatra exuded confidence in smooth sailing for the party in the upcoming election. Our main strength is the development-related work carried out by the BJD in the last 25 years and the clean image of Naveen Patnaik. Ganjam is his home district and the people in the district consider Naveen Patnaik as their own political party, he said.

Since losing the last elections in 2019, I have been working for the constituency and standing by the people beyond the party line during their ups and downs in all seven Assembly segments. I am confident that BJD will once again win this Lok Sabha seat due to my continuous hard work and people's love for Naveen Patnaik and the BJD, Baxipatra told IANS.

A beleaguered Congress, which is fighting a battle within to thwart the exodus of its leaders, has fallen behind in the race as it has so far declared candidates on only nine Lok Sabha constituencies in the state.

The Congress has named Rashmi Ranjan Patnaik as the party candidate for the Berhampur Lok Sabha constituency. He will try his luck for the first time in electoral politics.

According to experts, very few voters, only in some specific pockets of the urban areas of the constituency, know Ranjan Patnaik and thus his participation would not change the election calculations much in the constituency. However, he may gain some votes in tribal-dominated Mohana and Paralakhemundi Assembly segments in Gajapati district.



HITTING CAMPAIGN TRAIL: BJD's Barabati-Cuttack Assembly candidate Prakash Behera, along with party supporters and leaders, takes out a rally from Sarala Bhawan to Cuttack Chandi Temple, Monday

INDIA bloc bid to show solidarity



POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, April 8: The INDIA bloc tried to put up a show of solidarity here Monday when leaders of CPM and Congress, the two main constituents of the forum, raised their hands in unison during a press meet. However, representatives from JMM and CPI and other Left organisations were conspicuous by their absence.

Speaking about the alliance and its purpose, Bishnu Mohanty, national vice president and convenor of the press meet, brought a list of allegations against the NDA. However, he and the leaders present at the meet sought to

dodge questions over the absence of the CPI representative at the presser.

Bonai MLA Laxman Munda, when asked about the CPI's absence, said, "They will show up in the coming days." He was also not comfortable in answering questions over the probability of a CPI rebel candidate contesting from Sundargarh Assembly segment. Munda had lost to Bhimsen Choudhury in 2009. This time, both are pitted against each other once again. "I am going to win, he (Choudhury) has no relevance for the Bonai people," claimed Munda.

Similarly, Congress candidate from Raghunathpalli, Gopal Das

when asked about his alliance with George Tirkey in trade union politics, said, "He will support me". Gopal Das is the secretary of the Gangpur workers union which has been floated by George. This time, George's aide Rohit Joseph Tirkey is the BJD candidate from Biramitrapur Assembly constituency.

Rajan Ekka, sitting Congress MLA of Rajgangpur, said, "I am with the people and I was very active during Covid times. Prime Minister Narendra Modi talks big about bringing an end to corruption. However, this time his party has given ticket to a sarpanch who had been ousted over corruption charges."

Moreover, Ekka raised the issue of the 'alleged mysterious death' of Sushmita Minz, an OFS officer, whose demise had created a big embarrassment for the administration and government. Ekka said, "The case was covered up very cleverly. This is how they will ensure safety for women."

Besides, all those present in the presser unanimously spoke about the issue of giving employment to locals in the industrial units in the area.



PARTY HOPPING: BJD's former Keonjhar Sadar MLA Subarna Naik, his wife and former Jhumpura block chairperson Pratibha Manjari Naik joined Congress at a merger meeting held in Bhubaneswar in the presence of former PCC presidents Niranjana Patnaik and Jaydev Jena, and other party leaders, Monday

BJP pick vows to end Talsara irrigation woes

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, April 8: Bhabanishankar Bhoi, the BJP candidate from Talsara constituency and also the sitting MLA is pretty confident about his victory. Known as a soft spoken, non-controversial and down-to-earth person across his constituency, his image remains the same even for those belonging to the opposition camp.

"I have never seen him losing his temper and he is approachable at any point of time," said a person carrying a BJD flag and he did not hesitate to say so about Bhoi.

For his party workers, he is the friendliest person who doesn't like bad mouthing about anyone even if he is from the opposition camp or otherwise.

"What will I achieve if I say something bad about the opposition leader? I will not be benefiting by any means rather it will hurt him when he will listen to that," said Bhoi.

Much before the ticket was declared, Bhoi had hit campaigning trail and after his name was officially announced he started campaigning in full swing. He is actively engaged in meetings, door-to-door campaigning and street corner meetings to reach out to the voters of the constituency. "I have already covered the entire constituency at least once," he said.

When asked about his major poll plank, Bhoi said, "Modiji's guarantee. This guarantee is all about benefiting the poor and those belonging to the lower strata of the society."



Asked about his target for Talsara constituency, he said, "I have ensured that NRHM projects reached the beneficiaries. Besides, free medicine has been made available to the needy pa-

tients without any issues."

About his personal achievement, the BJP candidate said, "I have ensured development of communication in my constituency. With the help of DMF we have constructed five bridges enhancing connectivity along with the successful execution of PMGSY project."

Bhoi said that development of irrigation would be his focus area, if he gets elected.

"Irrigation projects will be my first priority. I will fight for irrigation projects on River Ib as this will solve all irrigation related issues. Other thrust areas will be to work sincerely for two barrages on River Safei near Teljore and Ghogor. The barrages will not only solve the irrigation issues but also water scarcity during summer."

Stars lose sheen as campaigners in Lok Sabha elections

IF VARIOUS POLITICAL PARTIES ARE TO BE BELIEVED, THE STARDUST IS LOSING ITS GLITTER AND FILM STARS CAN NO LONGER GUARANTEE A WIN ON THE SEATS THEY CAMPAIGN FOR

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, April 8: Till the turn of the Millennium; film stars guaranteed crowds and votes in politics.

Political parties across the country wooed them ardently and top stars of the time, including Rajesh Khanna, Vinod Khanna, Shatrughan Sinha, Dharmendra, Hema Malini, Jaya Prada, Govinda, Raj Babbar and Jaya Bachchan braved the heat and dust to campaign for their political parties. Some of the stars contested the elec-

tions and managed an easy win. Amitabh Bachchan contested his first election in 1984 from Allahabad and defeated a doyen like Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna.

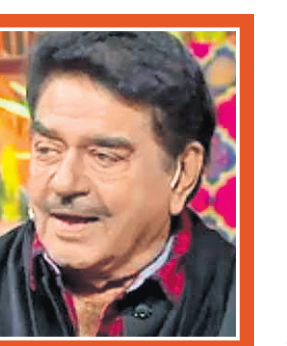
Amitabh Bachchan quit politics midway after the Bofors controversy, but he returned to Uttar Pradesh briefly in 2007 to campaign for Samajwadi Party.

The superstar held a number of programmes with his friend Amar Singh in which he coined the slogan "UP mein hai dum, kyonki jurm yahan hai kam."

Some like Dharmendra and Govinda could not understand the complexities of politics and called it a day after one term. However, an actor from the same era as Dharmendra, Vinod Khanna was a four-time MP who was very dedicated to his constituency Gurdaspur and remained in politics till his demise in 2017.

Others like Raj Babbar, Shatrughan Sinha, Hema Malini and Jaya Bachchan continue to stand their ground till date.

Jaya Bachchan has been sent to Rajya Sabha five times by the



Samajwadi Party and she campaigns for the party in every election. She has never contested Lok Sabha elections in Uttar Pradesh.

Actor Govinda recently joined the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena in Maharashtra, marking his re-entry into politics after a 14-year hiatus. His last stint in politics, which ended on a sour note in 2009, coincided with his films flopping. Now he hopes to kick start his political career again at the age of 60.

However, if various political parties are to be believed, the stardust is losing its glitter and film stars can no

longer guarantee a win on the seats they campaign for. A clear indication of this is the fact that the demand for actors as campaigners is almost missing in these elections.

A BJP candidate said, "There is no use getting film stars to campaign because they cannot give speeches and do not leave any impact on voters. Moreover, our biggest crowd puller and star is Prime Minister Narendra Modi."

According to senior journalist RK Singh, "The stars are losing their credibility because they lack conviction in what they say. People know

that in most cases stars take money to campaign and this erodes their sincerity. Some stars have changed more parties than they have delivered hits."

Besides, he explained, the glamour factor has also reduced because film stars are now seen 24x7 on social media and television, leading to over-exposure and fan fatigue.

"Earlier, people would wait for hours to catch a glimpse of their favourite actor but not anymore. You just need to get on to the internet and you can have your fill," he added.

Significantly, just like all the other candidates in the fray, Bhojpur stars

Ravi Kishan and Dinesh Yadav Nirahua, who are contesting the Gorakhpur and Azamgarh seats respectively for their second term, are toiling hard in their constituencies to ensure their win.

Raj Babbar explains that it needs more than just stardom to survive in politics.

"Much before I started working in theatre and then films, I was associated with socialist youth politics. I joined the Janata Dal in 1989 and actively participated in party activities. I later joined the Samajwadi Party and then the Congress. I never confined myself to campaigning and that is one reason why the parties and the people started taking me seriously," he says.

In these elections, Hema Malini has confined herself to campaigning in her own constituency Mathura and so has Arun Govil who is making his political debut from Meerut.

The campaigns of Jaya Prada, Jaya Bachchan and most others have not even been finalised yet. Though the actors are used for campaigning, they are seldom allowed to involve themselves in party matters.

national

of the day quote

I don't think the manifesto is to break the country. I think the manifesto is to make the country strong and to keep it secular

FAROOQ ABDULLAH | NATIONAL CONFERENCE CHIEF

During Modi's tenure as PM, the country's borders have become safer, respect for India has increased in world

YOGI ADITYANATH | UTTAR PRADESH CM

We are spending ₹24,000 crore per year. In the last five years, we have spent over ₹90,000 crore on pensions, which is higher than the other states in the country. If we look at other states on their pension expenditure, Bihar is spending ₹4,300 crore, Uttar Pradesh ₹5,160 crore, Karnataka ₹4,700 crore, and Telangana ₹7,180 crore

YS JAGAN MOHAN REDDY | ANDHRA CM

SHORT TAKES

BJP worker dies in freak accident

Bangalore: A BJP worker riding a motorcycle was run over by a bus after he crashed into the open door of a car belonging to Union Minister of State for Agriculture Shobha Karandlaje and fell down during an election campaign at KR Puram here Monday. The deceased, identified as Prakash died on the spot in the incident that occurred near the Ganesha Temple in the locality. Karandlaje is contesting the Lok Sabha polls from Bangalore North constituency and Prakash was following her convoy during her election campaign. Sources said the minister was inside the car. As soon as the door of her car was opened, Prakash crashed into it and fell down.

Birender Singh quits BJP, to join Congress

Chandigarh: Former Union minister Birender Singh Monday said he has quit the BJP and will join the Congress, the move coming almost a month after his son Brijendra Singh joined the grand old party. His wife Prem Lata Singh -- a former BJP MLA from Haryana -- also quit the party. "I have resigned from the primary membership of the BJP and sent my resignation to party chief JP Nadda. My wife, Prem Lata, who was an MLA from 2014-2019, has also quit the party. Tomorrow (Tuesday), we will join the Congress," Birender Singh (78), a prominent political figure in Haryana, told reporters in Delhi.

BJP lodges plaint with EC against Akhilesh

New Delhi: The BJP Monday urged the Election Commission to take "immediate action" against Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on his statements about the death of mafia-turned-politician Mukhtar Ansari and baseless claims of India's involvement in the killing of some people abroad. A delegation of BJP leaders comprising party national general secretary Arun Singh, Sanjay Mayukh and Om Pathak lodged a complaint with the poll panel against Yadav and accused him of violating the Model Code of Conduct (MCC).

ED questions Amol Kirtikar

Mumbai: Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Amol Kirtikar was Monday questioned for almost eight hours by the Enforcement Directorate in connection with the alleged irregularities in the distribution of kichdi by the Mumbai civic body during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Kejriwal's revolution will come to Assam as well. For the next three days, I will be in Assam and share Kejriwal ji's dream of a developed India and his fight against dictatorship with everyone

ATISHI MARLENA | SENIOR AAP LEADER

AAP'S NEW CAMPAIGN

The Aam Aadmi Party Monday launched a "Jail ka Jawab Vote Se" campaign ahead of the Lok Sabha polls to seek public support for the party and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal who is currently lodged in Tihar jail



TMC leaders protesting outside EC office detained

A 10-member delegation of the Trinamool Congress (TMC) had announced the dharna after meeting a full-bench of the Election Commission (EC)

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 8: TMC leaders were detained by the Delhi Police Monday while they were holding a dharna outside the Election Commission's office, demanding that the chiefs of CBI, NIA, ED and Income Tax Department be changed.

A 10-member delegation of the Trinamool Congress (TMC) had announced the dharna after meeting a full-bench of the Election Commission (EC). The delegation urged the commission to ensure a level-playing field in the Lok Sabha polls and stop the "misuse" of the central agencies against Opposition parties and leaders, TMC Rajya Sabha member Sagarika Ghose, who was among the leaders who met the poll panel, said.

The Mamata Banerjee-led party has been alleging that the central probe agencies -- the Enforcement Directorate (ED), the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), the National Investigation Agency (NIA) and the Income Tax (IT) Department -- have been targeting Opposition parties at the behest of the BJP-led Centre.

"We asked the EC to intervene in the name of parli-



mentary democracy to preserve sanctity of elections. Stop ED, CBI, NIA, I-T Department from acting against Opposition. They're working like the 12th man of the BJP," Ghose said during the dharna as members of her party displayed posters reading "NIA DG, ED, CBI directors change now".

TMC MPs Derek O'Brien, Mohammed Nadimul Haque, Dola Sen, Saket Gokhale and Ghose, MLA Vivek Gupta, former MPs Arpita Ghosh, Santanu Sen and Abir Ranjan Biswas, and party's students' wing West Bengal vice president Sudip Raha were detained. The EC's spokesperson said the commission has no comments to offer on the dharna by the TMC.

They were detained and taken to a police station as section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure -- that prohibits large gatherings -- is imposed in the area and no permission was taken for the protest, a police officer said. "We were picked up forcefully by the police, some of us fell down. Ms Dola Sen has a leg injury, she was pushed around," Ghose said in a video released by the TMC. In another video shared by the party, Gokhale said police has not informed them of where they are being taken.

In a letter to the EC, the TMC alleged that BJP leader Jitendra Tiwari met NIA Superintendent of Police DR Singh March 26 allegedly with a "packet", and left the flat empty handed after around an hour long meeting.

The party has alleged that during this meeting, the BJP leader handed over a list of TMC leaders and workers to be targeted. On Sunday, the TMC alleged Sunday an "unholy alliance" between the NIA and the BJP ahead of elections, prompting the central investigating agency to deny any mala fide intention and label the entire controversy as "unfortunate".

ED questions Kejriwal's PA, AAP MLA Pathak

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 8: The Enforcement Directorate Monday questioned Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's personal assistant Bibhav Kumar and AAP MLA Durgesh Pathak in the excise policy-linked money laundering case, officials said.

Their statement is being recorded under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), they said. Both of them have been questioned in this case earlier too by the ED.

Sources said Kumar's questioning was essential in connection with the engagements of Kejriwal. The 55-year-old CM, also the national convenor of the AAP, was arrested by the ED in this case last month.

The agency had alleged in its earlier charge sheets that at least 36 accused, including former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia and Kumar, "destroyed, used or changed" 170 phones to conceal evidence of "kickbacks" worth thousands of crores of rupees in the alleged scam. The IMEI (International Mobile Equipment Identity) of Bibhav's mobile number is stated to have been changed four times between September 2021 and July 2022, according to the ED charge sheet filed before a local court last year.

Pathak, the 35-year-old AAP MLA from Rajinder Nagar constituency, is understood to have been called by the agency for questioning in connection with the party's 2021-22 poll campaign for the Goa Assembly polls.

Congress moves EC against PM's 'Muslim League imprint' jab

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 8: As Prime Minister Narendra Modi persisted with his 'Muslim League imprint' attack on the Congress manifesto, the Opposition party Monday stepped up its counter-offensive, moving the Election Commission against his remarks while party chief Mallikarjun Kharge said that "there is a stink of RSS" in Modi's speeches.

The Congress alleged that the Prime Minister is resorting to the "cliched Hindu-Muslim script" as he is scared that the BJP may struggle to even cross the 180-seat mark in the Lok Sabha polls.

However, PM Modi again repeated the charge against the Congress at poll rallies in Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra, claiming that the country's oldest party has lost people's support due to its deeds and its recently released manifesto has the imprint of the pro-Partition Muslim League.

"The Congress is out of power for 10 years and we have been able to resolve all problems faced by the country. The Naxal menace has come down drastically. The Congress was soft on terrorism for vote-bank politics. Even its manifesto has the Muslim League imprint," Modi said at a poll rally in Chandrapur in Vidarbha region.

Echoing the Prime Minister's



views, BJP chief JP Nadda also accused the Congress of appeasement in its manifesto and asked the party to explain why it was against the majority community.

Leading the counter charge, Kharge alleged the BJP's "ideological ancestors" supported the British and the Muslim League against Indians in the freedom struggle.

Hitting out at Prime Minister Modi, Kharge in a post on X, said, "Even today, they are invoking the Muslim League against the 'Congress Nyay Patra', guided and shaped according to the aspirations, needs and demands of common Indians."

"Modi-Shah and their nominated president are today spreading falsehood about the Congress manifesto," he alleged.

"There is a stink of RSS in Modi ji's speeches, the BJP's electoral graph is plunging day by day, therefore the RSS has started remembering its best friend -- the Muslim League!," Kharge said in a statement.

TIDBITS

J&K: Cong, NC settle seat sharing deal for polls

New Delhi: The Congress and the National Conference Monday announced they will fight the Lok Sabha polls in Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh, in alliance, with both parties contesting three seats each. At a joint press conference here alongside Congress leaders Salman Khurshid and Pawan Khara, National Conference vice president Omar Abdullah said the Congress would contest Udhampur, Jammu and Ladakh Lok Sabha seats while the National Conference would field candidates in Anantnag, Srinagar and Baramulla. The announcement comes a day after Mehbooba Mufti's Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president named her party's candidates for three seats of the Kashmir Valley, signalling a breakdown of seat-sharing talks with the INDIA bloc partners.

Top court dismisses Sanjay Singh's plea

New Delhi: AAP leader Sanjay Singh Monday failed to get relief from the Supreme Court in a defamation case lodged for his alleged comments on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's educational qualification. The Rajya Sabha lawmaker will now have to face the case pending before a trial court in Gujarat. The apex court dismissed Singh's plea challenging an order of the Gujarat High Court which had refused to quash the summons issued against him in the case. "We are not inclined to entertain the present petition," a bench of Justices B R Gavai and Sandeep Mehta said. The bench said the high court had already observed that all contentions available to the parties were kept open and the trial judge would not be influenced by any observations made in its order. The high court had February 16 dismissed the pleas by Singh and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal seeking quashing of the summons issued against them in the defamation case.

SC relief for ex-cop Pradeep Sharma

New Delhi: In a relief for former Mumbai Police officer Pradeep Sharma, the Supreme Court Monday said he need not surrender till further orders to undergo the life sentence awarded to him in a 2006 fake encounter killing case. The apex court also sought a response from the Maharashtra government on his bail plea in the case. While admitting Sharma's appeal against the March 19 Bombay High Court verdict, a bench of Justices Hrishikesh Roy and Prashant Kumar Mishra said, "It is a case of reversal of acquittal by the high court, where the appeal is filed by the appellant. The statutory appeal is admitted for hearing. Issue notice on bail plea."



MATTER OF FAITH: Devotees participate in 'Kavu Theendal' ceremony during the annual 'Bharani' festival, at Kodungallur Bhagavathy Temple in Thrissur district, Kerala

Shantanu Thakur receives 'threat' letter from LeT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, April 8: Union minister and BJP leader Shantanu Thakur Monday claimed to have received a letter from terror outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), threatening him that if NRC is implemented in West Bengal, they will "burn the entire country".

The purported letter, typed in Bengali, also threatened to raze the 'Thakurbari', a pilgrimage of the Matua community, in case Muslims were tortured following the implementation of the National Register of Citizens (NRC). "I am shocked to receive this letter. I have informed my department. I will also inform the PM, the Home Ministry and lodge a case in this connection," Thakur, the Union Minister of State for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, told reporters.

When contacted, Bongaon Police District SP Dinesh Kumar said they have not yet received any formal complaint from the minister. The signatories of the letter, a copy of which is available with PTI, claimed they were members of the LeT in North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal.

India helping 5 nations develop early warning systems: IMD

IMD DIRECTOR GENERAL SAID INDIA WILL PLAY THE ROLE OF A BIG BROTHER AND A PEER ADVISOR TO NEPAL, MALDIVES, SRI LANKA, BANGLADESH AND MAURITIUS IN THE EFFORTS TO GUARD AGAINST THE IMPACT OF EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

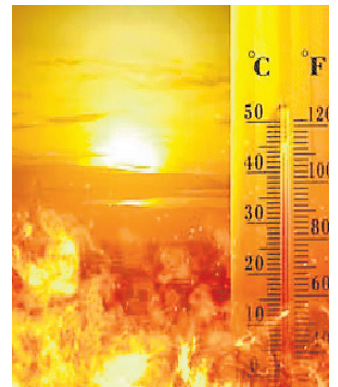
New Delhi, April 8: India is helping Nepal, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Mauritius develop early warning systems to reduce the loss of life and property due to extreme weather events, IMD chief Mrutyunjay Mohapatra has said. In a conversation with PTI editors, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) director general said India will play the role of a big brother and a peer advisor to Nepal, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Mauritius in the efforts to guard against the impact of extreme weather events.

India's efforts are part of the 'Early Warnings for All' initiative announced by the United Nations in 2022 to ensure that everyone is protected from hazardous weather, water or climate events through life-saving early warning systems by the

end of 2027. Mohapatra said India is helping five of the 30 countries identified across the world for the first phase of the initiative of establishing early warning systems.

"Fifty per cent of the countries do not have an early warning system. The poor countries, least developed countries, and small island nations, for example, Maldives and Seychelles, do not have the capacity to provide early warning about extreme weather events. Therefore, people are dying and losing a lot of property because of disasters," he said.

These countries need financial and technical support to augment their meteorological observations. Financial support will be provided through public-private partnerships and countries like India have pledged to provide technical support, he added. "We will help these five countries set up meteorologi-



cal observatories, allow them access to our numerical models, create a decision support system, and computing power," Mohapatra said.

The IMD will provide forecasts and warnings and ministries of communication of the respective nations have been roped in to help develop a system for data exchange and warning dissemination, Mohapatra said.

According to a report released by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in December, 101 countries (52 per cent) now have multi-hazard early warning systems.

The WMO's findings show a concerning trend as disasters increased over five times between 1970 and 2019. Water-related disasters became the most common globally, with tropical cyclones causing the most harm to people and economies. From 1970 to 2021, the world witnessed nearly 12,000 weather, climate or water-related disasters, resulting in more than two million deaths and economic losses of \$4.3 trillion.

According to official reports, around 41,789 people died annually from disasters between 2015 and 2022. And the number of people affected by disasters has been rising, with more than 130 million affected globally every year. In Asia, from 2013 to 2022,

more than 146,000 people lost their lives due to disasters and over 911 million were directly affected. Economic damages in 2022 alone were over \$36 billion, mostly due to flooding and storms. It is projected that by 2030, the world could face 560 medium- to large-scale disasters each year. Climate change not only makes disasters more likely but also harder to respond to those, the WMO had said.

Experts hail SC ruling

New Delhi: Policy experts Monday said the Supreme Court's ruling recognising the right against climate change as a fundamental human right will promote serious conversations on the crucial subject. However, they stressed that India's transition to clean energy to fight climate change must not lead to environmental injustices. The Supreme Court judgment, expanding the scope of Article 14 (right to equality before the law) and Article 21 (right to life) to include the "right against the adverse effects of climate change", came on a petition about the need to conserve the Great Indian Bustard -- a critically endangered bird species. Great Indian Bustards are mainly found in Rajasthan and Gujarat, and the alarming decrease in their numbers is attributed to frequent collisions with overhead power transmission lines, including those of solar plants, near their habitats.



international



We have been actively promoting peace talks and political solutions. China is not a creator or party to the Ukraine crisis, and we have not and will not do anything to profit from it
MAO NING | CHINA'S FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESWOMAN

GERMAN CHANCELLOR JOINS TIKTOK

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz opened a TikTok account Monday, promising he would not be caught dancing on the social media platform popular with young people



of the day quote

The reality is that sustainability has to be the anchor for development in the 21st century. Since we are talking about prioritising people and the planet, the sustainability dimension of things lies at the very heart of everything we are seeking to do developmentally in the UN
DENNIS FRANCIS | UNGA PRESIDENT

Many people have asked me what my position is on abortion and abortion rights. My view is now that we have abortion where everybody wanted it from a legal standpoint, the states will determine by vote or legislation or perhaps both. And whatever they decide must be the law of the land — in this case, the law of the state
DONALD TRUMP | FORMER US PRESIDENT

Spreading pessimistic views on China will end up harming oneself and misjudging China will result in missed opportunities
WANG YI | CHINA FOREIGN MINISTER

No progress made at Cairo ceasefire talks: Hamas

Cairo, April 8: A Hamas official said Monday no progress was made at a new round of Gaza ceasefire talks in Cairo also attended by delegations from Israel, Qatar and the US, shortly after Egyptian sources said headway had been achieved on the agenda. Western powers have voiced outrage over what they see as an unacceptably high Palestinian civilian death toll and humanitarian crisis in Gaza arising from Israel's military onslaught to destroy Hamas in tiny, densely populated Gaza.



Israel has ruled out winding up the war shortly or withdrawing from Gaza, saying its forces will not relent until Hamas no longer controls Gaza or threatens Israel militarily

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel would not yield to 'extreme' Hamas demands, though Israeli officials have signalled willingness to allow some Palestinians to return to northern Gaza

Israel and Hamas sent teams to Egypt Sunday after the arrival Saturday of CIA Director William Burns, whose presence underlined rising US pressure for a deal that would free hostages held in Gaza and get aid to stricken civilians.

"There is no change in the position of the occupation and therefore, there is nothing new in the Cairo talks," the Hamas official said. "There is no progress yet."

Six months into its offensive against Palestinian Islamist movement Hamas that has devastated Gaza and left most of its 2.3 million people homeless and many at risk of famine, Israel also voiced cautious optimism about the latest negotiations.

In Jerusalem at the weekend, Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz described the Cairo talks as the closest the sides have come to a deal since a November truce under which Hamas freed dozens of hostages. Hamas seized 253 people during an October 7, cross-border killing spree in southern Israel that ignited the war. Of those, 129 hostages remain,

and negotiators have spoken of around 40 going free in the first stage of a prospective deal with Hamas.

Two Egyptian security sources and Al-Qahera News said progress had been made in the Cairo talks. The security sources said both sides had made concessions that could help pave the way for a deal for a truce which — as proposed during previous talks — would be staggered over three stages, with the release of any remaining Israeli hostages and a long-term ceasefire addressed in the second stage.

The concessions relate to the freeing of hostages and Hamas' demand for the return of displaced residents to northern Gaza, they said. Mediators suggested the return could be monitored by an Arab force in the presence of Israeli security deployments that would later be

pulled back, they added.

Delegations left Cairo and consultations were expected to continue within 48 hours, the sources and Al-Qahera said. However, a Palestinian official close to mediation efforts said that deadlock continued over Israel's refusal to end the war; withdraw its forces from Gaza, allow all civilians to return to their homes and lift a 17-year-old blockade to allow speedy reconstruction of the coastal enclave.

These steps took precedence over Israel's prime demand for a release of hostages in exchange for Palestinians held in Israeli prisons, said the official, speaking on condition of anonymity. "Regarding the exchange of prisoners, Hamas was and is willing to be more flexible, but there is no flexibility over our...main demands," he said.

94 dead after ferry boat capsizes

Maputo, April 8: At least 94 people died, including children, and 26 are missing after a ferry boat capsized off the northern coast of Mozambique, an official from the country's Maritime Transport Institute (INTRASMAR) said. The vessel was an overloaded fishing boat and was not licensed to transport people, Lourenco Machado, an administrator of INTRASMAR, said on state television Monday.

"Sunday we registered a maritime incident where at least 94 people died when a barge carrying 130 people capsized. We have recovered 94 bodies and 26 are missing," he said. The boat was ferrying people from Lunga in Nampula province to Mozambique Island, he said, adding that initial reports indicated that it was hit by a tidal wave.

The passengers were fleeing a cholera outbreak, said state broadcaster TVM, citing another local maritime administrator. Jaime Neto, secretary of state for Nampula province, also said that the passengers were fleeing cholera, according to the British Broadcasting Corp (BBC).

"Because the boat was overcrowded and unsuited to carry passengers, it ended up sinking," he said, adding that many children were among the dead.

Videos posted on social media X showed many bodies lying on a beach and some people carrying the bodies of children.



PUSH FOR INDIA, PAKISTAN TALKS



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad/Jeddah, April 8: Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have underlined the importance of dialogue between Islamabad and New Delhi to resolve their 'outstanding issues', especially the Kashmir issue.

This was stated in a joint statement which was issued a day after Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Saudi de-facto ruler Prince Mohammed bin Salman held an official meeting April 7 at Al-Safa Palace in Mecca.

Their discussions centred on fortifying the fraternal relations between the two brotherly nations and exploring avenues for enhanced collaboration across various sectors, according to the joint statement.

They also discussed regional issues, including Kashmir, which was mentioned in the statement. "The two sides stressed the importance of dialogue between Pakistan and India to resolve the outstanding issues between the two countries, especially the Jammu and Kashmir dispute to ensure peace and stability in the region," it read.

New Delhi's long-held position has been that Kashmir is a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan and there is no question of any mediation or intervention by any third party. The ties between the two countries nosedived after India abrogated Article 370 of the Constitution, revoking the special status of Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcating the State into two Union Territories on August 5, 2019.

India's decision evoked strong reactions from Pakistan, which downgraded diplomatic ties and expelled the Indian envoy. India has repeatedly told Pakistan that Jammu and Kashmir "was, is and shall forever" remain an integral part of the country.

India has said it desires normal neighbourly relations with Pakistan in an environment free of terror, hostility and violence. The joint statement also said that emphasis was placed on the Gulf Kingdom's supportive role in Pakistan's economy and the mutual desire to strengthen trade and investment ties.

New Delhi's long-held position has been that Kashmir is a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan and there is no question of any mediation or intervention by any third party

SHORT TAKES

Sweden expels Chinese journalist

Copenhagen (Denmark): Sweden has expelled a Chinese journalist, saying the reporter was a threat to national security, Swedish media reported Monday. The journalist, an unnamed, 57-year-old woman, was arrested by the Swedish security service in October and expelled by the government in Stockholm last week, Swedish broadcaster SVT reported.

Record floods in Russia's Urals

Moscow: Swiftly melting snow triggered the worst recorded flooding in Russia's Ural Mountains, forcing thousands of people to flee their homes as some of Europe's biggest rivers swelled to bursting point. Russia declared an emergency in the Orenburg region near Kazakhstan after the Ural River, Europe's third longest river, swelled several metres in hours Friday, and burst through a dam embankment in the city of Orsk.

SLFP set to face long legal battle

Colombo: The Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) is set to get into a long legal battle this election year with separate factions trying to gain control of it as Nimal Siripala de Silva, an incumbent minister, was Monday appointed the party's acting chairman in place of former president Maithripala Sirisena. SLFP is one of the major political parties in Sri Lanka which has ruled the island nation for many years.

Suspended Maldivian minister mocks Indian flag, apologises

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Male, April 8: A Maldivian minister, who was suspended in January for her derogatory remarks against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has now mocked the Indian flag after including parts of the flag in an altered campaign poster of the opposition Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), according to a media report Monday.

In a post on X, former deputy youth minister Mariyam Shiuna has apologised for the content of her post. "I would like to address a recent social media post of mine that has garnered attention and criticism. I extend my sincerest apologies for any confusion or offense caused by the content of my recent post," she wrote.

"It was brought to my attention that the image used in my response to the Maldivian opposition party MDP bore a resemblance to the Indian flag. I want to make it clear that this was entirely unintentional, and I sincerely regret any misunderstanding it may have

caused," she wrote on X. "Maldives deeply value its relationship and, the mutual respect we share with India. In future I will be more vigilant in verifying the content I share to prevent such oversights," the suspended junior minister posted.

She denied any intention to mock India and claimed to have used the design of the Indian flag "by mistake." However, she did not explain her reasons for using the logo of India's ruling BJP in the post that drew criticism. Adhathu Online news portal reported Monday.

Her post came ahead of the parliamentary elections in the Maldives April 21. Shiuna, who was suspended from the government earlier this year for "derogatory remarks" against Prime Minister Modi, shared the post with the mockery of the Indian flag Saturday night.

The photo on the post made on her X account changed the MDP's campaign slogan and included the logo of India's ruling party.



South Korea's second military spy satellite lifts off from the Kennedy Space Centre in Cape Canaveral. South Korea has launched its second military spy satellite into space, days after North Korea reaffirmed its plan to launch multiple reconnaissance satellites this year

China accuses US of forcibly deporting its students

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, April 8: China Monday accused the US of forcibly deporting Chinese students without any valid evidence and warned of 'resolute measures' to safeguard the interests of its nationals.

The US has been overstretching the concept of national security and without any valid evidence, arbitrarily cancelled Chinese students' visas, banned them from entering the US and forcibly deported them, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning told a media briefing here.

Asked about reports that Chinese students and scholars were interrogated and forcibly deported when entering the US border at the Washington Dulles Airport and the Dallas Airport, Mao said, the US moves inflicted enormous damage on the persons concerned and obstructed people-to-people exchanges between China and the US.

"The recent cases show that the US law enforcement personnel are bent on making excuses for deporting Chinese personnel. These are typical cases of selective, discriminatory and politically motivated law enforcement," Mao said. "China will take resolute measures to safeguard the legitimate and lawful rights and interests of Chinese citizens. The US needs to immediately stop unjustifiably harassing," she said.

China's state-run Global Times quoted Chinese Ambassador to the US Xie Feng alleging that dozens of Chinese arriving in the US, including students, were being denied entry every month over the past few months.

They held valid visas, had no criminal records, and were returning to school after travelling elsewhere or reuniting with their family in China, he said. But when they landed at the airport, what awaited them was an 8-hour-long interrogation by officers, who prohibited them from contacting their parents, made groundless accusations against them, and even forcibly deported them and banned their entry, Xie alleged.

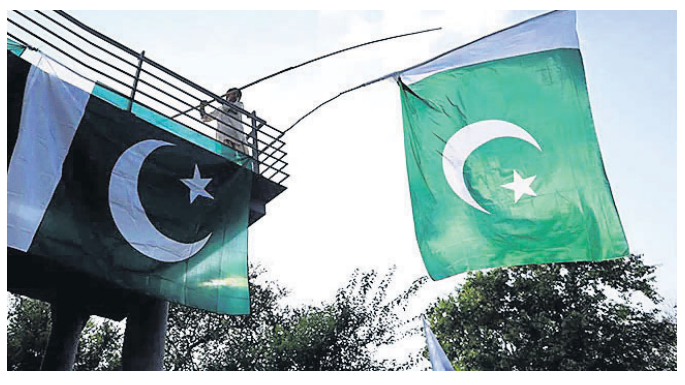
Pak man to get 80 lashes for falsely accusing ex-wife of adultery

THE CONVICT'S EX-WIFE, WHO GOT MARRIED IN FEBRUARY 2015, SAID THEY HAPPILY LIVED TOGETHER FOR ONE MONTH AND IN DECEMBER 2015 GAVE BIRTH TO A BABY GIRL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Karachi, April 8: In a rare punishment, a Pakistani court has sentenced a man in Sindh province to 80 lashes for refusing to admit the paternity of his child and falsely accusing his ex-wife of adultery.

Additional District and Sessions Judge (Malir) Shehbaz Bohyo convicted Fared Qadir under Section 7(1) of the Offence of Qazf (Enforcement Of Hadd) Ordinance, 1979 for disowning his legal child and making false accusations against his ex-wife,



Dawn News reported Monday. The section of the ordinance reads: "Whoever commits qazf liable to hadd shall be punished with whipping numbering eighty stripes." "It is crystal clear that the accused is a liar and had fabricated an allegation of qazf upon the complainant regarding illegitimacy of her daughter.. Thus, he is convicted and sentenced to 80 stripes each under section 7(1) of the Qazf Ordinance, 1979," the order said.

The court ruled that after the conviction, his evidence shall not be admissible in any court of law following the confirmation of the conviction from the Federal Shariat Court. "As the accused is sentenced to whipping only.. he shall remain on bail, provided that he agrees to appear at the time and place designated by this court for the execution of the punishment of whipping, following the confirmation of the conviction and sentence by the court of appeal, and submits a bail bond for Rs 100,000," the verdict said.

However, the court noted that the accused neither testified under oath nor produced any witnesses to support his claims, adding that the defence also failed to bring any evidence regarding the accused making an apology or filing applications over a misunderstanding. The court said the accused in his recorded statement under Section 342 of the CrPC admitted that a baby girl was his legitimate daughter.

Prosecutor Saira Bano said she did not witness any convictions of flogging under Section 7 of the Qazf Ordinance during her 14 years of service as a lawyer.

She explained the implementation of the punishment of 80 lashes is subject to confirmation or otherwise by the court of appeal.

provide maintenance or take her back to his home. When she moved to a family court the judge ruled in her favour and directed the convict to provide maintenance for his daughter and former wife.

However, the husband submitted two applications in court during the proceedings of the execution application, requesting a DNA test for the baby girl and disowning his daughter. These applications were subsequently withdrawn by him.

However, the complainant filed an application seeking legal remedy against her ex-husband for levelling serious allegations against her. During the trial, the accused denied allegations regarding his ex-wife and said she had only lived with him for six months after their marriage and then left the home to never return.

of the day quote

Domestic banks are dealing with market-makers in global markets rather than with end clients and are yet to emerge as market-makers of note globally

SHAKTIKANTA DAS | GOVERNOR, RESERVE BANK

The fiscal year FY24 has proven to be an eventful period for our company, marked by notable achievements across all key performance metrics including pre-sales, collections, launches, and new project additions

BOMAN IRANI | CMD, KEYSTONE REALTORS

The rigorous standards of compliance and commitment to data protection we have in place for our Indian business, helped us transition smoothly towards stringent international compliances

RAJESH MAGOW | CO-FOUNDER, MAKEMYTRIP

FY24 RESULTS

JSW Steel output at all-time high

New Delhi: JSW Steel Monday posted a record output of 26.43 million tonne of crude steel during financial year 2023-24, registering an on-year growth of 9 per cent. It had produced 24.14 million tonne (MnT) crude steel on a consolidated basis in preceding financial year, JSW Steel said in a statement. In the January-March period of 2024, the consolidated output was at 6.79 MnT, higher by 3 per cent over 6.58 MnT in the year-ago quarter. "JSW Steel has achieved its highest-ever annual consolidated crude steel production of 26.43 MnT, with a growth of 9 per cent YoY. The production for Q4 FY24 stood at 6.79 MnT, higher by 3 per cent YoY," it said.

REC sanctions record loans

New Delhi: State-owned REC has made record loan sanctions worth ₹3.59 lakh crore during 2023-24, posting a year-on-year rise of 33.66 per cent. It had sanctioned ₹2.68 lakh crore as loan during the preceding 2022-23 fiscal, the company said in an exchange filing. Of the total ₹3.59 lakh crore, ₹1.36 lakh crore were "renewable energy sanctions", higher from ₹21.371 crore sanctioned for green projects a year ago. "REC Ltd has continued its growth trajectory and posted...Strong operational performance with highest ever loan sanctions at ₹3.59 lakh crore and the highest ever loan disbursements at ₹1.61 lakh crore during the year 2023-24," it said.

HIGH ON SUVs

FADA SAID THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN INDIA, SUVs NOW HOLD A MARKET SHARE OF 50%

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 8: With a total of 3,948,143 units sold, 8.45 per cent higher than the 3,640,399 units in the financial year 2023 (FY23), the passenger vehicles (PV) retail sales touched an all-time high in FY24, according to the data released by the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA). It noted that the PV retail sales touched a milestone year due to improved vehicle availability, a compelling model mix, and the launch of new models. The association added that the sales

RECORD RALLY

BSE-listed firms shine

MCAP OF BSE-LISTED COMPANIES TOUCH ₹400 LAKH CRORE MILESTONE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 8: The market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies reached an all-time closing high of ₹400.86 lakh crore Monday following a record rally in equities, wherein the 30-share BSE Sensex scaled its lifetime peak.

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies has gone past the coveted ₹400 lakh crore mark for the first time.

The 30-share BSE benchmark jumped 494.28 points or 0.67 per cent to settle at 74,742.50. During the day, it climbed 621.08 points or 0.83 per cent to reach a new intra-day record high of 74,869.30.

Thanks to the rally in equities, the market capitalisation (mcap) of BSE-listed companies reached an all-time closing high of ₹4,00,86,722.74 crore (\$4.81 trillion).

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms had hit the ₹300 lakh crore mark in July last year.

The NSE Nifty climbed 152.60 points or 0.68 per cent to 22,666.30. During the day, it jumped 183.6 points or 0.81 per cent to hit a lifetime high of 22,697.30.

From the Sensex basket, Maruti, Mahindra & Mahindra, NTPC, JSW Steel, Larsen & Toubro, Reliance Industries, Axis Bank, and Power Grid were the major gainers.

Nestle, Wipro, HCL Technologies, Titan, HDFC Bank, Infosys and Tata Consultancy Services were the laggards.

"Markets maintained optimism throughout the trading session as robust global cues



Despite expensive valuations, investors are willing to bet big on Indian stocks on expectations of a strong growth momentum going ahead, which would augur well for equity markets

PRASHANTH TAPSE | SENIOR VP (RESEARCH), MEHTA EQUITIES

boosted key benchmark indices to fresh record highs on broad-based buying support. Domestic fund flows have been strong, which is giving local equity markets a major fillip in spite of choppy foreign fund inflows," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research) at Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo and Hong Kong settled in the positive territory while Shanghai ended lower. European markets were trading in the positive zone. Wall Street ended with gains Friday.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth ₹1,659.27 crore Friday, accord-

ing to exchange data. Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.81 per cent to \$90.45 a barrel.

"The buoyancy in sentiment continued, led by sectorial tailwinds and Q4 earnings growth expectations. The up move was largely broad-based, with outperformance by auto, realty, oil & gas, and consumer discretionary, while IT was tepid owing to insipid Q4 growth expectations due to a slowdown in spending," Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.26 per cent while smallcap index

Sensex, Nifty hit fresh peaks on firm global cues

We would like to be a bigger part of India's journey as it goes to fill its skills demand which is so massive over the next decade. Every country in the world will be interested in India at this moment

PHILIP GREEN | HIGH COMMISSIONER OF AUSTRALIA TO INDIA

ELECTION DAY: D-ST TO STAY SHUT MAY 20

Leading stock exchanges BSE and NSE Monday declared a trading holiday May 20 on account of voting for general elections in Mumbai. There will be no trading on that day in equity, equity derivatives and SLB (Securities Lending and Borrowing) segments



Pegatron may sell India iPhone plant

TAIWAN'S PEGATRON IN TALKS WITH TATA AS ITS AIMS TO REDUCE ITS APPLE IPHONE BIZ

REUTERS

Bangalore, April 8: Pegatron is in advanced talks to hand over control of its only iPhone manufacturing facility in India to the Tata Group, said two sources with direct knowledge, marking the Taiwanese firm's latest scale back of its Apple partnership.

Under the deal, which has received the backing of Apple, Tata plans to hold at least a 65% stake in a joint venture that will operate the Pegatron plant near Chennai city in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, with the Taiwanese firm providing technical support and holding the rest, one of the sources said.

Tata, one of the largest conglomerates in India, will operate the joint venture through its Tata Electronics unit, the second source said.

The Pegatron India factory has around 10,000 employees and makes 5 million iPhones annually. It is the last such facility operated by the firm after it forfeited control of an iPhone plant in China last year to rival Luxshare in a \$290 million deal.

Apple is increasingly looking to diversify its supply chain beyond China amid geopolitical tensions between Beijing and Washington. For India's Tata, the Chennai Pegatron plant will bolster its iPhone manufacturing plans.

Tata already operates an iPhone assembly plant in the



Tata eyeing key Pegatron India plant to boost its plans

Tata already has two planned iPhone assembly plants

Deal with Pegatron could take six months to close

neighbouring southern state of Karnataka, which it took over from Taiwan's Wistron last year, and is also building another in Hosur in Tamil Nadu, where Pegatron is likely to emerge as its joint venture partner.

Pegatron has for months also been building another iPhone factory at its Chennai campus, and the Tata deal talks include taking over that facility as well, the first source said.

The talks between Tata and Pegatron for the factory are expected to close in six months and will see the entire Pegatron India employees move to the joint venture entity, the first source added.

Apple's iPhone contract manufacturers in India currently include Tata, Pegatron and Foxconn. Tata is key to Apple's growing ambitions in India, which analysts estimate will contribute 20-25% of total iPhone shipments this year, from 12-14% last year.

Maruti Suzuki holds mileage rally



BHUBANESWAR: Maruti Suzuki India Limited, the country's leading carmaker, announces the successful culmination of the Grand Vitara Strong Hybrid Mileage Rally in Bhubaneswar. This customer-driven event spotlighted the exceptional fuel-efficiency and an enhanced driving experience offered by the strong hybrid technology in the Grand Vitara, solidifying its position as India's most fuel-efficient SUV. In a remarkable display of the technology's capabilities, 23 proud owners of the Grand Vitara Strong Hybrid participated in the mileage rally. This friendly competition saw customers striving to achieve optimal mileage in their vehicles. Astonishingly, participants recorded mileage figures ranging up to an astounding 40.9 km/L during the contest, underscoring the car's futuristic and eco-friendly technology. The rally, which kicked off at Hotel Trident in Bhubaneswar and culminated at a popular water park near Puri, strengthened the confidence and satisfaction of customers in the Grand Vitara Strong Hybrid's performance and efficiency. Equipped with cutting-edge electric-petrol hybrid technology, the Grand Vitara Strong Hybrid returns an impressive fuel-efficiency of 27.97 km/L (as per ARAI). With a 45-litre fuel tank capacity, the vehicle can offer a driving range of over 1200+ km on a single full tank, cementing its status as India's most fuel-efficient SUV. The Strong Hybrid technology allows the Grand Vitara to even operate on battery power alone, offering a quieter driving experience and enhanced performance. This technology blends the benefits of driving an electric vehicle while eliminating range anxiety to offer unparalleled convenience.

2024 FINANCIAL YEAR

Fuel demand hits new FY record

Mumbai: India's fuel consumption fell 0.6% year-on-year in March, but demand for the 2024 financial year was up about 5%, primarily driven by higher automotive fuel and naphtha sales. Total consumption, a proxy for oil demand, totalled 21.09 million metric tons (4.99 million barrels per day) in March, down from 21.22 million tons (5.02 mbpd) last year, preliminary data from the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC) of the oil ministry showed Saturday. However, fuel demand for the 2024 financial year, ending in March, hit a record high of 233.276 million tons (4.67 mbpd) compared to 223.021 million tons (4.48 mbpd) a year earlier. Sales of diesel, mainly used by trucks and commercially run passenger vehicles, rose 3.1% year-on-year to 8.04 million tons in March and was up 4.4% for the previous fiscal year. Sales of gasoline in March rose 6.9% year-on-year to 3.32 million tons and were up 6.4% for the fiscal year. Sales of bitumen, used for making roads, were largely steady in March, but were up 9.9% for the fiscal year. Sales of cooking gas, or liquefied petroleum gas, rose 8.6% to 2.61 million tons, while naphtha sales jumped 5.5% to about 1.19 million tons, compared with last March, the data showed. The usage of fuel oil fell 9.7% year-on-year in March and declined 6.3% for the fiscal year.



India net importer of finished steel

New Delhi: India was a net importer of finished steel during the 2023/24 financial year that ended March 31, according to provisional government data seen by Reuters Monday. The country imported 8.3 million metric tonne of finished steel between April and March, up 38.1% from a year earlier, the data showed. India's steel mills have called for government interventions and safeguard measures against surging imports. However, the federal Ministry of Steel has resisted calls for curbs, citing strong local demand. The world's second-biggest crude steel producer remains a bright spot globally with robust demand from its construction and automotive sectors. Steel consumption in India jumped 13.4% to 136 million metric tonne during the period, reflecting buoyant demand for the alloy in one of the world's fastest-growing economies. India's steel demand is likely to stay strong as the government expects economic growth will outpace the global economy in the next fiscal year. During 2023/24, India's finished steel exports were at 7.5 million metric tonne during 2023/24, up 11.5% on year. Crude steel output stood at 143.6 million metric tonne, up 12.9% from a year earlier, data showed. Finished steel output during 2023/24 was 138.5 million metric tonne, up 12.4% on year, data showed.

BAJAJ FINANCE HIKES FD RATES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 8: Bajaj Finance, part of Bajaj Finserv, has increased fixed deposit (FD) rates for most tenures by up to 60 basis points (bps).

Bajaj Finance is a deposit-taking non-banking financial company registered with the Reserve Bank of India.

Effective April 3, 2024, the company has increased FD rates for senior citizens by up to 60 basis points in the 25-35-month tenure and 40 basis points in the 18-24-month tenure.

For non-senior citizens, rates have been hiked by up to 45 basis points in the 25-35-month tenure, 40 basis points in the 18 and 22-month tenures, and 35 basis points in the 30 and 33-month tenures, the company said in a release.

Senior citizens can continue to avail FD rates of up to 8.85 per cent and non-senior citizens can take benefit of rates of up to 8.6 per cent, by booking digitally in the 42-month tenure, it said.

EV BATTERIES

Hyundai, Kia ink pact with Exide

REUTERS

Seoul, April 8: Hyundai Motor Co and Kia Corp Monday signed a memorandum of understanding with India's Exide Energy Solutions Ltd to supply batteries for their electric vehicles in a bid to boost competitiveness in the world's No 3 auto market.

The South Korean auto duo said in a statement that the partnership with Exide Energy, a unit of Exide Industries Ltd aims to localise their EV battery production in India, specifically focusing on lithium-iron-phosphate (LFP) cells.

Hyundai and Kia are set to expand in India - one of its four biggest revenue generating markets along with the United States, South Korea and Western Europe.

Hyundai has said it plans to invest about 3.25 trillion won (\$2.40 billion) for 10 years from 2023 for the Indian market, including for the launch of six EV models by 2028 and charging stations.

India logs all-time high PV sales in FY24

also rose due to enhanced supply dynamics, strategic marketing efforts, and expansion in road infrastructure.

The year also witnessed high demand for sports utility vehicles (SUVs). FADA said that for the first time in India, SUVs now hold a market share of 50 per cent.

In March, however, the PV sales dipped by 6 per cent compared to March 2023 due to heavy discounting and selective financing. It was further impacted by economic worries and the electoral climate. A total of 322,345 PVs were sold in the month compared to 343,527 units last year.

Compared to 330,107 units in February 2024, the PV sales were down by 2.35 per cent.

Overall, auto retail sales in India increased by 10.29 per cent in FY24. A total of 24,530,334 units were sold, including PVs,



Market sentiment is cautiously optimistic, with the industry banking on improved customer engagement and financing schemes to boost sales

MANISH RAJ SINGHANIA | PRESIDENT, FADA

commercial vehicles, two-wheelers, three-wheelers, and tractors, compared to 22,241,361 units in FY23.

The highest increase in sales was witnessed in three-wheelers, which saw a jump of 48.83 per

cent. It was followed by two-wheelers (9.3 per cent) and PVs.

According to FADA President Manish Raj Singhania, three-wheeler sales were fuelled by the introduction of cost-effective compressed natural gas fuel

and tractor sales dropped by 3.33 per cent.

The month was, however, positive for electric two-wheelers. "The expiration of the FAME-II subsidy on March 31 led to a notable increase in electric vehicle sales, with the two-wheeler electric vehicle (2W-EV) market share jumping to 9.12 per cent for the first time," the association said. In the near term, auto sales in India may continue to be impacted owing to a decline in consumer sentiment among urban buyers coupled with forthcoming elections.

In the long term, the market is cautiously optimistic. However, it faces challenges like the high base in the PV segment and intense competition. The focus is on overcoming these hurdles with innovation and strategic market engagement, aiming for balanced growth across all segments.

AFTER BOWLERS RESTRICT KKR BATTERS, SKIPPER RUTURAJ WATCHFULLY LEADS CHENNAI TO VICTORY

Jadeja turns CSK fortunes



Ravindra Jadeja celebrates with teammates after dismissing a Kolkata Knight Riders batter, Monday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, April 8: Ravindra Jadeja made optimum use of a tacky Chepauk surface as Chennai Super Kings were back to winning ways after they comfortably outclassed Kolkata Knight Riders by seven wickets in an IPL match here Monday. It was CSK's third win in five games, all of which have come at Chepauk, having lost the last two matches away from home. Jadeja, whose spin bowling has often taken a back-seat in

past few seasons, took three wickets in a space of eight deliveries to clinically dismantle KKR, who could only manage 137/9 on a track where stroke-making became difficult. The chase wasn't the problem as skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad scored 58-ball-67 and was dully supported by Daryl Mitchell (25 off 19 balls) and in-form Shivam Dube (28 off 18 balls). The chase was completed in 17.4 overs. Fittingly, MS Dhoni was present in the middle when they finally got the winning runs.

The match was a typical one from the KKR playbook, where they always apply the choke with their spinners on a surface where the ball grips and then their top-order controls the chase which is within manageable limits like it was Monday. Earlier, Jadeja worked his magic, ripping the heart out of KKR's batting. Having lost back to back games on the road, CSK were back in their element on a familiar Chepauk turf where the ball gripped and allowed Jadeja (3/18 in 4 overs) and



Ruturaj Gaikwad plays a shot during his match-winning innings

Maheesh Theekshana (1/28 in 4 overs) were absolutely brilliant with both their line and length. While KKR lost Phil Salt (0) cheaply off the very first delivery, Sunil Narine (27 off 20 balls) and young Angkrish Raghuvanshi (24 of 18 balls) continued from where they had left against DC, chancing their arms and adding 56 in powerplay but once spinners came into operation it all fell apart. With the ball gripping and not coming onto the bat, Narine's lofted shot was holed out in the deep and Raghuvanshi's inexperience became his undoing as he played an indiscreet reverse sweep to a straight delivery. Venkatesh Iyer (3) was ill at ease against Theekshana, who got his mojo back after being hit for two sixes in his first over and then Jadeja got his man, who wanted to slog out of trouble. With three wickets in eight balls, Jadeja seemed to snatch the momentum decisively in favour of CSK.

Shreyas Iyer (34 off 32 balls) never got going and Rinku Singh (9 off 14 balls) and Andre Russell (10 off 10 balls) couldn't up the ante as the canny Mustafizur Rahman (2/22) and Tushar Deshpande (3/33) were fantastic at the death. The KKR batters tried going hammer and tongs but the moment Jadeja came in after Powerplay, suddenly it seemed that pace off the track had vanished. Both took pace off the deliveries and bowled wide lines which were out of the hitting range of the two finishers. The catching in the deep was also top notch for CSK as KKR batters had a forgettable day in office.

BRIEF SCORES

KKR 137/9 (Shreyas Iyer 34, Sunil Narine 27; Ravindra Jadeja 3/18, Tushar Deshpande 3/33, Mustafizur Rahman 2/22) lost to CSK 141/3 (Ruturaj Gaikwad 67 n o, Shivam Dube 28, Daryl Mitchell 25; Vaibhav Arora 2/28) by 7 wickets.

Inconsistent Kings face unpredictable Sunrisers



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mullanpur, April 8: An inconsistent Punjab Kings will hope to come out with an attacking display to match the ultra-aggressive approach of Sunrisers Hyderabad as the two teams clash in a mid-table battle in the IPL here Tuesday. Both SRH and PBKS have two wins and two losses from their four matches to be tied with two other teams in the middle with four points and they will be desperate to break out of the mid-table logjam first. While SRH have been unpredictable sometimes they have displayed their might with the bat with their top-order firing on all cylinders on most occasions. But the same cannot be said about the Kings. SRH recorded the highest team total in the history of the IPL en route their win over Mumbai Indians, while they also notched up a convincing six-wicket win over reigning champions Chennai Super Kings Friday. The likes of Abhishek Sharma, Travis Head, Heinrich Klaasen and Aiden Markram have consistently taken the attack to the opposition bowlers, providing the team with blistering starts. PBKS too have plenty of high-hitting potential with their batting line-up boosting off Shikhar Dhawan, Jonny Bairstow, Liam Livingstone. But apart from the skipper, none has been able to consistently put up a show so far. Punjab will hope that their Indian players - Prabhsimran Singh and Jitesh Sharma - step up just like Shashank Singh,

who pulled off a jailbreak in their last match against Gujarat Titans. Both the teams are coming into the match after a win and it could well be a battle of the powerplay when they face off at the newly-built Maharaja Yadavindra Singh Cricket Stadium, which will host only its second IPL game Tuesday. Bowling department remains a concern for both teams. While Punjab has struggled at the death overs, Sunrisers faltered with the new ball. South African pacer Kagiso Rabada emerged as their best bowler with six wickets, but inconsistencies of the likes of death-over specialist Arshdeep Singh and Harshal Patel is a concern. For Hyderabad, the likes of Jaydev Unadkat, Mayank Markande and Bhuvneshwar Kumar have conceded too many runs. Skipper Pat Cummins, who has taken five wickets in four games, has looked good but he will need consistent support from his other bowlers. The Sunrisers bowlers dished out a lot of variations like cutters and slow balls to trouble the batters and they would hope to keep the momentum against the Kings. It is a 3-2 head-to-head count between SRH and PBKS in the last five meetings, indicating that a tight battle is likely to be on the cards.

MATCHDAY

Indian Premier League
PBKS vs SRH
Time: 07:30 pm
Telecast: Star Sports Network
Stream: Jio Cinema

Nagal stuns Arnaldi for maiden win at Masters



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Monte Carlo, April 8: Sumit Nagal Monday became the first Indian player to win a singles main draw match at an ATP Masters event on clay when he shocked World No.38 Matteo Arnaldi in a gruelling three-set contest in Monte Carlo. Nagal, who entered the ATP Masters 1000 event via qualifying route, erased a one-set deficit to turn the tables on his Italian opponent for a memorable 5-7, 6-2, 6-4 win in the first round. He will next take on World No.7 Holger Rune from Denmark. This is Nagal's third victory over a top-50 player and second time in the current season. The 26-year-old had topped the then World No.27 Alexander Bublik in straight sets at the Australian Open in Melbourne at the start of the 2024 season. He had also defeated then World No.22 Chilean Cristian Garin in Argentina Open in March 2021. Nagal, who qualified into the main draw with wins over higher-ranked players, has ensured himself a career-high rank of 80 on a day when he touched career-

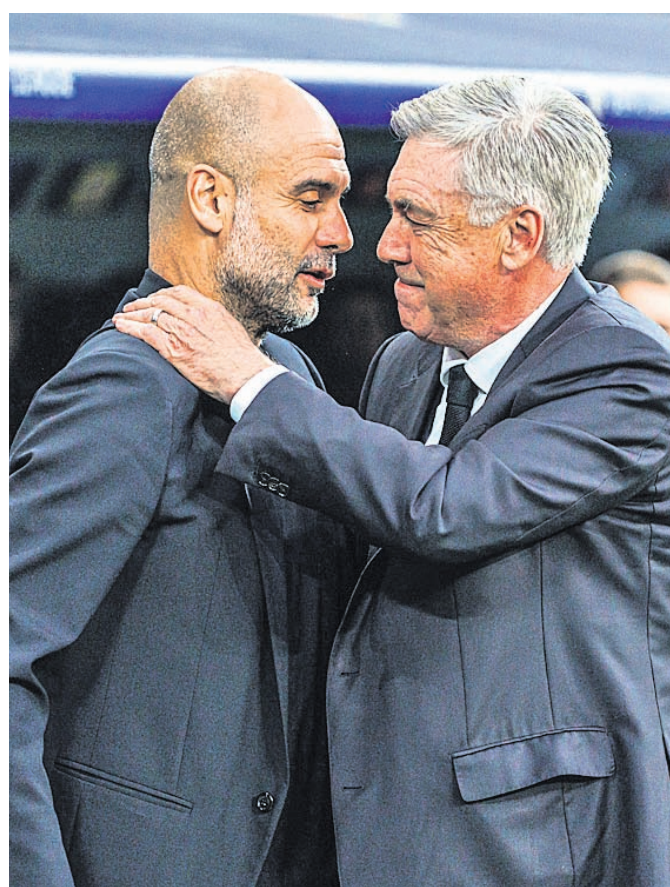
high rank of 93. Nagal had also qualified for the Indian Wells Masters in March this year but fell to formidable Canadian Milos Raonic in the first round. He had also competed in the Qualifiers of the Miami Masters but could not make the main draw. The first set was an even keel with both players breaking each other once. Serving to stay in the set, Nagal lost his serve in the 12th game with Arnaldi attacking the Indian's first serve. However, Nagal remained unperturbed and broke his rival twice in the second set for a comfortable 4-1 lead. His serve came under pressure in game six but he held and closed the set force a decider. After trading a break with Arnaldi, Nagal broke his rival's serve for the second time in the seventh game of the third set to take a 4-3 lead and that proved to be decisive in the final outcome of the match. He consolidated the lead by pocketing the eighth game and served out the match in game 10. As Arnaldi hit his forehand over the baseline on match point, Nagal let out a roar to celebrate his win.

Real well rested to take on Man City

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madrid, April 8: One of the Champions League's newest rivalries resumes this week with Real Madrid hoping to take advantage of the extended rest they've had ahead of Tuesday's quarterfinal against Manchester City. Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti, entering his record-extending 200th Champions League match, has had eight full days to prepare his squad for facing Pep Guardiola's Manchester City for the third straight year in the knockout rounds of Europe's top club competition. City, meanwhile, played Saturday at Crystal Palace in the Premier League and Guardiola wasn't happy about the considerable difference in the teams' preparation time. Madrid's last Spanish league match was March 31, a 2-0 win at Athletic Bilbao. Madrid didn't have to play this past weekend as the Spanish calendar was reserved for the Copa del Rey final.

Madrid eliminated City two seasons ago with a late comeback in the second leg of the semifinals at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium, where they haven't lost in 27 straight games in all competitions dating back to last April. But, City got the better of Madrid last season, advancing after a 4-0 rout in the second leg of the semifinals at home. Both clubs went on to win the Champions League title after eliminating their rival.



Carlo Ancelotti (R) and Pep Guardiola greet each other when the last time the two sides had met in the Champions League in 2023

The last four matches between the clubs produced 17 goals in total. They will have faced each other 12 times in 12 years after this season's quarterfinals. So far, there are four wins for City and three for Madrid, with three draws. Both teams are trying to reach the semifinals of the Champions League for the fourth

straight time. **ANCELOTI'S MILESTONE** Ancelotti arrives as the coach with the most Champions League titles (four) and victories (114), and he will be reaching his milestone 200th game in charge at the Bernabeu Tuesday. It will be the 59th game in the Madrid dugout for the 64-year-old Italian, who

is in his 21st Champions League season. **BELLINGHAM vs CITY** Ancelotti will try to win his third Champions League title with Madrid with a squad that this season was boosted by the signing of Jude Bellingham. The young England midfielder has never played in the Premier League, having joined Borussia Dortmund at an early age, but he has faced Man City four times and scored twice against the English side. Bellingham has 20 goals and 10 assists since joining Madrid and is one of the club's top attacking weapons this season along with Vinicius Junior and Rodrygo. **RUDIGER vs HAALAND** Madrid and Man City drew 1-1 in the first leg at the Bernabeu last season in a match marked by the duel between Madrid defender Antonio Rudiger and City striker Erling Haaland, who was the Champions League's leading scorer at the time. But, Rudiger and Madrid's defence made sure Haaland wasn't a factor, and the Norway international got only a few touches throughout the match.

MATCHDAY

Champions League
Semifinals 1st Leg
Real Madrid vs Man City
Arsenal vs Bayern Munich
Time: 12:30 am
Telecast: Sony Ten Network
Stream: SonyLIV

GUKESH HOLDS CARUANA; GUJRATHI FALTERS AGAIN AT CANDIDATES CHESS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Toronto, April 8: Indian Grandmaster D Gukesh did well to hold top-seeded American Fabiano Caruana to a draw but Vidit Gujrathi suffered another defeat at the hands of Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia in the fourth round of the Candidates chess tournament now underway here. On a day when R Praggnanandhaa played out an uneventful draw with Hikaru Nakamura of the United States, Nijat Abasov of Azerbaijan

fought hard to split the point with Firouzja Alireza of France to stay in contention in the eight-player double round-robin event that decides the challenger for the next World Championship. Nepomniachtchi became the first sole leader in the event on three points following his second victory with white pieces and he is now followed by Caruana and Gukesh on 2.5 points apiece. Praggnanandhaa is not far behind on two points holding the fourth spot while Gujrathi, Abasov, Alireza and Nakamura have an identical 1.5 points each.



In the women's section, R Vaishali made sure her streak matches with that of younger sibling Praggnanandhaa and

played out a draw with rating favourite Aleksandra Goryachkina of Russia but Koneru Humpy succumbed to

her first defeat at the hands of lowest seed and youngest participant Nurgul Salimova of Bulgaria. Zhongyi Tan maintained her sole lead on three points following a draw with Kateryna Lagno of Russia while Tingie Lei of China signed peace with Anna Muzychuk of Ukraine. With Tan in front, Goryachkina remains on her heels on 2.5 points and another half point adrift is the trio of Vaishali, Salimova and Lagno. Humpy slipped to joint sixth spot on 1.5 points along with Muzychuk and Lei.