



**Vidya speaks out**  
Actor Vidya Balan discusses male actors' reluctance to share screen with her

LEISURE | P2



**Scholz in China**  
German Chancellor Olaf Scholz visits China to enhance economic relations amidst Western pressure

INTERNATIONAL | P10



**Record RE addition**  
India has added a record renewable energy capacity of 18.48 GW in 2023-24 FY

BUSINESS | P11



**KKR ease past LSG**  
Phil Salt's superb knock helps Kolkata Knight Riders beat Lucknow Super Giants by eight wickets

SPORTS | P12

**SHORT TAKES**

**Cong announces 2nd list for state**

**Bhubaneswar:** The Congress Sunday announced the names of 75 nominees for the upcoming Assembly elections in Odisha, including Pruthvi Ballav Patnaik, son of former chief minister JB Patnaik, and Sushmita Singh Deo, a relative of former Union minister KP Singhdeo. The party's second list of candidates for the Assembly elections includes nine women among the 75 aspirants. The list, signed by AICC general secretary KC Venugopal, features several new faces and some former MLAs. Changes were made to candidates in three seats - Talsara, Baliguda, and Kabisuryanagar. Former Indian Hockey skipper Prabodh Tirkay was replaced by Debendra Bhatnagar in Talsara, while Upendra Pradhan replaced Surada Pradhan in Baliguda. Similarly, Bipin Bihari Swain took the place of Chiranjeevi Bisoyi in Kabisuryanagar. **P3**

**'Fairness creams affecting kidney'**

**New Delhi:** The use of skin fairness creams is driving a surge in kidney problems in India, according to a new study. Driven by society's obsession with fair skin, skin fairness creams have a lucrative market in India. However, the huge amount of mercury in these creams is known to harm the kidneys. The study, published in the medical journal *Kidney International*, showed that the increased use of fairness creams with high mercury content is driving cases of Membranous Nephropathy (MN), a condition damaging kidney filters and causing protein leakage.

**IRREGULAR by MANJUL**



**I don't really play computer games. I usually play with people's emotions**

**WEATHER**

	BBSR	CTC
<b>Max Temp</b>	39.6°C	38.4°C
<b>Min Temp</b>	25.0°C	24.5°C
<b>Humidity</b>	61%	52%
<b>Rainfall</b>	Nil	Nil

**FORECAST**  
DRY WEATHER VERY LIKELY



**FIGHTING FIRE:** Fire and Emergency Services personnel conduct a mock drill as part of 80th 'Fire Safety Week' (April 14-21) observation at OFDRA, Baramunda in Bhubaneswar, Sunday **PIC BIKASH NAYAK**

**'Unknown men' shoot dead killer of Sarabjit Singh**

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

**New Delhi, April 14:** Amir Sarfaraz Tamba, an accused in the murder of Indian death row prisoner in Pakistan Sarabjit Singh and a close associate of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terror outfit founder Hafiz Sayeed, was killed by unidentified gunmen in Lahore Sunday, official sources said.

Tamba was attacked by motorcycle-borne assailants in the Islampura area of Lahore in Pakistan and was rushed in critical condition to a hospital where he succumbed to his injuries, the sources said.

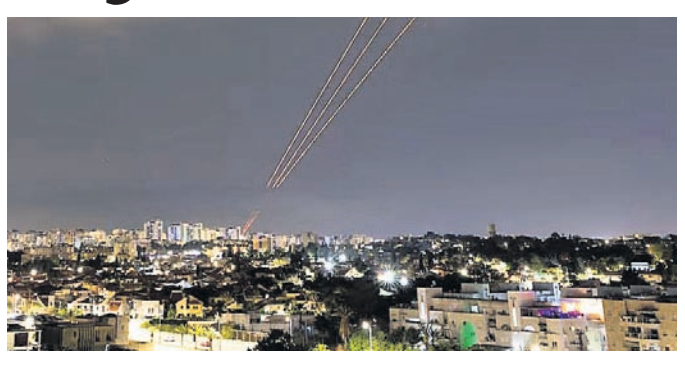
Singh, 49, died of cardiac arrest in Jinnah Hospital Lahore in the wee hours of May 2, 2013, after being comatose for nearly a week following a brutal assault by inmates including Tamba, inside the high-security Kot Lakhpat jail.

Tamba, whose father's name is Sarfaraz Javed, was born in Lahore in 1979 and was a close associate of the LeT founder.

A group of Pakistani prisoners had attacked Singh with bricks and iron rods. Singh had been allegedly found guilty of taking part in several bombings in Pakistan's Punjab province in 1990 and was given the death penalty.

**Another year, another war**

*With the world having already seen two full-blown wars taking shape in 2022 and 2023, Sunday's unprecedented drone and missile attack launched by Iran against Israel in response to the Damascus consulate strike reignited fears of yet another broader conflict. The development kept the world on the edge of its seat with people including a world leader perceiving it as a "prelude to World War III" and netizens wondering if Nostradamus' prophecies were coming true.*



participate in any offensive action against Iran.

"We don't seek a war with Iran. We're not looking for escalation here," White House national security spokesman John Kirby told NBC.

Iran launched the attack in response to a strike widely blamed on Israel that hit an Iranian consular building in Syria earlier this month and killed two Iranian generals. Israel said Iran launched 170 drones, more than 30 cruise missiles and more than 120 ballistic missiles.

By Sunday morning, Iran said the attack was over, and Israel reopened its airspace.

"We will build a regional coalition and collect the price from Iran, in the way and at the time that suits us," said a key member of Israel's War Cabinet, Benny Gantz.

The two foes have for years been engaged in a shadow war marked by attacks such as the Damascus strike. But Sunday's assault, which set off air-raid sirens across Israel, was the first time Iran has launched a direct military assault on Israel, despite decades of enmity dating back to the country's 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Israel has over the years established — often with the help of the United States — a multi-layered air-defence network that includes systems capable of intercepting a variety of threats, including long-range missiles, cruise missiles, drones and short-

**India calls for de-escalation**

**New Delhi:** Hours after Iran launched dozens of drones and missiles at Israel in a retaliatory attack, India Sunday said it is concerned over escalating hostilities between the two sides that threaten regional peace and security. Iran carried out the attack on Israel in response to a suspected Israeli strike on its consulate in Damascus April 1 in which seven Iranian Revolutionary Guards personnel, including two generals, were killed. In its reaction, India called for immediate de-escalation of the situation and return to the path of diplomacy. New Delhi said its embassies in the region are in close touch with the Indian community in the region. "We are seriously concerned at the escalation of hostilities between Israel and Iran which threatens the peace and security in the region," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

range rockets.

That system, along with collaboration with the US and others, helped thwart what could have been a far more devastating assault at a time when Israel is already bogged down in its war against Hamas in Gaza. **More P10**

**BJP manifesto dwells on development, skips NRC**

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

**New Delhi, April 14:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a pitch for electing a strong and stable government in an uncertain world beset by geopolitical tensions as the BJP Sunday released its manifesto, prioritising development and welfare while shunning populist measures and contentious issues like the NRC.

Named 'Modi ki Guarantee', the manifesto, released by Modi and other senior leaders including Union Ministers Amit Shah and Rajnath Singh besides party president JP Nadda, largely builds on the government's existing welfare schemes targeted at different sections of society, while reiterating the BJP's commitment to roll out one-nation-one-election and Uniform Civil Code, two issues mentioned in its 2019 manifesto too. The government has taken some concrete steps for their implementation.

The BJP promised to include all senior citizens above the age of 70 years in the 'Ayushman Bharat' scheme, which provides health insurance of up to ₹5 lakh.

The manifesto, in its outreach to the poor, highlights the government's decision to continue with the free ration scheme for over 80 crore people for the next five years and vows to protect the "garib ki thali" against any price pressure. It promises to expand the housing scheme for them and provide them with free electricity with its solar rooftop scheme.

It also spoke of considering bullet trains in north, south and east India and expanding "new age" trains like Vande Bharat, Amrit Bharat and Namoo Bharat.

Promising to strengthen the sports ecosystem to make India a world leader in sports, the BJP manifesto - Sankalp Patra - said its government will facilitate the Indian Olympic Association to bid for hosting the Olympic Games in 2036.

Modi gave the first copies of the manifesto to a few beneficiaries of his government's schemes in the function organised at the BJP headquarters.

**After death threat, firing outside Salman's house**

**Mumbai, April 14:** Two motorbike-borne unidentified persons opened fire outside Bollywood superstar Salman Khan's house here early Sunday morning leading the police to enhance security around his residence and launch a search for the accused.

The two persons fired four rounds outside the Galaxy Apartments in Mumbai's Bandra area, where the actor resides, at around 5am and fled from the spot, a police official said. Security outside Khan's residence was stepped up and the police were collecting footage of the CCTV cameras installed near his house to identify the persons, he said.

Local police, crime branch personnel and a team of forensic ex-

**Drug mixed with human bones ravaging Sierra Leone**

**AGENCIES**

**Freetown, April 14:** A bizarre yet alarming situation in Sierra Leone, a country in West Africa, has grabbed global attention as its people are getting high on psychoactive drug 'Kush', and digging up graves in order to extract human bones, which is apparently one of the ingredients of the drug.

Things have come to such a pass that Sierra Leonean President Julius Maada Bio has deemed the drug a 'death trap' and declared a national emergency over substance abuse following calls on his government to crack down on the rising use of the cheap and deadly synthetic drug.

Bio announced the national emergency in a late night address April 4, deploring what he said were "the destructive consequences of Kush on our country's very foundation: our young people". He said a national task force on substance abuse - involving all sectors of society and supervised by a presidential advisory team - would be set up to implement a five-step strategy for what he called a drug-free future.

Kush's low price makes it accessible to disillusioned, unemployed youth in Sierra Leone, where around a quarter of the population lives in poverty. The drug is also found in the neighbouring nation of Liberia.

The highly addictive mix of marijuana, tetanyl and tramadol has caused hundreds of deaths and psychiatrically damaged scores of users since it first appeared in Sierra Leone around four years ago, according to the government. There are no official figures on the exact number of deaths.

Also known as 'zombie drug', the narcotic substance has such severe euphoric effects and enhanced vigour that people tend to crumble like 'zombies' for hours after consuming the drug.

Medical staff in the capital



A man rolls his Kush in a drug den in Freetown, Sierra Leone **FILE IMAGE/AFP**

missions linked to Kush surged by almost 4,000% to reach 1,865, BBC reported.

The extent of the drug's grip on society is evident in the macabre phenomenon of grave robbing. Addicts, driven by their insatiable cravings, have resorted to unspeakable acts, raiding cemeteries in search of the raw materials for their next high. The sacred resting places of the deceased have been violated, their remains pillaged to fuel the insatiable demand for the 'Zombie' drug.

According to a report in *The Conversation*, there is no definitive evidence of bones being ground into the drug, but according to many, ground bones are added to make it more intoxicating. Some suggest that the sulphur content of the bones causes a high.

# leisure



## DRAKE HITS BACK AT LAMAR WITH A DISS TRACK

Rapper Kendrick Lamar earlier pointed guns at Drake and J. Cole on Metro Boomin and Future's *Like That*. The Canadian rapper seemingly launched a counter-offensive and has apparently fired back with a diss track that surfaced on social media, reports *Variety*.

## SHARON LASHES OUT AT AMANDA HOLDEN

Sharon Osbourne, the wife of Black Metal legend Ozzy Osbourne, has slammed actress Amanda Holden for calling her and Louis Walsh bitter and pathetic. Amanda blasted Sharon and Louis after they complained about Simon Cowell during their time on 'Celebrity Big Brother', reports *Female First UK*.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com  
accuracy • reliability • trust  
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

**ARIES**  
A tough, action-packed day ahead! There may be difference of opinions with friends over trivial matters, but you will thrive on it. But all pending work will be completed, much to your relief. It's a promising and optimistic day, says Ganesh!

**TAURUS**  
Today, you may have something at the back of your mind that will grip you with its complexity, says Ganesh. Speak freely as your words are capable of making a great impact on others. You may not be willing to confront unpleasant situations today.

**GEMINI**  
You are extremely competitive. And it doesn't matter how far behind the competition is. So today, you will continue your usual quest for getting better. You won't have it any other way as you despise mediocrity. You will find yourself in the company of like-minded people who will inspire you to study new subjects.

**CANCER**  
Today is a good day for you. However, don't expect a windfall. It is just one of those days when you will be in a good mood, irrespective of your problems, if any. You will treat your subordinates well, and they will show their appreciation.

**LEO**  
The Guevara may not hold the beacon any more, and the best of the Beatles are long gone. But your desire to revolutionise the world is as strong as ever, says Ganesh. The best ideas are the ones that come suddenly and subconsciously. So, always carry a pen and paper with you, you may need them to note down ideas that you generate over the course of the day.

**VIRGO**  
Professionalism will be overshadowed by personal preoccupations. Drill your way out of problems today by meeting them head-on. Don't get stuck up on the emotional front, especially in the evening, cautions Ganesh.

**LIBRA**  
Gear up to play the peace maker today! Your ability to handle a 'Brady Bunch' hasn't gone unnoticed. So expect to be put in charge of handling disputes among your subordinates at work today, hints Ganesh. Research work may slow to a crawl today, but the offshoot is that it's an auspicious day to enter into new contracts.

**SCORPIO**  
Work pressure will keep on mounting today, predicts Ganesh. But you shall handle it with great style, all thanks to your patience. But keep a watch on the radar and learn how to spot stress early and then act on it as quickly as you can.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Your ship may be rocked by stormy controversies today. Ganesh advises you to steer clear of people looking to give you a piece of their mind. The storm looks to ease away if you lend a patient ear to all such elements, and try and accommodate their views.

**CAPRICORN**  
You will starve for some free time, but will find it difficult to steal even a minute from your busy schedule, even if it is for unwinding your overworked soul, says Ganesh. In times like these, one can hardly think straight, let alone be innovative. You will, however, work your way out by prioritising matters.

**AQUARIUS**  
Your ideas are bang on target today! Everything you touch turns into gold. You have it in you to make it big, and the time is now. When the going gets tough, the tough get going — you've heard this before, now it's time for some action, says Ganesh.

**PISCES**  
Stabbing with a pen is so much more satisfying than slicing with a sword. With these lofty ideals in mind, you will launch an assault upon your unsuspecting prey with your lethal presentation skills, eliciting cries of sheer ecstasy and tremendous applause.

## Pooja: Power of OTT lies in creating stars

**Mumbai:** After 21 years, actress Pooja Bhatt has opened a new chapter in her acting career and credited the OTT world for it. She said the medium has opened a diverse canvas for her to explore.

"My launch was through *Daddy*, which my father (filmmaker Mahesh Bhatt) decided to release on Doordarshan. He was advised not to release it on the small screen because TV was a bad word in Bollywood at the time. *Daddy* overnight took me into people's homes and people's hearts with the relevant theme. It proved the medium is not important; the story is. And that is what OTT also proves," she said.

The 52-year-old added, "With the influx of OTT platforms, there are more roles for actors of different age groups, body types, and backgrounds. Back in the day, when I entered, it was all about a hero, heroine, villain, and hero's friend. Those lines have blurred completely, which is wonderful."

Picking her own example, she explains, "The fact that I came back after 21 years of quitting acting and I get a character like Rani in *Bombay Begums*, which is close to my age, OTT platforms offer diverse roles, and I'm grateful for the opportunity."

"Despite abundant opportunities, I believe there's a need for a shift in the mindset of decision-makers in the industry. While some are forward-thinking, others cling to outdated practices, prioritising star power over story. Yet the power of platforms like OTT lies in creating stars. Gratefully, meaningful roles and collaborations find me in this exciting phase of my acting career," concluded the actress, whose next project will also release on an OTT platform.

AGENCIES



## NORA'S TAKE ON FEMINISM

**Mumbai:** Actress-model Nora Fatehi recently shared her perspective on feminism, expressing concern over what she perceives as its negative impact on society.

Speaking on *BeerBiceps*, she said, "This idea of I don't need anybody, feminism, I don't believe in this shit. In fact, I think feminism messed up our society. The idea of being inherently completely independent and not having to get married and have kids and not having the male and female dynamics at home where the man is the provider; a breadwinner,

and the woman is the nurturer: I don't believe in people who think that's not true. I think women are nurturers; yes, they should go to work, have their own lives, and be independent, but to a certain extent."

The *Crakk* actress also emphasised that women shouldn't run away from the role of being nurturers. She said, "Individuals should embrace traditional gender roles, with women as mothers, wives, and nurturers, and men as providers, breadwinners, fathers, and husbands. This viewpoint, deemed old-fashioned by some, is simply normal to me. Feminism, while initially positive, has sometimes veered into radicalism, disrupting societal balance. While advocating for women's rights and education, radical feminism can pose dangers to society's stability." AGENCIES



## Harvard honour for Avantika

**Mumbai:** Indian-American actress Avantika Vandanapu, who is known for her role in *Mean Girls*, has been honoured with the South Asian Person of the Year award by Harvard University.

The actress was recognised for her outstanding achievements and significant impact in both the international and Indian entertainment industries.

Vandanapu said, "Being honoured by such a prestigious institution as Harvard University is truly humbling and incredibly motivating. This award not only acknowledges my efforts but also underscores the significance of narratives transcending borders and the crucial role of Indian representation in global media."

The actress, who made her debut in the Indian OTT series *Big Girls Don't Cry*, was born into an Indian, Telugu-speaking family and made her mark in several Hollywood projects, including *Mean Girls*, *Spin*, and *Senior Years*, among others.

"It propels me to delve into stories that challenge stereotypes, embrace diversity, and forge deep connections with people. My journey is just beginning, and this recognition ignites my determination to continue contributing positively through my work. I am eager for the future and aspire to pave the way for more Indian voices to resonate and thrive on the global platform." AGENCIES



## 'Male stars uneasy with women taking centre stage'

**Mumbai:** Actress Vidya Balan, graced the inaugural session of 'The Indian Express' in Mumbai. During the candid conversation, she spoke about her successful films like *Ishqiya*, *The Dirty Picture*, and others, which led to her facing reluctance from male actors when it came to sharing screen space with her.

In the conversation, the *Kismat Konnection* actress said, "Back in the day? I don't think they'd be okay even today to star in a Vidya Balan film, or a female-led film, for that matter. It's their loss, honestly, because we are doing better films than they are. I genuinely believe that. They are making more formula-based films; women-led films are far more exciting."

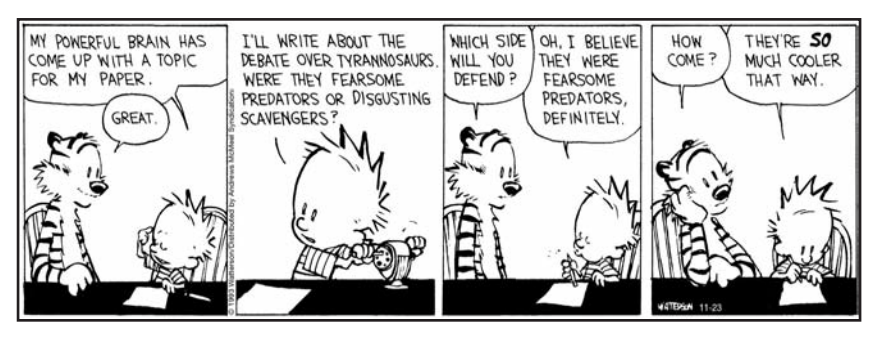
The actress added, "Of course, people have been appreciative, but male stars are uneasy with women taking centre stage. I don't think they'd be okay with anyone stealing the thunder. But I never felt bad. I was like, 'If they are threatened, what can I do?'" On the work front, Vidya will be seen in *Do Aur Do Pyaar* and has *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3* in her kitty.

AGENCIES

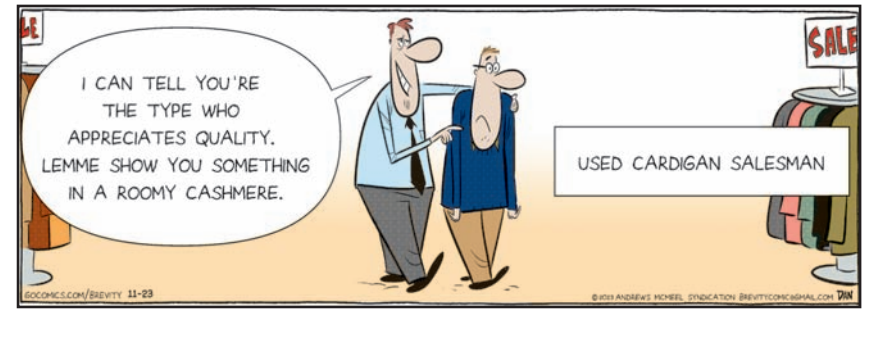
### PEANUTS



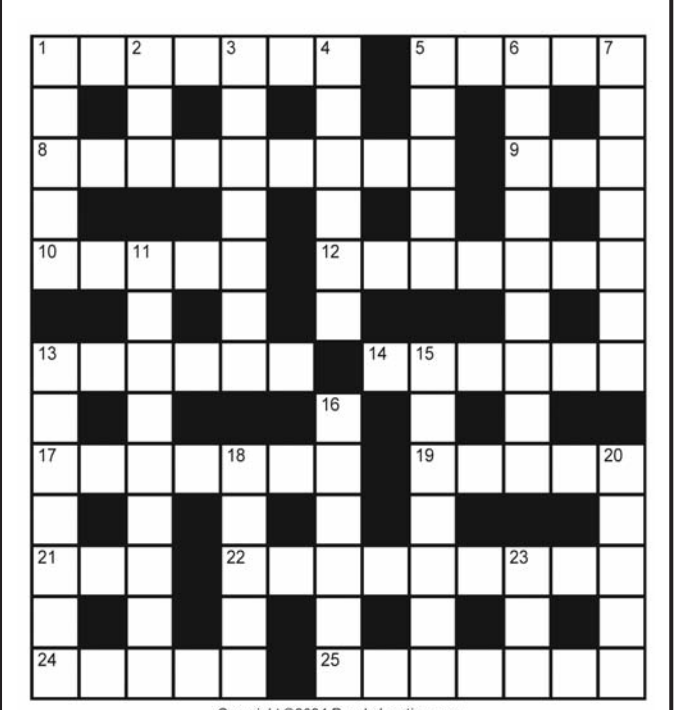
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



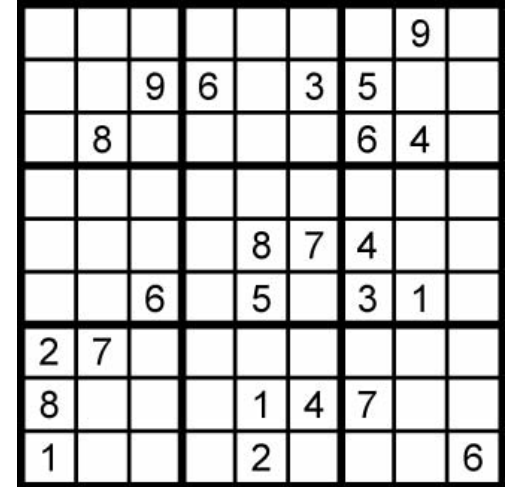
### FUN post CROSSWORD



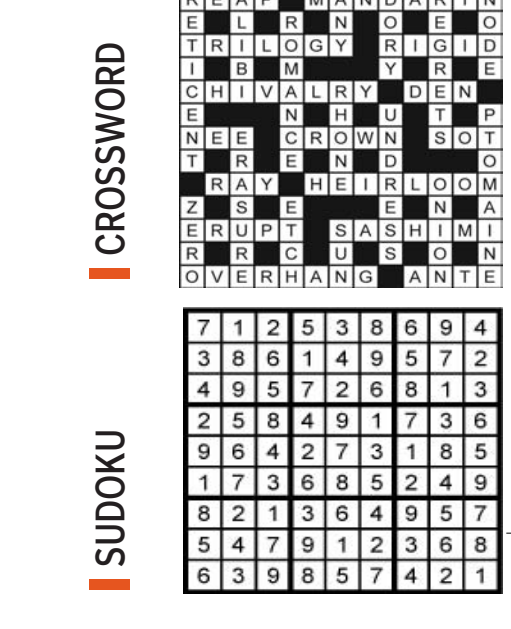
- Copyright ©2024 PuzzleJunction.com
- Across**
- 1 Pope's place
  - 5 Pear variety
  - 8 Department store event
  - 9 Wool weight
  - 10 Planetary house
  - 12 Himalayan peak
  - 13 Hummocks
  - 14 Like platypus feet
  - 17 Native
  - 19 Bullion unit
  - 21 Waikiki wear
  - 22 Next door resident, usually
  - 24 Destitute
  - 25 Intense
  - Down**
  - 1 Type of cords
  - 2 Little piggy
  - 3 Cut short
  - 4 Port on the Loire
  - 5 Ridgeline
  - 6 1940s dance craze
  - 7 Modernised
  - 11 Pirate attack, ship to ship
  - 13 Citadel of Moscow
  - 15 Smear word
  - 16 Journalist
  - 18 Wealth
  - 20 Brusque
  - 23 Lyric poem

### SUDOKU

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



### SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



At least four children watching Jhamu Jatra were injured as an asbestos roof on which they had gathered collapsed at Kedarpalli slum in Capital City, Sunday

downtown

Cong releases 2nd list of 75 picks

JB PATNAIK, KP SINGH DEO AND DEBENDRA SHARMA'S KIN GET TICKETS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 14: The Congress Sunday announced the names of 75 candidates for the upcoming Assembly elections...



Pradhan in Baliguda. Similarly, Bipin Bihari Swain took the place of Chiranjeevi Bisoiy in Kabisuryanagar.

Former Aul MLA Debendra Sharma's daughter Debasmitta Sharma has been nominated in place of her father.

Changes were made to candidates in three assembly seats - Talsara, Baliguda, and Kabisuryanagar.

Former Indian Hockey skipper Prabodh Tirkey was replaced by Debendra Bhitaria in Talsara, while Upendra Pradhan replaced Surada

sitting MLAs from the list of candidates - Suresh Routray and Adhiraj Panigrahi.

Jatni MLA Routray had previously announced his decision not to contest the 2024 elections, while Khariar legislator Panigrahi resigned from the party and joined BJD.

He has been nominated by the BJD to contest from Khariar. Among others, former Odisha Pradesh Congress (OPCC) presidents Niranjan Patnaik and Jaydev Jena will contest from Bhandaripokhari and Anandapur Assembly constituencies, respectively.

The Congress has named Rajanikanta Padhi as its candidate from Hinjili, where BJD president and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik is also a nominee.

With this announcement, the Congress has named 119 out of the 147 candidates in the state. Two seats have been adjusted with CPI(M) and JMM.

HERE'S THE LIST OF CONGRESS NOMINEES

Table with 3 columns: SI.No., No & Name of Constituency, Selected Candidates. Lists 38 candidates across various constituencies.

Table with 3 columns: SI.No., No & Name of Constituency, Selected Candidates. Lists 37 candidates across various constituencies.

Army conducts field trials of anti-tank guided missile system

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 14: The Indian Army has successfully carried out field trials of indigenously-developed man-portable anti-tank guided missile (MPATGM) weapon system...

The weapon system has been designed and developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), officials said.

The overall system consisted of the MPATGM, launchers, target acquisition device and a fire control unit.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has complimented the DRDO and the Indian Army for the successful trials of the system, terming it as an important step towards achieving self-reliance in advanced technology-based defence system development.

The MPATGM weapon system has been field evaluated in different flight configurations several times with an objective of proving the technology with high superiority, the Defence ministry said.

BJD urges EC for protection to ASHA, Anganwadi workers



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 14: Accusing the state BJP leaders of exerting pressure on ASHA, Anganwadi and Mission Shakti women workers to vote for the party in the upcoming Assembly and Lok Sabha elections, the BJD Sunday requested the Election Commission (EC) to provide protection to them.

In a memorandum to the

state's Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), a BJD delegation, including Rajya Sabha members Sasmit Patra and Sulata Deo, alleged that Odisha BJP leaders and candidates are engaging in defamation, intimidation, harassment and character assassination of the grassroots workers.

They claimed that false accusations are being made against the workers to illegally influ-

ence their support in the elections and create a climate of fear.

"The workers are being threatened with job loss and other consequences by the BJP if they do not comply with their demands. This is a blatant violation of their rights and an attempt to manipulate the electoral process through fear and intimidation," the party stated in its petition to the EC.

The regional party appealed to the EC to ensure the protection of these women workers so that they can carry out their duties without fear or interference.

"The dignity and respect of these workers must be upheld, and they should not be used as political tools," the BJD said.

Demand for pvt jets, choppers jumps up to 40%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 14: With politicians and political party representatives crisscrossing the country for the Lok Sabha polls, the demand for chartered planes and helicopters has jumped up to 40 per cent, and the operators are expected to net 15-20 per cent more

LS POLLS

earnings, according to industry experts. The hourly rates for chartered services have also spiked. The charge is about Rs 4.5-5.25 lakh for an aircraft and around Rs 1.5-1.7 lakh for a twin engine helicopter, they said.

While the demand has surged compared to the normal times and previous election years, there is lesser number of fixed wing aircraft and helicopters available.

"There is an increase in demand for helicopters and it is up to 25 per cent more in the election

period compared to the normal period. The supply is less compared to the demand," Rotary Wing Society of India (RWSI) President (Western Region) Captain Uday Gelli said.

80th Fire Safety Week begins in City

Bhubaneswar: The Odisha Fire and Emergency Services department observed the 80th Fire Safety Week and demonstrated the drills used during emergency situations at the OFDRA grounds, here, Sunday.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



The politics of manifestoes: A comparative analysis

BY ANIL SINGH

While election manifestoes were traditionally at the margins of political conversation because of their insignificance, they now command national attention during another electoral event.

Such manifestoes would function as literary pieces that unambiguously paint the images of political parties, which, in turn, encompass their blueprints for shaping the national future. But, amid the fervour, one question looms large: after addressing this question, one must conclude that, whether it is the real thing or just a poetical fiction, these documents do indeed carry with them real weight and power.

Manifestos go beyond the mark and paper; they tell about the state of the party's purposes and intentions. The fascination with the old papers grows when one thinks how the ethnic, cultural, and spiritual values of the country grow in abundance as thick as the lavish growth of a rainforest. The least, the Congress Party, the RJD, and the BJP have gone through the launch of their manifestos for the upcoming 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

With that being usual, so the scene is set for a meticulous test. This is also the very moment for an examination of these manifestoes, a time to anatomize their expressions and explore parties' aspirations in their bid for the masses' trust.

Congress Party's 'Nyaya Patra'

The Congress has, indeed, introduced its 'Nyaya Patra,' manifesto, like a successful raconteur; that paints pictures of equity, youth empowerment, and gender justice. The Congress

party came up with its Lok Sabha election manifesto for 2024 on April 5th, 2024. The manifesto, called Nyaya Patra, focuses on the theme of justice and highlights five pillars of justice: Yuva Nyaya (youth justice), Naari Nyaya (women justice), Kisan Nyaya (farmer justice), Shramik Nyaya (worker justice) and Hissedari Nyay (equity justice).

However, the manifesto Nyaya Patra of the Congress party enlists many promises and commitments. Some of the key promises include:

- 1. Right to apprenticeship: The manifesto promises to provide a legal guarantee for the right to apprenticeship.
2. Legal guarantee for Minimum Support Price (MSP): The Congress party pledges to provide a legal guarantee for MSP, ensuring fair prices for agricultural produce.
3. Constitutional amendment for reservation: The manifesto promises to pass a constitutional amendment to raise the 50% cap on reservations for Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs).
4. Focus on justice for various sections: The Nyaya Patra manifesto emphasizes justice for youth, women, farmers, workers, and equity.
5. Other guarantees: The manifesto includes other guarantees related to governance, economy, federalism, national security, and environmental sustainability.
RJD's 'Parivartan Patra'
The RJD which is led by Tejashwi Yadav, released the 'Parivartan Patra' manifesto as its working document for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. It

was launched on April 13, 2024, and covers the developmental issues and concerns of the people in Bihar. Key highlights of the Parivartan Patra manifesto include:

- 1. 24 promises: The manifesto outlines 24 promises that the RJD party is committed to fulfilling if elected to power.
2. Developmental issues: The manifesto emphasizes crucial developmental issues for Bihar, addressing areas such as job creation, welfare programs, and infrastructure development.
3. Welfare of the people: The Parivartan Patra manifesto focuses on the welfare of the people of Bihar, aiming to improve their quality of life and address their needs.
BJP's 'Sankalp Patra': Modi Ki Guarantee 2024
Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) has launched its election manifesto called 'Sankalp Patra' for the upcoming 2024 Lok Sabha elections. This was launched on the fourteenth day of April 2024, which is also the birth anniversary of Dr B. R. Ambedkar, who is a renowned freedom fighter and the father of the Indian Constitution. BJP's Sankalp Patra comprises a separate set of promises and a range of issues including simultaneous elections, Uniform Civil Code, economic objectives, and social and development schemes for the different sections of the society. Key highlights of the Sankalp Patra manifesto include:
1. One Nation, One Election: The manifesto includes the proposal for simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha and all state Assemblies, known as 'One Nation, One Election'.

- 2. Uniform Civil Code: The BJP pledges to implement a Uniform Civil Code (UCC).
3. Economic goals: The manifesto sets ambitious economic goals, aiming to increase India's GDP to US\$5 trillion by 2025 and \$10 trillion by 2032.
4. Focus on key segments: The BJP's manifesto focuses on four key segments: Garib (poor), Yuva (youth), Annadata (farmers), and Nari (women).
5. Welfare and development: The Sankalp Patra manifesto emphasizes welfare and development, with a focus on dignity, quality of life, and opportunities.

The Verdict
Manifestos resemble the monsoon rains that rejuvenate and yield a vigorous crop. They are overlooked, and erased. However, their lasting imprints are still present underneath the layers of time. Come elections when voters storm into the polling stations, an elector holds promises in his heart. Their idealism, sometimes misplaced, is something that these manifestoes do to beguile the elector who has fallen for such promises. Also, understand, that some hidden undercurrents are what these manifestoes are presented with. Naysayers reveal that statements of intent frequently look like a smorgasbord of pledges, whereas the main suggestion is absent. Political parties can announce that prosperity, justice, and growth will be developed, however, details regarding procedures of how these goals will be accomplished remain unclear. Nevertheless, these days people are not just interested in general notions such as 'how' and 'when' they would be implemented, but

demand that the cost also matters. The Congress, RJD, and BJP manifestos, somehow grant the accusation of being supportive of this conventional trend. It might be claimed that the devil hides under the name details. Unfortunately, the manifesto is not detailed enough and leaves many issues unanswered. The repetition of the old manifestoes is the most likely outcome. The same promises which were used in previous elections sparked a lot of skepticisms among the voters. Critics claim that the parties rely on their inability to remember their shortcomings and attract past commitments. The Congress, following the 'Nyaya Patra' manifesto ventures on similar roads—employment, gender equality, and regional pride. The RJD and the BJP also can be heard with similar issues through the media. To voters, promises are either flimsy slogans or concrete evidence. Manifestoes are no different from the architecture blueprints: success is ensured by execution. The critics argue that parties barely even keep to the promises they made during the election. The manifesto rhetoric continuously goes in contrast with the ground actions, forming a space. One of the roles Congress, RJD, and BJP should play is to fill this gap. Would they remain true to the words they have said, or would they prove to be incapable of taking action? Voters start looking at what they have done and they get cautious as they don't like broken promises. Manifestos edge beyond the divide between populism and pragmatism. Voters tend to respond well to jingo-

istic positions, but progress is ensured when wise countermeasures are in place. The Congress's 'Nyaya Patra' has a 'populist' tilt that focuses on the possibility of immediate relief. RJD and BJP are in the middle ground for that, but some doubts remain about their policy proposals. Only the most popular positions are included in the manifestoes, or some details are left out of the competition. Critics say the officials of parties maneuver to skim over painful realities. The Congress, RJD, and BJP manifestos fail to address some things like land reforms, labour laws, and the environment. Voters are puzzled if the exclusion is not accidental but part of the divulging hidden agendas. Manifestoes are yet other parties that critics disagree on whether they serve the interests of the party leaders or the citizens. Do parties write manifestoes for the nation or to improve the economy? The Congress, RJD, and BJP should endeavour to convince the voters that the manifestoes are the tools of people empowerment rather than attributes of elections. In this political drama, manifestoes step in to act as the main figures- the protagonists of a democratic story. As the voters cast their ballots, they weigh calming promises on one side between history, gloomy and hope signs in the background. Let's watch the blurry lines fade even more as the ironic comedy starts on June 4.

The writer is a New Delhi-based political strategist

# President, PM, CM greet people on Odia New Year



ful Odia culture. I pray that the year ahead is full of happiness and success. May all your dreams be fulfilled as well and may everyone be healthy."

The CM said, "My heartiest greetings and best wishes to all on the occasion of Maha Bishuba Sankranti and Odia New Year. May the immense mercy of Mahaprabhu Shree Jagannath fill everyone's life with happiness and prosperity."

Marking the celebration of the Maha Bishuba Sankranti, special rituals were held at Srimandir. The newly-prepared almanac was read before the sibling deities of Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Lord Jagannath.

The people observed fast and offered new clothes and 'Pana' to the deities at different temples. The Pana is prepared by mixing water, jaggery, yoghurt and spices having cooling properties.

The day was also celebrated as Hanuman Jayanti, as it is believed that Lord Hanuman was born on this day.

Jhamu Jatra rituals also take place during this occasion. The people observing Jhamu are called 'Patua' or holy devotees. They end the ritual on the day by walking barefoot on burning charcoal as a part of their penance and to express gratitude to the goddess for having fulfilled their wishes.

The Maha Bishuba Sankranti is observed in different names in various regions of the state, while it is called 'Chadak Parva' in North Odisha, the same is called 'Danda Nata' in the southern region of the state.



**FESTIVE MOOD:** Volunteers of an outfit distribute 'Pana' near Exhibition Ground in Bhubaneswar, Sunday, on the occasion of Odia New Year and Maha Bishuba Sankranti

## Mercury to rise by 4 to 6 degrees Celsius

**Bhubaneswar:** The India Meteorological Department (IMD) Sunday said the day temperature is expected to rise by four to six degrees Celsius in many places across the state over the next four to five days. This rise in temperature is due to prevailing northwesterly/westerly dry air and high solar insolation, the IMD Bhubaneswar centre said in a bulletin. The centre predicted that the day temperature will exceed 40 degrees Celsius in many areas of the state, with coastal Odisha experiencing temperatures around 36-38 degrees Celsius over the next two days. The interior areas are expected to witness temperatures between 40 and 42 degrees Celsius April 17 and 18. Additionally, the night temperature is likely to increase by two to four degrees Celsius in many places over the next three days, the IMD said. On Sunday, the maximum temperature recorded in the state was 40.5 degrees Celsius in Paralakhemundi, followed by Malkangiri (39.9 degrees C) and Bhubaneswar (39.6 degrees C). In anticipation of a heatwave, the IMD centre issued a Yellow Warning for Cuttack, Nayagarh, Dhenkanal, Bhadrak and Jajpur districts for April 15. Hot and humid weather conditions are expected in a number of districts during the day, including Bhadrak, Jajpur, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara, Balasore, Mayurbhanj, Khurda, Cuttack, Angul, and Nayagarh, weathermen said.

## Person can't be deprived of right to livelihood: HC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 14:** A person can't be deprived of right to livelihood and to live with dignity merely on account of old age and frail health, the Delhi High Court observed while upholding an order directing eviction of a tenant from a property, which is now required by the landlord for carrying out his business.

**OLD AGE, FRAIL HEALTH**

The high court rejected the stand taken by the tenant that looking at the old age and health of the landlord, it was not believable that he would carry out any business from the premises which was sought to be vacated.

The high court dismissed the petition by the tenant challenging an order of an additional rent controller (ARC) which had passed the eviction order.

"The bona fides of the requirement set up by the landlord cannot be shrouded with doubts on such presumptive arguments. Merely because the landlord suffers old age and frail health, it cannot be presumed that he does not require the tenanted premises to run his business or is not capable of earning livelihood," Justice Girish Kathpalia said while upholding the ARC's order.

The high court said there was nothing on record to feebly sug-

gest that the landlord was bedridden or being taken care of financially by his son, engaged in an independent business.

"Merely on account of old age and frail health, a person cannot be deprived of the right to livelihood and the consequent right to live with dignity," the high court said.

The landlord, who claimed to be the owner of a shop in Paharganj area, had filed a petition before the trial court seeking to evict the tenant on the grounds that now he required the premises to carry out his business as he has no reasonably suitable alternate accommodation.

The landlord said earlier he had to shut his business, which was being run in a residential area, and he was allotted a plot in Bawana by the authorities but he had surrendered the same on account of long distance and his old age. The court noted that the plot was surrendered long ago and it was not available with the landlord to be used as a shop.

"The surrender of the Bawana plot by the present respondent (landlord) was because of the long distance between Bawana and the place of residence of the present respondent. But that cannot be read to mean that he is incapable of earning his livelihood through business from the subject premises," it said.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, April 14:** President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik greeted the people on the occasion of 'Odia New Year' and 'Maha Bishuba Sankranti' Sunday.

Murmu, in a post on X, said, "On the occasion of Pana Sankranti, I extend my heartiest congratulations to the people of Odisha and those living abroad. Pana Sankranti or Maha Bishuba Sankranti is celebrated with joy across Odisha. I wish the dear brothers and sisters of Odisha a happy and prosperous Odia

**MARKING THE CELEBRATION OF THE MAHA BISHUBA SANKRANTI, SPECIAL RITUALS WERE HELD AT SRIMANDIR**

**PEOPLE OBSERVED FAST AND OFFERED NEW CLOTHES AND 'PANA' TO THE DEITIES AT DIFFERENT TEMPLES**

New Year, a symbol of cultural richness. And I pray for the prosperity of the people of the state."

Modi also wished the people of Odisha on Odia New Year and, in a post on X, said, "Best wishes on Maha Bishuba Pana Sankranti and Odia New Year. We take great pride in the wonder-

## FICCI FLO meet held

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 14:** THE FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO), Bhubaneswar chapter, recently hosted its inaugural members' meet here. The meet on the theme 'Connect & Conquer - Know and Get Known' was attended by chairperson of Odisha Skill Development Authority Alka Mishra as the chief guest. Speaking on the occasion, chairperson of FLO-Bhubaneswar Rashmi Sahoo said the meeting underscored the importance of empowering conversations and the pursuit of one's dreams. The event provided a platform for networking and collaboration among both the existing and new entrepreneurs.

FLO Bhubaneswar chapter extended a warm welcome to new entrepreneurs who joined its esteemed ranks. Their presence enriched the community, adding diverse perspectives and experiences.

The members present on the occasion were senior vice chairperson Pragnan Paramita Mishra, vice chairperson Panchami Manoo Ukil, treasurer Aparna Mishra, joint treasurer Sonia Guhani, secretary Shrabani Patnaik and joint secretary Gunjan Chandak.



## Governor, CM pay tributes to Ambedkar

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, April 14:** Governor Raghubar Das and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik paid tributes to BR Ambedkar on his 134th birth anniversary Sunday.

"Babasaheb played a pivotal role in shaping the democratic and inclusive fabric of the society," Governor said.

Taking to X, the CM said, "Humble tributes to the architect of Indian Constitution, Bharat Ratna BR Ambedkar on his birth anniversary. He was a visionary leader who worked towards the upliftment of the underprivileged and marginalised. Let's strive to uphold his ideals of equality and justice as we



work towards a brighter, more inclusive future for all."

The Central University of Odisha (CUO), Koraput vice-chancellor Chakradhar Tripathi also paid tributes to Babasaheb in presence of academic and administration advisor VC Jha, Hindi cell director in-charge Hemraj Meena, faculty members and administrative staff. Reflecting on Ambedkar's profound influence as a scholar and

social reformer, Tripathi highlighted his pivotal role in shaping India's Constitutional framework. He emphasised Ambedkar's pursuit of an egalitarian society, civil liberties, gender equality, and empowerment of marginalised communities.

Tripathi underlined the global significance of Ambedkar's legacy and called for a renewed appreciation for Ambedkar's economic, social, and educa-

tional endeavours.

On this occasion, Tripathi unveiled plans to establish a 'Centre for Ambedkar Studies' within the university, dedicated to interdisciplinary research on Ambedkar's teachings. Additionally, he revealed intentions to put up a statue of Ambedkar on campus, symbolising the university's commitment to preserving his ideals.

Jha, in his speech, lauded roles of Ambedkar as jurist, economist, politician and social reformer, highlighting his relentless advocacy against Dalit discrimination and his fervent support for women and workers rights. Meena underscored Ambedkar's transformative impact on the downtrodden sections of society.

## Cave Didis: Transforming lives through poultry farming support

In the past, Sabita Mohanti would find herself idle after completing household and field chores. Now, she eagerly responds to calls for help from fellow women poultry farmers in her community, signifying the positive change sweeping through Odisha's villages.

Once just a homemaker, Mohanti from Mayurbhanj district's Mituani village today has a new identity. She is one of the 200 Community Agro-Vet Entrepreneurs, or Cave Didis as they are popularly known, revolutionising life in villages in the state's Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj districts by providing vital assistance to women engaged in poultry farming.

The 37-year-old, who has studied till Class XII, has found not just a new identity but also a sense of purpose and empowerment.

"Poultry farming has always been a part of our community but initially awareness was limited. It was when respected individuals visited our village and suggested that I could become a

'Cave Didi', extending assistance to others, that I felt empowered to make a difference," Mohanti told Gaon Connection.

She oversees a flock of more than 80 chickens, extending her care not only to her own but also to others' poultry.

This transformative wave is fuelled by the Hatching Hope Global Initiative, implemented by Heifer International, which aims to uplift tribal women and farmers involved in poultry farming.

The dedicated Didis working across villages in the Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj districts are making a meaningful impact in the everyday lives of women engaged in poultry farming.

Similar is the case for Jayanti Mahato, in Mohanti's village Mituani, who raises chickens for a living. Earlier, her poultry would often fall ill, resulting in financial losses. However, the Didis, who also rear chickens, are always available to help.

"Now, whenever the chickens fall sick, a single phone call brings Didi to our aid. They offer us valuable insights," the 32-



year-old said.

Launched in November 2018 in Mayurbhanj district, the Hatching Hope initiative seeks to enhance nutrition and income levels by promoting increased backyard poultry farming and consumption of poultry products.

Recognising the affordability and accessibility of chicken and eggs as rich protein sources, the Hatching Hope Global Initiative

has left a significant mark worldwide. The initiative particularly benefits from the invaluable support of the Cave Didis, who offer essential training and vaccinations for the poultry.

Since its inception, the project has contributed to a 33.31 per cent growth rate in egg production over the last five years, making a substantial impact on

the availability of protein sources in the region.

In collaboration with partners, Hatching Hope facilitates the connection of poultry farmers with essential resources for the success and sustainability of their businesses.

"The project, initiated in 2018, has been ongoing for three years, benefiting nearly 30,000 Adivasi families in Odisha," Akshay Biswal, the state coordinator for Hatching Hope in Odisha, told Gaon Connection.

Andhra Pradesh leads the country in egg production, accounting for 20.13 per cent of the total production, followed

by Tamil Nadu (15.58 per cent), Telangana (12.77 per cent), West Bengal (9.94 per cent), and Karnataka (6.51 per cent).

Discussing the Cave Didi project, Biswal said, "The Animal Husbandry Department has appointed veterinary doctors at the district and block levels. So, we provided training to Cave Didis in every village who already have knowledge of vaccination and other basics."

Collaborating closely with the Animal Husbandry Department, Heifer ensures that Cave Didis receive continuous training.

Soumya Ranjan Khatua, a poultry expert from the department, said "We have regular meetings with Cave Didis. We distribute vaccines and medicines, enabling them to treat the chickens effectively."

He added, "For instance, in a case of chicken mortality in a particular area, we specifically trained Cave Didis there to prevent further losses."

(This story has been jointly produced by PTI and Gaon Connection.)

**LAUNCHED IN NOVEMBER 2018 IN MAYURBHANJ DISTRICT, THE HATCHING HOPE GLOBAL INITIATIVE SEEKS TO ENHANCE NUTRITION AND INCOME LEVELS BY PROMOTING INCREASED BACKYARD POULTRY FARMING AND CONSUMPTION OF POULTRY PRODUCTS**

**THE INITIATIVE PARTICULARLY BENEFITS FROM THE INVALUABLE SUPPORT OF THE CAVE DIDIS, WHO OFFER ESSENTIAL TRAINING AND VACCINATIONS FOR THE POULTRY**

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# Drop in turtle numbers sparks concern

Only 3 lakh turtles arrive in Gahirmatha this year, a sharp decrease from the 5 lakh that had nested in 2023

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kendrapara, April 14:** The decline in the number of Olive Ridley turtles for mass nesting at Gahirmatha marine sanctuary near Bhitarkanika National Park in this district for the last two years has sparked concern among the environmentalists, sources said Sunday.



According to an official report, 5.11 lakh Olive Ridley turtles had laid eggs at Gahirmatha in 2022. The number decreased slightly, to around five lakh in 2023. However, this year the drop in the number of turtles visiting the sanctuary is really alarming. According to official estimates, only three lakh turtles have arrived at Gahirmatha. This massive decline in numbers has sparked fears of drastic climate changes or some massive natural disaster in the offing.

Hemant Kumar Rout, secretary of 'Gahirmatha Marine Turtles and Mangrove Protection Committee', environmentalists Khitish Kumar Singh and Srikanth Nayak said there are a number of reasons behind the decrease in numbers. They pointed out that erosion and loss of land mass is one of the main reasons behind the decrease in number of turtles visiting the sanctuary. As the land is being gobbled up by the sea, the nesting places of the turtles are also being reduced. Hence many turtles are staying away from the sanctuary, pointed out Nayak.

Rout on the other hand, added that the only way to stop the erosion is through plantation of mangroves. "However, awareness programmes about the importance of mangroves and the plantation drive has not been properly implemented," he

pointed out.

The three informed that the mushrooming prawn gheries in Bhitarkanika National Park has a role to play in soil erosion. They said that the chemical-laced water released from these gheries acts as a 'killer' for whatever little mangrove plantation is there. The toxic water also affects the turtles and hence it may be another reason why a lesser number of turtles are visible in Gahirmatha this year.

Fishermen and change in climate are the other main reasons why there is a decrease in the number of turtles. Despite

bans, fishermen enter prohibited areas inside the sea. In the process, many turtles die after getting entangled in the nets, the three opined. They also pointed out that earlier the turtles used to lay eggs in March, but this year they have done so in April. This time shift is proof enough that some climatic change is affecting the visiting turtles, the environmentalists pointed out. They warned that the turtles will stop visiting Gahirmatha for mass nesting like Harachandi coastline in Puri district if natural environment is not restored at the earliest.

When contacted, Gahirmatha ranger Pradosh Moharana said the Forest department is taking a number of measures for protection of the turtles. He pointed out that mangrove forest plantations are being carried out to solve the erosion issues. Security has also been beefed up to prevent the unauthorised entry of fishermen in prohibited zones. "We will shortly conduct a review to find out why the number of turtles visiting Gahirmatha this year has declined. Accordingly we will take steps," said Moharana.

# Rourkela gears up for Ram Navami

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rourkela, April 14:** Preparations are on in full swing to celebrate Ram Navami in this city and adjoining areas in a grand manner Wednesday, various people associated with the programmes informed Sunday. They added security measures have also been tightened keeping in mind that this is the election year. Administrative officials said 58 associations have filed applications to take out immersion processions.

The 'Akhadas' usually play a dominant role during Ram Navami celebrations. Most of them are busy giving the finishing touches to the various themes or concepts on which the processions will be based. However, most of them are not ready to share the concepts as each of the 'Akhadas' wants to stand out with their show.

Subash Verma, of 'Bajrangbali Akhada', one of the oldest in this city said, "At this moment, we can't disclose our theme. However, we will surprise the audience. All I can tell you that we are now giving finishing touches to our preparations."

The district administration has issued strict orders to all organisations participating in the celebrations to maintain peace



and harmony. Decorations of roads and setting up of colourful lights have already been completed. The stretch between Bisra Chowk till Udit Nagar, just a shade more than two kilometres, has been decorated in such a manner that it looks like an extension of the inauguration of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya earlier this year. "Ram Navami is a very important occasion for us. Hence we have to celebrate it in the right manner and spirit," said Gursharan Singh, a resident of this city.

Officials meanwhile informed that roads through which processions will pass Wednesday will be washed with cow dung and water. The demand for various varieties of sweets has also escalated. "I have stopped taking any more orders because of shortage of hands," said the owner of a shop in this city.

Many clubs have also set up 'welcome stalls' for people participating in the processions. "We will distribute sweets and cold drinks to people joining the processions," said Ramesh, a youth who resides near the old taxi stand here. Most of the shops and other business houses have decorated their establishments. "We offer puja both at home and at the shop to seek the blessings of Lord Ram," said Binod Agarwal, owner of a very old electronic shop here.

Meanwhile, administrative officials held a meeting Saturday with the organisations that will take part in the immersion processions. They have been asked to carry out the immersions between 2.00pm to 7.00pm in the evening. Organisers have also been informed that all processions will terminate at Udit Nagar locality here.

# Woman 'kills' son for stealing money

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kalimela, April 14:** In a shocking incident, an eight-year-old boy died after being allegedly kicked on the chest by his mother at Tumbaguda village under this police limits in Malkangiri district Saturday night. The deceased has been identified as Rohit Padiami, son of Muka Padiami of the same village.



On being informed, officials from the Kalimela police station reached the spot and initiated an investigation into the incident. A forensic team was also pressed into service. Later Wagi was detained after her husband officially lodged a complaint against her. Kalimela PS IIC, Chandrakant Tandri informed that Wagi has confessed that she kicked Rohit under the influence of alcohol. Police are now waiting for the post-mortem report to ascertain the real cause behind Rohit's death.

# 3 held in Ganjam with explosives

PNN & AGENCIES

**Berhampur, April 14:** Three persons were arrested Sunday after explosive substances like gunpowder were allegedly seized from their possession in Ganjam district, police said.

The accused were transporting the explosive materials in a motorcycle, an officer said. During patrolling, they were arrested in Hundata area under Purushottampur police station limits, the officer informed.

The gunpowder weighing around 750 grams, a bundle of thread and the motorcycle were seized, said Ganjam SP Jagmohan Meena. Gunpowder and thread are usually used to make bombs, Meena added. All three persons were booked under sections of the Explosive Substance Act 1908, Meena stated.

The Ganjam SP said that a special drive to check vehicles has been launched across the district to curb the illegal transportation of firearms and explosive substances in view of the upcoming elections.



**AWARENESS DRIVE:** Koraput District Collector V Keerthi Vasana climbed to the highest peak of Deomali hills and called upon young voters to vote in the upcoming general elections as part of an awareness programme, held Sunday. Vasana urged the voters to register highest polling percentage in the district so that it can be compared to the height of Deomali hills, which is incidentally the tallest in Odisha

# Devotees throng Tarini temple on occasion of 'Pana Sankranti'

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Keonjhar, April 14:** The Odia New Year is observed as 'Maha Bishuba Pana Sankranti'. On the occasion of New Year, thousands of devotees from all over the state thronged to the Tarini temple at Ghatagaon in this district to watch the Suna Besha (golden attire) ritual of the deity, Sunday.

Devotees stood in line in front of the temple to offer puja and get a glimpse of the deity decked up in gold ornaments. They also observed the 'Chaiti Parva' ritual. The servitors distributed 'pana' a soft drink prepared by mixing various fruits, black pepper, grated paneer and curd, to all the devotees who visited the temple on the auspicious occasion.

Officials of the temple management committee informed that rituals and puja started from 5.00am Sunday morning. Later the gates



were opened for the devotees after completion of the rituals. The temple and local administration had made elaborate arrangements so that the devotees could celebrate the occasion in a proper manner. Special queues for elderly and physically-challenged persons and women were also arranged.

Coolers were installed at strategic locations to help devotees get respite from the blistering heat. Police also made proper arrangements for seamless movement of traffic. Various cultural programmes were organised

within the temple premises for the devotees.

Officials informed that the programmes will continue for five more days. Cultural events like 'Chhau dance', Puppet shows and 'Ghoda dance' will be held. Devotional programmes like 'Bhajan Samaroh' by eminent singers will also be held during this period. Earlier the festival at the temple was celebrated only on the first day of the Odia New Year. However, since 1937, it is being held over six days, officials informed.

# Elderly woman dies of snakebite

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rourkela, April 14:** An elderly woman died late Saturday night after being bitten by a venomous snake at Bijadihi village under Bisra police limits in Sundargarh district. She was rushed to the Rourkela Government Hospital (RGH) initially and then to a private nursing home here, but she did not respond to treatment. The deceased has been identified as Julia Minz, 58, a resident of the same village.

According to sources, Julia had gone to a nearby forest to feed her livestock including cows and goats. While she was returning home, she was bitten on her left leg by the snake. Immediately her leg started swelling and she felt severe pain all over her body. Somehow she managed to return home and her family members first took her to RGH and then to the nursing home. However, she breathed her last while undergoing treatment.

# Rivals exchange pleasantries while campaigning in Silk City

PNN & AGENCIES

**Berhampur, April 14:** Morning walkers in Silk City were surprised to see the leaders of the ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) and opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) exchange pleasantries when they met while campaigning at the MKCG Medical College ground here Sunday.

The leaders of different political parties have now adopted a strategy to start their campaigns early in the morning in parks and playgrounds where people gather for their daily walks and exercises. This is because of the extreme heatwave conditions the state is going

through at this juncture.

The people at the MKCG Medical College ground were pleasantly surprised and amused to see BJD's Berhampur Assembly constituency candidate and party's Ganjam district president Ramesh Chandra Chyau Patnaik and BJP's Berhampur Lok Sabha seat nominee Pradeep Panigrahy campaigning at the Medical College ground, Sunday morning.

Both the leaders were accompanied by their supporters. When Chyau Patnaik and Panigrahy came face to face, being younger in age, the latter greeted the former with folded hands. The supporters of both the

leaders, who were shouting slogans against each other paused when the two senior leaders greeted each other. However, when BJD supporters raised 'Jai Jagannath' slogan the BJP ones responded by chanting 'Jai Shree Ram'.

Both Chyau Patnaik and Panigrahy are arch-rivals in Ganjam district politics. However, Panigrahy respects Chyau Patnaik as a senior leader as he had worked under him. Panigrahy, the Gopalpur MLA, was expelled from BJD in 2020.

Elections to the Berhampur Lok Sabha and Berhampur Assembly segment will be held May 13.

# RSP helping women to increase their incomes



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rourkela, April 14:** Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) is providing a vocational skill development training programme in food processing to 15 women at the 'Institute of Periphery Development' here. The sole aim is to enhance the income generation opportunities for these women, officials said Sunday.

The month-long training programme commenced March 16. KS Viridi, GM In-charge (CPP-1) presided over the inaugural function and encouraged the participants to strengthen their

skills for additional incomes. He said that it will improve the quality of their lives. Present on the occasion were Munmun Mitra, GM (CSR) and other officers of RSP and representatives from the 'Society for Rural Industrialisation' (SRI).

The women were trained in various types of food processing including making of pickle products from mixed fruits, garlic, mangoes and bamboo shoots. They were imparted knowledge in making fried items like samosa, poha, thekua, chakuli dal and many other products. They were also taught to how make jams and sauces.

# Admin takes hand fan route to sensitise voters

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rayagada, April 14:** The district administration here has found an innovative way to educate and create awareness among the voters for the upcoming Lok Sabha and Assembly elections. The move has drawn appreciation from various quarters. Officials informed that the administration is using bamboo-made hand fans to conduct voter awareness programmes and to attract them to polling stations to cast their votes.

Almost all the bamboo-made fans being sold in this district have messages concerning the upcoming polls. The messages ask voters to turn out in large numbers and to cooperate for a free, fair, impartial and peaceful election. A slogan in the local dialect, 'Muin Misha Vote Debi' (I will vote in the elec-



tion) is written in most of the bamboo fans. It is bound to attract attention.

As per the schedule, three Assembly constituencies in this district will go to polls May 13. They are Rayagada, Bissam Cuttack and Gunupur. The dis-

trict administration is trying to ensure 100 per cent turnout in all the booths of these constituencies.

Officials said if it happens, it will certainly be a victory for democracy. This year, around 32,189 new voters will cast their votes for the first time in this district. The administration is also conducting awareness programmes in tribal areas to educate them about their rights and encouraging them to cast votes. The district registered 75 per cent polling in the 2019 elections. "Hopefully this time around, we can achieve the 100 per cent mark," said an official of the district administration. The use of bamboo fans for creating awareness has been beneficial for the people who make them. With the district administration buy-

ing large quantities of fans, the earnings of the artisans have also increased. Details of most of the polling booths have been inscribed on the fans through traditional Saura paintings known as 'Idital'.

Rayagada sub-collector Kalyani Sanghamitra Devi said that the district administration decided to use bamboo fans to create voter awareness on the direction of Collector Manoj Satyawan Mahajan. The fans are being used in the awareness programmes as it is cost efficient and environment friendly, Devi said. Some of these fans also have details of the various Apps that can be used during the elections like the 'Sakhyam App' for disabled persons and 'cVigil APP'. This move by the district administration has been appreciated by the local residents, informed Devi.

The messages on the hand fans ask voters to turn out in large numbers and to cooperate for a free, fair, impartial and peaceful election



What men call knowledge, is the reasoned acceptance of false appearances. Wisdom looks behind the veil and sees.

SRI AUROBINDO



## Basics Missing

Prime Minister Narendra Modi 14 April released the BJP's manifesto for the Lok Sabha elections, highlighting his vision for 'Viksit Bharat' as he urged the people to give another mandate to his party to shape India's 'destiny' for the next 1,000 years. Named 'Modi ki Guarantee', the manifesto focuses on expanding the government's current welfare programmes. "I had said from the ramparts of the Red Fort that 'Yahi Samay hai, Sahi Samay hai' to shape India's destiny for the next 1,000 years... I present this Sankalp Patra to the people of the country as 'Modi ki guarantee' for their blessings. The country's 140 crore people's ambition is Modi's mission," the Prime Minister said. The document reaffirms the party's commitment to implementing its staple issues - one nation, one election and Uniform Civil Code. Additionally, it promises bullet trains in the country's north, south and east and "new age" trains like Vande Bharat, Amrit Bharat and Namu Bharat. Surprisingly, the manifesto has no mention of the contentious National Register for Citizens (NRC), which the party had promised in 2019 to check illegal infiltration, but had to beat a hasty retreat in the face of nationwide protests.

While chairman of the party's manifesto committee Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has equated "Modi ki guarantee" to "24 carat gold," the Opposition is not amused as it questioned the absence of any reference to basic issues like unemployment, inflation and poverty in the document. Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi said: "Two words are missing from the BJP's manifesto and Narendra Modi's speech - inflation and unemployment." Similarly, trashing the BJP manifesto, Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge termed it a "warranty of jumlas."

It is pertinent to note here that the party has failed to fulfil its previous commitments regarding creation of two crore jobs every year, doubling of farmers' income, controlling inflation and bringing back black money stashed abroad. Nobody in the ruling dispensation these days is talking about these issues even after 10 years of incumbency, even as numerous reports from institutions of repute have flagged the problems of unemployment, inequality and multi-dimensional poverty in India.

There is no point talking about 2047 or the next millennium when the present times are replete with hardships for the common people. Inflation and unemployment have already taken a huge toll on the economy, while the poison of communalism is threatening to rip apart the country's social fabric. India is among the world's most unequal countries where the gulf between the rich and the poor is forever widening. Our educated youths are not getting jobs, while our farmers are a distressed lot. Superficial things like bullet trains and "new age" trains have no meaning for the millions languishing in poverty. That a large chunk of the population is in poverty is evident from the government's extending of the free ration scheme by five more years.

The party that is targeting 370 seats in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls has nothing tangible to offer to the country's common people who are already burdened under an unprecedented cost of living crisis. In this scenario, terms like 'Viksit Bharat,' 'Yuva Shakti,' 'Nari Shakti,' are mere rhetoric for the woman/man on the street.

## Another War

What was being feared now looks like happening. The Israel-Hamas conflict is fast deteriorating into a regional conflagration with Iran launching hundreds of missiles and drones at Israel in its first direct attack on the Jewish state's territory. This, according to Iran, is a retaliatory assault that wounded a seven-year-old girl and caused minor damage at an Israeli military facility in the southern parts of the country. The late night 13 April attack set off air raid sirens in cities across Israel, including Tel Aviv and West Jerusalem, and explosions were heard as air defences intercepted the projectiles. The Israeli military said the Iranian salvo consisted of more than 300 killer drones, ballistic missiles and cruise missiles, but that 99 per cent were intercepted with the help of forces from France, the United Kingdom and the United States. The launches came from Iran, Iraq and Yemen which only shows how the war is spreading in the region. Iran has justified the attack saying that it was but a retaliation against Israel for a deadly air raid on its consulate in Damascus in which seven members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, including two generals, were killed. That seems to be a dress rehearsal for a bigger warfare between Iran and Israel, as analysts say, raising fears of a regional war.

Israel's hawkish policy to pound Gaza following the Hamas attack on its soil 7 October, 2023 has already left over 30,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, dead, driven millions homeless and created a famine-like situation in Gaza. The way the ultra-right wing-driven government of Israel has gone after Hamas has been repeatedly condemned by several international bodies. The humanitarian crisis that has resulted has made even its greatest ally, the USA, talk tough and call for ceasefire. But, US President's Joe Biden's backing and mild admonitions from time to time have only encouraged Israel to continue with its relentless attacks with impunity.

Israel was looking for an opportunity to divert global attention from its mindless hostility in Gaza and the air raid on Iran's embassy in Damascus appears to have been engineered with that end in view. Israel has neither claimed nor denied responsibility for the attack, which only confirmed that it was its handiwork. The USA only tried to convince Iran that it was not involved in it, but it has not yet uttered a word of condemnation of the attack that violated international laws.

Iran, a known supporter of Hamas, had so long been letting its proxies - the Hezbollah and Houthis - attack Israel to express solidarity with Hamas. But, the raid on its embassy in Damascus left it with no other option but to launch a direct attack on Israel. Otherwise, Iran would have had a loss of face before its friendly outfits.

The brinkmanship and resulting tensions have put further strain on Washington's foreign policy. Already, the US is being perceived to be hypocritical for offering unconditional support to Israel and trying to prevent the conflict in Gaza from expanding. Biden should have pulled up Israel for attacking the Iranian embassy and endangering US troops in the region. But, his administration is rewarding the Israeli government by promising to provide "ironclad" support to it, instead. The US is calling on all the other parties in the region to be restrained, constantly telling the Iranians not to escalate, while virtually encouraging Israelis to act with impunity.

Iran's pledge to retaliate appears to have been prompted by the perception that the US and Israel believe they can cause harm without triggering a strong reaction from Tehran, which does not want to wage a regional war. The Israeli military has been targeting Iran-linked sites in Syria for years and it did not escalate the situation. But, bombing Iran's diplomatic facility in Damascus is a completely different proposition constituting a brazen act that should not go unanswered. As Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei asserted, the consulate and embassy offices in any country are considered to be the territory of that country and when "they attack our consulate, it means they have attacked our territory."

The escalation in the Middle East is already having its effects on other parts of the world. India has warned its citizens against travel to Israel and Iran. In an advisory, the Ministry of External Affairs also urged Indians residing in Iran and Israel to exercise utmost precautions about their safety and restrict their movements to minimum.

Till now Iran, as its spokesperson claims, has restricted its attack to Israel's military installations. It is to be seen how far Iran can go. This will determine whether it could be a turning point in the Gaza conflict. At this juncture, the world can ill afford another war.

## FOCUS SOCIETY

# WHITHER FREE SPEECH

Nathan Cofnas is a research fellow in the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Cambridge. His research is supported by a grant from the Leverhulme Trust. He is also a college research associate at Emmanuel College. Working at the intersection of science and philosophy, he has published several papers in leading peer-reviewed journals. He also writes popular articles and posts on Substack.

In January, Cofnas published a post called "Why We Need to Talk about the Right's Stupidity Problem." No one at Cambridge seems to have been bothered by his argument that people on the political right have, on average, lower intelligence than those on the left.

Some people at Cambridge were, however, very much bothered by Cofnas' February post, "A Guide for the Hereditarian Revolution." To follow Cofnas' "guide," one must accept "race realism": the view that heredity plays a role in the existing social and economic differences between different demographic groups. Only by challenging the taboo against race realism, Cofnas believes, can conservatives overcome "wokism," which he sees as a barrier to understanding the causes of inequality and to allowing people to succeed on the basis of merit.

If Harvard University admitted students "under a colorblind system that judged applicants only by academic qualifications," Cofnas asserted, Black people "would make up 0.7% of Harvard students." He also wrote that in a meritocracy, the number of Black professors at Harvard "would approach 0%."

That post gave rise to a petition from Cambridge students demanding that the university dismiss Cofnas. The petition currently has about 1,200 sig-



When it comes to controversial topics, even the world's most renowned universities can no longer be relied upon to stand by their commitment to defend freedom of thought and discussion

natures. On 16 February, the Master of Emmanuel College, Doug Chalmers, responded to the protests by saying that the college is committed to "providing an environment that is free from all discrimination." The relevance of this comment is unclear; although there are many statements in Cofnas' post that one can reasonably object to, it does not advocate racial discrimination. Importantly, though - or so it seemed at the time - Chalmers added that the college is also committed to "freedom of thought and expression," and he acknowledged Cofnas' "academic right, as enshrined by law, to write about his views."

On the same day, Professor Bhaskar Vira, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education at Cambridge, issued a brief statement that began: "Freedom of speech within the law is a right that sits at the heart of the University of Cambridge. We encourage our community to challenge ideas they disagree with and engage in rigorous debate." He then made the obvious

point that "the voice of one academic does not reflect the views of the whole university community," adding that many staff and students "challenge the academic validity of the arguments presented." His statement concluded by seeking to reassure students who were "understandably hurt and upset" by Cofnas' views that "everyone at Cambridge has earned their place on merit and no one at this University should be made to feel like this."

There was no suggestion, in the statements made by Chalmers or Vira, that either Emmanuel College or the University of Cambridge was considering dismissing Cofnas. Yet, in the face of continuing protests, both the college and the university bowed to the pressure and began their own inquiries, as did the Leverhulme Trust. The university's inquiry and that of the Trust are, at the time of writing, ongoing, but on 5 April Cofnas received a letter notifying him that Emmanuel College had decided to terminate its association with him.

In justifying that decision, the letter informed Cofnas of the views of a committee that had been asked to consider his blog: "The Committee first considered the meaning of the blog and concluded that it amounted to, or could reasonably be construed as amounting to, a rejection of Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion (DEI and EDI) policies... The Committee concluded that the core mission of the College was to achieve educational excellence and that diversity and inclusion were inseparable from that. The ideas promoted by the blog therefore represented a challenge to the College's core values and mission."

These sentences imply that at Emmanuel College, freedom of expression does not include the freedom to challenge its DEI policies, and that challenging them may be grounds for dismissal. That is an extraordinary statement for a tertiary institution to make. It is even more surprising given that the adoption of DEI policies is a relatively recent phenomenon.

Emmanuel College's decision does not prevent Cofnas from continuing to hold his research fellowship in the Faculty of Philosophy. But that would cease to be the case if the university inquiry were to reach the same conclusion as the college.

The academic world will be watching what happens. Were the University of Cambridge to dismiss Cofnas, it would sound a warning to students and academics everywhere: when it comes to controversial topics, even the world's most renowned universities can no longer be relied upon to stand by their commitment to defend freedom of thought and discussion.

The writer is Professor of Bioethics at Princeton University.  
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WERE THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE TO DISMISS COFNAS, IT WOULD SOUND A WARNING TO STUDENTS AND ACADEMICS EVERYWHERE

Peter Singer

## SPECTRUM TECHNOLOGY

# Protecting data, empowering consumers

In the era of digital dominance, safeguarding consumer data has become an indispensable duty. The Digital Personal Data Protection Act (DPDPA), enacted in 2023 by the Government of India, emerged as a beacon of hope, establishing a robust framework to ensure privacy and security of personal information. However, its impact extends far beyond. It signifies a pivotal moment in the evolution of data governance, demanding a paradigm shift in how we perceive and handle sensitive data.

At the core, the DPDPA embodies a commitment to transparency, accountability and individual rights. Empowering consumers with greater control over their data heralds a new era of digital citizenship, where privacy is not just a privilege but a fundamental right. Through stringent regulations and hefty fines for non-compliance, the DPDPA is a potent deterrent against data misuse and exploitation. The key features of DPDPA include provisions for consent-based data processing, requirements for data localisation, and obligations for data fiduciaries (entities processing personal data) to implement data-protecting measures. The DPDPA aims to bring India's

data protection regime in line with global standards, such as the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation.

Despite its noble intentions, the DPDPA faces formidable challenges in its implementation. The sheer complexity of data ecosystems and the rapid pace of technological advancements pose a constant test to regulatory efficacy. Moreover, the nature of data flows necessitates a concerted effort to harmonise standards and bridge jurisdictional gaps. One primary challenge is the complexity and interpretation of DPDPA's provisions. The Act's extensive requirements and intricacy often lead to ambiguity, leaving firms uncertain about specific compliance measures and understanding of the law. Resource constraints pose another significant challenge for organisations striving for DPDPA compliance. Compliance demands substantial financial and human resources for implementing robust data protection measures, conducting privacy impact assessments and appointing data protection officers (DPOs).

While the DPDPA has undoubtedly elevated the discourse on data protection, its success ultimately hinges on widespread awareness and enforcement.

Businesses must embrace a culture of compliance, viewing data protection not as a burden but as a cornerstone of trust and integrity. Likewise, governments must allocate adequate resources for regulatory oversight and enforcement, ensuring that the DPDPA's principles are upheld across borders and industries. Centre and state governments must enact comprehensive data protection laws that align with the principles outlined in the DPDPA.

In light of recent data breaches and privacy scandals, the urgency of robust data protection measures cannot be overstated. As custodians of consumer trusts, firms must prioritise the ethical collection, storage and usage of data, recognising that adherence to DPDPA principles is not just a legal requirement but a moral imperative. The banking industry, in particular, plays a pivotal role in implementing and adhering to DPDPA principles due to its extensive collection and processing of sensitive consumer data. As upholders of vast amounts of financial information, banks are entrusted with safeguarding the privacy and security of their customers' data. Compliance with DPDPA regulations is not merely a legal ob-

ligation for banks; it is a fundamental aspect of maintaining trust and credibility in the eyes of their clientele. Given the sensitive nature of financial data, any breach or mishandling of information may have severe repercussions, not only in financial losses but also in reputational damage.

The DPDPA is a landmark achievement in data protection, emphasising individuals' fundamental rights to privacy and control over their data. Its implementation requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders, including businesses, governments, and consumers, to ensure compliance and foster a culture of data protection. Businesses, particularly banking, have a critical role in upholding DPDPA principles by implementing robust data protection measures, promoting transparency and prioritising ethical data handling practices. Only through collective action and unwavering commitment can we realise the true promise of DPDPA and build a more secure and equitable future for generations to come.

The writer is a research scholar, Department of Business Administration, Berhampur University.



Ashyashree Praharaj

IN LIGHT OF RECENT DATA BREACHES AND PRIVACY SCANDALS, THE URGENCY OF ROBUST DATA PROTECTION MEASURES CANNOT BE OVERSTATED

## Uncompromising conservatism

Sir, Apropos, "Glorious milestone," Orissa POST, April 14, as we look back on the rich legacy of the Reserve Bank of India, it's clear that the institution has played a crucial role in shaping the Indian economy and laying the foundations for a self-reliant nation. Whether dealing with the regulation of banks or managing the country's forex reserves and public debt, one quality that stood RBI in good stead is its uncompromising conservatism. It's this conservatism that prevented India falling prey to the US subprime crisis. Going forward, India's GDP has grown from just \$30.6 billion in 1950 to over \$3.4 trillion in 2022, and the RBI has been a key driver of this transformation. Meanwhile, the central bank has formally adopted inflation targeting. This has helped keep inflation in line with the target and anchor expectations, barring some periods marked by the pandemic-induced disruptions. Also, introduction of UPI has revolutionised the payments ecosystem across the country. Add to this, an independent central bank plays a critical role in the macroeconomic management of the country.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

## Combating heat

Sir, Lack of rains is a precipitating factor for the possible heatwaves in April and May. Heat exhaustion, heat cramp and heat stroke are the three common heat conditions. From excessive sweating to absence of sweating the symptoms vary. Among these, heat stroke is a dangerous condition. Due to a prolonged heat exposure, the body cannot control its temperature and may rise to 103; sometimes as high as 106 degree Fahrenheit. Absence of sweating and dehydration means the body is unable to cool down. Low blood pressure and decreased minerals in the body can aggravate the condition. The affected person has to be immediately provided ice cold water to drink, placed before a running fan or a cooler, and ice needs to be applied on forehead, neck and armpit. If there are no signs of recovery, shifting the affected to a hospital, and infusing intravenous fluids, and other interventions, under the care and supervision of a doctor, should help the person with heat stroke.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

## 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](mailto:edit@orissapost.com)

Orissa POST

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# Unemployment, better infra dominate poll battle in Trichy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Tiruchirappalli (Tamil Nadu), April 14:** Behind its image of an alluring urbanscape surrounded by farmlands, Tiruchirappalli has its own cup of woes. Rising unemployment, farmers' difficulty in stepping up exports and the issue of acquiring land for the airport project are among the numerous issues that dominate the election this April 19 in Tiruchirappalli, a major hub connecting the southern districts, and even the delta districts.

The perennial Cauvery water crisis and lack of export prospects loom large on the face of farmers. And summer is invariably the time when the Cauvery river water level dwindles. According to N Selvam, a farmer from Tiruchirappalli, ryots and even small entrepreneurs find it difficult to obtain export licences owing to the tedious procedures including furnishing a plant quarantine certificate for exporting the vegetables.

"The quarantine certificate must mention the pesticides and chemical fertilisers used. This would not be possible as many farmers utilised pesticides and chemical fertilisers," he said with concern. He further said that securing international standard certification, export packing techniques, labelling, food processing machinery besides food licences were complicated.

AIADMK candidate Karupiah has assured to increase the cashew exports from Gandharvakottai and also address the farmers' concerns if he is elected. He is banking mostly on his party's image and performance in introducing pro-farmer initiatives especially on linking of rivers, desilting and maintaining water bodies and protecting the state's rights over Cauvery water row with Karnataka.

"I will take steps to implement the Gundar-Cauvery river linking project and take steps to



THE PERENNIAL CAUVERY WATER CRISIS AND LACK OF EXPORT PROSPECTS LOOM LARGE ON THE FACE OF FARMERS

THE SEAT WAS CEDED BY CONGRESS TO MDMK DURING THE SEAT-SHARING NEGOTIATION AGREEMENT WITH THE DMK PAVING THE WAY FOR THE MDMK TO CONTEST AGAIN FROM THIS CONSTITUENCY AFTER NEARLY TWO DECADES

remove the hurdles in acquiring land for the airport project," he said. "Unemployment is the major issue in the district as jobs in the PSUs such as the BHEL and Ordinance Factory have drastically reduced over the years," claimed Durai Vaiko, the MDMK candidate and son of party chief Vaiko, who is making a debut in electoral politics.

The seat was ceded by Congress to MDMK during the seat-sharing negotiation agreement with the DMK paving the way for the MDMK to contest again from this constituency after nearly two decades. The party's senior L Ganesan had won from the constituency in 2004. "About 23,000 people used to work at BHEL before Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to power a decade ago. But now

only 7,000 people are working there," said Durai.

Similarly, the number of employees declined to 4,000 from 17,000 10 years ago, at the Golden Rock Railway Workshop in Ponnmalai, he pointed out. And of them, those from Tamil Nadu account for about 1,500, he added.

The Ponnmalai or Golden Rock workshop is among the three such ones serving the Indian Railway's southern region. "This is just a sample. Not only Tiruchirappalli, but also in other places in the country the situation is similar at all the central PSUs," Durai claimed.

Things would change in Tiruchirappalli and the rest of India only if the INDIA alliance captured power, he said. Senthilnathan, the AMMK candidate is contesting from here in alliance with the BJP and he has assured to promote IT industries and make Tiruchirappalli a model constituency.

Seeman's NTK candidate 'Jallikattu' Rajesh is also in the fray in the constituency that has six assembly segments including Tiruchirappalli East, Tiruchirappalli West, Srirangam, Tiruverumbur, Pudukkottai and Gandharvakottai. The MDMK is comfortably placed as it enjoys the support of the DMK, Congress and the left parties.

CHIEF MINISTER MAMATA BANERJEE IN A POST ON X, QUOTED LINES OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S TIMELESS 'BANGLAR MATI BANGLAR JOL', WHICH IS THE STATE ANTHEM OF WEST BENGAL AND WISHED PEOPLE OF THE STATE ON THE OCCASION OF BENGALI NEW YEAR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, April 14:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Sunday wished the people of Bengal on the occasion of 'Shubho Nababarsho' (Bengali New Year) as the day was celebrated with enthusiasm by people of the state and Bengalis settled elsewhere.

In a post on X handle, Modi said "May this poila baisakh be the start of a year filled with prosperity, joy and peace." "May all your aspirations be fulfilled and may everyone be blessed with great health," he said in the pictorial post having both Bengali and English contents and accompanied by images of 'mangal ghat and kulo' tradi-

# PM, MAMATA WISH PEOPLE OF BENGAL

tional items which are integrated with the rituals.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in a post on X, quoted lines of Rabindranath Tagore's timeless 'Banglar Mati Banglar Jol', which is the state anthem of West Bengal and wished people of the state on the occasion of Bengali New Year.

Reminding her government had first declared 'Poila Baisakh', the first day of Bangla 'Nababarsho' as foundation day of the state and declared Tagore's Banglar Mati Banglar Jol (the soil of Bengal, the waterbodies of Bengal) as the state anthem, the CM said, "this day signifies the glorious culture, rich heritage and spirit of brotherhood in Bengal.

The CM in a separate post on the X handle wished peace, amity, brotherhood, and love to prevail among different communities of state and the ties cannot be broken. 'Prabhat pheris' (morning cultural processions) were taken out across the state by different organisations where people kept singing another popular Tagore song 'Eso He Baisakh' (Hey the month of Baisakh welcome) and Banglar Mati Banglar Jol wearing traditional attire.

In Kanthi, under Purba Medinipur district, senior BJP leader Suvendu Adhikari, BJP

candidate from Kanthi LS constituency Soumendu Adhikari, MLA Arup Das and thousands of people, cutting across party lines, walked in a colourful prabhat pheri holding Bengali handicraft items like 'Kulo' and 'Haat Pankha' and dancing to the beat of 'Dhak' and 'Dhamsa madal'.

The

participants sang 'Eso he Baisakh' and walked for over 2 km. "I walked along with thousands...Sincere heartfelt Bengali Happy New Year wishes. May the new Bengali year bring happiness in everyone's life," Adhikari, the leader of the opposition in the state Assembly posted in Bengali on X handle.

BJP candidate from Kolkata Uttar Tapas Roy and Dumdum

TMC candidate Sougata Roy also took part in Naba barsho processions in their constituencies and wished people. Customers thronged jewellery, garments and some other shops in the city and elsewhere in the state on the occasion. Customers also thronged speciality Bengali cuisine restaurants which offered lip-smacking delicacies.



# Annual 61-day fishing ban on TN coast from today

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Chennai, April 14:** The annual 61-day fishing ban on the eastern coast of Tamil Nadu will commence April 15, and will extend till June 14.

The fishing ban is imposed to preserve the fishing resources. During this ban, big mechanised boats, including barges, are not allowed to fish.

The state government had provided an amount of ₹6,000 per fisherman's family during this ban period. Antony Fernandes,



a fishermen leader from Kasimedu, said: "Last year, the

government provided ₹6,000 per family during this ban period,

and this year, we are expecting the dole amount to be raised to ₹8,000."

These boats are anchored at the harbour. However, there is no ban on local fishermen fishing using country boats, Kettuvallams and Kattumaram.

On peak days, the Kasimedu fishing harbour in Chennai gets around 300 tonnes of fish daily, while on other days, it is around 200 tonnes. With the annual ban in effect, there will be an acute shortage of fish in the market, leading to an increase in prices.

# Assets worth ₹411cr seized

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Kolkata, April 14:** The ED has so far seized assets to the tune of ₹411 crore in the two cases pertaining to the cash-for-school job scam and the ration distribution racket in West Bengal.

Sources said that at ₹230.60 crore, the value of the assets seized in the cash-for-school job case is higher than in the PDS case. The seizures mainly pertain to the personal assets and properties of the former convener of the screening committee of the West Bengal School Service Commission (WBSSC), Santi Prasad Sinha and arrested mid-dleman Prasanna Roy.



In the PDS case the value of the total assets seized by the ED is around ₹150 crore. These assets belong to former West Bengal Food and Supplies Minister, Jyotipriya Mallick and three other arrested accused in the case, namely Shankar Adhya, Bakibur Rahman and Biswajit Das.

In both cases the assets confiscated were largely in the form of land or apartments, some of which were even located outside West Bengal. Some fixed deposits and savings account deposits have also been confiscated by the ED.

Sources added the confiscated property by the ED included two apartments owned by Jyotipriya Mallick, one of which is in Kolkata and the other in Bolpur-Santiniketan in Birbhum district.

# Maldaha Uttar LS seat set to witness three-cornered contest

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, April 14:** Maldaha Uttar Lok Sabha constituency in the northern part of West Bengal is set to witness a three-cornered contest with the Congress-Left Front alliance, BJP and the TMC locking horns for the upcoming polls.

The constituency, once a stronghold of the Congress, has seen the emergence of the BJP and the Trinamool Congress over the past decade. The TMC holds sway over Chanchal, Harishchandrapur, Malatipur, and Ratua assembly seats which are part of the Lok Sabha constituency, while the BJP has made inroads in Habibpur, Gazole, and Maldaha segments.

Despite such a shift, longstanding issues such as river erosion, healthcare infrastructure and drinking water problems. Incumbent BJP MP Khagen Murmu, confident of retaining the seat for the second term, emphasised his efforts to address local grievances despite resistance from the state government.

He cited challenges in implementing central schemes due to "lack of cooperation" from the state administration.

"I am confident of winning with a big margin. People of this constituency have realised that the local administration and the state government do not want any development for them. They have been deprived because of the non-cooperative attitude of the state government. I have fought for them and the people of Maldaha Uttar know it. I know they will vote for me again," the BJP nominee said.

Murmu, a former CPI(M) MLA from Habibpur who



joined the BJP in 2019, alleged that he had faced "huge resistance from the state government whenever he tried to implement any central government scheme".

"There is a huge population who are still residing in kutcha houses. I tried to help them rebuild their houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, but the state government did everything to prevent me from helping the poor people," he said.

He also referred to the persisting problems of river erosion and inadequate drinking water and alleged that people of his constituency were "getting poor quality provisions" procured from ration shops.

"I have requested the state minister several times to send a detailed project report to the Centre so that river erosion could be checked. But that never happened," Murmu alleged.

MALDAH A UTTAR PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY WILL GO TO POLLS MAY 7

THE CONSTITUENCY, ONCE A STRONGHOLD OF THE CONGRESS, HAS SEEN THE EMERGENCE OF THE BJP AND THE TRINAMOL CONGRESS OVER THE PAST DECADE

He said Ganga river erosion displaced thousands of villagers at Mahanandtola gram panchayat under Ratua assembly seat.

Opposing Murmu's claims, TMC MLA Samar Mukherjee criticised the BJP for its "failure to fulfil promises to arrest river erosion before the 2019 elections".

"Ganga river erosion is a major issue that affects the lives of thousands of people in Malda and Murshidabad districts. Our government helped villagers who were displaced

by erosion. They are very upset with the BJP MP as he has failed in keeping his promise," Mukherjee said.

Congress candidate Mostaque Alam expressed confidence that his party will win the elections as people are "fed up with the BJP and TMC's politics". Alam questioned understanding of the grassroots politics of IPS officer-turned-TMC candidate Prasun Banerjee.

"What does he (Prasun Banerjee) know about politics? You cannot gauge the pulse of the people suddenly after coming out of an air-conditioned room. Maldaha Uttar is not that an easy affair," the Congress leader said. He said people have realised that the "politics of the BJP and the TMC will not benefit them".

Banerjee, a 2006-batch IPS officer, has held several important positions, including Inspector General (IG) of Raiganj range, before taking voluntary retirement to contest elections.

"I had offers from the TMC and was promised to be inducted into Mamata Banerjee's Cabinet, but they do not know that I am not a traitor. I started as a student leader under the leadership of ABA Ghani Khan Choudhury, worked with leaders like Priya Ranjan Dasgupta and Pradip Chakraborty, and have learnt what politics is all about," Alam said.

Banerjee declined to reply to his opponents and went on to say, "I do not want to speak anything now. June 4 will reveal everything." In the 2019 polls, the BJP secured over 37.5 per cent of the votes, while the TMC and the Congress had a share of 31 per cent and 22.5 per cent, respectively.

# TN FOREST DEPT WARNS MOTORISTS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Chennai, April 14:** The Tamil Nadu Forest Department officials have issued a warning to motorists passing through the Anamalai Tiger Reserve (ATR), urging them to drive at reduced speeds to prevent collisions with animals crossing the roads.

Forest department officials said that the warning is due to the presence of a large number of Nilgiri Thar, Nilgiri Lion-Tailed Macaques, Nilgiri Langur, Bonnet Macaques, Sambar deer, wild hares, and porcupines in the area.

Officials stated that the directive follows the frequent sightings of these animals, often accompanied by their offspring, emerging from the forest range and crossing roads. Forest department officials reported several incidents of these animals being struck by speeding motorists, particularly reckless two-wheeler riders.

To address this concern, the forest department has deployed four Anti-Depredation Squads between Puthuthottam and Iyarpadi, along with two additional squads within the Valparai town area, aimed at deterring speeding motorists from traversing the ATR.

G. Venatesh, Forest Range Officer of Valparai Forest Range,

Officials stated that the directive follows the frequent sightings of these animals, often accompanied by their offspring, emerging from the forest range and crossing roads

said: "In contrast to previous years, I have observed a higher presence of wild animals, along with their young, crossing the roads. This indicates an increase in their population."

He added, "We anticipate gaining clearer insights from the forthcoming wildlife census results. Despite efforts such as filling check dams and percolation ponds at Attakatti, as well as providing water troughs in Kadamparai, Akkamalai, and Upper Aliyar on a weekly basis for the animals' benefit, they still venture towards the roads, necessitating diversion by our forest staff."

The forest official also highlighted instances of reckless driving, primarily by two-wheeler riders. Wildlife staff employed by the department is primarily focused on preventing such behaviour using barricades and other means.





Over 200 BJD and Congress workers joined BJP at a booth level and merger meeting of party's Ganrei zone held at Phatamunda village of Muribahal block and Kantabanji Assembly segment in Bolangir district, Sunday



Resentment among the party workers over alleged neglect by party leaders came to the fore at a get-together programme of senior workers and party leaders of BJD at Kesinga in Kalahandi district

## TIRTOL ASSEMBLY SEAT

# Cong bid to eat into BJD, BJP vote share

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jagatsinghpur, April 14:** Tirtol Assembly constituency in this district holds special significance in the state's electoral history as several eminent leaders like former deputy chief minister Basant Biswal, noted leaders Nishamani Khuntia and Pratap Chandra Mohanty had represented this coveted seat and played pro-active role in Odisha politics. Khuntia had represented the Assembly segment thrice since 1951 on Congress and Praja Socialist Party (PSP) tickets. Similarly, Mohanty had also won the seat thrice on Congress, Utkal Congress and Janata Party tickets. Biswal was elected thrice on Congress ticket, said sources. Tirtol Assembly constituency was the citadel of BJD from 2000 to 2019 as the party's candidates emerged victorious four times during this period, barring 2004 when Congress had won the seat. Although Tirtol has been a



BJD stronghold since 2000, the party could not rely on a single candidate and has been changing its nominees. The party had nominated Debashish Samantaray in 2000, Rabindranath Bhoi in 2009, Rajashree Mallick in 2014, Bishnu Charan Das in 2019 and his son Bijaya Shankar Das in 2020 by-election. All had won the elections. Sticking to its winning strategy, the BJD has yet again fielded a new face - Ramakanta Bhoi - for 2024 polls, to which the Congress has reacted sharply and decided

to make it as its major poll plank this time. It would inform the voters how the ruling party is changing its candidates every time to hoodwink voters. Meanwhile, the Congress and the BJD claim that BJP's hold in the constituency has weakened as compared to the previous elections. The reason: Its candidate Rajkishore Behera had distanced himself from the voters after he faced a debacle in 2019 election. However, the saffron party has reposed faith in him and made him the candidate for 2024 election.

Political analysts believe that BJP's vote share might take a nosedive this time due to Behera's aloofness from the voters. Although it is difficult to predict how much of BJP's support would get diverted towards BJD and Congress, outcomes of 2014 and 2019 elections indicate that most of the votes will go to the Congress. While Behera (now BJP) was the Congress candidate in 2014, Ramakanta (now BJD) was the BJP candidate. Behera had secured the second position with 53,505 votes while Ramakanta bagged 14,516 votes with a distant third. Rajashree had won the election with 88,953 votes. However, the results of 2019 elections surprised many as BJP could pool 53,581 votes while Congress got 23,809 votes. The sudden drop in votes, to the tune of 30,000, raised concern for the Congress while Bishnu Charan Das (BJD) became the MLA for the first time

from the constituency. However, sudden demise of Das in 2020 necessitated a by-election in which his son Bijaya Shankar was nominated and got elected. While Congress had nominated Himanshu Bhusan Mallick, BJP picked Rajkishore who got 46,607 votes due to 'Modi wave'. Meanwhile, Congress Sunday announced Himanshu's name for Tirtol Assembly seat, as predicted earlier. Himanshu has already covered 36 panchayats and has vowed to cover 61 panchayats in 61 days. Grapevines have it that the alleged internal squabbles within the BJD would benefit Himanshu, though BJP's Behera and BJD's Ramakanta have claimed that they have the much needed public support. They said that voters will support them in the upcoming elections as there is BJD government in the state and BJP government at the Centre.

# 'Pana' politics plays out in streets of Steel City



POST NEWS NETWORK

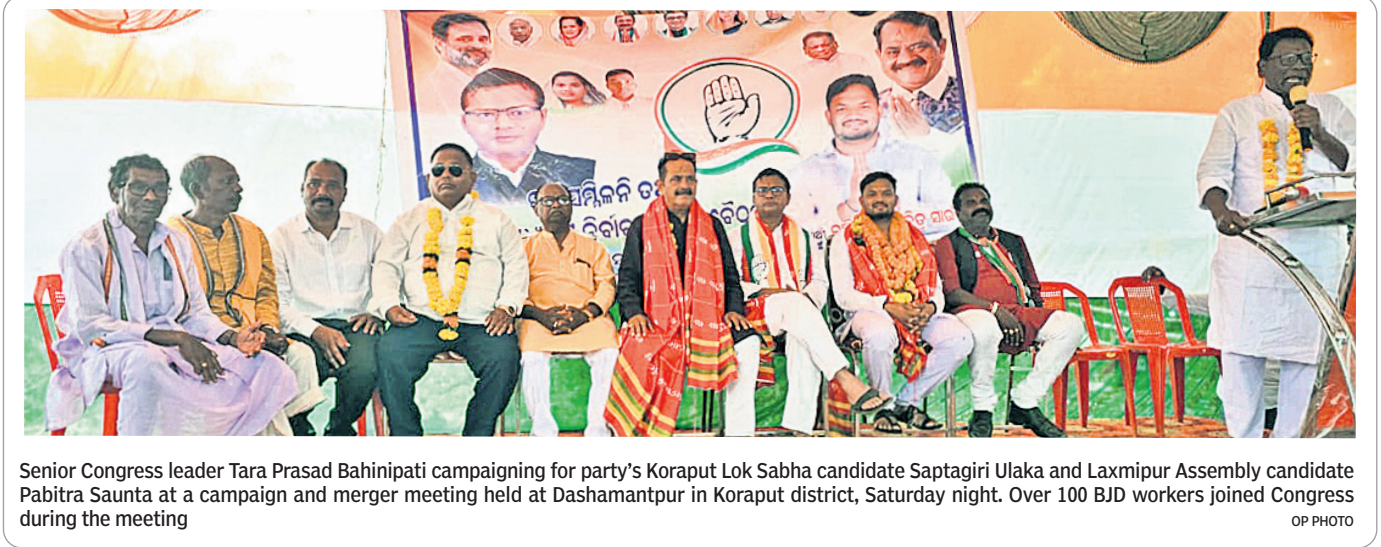
**Rourkela, April 14:** Politicking over 'Pana', a traditional savory drink consumed in every Odia household on the auspicious occasion of Mahabishuba Sankranti which is also the Odia New Year, was played out in the streets of the Steel City, Sunday with the elections round the corner. Politicians belonging to various parties hopped the 'Pana' committees and temples relishing Pana and soft drinks served on the occasion. "I salute their capacity," said a local in Daily Market area while commenting on the politicians' desperation during election time, adding, "If they keep drinking like this, I am sure many of them will be hospitalized." One of the supporters of minister Sarada Nayak who was seen visiting Pana committees without his entourage, said, "He is a regular here during Pana Sankranti." Dilip Ray, the probable BJP MLA candidate from Rourkela and the MP candidates from Sundargarh - BJD's Dilip Tirkey and Jual Oram of BJP - were

also seen. They visited different places with their supporters in tow and distributed the drink to people at various make-shift stalls. In fact Jual, Sarada and Prasant SETHY - the BJD ticket aspirant from Raghunathpalli Assembly constituency - also paid their obeisance to Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar at his statue in Sector-17. Pana stalls were set up in every hundred metre where drinks of varied taste and choice - from sweet, sour to salty - were distributed. Party insiders claimed that the stalls were mostly financed by their leaders. "We didn't spend a single paisa from our pocket. Everything has been financed," they said. "I am going to skip my lunch because I drank from the stalls of all political parties. Only the Communists didn't have one," said a passerby at Ambgaon Chowk, jokingly. Sarada Nayak said, "This is a great occasion, and we here in Rourkela celebrate it in a grand manner." Dilip Ray, who was given a rousing welcome at the Daily Market, was heard telling his supporters that occasions like this help foster brotherhood.

# Kangana threat to BJP: Vikramaditya

AGENCIES

**Shimla, April 14:** Actor Kangana Ranaut's entry into Himachal Pradesh politics has threatened the future prospects of the state BJP leaders, her opponent, Public Works Minister and Congress candidate from Mandi Lok Sabha seat, Vikramaditya Singh, said Sunday. The BJP has named Kangana as its candidate from Mandi Parliament seat. This is the first time that a celebrity is contesting an election in Himachal Pradesh. Vikramaditya Singh, the titular king of the erstwhile princely state of Bushahr, is the son of six-time chief minister Virbhadra Singh. His mother Pratibha Singh is the sitting MP from Mandi and the Congress' state unit president. He is a two-time MLA from Shimla (Rural) Assembly constituency. The speech made by Kangana in Manali Thursday overshadowed the BJP state leadership's Hamirpur rally, with which the party launched its election campaign, Vikramaditya Singh told PTI. "The state BJP leaders are feeling threatened by Kangana who has overshadowed the BJP leaders by her controversial outburst," he said. Kangana in her rally had taken a dig at the "dynastic and family-centric" Bollywood, which, she said, undermined her career in the industry. She also launched a blistering attack on certain political families, including that of former Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray, and dubbed Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Vikramaditya Singh as "Bada Pappu and Chhota Pappu".



Senior Congress leader Tara Prasad Bahinipati campaigning for party's Koraput Lok Sabha candidate Saptagiri Ulaka and Laxmipur Assembly candidate Pabitra Saunta at a campaign and merger meeting held at Dashamantpur in Koraput district, Saturday night. Over 100 BJD workers joined Congress during the meeting

# Changing the Constitution won't serve any purpose: Sen

AGENCIES

**Kolkata, April 14:** Changing the country's Constitution would not serve any purpose except aligning it with the government's "single-religion focus", said Nobel laureate Amartya Sen, while responding to a query on Opposition's claim that the BJP might change the Constitution if it returns to power. Noting that the Opposition in India has lost much of its power due to disunity, the Nobel laureate said the Congress has many organisational problems that need remedying. In an interview with PTI, Sen said that a caste census might be an exercise to consider, but India needs greater empowerment for the underprivileged through better education, healthcare, and gender equity. The noted economist said he is "enormously proud" to be a citizen of a democratic country like India, but there is a need to "work harder to enhance the na-

tion's democratic nature". Sen said the opposition bloc INDIA failed to gain much traction, with its important allies such as JD(U) and RLD walking out. When asked what the Opposition lacks in taking on the BJP, he said, "The Opposition in India lost a lot of its power due to its disunity. Unity would have given it much more strength." "Congress has many organisational problems that need remedying. The party's great past should inspire it," he said. Sen was also critical of the BJP-led NDA government over its economic policies. He claimed that widespread illiteracy and extraordinary gender inequality make it difficult for the poor in India to progress. "India's ruling classes tend to look after the interests of the rich. Widespread illiteracy, commonly shared ill health, and extraordinary gender inequality make it difficult for the Indian poor to progress," he said.



Moody's Analytics Friday projected India's economy to expand by 6.1 per cent in 2024, lower than the 7.7 per cent growth witnessed in 2023. When asked about the Opposition's claim that the BJP might change the Constitution if it returns to power, Sen said changing the country's Constitution would not serve any purpose except aligning it with the government's "single-religion focus". "Changing the Indian

Constitution may align it more with the government's class priority and its single-religion focus, but it will not benefit the common people of India," he said. Speaking on the Opposition making the caste census an important poll issue, Sen said India needs more empowerment for its underprivileged. "A caste census may be a good exercise to consider, but what India needs most is greater empowerment for the underprivileged through better education, healthcare and gender equity," he said. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has said that the party will conduct a countrywide caste census if voted to power. The Mahagathbandhan government, of which JD(U), RJD and Congress and Left parties were a part, implemented a caste census in Bihar last year. On whether the BJP would be

able to weather alleged dissatisfaction about economic performance by consolidating the majority Hindus with the construction of Ayodhya Ram Mandir and implementation of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, the 90-year-old professor said such an idea would betray the country's secular roots and multicultural nature. "India is a secular country with a secular Constitution, but while focusing only on Hindu identity may be easy for a majority of Hindus, this betrays India's secular roots and multicultural nature," the professor at Harvard University said. On the Lok Sabha polls, Sen said he is "enormously proud" to be a citizen of a democratic country like India. "But we must work harder to enhance the democratic nature of the country," he said. The seven-phase elections in India are slated to begin April 19, and the votes will be counted June 4.

India is a secular country with a secular Constitution, but while focusing only on Hindu identity may be easy for a majority of Hindus, this betrays India's secular roots and multicultural nature

AMARTYA SEN | NOBEL LAUREATE



# national

## of the day quote

There is no mention of jobs and employment anywhere in the BJP manifesto. There is no mention of reducing inflation, unemployment and poverty. There is nothing in the manifesto for 60 per cent youth of the country, 80 per cent farmers and villages of the country. They (BJP) ignored unemployment, issues concerning farmers and inflation in its manifesto. In fact...It proves that the BJP has nothing to offer people

**TEJASHWI YADAV** | RJD LEADER

Rahul Gandhi says that his party would undertake a poverty eradication programme. He does not read, but I would like to inform him that his grandmother and Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, had made the same promise. She (Indira), her son Rajiv Gandhi, and later Sonia Gandhi all came to power and gone, but nothing happened. How can we trust Rahul Gandhi's promise?

**AMIT SHAH** | UNION HOME MINISTER

As a student of politics, one of the first lessons I learnt is to place national interests above those of one's party or oneself. The national interest lies in ensuring that Narendra Modi gets a third term. We have the maturity, and so does the JD(U), to realise that we cannot afford to let the opposition capitalise on any infighting within the NDA

**CHIRAG PASWAN** | LOK JANSHAKTI PARTY (RAM VILAS) LEADER

## SHORT TAKES

### Bodies found

**Barrackpore (WB):** The bodies of three persons, a father-son-grandson trio, were discovered at their residence in Baranagar, located on the northern fringes of Kolkata Sunday, police said. Local residents alerted the authorities upon detecting a foul odour emanating from the premises. Officers from Baranagar police station forcibly entered the residence and found the bodies of Shankar Halder (72), his son Bappa (40), and his 16-year-old grandson, all bearing sharp weapon injuries.

### Farmer ends life

**Latur:** A 48-year-old farmer, who suffered crop losses and was unable to repay a loan, allegedly committed suicide at his house in Maharashtra's Latur district Sunday, police said. Nasir Lalammahand Maujan-Mujewar (48) allegedly hanged himself at his home in Shirur-Anantpal taluka in the early hours of the day, an official said. Nasir had borrowed Rs 1.30 lakh from a nationalised bank two and a half years ago and suffered crop losses, he said.

### 2 killed, 1 injured

**Thane:** A worker and a labour contractor were killed and another person was injured after a wall collapsed during repairs to a house in Maharashtra's Thane district Sunday, an official said. The incident took place at Bhayander East, on the outskirts of Mumbai, around 11 am, the official said. A house was being repaired when one of its walls collapsed on two workers and a labour contractor.

### Heroin seized

**Aizawl:** Three persons were arrested in Mizoram's Aizawl after heroin worth Rs 2.27 crore was seized from their possession in three separate operations, an official statement issued by Assam Rifles said Sunday. Personnel of Assam Rifles and the Special Narcotics Police Station seized 325.3 grams of heroin in the operations Saturday, it said.



**Your biggest problem is inflation. I believe that Modiji is not able to understand that. When there is too much power, people do not tell the truth. Officers and colleagues are scared of telling him about the reality**

**PRİYANKA GANDHI VADRA** | CONGRESS LEADER

## SPECIAL FACILITIES

Special measures such as voting from home, free transportation to polling stations, installation of ramps, provision of wheelchairs, and use of Braille-enabled EVMs are being implemented to facilitate voting for over 6.82 lakh electors aged above 80 years and those with disabilities in Jharkhand



# Indian missions asks its nationals to stay calm

AGENCIES

**Tel Aviv/Tehran, April 14:** The Indian diplomatic missions in Israel and Iran Sunday issued fresh advisories for its nationals after Tehran launched an unprecedented drone and missile attack on the Jewish state, advising them to stay calm, adhere to safety protocols along with activating additional helpline numbers.

Iran and its proxies launched 330 missiles and drones on Israel late Saturday night in retaliation to an alleged attack by Israel on a diplomatic mission of the Islamic Republic in Damascus April 1 in which several people, including two top commanders, were killed.

The Indian embassy in Israel issued a fresh 'important advisory' for its nationals after the overnight attacks by Iran. "In light of the recent events in the region, all Indian nationals in Israel are advised to stay calm and adhere to the safety protocols issued by the local authorities," the Indian mission said in the 'important advisory' posted on its social media handles.

"The Embassy is closely monitoring the situation and it is in touch with the Israeli authorities and Indian community members to ensure the safety of all our nationals," it added. It also urged Indian nationals to register with the embassy at a given link. Hours later, the Indian embassy in Tehran said it has activated additional telephone lines for its nationals.

"Embassy of India in Tehran



## Air India suspends Tel Aviv flights

**New Delhi:** Air India Sunday decided to temporarily suspend flights to Tel Aviv amid escalating tensions between Israel and Iran. An official said the direct flights between Delhi and Tel Aviv will be suspended for now. Air India operates four weekly flights between the national capital and Israeli city. The Tata group-owned carrier recommenced services to Tel Aviv March 3 after a gap of nearly five months. Air India suspended flights to and from Tel Aviv, starting October 7, 2023, in the wake of the Hamas attack on the Israeli city.

has activated additional helpline numbers. For any assistance, please contact the Embassy at: +989128109115; +989128109109; +989932179567; +989932179359; +98-21-88755103-5; cons.Tehran@mea.gov.in," the Indian Embassy at Tehran posted on its official X handle.

Earlier Friday, April 12, the Indian Embassy in Tehran had

issued an advisory that said: "Travel advisory for Iran and Israel: In view of the prevailing situation in the region, all Indians are advised not to travel to Iran or Israel till further notice."

It gave a mail ID (cons.Tehran@mea.gov.in) and two phone numbers (+98-21-88755103-5 and +989128109115) for any assistance. It also asked all Indians residing in Iran to register themselves and gave a URL to use for the same.

Same day, the Indian embassy in Tel Aviv too had also issued an advisory amid growing speculation of a retaliatory attack by Iran advising its nationals asking them to "avoid unnecessary travel, remain calm and follow safety guidelines issued by the local authorities."

In New Delhi, the Ministry of External Affairs said India was seriously concerned at the escalation of hostilities between Israel and Iran which threatens the peace and security in the region.

## 7 BURNT ALIVE IN COLLISION

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jaipur, April 14:** Seven people, including two children and three women, of a family were burnt alive when their car caught fire after crashing into a truck in Rajasthan's Sikar district Sunday afternoon, police said.

The car passengers, all residents of Uttar Pradesh's Meerut, were going to Hisar from Salasar Balaji Temple when the accident occurred, they said. "Near Arshiwad Pulia, the car crashed into a moving truck from behind, after which it caught fire. Seven people, including three women and two children, in the car were killed," Deputy Superintendent of Police (Fatehpur Circle) Rampratap Bishnoi said.

According to the police, accident happened when the car driver was trying to overtake the truck, carrying paper rolls and cotton boxes. When the driver saw another vehicle coming from the opposite direction, it hit the truck in order to avert an accident. The LPG kit in the car burst into flames, they said.

The car passengers could not open the doors of the car due to the fire and were burnt alive, he said. Those killed have been identified as Neelam Goyal (55), her son Ashutosh Goyal (35), Manju Bindal (58), her son Hardik Bindal (37), his wife Swati Bindal (32), their daughters Diksha (7), and Swati (4).

Fatehpur Kotwali SHO Subhash Bijaraniya said fire brigade vehicles were pressed into service from Fatehpur, Ramgarh, and Laxmangarh and the blaze in car and truck was brought under control in 30 minutes. The bodies have been sent for post-mortem at Rajkiya Dhanuka Sub-District Hospital, he said.

# Abhishek's chopper raided, claims TMC

*In a post on X, the party said the chopper was undergoing a trial run at Behala Flying Club for Banerjee's visit to Haldia in Purba Medinipur when a team of IT officials arrived and extensively searched it*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, April 14:** The Trinamool Congress Sunday said its general secretary Abhishek Banerjee's helicopter was raided by Income Tax (IT) officials in Kolkata's Behala flying club and alleged this was part of a deliberate ploy by the BJP to harass and intimidate opposition candidates whom they cannot engage with politically.

In a post on X, the party said the chopper was undergoing a trial run at Behala Flying Club for Banerjee's visit to Haldia in Purba Medinipur when a team of I-T officials arrived and extensively searched it. "Instead of removing the @NIA, India DG and SP, @ECISVEEP and @BJP4India chose to deploy minions from IT to search and raid my chopper and security personnel today, resulting in no findings," Banerjee said on X.

"When the Income Tax officials couldn't find anything, a frustrated team of Mr. Modi's men didn't let the chopper fly. When Banerjee's security personnel asked the reason, they (IT officials) engaged in a verbal spat and threatened to detain the chopper illegally. They opened each and every bag, searched every nook and corner of the chopper," the party said.

These actions, according to Banerjee, are evidence that "the BJP is trembling when it comes



to Bengal.. They want to wipe out the opposition in a bid to come to power again. But TMC will take the Bangla-Birodhi BJP head-on and we won't budge an inch because of these intimidating tactics carried out by central agencies on the instructions of their Delhi bosses."

The Diamond Harbour MP claimed when his security personnel videographed the raid, IT officials forcefully had it deleted. Labelling the BJP as "zamin-dars," the TMC remarked, "they can exert all their might, but Bengal's spirit of resistance will never waver." TMC Rajya Sabha MP and party national spokesperson Derek O'Brien asked, "Did the desperados find some fruits and fish sandwiches on board?"

Leader of the Opposition in the West Bengal assembly, Suwendu Adhikari, said that the IT raid was part of the drive to eliminate black money from election campaigns.

## Eight students injured in Raj fire

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kota (Rajasthan), April 14:** A massive fire broke out on Sunday morning in a boys' hostel building injuring eight students here with preliminary reports suggesting that the short circuit led to the blaze, police said.

The incident happened at around 6:15 am in Landmark City under Kumbhari police station, Superintendent of Police (SP) Kota city Amrita Dubhan said.

According to initial investigation, a short circuit in an electric transformer installed on the ground floor of the five-storey hostel building led to the fire, the police said. The forensic team, however, is trying to ascertain the exact reason for the incident.

Rakesh Vyas, a fire officer at Kota Municipal Corporation, said the hostel building was not

equipped with fire safety measures and did not have fire NOC. He added that it's alarming that the transformer was installed inside the hostel building.

The police said the six injured students, including one who sustained severe burns, are receiving primary medical treatment at Maharao Bheem Singh (MBS) Hospital here.

One student, who suffered a fracture in his leg after he along with 14 others jumped from the building's first floor

to escape the fire, is being treated at a private hospital, they added.

Bhavishya, a NEET aspirant from Bihar's Chindwara who lived in the building, was also injured in the incident. He said he was woken up by a loud noise at around 6:15 am and when he came out of his room, he found thick smoke everywhere.



# Patanjali Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj 'katha' enters 5th day

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar:** The Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj 'katha' series, organised by Baba Ramdev's Patanjali Yogpeeth in Haridwar, entered its fifth day, Saturday.

Speaking on the occasion, Swami Govind Dev Giri Ji Maharaj said, "I have come here to tell the story of Shivaji Maharaj, but as much as I am saying this, I am also listening to equally profound knowledge." Swami Ramdev Ji Maharaj, in his speech, said that the entire country is proud of Shivaji Maharaj's character, personality and spiritual practices.

Swami ji said, "Shivaji is an incarnation of Lord Shiva as well as a person of power, devotion and nationalism. He is a great pride of our Sanatani tradition. Shivaji is the biggest ideal or role model of more than 100 crore Indians and arouse inspiration of 'Sanatan Dharm' and 'Rashtriya Dharm' in them."

Pandurang Ji Maharaj, founder of Gatha Mandir, Dhule (Maharashtra) said that Godharma patron, protector of Hindu religion and founder of Swarajya, Chhatrapati Shivaji



Maharaj is the greatest deity of Maharashtra. He said Shivaji Maharaj practiced and protected Hindu religion. "The confluence of devotion and power of Maharashtra is shown here today in the form

of a story," he said. He further stated that he is proud that the story of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj is being told by Swami Govind Giri Ji Maharaj at Patanjali Yogpeeth, Haridwar.

# Demand for political merchandise booms in Bengal

*Market analysts said that while merchandise extending support to the Trinamool Congress is a hit in the wholesale markets of Burrabazar and Canning Street in Kolkata, those of the BJP top the charts on e-commerce platforms*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, April 14:** As Lok Sabha elections draw near, the political merchandise market, both offline and online, in West Bengal has started booming, with T-shirts sporting slogans such as 'Khela Hobe', 'Nation with NaMo' and 'NaMo again' selling like hot cakes.

Market analysts said that while merchandise extending support to the Trinamool Congress is a hit in the wholesale markets of Burrabazar and Canning Street in Kolkata, those of the BJP top the charts on e-commerce platforms.

The northern part of West Bengal, which will go to polls in the first few phases, is particularly witnessing a surge in demand for the political merchandise, they said. In the wholesale markets of the eastern metropolis, hundreds of shops have been adorned with a vibrant array of political merchandise, ranging from flags to key chains, caps, umbrellas, and sunglasses



bearing political symbols.

However, the quality and price of goods available in wholesale markets differ substantially from those available on e-commerce platforms.

"In the wholesale markets, there has been a steady increase in demand for these goods, with TMC merchandise leading the sales, followed by those of the CPI(M) and Congress. However, there has been lesser demand for BJP merchandise," Sanjay Chandrana of Shivam Textiles said. He predicted that the demand

will grow after the festive season. He said textile manufacturers are prepared to increase their production capacity to meet the demand. Online e-commerce platforms such as Amazon, Meesho and Flipkart are also tapping into people's enthusiasm for the Lok Sabha elections, which are the largest democratic exercise in the world, by offering a diverse range of political merchandise, ranging from trendy and premium apparel to mass-priced key chains and home decor items.

A seller on one of the leading e-commerce platforms said that BJP's merchandise is selling more as compared to other parties. However, reactions from Amazon and Flipkart on the sale of political merchandise on their platforms were not available.

The major differences between merchandise offered in wholesale markets and online platforms, however, are quality and pricing. While bulk T-shirts in Burrabazar are priced between Rs

50 and Rs 70 each and are made of polyester, online offerings are typically single-piece retail products and crafted from cotton, with significantly higher prices.

A polyester saree with political images costs between Rs 150 and Rs 300 in wholesale markets, whereas it costs upwards of Rs 500 per piece online. Political parties have welcomed the enthusiasm among the public regarding the elections, and said these merchandise increase the visibility of parties.

BJP spokesperson Samik Bhattacharya said that colourful political merchandise such as T-shirts and sarees increases a party's visibility, but voting patterns depend on political understanding and the nature of the election, whether it is national or local.

Trinamool Congress spokesperson Santanu Sen said that visual impression through logos and photographs has a lot of impact on voters. "There will always be innovation in campaigning," he added.

## 6-yr-old boy found dead in borewell

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Rewa, April 14:** A six-year-old boy, who fell into an open borewell in Madhya Pradesh's Rewa district two days ago, has died despite hectic efforts by multiple agencies to save him, an official said Sunday.

The child fell into the borewell in Manika village, located close to the Uttar Pradesh border, at around 3 pm Friday when he was playing near it. He was stuck at a depth of around 40 feet, officials earlier said.

Teams of the State Disaster Emergency Response Force (SDERF), National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and local administration were engaged in the operation to bring the boy out of the borewell.

The rescue teams supplied oxygen into the 70-feet-deep borewell and parallel pits were dug to reach him. Collector Pratibha Pal said the child was located Sunday after 40 hours of rescue operation but he was "unresponsive". "The boy was located at around 8 am. We made all efforts but could not save the child as the borewell was too narrow," Pal said at the spot.



I condemn in the strongest terms the Iranian regime's reckless attack against Israel  
RISHI SUNAK | UK PRIME MINISTER

## FLASH FLOODS IN AFGHANISTAN

Heavy flooding from seasonal rains in Afghanistan has killed at least 33 people and injured 27 others in three days, a Taliban spokesman said Sunday

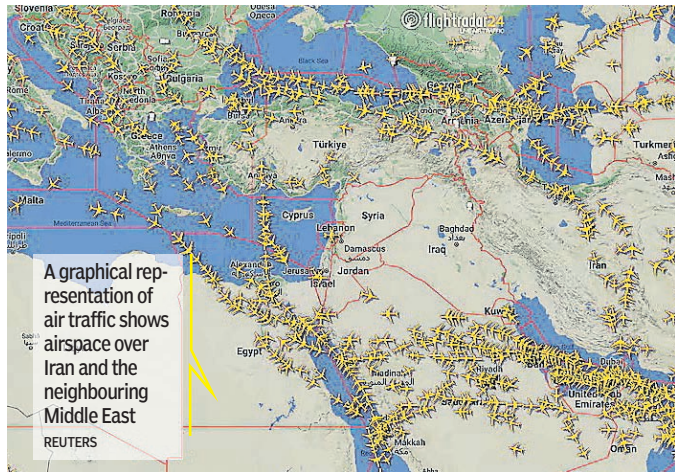


# US, UN condemn Iran's attack

**IRAN WARNS ISRAEL AND THE UNITED STATES OF A MUCH LARGER RESPONSE IF THERE IS ANY RETALIATION FOR ITS MASS DRONE AND MISSILE ATTACK ON ISRAELI TERRITORY OVERNIGHT, AS ISRAEL SAID "THE CAMPAIGN IS NOT OVER YET"**



Objects are seen in the sky over Amman after Iran launched drones towards Israel REUTERS



A graphical representation of air traffic shows airspace over Iran and the neighbouring Middle East REUTERS

Iranian foreign minister says Israel's neighbours given 72-hour warning of attack

German chancellor says will do 'everything to stop a further escalation'

Yemen's Houthis say Iran's attack on Israel was legitimate

Gaza residents voice admiration at Iran strikes

# Scholz in China on visit marked by trade tensions, Ukraine war

**THIS IS SCHOLZ'S SECOND TRIP TO CHINA SINCE HE BECAME CHANCELLOR IN LATE 2021**



ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Beijing, April 14:** German Chancellor Olaf Scholz arrived in China Sunday on a visit focused on the increasingly tense economic relationship between the sides and differences over Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Scholz's first destination was the industrial hub of Chongqing, where he and his delegation of ministers and business leaders were to visit a partially German-funded company and other sites in the vast city, which is a production base for China's auto and other industries.

Scholz is also scheduled to visit the financial hub of Shanghai during his three-day visit, before travelling to the capital, Beijing, to meet with Chinese leader Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang.

German companies such as BMW and Volkswagen are highly reliant on the Chinese market, but Beijing's support for Russia creates frictions with the West. Germany's economy has benefited from China's demand for investment and manufactured items from cars to chemicals, but those ties have frayed amid increasing competition from Chinese companies and tightened regulations. Political interference has also been blamed for a sharp drop in foreign investment.

German companies have argued they face unfair market barriers in China and the government has pushed for a

policy of "de-risking" to reduce reliance on the Chinese market and suppliers.

Despite that, China remained Germany's top trading partner for the eighth straight year in 2023, with 254.1 billion euros (\$271 billion) in goods and services exchanged between the sides, slightly more than what Germany traded with the US but a 15.5 per cent contraction from the year before. German exports to China totalled 97.3 billion euros (\$104 billion), according to Germany's Federal Statistical Office, although figures have varied depending on exchange rate fluctuations and rounding of numbers.

Chinese state broadcaster CCTV showed Scholz descending from his plane in Chongqing and leaving in a motorcade, but did not carry any comments made to the welcoming delegation.

Prior to his arrival, Scholz posted on social platform X that he had discussed the "massive" Russian air attacks on civilian energy infrastructure with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy Saturday, and declared that Berlin will "stand unbreakably by Ukraine's side."

China has refused to criticise Russian aggression. It has maintained trade relations with President Vladimir Putin's government and aligned its foreign policy with Moscow in opposition to the US-led liberal political order, while touting its "authoritarian one-party system as a superior alternative."

curity of Israel". Biden said at his direction, to support the defence of Israel, the US military moved aircraft and ballistic missile defence destroyers to the region over the course of the past week.

"Thanks to these deployments and the extraordinary skill of our servicemembers, we helped Israel take down nearly all of the incoming drones and missiles," he said.

"I've just spoken with Prime Minister Netanyahu to reaffirm America's ironclad commitment to the security of Israel," he said.

Iran had vowed to retaliate for a strike on its consulate in Syria 1 April which killed seven IRGC officers, including a top commander. It accused Israel of carrying out that attack, but Israel neither confirmed nor denied it.

Netanyahu called a war cabinet meeting after the start of the Iranian attack, and later spoke to President Biden, who said he had reaffirmed "America's ironclad commitment to the se-

will stay in close touch with Israel's leaders, and while we have not seen attacks on our forces or facilities today, we will remain vigilant to all threats and will not hesitate to take all necessary action to protect our people," Biden said.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken also said the United States con-

**All eyes are now on whether Israel chooses to take further military action, while Washington seeks diplomatic measures instead to ease regional tensions**



An Israeli military naval ship patrols the Mediterranean sea off the coast of Hadera, Israel AP

AGENCIES

**Washington, April 14:** The US, Canada and the UN have condemned the Iranian air attack on Israel, with President Joe Biden reaffirming America's "ironclad commitment" to the Jewish nation and vowing to convene a meeting of the G-7 leaders Sunday to develop a coordinated response to the brazen assault.

The Israeli military said Sunday that 99 per cent of more than 300 Iranian drones and missiles were intercepted by Israel and its allies.

Biden said "We helped Israel take down nearly all" of them. His comments came as American forces joined efforts to down drones and missiles launched by Tehran.

"Earlier today, Iran—and its proxies operating out of Yemen,

Syria and Iraq—launched an unprecedented air attack against military facilities in Israel. I condemn these attacks in the strongest possible terms," Biden said after his call with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu Saturday.

Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) said the attack was aimed at "specific targets".

Iran had vowed to retaliate for a strike on its consulate in Syria 1 April which killed seven IRGC officers, including a top commander. It accused Israel of carrying out that attack, but Israel neither confirmed nor denied it.

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## SYDNEY STABBING

### Attacker had mental health issues

REUTERS

**Sydney, April 14:** The man who fatally stabbed six people in Sydney had mental health issues in the past and there is no indication ideology was a motive in the attack in one of the city's busiest shopping centres, police said Sunday.

The attacker, identified by po-

lice as 40-year-old Joel Cauchi, was known to police in the neighbouring state of Queensland, and police have spoken to his family after Saturday's attack, according to police from New South Wales and Queensland states.

Cauchi's family recognised him and contacted police Saturday after seeing news reports of the killings.

## More civilians die in Ukraine

**Kyiv:** More civilians died across Ukraine Sunday as analysts warned that delays in US military assistance would see Kyiv struggle to fight off Russian offensives. One man was Sunday killed after a Russian drone hit the truck he was driving in the Sumy region, the local prosecutor's office said. Elsewhere, a 67-year-old woman was killed after shelling hit an apartment block in the Donetsk region, said Gov Vadym Filashkin. Officials in the Kharkiv region also said Sunday that they had retrieved the bodies of a 61-year-old woman and a 68-year-old man killed by a Russian strike the previous day.

## Landslides hit Sulawesi island, 14 killed

**Tara Toraja (Indonesia):** Torrential rains triggered landslides on Indonesia's Sulawesi island, killing at least 14 people and leaving three others missing, officials said Sunday. Mud fell from surrounding hills onto four houses just before midnight Saturday in the Tana Toraja district of South Sulawesi province, said local police chief Gunardi Mundu. He said a family gathering was being held in one of the affected houses. Dozens of soldiers, police and volunteers joined the search in the villages of Makale and South Makale, in a remote, hilly area, Mundu said. Rescuers early Sunday managed to pull out two injured people, including an 8-year-old girl, and rushed them to a nearby hospital.

## India gifts 101 vehicles to Nepal

**Kathmandu:** India Sunday donated 35 ambulances and 66 school buses to various organisations across Nepal, enhancing the local infrastructure in the health and education sectors. Indian Ambassador to Nepal Naveen Srivastava handed over the vehicles to the Nepalese officials in the presence of Finance Minister Barshaman Pun at a ceremony. Out of 101 vehicles, two ambulances were handed over on location in the earthquake-affected Jajarkot and West Rukum districts by the representative of the Embassy of India in the presence of district officials and local residents, a statement from the Indian Embassy here said.

## Indian student shot dead inside his car in Canada



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Ottawa, April 14:** A 24-year-old Indian student was shot dead in his car in Sunset neighbourhood in Canada's Vancouver, police said Sunday.

Chirag Antil, 24, was found dead inside a vehicle in the area, the Vancouver Police said in a statement.

After hearing the gunshots, residents in the neighbourhood called emergency responders, CBC news reported quoting police spokesperson Tania Visintin.

"Officers were called to East 55th Avenue and Main Street around 11 pm April 12 after residents heard the sound of gun shots. Chirag Antil, 24, was found deceased inside a vehicle in the area," Vancouver Police said.

No arrests have been made in the case and an investigation is on, the police said. Talking to X, Congress NSUI chief Varun Choudhary, tagging the Ministry of External Affairs, requested for assistance to the student's family.

He posted: "Urgent attention regarding the murder of Chirag Antil, an Indian student in Vancouver, Canada. We urge the Ministry of External Affairs to closely monitor the progress of the investigation and ensure that justice is swiftly served."

## SUDAN'S YEAR-OLD WAR

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Cairo, April 14:** Sudan has been torn by war for a year now, ever since simmering tensions between its military and the notorious paramilitary Rapid Support Forces exploded into street clashes in the capital Khartoum in mid-April 2023. The fighting rapidly spread across the country.

The conflict has been overshadowed by the war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza Strip, which since October has caused a massive humanitarian crisis for Palestinians and a threat of famine in the territory. But relief workers warn Sudan is hurtling towards an even larger-scale calamity of starvation, with potential mass death in coming months.

Food production and distribution networks have broken down and aid agencies are unable to reach the worst-stricken regions. At the same time, the conflict has brought widespread reports of atrocities including killings, displacement and rape, particularly in the area of the capital and the western region of Darfur. Justin Brady, head of the UN Humanitarian coordi-



nation office for Sudan, warned that potentially tens or even hundreds of thousands could die in coming months from malnutrition-related causes.

The situation in fighting on the ground has been deteriorating. The military, headed by Gen Abdel-Fattah Burhan, and the RSF, commanded by Gen Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo, have carved up Khartoum and trade indiscriminate fire at each other. RSF forces have overrun

much of Darfur, while Burhan has moved the government and his headquarters to the Red Sea city of Port Sudan.

The Sudanese Unit for Combating Violence Against Women, a government organization, documented at least 159 cases of rape and gang rape the past year; almost all in Khartoum and Darfur. The organisation's head, Sulima Ishaq Sharif, said this figure represents the tip of the iceberg since many victims

don't speak out for fear of reprisal or the stigma connected to rape.

In 2021, Burhan and Dagalo were uneasy allies who led a military coup. They toppled an internationally recognised civilian government that was supposed to steer Sudan's democratic transition after the 2019 military overthrow of long-time autocrat Omar al-Bashir amid a popular uprising. Burhan and Dagalo subsequently fell out in a struggle for power.

# Aid groups warn of mass death from hunger

**ABOUT 3.5 MILLION CHILDREN AGED UNDER 5 YEARS HAVE ACUTE MALNUTRITION, INCLUDING MORE THAN 710,000 WITH SEVERE ACUTE MALNUTRITION, ACCORDING TO THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION**

**AT LEAST 37% OF THE POPULATION AT CRISIS LEVEL OR ABOVE IN HUNGER**

**SAVE THE CHILDREN WARNED THAT ABOUT 230,000 CHILDREN, PREGNANT WOMEN AND NEWBORN MOTHERS COULD DIE OF MALNUTRITION IN THE COMING MONTHS**

The situation has been horrific in Darfur, where the RSF and its allies are accused of rampant sexual violence and ethnic attacks on African tribes' areas. The International Criminal Court said it was investigating fresh allegations of war crimes and crimes against humanity in the region, which was the scene of genocidal war in the 2000s.

A series of attacks by the RSF and allied militias on the ethnic African Masalit tribe killed between 10,000 and 15,000 people in Geneina, the capital of West Darfur near the Chad border,

according to a report by United Nations experts to the Security Council earlier this year. It said Darfur is experiencing "its worst violence since 2005."

Food production has crashed, imports stalled, movement of food around the country is hampered by fighting, and staple food prices have soared by 45% in less than a year, OCHA says. The war wrecked the country's healthcare system, leaving only 20 to 30% of the health facilities functional across the country, according to MSF.

At least 37% of the population at crisis level or above in hunger, according to OCHA. Save the Children warned that about 230,000 children, pregnant women and newborn mothers could die of malnutrition in the coming months.

About 5 million people were one step away from famine, according to a December assessment by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, or IPC, considered the global authority on determining the severity of hunger crises. Overall, 17.7 million people were facing acute food insecurity, it found. Aid workers say the world has to take action.

# business

## of the day quote

The commercial air-conditioning market represents a dynamic and evolving segment with considerable growth potential, driven by ongoing urbanisation trends and the imperative for energy-efficient, smart, and customisable solutions

SUNIL VACHANI | PRESIDENT, CEAMA

Growth in housing sales both in volume and value terms augur well for the overall economy as more than 200 ancillary industries, including cement and steel, are dependent on the real estate sector

VIKAS WADHAWAN | CFO, PROPTIGER.COM

We remain bullish and are optimistic about our growth in India, and will continue to expand Social to newer neighbourhoods in the coming year

RIYAAZ AMLANI | FOUNDER AND MD, SOCIAL

## SHORT TAKES

### LIC sees 59% rise in Adani stocks value

**New Delhi:** LIC, the state-owned insurance behemoth, has seen a 59 per cent rise in value of its investments in Adani group companies in 2023-24 fiscal year after the conglomerate made a smart recovery since being hammered by a damning short seller report. The value of LIC's investment in seven Adani group companies has soared from ₹38,471 crore as on March 31, 2023 to ₹61,210 crore March 31, 2024, registering an increase of ₹22,378 crore, according to stock exchange data. Last year, the insurance giant faced intense scrutiny over its decision to invest in the Adani group amidst a political slugfest after allegations of stock manipulation fuelled by Hindenburg report.

### EV fleet of 1,000

**New Delhi:** Wise Travel India Ltd, a B2B transport solutions provider, plans to add 1,000 electric vehicles to its fleet this year as part of its overall sustainable mobility drive, according to its founder and CEO Ashok Vashist. The company is expanding in India's tier II cities like Chandigarh, Jaipur, Coimbatore and Indore, and looking to have an international presence in Saudi Arabia and far-east countries. "This year, our main target is on sustainability, where we are inducting vehicles, which are electric and bio-CNG...We already have more than 300 cars, which are electric. This year, we will be inducting more than 1,000 electric cars and electric buses," Vashist told PTI.

### Bitcoin dip by 7.9%

**Washington:** Bitcoin fell 7.9% to \$61,842 Saturday, losing \$5,308 from its previous close. Bitcoin, the world's biggest and best-known cryptocurrency, is down 16.2% from the year's high of \$73,794 March 14. Ether, the coin linked to the ethereum blockchain network, fell 9.18% to \$2,930 Saturday, losing \$296.1 from its previous close.

### Hyundai-Kia mcap

**Mumbai:** The combined market capitalisation of Hyundai Motor and Kia is widely expected to surpass the 100 trillion-won (\$72.2 billion) mark this year, according to industry watchers. Currently, the combined market capitalisation of the two companies stands at 94.38 trillion won, with Hyundai Motor valued at 50.23 trillion won and its sister unit Kia valued at 44.14 trillion won.



**We expect markets to remain volatile in the near term given the global concerns (Middle East war)**  
SIDDHARTHA KHEMKA | HEAD (RETAIL RESEARCH), MOTILAL OSWAL FINANCIAL SERVICES

## FINMIN FOR ENHANCED KYC

In a bid to check incidence of BoB World app scam and other such financial frauds, the finance ministry makes a case for an enhanced KYC procedure and extensive due diligence by banks and financial institutions for onboarding merchants to safeguard customers against cyber risks, sources said



# Rising global liquidity fuelling gold bull run

Analysts have pointed out that the gold rally is not being explained by the traditional factors and new dynamics are in play

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, April 14:** The risk on trade in global markets is witnessing a huge rally in equities as well as gold.

There is an emerging view that the rally in gold is being fuelled by the surge in equities. "Record-high gold prices have accompanied record-high equity valuations. The wealth and liquidity effect of higher equities may allow for the purchase of more gold, than would otherwise be the case," global bank HSBC said in a note.

Much of the buying in gold appears to be fresh investment from outside the usual market participants, motivated perhaps by liquidity from the equity markets, and gives little sign of retreating, the note said.

Wall Street marquee firm Goldman Sachs said the majority of the gold upside since mid-2022 has been driven by new incremental factors, not least a significant acceleration in Emerging Market Central Bank accumulation as well as Asian retail buying.

EM Central Banks' accelerated gold accumulation has been catalysed by sanctions fear, reinforced by a preference to hold gold directly. Meanwhile, Asian retail demand, led by China, has been driven by fear over economic stability and currency depreciation, particularly tied in China to the property sector, Goldman Sachs said.

Despite the market pricing progressively fewer Fed cuts, stronger growth trends and



Gold has rallied 20% over the past two months to fresh high of ₹73,461 per 10 gm mark Friday

record equity markets, gold has rallied 20 per cent over the past two months.

Analysts at Goldman Sachs said the traditional fair value of gold would connect the usual catalysts – real rates, growth expectations and the dollar – to flows and the price.

"None of those traditional factors adequately explain the velocity and scale of the gold price move so far this year," the analysts said.

Jefferies analyst Christopher Wood wrote in his commentary titled, 'Greed and Fear' that if the causes of the rally in the oil price are reasonably self-evident, not least of which are the supply constraints enforced by Opec Plus, the near-term drivers of the current gold rally are much less clear.

"For now at least there continues to be a notable lack of inflows into gold ETFs in the Western world. It is also the case that, while gold mining stocks have rallied this year, they are not really outperforming bullion on the scale which would normally be expected to happen in a roaring bull market, which is what happened in the 2001 to 2011 period. If all of the above shows a

distinct lack of investor euphoria as regards gold, the question remains what is driving the current rally," Wood said.

What also seems to be aiding the rally in gold is the safe haven hedge against equities.

"Concerns over the length and breadth of the equity rallies worldwide have led some investors, including large institutional investors, to hedge their bets by safeguarding equity portfolios with some gold, global bank HSBC said in its research note.

"The possibility that equities underwhelm going forward has bolstered gold. While hedging equity risk has benefited gold to date, typically, an abrupt equity correction often triggers heavy gold liquidation," the note said.

The substantial purchases of gold have materialised led by asset and portfolio managers as well as insurance companies and pension managers, as a way to hedge equity market risk, the note said. For the record, the balance sheets of the Fed, the ECB and the Bank of Japan have risen from a combined \$5.5 trillion in March 2009 to a peak of \$25 trillion in February 2022 and are now \$19.6 trillion.

## Oil likely to rise after Iran's attack on Israel

REUTERS

**London, April 14:** Oil prices are expected to rise Monday after Iran's attack on Israel over the weekend, analysts said Sunday, but further gains may depend on how Israel and the West choose to retaliate.

Iran launched explosive drones and missiles at Israel late Saturday in retaliation for a suspected Israeli attack on its consulate in Syria April 1, a first direct attack on Israeli territory that has stoked fears a wider regional conflict.

Concern of a response from Iran to the strike on its embassy compound in Damascus supported oil last week and helped send global benchmark Brent crude Friday to \$92.18 a barrel, the highest since October.

It settled that day up 71 cents at \$90.45, while US West Texas Intermediate crude futures rose 64 cents to \$85.66. Trading is closed Sunday.

"It is only reasonable to expect stronger prices when trading resumes," said Tamas Varga of oil broker PVM. "Having said that, there has been no impact on production so far and Iran has said that 'the matter can be deemed concluded.'"

"However fierce and painful the initial market reaction will be, the rally could prove to be short-lived unless supply from the region is materially disrupted."

"Oil prices might spike at the opening as this is the first time Iran has struck Israel from its territory," said UBS analyst Giovanni Staunovo. "How long any bounce will last will... depend on the Israeli response," he added.



## Automobile exports from India plunge 5.5% in FY24

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 14:** Automobile exports from India declined 5.5 per cent in FY24 due to the monetary crisis in various overseas markets, according to the latest data shared by industry body SIAM.

Overall exports stood at 45,00,492 units in the last fiscal compared to 47,61,299 units in FY23.

Commenting on the drop in overseas shipments last fiscal, SIAM President Vinod Aggarwal said the situation remains volatile in various overseas markets.

The last fiscal saw a sizeable drop in commercial vehicle, two-wheeler and three-wheeler shipments, although passenger vehicles grew marginally.

However, in the January-March quarter this year, we have seen good recovery, especially for two-wheelers, indicating better potential for the rest of the year, he said.

In the passenger vehicle segment, exports increased 1.4 per cent to 6,72,105 units in FY24 from 6,62,703 units in FY23.

Maruti Suzuki led the segment with the shipment of



Some of the countries, where we are very strong with commercial vehicle and two-wheeler exports, have been facing foreign exchange-related issues

VINOD AGGARWAL | PRESIDENT, SIAM

2,80,712 units against 2,55,439 units in 2022-23.

Two-wheeler exports witnessed a dip of 5.3 per cent last fiscal at 36,52,122 units in 2022-23.

Similarly, commercial vehicle shipments dropped 16 per cent to 65,816 units against 78,645 units in FY23.

Three-wheeler exports declined 18 per cent to 2,99,977 units last fiscal compared to 3,65,549 units in the 2022-23 financial year.

## BULLISH ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

# FPIs infuse over ₹13,300cr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 14:** Foreign investors have infused over ₹13,300 crore in Indian equities in the first two weeks of the month owing to a resilient domestic economy with promising growth prospects.

Going ahead, concerns over changes in India-Mauritius tax treaty will weigh on Foreign Portfolio Investor (FPI) inflows in the near-term till clarity emerges on details of the new treaty, VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services, said.

Another major concern is the surcharged geopolitical situation in the Middle East with heightened tensions between Iran and Israel. These will keep the markets on tenterhooks in the near-term, he added.

Since domestic institutional investors (DIIs) are sitting on huge liquidity and the retail and HNIs in India are highly optimistic about the Indian market, FPI selling will be largely absorbed by domestic money.



According to the data with the depositories, FPIs made a net investment of ₹13,347 crore in Indian equities this month (till April 12).

Although, Friday witnessed FPI selling to the tune of ₹8,027 crore on fears of changes in India-Mauritius tax treaty.

Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director, Manager Research, Morningstar Investment Research India, said that several factors might have helped in the huge inflow including Fitch's downgrade of China's sovereign credit rating outlook from stable to negative due to growth concerns.

In addition, anticipation of a normal monsoon season this year that could alleviate infla-

## India adds record RE capacity last fiscal yr

INDIA'S INSTALLED RENEWABLE ENERGY CAPACITY IS 143.64 GW AS OF MARCH 31, 2024



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 14:** India has added a record renewable energy capacity of 18.48 GW in 2023-24, which is over 21 per cent higher than 15.27 GW a year ago, according to the latest data of the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy.

However, industry experts said there is a need to add at least 50 GW of renewable energy capacity annually for the next six years to meet the ambitious target of 500 GW of renewables by 2030.

According to the data, India's installed renewable energy capacity is 143.64 GW as of March 31, 2024, excluding 47 GW of large hydropower capacity (each plant is more than 25 GW or above).

They pointed out that renewable energy capacity stood at around 190 GW, including large hydro projects, and therefore, India needs to add 310 GW in the next six years or at an average of 50 GW per annum.

Union Power and Renewable Energy Minister RK Singh, in a recent interview with PTI, said, "You see, my installed capacity of RE is about 190 GW, I have 103 GW under construction, that makes it 290 GW. I have 72 GW under bids, so I am already at about 360 GW. I will reach it (tar-

India adds 18.48GW RE capacity, over 21% higher YoY

Solar installations led the addition followed by wind energy

Gujarat, Rajasthan have largest renewable energy capacities

get of renewable energy capacity of 500 GW by 2030) before time as I reach all my targets".

Besides, the MNRE is also targeting bidding of around 50 GW of renewable energy projects per annum to meet the ambitious target of 500 GW.

The data showed that solar installations of 12.78GW led the renewable energy capacity addition of 15.27 GW in 2023-24, followed by 2.27 GW of wind energy. Among the renewable energy capacity, the total solar installed capacity tops the chart at 81.81GW, followed by about 46 GW of wind energy, 9.43 GW of biomass cogeneration and 5 GW of small hydro (up to 25 MW capacity each).

Among the states, Gujarat and Rajasthan have the largest renewable energy capacities of about 27GW each, followed by Tamil Nadu at about 22 GW, Karnataka at about 21 GW and Maharashtra at about 17 GW.

Himachal Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh have installed renewable energy capacity of about 11 GW each.

## Mcap of 7 top firms climbs ₹59,404cr



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 14:** The combined market valuation of seven of the ten most valued firms climbed ₹59,404.85 crore in a holiday-shortened last week, with Bharti Airtel and ICICI Bank emerging as the biggest gainers.

Last week, Sensex dipped marginally by 3.32 points after a record-breaking rally. The BSE benchmark had settled at an all-time high of 75,038.15 Wednesday. It scaled the lifetime peak of 75,124.28 Tuesday.

The market valuation of Bharti Airtel jumped ₹19,029.37 crore to ₹6,92,861.27 crore.

ICICI Bank added ₹15,363.23 crore, taking its valuation to ₹7,75,447.63 crore.

Reliance Industries' valuation climbed ₹10,250.02 crore to ₹19,85,797.70 crore, and that of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) soared ₹7,507.53 crore to ₹14,47,343.55 crore.

The market capitalisation (mcap) of ITC rallied ₹2,809.06 crore to ₹5,36,967.87 crore, while Infosys climbed ₹2,303.73 crore to ₹6,16,424.57 crore.

State Bank of India's market valuation jumped ₹2,141.91 crore to ₹6,84,294.62 crore.

However, the mcap of HDFC Bank tanked ₹23,170.58 crore to ₹11,53,894.76 crore.

The valuation of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) dropped by ₹13,440.62 crore to ₹6,14,252.15 crore.

The mcap of Hindustan Unilever declined by ₹8,153.08 crore to ₹5,24,663.73 crore.

In the ranking of top-10 firms, Reliance Industries continued to retain the title of the most valued company, followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Bharti Airtel, State Bank of India, Infosys, LIC, ITC and Hindustan Unilever.

# This is how Tesla can make a ₹20L 'Make in India' EV

ACCORDING TO INDUSTRY EXPERTS, TESLA CAN GENERATE AT LEAST \$3.6BN IN REVENUE IN INDIA BY 2030

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, April 13:** Elon Musk is coming to India for the first time to spend at least 48 hours in the country later this month.

As all eyes are on what the billionaire would announce during his meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and industry leaders, Tesla lovers have only one question: When will they finally be able to drive a 'Make in India', affordable EV?



A cheaper Model 3, which is the entry-level Tesla, can only be possible with local manufacturing of battery components and a strong EV supply system, for which Musk will surely have a substantial announcement to make during his maiden visit to the country.

Currently, Tesla prices are almost the same worldwide. The base variant of the Model 3 is priced at over \$40,000 (nearly ₹33.5 lakh).

The cost reduction could be achieved if Tesla cars manufactured in the country come with fewer features compared to the ones available globally

Assistance System (ADAS) Level 2 could be included".

Tesla can eventually produce 5 lakh electric vehicles annually that start from ₹20 lakh in India.

To produce a ₹20 lakh car, Tesla can also have a battery pack with a lower capacity than 50kWh and the electric motors could be of lower power. The in-vehicle electronics could also be reduced with a smaller centre display.

In the new EV policy, the Indian government has cut the customs duty to 15 per cent (with certain riders) from the earlier 100 per cent on imported cars.

A minimum investment of ₹4,150 crore (about \$500 million) will be required to set up the manufacturing facilities for EVs in the country.

According to senior analyst Soumen Mandal from market intelligence firm Counterpoint Research, the import duty will be eliminated by setting up local production by Tesla, thus paving the way for an affordable Tesla car.

Also, the cost reduction could be achieved if Tesla cars manufactured in the country come with fewer features compared to the ones available globally.

Mandal told IANS that certain hardware required for Full Self-Driving (FSD) mode could be eliminated and "Advanced Driver

# CSK outgun Mumbai Knights slay Super Giants



(From L): MS Dhoni goes for a maximum during his cameo; Shivam Dube gives Rituraj Gaikwad a fist bump during their splendid partnership; Matheesha Pathirana celebrates after dismissing Ishan Kishan against Mumbai Indians, Sunday

**Mumbai, April 14:** Matheesha Pathirana and an ageless MS Dhoni delivered decisive blows as Chennai Super Kings out-gunned Mumbai Indians by 20 runs despite Rohit Sharma making a resolute unbeaten 105 (63b, 11x4, 5x6) in their IPL match here Sunday.

After Dhoni hammered three consecutive sixes in the final over bowled by Hardik Pandya to race to 20 not out off just four balls to propel CSK to a huge 206/4, Pathirana grabbed 4/28 to halt the chase of MI at 186/6.

Rohit produced his only second IPL century and first since 2012. But his magnificent effort did not get adequate support from the rest despite the pitch at the Wankhede Stadium remaining conducive for batting.

Defending champions CSK's first away win this season also marked a fourth defeat for Mumbai Indians in six matches, keeping them at the eighth spot.

CSK, on the other hand, rose to the third with eight points in their kitty.

In a game wherein the loudest cheers were reserved for Dhoni, Mumbai skipper Pandya continued to get booed intermittently. There were, though, a section of fans cheering him on at least once, like they did in the last game against RCB.

Unlike CSK, who got their majority of runs in the last 10 overs (136), Mumbai Indians remained in the hunt of in the initial part through Rohit's sustained acceleration and some handy contributions from others.

Once again, Rohit set the platform for Mumbai with a sturdy 70-run stand in seven overs with Ishan Kishan (23). With MI on charge, pacer Pathirana produced a two-wicket over after the powerplay accounting for Kishan and Suryakumar Yadav (0).

Tilak Varma aided Rohit with a 20-ball 31 (5x4), adding 60 off 38 balls for the third wicket, but

Pathirana's return broke their stand. However, it was the Mumbai duo of Shardul Thakur and Tushar Deshpande tilted the game in favour of CSK, producing two tight overs which broke the back of MI's chase.

Pandya fell for just two but consumed six balls and Tim David hammered a couple of sixes but failed to capitalise. Amid all this, Rohit remained stuck at the other end watching the game slip away despite his best effort.

Earlier, Dhoni's ballistic knock garnished forceful fifties by Shivam Dube (66 n.o., 38b, 10x4, 2x6) and Rituraj Gaikwad (69, 40b, 5x4, 5x6) as CSK powered to a strong total.

Dube and Gaikwad, who milked 90 runs off a mere 45 balls for the third wicket, gave Chennai innings steam in the initial and middle passages of the play before Dhoni mesmerised a packed Wankhede with vintage shot-making. The former CSK skipper hammered three

consecutive sixes off MI skipper Pandya (2/43) to help his side collect 26 runs off the final over.

Dhoni's stunning knock – which had the balls sailing over long-off, wide long-on and deep square leg – also pushed Chennai past the 200-run mark, which did appear tough until that final over.

Even though he could not push beyond 69, which came off 40 balls, Gaikwad appeared in prime form. The CSK skipper hit through the line effortlessly to clear ropes and when the MI bowlers challenged him by angling their deliveries into his body, Gaikwad improvised to find his runs without taking any unwanted risks.

**BRIEF SCORES**  
CSK 206/4 (Rituraj Gaikwad 69, Shivam Dube 66 n.o., MS Dhoni 20 n.o.; Hardik Pandya 2/43) beat MI 186/6 (Rohit Sharma 105 n.o., Tilak Varma 31; Matheesha Pathirana 4/28) by 20 runs.



PHIL SALT

**Kolkata, April 14:** Opening batter Phil Salt's magnificent 89 not out (47b, 14x4, 3x6) complemented pacer Mitchell Starc's brilliant bowling show (3/28) as Kolkata Knight Riders began their five-match home stretch with a lopsided eight-wicket win over Lucknow Super Giants in the IPL here Sunday.

The IPL's record buy Starc, who copped criticism for taking just two wickets from four matches and leaking 11 runs per over, bowled splendidly, while Sunil Narine returned with figures of 1/17 in his miserly spell as LSG posted a below-par 161/7 after KKR opted to bowl.

Captain Shreyas Iyer overcame a wobbly start to remain unbeaten on a run-a-ball 38 as KKR chased down the target with 26 balls to spare. Salt and Iyer stitched an unbroken stand of 120 from 76 balls to take KKR to 162/2 in 15.4 overs.

The win that coincided with the Bangla Nabo Barsho (Bengali New Year) catapulted KKR to second spot in the IPL table with eight points from five matches.

West Indies' Gabba Test hero against Australia, Shamar Joseph capped a forgettable debut for LSG and he began by leaking 22 runs in an eventful first over in which he bowled two wides and two no-balls.

The only bright spot for LSG was Mohsin Khan's first two overs when he exhibited a fine display of left-arm pace bowling and took the key wickets of Narine (6) and Angkrish Raghuvanshi (7). He also nearly dismissed KKR skipper Iyer with an incoming delivery that went through the batter's defence before darting away. Apart from that, it was a one-way traffic with Salt in his devastating best.

At the end of power play, KKR were well on course with Salt's aggressive innings taking them to 58/2. With no scoreboard pressure, Salt's fluent innings also rubbed on Iyer who overcame an anxious start.

Earlier, playing his 14th successive season for KKR, Narine yet again showed his craft at Eden Gardens when he stifled LSG in the middle overs in his boundary-less show that eventually proved to be decisive.

The Trinidadian came right after the power play just when captain KL Rahul and Badoni were looking to capitalise with 49/2 on the board. With the wicket gripping, he varied his pace and deceived the batters with his clever variations and the duo chose to see through his overs.

Narine gave away just nine runs in his first two overs, and completed his quota in the 15th

over, dismissing Badoni (29). Under the searing sun and on a two-paced wicket, LSG struggled to hold on to the momentum after the power-play with Narine and Rana bowling with precision.

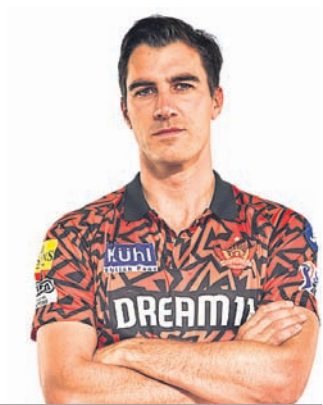
Promoted to No.4 after his 35-ball 55 not out, Badoni struggled to rotate strike. Rahul, who looked at ease against the pacers, also began to choke under pressure resulting a mistimed shot which led to his dismissal.

Against the run of play, Baibhav Arora drew first blood in the second over, dismissing Quinton de Kock for 10. Deepak Hooda's promotion to No.3 also failed to yield desired result as he wasted a lot of deliveries, leaving Rahul stranded at the other end.

Hooda finally perished for eight in the fifth over thanks to Ramandeep's flying catch at deep backward point as KKR's fielding looked vastly improved. After being 111/5 in 14.4 overs, LSG recovered in the back end with Nicholas Pooran's counter-attacking innings (45, 32b, 2x4, 4x6). Just when he was closing in on his fifty, Starc had the last laugh in the final over.

**BRIEF SCORES**  
LSG 161/7 (Nicholas Pooran 45, KL Rahul 39; Mitchell Starc 3/28) lost to KKR 162/2 (Phil Salt 89 n.o., Shreyas Iyer 38 n.o.; Mohsin Khan 2/29) by 8 wickets.

## RCB eye elusive win when they face SRH



**Bangalore, April 14:** Royal Challengers Bengaluru's IPL campaign that began in cheerfulness has melted into chaos, and their bowlers require a drastic transformation in mindset against Sunrisers Hyderabad for them to register an elusive win here Monday.

The RCB have players of repute and elite coaches with lofty pedigree but none of their plans have worked so far, evidenced by the team's 10th place in the standings with a solitary win from six matches.

The RCB's trundling run in this IPL is directly linked to their bowlers' ineffectiveness. They showed a distinct lack of willingness to adapt and upskill on conditions that needed a different thinking.

In this IPL, the bowlers have often relied on variations like knuckle balls, slow bouncers and pace-off deliveries to counter a set of ultra-aggressive batsmen. However, the RCB bowlers have been largely unidimensional in their approach allowing batters to tackle them with ease.

Dew, short boundaries etc cannot be counted as excuses when a team leaks above 13 runs per over. In fact, the RCB bowlers did not have the urge or imagination to blunt a batting unit full of intent.

That's an ominous sign against the Sunrisers, whose batting line-up is as intimidating as that of the MI. Two Hyderabad bat-

ters – Heinrich Klaasen and Abhishek Sharma – are inside the top-10 run-makers and Travis Head too has been consistent.

But more than the quantity of runs, how they made it make them more dangerous as Klaasen, Abhishek and Head have torn apart the bowling unit in the Power Play and in the middle-late overs.

That uniform power allocation through batting ranks makes SRH a tall proposition for the opposition bowlers. This is not to say that SRH, currently fifth on the table with six points from five matches, do not have a weak point.

Similar to RCB, bowling has been Hyderabad's soft underbelly in this tournament. But the Hyderabad outfit has found a saviour in skipper Pat Cummins, their highest wicket-taker with six scalps. Additionally, Cummins has also shown the flexibility to operate at various junctures of a match – with the new ball in the powerplay or bowling as second-change in the middle and death overs.

The inclusion of left-arm pacer T Natarajan (5 wickets) has given their bowling a new dimension and a bit more control in the last three matches.

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

## Gukesh beats Gujrathi to regain joint lead

**Toronto, April 14:** India's D Gukesh bounced back with a finely crafted game to outwit compatriot Vidit Gujrathi and regain his joint lead with Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia after the eighth round of the Candidates chess tournament here.

On a day when R Praggnanandhaa played out a draw with Firozua Alireza of France, Hikaru Nakamura sealed his supremacy in the all-American duel against Fabiano Caruana to come back in to reckoning for top honours.

Overnight sole leader Nepomniachtchi faltered in the early stages to allow tail ender Nijat Abasov to get away with an easy draw in the other game of the eight-player double round-robin event.

With six rounds still to come, Gukesh and Nepomniachtchi have 5 points apiece and they are followed by Nakamura and Praggnanandhaa on 4.5 points each. Caruana is now sole fifth on four points. Gujrathi on 3.5 comes in next ahead of Alireza on three points, while Abasov



is still at the rear of the tables on 2.5 points.

Gukesh had his task cut out and went for a rare variation wherein he surprised Gujrathi as early as on move four: Gujrathi sank into a long thought and ended up losing around twenty minutes on the clock. In the next few moves Gukesh equalised without much ado even as

Gujrathi tried to make some headways on both flanks.

In the middle game, Gukesh seized control of the only open file and used his queen and rook for an absolute domination to penetrate. Vidit tried hard to resist but the pressure was quite unforgiving especially when he had less time.

The die was cast when Gukesh

entered the eighth rank and it was a picturesque finish as white's king was taken for a walk before the checkmate became inevitable. The game lasted 38 moves.

In the Women's section, Koneru Humpy scored a victory over compatriot R Vaishali to jump to 3.5 points. The course of the event changed a bit in this section as Tingjie Lei of China accounted for her Chinese teammate Zhongyi Tan to through the event open.

Zhongyi's domination was halted as Aleksandra Goryachkina of Russia and Lei joined her in the lead on five points out of a possible eight. Russian Kateryna Lagno is within striking distance of the three leaders on 4.5 points with Humpy and Nurgul Salimova sharing the fifth spot on 3.5 points each. Anna Muzychuk of Ukraine stands seventh on three points, while Vaishali is on the last spot remaining on 2.5 points.

The ninth round will see an all important clash from the Indian perspective as Gukesh meets Praggnanandhaa in the men's section, while Gujrathi has to face the in-form Nakamura.

**Messi inspires win**  
**Kansas City:** Lionel Messi scored his fifth goal and added an assist and Luis Suarez tapped in the winner in the 71st minute as Inter Miami defeated Sporting Kansas City 3-2. After a defensive mistake by Sporting KC, Suarez converted Diego Gomez's crossing pass inside the six-yard box for the lead. It was Suarez's sixth of the season. With Inter Miami trailing 0-1 in the 18th minute, Messi assisted on Gomez's first-touch right-footer in the middle of the box to tie it. Messi's left-footed blast from the top of the penalty arc pushed Miami in front 2-1 in the 51st minute. Erik Thommy scored both the goals for the home team.

**Blow to title hopes**  
**London:** Arsenal and Liverpool had chance to overtake Manchester City in the Premier League standing, but both the teams lost at home with the Gunners went down 0-2 against Aston Villa, while the Reds suffered a 0-1 loss to Crystal Palace. Both Arsenal and Liverpool have 71 points each compared to City's 73 after 32 matches. Eberechi Eze's 14th minute strike consigned Liverpool to their first loss in the league at Anfield in 28 matches. At the Emirates Stadium, two late goals by Leon Bailey in the 84th and Ollie Watkins three minutes later stunned Mikel Arteta's men.

## Real, Barca script narrow wins

**Barcelona, April 14:** Real Madrid and Barcelona ground out road wins in the Spanish league while resting starters for their respective Champions League clashes against Manchester City and Paris Saint-Germain.

League leader Madrid won at Mallorca 1-0 to remain eight points clear of Barcelona after their 1-0 victory at Cadiz. The Spanish powerhouses will meet next weekend after their games in Europe's elite competition.

Madrid midfielder Aurelien Tchouameni scored the game's only goal at Mallorca three minutes after halftime. Madrid visit City Wednesday with their quarter-final poised after a 3-3 draw in Spain's capital this week.

Joao Felix scored to lead Barcelona at relegation-threat-



AURELIEN TCHOUAMENI

twice as Atletico Madrid beat Girona 3-1 to boost their chances of finishing in the top four. Griezmann got his first league goal since December by converting a penalty after a handball by Girona. His leveler in the 34th cancelled Artem Dovbyk's early opener.

Alvaro Morata's hustle proved key to putting the hosts ahead in first-half stoppage time when he chased down a ball before it could cross the end-line and whipped it into the area for Angel Correo to head into the top corner. Griezmann, Atletico's all-time top scorer, then blasted in a loose ball in the 50th for his 13th league goal of the campaign.

Girona remained in third place at four points clear of Atletico in fourth. Atletico moved five points ahead of Athletic Bilbao in fifth.

## Anju, Harshita to wrestle for gold at Asian Championships

**Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan), April 14:** Railways wrestler Anju, who had outclassed Vinesh Phogat in the recent selection trials, and Harshita put up a dominant show to reach the gold medal bouts in their respective categories at the Asian Championships, but Sarita Mor was eliminated after a shock defeat in her opening round here Sunday.

Competing in a highly competitive 53kg weight class category, Anju logged back-to-back wins by technical superiority against Philippines' Aliah Rose Gavelez and Sri Lanka's Nethmi Ahinsa Fernando. She faced some resistance from China's Chun

Lei before prevailing 9-6 in the semifinal. In the final, Anju will face Korea's Ji Hyang Kim.

Harshita conceded just three points en route the final, outclassing Uzbekistan's Ozoda Zaripboeva by technical superiority (13-3) and beating Kazakhstan's Anastassiya Panassovich 5-0. She will fight it out with China's Qian Jiang in the final.

However, a big shock was in store for the Indian squad as 2021 World Championship medallist Sarita lost her quarter-final bout 4-8 to Mongolia's Gantuya Enkhbat. The 28-year-old was a firm medal favourite in this category. Later Enkhbat lost her semi-final, closing the repechage route for the Indian.