

# <image>

TRADITIONAL ART: A youth decked up like Ravana takes part in an open-air theatre as a part of the 'Sahi Jata' festival at Kundheibenta Sahi locality in Puri, Monday OP PHOTO

# Insulin row intensifies

Amid AAP's allegation that there is a 'conspiracy' to kill Kejriwal, the Delhi CM said that he has been requesting the Tihar jail authorities to provide him with insulin every day, but his requests have not been heeded to. He stated that a false narrative is being given about his health when his sugar level is quite high and that AIIMS doctors never said he doesn't have to 'worry about it'

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gukesh makes right moves, creates history

CHENNAI TEEN WINS CROWN AT CANDIDATES CHESS AND BECOMES YOUNGEST PLAYER TO VIE FOR WORLD TITLE

**New Delhi, April 22:** Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal wrote Monday to the superintendent of Tihar jail where he is lodged since April 1. He



claimed that he has been asking for insulin every day and that AIIMS doctors never said there was 'no reason to worry about his diabetic condition'.

Kejriwal's letter to the superintendent comes a day after the Tihar administration issued a statement stating they had arranged his video conference with senior specialists from AIIMS during which neither 'the issue of insulin was raised by Kejriwal, nor was it suggested by the doctors'.

However, the Delhi CM contradicted the statement given by Tihar authorities. He alleged that the Tihar administration issued a 'false and misleading' statement under 'political pressure'. There was no immediate reaction from Tihar jail authorities on Kejriwal's allegations.

Meanwhile in a separate development, a Delhi court Monday directed AIIMS to constitute a medical board to examine

Kejriwal to determine whether he needs insulin to control his blood sugar levels and consider his other medical issues. Special Judge for CBI and ED cases Kaveri Baweja passed the order. AAP welcomed the decision.

Kejriwal rejected the jail administration's claim that the issue of insulin was never raised by him in his consultations with the doctors.

"This is false. I have raised the issue of insulin for 10 days, every day, multiple times. I showed my high sugar levels to every doctor who came to see me. I have requested for insulin every day, but my requests have been rejected," he said.

#### **BHUB HOTTEST**

Bhubaneswar: Odisha capital Bhubaneswar and Cuddapah in Andhra Pradesh emerged as the hottest places in the country Monday, sizzling at 43.8 degrees Celsius the IMD said. Paralakhemundi was second hottest at 42.9°C. P4

#### **IRREGULAR** by MANJUL



Sorry, no time for hate speeches or MCC violations. I'm busy ensuring free and fair polls

#### **Toronto, April 22:** India's 17-yearold Grandmaster D Gukesh scripted history by winning the Candidates Chess tournament here Sunday. In the process he became the youngest-ever challenger to the world title, bettering a record created by the legendary

AGENCIES

Garry Kasparov 40 years ago. Gukesh played out an easy draw with American Hikaru Nakamura in the 14th and final round to finish with nine out of a possible 14 points in the tournament which is held to decide the challenger to the World Champion.

The triumph entitles Gukesh a clash against reigning World Champion Ding Liren of China

#### FACTFILE

- Youngest-ever Indian to be a world title contender
  3rd youngest player in world to become GM at the age of 12
- Silver medal at Hangzhou Asian Games
  World title match against Ding Liren of China later this year

in the last quarter of the year. The Chennai-based teen bettered Kasparov's record by quite a distance as the Russian great was 22 when he qualified in 1984 to clash

with compatriot Anatoly Karpov.
"(I am) so relieved and so
happy. I was following this crazy
game (between Fabio Caruana



and Ian Nepomniachtchi), and then I went for a walk with my second (Gregorz Gazevsky). I think that helped," Gukesh said after winning the title.

Gukesh won a cash award of 88,500 euros (approx ₹78.5 lakh). He became only the second Indian after the great Viswanathan Anand to win the prestigious tournament. Fivetime World Champion Anand's triumph came in 2014.

"Congratulations to @DGukesh for becoming the youngest challenger. The @WacaChess family is so proud of what you have done. I'm personally very proud of how you played and handled tough situations. Enjoy the moment," Anand posted on 'X'.

Needing at least a draw, Gukesh gave nothing away to Nakamura, a clear signal that the teenager is ready for the big stage and is going to be the next biggest star in the chess world. Both players accepted a draw after 71 moves. POST NEWS NETWORK

B

**Bhubaneswar, April 22:** Biju Janata Dal (BJD) president and Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced Monday the names of six more candidates for the Assembly elections, denying nominations to five sitting MLAs. This was the seventh list announced by the BJD. With this, the BJD has so far announced the names of 141 candidates for the 147 Assembly constituencies in the state

constituencies in the state. The five sitting MLAs denied tickets were Simarani Nayak of Hindol, Raghunandan Das of Balikuda-Ersama, Subrat Tarai of Raghunathpali, Sunanda Das of Bari and Sudam Marndi of Bangiriposi. Later in the day Simarani resigned from the BJD. Sudam has been fielded by the BJD from the Mayurbhanj Lok Sabha seat while his wife Ranjita has been nominated by the regional party from the Bangiriposi Assembly segment. Similarly Tarai's wife Archana Behera has been fielded from Raghunathpali.

D drops 5 MLAs

The BJD has renominated Sports Minister Tushar Kanti Behera from the Kakatpur Assembly segment in Puri district. The others who got nominations are Dhenkanal MP Mahesh Sahu from Hindol, Sarada Prassana Jena from Balikuda-Ersama and Biswaranjan Mallick from Bari Assembly constituency.

The opposition BJP has so far announced the names of 132 candidates while the Congress has named 135 nominees.



-(



#### Mr. Bill Gates

Co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and Co-Founder & former CEO of Microsoft **(2023)** 

Her Excellency Mama Rachel Ruto, EGH First Lady of the Republic of Kenya (2022)

**Dr. Dansa KOUROUMA** President, National Transition Council of Guinea, **Guinea (2019)** 

Professor Muhammad Yunus (Nobel Laureate) Founder, Grameen Bank, Bangladesh (2018)

His Holiness The 14th Dalai Lama (2017) Nobel Laureate, 2005 and Spiritual Leader

Ms. Ashley Judd, Hollywood Actor, Activist & Global Goodwill Ambassador, UNFPA (2016)

His Excellency Dr Alejandro Toledo, Former President of Peru (2015)

**Ms. Anne F. Stenhammer** Former Regional Programme Director, UN Women, **South Asia Regional Office (2014)**  Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2024



Mr. Ratan Naval Tata, Chairman Emeritus, Tata Sons receiving the prestigious KISS Humanitarian Award 2021 from
Prof. Achyuta Samanta, Founder, KIIT, KISS & KIMS, Bhubaneswar.

ARE FROM ARE FROM 5 Continents 13 Countries 2 Nobel Laureates among the awardees Madam Albina Du Boisrouvray

Founder, Association François-Xavier Bagnoud (FXB International), **Switzerland (2013)** 

His Excellency Lyonchhen Jigmi Y. Thinley Hon'ble Prime Minister, The Royal Government of **Bhutan (2012)** 

Rt Hon. Lord Nicholas Addison Phillips President (Chief Justice) of the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom (2011)

Rt. Hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth Eminent Social Worker & His Excellency the President of Mauritius (2010)

**Dr. Ham Kee-Sun** Eminent Educationist & Physician and Hon'ble President & Founder,

Hanseo University, **South Korea (2009) Ms. Edna Bomo Molewa** Noted Social Worker & Hon'ble

Cabinet Minister, Social Development, South Africa National Assembly, **South Africa (2008)** 

The KISS Humanitarian Award is a prestigious annual international award conferred by the Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) in Bhubaneswar, India, conceptualized and the brainchild of visionary humanitarian and educationist Prof. Achyuta Samanta, Founder of KIIT and KISS. The award was initiated in 2008 to recognize and felicitate individuals for their exemplary and distinguished service to humanity across the globe.

🌐 www.kiss.ac.in | www.kiit.ac.in | www.achyutasamanta.com 🚯 facebook.com/kissfoundation | facebook.com/KIITUniversity | facebook.com/achyutasamanta



eisure

#### CHRISTINA HENDRICKS TIES KNOT WITH DOP GEORGE BIANCHINI

Actress Christina Hendricks has tied the knot with cinematographer George Bianchini. The wedding ceremony took place at the historic Napoleon House in New Orleans. The guest list included Mad Men creator Matt Weiner, Christian Siriano, Mae Whitman, and Retta, reports People magazine.

> Mumbai: Acclaimed actress Bhumi Pednekar has been

roped in by the United Nations

Development Programme

(UNDP) among others for The

Weather Kids - a global cam-

#### KERRY WASHINGTON WAS **SEXUALLY ASSAULTED AS KID**

Bhumi roped in for

UNDP's global drive

Django Unchained actress Kerry Washington revealed in her memoir that she was sexually assaulted as a kid. Kerry did not disclose the identity of her alleged abuser in the book but mentioned that the assaults occurred during sleepovers she attended as a child in the Bronx.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshaSpeaks.com accuracy • reliability • trust FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181\* ARIES

> Okay, so the plans you chalked out have not delivered any results. Today, you may want to do a rethink. By noon, you may put things in place, and this will fire your confidence. Ganesha says this is what life is about — try, try, try, until you succeed

#### TAURUS

This day you will be thinking of pleasant outings, picnics and pleasure trips. The

morning could be spent with your friends and family members, finalising plans and programmmes. But, warns Ganesha, you could lose track of things later in the day and, unfortunately, change your plans and end up by spoiling a lovely, enjoyable day and turning it into a drab and dull affair

#### GEMINI

A hectic and busy day awaits you. You will be busy trying to complete your

pending projects and in trying to figure out a way to beat your deadlings. However, the workload should ease a bit post-noon. You are likely to make plans to go watch a movie or to go out to dinner with friends and family, says Ganesha.

#### 

The day proceeds lazily. But vour work will pick up pace later in the day. Ganesha cautions about your health. As chance of stomach upset is likely, be careful of what you eat or drink. Do not neglect any ailment and contact doctor promptly.

#### **LEO**

The day may start off on a sour note. You will want to accomplish a lot of things, however, you will not achieve desired results. The later half of the day is better suited for all your work-related pursuits and you will be able to make much better progress, says Ganesha.

#### 

Today it is time to enjoy all the rewards that you have G. reaped in your life. It may appear to you that you have reached your wits' end. However, Ganesha foretells that all the jigsaw pieces will fall into place when you sit down with your spouse to sort things out.

### **LIBRA**

Ganesha says you will think twice before spending today. You shall try to save your money by bargaining too. The afternoon is an auspicious time to propose to

# **Naila shares her 'transformative** experience'

Mumbai: Actress Naila Grrewal recently shared her enriching experience working on the web series Maamla Legal Hai, which is cur-

rently streaming on Netflix. Surrounded by an intrigu ing ensemble cast of veteran actors including Ravi Kishan, Tanvi Azmi, Yashpal Sharma, Vivek Mushran, and Brijendra Kala, Naila believes that she was immersed in a world of talent and wisdom on the sets of the show.

"Working on Maamla Legal Hai was truly a transformative experience for me. Being in the presence of such seasoned actors was akin to attending an acting institution. I learned so much from each of them, and their guidance has had a profound impact on my approach to acting," Naila

shared In the series, Naila portrays the role of a lawyer along with a series of other characters who solve cases in a legal, albeit funny, way. "I feel fortunate to have

been part of such a talented ensemble cast," Naila continued. "Playing a lawyer

in the

show has

allowed me to explore new facets of mv craft. and I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to such an entertaining and thought-provoking series," she added. Meanwhile, on

the work front.

Naila is also a

part of the

PEANUTS

**CALVIN AND HOBBES** 

highly-anticipated Ishq Vishk Rebound co-starring Rohit Saraf and Jibraan Khan. It marks the debut of Hrithik Roshan's cousin. Pashmina Roshan.

paign to raise awareness about climate change and drive the world towards taking meaningful climate action. In her capacity as a National Advocate, Bhumi will help UNDP India in amplifying awareness and galvanising backing for the SDGs-an all-encompassing initiative urging global coopera-

tion to eradicate poverty. safeguard the environment, and foster universal peace and pros

per-

New Delhi: Sushrii Shreya

beauty pageants like Asian

Mishraa, who has won

Supermodel India and

Miss United Continents

2015, shared that gone are

the days when Miss India

She said that in today's day and

age, one has to have certain skill sets.

leading lady with Aayush Sharma-star-

rer upcoming action film Ruslaan.

The diva is set to make a debut as the

If she thinks beauty pageants make it easy to bag acting projects, Sushrii,

who has won several awards, like *l* 

AM Popular, Miss Vivacious, and Miss

Rampwalk told IANS,"I think pag-

eants like Miss India broaden vour

horizons in a wonderful way where

you meet the crème de la crème

of the industry. But just because you win the pag-

eant doesn't guaran-

tee you a film. I think gone are

WE HILLS ARE

I'LL SAY

MOOTH TALKING

THE TEACHER

OFF !!

W

VERY PATIENT

gets freeway into the movie.

and help raise awareness. I'm partnering with UNDP for their global campaign." She said, "Climate change is one of the most critical challenges facing humanity today, and it is imperative that we all come together to confront this crisis. My involvement in this campaign is to highlight UNDP's dedication to spread awareness about climate change.'

ity by 2030.

The Weather Kids focuses

on the impact of climate change

on people's lives and how it

will worsen as the years go by.

Bhumi stated, "I'm deeply dis-

turbed by climate change and

the impact that it is having

the world over. I have dedi-

cated my life to work on this

Talking about the campaign,

the days when Miss India got that freeway into the movie. I think in **'Beauty** today's day and age, you have to have a awards don't certain skill set.' Talking about the preparations guarantee for the film, the 33-year-old diva shared: "I was trained in action, so that was one easy part.

I have done some theatre. But acting in front of

different from what you do in theatre, on stage, or in a class. The film, set to release April 26, is pro-

films'

duced by Sri Sathya Sai Arts, and also stars Jagapathi Babu, and Vidya Malvade.

AGENCIES

The Badhaai Do actress went on to add, "I have always been committed to using my platform to raise awareness about the urgency of climate action and to empower individuals and communities to adopt sustainable practices. Together, we can make a difference and create a more sustainable and resilient world for future generations.

AGENCIES

Shriya speaks about media literacy

Mumbai: Shriya Pilgaonkar, who is set to return with her role of journalist Radha Bhargava in Season 2 of the streaming series The Broken News, has said that amidst the alarming rise in the usage of deepfake and Artificial Intelligence (AI), the onus also lies on people who consume news.

Shriya said, "This season explores different themes in the world of news reporting that are so relevant. One of them is fake news and how easy it is for sensationalised stories to spread faster than actual truth and facts.'

The actress speaks about the importance of media literacy in the age of fake news ahead of The Broken News-Season 2 release. Set to premiere May 3 on ZEE5, The

Broken News-Season 2 also stars Sonali Bendre and Jaideep Ahlawat in pivotal roles.

Given the recent alarming incidents of deepfakes, it raises concerns about misinformation and trust in the media. Speaking of the same, Shirya as-

to blindly believe everysocial on media without fact-checking from multi ple sources because of how common fake news has hecome

serted, "Today, we can't afford thing we read

the camera is very

day you shall experience love and closeness with your partner. Ganeshji sends you his best wishes

#### **SCORPIO**

A one to one conversation with your partner or spouse may leave you happy. In short, marital bliss is on the cards today To come closer to each other, you may even think of a getaway or plan a long vacation with each other. Your cheerful nature would keep you going throughout the day and even help you to sort out small issues.

#### **SAGITTARIUS**

Ganesha has to offer too many things on the platter today. Don't get confused if things don't appear as expected. Unexpected things may yield better results. There's lots more at the end of tiresome day. Let your hair down and hit the dance floor.

#### **CAPRICORN**

You have pulled up your socks and geared up to finish off all pending work. You'll want to do proper planning and go through the right route to minimise the chances of errors and wastage of time, even if it means spending the whole day for it, predicts Ganesha Physical intimacy will give boost to your love life. Enjoy the good time!

#### 

Financially, you are on a stable ground today, so make the most of it. You will give a tough fight to your competitors, and leave them far behind in the race as not many can beat you in your own game. Beware of those green-eyed people around, alerts Ganesha, as they are waiting for you to make a mistake and get off the track.

#### PISCES

Do not make or take any decision or activity lightly today, says Ganesha, For decisions taken today could have farreaching consequences. You will be forced to compromise on certain issues today.







CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

#### 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.

_								
					1			3
	3	8		5	6	9		
4						5		6
		7	3					
							7	
			1	2		6		
2		9			4		1	
	1	3	6					8

#### SOLUTIONS

		н		S		S		S		в		Т	
	S	U	D	0	К	U		T	A	R	Т	A	Ν
$\frown$		L	_	R		В		0		U		L	
	Р	A	1	R		J	U	٧	Е	N	Ι	L	Е
Ö				Е		Е		Е		Е		Т	
ž	F	А	L	L	А	С	Y	Ι,	Т	1	Т	А	Ν
CROSSWORD		Ν		_		Т		Н				L	
ŝ	L	A	Т	н	E		F	A	R	R	1	E	R
ö	C	C	D	A N	14	E	A .	Y		E	^	D	E
Ř	C	N	R	S	М	A	A			0	A	F	E
C	0	D	1	0	U	S		F	A	ŭ	С	F	т
		A		M	0	T		T		P		L	·
	_			_	-	_	_		_		_	-	_
	g		5	4	1	6 I	2	17	7	0	- A		3
	-	<u> </u>	5			~	~	- '	_	8	1		5
	2	2	8	6	÷	9	1	1	3	4	1	+	7
	2	2	-	6	÷	~	1	12	3	8 4 6	59	+	7
	278	2	-	6 1 3		~	1 4 9	1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	3	8 4 6	1 5 9 7		5 7 2 6
(U	2 7 8 6	+	8	6 1 3 2		9 8	1	10 40 14 4	2	8 4 6 1 5	1 5 9 7 3		7
OKU		+	8 3 4	6 1 3 2 7		9 8	1		5	4 6 1	9		7 2 6
DOKU		+	8 3 4	6 1 3 2 7 9		9 8	1 4 9 7	47 14 4	5	4 6 1 5	9		7 2 6 8
SUDOKU		5	8 3 4	6 1 3 2 7 9 8		9 8 5 1 3	1 4 9 7 6	4 4 4	5 2 4 3	4 6 1 5	9 7 3 2		7 2 6 8



downtown

#### REVIEW MEET

**Chief Electoral Officer Nikunia** Bihari Dhal, along with other officials, reviews the preparedness for the upcoming elections, in Bhubaneswar, Monday



# **Sleepy City slum under** scanner for narco trade

in the case in which his brother

POST that the reason behind

the suspected notoriety of Sian

Sramik Basti stems from the

ground that the affluent brother

duo, originally residents of

Kandhamal, resided in the slum's

lower middle class neighbour-

hood under Maitri Vihar police

in any plush area of the City.

Instead, they preferred to stay in

the shanties at Sian Sramik Basti

which raises eyebrows," an STF

official said, adding that the

drug trade in the southern dis-

trict is known to be carried out in connivance with Naxals, who

claim a lion share of the pro-

It has also been noticed that a

significant number of people

from Kandhamal reside at the

slum indicating the possible in-

volvement of many others in

trafficking of the contraband,

said the STF official.

ceeds of crime.

They could have easily lived

limits, in the Capital City.

Top STF sources told Orissa

was previously arrested.

STF nabs drug smuggler Soumya Ranjan Digal, a resident of Sian Sramik Basti in Chandrasekharpur, who was wanted in connection with 52 kg ganja haul



#### POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 22: Sian Sramik Basti, a small slum in Chandrasekharpur area, is suspected to be the den of an interstate ganja smuggling syndicate having its links with various outlawed Maoist ultra outfits. The lead in the case came fol-

lowing the arrest of a notori ous ganja smuggler, Soumya Ranjan Digal, 25, by the Special Task Force (STF) of Odisha Police during a raid at Tikabali in Kandhamal district, Sunday. Soumya, who is allegedly part of a larger syndicate, was on the run since April 11 after he staged a dramatic escape from the clutches of the police team that intercepted him and his brother, Bikash, in the City with a consignment of 52 kg of cannabis when the duo was transporting the contraband sourced from Kandhamal.

Soumya was subsequently booked under Sections 20(b)(ii)(C)/29 of NDPS Act, 1985

#### FSSAI to check quality of spices sold in India

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 22: Food safety regulator FSSAI has started taking samples of spices in powder form of all brands, including MDH and Everest, from across the country in view of quality concerns flagged by Singapore and Hong Kong, a government source said.

"In view of the current development, FSSAI has taking samples of spices of all brands.

This aspect is under analysis and surveillance. Furthermore, the brothers' connection with other inter-district and interstate drug traffickers are being scrutinised. Their possible connections with Naxals in the Kandhamal-Boudh region is also being investigated," the official pointed out. Giving details about the modus

operandi, the official said, "The members of the syndicate would collect ganja from Kandhamal and Boudh areas. It has been observed that they preferred to transport the contraband in cars instead of big vehicles, like trucks, as cars are less suspected by law enforcement agencies.'

Soumya and Bikash, STF officials said, have amassed a substantial amount of money and have purchased at least five luxurious cars and two motorcycles. The total cost of the vehicles would be more than ₹50 lakh. A thorough financial investigation under Section 68 of the NDPS Act has also been initiated, he said.

The STF would approach the competent authority in Kolkata (a quasi-judicial authority under the NDPS Act) for forfeiture of movable and immovable properties of the accused acquired from proceeds of crime, it was learnt. Soumva had earlier been arrested in a rape case of in

Phulbani. Since 2020, the STF has seized more than 75 kg brown sugar, 202 gram cocaine and 124 quintals ganja, and 14 kg opium and arrested more than 195 persons.

### State deploys 7 ODRAF teams to douse wildfire

#### AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 22: The state government deployed seven teams of Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force (ODRAF) in vulnerable forests to combat wildfires, Monday.

On the request of the principal chief conservator of forests (PCCF), the Office of Special

#### Fire engulfs parts

of Chandaka forest



office bearers at Congress Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Monday

# 2024 polls generate 9L temporary jobs

Electricians, cleaners, social media campaigners, event managers, content writers and content creators are some of the jobs that are in high demand during the elections, industry *experts* say

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 22: As the country goes through general elections, industry experts say up to 9 lakh temporary jobs are expected to have been created across different roles due to the hustings

The first phase of general elections was held April 19 with 102 constituencies across 21 states and UTs going to polls. The last phase of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections will be held June 1. "The exact number of temporary jobs created during the 2024 Lok Sabha Elections across the country would depend on various factors such as the scale of the election, the number of polling stations, and the requirements of election-related activities. However, on our platform, we anticipate at least 9 lakh jobs during the elections,' WorkIndia CEO and co-founder Nilesh Dungarwal told PTL The temporary jobs created during the 2024 Lok Sabha Elections encompass a diverse range of roles catering to different aspects of the electoral process, he said. He said some common positions include polling booth officials, election clerks, security personnel, data entry operators, transportation coordinators, and administrative staff, which are crucial for ensuring the smooth functioning of the electoral process and maintaining transparency throughout the elections.



The duration of these

temporary positions

typically begins about 1-2

Individual workers engaged for specific tasks may earn between ₹15,000 & ₹40,000 based on their role and the scope of work involved

the electoral proceedings and extends throughout the election period "During the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, job roles that saw a

weeks prior to the start of not impact the existing job market dynamics, given the prevailing imbalance between job supply and demand portation, food and beverages. catering, security, IT network

management and analytics. The

Since these jobs are just for

the elections, this surge in

temporary employment will

"This effect is particularly pronounced during the summer season, characterised by heightened consumer demand for durable goods, which may intensify competition for labour with similar skill sets. Nevertheless, this impact tends to be localised and short-lived, given that election-related operations typically unfold over a brief timeframe and generally do not substantially disrupt broader employment patterns within these sectors," he stated.

The duration of these temporary positions typically begins about 1-2 weeks prior to the start of the electoral proceedings and extends throughout the election period, which will be held in seven phases, Narayan said.

The majority of these roles will remain active until the completion of the election process in each respective location, he added Genius Consultants CMD R P Yadav said a significant workforce of over 1.00.000 temporary workers are required, who are

including MDH and Everest, from the market to check whether they meet the FSSAI norms." the source told PTL

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) does not regulate quality of exported spices, they said. FSSAI, which operates under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, takes samples of spices regularly from the market to check the quality of product sold in the domestic market.

Meanwhile, the Spices Board of India is looking into the ban imposed by Hong Kong and Singapore on the sale of four spices-mix products of Indian brands MDH and Everest, which allegedly contain pesticide 'ethylene oxide' beyond permissible limits. "We are looking into the matter. We are at it," Spices Board of India Director A B Rema Shree told PTI. The companies could not be contacted immediately.

The Hong Kong's Center for Food Safety (CFS) has asked consumers not to buy these products and traders not to sell, while the Singapore Food Agency has directed a recall of such spices.

Relief Commissioner (SRC) deployed ODRAF teams in Baliguda, Phulbani, Rayagada, Bonai, Kalahandi South, Similipal South and Paralakhemundi forest divisions to douse wildfire. Speaking to media persons. PCCF Debidutta Biswal said wildfire incidents are now under control and all measures have been taken.

Usually, forest fire incidents are reported in January each year.

During this year. forest fires were detected at 12,000 points in the state as compared to 32,500 during the same period of last year, Biswal said, adding that this year, all forest fire alerts have been responded to. "To stop the spread of fire in forest areas. seven ODRAF teams have been deployed in vulnerable points. They will reach the spot by Tuesday," he said. The office of the SRC has written a letter to additional DGP (Law & Order) in this regard Monday. In its letter, the SRC office asked ODRAF teams to carry the required equipment to manage forest fires along

mid reports of raging wildfire in Aseveral forests across the state, an area under the Chandaka forest was engulfed in fire Monday, posing serious threat to the wild flora and fauna. According to sources, the blaze near Godibari under Chandaka division was spotted by locals around 3pm following which personnel from the fire wings of the Forest department and Fire Services rushed to the spot and launched dousing operations. Though Forest department officials said the fire-affected area would be around one-and-a-half acres, locals

claim that the inferno might have taken into its grip more than four acres of the forest. The raging fire reduced many trees and bushes into ashes, while wildlife is under threat, said a local. Though the exact reason behind the fire is yet to be ascertained, at least 40 firemen were engaged in the fire-fighting operations when reports last came in.

been deployed by the Forest department to douse the fire in the state, Biswal added.

Altogether 370 squads have

cent), data entry jobs (64 per cent), security personnel (86 per cent), back office (70 per cent), delivery, drivers, field sales and retail (65 per cent), manual jobs (82 per cent), content writing (67 per cent) among others," he added.

significant increase on our plat-

Echoing the view, CIEL HR Director and CEO Aditya Narayan Mishra said that over the past six months it is estimated that about 2,00,000 temporary positions have emerged as contestants prepare for the upcoming elections.

These roles span various sectors crucial for election preparation such as data analysis, planning, public relations, market survey, media relations, content design, content marketing, social media marketing, AI strategies and project management, he said.

"As the campaigning activities pick up, for a window of 8-13 weeks, until the end of the polls in the respective constituencies, we expect a huge pick-up of activities for event management, printing, trans-

form were accounting (80 per service providers will hire an estimated 4,00,000 people on a temporary basis for these projects," he added.

> Since these jobs are just for the elections, this surge in temporary employment will not impact the existing job market dynamics, given the prevailing imbalance between job supply and demand, noted Mishra.

> TeamLease Services CEO -Staffing, Kartik Narayan said considering the vast scale of the upcoming elections, it is anticipated that a significant number of temporary positions will be created.

"With over a million polling booths across India. each booth is expected to employ at least 1-2 temporary gig workers for the duration of the electoral process," he told PTI.

When asked if these temporary jobs affect the job market, he said, the emergence of temporary employment opportunities during elections can transiently influence sectors accustomed to fostering such employment, notably logistics and e-commerce.

needed to handle various tasks including food catering, maintaining vehicles, schedules, managing campaign materials like posters and microphones, and assisting in the construction of meeting podiums and barricades. Electricians, cleaners, social

media campaigners, event managers, content writers, content creators among others are some of the jobs that are in high demand during the 2024 Lok Sabha Elections. Yadav said.

Talking about remuneration for these temporary jobs during the elections, he said, individual workers engaged for specific tasks may earn between ₹15,000-40,000 based on their role and the scope of work involved.

"Additionally, drivers hired to provide transportation services during the campaign are paid on a per day basis, typically receiving between ₹5,000-8,000 per day," he added.

Bhubaneswar: BJD's Puri Lok Sabha

Patnaik fell ill due to scorching heat

candidate and former IPS officer Arup

#### Father's diet can affect anxiety in sons, metabolism in daughters Heat: BJD Puri LS candidate falls ill

ACCORDING TO A NEW RESEARCH CONDUCTED IN MICE, SCIENTISTS FOUND THAT IT'S NOT JUST EATING TOO MUCH OR TOO LITTLE, BUT THE COMPOSITION OF THE DIET THAT CAN HAVE AN IMPACT ON FUTURE CHILDREN

he father's diet can affect the anxiety levels in their sons and the metabolism of their daughters before they are even conceived, according to new research conducted in mice.

While a mouse father's diet is known to impact his and his children's reproductive health, it was not yet known if differing its macronutrient composition of proteins, fats and carbohydrates could have differing impacts on children's health, researchers said.

The team of scientists, co-led

by the University of Sydney, Australia, found that male mice fed with diets low on proteins and high on carbohydrates are more likely to have male offspring with higher levels of anxiety.

with PPE kits.

They also found that male mice fed with high-fat diets are more likely to have daughters with higher body fat and more biological indicators of metabolic disease.

The findings, published in the Nature Communications journal, showed that in mice, the father can shape their chil-



dren's health through their diets. "It is extraordinary that by tein, fat and carbs in the father's diet we could influence specific features of his sons and daughters health and behaviour. There is some important biology at play here," said Stephen Simpson from the University of Sydney and the study's co-senior author.

For the study, the researchers fed male mice one of 10 diets differing in the amount of protein, fats and carbohydrates, and then allowed them to mate with females reared on a standard diet. They then analysed the behaviour and physiology of the resulting offspring.

The team also found that males consuming a low-protein diet also ate more food overall. However, macronutrient composition, along with calories, were found to influence the mice's offsprings' health.

"Our study shows that it's not just eating too much or too little, but the composition of the diet that can have an impact on future children," said Romain Barrès. from the University of Copenhagen, Denmark, and the study's co-senior author. PTI

while campaigning near Pipli town. Monday, Patnaik, a former Mumbai police commissioner, was rushed to a nearby hospital and then to the Capital Hospital in the Capital City where his condition is stated to be stable, hospital sources said. The incident took place near Haat Chhak during a procession from Uttara Chhak to Pipli town in Puri district. The Lok Sabha nominee fell ill when he and the candidate from the Pipli Assembly seat, Rudra Maharathy, were participating in it. Patnaik developed uneasiness due to the blistering heat and humid weather. his supporters said. The day temperature in the City and nearby areas was 39.8 degrees Celsius at 11.30am Monday.







# downtown

# **Prez confers Padma awards**



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 22: At a ceremonial function held at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, President Droupadi Murmu Monday conferred Padma awards upon several eminent personalities, honouring their contributions to various fields

Among the recipients were former vice president Venkaiah Naidu, renowned Bharatanatyam dancer Padma Subrahmanyam, and social worker Bindeshwar Pathak, who was given the award posthumously. They were conferred with the Padma Vibhushan.

Actor Mithun Chakraborty, singer Usha Uthup, former Uttar Pradesh Governor Ram Naik and industrialist Sitaram Jindal were conferred with the Padma Bhushan. Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar

MARKET WATCH

DOLLAR 83.3825

22336.40

88.9000

₹71,318

₹ 80,784

BBSR

43.8°C

28.4°C

Trace

**CLASSIFIED** 

53%

₹0.02

₹1,488

₹2,723

CTC

40.2°C

28.5°C

52%

Nil

INDEX

NIFTY

EURO

GOLD

SILVER

WEATHER

Max Temp

**Min Temp** 

Humidity

Rainfall

LIKELY

FORECAST

LIGHT TO MODER-

ATE RAIN/THUN-

DERSHOWER VERY

BOU



Among notable recipients were actor Mithun Chakraborty, singer Usha Uthup, former Uttar Pradesh Governor Ram Naik, and industrialist Sitaram Jindal

From Odisha, Binod Kumar Pasayat and Guru Gopinath Swain were conferred with the Padma Shri

were present at the event alongside other dignitaries.

From Odisha, Binod Kumar Pasayat and Guru Gopinath Swain were conferred with the Padma Shri. Hailing from Govindapur village in Sheragada block of Ganjam, 105-year-old Gopinath Swain has been performing Krishna Leela for over nine decades now. Binod Kumar Pasayat of Sambalpur town is a renowned lyricist, play writer and poet in Sambalpuri language. Born in Bolangir, 88-yearold Pasavat shifted to Sambalpur to pursue his interest in writing

while operating a barber shop in

the town. The other two persones selected for the Padma Shri are Bhagabat Padhan and Binod Maharana.

Padma awards, one of the highest civilian honours of the country, are conferred in three categories -- Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri.

The awards are given in various disciplines or fields of activities viz art, social work, public affairs, science and engineering, trade and industry, medicine, literature and education and sports among others.

The Padma Vibhushan is awarded for exceptional and distinguished service, the Padma Bhushan for distinguished service of high order and the Padma Shri for distinguished service in any field. The awards are announced on the eve of Republic Day every year. For 2024, the President had approved conferment of 132 Padma awards, including two duo cases (in a duo case, the award is counted as one).

The list comprises five Padma Vibhushan, 17 Padma Bhushan and 110 Padma Shri awards. As many as 30 of the awardees

are women and the list also includes eight people from the category of Foreigners/ NRI/PIO/OCI and nine posthumous awardees. While almost half of the

awardees were conferred the awards Monday, the remaining are likely to get them next week.



Infertility consultation

camp at SUM Sitalapalli

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, April 22: A free infertility consultation camp was organised at Sitalapalli campus of SUM Hospital Sunday. The objective of the camp was to counsel and extend help to childless couples and give proper advice for infertility related problems. The camp was attended by a large number of people from different parts of south Odisha.

The couples were counseled by Sujata Pradhan, head of the Centre for Human Reproduction (CHR) at Institute of Medical Sciences (IMS) and SUM

"Many couples were counseled about their problems and necessary remedial measures were provided at the camp,'



SUCCOUR: People enjoy Tala Saja (Ice Apple) near Matamath Ring Road in Cuttack, Monday, amid scorching heatwave

# Ratan Tata honoured with **KISS Humanitarian Award**

#### ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, April 22: Marking a significant recognition of his commitment to social development and exemplary corporate leadership, renowned industrialist and philanthropist Ratan Tata, Chairman Emeritus of Tata group, was honoured with the prestigious KISS Humanitarian Award 2021 Monday. The award ceremony was held at his residence in a private arrangement in Mumbai, as he has been avoiding public appearances due to health reasons.

The ceremony was attended by Tata group chairman N Chandrasekaran and three-time Grammy winner Ricky Kej, among others. The award was

### CM reaffirms commitment to protect environment

#### ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, April 22: On World Earth Day, Monday, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik reaffirmed commitment to protect environment, expand forest cover and reduce carbon footprint for healthier planet and sustainable future.

"The Earth, our only home, proides us clean air. food. water. ma-



founder Achyuta Samanta. Ratan Tata who is usually ret-

to Covid pandemic, he was un-

desired and real changes.

Bakul Foundation organised Panda said. "Odisha is one of the highly vulnerable geographies in the world when it comes to climate change impacts. This Earth Day, let's re-dedicate ourselves to strengthen the Plastic Free Picnic Challenge.'

#### Bhub hottest city in VARIATION country with 43.8°C SENSEX **73088.33** 懀 560.29 189.40 ₹0.10 PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 22: The meteorological department Monday said 17 places in Odisha recorded a temperature of 40 degrees Celsius or above during the day, with Bhubaneswar becoming the hottest city in the country along with Cuddapah in Andhra

Pradesh. During the day, the mercury level rose to 43.8 degrees Celsius in Bhubaneswar, the state capital, followed by 42.9 degrees Celsius in Paralakhemundi town and 42.6 degrees Celsius in Baripada.

Balasore and Chandbali also saw the mercury soar to 40.7°C and 40.4°C, respectively. Kenojhar recorded 38°C, followed by Sambalpur (36.6°C), Jharsugada (36.2°C), Paradip (35.4°C), Hirakud (34.8°C), and Rourkela (34.4°C). The weather office said that temperature is likely to fall by 2°C



likely to experience hot and humid weather conditions

Tuesday. Thunderstorms with lightning are also expected in Subarnapur, Boudh, Nuapada, Bolangir, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Nabarangpur, Rayagada, Koraput, Malkangiri, Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Bargarh, Jharsuguda, and Sundargarh April 23, it said.

Meanwhile, state Public Health director Niranjan Mishra said 89 people from 16 districts have been admitted to hospitals for heat stroke-related illness during this summer season.

Hospital, Bhubaneswar.

Pradhan said.

"Such camps will be held on third Sunday every month at Sitalapalli campus of SUM Hospital with the cooperation of director Deba Prasad Dash,"

#### of my life", he remarked. Samanta said, "Ratan Tata's social work and leadership have been influencing me since my childhood. I have respected and liked him from a young age. My father was an employee in Tata Company. Since then, I have represented by KIIT and KISS spected and liked Ratan Tata." KISS Humanitarian Award is

icent about accepting accolades, following a personal request from Samanta and recognising the importance of the honour, agreed to accept it. The award was announced in 2021, but due

the Earth day and held a discussion on making climate change an important part of the political discourse in the elections. A climate manifesto for the state was prepared by over 50 experts and released on the occasion. Environmentalist Ranjan



ganisations that embody the spirit of humanitarian work globally. The award was initiated in 2008 by Samanta.

the highest honour of the in-

stitution and is dedicated in

recognising individuals and or-

able to receive it.

Tata expressed his gratitude

and said, "I am extremely happy

to receive this honour. This is one

of the most significant moments

Extract of G.D. No. 023 Dated 18.04.2024 of Pipili Police Station. Station Diary / General Diary No.-023. Entry for (Officer) SI (Sub-Inspector) / Bhaskar Mania. Description of the GD Entry : - On dtd -12.04.2024 one Swadhin Kumar Sahoo, S/o - Binod Bihari Sahoo of Village -Shyamsundarpur, PS -Nimapada, Dist - Puri reported that he lost his Original Sale deed No. -11521201821 while he was riding on bike near tollgate, Pipili from BBSR to Nimapada. He searched but could not found. So enter the fact in GD for enquiry the matter for further future reference.

#### AFFIDAVIT

I, Deepti Nayak, W/o-Nishikanta Nayak, resident of HIG-78, Sailashree Vihar, Khurda, PIN 751021, Odisha hereby declare by this affidavit No.220/2024, dated 23.03.2024 that now onwards I shall be known as Diptirani Pattnaik for all future purposes.

to 3°C during the next three days. The IMD centre here said some places in Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar and Dhenkanal are

Sundargarh district reported the highest number of such hospitalisation cases at 41, followed by Khurda (12), Angul (9), Mayurbhanj and Jharsuguda (7 each) and Sambalpur (5), he said.

she added.

The camp was attended by Raiesh Kumar Lenka, medical superintendent of the Phulnakhara campus of IMS and SUM Hospital.

terials and space for recreation. Therefore, we need to reduce carbon footprint and promote renewable energy sources," the CM said.On the occasion, environmentalist JK Panigrahi said,

across the globe since 1970, with the motive of generating awareness among the people on various pertinent environmental issues. Awareness needs to be followed by action programmes at the grassroot level that would bring about

WORLD EARTH DAY

"Earth Day is being celebrated

# Vector control strategy to suppress dengue transmission

**STRATEGIES TO REDUCE BREEDING SITES THROUGH DOMESTIC WASTE AND WATER CONTAINER MANAGEMENT, USING LARVICIDE OR LARVIVOROUS FISH AND INSECTICIDE, CAN CONTROL DENGUE** 

eadly diseases carried by mosquitoes are spreading due to weather brought about by climate change. A bacteria-based solution could be key

to fighting back. Dengue fever continues to kill people across the world and climate change is making it worse. The World Health Organisation

(WHO) reported more than five million dengue cases and more than 5,000 deaths in more than 80 countries in 2023, which was the warmest year since records began. Nearly 80 per cent of cases,

about 4.1 million, were in the USA. There were more than 1.6 million cases in Brazil. Astonishingly, it's already passed that mark in just three months this year. Brazil's Ministry of Health reported more than 2.9 million probable infections and 1,116 deaths as of April 8. That staggering figure means

the fight against mosquito-borne diseases is hotting up.

In Indonesia, the government is conducting a programme involving the use of mosquitoes with Wolbachia to control the spread of dengue in five cities. Wolbachia technology stands

out as a promising biological intervention for controlling dengue. It is an intracellular bacterium commonly found in more than 60 per cent of insect species worldwide, meaning it lives inside the

cells of another organism. When introduced into the disease-transmitting Aedes aegypti mosquitoes, Wolbachia blocks the



insects' ability to transmit dengue virus replication within the mosquito body and significantly imviruses, otherwise known as the pedes the mosquitoes' capacity to "vector competence"

The study found a 77 per cent reduction in dengue infection and an 86 per cent decline in hospitalisation among confirmed dengue cases in the target area.

Wolbachia technology does not require individual administration, works without ongoing human intervention and can be self-sustaining once set up. Its embrace looms as a cost-effective, long-term way to reduce dengue transmission.

It's going to be needed, as a

warming climate, coupled with phenomena such as the El Nino. increases the risks of vectorborne diseases such as dengue and malaria.

El Nino is a weather phenomenon in which sea surface temperatures in the central Pacific rise, causing more rain. It has led to floods in the Horn of Africa and the United States. El Nino has also made Southeast Asia. Australia and southern Africa drier and warmer and worsened drought in the northern areas of South America.

The phenomenon increases the risk of diseases, particularly those spread by mosquitoes, like malaria and dengue.

In Venezuela and Colombia, malaria cases can increase by more than a third after dry periods linked to El Nino.

Warmer weather increases humidity and precipitation, meaning more breeding places and a broader geographical distribution of mosquito habitats. Temperature is also pivotal in the mosquito's life cycle and virus transmission capacity.

Warmer climates also boost mosquitoes' metabolism and shorten their viral incubation period, making them more efficient carriers of diseases.

Studies have found that as temperatures rise, disease transmission does, too, but in a way that's not straightforward or predictable. Vector control remains the most widely adopted strategy to suppress dengue transmission. Strategies to reduce breeding sites through domestic waste and water container management, using larvicide or larvivorous fish and insecticide, can control dengue.

This is where trials of other methods, such as Wolbachia, could prove the difference between continuing control strategies that dwindle in effectiveness over time and innovative approaches that adapt to evolving challenges in dengue control programme.

Ŀ	יי		
	1	1	

#### FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS

transmit the dengue virus.

Researchers from Monash

University injected Wolbachia

to the larvae using a micro nee-

dle. A 2011 study showed a big re-

duction in dengue viral load in

Wolbachia-infected mosquitoes

This biocontrol method lever-

compared to those in the wild.

ages the bacterium's ability to

spread through mosquito popu-

lations as the infected mosquitoes

pass the bacteria to their off-

spring, effectively reducing these

Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur-9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech-Tankapani Road-9861341488, Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookieman-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion-Jagmara-9938714347, Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.





#### **OrissaPOST** TUESDAY | APRIL 23 | 2024 | BHUBANESWAR



# Vig nabs headmaster for accepting bribe

#### POST NEWS NETWORK

Bargarh/Barpali, April 22: Vigilance sleuths Monday arrested Balamukunda Pradhan, the headmaster of Kusanpuri High School under

Barpali police limits in Bargarh district for allegedly demanding and accepting a bribe of ₹14,000 from a functionary of one local women self-help group (WSHG) to process a file for the release of payment in their favour towards cleaning and night watch duty at the school. The en-

tire bribe money has been recovered and seized from the possession of accused Pradhan.

According to a source, the WSHG which had been outsourced for cleaning and guarding the school premises requested Pradhan to pass their bill. However, Pradhan demanded ₹14,000 bribe for processing the file to release their payments. Members of the WSHG brought it to the knowledge of Sambalpur Vigilance and lodged a written complaint.

Swinging into action, Vigilance department laid a trap to arrest the headmaster. As per their plan, the Vigilance sleuths caught Pradhan red-handed while he was accepting the bribe amount.

Sambalpur Vigilance DSP Hemamalini Nayak, Vigilance inspector Dillip Kumar Pradhan, Susama Pashayat, ASIs Bijay Kumar Pradhan,

Bishnuprasad Jal and Tusharkant Mahapatra participated in the raid. Following the arrest, a case (9/2024), U/s 7 of the PC (Amendment) Act, 2018 was registered in this connection and the accused headmaster forwarded to Sambalpur Vigilance court Monday.



RIVER POLLUTION: Waste and weeds floating in Mahanadi river water in Sambalpur have sparked concern over river pollution as people all over the globe observed World Earth Day, Monday

# AM/NS India sets up dispensary at Sankari



Keonihar: Leading steel maker ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India) has launched a community health dispensary under its flagship CSR project 'Aarogya' at Sankari village in Keonjhar district. The dispensary aims to cater to the needs of the people of Sankari village and surrounding areas. Set up with the objective to address the health and nutrition issues prevalent in the area, enhance the overall wellbeing and promote a holistic approach for development of good health, the dispensary is expected to benefit nearly 500 villagers. Sulochana Pradhan, ward member of Sankari village, Dharmendra Hirwa, TSF In-Charge, AM/NS India, Madan Dash, Lead-CSR, AM/NS India and members of the local community attended the inauguration ceremony April 16. Equipped with a dedicated paramedical staff including a doctor who is available twice a week, a pharmacist, and a nurse,

the dispensary will offer free consultation and medicines. The management of the dispensary will be overseen by Utkal Needs, the implementation partner for this project.

#### POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, April 22: A sharp rise in potato price at the time of harvest of the crop has hit the consumers hard in the state, a report said Monday.

The price of the essential tuber is increasing and has now touched ₹28 per kg whereas it was being sold at ₹20 per kg only a week back in Kendrapara district. With its price going up when farmers are harvesting the crop, going by the trend, it is apprehended that the prices might reach ₹70 per kg towards the year end. This has sparked concern among the consumers. Earlier, potato was sold at ₹7 to 8 per kg during the time of har-

8 per kg during the time of harvest at various places. Niranjan Parida, a potato farmer of Kansar village, said he failed to get potato seeds from government stores while starting the cultivation. Left with no option, he bought potato seeds at ₹45 per kg from the open market instead of the government approved rate of ₹11.25. He sowed the seeds but failed to reap a

good harvest. Farmer leader Gayadhar Dhal said over 600 quintal potato is consumed on a daily basis in the district while the tuber is culti-



**Rise in potato price hits consumers hard** 

vated on 700 hectare land. Moreover, the traders also procure potatoes from neighbouring West Bengal to meet the increasing demand among consumers.

The district Horticulture department had planned to carry out the cultivation on 1,000 hectare. The farmers here had a requirement of 15,000 quintal potato seeds or 15 quintal per hectare of land. However, they had to buy seeds from the open market due to delay in arrival or non-availability of seeds at the government stores.

Harekrushna Behera, a resident of Jajanga village under Kendrapara block said that the tuber, the common man's most favoured vegetable, is required in preparation of both vegetarian and non-vegetarian food. It is a common food item in every rich and poor home.

A senior resident PN Gourang of Pattamundai area said in the absence of industries and mines in the district, agriculture is the mainstay of the people. The fertile land and rivers flowing through the district have strengthened the agricultural economy in the district. However, people have stopped relying on cultivation as a livelihood option and are switching to other professions due to lack of foresight among the political leaders and the district administration. River water management is the main problem hindering the growth of agriculture in the district, he said.

There is no plan for irrigation facilities or drainage of water from farmland during floods. The district had earlier earned a name in cultivation of cash crops, oil seed and vegetables like potato, jute, sugarcane, groundnuts, mustard, sesame and brinjal.

However, gone are those days as farmers do not receive any support from the state government or the district administration to raise their crop. Moreover, lack of marketing facilities, cold storages, good quality seeds and proper training is also ailing the agriculture scenario in the district. The statesponsored Potato Mission-2015 has failed to augment tuber cultivation.

A potato trader Pradip Kumar Sahu said they have to spend more on procuring potatoes from West Bengal. With the transportation cost increasing by ₹80-90 per quintal, the market price of potatoes has gone up sharply.

Moreover, he added that they have to pay an additional ₹50 to procure potato from the cold storages, which is another reason behind the price rise. Farmers have demanded the state government and the district administration to intervene and help them become selfsufficient in potato cultivation.

# Anganwadi worker ends life months after son's suicide

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Balasore, April 22:** Months after her son's suicide, an Anganwadi worker allegedly killed herself by hanging at Hansipatna village under Atapur panchayat under Soro block of Balasore district, Monday.

The deceased identified as Sabita Mohanty, 40, is suspected to have taken the extreme step after being depressed following the suicidal death of her 17-yearold son two months back. Sabita did not return home from the Anganwadi centre after her duty hours Monday morning. Sabita's family members launched a frantic search to trace her after she did not return home for long. Later, she was found hanging from the ceiling fan inside the Anganwadi centre, which was locked from inside.

Family members and villagers rushed her to the community health centre (CHC) at Soro after breaking open the door of the Anganwadi centre. However, doctors at the hospital pronounced her 'brought dead'.

On being informed, police reached the hospital and sent the body for post-mortem after registering a case in this connection.

#### 68 trainees complete courses under RSP CSR

**Rourkela:** As part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), SAIL, Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) has sponsored 68 youngsters from Rourkela and surrounding villages for training in various trades at the livelihood business incubation centre set up by



National Small Industries Corporation Limited (NSICL), National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSTFDC) and SAIL, RSP at Sector-15. The initiative was taken up in line with the Skill India movement aiming at strengthening the skill base of the country's youths. Of the 68, 32 youngsters enrolled for two months of assistant electrician and assistant beautician course, while the rest 36 underwent three-month training as assistant computer operator. RSP has spent ₹10 lakh in these three training programmes. After the completion of the courses, certificates were presented to all of them by RN Rajendran, CGM (Mechanical) in a ceremony held at the Centre April 19. Present on the occasion were Munmun Mittra, GM(CSR), TB Toppo, AGM (CSR) and BM Nayak, chief manager (NSIC).

# Mahua flowers: Nature's gift providing livelihood to tribals Youth ha

Due to lack of proper management, the tribals are forced to sell the Mahua flowers collected by them at slim prices. Due to this not only the tribals, but the state government also loses lakhs of rupees as revenue every year

#### POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, April 22: Keonjhar district has a vast swathe of dense forest, which has become a source of livelihood for the forest dwellers as well as poor people living in surrounding villages. They depend on the forest for eight months a year to eke out a living. Out of several forests produces, Mahua flower is bringing them more profits this season.

Mahua flower is a nature's gift to the poor tribals. Each tree provides Mahua flowers worth more than ₹1,000 on an average

in a year, if properly managed. Hence the tree not only keeps the environment green, but also is a major contributor of income for the tribal villagers.

Due to lack of proper management, the tribals are forced to sell the Mahua flowers collected by them at slim prices. Due to this not only the tribals, but the state government also loses lakhs of rupees as revenue every year.

The traders are buying Mahua flowers at cheaper rates during the flowering season and earning more profits by selling those



to liquor traders. Mahua trees Feb blossom in the spring from plea

February to April and tribal people collect the flowers from under the trees during this time.

Banspal, Telkoi, Sadar, Jhumpura, Ghatagaon blocks of Keonjhar district are harvesting more Mahua flowers than other blocks. For Mahua collection, one can obtain a license from the panchayat. Similarly the panchayat samiti is the authority to decide the minimum support price of the Mahua flower But the ground reality is different. Many traders are allegedly procuring the flowers at throw away prices without obtaining license.

Gopal Munda, member of a tribe in Banspal said, "As we have no storage facility, we feel it is better to sell the collected Mahua flowers immediately. Many times the traders cheat us in both rate and weight during procurement."

"Every year huge quantities of Mahua flowers are collected from Keonjhar forests, but a lion's share of the profit goes to the pockets of middlemen and traders as the gullible tribals are fleeced," said Bhakta Mohanty, a social activist.

Mamata Juang, a tribal woman of Gonasika, said, "In the early morning all family members including the children go to the forest to collect Mahua flowers these days. But we do not get enough money for the hard work as we have to sell those at lower prices."

Owing to massive deforestation for mining and industries, timber loot and forest encroachment by outsiders, the forest cover is shrinking fast and consequently the collection of forest produce has been dwindling in the last few years. On the other hand, distress sale due to lack of proper market to sell forest produce, the socio-economic condition of the poor tribals has remained dismal. Youth hacked to death over past enmity

#### POST NEWS NETWORK

Kabisuryanagar, April 22: Miscreants Monday brutally hacked a youth to death allegedly over past enmity on Sandhamara-Baliasara road under this police limits in Ganjam district.

The victim was identified as Ganesh Nayak, 25, son of Panchanan Nayak in Baliasara village. The body was found lying in a pool of blood near a temple shrine on Sandhamara-Baliasara road. The incident has sent shockwaves in the area.

On being informed, police reached the spot and launched an investigation. Ganesh was returning home on his bike after buying some food when miscreants in hiding waylaid and attacked him with swords. Family members have alleged that Ganesh was killed by some youths of Kabisuryanagar over past enmity.

### Mangrove pitta bird population rises in Bhitarkanika



#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kendrapara, April 22: Officials have reported an increase in the population of mangrove pitta birds during the latest bird census at Bhitarkanika National Park in Kendrapara district.

Forest officials Sunday released the mangrove pitta bird census report, which pegged their population at 218. This marks an increase of 39 compared to the previous census.

Forest officials had sighted 179 mangrove pitta birds in 2023 during the first census of the species in Bhitarkanika.

The census was carried out Saturday by around 80 Forest personnel under the supervision of the forest range officers of Dangamala, Rajnagar, Mahakalapara, Gahirmatha, and Kujang forest ranges of the park.

The mangrove pitta are colourful birds which have a black head with brown crown, white throat, greenish upper parts, buff under-parts and reddish vent area. It feeds on crustaceans, mollusks and insects, said Subhadarshani Pradhan, a mangrove pitta researcher.

This non-migratory resident bird, scientifically known as Pitta megarhyncha, thrives in Bhitarkanika, with its breeding season spanning from April to August. The abundance of fish and the distance from human habitation make Bhitarkanika an ideal breeding ground for these colourful birds, she added.



Bank of India Zonal Office : Star House, 1/1D, Jayadev Vihar, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751015 Bule-8(1)] of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules-2007

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

CHAKEISIANI BRANCH / Name & Address of Borrower	Liabilities due as per Notice	Date of Demand Notice / Date of Possession	Description of the Immovable Property				
Borrower: Mr. Durga Sankar Parida, S/o.: Mr. Dhirendranath Parida, At: Meria Bazar, Near UP School, Cuttack, Odisha-753001	+ interest &	20.04.2024	All that part and parcel of Land & Building situated over Khata No.: 359, Plot No.: a: Ac.0.022.06 Dec. (960 Sqft), Kissam:				
Homestead at Mouza: Adalia, P.S.: Cuttack Sadar, Thana No.: 47, Tahasil No.: 275, DSRO: Cuttack, Tahasil: Cuttack, Dist: Cuttack, Standing in the name of Mrs. Baisakhi Parida, W/o.: Mr. Durga Sankar Parida, Bounded by North: Plot No.: 433, South: Internal 20 feet Road, East: Sub Plot No.: 25, West: Sub Plot No.: 5							
Place: Bhubaneswar			Authorised Officer Bank of India				







# power post

#### FOCUS POLITICS

Death is but changing of our robes to wait in wedding garments at the Eternal's gate **SRI AUROBINDO** 



# **A Promising Start**

espite the relentless stream of bad news from around the world, there are still reasons for optimism. One notable example is the renewed push to localise pharmaceutical production in Africa, demonstrating how even catastrophic events like a pandemic can lead to positive, unforeseen outcomes.

The COVID-19 shock underscored the critical need to fund public-health systems and expand access to essential technologies and preventive and therapeutic drugs, and should have served as a wake-up call for policymakers and publics worldwide. But once the virus was brought under control, wealthy countries reverted to the policies and practices that had made the initial pandemic response so unequal.

No part of the world has suffered more from these extreme global in equalities than Africa. African countries were the last to receive COVID-19 vaccines, having been crowded out by vaccine-hoarding wealthier countries and denied access to the technologies necessary for domestic production. Although Africa accounts for 18% of the world's population, the continent received only 3.3% of all administered vaccines by the end of 2021. By the end of 2022, its share had barely increased to 5.5%

Even before COVID-19, Africa was already grappling with the global neglect of major epidemics such as Ebola,

Zika, and monkeypox, as well as endemic diseases like sleeping sickness. One of the biggest obstacles to tackling these health crises is the continent's dependence on imported drugs. Despite bearing onequarter of the global disease burden, only 2% of medical research is conducted in Africa, and more than 90% of the continent's vaccines and 70% of its medicines are imported. Moreover, of the roughly 375 pharmaceutical manufacturers operating in Africa, just 15% are locally owned, and most of these companies focus on formulations rather than the active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) crucial for drug production.

Fortunately, the bitter experience of COVID-19 appears to have catalysed a much-needed policy shift. During the pandemic, the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention laid the groundwork for inter-governmental cooperation by bolstering collective regional responses under extremely difficult conditions. More recently, several African governments and international organisations have launched initiatives to boost local pharmaceutical production and promote innovation across the continent.

The African Pharmaceutical Technology Foundation, backed by the African Development Bank, is a prime example. This initiative aims to bolster the continent's technological capabilities by expanding access to knowledge, building skills, and expanding product pipelines. The Foundation has pledged to invest up to \$3 billion over the next decade to develop pharmaceutical products in Africa, thereby reducing the continent's dependence on imports.

Another example is the Medicine Patent Pool's mRNA technology transfer programme, supported by the World Health Organization and the United Nations. The goal of this initiative, which operates from its South African hub at the Cape Town-based biotechnology company Afrigen, is to develop the necessary technological capacity and technical knowhow to enable 15 low- and middle-income countries to manufacture mRNA vaccines. Initially focused on COVID-19 vaccines, the programme has since expanded to other diseases prevalent across Africa, as well as more affordable cancer treatments.

These initiatives face significant challenges, especially their reliance on voluntary technology transfers, which have proven to be very limited in scope. To access essential knowledge and force multinational companies (MNCs) to share their technologies, African countries must expand their use of compulsory licensing, in line with their own patent laws and the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement. Notably, the mRNA hub in South Africa has already faced legal challenges from Moderna, itself a beneficiary of US government subsidies and patent sharing. This underscores the importance of ensuring that the ongoing negotiations for a global pandemic treaty include specific provisions addressing compulsory licensing. That said, access to knowledge alone is not enough. Given that production processes require specialised expertise, comprehensive education programmes and skills training are crucial to establishing a sustainable foundation for innovation and production in Africa. This requires a broader regional effort, which African governments appear to be considering. Another major obstacle is competition from large pharmaceutical companies. Novartis, which has previously initiated patent disputes in countries like India, has already announced its intention to achieve a fivefold increase in patient outreach in Sub-Saharan Africa by 2025. For localisation efforts to succeed, it is crucial to emphasise local ownership and ensure that the benefits are not monopolised by Big Pharma. In any case, MNCs can be unreliable partners, as is evident from Moderna's recent decision to put on hold its planned investment in vaccine production in Kenya because reduced demand makes commercial profitability less likely. Given that Africa's rich genetic diversity makes it a veritable treasure trove of genomic data, the risk of knowledge and data theft is a pressing concern. While the African CDC's Pathogen Genomics Initiative was celebrated as a major achievement when it was launched in 2019, there are now valid concerns that the pandemic treaty could make these data globally accessible, potentially benefiting large pharmaceutical companies in rich countries without ensuring fair compensation for Africa. Tellingly, foreign powers are already squabbling over who should control access to this invaluable database.

Jayati Ghosh

For localisation efforts to succeed, it is crucial to emphasise local ownership and ensure that the benefits are not monopolised by **Big Pharma** 

# **A SLIDE IS NOT UNLIKELY**

"t is never easy or safe to read the mood of the nation, particularly in the midst of a national election that is well spread out, this one running over 40 days and in seven phases. With that caveat, it must still be said that there is more than a whiff beginning to gather against the BJP, light to moderate in intensity at best, depending on who is making the analysis. At this stage though, with one phase of the election behind us, it is difficult to say if and how this sentiment may build, or if the pattern can grow to become a gathering storm against giving Narendra Modi a straight third

term. The sentiment, if it is to gather, will have to stand against the overwhelming money power and consequent reach and impact of the BJP campaign. The BJP's visibly heavy spends border on the vulgar, the ₹8,250 crore it got from the now-declared illegal electoral bonds scheme finding its way to overwhelm the electorate. Yet, this heavily slanted money power can also harm because while it enables unparalleled reach on the one hand, it serves to highlight the BJP's huge negatives on the other hand - a loud, overbearing, cocky persona that may not help during a time of seeking votes. The BJP has the largest share of private helicopter bookings for its leaders, not counting the travel of the Prime Minister. The party has outspent the Congress four-toone on Google search ads and three-to-one on Facebook ads, according to Reuters. It uses this as part of psychological warfare to plug its surface narrative, which is that the BJP will improve its tally of 303 seats from 2019.

It is difficult to see how this might be possible unless the ruling alliance holds old ground and covers new ground in areas it did not do well the last time, say the entire southern region or parts of the eastern region. In the south, the NDA alliance in 2019 won 30 out of 130 seats in the five states of Karnataka. Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Telangana, but 25 of them came from Karnataka. Karnataka now has a Congress government noted for progres-



With no scope of growing in the northern region, where the BJP maxed out in 2019, and no new ground from elsewhere, it becomes almost impossible for the BJP to improve its overall 2019 tally

his back-and-forth into the BJP

fold. It is difficult to see how

the JD(U)-BJP-LJP troika of the

NDA can deliver 39 of the 40

seats they bagged in the 2019

Lok Sabha polls.Tejashwi Yadav

of the RJD is leading an ener-

getic campaign, directing his

fire not plainly at Nitish Kumar,

who Yadav refers to as the "re-

spected" Chief Minister, but at

his inner circle that the RJD

says has used the Chief Minister

for their narrow ends. This lends

itself to the unstated sugges-

tion that Nitish Kumar has be-

come a pawn, is not in control

and is being manipulated by

the BJP, which has failed to

meet Bihar's demand for a "spe-

cial status" - a consistent ask of

the Centre and a demand that

has disappeared from Nitish

Kumar's vocabulary since he

In Maharashtra, the forced

NCP has hurt

splitting of the Shiv Sena and

Maharashtrian pride and built

a strong undercurrent of anger

against the BJP, whose actions

acquired the colour of Gujarat

being used to manipulate an

elected government in

Maharashtra. The BJP leader-

ship used Surat in Gujarat (and

later Guwahati) as a safe city to

whisk away MLAs while it en-

gineered the split. Maharashtra

and Gujarat were one state till

an agitation gave birth to

Maharashtra with Mumbai as

its capital. Downtown Mumbai

returned to the BJP fold.

the

sive initiatives, boosting its standing and campaign energy, and so it is highly unlikely that the BJP will reach its 2019 tally of 25 out of the 28 Lok Sabha seats in the state.

There is a BJP-led hype of the party doing well in Tamil Nadu, where it drew a blank the last time and is now putting up a stiff fight in the urban areas. But the BJP campaign positioned as an ideological challenge to the Dravidian movement is unlikely to find resonance in the state where all regional parties trace their origins and ideologies directly or indirectly to the Dravidian movement of Periyar. The DMK has also been able to put up a strong campaign targeting the Prime Minister in particular and calling him out repeatedly for having institutionalised corruption. The BJP may well draw a blank here.

Thus, with no scope of growing in the northern region, where the BJP maxed out in 2019, and no new ground from elsewhere, it becomes almost impossible for the BJP to improve its overall 2019 tally. In fact, the party can slide significantly from its self-stated benchmarks given the new realities in states like Bihar and Maharashtra

In Bihar, the moniker of 'paltu ram" appears to have latched on to Chief Minister Nitish Kumar of the JD(U) for

has a hutatma chowk, a mar tyrs' memorial in memory of those who died in the struggle for a separate Marathi-speaking Maharashtra state when Morarji Desai was the Chief Minister of the then Bombay-Gujarat combine called Bombay state. In the 2019 and 2014 Lok Sabha polls, the BJP and the Shiv Sena fighting in an alliance got 41 of the 48 Maharashtra seats. Expect the BJP to pay a heavy price here against a united Opposition of the Congress, Sharad Pawar's NCP and the original Uddhav Thackeray part of the Shiv Sena. The BJP MP from Amravati Navneet Rana openly said at a public rally that there is no Modi wave at work this time.

There are also reports of the Congress receiving an enthusiastic response in several other states, but the downside is the negative impact of the ugly CPI Congress spat over Wayanad and the uncertainty over Amethi, the seat which Robert Vadra has claimed by speaking apparently out of turn to queer the Congress pitch.

On the other side, the BJP's prime face, the Prime Minister. too, looks tired and lacklustre Like a fix that you need more of over time, he has begun overusing (even by the BJP standards!) religion with calls and cries that border on the vaude villian. At one meeting, he asked his audience to put on their mobile torches during the day to send light at a time the sun's rays were being mirrored on the idol of Lord Ram on his "birthday" being celebrated in the temple at Ayodhya. At the same meeting, he offered this triple slip: 'Modi ki guarantee yani guarantee pura hone ki guarantee' (Modi's guarantee means the guarantee of fulfill-

ing the guarantee). But we can let that pass - call it stress, fatigue or a theatre of the absurd in the midst of a festival of democracy that we hope India will continue to celebrate in the future.

The writer is a journalist and faculty member at SPJIMR. Views are personal. ©THE BILLION PRESS

SPECTRUM WORLD BOOK & COPYRIGHT DAY

The joy and importance of reading

The challenges confronting African countries' efforts to take control of their health-care destiny are immense. Their determination to localise drug and vaccine production is a promising start.

The writer, Professor of Economics at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, is a member of the Club of Rome's Transformational Economics Commission and Co-Chair of the Independent Commission for the Reform of International Corporate Taxation. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE

#### WISDOM CORNER

The fact is that people are good. Give people affection and security, and they will give affection and be secure in their feelings and their behavior.

#### ABRAHAM MASLOV

- The size of your success is measured by the strength of your desire; the size of your dream; and how you handle disappointment along the way ROBERT KIYOSAKI
- As we grow in our consciousness, there will be more compassion and more love, and then the barriers between people, between religions, between nations will begin to fall. Yes, we have to beat down the separateness.

RAM DASS



Jagdish Rattanani

**THERE IS A** 

**BJP-LED HYPE** 

**OF THE PARTY** 

**DOING WELL IN** 

WHERE IT DREW

TAMIL NADU,

**A BLANK THE** 

**UP A STIFF** 

**FIGHT IN THE** 

**URBAN AREAS** 

LAST TIME AND

**IS NOW PUTTING** 

Niranjan Mohapatra

**READING OFFERS A MULTITUDE OF BENEFITS ACROSS VARIOUS ASPECTS OF LIFE, INCLUDING** COGNITIVE, **EMOTIONAL**, **SOCIAL, AND EVEN** PHYSICAL WELL-BEING

spiring slogan or theme for promoting reading and literacy. On this theme the whole world is celebrating 'World Book Day' this year. There are many different paths to enjoying reading, and individuals should find what works best for them. Whether its fiction or non-fiction, printed books or e-books, audiobooks or graphic novels, everyone can find their own way to engage with literature. This theme could be used in various contexts, such as in schools, libraries, or literacy campaigns, to encourage people to explore different genres and formats of books. It also emphasises the idea that reading is a personal journey, and there's no right or wrong way to do it.

World Book and Copyright Day, also known as International Day of the Book, is an annual event celebrated on 23 April. It's organised by UNESCO (the United Nations Educational. Scientific and Cultural Organisation) to promote reading, publishing, and copyright worldwide. This day serves as a trib-

#### ead Your Way" is an in- ute to books, authors, and literature in general, aiming to encourage people, especially young ones, to discover the joy of reading and to appreciate the cultural value of books. It also raises awareness about the importance of protecting intellectual property through copyright laws, ensuring that authors and creators receive fair recognition and compensation for their work. Various activities take place on World Book and Copyright Day, including book fairs, public readings, literary competitions, and discussions on copyright issues. It's a day for celebrating the written word and the contributions of authors and publishers to global culture and knowledge.

At the heart of this celebration is UNESCO, along with international organisations representing the three major sectors of the book industry: publishers, booksellers, and libraries. These organisations join hands to recognise the World Book Capital for a vear. The World Book Capital is responsible for creating initiatives that maintain the mo-

#### mentum of this day's celebrations and foster a love of reading among people. The city of Strasbourg, Germany has been recognised as UNESCO's World Book Capital for 2024. The literary world considers 23 April a significant date since it commemorates the deaths of famous authors including Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, Miguel de Cervantes, and William Shakespeare. The decision to recognise books and authors globally on this day and to encourage people to value books by reading and accessing them was made by the UNESCO General Conference in 1995. which was held in Paris Proclamation of 23 April as World Book and Copyright Day.

For this year, the UNESCO theme for World Book and Copyright Day is "Read Your Way." This theme emphasises the importance of choice and enjoyment in fostering a love of reading. However, it encourages both children and adults to find ways to engage with books that resonate with them, regardless of format or genre. Additionally, "Read Your Way" could be interpreted as a call to read with individuality and independence, encouraging readers to choose books that resonate with their interests, passions, and values. Overall, it's a catchy and inclusive phrase that promotes the joy and importance of reading in our lives. The theme of World Book Day 2024 explained "children are more likely to enjoy reading when their choices are championed, and we make reading fun.

Reading offers a multitude of benefits across various aspects of life, including cognitive, emotional, social, and even physical wellbeing. The top ten benefits of reading are: 1) Mental Stimulation, 2) Knowledge Expansion, 3) Vocabulary Enhancement, 4) Stress Reduction, 5) Empathy Development, 6) Improved Focus and Concentration, 7) Enhanced Creativity, 8) Better Sleep, 9) Social Connection, and 10) Longevity. Hence the habit of reading can enrich your life in numerous wavs.

The writer is LRC Manager, Academy, World Skill Center, Bhubaneswar.

Exceptional feat

#### No festival this

Sir, I am at a loss why do we call the general elections as the festival of democracy? Festival presupposes joy. Is our democracy in a iovous mood by any means? Has not our democracy been throttled allegedly by the ruling party at the Centre? People are in serious apprehension that in the event the BJP comes back to power there will be no democracy worth to be mentioned. Be that as it may, we can hardly call the general elections as the festival of democracy

Arun Gupta, KOLKATA

Sir, Seventeen-year-old Grandmaster Gukesh Dommaraju deserves accolades for becoming the youngest-ever winner of the prestigious Candidates chess tournament. The Indian teenager emerged as the sole leader after a thrilling 14-round tournament in Toronto. Later this year, he will challenge the current world champion, Ding Liren, for the ultimate glory. D Gukesh, playing with the 🔺 black pieces, secured a draw in his lastround game against US Grandmaster Hikaru Nakamura. Gukesh's exceptional feat has filled Indians with pride and has the potential to ignite generation.

NJ Ravi Chander; BANGALORE

TO THE EDITOR Readers of Orissa POST (200 words), articles and

requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion

Orissapost

#### Key to knowledge

Sir, The World Book and Copyright Day, which is held annually on 23 April, is a global celebration of the joy of reading, and emphasises the importance of protecting the rights of authors. It boasts a rich history intertwined with the evolution of book culture. The day underlines the importance of copyright protection in ensuring fair compensation for authors and encouraging the creation of new books. The day also promotes the inclusion of different voices and perspectives, enriching the literary landscape and fostering cultural understanding. It reminds us that books hold the key to knowledge, empathy, and imagination, enriching our lives and shaping our understanding of the world. World Book and Copyright Day is more than just a date on the calendar. It is a celebration of our shared love for books and a commitment to preserving them for future generations. Let us embrace the legacy of books, turn their pages, and continue advocating the power of books to connect, inspire and transform.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

etters

are most welcome to contribute letters columns (between 750-1250 words). Contributors are 101 and suggestions, preferably by email, to: edit@orissapost.com

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





# Karnataka CM hails SC Neha murder case may polarise Lingayat votes for drought relief funds INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, April 22: Chief Minister Siddaramaiah Monday expressed happiness at the Supreme Court 'intervention' on providing drought management funds to Karnataka and termed it a success in his government's fight to secure justice and relief for the people of the state.

The Centre earlier Monday told the Supreme Court that the Election Commission has given clearance to it to deal with the issue raised by Karnataka regarding financial assistance for drought management.

A bench of Justices BR Gavai and Sandeep Mehta was hearing a plea filed by the Karnataka government seeking a direction to the Centre to release financia assistance from the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) to the state for drought management.

'The Election Commission has cleared the government to deal with this question. I think it will be done expeditiously,' General R Attorney Venkataramani, appearing for the Centre, told the bench. He told the bench that the mat

ter could be taken up next week. "This should all be done amicably...we are having a federal



structure," the bench observed. while adjourning the matter.

Reacting to the development, the chief minister said in a post on social media platform X: "Thanks to the intervention of the Hon. Supreme Court, the Central Government, which had delayed providing drought relief funds to the farmers of Karnataka, has agreed to make a decision within this week."

He added that Karnataka was forced to file a writ petition against the central government in court seeking drought relief funds, as it had not made a decision on the state's memorandum submitted in September 2023

"This is a milestone and a success in our long fight to secure justice and relief for the people of Karnataka," Siddaramaiah said.

While hearing the plea April 8, the apex court had observed: "Let there not be a 'contest' be-

tween the Union and the State.<sup>3</sup> The Attorney General and Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, who were appearing for the Centre, had told the bench they would seek instructions in the

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

facie violative' of the fundamental rights of the people of the state guaranteed under Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution. It said the state is reeling under "severe drought", affecting the lives of its people, and that

for the Kharif 2023 season, which starts in June and ends in September, a total of 223 out of 236 taluks are declared as drought-affected The plea said that 196 taluks

are categorised as severely affected and the remaining 27 as moderately affected. "Cumulatively for kharif 2023

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

sought from the Centre under the NDRF is ₹18,171.44 crore.

Bangalore, April 22: The sensational murder of 23-year-old student Neha Hiremath by a youth from a minority community who she was allegedly in a relationship with, has proved to be a setback for the Congress in Karnataka

On the other hand, the development is also leading to polarisation of the Lingavat vote bank to the BJP's advantage.

While the Congress is on the back foot and is apologising, the BJP is acting on a war footing and has organised a statewide protest. Despite his tight schedule, BJP president, JP Nadda vis-

ited the family of the deceased college student. BJP sources reveal that Union

Home Minister, Amit Shah, will be pitching in soon in Hubballi for campaigning.

The BJP's strategy is to embarrass the Congress government throughout the general elections by raising the issue of 'love iihad'.

Congress corporator Niranjan Hiremath, who is Neha's father, has castigated the handling of the case by the government.

He slammed Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Home Minister, G Parameshwara, urging them not to politicise the girl's murder and denied that she was in a relationship with Fayaz Kondikoppa.

Following the outrage over the murder, the government has handed over the case to the



Criminal Investigation Department (CID).

CM Siddaramaiah's categorical statement that the murder was not a case of 'love jihad' has become a weapon in the hands of the BJP.

BJP leaders are taking pot shots at the Congress government and asking that when their own corporator's daughter could not be protected, how can the government ensure the safety of others?

A series of crimes, including an attack by alleged Nigerian drug peddlers on the police have raised questions on the law and order situation in the state.

The Nigerian nationals had attacked the police with rods, stones and helmets in Bangalore last week.

Leader of Opposition, R Ashoka listed out a series of incidents reported in the recent past, such as an attack on youths

for raising 'Jai Shri Ram' slogans on Ram Navami festival, attack on a shop owner for playing Hanuman Chalisa in Bangalore, murder of four persons of a family in Gadag and a double murder in Bangalore

Ashoka had alleged that the government had tied the hands of the police for the sake of appeasement politics.

Talking to IANS, senior journalist Asha K stated, "The Neha Hiremath murder case is bound to give a twist to the elections for the Dharwad Lok Sabha seat. Of course, much depends on whether the BJP and the allied saffron fringe groups sustain their verbal battle against the ruling Congress over the incident.

"Neha hailed from the influential Lingavat community. She was reportedly stabbed around 4.30 pm last Thursday, and none of the Congress leaders dared to

#### While the Congress is on the back foot, the BJP is acting on a war footing and has organised a statewide protest. The BJP's strategy is to embarrass the Congress government throughout the general elections by raising the issue of 'love jihad'

meet her family members till the next day. This is despite her father being a Congress corporator. This clearly shows that the Congress was at a loss for words to even console the family. However, Union Minister Pralhad Joshi met the victim's father on the fateful day itself."

Asha K pointed out that Dharwad, Haveri, Belagavi, and the surrounding districts have a sizable Lingayat population, which used to support the BJP

The murder might again realign the community seeking 'justice' for the victim.

Though the Congress has condemned the incident, it enjoys the support of Muslims.

'In a way, the party leaders' tongues are tied. This also forced them to repeatedly say it is a 'personal case' while the BJP alleges it is another love jihad incident." Asha K noted

### Committed to resolution of Kashmir issue: Mehbooba

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bijbehara, April 22: PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti Monday said her party has not given up its stand on facilitating a resolution of the Kashmir issue and accused the BJP of aggravating the 'pain' by abrogating the provisions of Article 370 of the Constitution in 2019.

In an exclusive interview with PTI, the former chief minister also said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remark that the Congress plans to give people's hard-earned money and valuables to 'infiltrators' and 'those who have more children' is an indication that the B.IP was on a sticky wicket.

Mehbooba Mufti, the PDP ok Sabha candidate from

facilitated dialogue with Pakistan, separatists, and there was a forward movement.'

People also saw that something was happening regarding the Kashmir issue, Mehbooba Mufti said.

'You cannot catch someone by the neck and claim everything is fine. Unless you find a solution to an issue... there is pain and you cannot stop pain by shutting someone's mouth. The Jammu and Kashmir issue is a pain ('takleef') which you have made more complex by abrogating Article 370," she said.

Asked if Pakistan was still relevant in the context of Kashmir, the PDP chief said. "How can you make it irrelevant? Geographically, they are vour nearest neighbours. Also you cannot change history. We have had a history with Pakistan. We also share geography with Pakistan, a part of Jammu and Kashmir is still there. On the allegations that the PDP was trying to occupy the space left by the Hurrivat Conference, Mufti said there has been a trend that anyone who talks about the interests of Jammu and Kashmir and its people is labelled anti-national. "Everyone knows that the separatists' agenda is to separate Jammu and Kashmir from the country. Our agenda is that the resolution of Jammu and Kashmir (issue) is necessary within the Indian Constitution. Like Vajpayee used to advocate... by saying open the roads, address the issue, join both the Jammu and Kashmir by an advisory council so that they meet twice a year," the



### BJP goes vocal for local parties in Kashmir

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Srinagar, April 22: The BJP has decided not to field its candidates for the three Lok Sabha seats in the Kashmir division of J&K -- Anantnag-Rajouri, Srinagar and Baramulla, and instead will support the local non-dynasty parties.

One of these seats, Anantnag-Rajouri has voting segments both in the Kashmir and the Jammu divisions. Anantnag and Kulgam districts of the Valley and Poonch and Rajouri districts of Jammu division form the voting segments of this Lok Sabha constituency.

The BJP has large support in Poonch and Rajouri districts even though the National Conference (NC) has fielded its trump card, the senior political and religious Gujjar/Bakarwal leader, Mian Altaf Ahmad from here.

Ravinder Raina, belongs to Lamberi village of the Nowshera area of Rajouri district and he won the Assembly election from the Nowshera seat in 2015.

Raina has appreciable political influence in Nowshera and other places in Rajouri and Poonch districts. He worked hard in his constituency after leaving his high-paying job in the merchant navy. He is a post-graduate in international law.

BJP has a presence in Anantnag and Kulgam districts as well although in these districts the party may not match the large presence of the NC and the PDP supporters.

Despite its chances to put up a fight against the Valley-centric NC and the PDP, the BJP did not field its candidate in this constituency.

Mehbooba Mufti of the PDP

jumped into the electoral fray

in the Anantnag-Rajouri con-

stituency after being snubbed



Anantnag-Rajouri who was on a campaign trail in Bijbehara, her party's stronghold, was asked whether the PDP has given up on its agenda on selfrule in Jammu and Kashmir.

She replied, "No. For us, it is not that. If you read our manifesto, we have said that we are committed to facilitating the resolution of the Kashmir issue. The BJP wants to change the goal post, from the Kashmir issue to Article 370, from Article 370 to statehood and from statehood to municipality elections. But, this will not happen."

If an issue is left unaddressed, it becomes like a disease which turns painful with time, the PDP chief said.

"When there is such an issue, it remains in the hearts and minds of people. You can jail people, but you cannot jail an ideology. You have to address that like Mufti (Mohammad Sayeed) did by opening roads,



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh during a visit at Siachen Base Camp, in Ladakh, Monday.

There are over eight lakh voters in Poonch and Rajouri districts and 3.40 lakh of these voters are from the Pahari community. Paharis were given the ST status by the BJP-led Central government thereby fulfilling the community's 70-yearold demand.

This community forms a huge vote bank in the Anantnag-Rajouri constituency. In addition, there are Gujjar/Bakarwal and Hindu voters in Rajouri and Poonch districts.

РТІ РНОТО The BJP J&K president, by NC vice president, Omar Abdullah. J&K Apni Party headed by Syed Altaf Bukhari has fielded Zafar Iqbal Manhas from this constituency. Manhas belongs to the Pahari community and

hails from the Shopian district. Apni Party expects to get a Pahari vote share from the Poonch and Rajouri districts. The BJP is most likely going to support the Apni Party in Anantnag-Rajouri and Srinagar constituencies.

From arid to green: What world can glean from Vijayapura

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, April 22: Much has been written about how Bijapur, now Vijayapura, known for its aridity and brutal summers, is slowly blossoming into a green paradise.

It had two things going for it: political will as well as push from people.

Karnataka's large and medium industries and infrastructure minister MB Patil, when he was the irrigation and water resources minister, did two things that set the ball rolling in 2015. He got the irrigation department to fill the tanks and lakes in the district with water and the forest department to hand out saplings to people at the same time, ensuring a higher survival rate for the plants. Meanwhile, NGOs began motivating people to do their bit for the '1 crore plants in five years' dream aka 'Koti Vruksha Abhiyan'.

In less than 10 years, nature lovers have a lot going for them in Vijayapura. The district is now home to one of the largest urban forest plantations - over 600 acres planted with 60,000odd native species of trees. In all, over 1.30 crore saplings have already been planted, and with drip irrigation powered by solar, it was possible to achieve a 98% survival rate for plants, according to Society for Protection of Plants and Animals (SPPA), an NGO that oversaw the effort.

The question worth asking: Can Vijayapura be replicated in other parts of Karnataka, perhaps even other parts of India?

"It is a monumental task, but it can be and should be replicated," said Patil in an exclusive interview to PTL

According to him, the biggest problem is that, typically in a government-run project, various departments work independently, even if they have a common goal.

"But it has to be a coordinated effort. If you ask me, a project like this can be a success if a deputy commissioner, CEO of district panchayat and the forest department get involved and talk



to one another," added Patil. In the case of Vijayapura though, Patil said he personally ensured that the project ran smoothly.

"To be honest, I circumvented a lot of bureaucratic processes. For me it was simple. Say, if somebody wanted access to water so that they could maintain the plants, I ensured that they got it. So, I guess, in Vijayapura it was a bit different from how the situation would be elsewhere," said Patil

When he walked into this,

Patil said he simply wanted to increase the forest cover. He said he wanted to do something when he heard that it was a dismal 0.17%, the lowest in Karnataka. In his mind, he said, he was thinking how difficult it would be to distribute saplings for people to plant.

"Then I realised that it was not that simple. In the first year, we did not have enough saplings. That's when we started growing them in nurseries. Now, we grow different kinds of native species that are beneficial to farmers in more than 20 nurseries. That was valuable learning for us," said Patil.

His son Dhruv, professional wildlife photographer and president of the NGO SPPA, said, initially, they also thought that farmers would be happy to get saplings cheap-they had to pay only 10% for it.

"But they were not interested at all. It took us a while before it hit us: instead of giving them the available saplings, we have to give them what they want. When we started giving them what they wanted mostly red sandalwood, but also mangoes and other fruit trees – they started coming back for more. That's when we saw the whole agro-forest move-ment take off," said 21-yearold Dhruv, who is studying in 🗦 New York University.

According to him, it is thanks to agro-forestry that the movement really caught on.

"I would say creating awareness was the other importantgoal for a project this ambitious," added Patil.

Orissapost **BATTLEFIELD 2024** TUESDAY | APRIL 23 | 2024 | BHUBANESWAR

# 12 royal scions in fray for 2024 hustings

Ruling Biju Janata Dal has fielded eight members from royal families, followed by Bharatiya Janata Party three, and Congress one

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 22: Twelve members of different royal families in the state are contesting the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections seeking votes of commoners

Elections to the 21 Lok Sabha constituencies in Odisha and 147 Assembly segments will be held simultaneously in the state from May 13 to June 1.

The ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) has fielded eight members from royal families followed by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) three and Congress one. Ten members of the royal fam-

ilies are contesting Odisha Assembly elections while two are in the fray for Lok Sabha polls.

The BJD has fielded 28-yearold Sulakshana Geetaniali Devi. granddaughter of veteran leader late AN Singhdeo of Dharakote as its candidate for the Sanakhemundi Assembly constituency.

A law degree-holder, Geetanjali is the fifth member of the Dharakote royal family to contest Assembly election. Her grandfather AN Singhdeo was elected from the Surada constituency four times - 1967, 1971, 1977 and 1995 - as an MLA and in 1989 as the MP of Aska Lok Sabha constituency.

Her grandmother Shanti Devi and father Kishor Chandra Singhdeo had also been elected from the seat in the 1990 and 2004 elections, respectively.

Her mother Nandini Devi had won from Sanakhemundi seat in 2014. This time, Geetanjali will contest against Congress's sitting MLA Ramesh Chandra

Jena in the May 20 election.

"I have been inspired by my grandfather, mother and father to join politics to serve the people. I thanked the chief minister for giving me the opportunity to serve the people of the constituency," said Geetanjali, who is the chairperson of the pan-

chayat samiti of Dharakote. The BJD has also fielded Chinmayananda Srirup Deb, son of Usha Devi, royal scion of Chikiti to contest from Chikiti

Assembly segment. Srirup Deb, son of Usha Devi, Urban Development minister, is the third member of the Chikiti royal family to make electoral debut from his mother's seat Chikiti. His grandfather Sachidananda Deo was elected in the seat in 1971, while his mother Usha Devi won five times

in a row since 2000. Deb worked with a multinational IT company for over two decades and then started his own





business after quitting the job.

"I have also been working with my mother in politics since 2018,"said 48-year-old Deb. To provide service to the people and make Chikiti a model constituency is his aim to enter politics, he added.

The BJP has re-nominated its MP Sangeeta Kumari Singh Deo from the Bolangir Lok Sabha seat. She hails from the Bolangir royal family. Her husband and senior BJP leader KV Singh Deo has also been fielded by the saffron party from the Patnagarh Assembly segment.

Sangeeta has been elected from the Bolangir Lok Sabha seat four times in the past.

The BJD has fielded Kalikesh Naravan Singh Deo, two-time MP from Bolangir, to contest from the Assembly segment this time.

The saffron party has fielded Malavika Keshari Deo, wife of former MP Arka Keshari Deo





in Kalahandi Lok Sabha seat The royal couple joined the BJP in 2023 after quitting the BJD, after being denied ticket in 2019. Arka is the son of Bikram Keshari Deo, Kalahandi royal

who had won the seat thrice. The BJD has also fielded Bamanda 'Rani' Arundhati Devi, who is the wife of erstwhile Deogarh king and BJP's Sambalpur MP Nitesh Ganga Dev, as its Deogarh Assembly candidate.

Pushpendra Singh Deo, another member of the royal family has been fielded by BJD in the Dharmgarh Assembly seat.

The BJD has also fielded Sanjukta Singh to contest from the Angul Assembly segment. She replaced her husband and sitting MLA Rajanikanta Singh who is the scion of the Angul royal family.

The regional outfit has also fielded Pratyusha Rajeswari in

Navagarh Assembly segment while Pratap Keshari Deb, a member of the Aul royal family, will fight from the Aul seat for BJD. The Congress has fielded

Susmita Singh Deo, a member of Dhenkanal royal family, for the Dhenkanal Assembly seat.

Prahallad Sinha, a political analyst said royal families still command respect from villagers. "People still have faith that royal family members will address their problems and raise their is sues in proper place," he said.

However, Bolangir royal family member and senior BJP leader KV Singh Deo, who is contesting from Patnagarh Assembly seat, said, "I have never been considered as a member of a royal family. People have showered their love and affection on me and my wife who has been elected to Lok Sabha four times.<sup>3</sup>

Bamanda queen Arundhati Devi said, "I feel always connected to the people. Therefore, people have loved our family."

Sinha said according to the political history of Odisha, royal families of Bolangir and Kalahandi have wielded immense political clout as former rulers of princely states and had taken leadership of the state's first regional outfit, the Ganatantra Parishad.

Former ruler of Patna (now Bolangir) royal family member Rajendra Narayan Singh Deo was chief minister of Odisha between 1967-71 and former Maharaja of Kalahandi, Pratap Keshari Deo, was the driving force behind the Ganatantra Parishad which was regarded the biggest rival of the Congress in the 1950s and early 1960s, said Sinha.



BJD nominee for Anandapur Assembly constituency in Keonjhar Abhimanyu Sethi and his wife Sabitri Sethi meet Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik at Naveen Niwas in Bhubaneswar, Monday, following his nomination as the party's candidate

## Dissent in Morada as **BJD** fields Pritinanda

#### POST NEWS NETWORK

Morada, April 22: With elections round the corner, voices of dissent within the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) have started growing over selection of the candidate for this Assembly seat under Mayurbhanj Lok Sabha segment, a report said

According to sources, the ruling party has announced Morada MLA Rajkishore Das' wife Pritinanda Kanungo as its candidate for the Assembly seat which has stirred a hornet's nest. The party leaders and workers here seem to be unhappy over the decision of the top leadership and are raising objections to her candidature.

The voices of dissent grew so much so that a frontline BJD leader of Morada block. Souray Ranian Mohanty, has resigned from the primary membership of the party. Mohanty had been working as the general secretary of north Odisha zone of Biju Yuva Janata Dal which comprises of Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Keonjhar and Bhadrak districts.

It is learnt that Mohanty tendered his resignation as he was very upset over the political activities of the Morada MLA and his wife Pritinanda. Chatters are abuzz that Mohanty's resignation may act as a show spoiler for BJD in the district while the dissent within the party will rise in coming days.

#### Deepfakes of stars spark worries of AI meddling in polls **BJP manifesto's Odia** version released

#### AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 22: The state unit of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Monday released the Odia version of the party's manifesto for the Lok Sabha elections

Senior BJP leaders including election in-charge Vijavpal Singh Tomar, state president Manmohan Samal, former Union minister Jual Oram and former state president Samir Mohanty were present during the release of the Odia

#### REUTERS

Mumbai, April 22: In fake videos that have gone viral online. two of India's A-lister Bollywood actors are seen criticising Prime Minister Narendra Modi and asking people to vote for the opposition Congress party in the country's ongoing general election.

In a 30-second video that shows Aamir Khan and another 41-second clip of Ranveer Singh, the



and a survey conducted by research organisation Esya Centre and the Indian Institute of Management business school showed an average Indian spends over three hours a day on social media. The country has nearly one billion voters.

Some versions of the videos have been blocked on social media but at least 14 were still visible on X Saturday. Facebook deleted two videos Reuters flagged to the company but one

AI VIDEO OF DEAD FATHER In this year's election, politi-

cians are using AI in other ways. In southern India, Congress leader Vijay Vasanth's spokesperson said his team has created a 2-minute audio-video clip using AI that was shared on social media platforms and shows his now dead but more popular politician father, H Vasanthakumar, seeking votes for him.

The late politician is seen saying even though my body left you all, my soul is still around. In videos put out on YouTube by the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPM), Samata, an AIgenerated anchor dressed in a traditional saree and speaking in a style that mimics regular news channels, criticises the ruling party in West Bengal state.



family scion and BJP leader,

version of the party's manifesto.

Centre's free ration scheme will be extended by another five years, three crore 'Lakhpati didis' will be created, PM Awas Yojana will be expanded and drinking water supply will be taken to every home, said Tomar.

"If BJP forms a government in Odisha, we will implement all the promises made in the central manifesto in the state. The present government has not implemented the Avushman Bharat Yojana in Odisha for which migrant workers are facing hardship," he said. The Modi government is totally dedicated to women, youths and farmers. The Modi government has fulfilled all promises made in the poll manifesto in 2014 and 2019, Samal claimed.

The BJP will reach out to every household with the Odia version of the manifesto, the state party president said.

two Bollywood actors purportedly say Modi failed to keep campaign promises and failed to address critical economic issues during his two terms as prime minister.

Both AI-generated videos end with the Congress election symbol and slogan 'Vote for Justice, Vote for Congress'

The two videos have been viewed on social media more than half a million times since last week. a Reuters review shows

Their spread underlines the potential role such AI-generated content can play in the mammoth Indian election that started Friday and will continue until June. AI and AI-generated fakes, or deepfakes, are being increasingly used in elections elsewhere in the world, including in the US, Pakistan and Indonesia.

Campaigning in India has long focused on door-to-door outreach and public rallies, but extensive use of WhatsApp and Facebook as campaigning tools started in 2019. This year's general election - in which Modi is expected to secure a rare third term - is the first in which AI is being used. A Congress spokesperson, Sujata Paul, shared actor Singh's

video with her 16,000 followers on X April 17 and by Saturday afternoon, her post had been reshared 2,900 times, liked 8,700 times and received 4,38,000 views. Paul told Reuters by telephone

she was aware the video was marked manipulated media by X, but she did not want to delete it as, while posting, she thought the person was a look alike of Singh and it has creativity for sure

The post was no longer visible on X Sunday, hours after Reuters sent a request for comment to Congress' head of social media cell, who did not respond.

Both actors have said the videos are fake. Facebook, X and at least eight fact-checking websites have said they are altered or manipulated, which the

Reuters digital verification unit has also confirmed.

Reuters could not ascertain who created the videos. Khan was alarmed by the viral fake video and Singh's team was looking into the matter, according to a spokesperson for both actors. Singh wrote on X Friday, "Beware of deepfakes, friends.

Modi's office, and the IT head of his Bharatiya Janata Party, did not respond to requests for comment

POLICE PROBE

Nearly 900 million people in India have access to the Internet

other was still visible.

Facebook in a statement said it has removed the videos for violation of its policies. X did not respond to Reuters queries.

The videos have sparked one police investigation with Khan registering a case in Mumbai against unnamed persons April 17 for alleged impersonation and cheating for creating the fake video.

Mumbai police did not return a request for comment, but two officers working on Khan's case, who declined to be named, said they wrote to Facebook and X to take down the video and the companies had said it was done. The officers said they were

up until 2am Friday, refreshing pages to check if Khan's online videos were removed. Asked about progress in the case, one of them said, "Such technical investigations take time.'

In one clip, the anchor alleges the party does not care about the environment as many water bodies have vanished due to illegal construction.

A spokesperson for the ruling party denied the allegation and said the state government has ensured no such construction takes place. The CPM did not respond to requests for comment

In the video, which has been seen 12,000 times, anchor Samata declares, "These are questions that we the citizens of this city need to ponder over.'



A BJP councillor candidate from ward no-9 Dinesh Patnaik and independent councillor candidate Lakshmidhar Behera from ward no-13 joined BJD at a merger meeting in the presence of Balasore MLA Swaroop Das at the party office at Azimabad in Balasore, Monday



Kendrapara Zilla Parishad chairperson Gitanjali Sethi along with other BJD members joined BJP at the state headquarters of the party in Bhubaneswar, Monday OP PHOTOS



# national



Fear and panic have gripped the BJP. After the first phase of polling in nearly 100 seats across the country, they have sensed defeat. That is why they are making baseless statements. The rout of the saffron camp is only a matter of time MAMATA BANERJEE WEST BENGAL CM

#### **RANVEER SINGH FILES POLICE CASE** AFTER DEEPFAKE VIDEO GOES VIRAL

An FIR has been filed against the social media handle promoting the deepfake video of Ranveer Singh, the actor's spokesperson said Monday. Last week, a video of Singh went viral on the Internet in which the actor could be seen voicing his political opinion



# uote

For now, we are waiting for the (Ghazipur landfill) site to cool down. We will set up an inquiry to investigate the cause of the fire. Based on the

investigation, appropriate action will be taken SHELLY OBEROI MAYOR OF DELHI

Elections are being held, it is a festival of democracy and in Himachal Pradesh, we are contesting



elections to save democracy. We are appealing to the general public why the leaders they elected for five years voted in favour of the BJP candidate in Rajya Sabha polls in 14 months and then got



disgualified

HIMACHAL PRADESH CM



'astha ke khilwad kiya' (manipulated faith) and tried to breach the security. You should put Aligarh lock on their fate in the

elections YOGI ADITYANATH UTTAR PRADESH CM

#### SHORT TAKES

#### Top court rejects petition seeking 3-yr law course

New Delhi: Observing that the legal profession needed "mature people", the Supreme Court Monday refused to entertain a PIL seeking directions to the Centre and the Bar Council of India to set up an expert committee for exploring the feasibility of introducing a three-year LLB course after class 12 instead of the existing five-year course. A bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justice JB Pardiwala said the five-year LLB (Bachelor of Law) course is "working fine" and there was no need to tinker with it.

**Court reserves order** on Kavitha's bail plea

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 22: Frequent Indian travellers to Europe will now be able to apply for multiple entry Schengen visa of up to five years, with the European Commission effecting certain changes in existing rules.

European Union's ambassador to India Herve Delphin described the new visa regime as another step towards enhancing people-to-people contact between the two sides.

'The European Commission adopted specific rules April 18 on the issuing of multiple entry visas to Indian nationals, which are more favourable than the standard rules of the visa code that applied to date," an EU read-



out said It said this new visa 'cascade' regime for Indian nationals residing in India who apply for Schengen (short-stay) visas in

India will provide easier access to visas with multi-year validity for travellers with an established travel history. "According to the newly adopted visa 'cascade' regime for India, Indian nationals can now be issued long-term, multi-entry Schengen visas valid for two years after having obtained and lawfully used two visas within the previous three vears." the readout said.

'The two-vear visa will normally be followed by a five-year visa, if the passport has sufficient validity remaining. During the validity period of these visas, holders enjoy travel rights equivalent to visa-free nationals," it said.

The changes in the visa norms came in the context of "strengthened" relations under the EU India common agenda on migration and mobility, which seeks comprehensive cooperation on migration policy between the two sides, it added. Schengen visas allow the

holder to travel freely in the Schengen area for short stays of a maximum of 90 days in any 180-day period. The visas are not purpose-bound, but they do not grant the right to work.

The Schengen area consists of 29 European countries of which 25 are EU states.

The countries are Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland and Sweden, along with Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

posed," state BJP president C R

Paatil posted on X. The Congress

claimed the BJP was frightened

by the anger of MSME owners and

the business community and at-

tempted "match-fixing" even in the

Surat Lok Sabha seat which the

ruling party has been winning

Congress general secretary

jects the Congress' candidate for

Surat Lok Sabha Nilesh

Kumbhani's nomination for

'discrepancies in the verifica-

tion of signatures of three pro-

posers'. On similar grounds, of-

ficials reject the nomination of

Suresh Padsala, the INC's sub-

stitute candidate from Surat.

The Congress is left without a

candidate," he said on X.

since 1984.

#### GADAG MURDERS

#### Accused paid 'supari' to kill brother, parents

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gadag (Karnataka), April 22: Police here Monday claimed to have cracked the murder of four persons with the arrest of a gang and one Vinayak Bakale, who wanted his brother and parents dead over a suspected property dispute and hired the assailants for cash to eliminate them. But the plot went awry.

The arrested included members of the 'supari' (contract) gang that was hired by Vinayak, who paid Rs 65 lakh to kill his brother Kartik and parents-- Prakash Bakale and Sunanda Bakale.

While Vinayak's parents survived, Karthik (27) and the family's close relatives -- Parashuram Hadimani (55), Lakshmi Hadimani (45) and Akanksha Hadimani (16) --were hacked to death in the early hours of April 19 at Dasara Oni in Gadag.

Prakash and Sunanda are local BJP functionaries, with the latter being the vice president of the Gadag-Betageri City Municipal Council.

Karthik (27), Parashuram Hadimani (55), Lakshmi Hadimani (45) and Akanksha Hadimani (16) were found murdered at Dasara Oni in Gadag.Police sources said Karthik's marriage had been fixed, which the Hadimanis had

Jairam Ramesh claimed that democracy is under threat. come to attend. Since jewellery, valuables and '''Aap chronology samajhiye (Understand the chronology): cash were intact in the house, it Surat District Election Officer re-

was suspected that the motive was not robbery but something else, police sources said.

They said that a property dispute among the siblings was suspected to be the reason behind the murder as Prakash was to give all his wealth to Karthik, which irked Vinayak. Subsequenyly, he allegedly decided to wipe out his parents and brother.

BENGAL TEACHER RECRUITMENT SCAM BJP bags 1st LS seat in 2024 polls; Surat nominee declared elected all appointments; PRESS TRUST OF INDIA over 25000 jobs axed Surat, April 22: The BJP won its

first seat in the ongoing Lok Sabha polls, as its candidate Mukesh Dalal was Monday declared elected from Surat, after the nomination of Congress candidate was rejected and other candidates withdrew from the fray.

Dalal won uncontested - the election was scheduled on May 7 - after the other candidates withdrew Monday, the last day of withdrawal of papers. They included four Independents, three from smaller parties and Pyarelal Bharti of Bahujan Samaj Party. On Sunday, the nomination of Congress candidate Nilesh Kumbhani was rejected after a preliminary examination revealed inconsistencies in the signatures of proposers, an election official said. The nomination form of Suresh Padsala, the

#### 11 dead, 28 injured in separate mishaps in MP

Khargone/Seoni/Maihar (MP): Eleven persons died and 28 were injured in separate accidents in the past 24 hours in Madhva Pradesh's Khargone, Seoni and Maihar districts, police said Monday. Two persons were killed and 11 injured in Khargone, seven died and 16 were iniured in four accidents in Seoni and two persons lost their lives and one received iniuries in Maihar, officials said. In Khargone, 65-year-old Taj Bi and her 48-year-old son Aamin were killed on the spot and 11 persons sustained injuries after a car collided with a sports utility vehicle on Bistan Road under Kotwali police station limits at 2:30am, an official said, "Tai Bi and Aamin were travelling in the SUV from Indore to Khargone when it collided with a car. The injured comprise two persons in the car and nine in the SUV. Eight of the injured have been shifted to Indore for further treatment." said district hospital post in charge Ram Naresh Sharma. In Seoni, two cars collided Monday afternoon on the road leading to Balaghat, killing Nitin Nema (43) and his 9-year-old son, while his wife and another son are wounded, Barghat police station in charge Mohnish Bais said.



Congress' "substitute" candidate from Surat, was also invalidated.

"I declare that Mukeshkumar Chandrakant Dalal, sponsored by the BJP, has been duly elected to fill the seat in the House from Surat parliamentary constituency." election officer Saurabh Pardhi told reporters. after handing over the certificate of election to Dalal

"Surat has presented the first Lotus to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. I congratulate our candidate for Surat Lok Sabha seat Mukesh Dalal for getting elected unop-

**REDISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH REMARKS** Cong seeks EC action against PM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 22: The Congress Monday moved the Election Commission seeking



were the remarks made by the Prime Minister.

"We respect the office he holds. he is as much our Prime Minister as he is yours and of the BJP's



High Court Monday ordered the cancellation of appointments of 25.753 teachers and non-teaching staff made through the recruitment process of State Level Selection Test-2016 (SLST) in West Bengal governmentsponsored and aided schools. declaring the selection process as "null and void"



#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, April 22: The Calcutta

A division bench, comprising justices Debangsu Basak and Md Shabbar Rashidi also di-

rected the CBI to

probe into the ap-

pointment process

appointed outside the officially available 24,640 vacancies, appointed after the expiry of the official date of recruitment, and those who submitted blank Optical Mark Recognition (OMR) sheets but obtained appointments to return all remunerations and benefits received by them with 12 per cent per annum

interest, within four weeks. Observing that it has given "anxious consideration to the passionate Reacting sharply, West Bengal chief minister plea" that persons who had obtained Mamata Banerjee termed th the appointments high court order "illegal" and legally would be said her government will prejudiced if the challenge the verdict entire selection

New Delhi: A Delhi court Monday reserved its order on the bail application of Bharat Rasthra Samithi (BRS) leader K Kavitha in a corruption case linked to the alleged Delhi excise scam. Special Judge for CBI and ED reserved the order till May 2 after hearing arguments on the application from the counsels appearing for the CBI, which is probing the case, and the accused.

#### Woman found hanging inside PS

Bettiah (Bihar): A woman, arrested in connection with a murder case, was found hanging inside the premises of a police station in Bihar's West Champaran district Monday. an officer said. The accused was arrested in connection with a dowry death case and she was lodged in the women's barrack at Shikarpur police station in Bettiah. Police suspect that she hanged herself from a ceiling fan using her sari, shortly before she was to be taken to a local court for production.

#### Amit Shah warns **Ch'garh Naxalites**

Raipur: Union Home Minister Amit Shah Monday asserted the Narendra Modi government has eliminated terrorism from the country as he issued a stern warning to Naxalites in Chhattisgarh, asking them to surrender or else they will be rooted out from the state in two years. He said in the last four months alone, 90 Naxalites were neutralised in Chhattisgarh under the BJP government, comments coming after 29 Maoists were gunned down by security forces in an encounter in Kanker, which is part of the Bastar region, April 16.

and submit a report in three months. Reacting sharply, West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee termed the

high court order "illegal" and said her government will challenge the verdict.

West Bengal School Service Commission (SSC) Chairman Siddharth Majumder said the commission will approach the Supreme Court, after going through the complete high court

process is can-Adhikari welcomed the court judgement, asserting that it proves that the "TMC povernment was indeed nvolved in corruption

order. Over 23 lakh candidates had appeared for the SLST-2016 for 24,640 vacant posts. A total of 25,753 appointment letters were issued against 24,640 vacancies, Firdaus Shamim, a lawyer for some of the petitioners who had alleged irregularities in the selection process, said.

celled, the bench said it hardly had any choice left. The court held that all appointments granted in

the selection processes involved were violative of Articles 14 (equality before the law) and 16 (prohibiting discrimination in employment in any government office) of the Constitution.

"It is shocking that, at the level of the cabinet of the State Government, a decision is taken to protect employment obtained fraudulently in a selection process conducted by SSC for state-funded schools, knowing fully well that, such appointments were obtained beyond the panel and after expiry of the panel, at the bare minimum," the court said.

'appropriate action" against Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his 'redistribution of wealth' remarks at a poll rally in Rajasthan, alleging the comments were "divisive" "malicious" and targeted a particular religious community.

A delegation of Congress leaders met the Election Commission and handed over complaints against the Prime Minister, alleging that he has trampled upon and violated the model code and directions of the poll body.

The Prime Minister has to be held accountable by the ECI for the brazen trampling of the Model Code of Conduct as well as the whole gamut of offenceselectoral and otherwise- committed by him and his party,' the Congress said in a representation, adding inaction by the poll panel in the matter will

tarnish its legacy. The delegation comprising

Abhishek Manu Singhvi and Gurdeep Sappal met Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar and election commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and put forward 16 complaints and memorandums against the BJP and others for alleged violations of The Representation of the People Act, 1951, various judgments of the Supreme Court, and the Model Code of Conduct.

Singhvi told reporters that he discussed in detail some complaints out of the 16 made to the EC and the most objectionable

weighed with us are that the

MTP is sought for a minor who

is 14 and the pregnancy has em-

anated from a sexual assault re-

sulting in an FIR. The minor

It asked the

hospital ad-

ministration

ments for

arrange-

make

to

The higher the post he holds the more obligation he has to exercise restraint. Unfortunately, the statement we have quoted is seriously objectionable, we cannot accept this from as eloquent as our PM," he said.

'We would pray to him with folded hands to withdraw these comments, to clarify and we have asked the Election Commission to state that this is the position in law and we will do in this respect whatever we do with others. I will not repeat what was said but its four or five elements are deeply objectionable," he said.

The prime minister has talked of community blatantly and has linked the deprivation of resources of the majority and garnering and monopolisation of the resources by the minority, Singhvi said.

# SC allows termination of 30-week pregnancy of rape victim

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 22: Taking note of "exceptional" circumstances, the Supreme Court on Monday permitted a 14-year-old rape survivor to undergo medical termination of her almost 30-week pregnancy, saying the welfare of the minor was of "paramount importance".

Exercising its powers under Article 142 of the Constitution which empowers it to pass any order necessary for doing complete justice in any case, a bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justice JB Pardiwala said, "Bearing in mind the exigencies of the situation and the welfare of the minor, which is of paramount importance and her safety...we set aside the judgement of the Bombay High Court.' At the outset, the bench, which

took up the plea as the first item,

observed, "We will allow the medical termination since she is 14-year-old and it is a rape case. This is an exceptional case.' Setting aside the April 4 judgement of the Bombay High Court declining permission for termination of pregnancy, the top court directed the dean of the Lokmanya Tilak Municipal Medical College and General Hospital (LTMGH) at Sion in Mumbai to set up a team of doctors immediately for aborting the foetus.

While allowing the plea, the bench took note of the report submitted by LTMGH and said, "The medical board has clearly opined that the continuation of the pregnancy against the will of the minor would impact negatively on physical and mental well being of the minor who is barely 14 years old.'

Referring to the report, it said, "While a certain degree of risk



is involved in every procedure for medical termination of pregnancy, the medical board opined that the threat to life of the patient if termination of pregnancy is carried out at this stage is not higher than the risk of delivery at full term of preg-

herself was unaware that she was pregnant till a very THF late stage. This is not MEDICAL an uncommon fea-REPORT STATED THAT ture in such THE CONTINUATION OF cases," it said. THE PREGNANCY AGAINST THE WILL OF THE MINOR MAY NEGATIVELY IMPACT HER PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WELL-BEING UNDER THE MEDICAL TERMINATION OF PREGNANCY ACT. 1971. A PREGNANCY THAT

transportation of the IS 24 WEEKS OR ABOVE CAN minor for the **BE TERMINATED ONLY** medical proce-WITH THE PERMISSION dure while taking

OF A COURT note of the submissions of Additional ing the exigencies of the case Solicitor General (ASG) Aishwarya Bhati that the "The circumstances which Maharashtra government will bear the expenses. The bench directed that post-procedure medical care, if any, be ensured.

It, however, did not order a DNA test or any other medical examination of the foetus for the purpose of the ongoing criminal investigation in the rape case. The bench said police can take recourse in this regard.

ASG Bhati, at the outset, urged that the MTP be permitted under Article 142 of the Constitution keeping in mind the medical report and situation where time is precious

On April 19, the top court had taken up the matter on an urgent basis and sought a fresh medical report after taking note of the fact that the high court had relied upon the earlier report which did not deal with "the impact of the pregnancy on the life of the minor and on thephysical, mental and emotional well being of the girl.'





The bench said a de-

tailed and reasoned judg-

ment will follow as it was

passing an interim order keep-

nancy.'

in mind.







international 



No ifs, no buts, these flights are going to Rwanda RISHI SUNAK UK PM

#### **UK TO BAN WET WIPES WITH PLASTIC CONTENT**

Wet wipes containing plastic are set to be banned from sale in the UK under legislation expected to be confirmed Monday. UK **Environment Secretary Steve Barclay is expected** to announce plans to introduce legislation before the summer recess in July following a longrunning campaign to ban the products



The world is a dangerous place, not because of those who do evil, but because of those who look on and do nothing

IMRAN KHAN PAK'S JAILED FORMER PM

The Kremlin also sharply criticized another legislative proposal in Washington: the planned confiscation of Russian property in the US. These are unlawful acts DMITRY PESKOV KREMLIN SPOKESMAN

World War II was not the doing of my people; however, they were needlessly dragged into a conflict that was not

their doing JAMES MARAPE PAPUA NEW GUINEA'S PM

#### SHORT TAKES

#### **Top Israeli military** official resigns

Tel Aviv: The head of Israel's military intelligence directorate resigned Monday over the failures surrounding Hamas' unprecedented October 7 attack, the military said, becoming the first senior figure to step down over his role in the deadliest assault in Israel's history. Maj Gen Aharon Haliva's resignation sets the stage for what's expected to be more fallout from Israel's top security brass over Hamas' attack, when militants blasted through Israel's border defences, rampaged through Israeli communities unchallenged for hours and killed 1,200 people, most civilians, while taking roughly 250 hostages into Gaza.

#### Floods wreak havoc across East Africa

Bujumbura (Burundi): Deadly floods are wreaking havoc in many parts of East Africa that face torrential rainfall, with the poor nation of Burundi calling for international help to deal with the aftermat Lake Tanganyika's rising waters have invaded the port of Buiumbura, Burundi's economic capital, disrupting business there and elsewhere in the country that relies heavily on donor support to run government programmes.

# world is a gerous China hails Muizzu's victory

Muizzu-led PNC won 68 out of 93 seats in Sunday's polls and its coalition partners Maldives National Party (MNP) and Maldives Development Alliance (MDA) won one and two seats, respectively, which is more than two-thirds of the Parliament

more

of cost.

months.

tourists

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, April 22: China Monday congratulated Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu's People's National Congress (PNC) which has secured an absolute majority in Sunday's Parliament polls and expressed its willingness to deepen the "comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership" between the two countries. Muizzu-led PNC won 68 out of 93 seats in Sunday's polls and its coalition partners Maldives National Party (MNP) and Maldives Development Alliance (MDA) won one and two seats, respectively, which is more than two-thirds of the Parliament, landing the party an easy supermajority with the power to

amend the Constitution. The Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), led by former President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, who is seen as a pro-India leader, won only 15 seats this time. The parliamentary majority for the PNC would give Muizzu the legislative backing to shape the foreign policy of the strategically placed archipelagic state in the Indian Ocean

geographically located close to India's southern coast. Commenting on the PNC's victory, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told a media briefing here that Beijing wants to congratulate the Maldives on the successful parliament election and respect the choice made by the people.

"China stands ready to work

with the Maldives to carry forward traditional friendship, expand exchanges and cooperation in various fields, deepen China-Maldives comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership and speed up the building of a China-Maldives community with a shared future to deliver greater benefits to our two

peoples," he said. Ever since his election as President in October last year, Muizzu, who defeated the pro-India incumbent Solih, moved closer to China signing what the two countries term as a "comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership" besides 20 agreements to assist Maldives infrastructure after meeting

with President Xi Jinping here in January. China also announced a \$130 million grant besides promis-

ing to send more Chinese tourists to the tourism-dependent Maldives. After Muizzu's visit in January, China is sending tempt to reduce China has also started several the dependence medium infrastructure on Indian tourists projects in the Maldive in recent months in the tourism-dependent country.

Subsequently, the two

under which China's military

would supply 'non-lethal'

weapons to the Maldives free

several medium infrastructure

projects in the Maldives in recent

Regarded as the pro-China

leader, Muizzu started his

Presidency demanding the with

drawal of the 88 Indian military

personnel handling two heli-

copters to ferry Maldives pa-

tients to hospitals from various

atolls and a Dornier maritime

surveillance aircraft to moni

China has also started

debt relief to his country for the "hefty" loans countries signed an agreement taken by Male.

tor the Indian Ocean.

a Dronier aircraft.

After negotiations, the two

countries reached an agreement

to replace the military person-

nel with civilians to operate two

India-donated helicopters and

For its part, India too increased

its annual aid to Maldives and

permitted a steady supply of

essentials including vegetables,

food and construction materi-

restrictions.

als relaxing export

Subsequently,

Muizzu toned

down his anti-

India rhetoric

saying that India

will remain

'without question" a "clos-

est ally" of

Maldives and urged

New Delhi to provide

а

Muizzu in his media interview last month said the only matter of contention that arose with India was the presence of Indian military personnel in the Maldives and India too had agreed to withdraw them.

"It is not nice to dismiss or disregard aid from one country to another as useless," he said. adding that Indian projects in Maldives will continue.

Observers say now that his PNC party won the parliament polls, it is to be seen the likely course of his foreign policy towards India and China

than on the campaign trail, a



ASSOCIATED PRESS

New York, April 22: A prosecutor says Donald Trump 'orchestrated a criminal scheme to corrupt" the 2016 presidential election.

Matthew Colangelo, a prosecutor with the Manhattan District Attorney's office, made the remarks during opening statements Monday at Trump's historic hush money trial.

Trump faces 34 felony counts of falsifying business records and denies wrongdoing. Trump arrived at the courthouse shortly before 9 am, minutes after castigating the case in capital letters on social media as "election interference" and a "witch hunt". He faces 34 felony counts of fal-

sifying business records — a charge punishable by up to four years in prison — though it's not clear if the judge would seek to put him behind bars. A conviction would not preclude Trump from becoming president again, but because it is a state case, he would not be able to attempt to pardon himself if found guilty. He has repeatedly denied any wrongdoing.

Unfolding as Trump vies to reclaim the White House, the trial will require him to spend his days in a courtroom rather

### SNIPPETS

#### Indian envoy in Sri Lanka hosts Ayodhya Ram temple trust officials

Colombo: India's High Commissioner to Sri Lanka Santosh Jha has hosted top officials of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust and discussed ways in which India can support the development of the Ramayana Trail in the island nation. Jha met Swami Govind Dev Giri Maharaj, the treasurer of Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust and his team at the India House here Sunday. The Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust is the body responsible for the construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya. "High Commissioner @santjha hosted Swami Govind Dev Giri Maharaj, Treasurer of Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust & his accompanying team at India House," the Indian High Commission in Sri Lanka said in a post on X. "Discussed ways in which India can support (the) development of #RamayanaTrail in Sri Lanka, promoting P2P (people-to-people) connect and economic growth," it said.



### Trump tried to 'corrupt' 2016 election: Prosecutor

reality he complained about Monday morning after his arrival when he lamented to reporters that he was "here instead of being able to be in Pennsylvania and Georgia and lots of other places campaigning, and it's very unfair".

Hearing the case is a jury that includes, among others, multiple lawyers, a sales professional, an investment banker and an English teacher. As court began Monday, Judge Juan Merchan disclosed that one of the jurors selected for the case had conveyed reservations about participating, apparently because of the intense media attention. The juror was questioned privately but will remain on the case.

The case will test jurors' ability to set aside any bias but also Trump's ability to abide by the court's restrictions, such as a gag order that bars him from attacking witnesses. Prosecutors are seeking fines against him for alleged violations of that order. The case brought by Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg revisits a chapter from Trump's history when his celebrity past collided with his political ambitions and, prosecutors say, he sought to prevent potentially damaging stories from surfacing through hush money payments.

One such payment was a \$130,000 sum that Michael Cohen, Trump's former lawyer and personal fixer, gave to porn actor Stormy Daniels to prevent her claims of a sexual encounter with Trump from emerging into public shortly before the 2016 election.

#### **Raisi, Sharif agree** to eradicate terrorism

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, April 22: Pakistan and Iran Monday agreed on joint efforts to eradicate terrorism as Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif held talks with Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and discussed ways to promote bilateral ties at political, economic, trade and cultural levels, months after the two neighbours carried out titfor-tat air strikes against alleged terrorist hideouts on rival lands.

Raisi, the first head of state of

the two countries signed an agreement of its under which China's military to would supply 'non-lethal' weapons to the Maldives Maldives on his free of cost

request in an apparent at-

#### **US, Philippine forces** launch combat drills

Manila: American and Filipino forces launched their largest combat exercises in years Monday in a show of allied firepower near the disputed South China Sea that has alarmed Beijing. The annual exercises by the longtime treaty allies will run until May 10 and involve more than 16,000 of their military personnel, along with more than 250 French and Australian forces.

#### Google pressed to reform search ad practices in Japan

Tokyo: Japan's antitrust watchdog said Monday that US search giant Google must fix its advertising search restrictions affecting Yahoo in Japan. The Japan Fair Trade Commission said in a statement that its recent study of Google's practices showed it was undermining fair competition in the advertising market. Yahoo Japan Corp., which has since merged with the Japanese social media platform Line, began keyword-targeted search advertising services using Google's technology after the two companies formed a tie-up in 2010. The FTC alleges that Google had imposed restrictions in its search advertising agreement with Yahoo Japan that for more than seven years hindered its ability to compete in targeted search ads.

#### Nawaz Sharif to undergo health checkup in China

Islamabad: Three-time former Pakistan premier Nawaz Sharif will embark Monday on a five-day personal visit to China, where he will undergo a medical checkup, according to a media report. This will be 74-year-old Sharif's first international visit after he returned to Pakistan in October last year following a four-year self-imposed exile in the UK. The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo will be accompanied by Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on his "personal visit", Geo News reported Monday. Sharif's visit is personal and during the trip, he will undergo a medical checkup, the report said, quoting party sources. The former Prime Minister would also hold meetings related to the development works of the Punjab province and will also meet the owners of Chinese companies, sources said.

Britain's Queen Camilla inspects the 152 Lancers on a parade during her visit to the Royal Lancers in Catterick, England. Queen Camilla undertakes her first visit to the Regiment since being appointed as their Colonel-in-Chief

### Chinese general takes a harsh line on Taiwan

#### ASSOCIATED PRESS

Qingdao, April 22: One of China's top military leaders took a harsh line on regional territorial disputes, telling an international naval gathering in northeastern China Monday that the country would strike back with force if its interests came under threat.

The 19th biennial meeting of the Western Pacific Naval Symposium opened in Qingdao, where China's northern naval force is based,

providing a vivid backdrop to China's massive military expansion over the past two decades that has seen it build or refurbish three aircraft carriers.

The two-day talks have drawn representatives from partners and competitors including Australia, Cambodia, Chile, France, India and the US and comes amid heightened tensions over China's assertive actions in the Taiwan Strait and the East and South China seas, and

as China's navy has grown into the world's largest by number of hulls.

Zhang Youxia, the vice chairman of the ruling Communist Party's Central Military Commission, which controls the armed forces, spoke of "common development" and said "decoupling, friction and confrontation will only divide the world into isolated islands guarding against each other with suspicion.'

any country to visit Pakistan after the February 8 general elections, was welcomed by Sharif at the Prime Minister House where the Iranian leader inspected the Guard of Honour.

During their talks, President Raisi and Prime Minister Sharif agreed on joint efforts to eradicate terrorism, state-run Radio Pakistan reported.

It added that the two leaders also held discussions to increase trade and communication links between their countries.

In the presence of Raisi and Sharif, the Iranian and Pakistani officials signed eight documents for promoting cooperation in various fields. Addressing a joint press conference, President Raisi said that Iran and Pakistan have decided to increase the trade volume to \$10 billion. In his remarks, Sharif said the entire Pakistani nation welcomes the visit of the Iranian President as he called for strengthening Pak-Iran ties despite challenges.

#### **2** suspects held in Jerusalem car attack

Jerusalem: Israeli police said they have arrested two people after a car slammed into pedestrians in Jerusalem on Monday, lightly wounding three. Footage taken by a CCTV camera and aired by Israeli media showed a car plowing into three ultra-Orthodox Jews, sending at least two flying over the dashboard. Palestinians have carried out periodic attacks on Israeli cities and towns since the country's war against Hamas began October 7. During that time, violence has surged in the West Bank. Also Monday, Palestinian civil defence in Gaza said it had found 210 bodies on the grounds of a Khan Younis hospital, and Israel's chief of military intelligence resigned over the failure to prevent the October 7 attack, the first senior official to do so.

# The invisible killer lurking in the air of our cities

#### 360info

Melbourne, April 22: As climate change makes smog and bushfires more common, people will die from air pollution at increasingly high rates - especially in densely populated cities.

Short-term exposure to high levels of air pollution kills more than one million people every year. And while Asia and Africa are particularly at-risk, Australia isn't immune to the danger.

With climate change making

smog and bushfires more com-

mon, it's likely more people will

die from air pollution in coming

years — especially in densely

Those are some of the key

findings from our recent re-

populated cities.

search, published in Lancet Planetary Health last month. Bushfires and emissions put Australians' health at risk

Australia usually enjoys excellent air quality, being one of only seven countries that meet the clean air standards set by the World Health Organisation. But there's a catch. Sometimes. Australia's air pollution levels jump significantly - and breathing in that polluted air can make us sick

Bushfires, especially in summer, are a key reason for these pollution spikes. These fires emit smoke and tiny harmful particles into the air, degrading the air quality.

For instance, researchers found that during the "Black Summer" bushfires of 2019-2020,



the air pollution was 15 times worse than levels considered safe by WHO. This bad air was linked to 429 people dving sooner than they might have otherwise — and more than 3,000 people landing in hospital because of breathing problems or heart issues caused by smoke.

Dust storms and emissions from industries and vehicles are also contributors to these pol-

China, especially its cities, has had the highest death toll from short-term spikes in air pollution over the past 20 years

Countries in southern Asia, like Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, have seen a fast rise in these deaths, climbing up the global ranks

lution peaks. When there's a lot of activity from factories or more cars and trucks on the roads, the amount of pollution released into the air can increase quickly.

Air pollution doesn't just make it hard to breathe. It can also harm other parts of the body, including the heart, blood vessels, and brain.

One of the tiniest troublemakers in the air are tiny par-

ticles known as "fine particulate matter" (PM2.5). These particles — which are tinier than a red blood cell - can get deep into your lungs and even into the blood, affecting our health. The WHO says PM2.5 is one of the most health-damaging particles, and affects more people t an any other pollutant

When you're exposed to a lot of this pollution for a short time, it can make problems like asthma worse, and you might cough, wheeze, or feel short of breath.

Being around too much air pollution for even a little while \_just hours or days — can speed up health issues with your lungs and heart, making you more likely to need to go to the hospitalor even increasing the risk of dying sooner.



# business



We are in a catch-up growth phase. Growth has to go up in order to create employment and jobs for young people, for the investment cycle to take off, and so on ASHIMA GOYAL MPC MEMBER, RBI

#### **ZOMATO RAISES PLATFORM FEE**

Online food delivery platform Zomato has hiked its platform fee by 25 per cent to ₹5 per order. Zomato introduced a platform fee of ₹2 in August last year and later increased it to ₹3 to improve its margins and become profitable. Its main rival, Swiggy, already charges a platform fee of ₹5 per order





be an entrepreneur because it's a state of mind. As long as everybody in the company asks

Everybody can

themselves how I can do things faster, cheaper and better then I think you'll be in a position to bring in competitive sustainable advantage for you

NR NARAYANA MURTHY | FOUNDER, INFOSYS

AI and machine learning can drive efficiency and innovation but also raise concerns related to market concentration and potential anti-competitive behaviour

RAVNEET KAUR CHAIRPERSON, CC

This surge is anticipated to lead to a significant increase in the representation of women apprentices, reaching up to 40 per cent by the end

of the year SUMIT KUMAR CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER TEAMLEASE DEGREE APPRENTICESHI

#### SHORT TAKES

#### **Reliance net** profit stays flat

New Delhi: Reliance Industries Ltd Monday reported an almost flat March quarter net profit, amid a recovery in its core oil and petrochemicals business and sustained momentum across the consumer-facing telecom and retail businesses. RIL's net profit stood at ₹18.951 crore. or ₹28.01 per share, in the January-March guarter of the 2023-24 fiscal as compared to ₹19.299 crore, or ₹28.52 a share, a year ago, according to a company's stock exchange filing. The revenue from operations rose 11 per cent to ₹2.64 lakh crore on higher oil prices.

#### Jio net profit rises over 13%

New Delhi: India's largest

.....

# **D-St sustains win run**

Sensex jumps over 560 points, Nifty tops 22,300-level

**INVESTORS' WEALTH** CLIMBS ₹4.97L-CR IN **TWO DAYS OF MARKET RALLY** 

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 22: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty climbed nearly 1 per cent each Monday amid a rally in Asian and European markets, decline in Brent crude oil prices and buving by foreign investors. Extending its previous day's

rebound, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 560.29 points or 0.77 per cent to settle at 73,648.62. During the day, it advanced 679.47 points or 0.92 per cent to 73,767.80.

The NSE Nifty went up by 189.40 points or 0.86 per cent to 22.336.40 From the Sensex basket,

Larsen & Toubro, Bajaj Finance, Axis Bank, State Bank of India, UltraTech Cement, Wipro, ICICI Bank, Infosys, HCL Technologies and Asian Paints were the major gainers. NTPC, JSW Steel and HDFC

Bank were the laggards. In the broader market, the

BSE smallcap gauge climbed 1.26 per cent and midcap index rallied 0.93 per cent.

Among the indices, consumer durables advanced 2.53 per cent, industrials (1.93 per cent), capital goods (1.65 per cent), telecommunication (1.17 per cent), financial services (1.04 per cent)

change data.

and consumer discretionary (1.02 per cent). Utilities emerged as the only laggard. In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, and Hong Kong settled in

BSE Sensex Previous day close Change 🔿 +560.29 73,088.33 73.800 73,648.62 73,200 -

The Indian market extended last Friday's relief rally as Middle East tension saw some respite, though the situation remains fluid. The recovery was broad-based across sectors, with renewed interest in mid and smallcaps VINOD NAIR | HEAD OF RESEARCH, GEOJIT FINANCIAL SERVICES

the positive territory while Shanghai ended lower: European markets were trading with gains. Wall Street ended on a mixed note Friday.

'Global equities were mostly higher on Monday as a relief rally was underway as geopolitical risks subsided," said Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.80 per cent to \$86.59 a barrel

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) turned buyers on Friday and they bought equities worth ₹129.39 crore, according to ex-

The BSE benchmark climbed



#### Gold, silver retreat from record levels

Gold and silver prices retreated from record high levels in the national capital Monday, with the precious metal plunging by ₹450 per 10 grams, due to weak global trends and easing tensions in West Asia, Gold prices declined by ₹450 to ₹73.650 per 10 grams amid weak trends in the overseas markets, according to HDFC Securities. The vellow metal had settled at ₹74.100 per 10 grams Friday. Silver prices also tumbled by ₹1,100 to ₹85,500 per kg. In the previous close, it had closed at ₹86,600 per kg. In the international markets, spot gold at Comex was trading at \$2,365 per ounce, down by \$26 from the previous close. "Gold prices further went on to be weak as profit booking continued in the vellow metal, for week ahead price correction can continue as long as there is no new fresh trigger in the Middle East." Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst of Commodity and Currency at LKP Securities, said.

599.34 points or 0.83 per cent to settle at 73,088.33 Friday. The NSE Nifty jumped 151.15 points or 0.69 per cent to 22,147.

#### **GOVT BONDS WORTH ₹32K-CRORE TO BE AUCTIONED APRIL 26**

#### INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 22: The Finance Ministry Monday announced the sale of government bonds worth ₹32,000 crore in two categories April 26 (Friday).

The first lot comprises "7.1 per cent Government Security 2034" for an amount of ₹20,000 crore while the second lot consists of "7.46 per cent Government Security 2073' worth ₹12,000 crore.

Both the bonds will be auctioned by the RBI in Mumbai through a price-based auction using the multiple price method. The government will have the

option to retain additional subscriptions up to ₹2,000 crore against each security.

Up to 5 per cent of the notified amount of the sale of the securities will be allotted to eligible individuals and institutions as per the scheme for non-competitive bidding facility in the auction of government securities.

Both competitive and non-competitive hids for the auction have to be submitted in electronic format on the Reserve Bank of India Core Banking Solution (E-Kuber) system April 26.

The non-competitive bids should be submitted between 10.30 am and 11.00 am and the competitive bids should be submitted between 10.30 am and 11.30 am, according to the Finance Ministry statement.

The result of the auctions will be announced April 26 (Friday) and payment by successful bidders will be April 29 (Monday).

The securities will be eligible for "When Issued" trading in accordance with the RBI guidelines

# Mutual funds garner ₹66,364cr via NFOs

Industry experts said that stock market performance along with the positive investor sentiments led to higher fund mobilisation through NFOs in 2023-24



New Delhi, April 22: Asset management companies (AMCs) floated 185 new fund offerings mobilising ₹66,364 crore in 2023-24, marking a 6.5 per cent increase from the previous year, amidst growing interest of retail investors and significant uptrend in broader markets.

This was higher than ₹62,342 crore garnered by AMCs through 253 New Fund Offerings (NFOs) in 2022-23

The financialisation of savings in India is currently underway, signifying a growing recognition among investors that investing in financial assets is integral to building wealth. With income and expenditure levels rising constantly, there is a heightened need to channel monthly savings into avenues offering higher returns. The substantial inflow of investments into equities underscores a notable shift in investor attitudes and risk appetites," FYERS Research said in its report.

As India's growth narrative gains momentum and investment opportunities expand, many unlisted companies seek capital market support. This trend bodes well for investors seeking growth opportunities and aspiring to participate in the long-term journeys of these



companies, it added.

As per the FYERS report, the January-March period of 2024 saw the highest number of NFOs at 63 with the fund mobilisation totalling ₹22,683 crore. This was followed by the October-December period of 2023, when AMCs introduced 49 NFOs and mobilised ₹16,093 crore.

Usually, NFOs come during a surging market when investor sentiments are high and optimistic. The NFOs were floated to capitalise on the mood of investors and attract their investment as they were willing to invest at that time.

The benchmark indices performed exceptionally well in FY24, delivering impressive returns to investors with Nifty 50 yielded a return of 28.6 per cent.

Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) bought equities worth over ₹2 lakh crore in FY24, supported by a steady monthly inflow of funds from retail investors. The contribution to Systematic Investment Plans (SIPs) increased from ₹13,720 crore per month in April 2023 to ₹19,270 crore by March 2024.

The mutual fund industry witnessed a significant increase in net flows, reaching ₹3.55 lakh crore in FY24, way higher than the previous year's inflows of ₹76,225 crore.

#### Biswal new circle head of PNB Balasore Circle

Balasore: Biswojit Biswal appointed as the new circle head of Punjab National Bank (PNB) for the Baleswar Circle. With an impressive career trajectory, he brings invaluable experience and fresh perspectives to his role. Starting as an agriculture officer in 2009, he has succeeded to become one of the youngest circle heads of PNB. Prior to this assignment, he was working as the circle head of



#### Air traffic touches new single-day high

New Delhi: Domestic air traffic touched a new single-day high of 4,71,751 passengers Sunday, according to official data. The

traffic Sunday was more than 14 per cent higher than the average pre-Covid count of 3,98,579. On April 21, the total number of domestic air passengers stood at 4,71,751 and the number of flights was 6,128, as per the data from the civil aviation ministry. This is higher than the domestic air traffic of 4,28,389 passengers and 5,899 flights recorded on April 21, 2023. In a post on X, the ministry said India's domestic aviation is "every day at a new high". "Domestic aviation in India is witnessing unprecedented growth, driven by factors such as concrete policies, economic development, and expansion of low-cost carriers. As more people gain access to air travel, the sector is expected to continue its upward trajectory," it said. Last week, aviation regulator DGCA said passengers carried by domestic airlines during January-March 2024 were 391.46 lakhs as against 375.04 lakhs during the corresponding period of the previous year, registering an annual growth of 4.38 per

cent and monthly growth of 3.68 per cent.

#### SNIPPETS

India's biggest: VIL's FPO gets over the line

New Delhi: Debt-saddled telecom operator Vodafone Idea Ltd raised ₹18,000 crore in India's largest ever follow-on offering (FPO) as the issue got subscribed nearly seven times after institutional investors poured in money, stock exchange data showed. At the close of the offering, as many as 8,011.29

crore shares were sought, 6.99 times of the issue size. This is the highest-ever overall subscription. The company got bids worth ₹88,124 crore but will retain ₹12,600 crore as per the FPO offer size. Together with ₹5.400 crore collected from anchor investors

telecom operator Reliance Jic Monday posted a 13 per cent year-on-year rise in its standalone net profit at ₹5,337 crore in March quarter. Its revenue from operations for Q4FY24 came in at ₹25,959 crore, up 11 per cent over the year-ago period. The net profit was pegged at ₹5,337 crore for just-ended quarter, up from ₹4,716 crore in the fourth quarter of FY23, which translated into a 13.16 per cent increase. According to a BSE filing by the company, for the full FY24, the net profit stood at ₹20,466 crore, which was 12.4 per cent higher than that of FY23. The revenue for full fiscal ended March 2024 was ₹1,00,119 crore, up 10.2 per cent over the preceding fiscal.

in India in the first quarter (Q1) this year, from \$1.6 billion across 313 deals (Q4, 2023) to \$3.2 billion across 354 deals in Q1 2024, a report showed Monday

ture capital (VC) investment and

the number of VC deals grew

Fintech continued to attract good attention, although at smaller deal values, according to the 'KPMG Private Enterprise Venture Pulse' report.

"As expected, India has seen an uptick in VC investments despite the deal activity being muted in Asia," said Nitish Poddar. Partner and National Leader, Private Equity, KPMG in India.

'This will only increase in the coming quarters given our robust GDP growth, strong demographics and expectation of stable government at the Centre. AI, power tech, health tech and



agritech are some key sectors to watch out for," he added.

Meanwhile, global VC investment fell slightly from \$83.8 billion across 9,458 deals in Q4 2023 to \$75.9 billion across 7,520 deals in Q1 this year amid geopolitical tensions, the extended drought in exits among VC-backed companies, and a continued pullback in investment at later deal stages.

VC investment dropped in both the Americas and Asia this quarter, while it rose in Europe, the report mentioned.

/ selling 490 crore snares prior to the market snare, it raised the targeted ₹18,000 crore. Shares were being offered in a price band of ₹10-11 apiece, lower than the trading price of the share. The FPO is the largest ever. Prior to this, the largest FPO in the Indian market was a ₹15,000 crore share sale by YES Bank in

#### Byju raised debt to pay March salaries



New Delhi: Edtech firm Think and Learn, owner of Byju's brand, credited partial salaries of employees for the month of March, according to sources. Byju Raveendran, the Founder and CEO of Think and Learn, has raised debt in his personal capacity to pay the salaries of employees for March. Byju's salary

expenses for partial payouts is estimated to be in the range of ₹25-30 crore. The salary was credited Saturday, April 20, in the account of employees. According to the source, the amount paid is between 50-100 per cent of salary. "Byju raised more personal debt to pay salaries this month. While the rights issue money is still blocked by the foreign investors," a source said.

Aurangabad Circle. His journey spans across diverse regions of the country, including Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, and



Bihar, where he gained his skills and expertise. Now, embarking on his first assignment in Odisha, he brings a wealth of knowledge and strategic insight to the Baleswar Circle, covering five major districts such as Balasore, Bhadrak, Jaipur, Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj with 67 branches and substantial business mix of over Rs 5400 crore. Biswal's focus lies on fostering growth and achieving milestones, particularly in the MSME, retail, agriculture as well as digital banking.

compete for shelf space due to de-

Lower raw material prices,

including wheat and sugar. could.

however, aid in margin expansion

across the board, analysts said.

But, this may not entirely re-

flect in the bottom-line due to

price cuts and advertisement

clining commodity prices.

#### EARTH DAY

#### Vedanta Aluminium accelerates shift to renewables

New Delhi: Vedanta Aluminium, India's largest producer of aluminium, is making its fuel mix more sustainable with the deployment of biomass briquettes for power generation. The company is now utilising 20 tonnes of biomass briquettes per day at



its world-class alumina refinery in Lanjigarh, Odisha. This will potentially decrease the unit's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by more than 10,000 tonnes of CO2 equivalent each year, in addition to reducing its reliance or fossil fuels. On the occasion of Earth Day 2024, this comes as a significant step forward in the company's journey to achieve net zero carbon by 2050 or sooner. The biomass briguettes are made from agricultural residue sourced from local farmers, who would otherwise simply burn it leading to severe environmental pollution. A similar initiative has been rolled out previously at BALCO, India's iconic aluminium producer and a unit of Vedanta Aluminium based at Korba, Chhattisgarh. Further, the company has entered into long-term power delivery agreements to source 1,335 MW of renewable energy to power its operations in the country. Speaking on the occasion, Pranab Kumar Bhattacharyya, CEO - Alumina Business, Vedanta Ltd said, "As India works towards integrating cleaner and more sustainable energy systems, the strategic deployment of biomass co-firing within our operations can play a crucial role in achieving emission reduction goals and supporting rural economies. It forms a critical part of our strategy to evaluate emerging technologies towards decarbonising our operations." On the occasion of Earth Day, the company organised focused awareness sessionsfor farmers at Jharsuguda, Odisha, under the aegis of its development project, Jeevika Samriddhi, which aims to boost income generation through more efficient methods of farming

# Consumer goods makers to see delays in recovery

**FIRMS SUCH AS GODREJ CONSUMER PRODUCTS AND DABUR INDIA HAVE ALREADY FLAGGED SUBDUED DEMAND** FOR JAN-MARCH, **PROLONGING A RURAL-LED SLOWDOWN THAT STARTED TWO YEARS AGO** 

Bangalore, April 22: Most Indian consumer goods makers are unlikely to see a recovery in volumes in the fourth quarter, analysts said Monday, indicating that any improvement can only be expected by the Decemberquarter.

REUTERS



Firms such as Godrej Consumer Products, which owns the Cinthol soap brand, and toothpaste-to-honey maker Dabur India have already flagged subdued demand for January-March, prolonging a rural-led slowdown that started two years ago.

"Consumer companies may be stuck in a limbo," said Preeyam Tolia, a senior research analyst at Axis Securities, adding that volume growth could pick up pace after the onset of the monsoon, which typically boosts rural consumer confidence.

Analysts expect volume growth

in the low- to mid-single digit percentage range for the fourth quarter, roughly the same as the last six quarters.

While consumer goods firms all through last year maintained that a rebound in rural demand was on the horizon, recovery has remained elusive due to persistently high inflation and erratic weather.

Unseasonal rains affected the sale of beverages during the quarter, analysts said, while a delayed winter hit demand for season-specific goods in-Consumer cluding companies may be mosquito

stuck in a limbo PREEYAM TOLIA | SENIOR RESEARCH ANALYST, AXIS SECURITIES

slots that have become pricier due to the Indian Premier League cricket tournament and national elections, they added. They tip gross margins for heavyweights such as ITC and Britannia Industries to shrink or only expand moderately.

Still, analysts expect pockets of strength in the March quarter, with price increases driving growth at Colgate-Palmolive India and new product launches benefiting Tata Consumer Products, which kicks off consumer earnings Tuesday.

Hindustan Unilever and Nestle India also report later this week, while other consumer goodsfirms are set to report their earnings until May 23.











repellents

products.

Further,

large listed con-

sumer goods firms

are also facing increasing com-

petition, with smaller manu-

facturers now better equipped to

and skincare



# JAISWAL, SANDEEP LIFT RR



#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, April 22: Yashasvi Jaiswal roared back to form with a terrific hundred after Sandeep Sharma's maiden five-for as a rampaging Rajasthan Royals hammered Mumbai Indians by nine wickets in the IPL here Monday.

After Sandeep returned 4-0-18-5 to record the best bowling figures this IPL, Jaiswal found form at last in Rajasthan's final home game at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium, flaying the Mumbai Indians attack during

his 104 not out (60b, 9x4, 7x6). Despite a rain intervention delaying the proceedings, Rajasthan did not face much challenge in overhauling a 180run target set by Mumbai Indians, reaching 183/1 in 18.4 overs. The contest also witnessed India and RR spinner Yuzvendra Chahal entering history books with 200 dismissals.

After Jaiswal put on 79 runs for the opening wicket with Jos Buttler (35, 25b, 6x4), he added another unbeaten 109 for the second wicket with Sanju Samson (38 n o, 28b, 2x4, 2x6)



Sandeep Sharma (2nd from L) celebrates a wicket with teammates

turies in this IPL already.

On a benign surface and up against a lopsided bowling attack, Jaiswal flourished right from the word go and went on to register a knock of highest quality — one that would bring him back in contention for a spot in India's squad for the upcoming T20 World Cup.

The massive margin of win for the Royals, meanwhile, consolidated their position at the top of the points table. The Sanju Samson-led side now have 14 points in their kitty with a net run-rate of 0.698 with the win firming up their claim for a spot in the playoffs

Meanwhile, the tone was set by Royals' opening pair of Jaiswal and Buttler, who knocked off 61 runs from the target in the power play before the rains intervened. MI deployed their ace pacer Jasprit Bumrah for two overs in the power play for a mere 11 runs, but the others were exposed again.

As has been the case with MI this year, the other bowlers remained poor despite injecting firesh option in Nuwan Thushara (0/28). RR took 50 runs off the remaining four overs in the power play to stay on top. The DRS reading showed RR were 20 runs ahead of the par score when the rain halted proceedings.

Jaiswal and Rajasthan Royals picked up from where they left off, peppering almost all areas with exquisite strokes to keep charging towards their target. Rajasthan Royals were also aided in their cause by ordinary effort in the field by Mumbai Indians.

Jaiswal was given a reprieve by Nehal Wadhera who spilled a catch near the ropes which ended in a six, and soon after, Tim David dropped a regulation chance at long on off Hardik Pandya when Samson was batting on 19.

Earlier, Sandeep grabbed his maiden five-wicket haul in the IPL to help Rajasthan Royals restrict Mumbai Indians to 179/9. Coming back after an injury layoff, Sandeep claimed three of his five wickets in a terrific final over while also accounting for Tilak Varma, whose 45-ball 65 (5x4, 3x6) lifted MI from a precarious position.

With their top order blown away without any resistance for the second time this season by Rajasthan, MI were struggling at 52/4 at one stage. But Varma and Wadhera (49, 24b, 3x4, 4x6) fought their way through adversity to deliver the goods for Mumbai Indians, putting on 99 runs for the fifth wicket.

BRIEF SCORES: MI 179/9 (Tilak Varma 65, Nehal Wadhera 49; Sandeep Sharma 5/18, Trent Boult 2/32) lost to RR 183/1 (Yashasvi Jaiswal 104 n o, Sanju Samson 38 n o, Jos Buttler 35 n o) by 9 wickets.

# Accolades pour in for Gukesh after triumph

People from all walks of life, including the chess community, went into a frenzy as they hailed India's D *Gukesh as a potential "future world champion" after he etched his name in the history books by winning the* prestigious Candidates tournament in Toronto



award for both Fabi, Ian for thei

chess in fact Full respect

challenger!!

incredible performance today. One of

the most interesting games I ever saw.

Bravo, REAL FIGHTERS, for giving it all.

Most important, more than anything in

KONERU HUMPY: Congratulations to

TANIA SACHDEV: GUKESH WINS THE

CANDIDATES!! The future is here. It's

today. 22.04.2024 a date to remember

It's going to be Ding Liren vs Gukesh,

R RAMESH: Hearty Congratulations to

young @Gukesh for convincingly win-

formance! Whole India is proud of you!

Gukesh drew with American

Hikaru Nakamura in the final

gious tournament but also

round to not only win the presti

become the youngest ever chal

With the win, Gukesh bettered the

great was 22 when he qualified ir

legendary Garry Kasparov's 40 year-old record. The Russian

1984 to clash with compatriot

The Chennai lad will take on reign

ing World Champion, China's Ding

Liren for the crown later this year

Anatoly Karpov

lenger to the world title at 17

ning the Candidates. Inspiring per-

World Chess Championship 2024

@DGukesh for becoming the youngest

VISWANATHAN ANAND: Congratulations to @DGukesh for becoming the youngest challenger. The @WacaChess family is so proud of what you have done. I'm personally very proud of how you played and handled tough situations. Enjoy the moment

NARENDRA MODI: India is exceptional ly proud of @DGukesh on becoming the youngest-ever player to win the #FIDECandidates! Gukesh's remarkable achievement at the Candidates in Toronto showcases his extraordinary talent and dedication. His outstanding performance and journey to the top inspires millions

SACHIN TENDULKAR: What a triumph, @DGukesh! The youngest ever to win the FIDE Candidates-at only 17! Your journey from here leads to the World Championship, and we'll be with you at every move. Go make history! **#FIDECandidates** 

DAVID HOWELL: Congrats to Gukesh on winning the Candidates!! What a tournament I knew he was special ever since our first game. He was just 12 years old (but already a GM! ) While analysing, both his mature attitude and his calculation skills impressed me hugely. Future World Champ?

VLADIMIR KRAMNIK: What an evening Congratulations to Gukesh and special

#### HUMPY, VAISHALI SHINE

ndian Grandmaster Koneru Humpy defeated erstwhile joint leader Tingjie Lei of China to finish second on a superior tie-break in the women candidates tournament here. Zhongyi Tan of China topped the tables. The real story of the day was R Vaishali who scored her fifth victory on the trot at the expense of Kateryna Lagno of Russia to tie for the second spot before finishing fourth on tie-break. Tan finished with 9 points in all, 1.5 points clear of the nearest rivals Humpy, Lei and Vaishali who all finished second to fourth respectively.

### CSK look to avenge their loss against Super Giants



### ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jaiswal, who came into this

IPL after an immensely suc-

cessful five-Test series against

England, had blown hot and cold.

While he repeatedly got quick

starts, Jaiswal was not able to

convert those into anything sub-

The 22-year-old finally over-

came the obstacle, unleashing

powerful pulls and delightful

drives in his knock, which con-

tained nine fours and seven sixes.

With this knock, Jaiswal joined

Buttler to have scored a century

for RR this season. Between

them, the pair shares three cen-

stantial until this contest.

Madrid, April 22: With a late strike by Jude Bellingham, Real Madrid took a huge step toward winning the Spanish league. Bellingham, who quickly became one of Madrid's most important players after his transfer last year, likely sealed the title Sunday by scoring a stoppage-time winner in a 3-2 victory over Barcelona in the final "clasico" of the season. Barcelona twice took the lead at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium but Madrid rallied to win for a comfortable 11-point cushion over their second-placed rival entering the final six rounds. Bellingham scored the winning goal from a difficult angle one minute into stoppage time with a left-foot strike into the top of the net after a cross toward the far post by Lucas Vazquez, who also scored and set up a goal by Vinicius Junior. Bellingham hadn't found the net in his last six appearances for Madrid in all competitions. The England international had scored both goals for Madrid when they won 2-1 at Barcelona in the first league clasico of the season. It was the third straight win for Madrid over Barcelona this season. Madrid are unbeaten in

# Real pip Barca, inch closer to league title

Liverpool thrash Fulham, stay in hunt for PL title \_\_\_\_

#### ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, April 22: Liverpool stayed in the hunt for the Premier League title and moved level on

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, April 22: Revenge will be on defending champions Chennai Super Kings' minds when they host an unpredictable Lucknow Super Giants here in their reverse IPL fixture Tuesday with both the teams desperate to break out of the mid-table logjam.

The last time the two teams faced off in Lucknow last week, KL Rahul and Quinton de Kock put up a record opening partnership which proved to be the difference as LSG joined CSK at eight points in the IPL standing

CSK have been a force to be reckoned with at home and they will look to set the record straight this time. Following the away loss, CSK will be eager to redeem themselves in the three consecutive home ties to march towards the playoffs.

For CSK, skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad and Shivam Dube have done bulk of the scoring and their failure against LSG meant they didn't get a flying start and also struggled in the middle overs.

While opener Rachin Ravindra's form is a concern, CSK also promoted Ajinkya Rahane as the opener and as a result. Gaikwad pushed himself a spot down to three.

While Ravindra Jadeja stepped up with a composed fifty, which allowed Moeen Ali and MS Dhoni to produce the late fireworks and give the team a fighting total, CSK would hope their top order



gets their act together before they face LSG again.

CSK's bowling unit was at their wits end against the rampaging duo of Rahul and Quinton the other day. Young Matheesha Pathirana was their best bowler but the onus will be on pacers Deepak Chahar, Tushar Deshpande and Mustafizur Rahman to produce a better show when they face the same opposition again. Left-arm spinner Jadeja too struggled and will need to step up on their home turf, having done so in the past.

For LSG, batting has been an issue but they have shown how devastating they can be if their top order fires. Rahul and De Kock will once again have to do the heavy lifting at Chepauk. Also Nicholas Pooran has hit top gear when needed and LSG will bank on him a lot.

In bowling, LSG will hope for the return of young pace sensation Mayank Yadav, who had to sit out of two games after suffering lower abdominal strain. Pacer Mohsin Khan and Yash Thakur did well to restrict CSK initially but found themselves in the firing line of Dhoni in the final overs, something they need to work on before they walk into

> MATCHDAY Indian Premier League

his den.

CSK vs LSG Time: 07:30 pm Telecast: Star Sports Network Stream: Jio Cinema

PEDRI

26 league games, since losing at Atletico Madrid in September.

Goalkeeper Andriy Lunin miscalculated a cross into the area in Barcelona's first goal and failed to fully clear a ball in front of the goal in the second. Barcelona took an early lead with a header by Andreas Christensen six minutes into the match.

The hosts equalised with Vinicius converting an 18th-minute penalty kick before Barcelona went ahead again with Fermin Lopez's goal from close range in

#### NADAL POISED FOR LAVER CUP SWANSONG IN BERLIN IN SEPT

#### ASSOCIATED PRESS

Berlin, April 22: Rafael Nadal said Monday he will play at the Laver Cup in September in what may be one of the 22-time Grand Slam champion's last tournaments.

Nadal has signaled 2024 may be his last year on tour and said last week that his second-round loss to Alex de Minaur at the Barcelona Open, which he has won 12 times, was "probably my last match here." "At this stage in my career I really want to go out there and make the most of every opportunity I am given," Nadal said in a statement.

The 37-year-old Spanish superstar has long struggled with injuries and has played just five

competitive matches this year, three in Brisbane in January and two in Barcelona last week.

The Laver Cup, to be held from September 20-22, is an indoor hard-court men's competition pitting Team Europe against Team World in a format similar to that of golf's Ryder Cup.

Nadal and Roger Federer teamed up in the doubles at the 2022 Laver Cup in London for the Swiss great's last match before retirement. "I am very happy to be playing Laver Cup in Berlin for Team Europe," Nadal said. "I have some really special memories from my Laver Cup experiences, including all the emotions from London two years ago playing alongside Roger for the last time.

the 69th. Vazquez evened the match again after a cross by the Brazil forward in the 73rd.

The match marked the debut of the new state-of-the-art 360-degree video scoreboard at the renovated Bernabeu. Among those in attendance at the Bernabeu were tennis great Novak Djokovic, former NFL star Tom Brady and actor Andy Garcia. ATLETICO STRUGGLE

Atletico Madrid followed up their Champions League elimination with a 0-2 loss at Alaves in the Spanish league, missing

a chance to strengthen their hold on fourth place.

The defeat against 13th-place Alaves kept Atletico only three points ahead of fifth-place Athletic Bilbao in the fight for a Champions League spot next season. Athletic had been held to a 1-1 draw against relegationthreatened Granada at home Friday.

Alaves, who had lost three league matches in a row, won with goals by Carlos Benavidez in the 15th minute and Luis Rioja in second-half stoppage time.

points with leader Arsenal with a 3-1 victory over Fulham that was illuminated by a brilliant free-kick by Trent Alexander-Arnold.

Liverpool bounced back from Thursday's exit to Atalanta in the Europa League quarterfinals and last weekend's home loss to Crystal Palace by winning at Craven Cottage after Jurgen Klopp dropped Mohamed Salah and Alexis Mac Allister to the bench. Alexander-Arnold's curling

free-kick in the 32nd was cancelled out by Timothy Castagne's first goal for Fulham in first-half stoppage time. Ryan Gravenberch and Diogo Jota scored in the second half as Liverpool joined Arsenal on 74 points — one more than defending champion Manchester City, which has a game in hand.

Fulham academy graduate Harvey Elliott, who swapped London for Merseyside in 2019, was galvanised by jeers from the home fans.

### Ghosal retires from professional squash

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 22: India's finest men's squash player Saurav Ghosal Monday announced his retirement from professional circuit after completing a glittering 22-year journey although he would continue representing the country at multi-discipline events for some more time.

Besides winning two gold medals in team events of Incheon and Hangzhou Asian Games, Ghosal has three Commonwealth Games medals and also bagged the yellow metal in the 2022 World Doubles Championships in mixed doubles in Glasgow.

"I started my journey on @psaworldtour 22 years ago. At the time, I never thought in my

wildest dreams. I would play professional squash for so long. As I travelled across the world playing on some of the biggest stages our wonderful sport offered, I thought it would never come to an end," 37-year-old Ghosal wrote in a post on his official Instagram handle.

"But, there's always an end point. I am overwhelmed with emotions as I write this message. This sport has been my

passion, my livelihood, and my identity for so many years. So, with a heart filled with pride and a tinge of sadness, I announce my retirement from the PSA," he added.

Kolkata-born Ghosal also remains the only Indian man to reach the world's top 10. Since making his PSA debut in 2003. Ghosal has lifted 10 PSA titles.

Ghosal, however isn't completely done with the sport and hopes to represent the flag for some more years. "Finally, I hope this is not me saying goodbye altogether from competitive squash. I would like to play for India a little while longer. Hopefully, there's some fight left in me, and I can achieve a bit more for my coun-

try. Till then, THANK YOU!

Printed and published by Tathagata Satpathy on behalf of Navajat Printers and Media Pvt. Ltd. and printed at Navajat Printers, B-15 Industrial Estate, Rasulgarh, Bhubaneswar -751010, Odisha; Phone: 7894447142 (Marketing). Editor: Tathagata Satpathy, RNI No. ORIENG/2011/37159







