



## PLAYING IT SAFE

Actor Samantha Ruth Prabhu says she doesn't want to engage in any debate over north and south films

LEISURE P2



## US SUPPORT FOR INDIA

The US recognises Arunachal Pradesh as an integral part of India and strongly opposes any attempt by China to claim territories

INTERNATIONAL P10



## RCB TEST FOR KKR

Injury-hit KKR seek home comfort and look to return to winning ways when they face a star-studded RCB

SPORTS P12

## Man stabbed inside Koraput police station

**KORAPUT:** A man was allegedly stabbed Tuesday inside Boipariguda police station in this district over past enmity. The victim, identified as Khagapati Gadaba of Thatuguda village, has been admitted to the district headquarters hospital here. He suffered injuries after Goura Harijan of Ghumura village attacked him with a knife. Officials said Wednesday that the two had a fight Tuesday during which Khagapati hit Harijan with a stick. Both were called Wednesday to the police station to resolve the matter amicably. During discussions Harijan suddenly attacked Khagapati with a knife injuring the latter severely. "Harijan has been arrested and produced in court," said a police official and added that the condition of Khagapati is stable.

## 10-yr prison term for retired headmaster

**SUNDARGARH:** A special POCSO court and Court of the Additional District and Sessions judge sentenced Wednesday, retired headmaster Debanand Patel, 62, of Raidih Upper Primary School under Lephripada block in this district to 10 years in jail for raping and sexually abusing 11 girl students in 2015. Additional District Judge Mahendra Kumar Sutradhar, also slapped a penalty of ₹47,000 on Patel. The court also directed the district legal services authorities to provide ₹28 lakh ex-gratia to all the victims of sexual abuse. Patel was convicted for disrobing the girls and sexually abusing them.

## 5 meet watery grave during ritual in TN pond

**CHENNAI:** Five young men, part of a group that performed a seasonal temple ritual in a pond, drowned here Wednesday, police said. The accident occurred when priests and volunteers entered the pond and formed a circle as part of a ritual and at that time, a person who was part of the group drowned. When four others tried to rescue him, they too went under water. Senior revenue and police officials arrived and the bodies were fished out by Fire and Rescue Services personnel. All the deceased were in the 18-25 years age group, officials said.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



You know nothing. Read all the text books... and tell me which portions should be removed

MARKET WATCH		
INDEX		VARIATION
SENSEX	59689.31	↑ 582.87
NIFTY	17557.05	↑ 159.00
DOLLAR	82.17	↑ ₹0.02
EURO	89.47	↓ ₹0.43
GOLD	₹60,705	↓ ₹249
SILVER	₹74,206	↓ ₹412

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
TEMP	MAX 37.8°C	37.0°C
	MIN 22.5°C	23.4°C
Humidity	68%	70%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Light to moderate rain	



**HONOURING LEGENDS:** (Clockwise from L) Singer Krishna Patel, author-researcher Antaryami Mishra and agriculturist Pattayat Sahu receive Padma Shri awards from President Droupadi Murmu in New Delhi, Wednesday



**HONOURING LEGENDS:** (Clockwise from L) Singer Krishna Patel, author-researcher Antaryami Mishra and agriculturist Pattayat Sahu receive Padma Shri awards from President Droupadi Murmu in New Delhi, Wednesday

## NCERT drops texts on Gandhi, RSS ban

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 5:** The NCERT has dropped from its Class-XII history textbook certain portions on Mahatma Gandhi and how his pursuit of Hindu-Muslim unity 'provoked Hindu extremists', and on a 'ban on the RSS'. The move triggered a row, with the Congress accusing the Centre of 'whitewashing' and 'distorting' history. 'Gandhi's death had magical effect on communal situation in the country', 'Gandhi's pursuit of Hindu-Muslim unity provoked Hindu extremists' and 'Organisations like RSS were banned for some time' are among the portions deleted from the textbook.

The portions referring to Gujarat riots have also been dropped from Class-XI sociology textbook months after NCERT removed the reference to the 2022 communal violence in two Class-XII textbooks.

NCERT chief Dinesh Saklani, however, said the syllabus was rationalised in June last year itself and there has been no trimming of the curriculum this year.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge slammed the BJP and RSS over the omissions. He said no matter how much they try, they cannot erase history.

# 'MEDIAONE' WINS

Supreme Court slams Ministry of Home Affairs for raising national security claims from thin air and says independent press is absolutely necessary for robust democracy

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, April 5:** The Supreme Court quashed Wednesday the Centre's telecast ban on Malayalam news channel 'MediaOne', and pulled up the Ministry of Home Affairs for raising national security claims from 'thin air' without facts. Observing that the state can't impose unreasonable restrictions on 'press as it would have a chilling effect on press freedom', a bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud set aside the Kerala High Court order which had upheld the Centre's decision to ban the channel's telecast on security grounds.

The top court said critical views of the channel against government policies cannot be termed as 'anti-establishment' as an independent press is necessary for a 'robust democracy'.

"Press has a duty to speak the truth and present citizens with hard facts enabling them to make choices that propel democracy in the right direction. The restriction on freedom of press compels citizens to think along the same

tangent," the bench said. "Homogenised views on issues that range from socio-economic polity to political ideologies would pose great dangers to democracy," the bench also comprising of Justice Hima Kohli added. It also said that non-renewal of license for a channel is a restriction on the right to freedom of speech.

The top court pointed out that the alleged link of the channel's shareholders to Jamaat-e-Islami Hind is not a legitimate ground to restrict the rights of the channel. It said the state is using national security as a tool to deny citizens remedies that are provided under



the law. "National security claims cannot be made out of thin air; there must be material facts backing it," the bench asserted.

Non-disclosure of reasons for denial of security reasons and disclosure only to court in sealed cover has violated principles of natural justice. "Sealed cover procedure cannot be introduced to cover harms that cannot be remedied by public immunity proceedings," the bench pointed out.

The Supreme Court was hearing the plea of the news channel against the Kerala High Court's order which had upheld the Centre's decision to ban its telecast on security grounds.

## Oppn plea against probe bodies junked

**NEW DELHI:** The Supreme Court refused Wednesday to entertain a plea by 14 political parties led by the Congress alleging arbitrary use of central probe agencies against opposition leaders. It said laying down guidelines without facts of a criminal case will be 'dangerous'. "Political leaders do not enjoy immunity higher than the common citizens... Once we accept that political leaders are absolutely on same footing as common citizens with no higher immunity, then how can we say there can be no arrests unless there is a three-pronged test which is satisfied," a bench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justice JB Pardiwala said. The counsel for the political parties, AM Singhvi told the court that "between 2014 and 2022, 121 political leaders have been probed by the ED out of whom 95 per cent are from opposition parties".

## New technology protects structures from quakes

Buildings constructed with seismic isolation devices and seismic dampers can lessen the intensity of the earthquake by absorbing the energy

AGENCIES

**Istanbul, April 5:** The February 6 earthquakes in Turkey and Syria damaged over 1,00,000 buildings, caused more than 10,000 collapses and killed more than 50,000 people. However, at the same time some buildings escaped unscathed without a scratch.

But then how was it possible? Experts have pointed out that advanced building technologies can protect structures from quakes and also minimise damages.

The worst-hit Turkish cities in the February 6 earthquake were Antakya, Adana and Sanliurfa. However, a number of buildings including hospitals, even though a small number, survived the massive earthquakes in these cities. Several hospitals built with a



The Adana Hospital managed to survive the earthquakes that hit Turkey

technology called the 'Seismic Isolation System', survived the earthquakes with almost no harm, as per reports in the local media, even while surrounding buildings sustained heavy damage.

Adana City Hospital was built to record both ground shaking and the building's response. Thanks to its seismic isolation system, the building saw a 75% reduction in shaking, according to the company that designed the iprotective measures, compared with neighbouring structures. This technology enabled the building to stay upright.

Engineers aren't surprised that the hospitals with seismic isola-

tion systems survived with minimal damage. The question however, is why isn't the same smart technology used in all quake-prone areas.

As per experts, the simple reason why the technology is not frequently implemented is because it is still not a popular mode of construction for engineers.

"First of all it is difficult to identify quake-prone areas and the seismic technology is a costly affair and so many engineers continue to use the traditional processes," said Osman Ozbulut, Associate Professor of Civil Engineering at a University here. "However, now more and

more people will back the technology because it gives them more than 75% chance of survival during an earthquake," Ozbulut added.

So why is the seismic technology more resilient than traditional methods of building constructions? This is because seismic isolation devices and seismic dampers minimise the seismic energy that goes into these columns or beams by either absorbing it or diverting it. As a result, the building experiences less motion and damage and is more likely to remain functional after an earthquake.

Seismic isolation systems prevent seismic energy from entering buildings by using devices made from rubber or steel plates coated with a friction-generating material that slide over one another to minimise an earthquake's impact. These isolation devices are installed between the structure's foundation and the building itself.

Alternatively, seismic dampers, installed in each storey of a building, absorb earthquake energy the way shock absorbers work in a car and convert it into heat energy to minimise damages.

## Nothing for Odia

The Centre has spent ₹640 crore for Sanskrit while 5 other classical languages have been allocated ₹30 crore only

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, April 5:** Despite finding a place in the list of classical languages in India, the Centre has not spent anything for popularising Odia. On the other hand, over ₹640 crore has been spent for increasing the popularity and spread of Sanskrit.

This information was shared Wednesday by Rajya Sabha Member and Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh in the Upper House. Ramesh brought up the topic while referring to 'unstarred' Question No 171 raised February 3, 2020 in the Rajya Sabha. While presenting the facts, Ramesh referred to the answers given by the then Culture Minister.

Ramesh pointed out that after the question was asked, the minister had stated that ₹643 crore had been spent for popularising Sanskrit in the last three years. During the same period, ₹24 crore was spent for Tamil, ₹3 crore

each for Telegu and Kannada. Strangely for both Odia and Malayalam not a single penny was allocated or spent.

"I don't understand why such a huge amount was spent on popularising Sanskrit which at the most is spoken by 15,000 people in India. Why have the other classical languages not been given the same importance," Ramesh asked.

"Sanskrit is not the popular language as it is being projected. It has been the language of the priests, the language of the courts. Buddha taught in Magadhi, but since Sanskrit is a part of our cultural legacy we take pride in it. However, that doesn't mean will be giving more importance to Sanskrit than other regional languages," he added.

The senior Congress leader pointed out that in its effort to popularise Sanskrit, the Centre has ignored the other classical languages like Odia. He termed this development as alarming.

₹24 crore for Tamil  
₹3 crore for Telegu  
₹3 crore for Kannada  
₹0 for Odia  
₹0 for Malayalam  
JAIRAM RAMESH



# leisure



## MADDEN KEEN TO WORK IN HINDI FILMS

Game of Thrones star Richard Madden, who will be soon seen playing an elite spy in the upcoming action-thriller series *Citadel* starring Priyanka Chopra, said that he would be honoured to work in a Hindi movie. The actor was in Mumbai for the Asia-Pacific leg of the series' promotion.

## SCARLETT IS TOO FRAGILE TO JOIN SOCIAL MEDIA

Scarlett Johansson avoids social media because her 'ego is too fragile.' The *Black Widow* star said she's chosen to stay away from sites like Facebook, Twitter or Instagram because she finds the sites too addictive and worries she would get completely absorbed.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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#### ARIES

Today ideas will flood your mind, but it is good that you will be able to carry them out efficiently. However, Ganesha warns you not to take rash decisions. Wise people will help you along the way. Pay heed to the advice of experienced people.

#### TAURUS

Your thinking is expected to be immensely clear and focused this day. So says Ganesha. This, therefore, is a great day for holding important meetings with colleagues and partners, for resolving vital issues, for entering new tie business tie ups. Knowing what you want as well as how to get it will give you tremendous advantage. Those engaged in joint ventures could have a windfall.

#### GEMINI

A fun and frolic filled day awaits you. You will have a lot of fun with your family members, especially children. You will help your children with their work. Marital life will be blissful. Relations with your spouse will be romantic today. A pleasure filled day awaits, says Ganesha.

#### CANCER

There is a chance today to benefit from womenfolk. Though you are methodical and disciplined in your work, you will feel rudderless. Yet you will get relief from this monotony and feel jovial, says Ganesha.

#### LEO

You will not be able to reap the rewards of your hard work fully today. You will take all matters very seriously today. You will feel a sense of responsibility and will try to find lasting solutions to problems today. It is a good day to put to rest some worries that have been haunting you for some time now, says Ganesha.

#### VIRGO

You will enchant people with your adaptability and your desire to get with your surroundings. For those who are in love, something unexpected may take place, but there is no need to panic as by and by things will turn out to be in your interest. You will spend quality time with your family.

#### LIBRA

Ganesha says that for people you may appear to be a miser but when it comes to your closed ones you will never hold back or hesitate to spend. Today is a good day to take your loved ones shopping. You may overspend your budget but the spending will give you a feeling of happiness and contentment. Ganesha showers you with his blessings

#### SCORPIO

You wish to make an image makeover in your office. You are tough and determined, and your work knows no limit when it comes to achieving your targets. You will love to brainstorm and give innovative ideas to colleagues and bosses. However, don't give away your best of ideas to anyone, advises Ganesha.

#### SAGITTARIUS

Your far-sightedness and brilliance will not only impress your peers, but also help you to rope in big clients and huge projects. Cheers to that! Thanks to your systematic and disciplined approach, you are entitled to be the 'most desirable' employee of the company. Business may look forward to huge profits, predicts Ganesha.

#### CAPRICORN

Singles, you may meet the one of your dreams today and plan about a future together. You will feel and enjoy the exciting feeling of meeting your life partner and letting your heart open in front of somebody, says Ganesha. All of this will not be one sided. Your sweetheart will also shower love and affection upon you unconditionally.

#### AQUARIUS

You will spend the day introspecting, but the mental peace will still seem distant. Some unavoidable circumstances will force you to handle the situations with diligence, feels Ganesha. Due to your devotion to the Almighty and spiritualism, you will be able to deal with problems pretty well.

#### PISCES

You will find favourable conditions at work as you co-ordinate with your colleagues and seniors to tackle tough problems. You will be able to get the desirable results for all the effort you put in, in the office, says Ganesha. Those engaging in business will be able to make some strong and useful contacts today which will be handy in the future.

# MRUNAL SETS HEARTS ON FIRE

Mumbai: Mrunal Thakur is one of the most popular actresses in South and Hindi film industry as well. The actress, who made her debut in South with Dulquer Salmaan starrer *Sita Ramam*, impressed audiences with her role as Sita. With just one film, Mrunal garnered a huge fan following from South audiences and her every picture goes viral as well. Now, the actress shared a few pics in a bikini from the beach and sent the internet into a frenzy.

The *Dhamaka* actress set hearts on fire with her latest pictures in a royal blue-coloured bikini by the beach. The actress showed off her toned midriff and flaunted her radiant smile. Her wet, messy hair falling on her face was just like a cherry on top of a cake.

The *Sita Ramam* actress also shared a few glimpses from the beach, sea, sky, and breathtaking views. Another picture shows Mrunal posing with a smile yellow-coloured bodysuit and denim. Sharing the pictures, the actress captioned them, "March dump."

Mrunal Thakur was last seen in a Hindi film titled *Selfie*, which was released February 24 and failed to impress the audiences.

Coming to her next in South, Mrunal has teamed up with Jersey actor Nani for the tentatively titled film *Nani30*. The film is an emotional family drama directed by Shouryuv.



Mumbai: Actor Jr NTR, who has been swaying the audience - both Indian and international - with RRR, has been signed for the spy action-thriller, *War 2* - a sequel to the 2019 blockbuster.

Hrithik Roshan, who played the role of Kabir in *War*, will be seen taking on Jr NTR in a bloody battle that will be an adrenaline-pumping action extravaganza.

## Hrithik to lock horns with Jr NTR in *War 2*

Recently, it was also revealed that the event film is being directed by Ayan Mukerji, who has a history of delivering some of the biggest blockbusters including his last release *Brahmastra*.

A veteran trade source confirmed on condition of anonymity that Jr NTR will be locking horns with Hrithik in *War 2*. "Their battle of wits and their fierce showdown will definitely be an action spectacle to remember on the big screen. *War* is now a true-blue pan Indian film. South India should come alive and connect at a more emotional level with the film because of the presence of their beloved superstar," it added.



# 'No wall between north, south films'

Mumbai: Samantha Ruth Prabhu has come down to Mumbai for the promotion of her upcoming film *Shaakuntalam*.

As the barrier between north and south films has been diminishing over the years, Samantha said, "There's no wall between North and South films now. I don't want to engage in any

debate over this. As an actor, it gives me immense pleasure that I can work in films across languages. Nowadays, audiences also watch movies from different languages."

*Shaakuntalam* is based on a popular Indian play *Shakuntala* by Kalidasa. Shakuntala was the wife of king Dushyant and the mother of emperor Bharata.

The Pan-India mythological romantic drama will be out in Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam, and Kannada.

Asked about the movie, Samantha said, "It's a love story. And love is like a universe in itself. Our cultural heritage is rich. And the story of this film is inspired from one of our oldest classics. Apart from the story, the movie has high-level graphics and special effects."

Dev Mohan has been paired opposite Samantha. Expressing her feelings, she said, "I am excited as well as a bit nervous. The budget of the film is quite high. But I feel, audience will love the movie."



# Manoj opens up about his inter-faith marriage

Mumbai: Renowned actor Manoj Bajpayee, who is known for his acting prowess, is also the doting husband of co-actress Shabana Raza, who has quit the film industry long back. While Shabana has given some memorable performances in films like *Hogi Pyaar Ki Jeet* with Ajay Devgn and *Fiza* with Hrithik Roshan, she is currently away from the media glare. With many stars coming under the radar for inter-faith marriage and facing backlash on social media, Manoj Bajpayee opened up about his own experience with it.

In a recent interview, the *Gulmohar* actor revealed that his marriage with Shabana Raza is beyond religion and that they both peacefully follow, respect, and admire each other's faiths. "My marriage with Shabana, more than religion, is about the

values that we share. And those values we don't talk about," he said.

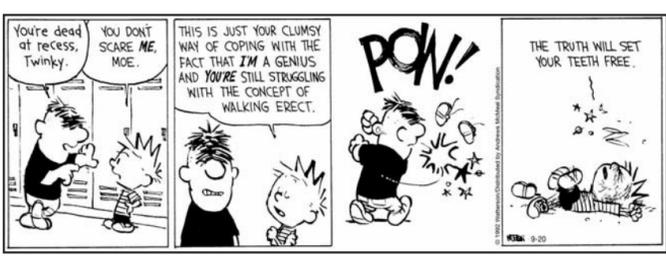
Furthermore, the actor also maintained about how despite belonging to a feudal Brahmin family, they never raised any objection or posed a challenge when he married Raza. In the same breath, the *Satya* actor also added, "Even if people would have talked about the religion of my wife, they could never have the strength or the courage to speak to me on my face. Because they know that I don't mince my words, I'm very hard when it comes to anyone talking like that."



### PEANUTS



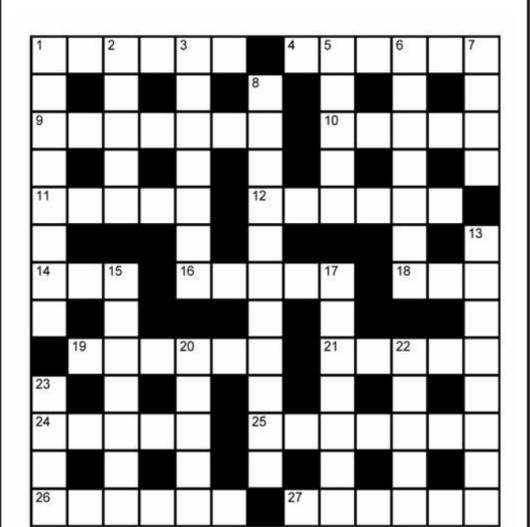
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



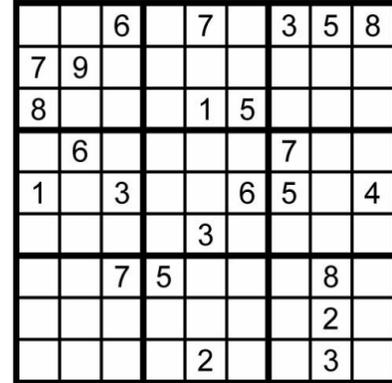
### FUN post CROSSWORD



- Across
- 1 Elocute, as a poem
  - 4 Cancel officially
  - 9 \_\_\_ arts
  - 10 Famous
  - 11 Musical pace
  - 12 Water tap
  - 14 Historic period
  - 16 Flower starters
  - 18 Human
  - 19 *Relative Comedy* author
  - 21 Violin maker
  - 24 UFO passenger
  - 25 Italian city
  - 26 African menace on the wing
  - 27 Golfer's posture
  - 5 Boredom
  - 6 Viewpoint
  - 7 Whirlpool
  - 8 Broken limb bandage (7,4)
  - 13 Snake bite curative
  - 15 Greed
  - 17 Actress on the way up
  - 20 Districts or areas
  - 22 Cook's garment
  - 23 Bonkers
- Down
- 1 Sent payment
  - 2 Billiard ball bounce
  - 3 Garment workers

### SUDOKU

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

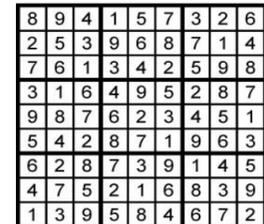


### SOLUTIONS

#### CROSSWORD



#### SUDOKU

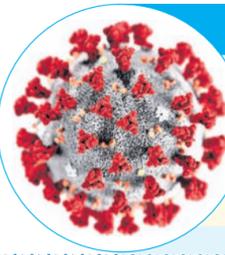


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



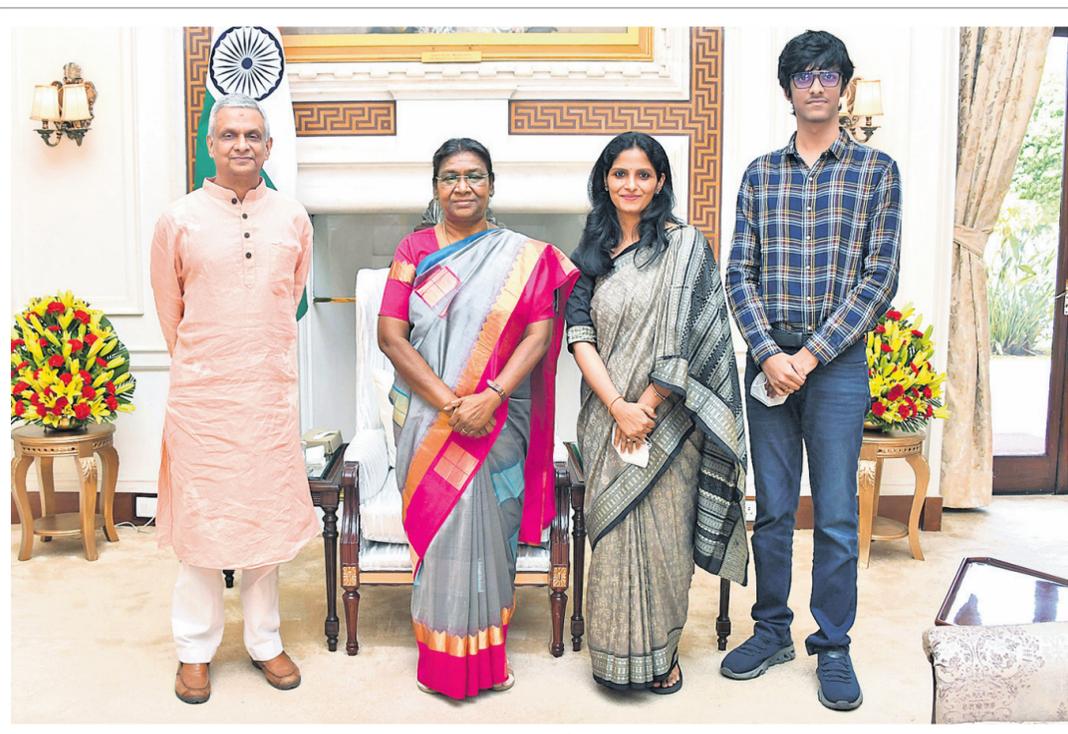
**JAIL REVAMP**

Cuttack Collector Bhabani Shankar Chayani, CDA chairman Anil Kumar Samal and the development authority's vice-chairman Nikhil Pavan Kalyan during a meeting on renovation of the old jail in the Silver City, Wednesday



**COVID-19 TRACKER**

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	68,43,17,088	65,72,77,423	68,33,935
India	4,47,33,719	4,41,79,712	5,30,916
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204



COURTESY CALL: Dharitri and OrissaPOST Editor Tathagata Satpathy and Chief Executive Adyasha Satpathy, along with their son Aaryl Che, pay a visit to President Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhawan in New Delhi, Wednesday

**BJD, BJP cross swords over Income Tax raids**

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 5: The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) and opposition BJP have locked horns over Income Tax (I-T) raids on the ruling party leaders and supporters in the past few days.



Such raids (by I-T department) during the election period are not a good sign for a healthy democracy

It's the routine work of the I-T department and they are conducting raids around the year. If they (BJD leaders) are paying tax regularly, there is nothing to worry about



MANAS MANGARAJ | BJD LEADER & MP

MANMOHAN SAMAL | STATE BJP PRESIDENT

According to reports, the I-T department has conducted raids on the firms, properties, and offices of Benuhar Pradhan, the vice-chairperson of Bhapur block in Nayagarh district, and Bhramarabara Nayak, the vice-chairperson of Soro block in Balasore district. Both are the ruling party leaders.

said, "It is the routine work of the I-T department and they are conducting raids around the year. If they (BJD leaders) are paying the tax regularly, there is nothing to worry about."

Meanwhile, the state GST has conducted raids on a few businessmen of Talcher and Angul areas who are stated to be the supporters of the BJP.

Besides, the central agency has raided the crusher unit of a businessman and BJD leader of Sambalpur district.

Congress MLA Santosh Singh Saluja said, "The raids are being carried out on the property of either BJD leaders or their associates. If the raids are being carried out intentionally, it is unfortunate. The Central government will conduct I-T raids and the state government, in turn, will carry out Vigilance or GST raids. It's not a good sign."

Sources said a 15-member team of the enforcement wing of the Cuttack CT&GST carried out the raids after reportedly detecting discrepancies in the GST return filed by the trading establishments.

"Such raids during the election period are not a good sign for a healthy democracy," said BJD leader and MP Manas Mangaraj here, Wednesday.

Commenting on the issue, Odisha BJP president Manmohan Samal

Earlier, such I-T and GST raids were conducted in Padampur area of Bargarh district during the Padampur bypoll.

**KURMI STIR HITS TRAIN SERVICES**

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar/Jhargram, April 5: Train services of the South Eastern Railway (SER) and East Coast Railway (ECoR) were affected Wednesday as 'Kurmis' blocked railway tracks in two stations in West Bengal demanding ST status, officials said.

Members of the Kurmi community, who are currently under the OBC category, blocked tracks at Khamasuli railway station in Paschim Medinipur district and Kustaur in Purulia.

They also blockaded NH 6 at Khamasuli to press for their demand. As a result of their stir, SER cancelled 46 express and passenger trains and short-terminated eight trains, a release said.

"The blockade will continue until our demands are met," Tapas Mahato, a leader of the West Bengal Kurmi Samaj, said.

Hundreds of vehicles were stranded on NH 6 as a result of the blockade, triggering massive traffic snarls in other adjoining roads in Paschim Medinipur and Jhargram districts. Some of the vehicles were diverted through Balibhasha in Jhargram to bypass the blockade, officials said.

**Vig recovers 1 kg gold, ₹6.59L in cash from Paradip GST official**

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 5: The state Vigilance Wednesday claimed to recovered bank, insurance deposits and investments in mutual funds worth over ₹1.04 crore and 1.135 kg gold from the possession of a CT&GST officer at the enforcement unit in Paradip of Jagatsinghpur district.

Vigilance sources said during the ongoing search, two lockers of CT&GST officer Chitta Ranjan Mohanty and his wife at Bank of Maharashtra and Punjab and Sind Bank in CDA area of Cuttack was traced and opened Wednesday.

Around 1.060 kg gold jewellery, including 19 gold biscuits of 24 carat weighing 433 gram (market price of gold biscuits about ₹26 lakh), were recovered from the lockers of Mohanty and his spouse. It took the total gold recovered to 1.135 kg.

In addition, ₹5.4 lakh in cash was found in a locker at the Bank of Maharashtra. So far, total cash of ₹6.59 lakh including ₹5.4 lakh found in locker and ₹1 lakh from office of Mohanty was recovered.

On March 31 last, Mohanty was trapped and arrested by Vigilance

ON MARCH 31, THE OFFICIAL WAS CAUGHT ACCEPTING A BRIBE OF ₹80,000 FROM THE COMPLAINANT TO FURNISH A CLOSURE REPORT OF CT&GST CASE INSTITUTED AGAINST HIM

FOLLOWING THE CASH SEIZURE, SIMULTANEOUS SEARCHES WERE CONDUCTED AT THREE LOCATIONS TO TRACE THE ASSETS OF THE ACCUSED

for accepting a bribe of ₹80,000 from a complainant to furnish a closure report of CT&GST case instituted against him.

The entire bribe money was recovered from the accused, sources said.

Following the seizure of cash, simultaneous house searches were conducted at three locations to trace the assets of the accused disproportionate to his known sources of income, they added.

In this connection, a case (4/23) under section 7 of PC (Amendment) Act, 2018 has been registered which is under investigation. Mohanty has been recommended to jail custody till April 13, it was learnt.

**Ensure extensive field visits during month's 3rd week, secretaries told**

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 5: In a bid to ensure effective monitoring and review of programmes, and delivery of critical public services, Development Commissioner (DC) Anu Garg has asked all secretaries and senior officials to ensure extensive field visits and night stays in rural and remote areas of the state during the third week of every month.

Garg has recently issued a circular to the additional chief secretaries (ACSS), principal secretaries and secretaries of all departments in this regard.

In the circular, the DC said the state government has taken up a host of significant initiatives in the recent past for transformation in education, healthcare, irrigation, agriculture, skill development and investment promotion.

"This is to ensure inclusive growth in all sectors through human development, creation of physical and social infrastructure, provision of social safety nets for the disadvantaged and vulnerable sections and empow-



The field visits will not only make the administration people-friendly and responsive through redressal of public grievances, but also help obtaining citizens' feedback about the efficacy of the schemes and programmes

ANU GARG | DEVELOPMENT COMMISSIONER

erment of women, youth, Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes, Other Backward Classes, Minorities, differently-abled and the senior citizens," she noted.

public grievances but also help obtaining citizens' feedback about the efficacy of the schemes and programmes," Garg said.

The DC said all secretaries and senior officers, whether they have been allotted a particular district or not, should make extensive field visits and night halts in rural and remote areas of Odisha during the third week of every month for effective monitoring and review of the programmes, schemes, and delivery of critical public services.

To facilitate the field visits, the state government, after careful consideration of these factors, has decided not to hold any review meeting at government level in the Secretariat during the third week of each month, she pointed out.

"This will not only make the administration people-friendly and responsive through redressal of pub-

Garg has advised all the secretaries not to schedule any meetings in the third week of the month beginning April 2023 in order to facilitate maximum field visits during the period.

**'Impact of tech must be assessed'**

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 5: The advent of smart technology has been revolutionising life on Earth, but its long-term impact on the essential elements of being humans has to be assessed, University Grants Commission (UGC) vice-chairman Deepak Kumar Srivastava said.

"Use of technology is enhancing the productivity of the human brain but the ability to think, act and analyse is being challenged by excessive use of technology," Srivastava said while delivering the Silver Jubilee Lecture at the Siksha 'O' Anusandhan (SOA) deemed to be university here Wednesday.

He said, "We need to set our technology in the background, learn how to detach from it and connect to it when necessary."

Referring to the latest innovations like ChatGPT, Srivastava said while such technology was useful it needed to be controlled with focus on human conscientiousness.

Srivastava said the policymakers and certain governments have been very serious about providing technology access to people of different age groups.

**5 Indian-origin executives among '100 Most Influential Women in US Finance'**



and portfolio manager of Ariel Investments' global equity strategies. She is a member of the board of directors of 100 Women in Finance. Bhansali believes that managing money is what she was born to do, and is passionate about encouraging women to work in finance. "It's about empowering women at every stage of their career," she was quoted as saying.

Desai made history in 2018 by becoming the first woman chief investment officer in Franklin Templeton global investment fund. The 58-year-old joined the firm in 2009 after working for the International Monetary Fund, Dresdner Kleinwort Wasserstein, and Thames River Capital. According to the release, she currently oversees USD 137 billion in assets.

Flynn, 45, is a co-head of global private wealth management at Goldman Sachs Group, whose career in finance began soon after a sports injury.

She joined JPMorgan Chase in 1999 and moved to Goldman Sachs the following year, becoming a partner in 2014. Today, Flynn wears several hats, including co-chairing the global inclusion and diversity committee.

"We are seeing more ultrahigh-net-worth female clients at the table, managing the family's wealth, being part of the decision making and making the money," Flynn was quoted as saying in the press release.

Subramanian, 50, the head of US equity and quantitative strategy at Bank of America, also made it to the list.

She is responsible for recommending US sector allocations for equities and determining forecasts for the S&P 500 and other major US indices.

"Barron's list reflects the varied career trajectories that have taken women to the top echelons of financially focused companies," the press release said.

Five Indian-origin women executives have made it to Barron's prestigious annual '100 Most Influential Women in US Finance' list for achieving positions of prominence in the financial services industry and helping shape its future.

Barron's is a sister publication of the Wall Street Journal, published by Dow Jones and Company.

"The list honours established and emerging leaders in financial services, the corporate world, non-profit organisations, and government," the magazine said in a press release.

Indian-origin Anu Aiyengar from JP Morgan, Ariel Investment's Rupal J Bhansali, Sonal Desai of Franklin Templeton, Goldman Sachs' Meena Flynn and Savita Subramanian from Bank of America are among the 100 women who were named in the fourth annual version of the prestigious list.

**The list honours established and emerging leaders in financial services, the corporate world, non-profit organisations, and government**

global head of Mergers and Acquisitions (M&A) at JP Morgan in January after serving as a co-head of the division since 2020.

According to the press release, she has long credited her love of number crunching, legal contracts, and building client relationships for bringing her to the mergers-and-acquisitions sphere.

"Aiyengar offers clients equal measures of expertise and steadiness when navigating challenging markets," it said.

Bhansali, 55, is the chief investment officer

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# OHRC orders probe into open air jail irregularities



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 5:** Odisha Human Rights Commission (OHRC) has passed an order directing the special secretary to government, Home Department of Odisha to make an enquiry into a petition claiming illegalities and irregularities committed at the Biju Patnaik Open Air Ashram Jail at Jamujhari in Khurda.

OHRC order reveals that it has received a petition from the Jailor of the open air Ashok Kumar Behera in which he has raised concerns over different illegalities and irregularities committed by Jail Superintendent, which has allegedly resulted in injustice to the inmates of the Jail. It has been specifically mentioned that the inmates are not provided food articles and other facilities to which they are entitled as per the government instructions.

practices to the notice of the Superintendent he had to face undue harassments through false complaints against him. It is stated by the petitioner that the matter previously faced an unfair enquiry from the jail authority. Some inmates were subjected to torture for their free opinion against the superintendent at the time of the enquiry. The petitioner now has expressed concerns over threat to his life. Considering the allegations made by Behara assisted by human rights activist Biswa priya Kanungo serious and urgent, the commission has directed the special secretary to make an enquiry and submit his report within a month. OHRC has also directed the Home department to ensure that the petitioner is not harassed by the Superintendent or any jail authority in any manner for this complaint made.

## NATIONAL MARITIME DAY

# Celebrate our glorious maritime history: CM

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 5:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Wednesday said Maritime transport is prime mover of trade & economic growth. Let's celebrate our glorious maritime history & reaffirm pledge to make Odisha one of the biggest hubs of coastal shipping through modern ports.



through modern ports." The state cabinet recently approved a new port policy which aims to facilitate private sector investments in maritime sector and the development of ports and port-related industries. Odisha, a principal maritime state situated on the eastern coast of India, has a

coastline of about 480 km extending from Bahuda Mouth in Ganjam district in the south to Bichitrapur (Talashari) in Balasore district in the north. It is endowed with conducive, unique, natural and strategic port locations. Every stretch of the coast is a variety of ecological niches and habitats.

## CLASSIFIED

### AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn-in before the Notary Public, Bhubaneswar, Dated 04.04.2023 I, Anshuman Thatoi, R/o. S-5/94, Niladri Vihar, Chandrasekharpur, Bhubaneswar, have changed my minor Son's name from SHREYANSHU BALIARSINGH to SHREANSH BALIAR THATOI. Henceforth, my son will be known as SHREANSH BALIAR THATOI for all purposes.

### LOST

By an affidavit before Executive Magistrate, Badamba, Cuttack, I, Urbashi Nayak, W/o Basanta Kumar Nayak of Vill/P.O.: Gadapokhari, P.S.: Badamba, Dist.: Cuttack declare that on the way from my resident to Badambagarh on dtd. 24.3.2023 I lost my original sale deed bearing No.664/1998, Khata No. 309/17, Plot No. 421, 404, 763, 427, 395, 426 & 421/2055. Hence I request anybody comes across these documents kindly contact me at: 9583290757.

Our Collection Executive Named Prasan Kumar Hota whose HDFC BANK ID CARD (CARD NO-220204769800326) has lost some where on dated 23.03.2023. If any kind of misuse, We will not responsible for this. (Sujoy Associates)

## Shanti Memorial Hosp observes foundation day

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, April 5:** Cuttack based Shanti Memorial Multispecialty hospital observed its 33rd foundation day at Saheed Bhavan, Cuttack recently. The programme was graced by Bhabani Shankar Chayani, Collector and District Magistrate as chief guest and Sita Kanta Dash, Chairman, Kalinga Hospitals, Bhubaneswar as guest of honour.

Addressing the audience and invitees, Chairman and Managing Director of the hospital, Sreejoy Patnaik briefed on how the last wish of his mother gave him impetus to become a doctor to serve needy patients and that dream. He narrated the journey of Shanti Hospital from a fourteen-bed tiny hospital to one hundred-bed multi-specialty hospital which today caters to all needs of patients under one roof.

## CONTINUED FROM P1

### 26K cr investment...

Patnaik also highlighted how Odisha is becoming the fulcrum of trade and commerce in the Bay of Bengal region and the measures the undertaken by his government to help industries looking to cater to the untapped markets in Eastern and North-Eastern India as well as markets in ASEAN and East Asia region.

"As we enter into a new era of industrialisation propelled by advancements in technology and a philosophy of sustainability, we require a collaborative effort between the governments, industries and people to ensure consistent growth," Patnaik told the investors.

ernment is focused on providing the best-in-class facilitation to all investors coming to Odisha. The chief minister requested all Japanese investors to visit Odisha and experience the change.

An MoU for collaboration in skill development sector was also signed between Nihon-Utkal (NITKAL) and IIT, Bhubaneswar. The event also enabled trade and technology transfer-discussions between the Odisha business delegation and their Japanese companies. During the day, the Chief Minister held one-to-one meetings with senior industrialists across sectors and discussed their plans for investments in India and presented the case for Odisha being the best investment destination for them.

## Advisory board, task force set up by IWA

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 5:** The International Water Association (IWA) has announced the establishment of an advisory board and task force for its inclusive urban sanitation initiative, to provide guidance, feedback and direction on the initiative's priorities, activities and performance. State Housing and Urban Development principal secretary G Mathi Vathanan was included as one of the advisors of the 11 member advisory board.

Vathanan said, "It is Team Odisha, Team Urban. All credit goes to the Chief Minister of Odisha." It is worth mentioning that Vathanan's approach of a decentralised strategy with community partnership has become a central aspect of the Odisha model of urban governance initiatives which have earned a number of national and international recognitions.



# Govt committed towards conservation of water: Min

Minister Sahu asked the newly-recruited geologists to explore their talents for identification of pockets having water scarcity in different blocks of the state



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 5:** The Department of Water Resources distributed appointment orders to newly-recruited 36 geologists in Ground Water Development Directorate, Odisha.

Water Resources, Commerce and Transport Minister Tukuni Sahu distributed appointment orders to the newly-recruited geologists in a programme organized by the DoWR at Gita Govinda Sadan Auditorium in Bhubaneswar.

(Ground Water Utility & Extraction Structure Survey), developed by GWD, Odisha under the National Hydrological Project.

The Minister released IEC materials under "CHHATA" (Community Harnessing & Harvesting rain water Artificially from Terrace to Aquifer) scheme. She also flagged off a publicity van on "CHHATA" scheme for awareness of the public to adopt Rooftop Rain water Harvesting System (RRHS).

Addressing the newly-recruited geologists, Sahu said, "Water is precious. Keeping in view the re-

quirement of water for our daily consumption, agriculture, industrial and other needs, the state government has committed towards conservation of water and related projects."

She added that under the leadership of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, DoWR has adopted 5-T principles for effective service delivery through transformation. Newly recruited geologists can explore their ideas and talents for identification of pockets having water scarcity in different blocks of the state so as to formulate policies for the future generation.



**RIGHT TO EDUCATION:** School children holding placards in support of education during an Enrollment Campaign organised by ActionAid Association at Niladri Vihar in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday

# Gut microbes linked to attention disorder in kids: Study

The microbial composition of the gut may affect a child's susceptibility to attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), according to a study. ADHD is one of the most common neurodevelopmental disorders of childhood. Children with ADHD may have trouble paying attention, controlling impulsive behaviours (may act without thinking about what the result will be), or be overly active.

of researchers from Taiwan compared faecal samples from 35 children with ADHD and 35 healthy controls. The human gastrointestinal tract hosts a large population of microorganisms such as bacteria, viruses and fungi. The results published in the Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry showed that samples from children with ADHD had higher levels of certain species of fungi and lower levels of other species.



complex and diverse microbial ecosystem, and findings from this study suggest that dysbiosis of the fungal mycobiome in ADHD can

Children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) may have trouble paying attention, controlling impulsive behaviours or be overly active. The results published in the Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry showed that samples from children with ADHD had higher levels of certain species of fungi

influence patient health," said the team including Lian-Jen Wang, child psychiatrist at Kaohsiung Chang Gung Memorial Hospital, Taiwan. Dysbiosis is often defined as an "imbalance" in the gut microbial community that is associated with disease. In experiments with cells grown in the lab, one species in abundance in samples from children with ADHD-called Candida albicans-increased the permeability of cells that line the intestine. This could create a "leaky gut"

that allows bacteria into the bloodstream, possibly resulting in inflammation throughout the body and brain. The study also showed that abundance of Candida was found much higher among males with ADHD than without the disorder. No such differences were observed among females with and without ADHD. "As ADHD is a male predominant disease, whether microbiome dysbiosis is involved in sex specific manifestation of ADHD warrants further investigations," the authors noted.

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# Denied pay, migrant workers hitch-hike 1,000 km in 7 days

The trio was part of a 12-member group of migrant workers who had travelled to the southern city two months ago with the help of middlemen in search of jobs



**BANGALORE TO KORAPUT ON FOOT**

**Koraput, April 5:** In a near rerun of the dark days of Covid lockdown, three destitute migrant workers from Odisha walked and hitch-hiked over 1,000 km to Koraput on their way home to Kalahandi from Bangalore in seven days. They reached their homes Sunday, their pockets empty and holding on only to their water bottles, with tales of struggle, hardships, exploitation and gestures of help from unknown people during the long journey. The trio - Budu Majhi, Katar Majhi and Bhikari Majhi from Tingalkan village of Kalahandi district had undertaken the arduous journey after being denied their wages by their employer in far away Bangalore. They had exhausted their meagre savings and

had no food or money left. On reaching Koraput, they told locals at Padalguda in Potangi block that they had started their journey March 26 and walked even at night over the seven days. At some places they managed to get lifts. Many people, touched by their ordeal came forward spontaneously and helped them. A shopkeeper offered them food, while the president of Potangi unit of Odisha Motorists Association, Bhagwan Padal gave them ₹1,500 and arranged for their transport to Nabarangpur, which is on way to Kalahandi. The three men were part of a 12-member group of migrant workers who had travelled to the southern city two months ago with the help of middlemen in search of jobs. They found work after reaching Bangalore but their employer allegedly denied them wages even

though they worked for two months. When they asked for their pay they were thrashed, the trio said. "We had gone to Bangalore with the hope of earning money to support our families. But instead of paying our pending dues the company staff beat us whenever we asked for it. Unable to bear the torture any further, we left the place," Bhikari Majhi told PTI. "The condition of the three migrant workers was pathetic when they reached Koraput by foot from Bangalore. We offered them food, collected some money and sent them home with the help of a few people," Padal told PTI. Congress lawmaker Santosh Singh Saluja, who hails from the backward KKB (Koraput-Bolangir-Kalahandi) said the incident was reflective of the condition of migrant workers from the region. Training his guns at the Naveen Patnaik government in Odisha, he said it has failed the people even after being in power for 23 years. Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee president Sarat Patnaik told PTI that the government is spending crores to finance the travels of bureaucrats and politicians to Japan in the name of bringing in investment instead of bothering about poor people. The chief minister is on a tour to Japan. Odisha Labour Minister Srikant Sahu and labour commissioner N Thirumala Naik did not respond to repeated calls or messages from PTI on the issue.



**COMMUNITY WORK:** Members of Maa Metakani Youth Association cleaning a village pond by removing weed at Mahulpali village under Bheden block in Baragrh district, Wednesday

## Fake job racket busted in Balasore; 5 held

**Balasore, April 5:** The Odisha Police busted a racket that was allegedly involved in making money by offering fake jobs in the government and private sectors to people, a senior officer said here. "Five people, including two from Balasore, have been arrested in this connection," he said Tuesday. The mastermind of the gang used to contact government job aspirants and those who are seeking

opportunities in the private sector, and collect money by offering fake appointments to them in various organisations, the officer said. Some mediators were involved to disseminate information about job opportunities among aspirants, and fake job interviews were also conducted, police said. "A preliminary investigation finds that the gang leader has duped job seekers of nearly ₹1 crore," Balasore Superintendent of Police Sagarika Nath said.

A search operation was conducted in the residence of one of the accused, and fake appointment letters, application forms of various companies of repute, gold ornaments worth ₹10.50 lakh, ₹3.09 lakh in cash, bank account and deposits of ₹28 lakh and property worth ₹80 lakh were unearthed, police said. Two police teams have been sent to various parts of South India to ascertain further links to the racket, the officer added.

## Woman employee stabbed to death on office premises

**Deogarh, April 5:** A woman working for a finance company was allegedly bludgeoned to death on her office premises Tuesday night in Pradhanpat area of Deogarh district. The deceased has been identified as Rita Sahu, an employee at SKS Finance. She hailed from Kuchinda in Sambalpur district. Around 11pm, when Rita was leaving her office, she was reportedly attacked by two people using a wooden plank and a knife, said a source. Before fleeing the scene, the miscreants repeatedly hit Sahu with a wooden log and stabbed her with the knife. As soon as other employees of the company heard her screams, they rushed to save her. Sahu, who was heavily bleeding, was taken right away to the Deogarh DHH, where a doctor pronounced her dead. Police arrived on the scene and took the body away for an autopsy. An investigation has been started.

## Man hacks sister-in-law to death over land feud

**Jajpur, April 5:** A man allegedly hacked his sister-in-law to death over a land dispute in Jajpur district Wednesday, police said. The incident took place in Kapatikiri village in Bairee Police Station area. A heated argument ensued between Anita Nayak and accused Jayanta Nayak over the dispute when she was cleaning the courtyard of her house in the morning, a police officer said. Angered by the argument, the accused dragged Anita to his house

## 2 dead as trailer rams into truck

**Jajpur, April 5:** At least two persons were killed after a trailer truck rammed into a stationary truck in Jajpur district Wednesday, police said. The accident took place on National Highway-16 near Balukhai village in Dharmasala Police Station area early during the day. The driver of the trailer truck and the helper of the stationary truck were killed in the accident. The truck, laden with iron rods, was parked on the roadside after its tyre got punctured Tuesday night. The trailer truck hit it from behind around 5am Wednesday. The impact of the collision was such that the cabin of the trailer truck caught fire and the driver was burnt to death on the spot. The stationary truck's helper, who was fixing the wheel, was injured in the accident and he was taken to a medical establishment, where he succumbed to his injuries, Dharmasala Police Station inspector-in-charge PK Tripathy said.

## 'Son rise' on cards in 3 Ganjam seats

**3 SITTING MLAS PLANNING TO GIVE UP THEIR SEATS TO CLEAR THE WAY FOR THEIR SONS**

**Berhampur, April 5:** With the Assembly elections in Odisha slated for next year, the ruling BJD and the opposition BJP and Congress are gearing up in full swing to achieve favourable results. The 13 Assembly constituencies in Ganjam district will see a three-way tussle between the BJD, BJP and Congress. Speculation is also rife that Ganjam will see the 'son rise in some of these Assembly constituencies' as some of the lawmakers are planning to retire and nominate their sons.



the other hand is concentrating on zonal and booth level programmes to reach out to the people. Sources said Tuesday, that Digapahandi MLA Surya Narayan Patra is all set to vacate his seat for heir apparent Biplab in the upcoming Assembly polls. The former Speaker of the Odisha Assembly and a seven-time legislator, Patra is contemplating retirement from politics due to ill health. It has also prevented him from visiting his constituency for a long time. Meanwhile it is clear that the mantle has been passed on to Biplab who is visiting the constituency on a regular basis. Patra loyalists are hopeful that Biplab will succeed him. However, a twist to the tale has been added by former Digapahandi block chairperson Bipin Pradhan. He is also an aspirant to contest from the same seat for the upcoming

elections. It is clear that both Biplab and Bipin are not ready to concede an inch to one another. Sources said that another senior BJD leader is also planning to throw in his hat in case Patra formally announces his retirement from active politics. Odisha Urban Development Minister Usha Devi, who is an MLA from the Chikiti Assembly segment, is also planning to give up her seat for son Chinmayananda Swroop Dev. The six-time MLA and two-time Odisha minister has already expressed her desire to retire from politics and project her son in her place. Chinmayananda has been very active in the recent past as he is reaching out to the voters. Speculation is also rife that Aska MLA Manjula Swain's son Nachiketa is set to contest on a BJD ticket. Nachiketa is active in Biju Yuva Janata Dal (BYJD) and is also the president of party's zonal unit. Manjula is also keen that Nachiketa contests from Aska. In the end however, what matters is the decision of party supremo Naveen Patnaik. If only he gives the go ahead, there may be 'son rise' in the three Assembly segments of Ganjam district.

## In a first, CNG-laden cargo ship anchors at Dhamra port

Cooking stopped for five days in villages near the port

**Chandbali, April 5:** In a first, a large cargo ship carrying compressed natural gas (CNG) from Kolkata has anchored at the Adani group-owned Dhamra port here in Bhadrak district, Monday. The ship named 'Milahi Ras Lafan' carrying 26 million tonne of natural frozen gas has arrived at the port. After arrival of the ship, the port authorities have beefed up security arrangements in and around the port along with a ban on cooking in nearby villages for five days. The ship loaded with 1,35,000 cubic metre of gas left Kolkata March 21 and reached at Dhamra port, April 2. The consignment has been booked by the state-owned Gas Authority of India Ltd (GAIL) and Indian Oil Corporation



Ltd (IOCL). The gas after its arrival will be refined by these two companies and re-supplied through gas pipelines to steel and fertiliser plants in the country. The local residents have been asked not to light their stoves or chullahs to cook food as the company has made arrangements to provide cooked food to the people during the period. The Adani group and a French firm have jointly built a terminal in the port

at an expense of ₹6 crore. The CNG in the ship can be used as a fuel in the fertiliser plant and can be converted into natural gas and cooking gas. The Adani group owned port plans to bring 5 million tonne of gas through this terminal annually and supply them to various establishments in eastern India. The gas terminal will first work on 2.2 million tonne to 2.3 million tonne capacity and later it will be expanded to 5 million tonne.

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- Do not ever force a three-prong plug into a two-receptacle socket.
- Know where fuse boxes and circuit breakers of your home/office/ work place are located as well as how to operate them properly.
- Never attempt electrical repairs or rewiring without proper knowledge and experience.
- Do not put water on an electrical fire; use a dry fire extinguisher.








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## New Asian Order

By building up the notion of the Indo-Pacific as a critical region, Abe Shinzō, the late Japanese prime minister, created a strategic framework that presaged the geopolitical and economic integration now taking place across Asia and parts of Africa. As South Asian and Middle Eastern countries merge into West Asia, a new continental order could reshape the global balance of power.

During his first visit to India as prime minister, in August 2007, Abe delivered his seminal "Confluence of the Two Seas" speech to the Indian Parliament. Abe drew his speech title from a book written by the Mughal prince Dara Shikoh in 1655, which explored the commonalities between Islam and Hinduism as neighbouring religious and civilisational constructs. The Pacific and Indian Oceans also share many commonalities, Abe noted. The "dynamic coupling" of these "seas of freedom and of prosperity" would transform not only the Indo-Pacific region but also "broader Asia."

But Abe, who was assassinated last July, had more than just maritime metaphors in mind. His overarching goal was to build the most consequential bilateral relationship in the Indo-Pacific—India and Japan. As one of the first Asian leaders to recognise the global and regional impact of China's rise, Abe went on a one-man crusade to create a viable new balance of power. By expanding the geopolitical dimensions of the Asia-Pacific region and pushing it westward toward the Indian Ocean, he helped shift the region's strategic profile.

Abe's 2007 speech highlighted the intellectual vacuum in Washington at the time. While the United States was at the height of its ill-fated "war on terror" and mired in two protracted, costly wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, Abe sought to redefine the Indo-Pacific on Japan's terms, as a rival to the China-centric "community of common destiny."

For Abe and his successors, fostering cooperation across the Eurasian and African rimlands through extensive networks of defense and trade ties was the key to realising the vision of a broader Asia. In placing the Indo-Pacific at the heart of this vision, they drew on the insights of the nineteenth-century American admiral Alfred Mahan and the British naval historian Julian Corbett.

Mahan and Corbett, the pioneers of modern naval strategy, viewed sea power as an essential source of national strength. The twentieth-century political scientist Nicholas Spykman emphasised the strategic centrality of the Eurasian rimland, in contrast to Halford Mackinder's insistence on the centrality of the Eurasian heartland. Together, Mahan and Corbett's writings on sea power and Spykman's maritime-based approach to geopolitics provided the intellectual foundations for Abe's broader Asia.

Today, the clearest manifestation of Abe's Indo-Pacific strategy is the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, better known as the Quad, which began as a humanitarian initiative when the US, Australia, India, and Japan formed a joint relief operation following the deadly tsunami that devastated Indonesia in 2004. After his re-election in 2017, Abe repurposed it as a vehicle for his geopolitical vision.

But the Quad was only the beginning. It has been followed by a series of "mini-lateral" institutions, including the AUKUS defence pact between Australia, the US, and the United Kingdom; the US-Australia-Japan Trilateral Strategic Dialogue; trilateral cooperation between Australia, Indonesia, and India; and a joint Italy-Japan-UK fighter jet project. These initiatives, all of which aim to boost security and stability across the Indo-Pacific, reflect the region's ongoing transformation into a "geography of strategies."

After the Iraq War and Arab Spring pushed Arab states to diversify their alliances and partnerships and decrease their reliance on the US, Asian countries such as China, Japan, India, Indonesia, and South Korea rushed to fill the vacuum. The United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, for example, are India's third- and fourth-largest trade partners, respectively. Japan has become a trusted regional leader in technology, clean energy, and space exploration. And South Korea is now a major supplier of technology and arms to the Gulf states and Egypt. Deepening defence and trade ties, together with the Gulf states' growing clout, have accelerated the Middle East's integration into the Asian economic sphere.

While Abe sought to offset China's rising power by redefining the Asia-Pacific region, strategists and intellectuals (including me) have been trying to establish regional balance of power by expanding the geopolitical definition of the Middle East to include India and other South Asian countries. The Abraham Accords between Israel, the UAE, and Bahrain, the Negev Forum, the I2U2, and the France-UAE-India trilateral framework all point to a fledgling Indo-Abrahamic alliance between India, Israel, and the Arab states.

The introduction of India into the Middle East's political and economic domain is an extension of the geostrategic model Abe championed in his "Confluence of the Two Seas" speech. With India as the link between the Indo-Pacific and the Indo-Abrahamic countries of West Asia, a continental Asian order is beginning to take shape.

*The writer, a global strategy adviser at McLarty Associates, is Director of the Strategic Technologies and Cyber Security Programme at the Middle East Institute.*

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### WISDOM CORNER

Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage. LAO TZU

Keep your face always toward the sunshine - and shadows will fall behind you. WALT WHITMAN

When you want something, all the universe conspires in helping you to achieve it. PAULO COELHO

### WORDSWORTH

#### Haberdasher

In Britain and Australia, a haberdasher is a dealer in dressmaking and sewing goods; in North America, he's a dealer in men's clothing. One of the American dictionaries, in making clear the ways in which this word is used in different places, uses two words that sound mildly odd in Britain. In the USA, it says, a haberdasher sells men's furnishings (such as shirts, ties, gloves, socks, and hats); in the UK, he or she sells small wares and notions (such as buttons, needles, ribbons, and thread). This substantial divergence in sense reflects the muddled history of this odd-looking word, which in origin has nothing whatever to do with anybody dashing anywhere. It may come from an Anglo-Norman French word hapertas, which may have been a type of fabric. But nothing other than these vague suppositions is known about its origin. It went through lots of variant spellings before it settled down to the modern form around the middle of the sixteenth century. Its meaning down the centuries has been as diverse as its origin is mysterious. When it appeared, in the thirteenth century, it meant a trader in a range of goods. According to early chroniclers, these included: "glasses, daggers, swerdes [swords]", "mousetrappes, bird cages, shoohng horns, lanthorns, and Jew's trumpes [Jew's harps]", and "bookes, pictures, beades, crucifixes" — what we would now think of as the stock of an eclectic general store.



Anwesh Satpathy

**IDEOLOGICAL VOTERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO MAKE THEIR DECISION THAN NON-IDEOLOGICAL ONES MOTIVATED BY CAMPAIGN PROMISES**



Mohammed Soliman

**With India as the link between the Indo-Pacific and the Indo-Abrahamic countries of West Asia, a continental Asian order is beginning to take shape**

### SPECTRUM ECONOMY

## Demand & job creation vital

As we enter the new fiscal, the economic situation in the country is projected to be far from satisfactory. While inflation is not under control, especially food prices on which people from the lower echelons of society depend for their survival, unseasonal rains and the forecast of scanty rainfall and heatwaves in several parts of the country has added to the misery. The global economic situation has also adversely impacted the Indian scenario.



Dhurjati Mukherjee

**WHILE THE ECONOMY GRAPPLES WITH HIGH FOOD INFLATION, POTENTIALLY ADVERSE CLIMATIC CONDITIONS ARE POSING A THREAT TO INDIA'S FARM OUTPUT**

While the possible appearance of an El Nino this year does not bode well for monsoon rains in the country, which have implications for the kharif output, there are several other factors that determine the quantum of rainfall during the June-September season such as conditions in the Indian Ocean, the Eurasian snow cover, intra-seasonal variations.

While the economy grapples with high food inflation, potentially adverse climatic conditions are posing a threat to India's agricultural output. The other disturbing trend is that government expenditure has picked up a little, but the absolute sum does not match the pre-pandemic quarter (October-December 2019), indicating that the impetus from public capex was

### FOCUS NATION

## VOTERS & IDEOLOGY

The question of ideology in Indian politics has been debated and dismissed for a long time. Writing for the New York Times, the American political pundit Anand Giridharadas dismisses Indian elections as one being without "ideology, larger-than-life leaders, causes or principles." The flaw in the first part of Giridharadas' argument is instantly recognisable to anyone with even a rudimentary awareness of Indian politics. The popularity of leaders like J Jayalalithaa, MG Ramachandran, NT Rama Rao and arguably even Jawaharlal Nehru has been at least in part due to their perception of being larger-than-life personalities. The question of ideology, on the other hand, is much more complex.



**The Indian electorate has rarely been ideologically devoid. On the contrary, the majority of India's crucial political events can be traced to stable existing ideological divisions**

India has witnessed unlikely coalitions among the socialists and the Hindu nationalists during the emergency to rout Indira Gandhi in the immediate aftermath of Emergency. Similarly, the Communist Party of India (CPI) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) both provided outside support to the National Front government under VP Singh. In recent years, the unlikely alliance between the Congress and the Hindu nationalist Shiv Sena in Maharashtra further bolsters the argument for the irrelevancy of ideology in Indian politics.

These factors, however, cannot be taken as clinching proof of the non-ideological nature of Indian politics. There have always been individuals in Indian political parties who haven't necessarily adhered to the broader political ideology of their own party. The socialist leader George Fernandes is a notable example. This is not unique to Indian politics. Within the socially conservative Republican Party in the United States, there have been factions like the Log Cabin Republicans who have stood up for LGBT rights. This does not change the fact that the Republican Party has historically largely adhered to socially conservative policies.

The political scientists Rahul Verma and Pradeep Chibber identify two primary ideological divi-

sions that have remained stable i.e. the politics of recognition and the politics of statism. Politics of recognition refers to whether everyone should be treated equally in the eyes of the state or whether some communities deserve preferential status as a reservation due to their backward social or economic status. Politics of statism, on the other hand, concerns whether the state should intervene in redistributing private property and regulating economic activity.

On both these spectrums, ideological adherence has remained stable in the Indian political arena historically. This can be glimpsed through multiple surveys conducted over the years. According to a 1971 survey, political activists belonging to the Congress, Left parties, socialists and regional parties were more likely to support statism (greater control of industries and bank nationalisation) than the political activists of Jana Sangh and the Swatantra Party. The findings remained fairly constant in a 1993 survey. While BJP political activists were less likely to advocate for state control in matters of religion and caste, Congress activists appeared to be situated firmly in the centre. Moreover, 59% of BJP activists were more likely to pray, go to temples and attend religious ceremonies while only 20% were similarly in-

clined in other political parties. These findings seem to be in conflict with the popular perception that political leaders switch parties with relative ease. Using state assembly elections database between 1987 and 2007, Francesca Jensenius and Pavithra Suryanarayan have found that there is considerable instability in candidates running for re-election. Nevertheless, while political candidates do run for re-election from other parties, they rarely cross ideological lines. Among the 2,643 BJP MLAs in the dataset, 72% ran for BJP while very few ran from Congress and other regional parties. Of the 1531 MLAs from the Communist Party, very few ran from regional parties while no one ran from BJP and only 4 ran from Congress. Indian voters show remarkable ideological consistency as well. Ideological voters are more likely to make their decision than non-ideological ones motivated by campaign promises.

The majority of Indian voters make their decision before the campaign even begins. The proportion of late voters has been steadily and consistently declining in each successive election. In the immediate aftermath of Independence, the Congress party under Nehru managed to accommodate elements on both the Left

and Right side of the statist economic spectrum. The state managed to equate developmental, social progress and equal treatment with greater intervention and regulation. While the state abolished the Zamindari system, it did not redistribute property. Its control of production of goods provided monopolies to a select few industrialists.

Its statist politics were further continued by Indira Gandhi who sought to, at least rhetorically, eradicate poverty. The inability of the Congress to accommodate recognition as the calls of the backward classes grew proved to be a fatal error. While the Hindu nationalists drifted away to the BJP due to its increasing statism, socialist leaders like Karpoori Thakur mobilised the masses for recognition of backward classes. The social coalition of the Congress suffered as the Babri Masjid movement led its Right wing voter base towards the BJP while "the silent revolution" among OBCs ensured its backward class voters drifted to vocal regional parties.

In the aftermath of multiple corruption scandals and inefficiency, the middle class opposing the politics of statism took to streets in the 2011 anti-corruption movement. In contrast, the BJP projected Narendra Modi as a pro-business advocate and efficient administrator. The BJP's electoral success, while partly a result of polarisation, is largely a consequence of its success in uniting anti-statist middle class voters and its Hindu nationalist core base opposing the politics of recognition. Chibber and Verma term this as the "fourth party system."

The Indian electorate has rarely been ideologically devoid. On the contrary, the majority of India's crucial political events can be traced to stable existing ideological divisions. In order to pose a real challenge to the BJP, political parties need to take a clear and explicit position on the politics of statism as well as the politics of recognition.

*The author is a writer and student at the Jindal School of International Affairs.*

needs to be reiterated that defence or aerospace expenditure or the wealth of the top richest persons or the increase in the number of billionaires hardly matters as the struggling masses have to be brought into the mainstream of life and activity. It may be necessary at this juncture to take certain steps which include improving the supply chain to control inflation. India needs sector-specific targeted efforts to manage supply, and therefore, inflation.

Secondly, there is need to incentivise the services sector for job creation. The government's focus has rightly been on sectors such as infrastructure, construction, and manufacturing that create jobs for workers across all skills. As the services sector has huge potential, be it in retail, trade, or information technology, schemes such as Product Liked Incentive would go a long way in promoting manufacturing and sunrise sectors.

Thirdly, there is need to find new sources of revenue. The government will have to support growth by boosting spending to cushion the impact of global exigencies as well as the global economic slowdown. As the challenge would be to raise resources for the expenses it incurs, it would be advisable if the

super-rich is imposed a cess for a year or two on infrastructure. Though tax revenues have been quite strong, the government will have to monetise assets so that it can front-load its expenses in 2023-24.

Finally, India must be prepared to bounce back when the global economy recovers though this is easier said than accomplished. The government needs to focus on completing ongoing infrastructure projects and boosting sectors with strong linkages and multiplier effects. While progress in several infrastructure projects has been somewhat good, highway networks are yet to gain momentum and progress in power and energy has been modest.

As has been repeatedly emphasised repeatedly, the GDP growth rate cannot be an index of the prosperity of the lower segments of society. Thus, there should be a general increase in demand, the rise in per capita incomes of organised and unorganised sector workers and exploring possibilities of employment generation that should help in reviving demand and take the economy forward.

*The writer is Sr. Consultant & Guest Faculty at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Kolkata.* @INFA

#### Maritime capability

Sir, It is enigmatic that India is yet to fully realise its maritime potential although every April 5 is observed as the National Maritime Day to defend, shield and preserve India's maritime zone. For a country with a long coastline of over 7,500 km, this only reflects a lack of political will. Maritime development can act as an engine of growth and development and boost the country's economic growth. The "waterways trade" or the inland waterway can supplement, or even ease, the road and rail trade load. The government's plan of doubling the port capacity by 2025 is equally ambitious. There should also be important infrastructural changes at seaports. Ports should be able to embrace larger ships and must be in a position to host fresh terminals for vessel occupancy. If the seaport capacity is enhanced, necessary changes will follow. Prudent utilisation of funds and effective implementation of decisions will go a long way.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

#### Financial literacy

Sir, It is widely acknowledged that financial literacy is a critical aspect of achieving financial inclusion in India, as a large segment of the population lacks basic financial knowledge. Poor financial education leads to inadequate financial decision-making and a lack of trust in financial institutions, hindering financial inclusion. India's financial literacy rate is only 24%, compared to the global average of 35%, while developed countries like the US and Canada have rates of 57% and 68%, respectively. To bridge the gap in financial literacy between India and other countries, financial education needs to be integrated into India's education system, providing young people with the knowledge and skills to develop good money habits early in life. Although India is home to 20% of the world's population, only 76% of its adult population is familiar with basic financial concepts. Shockingly, only 5.5% of schools in India offer financial education courses. The government has established the National Centre for Financial Education to promote financial literacy. Private sector companies, including banks and financial institutions, have also launched financial literacy programmes that provide workshops, seminars, and online courses to educate people about budgeting, saving, investing, and credit management. The pandemic further highlighted the significance of financial literacy as people were forced to manage their finances all by themselves.

Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

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

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



# national



Uddhav Thackeray had tried to give contracts to kill me. Uddhav tried to give 'supari' (contract) to many people to kill me, but none of them could ever touch me. Some of them even warned me that they were being contacted for such supari

NARAYAN RANE | UNION MINISTER

## BOOSTING TIES

India and Japan Wednesday agreed to diversify their defence cooperation in new and emerging domains like space and cyber as part of an aim to consolidate the overall strategic engagement



## of the day quote

Opposition unity is not important, people's unity is important

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | AAP CHIEF



We may be in power or not, peace and social harmony will remain in Bihar. They had freaked out after the massive rally of Patna. The people of Bihar are smart and they understand it very well

TEJASHWI YADAV | BIHAR'S DEPUTY CM



My target is to ensure that the youth of Punjab are not branded as aimless. I want you to be your own role model, therefore, no one else can take advantage of your abilities and potential

BHAGWANT MANN | PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER



## PREZ PRESENTS PADMA AWARDS



President Droupadi Murmu confers Padma Shri on music composer M M Keeravani

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 5: Veteran socialist leader and former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Late Mulayam Singh Yadav, and medical professional Dilip Mahalanabis, known globally for his work on Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS), were among those conferred the Padma Vibhushan award by President Droupadi Murmu Wednesday.

Author and philanthropist Sudha Murty, physicist Deepak Dhar, who is known for long-standing research career in statistical physics, novelist S L Bhyrappa, noted playback singer Vani Jairam and Vedic scholar Tridandi Chinna Jeeyar Swamiji were given the Padma Bhushan at a function held at the Rashtrapati Bhavan here. Murty's daughter Akshata, who is the wife of British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, was seen sitting in the front row next to External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, along with other dignitaries at the majestic Durbar Hall of the Rashtrapati Bhavan. Yadav, who was also India's defence minister and long-time parliamentarian, Mahalanabis, who returned from the US to serve in the 1971 Bangladesh war refugee camps, and Jairam were given the honour posthumously.

Yadav's son and former Uttar Pradesh chief minister Akhilesh Yadav, who came wearing the Samajwadi Party's trademark red

cap, received the award on his behalf, while Mahalanabis' award was received by his nephew Susham Gupta and Jairam's award was received by sister Uma Mani.

Sudha Murty's husband and Infosys co-founder N R Narayana Murthy was sitting among other guests and family members.

Music director M M Keeravani, who recently bagged India's first Oscar for an original song for the 'RRR' song 'Naatu Naatu', and Bollywood actor Raveena Tandon were among those who received the Padma Shri. Keeravani received the loudest applause at the event. In their traditional dress and headgear, Ramesh Parmar and Shanti Parmar of Madhya Pradesh who make dolls using recycled cloth got emotional as they touched Prime Minister Modi's feet. Gujarati folk artiste Paresh Rathwa was also overwhelmed with emotions as he greeted the prime minister by touching his feet.

At least six awardees, including veteran Bidri craft artist from Karnataka Shah Rashed Ahmed Quadri, traditional artist from Maharashtra Parshuram Komaji Khune and Ramkuiwangbe Jeme Newme, a social worker from Assam, shook hands with Modi.

The President came forward a few steps to confer the award on educationist from Odisha Antaryami Mishra and Delhi-based doctor Ishwar Chander Verma, both of whom are wheelchair-bound.

# Cong slams Scindia, Azad

The Opposition party's attack on the two leaders came after they criticised it and its leadership separately in the media

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 5: The Congress Wednesday lashed out at its former members Ghulam Nabi Azad and Jyotiraditya Scindia, saying they have been huge beneficiaries of the party's system but with every passing day they give powerful evidence that this generosity to them was "undeserved" as they reveal their "true character".

Scindia, a Union minister and a BJP leader, launched a sharp attack on Rahul Gandhi and the Congress, alleging that the party has been left with no ideology except the one of a "traitor" which works against the country Ahead of the launch of his autobiography, Azad has been giving a series of interviews, slamming the Congress leadership and the party.

In an interview with PTI, Azad said he believes the Congress is still run by "remote control" and alleges that a "new coterie of inexperienced sycophants" manage its affairs.



Reacting to the scathing criticism by the two former Congress leaders, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said on Twitter, "Both Ghulam Nabi Azad and Jyotiraditya Scindia have been huge beneficiaries of the Congress system and its leadership."

Talking to reporters at the AICC headquarters, Congress' media department head Pawan Khera slammed Azad, saying he is following the ideology which he had opposed for 50 years.

The party that gave him so much, he is now cursing that very party, Khera said of Azad. "If a leader

who spent 50 years in the party and still betrayed it, how will the party trust workers like us...He (Azad) has been asserting for the last two days that he is now Azaad (free), but he has actually become 'ghulam (slave)'," the Congress leader said. Ahead of the release of his book 'Azaad - An Autobiography' the former Congress stalwart, who quit the party last year, said Rahul Gandhi might not be holding any post as of now but everyone knows that he is the "captain of the ship (Congress)" and everybody knows who is calling the shots". "The remote-control model that destroyed the institu-

tion integrity of the party to the manner in which proxies were being propped up to take over the leadership of the party, it was a no-holds-barred account of how the grand old party had lost both the will and the ability to fight for what is right for India", the Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) chief said. Earlier in the day, the Congress also hit back at Union minister Scindia for his scathing criticism of Rahul Gandhi, and said Prime Minister Narendra Modi should "beware" of a man who did not stay loyal to his former party and will also "not be loyal" to him.

The BJP leader attacked the Congress for according Gandhi a "special treatment" following his conviction in a defamation case and accused the party of pressuring the judiciary, and doing everything possible to stay relevant.

## SHORT TAKES

### Deepak Boxer sent to 8-day police custody

New Delhi: A Delhi court Wednesday granted eight days custody of gangster Deepak Boxer, to Delhi Police's Special Cell. The gangster was produced before the Patiala House Courts, directly from the lockup due to security reasons. A five-member team of Delhi Police Special Cell had landed with the gangster at the IGI airport Wednesday morning. The Delhi Police, with the assistance of the FBI, had apprehended wanted gangster Deepak Boxer in Mexico.

### Z+ security cover to Apni Party chief

New Delhi: The Union government has sanctioned Z+ category VIP security cover to Jammu and Kashmir politician and Apni Party president Altaf Bukhari, sources said Wednesday. The Union home ministry has accorded the cover of armed commandos that will be jointly provided by the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and the Jammu and Kashmir Police, they said. Z+ security is the highest level of security in India.

### Actor Sudeep backs Bommai

Bangalore: Leading Kannada film actor Sudeep Sanjeev, popularly known as Kichcha Sudeep, on Wednesday announced his support to Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai in poll-bound Karnataka, giving "star power" to the ruling BJP's campaign for the May 10 Assembly elections. Bommai said Sudeep supporting him means the actor would campaign for the BJP.

## HANUMAN JAYANTI

# MHA asks states, UTs to ensure law & order

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 5: Central Armed Police Forces have been deployed in West Bengal to assist the state police during Hanuman Jayanti, announced the Union home ministry, which on Wednesday also asked all states to ensure law and order during the festival in the wake of communal violence in Bengal and Bihar during Ram Navami.

Hanuman Jayanti will be observed Thursday.

Earlier, the ministry sent an advisory to states and Union territories aiming at sensitising law enforcement agencies following communal violence last week.

Clashes and instances of fire-bombing were reported from Hooghly and Howrah districts of West Bengal over Ram Navami

processions, including Monday night. Several vehicles were also torched and shops ransacked in Howrah. Clashes were reported in West Bengal's Rishra Sunday during a Ram Navami procession in which BJP national vice president Dilip Ghosh and party's Pursurah MLA Biman Ghosh were present. The MLA was injured and hospitalised. Parts of nearby Serampore also witnessed incidents of vandalism following which prohibitory orders were imposed and Internet services suspended.

The violence led West Bengal Governor C V Ananda Bose to visit some of the violence-hit areas after Union Home Minister Amit Shah spoke to him.

On Tuesday, the Union home ministry also sought a detailed report from the West Bengal gov-

ernment on the communal violence. Communal violence took place in Bihar's Sasaram and Biharsharif towns too on and after Ram Navami following which over 170 people were arrested.

Vehicles, houses and shops were torched and several people were injured in communal flare-ups reported in both towns March 30 and 31. Home Minister Shah expressed concern over the incidents and spoke to Bihar Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar to take stock of the situation. The home ministry also sent additional paramilitary forces to Bihar to assist the state administration in handling the situation.

Shah had cancelled his proposed tour of Sasaram on April 2 after prohibitory orders were put in place in the town.

## Ready to contest against Shinde in Thane: Aaditya

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thane, April 5: Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aaditya Thackeray Wednesday slammed the Maharashtra government saying that "Mughal rule" was prevailing in the state, and declared that he would contest the next Assembly election from Thane, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's bastion.

He was speaking at a rally organised by the Shiv Sena (UBT), Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and Congress - which comprises the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi

Thackeray, a former state minister. The word is 'Mogali' is often used to denote tyranny in Marathi. "There is no Chief Minister of Maharashtra, whoever there is, he is the Chief Minister of Guwahati and Gujarat," he said in a jibe at Shinde, who had taken his flock of Shiv Sena MLAs first to Surat and later to Guwahati after rebelling against Uddhav Thackeray's leadership last June. Saying that the Shinde government would not last long, Aaditya said once it falls, everyone including "traitor" leaders and officials who

have misused their positions will face consequences. "I would contest from Thane and win," said Aaditya, who had won the 2019

Assembly election from Worli in south Mumbai. Chief Minister Shinde, notably, represents the Kopri Pachphakadi constituency in Thane city. A woman worker of the Shiv Sena (UBT) was assaulted, but instead of booking the assailants, the police in Thane registered FIRs against her for alleged defamation, Thackeray said.



MATTER OF FAITH: Devotees with their mouths pierced with iron rods participate in a religious procession to celebrate 'Panguni Uthiram' in Chikmagalur, Karnataka

# Covid accelerates progression of dementia: Study

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 5: Infection with the SARS-CoV-2 virus may significantly accelerate dementia in patients already suffering from the neurodegenerative condition, according to a study conducted in West Bengal.

The research, published in the Journal of Alzheimer's Disease Reports, found that participants with all subtypes of dementia experienced rapidly progressive dementia following infection with SARS-CoV-2. Insights into the impact of COVID-19 on human cognition has so far remained unclear, with neurologists referring to it as "brain fog."

The researchers investigated the effects of COVID-19 on cognitive impairment in 14 patients with pre-existing dementia who had suffered further cognitive deterioration following the infection with SARS-CoV-2.

The patients included four with Alzheimer's disease, five with vascular dementia, three with Parkinson's disease, and two with the behavioral variant of frontotemporal dementia.



They were recruited out of a total of 550 patients with dementia who attended the wards of Burdwan Medical College and Hospital, Bangur Institute of Neurosciences, and private cognitive specialty clinics in West Bengal, between May 2013 and September 2022.

The researchers found that the characteristics of a particular type of dementia changed following COVID-19, and both degenerative and vascular dementias started behaving like mixed dementia. A rapidly and aggressively deteriorating course was observed in patients having insidious onset, slowly progressive dementia, and who were previously cognitively stable, they said.

Researchers found that the characteristics of a particular type of dementia changed following Covid-19, and both degenerative and vascular dementia started behaving like mixed dementia both clinically and radiologically

Cortical atrophy, which causes the loss of brain cells, was also evident in the study's subsequent follow-ups, according to the researchers.

Coagulopathy involving small vessels and inflammation, which were further correlated with white matter intensity changes in the brain, was considered the most important pathogenic indicator, they said.

The rapid progression of dementia, the addition of further impairments of cognitive abilities, and the increase or new appearance of white

matter lesions suggest that previously compromised brains have little defence to withstand a new infection. "Brain fog is an ambiguous terminology without specific attribution to the spectrum of post-COVID-19 cognitive sequelae," said study lead investigator Souvik Dubey from Bangur Institute of Neurosciences.

"Based on the progression of cognitive deficits and the association with white matter intensity changes, we propose a new term: 'FADE-IN MEMORY' (Fatigue, decreased Fluency, Attention deficit, Depression, Executive dysfunction, slowed Information processing speed, and subcortical MEMORY impairment)," Dubey said.

The researcher noted that as the ageing population and dementia are increasing globally, pattern recognition of COVID-19-associated cognitive deficits is urgently needed to distinguish between COVID-19-associated cognitive impairments and other types of dementia. "This understanding will have a definitive impact on future dementia research," Dubey added.

Advertisement for CIPET (Central Institute of Petrochemicals Engineering and Technology) regarding hiring of vehicle. Includes contact details and terms of service.

Advertisement for East Coast Railway regarding tender for modification of air spring LHB coaches. Includes tender details and contact information.

Advertisement for East Coast Railway regarding tender for depot premises cleaning. Includes tender details and contact information.

Advertisement for Rail Wheel Plant/Bela regarding tender for supply of spare parts. Includes tender details and contact information.

Advertisement for East Coast Railway regarding tender for ATM facilitator. Includes tender details and contact information.

HANUMAN JAYANTI

# Calcutta HC directs Mamata govt to deploy Central forces



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Kolkata, April 5:** A division bench of the Calcutta High Court Wednesday directed the West Bengal government to deploy central armed forces on the auspicious occasion of Hanuman Jayanti April 6 to avoid repetition of violence witnessed during Ram Navami processions.

The violence had erupted in three districts March 30 and continued till April 3 night. The division bench of Calcutta High Court's acting Chief Justice TS Sivagnanam and Justice Hiranmoy Bhattacharya directed the state government to identify the sensitive pockets in the state and take the help of the central armed forces there.

At the same time, the division

## CAPF companies in three pockets

The West Bengal government, abiding by the order of the Calcutta High Court, has decided to deploy three companies of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) in three pockets of the state Thursday on the occasion of Hanuman Jayanti. The decision was taken at a high-level meeting chaired by Chief Secretary HK Dwivedi, which was attended virtually by top police officials in the state. It was decided that the three companies of CAPF will be deployed in areas of mixed population in Kolkata, Howrah Police Commissionerate and Chandernagore City Police.

Sivagnanam observed.

The intelligence wing of the state police also faced criticism from the division bench for not having any prior information about the probable outbreak of violence over Ram Navami processions.

The court also observed that no procession would be allowed in the area where Section 144 has been imposed amid the instances of violence in the recent past.

The division bench also suggested whether procession on occasion of Hanuman Jayanti can be done through areas that are guarded by raising of barricades as is done in case of Ganesh Chaturthi procession in Maharashtra.

**"I say religion is a personal choice, while festivities are for everyone. We must see that we celebrate festivals together peacefully. We all must pray for peace irrespective of our religious identity. Let peace prevail around the world, in India and Bengal"**

MAMATA BANERJEE | CM, WEST BENGAL

also directed the state police to conduct route marches in those pockets from Wednesday night only for the purpose of area domination. "From the nature of the problems that are being referred to, it is clear that the state police cannot single-handedly manage the affairs," Justice

# Sikkim avalanche: Search op called off

Avalanches have killed at least 120 people in the Himalayas over the past two years

AGENCIES

**Gangtok/Siliguri, April 5:** A Sikkim government official Wednesday said it is now "almost certain" that no tourist is left strapped under the snow at 15th Mile, the site of the devastating avalanche and search operations by the Army and the Border Road teams have been called off.

But helpline numbers will remain active for the time being to help tourists get information about their kin, Gangtok District Collector Tushar Nikhare told reporters here. "We are almost certain that no more tourists are trapped under the snow near 15th Mile," Nikhare said.

The Army, NDRF, ITBP, GREF, Sikkim Police and two personnel from Tiranga Mountain Rescue Team equipped with radars searched all possible areas near 15th Mile to find out any tourist lodged under the snow. But nobody was found there during the rescue and search operations that were carried out from 8am to 3pm before being halted, the Gangtok DC said.

The rescue teams used digging and trenching machines and other modern equipment to find people trapped under the debris at the place, which is a few km short of Nathu La, but none was found, he said.

The road between Nathu La and Gangtok is open but no tourist vehicle will be allowed to ply till permission is granted after taking note of the weather conditions, he said.

The avalanche that took place near the high Himalayan pass between Tibet and India Tuesday has claimed seven lives and trapped under it an estimated 25-30 people, besides six vehicles,



officials said.

Nikhare said that the incident was not an avalanche but a 'snow slide' and it has been clarified by top authorities.

A snow slide is an avalanche of snow, while an avalanche is a large mass of snow, ice, earth, rock or other material down a mountain-side or over a precipice.

Describing a snow slide as a "once in a life time incident", he asserted that Sikkim is otherwise a safe place for tourists and other visitors.

Lessons have been learnt from the 'snow slide' and precautionary measures like signages indi-

cating dangerous areas, no parking zones and instruction about not crossing the limits of visiting areas will be put up at 15th Mile and surrounding areas, the official said.

Meanwhile, the post mortem of all seven retrieved bodies were carried out at the STNM here and five of them being handed over to their next of kin. The bodies of the remaining two persons will be taken by the relatives tomorrow, officials said.

The state government will provide all assistance to the kin of the victims and the injured will be provided treatment free of cost, they added.

Avalanches have killed at least

120 people in the Indian Himalayas over the past two years.

A study in the US Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences concluded in 2018 that climate change had increased avalanche risks in the Himalayas.

The cause of Tuesday's disaster was not immediately clear.

Tourists flock to Sikkim, located below Mount Khangchendzonga, also known as Kanchenjunga, the third highest mountain in the world.

Nathu La serves as a route for the Kailash Mansarovar pilgrimage to Mount Kailash in China, considered one of the holiest pilgrimages in Hinduism.

## Prez, PM, CJ to attend Gauhati HC's 75th anniv

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Guwahati, April 5:** President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Justice of India Justice DY Chandrachud would attend in a series of programmes to be organised as part of the platinum jubilee of the Gauhati High Court.

Union Law and Justice Minister Kiren Rijju, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, and Chief Justice of Gauhati High Court Sandeep Mehta would attend a meeting on the occasion Wednesday.

President Murmu and CJ Chandrachud would attend the function April 7 while the Prime Minister would attend in the concluding event April 14.

The high court would felicitate senior advocates who have completed 50 years of legal practice. A commemorative postal stamp and the Assamese version of the book titled "Gauhati High Court: History & Heritage" along with a special edition of the magazine ATMAN would also be released.

The Gauhati High Court was established April 5, 1948. All the northeastern states excluding Sikkim were earlier under it before separate full-fledged High Courts were set up in Tripura, Meghalaya and Manipur in March 2013.

## Common uniform for students in Mizoram government schools

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Aizawl, April 5:** For the first time, students of state-run schools in Mizoram started wearing a common uniform with the new academic session beginning Wednesday, a senior official of the school education department said.

Specifications for the common uniform had been notified separately for primary, middle, high school and higher secondary schools, director of the school education department, Lalsangliana said.

State education minister Lalchandama Ralte had earlier said that the objective of the introduction of the common uniform was to bring equality between the rich and poor students in both urban and rural areas.

The students of government schools will no longer require buying a new set of uniform when their parents are transferred to other places, the minister had said.

# NCPCR seeks Bengal govt report on child marriages

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Kolkata, April 5:** The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has sent a notice to the West Bengal government seeking clarifications on the allegations of negligence by appropriate state authorities in connection with complaints about child marriages in the state.

Sources in the state government said that the notice sought reports on action taken by the authorities in 1,640 such cases, the details of which are missing.

Sources said that NCPCR in its notice has pointed out that during the 17-month period from April 2021 till September 2022, there had been 6,733 complaints of child marriage attempts in West Bengal, of which 4,001 were reported during the 12-month period between April 2021 and March 2022, and remaining 2,732 were from April 2022 to September 2022.

As per the NCPCR notice, of the total 6,733 complaints received during the 17-month period from April



2021 till September 2022, as many as 5,093 cases were resolved, which implies that the child marriages could be prevented.

Again, out of 5,093 resolved cases, 2,732 were during the 12-month period between April 2021 and March 2022 and the remaining 2,154 were during the remaining five-month period from April 2022 to September 2022.

This, according to NCPCR, means that reports for as many as 1,640 cases during the 17-month period from April 2021 till September 2022 are missing, out of which 1,062 are during the 12-month period between April 2021 and March 2022 and the remaining 578 are during the remaining five-month period from April 2022 to September 2022.

Besides seeking a clarification from the state government on the status of such cases for which reports are missing,

NCPCR has also directed the state police director general to start legal proceedings under the provisions of Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 in such cases in which the reports are missing.

The state government has been directed to reply to the notice within 10 days of its receipt.

# World's tallest pier railway bridge to be part of Jiribam-Imphal rly project

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Guwahati/Imphal, April 5:** The world's tallest pier railway bridge, with a height of 141 metres, is being constructed as part of the Jiribam-Imphal railway project which has already achieved physical progress of 93.30 per cent.

With the completion of the 111-km-long Jiribam-Imphal railway project by December this year, Manipur capital would come onto the Indian Railways network, making Imphal the fourth capital city in the northeastern region to have a rail link.

Northeast Frontier Railway's (NFR) Chief Public Relations Officer Sabyasachi De said that the Rs 14,322 crore project is one of the crucial connectivity projects for the northeastern region and it is at an advanced stage of completion.

He said that construction of the railway project involves multiple tunnels and bridges in tough terrain with the total length of tunnels in this project being 61.32 km, out of which 59.11 km of tunnelling work has already been completed.



The project would have total 11 major bridges and 137 minor bridges, out of which work for five major bridges and 101 minor bridges have been completed so far.

The section from Jiribam to Khongsang has already been commissioned earlier for train service. After completion of the entire project, the present road journey

time of about 10 hours to reach Imphal from Jiribam would be reduced to 2.5 hours by railways.

The NFR has been putting their full effort by working 24x7 for the completion of this project dealing with all the challenges including heavy rainfall and other logistic hindrances, De said.

The CPRO said that the Jiribam-

WITH THE COMPLETION OF THE RAILWAY PROJECT BY DECEMBER THIS YEAR, MANIPUR WOULD COME ONTO THE INDIAN RAILWAYS NETWORK

IMPHAL WILL BE THE FOURTH CAPITAL CITY IN THE NORTHEASTERN REGION TO HAVE A RAIL LINK AFTER GUWAHATI, AGARTALA AND ITANAGAR

Imphal rail project would provide enhanced connectivity to the people of Manipur, help grow small scale industries in the area and boost tourism of the state.

It would also help in receiving essential commodities faster by the state and help the state local producers to export their products outside the state faster.

The economy of the state would receive a boost, the official stated. Assam's main city of Guwahati (adjoining capital Dispur), Tripura capital Agartala and Arunachal Pradesh's Nahaarlagun (adjacent to capital city Itanagar) are already on the railway network.

## SWINE FLU SCARE

### Tripura bans import of pigs

**AGARTALA:** Tripura has imposed ban on the import of pigs and piglets amid sporadic incidents of swine flu in different parts of the country last week. Tripura's Animal Resource Development (ARD) Minister Sudangshu Das Wednesday said that keeping in view the sporadic incidents of African Swine Flu (ASF) in different parts of the country during the past one week, as precautionary measures, the state government has totally banned the import of pig and piglet from outside the state. The minister said that doctors of the ARD Department are working and monitoring the situations and time to time samples are being sent to the disease investigation labs for examination for ASF so that if anything is found wrong then immediate action can be taken up. The highly-contagious ASF created havoc in Mizoram during 2021 and 2022, killing over 33,400 pigs, affecting over 10,000 families besides causing financial loss of Rs 61 crore. Around 12,000 pigs were culled in Mizoram in 2021 and 2022. Pork is one of the most popular meats consumed by both tribals and non-tribals in the region.

# NGO slams hosting of G20 dinner at Durbar Hall of Ujjayanta Palace



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Agartala, April 5:** An NGO condemned the Tripura government for using the Durbar Hall of Ujjayanta Palace, home and headquarters of the erstwhile Manikya dynasty of previous princely-ruled northeast state, for hosting dinner for the delegates of the Science-20 conference under India's G20 presidency in Agartala.

Royal scion and Convener of Tripura chapter of Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), MK Pragma Deb Burman, condemning the hosting of dinner April 3 at the Durbar Hall of Ujjayanta Palace, said that as the name indicates, the Durbar Hall was not merely a room but a historical and sacred place.

"Durbar Hall has been held dearly and has been respected for over 122 years in our state, by one and all. It was used for the Coronation of the Rulers of Tripura which were religious in nature and for important, official purposes and never entertainment or dining!" she said.

With the participation of 150 delegates including delegates from 12 G-20 members, including China, the US, UK, Australia, and Brazil, the two-day Science-20 conference, under India's G20 presidency, was held in Agartala Monday and Tuesday.

Deb Burman said that even when the Ujjayanta Palace was used as the state Assembly building in the past, prior to becoming the state multicultural museum in 2013, it was used for official purposes by the Speaker of the assembly.

"Unfortunately the identity of the Durbar Hall is being tarnished now by the state government and this has shocked us. On the one hand, they speak of respecting our centuries-old Indian culture, the visionary Maharajas and our rich history past but on the other hand, parties are held, such hypocrisy

**"Durbar Hall has been held dearly and has been respected for over 122 years in our state, by one and all. It was used for the Coronation of the Rulers of Tripura which were religious in nature and for important, official purposes and never entertainment or dining!"**

MK PRAGYA DEB BURMAN | ROYAL SCION AND CONVENER OF TRIPURA CHAPTER OF INTACH

must be known and be condemned by the people," the INTACH convener said.

She said that the dinner can be hosted in a hotel but the authorities suddenly decided that the Durbar Hall should be used for the entertainment of the delegates.

"The horribly placed statue where the throne used to be, and gaudy dining arrangement in the hall are insulting and show disrespect to our heritage. I sincerely hope that this sacred space would not be converted in the future into a party or dining room."

There were plans by the Museum authorities to recreate the Durbar Hall for the purpose of educating of our fellow citizens but with this attitude, we fear the worst and ask the state government of Tripura to honour our historic spaces and give it the dignity it deserves, Deb Burman said in a statement.

The INTACH was founded in 1984 in New Delhi with the vision to spearhead heritage awareness and conservation in India.

Historian and writer Salil Debbarma told IANS that at the end of the 1,355-year-rule by 184 kings, on October 15, 1949, the erstwhile princely state of Tripura came under the control of the Indian government after a merger agreement was signed between Regent Maharani Kanchan Prabha Devi and the Indian Governor General.



# national



**Tomorrow is Hanuman Jayanti. I will urge everybody to celebrate it peacefully. There will be no problem if peace is observed. Bengal is the land of peace**  
MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CM

## GOVT HAS NO PLAN TO USE AADHAAR DATA FOR CENSUS

The government has no plan to use Aadhaar data for census, Minister of State for Electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar told Lok Sabha Wednesday



### of the day quote

The riots last week were planned thoroughly. No wonder, one of the places, Sasaram, happened to be where he (Amit Shah) was supposed to visit. And the other was Bihar Sharif, a town which is dear to me  
NITISH KUMAR | BIHAR CM

The government is prepared to deal with any situation arising out of a rise in Covid cases  
BALBIR SINGH | PUNJAB HEALTH MINISTER

The state government would never permit coal mining/lignite mining from the Delta districts of Tamil Nadu  
MK STALIN | TAMIL NADU CM

### SHORT TAKES

#### BSF nabs Pak national

**Ahmedabad:** The Border Security Force has apprehended a Pakistani national trying to enter India through the border along Gujarat's Banaskantha district, the BSF said. BSF troopers observed a Pakistani national crossing the international border Tuesday. They nabbed him as soon as he climbed down the gate near the Border Out Post (BOP) Nadeshwari in Banaskantha district. The man, identified as Daya Ram, a resident of Nagarparkar in Pakistan, was seen negotiating a fence gate by climbing over it to enter the Indian side of the fence, the BSF Gujarat Frontier said in a release.

#### Four killed in two separate accidents

**Shimla/Una:** Four people were killed and two others injured in two separate accidents in Kullu and Una districts of Himachal Pradesh, police said Wednesday. On Tuesday night, three people died after their tipper truck fell into a gorge near Kurpan Khadd in Kullu's Nirmand tehsil, they said. In the other accident Tuesday night, a woman was killed and two others were seriously injured after their car crashed into a school's wall, police said.

#### Royal Bengal Tiger dies at Hyd Zoo

**Hyderabad:** A Royal Bengal Tiger has died at Nehru Zoological Park in Hyderabad Wednesday. The 10-year-old male Royal Bengal Tiger named 'Joe' succumbed in its enclosure at 3 a.m., the Zoo curator said. It was under treatment for the last six months and the post-mortem examination revealed that the big cat died of renal failure.

### 'MISUSE' OF PROBE AGENCIES

## Top court junks Oppn plea

The Supreme Court said that political leaders do not enjoy an immunity greater than an ordinary citizen of the state and they are also not entitled to a higher immunity, while refusing entertain a petition by 14 Opposition parties



AGENCIES

**New Delhi, April 5:** The Supreme Court Wednesday refused to entertain a plea by 14 political parties led by the Congress alleging arbitrary use of central probe agencies against opposition leaders, asserting that laying down guidelines without facts of a criminal case will be "dangerous".  
A bench of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justice J B Pardiwala expressed disinclination to entertain the petition, saying courts are always there for taking up the grievances of political leaders as they do for common citizens.  
"Political leaders do not enjoy an immunity higher than the common citizens... Once we accept that political leaders are absolutely on same footing as common citizens with no higher immunity, then how can we say there can be no arrests unless there is a three pronged test which is satisfied," the bench said.  
Sensing its disinclination, senior advocate A M Singhvi, appearing for the political parties, sought permission to withdraw the petition which was granted.  
"Learned counsel seeks permission to withdraw the plea at this stage. The petition is ac-

cordingly dismissed as withdrawn," the bench ordered. "You please come back to us when you have an individual criminal case or group of cases," the bench said, adding "laying down general guidelines without having relation to facts of a case will be dangerous".  
At the outset, Singhvi referred to certain statistics while trying to drive home the point that opposition leaders have been targeted by federal investigative agencies from 2014 to 2022 and that there has been a 600 per cent increase in CBI and ED cases.  
"Between 2014 and 2022, 121 political leaders have been probed by the Enforcement Directorate out of whom 95 per cent are from opposition parties," he claimed.  
The Narendra Modi government first came to power in May 2014. The CBI has probed 124 political leaders and out of these, 108 are from opposition political parties, Singhvi claimed.  
The bench said even the media, under Article 19(1)(a) (freedom of speech and expression) of the Constitution, does not have higher powers and "the political persons are also citizens and as a citizen they are subject to similar rules".  
The senior lawyer said he was not seeking any particular relief

in a particular case and the parties, which represent 42 per cent of the electorate in the country, wanted prospective guidelines of pre and post-arrest procedures to be adopted by the central probe agencies. Earlier, the joint plea was mentioned for urgent hearing on March 24 by Singhvi.  
"I am asking for the guidelines for the future. This is a remarkable convergence of 14 parties against the misuse of the agencies, both CBI and ED," Singhvi had said, and claimed that 95 per cent cases of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) are against the leaders of opposition parties.  
The senior lawyer had referred to the rise in the number of cases filed by the CBI and ED after the Modi-led NDA government came to power in 2014.  
"Second statistics, pre-2014 and post-2014: there is a humongous jump in cases. The rate of conviction is four to five per cent. We are asking for pre-arrest guidelines and post-arrest bail guidelines," Singhvi had said.  
The plea alleged there has been an alarming rise in the use of coercive criminal processes against opposition political leaders and other citizens exercising their fundamental right to dissent. "Investigating agencies such as CBI and ED are being increasingly deployed in a selective and targeted manner with a view to completely crush political dissent and upend the fundamental premises of a representative democracy," a statement issued on behalf of a petitioner alleged.  
The plea, filed through lawyer Shadan Farasat, cited some statistics and asserted they demonstrated a "shocking and unconstitutional state of affairs".  
Besides the Congress, the parties to the petition included the DMK, RJD, BRS, Trinamool Congress, AAP, NCP, Shiv Sena (UBT), JMM, JD(U), CPI(M), CPI, Samajwadi Party and the J&K National Conference, the statement said.

## T'gana BJP chief held, named prime accused

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Hyderabad, April 5:** Telangana BJP president and MP Bandi Sanjay Kumar was arrested by police Wednesday and was named the prime accused by Warangal police in a case of malpractice after a question paper of Standard 10 (SSC) board exam surfaced on various groups of an instant messaging app, police said.  
Sanjay Kumar, a Lok Sabha MP from Karimnagar constituency, was picked up by a team of police past midnight Tuesday from his residence in Karimnagar city, triggering protests by his party workers.  
The paper of Standard 10 (SSC) board exam in Telangana found its way into an instant messaging platform for the second day Tuesday after a 16-year old boy took a photo of the paper from a student who appeared for the exam and shared it with that student's brother while

the exam was going on, police said. The paper was then posted in a group of the instant messaging app and subsequently shared in other groups by one of the accused, who had also sent a copy to Sanjay Kumar, police added.  
Sanjay Kumar had sought to defame the government by conspiring to create fear among the students and their parents during the ongoing SSC public examination, as the blame for the question paper leak would fall on the Telangana administration, the police alleged. After images of an SSC Hindi question paper surfaced on the social media platform, police took up the investigation and apprehended the 16-year-old boy and arrested two others Tuesday, who include a former journalist of a TV channel and a lab assistant who had allegedly circulated the question paper on the app. Subsequently, Sanjay Kumar was arrested in the early hours of Wednesday.

### SSC QUESTION PAPER LEAK CASE



## India elected to UN statistical body

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 5:** India has been elected to the highest statistical body of the United Nations for a four-year term beginning January 1 next year.  
External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said this on Twitter: People familiar with the matter said India won handsomely in the UN Statistical Commission election securing 46 out of 53 votes, leaving rivals Republic of Korea (23) China(19) and the United Arab Emirates (15) far behind.



This was a multi-cornered election, four candidates for two seats, they said. "India elected to the highest UN statistical body for a 4-year term beginning 1 January 2024! Congrats Team @IndiaUNNewYork for coming through so strongly in a competitive election," he said. Jaishankar said India's expertise in the field of statistics, diversity and demography has earned it the seat on the UN Statistical Commission.

### EXCISE POLICY SCAM

## HC to hear Sisodia's bail plea today

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, April 5:** AAP leader and former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia Wednesday moved the Delhi High Court seeking bail in the now-scrapped excise policy case being probed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).  
His bail plea is listed for hearing before Justice Dinesh Kumar Sharma Thursday. On March 31, a Delhi court had dismissed his bail plea.  
CBI Judge MK Nagpal of the Rouse Avenue Courts had, Monday, extended former his judicial custody until April 17. The central probe agency had sought the extension of Sisodia's custody as the investigation is at a crucial stage.  
While denying him bail, Judge Nagpal had said that Sisodia can,



prima facie, be held to be the "architect of the criminal conspiracy". He observed that the payment of advance kickbacks of around ₹90-100 crore was meant for him and his other colleagues in the AAP government. The court is not inclined to release Sisodia on

bail at this stage of investigation as his release may adversely affect the ongoing investigation and will also seriously hamper the progress, the order stated. It said that the evidence collected by the probe agency so far shows that the applicant through the co-accused Vijay Nair was in contact with the 'South lobby' and formulation of a favourable policy for them was being ensured at every cost and a cartel was permitted to be formed to achieve monopoly in sale of certain liquor brands of favoured manufacturers and it was permitted to be done against very objectives of the policy.  
The ED told a Delhi court the investigation in the money laundering probe is at a "crucial" stage and it has found fresh evidence of his complicity.

# How social isolation impacts our energy

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi/London, April 5:** Eight hours without social contact can lead to a reduction in energy similar to eight hours without food, finds a study in the context of Covid-19 lockdowns.



**Evidence shows that a lack of social contact induces a craving response in our brains comparable to hunger, which motivates us to reconnect, said researchers from the University of Vienna in Austria**

The study, published in Psychological Science, suggests that low energy may be a basic human response to a lack of social contact. It also showed that this response was affected by social personality traits of the participants.  
If we do not eat for an extended period, a series of biological processes ensue and create a craving sensation we recognise as hunger. As a social species, we also need other people to survive. Evidence shows that a lack of social contact induces a craving response in our brains comparable to hunger, which motivates us to reconnect, said researchers from the University of Vienna in Austria.  
The related "social homeostasis" hypothesis suggests that there is a dedicated homeostatic system that au-

tonomously regulates our need for social contact. However, we know very little about the psychological responses to social isolation, they said.  
"It is well-known that long-term loneliness and fatigue are related, but we know little about the immediate mechanisms that underlie this link. The fact that we see this effect even after a short period of social isolation suggests that low

energy could be a 'social homeostatic' adaptive response, which on the long run can become maladaptive," said Giorgia Silani.  
To explore, the team investigated the effects of social isolation using comparable methodology across two contexts: in the laboratory and at home during Covid-19 lockdown.  
For the study, 30 female volunteers came into the lab on three sep-

arate days, spending eight hours without social contact or without food or with both social contact and food. Multiple times throughout the day, they indicated their stress, mood, and fatigue, while physiological stress responses, such as heart rate and cortisol, were recorded by the scientists.  
In order to validate the results of the laboratory study, the results were compared with measurements from a study conducted during the lockdown in Austria and Italy in spring 2020. From this study, they used data from 87 participants who had spent at least an eight-hour period in isolation and whose stress and behavioural effects were assessed with the same measurements several times a day for seven days.  
"In the lab study, we found striking similarities between social isolation and food deprivation. Both states induced lowered energy and heightened fatigue, which is surprising given that food deprivation literally makes us lose energy, while social isolation would

not," said researchers Ana Stijovic and Paul Forbes from the varsity.  
This result is further supported by the validation with data obtained during the lockdowns -- participants who lived alone during the lockdown and who were generally more socially also reported lower energy on days on which they were isolated, compared to days on which they had social interactions.

**GOVT. OF ODISHA**  
**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER**  
**JAJPUR IRRIGATION DIVISION, JAJPUR**  
Office Phone No.06728-222022  
Email - jpt.rrigation@gmail.com.  
No.A-08: 'e' -Procurement Notice No. 01 / 2023-24

- Name of work : Protection & Restoration works.
- Total No. of Packages : 30 (Thirty) Nos. of Packages only.
- Estimated Cost : Varies from Rs.49.86 Lakh to Rs.11.96 Lakh
- Mode of Payment of EMD: (Bid Security) & Bid cost : The bidder shall transfer the required amount of EMD (Bid Security) and Cost of Bid by online through electronic payment as mentioned in DTCN.
- Period of completion : Upto 6 (Six) Calendar Months.

**6. Other details as follows :**

- Procurement Officer : Superintending Engineer, Jajpur Irrigation Division, Jajpur
- Period of Online Bidding : Dt.10.04.2023 from 10.00 Hrs. to Dt.19.04.2023 upto 17.00 Hrs.
- Date, time & place of opening of and both Technical & Financial bid for the works : Dt.20.04.2023 at 11.30 Hrs. in the Office of the Superintending Engineer, Jajpur Irrigation Division, Jajpur.
- Date of Transparent Lottery: Dt.28.04.2023 at 11.00 Hrs. in the Office of the Superintending Engineer, Jajpur Irrigation Division, Jajpur (If required)

Further details can be seen from the Govt. website www.tendersorissa.gov.in.

**Sd./- Superintending Engineer**  
**Jajpur Irrigation Division**  
OIPR-32130/11/0002/2324

**Office of the Superintending Engineer**  
**Ganjam R&B Division No II, Berhampur**  
Phone/Fax: (0680) 2233996 (Email: sernb2.ganjam@gmail.com)  
**Quotation Call Notice**  
Letter No. 4100 // Dated. 31.03.2023 //

No. B-23:- The Superintending Engineer, Ganjam [R&B] Division No.II, Berhampur invites sealed quotation from intending manufacturers, suppliers for supplying, installing, commissioning and testing of the following recent BCAS compliant equipments mentioned in table for immediate operation of Rangailunda Airstrip in the district of Ganjam, Odisha

The sealed quotations should be submitted alongwith attested copies of valid GSTIN, PAN card, Registration certificate and detail specification of the equipment from 10.04.2023 to 21.04.2023 upto 2.00 P.M. and will be opened on 24.04.2023 at 11.00 A.M. in the office chamber of the undersigned.

The undersigned reserves right to accept or reject any or all quotations without assigning any reason thereof. The quotation for the following equipments are given below should be submit with all connecting documents on the date mentioned above.

Sl. No.	Description	Unit	Qty.	Rate to be quoted In Figure	In Word
1	Baggage scanner, R.B XBIS 100x100 Dual view	Each	1		
2	Baggage scanner H.B XBIS 60x40 Dual view	Each	1		
3	D.F.M.D	Each	1		
4	H.H.M.D	Each	1		
5	Non illuminated windsocks with stand (Orange and white)	Each	1		

Further clarification can be obtained from this office during working hours before schedule time of submission of quotation.

**Sd./- Superintending Engineer**  
**Ganjam [R&B] Division No.II, Berhampur**  
OIPR-34080/11/0001/2324

**OFFICE OF THE PANCHAYAT SAMITI, CHANDBALI**  
**At/PO- Chandbali, Dist- Bhadrak, Pin-756130. e-mail: ori-chandbali@nic.in**  
**REVISED INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)**  
**BID IDENTIFICATION NO. 4/2022-23 Dt- 05.04.2023**

No.I-21

SI No.	Name of work	Amount put to tender Rs	EMD P	Time for completion P	Class of Contractor	Cost of document Rs
1	TRANSFORMATION OF AMA HOSPITAL UNDER ST AT CHC, CHANDBALI	34,63,669	34637.00	Six Calendar months	C & Above	6000.00

**1. Date & Time:** 10 AM of 06.04.2023 to 3 PM of 20.04.2023. **2. Last Date:** Upto 3 PM of 20.04.2023. **3. Time of Opening:** 3 PM of 21.04.2023. **4. Name and address:** Block Development Officer, Chandbali, Bhadrak. Further details can be seen from the website portal https://bhadrak.nic.in/. The interested bidders can contact office of the Block Development Officer, Chandbali, Dist- Bhadrak, Contact No. - 9437228182  
OIPR-19183/11/0002/2324

**Sd./- Block Development Officer, Chandbali**

# international



We hear increasingly loud voices expressing a strong concern about the future of relations between the West and China that in some form lead to the conclusion that there is an inescapable spiral of mounting tensions  
EMMANUEL MACRON | PRESIDENT, FRENCH

## ARDERN BIDS FAREWELL

Former New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern bowed out of parliament Wednesday, ending a career marked by empathetic leadership during times of crisis. The 42-year-old, once the youngest woman leader in the world, said in her final speech to parliament that she never expected to take the nation's top job



## of the day quote

AI can help deal with some very difficult challenges like disease and climate change, but it also has to address the potential risks to our society, to our economy, to our national security  
JOE BIDEN | PRESIDENT, US

Irregular routes to Canada or to other countries present very real dangers. We encourage individuals in need of protection to claim asylum in the first safe country that they enter and to do so at a designated port of entry  
JUSTIN TRUDEAU | PM, CANADA

Ambassador Garcetti will be leading an ambitious effort to deepen our cooperation with India in critical and emerging technologies, expand our defense cooperation, and strengthen our economic and people-to-people ties  
KARINE JEAN-PIERRE | WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY, US

## SHORT TAKES

### Israeli police clash with Palestinians

Jerusalem: Israeli police stormed into the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem's Old City early Wednesday, firing stun grenades at Palestinian youths who hurled stones and firecrackers at them in a burst of violence during a sensitive holiday season. Gaza militants responded with rocket fire on southern Israel, prompting an Israeli airstrike. The fighting, coming as Muslims mark the holiday month of Ramadan and Jews prepare to begin the Passover festival Wednesday evening, drew Palestinian condemnations and raised fears of a wider conflagration. Similar clashes two years ago erupted into an 11-day war between Israel and Hamas.

### Marin steps down as party leader

Helsinki: Finland's outgoing Prime Minister Sanna Marin is stepping down as leader of the Social Democratic party, she said Wednesday, adding she will serve as a regular lawmaker in the newly elected parliament next week. "I will start my work as member of parliament next week and I hope I can also lead a calmer life," Marin told a news conference, adding she would not run for president. She said she had not received any offers for international positions.

### Taliban bar female UN Afghan staffers

Islamabad: Female Afghan employees of the United Nations have been banned by the ruling Taliban from working in the country, UN officials said Tuesday. The UN Mission expressed "serious concern" after its female staffers were prevented from reporting to work in eastern Nangarhar province. "We will continue to pursue all avenues to ensure that we can reach the most vulnerable people, especially women and girls," UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

### Mexico complains to China about US

Mexico City: Mexico's president asked his Chinese counterpart for help Tuesday in halting chemicals from China used by Mexican drug dealers to illegally produce fentanyl, while also complaining of "rude" US pressure to curb the drug trade. President Andrés Manuel López Obrador has previously said that fentanyl is America's problem and is caused by "a lack of hugs" in US families.

# Mystery clouds blanket US Prez race

DONALD TRUMP'S ARREST TUESDAY HAS PLUNGED WHITE HOUSE RACE INTO UNCHARTED TERRITORY

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Washington, March 5: US voters woke Wednesday after Donald Trump's arraignment in New York to a uniquely uncertain 2024 presidential election landscape, where the leading Republican candidate faces trial and the incumbent, Joe Biden, has not even confirmed he's running.

Trump pleaded not guilty Tuesday to 34 felony charges linked to alleged attempts to silence damaging personal information during his triumphant 2016 race for the White House.

The man who went from 1980s playboy real estate magnate, to TV reality show star in the 2000s, then far-right populist president, has now made history as the first serving or former commander in chief under criminal indictment. But what some might have seen as a moment of supreme shame, the Trump team immediately turned into a battle cry.

While he had to go through the humiliating process of arrest for Tuesday's hearing, polls still show Trump is by far the strongest Republican candidate. In fact, his numbers have only improved as his legal scandals grow.

Trump attorney Todd Blanche said his client is "upset." But "I'll tell you what: he's motivated and it's not going to stop him and it's not going to slow him down."



DEFIANT TRUMP PLEADS NOT GUILTY TO ALL 34 CRIMINAL CHARGES  
TRUMP'S NEXT IN-PERSON HEARING IN HUSH MONEY CASE SET FOR DEC 4

Trump flew back home to Florida and delivered a rambling, conspiracy theory laden tirade to gathered supporters, painting himself as the victim of a "Trump-hating judge" and "massive election interference." His election campaign did not wait for the Manhattan court hearing to be over before merchandising a T-shirt with a fake mug shot of the former president over the words 'NOT GUILTY' in exchange for \$47 donations.

Representative Elise Stefanik, a Trump loyalist in Congress, predicted boldly: "President Trump will defeat this latest witch-hunt, defeat Joe Biden, and will be sworn in as president of the United States of America in January 2025."

### Troubles Pile Up

For all the bravado, 76-year-old Trump is in serious trouble.

During his decades in the public eye, he has shown astonishing ability to wriggle out of legal corners, whether during his many business disputes or even as president when Republicans acquitted him in an unprecedented two impeachment trials.

But Trump is now in the hands of the New York state court system, where Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg is mounting an aggressive prosecution.

"We cannot and will not normalize serious criminal conduct," Bragg said of the felony charges alleging that Trump falsified business

The only crime that I committed is to fearlessly defend our nation from those who seek to destroy it. Incredibly, we are now a failing nation. We are a nation in decline. And now these radical left lunatics want to interfere with our elections by using law enforcement. We can't let that happen  
DONALD TRUMP | FORMER PRESIDENT, US

records to "conceal criminal conduct that hid damaging information from the voting public during the 2016 presidential election."

Even if some analysts have questioned the strength of the New York case, Trump's real problems may lie elsewhere.

Reports indicate that a high-level probe into his hoarding of top secret White House documents at his private Florida Mar-a-Lago residence is gathering pace. Another criminal probe is underway in Georgia over his efforts to overturn the 2020 election, which he lost to Biden but refused to concede.

Time, however, may be on Trump's side.

Any trial may not start until well into the 2024 election season and there is nothing to stop someone under indictment from seeking office. Back in 1920, Eugene V Debs even famously ran for president -- entirely legally -- as a Socialist from a jail cell.

### 'Not a focus'

Biden appears content to sit back and watch the fall of a man he has branded a "toxic presence."

Last week, Biden went out of

his way to take questions about Trump from reporters -- only to stress to every single question that he was not going to comment. On Tuesday, White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre also made a point of rising above the fray.

Asked if Biden, like millions across the country, was watching live coverage, she insisted the president was instead working for Americans. He might "catch part of the news when he has a moment," she said, but "this is not something that's a focus for him."

While Trump has injected a giant note of uncertainty into the 2024 race, Biden brings question marks of his own.

His age is a constant source of concern, even to allies. Now 80, he would be 86 by the time he left office after a second term. And he has yet to confirm he is running at all.

Last year, word was that Biden was looking at a family Christmas holiday in the Caribbean as the moment to take a final decision. But the weeks and months passed, with no word, even if Biden has said on several occasions that he intends to run.

## PROPAGANDA PRESS

### North Korea scribes meet after 22 years

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

South Korea, April 5: North Korea held a conference of its journalists union for the first time since 2001, state media said Wednesday, as the isolated regime ramps up nuclear threats despite reported food shortages.

The official Korean Central News Agency said the conference took place "at a critical time", with attendees urged to redouble their efforts to push leader Kim Jong Un's ideological line.

The Kim family has ruled the country for more than seven decades with an iron fist wrapped in a pervasive personality cult, propagated via state media.

The North is regularly rated one of the worst countries in the world in terms of press freedom.

The conference, held Monday and Tuesday in Pyongyang, was the first time the union has convened since Kim was declared leader in 2011.

It emphasised that journalists "should become ardent believers, staunch defenders and thorough implementers of the revolutionary idea of" Kim, KCNA said.

Last year the North declared itself an "irreversible" nuclear power, and Kim this year ordered his military to intensify preparations for a "real war".

The impoverished country has also been struggling to tackle chronic food shortages, with some reports of starvation emerging.

Wednesday's KCNA report said conference attendees were told a political and ideological campaign must be "vigorously launched" to inspire "the entire country" to implement the regime's rural development strategy.

"In North Korea, journalists are the elite warriors of the party's political propaganda," said An Chan-il, a defector-turned-researcher who runs the World Institute for North Korea Studies.

"It's an order from the regime to write articles that are much more fierce and loyal to Kim. The fact that the North feels it needs more propaganda may signify that its food situation is not getting any better."

An told AFP the convention could also suggest another nuclear test was coming, "perhaps on April 15th -- the birth anniversary of (the North's) founder Kim Il Sung".

"The regime may have wanted to prepare its reporters before the massive coverage of the test."

## US recognises Arunachal as integral part of India



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, April 5: The US has recognised Arunachal Pradesh as an integral part of India and strongly opposes any unilateral attempts to advance territorial claims by renaming localities, the White House has said.

The US reaction came in response to Beijing announcing Chinese names for 11 more places in Arunachal Pradesh which the neighbouring country claims as the southern part of Tibet.

The official names of the 11 places were released Sunday by China's ministry of civil affairs.

"The United States has recognised that territory (Arunachal Pradesh) for a long time (as an integral part of India). And we strongly oppose any unilateral attempts to advance territorial claims by renaming localities," White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said Tuesday. "And so, again, this is something that we have long stood by," Jean-Pierre told reporters at her daily news conference.

India Tuesday outrightly rejected China renaming some places

in Arunachal Pradesh, asserting that the state is an integral part of India and assigning "invented" names does not alter this reality.

"We have seen such reports. This is not the first time China has made such an attempt. We reject this outright," Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said.

"Arunachal Pradesh is, has been, and will always be an integral and inalienable part of India. Attempts to assign invented names will not alter this reality," he said. It was the third batch of standardised geographical names for Arunachal Pradesh issued by China's civil affairs ministry.

The first batch of the standardised names of six places in Arunachal Pradesh was released in 2017 and the second batch of 15 places was issued in 2021.

China's renaming of the places in Arunachal Pradesh came in the midst of the lingering eastern Ladakh border standoff that began in May 2020.

Following the standoff, India bolstered its overall military preparedness along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Arunachal Pradesh sector as well.

The Indian and Chinese troops are locked in a nearly three-year-long confrontation in certain regions in eastern Ladakh even as the two sides completed disengagement of troops from several areas following extensive diplomatic and military talks. India has been maintaining that its ties with China cannot be normal unless there is peace in the border areas.



FESTIVE FERVOUR: A whirling dervish spins during a traditional performance during the holy month of Ramadan at Al Muezz Street in Cairo, Egypt

## AHEAD OF US MEETING

REUTERS

Taipei, April 5: Taiwan's defence ministry said Wednesday a Chinese aircraft carrier group was in the waters off the island's southeast coast, the same day President Tsai Ing-wen was due to meet US House Speaker Kevin McCarthy in Los Angeles.

China, which claims democratically-governed Taiwan as its own territory, has warned of unspecified retaliation if the meeting goes ahead.

China staged war games around Taiwan last August following the visit to Taipei of then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

Taiwan's defence ministry said the Chinese ships, which were led by the carrier the Shandong, passed

through the Bashi Channel which separates Taiwan from the Philippines and then into waters to Taiwan's southeast.

It said the ships were going for training in the Western Pacific, and that Taiwanese naval and air forces and land-based radar systems closely monitored them.

"The Chinese communists continue to send aircraft and ships to encroach in the seas and airspace around Taiwan," the ministry said.

"In addition to posing a substantial threat to our national security, it also destroys the status quo of regional security and stability. Such actions are by no means the acts of a responsible modern country."



The ministry provided two pictures - one a grainy black and white image of the carrier taken from the air, and the other of a Taiwanese sailor looking at the Shandong and another unidentified ship in the distance. China has yet to comment on the carrier group, whose appearance also coincided with the arrival in Beijing of French President Emmanuel Macron.

# Deadly chaos as Pakistanis scramble for scarce donations

ECONOMIC MALAISE IN PAKISTAN SEEMS TO BE ERODING SOCIETY'S ABILITY TO COPE WITH RUNAWAY PRICES

REUTERS

Karachi, April 5: Seven-year-old Saad Umer joined a crowd in a poor neighbourhood in the Pakistani city of Karachi rushing to get a handout of flour and a little cash from a charity trying to help the most vulnerable cope with runaway prices. But in the surge, a melee broke out and some people fell.

Saad and 10 others, all women and children, were killed in the latest in a series of deadly scrambles for food as Pakistan struggles with its most serious economic crisis in years.

"He was a beautiful kid. I'll never get over his death as long as I live," his father, Umer Zada, told Reuters. Zada said the distribution of aid

should have been better organised, with police supervision of the hungry and desperate seeking help.

"There were no rules or regulations as my son got trampled."

Last week, in another incident, police fired tear gas in a bid to control a frenzied crowd trying to get their hands on food supplies at a site in Kyber Paktunkwa province.

In all, 16 people have been killed in chaos at charity distributions, shocking Pakistan, especially during the Islamic fasting month of Ramadan, a time for giving and spiritual reflection.

Global factors have compounded consumer inflation as the country of 220 million people tries to finalise a bail-out agreement with the International Monetary Fund.



Prices have been pushed higher by a weakening currency, energy tariff increases and a usual Ramadan spike.

Pakistan's inflation soared to a record 35% last month. Food inflation in March was at 47.1% and 50.2% for urban and rural areas re-

spectively.

The turmoil as charities try to help the poorest lays bare the desperation that is likely to get worse as the impact of inflation is compounded by smaller donations of the traditional zakat alms for the poor, according to five aid groups that

### 'DONOR FATIGUE'

With prices rising, the funds that donors are giving are not stretching as far as they did.

"Charities are struggling to deal with rising inflation and costs the same way households are. There has also been a rise in the number of people heading our way for help," said Ramzan Chhipa, founder of the Chhipa welfare association.

Higher fuel prices make providing an ambulance service ever

more difficult, says Faisal Edhi, a philanthropist and chief of Pakistan's largest charity operation the Edhi Foundation. The group's ambulances took away the injured and the bodies of Saad and the others killed in the Karachi crush.

"Our services are becoming costly and we aren't always able to reach the people... We've already spent a substantial amount from our reserves," Edhi said. Edhi said there had also been an increasing number of men committing suicide because they could not support their families, including one man who was a friend of his.

Sikander Bizenjo, co-founder of the Balochistan Youth Action Committee, which helps out in the remotest villages, said after a year in which floods devastated huge areas, it was not surprising people felt they could not help as much as before. "There is some form of donor fatigue," he said.

**of the day quote**

Some of the services in which India has a trade deficit with China include construction, telecommunication, computer and information services, maintenance and repair services

**ANUPRIYA PATEL** | MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

We have to work hard to make shipping a fast-growing sector so that India can become a world leader in maritime infrastructure as well as a lead player in the maritime economy

**SARBANANDA SONOWAL** | UNION MINISTER

The interest in IPL continues to be high in multiple categories. IPL is unavoidable

**SAJIOG GUPTA** | HEAD (SPORTS), DISNEY STAR

**SHORT TAKES**

**Largest syndicated loan in India**

**New Delhi:** Reliance Industries Ltd and its telecom arm Jio Infocomm have raised a total of \$5 billion in bank-to-back foreign currency loans, the largest syndicated loan in India's corporate history, sources said. Reliance last week raised \$3 billion from 55 banks and Reliance Jio Infocomm secured additional credit of \$2 billion from 18 banks, sources aware of the development said. The \$3 billion financing closed March 31 and the add-on facility of \$2 billion was secured Tuesday, they said.

**APSEZ ends FY23 with 9% growth**

**New Delhi:** Billionaire Gautam Adani's Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd (APSEZ) Wednesday reported 9 per cent growth in cargo handling at seaports it operates for fiscal year ended March 31. At 339 million tonne, this is the largest port cargo ever, APSEZ said in a statement. The firm handled about 32 million tonne of total cargo in March, up 9.5 per cent year-on-year. This is the first time since July 2022 that the volumes crossed the 30-million tonne mark.

**J&J offers \$8.9bn to settle lawsuits**

**New Brunswick:** Johnson & Johnson is earmarking nearly \$9 billion to cover allegations that its baby powder containing talc caused cancer, more than quadrupling the amount that the company had previously set aside to pay for its potential liability. Under a proposal announced Tuesday, a J&J subsidiary will re-file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection and seek court approval for a plan that would result in one of the largest product-liability settlements in US history. The \$8.9 billion that J&J would transfer to the subsidiary, LTL Management, would be payable over the next 25 years. The amount is up from the \$2 billion that the New Brunswick, New Jersey, company set aside in October 2021.

**L&T bags contracts worth over ₹7K-cr**

**New Delhi:** Construction major Larsen & Toubro (L&T) Wednesday said it has bagged multiple contracts of worth more than ₹7,000 crore in the Middle East region. The scope of work comprises engineering, procurement, construction and installation for various new offshore facilities and integration with existing installations, L&T said in a statement. L&T wins "mega" contracts for its hydrocarbon business from a prestigious client in the Middle East, it said.



**It is a matter of pride and satisfaction for me to note that more than 1.8 lakh women and SC/ST entrepreneurs have been sanctioned loans for more than ₹40,600 crore**

**NIRMALA SITHARAMAN** | FINANCE MINISTER

**APPLE'S FIRST RETAIL STORE SOON**

Apple Inc is set to open its first official retail store in India's financial hub of Mumbai, the iPhone maker said Wednesday. The Cupertino, California-based company launched an online retail store in India in 2020. Its 2021 plans for the launch of an offline retail store in the country were delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic



**LITTLE LEAP** WTO revises global trade hope to 1.7% for 2023

**GLOBAL TRADE GROWTH IN 2023 IS STILL EXPECTED TO BE SUBPAR DESPITE A SLIGHT UPGRADE TO GDP PROJECTIONS SINCE LAST FALL**

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

**New Delhi, April 5:** The growth in world trade is expected to drop by a meagre 1.7 per cent in 2023 due to global uncertainties, the World Trade Organisation (WTO) said Wednesday.

The 1.7 per cent forecast is up from the previous estimate of 1 per cent last October.

For 2024, the WTO in its forecast said, the trade growth

should rebound to 3.2 per cent. However, it said, this estimate is more uncertain than usual due to the presence of substantial downside risks, including geopolitical tensions, food supply shocks and the possibility of unforeseen fallout from monetary tightening.

"Weighed down by the effects of the war in Ukraine, stubbornly high inflation, tighter monetary policy and financial market un-



certainty, the volume of world merchandise trade is expected to grow by 1.7 per cent this year,

following 2.7 per cent growth in 2022," the WTO said in a statement. WTO Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala said that trade continues to be a force for resilience in the global economy, but it will remain under pressure from external factors in 2023.

This makes it even more important for governments to avoid trade fragmentation and refrain from introducing obstacles to

trade, she said.

The 2.7 per cent increase in world trade volume in 2022 was weaker than the WTO's October 2022 forecast of 3.5 per cent.

Revision of forecast from 1 per cent to 1.7 per cent for 2023 is due to factors such as relaxation of Covid-19 pandemic controls in China, which is expected to unleash pent-up consumer demand in the country, in turn boosting international trade, it added.

**Steel exports dip to 5-yr low, imports rise to 4-year high**

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

**Mumbai, April 5:** India's steel exports slumped to a five-year low in the financial year that ended in March, as slowing global demand and an export tax hampered shipments, government data compiled by Reuters showed Wednesday.

India, the world's second-biggest producer of crude steel, shipped 6.7 million tonne of finished steel in 2022/23, a decline of 50.2% on the year and the lowest since 2018/19, the data showed.

Major steelmakers had reported a drop in profits in the December quarter, in part because the government had in May last year imposed the export tax, which was withdrawn in November.

Most steel companies, including JSW Steel Ltd, India's biggest steelmaker by capacity, had projected a pick-up in exports in the quarter that ended in March.

Meanwhile, India's imports touched a four-year high at 6 million tonne in 2022/23, a growth of 29% on the year and the highest since 2019/20.

During April-January, India's imports of Russian steel reached an eight-year high, and shipments were nearly five times higher than in the same period a year ago. However, for 2022/23, India was a net exporter of finished steel.

Overall, India's crude steel production reached a record high of 125.32 million tonne in 2022/23, up 4.2% on the year, in line with previous government estimates.

Consumption of total finished steel was 119.17 million tonne in 2022/23, up 12.7% on the year as they purchased shares worth ₹321.93 crore.

media training institutions of Film & Television Institute of India (FTII) and Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute (SRFTI) on the Government's side. On Amazon's side, the LoE involves participation of Amazon Prime Video, Alexa, Amazon Music, Amazon e-marketplace, and IMDB.

Vice President, Asia Pacific, Amazon Prime Video, Gaurav Gandhi said that "our wholistic collaboration with Ministry of I&B looks at every life stage and every corner of integration to stimulate the growth of the industry and we are very optimistic of the pathways it will create."

Guest of Honour for the event, Actor Varun Dhawan spoke about the depths being reached by streaming services. Also present on the occasion were Chetan Krishnaswamy Vice President, Public Policy at Amazon India, Vikram Sahay, Joint Secretary, Min of I&B and other senior officials of the Ministry.



**CHARGED BY COAL**

**Power output scales new heights in FY23**

*India's power generation grows at fastest pace in 33 years fuelling a sharp surge in emissions*

**REUTERS**

**Singapore, April 5:** India's power generation grew at the fastest pace in over three decades in the just-ended fiscal year, a Reuters analysis of government data showed, fuelling a sharp surge in emissions as output from both coal-fired and renewable plants hit records.

Intense summer heatwaves, a colder-than-usual winter in northern India and an economic recovery led to a jump in electricity demand, forcing India to crank up output from coal plants and solar farms as it scrambled to avoid power cuts.

Power generation rose 11.5% to 1,591.11 billion kilowatt-hours (kWh), or units, in the fiscal year ended March 2023, an analysis of daily load data from regulator Grid-India showed, the sharpest increase since year ended March 1990.

Output from plants running on fossil fuels rose 11.2%, the quickest growth in over three decades, thanks to a 12.4% surge in electricity production from coal, the analysis showed, offsetting a 28.7% decline in generation from cleaner gas-fired plants as a global spike in LNG prices deterred usage.

In the new fiscal year that began April 1, Indian power plants are expected to burn about 8% more coal.

The rapid acceleration in India's coal-fired output to address a spike

- Emissions from power gen rose nearly a sixth to 1.15 billion tonne
- Coal-fired power output up 12.4%, gas-fired output down 29%
- Coal share in overall power output rose to 73.1%; highest since 2019
- Renewables output rose 21.7%, share up to 11.8%

in power demand underscores challenges faced by the world's third largest greenhouse gas-emitter in weaning its economy off carbon, as it attempts to ensure energy security to around 1.4 billion Indians.

Total power supplied during the last fiscal year was 1509.15 billion kWh, 8.4% higher than a year earlier but still 6.69 billion units short of demand, the widest deficit in six years.

Electricity generated from coal rose to 1,162.91 billion kWh, the data showed, with its share in overall output rising to 73.1% - the highest level since the year ending March 2019.

India's Central Electricity authority estimates that 1 million kWh of power produced from coal generates 975 tonne of carbon dioxide, while the same amount of power generated from gas produces 475 tonne. A plant fired by lignite, known as brown coal, emits 1,280 tonne to produce equivalent power.

**RENEWABLES PUSH**

Increased fossil fuel burning for power in the world's fifth largest

economy drove up CO2 emissions during the year by nearly a sixth, to 1.15 billion tonne, Reuters calculations based on government data and emissions estimates show.

That is 3.4% of the International Energy Agency's estimate of annual global emissions of 33.8 billion tonne in 2022.

Many major countries boosted coal use in the twelve months due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, but the rise was steepest in India, data from energy think-tank Ember shows.

The government has defended India's high coal use citing lower per capita emissions compared with richer nations and rising renewable energy output.

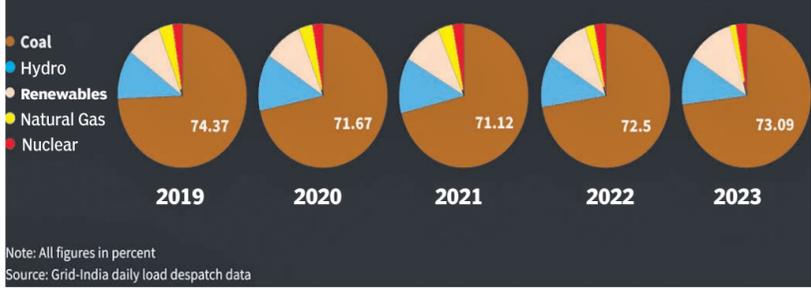
After missing a target to install 175 GW in renewable energy capacity by 2022, India is trying to boost non-fossil capacity - solar and wind energy, nuclear and hydro power, and bio-power - to 500 GW by 2030.

India's solar capacity additions have risen by about a fifth during the just-ended fiscal year, boosting its renewable energy output by a record 33.3 billion units, or 21.7%, to 187.1 billion units.

The green energy output helped prevent as much as 32.5 million tonne of CO2 emissions from power that would otherwise likely have been produced with coal, calculations show.

The share of renewables in power generation, excluding big hydro and nuclear power, rose to 11.8% in 2022/23, compared with 10.8% the previous year, the data showed, driven mainly by a 35% increase in solar output.

**Coal's share in India power output up for second straight year**



**Russian fuel gets backdoor entry into Europe via India**

**ACCESS TO CHEAP RUSSIAN CRUDE HAS BOOSTED OUTPUT AND PROFITS AT INDIAN REFINERIES, ENABLING THEM TO EXPORT REFINED PRODUCTS COMPETITIVELY TO EUROPE AND TAKE BIGGER MARKET SHARE**

**REUTERS**

**New Delhi, April 5:** Record high imports of crude oil from Russia in fiscal 2022-23 helped India's refiners boost exports of diesel and jet fuel to Europe as the continent shunned Russian products, preliminary ship-tracking data from Kpler and Vortexa showed.

Europe typically imported an average of 154,000 barrels per day (bpd) of diesel and jet fuel from India before Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

That increased to 200,000 bpd after the European Union banned Russian oil products imports from February 5, Kpler data showed.

Indian refiners, which rarely bought Russian oil previously due to high transport costs, imported 970,000-981,000 bpd of it in 2022/23, accounting for more than a fifth of overall imports at 4.5-4.6 million bpd, Kpler and Vortexa data showed. Imports from Iraq slipped to 936,000-

- INDIA'S DIESEL EXPORTS TO EUROPE ROSE 12-16%
- EUROPE IMPORTED ABOUT 50% OF INDIA'S JET FUEL
- INDIA HAS ALSO BOOSTED VGO SHIPMENTS TO US

961,000 bpd from nearly 1 million bpd in 2021/22, the data showed.

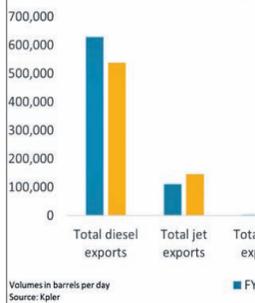
While Russia's flagship grade Urals makes up the bulk of India's purchases, refiners are also importing lighter grades from Russia's Far East and Arctic grades such as Sokol, Arco and ESPO blend.

Russia's largest oil producer Rosneft and top Indian refiner Indian Oil Corp have signed a term deal to substantially increase and diversify oil grades delivered to India.

**OIL PRODUCTS**

As Europe's ban kept Russian products out, India's diesel exports to the continent rose 12-16%

**Indian oil products exports**



to 150,000-167,000 bpd in the last fiscal year, the Kpler and Vortexa data showed. That accounted for about 30% of India's total gasoil exports, up from 21-24% a year earlier, it showed.

The key European buyers of Indian diesel are France, Turkey, Belgium and the Netherlands, the

**AGENCIES**

**New Delhi, April 5:** Amazon India has signed a Letter of Engagement (LoE) with the country's Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (MIB) in a bid to boost the creative economy, Union Minister of Information & Broadcasting Anurag Thakur today announced the partnership between the MIB and Amazon India in the field of media, entertainment and public awareness.

Speaking about the partnership with Amazon, Thakur stated that the partnership with Amazon India is unique on a number of counts and the LoE spans across various aspects of the creative industry.

The LoE leads to a multidimensional partnership between the various organizations under the Ministry and various verticals of Amazon. These include National Film Development Corporation (NFDC), Prasar Bharati, Publications Division, and the

media training institutions of Film & Television Institute of India (FTII) and Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute (SRFTI) on the Government's side. On Amazon's side, the LoE involves participation of Amazon Prime Video, Alexa, Amazon Music, Amazon e-marketplace, and IMDB.

Vice President, Asia Pacific, Amazon Prime Video, Gaurav Gandhi said that "our wholistic collaboration with Ministry of I&B looks at every life stage and every corner of integration to stimulate the growth of the industry and we are very optimistic of the pathways it will create."

Guest of Honour for the event, Actor Varun Dhawan spoke about the depths being reached by streaming services. Also present on the occasion were Chetan Krishnaswamy Vice President, Public Policy at Amazon India, Vikram Sahay, Joint Secretary, Min of I&B and other senior officials of the Ministry.

**BIZ BUZZ**

**Start-ups to contribute 5% to GDP, says Panda**

**Bhubaneswar:** Underlining the importance of start-ups, Subhrakant Panda, Managing Director of Indian Metals & Ferro Alloys Ltd (IMFA) said, "Over the next 4 to 5 years, start-ups are expected to contribute about 5% to India's GDP, which is very significant." He was addressing an industry-academia interaction with the students of National Institute of Technology (NIT), Rourkela. India has a unique positioning in global economy. While most of the countries are looking for export market for their manufacturing industry, India offers a huge unified domestic market because of GST, he added.

During the interaction, Panda, who is also President of FICCI, shared his ideas on "Future of Work: Technology driven Entrepreneurship". He said that immigration, unified domestic market, sustained economic reform and startup ecosystem are key strengths of Indian economy. As business is getting more technology oriented, engineering can contribute to creating more and more entrepreneurs in the country. He appreciated efforts of institutions like NIT in creating opportunities for entrepreneurs. More and more institutions should take similar steps, he suggested. Panda also recalled the long association of IMFA Group with NIT-Rourkela. Founder of IMFA Bansidhar Panda was the Chairman of the Board of Governors of NIT, Rourkela from 2002 to 2007. IMFA has instituted gold medal in the memory of its founder. The medal is awarded every year to the topper in the B. Tech stream of Metallurgical and Materials Engineering of the institute. The interaction session was organised by NIT-Rourkela as part of G20 Jan Bhagidari events. Director General of FICCI Arun Chawla and Director of NIT Rourkela K Umamaheshwar Rao were also present on the occasion.

**Sensex, Nifty rally nearly 1%**

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

**New Delhi, April 5:** Sensex and Nifty rallied nearly 1 per cent Wednesday as the benchmark indices closed in positive territory for the fourth straight trading session on the back of gains in IT and financial shares.

A day ahead of the Reserve Bank of India's monetary policy review, the 30-share BSE Sensex surged 582.87 points or 0.99 per cent to settle at the nearly four-week high of 59,689.31. After a gap-up opening, the index touched a high of 59,747.12 points during the session.

The broader NSE Nifty jumped 159 points or 0.91 per cent to close above the 17,550 level at 17,557.05. A total of 37 Nifty shares gained while 13 declined.

In the four-session gaining streak, Sensex spurred by 2,075 points or 3.5% while Nifty rose by nearly 4% or 605 points.

Investors are waiting for the Reserve Bank of India's monetary policy decision Thursday amid inflation remaining relatively high.

**India's imports of Russian crude in March rose for the seventh straight month to end the fiscal year as top supplier to India, displacing Iraq for the first time**

US. The US took about 11,000-12,000 bpd of VGO in 2022/23, or 65-81% of India's overall exports of the refining feedstock that can be processed further to produce fuels such as gasoline and diesel, the data showed.

In 2021/22, India exported only around 500 bpd of VGO to the United States.

However, India's total annual refined fuel exports in 2022/23 were lower than a year earlier as some refiners shut units for maintenance in later half of 2022.



# ROYAL CHALLENGE AWAITS KNIGHTS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, April 5:** Hit by injuries and unavailability of key players, two-time champions Kolkata Knight Riders will seek home comfort and look to return to winning ways when they face a star-studded Royal Challengers Bangalore in the IPL, here Thursday.

Having started their campaign with a seven-run defeat via Duckworth-Lewis method against Punjab Kings at Mohali, KKR suffered twin blows.

First premier Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan pulled out of the tournament because of family reasons and international commitments and, the next day, regular skipper Shreyas Iyer, who is also their batting mainstay, was ruled out of the entire IPL as he will undergo a surgery to treat his back injury.

KKR had made Nitish Rana their stand-in skipper, assuming that their regular skipper would be back in the second half of the season but with Iyer ruled out completely, the Chandrakant Pandit-coached side may face a leadership crisis.

'Accidental' skipper Rana, who has experience of leading Delhi in white-ball cricket, has a big task ahead of him as the team desperately seeks some solace in its den.

The buzz is that KKR's owner Shah Rukh Khan will be in the house when they return here after 1,438 days. They last played at Eden Gardens April 28, 2019 – a 34-run win over Mumbai Indians before COVID-19 hit the world. The excitement will be at an all-time high for both teams, with crowd-puller Virat Kohli in the visitors' dugout.

KKR looked a shadow of their past in their season-opener, which

was interrupted by a floodlight glitch before the skies opened up.

Iyer's absence has made the batting feeble. A quick-fire fifty-run partnership between Andre Russell and Venkatesh Iyer, who was promoted to No. 4, was the highlight of their batting against Punjab.

KKR also can take positives from a cracking start by Afghan wicketkeeper-batter Rahmanullah Gurbaz, who smashed a flurry of boundaries and a 101-metre six before perishing for 22.



KKR had blamed the power failure in the innings break for their drop in momentum, but the truth is they will have to raise the bar.

On the bowling front, the likes of Tim Southee and Sunil Narine leaked runs, something they will have to address. Narine looked to have lost his mystery ball as the Punjab batters took him to the cleaners.

KKR's attack will be put to test against the likes of Faf du Plessis and Virat Kohli, who looked in imperious touch in an unbeaten 82 in their eight-wicket win over Mumbai Indians.

RCB's pace trio of Mohammed Siraj, Harshal Patel and Akash Deep will also look to make it count on a seaming-friendly Eden. But they are likely to miss English pacer Reece Topley, who suffered a shoulder dislocation. David Willey is expected to replace him.



## PBKS sign Brar as Bawa's replacement

**Mohali:** Punjab Kings (PBKS) Wednesday announced the signing young all-rounder Gurmoor Singh Brar as a replacement for the injured Raj Angad Bawa in the IPL. Brar was picked up PBKS for Rs 20 lakh, said a statement issued by the IPL. Bawa, who played two games for PBKS last season, has been ruled out of the ongoing IPL due to a left shoulder injury. A left-handed batting all-rounder, Brar made his first-class debut for Punjab in December last year. The 22-year-old has featured in five first-class matches and scored 107 runs at a strike rate of 120.22 and picked up seven wickets at an economy rate of 3.80. PBKS defeated KKR by seven runs via DLS method in their campaign opener here April 1. PBKS will take on Rajasthan Royals in Guwahati Wednesday.

## KKR ROPE IN ROY FOR ₹2.8 CRORE



**Kolkata:** England opener Jason Roy was Wednesday roped in by Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) to give the side a boost following injury to regular captain Shreyas Iyer and the pullout of Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan. KKR did not elaborate whether Roy will be available for their IPL home game against RCB Thursday. The two-time IPL champions were dealt a huge injury blow when Iyer was ruled out for the entire season due to a back injury, while Shakib pulled out citing personal and national commitments. "Kolkata Knight Riders have signed England's Jason Roy for Rs. 2.8 crore for the TATA IPL 2023 from his base price of Rs. 1.5 crore," said KKR in a statement Wednesday. Roy, who first featured in the 2017 edition of the IPL for Gujarat Lions, last played in the 2021 season for Sunrisers Hyderabad.

## KUMBLE PRAISES SAI SUDHARSAN



**New Delhi:** Young Sai Sudharsan looked an organised player and created an impact for Gujarat Titans against Delhi Capitals in their last IPL game here, said the legendary Anil Kumble. Chasing a below-par 163, the 21-year-old anchored the chase with a calm and composed 62 not out as Titans won by six wickets with 11 balls to spare, here Tuesday. "He looked like a very organised player. Good against fast bowling, good against swing. He came into the first game as an impact player and certainly created an impact, he played a cameo," the former India captain-cum-coach told official broadcaster 'JioCinema'. "Today, it was three-down and all the big stars gone. Shubman Gill was gone, (Wriddhiman) Saha got out, and his captain Hardik Pandya got out. Both the Tamil Nadu guys (Vijay Shankar and Sudharsan) got together and put together a partnership."

## GILL REACHES CAREER-BEST 4TH SPOT IN ODI BATTERS' RANKINGS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Dubai, April 5:** India opener Shubman Gill has climbed a spot to career-best fourth position among batters in the latest ICC ODI Player Rankings released Wednesday. Apart from Gill, Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma too features in the top 10.

While Kohli also moved a spot to seventh, Rohit remained static at eighth in the list led by Pakistan skipper Babar Azam.

Pacer Mohammed Siraj continues to be the only Indian bowler in

the top 10 as he held on to his number three spot, behind Australian quick Josh Hazlewood and New Zealand's Trent Boult.

South Africa's Aiden Markram gained 13 spots to reach 41st position in the batting chart and 16 places to 32nd in the all-rounders' list, another career-best feat in both the departments.

In T20I rankings, Suryakumar Yadav retained his top position among batters, while Hardik Pandya remained static on second in the all-rounders' list.

# Kings beat Royals narrowly



SHIKHAR DHAWAN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



PRABHSIMRAN SINGH

off the filed grimacing after taking Shahrukh Khan's catch earlier on.

Yashasvi Jaiswal was first to go as he sent the ball straight the fielder. The Ashwin experiment also failed as the senior spinner perished for a duck. Coming at No.3 Buttler, hit an 11-ball-19. He was dropped in the third over but couldn't much as he became Ellis' first victim of the night.

Skipper Sanju Samson (42, 25b, 5x4, 1x6) looked in good nick as he timed the ball well. He smacked Harpreet Brar for back to back boundaries before greeting Ellis with twin fours.

Rajasthan were 89/3 at the halfway mark. But the Punjab bowlers managed to dry out the boundaries and with the required run rate increasing Samson succumbed under the pressure and mistimed a cross seamer by Ellis.

Ellis then sent back local favourite Riyan Parag (20) who played a quick cameo and Devdutt Padikal (21) packing before Hetmyer and Jurel hit a flurry of sixes and fours to bring the equation down to 15 off the last over.



NATHAN ELLIS

Earlier, Prabhsimran mercilessly punished the Rajasthan bowlers during the first 10 overs to bring up his IPL maiden fifty off 28 balls as Punjab was off to a rollicking start. He and Dhawan added 90 runs for the opening stand off just 61 balls.

On the other hand, Dhawan, switched gears effortlessly as he was 30 off 30 balls at one stage playing second fiddle to Prabhsimran. Once his opening partner was dismissed, Dhawan upheld the ante as he scored 56 off next 26 balls that he faced.

The Punjab Kings skipper was dropped on 50 and made most of his reprieve as he played the role of sheet anchor, ensuring his team had enough runs on the board with dew setting in. His inning was studied with nine fours and three maximums that came in the second half.

Prabhsimran started by smacking Trent Boult for lacerating drive in the first over, making his intentions clear. He followed that up by slapping a six over backward square off KM Asif in the second over. Dhawan joined the party briefly with back-to-back fours in the next over.

But the young opener was brutal on Asif, whom he hammered for three fours and a six in the fourth over. He also didn't spare Boult and Ashwin.

The 22-year-old first smacked a length ball over mid off before cutting one behind point for a second

boundary. He followed that up with a short-arm pull over the mid-wicket region for a maximum.

The introduction of spin didn't bother Prabhsimran either as he continued his boundary hitting spree, hitting Ashwin to two consecutive fours as Punjab raced to 63/0 in the Powerplay. With a half century in his kitty, Prabhsimran welcomed back Boult for his second spell with a flat-batted six down the ground.

His fabulous innings came to an end, courtesy Jason Holder and Buttler, who took a sensational catch, diving forward from long on. Punjab were handed another blow as Dhawan's powerful drive hit the big-hitting Bhanuka Rajapaksa in his right arm, forcing the Sri Lankan to retire hurt on 1.

A spectator for most part of Prabhsimran's innings, Dhawan upped the ante as he played some well-timed shots to get to his half century in 36 balls. Jitesh Sharma showcased his batting prowess in his 15-ball 27 that included in 89m monstrous six off Boult.

**BRIEF SCORES:** PBKS 197/4 (Shikhar Dhawan 86 n o, Prabhsimran Singh 60, Jitesh Sharma 27; Jason Holder 2/29, Ravichandran Ashwin 1/25) beat RR 192/7 (Sanju Samson 42, Shimron Hetmyer 36, Dhruv Juyal 32 n o; Nathan Ellis 4/30, Arshdeep Singh 2/47) by 5 runs.

## Saina makes Rd 1 exit from Orleans Masters



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Yigit 4-11. Saina, however, fought back to narrow down the deficit to 13-15 but the gap was eventually too much as the Turkish shuttler took the first game.

A rusty Saina was down against in the second game, trailing 6-11 at the mid-game interval and eventually losing the tie in straight games.

Sameer Verma, on the other hand, squandered a game lead to lose 19-21, 21-19, 21-17 against Ireland's Nhat Nguyen.

In other first-round men's singles matches, India's Manjunath defeated higher-ranked Victor Svendsen of Denmark 24-22, 25-23 while Rajawat beat compatriot Kiran George 21-18, 21-13.

Manjunath will play Taipei's Yu Jen, who was lucky to progress after fifth seed Rasmus Gemke retired in the second game after pocketing the first.

Rajawat, on the other hand, will be up against top seed Kenta Nishimoto of Japan. Nishimoto prevailed over Taipei's Chia Hao Lee 21-18, 21-11.

Tanya eked out a 21-17 21-18 win over Leonice Huet of France in the women's singles while Aakarshi fought from a game down to beat Japan's Natsuki Nidaira 8-21, 21-13, 8-21. Tasnim Mir went down fighting to Germany's Yvonne Li 22-20, 13-21, 5-21.

## Ministry approves financial aid for 12 para shuttlers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 5:** The Sports Ministry's Mission Olympic Cell (MOC) has approved financial assistance to 12 para-badminton players, including Pramod Bhagat and Mansi Joshi, for their participation in the upcoming Brazil Para-Badminton International.

The tournament is a Level 2 event and part of the Paris Paralympics pathway for 2023. The funding has been cleared under ministry's Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) and will cover financial assistance to the players and their support staff.

The funding will cover athletes' and the support staff's travel, visa, and insurance costs, along with their boarding and lodging, their entry fees for the competition and Out of Pocket Allowance (OPA) for other daily financial needs.

The para shuttlers who have been granted assistance are Bhagat, Joshi, Krishna Nagar, Sukant Kadam, Nitesh Kumar, Manoj Sarkar, Suhas Yathiraj, Tarun Dhillon, Mandeep Kaur, Nithya Sre, Parul Parmar and Manisha Ramadass.

## Chelsea, Liverpool draw again

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**London, April 5:** Another 0-0 stalemate between Chelsea and Liverpool. Another match highlighting the sharp decline of two of England's top teams who, at this rate, are unlikely to be playing in the Champions League next season.

Chelsea were playing their first game since the firing of Graham Potter Sunday but little was different under his interim replacement, Bruno Salto.

Indeed, there was something very familiar about the teams serving up a goalless draw. That has been the score in this fixture in their last four meetings — both Premier League matches this season and both domestic cup finals last season, which were ultimately won by Liverpool via penalty shootouts.

The top four, and qualification for the Champions League, is looking increasingly unlikely for both teams. Liverpool, which ran Manchester City so close for the title last season, is in eighth place and seven points off fourth-place Tottenham. Chelsea, on the back of spending USD 630 million in the last two transfer windows, is four points further back in 11th place.

Scoring goals remains Chelsea's



big problem, with the expensively assembled team failing to net at home for the fifth time in 2023.

Reece James had a strike disallowed for a narrow offside against Enzo Fernandez and Kai Havertz's celebrations for a goal in the second half were cut short after VAR spotted the ball rebounded off his arm and into the net after Liverpool

goalkeeper Alisson Becker saved the striker's shot.

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp was satisfied with the reaction of his team after a humbling 1-4 loss at Manchester City which led to him making six changes — including dropping Mohamed Salah, Trent Alexander-Arnold and Andrew Robertson to the bench.

## FOOTBALL ROUND-UP

### INTER-JUVE ITALIAN CUP SEMI ENDS IN SCUFFLE

**Turin:** The Italian Cup semifinal between Inter Milan and Juventus ended with a mass scuffle and three red cards following a 1-1 draw in the first leg. After Romelu Lukaku converted a penalty in stoppage time to equalise for Inter Tuesday, the Belgium striker picked up his second yellow card for apparently taunting the crowd. Juan Cuadrado, who had put Juventus ahead in the 83rd, and Inter goalkeeper Samir Handanovic were also shown red cards as they clashed after the final whistle, with players from both teams then getting involved as they tried to separate the two. Lukaku, Cuadrado and Handanovic should all miss the second leg April 26. Last-place Serie A club Cremonese hosts Fiorentina in the other semifinal Wednesday.

### OSASUNA UPSET ATHLETIC, REACH COPA DEL REY FINAL

**Madrid:** Osasuna pulled off yet another Copa del Rey upset by eliminating Athletic Bilbao in extra time to reach the final for the first time in nearly two decades. Late substitute Pablo Ibañez scored with a volley from the edge of the area on a breakaway in the 116th minute Tuesday to secure a 2-1 aggregate win that sent the Pamplona club to the final for the first time since 2005. Athletic had forced extra time at San Mamés Stadium after winning 1-0 in regulation with a goal by Iñaki Williams in the 33rd. Osasuna had won the first leg 1-0 at home. Osasuna will play the final against either Barcelona or Real Madrid, who meet in the other semifinal at the Camp Nou. Barcelona can advance with a draw after winning the first leg 1-0 in Madrid.

### FREIBURG SHOW BAYERN GERMAN CUP EXIT DOOR

**Munich:** Freiburg forward Lucas Höler scored a last-minute penalty to knock Bayern Munich out of the German Cup. Höler struck his effort in under the crossbar in the fifth minute of injury time Tuesday to send Freiburg into the semifinals. The modest club from the southwest of Germany reached the final last year. The spot-kick was awarded for a handball by Bayern substitute Jamal Musiala as he blocked Höler's attempt at goal. The ball hit both of Musiala's arms, bouncing from one to the other. Bayern were bidding to win the competition for the first time in three years after embarrassing exits in the last two seasons. Borussia Mönchengladbach routed Bayern 5-0 in the second round last season and Holstein Kiel knocked the Bavarian powerhouse out at the same stage the season before.

### LUKAKU REPRESENTATIVE URGES ACTION AFTER RACIST INCIDENT

**Milan:** Romelu Lukaku's management company reacted with outrage after the Inter Milan forward was shown a second yellow card and then sent off for a gesture toward Juventus fans who directed racist chants at him. The incident occurred after Lukaku converted a penalty in stoppage time to earn Inter a 1-1 draw in the Italian Cup semifinals Tuesday. Lukaku held his finger to his lips as if to silence the crowd after scoring. Lukaku's gesture enraged the opposing team and the game ended in a scuffle between the two squads, with Juventus winger Juan Cuadrado and Inter goalkeeper Samir Handanovic also sent off. "Tonight's racist remarks made towards Romelu Lukaku by Juventus fans in Turin were beyond despicable and cannot be accepted," Roc Nation Sports International president Michael Yormark said. "Romelu deserves an apology from Juventus, and I expect the league to condemn the behaviour of this group of Juventus supporters immediately," Yormark added.