



CALCULATED RISK

Actor Mrunal Thakur says she believes in taking chances and is overjoyed that her choices are being rewarded

LEISURE P2



CHINA ENDS TAIWAN DRILLS

China successfully completes its three-day large-scale fire and fury military drills 'encircling' Taiwan

INTERNATIONAL P10



AIMING FOR 1ST WIN

Delhi Capitals and Mumbai Indians to look for their maiden win in IPL 2023 when they lock horns today

SPORTS P12



ECSTATIC EASTER: Hungarian men wearing folk costumes pour water onto a woman during a traditional Easter Monday celebration in Holloko, Hungary. Although Christianity is widespread throughout the world, the Easter celebrations like sprinkling are mostly confined to Central-Europe

Dragon lets off steam as Shah visits Arunachal

India last week outrightly rejected China's move renaming 11 places in the state, which it claims as Southern Tibet

AGENCIES

Beijing, April 10: China Monday criticised Home Minister Amit Shah's visit to Arunachal Pradesh, stating that it violated Chinese sovereignty over the area, days after India slammed Beijing's move to rename some places in the border state in an attempt to stake its claim over the area.

While there was no immediate reaction from New Delhi over the Chinese foreign ministry's strong reaction over Home Minister Shah's visit, India routinely rejects such objections by China to visits by its leaders to Arunachal Pradesh.

During his visit Monday, Shah launched 'Vibrant Villages Programme' from Arunachal's border village Kibithoo, India's easternmost place, which is about 11 km from the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China and about 40 km from the India, China and Myanmar tri-junction.

Responding to a question on Shah's visit, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said, "Zangnan (the Chinese name for Arunachal Pradesh) is part of China's territory."

"The activity of the senior Indian official in Zangnan violates China's territorial sovereignty and is not conducive to peace and tranquility in the border areas. We are firmly against this," he said at a media briefing here.

Last week, China announced renaming of 11 more places in Arunachal Pradesh in Chinese which they claim as Southern Tibet, evoking a sharp reaction from India. "We have seen such reports. This is not the first time China has made such an attempt. We reject this outright," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said in New Delhi.



Gone are those days when people could encroach into our land. Now, they cannot even take a pin's tip worth of our land

AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

"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.

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.

Last month, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said the situation along the LAC in eastern Ladakh remained "very fragile" and is "quite dangerous" in military assessment because of close deployments of troops of both sides in some pockets though "substantial" progress has been made in the disengagement process in many areas.

Contd...P4

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Yes, he is visiting a tiger reserve today. But how did you know?

JHARSUGUDA BYPOLL CONG NAMES TARUN PANDEY

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 10: The Congress Monday named Tarun Pandey as its candidate for the upcoming by-election to Jharsuguda Assembly constituency in Odisha.

All India Congress Committee (AICC) President Mallikarjun Kharge has approved the candidature of Pandey for the bypoll, the party's General Secretary, Mukul Wasnik said in a press statement.

Pandey is the son of former Jharsuguda MLA Birendra Pandey who died last month. Birendra was elected to the state Assembly thrice from the Jharsuguda Assembly constituency in 1980, 1985 and 1995.

Thanking the Congress for selecting him for the crucial bypoll, Tarun said he will raise issues like air pollution, unemployment, and law and order situation during the election.

The ruling Biju Janata Dal has already fielded slain Minister Naba Kishore Das's daughter Dipali for the bypoll. BJP is also likely to nominate its youth leader Tankadhar Tripathy. Voting for the bypoll will be held May 10 and results will be declared May 13. The bypoll to Jharsuguda was necessitated after the murder of state minister and MLA Naba Kishore Das.

EC: AAP gets nat'l status, TMC, NCP & CPI lose tag

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 10: The Election Commission Monday recognised the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) as a national party and withdrew the national party status of the All India Trinamool Congress, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and the Communist Party of India (CPI).

In an order issued Monday, the Commission also revoked the state party status granted to RLD in Uttar Pradesh, BRS in Andhra Pradesh, PDA in Manipur, PMK in Puducherry, RSP in West Bengal and MPC in Mizoram.

The Commission said the AAP has been named as a national

- The Commission said the AAP has been named as a national party based on its electoral performance in four states -- Delhi, Goa, Punjab and Gujarat
- The BJP, Congress, CPI(M), Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), National People's Party (NPP) and the AAP are now national parties

party based on its electoral performance in four states -- Delhi, Goa, Punjab and Gujarat. The Arvind Kejriwal-led party is in power in Delhi and Punjab.

The poll panel said that the status of NCP, CPI and the Trinamool

Congress as national political parties would be withdrawn.

The BJP, Congress, CPI(M), Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), National People's Party (NPP) and the AAP are now national parties.

The Commission said that NCP and Trinamool Congress will be recognised as state parties in Nagaland and Meghalaya respectively based on their performance in the recently concluded assembly elections.

It also granted recognised state political party status to the Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) in Nagaland, Voice of the People Party in Meghalaya and the Tipra Motha in Tripura.

State sizzles as mercury crosses 40°C mark

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 10: Odisha sizzled Monday with mercury crossing 40 degrees Celsius mark Monday for the first time this summer season as hot and humid weather conditions have made a comeback to state.

According to the evening bulletin of the Bhubaneswar centre of India Meteorological Department (IMD), Jharsuguda recorded the highest day temperature of 40.4 degrees Celsius, followed by Baripada in Mayurbhanj district with 40 degrees Celsius.

Capital city Bhubaneswar, Chandbali, Angul and Sambalpur registered a maximum temperature of 39.7 degrees Celsius each.

Similarly, Malkangiri and Boudh towns recorded 39.5 degrees Celsius each, while it was 39.2 degrees at Sonepur and Titlagarh, and 39.1 degrees in Cuttack.

Bhadrak, Jagatsinghpur and Sundargarh towns in Odisha have witnessed a day temperature of 39 degrees Celsius each.

The Regional Meteorological Centre, in its Monday evening bulletin, however, issued thunder-



storm warning for several districts.

Bhubaneswar Met Centre Scientist Umasankar Das said that temperatures will continue to rise by 2 to 3 degrees Celsius in maximum places across Odisha

during next 2-3 days under influence of dry and hot air coming from north-west direction.

"A significantly higher number of heatwave days are predicted over parts of Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Punjab, and Haryana," IMD Director General Mrutyunjay Mahapatra said.

As per the announcement made by the government earlier, morning classes for all the students of Class I to XII will start from April 11 onwards from 7 am to 11.30 am.

WOMAN TRAMPLED BY WILD ELEPHANT

Bhubaneswar: A woman died and another was injured in an attack by a wild elephant in Panabaraj village under Town police station limit of Khurda district Monday. The elephant crushed the woman to death near a playground while she was out for morning walk. Another woman injured in the attack was admitted to Khurda district headquarters hospital. Police identified the deceased woman as Kiranbala Mangaraj. In another incident, a mother elephant was seen guarding the carcass of her baby in Kusumandi forest near Koida in Sundargarh district. The baby elephant aged about three to four years old was recently released into the forest by the Forest department after treatment about a fortnight ago. The cause of the death of the baby elephant is not yet known.

BBC reacts as Twitter dubs it 'govt-funded media'

AFTER LABELLING THE @BBC HANDLE, MUSK TWEETED, "WHAT DOES BBC STAND FOR AGAIN? I KEEP FORGETTING"

AGENCIES

London, April 10: Elon Musk-owned Twitter has labelled the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) as a government funded media on the microblogging site, leading to a sharp reaction from the British public broadcaster which objected to the move and sought clarification, Monday.

The taxpayer-funded licence fee supported UK media corporation said it has contacted the social media giant over the designation on its @BBC account to resolve the issue as soon as possible.

"The BBC is, and always has been, independent. We are funded by the British public through the licence fee," the BBC statement said.



An email exchange with Twitter chief Elon Musk suggests that he is considering providing a label that would link all media organisations to exact funding sources. "We are aiming for maximum

transparency and accuracy. Linking to ownership and source of funds probably makes sense," Musk's email to BBC reads. "I do think media organisations should be self-aware and not falsely

claim the complete absence of bias. All organisations have bias, some obviously much more than others. I should note that I follow BBC News on Twitter, because I think it is among the least biased," it said.

"We need to add more granularity to editorial influence, as it varies greatly. I don't actually think the BBC is as biased as some other government-funded media, but it is silly of the BBC to claim zero influence"

The level of the GBP 159 annual licence fee, which is required by law to watch live TV broadcasts or live streaming in the UK, is set by the British government and paid for by individual UK households.

While the @BBC account, which has 2.2 million followers, has been given the label, much larger accounts associated with the BBC's news and sport output are not currently being described in the same way, the BBC said.

According to the London-headquartered media organisation, the @BBC Twitter account primarily shares updates about BBC-produced TV programmes, radio shows, podcasts and other non-news material.

The BBC Charter states the cor-

Musk follows Modi

Twitter boss and billionaire Elon Musk has started following Prime Minister Narendra Modi. A screenshot of a list of 195 people he follows showed PM Modi's name Monday and started gaining traction on the microblogging platform soon after it was uploaded. With a whopping 134.3 million followers, which is around 30 per cent of total users, Musk is the most followed person on Twitter. PM Modi is also one of the most followed leaders with 87.7 million followers on Twitter. Elon Musk took charge of Twitter in late October last year.

poration must be independent, particularly over editorial and creative decisions, the times and manner in which its output and services are supplied, and in the management of its affairs.

5 DIE IN LOUISVILLE BUILDING SHOOTING

Louisville (US): Police say five people have been killed in a shooting at a bank building in downtown Louisville and the suspected shooter is also dead. Police say six others were brought to the hospital after the Monday morning shooting. The Louisville Metro Police Department said Monday on Twitter there was an ongoing situation and asked people to avoid the area. "There are multiple casualties," police said in the tweet. Police described it as an "active aggressor." Witnesses who left the building said they heard gunfire inside the building. Numerous police vehicles were seen on television footage. WHAS reporters said they saw people being taken from the scene in ambulances. In a tweet, Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear said he was heading to the scene.

leisure



HALLE BERRY BARES ALL WHILE DRINKING WINE

'Catwoman' Halle Berry has given her online devotees a saucy treat by sharing a photo of her drinking wine, naked on a balcony. The *John Wick* actress heated up the Internet by sharing the snap on Instagram. She wrote, "I do what I wanna do. Happy Saturday."

MADONNA DESPERATE TO REVERSE PLASTIC SURGERY

The 'Queen of Pop', Madonna, is reportedly doing everything she can to 'look more like her old self', ahead of her sold-out global tour as the backlash over her changing appearance does affect her, reports *aceshowbiz.com*. The singer is reportedly deeply 'affected' by online criticism.



FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com
accuracy • reliability • trust
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL \$5181

ARIES
You will feel like going for a little excursion to some place today. It could be to some historical place that you have not visited before. However, Ganesh suggests, in keeping with your responsibility of being a family-man, you should pay heed to the needs of your loved ones.

TAURUS
You are likely to have differences with your parents in the early hours of the day. Ganesh urge you not to quarrel or confront them. Do not retaliate in any way. Act decent and discreet. Respect their views, wishes and sentiments. Be careful. You may have health problems later in the day.

GEMINI
You will be faced with difficult situations and circumstances today. You will become sentimental as a result. You will be able to extricate yourself only when the time is right from these adverse circumstances. You will receive co-operation from your colleagues.

CANCER
A day of challenges, but you will be ambitious and bold to surmount them. Yet you will not cross limits. Your evocation to God will repel all hurdles and grant you energy. Health will be good. A fabulous time, says Ganesh.

LEO
Your day will be filled with interesting activities. You will be able to put across and prove your point of view today. In the afternoon you will be able to finish your work. You ought to make the most of the day, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
Your thinking will be very sharp today, and at the same time you will feel passionate about work. In the afternoon, you can afford to unwind a bit. Those in the public sector will feel inspired and have an agreeable day. Your no-nonsense attitude will be very apparent, says Ganesh.

LIBRA
Ganesh says you will wish to spend the maximum time with your beloved only. After some intimate discussions with the person you will find yourself growing closer to them. Today you will be the center of attention for a lot of people today. People will be happy and impressed by your wit and ability.

SCORPIO
An eventful day lies ahead of you, says Ganesh. The first half of the day would be packed with routine activities, fighting cut-throat competition on field. However, you become a fashionista in the second half as you plan to attend a social function and take the centre stage.

SAGITTARIUS
The day has to offer a mixture of activities. Today, work comes after home & family. Your attention is diverted towards your kith and kins today. You are an important member of the family and your opinion matters to them. For some of you, evening is full of romantic conversations with your beloved.

CAPRICORN
Increase in workload will not make you tense, in fact, you will rise to the challenge and try to complete your targets as fast as you can. Your colleagues will play a major role in enabling you to dispose off the pile of files lying on your desk, predicts Ganesh. If you are a businessman, keep your eyes and ears open. You may not be the biggest fish in the pond, but you can give a really tough time to the strongest of the competitors.

AQUARIUS
You will bring excellence to the table. But, the results may not reflect the same. The day progresses on slow pace and no major events are in store for you, says Ganesh. On the personal front, you may have some problems with your spouse, but you will learn to ignore them, sit back and unwind.

PISCES
You are likely to embark on a picnic or travel today, or will be busy planning for the same. You will not be able to concentrate on your work till noon, but later on you will find yourself making excellent progress. You will be able to meet all your deadlines and hence will be able to implement your plans for travel, says Ganesh.

Mrunal believes in taking chances



Mumbai: Actress Mrunal Thakur has been upping her game in the industry with films like *Sita Ramam* and *Jersey*. In her latest release, *Gumraah*, she is being lauded for her portrayal of a righteous cop who goes to great lengths to uncover the truth behind a crime. Sharing her experience from the film, she recently said that she always believed in taking chances and is overjoyed that her choices are being rewarded.

Speaking about her role in *Gumraah*, the actress said, "Playing a tough cop in *Gumraah* was a challenging yet thrilling experience. I have always loved taking chances and doing unconventional roles, and I am glad that my choices have paid off. When I hear compliments about the film's engaging second half, and how my role contributed to it, it makes me feel great as a performer. I am grateful for the opportunity to bring impactful characters to life on screen."

She added, "I had to put in a lot of effort to get into the skin of the character, but it was worth it. I am glad that the audience has appreciated my performance."

The actress will be next seen in *Pippa* and *Ankh Micholi*.



AMITABH'S TAKE ON SMOKING, DRINKING

Mumbai: Top actor Amitabh Bachchan has opened up about smoking and drinking and their effects on his health in his most recent blog.

An excerpt from his blog provides details on how he started drinking. It said that as the last paper for the graduate degree was over, a few of his classmates celebrated with the pure alcohol kept in the lab. The daredevil experiment took its toll, and he got extremely sick. He recalled the event as an act that taught a lesson very early on about the effects, or rather the disaffect, of the 'elixir'.

He further described when he was employed in Kolkata, the City of Joy, that his natural curriculum seemed to be in line with the phrase 'social drinking'. He did not deny its consumption but remains reluctant to share the circumstances of his leaving it. He also said that he left smoking cigarettes with a sudden and immediate resolve. Narrating the decision as 'a good riddance', he summed up that it was the immediate removal of cancer.

Suhana bags her maiden major endorsement deal

Mumbai: Shah Rukh Khan's daughter Suhana Khan's debut in Zoya Akhtar's adaptation of *The Archies* might possibly be the biggest launch of the decade, where she will be playing the role of Betty Cooper.

The buzz around Suhana's film debut is growing with each passing day. Her recent public outings, like her appearance at the Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre (NMACC), have also added to the anticipation. According to sources close to the development, Suhana has taken

the next big step in her professional career and signed her first major endorsement deal. She has been signed by an international makeup and cosmetics brand that has been associated with Alia Bhatt and Athiya Shetty in the recent past. An official announcement will be made in the next few days.

Suhana has the youthful energy that a lot of brands want to tap into. The thought behind signing her is that in the age of social media, Gen Z actors have a natural advantage of having high social media connections.

The Archies also marks the debut of Sridevi's younger daughter Khushi Kapoor and Amitabh Bachchan's grandson Agastya Nanda. The trailer is supposed to launch next month.



Anil boasts 'Sexy at 60'

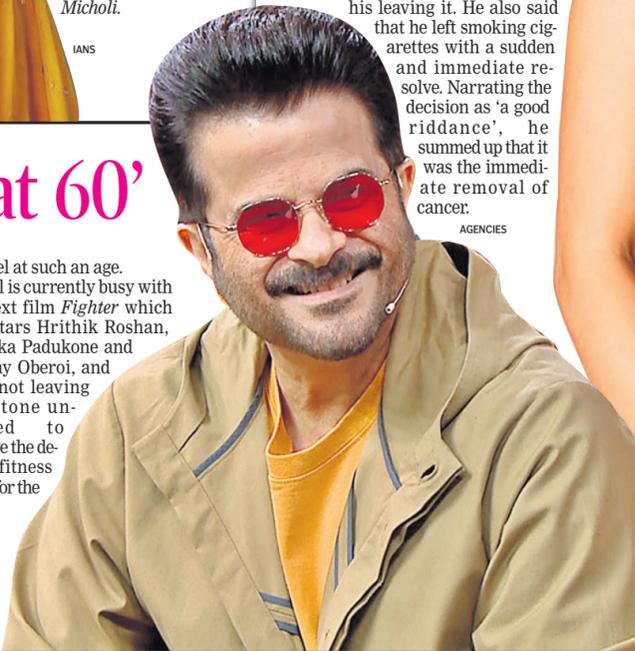
The 'Parinda' actor posts videos of working out in minus 110 degree Celsius with the help of an oxygen mask

Mumbai: Mr. India actor Anil Kapoor, known to be one of the fittest actors of his generation, is often lauded by the audience for his youthful looks at the age of 66. The actor once again left the audience stunned when he worked out in subzero temperature.

The *Parinda* actor recently posted videos in which he was seen undergoing cryotherapy, working out in minus 110 degree Celsius with the help of an oxygen mask. He can be seen working out shirtless in an enclosed area with temperatures that are unfathomable. In the second video, the actor also showed a thumbs-up sign while jumping and jogging. He wrote, "Say goodbye to Naughty at 40, it's time to be Sexy at 60... #fightermodeon."

Soon after Anil posted the video, members of the film fraternity and his fans flooded the comments section with appreciation for the actor's dedication and single point focus to excel at such an age.

Anil is currently busy with his next film *Fighter* which also stars Hrithik Roshan, Deepika Padukone and Akshay Oberoi, and he is not leaving any stone unturned to achieve the desired fitness levels for the action film.



PEANUTS



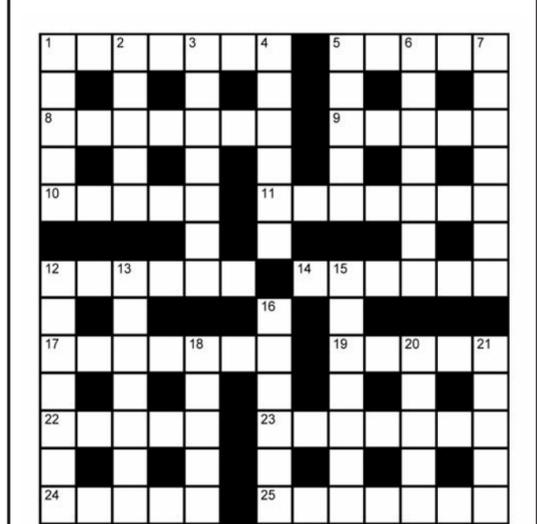
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



FUN post CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Toasts
 - 5 Swiss capital
 - 8 Thankless person
 - 9 Full of life
 - 10 Bogus
 - 11 Ear lobe
 - 12 Respond
 - 14 Excavating machine
 - 17 Cookout item
 - 19 Caterpillar, for one
 - 22 Coastal feature
 - 23 Passionate
 - 24 Ballet skirts
 - 25 Catherine the Great, e.g.
 - 5 Bank note, informally
 - 6 Stomach alkaliser
 - 7 Eton, e.g.
 - 12 Nonbeliever
 - 13 Additional story line
 - 15 Old fashioned desk (4-3)
 - 16 Figure of speech
 - 18 Mentions
 - 20 Washer cycle
 - 21 Regions

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.

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

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

A	S	T	O	U	N	D	C	O	L	I	C	
D	E	R	P	A	O	I	A					
I	N	E	R	T	N	O	N	S	T	O	P	
E	M	O	G	S	R	I						
U	N	I	N	T	E	L	L	I	G	E	N	T
N	H	E	D			O						
A	N	G	L	E	R	J	E	K	Y	L	L	
F	M	A	R			O						
F	I	S	H	I	N	G	T	A	C	K	L	E
A	T	N	H	T	O	A						
B	R	A	V	U	R	A	I	R	O	N	S	
L	E	R	T	S	O	N	E					
E	Y	R	I	E		T	A	N	G	O	E	D

SUDOKU

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

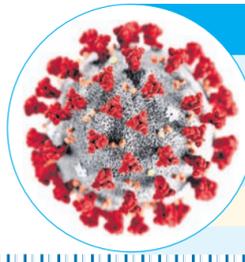
downtown

COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	68,49,96,888	65,78,02,008	68,37,864
India	4,47,62,496	4,41,96,318	5,30,979
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

NUMBERS IN MIND

CHSE Plus-II exam papers' evaluation starts at BJB College in Bhubaneswar, Monday



Nod to ₹54.81cr projects



Bhubaneswar, April 10: The Western Odisha Development Council (WODC) has approved 566 projects recommended by MPs, MLAs and others worth Rs 54.81 crore during its meeting held here Monday, an official said.

The meeting was held under the chairmanship of WODC chairman Asit Tripathy. Deogarh MLA Subash Chandra Panigrahi, Lanjigarh MLA Pradip Kumar Dishari, Bargarh MLA Debesh Acharya and Khariar MLA Adhiraj Mohan Panigrahi attended the meet and raised various issues related to implementation of WODC projects.

MPs and MLAs concerned have recommended the projects between December 1, 2022 and

The WODC chairman informed the council regarding enhancement of GIA from Rs 200 crore to Rs 325 crore by the state govt in 2023-24 Budget, and expressed his gratitude to the CM for the same

March 31, 2023. Welcoming all the members, Tripathy apprised the council regarding enhancement of grant in aid (GIA) from Rs 200 crore to Rs 325 crore by the state government in 2023-24 state Budget, and expressed his gratitude to Chief

Minister Naveen Patnaik for the same.

All the members appreciated the steps taken by WODC for completion of community centres and kalyan mandaps for which Rs 125 crore has been earmarked.

The WODC chairman emphasised on measures taken for overall transformation and transparency regarding the implementation of council-funded projects, utilisation of projects for public use, construction of auditoriums, livelihood projects including tourism related activities, which are sustainable with local ownership.

He also called upon all the members to work in a team spirit.

Proposals received for completion of 1,147 WODC-funded community centres or kalyan mandaps to the tune of Rs 64.24 crore, engagement of four more technical personnel to different districts, functioning of social media cell were vividly deliberated and were approved by the council.

The MLAs expressed their gratitude to the CM for enhancement of allocation.

Adviser and all nine expert members also put forth the issues of their respective districts.



EXCLUSIVE DISPLAY: Maruti Suzuki Jimny being showcased at NEXA Cyber City (Jyote Motors Private Limited) in Chandrasekharpur area of Bhubaneswar, Monday. Jyote Group MD Deviyoti Patnaik, Maruti Suzuki India Limited RM Kartik Raja and Jyote NEXA business head Sourav Sahu attended the event. The jyote SUV sports a 1.5-litre K15B petrol engine that comes paired to either a 5-speed manual or a 4-speed torque-converter automatic transmission

Odisha Skill Conclave 2023 starts April 20 Cop gets 3 yrs in jail for bribery

Bhubaneswar, April 10: The state government is all set to organise 'Odisha Skill Conclave 2023' from April 20 to 22 at Kalinga Stadium here, Skill Development and Technical Education (SDTE) Minister Pritiranjana Gharai said Monday.

Addressing the media at Geeta Govinda Sadan here, Gharai said, "In a bid to enable youths of Odisha skilled and employable not only in the country but also abroad, the state government will organise Odisha Skill Conclave 2023 with the theme 'Skill for the new world' April 20-22 at Kalinga Stadium."

The conclave would provide an opportunity to display Odisha's achievements in upskilling youths and emerging opportunities across sectors, he said.



Skill Development and Technical Education Minister Pritiranjana Gharai addresses the media in Bhubaneswar, Monday

The conclave would provide an opportunity to display Odisha's achievements in upskilling youth and emerging opportunities across sectors

Skilled-in-Odisha has been recognised as a global brand in the Technical and Vocational Education and Training eco-system

The inaugural day will witness discussion on a host of topics like building a coherent skill ecosystem in India and commendation of skilled manpower. On April 21, there will be brainstorming on topics like making India the skill capital of the world and empowering women through skills. The last day of the mega event will see special session and exhibition on drone technology, Gharai said.

The minister said that 'Skilled-in-Odisha' has been recognised

as a global brand in the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) eco-system. "This aspirational vision of the state and untiring efforts of all stakeholders have enabled a 'Skilled-in-Odisha' trainee to win the first-ever gold medal from India at the World Skills Competition, 2019," added Gharai.

SDTE Principal Secretary Usha Padhi said the event will see participation of international and national dignitaries, intellectuals and industry representatives active in skilling in the plenary discussions. The conclave will also witness congregation of over 2,000 students, 1000 delegates from industry, academia and government sector.

The conclave will also see signing of various pacts with industry partners regarding skilling in the state.

Bhubaneswar, April 10: The Special Vigilance court here Monday awarded three years of rigorous imprisonment (RI) to an assistant sub-inspector (ASI) of police after holding him guilty in a bribery case of 2013.

The court also slapped a penalty of Rs 10,000 on Laxmidhar Panda, an ASI at Banapur police station, under two different sections of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988. Failure to pay the penalty would entail additional six months of jail term for the convict, the court ordered.

According to the case details, Panda was the investigating officer of a case (260/13) in Khurda police station registered on the basis of a complaint filed by Trilochan Ransingh's father.

"On August 8, 2013, Panda de-



The court slapped a penalty of Rs 10,000 on Laxmidhar Panda, an ASI at Banapur PS, under two sections of PC Act, 1988

manded Rs 10,000 from Trilochan for submitting charge sheet in the case. He even told Trilochan that he would arrest the accused only after receiving the amount," special public prosecutor Hemant Kumar Swain said.

With no way out, Trilochan approached the superintendent of police (Vigilance) in Bhubaneswar in this regard. "On the basis of Trilochan's complaint, the anti-corruption wing laid a trap and caught Panda while receiving the bribe near Shankuntala market

complex in Khurda August 12, 2013. The bribe money was recovered from the possession of the accused," the special public prosecutor said.

The court convicted Panda after examining nine witnesses and going through other documentary evidences.

Sources, meanwhile, claimed that the Vigilance will initiate process for dismissal of Panda from service following his conviction by the court in the graft case.

RSP achieves feat in FY23

Bhubaneswar, April 10: Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) ended the financial year 2022-23 with a string of records in key production areas, an official said Monday.

RSP sources said the yearly crude steel production surpassed 4 million tonne for the first time in its history in the last fiscal.

RSP produced 40,38,977 tonne of crude steel in 2022-23 to record its all-time high figures improving upon its earlier best crude steel production figure of 39,87,259 tonne achieved in the previous fiscal, the official said.

The Steel Melting Shop-II was the major contributor in achieving the feat by producing an all-time high of 35,53,624 tonne for any fiscal.

Hot metal production from Blast Furnace-5 (BF-5) also touched an all-time high of 27,64,275 tonne in the last fiscal, improving upon its earlier best figure of 27,57,190 tonne achieved in 2016-17.

The saleable steel production also witnessed record high figure of 37,71,847 tonne. The state-of-the-art Hot Strip Mill-2 led the finishing mills by producing 17,73,243 tonne of HR Coils to create an all-time best fiscal performance.

The trend was reflected in the dispatch also with the plant registering the best saleable steel dispatch of 37,71,270 tonne in 2022-23.

The sinter plants excelled in tandem to produce 70,12,003 tonne of sinter and register the best performance for any financial year.

Similarly, by clocking an average push of 90.1, the Coke Oven Battery-6 achieved its best annual performance.

RSP also surpassed the major milestone of producing 100 million tonne of crude steel in the last fiscal.



SPREADING AWARENESS: An artist draws mural to spread awareness on water conservation near Darghabazar police station in Cuttack, Monday

State for CBI probe into fake certificate racket

Bhubaneswar, April 10: The Chief Post Master General (CPMG), Odisha has sought a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into the multi-state fake certificate racket, an official said Monday.

As per reports, the CPMG has written to the CBI to investigate the racket which has links with Uttar Pradesh. The Crime Branch, which is investigating the case originating from Bolangir, has come across involvement of people in other districts as well. The CPMG has reportedly requested for CBI probe after Sambalpur division of India Post suspected the authenticity of certificates of some candidates during verification of applications for appointment to the posts of Gramin Dak Sevaks (GDS). The

postal department has come across 42 cases of fake certificates during appointment to 1982 posts so far.

Bipin Bihari Negi, postal superintendent, Sambalpur, told mediapersons that they suspected that at least six candidates had submitted fake document. "All these candidates had produced certificates from Uttar Pradesh Board of Secondary Education. Their marksheets showed that they had secured 98-99 per cent in English and Odia. But we found that while writing undertaking during verification, they were unable to complete a single sentence correctly," he added.

The CB has found evidence of the involvement of a seven-member syndicate besides the four arrested accused, including mastermind Manoj Mishra.

Prepare model for menstrual hygiene mgmt in schools: SC to Centre

New Delhi, April 10: The Supreme Court Monday asked the Centre to prepare Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and formulate a national model to be adopted by all the states and Union Territories for managing menstrual hygiene for girls studying in schools.

Termining the issue as of "imense importance", the top court said the Centre should engage with all the stakeholders for implementation of uniform national policy on management of menstrual hygiene in schools, including government and government-aided schools.

A bench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices PS Narasimha and JB Pardiwala appointed secretary of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

(MOHFW) as the nodal officer to coordinate with all the states and UTs and collect relevant data for formulating a national policy.

The bench noted that MoHFW, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Jal Shakti have schemes running on the issue of menstrual hygiene.

"At the present stage, we are of the considered view that Centre should engage with all the stakeholders for implementation of the uniform national policy with a way for the states and UTs to modify the scheme as per their local needs", it said.

The bench said keeping in mind the implementation of the scheme, all the states and UTs are directed to submit their menstrual hygiene management strategies and plans which are being executed either with the help of funds provided by



central government or their own, to the Mission Steering Group (MSG) of the National Health Mission (NHM).

It said the mission steering group can re-evaluate the national guidelines based on experiential learning of the last 10 plus years.

The bench said, "All states and UTs are directed to notify the appropriate ratio of girls' toilets for residential and non-residential schools in their respective territories".

It added that all the states and UTs are directed to make provision for ensuring availability of quality low-cost sanitary pads, vending machines in schools.

"All states and UTs are further directed to ensure that disposal mechanisms are available for schools/school complexes having girls' enrolment in upper-primary/secondary/higher secondary classes for safe disposal of sanitary pads",

it said. The bench directed the Centre to file an updated status report by the end of July, 2023.

At the outset, Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for the Centre said there are several guidelines and schemes of different ministries dedicated to improve access to menstrual hygiene for young and adolescent girls but the responsibility of providing health care services lies with the respective state governments as public health is a state subject.

In an affidavit filed before the top court, the Health ministry has said it has undertaken awareness and training programmes and made necessary resources available to girls across the country.

"It is submitted that public health is a state subject and the responsibility of providing healthcare services is that of respective state gov-

ernments.

"The Central government and its agencies are not the implementing bodies for schemes relating to menstrual health; and it is in fact the states and their agencies which are at the forefront of enforcement of the policies," the ministry said.

It submitted that the Central government is committed to improving menstrual hygiene for young and adolescent girls and to make necessary resources accessible to them.

The affidavit was filed in response to a PIL filed by Congress leader Jaya Thakur through advocate Varinder Kumar Sharma seeking issuance of directions for providing free sanitary pads to girls studying in classes 6 to 12 in government schools across the country.

Monitoring elephant death at top level: ECoR

KIMS' workshop on infertility

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 10: Taking note of the death of an elephant in the Angul-Sambalpur Railway Section April 6, the East Coast Railway (ECoR) informed Monday that it is monitoring the incident at top level of management.

ECoR sources here Monday said that on the night of April 6 a tragic incident occurred in the Angul-Sambalpur Railway Section as an elephant lost its life in a train accident between Boinda and Jarapada stations.

Some media outlets have reported that the incident occurred due to lack of coordination between the railways and the Forest department.

ECoR clarified that there are Wildlife Control Cells (WCC) functioning at Divisional Headquarters



at Sambalpur and Khurda Road Railway Division providing information regarding movement of elephants to the Divisional Controls so that the movement of wildlife will be safe on railway tracks.

This coordination leads to trains running at lower speed and blowing horns while moving on a particular stretch of track to avoid

wildlife and train conflict.

In this particular incidence, the Wildlife Control Cell manned by Forest department at Sambalpur Railway Division gave a memo to the Divisional Control Office on restriction of train movement at 6:30pm April 6 last.

The ECoR restricted the speed limit of 50kmph from 125/00 to

Upon receiving a memo from Forest department about wildlife movement, the railways took precautions like limiting speed of the trains and blowing horns

Kms 131/00 from both sides between Boinda and Jarapada stations from 6:30pm April 6 to 6:30am of April 7.

Upon receiving this information, Railways took necessary steps, and the instructions were clearly communicated to the loco pilot, who followed the orders provided to him through a caution order.

However, the unfortunate incident occurred beyond the above-men-

tioned area, specifically at KMs 131/23-25, which is beyond the elephant passing zone, as per the memo of the Forest department. The incident occurred at 21.21hrs while 20832 Sambalpur-Shalimar Mahima Gosain Express was approaching Jarapada railway station from Boinda in Sambalpur-Angul railway section, with all precautions taken by maintaining the above-mentioned speed limit, blowing horns, and following all caution orders.

Elephant caution orders exist at many places in ECoR jurisdiction, like near Rambha & Huma in Khurda Road-Brahmapur Railway Section, Niraj-Raj Athgarh Section, Rajathgarh-Angul-Sambalpur Railway Sections apart from other places in ECoR jurisdiction where Railway is coordinating with Forest Department for saving wildlife, the statement said.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 10: Health experts discussed the burning issue of infertility and role of assisted reproduction technology in combating it, in a workshop organised by the Centre for Reproductive Medicine (CRM) of Kalinga Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS), at the institute's auditorium here Sunday.

Important topics pertaining to embryology, andrology and distress to infertility couple were taken up during the discourse.

The workshop was inaugurated by leading Obstetrics & Gynaecology (O&G) expert and ISAR Odisha Chapter chairperson Sujata Kar and KIIT School of Biochemistry associate professor Rahul Modak.

KIMS principal professor Ambika Prasad Mohanty, O&G expert professor Purna Chandra Mohapatra, head of O&G de-



partment of KIMS Jyosnamayee Panda, senior embryologists like Ritu Gupta, Chidananda Das, Abinash Panigrahi, Phaluguni Patro, bio-technology graduates and O&G post-graduates participated in the event.

The event was attended by over 150 delegates from various parts of India and Odisha including infertility consultants, embryologists and students.

Purna Chandra Mohapatra gave an insightful speech on the issue of infertility in his talk 'Stress for fertility specialist and de-stress to infertile couple'.

Agreement inked to boost climate resilient agriculture



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 10: Agriculture & Farmers' Empowerment department and Indian School of Business (ISB) signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) Monday in the presence of the Agriculture & Farmers' Empowerment Minister Ranendra Pratap Swain.

The agreement, which will enable collaboration between the two institutions, has two objectives: improve nutrition outcomes by strengthening agriculture-nutrition convergence with a focus on

increased availability, accessibility, and affordability of nutrient-dense foods. ISB will provide the responsive research and technical support for using agriculture-nutrition convergence, policy, markets, and technology for alleviating nutrition outcomes," said a department official.

Similarly, through the climate resilience support cell, ISB will undertake research for identifying and understanding factors that affect resilience of crops, farmers and rural livelihoods in the state. ISB will also support DAFE in identifying policy innovations and pathways for a climate-resilient agriculture roadmap for the state, added the official.

ISB's Bharti Institute of Public Policy will undertake research to produce a comprehensive report and case study on the Odisha Millets Mission. "It is expected that this collaboration will contribute to identifying climate resilient agriculture techniques and will lead to building long lasting impact pathways for improving nutrition. DAFE & ISB will work together towards these objectives," said the official.

fruits and vegetables and to establish a climate-resilience support-cell that will facilitate creation of sustainable and climate resilient agriculture pathways.

Department principal secretary Arabinda K Padhee, Agriculture & Food Production director -cum-ex-officio additional secretary Prem Chandra Chaudhary, and ISB-BIPP Hyderabad executive director Ashwini Chhatre were present during the signing of the MoA.

"Indian School of Business will support the department in improving nutritional outcomes of low-income households through in-



UP IN ARMS: Members of Odisha Sebanibruta Karmachari and Sikhyak Bikas Mancha sitting in a dharna in front of ADM office in Bhubaneswar seeking fulfillment of their various demands, Monday

'Villages still lack basic amenities'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 10: Despite Odisha government's efforts to create clean and hygienic villages, a recent survey conducted by Civil Society Organisation (CSO) Atmashakti Trust, along with its allies Odisha Shramajeebee Mancha and Mahila Shramajeebee Mancha, reveals significant deficiencies in basic infrastructure, including damaged tube wells, lack of soak pits, absence of drainage facilities, inadequate cement concrete (CC) roads and poor toilet facilities.

The survey, which covered 9,696 villages across 866 Gram Panchayats (GPs) in 15 tribal-dominated districts of Odisha, underscores the urgent need for a comprehensive overhaul of water infrastructure in Odisha to improve the overall cleanliness and sanitation in rural areas. The survey findings are alarming



and require immediate action from the government and civil society organisations.

According to the survey, out of the 32,960 tube wells and hand pumps surveyed, 68.25 per cent (18663) of tube wells or hand pumps were found dysfunctional. 82.67 per cent (21662) of the total tube wells had no functional soak pit, which is es-

sential to allow wastewater to seep into the surrounding soil.

80.6 per cent villages (7816) had either no or improper facilities for water drainage and around 34.48 per cent of the available drainage structures, such as pipes, channels, culverts, ditches, and surface drains have become unfit for operation, revealed the survey.

Besides 38.65 per cent (3402) of these villages, either did not have a CC road or had one in a damaged condition, the survey claimed. This apart, 30.17 per cent (289,116) of surveyed households lacked toilets and another 24 per cent of the households either had an unusable toilet or needed to have adequate water facilities in them.

"Even after 75 years of independence, it is unfortunate that many rural areas in Odisha lack basic amenities. We have put demands at the gram panchayat and block levels to build the required infrastructure to ensure environmental hygiene and curb malnutrition. Now, we urge the authorities to complete the establishment of these infrastructures before the onset of the monsoon so that water and sanitation-related problems can be resolved," said Anjan Pradhan, convener of Odisha Shramajeebee Mancha.

CONTINUED FROM P1 Dragon lets...

The Indian and Chinese troops are locked in a nearly three-year confrontation in certain friction points 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.

BBC reacts as...

The BBC said it also receives more than GBP 90 million per year from the government to support the BBC World Service, which predominantly serves non-UK audiences.

Twitter's new labelling of the BBC's account comes after it did the same to US public broadcaster NPR's handle.

Meet held on sanitation, waste management

Bhubaneswar: A review cum planning meeting on sanitation and waste management held Monday in the conference hall of Housing & Urban Development department under the chairmanship of department's Principal Secretary G Mathi Vathanan, to assess and chalk out plan of action to meet the desired output and outcome. Various aspects such as 100 per cent door to door collection, effective management of wealth centre, 100 per cent Mo Toilet construction in slum areas, cleaning of drains before monsoon among others were discussed during the meeting. Community Partnership model needs to be adopted by all Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) of Urban Odisha while designing action plan on sanitation and waste management directed by Principal Secretary. Director Municipal Administration cum Mission Director, SBM, Urban, Sangramjit Nayak urged all ULBs to bring change in their mindset to work hard and sincerely for bringing a change in the lives of urban denizens. "Monitoring by ULB authorities will ensure better service delivery for sanitation and waste management" he added. Major highlights of the meeting are all ULBs to prepare Action Plan (April 2023 to March 2024) (Road Map) for proper sanitation and waste management in urban Odisha.



ANTI-ENCROACHMENT DRIVE: Excavators engaged by BDA razing down unauthorised houses at Gadakana in Bhubaneswar, Monday

Getting good night sleep may keep asthma at bay

Poor sleep may bolster genetic susceptibility to asthma risk, but a good night's sleep may help slash your risk of developing the chronic lung disease, according to a study.

Individuals with asthma usually have comorbid sleep disturbances, however, whether sleep quality affects asthma risk is still unclear.

The study, published in the access journal BMJ Open Respiratory Research, showed that people with poor sleep patterns and higher genetic susceptibility have an additive higher asthma risk.

Poor quality sleep can potentially double risk of being diagnosed with the condition.

Spotting and treating sleep disorders early on might lessen the risks, irrespective of genetic predisposition, the study showed.

"A healthy sleep pattern reflects a lower risk of asthma in adult populations and could be



beneficial to asthma prevention regardless of genetic conditions," said Professor Fuzhong Xue, from Shandong University, China.

"Early detection and management of sleep disorders could be beneficial to reduce asthma incidence," he added in the paper.

The study defined a healthy sleep pattern as early chronotype, clocking up 7-9 hours of sleep every night, never or rare insomnia, no snoring and no frequent daytime sleepiness.

For the study, the team drew on 455,405 UK Biobank participants who were between 38 and 73 years old when enrolled between 2006 and 2010.

Around one in three participants were classified as 'high' genetic risk (150,429) and another third (151,970) as 'intermediate' risk. The remainder was classified as 'low' risk.

Compared with those at low genetic risk, those with the highest risk were 47 per cent more likely to be diagnosed with asthma, while those with a poor sleep pattern were 55 per cent more likely.

But people at high genetic risk, who also reported poor sleep patterns, were 122 per cent more likely to be diagnosed with asthma than those with both a healthy sleep pattern and a low genetic risk.

In other words, they were more than twice as likely to be diagnosed with asthma.

Further in-depth analysis on a smaller group of people indicated that a healthy sleep pattern might reduce the risk of asthma in those at high genetic risk by 37 per cent.

FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS

Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur- 9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech-Tankapani Road-9861341488, Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookieman-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-977682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347, Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.

TUDU FACES SEVERE BACKLASH

FORMER ODISHA CHIEF SECRETARY TERMS THE UNION MINISTER'S 'DACOITS' COMMENT AS 'DEFAMATORY'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Balasure, April 10: Senior BJP leader and central minister Bhiswari Tudu's remark that many of the officers appointed through the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) are 'dacoits', has evoked a strong reaction in Odisha with former Chief Secretary Sahadev Sahu terming Monday the comment as 'defamatory'.

The Union Minister of State for Tribal Affairs and Jalshakti made the remarks while addressing a gathering as chief guest at the golden jubilee function of a government school at Baliapal in this district Sunday.

Reacting to Tudu's remark, Sahu said: "It is defamatory to call officers appointed through the UPSC as 'dacoits'. One needs to verify



the mental condition of the man who made such a silly remark. Politicians choose members of UPSC and they then select the meritorious candidates. Therefore it is better to blame the politicians who select the members." A Union Minister can move the ministries concerned to correct the wrong

doings in UPSC, Sahu added. The UPSC is India's premier central recruitment commission which appoints top government officers. "Instead of speaking at the right platform, he (Tudu) is making silly statements," Sahu said. Veteran journalist Rabi Das said if the officers are dishonest or da-

coits, it is the responsibility of the government to catch and punish them. "As a central minister, he (Tudu) should ensure punishment for such 'dacoits', which he is not doing," Das pointed out.

BJP's Balasure district president Umakanta Mohapatra said that Tudu has made the remark keeping in view the manner in which officers, instead of elected peoples' representatives, are running the government in Odisha.

Former Chief Secretary and Congress leader Bijay Patnaik said that there should be no doubt that some of the IAS officers are 'neck-deep in corruption'. "Action should be taken against such corrupt officers," Patnaik said.

The Union Minister was heard making the controversial statement in a viral video. However,

this agency could not verify the authenticity of the video.

"I had an idea that those who are appointed through UPSC ... They are the most knowledgeable persons and hold high positions. But now, I feel that most of those who have qualified from there perhaps are dacoits. I do not say 100 per cent, but many of them are dacoits," Tudu is heard saying in the video.

During his speech, Tudu also asked: "Why is our society engulfed in corruption and injustice if such educated people are there? It is because of lack of morality in our education system and lack of spiritual education and thoughts among us."

The minister had also stoked controversy in 2021 by accusing Odisha government officials of misbehaving with him in his constituency in Mayurbhanj.

Man hurt in bear attack in Korpaut

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dasamantapur, April 10: There is no respite in the man-animal conflict in Odisha. A 58-year-old man was critically hurt after a bear mauled him in a forested area close to Lulla village under a panchayat of the same name in Dasamantapur block of Koraput district. The incident happened late Sunday evening, officials said Monday.

The injured person has been identified as Taila Dalapati. He had gone near a cashew garden bordering the forested area at the base of the Bada Damak hills. Taila, sources said, had ventured deep into the garden to collect some nuts, when he came face to face with the bear which attacked him. The animal was hiding in the

shrubs from where it appeared suddenly and attacked Taila.

Initially Taila tried to fight back with the axe he was carrying. However, the bear was too strong for him and mauled him. Hearing his screams, others working in the cashew garden including Dalapati Nayak and Nila Patra arrived at the spot and chased away the bear. Taila was initially taken to a local hospital from where he was then transferred to the district headquarters hospital as his condition deteriorated.

This incidentally is not the first case of bear attack in the state. In July 2022, a bear mauled and killed three persons in Nuapada district. Earlier in March this year, a sloth bear had attacked a tribal woman in Balasure district.

Bheden river barrage work irks locals

Residents of Kuchinda block allege that construction is not being done in a legal manner



POST NEWS NETWORK

Kuchinda, April 10: There has been growing unrest among the local community of Gochhara panchayat under Kuchinda block in Sambalpur district due to irregularities in the construction of a barrage on Bheden River at Janakdih by a company. The barrage is being built to facilitate irrigation in the block, but has run into troubled waters. Residents of the block are now expressing their dissatisfaction with the project. They have already written a letter on this issue to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and marked a copy to 5-T Secretary VK Pandian, the district collector of Sambalpur, Ananya Das and the State Pollution Control Board (SPCB).

Sources informed that the Odisha gov-

ernment had approved the construction of the barrage on Bheden river to provide water for the hyper-arid areas. The Water Resources department had floated a tender last year to choose a company which would be interested in construction of the project. After examining the bids, a company from Chhattisgarh was selected to construct the barrage at a cost of ₹55 crore. Work on the project started in November 2022.

Locals alleged that staff of the company has been carrying out illegal stone blasting around the river and using those in construction work. They said that this process will erode the river banks and it may lead to natural calamities like floods. Blasting of stones is also affecting the atmosphere they alleged and added that stone crushers should be

used for the project.

Locals also alleged that the company engaged in the construction of the barrage is involved in illegal sand mining. They pointed out that the company is collecting sand from the river bed and using it for construction without obtaining permission from the authorities. Also, the company has been accused of irregularities while procuring materials and hiring of workers.

One can clearly feel the frustration of residents living in parts of Kuchinda block. They had thought that the barrage will be of great help to them. However, now they are worried because the way the barrage is being constructed. Locals want the state government and district administration to step in to prevent the situation from turning worse. They said that the present company should be removed and new bids be invited from other companies.

Sources pointed out that permission is needed from Gram Sabhas when stone blasting is carried out in any particular area. They alleged that the company has not been given any such permission. However, Kuchinda tehsildar Prasanna Tete defended the construction company asserting that it had obtained all the necessary permissions for stone blasting and sand mining.

Cops rescue missing Jharsuguda minor from Chhattisgarh

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jharsuguda, April 10: Police have managed to rescue Monday the minor boy who went missing April 7 from this town. The kid was found in a train at the Bilaspur station in Chhattisgarh. The disappearance of the boy had created fear not only among the family members of the boy, but also in the mind of the people here.

Police however, said that boy had not been abducted, as alleged by the family members. He was rescued from the compartment of a train and he was travelling alone. They added that the boy is being brought back here and he will be reunited with his family by Monday evening.

Police said that the boy's family had lodged a complaint after the minor went missing from his house in Buromal locality. The family members had alleged that the minor had been kidnapped for ransom. The boy's mother has been undergoing treatment at a local hospital here. His father was also at the hospital when the boy who was playing in front of his house with his elder brother, suddenly went missing in the evening. However, there was no ransom call made to the family.

Girl critical after attempting suicide

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sundargarh, April 10: An inmate of the Sundargarh Women's College Hostel here tried to die by suicide by setting herself on fire inside a bathroom, Sunday night, police said Monday. Police informed that the girl has suffered 60 per cent burn injuries and her condition is critical and she is undergoing treatment at the Veer Surendra Sai Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (VIMSAR) in Burla.

The girl, who is a Plus-II first year student, has been identified as Triveni Rohidas. She is a resident of Ekatali village which is in Jharsuguda district. The parents of the girl have arrived at the hospital, police informed.

According to information available from Smita Rani Patel, the dormitory officer of the hostel, other students rushed to the aid

of Triveni after hearing her screaming and doused the flames. Initially Triveni was taken to the Sundargarh district headquarters hospital (DHH). Later however, she was taken to VIMSAR after her condition deteriorated. Doctors at VIMSAR informed that Triveni is still critical and added that portions from the waist to the chest have been severely burnt.

According to police, the other inmates of the hostel were busy with their own work as it was an off day. Taking advantage of the situation, Triveni entered the bathroom, doused herself in kerosene and set herself on fire.

Police have still not been able to ascertain why the student took such an extreme step as they have not been able to question Triveni who is yet to regain her senses. So far there has not been any allegation of foul play in the case, they said.

Huge amount of cannabis seized, 7 held



that more such raids are on the anvil.

Berhampur, April 10: A total of 105 kilograms of cannabis have been seized and seven people have been arrested after two Excise department teams raided various parts of this city, officials said Monday. During the raids, Excise officials also confiscated a car and a two-wheeler. Seven cases have been registered in this regard, officials informed and added that all those arrested have been produced in court. Deputy Superintendent of the Excise department, Kuber Sethi stated officials also informed that the seized cannabis was being smuggled from Mohana in Gajapati district to parts of Bihar. However, the vehicle carrying the contraband was intercepted by police late Sunday night and driver Deepak Nayak was arrested. Approximately 75kg of cannabis was found in the vehicle (OD-05-U-2315). Later on, after interrogation of Deepak, Excise officials conducted raids Monday at various places in this town and seized another 30 kilograms of ganja.

Teacher forced to work as daily wager

Falling sick in 2014 cost the teacher dearly as she was not allowed to join duty again

POST NEWS NETWORK

Phulbani, April 10: A lady teacher belonging to the tribal community is now being forced to lead a life of a daily wager in the K Nuagaon block of Kandhamal district. Her predicament is a blow to not only her, but to all who basically want to devote their lives for teaching.

The teacher, identified as Dharitri Pradhan, was employed in various schools in the district for three years and eight months. However, her failure to attend school for a mere four days in 2014 over some health issues cost her dearly. She was not allowed to join the job again.

Since the last nine years she has been running from pillar to post to get her job back. Dharitri has met the block development and education officers and the collector a number of times to get her job back. However, she did not succeed. This prompted



her to take up the job of a daily wager as she failed to get back into teaching.

Dharitri of Kambanaju village of Chanchedi panchayat under K Nuangan block joined as an assistant teacher April 10, 2011 at the Garjodi New Primary School under Daringbadi block vide appointment letter (No-4095). However, a few months later she was transferred to the Bandabaju Upper Primary School as per the direction of the Sarvasikhya

project co-ordinator.

However, more transfers were on the anvil. Dharitri was transferred to the Jugupadar Primary School on deputation. After her deputation period got over, she again joined the Bandabaju School. While she was teaching there, she fell sick for four days. She got admitted to a hospital for treatment and she has the documents to prove that. However, when she returned to the Bandabaju School, the headmaster did not allow her to join.

"I have running from one office to another for the last nine years to plead my case. However, nothing fruitful has happened. So I have taken up the job of a daily labourer," Dharitri informed.

When this correspondent pointed out to district education officer Pramod Kumar Sarangi, the plight of Dharitri, he said that the matter will be looked into. Till then there is no respite for Dharitri.

UCO BANK POSSESSION NOTICE For Immovable Property. (Under Section 13(4) of the Securitization & Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 for Immovable Property) ... BANPUR BRANCH/ Name and Address of the Borrower/ Guarantors ...

Union Bank of India E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE. Sale Notice for sale of Immovable/Movable Properties. E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets Under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 for Immovable Property ...

FOCUS SOCIETY

IS FEMINISM A LUXURY?



Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but also a foundation for holistic development and a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world

ical dependence of children on mothers.

The present scenario, whether social, economic or physical, is indicative of inequitable development. It speaks about universal presence of sexism, gender-based discrimination and societal barriers for women. Even though there is improvement in educational attainment and economic independence of women, the progress is far from satisfactory. Further, the educated and employed women face multifarious pressure for managing dual responsibility of work and home in addition to their role to look after children. This attitude symbolises the faulty process of socialisation which still does not believe in equal sharing of household responsibilities by both the genders. The value system in this regard is so deep rooted that working women unlike their male counterparts often suffer from guilt complex for not being with their children while at work.

Research indicates that when more income goes into the hands of women, nutrition of child, health and education improves. The potential of women with unique qualities like softness and endurance should not be looked down as weakness or constraint for their growth. Rather the uniqueness can be utilised for the betterment of society. The role of mother is universal since they nurture and take care of the future citizens of the universe.

Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but also a foundation for holistic development and a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. A feminist approach is the need of the hour for conserving balance in society. Therefore, belief in feminism is not a luxury but a prerequisite for building a society which is equally compassionate towards the existence of women in their totality.

The writer is Joint Commissioner of Commercial Taxes & GST. Views are personal.

When someone utters the word 'feminism' it seems that the person belongs to a different world. Irony is that in a society full of sexists, a person advocating feminism is called an extremist. The alternative argument will attempt to justify elimination of gender bias by citing the pro-women attitude of the government and all kinds of schemes proposed for their wellbeing. Some may argue in terms of social and economic liberation of women.

A question arises then why at all a discussion on women's rights and welfare arises in a society tilted towards modernisation and liberalisation. Let us analyse it in terms of statistical figures. The data of National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) reveals that Indian married women labour participation declined from 35% in 1983 to 24% in 2011. Also the overall female participation in India has declined to 23.3% in 2017-18. Most importantly the decline is visible in high skill professions. This fact discloses seriousness of the matter and uncovers a miserable situation at a time when the economy is growing, there is decline in fertility rate and rise in educational attainment of women.

In respect of poverty and hunger, women are more vulnerable in comparison to men since about 60% of chronically hungry people of the world are women and girls. Also women make up more than two-third of the world's illiterate. Globally, 24% of girls aged 15-19 are not in education, employment or training compared to 13% of boys of the same age group. Twenty-six per cent of ever-partnered women aged 15 and older have been subjected to physical or sexual violence by a husband or intimate partner at least once in their lifetime.

In a 2021 survey in 13 countries, 45% of women reported that they or a woman they know has experienced some form of violence since COVID-19. In the same year, nearly one in five young women were married before the age of

18. Maternal health conditions like haemorrhage, sepsis or obstructed labour were the second leading cause of death among girls aged 15-19. Self-harm is the third leading cause of death among girls aged 15-19, worldwide.

In a study conducted in 2011 for more than 45,000 crash victims over 11 years, the researchers of University of Virginia found a peculiar information. As per the study, women drivers are more prone to injury than men in a crash since car safety features are designed for men. This unusual fact drags our mind towards the magnitude of the topic.

In our society there is colour prejudice particularly against women irrespective of their class and education. The severity of colourism has been a factor responsible for the movement "dark is beautiful" launched in 2009 by an Indian NGO "Women of Worth". Even actress and director Nandita Das has raised the issue many times in interviews. Actresses like Vidya Balan have confessed about the presence of body shaming of women in the so-called liberal film industry. Undoubtedly, there is endless pressure on women to look beautiful,

fair and slim unlike men.

Gender disparities between boys and girls become more pronounced in adolescence, a crucial period when their attitude on gender develops and gender norms emerge. In some places, attaining puberty is treated as an indication for restraining girls' movement including schooling and exposure. Adolescent girls face disproportionate burden of domestic work, expectations to be married, risks of early pregnancy, as well as sexual and gender-based violence.

Women face hardship in respect of their access to decision-making. These barriers range from unequal access to resources, information and technology to absence of safety, mobility and decision-making. Mostly women do more unpaid work like domestic and child care, limiting their ability to have access to the labour market. Their work ordinarily remains unrecognised without any economic value. Also women working for wages are more likely to hold seasonal, part-time and low-paid jobs. Irony is that although women perform a universal duty like upbringing children, their contribution is never recognised and concealed in the name of biolog-



Swayamprava Sahu

A FEMINISTIC APPROACH IS THE NEED OF THE HOUR FOR CONSERVING BALANCE IN SOCIETY

Porcupine Policy

India has much to learn from the current Taiwan scenario. The manner in which China is moving in matters related to that island nation is also indicative of its intent. It is quite possible that, instead of getting into a full scale war like Russia has with Ukraine and got badly stuck, Beijing may prefer to creep into Indian territory. For China, it may not be Taipei but Tawang that will make more sense.

China is angry with both Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen and the US over the former's meeting with US House Speaker Kevin McCarthy. This was the first such high level meeting last week since the US had broken off its official ties with Taiwan in 1979 and instead recognised the government in Beijing. A Taiwan-US defence treaty was terminated at the same time. China first greeted the engagement between McCarthy and Ing-wen with threats of retaliation and then followed it up with military simulated precision strikes against Taiwan for the past few days in drills around the island. Taiwan's defence ministry reported multiple air force sorties and that it was monitoring China's missile forces.

China, which claims democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory, began three days of military exercises around the island 8 April, the day Ing-wen returned from her brief visit to the USA.

Chinese state television reported that the combat readiness patrols and drills around Taiwan were continuing.

"Under the unified command of the theatre joint operations command centre, multiple types of units carried out simulated joint precision strikes on key targets on Taiwan island and the surrounding sea areas, and continue to maintain an offensive posture around the island," it said.

The Chinese military's Eastern Theatre Command even put out a short animation of the simulated attacks on its WeChat account, showing missiles fired from land, sea and air into Taiwan with two of them exploding in flames as they hit their targets. Taiwan's defence ministry said that as of 9 April they had spotted 70 Chinese aircraft, including Su-30 fighters and H-6 bombers, as well as 11 ships, around Taiwan. The ministry said they were paying particular attention to the People's Liberation Army Rocket Force which is in charge of China's land-based missile system.

Stakes are very high for both China and the US so far as Taiwan is concerned. It is a deeply emotive issue for the Communist Party of China and Chinese President Xi Jinping. China has claimed Taiwan as its territory since the defeated Republic of China government fled to the island in 1949 after losing a civil war with former Chinese leader Mao Zedong's communists. China has repeatedly called on US officials not to engage with Taiwanese leaders, viewing it as support for Taiwan's desire to be viewed as separate from China.

China has never renounced the use of force to bring democratically governed Taiwan under its control and in 2005 passed a law giving Beijing the legal basis for military action against Taiwan if it secedes or seems about to. This position is particularly worrisome and the threat of Chinese attack on Taiwan has increased manifold since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. International observers have been expressing the fear that China is keenly observing Russia's forcible occupation of Ukraine and watching how the US-led Western powers handle the issue with the ulterior motive of forcibly taking over Taiwan itself, someday at its convenience.

To pre-empt such an eventuality the US, under the Joe Biden administration, has already warned that it would provide military assistance to Taiwan in case the latter is attacked by China. This has led to further deterioration of US-China relations.

The US did not stop at that. Its former House Speaker Pelosi had visited Taiwan some months ago to express solidarity with the people of Taiwan inviting protests from China.

The question is why China is getting angry over such posturing by both Taiwanese and US leadership and also why America and Taiwan are provoking China. China accuses the USA of using Taiwan like a "porcupine" and keeping the option open for attacking China from its military base whenever needed. It also charges that the US military-industry is hugely profiting from the conflict over Taiwan by selling weapons to the island.

The US and Taiwan, however, charge China with attempting to rob the people of Taiwan of their democracy and freedom. Taiwan's position is that only its people have the right to decide how they will be ruled.

It appears China has, at the moment, only one option to deal with Taiwan. It can ratchet up tension through military drills each time the US and Taiwan show to the world their proximity disregarding China's concerns. The US calculation, it appears, is that Xi will not follow in the footsteps of Russian President Vladimir Putin who is facing united opposition by the West for his misadventure in Ukraine. This may ensure the status quo in Taiwan despite the war drills.

WISDOM CORNER

People sacrifice the present for the future. But life is available only in the present. That is why we should walk in such a way that every step can bring us to the here and the now. **THICH NHAT HANH**

I would rather be a superb meteor, every atom of me in magnificent glow, than a sleepy and permanent planet. **JACK LONDON**

Civilization is the progress toward a society of privacy. The savage's whole existence is public, ruled by the laws of his tribe. Civilization is the process of setting man free from men. **AYN RAND**

WORDSWORTH

Haggard

Nothing strange about this word for looking exhausted and unwell, you may think, but it's a classic case of a word which has changed its sense remarkably in the course of its history. When it first came into the language in the sixteenth century, a haggard was a hawk that had been caught for training after it had taken on its adult plumage (this meaning is still extant in falconry). Adult hawks are hard to tame, so it came to mean anything wild or feral. It was only about 1580 that we start to see it applied to people, at first to wild-looking or intractable individuals. Shakespeare uses both senses in a bit of wordplay in Othello in which Othello is musing about the imagined unfaithfulness of his wife Desdemona: "If I do prove her haggard, / Though that her jesses were my dear heartstrings, / I'd whistle her off and let her down the wind / To prey at fortune". Later still it was assumed that anybody who looked wild was suffering the effects of privation, fatigue, terror or worry - hence unwell. The source of haggard isn't known for sure: it's certainly from French haggard, but where that comes from is open to some doubt. We are pretty sure, though, that the English haggard for an ugly old woman had some influence on the shift to the modern meaning, through people thinking that haggard was in some way linked to it.

LOL

Is he a good dentist?

A couple of old guys were golfing when one said he was going to Dr. Taylor for a new set of dentures in the morning.

His friend remarked that he had gone to the same dentist a few years before. "Is that so?" the first said.



"Did he do a good job?"

"Well, I was on the course yesterday when the fellow on the ninth hole hooked a shot," he said. "The ball must have been going 200 mph when it hit me in the stomach. That," he added, "was the first time in two years my teeth didn't hurt."

SPECTRUM SUSTAINABILITY

Tax brown, subsidise green

After years of global climate-policy leadership, the European Union is looking warily at the US' sudden embrace of ambitious clean-energy subsidies. Ultimately, America's entry into the clean-energy race is good news for both the planet and Europe. But will US generosity toward its own companies under the recent Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) hollow out Europe's industrial base even further? Will dirty industries continue moving east and south as clean ones move west across the Atlantic? Europe must prevent this outcome. But how should EU leaders proceed? Unlike in the US, European policymakers have long heeded the economists who suggest that carbon pricing is the best strategy for tackling climate change. That means making dirty energy more expensive, in line with the external costs that it imposes on society. Though the EU's Emissions Trading System is far from perfect, it now prices roughly half of Europe's carbon pollution at around €100 (\$109) per tonne; and several national governments in the bloc have introduced their own carbon taxes. None of this is sufficient on its own. But Europe's carbon-pricing policies are clearly much better than America's incomplete state-level patchwork and its complete lack of a federal carbon price.

Now, US policymakers have seemingly taken the easy way out, sub-

sidising clean energy instead of pricing dirty energy. But while giving handouts is politically easier than imposing taxes, there is in fact a strong economic argument for subsidies in this case. Yes, Economics 101 calls for pricing negative externalities, but Economics 102 calls for subsidising positive externalities that arise from learning by doing. The argument is simple: installing the thousandth, and especially the millionth, solar panel will be much faster and cheaper than installing the first, owing to all the efficiencies and improvements that have been developed along the way.

The same logic extends to research and development more broadly. Innovators deciding on how much to invest in R&D will generally spend less money than is socially optimal, because their decisions typically do not include the possibility that the result will create shoulders for others to stand on. That, too, calls for subsidies.

Policymakers from California to Germany have embraced the learning-by-doing logic with solar subsidy schemes that start high in the first year and decrease almost immediately thereafter. While solar feed-in tariffs have decreased, EU carbon prices have risen some tenfold, from as low as €10 per tonne. It is here that the EU's climate policy shines. European policymakers recognise

that carbon pricing is crucial, and they have acted on that insight.

But neither carbon pricing nor subsidisation is enough on its own. Just as the US ought to take a page from Europe's book on carbon pricing, Europe should follow the US in pursuing green subsidies.

Whatever reasons Europe had for avoiding green subsidies in the past, European competitiveness and energy security demand that they be reconsidered in the context of the IRA. China currently produces the vast majority of the world's clean-energy technologies: including three-quarters of all solar panels and batteries sold globally, well over half of all wind turbines, and around half of all electric vehicles. In some clean technologies, like heat pumps, Europe is behind not only China but also North America, which produces 39% and 29%, respectively, compared to Europe's 16% share.

This import dependency translates into significant geopolitical vulnerabilities. Relying on China for solar panels may be less dangerous than depending on Russia for gas; but that hardly makes it prudent.

The IRA should be welcomed around the world. Of course, its immediate effect will be to boost US clean-energy investments, and it will inevitably rankle some foreign manufacturers and governments as it generates headlines around the

world about companies being lured to the US. But it is important to remember that just as economic growth is not a zero-sum game, neither is clean growth.

In a recent paper, Costas Arkolakis of Yale University and my Columbia Business School colleague Conor Walsh show that IRA's subsidies will pay for themselves through increased global GDP, owing to positive spillovers from learning-by-doing dynamics. The implication is that EU and the rest of the world will ultimately benefit from US subsidies. And Arkolakis and Walsh's analysis does not even account for the positive welfare effects of helping to address climate change. Add those in, and US clean-energy subsidies look like a win-win-win.

The massive costs of unchecked climate change are already mounting and should be sufficient to show that much more needs to be done on both sides of the Atlantic, as well as around the world. The EU, meanwhile, must take the arguably easier step of ramping up its own clean-energy subsidies. It can and must afford to do so. The result will be a race to the top, with the global economy and the planet as clear winners - a truly rare occurrence in the annals of global economic competition.

The writer is a climate economist at Columbia Business School. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE



Gernot Wagner

THE MASSIVE COSTS OF UNCHECKED CLIMATE CHANGE ARE ALREADY MOUNTING AND SHOULD BE SUFFICIENT TO SHOW THAT MUCH MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE

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

Orissa POST
B-15, Russagarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Distortion of history

Sir, The decision made by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) to drop certain parts of school syllabi under the guise of rationalising syllabi has sparked off a controversy. True, changes in the educational system call for rationalising syllabi. On the other hand, such a move should be in accordance with the needs of the student community. NCERT argues that the syllabi were reduced to lessen the burden of a vast syllabi and it was done by experts in the field. However, it is discernible that the changes were made with a political motive. As a matter of fact, dropping of certain portions from social science such as reference to the 2002 Gujarat riots, the Cold War and Mughal rule from Class XII textbook, Industrial Revolution from Class XI textbook and some Dalit writers from Class VII textbook indicates a political link. Worse, reports show that Mahatma Gandhi's views on Hindu-Muslim unity and ban on RSS have also been removed. Education is imparted to students to develop their knowledge and widen their views. Authentic and comprehensive information should be given to them. Truths, facts and ideas should not be changed. They should not be covered up from students' eyes. Political interference and narrow minded outlook will damage the sanctity of education. Students have the right to acquire knowledge in its entire form. Changing of historical truths and facts will lead to understanding of history in distorted form. Political interference in curriculum is harmful to students and social progress.

Venu GS, KOLLAM

Pawar politics

Sir, NCP leader Sharad Pawar backing business tycoon Gautam Adani, saying those with a private purpose targeted the industrialist, has raised many eyebrows. Pawar argued against the idea of a Joint Parliamentary Committee investigation into the allegations raised by the Hindenburg Research against the Indian conglomerate, as the Supreme Court is already involved with the matter. The NCP leader highlighted that more emphasis is being placed on the Adani issue. The Congress sought to downplay Pawar's comments saying that the NCP may have its views, but 19 like-minded Opposition parties are convinced that the PM-linked Adani group issue is real and very serious. The development might ruin the Opposition's unity in the lead-up to the 2024 general elections.

NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

national

of the day quote

BJP supporters carried revolvers, danced with arms... Why people will carry arms, drive tractors and bulldozers in religious rallies? who gave them permission? These are illegal. These people are outsiders and were brought from Munger

MAMATA BANERJEE | WB CHIEF MINISTER

I held a meeting with all the secretaries on budget implementation. We have given a target to start the budget implementation. They will have to set the target date of implementation of schemes, laying foundation stones of projects, inauguration of projects and bringing reforms

PRAMOD SAWANT | GOA CHIEF MINISTER

Losses that farmers are facing today due to untimely rain and hailstorm will be compensated by this government

BHAGWANT MANN | PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

SAD leader Majithia receives threat calls

Mohali (Punjab): Shiromani Akali Dal leader Bikram Singh Majithia Monday alleged that he had received several threat calls and claimed that nothing happened in the matter despite bringing it to the Punjab Police chief's notice. Majithia also attacked the state's AAP government over law and order and alleged that it had reached an "all-time low".

BJP to gherao J'khand secretariat

Ranchi: The BJP will gherao the Jharkhand secretariat Tuesday to protest against the Hemant Soren government's failure to tackle "unemployment, corruption and deteriorating law and order" in the state, a senior party leader said. Thousands of workers of the saffron party from across Jharkhand will assemble at Prabhat Tara ground of the city and march towards the state secretariat building at around 11 am, BJP state president Deepak Prakash said.

Seven grenades found in Delhi

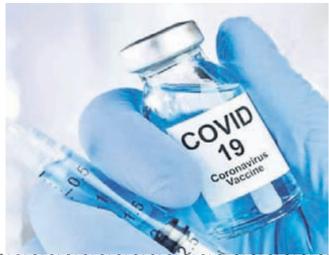
New Delhi: Delhi Police officers were put on high alert Monday after seven hand grenades were found in the Holambi Kalan area in North Delhi. A source said that several persons have been detained by the police in this connection. The source in the police also said that the recovered grenades were all country-made. Delhi Police officials are tight-lipped over the matter, not making any official statement.



Kashmir to Kanyakumari road was a dream for us. From Rohtang to Ladakh, four tunnels will be constructed
NITIN GADKARI | UNION MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS

COVOVAX DOSE TO BE AVAILABLE ON CoWIN

In view of rising cases of Covid-19 in various parts of the country, Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya is learnt to have approved the inclusion of Serum Institute's Covovax on the CoWIN portal as a heterologous booster dose for adults, official sources said Monday



India likely to get below-normal monsoon rains, drought: Skymet

Monsoon rains in India are expected to be 94% of the long-term average, said Skymet, retaining its previous view of sub-par monsoon



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 10: India is likely to experience below-normal monsoon rainfall this year, with a 20 per cent chance of drought due to the end of La Nina conditions and the potential for El Nino to take hold, private forecasting agency Skymet Weather said Monday.

After four consecutive years of normal and above-normal rains during the monsoon season, this forecast comes as a concern for the agricultural sector, which heavily relies on monsoon rains for crop production.

Skymet expects the monsoon rainfall to be around 94 per cent of the long-period average (LPA) of 868.6 mm for the four-month period from June to September. The private forecaster also predicted that the northern and central parts of the country may see a rain deficit, with Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra expected to witness inadequate rains during the core monsoon months of July and August.

Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and

Uttar Pradesh, the agricultural bowl of north India, are likely to observe less-than-normal rains during the second half of the season. In a statement, Skymet said: "20 per cent chance of drought (seasonal rainfall that is less than 90 per cent of LPA)."

It said there is no chance of excess rain (seasonal rainfall more than 110 per cent of the LPA), a 15 per cent chance of above normal rain (between 105 per cent and 110 per cent), 25 per cent chance of normal rain (between 96 per cent and 104 per cent) and 40 per cent chance of below normal precipitation.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) is yet to release its forecast for the monsoon season, but it has predicted above-normal maximum temperatures and heatwaves in most parts of the country from April to June.

Jatin Singh, managing director of Skymet, said the return of El Nino

could presage a weaker monsoon this year. El Nino, which is the warming of the waters in the Pacific Ocean near South America, is associated with weakening of monsoon winds and less rainfall in India.

"La Nina has ended. Key oceanic and atmospheric variables are consistent with ENSO-neutral conditions. Likelihood of El Nino is increasing and its probability to become a dominant category during the monsoon is growing large," Singh said. La Nina conditions -- characterised by the cooling of the waters in the Pacific Ocean near South America -- favours the Indian monsoon. However, Skymet also noted that the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD)

could steer monsoon and negate the ill-effects of El Nino when sufficiently strong. Currently, the IOD is neutral and is expected to turn moderately positive at the start of monsoon.

Skymet Weather said El Nino and the IOD are likely to be "out of phase" and may lead to extreme variability in the monthly rainfall distribution, with the second half of the season expected to be more aberrated.

The IOD is defined by the difference in the sea surface temperatures between the western parts of the Indian Ocean near Africa and the eastern parts of the ocean near Indonesia. A positive IOD is considered good for the Indian monsoon.

Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, the agricultural bowl of north India, are likely to observe less-than-normal rains during the second half of the season



PURE DEVOTION: Devotees take part in a 'Nagar Kirtan' ahead of the birth anniversary celebrations of the 9th Sikh Guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur at Golden Temple in Amritsar, Punjab

AGNIPATH SCHEME

SC junks pleas against HC judgment

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 10: The Supreme Court Monday dismissed a plea against the Agnipath scheme, to induct youth into all three-armed forces divisions for a period of four years.

The top court observed that the scheme is not arbitrary and that promissory estoppel is always subject to overarching public interest. Advocate ML Sharma submitted before a bench headed by Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud that it should have been passed by Parliament and it should not have been brought as a scheme and it will attract Article 77 as well as Article 107.

After hearing Sharma's submissions, the bench, also comprising Justices P.S. Narasimha



and J.B. Pardiwala, dismissed his petition. In February, the Delhi High Court dismissed the pleas challenging the Centre's Agnipath scheme concluding that it was introduced in national interest and to make sure that the Armed Forces are well equipped.

The apex court Monday also took up another plea seeking directions to complete the recruitment processes initiated to the Indian

Army and Air Force, which were discontinued after the 'Agnipath' scheme was announced in June last year.

A counsel submitted that he is not challenging the Agnipath scheme and that the matter was confined to the completion of the previously notified recruitment processes to Army and Air Force. He further added that exams were postponed many times citing Covid and suddenly, in June, the Agnipath scheme was announced and for the Air Force, the exams were held but the results were not published.

Declining to entertain the plea, the bench said that the candidates have no vested right to seek the completion of recruitment process. The counsel insisted that the Agnipath scheme will not be affected even if these people are recruited.

BJP leader among 60 held for clashes in Jamshedpur

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jamshedpur (Jharkhand), April 10: A BJP leader was among 60 people arrested in connection with violence over the alleged desecration of a religious flag in Shastrinagar area of Jamshedpur city in Jharkhand, police said Monday.

Internet services were suspended in the city at 8 am but later lifted at 7 pm as no fresh incident of violence was reported. Prohibitory orders under Section 144 of CrPC, however, remained clamped in the area where clashes took place between two groups on Sunday evening. Also, a total of 1,120 people have been booked over the clashes, of whom 120 have been named.

Police also conducted flag march in the area on Monday morning and evening but no fresh incident has been reported.

"Around 60 people, including BJP leader Abhay Singh, have been arrested," SSP Prabhat Kumar said, adding further investigation is underway. Singh is a former president of the BJP's



East Singhbhum district unit and is presently the party's in-charge of Dhanbad. An adequate police force has been deployed in the area to maintain law and order, he said. "A total of 120 named and 1,000 unknown people have been booked but the situation is under control at present," Superintendent of Police (City) K Vijayshankar told PTI.

Dhalbhum SDO Piyush Sinha said internet services were suspended at 8 am but later lifted at 7 pm following an improvement in the situation as no fresh incidents of violence were reported since the clamping of prohibitory orders Sunday night. East Singhbhum District Deputy Commissioner Vijaya Jadhav said all block officials and circle officials have been asked to remain alert.

Centre looking for new 'spyware', Cong alleges

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 10: The Congress Monday accused the government of using a new software to spy over people opposed to it and damage India's political and democratic system.

Congress spokesperson Pawan Khara alleged that the Modi government first used Cambridge Analytica (CA), then Pegasus, then Israeli Contract Hackers led by "Team Jorge" and now it is vying for a new spyware to "meddle in Indian political system and Democracy".

"Just like Pegasus, Cambridge Analytica and the recently exposed 'Team Jorge' - the Modi government has now bought a new spyware to snoop, spy and surveil individuals and institutions? These institutions include - Opposition parties, NGOs, media houses, civil rights activists, judiciary, Election Commission, and every other Institution which protects any semblance of democracy," he told reporters.



"If Modi ji is spending so much on malware and spywares to snoop and spy on institutions - why can't he tell the nation that to whom does the Rs 20,000 Crore in Adani's shell companies belong to," he asked.

Citing media reports, he said that according to trade data analysed by a prominent newspaper once again, the BJP government stands "exposed" before the nation for its role and complicity in the "illegal and unconstitutional surveillance racket".

"Didn't the BJP government spy on its citizens and political leaders in the run-up to 2019 General Elections to Parliament of India through Pegasus, and now aims to repeat the same by using another spy-

Azad slams Rahul

New Delhi: Former Congress veteran Ghulam Nabi Azad's allegation that Rahul Gandhi has ties with "undesirable businessmen" triggered a political row Monday with the BJP asking Gandhi to clarify the "serious charge" made against him. The Congress hit back at Azad alleging that with every passing day he "falls to new depths" to demonstrate his loyalty to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Azad's contemptible statements on the Congress' leadership reflect his desperation to remain relevant, the Congress said.

ware for the 2024 General Elections? "Who in the Government of India purchased and deployed the illegal spyware - 'Pegasus' from Israeli company NSO and who in the Government of India has started deliberations for this new spyware," Khara asked.

7 killed, 37 injured after tree falls on tin shed in Akola temple



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Akola, April 10: Seven persons were killed and 37 others injured when a tree fell on a tin shed under which people were standing in a temple premises after heavy wind and rains in Maharashtra's Akola district, officials said Monday.

The incident took place at around 7.30 pm Sunday at Babuji Maharaj temple located in Paras village under Balapur taluka when the people had gathered for the 'maha aarti', Akola Collector Nima Arora said.

State Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis expressed grief over the incident which he termed as "very serious and unfortunate". Seven people were killed and 37 others injured, Fadnavis said, adding that he has given directions for an inquiry into the incident.

The government will provide a compensation to the families of the deceased, he said. The district authorities said families of each of the deceased will be given a compensation of Rs 4 lakh and the injured persons will be given monetary assistance as per government rules.

Due to the heavy wind and rains, a 100-year-old tree fell on a tin shed under which around 40 people were standing, the district administration said. Five men and two women were killed and 37 others received injuries, it said.

After receiving information, police and district disaster management authorities rushed the spot and started the rescue operation, an official said.

Tiger census 2022 world's most extensive wildlife survey: Report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 10: The all-India tiger estimation conducted in 2022 stands out as the most extensive wildlife survey to date, encompassing 20 states and entailing an impressive foot survey of 6,41,449 kilometres, according to data released by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA).

The study team involved officials and experts from the NTCA and the states, research biologists, scientists, coordinators, interns and volunteers. As part of the exercise, the team sampled 3,24,003 habitat plots to gather data on vegetation, human impacts and ungulate dung.

The camera traps installed at 32,588 locations resulted in an impressive 4,70,81,881 photographs, including 97,399 captures of tigers, according to the "Status of Tigers 2022" report released by Prime



Minister Narendra Modi at an event in Mysuru Sunday.

The study required an immense amount of effort, with the team investing more than 6,41,102 man-days to complete it. The camera traps captured the images of a

total of 3,080 tigers (aged above one year). The number represents an increase compared to the figures (2,461) of 2018.

The first phase of the 2022 estimation exercise involved data collection across the country covering

10,146 grids of 100 square km each, the report said.

The entire phase-1 data was collected using the MSTripes android application.

The second phase, conducted at the Wildlife Institute of India,

In 2006, the country established a 100-square kilometre grid as the standard sampling space for monitoring tiger populations

Dehradun, entailed generating landscape-level data using remote sensing and secondary data sources. Finally, the third phase involved sampling at 174 sites, encompassing 32,588 locations, which yielded 4,70,81,881 photographs, including 97,399 pictures of tigers.

The effort invested in the data collection and collation was more than 6,41,102 man-days, making this the largest survey conducted ever, officials said. The 2022 all-India tiger estimation revealed a notable increase in tiger occupancy.

It identified and photographed 3,080 unique tigers, representing an increase from the 2,461 tigers captured in 2018.

According to the report, the minimum estimated population of tigers in India is 3,167, up from 2,697 in 2018. Tiger populations have increased significantly in the Shivalik and Gangetic floodplains as well as in central India, the Northeastern Hills-Brahmaputra floodplains and Sundarbans.

However, the Western Ghats, recognised as one of the most notable biodiversity hotspots in India, showed a decline. The region recorded 824 "unique tigers" in 2022, as compared to 981 in 2018. According to the study team, aligning the aspirations of large-scale economic development while safeguarding forests and wildlife and mitigating human-tiger conflict is one of the major challenges.

Guv clears Bill hours after CM's Assembly offensive

THE TN ASSEMBLY MONDAY ADOPTED A RESOLUTION URGING THE CENTRE AND PRESIDENT TO FIX A TIMEFRAME FOR GOVERNORS TO APPROVE BILLS ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE

AGENCIES
Chennai, April 10: Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi has given his assent to a Bill banning online gambling which was adopted in March by the state Assembly for a second time, official sources said Monday, just hours after the TN Assembly adopted a resolution urging the Centre and President to fix a timeframe for Governors to approve Bills adopted by the House. Raj Bhavan sources said Ravi



"has given his assent to the Bill." With the Governor clearing the Tamil Nadu Prohibition of Online Gambling and Regulation of Online Games Bill, a gazette notification would follow. Advertisement in any form promoting online gambling or playing of online games of chance with money or other stakes is prohibited in the state. The specified online games of chance are Rummy and Poker.

Those violating the provision on advertisement for promotion or inducing people to play online gambling/games of chance face punishment with imprisonment upto one year or with fine, which may extend to Rs five lakh, or both. In Tamil Nadu, any person indulging in online gambling/online games of chance with money or other stakes shall be punished with imprisonment for a term

which may extend to three months or with fine upto Rs 5,000 or both. Any person who provides online gambling service or games of Poker and Rummy with money or other stakes shall face punishment with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years or with fine which may extend to Rs 10 lakh or both. The Governor 'delaying' assent for the Bill and then returning it led to a fresh faceoff between Ravi and the DMK regime. Days after Ravi said the term 'withheld' meant the Bill in question is dead, the Assembly has now passed a resolution asking the Centre to fix time limit for Governors to provide assent for Bills. Following a popular outcry against online gambling with several persons choosing to end their lives after landing in debt trap and losing money heavily by playing such games, the government came with an ordinance last year to ban online gambling. October 19, 2022 a Bill to replace the Ordinance was passed by Assembly and sent to the Governor. After 131 days, the Bill

was returned March 6, 2023 by Governor Ravi to the Assembly. "Lack of legislative competence" was among the key reasons outlined by the Raj Bhavan for returning the Bill. March 23, the Assembly once again unanimously adopted the Bill to ban online gambling and sent it to Ravi. The government, citing Constitutional provisions stoutly defended its move and asserted that it is fully empowered to enact a Bill to ban online gambling. When the Bill was passed by the Assembly for the second time, legal experts opined the Governor was duty bound to give his assent. The background to the promulgation of the ordinance in 2022 and passage of a Bill to replace that was necessitated after the Madras High Court struck down in August 2021 the provisions of the Tamil Nadu Gaming and Police Laws (Amendment) Act 2021 which banned wager or placing bets in cyber space. Various political parties and outfits welcomed the Governor's move.

BJP plans massive Muslim outreach in Uttar Pradesh



MUSLIMS CONSTITUTE ABOUT 19 PER CENT OF THE STATE'S ELECTORATE AND HAVE A GOOD PRESENCE IN AT LEAST 30 LOK SABHA SEATS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi, April 10: To woo Muslims in Uttar Pradesh, the BJP is planning a massive outreach through Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 100th 'Mann Ki Baat' episode April 30. The Minority Morcha of the UP BJP unit is preparing to organise a massive telecast of the 100th 'Mann Ki Baat' radio telecast at over 100 places associated with the Muslim community in the state, including madrassas and dargahs. According to a source, "PM Modi's 'Mann Ki Baat' 100th episode will be a game-changer. The episode will air April 30. We are planning to make it a historic event. We are planning to organise 100 places belonging to the Muslim community including 50-60 madrassas, 30-35 dargahs and majlis where the people of the community can gather and listen to the PM." The source further said that the

Urdu version of 'Mann Ki Baat' - originally a compilation of the PM's 12 monthly broadcasts aired between January and December 2022 - would also be made available to clerics and religious scholars. He said, "We want to ensure that the Prime Minister's vision for the nation reaches everyone. Ahead of the 100th episode, the Urdu translation of Mann Ki Baat and a booklet will be formally launched at a grand event in Lucknow and distributed among the Muslim community at these 100 places April 30." Through Minority Morcha meetings, the BJP has been consistently reaching out to a section of the Muslim population, mostly focused on Pasmanda Muslims, who belong to Dalit and OBC communities. A few days ago, the BJP nominated Tariq Mansoor, the former vice-chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) to the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Council. Muslims constitute about 19 per cent of the state's electorate and have a good presence in at least 30 Lok Sabha seats. Out of which they play a major role in deciding the result in 15 to 20 constituencies. BJP's national general secretary Dushyant Gautam and Vinod Tawde are in-charge of the 'Mann Ki Baat' programme, and under their leadership, this programme will be conducted across the states. BJP has prepared a whole team for this.

NIA raids multiple locations in TN for suspected LTTE links

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
Chennai, April 10: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) Monday conducted raids in several areas of Tamil Nadu for suspected LTTE links and seized documents and gold bars from some places. Sources in the premier investigation agency told IANS that the raids were carried out following tip-offs from the Central intelligence bureau regarding the LTTE trying to regroup in the state. Former LTTE cadres and sympathizers have been trying to regroup themselves in several parts of Tamil Nadu in a bid to revamp the organisation. The former sympathisers and some cadres, who are in the Tamil refugee camps of the state, were trying to arrange funds by using smuggling networks. The LTTE cadres linking themselves with the dreaded Haji Ali Network of Pakistan was reported a few days ago by the IANS. A former senior intelligence operative of the LTTE, Sabesan alias Satkunam was arrested in October 2021 fol-



lowing the seizure of a huge cache of drugs, AK 47 assault rifles and ammunition from the Vizhinjam coast in Kerala in August 2021. A woman LTTE operative, who is a Canadian citizen, was also arrested while trying to withdraw funds lying in a dormant bank account in the Indian Overseas Bank in Mumbai. The woman, according to the intelligence department, was part of a major network of former LTTE sympathisers positioned in various parts of the globe and were trying to use fake ID cards to withdraw money from these dormant accounts for funding the defunct LTTE.

Dalits barred from entering state govt-controlled temple

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
Chennai, April 10: Tamil Nadu's Villupuram was tense Monday after caste Hindus did not let Dalit community members enter the local Shri Dharmaraja Draupati Amman Temple at Melpathi. The temple, interestingly, is controlled by the state government's Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment (HR&CE) Department. Dalit youth Kathiravan, 23, had visited the temple Friday along with his two siblings and was assaulted by caste Hindus who prevented their entry. Talking to IANS, Kathiravan said: "Caste Hindus prevented us from entering the Shri Dharmaraja Draupati Amman temple and even beat us up. They said that we are not even allowed to take photographs of the idol, leave alone providing entry." For the past 70 years, the Dalits were not allowed entry into the temple but six months before, the district authorities had allowed their entry when the idol of Dharmaraja was reinstated. However, a curtain was in place that prevented the Dalits from having a glimpse of the idol. Melpathi in itself is divided into two areas - 'Oor' where the caste Hindus reside, whereas 'cheri' is where the Dalits stay. The area is tense following the caste Hindus hurling slurs and abusing the Dalits. A heavy police team is contingent in place to prevent any untoward incident in the area. The District Collector and district police had already conducted one round of discussions with the Dalit leadership and the caste Hindus Saturday but could not reach a conclusion. Tamil Nadu Police have been given stringent instructions to deploy a heavy police posse on the areas in Mepathi village and surroundings in Villupuram district to prevent any untoward incidents.



Tigers spotted in UP's Suhelwa for first time



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
Lucknow, April 10: Photographic evidence about the presence of tigers in the Suhelwa Wildlife Sanctuary in Uttar Pradesh has been recorded for the first time. The Suhelwa and Sohagi Barwa wildlife sanctuaries have been added to tiger detected grids. According to the report, both the wildlife sanctuaries need prey and habitat restoration along with major investment in protection for securing the tiger population in new areas. In the Ranipur tiger reserve area, three tigers were spotted but they were commonly spotted between Ranipur area and Madhya Pradesh. Though the state-wise figures on tiger population will be released later, the composite report released on Sunday showed 804 'camera trapped tigers' in the Shivalik hills and Gangetic plains landscape, which spans across several states and includes five important tiger reserves, including Dudhwa and Pilibhit tiger reserves and other protected areas of Uttar Pradesh. The report said, "Important step to ensure long-term survival of new populations in this landscape is to supplement and repopulate the Shivalik Forest Division of Uttar Pradesh and increase protection for tigers in Suhelwa." With tigers increasing outside tiger reserves in the landscape, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh need to invest in mitigating conflict with tigers and mega herbivores, said the report.

Varanasi's 'corridor of change' merges past with future

WHILE THE KASHI VISHWANATH CORRIDOR WAS A DREAM PROJECT OF PM MODI, WHO REPRESENTS VARANASI IN THE LOK SABHA, DEVELOPMENT HAS NOT BEEN RESTRICTED TO THE TEMPLE ALONE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
Varanasi (UP), April 10: The revamping of the Kashi Vishwanath Dham corridor has opened the door for a new Kashi. The Ganga is closer to the historic Kashi Vishwanath Dham and obstacles to mythological legends have been removed. Earlier, devotees had to meander through tiny lanes and bylanes to reach the sanctum sanctorum of the Kashi Vishwanath temple and then move to another route to take a holy dip in the Ganga river. The Kashi Vishwanath Corridor has ensured direct accessibility to the Ganga river from the temple. "According to mythology, Lord Shiva had kept Maa Ganga in his hair bun in order to lessen her force and prevent damage to the people on earth. The relationship between the Lord and Mother Ganga has remained pious since then. The new corridor brings Lord Shiva and Maa Ganga together again," said Pandit Vipin Acharya, a local priest. A 20-25 feet wide corridor now connects the Lalita Ghat in Ganga to the Mandir Chowk in the temple. Under the project, the area around the temple has been ex-



panded from 3,000 to 5 lakh square feet. Around 40 temples have been restored to their original glory around here and 23 buildings have been added to the structure providing various facilities. With the completion of the project, pilgrims no more have to walk through the congested lanes to visit the temple, as it would be directly visible and easily accessible from the Ganga. Constructed at a cost of Rs 339 crore, the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor also connects the various ghats to near the iconic and one

of the most ancient ghats -- Dashashwamedh Ghat. The project's architect, Bimal Patel, said, "Prime Minister Modi wanted the corridor to enable devotees to walk directly to the temple after collecting water from the Ganga. The corridor should be a link between the Ganga and the temple. We worked to restore the grandeur of the temple premises as per the vision of Prime Minister Modi." "What is more important is that the original structure of the Kashi Vishwanath temple has not been

tampered with -- it has been allowed to remain as it is. The corridor has increased the facilities for the tourists and beautified the temple premises," he said. During the construction, workers often found bits and pieces of faith entwined in homes and commercial establishments -- small temples or idols installed by unknown people over the decades. Many of these temples were preserved and will be shown in the main gallery of the complex, said officials. "The corridor will give glimpses

of the sculptural art and architectural history of temples over 300 years because the 41 temples, which were found among the buildings purchased and demolished, have been preserved," said Atul Tripathi of Banaras Hindu University. The project has been completed in a record span of three years, despite the pandemic. With the completion of the project, Varanasi has also seen a major transformation. While the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor was a dream project of

Modi who represents Varanasi in the Lok Sabha, development has not been restricted to the temple alone. The Rudraksh Convention Centre has been built to facilitate business conferences and tourism in the city. The building has seating of 1,200 people and is designed like a 'Shivalinga'. It has 108 Rudrakshas on its facade. With modern facilities like art galleries, multi-purpose pre-function areas, divisible meeting rooms the Centre has become a major tourist attraction of the city. The Deen Dayal Hastkala Sankul, a trade facilitation centre for weavers, craftsmen, and artisans of Varanasi that was opened in 2017, acts as a public place and a marketing platform for local artisans. The mega facelift project across 550,000 square feet comprises 24 buildings that include an emporium, a museum, a sacred kitchen, a Vedic library, a centre to store ancient scriptures, a city gallery and a food court. The Manduadih railway station in Varanasi has been also been revamped with more upgraded facilities, cafeterias, booking rooms, lounge and so on. The railway station that looks more like a modern airport now has more tourists than passengers. The well-known heritage places of the city have been given smart signage with a QR code. On a scan, the code will provide a tourist with all the necessary information and history of any place. It will also provide further information on the 84 ancient ghats of Varanasi and the culture that has developed around the sites. Elsewhere in the city, LED screens display information for tourists, including on the history, architecture, and art of Kashi. The famous Ganga Aarti and the aarti at the Kashi Vishwanath temple are also shown on the screens throughout the city.

national

of the day quote

Voting for the municipal corporations should be conducted using ballot papers, and not through EVMS (electronic voting machines). The elections should be free and fair. This is our demand to the government and officials concerned

MAYAWATI | BSP SUPREMO

Following the communal violence in Sasaram and Biharsharif, the Nitish-Tejashwi government is sending the people of Muslim community to jail instead of rioters of Hindu community

ASADUDDIN OWAI | AIMIM CHIEF

I urge Prime Minister Narendra Modi to immediately allow the candidates to write the CRPF recruitment exam in Kannada too

SIDDARAMAIAH | SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER

SHORT TAKES

NIA raids 9 locations in CPI (Maoist) case

New Delhi: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) Monday said that they conducted raids at nine locations in Lohardaga in CPI (Maoist) case and arrested a man along with illegal arms. The accused was identified as Sajjan Kumar, a resident of Jharkhand. The raids were conducted Sunday. The NIA had taken up the case of conspiracy by active cadres of CPI (Maoist) to attack security forces in June 2022. A joint operation was launched in February last year by local police and CRPF when cadres of CPI (Maoist) fired indiscriminately upon them at Harkatta Toli and Banglapat on the way to Bahabar Jungle.

Elderly couple found murdered

New Delhi: An elderly couple was found dead with their throats slit at their residence in northeast Delhi's Gokalpuri area Monday morning, police said. Radhey Shyam Verma (72) and his wife Veena's (68) house was also found ransacked, Deputy Commissioner of Police (northeast), Joy Tirkey, said. While the elderly couple were living on the ground floor of the house, their son Ravi Rattan along with his wife and six-year-old son was living on the first floor.

Four killed in road mishap

Kolkata: Four persons, including a woman, were killed after an SUV first rammed into a motorcycle and then a truck waiting at a traffic signal in the city's Dum Dum Park area, police said Monday. The accident happened around 1.30 am when the speeding vehicle collided with the two-wheeler and the truck, killing three persons on the spot, they said.

BRS suspends two leaders

Hyderabad: Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) has suspended former minister Jupally Krishna Rao and former MP Ponguleti Sudhakar Reddy for anti-party activities. The party's central office announced Monday that they have been suspended on the orders of party president and Chief Minister K. Chandrababhan Naidu. The suspension came a day after Krishna Rao joined Srinivas Reddy, who had already raised the banner of revolt against the leadership. Krishna Rao Sunday attended an Athmeeya Sammelanam programme organised by Srinivas Reddy in Kothagudem, where he slammed KCR for what he called the suppression of democratic voices.



Ghulam Nabi Azad has made a serious allegation that whenever Rahul Gandhi goes on a foreign tour, he meets many unwanted businessmen

RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD | SENIOR BJP LEADER

ED SUMMONS TEJASHWI YADAV

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has summoned Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav Tuesday in connection with the alleged land for job matter involving his father and former Railway Minister Lalu Prasad Yadav and other family members. Earlier, his sister and Rajya Sabha Member Misa Bharti was questioned by the ED



Nationwide Covid drill in hosps

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 10: Amid a spike in Covid-19 cases, mock drills to take stock of hospital preparedness were held in several public and private facilities across the country on Monday, with Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya visiting the Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital here to review the measures taken to combat the disease.

India logged 5,880 fresh cases, while active cases increased to 35,199. The country's Covid death toll has reached 5,30,979 with 14 latest fatalities, according to the health ministry data updated Monday.

While visiting the Ram Manohar Lohia (RML) Hospital, Mandaviya interacted with the heads of departments and the staff. He also spent time with doctors, nurses, heads of security and sanitation services, listening to their suggestions.

The suggestions revolved around quality clinical practices, measures for infection control, hospital management, sanitation processes and patient-centric provisions.

"A huge response was seen nationwide where ministers and senior officials reviewed the preparations and capacities of hospitals and facilities," the health ministry said. In a review meeting held April 7, the health minister had urged



Healthcare workers take part in a mock drill to check Covid-19 preparedness amid rising cases of coronavirus at a Government hospital in Ahmedabad, Gujarat

state health ministers to visit hospitals and oversee the mock drills April 10 and 11.

In the meeting with state health ministers, and principal and additional chief secretaries held virtually, Mandaviya had stressed on identifying emergency hotspots and by monitoring trends of influenza-like illness (ILI) and severe acute respiratory infection (SARI) cases, ramping up testing and vaccination, and ensuring readiness of hospital infrastructure. Besides enhancing genome sequencing and ramping up whole genome sequencing of positive samples, he

had also laid stress on creating awareness about following Covid-appropriate behaviour.

During the meeting, states and Union territories were informed that the World Health Organisation (WHO) was closely tracking a variant of interest (VOI), XBB.1.5, and six other variants (BQ.1, BA.2.75, CH.1.1, XBB, XBF and XBB.1.16). It was highlighted that while Omicron and its sublineages continue to be the predominant variants, most of the assigned variants have little or no significant transmissibility disease severity or immune escape. The prevalence

Amritpal's close aide arrested in Amritsar

Papalpreet is considered to be Amritpal's mentor and has allegedly been in contact with Pakistan's ISI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, April 10: Radical preacher Amritpal Singh's close aide Papalpreet Singh was nabbed in Amritsar district and detained under the National Security Act, police said Monday.

Addressing the media here, Punjab Police Inspector General (Headquarters) Sukhchain Singh Gill said, "He (Papalpreet) is the main associate of Amritpal Singh. He has been arrested from Kathunangal area in Amritsar."

He said Papalpreet has been detained under the stringent National Security Act (NSA) and that six other cases have also been registered against him. Earlier, officials said Papalpreet was arrested in a Punjab Police operation that also involved its counter intelligence wing. They had also said that he was arrested in Hoshiarpur. Papalpreet is considered to be Amritpal's mentor and has allegedly been in contact with Pakistan's ISI.

Gill said further legal action will be taken against Papalpreet.



The police had been conducting searches at many places, including Hoshiarpur, to nab the duo who had been hoodwinking the security forces since March 18 when police had launched a crackdown against the Khalistan sympathiser and his aides. Papalpreet's arrest comes days after a CCTV footage made the rounds on social media in which he could be seen at a 'dera' (place for religious congregation) in a village in Hoshiarpur. The footage is said to be of March 29, a day after a team of the counter intelligence wing chased an Innova car from Phagwara to Hoshiarpur after the police suspected that the fugitive and his aides could be in that vehicle. The 'dera', seen in the footage, is in village Tanauli which is located just two to three kilometers away from Marmaian village in Hoshiarpur where the police had launched a massive search operation in search of the suspects.

AI flight to London returns to Delhi after flier harms cabin crew

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 10: Air India Monday morning deboarded an unruly male passenger who caused physical harm to two cabin crew members onboard a Delhi-London flight, which returned to the national capital about three hours after departure.

The 25-year-old passenger was handed over to the security personnel after the flight AI 111 landed at the Delhi airport and an FIR has also been lodged with the police, the airline said. The Delhi Police detained the passenger, who has been identified as Jaskirat Singh.

Sources said the flight had around 225 passengers. The male passenger was in seat 20E in the economy class and the cabin crew used restraining devices for the passenger to bring things under control, they added. "Not heeding to verbal and written warnings, the passenger continued with unruly behaviour including causing physical harm to two of the cabin crew members," the airline said in a statement. The aircraft which took off for

London Heathrow returned to the national capital shortly after departure "due to the serious unruly behaviour of the passenger". The pilot in command decided to return to the Delhi airport.

The rescheduled flight took off for London in the afternoon. Sources at the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said the flight took off from the national capital at around 6.35 am and a brawl happened between the passenger and two crew members onboard.

Then, the plane made a turn back to Delhi and landed at around 9.40 am, the DGCA sources said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Airport) Devesh Kumar Mahla said, "We have received a complaint in this regard and have detained Jaskirat Singh, who was travelling with his parents to London. He is being interrogated and legal action will be taken accordingly."

On Monday, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) issued an advisory to airlines reiterating the existing provisions in place to deal with unruly passengers.

Airlines have witnessed many such incidents of unruly behaviour by some air passengers in the last few months



PROUD MOMENT: A medical officer of Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) offers cap to her mother during passing out parade, at training headquarters in Chandukheddi near Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh

Lightning bolts, drowning claim 14 lives in 48 hrs

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, April 10: As unseasonal rains and hailstorms lashed different parts of Maharashtra, at least 13 persons were killed in lightning-related incidents and one due to drowning, across the state in the past 48 hours, officials said here Monday. In the worst single tragedy, seven persons were killed in Akola's Parasgaon village late Sunday where a lightning bolt felled a 150-year-old neem tree on a tin shed at the Babuji Maharaj Sansthan ashram.

At least four dozen devotees participating in the prayer ceremonies were trapped underneath but most were rescued and the bodies of four deceased were recovered early Monday, and three died later dur-



Lightning bolts, drowning claim 14 lives in 48 hrs

varying injuries, including two described as "serious". Besides, Aurangabad, Beed, Hingoli, Nandurbar, Parbhani and Pune have reported one death each, mainly farmers working in the fields, owing to lightning hits.

Meanwhile, one person drowned in flash floods triggered by torrential rain that lashed Nashik Sunday, said the officials. Additionally, scores of animals have also been killed or hit in these lightning strikes as the sporadic inclement weather wreaks disasters in different regions of the state since the past few weeks.

Many districts have suffered massive agriculture damage due to hailstorms, playing havoc with standing crops, especially of mangoes and other fruits and vegetables.

DALAI LAMA APOLOGISES TO BOY, HIS FAMILY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shimla, April 10: The Dalai Lama Monday apologised to a boy, his family and friends for the "hurt his words may have caused" after a video clip purportedly showing the Tibetan spiritual head asking him to "suck" his tongue sparked a row.

In the two-minute-five-second video, the Dalai Lama also asked the child "to look at those good human beings who create peace, and happiness and not follow those who kill other people". A senior official said since the Dalai Lama has diplomatic immunity, the government is examining what can be done in the matter.

In an official statement, the Tibetan spiritual head's office said, "A video clip has been circulating that shows a recent meeting when a young boy asked His Holiness the Dalai Lama if he could give him a hug. His Holiness wishes to apologise to the boy and his family, as well as his many friends across the world, for the hurt his words may have caused." "His Holiness often teases people he meets in an innocent and playful way, even in public and before cameras. He regrets the incident," it said. However, the Tibetan spiritual leader's gesture was criticised by some child rights activists who said such actions cannot be "playful".



THE NEVER-ENDING SAGA OF EXAM PAPER LEAKS

On April 4, the in-charge principal of a college in Bhavnagar city of Gujarat was detained along with two students for leaking a B.Com question paper. On April 6, 30 people were arrested for allegedly 'purchasing' leaked question papers of the junior clerks exam in January being held by the Gujarat Service Selection Board. This is the thirteenth paper leak case involving government recruitment examinations in Gujarat since 2014.

Gujarat is not the lone ranger, switch to Rajasthan. Over the last 12 years covering both Congress and BJP rule, there have been 17 question paper leaks including the one for recruiting senior teach-

ers in government schools December 24 last year. This figure does not include the ones taking place in academic institutions like the Hindi Literature question paper of the Kota Open University January 3 this year.

Madhya Pradesh which is still feeling the tremors of the Vyapam scam-the medical entrance and recruitment scam which started in 1995 and was exposed in 2013-is not lagging behind either. In February, an exam for recruitment of nurses on contract under the National Health Mission was cancelled after the paper was found to have been leaked. Over 45,000 aspirants were to appear for 2,284 posts. March witnessed the leak of four papers

of the class 10 and 12 school board exams in Madhya Pradesh.

On March 5, the Telangana Public Service Commission (TPSC) paper for junior engineer (town



planning) got leaked leading to its cancellation. The latest is the case of the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) Hindi and Telugu paper 'leaks' in Telangana April 3-

4 and the arrest of state BJP president, and MP Bandi Sanjay Kumar for an alleged 'conspiracy' to "leak" the question papers to "provoke breach of peace". Assam, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu the list is long.

According to one published estimate there have been more than 70 cases of question paper leaks in the country in the last seven years. Academic circles put the figure at many times this number: The number of students/aspirants affected by these leaks would go into crores. The huge numbers in lakhs that a few thousand vacancies at the clerical level attract confronts the country with a frightening specter of

joblessness haunting it despite all the outside claims governments of the day make.

In the case of the January Gujarat exam leak case, many of those who 'purchased' the leaked papers were either contractual employees already attached to various government departments or the next of kin of Gujarat government employees, the Gujarat Anti-terrorist Squad (ATS) probing the case has found. It is common knowledge that the leaked papers were being marketed for between Rs 12-15 lakhs per piece. In 9.5 lakh aspirants if one were to find 5,000 buyers, the total amount involved is anybody's guess. Now calculate the number of job-related competitive exam-

inations going on in the country at any point of time and multiply just a fraction of the total aspirants with their paying capacity and one has an astounding sum of sullied money skating round the national rink. In the Gujarat case the 'spokes' operated from Hyderabad, Odisha, Patna Kolkata and Vadodra.

However, the biggest obstacle in the centralised investigation of these cases is political. There is complete lack of trust between the BJP-ruled Centre and the Opposition-ruled states. BJP creates a big ruckus over the leaks in Congress-ruled Rajasthan but turns stone silent in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh where it is in power.

international

of the day quote

Australia has approved 11 renewable energy projects since the ruling Labor Party came to power in May 2022, more than double the five approved by the former government

There should be an end to all forms of terrorism and foreign interference in Syria in order to restore its security and stability

Khalsa, which was created on the Baisakhi day, by Guru Gobind Singh is a uniting and not a dividing force

SHORT TAKES

4 killed, 18 injured

Karachi: A powerful blast targeting a police vehicle in a busy marketplace in Pakistan's restive southwestern Balochistan province Monday killed at least four people, including two policemen, and wounded 18 others, in a fresh wave of attacks targeting security personnel. The explosion occurred near a parked police vehicle next to Qandhari Bazar on Shahrah-e-Iqbal in the provincial capital Quetta, the Dawn newspaper reported. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack, but previous such attacks have been blamed on Baloch insurgents and Islamic militants.

Six dead

Paris: The death toll from Sunday's avalanche in the French Alps rose to six, including two mountain guides, local authorities said Monday. The prosecutor's office in Bonneville, in the Haute-Savoie region, said the body of a sixth person has been found after searches resumed on Monday morning. The prefecture of Haute-Savoie said one person was sent to the hospital with minor injuries. Eight other people were found unharmed. No details have been provided on the identity of the victims.

2 lawyers jailed

Beijing: Two prominent Chinese human rights lawyers have been sentenced to more than a decade in prison, Human Rights Watch said on Monday, the latest in a crackdown by the ruling Communist Party on its critics. The rights group said Xu Zhiyong, 50, was sentenced to 14 years and Ding Jixi, 55, was given 12 years in prison under the vague charge of "subversion of state power." Such proceedings are conducted under intense secrecy.



We don't have two Brazils, the Brazil of those who voted for me and the Brazil of those who voted for another candidate. We are one nation

LUIZ INACIO LULA DA SILVA | BRAZILIAN PRESIDENT

STILL UNRESPONSIVE

North Korea remained unresponsive to daily routine calls with South Korea through an inter-Korean liaison communication channel and a military hotline for a fourth straight day Monday according to the Seoul's government



Intel leak has US officials bracing for impact at home and abroad

Washington, April 10: The US national security community is grappling with fallout from the release of dozens of secret documents, including the impact on sensitive information-sharing within the government and ties with other countries, two US officials said. Reuters has reviewed more than 50 of these documents, labeled "Secret" and "Top Secret", that first appeared on social media websites in early March and purportedly reveal details of Ukrainian military vulnerabilities and information about allies including Israel, South Korea and Turkey.

The material did not draw much notice until a New York Times article on Friday. Reuters has not independently verified the documents' authenticity. U.S. officials have said some giving battlefield casualty estimates from Ukraine appeared to have been altered to understate Russian losses. The leak was sufficiently alarming within the Pentagon that it referred the matter to the Department of Justice, which has opened a criminal investigation into the disclosure of the documents. Two US defence officials, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter, said the Pentagon was



Aerial view of the Pentagon is seen in Washington

examining procedures governing how widely some of the most sensitive U.S. secrets are shared. Some of the documents, one of the officials said, would most likely have been available to thousands of people with US and allied government security clearances despite being

highly sensitive, as the information directly affected those countries. The Pentagon on Sunday said in a statement that an interagency effort was assessing the impact the photographed documents could have on US national security as well as that of close American allies, a standard procedure known as "damage assessment" for leaks of classified information. The first official said the number of people who had access to the documents underscores that sensitive information was perhaps being shared too widely with personnel who might not require the level of detail some of the documents contained. "The Pentagon has needed to

curtail the unbridled access to some of the most sensitive intel when they've (got) no justifiable reason to have it," the first official said. The two officials said further that although the leaks were highly concerning, many of them provided only snapshots of time in February and March - when they were dated - but did not appear to disclose anything about future operations. Although the release of documents appears to be the most serious public leak of classified information in years, officials say it so far does not reach the scale and scope of the 700,000 documents, videos and diplomatic cables that appeared on the WikiLeaks website in 2013.

China ends Taiwan drills



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, April 10: China Monday said it has successfully completed its three-day large-scale fire and fury military drills "encircling" Taiwan, including the use of an aircraft carrier, aimed at showing its anger over the US House Speaker's meeting with Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen. The Eastern Theatre Command of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) successfully completed all tasks of its combat readiness patrols and exercises around Taiwan Island, official media here reported. Taiwan's defence ministry said Sunday that in the past 24 hours, 70 Chinese aircraft and 11 Chinese ships were spotted around Taiwan. China views Taiwan as a breakaway province. Beijing has not ruled out the possible use of force to reunify the self-ruled island with the mainland. Analysts say that

US WARSHIP SAILS NEAR MANMADE CHINESE-CONTROLLED ISLE

Beijing: A US Navy destroyer sailed near one of the most important man-made and Chinese controlled islands in the South China Sea Monday, in a freedom of navigation mission that Beijing denounced as illegal. While the United States frequently makes such voyages to challenge China and other states' territorial claims in the strategic waterway, the latest one took place as Beijing staged more war games around Taiwan.

PLA's exercises this time compared to last August when House Speaker Kevin McCarthy's predecessor Nancy Pelosi visited Taipei, becoming the first high-profile American politician to visit the island defying Beijing's redlines, were muted and far less in intensity. China deployed its aircraft carrier 'Shandong' and the state-run CCTV showed missiles being fired from several of China's coastal areas into the Taiwan Strait, the busy waterway that separates the self-governing island from the mainland but chose to end it in three days compared to its previous response. Officials here attribute the reason for short-term drills to Presidential elections in January next year and Beijing was averse to creating a negative public impression in Taiwan which may shore up public support to the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) headed by Tsai, a firm opponent of reunification with China. China hosted former Taiwanese politician Ma Ying-jeou, heading Kuomintang (KMT) party which ad-

BEIJING HAS NOT RULED OUT THE POSSIBLE USE OF FORCE TO REUNIFY THE SELF-RULED ISLAND WITH THE MAINLAND
TAIWAN'S DEFENCE MINISTRY SAID SUNDAY THAT IN THE PAST 24 HOURS, 70 CHINESE AIRCRAFT AND 11 CHINESE SHIPS WERE SPOTTED AROUND TAIWAN
CHINA VIEWS TAIWAN AS A BREAKAWAY PROVINCE

MASS RALLY

Israeli settlers march to West Bank outpost

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jerusalem, April 10: Thousands of Israelis led by at least seven Cabinet ministers marched Monday to an evacuated West Bank settlement, in a defiant signal that Israel's most right-wing government in history is determined to accelerate settlement building on occupied lands despite international opposition. The mass rally also threatened to further raise tensions that have been heightened by days of unrest across the region over a contested Jerusalem holy site. In new violence, Israel troops killed a 15-year-old Palestinian boy during an arrest raid in the occupied West Bank, while a 48-year-old Israeli woman died of wounds sustained in an attack last week that killed two of her daughters. Monday's march took place in the northern West Bank — the



Thousands of Israeli police and army forces were reportedly deployed to secure the march, which added to the already combustible atmosphere that has accompanied the overlap of major Jewish and Muslim holy days. The march to Eviatar, an unauthorised settlement outpost in the northern West Bank that was evacuated by the previous Israeli government in 2021, was being led by hard-line ultranationalist Jewish settlers. scene of repeated violence in recent months. Thousands of Israeli police and army forces were reportedly deployed to secure the march, which added to the already combustible atmosphere that has accompanied the overlap of major Jewish and Muslim holy days. Tensions between Israelis and Palestinians have reached a fever pitch in recent weeks surrounding the Jerusalem shrine.

RUSSIA USING 'SCORCHED EARTH' TACTICS: UKRAINE

REUTERS

Kyiv, April 10: A senior Ukrainian commander said on Monday that Russian troops were using "scorched earth" tactics in the embattled city of Bakhmut and destroying buildings and positions with air strikes and artillery. Ukrainian forces have hung on for months in Bakhmut, a small city in eastern Donetsk region, where the fiercest fighting of Moscow's full-scale February 2022 invasion has killed thousands of soldiers and been dubbed the "meat-grinder." "The enemy switched to so-called scorched earth tactics from Syria. It is destroying buildings and positions with air strikes and artillery fire," said Colonel General Oleksandr Syrskiy, commander of Ukraine's ground forces. But

the defence of the city of Bakhmut continued, he said. Syrskiy, who is overseeing the operation in the east, on Sunday visited front line areas with the fiercest fighting around Bakhmut, Ukraine's Military Media Centre said. "The situation is difficult but controllable," he said. Ukraine also accused Russia of using "scorched earth" tactics last summer in its assault on Sievierodonetsk, a city in the eastern Luhansk region. Kyiv's forces were forced to withdraw from there in July after a Russian onslaught. Ukraine has said its defence of Bakhmut is buying time for it to build up and reconstitute forces for a much-vaunted spring offensive and that it is inflicting huge losses on Russian forces trying to seize control.



Masked youths throw petrol bombs at a police Landrover as Republican protesters opposed to the Good Friday Agreement hold a parade in Londonderry, Northern Ireland. President Biden is due to visit Northern Ireland and Ireland to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement

Indian-American CR Rao awarded

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, April 10: Callyampudi Radhakrishna Rao, a prominent Indian-American mathematician and statistician, will receive the 2023 International Prize in Statistics, the equivalent to the Nobel Prize in the field, for his monumental work 75 years ago that revolutionised statistical thinking. Rao's work, more than 75 years ago, continues to exert a profound influence on science, the International Prize in Statistics Foundation said in a statement. Rao, who is now 102, will receive the prize, which comes with a USD 80,000 award, this July at the biennial International Statistical Institute World Statistics Congress in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. "In awarding this prize, we celebrate the monumental work by

Historic jewels, new emoji for King Charles' coronation

The 74-year-old monarch, who succeeded to the British throne after the passing of his mother Queen Elizabeth II in September last year, will be formally crowned at a solemn religious ceremony at Westminster Abbey in London May 6

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, April 10: A gilded air-conditioned horse-drawn carriage, a series of historic crown jewels and a brand-new emoji for social media to give a modern touch are among the details released by Buckingham Palace in London Monday for the grand Coronation ceremony of King Charles III and Queen Camilla next month. The 74-year-old monarch, who succeeded to the British throne after the passing of his mother Queen Elizabeth II in September last year, will be formally crowned at a solemn religious ceremony at



Westminster Abbey in London May 6. It marks a 70-year gap since this royal tradition was last seen in action for the late Queen in 1953 and next month's ceremony will include many of the same elements but also add modern-day touches chosen by Charles. "On the morning of the 6th May, Their Majesties will travel from Buckingham Palace in The King's Procession to Westminster Abbey in the Diamond Jubilee State Coach," the palace said. "Created for Queen Elizabeth II to commemorate the 60th anniversary of Her late Majesty's reign in 2012, the coach has only ever conveyed the Sovereign, occasionally accompanied by the consort or a visiting Head of State," it said. "The gilded crown on the top of the Diamond Jubilee State Coach was carved from oak from HMS Victory, and the coach's interior is inlaid with samples of woods, metals and other materials from buildings and places with specific connections to Britain and its history," it said. This horse-drawn carriage is the far more comfortable one of the two to feature in the two-way

procession, including air-conditioning and shock absorbers. The less comfortable royal carriage, the Gold State Coach, will be used for the shorter return journey from the Abbey to the palace. "The coach, last seen during the Pageant of the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II in June 2022, was commissioned in 1760 and was first used by King George III, to travel to the State Opening of Parliament in 1762," the palace said. "The coach has been used at every Coronation since that of William IV in 1831. The coach will be drawn by eight Windsor Greys and, due to its weight of four tonnes, will travel at walking pace," it said. Once back at the palace, the newly crowned King and Queen will receive a Royal Salute from the United Kingdom and Commonwealth

Armed Forces who would have been on parade that day. The Royal Salute will be followed by three cheers from the assembled service personnel, as a tribute from the Armed Forces. The Coronation Regalia, the heart of the Crown Jewels which remain at the Tower of London for public display at all other times as a set of sacred and secular objects which symbolise the service and responsibilities of the monarch, are also being prepared for the grand ceremony. "The Regalia has played a central role in Coronation Services for hundreds of years and, in keeping with tradition, will be used at Westminster Abbey on the 6th May. As part of the Royal Collection, the Regalia are held in trust by the monarch on behalf of the nation," the palace said.



C R Rao that not only revolutionised statistical thinking in its time but also continues to exert enormous influence on human understanding of science across a wide spectrum of disciplines," said Guy Nason, chair of the International Prize in Statistics Foundation. In his remarkable 1945 paper published in the Bulletin of the Calcutta Mathematical Society, Rao demonstrated three fundamental results that paved the way for the modern field of statistics and provided statistical tools heavily used in science today, the Foundation said in a statement on April 1.

of the day note

India is home to 5 lakh micro, small and medium enterprises in the building and manufacturing sector, and we aim to supply building material to them

PARTH JINDAL | DIRECTOR, JSW ONE PLATFORMS

IHCL has witnessed a tremendous year of growth with unprecedented momentum of portfolio expansion. We signed a record 36 hotels in this financial year taking our portfolio to 260 properties

PUNEET CHHATWAL | MD & CEO, IHCL

Singapore has always been a top destination for Indians and our partnership with Mandai Wildlife Group allows us an exciting opportunity to benefit customers with attractive products and offers

DANIEL D'SOUZA | PRESIDENT & COUNTRY HEAD (HOLIDAYS), SOTC TRAVEL

SHORT TAKES

Fuel demand rises 5% in March YoY

New Delhi: India's fuel consumption, a proxy for oil demand, rose 5% year on year in March, data from the oil ministry's Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC) showed Monday. Consumption totalled 20.50 million tonne. Sales of gasoline, or petrol, rose 6.8% to 3.1 million tonne while cooking gas, or liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), sales fell 2.7% year-on-year to 2.41 million tonne. Sales of bitumen, used for making roads, jumped 16.5% month-on-month, and fuel oil use increased more than 2% in March, compared with February.

Bumper FY23 for Godrej Properties

New Delhi: Godrej Properties Monday said its sales booking rose 56 per cent last fiscal year on an all-time high of ₹12,232 crore on strong demand for residential properties. Godrej Properties informed that the company achieved its highest ever sales bookings in the fourth quarter as well as the entire 2022-23 financial year. In the fourth quarter, the company clocked sales bookings of ₹4,051 crore. Its sales bookings stood at ₹7,861 crore in 2021-22.

JSW Steel output rises 13% in Q4

New Delhi: JSW Steel Monday posted a 13 per cent growth in its consolidated crude steel production at 6.58 million tonne (MT) during the fourth quarter of FY23. The company had produced 5.81 MT crude steel from operations in India and the US in the year-ago period, JSW Steel said in a statement. For the whole 2022-23 fiscal, the company's crude steel production was at 24.15 MT, up 24 per cent, from 19.51 MT in FY22. The consolidated crude steel production in FY23 was the highest, JSW Steel said. Part of \$22 billion JSW Group, JSW Steel is among India's top six steel making companies.

Temasek acquires 41% stake in MHE

New Delhi: Singapore-based sovereign wealth fund Temasek will acquire an additional 41 per cent stake in Manipal Health Enterprises for over ₹16,300 crore (\$2 billion), increasing its stake in one of India's largest hospital chains to 59 per cent. Sources said Temasek stake buyout would be for over ₹16,300 crore valuing Manipal Health Enterprises (MHE) at around ₹40,000 crore, making it the largest deal in the Indian healthcare sector.



2022 has been a watershed year for the flexible workplace industry

NIDHI MARWAH | MD (SOUTH ASIA), THE EXECUTIVE CENTRE

TRIUMPH TRANSFERS OPS TO BAJAJ AUTO

Bajaj Auto Ltd and British bike maker Triumph Motorcycles Monday said they have completed transfer of the latter's India sales and marketing operations to the Indian firm. The development is part of the strategic partnership between the two companies announced in 2020 under which they planned to collaborate to create a new range of mid-sized Triumph Motorcycles



WINNING STREAK

D-St sees longest rally in 4 months

SENSEX AND NIFTY HAVE RISEN BY AROUND 4% IN THE SIX DAYS OF GAINS WHICH IS THE LONGEST WINNING RUN SINCE THE EIGHT-DAY RALLY FROM NOV 22 TO DEC 1 LAST YEAR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 10: Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty eked out gains in volatile trade Monday, extending the winning streak to a sixth straight day as gains in auto and IT shares offset losses in banking and FMCG stocks.

Logging its longest gaining streak in four months, the 30-share BSE Sensex ended marginally up by 13.54 points or 0.02 per cent to 59,846.51. During the day, it climbed 276.14 points or 0.46 per cent to 60,109.11.

The broader NSE Nifty advanced 24.90 points or 0.14 per cent to finish at 17,624.05, marking its sixth straight day of gains.

Among the Sensex firms, Tata Motors ended with over 5 per cent gains after the company reported an 8 per cent year-on-year increase in group global wholesales, including that of Jaguar Land Rover (JLR), at 3,61,361 units in the fourth quarter of FY23.

Wipro, Power Grid, Larsen & Toubro, Mahindra & Mahindra, Tech Mahindra, NTPC, Titan, Tata Consultancy Services and HCL Technologies were among the other major winners.

Bajaj Finance, IndusInd Bank,



Asian Paints, Hindustan Unilever, Axis Bank, ICICI Bank, Reliance Industries and HDFC Bank were among the laggards.

The rupee pared its early gains to close 3 paise higher at 81.99 against the US dollar Monday as a resurgent greenback amid expectations of Fed rate hike and firm crude oil prices weighed on the local unit.

"The positive quarterly business updates from auto and real estate firms caused strong movements in their respective sectors, but the overall mood was slightly dampened by solid US job data,

which raised fears of further rate hikes by the Fed. The release of inflation data in India and the US, along with the FOMC minutes, have now become crucial in determining the market trend," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

While benchmark indices ended a tad higher in a lacklustre trading session, realty, oil & gas, auto and power stocks rallied sharply after having retreated last month.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.38 per cent and smallcap gauge advanced 0.16 per cent. Among sectoral in-

NSE warns investors against 'dabba' trading

The National Stock Exchange (NSE) Monday cautioned investors against some fraudsters running illegal dabba trading with guaranteed returns to investors. Dabba trading is an illegal form of trading in shares, where operators of such trading rings allow people to trade in equities outside the stock exchange platform. The cautionary statements came after NSE found that the entities -- Shri Parasnath Commodity Private Limited, Shri Parasnath Bullion Private Limited, Faary Tale Trading Private Limited and Bharat Kumar (associated with Trade with Trust) --were providing dabba or illegal trading platform with assured returns. The exchange said that these persons are not registered either as a member or authorised persons of any registered member of the NSE. Moreover, a police complaint has been lodged in this regard. Cautioning investors, NSE asked them not to subscribe to any such scheme or product offered by any person or entity offering guaranteed returns in the stock market as the same is prohibited by law. "Investors are cautioned and advised not to trade on such illegal trading platforms. Participation in such illegal platforms is at the investor's own risk, cost and consequences as such illegal trading platforms are neither approved nor endorsed by the exchange," the bourse said. For any kind of disputes relating to such prohibited schemes, mechanisms such as benefits of investor protection under the exchange's jurisdiction, exchange dispute resolution mechanism and investor grievance redressal mechanism administered by the exchange, would not be available to investors, it added.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude

utilities climbed 1.60 per cent, power (1.56 per cent), auto (1.23 per cent), oil & gas (1.18 per cent), IT (0.83 per cent), consumer discretionary (0.80 per cent) and tech (0.74 per cent). FMCG, financial services, telecommunication and bankex were the laggards.

Investors may look forward to CPI, Federal Open Market Committee minutes retail sales and industrial production data.

Reliance, Adani, Jindal among 49 players keen to acquire Future Retail

Debt-ridden FRL operated multiple retail formats in both the hypermarket supermarket and home segments under brands, such as Big Bazaar, Easyday, and Foodhall. At its peak, it was operating over 1,500 outlets in nearly 430 cities



Ltd among others.

As per the provisions of the Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code, expression of interest was invited from prospective bidders October 04, 2022. Later, it was reissued and the submission date was extended for the Resolution Plan and a final list of 15 PRAs was published November 15, 2022.

Earlier March 15, FRL had informed that almost one and a half months after resigning from the suspended board of FRL, Kishore Biyani has withdrawn his resignation. This came after the RP had raised objections to the contents of Biyani's resignation letter and had requested him to recall it.

FRL was part of the 19 Future group companies operating in the retail, wholesale, logistic and warehousing segments, which were supposed to be transferred to Reliance Retail as part of a ₹24,713-crore deal announced in August 2020.

However, lenders had rejected the takeover of the 19 Future group companies, including FRL, by Reliance amid a legal challenge by Amazon. Last year in August, SEBI ordered a forensic audit of the accounts of FRL for the financial years 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22.

MFs invest ₹1.82L-cr in equities in FY23

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 10: Mutual funds remained bullish on the Indian equities in 2022-23 and invested ₹1.82 lakh crore largely due to a strong interest from retail investors and the correction in the market that led to reasonable valuation.

This comes following a similar amount of ₹1.81 lakh crore invested by mutual funds in the stock market in preceding financial year 2021-22 (FY22). Before that, they had pulled out ₹1.2 lakh crore from equities in 2020-21, according to the data with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi).

According to the Sebi data, mutual funds have invested a net amount of ₹1.82 lakh crore in the just concluded financial year.

In terms of sectors, financial services continued to have the biggest allocation in mutual fund portfolios followed by IT, capital goods, auto and healthcare.

The massive selling by Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) from the Indian market has been absorbed by Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs), including mutual funds and insurance companies. This is a reflection of the rising clout and maturity of domestic investors.

FPIs dumped Indian equities to the tune of ₹37,631 crore in the last fiscal and sold equity worth ₹1.4 lakh crore in FY22.



Govt kickstarts IREDA IPO process

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 10: The government is planning to come out with an initial share sale offer for up to 25 per cent stake in Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) and is looking for merchant bankers to manage the process.

The Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) Monday invited bids from category-I Sebi registered merchant bankers; either singly or as a consortium, with experience and expertise in public offerings in capital market; to act as Book Running Lead Manager (BRLM) and to assist and advise the Government/IREDA in the process.

The BRLM would advise the Government/IREDA on the timing and the modalities of the Initial

Public Offer (IPO), undertake due diligence, advice on regulatory norms and conduct roadshows to generate investor interest.

The government will appoint up to three merchant bankers and the last date to submit bids is April 28.

Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd (IREDA) is under the administrative control of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) and engaged in the financing of renewable energy and energy efficiency projects.

Last month, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) approved the listing of IREDA through an initial public offer (IPO) to part sale the government's stake and raise funds for IREDA through the issue of fresh equity shares.

AMID RECORD DEMAND

Sugar prices climb as output dips

India has allowed sugar mills to export only 6.1 million tonne of the sweetener in the current season, down from the record 11 million tonne in the previous season



the margins of sugar makers such as Balrampur Chini, Shree Renuka Sugars, Dalmia Bharat Sugar and Dwarkesh Sugar, helping them make cane payments on time to farmers, dealers said.

But the price rise could add fuel to elevated food inflation and discourage New Delhi from allowing additional sugar exports, supporting global prices, which are already trading near multi-year highs.

Sugar prices are rising mainly due to the downward revision in

production in top sugar producing state Maharashtra, said Ashok Jain, president of the Bombay Sugar Merchants Association.

"Prices would rise further in coming months as demand from bulk buyers is expected to rise because of summer season," he said.

Sugar demand rises as consumption of cold drinks and ice cream climbs in India during the summer months that run roughly from April to June. Demand also gets a boost in summer from the wedding season.

Demand has rebounded after being disrupted last year by the Covid-19 pandemic, and could rise to a record 28 million tonne this marketing year, said one Mumbai-based dealer with a global trading firm.

PILOT PROJECT

Govt allows 5 private firms for cluster farming

THE MOVE AIMS TO MAKE INDIAN PRODUCE GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE AND BOOST FARMERS' INCOME

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 10: The Centre has allowed five private firms to undertake cluster farming of specific horticulture crops in about 50,000 hectares on a pilot basis entailing an investment of ₹750 crore, including government subsidy -- a move aimed at making Indian produce globally competitive and boost farmers' income.

Desai Agrifoods, FIL Industries, Sahyadri Farms, Meghalaya Basin Management Agency, and Prasad Seeds are five companies selected for pilot cluster farming through a bidding process.

The Centre will give financial assistance up to ₹100 crore depending on the size of the project under the recently launched central scheme Cluster Development Programme (CDP), which is im-

plemented by the National Horticulture Board with an outlay of ₹2,200 crore.

Priya Ranjan, Joint Secretary in the Agriculture Ministry, said, the cluster-based approach has seen an incredible amount of success across the world. In India, the government for the first time is encouraging market-led development of entire value chain of specific horticulture crops by giving financial assistance. "These five companies are spread across an area of almost 50,000 hectares and cover around 55,000 farmers. The investment within these clusters is about ₹750 crores," he said.

For instance, Desai Agrifoods's ₹103 crore 'banana cluster' project will be developed in Ananthapur, Andhra Pradesh, Sahyadri Farms' ₹205 crore 'grapes cluster' project will come up in



Nasik, Maharashtra, while Meghalaya Basin Management Agency's ₹52 crore 'turmeric cluster' project will be developed in West Jaintia Hills, he said.

FIL Industries will develop an 'apple cluster' in Shopian, Jammu and Kashmir, while Prasad Seeds will

develop a 'mango cluster' in Mahabubnagar, Telangana, he added.

The government aims to develop 55 different clusters identified across the nation, each with its specific crop. Initially, the pilot will be in 12 clusters with seven-cultured crops on a pilot basis.

AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN ABOUT 50,000 HECTARES WITH ₹750CR SEED MONEY

FIRMS WILL FOCUS ON CROPS LIKE BANANA, APPLE, GRAPES, TURMERIC AND MANGO

TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION, OPERATIONALISATION OF THE PROJECT WILL BE FOUR YEARS

Under the CDP, financial assistance of up to ₹25 crore will be given for mini clusters of more than 5,000 hectares, up to ₹50 crore for mid clusters between 5,000-10,000 hectares and up to ₹100 crore for mega clusters of above 15,000 hectares.

The implementing agencies of cluster farming are selected through a bidding process for different verticals: pre-production and pro-

duction; post-harvest management and value addition; and logistics, marketing and branding.

In addition to private companies, farmer producer organisations (FPOs), farmer producer companies (FPCs), federations, co-operatives, societies, partnership firms, proprietorship firms, state agriculture and marketing boards and other public sector entities are eligible for becoming implementing agencies.

The main objective of CDP is to provide ease of access to farmers for clean, good-quality planting material. The provision of these planting materials will enhance the quality of produce at the farm level and will allow farmers to reap the benefits of exporting their crops as well. This will be possible due to the alignment of crop production with international standards.

POORAN, STOINIS LIFT LSG DC, MI look for first win

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



NICHOLAS POORAN



MARCUS STOINIS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, April 10: Nicholas Pooran smashed a match-winning 19-ball 62 (4x4, 7x6) while Marcus Stoinis made 65 (30b, 6x4, 5x6) as Lucknow Super Giants prevailed over Royal Challengers Bangalore by one wicket in a last-ball thriller in the IPL here Monday.

Chasing 213, LSG rode on Pooran and Stoinis' brilliance to eke out a memorable win. Pooran recorded the season's fastest fifty, reaching the landmark in only 15 balls.

Earlier, captain Faf du Plessis (79 n o, 46b, 5x4, 5x6), Virat Kohli (61, 44b, 4x4, 4x6) and Glenn Maxwell (59, 29b, 3x4, 6x6) smashed blistering half centuries as RCB posted an imposing 212/2 after being sent into bat. Du Plessis and Kohli shared 96 runs for the opening wicket after being sent into bat.

LSG had a horrible start and lost Kyle Mayers to Mohammed Siraj (3/22) in the third delivery of the opening over. RCB tasted their second success in the fourth over when Deepak Hooda got a faint edge to Dinesh Karthik behind the stumps off the bowling of Wayne Parnell.

To make matters worse for LSG, Parnell struck again a ball later when Krunal Pandya edged one to Karthik, as the visitors slumped to 23/3 in four overs.

Thereafter, Stoinis showed his batting prowess and took Harshal Patel and Karn Sharma to the cleaners to keep LSG in the hunt. Stoinis continued his onslaught and slammed Shabbaz Ahmed for two maximums to take LSG to 91/3 after the halfway stage while bringing up his fifty in 26 balls. Stoinis then hammered Karn

Sharma over the extra cover boundary, but the bowler had the last laugh as the Australian miscued a shot to be caught by Ahmed at deep point.

LSG skipper KL Rahul's lean patch continued as he struggled to 18 off 20 balls before being caught by Kohli off Siraj in the 12th over. Pooran used his long handle to great effect and smashed seven sixes and four boundaries to keep LSG in the hunt. Playing a gem of an innings, Pooran brought up his fifty off just 15 balls. Pooran singlehandedly changed the complexion of the match with his big-hitting prowess and took LSG to within sniffing distance of a spectacular win.

Earlier, after a sedate start, Kohli smashed Avesh Khan for a six and four in consecutive deliveries in the second over to up the tempo. Avesh

was again at the receiving end of Kohli's wrath as the former India captain clobbered the bowler for three boundaries in the fourth over.

Kohli was at his best as he hit straight over Mark Wood's head for a boundary and then pulled the bowler over deep midwicket for a maximum.

Du Plessis, on the hand, played the second fiddle and took his time. While Kohli went hammer and tongs, the South African played sensibly, hitting the bad deliveries to the fence.

Kohli finally departed in the 12th over when he pulled Amit Mishra to Stoinis at square leg. While Du Plessis struggled to get going initially, Maxwell announced his arrival at the crease with a four and six off Mishra.

Du Plessis opened up with three huge hits over the fence off Bishnoi in the 15th over as RCB raced to 137/1. Du Plessis, who was slow to start with, brought up his fifty with a fantastic lofted shot over Wood's head.

Maxwell showed his worth as he went after the bowlers from the word go. But it was Du Plessis who went hammer and tongs towards the end, clobbering every LSG bowler out of the park. It was raining sixes and fours from Du Plessis' bat as the 18th over from Jaydev Unadkat fetched RCB 23 runs.

BRIEF SCORES

RCB 212/2 (Faf du Plessis 79 n o, Virat Kohli 61, Glenn Maxwell 59; Amit Mishra 1/18) lost to LSG 213/9 (Marcus Stoinis 65, Nicholas Pooran 62; Mohammed Siraj 3/22, Wayne Parnell 3/41) by 1 wicket.

New Delhi, April 10: Both Delhi Capitals and Mumbai Indians will be expecting a lot more from their local talent as they search for their maiden victory in the Indian Premier League here Tuesday.

It is extremely difficult to gain consistency in the highly competitive league if the Indian players are not delivering and that is what is plaguing both sides.

Delhi are being forced to go back to the drawing board after three losses in as many games while perennial slow starters Mumbai have also lost two in two. Both have their work cut out in all the departments.

Delhi's top order was 'Boulted' in the last game, raising questions about Prithvi Shaw's ability against fast bowling. He has been dismissed in different fashion - pace, bounce and swing, in his three innings and there doesn't seem to be a quick fix to his technical issues.

With wickets falling at the other end, skipper David Warner has got the runs but it has come at a strike rate of 117. He is expected to do better than that.

Getting the opportunity in the absence of Mitchell Marsh, who has gone back home to get married, Manish Pandey lasted only one ball and the veteran batter will be keen to make an impact at Kotla.

Delhi's pacers, including Anrich Nortje, Mukesh Kumar and Khaleel Ahmed, have been taken to the cleaners and the team must address that issue against Mumbai.

A spicy deck was dished out for the opening game here with pacers getting plenty of assistance. The conditions might favour them again for the Delhi attack to bounce back.



There is a big question mark over the fitness of Khaleel, who injured his hamstring in the game against Rajasthan Royals.

In the spin department, Kuldeep Yadav has been economical but the team expects more from him in the middle overs while Axar Patel has been expensive.

"If I could put my finger on it, I'd do something to change it. We need to do some more soul-searching as a group and talk about it. Three games in and no wins... you can't get afford to get off to bad

starts in the IPL," head coach Ricky Ponting said after the loss to the Royals.

The star-studded Mumbai Indians too have a lot to figure out, starting with their explosive top-order which has flattered to deceive so far. Skipper Rohit Sharma looked good before a beauty of a ball from Tushar Deshpande got the better of him against CSK.

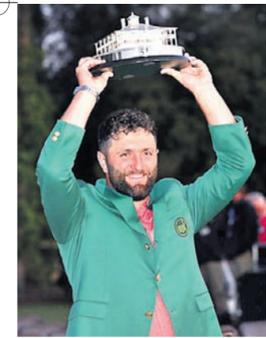
A special knock from Ishan Kishan too is awaited while million dollar buy Cameron Green is yet to make an impact.

When a batter is out of form, he finds news ways to get out and that is what is happening with star player Suryakumar Yadav, who would be hoping his unexpected lean run ends Tuesday.

The young Tilak Verma has stood out in an otherwise underperforming batting department. Rohit had no hesitation in saying after the CSK game that the senior players need to step up.



Rahm rolls to Masters win, Koepka collapses



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Augusta, April 10: Brooks Koepka will no doubt hear the same murmured joke no matter where he goes in the coming days and weeks. If only the Masters was 54 holes. Like those tournaments on the Saudi-backed LIV Golf circuit.

If that was the case, Koepka would've been wearing a green jacket on the 18th green at Augusta National, rather than making the dejected march from there to the locker room. He had a four-shot lead over Jon Rahm when they resumed third rounds that had been halted by weather, and a two-shot lead when the round finished, before shooting 3-over 75 in his final round.

Rahm closed with a 69 to finish at 12 under. By the time Koepka slid a birdie putt past on his 72nd hole,

he was left at 8 under and tied for second with LIV Golf compatriot Phil Mickelson, whose finishing 65 had sent him shooting up the leaderboard.

The previous three times Koepka had a 54-hole lead in a major, he went on to win. Koepka opened with a near-flawless 65, then took advantage of a favorable tee time to shoot 67 while dodging storms that derailed most of the second round. Koepka hung tough when driving rain greeted players Saturday, and was still holding onto a four-shot lead when Augusta National grew so waterlogged that the third round could not be continued. Half of that lead was gone in the first 30 seconds of play Sunday.

Picking up where they left off on the seventh hole, Rahm made birdie and Koepka made bogey, and that two-shot swing set the tone for the rest of the day. Koepka maintained his lead for the rest of the third round, but the birdie binge that he'd been on the first couple of days dried up and Rahm swept past him on the front nine of the final round.

At one point, Koepka went 22 straight holes Sunday without a birdie, dropping from 13 under to start the day to 7 under. He finally made birdie at the 13th to get back to 8 under, but Rahm rammed in his birdie putt on top of him. That allowed the Spaniard to maintain a three-shot lead with five holes to play and effectively ended Koepka's hopes.

HI planning to revive HIL



(From L): One of the founders of BBMVPL Ravneet Gill, HI President Tilip Tirkey and HI Secretary General Bhola Nath Singh show the agreement document

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 10: The lucrative Hockey India League (HIL) is likely to be re-launched early next year as the national federation on Monday announced its exclusive commercial and marketing partner for the event.

HIL was stopped after the 2017 edition due to financial issues and Hockey India (HI) is now looking new partners to revive the league. "The HIL was a big success for

the game and we are now in the process of reviving the league early next year," a HI source told this agency.

"We wanted the league to start as soon as possible but there is no window in FIH till February next year. But it gives us ample time to put all the things in place," he added.

HI Monday announced Big Bang Media Ventures Pvt Ltd as its exclusive commercial and marketing partner agency. This marks a

great step towards the awaited revival of the HIL.

"I am very pleased today, because the Hockey India League was one of my top priorities when I assumed office as president of Hockey India. It will be a critical stepping stone for India and we are delighted to have Big Bang Media Ventures Pvt Ltd (BBMVPL) as our exclusive Commercial partners for the HIL," HI president Dilip Tirkey said.

"Their understanding of sport, esports, content, media & IP monetisation is unparalleled and we are very excited for what we could collectively achieve and deliver."

"I am delighted that we are moving towards the launch of a new era of the Hockey India League. It will revitalise not only hockey in India, but also bring fresh energy to the sport globally," he added.

Echoing Tirkey's sentiments, HI secretary general Bhola Nath Singh said: "The Hockey India League will bring together the best of the world and a great learning experience for young talent as well. "We are confident of taking this forward with Big Bang Media Ventures Pvt Ltd. And their expertise to manage the commercial and marketing aspects of the league."

As per the agreement, Big Bang Media Ventures Pvt Ltd will be responsible to bring in sponsors, including the main sponsor, besides scouting for possible franchise owners.

GM Gukesh reigns supreme at Armageddon C'ship event



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Berlin, April 10: Teenaged Indian Grandmaster D Gukesh stunned former world rapid champion Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan in the final to win the World Chess Armageddon Asia & Oceania event here. Gukesh emerged winner in a topsy-turvy summit clash late Sunday.

After a missed chance in game 1, Gukesh led the next game against Abdusattorov to use his "extra life" and start the match all over again.

The first game of the 'new' match was a draw after a perpetual check from Gukesh. He won the next game to emerge champion. Both Gukesh and Abdusattorov have earned a spot at the Armageddon's Grand Finale in September.

The 16-year-old Indian won in

a field that included former world classical champion Vladimir Kramnik, Daniil Dubov, Yangyi Yu (China), Vidit Gujrathi and Karthikeyan Murali (both India) and Paryan Maghsodloo (Iran), apart from Abdusattorov.

"Glad to win the thrilling event Armageddon championship series 2023-Asia and Oceania group by @theworldchess! Big relief to finally win a faster time control elite event & enjoyed plenty of new experiences the way event was played amidst lights, makeup stuff," Gukesh tweeted after the triumph.

Former World Champion Viswanathan Anand hailed the young GM's achievement. "Congratulations @DGukesh. An excellent achievement especially in a different time control. Proud to see our @WacaChess mentee make us proud again," Anand tweeted.

Once asked to mop floor, Rinku scripts surreal tale

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 10: "You don't have to tell anyone that you mop floors at a tuition centre. Just come in the morning, do the cleaning and leave. Nobody will know. But I didn't like the idea," Rinku Singh had once narrated his ordeal.

These were his father's words to a young Rinku before he began playing at U-16 level for Uttar Pradesh. The family of seven, which included five sons, found father Khanchand's meagre income from delivering LPG cylinders door-to-door, insufficient for financial sustenance and most of them had to do odd jobs to make ends meet.

Life, indeed was tough for Rinku and his family. However, the perseverance kept him going and now he has become a household name after his sensational power hitting in IPL Sunday night.

"I am not educated enough to fall back on academics. It is only cricket that could have taken me forward and it wasn't just one of the options but the only option," his jaws tightened when he spoke to KKR's official Youtube channel some time back during an interaction.

Sunday, the stockily-built 25-

year-old from Aligarh didn't just hit his UP teammate Yash Dayal for five consecutive sixes to pull off an incredible IPL win but each and every ball that soared over the ropes at the Narendra Modi Stadium was a statement in itself.

In the last few years, his family has been able to bid poverty good-bye with IPL money but from now, he will enjoy IPL stardom for posterity.

Ian Bishop was on air when Rinku launched into Dayal's back of the hand slower delivery. "Rinku Singh, Remember the Name" in Bishop's voice was something you would love to hear, on a loop.

"My father struggled a lot, I come from a farmer's family. Every ball that I hit out of the ground was dedicated to the people who sacrificed so much for me," Rinku said after his match-winning knock.

During the 2021, domestic season, he had sustained a serious knee injury while going for a second run in a game for UP and underwent a surgery. His father was so depressed that he had stopped eating for a few days before he made him understand that injuries are a part of players' lives.

THE BOY FROM ALIGARH

Aligarh is considered as a cul-



tural hub of India with the famous Aligarh Muslim University still having its pride of place among country's elite academic institutes. It has been a house of intellectuals, poets, social reformers, sportspersons (Major Dhyan Chand and Lala Amarnath) for nearly a-century-and-

half-now (148 years).

The biggest link of the city with sport is that it is the birthplace of former India hockey captain Zafar Iqbal. But Aligarh belongs to Rinku too, whose father would often thrash all his five sons if they tried to give cricket precedence over studies.

"To play proper inter-colony or club matches, you needed to pool in money to buy a leather ball and my father would never give me money. Once I went to play a match in Kanpur and my mother borrowed Rs 1000 from local grocery store to provide for my pocket-money," Rinku recollected back then.

"Papa se hum paancho bhaiyon ko bahot maar padhi hai (All five brothers have got lot of thrashing from dad). My father was hawker, delivered LPG cylinders and when he wouldn't be available for the job, we brothers had to fill in and father would sit with a stick till we hadn't delivered," the UP south-paw said.

Lifting the heavy LPG cylinder requires a lot of strength. Rinku and one of his brothers would often carry the heavy cylinder on their bike and then travel through the by-lanes of Aligarh to residential areas and hotels for delivery.

So when did his father finally stop beating him up for ignoring studies and playing cricket. "There was a tournament called School World Cup being organised by DPS Aligarh and I was adjudged 'Man of the Tournament'."

"That was the first time Papa had come to the ground to watch

me. I was presented with a motor-bike in front of him. Usdin ke baad unhone kabhie nahi mara (He never raised his hand after that day)," Rinku was seen laughing for the first time during that interaction.

COMING THROUGH RANKS

He had his share of rejections as he was twice ignored during UPCA's U-16 trials though he himself admitted that he wasn't ready for that level at that time.

But by 2012, he was ready and scored 154 on his Vijay Merchant Trophy debut and an innings like that in a BCCI tourney gave him confidence that he can play elite cricket if he works hard. Within a couple of years, he was in UPU-19 team and in the first year (2014) was directly inducted into UP's one-day team and never looked back.

In the past three years, Rinku has moved his family into their new apartment in the city, the first thing he did with IPL money. He has paid of all outstanding loans of his family.

Rinku Singh has the talent and ability but after Sunday, it can be said safely that he has the heart to own the big stage in most difficult of circumstances.

BCCI announces domestic cricket season schedule

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 10: Indian 2023-24 domestic season will kickstart with the Duleep Trophy tournament starting June 28 while the flagship Ranji Trophy set to commence from January 5, next year.

The Duleep Trophy will be followed by Deodhar Trophy (July 24 to August 3), Irani Cup (October 1-5), Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy (October 16-November 6) and Vijay Hazare Trophy (November 23-December 15).

The senior women's season will begin with the national T20 championships (October 19 to November 9), followed by Inter-Zonal T20 Trophy from November 24 to December 4. This will be followed by senior women's one-day trophy (January 4-26).

The senior women's T20 Trophy and one-day trophy will have five groups. The two top teams from each of the five groups will qualify for the knock-outs. After the group matches, the teams will be ranked 1-10. The top six teams will directly qualify for the quarterfinals while remaining teams will play a pre-quarterfinal round to decided the remaining two slots.