

## Ex-MP Trilochan Kanungo dies

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 21: Noted economist and veteran BJD leader Trilochan Kanungo died due to old age-related ailments Friday, his family said. He was 82 and is survived by his wife, son and three daughters.

The three-term MLA and one-time MP was undergoing treatment at a private hospital here since March 30. His younger brother Panchanan Kanungo is a Congress politician.

Born November 24, 1940 at Badamulei village in Cuttack district, Kanungo was residing in Sheikh Bazaar area of Cuttack for the last few years.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan and others expressed grief over Kanungo's demise.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Not only Naroda, but the accused in Atiq's murder have also welcomed the judgment



FOR A CAUSE: Young women with messages painted on their faces urging to save the Earth at an event, on the eve of Earth Day in Jabalpur, Friday (Report P3)

## 'Kuno lacks space for cheetahs'

RESEARCHERS WARN THAT THE RELEASED ANIMALS WILL LIKELY MOVE FAR BEYOND THE PARK'S BOUNDARIES AND CAUSE CONFLICTS WITH NEIGHBOURING VILLAGES

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 21: The introduction of African cheetahs to India was planned without considering their spatial ecology, according to researchers who warn that the released animals may come into conflict with people in the neighbouring villages.

Spatial ecology addresses the fundamental effects of space on the movement of individual species and on the stability of multispecies communities.

A total of 20 cheetahs from Namibia and South Africa were introduced to Kuno National Park (KNP) in Madhya Pradesh since last year to establish a free-ranging population—for the first time since their extinction in India 70 years ago.



Scientists of the Cheetah Research Project of Leibniz-IZW in Namibia argue that in southern Africa, cheetahs live in a stable socio-spatial system with widely spread territories and densities of less than one individual per 100 square kilometres. The plan for cheetahs in KNP assumes that the high prey density will sustain high cheetah densities, even though there is no evidence for that, they said.

In a letter published in the journal Conservation Science and Practice Thursday, researchers noted that as KNP is small, it is likely that the released animals will move far beyond the park's boundaries and cause conflicts with neighbouring villages.

KNP is an unfenced wilderness area of approximately 17 by 44 kilometers (about 750 km<sup>2</sup>).

"In Namibia, territories are larger and prey density lower; in East Africa territories are smaller and prey density higher—but the distance between territories is a constant and no new territories are established in between. For the reintroduction plan in Kuno National Park, these distances were ignored," Bettina Wächter from the Cheetah Research Project. **Contd...P4**

## CBI summons Satya Pal

The central agency's move comes barely a week after Malik's comments about the 2019 Pulwama terror attack triggered a political storm

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 21: The CBI has asked former Jammu and Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik to answer certain queries in connection with an alleged insurance scam in the Union Territory, officials said Friday.

This is the second time in seven months that Malik, who completed his terms as Governor of various states, will be questioned by the CBI. He was questioned in October last year after he concluded his gubernatorial responsibilities in Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir, Goa and finally, Meghalaya.

The CBI move comes barely a week after Malik's interview to 'The Wire', in which he made critical remarks about the BJP-led Centre, especially regarding its handling of Jammu and Kashmir where he served as the last Governor before the erstwhile state was bifur-



cated into Union territories. Reacting to the development, Malik told PTI that the CBI has asked for his presence at the

agency's Akbar Road guesthouse here for 'certain clarifications'.

"They want certain clarifications for which they want my presence. I am going to Rajasthan, so I have given them dates from April 27 to 29 when I am available," he said.

The CBI registered two FIRs in connection with corruption allegations levelled by Malik in the awarding of contracts for a group medical insurance scheme for government employees and civil work worth Rs 2,200 crore related to the Kiru hydroelectric power project in Jammu and Kashmir. **Contd...P4**

## UP STF visited Bargarh in pursuit of Atiq's aide

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 21: Odisha police Friday confirmed that a team of UP Police's STF had recently visited the state in connection with the hunt for slain gangster Atiq Ahmed's absconding aide Guddu Muslim.

Odisha DGP Sunil K Bansal confirmed that the UP Special Task Force visited Bargarh district in connection with sharp shooter Guddu Muslim's driver meeting a man in the state and allegedly staying for some days in Bargarh district.

"They (UP STF) questioned a

man here and Odisha Police provided assistance in accordance with protocol. The team did not inform us any details about the probe," the DGP told reporters after a meeting with senior officers including ADG (Law & Order) and other senior police officers.

The DGP clarified that the UP Police has however, not arrested any person from Odisha.

Guddu's driver reportedly stayed in at Bhatli town in Bargarh district after the Prayagraj incident. Bargarh SP Prahlad Sahai Meena had also earlier confirmed about the visit of a 5-member STF team April 18. **Contd...P4**

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# leisure

## FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

**ARIES**  
You are uptight about what is yours and today, you are even less keen on sharing. This possessiveness may have to do with a certain 'someone'. Ganesh says matters regarding love are going forward intensely and your marital life will blossom.

**TAURUS**  
Almost as if crafted by Cervantes himself, you might wake up today feeling passionate and quixotic. Make up and make overs may be on the cards as you will have the urge to be groomed. Once you are done without yourself, you will shower others with attention, says Ganesh.

**GEMINI**  
Even though it is for your own benefit, you will spend the day safeguarding the sentiments of others. Not too uncharacteristic, but unusual nonetheless. For most part of the day, you will be away from your family, mostly on a trip for business or leisure purposes. Today, family takes a backseat and having a successful career will be the only thing on your mind.

**CANCER**  
The workaholic Bull will have more on their plate than they can chew. They will be under so much work pressure that their otherwise robust shoulders may wilt under pressure. Ganesh advises you to take it easy, and learn to say no. Also, this is just a temporary phase and as long as you stay cool, nothing can defeat you.

**LEO**  
When it comes to maintaining a balance in any relationship, you set an example for others to follow. It is like an inner light guides you towards joyful coexistence, though, at times, it may entail making certain acts of sacrifice, says Ganesh. You may choose to lose an argument in order to win hearts.

**VIRGO**  
Take up the gauntlet that promises to test your business acumen, especially those related to capital and finances. You are most likely to come up with out-of-the-box ideas to resolve issues, and Ganesh assures that this will work wonders.

**LIBRA**  
Everyone has a dream, but only few have the fortune to realise them. Be among the lucky ones today as you see your dream project materialise and take its first steps towards a successful future. But all good things have humble beginnings. What matters is that you had a dream, and dreaming it was the hardest part, reminds Ganesh.

**SCORPIO**  
Ganesh predicts that you shall work towards building a better future. But do not expect radical or dynamic changes. Cruise control is the best way to go for now, says Ganesh. Patience in itself will reap rich benefits.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Problems will push you in a corner today. But try resolving them as soon as possible. Expect delays in making final decisions. But as the day ends, expect fruitful results to come by, predicts Ganesh.

**CAPRICORN**  
You may have sweated your guts out for an opportunity to pursue higher studies abroad, and met with disappointment. Try again today, advises Ganesh. For those of you engaged in speculation, transaction in stock and shares is likely and may fetch substantial gains. Opportunities galore, but you won't progress until you exploit them to the best of your interest.

**AQUARIUS**  
Work, work, work! That is what will pay rich dividends. Of course, a pat on the back does matter, and with your commitment record, you may be getting a lot of it! You may back off from taking risks, and yet want change. Ganesh wonders how you will fulfill your wish.

**PISCES**  
Arguments lead nowhere, and why argue when, at the end of the day, you can step back and watch them end up with egg on their faces, break a leg, get crushed under a falling safe, or otherwise suffer the numerous disasters you wish them to, for disagreeing with you. You will end up having the last laugh, so you might as well use your time more effectively, says Ganesh.



## SCARLETT SPEAKS NICE OF EX-HUSBAND REYNOLDS

'Black Widow' Scarlett Johansson made a rare comment about her ex-husband, Ryan Reynolds, in a new interview with Gwyneth Paltrow. The 38-year-old praised her former spouse while discussing marriage. Scarlett, who was married to Ryan from 2008 to 2011, then replied with a laugh, "He's a good guy."

## BTS' SUGA DROPS SOLO ALBUM D-DAY

K-pop superband BTS member Suga Friday released his first official solo album *D-Day* under a stage name for his individual project, *Agust D*. The album carries the message of prioritising 'me' and 'now' in an era where there is an overwhelming amount of fast and extensive information, reports *Yonhap*.



## Disha's Ganga Aarti wear irks netizens

**Mumbai:** Disha Patani often gives her social media fans a glimpse of her shenanigans on the platform, whether it is regarding her films or fitness. The actress often makes her public appearances in sultry avatars, but recently when some netizens spotted her attending the famous Ganga Aarti in Varanasi in a crop top and shawl, the video not only became viral, but many expressed their displeasure over her outfit choice for the ceremony.

Some netizens on the platform lashed out at the *Ek Villain Returns* actress and posted their displeasure saying, "Poo bani Parvati (Poo became Parvati)", which was a reference made to the popular dialogue from the film *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham*.

"She looks good in full clothes", one user wrote. "She looks so good in ethnic wear. She had so much potential to be a good-ranked movie star, but it was ruined", added one of them, referring to her extensive lingerie promotions for a brand.

On the work front, Disha is gearing up to feature alongside Sidharth Malhotra and Raashii Khanna in *Yodha*. Besides that, the actress also has Nag Ashwin's sci-fi drama *Project K* in her kitty, co-starring Prabhas, Deepika Padukone, and Amitabh Bachchan.

AGENCIES



## PeeCee reflects on her '2-second music career'

**Los Angeles:** Global star Priyanka Chopra Jonas ventured into the international music industry at the peak of her career in the Hindi film industry with

the launch of her debut singles, *In My City* in 2012 and *Exotic* in 2013, a song she co-wrote with Pitbull, a US rapper and singer. She quickly abandoned her musical endeavours, however, in order to concentrate on her Hollywood career.

In her conversation with an entertainment portal, the *Citadel* star discussed her 'two-second music career' and said she wouldn't want to feel left out if everyone had an opinion on it. Priyanka claimed that after spending her whole 20s working nonstop, she

relished the freedom that her brief time as a popstar provided, particularly since it took place in the US, where she was still largely anonymous.

The actress further added, "I didn't think it was going to be long-term. I was enjoying it too much to give it up." When asked how she's able to laugh about it now, Priyanka added, "In my 22-year career, it was only two seconds. There are literally four singles, guys. I have 40 songs on my laptop, though, which will never be heard."

AGENCIES

## Sonam digs saris for comfort wear

**Mumbai:** *Neerja* actress Sonam Kapoor, who was seen at the IPL match along with Apple CEO Tim Cook, said she chose to wear a saree to the match because it is comfortable. The actor wore a breezy white and yellow ethnic outfit with heavy vintage earrings.

She captioned the image, "In a simple linen sari with vintage jewels. I find saris the most comfortable to wear in the Indian heat. Thank you, @anavila\_m, for making some of the chicest and most beautiful saris that scream simplicity."

Sonam, who was present at the match along with Tim Cook, took to Instagram Thursday to share photos with him and Anand Ahuja and wrote, "Tim Cook and the entire @apple team—we hope you've had a lovely stay here and leave encouraged and positive on Apple's outlook in the country." Tim tweeted after Sonam also shared the pictures on Twitter, "Thank you so much for an unforgettable evening!"

After her long break from films, Sonam is making her film comeback with Shome Makhija's *Blind*. This will be her first film since she gave birth to her son Vayu in August last year.

AGENCIES



## Erica's shocking revelation

**Mumbai:** Erica Fernandes is a massive name in the television industry. Over the years, she has done some fantastic shows and enjoys an enormous fan following on social media. With shows like *Kasautii Zindagii Kay* and *Kuch Rang Pyaar Ke Aise Bhi*, she became a household name in the country.

In a recent interview, Erica revealed some explosive details about the Hindi film industry, and it's worth reading for.

The actress said, "To get into Bollywood, you have to be a part of some group or have contacts, the truth being said, they always look down upon TV artists, and discrimination happens between Bollywood actors and TV actors."

When asked if she has been through this, Erica Fernandes said, "Yeah, many times, and this is the answer that you will get from most TV actors."

Meanwhile, Erica has shifted her base to Dubai and is living there. She often gives a glimpse of her luxurious life to the fans.

AGENCIES

## FUN post

### PEANUTS



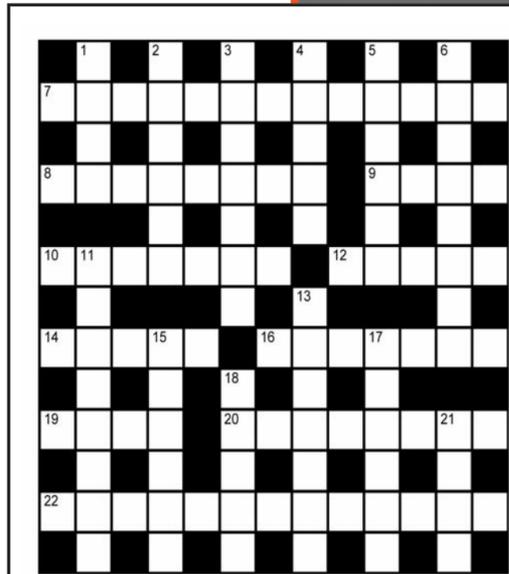
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



### CROSSWORD



- Across
- 7 Pirate's loot (6,2,5)
  - 8 Sink
  - 9 Farm sound
  - 10 Type of pudding
  - 12 Achray and Linnhe, e.g.
  - 14 Celestial path
  - 16 Balkans nation
  - 19 Kitchen appliance
  - 20 Places for crooks
  - 22 Performing ostentatiously
- Down
- 4 Frequently
  - 5 Japanese attire
  - 6 Chinese port
  - 11 Termite eating mammal
  - 13 In small stages playing period
  - 15 Baseball
  - 17 Bypasses
  - 18 Stage
  - 21 Collapsible shelter
  - 1 Stead
  - 2 Shrimp dish
  - 3 Flightless bird

### 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.

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

### SOLUTIONS

#### CROSSWORD

D	E	I	S	M	A
C	O	G	N	A	C
L	C	E	O	R	N
O	L	I	O	G	O
U	U	N	T	E	
U	P	D	R	A	F
E	A	O	A	F	R
D	R	E	G	S	P
O	E	F	B	I	
E	X	A	M	P	L
A	D	O	N	T	S
E	T	K	P	A	R

#### SUDOKU

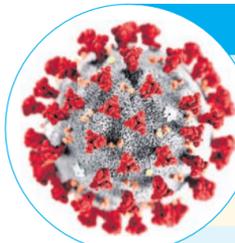
9	3	6	7	2	8	5	4	1
1	8	4	6	9	5	3	2	7
7	2	5	4	1	3	8	9	6
6	7	3	5	8	9	2	1	4
2	5	9	1	3	4	6	7	8
4	1	8	2	7	6	9	3	5
8	4	2	9	5	1	7	6	3
3	9	1	8	6	7	4	5	2
5	6	7	3	4	2	1	8	9

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



## CHANDAN YATRA AHEAD

Darzi servitors stitch decorative pieces for Chandan Yatra of Srimandir deities, Friday



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	68,62,64,684	65,87,99,087	68,58,497
India	4,48,69,684	4,42,72,256	5,31,258
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

## Citizens focal point of governance: CM

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 21:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Friday said citizens must be the focal point of our governance. He was speaking during a Civil Services Day event organised by Gopabandhu Academy of Administration at State Convention Centre of Lok Seva Bhawan here.

The CM said, "According to our Constitution, citizens are the fundamental building blocks of our country, and as such, they must be the focal point of governance. The goal of our government is to promote the welfare of our citizens, in a transparent, accountable, and responsive manner."

He said, "I have been emphasising on 'Transformative Governance' which is primarily aimed to bring about fundamental changes in the system and society by addressing the root causes of issues rather than just treating the symptoms."

In Odisha, the approach of civil services has been improving, both in terms of attitudinal change and adapting to new technologies making them more responsive, real-time accountable, and efficient, he added.

The CM lauded the initiatives of 5T and Mo Sarkar for bringing real transformation in people's perception of governance. "While civil services were traditionally structured in a top-down approach, this approach is being increasingly replaced with growing recognition for more citizen-centric governance. It is being driven by factors like advances technology, changing public expectations, and recognition that citizens are the ultimate beneficiaries of governance," he said.

## Body in train toilet: Murder suspected

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 21:** A young lady, who was found dead in the toilet of Dhanbad-Bhubaneswar Garib Rath Express Thursday, was suspected to have been murdered by unknown miscreants, police sources said. The post-mortem report also revealed that the woman died of profuse bleeding, they added.

Two deep wounds on the neck of the deceased indicated at stabbing. Meanwhile, police, during checking of the coach, recovered a wet Samsung mobile phone from the dustbin of the toilet.

"The mobile phone recovered from the dustbin was not getting switched on. We are trying to get the phone started with the help of experts. We hope the phone belongs to the deceased and it would help in ascertaining the identity of the lady. We will soon get the list of passengers travelling in the particular coach where the body was recovered," a Government Railway Police (GRP) official said.

Notably, police have been investigating into the matter by registering an unnatural death case (28/23).

## EARTH DAY TODAY

As we observe Earth Day Saturday to raise awareness about environmental issues and promote global efforts so as to protect the planet's natural resources,

**Orissa POST's Arindam Ganguly speaks to a few environmentalists on the climate crisis and ways to tackle it for a liveable tomorrow**

**BHUBANESWAR:** On the eve of Earth Day, several environment activists blamed mindless urbanisation, industrialisation and deforestation for carbon emissions and rising temperatures.

Activist Prafulla Samantara blamed both Union and state government for the climate crisis.

"Neither the Centre nor the states are serious about the climate crisis. Mining are being allowed mindlessly at the cost of green cover. Water bodies like ponds are being levelled and trees

## ODISHA SKILL CONCLAVE: DAY 2

# Thrust on making state skill capital of the world



Dignitaries, including Mission Shakti commissioner-cum-secretary Sujata R Karthikeyan and ORMAS CEO Guha Poonam Tapas Kumar, during the second day of Odisha Skill Conclave 2023 at Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar, Friday. OP PHOTO

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 21:** The Odisha Skill Conclave Friday emphasised on chalking out a roadmap for transforming Odisha into a leading skill hub in the world. The second day of the three-day event saw sessions on narrowing the gender gap, apprenticeship and importance of diversification of workforce.

The day started with the session 'Making India the Skill Capital of the World' that deliberated upon the role of international facilitators and partners in supporting the creation of an internationally benchmarked Indian workforce and international internships and the role of international Technical and Vocational Education and Training providers.

Rural Development secretary Sanjay Singh said, "Odisha is the rising land of skilling in India, the skill capital of India and the aspiring skill capital of the world. We take pride in the skilling ecosystem we have in the state and the way

it has been globally benchmarked. Through strategic planning, we have been able to develop the same as it is a life transforming initiative for both individuals and society."

The next session, 'Narrowing the Gender Gap: Empowering Women through Skills' focused on Odisha's role in supporting young girls through learning pathways, employability enhancement initiatives and sustainable livelihoods.

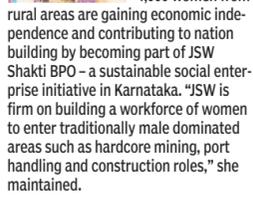
Mission Shakti commissioner-cum-secretary Sujata R Karthikeyan said, "Every woman or a girl has the right to be empowered to aspire and achieve those aspirations. Gender and skill, and gender and empowerment are key for the government. Our efforts will be to ensure that through Mission Shakti we are able to empower the women of the state."

The session on 'Linking Apprenticeship and Internship to Skilling for the New World' saw experts deliberating upon roadmap for a coherent execution of apprenticeship policies.

## Sangita for bridging gender gap through skills

**Bhubaneswar:** Chairperson of JSW Foundation Sangita Jindal in her special address on day 2 of the Odisha Skill Conclave spoke on bridging the gender gap through skills. She said 30,000 young women and girls are availing benefits from India's largest and first-of-its-kind Skill Impact Bond that JSW runs in collaboration with National and International partner organisations.

Jindal also said that more than 4,000 women from rural areas are gaining economic independence and contributing to nation building by becoming part of JSW Shakti BPO - a sustainable social enterprise initiative in Karnataka. "JSW is firm on building a workforce of women to enter traditionally male dominated areas such as hardcore mining, port handling and construction roles," she maintained.



## POONCH TERROR ATTACK

# Slain soldier leaves behind 7-month-old daughter

AGENCIES

**Puri, April 21:** Family members of Lance Naik Debashis Biswal were inconsolable after hearing that he was one of the five soldiers who were killed in a terrorist attack at Poonch in Jammu and Kashmir.

The army man who hailed from Algom village in Puri district got married in 2021 and left behind, besides his wife, a seven-month-old daughter.

Popular among the locals, 30-year-old Biswal used to take part in social activities whenever he was in the village, his family members said.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik too condoled his death, saying, "His sacrifices for the safety of the country will always be remembered. May his soul rest in peace."

While expressing condolence, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said that the sacrifice of Biswal will not go in vain.

Biswal's family was informed about his death by the Army Headquarters. His body is scheduled to reach the state Saturday.

"He joined the Army intending to serve the nation. Whenever he visited us, he would take part in social activities and was an inspiration for the local youth," said the slain soldier's cousin Dilip Biswal.

His grandfather Panchanan Biswal said they never thought that they would have to see this day. "We have lost a brave son who was not only dutiful to the family but also to the nation," he said.

"He had organised a feast for the entire village on the 21st day celebrations of his daughter," said the slain soldier's uncle.

A pall of gloom descended at Khandayat Sahi in Puri district as the people of the village came to know that a son of the soil was among the five Army personnel killed after their vehicle caught fire following a terrorist attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district.

# 'Concerted efforts to save planet need of the hour'



filled just to make way for concrete jungles. Fossil fuels are being exploited to the fullest. Can we expect a greener tomorrow when our present is on fire?" rued Samantara.

Likewise, urban planner Piyush Ranjan Rout expressed concern over large-scale deforestation and said in search of gold, we are losing diamond.

"Our quest for a 'better tomorrow' by way of infrastructure development is actually killing us in the long run. Felling of trees for projects like MLA Colony in the state capital is a classic example. Such destructive activities can be blamed for the sweltering heat in Bhubaneswar even in early April," the green activist pointed out.

Quoting Mahatma Gandhi, environment activist Shweta Agrawal said

Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need, but not every man's greed. It is high time to address the pressing issue of rising temperatures and its impact on the environment, added Agrawal.

"Human activities like carbon emissions and deforestation are primary contributors to rising temperatures. We, especially in Odisha which is prone to natural calamities, can no longer afford to ignore such issues. Hence, it's the responsibility of governments and individuals to reduce carbon footprints and adopt eco-friendly practices in order to address this global concern," the founder of Unmukt Foundation pointed out.

Echoing similar concerns, environmentalist Jaya Krushna Panigrahi attributed Earth's degrading health to exploitation of natural resources faster than ever.

"Enhanced emission of greenhouse gases has brought about global warming and climate change that inflict serious consequences on the living world by way of natural disasters. Even many species are disappearing at a faster rate. Only a concerted effort can help us save the planet," Panigrahi said.

## Pathapranta Utsav in City pulls crowd



Skill Development and Technical Education Minister Pritiranjana Gharai and Odisha Skill Development Authority chairman Subroto Bagchi share a light moment with students during Pathapranta Utsav in the City, Friday. OP PHOTO

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 21:** A 'Pathapranta Utsav' was organised here Friday to celebrate the three-day Odisha Skill Conclave-2023 being held at Kalinga Stadium since April 20.

Many students of Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and polytechnics from different parts of the state thronged the Exhibition Ground here early Friday morning to participate in the programme.

Skill Development and Technical Education (SD&TE) Minister Pritiranjana Gharai, Odisha Skill Development Authority (OSDA) chairman Subroto Bagchi, SD&TE principal secretary Usha Padhi and the department's director

Reghu G were present at the 'Roadside Festival' to encourage the participating students and general public.

Students showcased their dance, music and cultural skills during the event while food stalls, fashion show, cosmetic art work and ramp show added colour to the programme. Around 50 stalls were opened on behalf of ITIs, polytechnics, Mission Shakti and other organisations.

The atmosphere was reverberating with bewitching performances of the participants. Senior citizens and locals appreciated the skilled young people and other artistes, who had assembled at the event organised by the SD&TE department.

## PURI ASI HELD FOR EXTORTION

AGENCIES

**Puri, April 21:** The Beach Police here have arrested assistant sub-inspector (ASI) of PCR-5 Akshay Kumar Mullick for extorting money from the caretaker of an ashram in the Pilgrim City.

According to additional superintendent of police (ASP) Mihir Kumar Panda, Mullick reached the ashram under the Beach police limits April 13 at 11.30pm in response to a distress call. "Instead of acting professionally, he threatened the ashram caretaker and extorted Rs 7,500 from him. The ashram caretaker lodged a complaint with us in this regard," the ASP said, adding that after a thorough probe, Mullick was found guilty of the offence. The SP has suspended, while a criminal case has been registered against him with the Beach police under Section 392 of the IPC.

## MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	VAR.
SENSEX	59655.06	↑ 22.71
NIFTY	17624.05	↓ 0.40
DOLLAR	82.19	↑ ₹0.14
EURO	90.05	↓ ₹0.00
GOLD	₹59,750	↓ ₹753
SILVER	₹74,771	↓ ₹730

## WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP. MAX	36.1°C	34.0°C
TEMP. MIN	26.7°C	27.5°C
Humidity	42%	42%
Rainfall	1.2mm	Nil

Forecast: Light to moderate rain



# 69<sup>th</sup> NATIONAL FILM AWARDS 2021

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Best Writing On Cinema

### Eligibility

Films Certified by CBFC and  
Books & Articles/Reviews on Cinema Published  
between

01/01/2021 to 31/12/2021 (both days inclusive)

All Films should have English subtitles

For details, regulations and entry form please visit [www.mib.gov.in](http://www.mib.gov.in)

Last date for submission of online application is 02/05/2023 and for the receipt of the hard copy of the submitted online application form along with the documents is 10/05/2023.

All requisite documents must be sent to :

National Film Awards Cell  
Ministry of Information and Broadcasting  
Government of India  
Siri Fort Auditorium Complex  
August Kranti Marg,  
New Delhi - 110049

Tel: 011 26499378

Email: [69nfa2021@gmail.com](mailto:69nfa2021@gmail.com)

**OUAT helpline service extended for a week**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 21:** In view of the prevalent heatwave in the state, Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT) has extended its helpline services by a week.

OUAT vice chancellor Pravat Kumar Rouil has directed to extend the service from April 21 to 27 to address farmers' queries on account of continuing heat wave and other related problems.

Keeping in view, the exigency situation arising due to heatwave and its implications on farmers and farming situations of the state, the university had put in place a helpline number (0674-2397933) April 13, effective from 10.00 am to 5.30 pm, to provide professional advice and counseling.

The service provides information on water supplementation techniques during field operations, general health management during heat wave, measures to mitigate excessive sweating, dehydration, and sunstroke.

# Superintendents asked to follow Covid guidelines



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 21:** Keeping in view the surge in Covid cases, Prisons department has instructed all the jail superintendents in the state to take the necessary precautionary measures to curtail the spread of virus among the inmates.

The jail authorities have been asked to ensure that the inmates and staffers follow the Covid guidelines like wearing masks, keeping distance and regular washing of hands.

If there are any inmates or staff who have been infected by Covid, the department has directed the authorities to keep them in isolation to prevent other inmates from getting infected.

"Testing, tracking, vaccination, Covid appropriate behavior i.e wearing of mask, washing of hands and physical distance of 2 gauge may be ensured. All the inmates, staff and visitors should use masks and Covid positive patients shall be isolated from others to ensure safe custody," told Prisons department sources.

The superintendents have also

THE SUPERINTENDENTS HAVE ALSO BEEN INSTRUCTED NOT TO ALLOW GATHERING OF INMATES INSIDE PRISONS AND PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE PRISONERS WITH CO-MORBIDITIES

THEY HAVE BEEN DIRECTED TO CONSULT WITH THE JAIL MEDICAL OFFICERS AND THE LOCAL CHIEF DISTRICT MEDICAL OFFICERS IN CASE OF ANY MEDICAL EMERGENCY

been instructed not to allow gathering of inmates inside their respective prisons and pay special attention to the prisoners who have been suffering co-morbidities. They have been directed to consult with the jail medical officers and the local Chief District Medical Officers (CDMOs) in case of any emergency.

As per reports, hundreds of prisoners lodged in various jails of the state were infected with coronavirus in 2021. As most of the state jails are congested, they are highly vulnerable to the spread of virus.

It should be mentioned here that the jails have recorded almost 100 per cent occupancy rate. Meanwhile many sub-jails and district level jails are housing greater number of inmates as compared to the sanctioned strength. As per latest information, as many as 20,879 prisoners are lodged in the prisons across the state as against the sanctioned strength of 20,987.



**POLITICAL JOLT:** Mahendra Naik (4th from right, first row), Congress MLA candidate from Jharsuguda constituency in 2019, and other congress members of Gonda Samaj, join BJD in presence of Rajya Sabha member Manas Mangaraj (3rd from left) and others in Bhubaneswar, Friday

OP PHOTO

**Continued from P1**

**'Kuno lacks...**

Already with the cheetahs transferred from Namibia in autumn 2022, including three males, the carrying capacity of KNP has been reached in terms of the cheetahs' territorial system, the researchers said.

"Regardless of the size of their territories established in India, the three Namibian males will have occupied the entire national park, leaving no room for further territories of the additional cheetahs recently transferred from South Africa," they added.

**UP STF visited...**

"The team camped in Bargharh and grilled one person. The team had informed us about its visit. They left yesterday," the SP said.

Odisha's Northern Range IG Deepak Kumar said, "The UP STF had sought assistance from the local police. The team carried out verifications in the area and returned. No one was arrested."

Guddu Muslim, a professional shooter, is on the run since killing of gangsters-turned-politicians Atiq Ahmed and his brother Ashraf Saturday night.

The shooter's arrest assumes importance for the probe as Ashraf's last words before death was, "Main baat yeh hai ki Guddu Musli (the main thing is Guddu Muslim)..."

Guddu Muslim is among 10 accused named in the high-profile Umesh Pal murder case in UP. Six of them have been killed and Guddu Muslim is among the four others who are currently on the run.

**CBI summons...**

Malik had claimed that he was offered a Rs 300-crore bribe for clearing two files during his tenure as the Jammu and Kashmir governor between August 23, 2018 and October 30, 2019.

The agency has booked Reliance General Insurance and Trinity Re-Insurance Brokers Limited as accused in its FIR related to a controversial health insurance scheme for Jammu and Kashmir government employees reportedly cleared by Malik at a state administrative council meeting held August 31, 2018. The scheme was scrapped subsequently.

**CLASSIFIED**

**AFFIDAVIT**

I Dali Pradhan, W/o Manoj Kumar Malik who is working in Indian Army. In his service record my name & DOB mentioned wrongly as Dali Malik & 06th May 1986. But my Correct Name is Dali Pradhan & DOB 03rd May 1979 as per My Aadhaar Card & Educational Certificate.

# Students' leadership on display at SOA Mock G20

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 21:** As a precursor to the 3rd meeting of the G20 Education Working Group to be held in the city on April 27 and 28, a mock G20 conclave involving students from various institutions was organised at Siksha 'O' Anusandhan (SOA) Deemed to be University Friday.

The Mock G20 on the theme of 'Future of Work', organised in collaboration with the Ministry of Education (MOE), Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), Indian Institute of Democratic Leadership (IIDL), Mumbai, was attended by students who represented the member countries and international organisations.

"It has been organised to create awareness in students as to how the G20 functions. The students are the stakeholders in the field of education and skill development," Usha Titus, chairperson and managing director of additional skill acquisition programme, Kerala,



said while addressing the inaugural session of the conclave.

The G20 nations accounted for 90 per cent of the global GDP and 80 per cent of the global trade and it was the right forum to talk about partnership and cooperation, she said.

Pradipta Kumar Nanda, vice-chancellor of SOA and Devendra Pai, course director, IIDL, also addressed the inaugural programme.

Titus said that Covid-19 had "disrupted our thinking and brought in technology into our lives in a big way." Technology needs to be harnessed to take education forward and the need was to adopt the best practices and collaborate for future progress, she added.

Nanda said students being the fu-

**OHP FOUNDATION DAY**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 21:** The 28th Foundation Day of Odisha Hydro Power Corporation Limited (OHP) was celebrated at Rabindra Mandap here Friday. Industries Department principal secretary Hemant Sharma joined as the chief guest while Energy, I & PR, and Rural Development principal secretary Sanjay Kumar Singh was the guest of honour.

The guests addressed the gathering. Higher Education principal

# Hirakud awarded the best performing unit



secretary and OHP chairperson Bishnupada Sethi presided over the meeting. Amresh Kumar, managing director, Prabodh Kumar Mohanty, director (HR) and Ashish

Kumar Mohanty director (operation) of OHP were present at the event.

The guests lighted the lamps, inaugurating the event. Later award for the best performing unit of OHP was presented to Hirakud Hydro Electric Project, Burla.

The award for 2nd best performing unit went to Chiplima Hydro Electric Project, Chiplima & the best housekeeping unit was awarded to Balimela Hydro Electric

project, Balimela.

The evening saw captivating cultural programmes. Sohini Bhandopadhyay, eminent Kathak dancer from Kolkata performed a solo Kathak recital. She was accompanied by Ashish Mukherjee on tabla, Jiban Prakash Des on sitar, Ritubrota Pandey and Sayan Mukherjee. The programme ended with a musical performance by team from 'bvot Muzik'. Singer Bivu Prasad and his troupe enthralled the audience with beautiful songs.

# OVER 400 DELEGATES TO JOIN C-20 AT KIIT

C-20 will address several priority areas organised into working groups, one of which KIIT is to coordinate on "Gender Equality and Disability"

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 21:** KIIT Deemed to be University is hosting the Civil 20 (C-20) under the G20 framework April 22 and 23. More than 400 delegates from India and abroad will attend the event.

"C-20 is the official 'Engagement Group' of G20 aiming to ensure that civil society considerations, including Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), NGOs, and non-profits, are mainstreamed into the G20 discussions and translated into the G20 Leaders' Declaration on policies and commitments," explained a staffer involved in arrangements.

C-20 will address several priority areas organised in different working groups. One of these working groups,

which KIIT has been entrusted to coordinate, focuses on "Gender Equality and Disability" (GED).

"Members of the GED WG Advisory Board, local CSOs, national and international CSOs, government representatives, international delegations, members from other engagement groups, members from other working groups, team members of the GED WG are the main participants in the event, while additional observers are also expected to join," informed KIIT and KISS founder Achyuta Samanta.

The Gender Equality and Disability (GED) Working Group is committed to examining and addressing the dimensions of inequalities and disadvantages experienced by all the genders and those with physical and mental disabilities (regardless of gender).

In doing so, the GED Working Group intends to reinforce an approach to equality and development through an understanding where mutual respect and compassion are at the core of global governance for societies and the planet.

# YOGA STRENGTHENS BODY & MIND: MIN



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 21:** The two-day Bharateeya Paramparik Kreedha Mahotsava, organised jointly by the Central University of Odisha (CUO) and Kreedha Bharati, was inaugurated by the Union Minister of State for Education Subhas Sarkar Friday. The purpose of the sporting event is to create awareness about the traditional games of the country, which are losing popularity in modern times.

The inaugural session of the programme was held at main Sports Ground of CUO.

Speaking on the occasion, the union minister outlined the significance of sports and yoga in our Vedas and Upanishads as well as in Ramayana, Mahabharata and Natyashastra. "Yoga strengthens our body as well as mind. To achieve our personal development we should indulge in sports always," he said, advising the students to practice yoga for at least 30 minutes daily.

CUO chancellor PV Krishna Bhatta highlighted the importance of sports and games in our culture since generations. He urged the students not only to focus on studies, but also focus on sports for overall development of body and mind. Eight sporting groups are participating in the event, of which five are from Odisha, two from West Bengal and one from Assam.

**Srimandir files traced**

**Bhubaneswar:** Two important files related to Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (JTA) have been traced out in the Law department. Law Secretary Dhaneswar Mallik, in a press statement, Friday said that both the files have been traced from the department itself. Missing of the Srimandir files came to the fore after the deputy secretary of the department wrote to all the sections under it to find them on a priority basis. The deputy secretary, in a letter to all sections, had said two files of JTA Section are untraceable.

**Bike lifters gang busted in City**

**Bhubaneswar:** The Commissionerate Police Friday busted a bike lifters gang by arresting an accused. The cops also recovered nine stolen bikes following inputs fetched during interrogation. The accused, identified as Digbijay Pattnaik, is a resident of Pipili in Puri district. The police arrested Pattnaik in connection with a case (156/23) registered at the Saheed Nagar police station regarding the theft of a motorcycle from IDCO Tower near Rupali square March 17, 2023. The police claimed that it came to fore during investigations that the gang used to hire auto rickshaw and steal bikes placed in parking places at various offices and buildings in the City. They wore the helmets kept on the vehicle to avoid getting caught in CCTV or being identified by people. The accused allegedly revealed that they used to take loans from people near their village by mortgaging the stolen motorcycles. Pattnaik was sent to judicial custody by the court Friday.

# 'Protecting turtles our moral responsibility'

Experts suggest high-mast streetlights on the sea beach in Rushikulya mouth area be switched off for a week as they disorient baby turtles resulting in their death

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 21:** Odisha coast is considered a healthy habitat for Olive Ridley sea turtles since they have preferred again and again the state's beaches suitable for breeding. A trend has developed in recent years with more turtles choosing the Rushikulya river mouth area for mass nesting.

Around 6.5 lakh turtles have reached the beach for breeding this year; thus setting a new record with emerging hatchlings making



their way into sea to start a new life.

Though Kendrapara's Gahirmatha beach is considered the largest rookery of the world, decrease in turtle migration into the area is observed now for various reasons, including changes in beach structure. Though found throughout the world, the turtles are decreasing in number because of overconsumption of their meat and egg as well as their death due to fishing gear used. All of this

makes protection of the turtles our moral duty that can be carried out by undertaking various conservation measures.

Wildlife experts expressed these opinions in a workshop titled 'Sea Turtle Conservation at Rushikulya Mass Nesting Site', organised jointly by the Orissa Environmental Society, Bhubaneswar; and the Tata Steel Foundation, Gopalpur, in collaboration with Rushikulya Sea Turtle Protection Committee at

Bateswar, Humma, Ganjam.

Scientist and professor at Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, Bivash Pandav was the chief guest for the programme. Narrating his experience in Gahirmatha and Rushikulya areas, he explained how developmental activities are putting the turtles in difficult situations. The threats to the turtle hatchlings are increasing for which they are dying in large numbers. He suggested high mast streetlights on the sea beach in Rushikulya mouth area be switched off for a week which disorients baby turtles resulting in their death.

Chairing the workshop, OES president Sundara Narayan Patro opined that conservation process should be at the top of our environment agenda at both government and public levels. Turtle conservation will prove the commitment of Odisha to the cause of wildlife.

**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-9760056507, 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-Cookiemanager-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolitan 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.

# No Eid prayers at Sambalpur Eidgah

# Kandama ghat accident leaves 3 dead, 7 injured

MEMBERS OF THE HANUMAN JAYANTI COORDINATION COMMITTEE SKIP MEETING CONVENED BY RDC

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sambalpur, April 21:** As curfew continues to remain in force in Sambalpur city since April 14 midnight, the district administration has decided not to allow Eid congregation at the Eidgah here, but the believers can offer prayers in mosques.

Though the curfew has been relaxed by 12 hours from 6am to 6pm following improvement of the situation, the district administration at a meeting requested members of the minority community to offer namaz in mosques instead of congregating at the Eidgah this year, an official said.

Members of the community agreed to the proposal and gave an assurance to the authorities that they will instead offer namaz at 10 mosques across the city.

Sambalpur Superintendent of Police B Gangadhar said that a decision was taken against holding mass gathering at the Eidgah to ensure public order.

A senior member of the minority community, Md. Parveez Ali Khan said, "We have accepted the proposal of the administration for not holding namaz at the Eidgah. We will hold prayers in 10 masjids in the city in small batches. We are cooperating with the administration in restoring peace."



Revenue Divisional Commissioner (RDC), North Suresh Chandra Dalei Thursday convened a meeting of different stakeholders and claimed that the situation in Sambalpur city is improving gradually.

However, members of the Hanuman Jayanti Coordination Committee skipped the meeting. "We will hold a meeting with those who were not present in the next phase," the RDC said. Meanwhile, residents of Khetraipur area Friday morning held a peace march in their area appealing to people to work for the restoration of peace.

The administration suspended internet service across Sambalpur district following a violent clash between the two communities in Sambalpur city April 12 during a bike rally and Hanuman Jayanti celebration April 14.

The state government Thursday further extended the suspension of internet services in the district till 10am April 22.

As many as 85 people have so far been arrested in connection with the April 12 and April 14 violence, police said.

**R Udayagiri, April 21:** A tragic accident Friday claimed the lives of three people and left 10 others critically injured when an auto-rickshaw carrying the passengers skidded off the road and fell 20 feet down the Kandama ghat near Keredang village under Seranga police limits in Gajapati district. The passengers from Nuagada block were returning from Keredang weekly market when the auto-rickshaw met with the accident and fell into a creek.

Informed, police and fire personnel arrived at the scene immediately, rescued the injured passengers and admitted them to Khajuripada CHC but later shifted them to MKCG Medical College and Hospital at Berhampur, police said.

According to sources, Luka Mandal (60) of Kulesingh village died at the spot, while Dolly Kar (30) of Badapada and Pratyush Karji (9) of Jalang succumbed during the treatment. The injured were identified as Jagannath Sahu (34) of Nuagada village, Sadhu Kar (38) of



Badapada, Suresh Raita (40) and Lizamani Raita of Baradang, Gaya Sabara and Ashok Sabara of Abada village, Triveni Raita (40) of Jalang village, Ishudhan Karada (55) of Keredang village and Gayatri Mandal of Tarajsingh village. The auto driver Sadhu Kar and Jagannath Sahu were rushed to MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur, while eight others were later shifted to district headquarters hospital at Parlakhemundi from Khajuripada CHC.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

This public Notice is made for general information as all, that Ac 0.20 dec vide Plot No- 275, Ac 0.24 dec vide Plot No- 276 & Ac 0.08 dec vide Plot No 275/563 under Khata No- 13 of Mouza- Amjore, P.S- Jaipatna, Dist- Kalahandi is purchased by Sasmita Panda, W/o Anil Kumar Panda of Amjore vide Regd Sale Deed No-10901000292/2010. The above original Regd Sale Deed has been lost. I am intending to avail loan from State Bank of India, Bijmara Branch by mortgaging the property. If anybody is in possession of the original Sale Deed, which I have lost please intimate me. If anybody any objection to my availing the loan on production of Certified copy of Sale deed. He/She at liberty to make any objection upon me/Branch Manager, State Bank of India, Bijmara branch within fifteen days of this publication.

**Sasmita Panda**  
W/o- Anil Kumar Panda  
Village-Amjore,  
P.O- Bandigaon,  
Dist- Kalahandi,  
Mob No- 9938607629

## Nayagarh Collector demands bribe from mine owner, booked

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, April 21:** Police have booked Nayagarh district Collector Rabin Nath Sahu for allegedly demanding a bribe of ₹25 lakh from a laterite stone mine owner.

Three others were also booked for allegedly demanding money on behalf of the collector.

Sahu, however, rejected the allegation and claimed that the complainant lodged the FIR as he had tried to implement an order of the National Green Tribunal (NGT).

35-year-old Sushant Kumar Barad, a resident of Champagada, lodged an FIR with Chandpur Police Station April 11 alleging that Sahu, along with three others, visited his mine located in Ranpur tehsil January 26 and demanded the bribe to provide concession in mine lease.

The three others named in the FIR are Dilip Kumar Samantaray, Deepak Kumar Routray and Ganeswar Mandhata, all locals from nearby villages.

Barad said he lodged the FIR with Chandpur Police Station and sought Nayagarh Superintendent of Police Alekha Chandra Pahi's intervention after the local police station refused to register the case.

He later moved Orissa High Court for not getting cooperation from the local police station. The court ordered that the collector be booked.

Chandpur Police Station inspector-in-charge Mukesh Behera said a case under Sections 294 (obscene acts or words), 506 (criminal intimidation), 385 (causing fear or injury to commit extortion), 167 (public servant framing an incorrect document with intent to cause injury) and 34 (criminal act done by several persons with common intention) of IPC was registered and further investigation is underway.

Dismissing the allegation, the collector said, "The NGT had slapped a fine of ₹2.81 crore on the mining lease holder following a survey. Prohibitory orders under Section 144 of CrPC were also clamped in the mining area. He lodged the FIR to divert attention from these. I never visited the spot January 26 as I was busy with Republic Day programmes."

## 2 minor boys electrocuted

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Malkangiri, April 21:** In a tragic incident, two minor boys were electrocuted Friday after coming in contact with a live wire atop a tree at Undrukonda village under Kalimela police limits in Malkangiri district.

The deceased have been identified as Chandan Padiami (7), son of Dula Padiami, and Mana Madhi (11), son of Lasa Madhi, both from Rodaguda village. According to reports, the two friends had climbed a tree to pick Kusum berries when they accidentally came in contact with an 11 KV electric wire. The electric shock caused them to fall down from the tree, leading to their untimely demise.

The boys had reportedly gone to



the Undrukonda weekly market along with their friends, and from there, they entered a nearby jungle to collect berries. After the incident, their friends informed the family members, who rushed to the spot and rushed them to a hospital in Kalimela. However, both the boys were declared dead by doctors. Police have registered a case of unnatural death and handed over the bodies to their families after post-mortem. A pall of gloom descended on the village after the news spread.

## Rain douses major grass fire in Chilika

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Berhampur, April 21:** A major fire broke out in dry grass at the edge of Chilika, Asia's largest brackish water lake, Friday, the police said.

The fire originated in the patches of 'Nala' grass, which is full of mud, making it difficult for fire-fighters to reach.

The blaze was extinguished by rain after a few hours, a Forest department official said. As the fire spread along the edge of the lake, the area was filled with smoke.

"Some miscreants might have set afire the Nala grass which dries in the summer," said Amlan Nayak, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) of Chilika Wildlife Division.



Forest department personnel faced difficulties to go near the spot as the water level in the lake has drastically fallen due to the summer season, covering the area with mud.

"Our staff tried their best to douse the fire but it was virtually

inaccessible. Finally rain helped us extinguish the blaze," Nayak said adding that the department will investigate how the fire broke out.

Another forest official said local boatmen sometimes set fire to patches of 'Nala' grass to clean the area for smooth ride of their boats in the water bodies.

Wildlife activists feared several nests and chicks of the residential birds and fishing cats in Chilika might have perished in the fire.

Allaying the fear, DFO Nayak said the fishing cats and birds must have moved to safer places after seeing the fire.

Migratory birds, which had flown to the lake during the last winter, have already left the lagoon by the onset of the summer.



**PEACE MARCH:** Members of Hindu and Muslim communities take out a 'Sadbhavana Rally' in association with the district administrator at Khetraipur in Sambalpur appealing to the denizens for restoration of peace, Friday morning

## Man awarded life term for killing wife

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhawanipatna, April 21:** A man was sentenced to life imprisonment after he was convicted for the murder of his wife at Kuhuriguma village under Jayapatna police limits in Kalahandi district. The accused identified as Agasti Majhi had reportedly axed his wife to

death in 2019 over doubt of extramarital affair. After a long investigation, the case finally went to trial and the Phulbani Additional District and Sessions Judge Bandana Kar sentenced Majhi to life imprisonment, Friday. The Judge has also imposed a fine of ₹10,000 on the accused. The imprisonment

period may increase if Majhi fails to deposit the fine amount, the report said. In 2019, the incident had shocked the entire village and garnered a lot of media attention at the time of the murder. The case had been under investigation ever since and the verdict has brought a closure to the victim's family.

## Sitharaman turns Good Samaritan for elderly woman, tells SBI to 'be humane'



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, April 21:** Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Thursday pulled up country's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI), asking it to act humanely, after tagging a video on her Twitter handle of an elderly village woman

from Odisha, walking barefoot in scorching heat with the help of a broken chair, to collect her pension from the nearest branch.

The woman in the video, identified as Surya Harijan, lives in Nabrangpur district and stays with her younger son, who grazes other people's cattle. Her elder son

is a migrant labourer working in another state. The family lives in a hut and does not own any land, as per reports. Sitharaman tweeted while sharing the video, "Can see the manager of SBI responding but yet wish Department of Financial Services (DFS) and the SBI to take cognisance of this and act humanely. Are they no bank Mitra?" The incident took place April 17.

The SBI responded to Sitharaman's tweet and said the woman's pension will be delivered to her doorstep from next month onwards. It added that she would also be given a wheelchair.

As per reports, the woman earlier used to withdraw her pension from the CSP point in her village, every month. However, the woman was forced to physically collect her pension as her thumbprint stopped matching with her records at the CSP point owing to old age.

**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER**  
**BALASORE (ROADS & BUILDINGS) DIVISION-I**  
AT/PO- PADHUANPADA, BALASORE  
CONTACT NO.- 06782262045, E-MAIL ID:- ee\_blsrb@yahoo.co.in  
**BID INVITATION NO. SE (R and B) BLS-Divn-I-01/2023-24**  
Letter No. 3515 Date: 17.04.2023

- The Superintending Engineer, Balasore (R&B) Division-I, Balasore on behalf of the Governor of Odisha invites Percentage rate bids to be received in **ONLINE MODE** only for road and Building works.
- No. of Work : 7 Nos.
- Nature of Work : Road & Building works of Balasore (R & B) Division-I
- Class of Contractor : "D", "C" & "B" Class Contractor
- Approx. value of work : Rs. 8.09 Lakhs & 31.86 Lakhs
- Tender Cost : Rs. 4,000/- & 6000/-
- Availability of Bid : From 10.00 Hours of dt.24.04.2023 to 16.00 hours of dt.03.05.2023  
Documents in the website
- Date of Opening of Bid : Dt. 04.05.2023 at 11.00 Hours
- Other details can be seen in the Bidding documents from the website: <https://tendersorissa.gov.in>

Sd/- Superintending Engineer,  
Balasore (R&B) Division-I  
OIPR-34157/11/0002/2324

**EAST COAST RAILWAY**  
(1) E-Tender Notice No. ST-SBP-TENDER-2023-07, Dt.: 12.04.2023  
NAME OF WORK: SIGNAL & TELECOM WORK IN RELATION TO SOFT UP-GRADATION OF STATION BUILDINGS AND BUILDING OF CIRCULATION AREA ETC. FOR AMRIT BHARAT WORK IN THERUBALI-JITLAGARH-ARANG MAHANADI SECTION.  
Tender Value : ₹ 78,21,332.40, Bid Security: ₹ 1,58,400/-  
(2) E-Tender Notice No. ST-SBP-TENDER-2023-08, Dt.: 12.04.2023  
NAME OF WORK: SIGNAL & TELECOM WORK IN RELATION TO SOFT UP-GRADATION OF STATION BUILDINGS AND BUILDING OF CIRCULATION AREA ETC. FOR AMRIT BHARAT WORK IN JHARSUGUDA ROAD-SIKIR & SAMBALPUR CITY-JARPADA SECTION.  
Tender Value : ₹ 69,86,272.10, Bid Security: ₹ 1,39,700/-  
Tender Closing Date and Time : At 1100 hrs. on 08.05.2023 (for Tender No. 1) & At 1100 hrs. on 09.05.2023 (for Tender No. 2).  
No manual offers sent by Post/ Courier/ Fax or in person accepted against such e-tenders. Even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and receipt in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.  
Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website : <http://www.ireps.gov.in>  
Note : The prospective tenderers are advised to visit the website 15 (fifteen) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / corrigenda issued for this tender.  
Sr. Divl. Signal & Telecom Engineer/ PR-77/023-24 Sambalpur

**Indian Bank**  
ZONAL OFFICE: SAMBALPUR  
2ND FLOOR, SHYAM ARCADE,  
KHETRAJIPUR, SAMBALPUR - 768003,  
e-mail: [zosambalpur@indianbank.co.in](mailto:zosambalpur@indianbank.co.in)

**E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE**  
(See proviso to rule 6(2) & 8(6) Sale Notice for sale of property /ies under SARFAESI Act)

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

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

Sl. No.	SAMABALPUR-1 BRANCH / Name & Address of Borrower/ Guarantor / Mortgagee	Description of the Immovable Property	Date of Demand Notice/ Date of Possession / Outstanding dues (As per 13(2) notice)	Reserve Price / EMD / Bid Increment Amount	Date & Time of E-Auction
1.	Borrower: M/s. Jagadamba Automobiles, Prop.: Kiran Shankar Panda, At: Ladaripali, Rangali Camp, Dist.: Bargarh - 768027/ Borrower/Mortgagee: Sri Kiran Shankar Panda, S/o.: Sri Purna Chandra Panda, Address: 1- Lane 6/C-2, Kalyan Nagar, Budharaja, Sambalpur - 768004, Address: 2- At: Sahajabahal, P.S.: Banaharpalli, Dist.: Jharsuguda, Odisha, PIN - 768211 / Guarantor: Mr. Tushar Ranjan Panda, S/o.: Kiran Shankar Panda, At: Lane 6/C-2, Kalyan Nagar, Budharaja, Sambalpur, PIN-768004	All that piece and parcel of Property recorded in the name of Mr. Kiran Shankar Panda, S/o: Sri Purna Chandra Panda, at Mouza: Sambalpur Town Unit No.: 15(Ainthapali), Khata No.: 559/3883 having two plots (Plot No.: 1674/8916 with Area: Ac0.087 Dec. and Plot No.: 1673/8915 with Area: Ac0.013Dec.), KISSAM: Gharabari, PS/Dist.: Sambalpur, The Property is Bounded by North: 20ft. Road, South: Plot No.: 1802, East: Plot No.: 1674, West: Plot No.:1673	19.10.2022 / 07.01.2023 / ₹ 98,11,888.51 as on 10.04.2023 + further interest, costs, other charges and expenses thereon	₹1,25,00,000/- / ₹12,50,000/- / ₹50,000/-	29.05.2023 (Monday) between 11.00 AM to 05.00 PM

**DATE AND TIME OF E-AUCTION: 29.05.2023 from 11.00 AM to 05.00 PM with unlimited extension of 10 Minutes duration**  
**LAST DATE AND TIME FOR SUBMISSION OF EMD AND DOCUMENTS ON OR BEFORE 26.05.2023 upto 05.30 PM by online**  
**Date & Time of Inspection of Property: 26.05.2023 between 11.00 AM to 5.00 PM (with prior appointment from bank) at their own expenses**

**TERMS & CONDITIONS:** 1) For detailed terms and conditions of the sale please refer to the link: <https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/ibapi/index.jsp> and <https://ibapi.in>. prospective bidders may also contact the Authorised Officers / Branch no. as mentioned in above list. 2) This is a statutory 30 days sale notice to the above mentioned borrower/guarantor/mortgagee under Rule 8(6) of the SARFAESI Act, 2002. 3) This is a 30 days' notice to the Borrower / Guarantor / Mortgagee of the above said loan about holding of this sale on the above mentioned date. 4) All expenses relating the stamp duty and registration of Sale Certificate/conveyance, if any, shall be borne by the successful bidder. 5) The Authorized Officer will not be held responsible for any charge, lien, encumbrance, property tax or any other dues to the Government or anybody in respect of the property under sale. 6) The Authorized Officer has the absolute right to accept or reject any bid or adjourn/postpone/cancel the sale without assigning any reason thereof. It may be noted that nothing in this notice constitute or deemed to constitute any commitment or representation on the part of the bank to sell the property. **STATUTORY 30 DAYS SALE NOTICE UNDER RULE 8(6) OF THE SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002.** Borrower/Mortgagee are hereby notified to pay the total dues along with up to date interest and ancillary expenses before the date of E-Auction, failing which the property will be auctioned/ sold and balance dues, if any, will be recovered with interest & cost.  
**Place: Sambalpur, Date: 21.04.2023**  
Sd/-Authorised Officer, Indian Bank



Metaphysical thinking will no doubt always be a strong element in her mentality and it is to be hoped that she will never lose her great, her sovereign power in that direction  
**SRI AUROBINDO**



## Voter Data Scam

The voter data theft case in Karnataka (reported in this column on December 29, 2022) has come alive again, just when the state is about to go to polls. A probe by the Election Commission, conducted by IAS officer Amlan Aditya Biswas, Regional Commissioner, Bengaluru Division, has found that many officials of the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) gave illegal and undue favours to a private trust called Chilume, allowed it to collect voter data, and even tried to subvert a complaint against the trust.

While the probe has established the links between BBMP officials and the trust, it is yet to establish where the data collected by Chilume Trust is kept. The report states it could be stored on foreign servers, possibly Chinese or Eastern European, in violation of ECI's rules.

In December 2022, DKB reported that the Bommai government had reinstated two IAS officers K Srinivas and S Rangappa, less than a month after they were suspended in the voter data theft case, defying an Election Commission order. The new report puts it in a spot.

The report will further damage the embattled Basavaraj Bommai government, which is already on the back foot following allegations of large-scale corruption, barely weeks before the state goes to polls. It will give further ammo to the Opposition parties who have been calling for stern action against officials and other employees since the scam emerged.

### Jharkhand babu's innovations

There are reasons why the Department of Commercial Taxes in Jharkhand makes a good case study for those in other states seeking to increase revenue collection. Jharkhand has recently achieved a record in revenue collection of nearly Rs 21,000 crores, primarily due to the establishment of an Intelligence and Revenue Analysis Unit (IRAU) and Special Task Unit (STU), under Aradhana Patnaik, Principal Secretary, Commercial Tax, and her committed team of number crunchers.

Over the past two years, sources have informed DKB, the department has taken several measures, including the creation of IRAU, for revenue augmentation. IRAU has been set up in the department headquarters where Patnaik leads a team of officers who are adept in computer knowledge and tech-savvy with domain knowledge in GST Tax laws and data analytics. While IRAU is responsible for sector-wise analysis and gathering information for enforcement action, STU focuses on big taxpayers with turnover of more than Rs 10 crore, which contribute to 95% of the total tax revenue of the department.

The Department has followed a targeted approach to maximising return compliances and revenue collection, leading to 100% return filings by taxpayers with an annual turnover of over Rs 5 crores. Besides, Patnaik has created a dedicated GST audit wing, a targeted enforcement mechanism, and an online VAT assessment module. These initiatives have led to spectacular performance in terms of revenue collection and growth.

Most agree that augmenting revenue resources in a state like Jharkhand is not easy. But here's the best part – the approach adopted by Patnaik and her team is replicable and scalable. The Centre has noticed, and hopefully, other states too are taking note.

### Questionable move in Chhattisgarh

The trend of re-engaging officers for important government assignments, begun by the Centre, is now happily followed by state governments as well. Many see this practice to maintain a strong grip on administration and promote political interests.

The Chhattisgarh government of Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel has appointed retired IPS officer DM Awasthi as the Officer on Special Duty (OSD) at the Raipur police headquarters. Awasthi will reportedly oversee the Economic Offences Wing and Anti-Corruption Bureau. What raised eyebrows in babu circles was that even though Awasthi retired on March 31, he was immediately hired as the OSD on a contractual basis.

While this may point to the senior cop's closeness to Baghel, there are some others who are raising concerns associated with this practice. The government may argue that re-hiring Awasthi was necessary to ensure efficiency and productivity in the administration, there are a few who believe that it undermines the principles of fair competition and equal opportunity for all officers, regardless of their age or seniority. They are also questioning the move claiming that it also sends a wrong message to younger officers who may feel demotivated by the lack of upward mobility opportunities.

Perhaps, for Baghel, having his trusted babus around him is far more assuring as he enters the last leg of his Congress government's term and aims to return to power in the state.

Share a babu experience! Follow [dilipthecherian@twitter.com](mailto:dilipthecherian@twitter.com). Let's multiply the effect

### WISDOM CORNER

- Today well lived makes every yesterday a memory of happiness and every tomorrow a vision of hope. **KALIDASA**
- The role of the artist is to ask questions, not answer them. **ANTON CHEKHOV**
- One word frees us of all the weight and pain of life and that word is love. **SOPHOCLES**

### WORDSWORTH

### Areologist

The equivalent for Mars of a geologist. The word is formed from the prefix areo-, derived from the name of the Greek god of war, Ares, plus the suffix-ologist. It is a term very much of the moment, following the much-publicised claim earlier this year that primordial fossils have survived in an Antarctic meteorite that originated in the Red Planet, and because large amounts of investigative hardware are to be thrown at Mars in the next ten years (or, in the case of a recent unfortunate Russian rocket, not). So it is surprising to discover that the related term areology is first attested by the Oxford English Dictionary in 1881, even before HG Wells had entertained an earlier generation with descriptions of ravaging Martians. Until it turned up in the Economist the other week, almost the only sightings of areologist have been in science-fiction works, notably the Mars trilogy of Kim Stanley Robinson, in which he creates a number of other neologisms in areo-, including areophyte, areosynchronous and areobotany.

### Vaccimulgence

This word popped up in a book I happened to be reading the other day, Appleby's End, one of the more skittish and fanciful works of the late Michael Innes (the pen name of the Oxford scholar J I M Stewart). Inspector Appleby is investigating strange goings-on in a rural neighbourhood and visits an old woman, of whom the local vicar says, "Since girlhood she has been celebrated in this part of the countryside for her skill in vaccimulgence." Putting it another way, she was an excellent milkmaid. Mr Innes was not the first to employ this weird word for the milking of cows, for it turns up in a whimsical letter written by Samuel Taylor Coleridge in November 1796: "Will you try to look out for a fit servant for us, simple of heart, physiognomically handsome, and scientific in vaccimulgence." That last word is a new one, but soft in sound, and full of expression.

## FOCUS HEALTH

# PREVENTING PANDEMICS



New cases of highly pathogenic avian influenza across the United States and in other parts of the world are a wake-up call. We should always assume that the next pandemic is closer than most people think



William A Haseltine

POPULATION GROWTH, EXPANDING URBANISATION AND ENCROACHMENTS ON NATURE, AND THE RESUMPTION OF REGULAR AIR TRAVEL MEAN THAT INFECTIOUS-DISEASE OUTBREAKS WILL CONTINUE TO PLAGUE US

Although COVID-19 restrictions are rapidly fading around the world, we are still reeling from the impact of the past three years. More than 6.8 million deaths from COVID-19 have been officially reported, but the true number may be closer to 15 million. There has been immense suffering and social and economic turmoil, and the virus itself still poses a clear and present risk, with one in five Americans reporting ongoing "long COVID" symptoms.

Worse, COVID-19 is far from the last zoonotic disease with the potential to devastate the global population. Innumerable other viruses – many of which remain understudied – have been discovered in animals. Any of them could serve as a source of new human viruses, which often originate from repeat-offender virus families such as coronaviruses, orthomyxoviruses, and filoviruses. When viruses from these families show up in mammals or birds, there is always a risk that they could develop the potential to infect humans. And when that happens, the fact of globalisation means that those viruses can spread faster than ever before.

A key challenge, then, is to discover and identify which viruses pose the greatest risks to humans. If we can detect a new human virus in the earliest days of a disease outbreak, we will have a much better chance of implementing the measures needed to prevent another global pandemic. To that end, a recent article in Science proposes setting up an experimental pipeline whereby researchers can test animal viruses for four crucial properties consistent with human infection.

By identifying the viruses that pose the highest risk for zoonosis (transmission across species), we can then rapidly roll out diagnostic panels to detect new human infections. Serology- and polymerase-chain-reaction-based diagnostics are currently the most practical solutions for health-care settings around the world. But they are pathogen-

specific, so they are effective only when clinicians and scientists know which pathogens they should be testing for.

An animal virus needs four essential biological properties in order to infect humans: it must use the human version of its cellular entry receptor to gain access to human cells; it must use human intracellular proteins to replicate and exit human cells; it must overcome humans' innate immune responses; and it must evade pre-existing human adaptive immunity functions such as antibodies and T cells.

Animal viruses that have most of these properties – such as primate arteriviruses – obviously warrant targeting by new diagnostic tools. Such tests can be grouped into regional panels for use in diagnosing unusual or unattributable human illnesses, as well as to monitor healthy populations for virus-surveillance purposes.

The first zoonotic property – an ability to enter human cells – is often the easiest to study, because we can test the surface protein of an animal virus by engineering it onto a reporter virus. (A reporter virus genome lacks genes essential for viral replication,

making it safe for research and surveillance purposes.) This method has been shown to demonstrate that some poorly studied tetroviruses from the Rhabdoviridae family can enter human cells, though their multiplication within human cells is uncertain.

The ability to multiply – the second biological property viruses need to infect humans – involves a complex process that requires interactions with several intracellular host proteins. Even a single incompatibility can prevent an animal virus from multiplying in human cells.

There is scarce research on the third property: how animal viruses interact with human-innate immunity beyond the interferon response. This is a first line of defence against virus infections. It functions by generating an intracellular environment that restricts virus replication and signals the presence of a viral pathogen to the adaptive arm of the immune response. Further study is needed to determine, for example, why some ebola viruses can multiply in human cells, yet rarely infect humans in nature. In these cases, there seem to be powerful innate immune mechanisms protecting animals,

including humans, from cross-species transmission.

The final property is an ability to overcome pre-existing human adaptive immunity, such as neutralising antibodies and cytotoxic T cells. While human responses raised against one virus can be tested for reactivity against a second virus, it is unknown how much cross-neutralization would be enough to protect humans from infection or severe disease if exposed to potentially zoonotic viruses.

To detect outbreaks at their onset, clinicians and scientists must be able to track animal viruses in human populations. Yet our health-care systems currently struggle to provide testing even for well-understood viruses. We urgently need greater investments in universal and accessible health care, which would have the added benefit of enhancing our virus-surveillance abilities.

But in addition to more comprehensive surveillance protocols and stronger health systems, we also need to address underlying causes of zoonotic-disease emergence, such as deforestation, the wildlife trade, and climate change.

While implementing a comprehensive pandemic-prevention framework will require significant investment, the cost of inaction is sure to be far higher. Population growth, expanding urbanisation and encroachments on nature, and the resumption of regular air travel mean that infectious-disease outbreaks will continue to plague us.

They already are. New cases of highly pathogenic avian influenza across the United States and in other parts of the world are a wake-up call. We should always assume that the next pandemic is closer than most people think.

The writer, a scientist, biotech entrepreneur, and infectious disease expert, is Chair and President of the global health think tank ACCESS Health International.

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## SPECTRUM JUDICIARY

# Extra judicial killing & rule of law

When Atiq Ahmed, the dreaded gangster and mafia don and his brother were killed in full public glare, the human rights activists were outraged by the public's embrace of violence, ineffective judiciary and a media that enables such flagrant degeneration. Two ministers from Yogi Adityanath's ministry described the murder of Atiq and his brother akin to divine justice. No tears will be shed for Atiq's death who till 2004 had accumulated 159 criminal charges and had openly declared these cases in an affidavit, accompanying his candidature for Parliamentary elections that year. The fear that he struck into the hearts of ordinary citizens ensured that he not only won that election but was elected to the UP legislative assembly five times.

Atiq has shown the Indian citizenry and the state in its worst avatar. For the better part of his life, the state co-opted him, afraid of confronting his might. In death, an impotent state watched on silently as three assassins shot him dead on live television. In Atiq's life as in his death, the rule of law stood demolished and the state of nature prevailed triumphantly.

The state of nature, with its jungle justice, carries an animal appeal.

In comparison, the rule of law appears wimpy. This is why in a straight up contest between the rule of law and rule of the jungle, the latter always enjoys mass endorsement. When the police blinded 31 under trial criminals in 1980 in Bhagalpur, a massive procession was taken out. Prakash Jha made a highly successful film GangaJal (2003), capitalising on public sentiment. The Supreme Court, however, made criminal jurisprudence history by ordering compensation to the victims.

In a case of recent memory, the public rejoiced when Telangana police killed four persons accused of a raping a vet in Hyderabad, in an alleged encounter in 2019. Instant justice is especially attractive in India where rule of law is synonymous with the rule of slow judges and 'meandering pace of justice', as the BBC observed. In the immediate aftermath of the incident, the Supreme Court set up a three-member Commission headed by a retired Supreme Court judge, Justice VS Sirpurkar. The Commission concluded that the encounter was staged as there was no evidence that the accused were firing at the police. But this finding did not lead to any meaningful action. When the matter came up in

SC again, it took refuge in procedure and sent the matter to the High Court, where it remains hibernating. This is why judicial pontification on rule of law rings hollow.

No state in the world has established the rule of law without first using some kind of despotic power. In the USA, Barack Obama ordered a drone strike on Anwar al-Awlaki, a key organiser in Al-Qaeda in 2011 in Yemen. Civil liberty advocates cried hoarse as it was an extra judicial execution that breached Awlaki's right to due process including a trial. From 1990 onwards the Mumbai police used encounters to cut the underworld to size. Khalistan terrorism could not have been tackled without KPS Gill using extra judicial methods. There is substantial public support when such extra judicial killings take place to eliminate terrorists and criminals quickly, instead of getting into a long drawn judicial process.

However UP under the political dispensation of Yogi Adityanath is looking at Atiq's killing in a different prism. He wants to be seen as tough on crime, by eliminating all mafia dons. But there is a religious angle to his mission by invoking divine justice and targeting people on religious lines. Ironically there is a divine precedent, the way Lord

Rama killed Bali from behind to help his ally Sugriva. This is shortcut justice, made legitimate by the fact that Rama, the epitome of Dharma himself, had shot the arrow.

But this is a dangerous invocation of Ramayan, where the politicians of UP are trying to harvest political dividends by polarising people along religious lines. It aims to substitute judicial process by exercising the coercive function of the state as an instrument of strongman's governance. The concept of rule of law essentially has two facets to it; the state having the capacity to enforce it evenly and not arbitrarily, and monopoly of coercive power. Yogi seems to believe that he has the divine right to look at rule of law as a form of coercive power that is both violent and partisan. The CEC in 2014 had suggested that those candidates charge-sheeted for serious crimes attracting five years' imprisonment should be debarred from contesting. It is sad that the political parties have not taken this sensible suggestion forward. The Supreme Court must set its record better as a defender of everybody's rights and custodian of rule of law.

The writer teaches Constitutional Law



Satya Narayan Misra

IN ATIQ'S LIFE AS IN HIS DEATH, THE RULE OF LAW STOOD DEMOLISHED AND THE STATE OF NATURE PREVAILED TRIUMPHANTLY

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

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

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

### Marketing gimmick

Sir, Like every year, buyers of gold will be flocking the jewellery marts in large numbers on the Akshya Tritiya day today with a superstitious notion that buying gold on this auspicious day will bring them unending prosperity. But, this is the biggest marketing gimmick ever, and a perfect example of how these jewellery shops commercialise and take advantage of people's sentiments and indoctrinate them towards buying the yellow metal on this day. Unfortunately people fail to realise the fact that nowhere it is ever mentioned in the scriptures that buying gold on this day is equivalent to inviting goddess Lakshmi into your house. This gold rush is nothing more than a clever scam concocted by corporations to drive big sales on this day. Let's not, therefore, fall prey to the deceptive selling of these big jewellery merchandisers and earn big bucks from our collective ignorance.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

### Modernise drug control department

Sir, Cops have seized millions of bottles of sedative cough syrup from pharmaceutical units across the country which were notably sealed in long ago. It is discovered that the syrup contains codeine, an opiate on the list of controlled substances. How this escaped the attention of regulators for so long is perplexing, given that all units using it are required to file quarterly returns of the narcotic substance used. Lax regulatory controls and gaps in the inspection of medical and drug-making firms have been identified as major causes of the sector's ills. This is a serious lapse in judgement because bogus medicines cause havoc in the lives of consumers and can even be fatal. The grip of law enforcement on this critical segment must be tightened. However, its image has been tainted by a few bad apples, with cases of death linked to contaminated medicines manufactured in India being reported on a regular basis both at home and abroad. Drug control departments must be modernised with cutting-edge technology and skilled personnel to intercept defaulters in real time. Pharma must also improve their internal quality control measures. Immediate and firm action against the perpetrator can keep people from becoming victims of this lethal scam.

Vijaykumar HK, RAICHUR

of the day quote

Delhi's law-and-order situation is 'creaking' and instead of creating hurdles in others' jobs and indulging in dirty politics, everyone should pay attention to the job at their hands

ARVIND KEERIWAL | DELHI CM

Deeply pained to learn that the Indian Army lost its valiant soldiers in an extremely tragic incident in J&K. Our jawans laid down their lives in the line of duty and their supreme sacrifice will never be forgotten. I offer my sincere condolences to the bereaved families

MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CM

If the ruling parties in Maharashtra have courage and humanity, they should lodge a complaint against Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis for the Kharghar sunstroke tragedy that claimed the lives of 14 people

SANJAY RAUT | SHIV SENA (UBT) LEADER

SHORT TAKES

Rahul to vacate bungalow today

New Delhi: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, who was disqualified as MP after conviction in a defamation case, moved out all his belongings from his official residence Friday, with sources saying he will hand over the 12, Tughlaq Lane bungalow to the Lok Sabha secretariat April 22. The former Congress president was asked to vacate the premises by April 22.

Shivakumar relieved

Bangalore: Karnataka Congress President D.K. Shivakumar Friday heaved a sigh of relief after the returning officer accepted his nomination from Kanakapura constituency for the May 10 Assembly polls. The authorities ruled out any discrepancy in the nomination filed by Shivakumar. He feared that BJP is conspiring to push him out of the election fray. Shivakumar is vying for the post of chief minister and the development has disturbed him.

Probe ordered

New Delhi: Aviation regulator DGCA is probing the incident of an Air India pilot allowing a female friend into the cockpit during a Dubai-Delhi flight on February 27, and the airline is also investigating after taking serious note of the matter, according to officials. An Air India spokesperson Friday said the airline has zero tolerance in aspects related to the safety and well-being of passengers and will take requisite action about the incident.



The top security officials in Jammu and Kashmir should look into the lapses that led to the killing of five Army soldiers in a terrorist attack in Poonch district

FAROOQ ABDULLAH | NATIONAL CONFERENCE PRESIDENT

OLD MORTAR RECOVERED

An old mortar was recovered during the cleaning of a public drainage in Southwest Delhi's Kapashera area Friday, an official said. According to police, an information regarding recovery of a suspected explosive device was received around 12:30 pm Friday from MCD staff



GODHRA TRAIN BURNING CASE

SC grants bail to 8 convicts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 21: The Supreme Court Friday granted bail to eight people sentenced to life imprisonment in the 2002 Godhra train burning case which plunged Gujarat into a communal conflagration.

A bench of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justice P S Narasimha, while granting them the relief took note of the time they have already served and the unlikelihood of their appeals being taken up for disposal anytime soon.

"We direct that the convicts be released on bail subject to such terms and conditions as may be imposed by the sessions court," the bench said. The convicts who were granted bail are - - Abdul Sattar Ibrahim Gaddi Asla, Yunus Abdul Hakk Samol, Mohammad Hanif Abdulla Moulvi Badam, Abdul Rauf Abdul Majid Isa, Ibrahim Abdulrazak Abdul Sattar Samol, Ayub Abdul Gani Ismail Pataliya, Soheb Yusuf Ahmed Kalandar and Suleman Ahmad Hussain



The top court, however, refused to grant bail to four convicts - Anwar Mohammad Mehda, Saikat Abdulla Moulvi Ismail Badam, Mehboob Yakub Mitha and Siddik Mohammad Mora- after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta opposed their applications highlighting their role in the incident.

Senior advocate Sanjay Hegde, appearing for the convicts whose bail petitions were rejected, requested the bench to adjourn the hearing on their applications, saying there is a festival tomorrow. Mehta, who represented the Gujarat government, had earlier said it was not merely a case of stone-pelting as the convicts had bolted a bogie of the Sabarmati Express and set it ablaze, leading to the death of 59 passengers.

IIT-M STUDENT DIES BY SUICIDE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, April 21: A second year undergraduate student of IIT-Madras died by suicide here Friday, police said.

The student was found hanging in his hostel room on the campus, a police officer said and added a case has been registered and a probe is on.

"He did not respond and then he hosted room's door was broken open and he was found hanging," the officer said. Preliminary probe indicated that the deceased student may have had some issues arising out of him being in love with a woman, the officer said.

On March 14, a third-year B-Tech student of IIT-Madras died by suicide. A post-graduate student of engineering of IIT-M also died by suicide on February 14. He too had been found dead in his hostel room. There have been similar suicides in the past.



An area near the Gangotri dham receives fresh snowfall in Uttarkashi

PTI PHOTO

COVID SURGE

Centre asks states to keep strict vigil

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 21: Amid rising cases of COVID, the Centre Friday asked eight states including Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra to maintain a strict watch and take preemptive action in any area of concern to control any emerging spread of infection.

Underlining that COVID is still not over, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan in a letter to Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Kerala, Karnataka, Haryana and Delhi urged them to remain cautious against laxity at any level saying that may nullify the gains made in pandemic management so far.

The country has been witnessing a consistent rise in COVID-19 cases since March, with 10,262 cases reported in the week ending April 20.

A rise in positivity rate has also been noted across the country, with 5.5 per cent positivity reported in the week ending April 19 against 4.7 per cent positivity reported in the previous week, Bhushan said.

"This is a cause of concern," he stated.

While the rates of hospitalization and deaths due to COVID-19 have remained low, states or districts reporting higher number

of cases may indicate a possible localized spread of infection thus necessitating a closer look at these states or districts (high daily cases and/or high-test positivity rates) and the need to institute requisite public health measures to control and contain such surges in the initial stages, he said.

"It is also critical to ensure timely and regular updating of data to assist in accurate monitoring of the situation. It is essential that the state must maintain a strict watch and take preemptive action if required in any area of concern to control any emerging spread of infection. Regular monitoring and follow-up action are crucial," Bhushan said.

While the five-fold strategy for control of pandemic - Test-Track-Treat-Vaccination and adherence to COVID appropriate behaviour - remains the time-tested approach, it is critical for the state health departments to institute prompt and effective public health measures with a key focus on the aspects such as strengthening COVID surveillance in all districts and monitoring trends of influenza-like illness (ILI) and SARI cases in all sentinel surveillance sites on a regular basis and ensure its reporting through IDSP-IHIP network, he said.

The country has been witnessing a consistent rise in COVID-19 cases since March, with 10,262 cases reported in the week ending April 20

States have also been asked to ensure operational readiness and adequate strengthening of hospital infrastructure



SUDAN VIOLENCE

Prepare contingency evacuation plans: PM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 21: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday issued directions for the preparation of contingency plans to evacuate Indians from Sudan as he carried out a detailed review of the security situation in the violence-hit country at a high-level meeting.

The Prime Minister received a first-hand report of the conditions on the ground, with a specific focus on the safety of over 3,000 Indian citizens presently located throughout that country, the PMO said in a statement.

It said the prime minister instructed officials to prepare contingency evacuation plans, accounting for the rapidly shifting security landscape in Sudan and the viability of various options. The Prime Minister also directed all relevant officials to remain vigilant, closely monitor developments and continuously evaluate the safety of Indian nationals in Sudan while extending them all possible assistance.

The meeting that took place via video-conferencing was attended by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari, Navy Chief Admiral R Hari Kumar, the Indian ambassador to Sudan and numerous other senior officials.

"During the meeting, Prime Minister Modi assessed the most recent developments in Sudan and received a first-hand report of the conditions on the ground, with a specific focus on the safety of over 3,000 Indian citizens presently located throughout the country," the PMO said.

Sudan has been witnessing deadly fighting between the country's army and a paramilitary group for the last eight days that has reportedly left around 300 people dead. "Prime Minister Modi instructed all relevant officials to remain vigilant, closely monitoring



The Prime Minister received a first-hand report of the conditions on the ground, with a specific focus on the safety of over 3,000 Indian citizens presently located throughout that country, the PMO said in a statement

The Prime Minister directed all relevant officials to remain vigilant, closely monitor developments and continuously evaluate the safety of Indian nationals in Sudan while extending them all possible assistance

developments and continuously evaluating the safety of Indian nationals in Sudan and extending them all possible assistance. The prime minister further directed the preparation of contingency evacuation plans, accounting for the rapidly shifting security landscape and the viability of various options," the PMO said.

The PMO said Modi also emphasised the importance of maintaining close communication with neighboring countries in the region, as well as those with significant numbers of citizens in Sudan.

External Affairs Minister Jaishankar has already spoken to his counterparts from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt on the ground situation in Sudan with a focus on ensuring the safety of the Indians. On Thursday, Jaishankar discussed the situation in Sudan with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and underscored the need for "successful diplomacy" for an early ceasefire and to create the ground for the safety and welfare of people in the African nation.

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi on Thursday said the situation in Sudan is "very tense" and India is focusing on ensuring the safety and well-being of the Indian community there.

Sudan's military captured power in a coup in October 2021 and it has been running the country through a sovereign council since then. There has been a dispute between the Army and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) over a proposed timeline for handing over power to a civilian government. The fighting erupted between the forces loyal to two rival generals as both are aiming to wrest control over the country.

Amitabh to Rahul: Twitter removes verified blue ticks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 21: Indian celebrities and top politicians ranging from Amitabh Bachchan, Shah Rukh Khan and Salman Khan to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi lost verified blue ticks on their Twitter accounts after Elon Musk's microblogging site started removing check mark icons from accounts that did not pay a subscription fee.

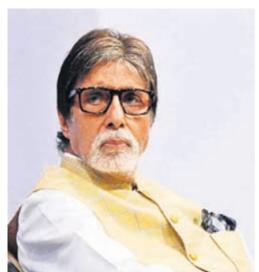
Twitter has begun removing the check mark, which had for years meant that Twitter had verified the identity of the user behind an account, from the profiles of thousands of celebrities, politicians and journalists on Thursday.

This led some of the biggest names in Bollywood - from Bachchan to Shah Rukh Khan and Salman Khan, several chief ministers including Yogi Adityanath, and top cricketers

such as Sachin Tendulkar and Virat Kohli losing the blue tick mark on their Twitter handles.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and his sister Priyanka Gandhi as well as cricketers Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma too lost their verified blue ticks from their Twitter accounts. Theirs and that of several other prominent personalities, which had the blue tick, did not show the verified icon on Friday.

Bachchan tweeted that he has paid the money and sought the blue tick back. The blue tick was considered something of a status symbol but under Musk, who bought Twitter for USD 44 billion in October, the social media service is now charging individuals a monthly fee of Rs 650 on the web and Rs 900 on mobile devices to maintain their verification status. The microblogging platform also



offers a discounted annual plan of Rs 6,800 per year. Musk had previously stated that those who did not pay will lose their check marks.

Several other Chief Ministers, including Mamata Banerjee of West Bengal, Yogi Adityanath of Uttar Pradesh, Eknath Shinde of Maharashtra, M K Stalin of Tamil Nadu, and Nitish Kumar of Bihar;



too lost their verified icons. Legendary cricketer Sachin Tendulkar, who has 38.6 million followers on Twitter, also lost the blue tick.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his ministers as well as Twitter handles of political parties including BJP and Congress continued to display verified marks. Congress president Mallikarjun

Kharge as well as BJP chief Jagat Prakash Nadda sported a grey checkmark, which indicates that an account represents a government/multilateral organisation or a government/multilateral official.

Other celebrities whose blue ticks were removed included Ajay Devgn, Alia Bhatt, Akshay Kumar, Kajol, Madhuri Dixit, Anushka Sharma and Anil Kapoor; among others. Some celebrities said they would abandon Twitter altogether, while others shrugged off the change but refused to pay. Twitter introduced the blue check mark system in 2009 to help users identify that celebrities, politicians, companies and brands, news organisations and other accounts "of public interest" were genuine and not impostors or parody accounts. The company didn't previously charge for verification.

8-yr-old found dead in drain

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad, April 21: An eight-year-old boy was brutally murdered in Hyderabad in what his family has suspected to be a case of human sacrifice.

But the police said they have no evidence of it. The body of Abdul Wahid was found in a drain in Moosapet early Friday. The boy went missing on Thursday from his house in Allaundhi Koti area of Sanath Nagar and his family had lodged a complaint with the police.

Police have arrested Imran, a transgender, and four others for the murder. The victim's family ransacked his house and claimed to have found indications of a human sacrifice. However, the police said the boy was murdered over a financial dispute between Imran and the boy's father Waseem Khan, who runs a business of ready-

made garments. After the boy went missing on Thursday evening, his father had lodged a complaint with the police. Based on CCTV footage in the area, police arrested Imran, who confessed to killing the boy and throwing the body in a drain.

According to the victim's family, Imran had asked the boy to fetch ORS. When the boy was fasting, went to Imran's house to give the ORS packet, the latter caught hold of him. The accused strangled him to death by forcibly dipping his head in the bucket filled with water. After confirming the child had died, Imran, with the help of an auto-rickshaw driver, stuffed the body in the water bucket and a bag and threw it in the drain. The murder led to high tension in the area.

Deputy Commissioner of Police Srinivas Rao said dispute over financial matters led to the murder.

# RECORD NUMBER OF TOURISTS VISIT TULIP GARDEN



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Srinagar, April 21:** A record 3.7 lakh tourists, including those from far-away countries like Argentina, visited Asia's largest tulip garden situated on the banks of the Dal lake here this season.

The Indira Gandhi Tulip Garden, which was earlier known as Siraj Bagh, has drawn tourists from all over the country and abroad, Inam-ur Rehman, the in-charge of the garden, told PTI.

"Today was the 32nd day of the tulip show. More than 3.7 lakh tourists have visited the tulip garden so far, of whom more than

**The Indira Gandhi Tulip Garden, which was earlier known as Siraj Bagh, has drawn tourists from all over the country and abroad**

three lakh were domestic tourists. The response of foreign tourists has also been very good as more than 3,000 of them visited the garden," Rehman said Friday.

He said the tulip show was successful as the footfall this season was the highest ever. Last year, 3.6

lakh tourists visited the garden. "Our mission was to create a global appeal and we succeeded in it. Tourists from Thailand, the United States, European countries and Argentina visited the garden," Rehman added.

He said the tulip garden has played a significant role in advancing the tourism season in Kashmir. With the tulips in the last stage of their bloom, a significant number of tourists are still visiting the garden.

"We do not have this type of a garden in Thailand. It is very nice. There are a lot of tulips of different colours here. My friend

and I love these," Ngoyenoy from Thailand said.

Maresh Soni from Delhi said the garden is like a meadow of flowers. "It is really beautiful. Our trip to Kashmir was mesmerising and it is worth it," he added.

"It (Kashmir) is the heaven of India. Wherever you look, there are mountains and in between, there are tulips of different colours," Deepali Saha, a tourist from West Bengal, said.

Saha said this was not her first visit to Kashmir but this time, she arrived early to see the tulip garden.

## Mountain cycle rally in Himachal to cover 120 km

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Shimla, April 21:** Intrepid cyclists of MTB Shimla will cover a distance of 120 km through back-country trails of Himachal Pradesh in two days, gaining a maximum elevation of 2,500 m, with a total elevation gain of 3,500 meters after flagging off from the state capital, rally organiser club HASTPA said Thursday.

It claims the rally is the most difficult mountain race where the riders will face daunting rocky mud tracks, old forest jeep tracks, task of trails, single tracks, river crossing and treacherous uphill.

MTB Shimla, a two-stage MTB XCM, has entered its 10th edition with riders from 15 cities racing for the title of "King of Shivaliks".

Event organisers said this time there would be more professional and ranked riders. State Rural Development Minister Anirudh Singh Thakur would flag off the race Friday from the historic Ridge. It will culminate at the same location April 23.

## Himachal BJP chief resigns

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, April 21:** Himachal Pradesh BJP President Suresh Kashyap has resigned from the post. According to sources, Suresh Kashyap has submitted his resignation to the party's national president JP Nadda.

As per sources, in his letter submitted to Nadda, Kashyap has cited "personal reasons" for leaving the post. However, his resignation is being considered as a sign of major reshuffle in the state unit of Himachal Pradesh BJP.

After the defeat in state assembly elections last year, the BJP now does not want to take any risk further regarding Himachal Pradesh in view of the Lok Sabha elections to be held in 2024. Therefore, the BJP is likely to reorganise the party's state unit in the coming days.

Suresh Kashyap himself is a Lok Sabha MP from Shimla in Himachal Pradesh and it is believed that the party may reatin him as candidate again in 2024.



# Massive manhunt for terrorists

Five Army personnel were killed and another was seriously injured Thursday after their vehicle caught fire following a terrorist attack in J&K's Poonch

AGENCIES

**Poonch/Jammu, April 21:** At least 12 people were detained Friday for questioning in connection with the deadly ambush of five army soldiers in the dense forest area of Bata Doriya here even as a MI helicopter, drones and sniffer dogs were pressed into service in a massive manhunt for the perpetrators of last afternoon's attack.

Officials said that those detained were being questioned at various levels by the security forces to ascertain the identity of the terror group, which is believed to be active in the area for more than a year and probably comprises a sniper too.

A day after the attack, Director General of Jammu and Kashmir Police Dilbag Singh along with Additional Director General police Mukesh Singh was camping in neighbouring Rajouri district to oversee the investigation. The two officers also visited the site. A National Investigation Agency (NIA) team headed by a Deputy Inspector General rank of



BJP workers burn the effigy of Pakistan during a protest

PTI PHOTO

ficer was also present as the agency is likely to take over the case.

Initial reports suggest the presence of around five terrorists and the army truck is believed to have been attacked from three different sides.

After the ambush, the terrorists possibly used grenades as well

as sticky bombs that set the vehicle ablaze. Vehicular traffic was suspended on the national highway between Bhimber Gali and Jarran Wali Gali for the second consecutive day. The officials said those who executed the attack are believed to have been present in Rajouri and Poonch for more than

## Army pays tributes to soldiers

**Poonch:** Top Army and police officials Friday paid homage to the five soldiers. At a ceremony held at a military camp in Rajouri, senior officers, including general officer commanding (GoC) and additional director general of police (ADGP), and civil dignitaries paid homage to the soldiers. After the wreath-laying ceremony, mortal remains of Lance Naik Debashish from Alqum Sami village in Odisha were airlifted to his native place, the officials said. The mortal remains of Havildar Mandeep Singh from Chankoiyan village in Ludhiana, Lance Naik Kulwant Singh from Charik village in Moga, Sepoy Harkrishan Singh from Talwandi village in Gurdaspur and Sepoy Sewak Singh from Bagha village Bathinda, all in Punjab, are being sent to their native places by road.



# NC demands hike in cash assistance to migrant KPs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jammu, April 21:** National Conference provincial president Rattan Lal Gupta on Wednesday accused BJP of exploiting migrant Kashmiri Pandits and appealed for a reasonable hike in the cash assistance and adequate compensation to over-aged members of the community.

Gupta was addressing a meeting of the office bearers of the youth wing of the party's minority cell here with discussions taking place on the issues and problems being faced by the migrant Kashmiri Pandit community living in different parts of Jammu.

Cash assistance provided to displaced families, over-aged members suffering on account of the exodus from the Valley, allotment of shops within the Kashmiri migrant camps, and the pitiable condition of tenements or quarters were some of the issues on which deliberations were held, a party spokesman said.

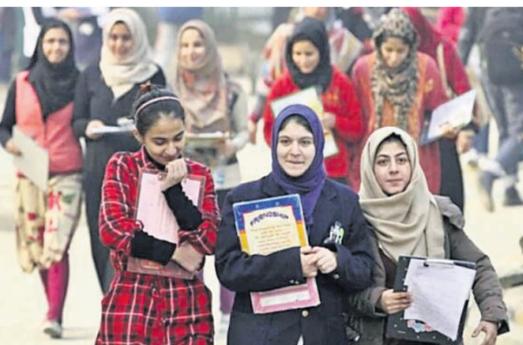
"BJP has exploited Kashmiri Pandit migrants to the hilt just for satiating its vote bank interests. It is really unfortunate that de-

spite increased cost of living amid sky rocketing prices and peak inflation the cash assistance being paid to the Kashmiri migrants has not been enhanced for the past so many years," Gupta said.

While dearness allowance of the employees was also hiked due to high cost of living, the Kashmiri migrants are unable to make ends meet with the meagre cash assistance and these people are out on roads protesting for relief enhancement and other issues. He appealed to the government to immediately announce a reasonable hike in the cash assistance being provided to them.

The senior NC leader said the BJP government had made promises to rehabilitate the migrants Kashmiri Pandits in the Valley but these proved to be a "cruel joke" as nothing has been done in this regard since 2014 when the BJP came to power at Centre.

He dared the BJP government to reveal what steps have been taken by it for the employment of unemployed KP youth, including those who are now barred due to them being over-aged.



Local people go through a snow-covered street after fresh snowfall in Koksar of Lahaul-Spiti, Himachal Pradesh

PTI PHOTO

# 'Jumma-tul-Vida' celebrated across Kashmir

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Srinagar, April 21:** 'Jumma-tul-Vida' prayers, marking the last Friday of Ramzan, were offered across Kashmir including at the historic Jamia Masjid here with religious fervour, officials said.

The largest congregation was held at Jamia Masjid in the old city here, where the Jumma-tul-Vida prayers were offered after three years.

A huge number of the faithful also offered the prayers at the Hazratbal shrine, which houses the holy relic of Prophet Mohammad, on the banks of the Dal Lake, the officials said.

The mosques and shrines across the valley witnessed a huge rush of devotees to offer the Friday con-

gregational prayers, a day before Eid-ul-Fitr, they said. Srinagar Police on Twitter said, "'Jumma-tul-Vida' prayers went peacefully and smoothly in all the mosques of Srinagar district including in Hazratbal Dargah & in Jamia Masjid, Nowhatta. A huge congregation offered Friday afternoon prayers in all the mosques."

Last Friday, congregational prayers were disallowed at the Jamia Masjid by the authorities. However, Shab-e-Qadar prayers were allowed at the grand mosque on Monday night.

Meanwhile, Anjuman Auqaf Jamia Masjid, the managing body of the grand mosque, said thousands of men, women and youngsters offered the Friday prayer at the historic 14th-century mosque.



It, however, said the people were "once again disappointed over the absence of their beloved leader Mirwaiz-e-Kashmir Dr Moulvi Muhammad Umar Farooq who is under house detention for the last nearly four years".

A spokesperson of the Auqaf conveyed the Eid-ul-Fitr message of the Mirwaiz to the people and appealed to them to celebrate Eid with simplicity according to Islamic teachings. "The Auqaf expresses strong resentment against the continu-

ous illegal and arbitrary detention of Mirwaiz-e-Kashmir. The authorities should change their dictatorial attitude and release him before Eid," he said. The managing body of the mosque said the Eid prayers would be offered there Saturday after three years.

The spokesperson said the Eid prayer will be offered at 9 am on Saturday, and urged people to reach the mosque before time and show Islamic unity and discipline on the occasion.

Eid-ul-Fitr, marking the end of the fasting month of Ramzan, will be celebrated across Jammu and Kashmir Saturday after the Shawal Moon was not sighted Thursday. The Islamic calendar month is of 29 or 30 days depending on the sighting of the crescent.

## Pangi region to get two solar projects

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Shimla, April 21:** The tribal areas of Himachal Pradesh will get two solar power projects of 400 KW each. The projects would be set up in the Pangi subdivision of Chamba district for which land has been transferred to Himurja, the state-run nodal agency for renewable energy, officials said.

Himurja has selected one hectare land for each solar plant at Hillaur and Dharwas at a cost of approximately Rs 10 crore. Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu has instructed Himurja to complete the construction work at the earliest.

Apart from these, the CM said the state government made a provision in the Budget to set up

a solar power-based battery energy storage system project in Pangi to strengthen its power supply system.

This project will provide uninterrupted power supply even during breakdowns caused by heavy snowfall. The people of Pangi have to face difficulties due to the adverse climatic conditions, especially during the winter, which often result in power outages. "The government is taking steps towards reducing carbon emissions by harnessing solar energy. To make Himachal a green energy state by March 31, 2026, and in order to achieve this goal, the government has set a target to start 500 MW capacity solar power projects in 2023-24. Additionally, two panchayats in each district will be developed as green panchayats on a pilot basis," Sukhu said.

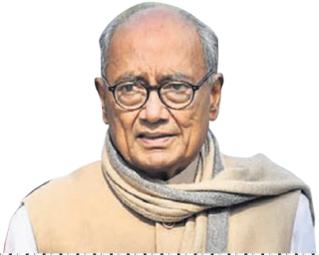
The Chief Minister said the government is also encouraging the youth for setting up solar power projects ranging from 250 kW to 2 MW capacity for which the government will provide 40 per cent financial assistance. The electricity produced from these projects will be purchased by the state electricity board.



**THIS PROJECT WILL PROVIDE UNINTERRUPTED POWER SUPPLY EVEN DURING BREAKDOWNS CAUSED BY HEAVY SNOWFALL**



**THIS PROJECT WILL PROVIDE UNINTERRUPTED POWER SUPPLY EVEN DURING BREAKDOWNS CAUSED BY HEAVY SNOWFALL**



**A big attack took place in terrorism-free Poonch which is part of Jammu. Such incidents used to take place in Anantnag and Pulwama (in Kashmir Valley)... now terror attacks have started taking place in new areas**  
DIGVIJAYA SINGH | CONGRESS VETERAN

## UP MAN BOOKED

A man has been booked by the Pilibhit police for allegedly shooting his neighbour's pet dog. The incident occurred April 17, when the 12-year-old dog was shot dead while sitting outside its owner's house



## of the day quote

There is no crisis in the state BJP  
N BIREN SINGH | MANIPUR CM

Can milk and lemon juice ever mix? Some people don't find peace without making false allegations  
VASUNDHARA RAJE | BJP LEADER

Strict action will be taken against investigators found guilty of negligence in probing the Jaipur serial bomb blast case in which all the accused were recently acquitted by the high court  
ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CM

## SHORT TAKES

### Girl ends life

**Kanpur:** A 10-year-old girl, who had bought ice cream in exchange of two handfuls of wheat, committed suicide after her sister threatened to complain to her parents. Balkaran, who lives in Bhawanipur village in Bidhnu police circle, works as a labourer along with his wife, Sumeri. They had three daughters, Khushbu, 10, Kajal, 8, and one more, besides two sons. The couple had taken three of their children along with them to work, while Khushbu and Kajal were at home. Balkaran said that in the evening Kajal took goat for grazing in the nearby fields and when she came back home, she found Khushbu had committed suicide by hanging herself.

### Boy detained

**Lucknow:** A 13-year-old boy has been detained for allegedly raping his two-year-old cousin in Uttar Pradesh's Mohanlalganj district. Police said that the minor accused took the toddler to a tin shed where he forced himself on her and fled the scene after the victim started crying out in pain. The girl later reached her home where her mother saw her injuries and suspected something wrong. Kuldeep Dubey, SHO, Mohanlalganj, said: "When asked, she disclosed the name of her minor cousin."

### Three arrested

**Gurugram:** A 57-year-old priest, Ajit Singh alias Joker Nath alias Pujari, and his two associates have been arrested for murdering a Nepali youth here, police said Friday. The victim was identified as 24-year-old Dinesh alias Raju and the associates as Sonu alias Seela, 27, and Premjeet alias Sonu Balhara, 32. According to the police, the incident took place on Wednesday after Dinesh damaged 2-3 fingers of an idol while cleaning it at a temple in Khandas village. The deceased body was recovered on Thursday afternoon from the temple premises after Mahesh, a native of Mathura in Uttar Pradesh, who is also an eyewitness in the case alerted the police.

### 6 injured in J&K

**Srinagar:** Six persons including 5 tourists were injured Friday in a road accident in Jammu and Kashmir's Anantnag district, an official said. The accident happened when a vehicle carrying tourists skidded off the road near Pahalgam hill station.

### 2 farmers killed

**Belagavi:** Two farmers were killed and two others injured when an unidentified vehicle hit them on Friday in Karnataka's Belagavi district, police said. The deceased have been identified as 65-year-old Mahabaleshwara Shindhe and 75-year-old Pundalika Redekara. Krishan Redekara (74) is seriously injured and has been admitted to a hospital.

# BJP endorses corruption: Congress

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 21:** The Congress Friday accused the BJP of endorsing corruption after Prime Minister Narendra Modi reached out to ex-Karnataka minister K S Eshwarappa who was denied a party ticket in the upcoming state assembly polls.

The Opposition party said that Prime Minister Modi congratulating Eshwarappa for not rebelling despite not being given a poll ticket "is unacceptable". Eshwarappa stepped down as Karnataka's Rural Development and Panchayati Raj minister in April 2022. This was the fallout of a contractor, Santosh Patil, ending his own life after accusing Eshwarappa of collecting a 40 per cent commission on public works in Belagavi.

A probe later gave Eshwarappa a clean chit. The former minister had recently conveyed to the BJP's central leadership his wish to retire from electoral politics but is said to have sought the ticket for his son K E Kantesh. The party, however, gave the ticket to Channabasappa overlooking the senior leader's request.

The Congress on Friday said on Twitter, "This man is accused of demanding 40 per cent commission and was forced to resign over corruption charges after BJP worker Santosh Patil committed suicide." "By praising such corrupt leaders, the BJP is sending a clear message that it endorses corruption and illegal activities," it added.

The attack came after Eshwarappa shared a video of him talking to Modi in a phone call. In



K S Eshwarappa

the video, the prime minister is heard saying, "You have demonstrated your commitment to the party. I am very happy with you. So, I decided to talk to you." Modi is also heard saying that he will meet Eshwarappa whenever he visits poll-bound Karnataka. In reply, Eshwarappa told the PM that the BJP will win the May 10 assembly polls.

This proves the remarks of former Jammu and Kashmir Governor Satyapal Malik that "the prime minister has no problem with corruption", Congress leader Randeep Surjewala said in Bengaluru.

"It is a sad day for India's democracy. PM Modi has put his stamp on 40 per cent corruption. He has conveyed that lives don't matter to the BJP. The PM called up BJP leader Eshwarappa for not rebelling. 'Eshwarappa is accused of demanding a 40 per cent commission and was forced to resign over corruption charges after BJP worker

**THE OPPOSITION PARTY SAID THAT PRIME MINISTER MODI CONGRATULATING ESHWARAPPA FOR NOT REBELLING DESPITE NOT BEING GIVEN A POLL TICKET "IS UNACCEPTABLE"**

**THE FORMER MINISTER HAD RECENTLY CONVEYED TO THE BJP'S CENTRAL LEADERSHIP HIS WISH TO RETIRE FROM ELECTORAL POLITICS BUT IS SAID TO HAVE SOUGHT THE TICKET FOR HIS SON K E KANTESH. THE PARTY, HOWEVER, GAVE THE TICKET TO CHANNABASAPPA OVERLOOKING THE SENIOR LEADER'S REQUEST**

Santosh Patil committed suicide," Surjewala said.

The Congress leader said, "Today is a day when none less than the prime minister has committed a sacrilegious crime." He claimed that while the prime minister spoke to Eshwarappa, he has not even bothered to speak to Santosh Patil or his family members.

Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera also referred to Satyapal Malik's remarks and said that it was just for the sake of votes that the prime minister was seeking the support of a leader who was removed as a minister. Party general secretary Jairam Ramesh shared a tweet showing the video of Eshwarappa speaking with the prime minister over phone and repeated the statement of former Satyapal Malik. "PM Modi's blessings are only for the corrupt. The prime minister does not hate corruption very much," Ramesh said in a tweet in Hindi.

## Student from Andhra shot dead in US

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Amaravati, April 21:** A 24-year-old man from Andhra Pradesh, who was pursuing Masters degree in the United States, died of gunshot wounds in a reported shooting there at a fuel station where the victim was working, according to police in the US state of Ohio.

The deceased was identified as Saiesh Veera and the incident happened in Columbus division of the state on Thursday, they said. According to media reports, Veera was a native of Andhra Pradesh.



"On April 20, 2023, at 12:50 AM, Columbus Police officers were dispatched to the 1000 block of W. Broad St. On a reported shooting. Upon arrival, the officers located an adult male victim, identified as SAIESH VEERA, M/O/24, suffering from a gunshot wound," the police said in a notification.

Columbus Fire service personnel arrived and transported the victim to a local hospital. Despite life-saving measures, the victim was pronounced dead at 1:27 am, they said. The incident remains under investigation and the next of kin has been informed, the police added.

# Woman shot at in Delhi court

**VIDEOS OF THE INCIDENT SHOWED THE MAN AND THE WOMAN HAVING AN ARGUMENT OUTSIDE A BUILDING IN THE COURT COMPLEX AND THE MAN PULLING OUT A GUN AND RUNNING AFTER HER**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 21:** A man dressed as a lawyer fired multiple rounds at a woman and injured her in the Saket court complex in south Delhi on Friday, triggering panic inside the premises and raising questions about law and order in the national capital.

Police said the man, a former advocate at the Saket court, had filed a case of cheating against the woman over a monetary dispute involving ₹25 lakh and the hearing in the case was scheduled for Friday.

Videos of the incident showed the man and the woman having an argument outside a building in the court complex and the man pulling out a gun and running after her. He fires two rounds from a close range at the woman, who scrambles to move away from him screaming for help. The man then fires a third round.

People present there ran in panic and one of them could be heard saying "someone save the woman". The man then moves inside the building and the woman is taken away by people and security personnel present there. Eyewitnesses said at least two more rounds were fired during the incident around 10.30 am.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (South) Chandan Chowdhary said the woman, M Radha (aged above 40), was shot in her abdomen and a hand. She was admitted to Max Hospital in Saket and her condition is stable.

The attacker managed to escape through the back entry in the building and teams have been formed to nab him. "He had lodged a case under IPC Section 420 (cheating) against the victim and advocate



Rajendra Jha, Chowdhary said.

After the incident, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said in a tweet that law and order in the national capital has completely broken down. Sharing a video of the incident, he asked, "LG sir, what's happening in our Delhi?"

In another tweet in Hindi, he said, "The law and order situation in Delhi has completely broken down. Instead of obstructing the work of others and doing dirty politics on everything, everyone should focus on their own work. If one cannot handle it, they should resign and let someone else take care of it. The safety of the people cannot be left to god's will."

AAP chief spokesperson and cabinet minister Saurabh Bharadwaj too trained his gun at Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena, saying he should take responsibility for the incident as Delhi Police report to him.

"The LG has only two jobs -- Police and DDA. After the arrival of the new LG sir, the law and order situation in Delhi has gotten worse. Guns are fired in courts. The police is involved in ₹350-crore corruption," he tweeted in Hindi.

A police source said the accused was an advocate who was suspended by the Saket Court Bar Association. He had allegedly loaned ₹25 lakh on interest to the woman and she was defaulting on repayment.

Saket Court Bar Association president Vinod Sharma confirmed the accused's membership was suspended by the bar association. He condemned the incident, saying no person should take the law into their hands and people in the legal profession should especially ensure that.



A woman looks at bangles at a market on the last Friday of Ramadan month in Nagpur

PTI PHOTO

# National interest above all, PM tells bureaucrats

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 21:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday urged bureaucrats to make national interest the sole basis of their every decision, saying the country has put its faith in them and they must uphold that trust.

Addressing bureaucrats on the occasion of Civil Services Day here, Modi said it is the duty of civil servants to analyse whether a political party in power is using taxpayers' money for its own benefit or for the nation.

The prime minister also hailed the contribution of civil servants to nation building and said India's rapid development would not have been possible without their active participation. In his nearly 33-

minute speech, Modi urged "each and every" government employee, whether at state or central level, to ensure national interest is the sole basis of every decision they take.

"As the world is saying that India's time has arrived, there is no time to waste for the bureaucracy of the country. The country has put its faith in you, work while maintaining that trust. National interest should always be the basis of all your decisions," he said.

Speaking on the theme of this year's Civil Services Day, 'Viksit Bharat' (Developed India), he said the concept is not limited to modern infrastructure. "It is important for Viksit Bharat that India's government system supports the aspirations of every Indian and every government servant helps every cit-



NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

izen in realising their dreams and the negativity that was associated with the system in the previous years turns into positivity," he said.

Modi said the motto of his government is "nation first, citizen first" and its priority is prioritis-

**As the world is saying that India's time has arrived, there is no time to waste for the bureaucracy of the country. The country has put its faith in you, work while maintaining that trust. National interest should always be the basis of all your decisions**

ing the deprived. He told the civil servants that there are two approaches to life -- first, getting things done and second, letting things happen.

"The first is an active attitude and the second reflects a passive attitude. People with faith in getting

things done take ownership in a proactive manner and become the driving force of their teams." With this burning desire to bring change in the lives of the people, you will be able to leave behind a memorable legacy. You will not be judged by what you have done for yourself but by what changes you have brought in the lives of the people," he said.

Therefore, Modi said, good governance is the key. "People-centric governance solves problems and gives better results," he added. Highlighting the importance and necessity of political parties with different ideologies in a democracy, the prime minister stressed the need for the bureaucrats to assess whether a political party in power is using public money for its own growth or for the nation.

# 2022 fifth or sixth warmest year on record: WMO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 21:** The global mean temperature in 2022 was 1.15 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial (1850-1900) average, making it the "fifth or sixth" warmest year on record despite the La Nina conditions, the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) said in a report Friday.

The eight years from 2015 were the warmest ever and the concentrations of the three main greenhouse gases -- carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide -- touched record highs in 2021, the latest year for which consolidated global values are available (1994-2021), the report titled "State

of the Global Climate 2022" said.

"Antarctic sea ice fell to its lowest extent on record and the melting of some European glaciers was, literally, off the charts," it added. Keeping the global temperature rise below the 1.5 degrees limit (as compared to pre-industrial levels) is important to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

The WMO said the 2022 pre-monsoon period was exceptionally hot in India and Pakistan. Pakistan witnessed its hottest March and hottest April on record, with both months having national mean temperatures more than four degrees Celsius above the long-term average.

In India, grain yields were reduced by the extreme heat and there



were a number of forest fires, particularly in Uttarakhand. "Heatwaves in the 2022 pre-monsoon season in India and Pakistan caused a decline in crop yields. This, combined with the banning of wheat exports and re-

strictions on rice exports in India after the start of the conflict in Ukraine, has threatened the availability, access to and stability of staple foods within international food markets and posed high risks to countries already af-

ected by shortages of staple foods," the report read.

India also reported significant flooding at various stages during the monsoon season, particularly in the northeast, in June. Around 700 people died due to floods and landslides, and another 900 from lightning strikes. Floods also triggered 6.63 lakh displacements in Assam, the WMO observed.

Heavy monsoon rains caused severe flooding and landslides in Pakistan, leading to a spread of water-borne diseases, with the greatest impacts in the most vulnerable and food-insecure regions of the country's southern and central parts.

More than 1,700 people died, along with 9.36 lakh head of live-

stock. Large areas of croplands were affected and rainfall-triggered flooding and landslides substantially disrupted transportation and building infrastructure.

"While greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise and the climate continues to change, populations worldwide continue to be gravely impacted by extreme weather and climate events. For example, in 2022, continuous drought in East Africa, record-breaking rainfall in Pakistan and record-breaking heatwaves in China and Europe affected tens of millions, drove food insecurity, boosted mass migration, and cost billions of dollars in loss and damage," WMO Secretary-General Professor Petteri Taalas said.

# international



Over recent months, an argument that is important for democracy has been waged within us. But during these days, I request that all public officials, from right and left, put aside that argument

BENJAMIN NETANYAHU | PRIME MINISTER OF ISRAEL

## BORDER POINTS SEALED

Nepal's border points with India in the country's southern Bara district have been sealed for 72 hours in view of the by-election in Bara-2 constituency Sunday



### of the day quote

I think it makes eminent sense for India to produce world-class defence equipment for its own needs, and potentially as an exporter, for the world

DONALD LU | US ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA

Good to meet UN Secretary General @antonioguterres in New York today afternoon. Discussed the current developments in Sudan, G20 Presidency and Ukraine

S JAISHANKAR | EAM OF INDIA

In the spirit of European solidarity, we are advocating the introduction of progressive EU transit support so that Ukrainian grain can reach its former, traditional markets

ISTVAN NAGY | HUNGARY'S AGRICULTURE MINISTER

### SHORT TAKES

#### Qin Gang warns Taiwan

Beijing: China's foreign minister stepped up threats Friday against the self-governing island of Taiwan, saying those who go against Beijing's demand to exert control over the island are "playing with fire." Qin Gang's remarks Friday came at the end of a speech espousing China's contribution to the global economy and the interests of developing nations, in which he repeatedly praised Communist Party Secretary General Xi Jinping's Global Security Initiative.

#### 15 dead in boat mishap

Kinshasa: Fourteen people drowned in a lake on the border between Zambia and Congo when the boat they were taking across sank earlier this week, Congolese lawmakers said. The boat passengers died on Lake Mwero as they were leaving Chinsamba Island, according to Abraham Kitanika Soriano, a member of Congo's parliament. A 15th passenger died of a heart attack due to the stress of the incident, he said.

#### Lula visits Portugal

Lisbon: Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva was set to arrive in Portugal Friday amid heightened tensions with the European Union over his position on the war in Ukraine, following statements suggesting the invaded country and the West share responsibility for the conflict. Lula said last weekend while travelling in the United Arab Emirates and China that both Ukraine and Russia had decided to go to war, and that the US was "stimulating" the fighting.

## Sunak rocked by Raab's resignation

AGENCIES

London, April 21: In a major blow to British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, his close aide and Deputy Prime Minister Dominic Raab resigned Friday after allegations he bullied staff members while working as a Cabinet minister across different government departments. Sunak was handed the independent report into allegations made by several civil servants Thursday, a copy of which has now been released by Downing Street. Sunak expressed his "sadness" as he accepted the resignation of 49-year-old Raab. While Sunak praised Raab for keeping his word to resign in the event of any finding of bullying, he also pointed to "shortcomings" in the historic process that highlighted the need for better handling of such matters in the future. In a clear indication of his disappointment to see his close Cabinet colleague's exit, Sunak referenced a string of his achievements within the Conservative Party government and also his "steadfast personal support" during his leadership campaign last year.

"I will always be grateful for your steadfast personal support during last year's Conservative Party leadership contest from the day you introduced me at the launch to the last day of the contest. The subsequent dedication, commitment and loyalty with which you have discharged your responsibilities as deputy prime minister has been typical of your belief in public service," he notes. The outgoing minister pointed out that the review, carried out by independent investigator Adam Tolley KC, showed he had "not

In his resignation letter posted on Twitter, Raab noted that the report into his conduct had upheld two claims against him

However, he did call them "flawed" and claimed they set a dangerous precedent of a low threshold for bullying for the conduct of good government

once, in four and a half years, sworn or shouted at anyone, let alone thrown anything or otherwise physically intimidated anyone, nor intentionally sought to belittle anyone" - referring to some of the allegations that were doing the rounds in the media over the course of the investigation. In his letter addressed to Sunak, Raab said: "I called for the inquiry and undertook to resign, if it made any finding of bullying whatsoever. I believe it is important to keep my word." Raab, however, warned that the findings will encourage "spurious complaints" against ministers, and have a chilling effect on those driving change on behalf of the government and British people. The Tory MP for Surrey in south-east England said ministers should be able to exercise direct oversight with respect to senior officials over critical negotiations.

The Oxford and Cambridge University law graduate, who worked as a solicitor before embarking on a political career, was among the frontline Conservative MPs who were seen by Sunak's side as he campaigned to become the party's leader and Britain's first Indian-origin Prime Minister last year. He was rewarded with not one but two plum posts in his Cabinet.



DOMINIC RAAB



RISHI SUNAK



A cob horse for conservation grazing along with its foal rests on the clifftops of Rhossili, Swansea, Britain

REUTERS

## Russia's air force bombs its own city

AGENCIES

Moscow, April 21: Russia's military acknowledged that a bomb accidentally dropped by one of its warplanes caused a powerful blast in a Russian city not far from Ukraine's border, injuring two and scaring local residents.

Belgorod, a city of 340,000 located about 40 kilometers (25 miles) east of the Russia-Ukraine border, has faced regular drone attacks during Russia's current military operation in Ukraine. Russian authorities blamed the earlier strikes on the Ukrainian military, which refrained from directly claiming responsibility for the attacks. The explosion late Thursday was far more powerful than anything Belgorod residents had experienced before.

Witnesses reported a low hissing sound followed by a blast that made nearby apartment buildings tremble and shattered their windows. It left a 20-meter (66-foot)-wide crater in the middle of a



The site of the crater after the Russian military accidentally bombed Belgorod

AP PHOTO

tree-lined boulevard flanked by apartments, damaged several cars and threw one vehicle onto a store roof. Two people were injured, and a third person was later hospitalised with hypertension, authorities said.

Immediately after the explosion, Russian commentators and military bloggers were abuzz with theories about what weapon Ukraine had used for the attack. Many of them called for strong retribution. But about an hour

later, the Russian Defense Ministry acknowledged that a weapon accidentally released by one of its own Su-34 bombers caused the blast.

The ministry did not provide any further details, but military experts said the weapon likely was a powerful 500-kilogram (1,100-pound) bomb. Military experts charged that the weapon appeared to have been set to explode with a small delay after impact that would allow it to hit underground facil-

## SA mass shooting kills 10

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Johannesburg, April 21: Ten members of the same family, seven of them female and at least one of them a child, were killed in a mass shooting at a house in South Africa, police said Friday.

A male suspect was killed in a shootout with police hours after and two men were arrested. A fourth suspect escaped but his identity is known and he is being sought, Police Minister Bheki Cele said. According to initial reports, the family was ambushed by gunmen at the home in the city of Pietermaritzburg in the eastern KwaZulu-Natal province, police said. The shooting happened Thursday night or early Friday morning.

Police initially announced that the victims were seven women and three men but Cele said at least



one child, a 13-year-old, was among the dead. The oldest victim of the mass shooting was 65, Cele said. He didn't confirm the gender of the teenager who was killed and gave no other details on the ages of the other victims.

Cele, who was at the scene, said police confronted four men on a street about a mile from the house

where the mass shooting occurred and the men shot at officers.

"Police shot back, killed one, injured one, who is arrested, and one is arrested uninjured. One has run away," Cele said. The suspect who was killed was "notorious" and linked to other crimes in the area, Cele said, although he didn't offer a motive for the mass shooting. The scene at the house where the 10 were killed was "terrible," Cele said. Police were also questioning the driver of an e-hailing taxi who is believed to have previously transported the suspects when they were suspected of committing other crimes.

South Africa has one of the highest homicide rates in the world and there has been a spate of mass shootings in recent years. Eight people were fatally shot at a birthday party in the south coast city of Gqeberha in January.

## Muslims celebrate Eid al-Fitr

AGENCIES

Beirut, April 21: The holiday of Eid al-Fitr ushered in a day of prayers and joy for Muslims around the world Friday. The celebration was marred by tragedy amid the explosion of conflict in Sudan, while in other countries it came against the backdrop of hopes for a better future.

After the Ramadan month of fasting, Muslims celebrate Eid al-Fitr with feasts and family visits.

In Sudan's capital, Khartoum, staccato blasts of gunfire marked the early hours of the feast day. A deadly conflict in the vast African country that erupted in the past week has forced many people to shelter indoors ahead of the holiday, even as water and food for civilians runs low.

In Jerusalem, thousands of faithful gathered at Islam's third holiest shrine, the Al-Aqsa Mosque

compound, where tensions with Israeli authorities have seethed in the past month. The compound also hosts Judaism's holiest site.

The streets of Arab capitals of Damascus, Baghdad and Beirut were crowded with worshippers heading to mosques and cemeteries. Many Muslims visit the graves of their loved ones after the early morning prayer on the first day of Eid al-Fitr. Visitors toted bouquets of flowers, jugs of water for plants, and brooms to clean gravestones.

In Yemen, the Saudi-Iranian rapprochement raised the possibility for an end to the civil war that had turned into a proxy conflict and torn the impoverished country apart since 2014.

In Turkey and Syria, many are still mourning loved ones lost in the devastating 7.8-magnitude earthquake that struck the two countries on Feb. 6, killing more than 50,000 people.

## US to begin training Ukrainian troops

Ramstein Air Base (Germany): The United States will begin training Ukrainian forces on how to use and maintain Abrams tanks in the coming weeks, as it continues to speed up its effort to get them onto the battlefield as quickly as possible, US officials said Friday. The decision comes as defense leaders from around Europe and the world are meeting at Ramstein Air Base, in the ongoing effort to coordinate the delivery of weapons and other equipment to Ukraine.

ities. Belgorod Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov said local authorities decided to temporarily resettle residents of a nine-story apartment building while it was inspected to make sure it hadn't suffered structural damage that rendered it unsafe to live in.

## PREZ RACE

### Trump storms into Florida to oust rival DeSantis



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Washington, April 21: Even as the Republican Party is still weighing in options between former US President Donald Trump and Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, Trump is wasting no time to oust his rival DeSantis from the race in the 2024 primaries drumming up support for himself on the Governor's home turf. Republican Congressman Michael Waltz, who replaced DeSantis in the House, made it clear Thursday that he won't be supporting his predecessor's expected run for the White House. He has endorsed Trump.

The Combat-decorated Green Beret Waltz has virtually waltzed his way to join as many as 11 of the 20-member Florida Republican delegation that has backed Trump. Trump has also unveiled the endorsements of Representatives Gus Bilirakis and Carlos Gimenez in a fundraising email on Wednesday shaking DeSantis out of his comfort zone.

Waltz, media reports said, has over the years carefully threaded the needle when it comes to Trump, avoiding any criticism of Trump, simultaneously rejecting and voting against policies pushed by his administration. But he announced he was backing Trump in 2024 on Thursday morning.

## Sudan's top general says military committed to civilian rule

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Khartoum, April 21: Sudan's top general Friday declared the military's commitment to a civilian-led government, an apparent bid for international support even as his forces battle a rival paramilitary group in brutal fighting that has derailed hopes for the country's democratic transition.

In his first speech since the conflict engulfed Sudan nearly a week ago, army chief Gen. Abdel Fattah Burhan pledged the military would prevail and secure the vast African nation's "safe transition to civilian rule." But for many Sudanese, Burhan's claim rang hollow 18 months after he joined forces with his current rival to seize power in a coup that cast aside Sudan's pro-democracy forces.

The explosions rocking Khartoum followed frenzied international calls for a holiday ceasefire. After the United Nations and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken urged a respite from the spiraling violence, the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, promised to stop fighting for the three days of Eid al-Fitr to allow for evacuations and safe corridors. But there was no response from Burhan's military.

Such proposed pauses in the fighting have repeatedly collapsed over the past week. "We are confident that we will overcome this ordeal with our training, wisdom and strength," Burhan said, vowing to preserve "the security and unity of the state." The Sudanese military a day earlier ruled out negotiations with the RSF, saying



In this image made from video provided Friday by the Sudan Armed Forces, Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan, commander of the Sudanese Armed Forces, speaks at an undisclosed location

PHOTO CREDIT: AP

it would only accept its surrender. The military claimed Friday it had moved past the phase of de-

fending its positions and was now clearing RSF positions from around Khartoum. The military has ap-

Burhan's announcement came on the Muslim Eid al-Fitr holiday, which marks the end of Ramadan and its month of fasting

The holiday - typically filled with prayer, celebration and feasting - was a somber one in Sudan, as gunshots rang out across the capital of Khartoum and heavy smoke billowed over the skyline

peared to have the upper hand, with its monopoly on air power, but it was impossible to confirm its claims of advances.

The two generals vying for control over the vast African nation are also vying for acceptance by foreign powers, which have expressed support for Sudanese seeking a transition to civilian rule. Both Burhan and his

rival, RSF chief Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo, have sought to portray themselves as supporters of democracy. In 2019, they turned against long-time autocrat Omar al-Bashir and pushed him out of power amid a popular uprising against his rule.

But since then, they have failed to implement agreements under which they would hand over power. Their forces crushed pro-democracy protests, and in 2021 they jointly carried out a coup that removed a transitional government and entrenched them as Sudan's most powerful leaders. The current explosion of violence between them came after Burhan and Dagalo fell out over a recent internationally brokered deal with democracy activists that was meant to incorporate the RSF into the military and eventually lead to civilian rule.

## of the day quote

We are pinning hopes to push our exports to Russia as it is a major market. The business delegation will explore export opportunities as that country holds huge potential. We are aiming to take our exports to Russia to \$5 billion this fiscal

A SAKHIVEL | PRESIDENT, FICO

We have achieved the milestone of being one of the early companies to cross the benchmark of ₹10,000 crore of GWP in just 13 years of operations

KISHORE KUMAR POLUDASU | MD AND CEO, SBI GENERAL INSURANCE

We are planning to invest \$10 million in phases, of which \$5 million will be spent in setting up infrastructure in the schools and the rest \$5 million will be utilised for creating top quality content, pedagogy development and academic upgradation

IMRAN RASHID | VP, PHYSICSWALLAH

## SHORT TAKES

### Hindustan Zinc profit falls 12%

**New Delhi:** Vedanta Group company Hindustan Zinc Ltd (HZL) Friday reported an 11.78 per cent fall in its consolidated net profit at ₹2,583 crore for the fourth quarter of 2022-23 on account of higher expenses. The company clocked ₹2,928 crore net profit in the January-March period of the preceding 2021-22 fiscal. Its total income also declined to ₹8,863 crore from ₹9,074 crore in the year-ago period. The company's expenses stood at ₹5,358 crore, higher than ₹4,717 crore a year ago. In a statement, the company said its zinc production was at 2.15 lakh tonne (LT), up 2 per cent from 2.11 LT in January-March 2022, while sales were almost flat at 2.16 LT.

### Court rejects Xiaomi's plea

**New Delhi:** A court in India's Karnataka state has rejected China-based Xiaomi Corp's petition challenging the seizure of ₹55.51 billion (\$676.35 million) by the Enforcement Directorate, news website Live Law reported Friday. India's federal financial crime agency froze Xiaomi's assets last year, alleging the company had made illegal remittances to foreign entities by passing them off as royalty payments. The company denies any wrongdoing. Xiaomi has lost its spot as India's top choice for smartphones to rival Samsung Electronics as Indian consumers opt for improved features in the world's second biggest market for the devices. Chinese companies have also struggled to do business in India since 2020 due to political tensions following a border clash.

## IITC pips HDFC to be 7th largest firm by m-cap

India's largest cigarette manufacturer IITC has had a dream run in FY23, with its stock going up by over 51%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 21:** Shares of FMCG major IITC climbed 2 per cent Friday and became the seventh most valued firm in terms of market valuation.

The stock advanced 1.99 per cent to settle at ₹408.25 apiece on the BSE. During the day, it rallied 2.17 per cent to its 52-week high of ₹409. On the NSE, it climbed 1.92 per cent to finish at ₹408 per share. The

company commanded a market valuation of ₹5,07,373.82 crore and has entered the coveted ₹5 lakh crore market capitalisation club. IITC emerged as the biggest gainer on both the Sensex firms. The stock has been rising since the past two days, climbing 2.47 per cent. The 30-share BSE Sensex ended 22.71 points or 0.04 per cent up at 59,655.06.

Reliance Industries is the country's most valued firm with a market capitalisation of ₹15,89,169.49 crore, followed by Tata Consultancy Services (Rs 11,56,863.98 crore), HDFC Bank (9,33,937.35 crore), ICICI Bank (Rs 6,17,477.46 crore), Hindustan Unilever (Rs 5,86,927.90 crore), Infosys (Rs 5,09,215 crore) and IITC (Rs 5,07,373.82 crore). "IITC is better placed than peers



with accelerated earnings growth over the past two years, especially in FY23, and strong earnings visibility compared to peers into FY24 as well," said the analysts at Motilal Oswal.

So far this year, shares of the FMCG major have jumped 23 per cent. IITC has a diversified set of businesses which include tobacco, other FMCG products, packing and agriculture, to name a few. Amongst

## HDFC BANK, HDFC MERGER

# No exceptions on CRR, SLR

HDFC Bank and HDFC announced a \$40 billion merger, the largest in Indian corporate history, last April and are awaiting the final regulatory go-ahead for the same

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, April 21:** The country's largest private lender HDFC Bank Thursday said the Reserve Bank has refused to make any exceptions on cash reserve ratio (CRR) and statutory liquidity ratio (SLR) requirements as sought by it ahead of the merger of mortgage financier parent HDFC with itself.

The central bank has, however, allowed some leeways on the priority sector lending front, the city-headquartered bank said in a letter to the exchanges.

HDFC Bank and HDFC announced a \$40 billion merger, the largest in Indian corporate history, last April and are awaiting the final regulatory go-ahead for the same. In pursuit of the same scheme, HDFC Bank sought relaxations on certain regulatory requirements from the regulator.

The bank informed the exchanges that it has received a letter from RBI with views on certain matters, while clarity on other requests is expected in due course. "HDFC Bank shall continue to comply with extant requirements of CRR, SLR and LCR (liquidity cov-



RBI HAS GIVEN SOME LEEWAYS ON PRIORITY SECTOR LENDING FRONT

HDFC BANK CAN HIKE STAKE IN HDFC LIFE, HDFC ERGO TO OVER 50%

HDFC BANK, HDFC MERGER IS EXPECTED TO COMPLETE BY JULY 2023

erage ratio) from the effective date (of merger) without exceptions," the lender said quoting the letter from RBI.

CRR is the percentage of deposits which a commercial bank like HDFC Bank has to park with the central bank for which it does not earn any interest, while SLR is a percentage of deposits which are mandated to be invested in government securities. A non-bank lender is exempt from the same requirements and HDFC Bank had sought leeways on compliance.

On PSL, the RBI has told the bank that adjusted net bank credit may be calculated considering one-third of the outstanding loans of HDFC as on the effective date of the amalgamation for the first year, and the remaining two-thirds of the portfolio of HDFC shall be considered over a period of next two years equally.

Under the PSL norms, commercial banks are required to devote over 40 per cent of their overall advances to areas marked as priority sectors for the emancipation of certain marginalized sections of society, whereas a non-bank lender like HDFC does not have to

comply with such mandates. The RBI has also allowed for the investments including subsidiaries and associates of HDFC to continue as investments of HDFC Bank, the letter said, adding HDFC Bank or HDFC can increase shareholding in HDFC Life Insurance Company and HDFC ERGO General Insurance Company to over 50 per cent prior to the effective date of the merger.

HDFC Bank can continue holding HDFC's stake in HDFC Education and Development Services, which operates three education schools, for a period of two years from the effective date and in HDFC Credila Financial Services provided the shareholding is brought down to 10 per cent within two years from the effective date and not onboarding new customers.

The bank will engage with the RBI for certain clarifications on the letter received Thursday, and also approach RBI with the crystallised amounts of the liabilities as of the effective date, the letter said. Speaking to analysts on a conference call last weekend, the bank had said that it expects the merger to get a go-ahead by July.

## INDIA'S 1ST COMMERCIAL LI-ION CELL MAKING LINE

Battery technology startup Log9 Materials on Friday inaugurated the country's first lithium-ion cell manufacturing facility in Bangalore. The plant has an initial capacity of 50 MWh



REUTERS

**Bangalore, April 21:** Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) started the new financial year buying Indian equities, according to National Securities Depository Ltd (NSDL) data.

FPIs purchased shares worth ₹87.67 billion (\$1.07 billion) on a net basis in the first half of April. They had been net buyers in the previous month too, but that was largely due to US boutique investment firm GQG Partners' \$1.87 billion investment in four Adani Group companies in early March.

The benchmark Nifty 50 slid 4.12 per cent between January and March this year, lowering its price-to-earnings ratio to 20.44 as of March 31, from 21.79 at the start of the year, according to NSE data.

FPIs sold equities worth ₹376.32 billion in the previous fiscal, marking two straight years of net sales for the first time. The sales came after record purchases of ₹7,240.32 billion in FY2021.

Analysts expected FPI flows to improve after the selling witnessed in the last two financial years. "Foreign flows for the last two years have been negative. Rarely have foreign investors been ag-

gressive sellers of Indian equities for three years in a row," G Chokkalingam, founder and head of research at Equinomics, said. Aided by the FPI buying, the Nifty 50 rose 2.7 per cent in the first half of April.

**PURCHASES AND SALES**  
After selling financial services shares worth ₹299.93 billion in FY2023, FPIs bought ₹44.10 billion in the sector in the first half of April. Analysts said that easing risks of a contagion in the global financial system and domestic lenders' strong growth prospects aided sentiment in the space.

Information technology saw renewed interest with foreign investors adding ₹10.02 billion, while the auto segment also witnessed FPI buying. The Nifty 50 is down nearly 2.79 per cent in 2023 so far, making domestic valuations attractive.

Broader markets have witnessed a sharper correction than the benchmark Nifty 50 with the small-cap index losing 4 per cent in 2023 so far. The steep fall in smallcap stocks also attracted domestic mutual funds, which bought over ₹21 billion worth of equities in the segment in March.

## NEW FINANCIAL YEAR

# FPIs buying equities on cheaper valuations

FPIs PURCHASED SHARES WORTH ₹87.67 BILLION ON A NET BASIS IN THE FIRST HALF OF APRIL



REUTERS

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"Foreign flows for the last two years have been negative. Rarely have foreign investors been ag-

## BIZ BUZZ

### Behera new regional head of Union Bank, Balasore

**Balasore:** Jay Gopal Behera has joined as the regional head of Balasore region which covers 5 districts, namely Balasore, Bhadrak, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj and Jajpur with 60 branches. Behera has over 21 years of banking experience in various states like Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Maharashtra.



As a banker, he has served in various capacities like branch head, credit in charge, loan processing centre in charge. He envisages scaling up of digital adoption of banking services, advances under thrust sectors like retail, agriculture and MSME. Additionally, he aims to improve the asset quality of the region by reduction of stressed and NPA portfolio.

# Reliance posts highest-ever quarterly profit in Q4

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 21:** Reliance Industries Ltd Friday reported a 19 per cent jump in its March quarter net profit to ₹19,299 crore, according to a company's stock exchange filing.

The net profit of ₹19,299 crore in January-March 2023 compares to ₹16,203 crore earning a year back. This is the company's highest-ever quarterly net profit.

Its revenue from operations rose to ₹2.16 lakh crore from ₹2.11 lakh crore in January-March 2022.

For the full 2022-23 fiscal (April 2022 to March 2023), Reliance reported a net profit of ₹66,702 crore on a revenue of ₹9 lakh crore.

Reliance Retail reported a 12.9 per cent increase in its net profit to ₹2,415 crore for the quarter, helped by the increase in footfalls and new store openings.

The company's revenue for operations surged 21.09 per cent to ₹61,559 crore in the fourth quarter of this fiscal.

The retail arm of Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) said it posted a net profit of ₹2,139 crore in the



Reliance Industries net profit jumps 19% to ₹19,299 crore  
Reliance Retail profit rises 12.9% to ₹2,415 crore  
Jio Platforms net profit surges 16% to ₹4,984 crore

January-March quarter of FY22 and its revenue from operations was ₹50,834 crore. The number of

stores operated by Reliance Retail crossed 18,000 and the number of footfalls at its stores was 21.9 crore,

up 41.29 per cent year-on-year. RIL's digital services arm Jio Platforms reported a 15.6 per cent rise in net profit to ₹4,984 crore for the fourth quarter, the company said in a regulatory filing.

The company reported a net profit of ₹4,313 crore in the same quarter a year ago.

Its revenue from operations in the reported quarter increased by 14.4 per cent to ₹25,465 crore from ₹22,261 crore in the March 2022 quarter. The company's annual revenue crossed ₹1 lakh crore in 2022-23.

## World's wealthiest parking more money in gold

AUSTRIA RANKED FIRST ON THE LIST WITH 8% ALLOCATION IN GOLD FOLLOWED BY INDIA, CHINA AT 6%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 21:** Ultra-high net worth individuals (UHNWIs) allocated 6 per cent of their total investable wealth in gold last year, according to property consultant Knight Frank India.

In 2022, the average UHNWI wealth allocation in gold was 3 per cent globally and 4 per cent in the Asia Pacific region.

"According to the Attitudes Survey conducted by Knight Frank, 6 per cent of the total investable wealth of Indian ultra-high net worth individuals was allocated towards gold in 2022," the statement said.

India and Chinese Mainland were positioned second on the



In the wake of uncertainties in the global economic landscape, consumers resorted to allocate incremental capital to assets that offer stability and serve as a hedge against inflation

SHISHIR BAJAJ | CHAIRMAN & MD, KNIGHT FRANK INDIA

list with a 6 per cent wealth allocation in gold by the UHNWIs of both the countries in 2022. Austria

ranked first on the list with 8 per cent allocation.

There has been an increase in

Gold has delivered stellar returns of over 69% in the past 5 years (From FY2019 to FY2023)

the allocation to gold by the Indian UHNWIs from 4 per cent in 2018 to 6 per cent in 2022, Knight Frank said, while attributing the rise to significant returns that the yellow metal has provided over the years.

Gold has delivered stellar returns of over 69 per cent in the past 5 years (From FY2019 to FY2023). The pandemic has resulted in a low interest rate, and easy liquidity strategy adopted by the global central banks gave a massive push to the prices, the consultant said.

## Forex kitty rises to 9-month high

REUTERS

**Mumbai, April 21:** India's foreign exchange reserves rose for a second week to hit an over nine-month high of \$586.41 billion for the week ended April 14, the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) statistical supplement showed on Friday.

That is an increase of \$1.65 billion from the previous week. Reserves had gone up by \$6.3 billion in the week ending April 7.

The central bank intervenes in the spot and forwards markets to prevent runaway moves in the rupee. Changes in forex reserves also stem from valuation gains or losses.

For the reported week, the rupee had ended marginally higher against the US dollar and traded in a range of 81.77 to 82.15.

The rupee closed at 82.09 Friday



in the week ending April 21, halting a four-week rising streak.

Meanwhile the RBI bought a net of \$254 million in the spot foreign exchange market in February, according to data released Friday.

The RBI said it purchased \$4.38 billion and sold \$4.13 billion in February. In January, the central bank had sold a net of \$384 million in the spot market.

The Indian rupee depreciated by 0.9 per cent against the US dollar in

RBI BOUGHT A NET OF \$254 MILLION IN THE SPOT FOREIGN EXCHANGE MARKET IN FEBRUARY

February and hit a four-month low of 82.95 February 27.

The RBI's net outstanding forward purchase stood at \$20.47 billion as of end-February, compared with a net purchase of \$21.73 billion at the end of January, the data showed.

The central bank intervenes in the spot and forwards market to curb exchange rate volatility. The currency was at 82.09 to the dollar Friday.

# GT seek return to winning ways vs LSG

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Lucknow, April 21:** Gujarat Titans would look to shrug off the defeat in the previous outing and get their mojo back when they clash with Lucknow Super Giants, who will be eager to keep the winning momentum going in IPL here Saturday.

While the Titans will look to start afresh after the three-wicket loss to the Rajasthan Royals, LSG got a confidence-boosting 10-run win against the Sanju Samson-led side to climb to the second spot in the points table.

Both teams have been a tad inconsistent this season, losing two games each although the Titans have played a match less than LSG. The Titans, who are fourth in the

league table, have struggled to defend totals this season.

Mohammed Shami has been a constant wicket-taker and has looked potent in the powerplay but more is expected of Alzarri Joseph and Josh Little.

Skipper Hardik Pandya also hasn't been at his best with the ball, having picked only one wicket so far. Pacer Mohit Sharma, however, has done well in the two games he has played.

Rashid Khan has spearheaded the spin department, but against the Royals when he was taken to the cleaners by Samson, GT had no answer but to hand debut to 18-year-old Afghan wrist spinner Noor Ahmad, who did well under pressure, albeit in a losing cause.

The Gujarat batting department



looks sorted with likes of Shubman Gill, David Miller, Sai Sudarshan striking the ball well. But the reigning champions will have their task cut out against LSG, who boast of a formidable batting line up.



Nicholas Pooran and Marcus Stoinis capable of pulverising any opposition. Mayers has been in sensational form at the top while Pooran and Stoinis doing the job in the middle order.

But skipper KL Rahul's form is a little concerning. He has bat-

ted with strike rate of 114.79 this season. All-rounder Deepak Hooda is also yet to play an impactful innings he is capable of.

Talented leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi and veteran Amit Mishra are doing well for LSG in the spin department while Krunal Pandya has also put in a match-winning performance.

In Mark Wood, Avesh Khan and Yuvraj Singh Chakar, LSG also possess a good pace department. Debutant Naveen-ul-Haq sizzled in his maiden game against RR and will look to continue in the same vein.

The Titans, however, may have a slight psychological edge having defeated the Super Giants on both occasions last season. The match is set to be played during the day so dew won't be a factor.

# Mumbai look to maintain momentum against Punjab



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, April 21:** Perennial slow starters Mumbai Indians have found their mojo and will be favourites against a faltering Punjab Kings in their IPL clash here Saturday.

Having made a poor start with defeats in first two matches, Mumbai Indians, who are placed sixth in the points table, have been able to bounce back impressively with wins against Delhi Capitals, Kolkata Knight Riders and Sunrisers Hyderabad.

On the other hand, Punjab Kings, ranked seventh in the points table, have stuttered in the absence of their regular captain and the highest run-scorer Shikhar Dhawan, who is unlikely to play against Mumbai Indians here at the Wankhede Stadium owing to a shoulder injury.

Dhawan played a key role in PBKS making a confident start to the season but his absence has made a significant difference in the outcomes that have come along their way.

PBKS have three wins to show from overall six matches but all three losses have come in their last four matches, with PBKS desperately missing the stability and firepower that Dhawan provides at the top. The left-handed senior batter's absence is something that PBKS have not been able to fulfill anyhow.

Sikandar Raza scored a fine half century to take PBKS over the line against LSG but he was left out of Thursday's clash against RCB inexplicably. PBKS will also hope that their over-



seas stars in Liam Livingstone, Matthew Short and Sam Curran do more with the bat.

With the ball, PBKS have again blown hot and cold and it will be a challenge to stop the Mumbai batters, who seem to have found their feet and have fired in unison.

The trio of Arshdeep Singh, Kagiso Rabada and stand-in captain Curran, the costliest player ever in the history of IPL auction, will have their task cut out as PBKS look to arrest their slide.

Rohit Sharma and Ishan Kishan at the top have provided brisk starts to Mumbai Indians, which has set the platform for the others that follow. The overseas pair of Cameron Green and Tim David has done well, but it remains to be seen how their middle-order mainstay Suryakumar Yadav goes about his job.

In the bowling department, MI are likely to be without their overseas star Jofra Archer who continues to carefully tread his way back into top flight cricket. The right-arm pacer has not played since MI's opening match against RCB April 2, while he has trained with the team but not in the full tilt.

Telesat: Star Sports channels

# Jadeja, Conway seal CSK win

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chennai, April 21:** Ravindra Jadeja's three-wicket haul (3/22) was complemented by a magnificent unbeaten fifty from opener Devon Conway (77 n o, 57b, 12x4, 1x6) as Chennai Super Kings cantered to a comfortable seven-wicket win against Sunrisers Hyderabad in a low-scoring IPL match here Friday.

Jadeja spun a web of spin to restrict SRH to a below-par 134/7 before Conway comfortably led the chase as CSK made light of the target, reaching 138/3 in 18.4 overs for a fourth straight win over SRH at Chepauk.

Conway shared an 87-run stand with opening partner Ruturaj Gaikwad (35) to provide a rollicking start to the chase. Conway and Gaikwad notched up 50 in the sixth over. The New Zealand batter reached his 50 from 33 balls to power CSK's chase, overshadowing the talented Gaikwad in the process.

The opening duo appeared set to see the team home when misfortune struck Gaikwad, who was run-out after a shot by Conway got deflected off Umran Malik's hand and hit the stumps with the CSK batter out of



IMPRESSIVE SPELL: Ravindra Jadeja celebrates after getting a wicket, Friday

his crease.

Leg-spinner Mayank Markande (2/23) was the best performer with the ball for SRH on a rather forgettable day. He got the wickets of Ajinka Rahane (9) and Ambati Rayudu (9), bowling the latter with a googly. In the end, Moeen Ali (6 n o) hit the winning runs of Washington Sundar.

Earlier, it was trial by spin for the SRH batters as the CSK spinners,

especially Jadeja, came up with a superb performance to restrict the visitors to a modest total. Abhishek Sharma (34) was the top scorer for the SRH, who just couldn't get going after being sent in to bat by skipper MS Dhoni.

SRH batters faltered despite a 35-run partnership for the opening wicket between Harry Brook (18) and Sharma and a 36-run stand for the second wicket between



Devon Conway

Sharma and Rahul Tripathi (21) as the CSK spinners took over.

There was no significant partnership in the middle order as the SRH batters failed to push the score. The experienced Jadeja and Maheesh Theekshana (1/27) strangled the SRH batting unit after Dhoni made the spinners bowl in tandem in the middle overs.

Such was the dominance of the spinners that after 10.3 overs, SRH

## Ahmedabad to host IPL final May 28

**NEW DELHI:** The Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad will host the Qualifier 2 and the final of the ongoing IPL May 26 and 28 respectively, the BCCI said Friday. Chennai's MA Chidambaram Stadium will stage the Qualifier 1 and the Eliminator on May 23 and 24 respectively, the IPL said in its advisory after the sport's apex body in the country finalised the schedule for the league's four biggest matches.

batters couldn't get any boundary for the next 36 balls. Brook fell to a good catch by Gaikwad off Akash Singh. Sharma became Jadeja's first victim. Agarwal, who was bumped down the order to No.6 did not last too long.

### BRIEF SCORES

SRH 134/7 (Abhishek Sharma 34, Rahul Tripathi 21; Ravindra Jadeja 3/22, Akash Singh 1/17) lost to CSK 138/3 (Devon Conway 77 n o, Ruturaj Gaikwad 35; Mayank Markande 2/23) by 7 wickets.

# Indian compound mixed team eye WC gold

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Antalya, April 21:** The compound mixed pair of Jyothi Surekha Vennam and her debutant partner Ojas Deotale showed perfect chemistry and cruised into the final with three easy wins to confirm a second medal for India in the Archery World Cup Stage 1 here Friday.

The duo defeated Malaysia's Fatin Nurfaatehah Mat Salleh and Mohd Juwaidi Mazuki 157-154 to set up a gold medal clash against 12th seed Chinese Taipei, slated Saturday.

The Indian men's recurve team of Atanu Das, B Dhiraj and Tarundeep Rai will also fight for a second gold when they take on their Chinese counterparts Sunday.

India also are in contention for a third medal in the women's compound individual section where former World Championship silver



medallist Jyothi Surekha Vennam has advanced into the semifinal.

Jyothi and her 20-year-old partner, who got a bye into the second

round after qualifying as second seed, began with some flawless shooting as they defeated Luxembourg and France dropping

just one point.

Jyothi and Deotale missed the centre only once from 16 arrows as they shot 159 points out of a possible 160 in both the pre-quarters and quarters. Luxembourg scored 157, while France managed 156.

In the semis, the Malaysian duo put some pressure by levelling the Indians 39-all and 40-all in the first two ends. But Mat Salleh and Mazuki faltered in the third end and managed just 37 points, shooting one 8 and 9, as the Indians snatched a two-point lead with a 39.

Maintaining their consistency, Jyothi and Deotale wrapped it up with another 39 in the final end.

However, there was disappointment in the recurve mixed pair section as the 11th seeded duo of Atanu Das and debutant Bhajan Kaur were eliminated in the first round by a lower-seeded Denmark 3-5 (37-36, 34-35, 35-35, 34-36).

# Odisha FC target final berth

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Manjeri, April 21:** Odisha FC and NorthEast United FC (NEUFC) will cross swords in the second semifinal of the Super Cup football tournament here Saturday, aiming to make the title clash after an impressive outing in the group stage.

Odisha qualified for the semifinals as Group B winners with seven points. Odisha head coach Clifford Miranda was delighted with his team's performances.

Star striker Diego Mauricio, who won the ISL Golden Boot this season, scored two and assisted two in the group stage, and Miranda is well aware of his indispensability to Odisha.

The Bhubaneswar outfit did the double over NEUFC in the ISL this season, but the circumstances are quite different in the Super Cup given how Floyd Pinto's side have

surprised everyone with their final four qualification.

Wilmar Jordán was the talk of the town after scoring four goals in NEUFC's 6-3 success over Churchill Brothers Wednesday. NEUFC head coach Pinto was all praise for the Colombian and is eager to see even more from him Saturday.

NorthEast United had nothing to

lose coming into the Super Cup on the back of a last-placed finish in the ISL. They got off to a poor start with a 2-4 defeat at the hands of Chennaiyin FC but showed great fighting spirit to stun Mumbai City FC 2-1 before thrashing Churchill 6-3. NorthEast's better head-to-head record over Mumbai City booked them a historic semifinal spot.

# Sevilla top Man Utd, to face Juventus

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**London, April 21:** Six-time champions Sevilla eliminated Manchester United from the Europa League after a 3-0 victory in the second leg of their quarterfinal.

United had beaten Barcelona and Real Betis earlier in Europe's second-tier competition but couldn't keep up with Sevilla — currently 13th in the Spanish league — at the Ramón Sánchez-Pizjuán Stadium.

Forward Youssef En-Nesyri scored twice and Sevilla advanced to the semifinals 5-2 on aggregate after last week's 2-2 draw in the first leg at Old Trafford.

Under pressure, United defender Harry Maguire lost the ball outside the area and En-Nesyri scored on a low left-footed shot into the corner past goalkeeper David de Gea in the eighth minute. Defender Loïc Badé headed home two minutes into the second half and En-Nesyri made it 3-0 late on after De Gea's blunder.

The Spaniards also eliminated United in the semifinals of the same competition in 2020. Sevilla will face Juventus in the last four following the Italian team's 1-1



TWO SIDES OF EMOTION: Sevilla players celebrate a goal, while Manchester United players (inset) look dejected during their match, Thursday

draw at Sporting in Lisbon for a 2-1 aggregate victory.

Juventus took a 1-0 lead to Lisbon and advanced with a 1-1 draw. France midfielder Adrien Rabiot put the visitors ahead early after he netted when Sporting failed to clear a corner kick.

Marcus Edwards equalized from the penalty spot in the 20th. Sporting knocked out English Premier League leader Arsenal in the previous round.

It was the second celebration for Juventus Thursday. The storied Italian team had a 15-point penalty suspended and jumped up to third in Serie A.

In the Italian capital, Roma forward Paulo Dybala scored in the 89th minute against Feyenoord, and Stephan El Shaarawy and captain Lorenzo Pellegrini scored in extra time for the Italian team to win 4-1 and advance to the semifinals on a 4-2 aggregate score.

## Sachin, Virat, Sindhu lose Twitter blue ticks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 21:** Top India sports stars, including the legendary Sachin Tendulkar, Virat Kohli and double Olympic medalist shuttler PV Sindhu, have lost the blue checkmarks that helped verify their identity on the micro-blogging site Twitter.

The legacy blue checkmarks were previously granted to journalists, public officials, and celebrities for free as a measure against impersonation and spam on the social media platform.

Twitter, which was taken over by business magnate and Tesla CEO Elon Musk last year, however, removed the blue ticks from accounts that don't pay a monthly subscription for the service Thursday.

MS Dhoni, Rohit Sharma, Saina Nehwal, Neeraj Chopra, Bajrang Punia, Vinesh Phogat, Nikhat Zareen, Sania Mirza, Sunil Chhetri, PR Sreejesh were among a plethora of Indian sporting icons who have lost their blue ticks. Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal, Cristiano Ronaldo and Kylian Mbappe and Stephen Curry are also no longer "verified" on the social media platform.