



INNER FEAR

Actor Radhika Apte has opened up about the reason that makes her scare as a freelance actor

LEISURE P2



SUDAN'S STRUGGLE SPIRALS

Extreme violence in Sudan has resulted in the deaths of at least 420 people and injury to 3,700 people

INTERNATIONAL P10



MI FACE GT TODAY

Mumbai Indians look to address their poor death over bowling when they take on a resurgent Gujarat Titans

SPORTS P12

SHORT TAKES

MASKS MUST FOR HEALTH WORKERS

Bhubaneswar: The state government Monday decided to make use of masks mandatory in all healthcare institutions in state in the wake of a surge in Covid-19 cases. As per a fresh order from the Public Health Directorate, masks have been made mandatory for all healthcare providers during duty hours, all officials and others present in the meetings, during congregation of people particularly in closed rooms, persons providing clinical/laboratory and other support services in the hospital setting. Wearing masks has also been made compulsory for people visiting areas with high possibility transmission. The daily Covid-19 cases tally Sunday breached the 500-mark in Odisha.

LOVERS COMMIT SUICIDE IN JAJPUR

Jajpur: Two young lovers died by suicide in Jajpur district, police said Monday. According to police, 23-year-old Pravat Kumar Lenka of Birijanga village and 21-year-old Namita Sahu of Bayree village were in love with each other for the past couple of years. Due to alleged pressure from the family, the woman stopped talking with her lover on the phone. As a result, Pravat was upset and killed himself by consuming poison at his residence Saturday night. A day after her lover died, Namita allegedly died by suicide by hanging herself in her residence Sunday night, police said.



CULTURE ON DISPLAY: Artists perform the famous 'Medha Dance' of Puri on the second day of 3rd G20 Education Working Group Meeting held at CSIR-IMMT, in Bhubaneswar, Monday (Report on P3)

Cab nod to 15 projects

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 24: The state Cabinet headed by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik approved a total of 15 proposals, Monday, including implementation of Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme with an outlay of ₹6,284 crore as many parts of the rural areas are facing power outages this summer season.

The main objective of the scheme is to improve the quality, reliability of power supply along with reduction of aggregate technical and commercial (AT&C) loss and the gap between average cost of supply (ACS) and average realisable revenue (ARR), said Chief Secretary PK Jena.

The total outlay of the scheme is ₹6,284 crore which includes state government's share of ₹2,342 crore. There is a provision of ₹428 crore for smart metering, ₹4,248 crore for disaster resilient infrastructure and ₹1,509 crore for system strengthening under the scheme. The projects will be executed in three years and will be completed by 2026, he said.

The Cabinet has also decided to extend the Biju Setu Yojana (BSY) upto 2025-26 with an additional outlay of ₹3,597.22 crore.

During 2021-22 the scheme was approved to be implemented for a period of three years from 2021-22 to 2023-24 with an outlay of ₹5,182.00 crore for execution of 946 bridges (396 ongoing and 550 new), he said.

Considering the necessity of the bridges in rural areas for improving communication and thereby socio-economic conditions of the people residing in rural areas, in public interest, the Cabinet has now approved to take up 866 new bridges in addition to completion of ongoing bridges with an additional outlay of ₹3,597.22 crore.

CABINET DECISION

- State to implement scheme to strengthen power supply network with an outlay of ₹6,284 crore
- The Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme will be implemented in three years
- BSY will be extended up to 2025-26 with an additional outlay of ₹3,597 crore
- Cuttack Ring Road will be upgraded to 6-lane standard

The state Cabinet has also approved the tender for improvement of Cuttack Ring Road to 6-lane standard from Khannagar to Linkroad under state sector-Road Development Programme. This road project with a length of 2.1 km will provide better connectivity and reduce traffic congestion, Jena said.

Now the Cabinet has approved the tender of ₹121.65 crore for execution of the above work, which is targeted to be completed within 24 months.

The Cabinet led by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has also approved promulgation of ordinance for amendment of the Odisha State Commission for Backward Classes (OSCBC) Act, 1993 to include 22 communities in the SEBC list of Odisha.

Besides, the state government has also enhanced subsidy under the Odisha Electric Vehicle Policy, 2021. This policy has been implemented since September 2021. Based on the experience and best practices across the country, it is decided to enhance the subsidy for purchase of new EV.

This will make the policy more progressive and help the state to achieve the desired objectives and attract the public to purchase electric vehicles, the Chief Secretary added. **More P3**

2 held with leopard hide in Kandhamal

BHUBANESWAR: Two persons were arrested with a leopard skin in Kandhamal district, police said Monday. Acting on a tip-off, the Special Task Force of Odisha Police raided Khajuripada Sunday evening and arrested the two accused, they said. A leopard skin and other incriminating materials were found with them. Police said they were planning to sell the skin at ₹5 lakh. It will be sent to the Wildlife Institute of India in Dehradun for biological examination, they said, adding that an investigation was underway.

Wrestlers move SC for FIR against WFI chief

Delhi Police has reportedly sought a report from the probe committee that was established by the Sports Ministry in response to the complaints

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 24: Wrestler Vinesh Phogat and other protesting wrestlers have moved the Supreme Court seeking a direction for registration of an FIR against Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh.

As senior advocate Narendra Hooda mentioned the plea before a bench headed by Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud Monday, the Chief Justice asked Hooda to mention the matter again Tuesday as his petition was not on the list of mentioning matters.

According to the plea, Phogat and other wrestlers have cited an inordinate delay in registration of an FIR by Delhi Police against the WFI chief and urged the apex court to issue a direction to police to lodge a case against him. Counsel familiar with the development said the matter will be mentioned again for early hearing in the Supreme Court Tuesday.

Amid the ongoing protests by wrestlers against Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, the Delhi Police has reportedly sought a report from



the probe committee that was established by the Sports Ministry in response to the complaints.

"We have received seven complaints and are currently conducting an inquiry into all of them. We will register an FIR once concrete evidence is obtained. In the course of our inquiry, we have requested a report from the Sports Ministry's probe committee that was established to investigate the accusations of sexual harassment made against the WFI chief," said a senior police official.

On Sunday, Olympian wrestlers Bajrang Punia, Sakshi Malik, Phogat and other top Indian grapplers, restarted their protest against the WFI chief in Jantar Mantar in central Delhi.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



You vacated your house. You could've stayed with us, but we've been waiting for a house for the past 75 years

MARKET WATCH

| INDEX | VAIATION |
|--------|-------------------|
| SENSEX | 60431.84 ↓ 250.86 |
| NIFTY | 17770.90 ↓ 85.60 |
| DOLLAR | 82.55 ↓ ₹0.09 |
| EURO | 88.48 ↑ ₹0.40 |
| GOLD | ₹56,657 ↓ ₹84 |
| SILVER | ₹66,312 ↓ ₹352 |

WEATHER

| | BHUB | CTK |
|----------|--------|--------|
| MAX | 35.2°C | 35.0°C |
| MIN | 23.5°C | 23.0°C |
| Humidity | 78% | 85% |
| Rainfall | Nil | Nil |

Forecast: Light to moderate rain

MP seeks 'alternate site' for cheetahs

SOME EXPERTS HAD RAISED DOUBT OVER THE SPACE SHORTAGE AT KUNO NATIONAL PARK LIKELY TO AFFECT THE CHEETAH REINTRODUCTION PROJECT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal, April 24: The Madhya Pradesh Forest department has asked the Centre for an alternate site for cheetahs currently introduced at the Kuno National Park, which has seen the death of two of the felines in less than a month, with officials citing lack of logistical support and space.

A senior state forest official on condition of anonymity said they do not have enough logistical support for the upkeep for the cheetahs, brought in two batches of 8 and 12 felines from Namibia and South Africa respec-



tively since September last year. "We need nine staffers to keep an eye on one cheetah round-the-clock. We don't have enough hands," the official told PTI on condition of anonymity

Asked about the space shortage, the official said it was secondary and added that "not just space, we need a lot of logistics."

Notably, before the cheetahs were imported, some experts had raised doubt over the space shortage likely to affect the cheetah reintroduction project at the Kuno National Park (KNP), which has a core area of 748 sq km and buffer zone of 487 sq km.

On Sunday, the KNP witnessed a second cheetah fatality in less than a month as a six-year-old male feline named Uday, translocated from South Africa in February, died. **Contd...P4**

DSPL - 22

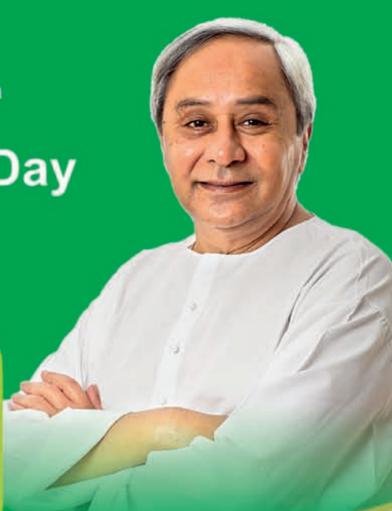

 Government of Odisha

World Malaria Day

25th April 2023

"Malaria free Odisha by 2030 is our aim. I appeal to all to use Mosquito net and keep environment clean to prevent mosquito breeding"

(Naveen Patnaik)
Chief Minister, Odisha



Our achievements in Malaria reduction in the State

- Odisha's innovative programme "DAMaN" undertook special strategies to cover hard-to-reach areas for Malaria Control.
- 1.56 crore Long Lasting Insecticidal Nets have been distributed in the State in 2019-2021.
- As a result of the above initiatives, Odisha achieved 95% decline in Malaria during the period 2016 - 2022, which is highest in the country and also lauded by the WHO.

Healthy Odisha
Happy Odisha

Health & Family Welfare Department

facebook.com/HFWOdisha
 @HFWOdisha
 http://www.health.odisha.gov.in

leisure



OLSEN FINDS IT ABSURD DOING HER OWN STUNTS

Actress Elizabeth Olsen complained about doing her own stunts and said that there are 'stunt doubles' for a reason. On The Late Show, she shared that she has found doing most of her stunts in the Marvel Cinematic Universe 'ridiculous', reports *hollywoodreporter.com*.

KIDMAN ASSUMED FALLON WAS GAY

Nicole Kidman was a guest in *The Tonight Show* starring Jimmy Fallon, twice, in 2015 and 2016. She tried to spice things up with him, but it went down in vain and she was convinced that Jimmy was gay. The host started blushing after knowing the lost opportunity to date her.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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

ARIES
Today, you will appreciate beautiful things and exotic artefacts. You may even seriously think of pursuing a business related to such commodities. However, you may not be able to make up your mind, says Ganesh. However, you will decide to keep an open mind about it.

TAURUS
You may find it hard to stop the impending outflow of cash while shopping today, says Ganesh. You aren't the one to be dominated and God help anyone who tries to dictate terms to you today. You may end up spending a small fortune, more than lavish to be precise, on the opposite sex today.

GEMINI
Today, you are likely to get encouragement and support for your endeavours from all quarters. You have a gift of gab and your ability to dispel tension with even the simplest of your remarks will be put to test. Still, you will rise to the occasion and prove your mettle.

CANCER
If you are a stockbroker, you may feel that things are not going too well for you. Today, you may regret being a stockbroker. Manufacturers must delay the launch of a new product. However, after a waiting game, you may go on to launch the product with a fanfare. Ganesh wishes you a good luck.

LEO
Everyone wants to be different. But little do they realise that they already are unique, says Ganesh. Today, you may meet a lot of such different people at work, some of whom may even test your patience. Always remember that working in a team means balancing a variety of egos and opinions.

VIRGO
Take time off all by yourself and introspect today, says Ganesh. Office cubicle looks set to be a war front and pay due attention there, lest things turn to be more difficult, advises Ganesh. New love may just blossom today, and you may even enjoy a nice quiet evening with friends.

LIBRA
Being in charge was never easy, but it's not for nothing that leaders are made of sterner stuff. As a person in charge, you are expected to give directions in a manner that gets the best efforts out of your juniors.

SCORPIO
You shall be completely immersed in your routine today. It's the same old humbug of a day for you, says Ganesh. But this exhausting day may transform into an exciting evening - so be prepared to get surprised.

SAGITTARIUS
Cupid is hunting and you are the game today. Cupid's arrows will have you adrift on the ocean of love and turbulent emotions. Your rescue is imminent, when a member of the opposite sex answers your SOS calls. But use your discretion as to which boat you hitch a ride back home, says Ganesh.

CAPRICORN
It's a lucky day for your sweetheart! Wonder why it's written in your horoscope? You will pamper him/her to the hilt, take them out on a shopping spree and buy whatever they lay their eyes on, even if it's way beyond reasonable, says Ganesh. You will go overboard to make your love feel that nothing else matters, and although this lavish outing will serve the purpose, you may later regret not keeping a count of your cash.

AQUARIUS
You find solace in travel today. But if you plan to include others, beware, as you may end up doing all their dirty work too. But, you will find fulfillment even in that, which, says Ganesh, is your strong point. You know how to turn a weakness into strength.

PISCES
Today just might be the day when you invent a better mousetrap. However, your ideas have a propensity to wane and wax at the same speed, says Ganesh. Hence, keep a notebook handy to jot down all your earth-shattering revolutionary ideas.

Radhika shares her inner fear

Mumbai: Actor Radhika Apte says it's difficult to find characters that inspire her and that's one of the reasons why she chooses to do limited work. "It is difficult now to find good script as everyone is making everything so fast, there are lots of other parameters that have to fit in. It is difficult to find roles that you just wholeheartedly go and feel this is so well crafted," Apte said in an interview.

Then, there are moments when she worries about turning down a role because she wonders if the projects will keep coming. "I just say, 'I don't feel like doing the part right now'. It is hard to reject because sometimes you don't have anything else and you feel, 'Will I get work?' As a freelance actor, you are constantly thinking about your next project, it can be scary but it is ok."

Known for films such as *Badlapur*, *Phobia*, *Anhadhun*, and *Monica*, *O My Darling*, Apte said her role in *Mrs Undercover* is a departure from the intense roles she is known for.

The actor said she enjoyed doing stunts for the ZEE5 film, directed by debutante Anushree Mehta.

Shehnaaz reveals secrets behind her transformation

Mumbai: Shehnaaz Gill, who has made her Hindi film debut with Salman Khan's *Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan*, says she was driven to put her best foot forward in the Mumbai entertainment industry after gaining popularity through the TV show.

Known for Punjabi movies such as *Kala Shah Kala* and *Honsla Rakh*, the actor said she was body-shamed during her stint on *Bigg Boss* and that motivated her to work on her personality.

"I changed myself, worked on myself. When people gave me good advice, I followed it and improved. I lost weight as I would hear a lot of comments on *Bigg Boss* about being fat and was body-shamed... Then I changed my style as people would think I could only wear salwar-suit. I broke all these preconceived notions and would continue to do so moving forward," Gill revealed.

"Besides, Sir would motivate me saying, 'You can go ahead, you have potential, work on yourself...' He always makes me feel comfortable. He's always supported me. I'm very fortunate that I got to work with sir," she further shared talking about Salman Khan's role in her transformation.



Samantha trolled for faking US accent

Mumbai: Actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu was recently in London to attend the London premiere of the Prime Video web series *Citadel*. There, she interacted with the press with actor Varun Dhawan, her co-star from the Indian adaptation of *Citadel*, where a clip featuring Samantha has gone viral on social media. Her 'Western accent' has earned mixed responses from people.

In the clip, Samantha is officially introducing herself and talking about being part of the Indian version of *Citadel* and how she's excited to be joining such a big spy universe. Reacting to the video shared on Twitter, some users asked why she needed to change her accent. A netizen wrote, "Someone remind her; she's from Kerala."

"Why celebs like #NTR and #Samantha want to make western accents look cool. We can launch rockets with our own Indian accent," another user added. A user came in support and said, "Not defending Sam here, but in the States or in Western countries, they do make fun of our Indian accent, so that it became a stereotypical joke and a racist thing."

On the work front, her latest release, *Shaakuntalam*, is still premiering in theatres, with a lukewarm response from the audience.



'Hurting religious sentiments' Badshah tenders apology

Mumbai: Popular Punjabi singer-rapper Badshah has come out with an apology on social media after drawing flak for mentioning Lord Shiva's name in his latest track, *Sanak*. Badshah, whose real name is Aditya Prateek Singh Sisodia, took to Instagram, where he posted a note and apologised. The track had received backlash for using a deity's name along with objectionable words.

Badshah mentioned that he has already taken 'proactive measures' to change some words and would never cause offence to anyone willingly or unknowingly.

He wrote in the note: "It has been brought to my attention that one of my recent releases, *Sanak*, sadly seems to have hurt the sentiments of some people. I would never willingly or unknowingly cause offence to anyone's sentiments."

He further added, "I bring my artistic creations and musical compositions to you, my fans, with utmost sincerity and passion. In light of this recent development, I have taken proactive measures to change some parts of the song in this new version on all digital platforms to further avoid hurting anyone."

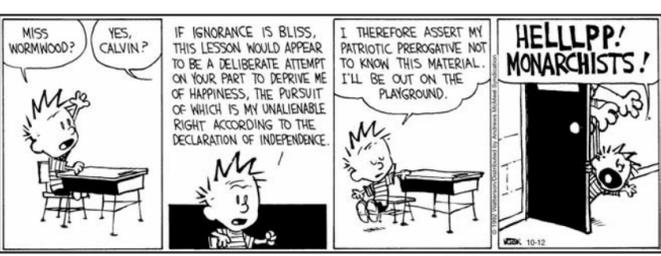
He added that the replacement process takes a few days before the changes reflect on all platforms.



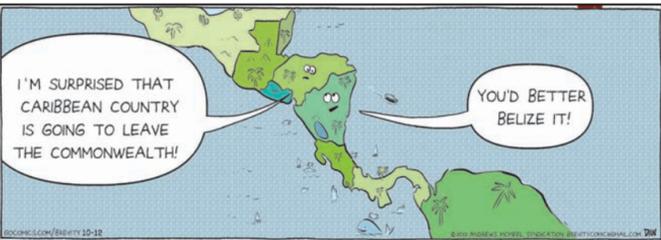
PEANUTS



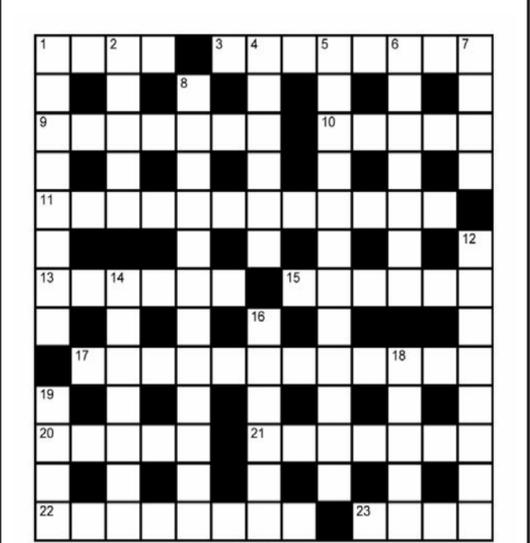
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



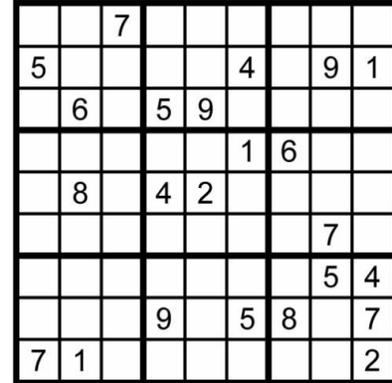
FUN post CROSSWORD



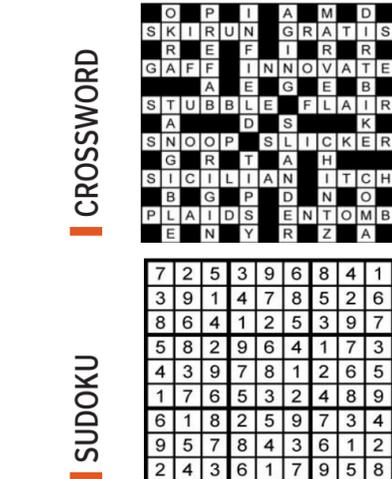
- Across**
- 1 Airport feature
 - 3 Automobile part (3,5)
 - 9 Anthropology
 - 10 Plus
 - 11 You can't fool her (6,6)
 - 13 Refinement
 - 15 Knitted sock
 - 17 Smoke shop items (4,8)
 - 20 Blood carriers
 - 21 Inner circle
 - 22 Begrudged
 - 23 Norse thunder god
 - 6 Demolish
 - 7 After curfew
 - 8 Deterrent example (6,6)
 - 12 Clothing store aisle
 - 14 Medical buildings
 - 16 Platitude
 - 18 Third rock from the sun
 - 19 Profess

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS

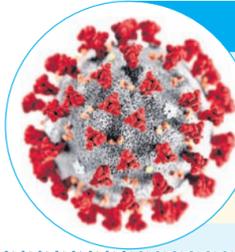


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown

INFRA BOOST

Puri SP Kanwar Vishal Singh inaugurated the pre-paid auto-rickshaw counter at the bus stand in the Holy city, Monday



COVID-19 TRACKER

| | INFECTED | RECOVERED | DEAD |
|--------|--------------|--------------|-----------|
| World | 68,65,53,714 | 65,91,00,556 | 68,60,023 |
| India | 4,48,98,893 | 4,43,01,865 | 5,31,345 |
| Odisha | 13,36,304 | 13,26,915 | 9,204 |

OSSC cancels exam for accountant

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, April 24: Odisha Staff Selection Commission (OSSC) Monday cancelled the preliminary examination held Sunday for the post of 'Accountant' under Housing and Urban Development (H&UD) department citing errors in Odia version of the question papers.

In a notification, the commission said, "The OSSC has decided to cancel the preliminary examination (both English and Odia versions) for accountant under the H&UD department (Advertisement No. IIE-153/2022-7257/OSSC, Date-22.12.2022) held on April 23."

It added that the commission regrets the inconvenience caused to the applicants. And that fresh date for preliminary examination would be announced soon.

Odisha to sponsor hockey teams till 2033

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 24: The state Cabinet led by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Monday approved extension of sponsorship agreement of both men and women Indian national hockey teams (senior and junior) by another 10 years—from 2023 to 2033.

Odisha has been the official sponsor of both the men and women national hockey teams since 2018. "This support will be a significant step towards the growth and development of hockey in India," Chief Secretary Pradeep Kumar Jena said.

Earlier, state PSU Odisha Mining Corporation (OMC) Limited had entered into an agreement with Hockey India for sponsorship of the Indian hockey teams for five years—from 2018 to 2023.

On a request from the Hockey India president, OMC had sought approval of the state government



OMC will provide ₹434.12cr to Hockey India for extension of sponsorship by 10 years

for extension of the agreement and the Cabinet approved it, Jena said. OMC has committed to sponsor the teams from February 1, 2023 to January 31, 2033, and will release ₹434.12 crore (excluding taxes) to Hockey India during this period.

Jena said the state government has been a key promoter of hockey, and Odisha's partnership with Hockey India has played a crucial role in the revival of the sport in the country.

The achievements by both the teams at the Tokyo Olympics, where the men's team won a bronze after 41 years and the women's

team reached the semi-finals for the first time have been significant realisations, the Chief Secretary pointed out.

With this decision, the government aims at further boosting the sport and attracting more young players towards it, which will help create a strong talent base in the state, he added.

The Chief Secretary said the state government has transferred the administration of minor minerals from the Revenue and Disaster Management department to the Steel and Mines department.

The Cabinet has approved a pro-

posal for amendment to Odisha Minor Minerals Concession Rules, 2016 (OMMC Rules, 2016) and Odisha Specified Minor Minerals Auction Rules, 2019 (OSMMA Rules, 2019), he said.

"To accommodate the transfer process and implementation of a few measures like e-Auction, prevention of illegal mining, theft of minor minerals, OMMC Rules, 2016 are being amended after approval by the Cabinet," Jena said.

He said after the first phase of e-Auction pertaining to Specified Minor Minerals, the state government has decided to amend OSMMA Rules, 2019 in a bid to bring more transparency in the auction process.

Moreover, the Cabinet has approved the proposals for restructuring of Odisha Forest Service (OFS) cadre, Odisha Excise Service Recruitment Rules, modification to General Provident Fund (Orissa) Rules, 1938.

SC breather for gangster Susanta Dhalasamanta

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, April 24: The Supreme Court Monday granted bail to notorious gangster Susanta Dhalasamanta in an extortion case of 2016.

While granting bail, a two-judge Bench of Justices KM Joseph and BV Nagarathna adjourned the hearing in another petition seeking bail in a murder case to two weeks.

Susanta is in custody on charges of multiple offences.

Advocate Madhusmita Bora, appearing for Susanta, submitted in the SC that her client has already spent seven years in custody, the maximum sentence awarded in an extortion case.

The apex court took the argument on record and granted bail to Susanta.



Notably, Chauliaganj police in Cuttack registered a case against Susanta on charges of collecting huge amount of money by way of extortion and tender fixing and sand quarries' lease through his associates. He was taken into custody March 10, 2016.

Earlier, Susanta had approached the Orissa High Court for bail in the matter. The HC, however, had rejected his plea August 11 last year. Later, he moved the SC.

Interest subvention of ₹441.76 crore disbursed

WITH THE SECOND PHASE OF DISBURSEMENT MONDAY, THE FARMERS IN THE STATE HAVE SO FAR RECEIVED A TOTAL INTEREST REBATE OF ₹856.99 CRORE



AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 24: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Monday disbursed interest subvention of ₹441.76 crore on farm loans benefiting 35 lakh farmers in the state.

Patnaik disbursed the amount at a function held in Lok Seva Bhawan here.

Stating that nearly 60 per cent of credit is being given to farmers through cooperative bodies, Patnaik said the second phase amount was given against the loans given by all cooperative banks and 2,409 primary agricultural cooperative societies.

This was the second phase of farm loan subvention for financial year 2022-23. In the first phase,

farmers in Odisha do not have to pay any interest for crop loans up to ₹1 lakh. Out of 35 lakh farmers, 30 lakh are small and marginal farmers, an official release issued by the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said.

Noting that agriculture is the soul of Odisha's economy as well as the basis of development, Patnaik said: "The pilots of our new Odisha, strong Odisha are our farmers, mothers, and young women. So, I have always emphasised your empowerment."

He said a special budget has been made to empower the farmers in the state. Patnaik said interest-free agricultural loans up to ₹1 lakh are being given, while KALIA education scholarship is being provided for the welfare of the families engaged in farming.

The Chief Minister in his speech pointed out that Kiran Sahu, a farmer's son in Ganjam, received a scholarship to study at MKCG Medical College in Berhampur.

He claimed that Odisha is the first state in the country to provide interest-free loans to farmers and implement welfare schemes like KALIA. He said due to today's interest subvention, farmers will not have to pay a single rupee of interest.

Cooperation Minister Atanu Sabyasachi Nayak said that the state government is working with commitment for the uplift of the farmers in the state.

On the occasion, three beneficiaries—Reena Sethi, Nikunj Bihari Kaap, and Savita Samantray—explained how they are able to sustain their families through farming and business due to interest concession on major loans. They said many farmers' families have become self-reliant due to the interest rebate scheme.

FARMERS IN ODISHA DO NOT HAVE TO PAY ANY INTEREST FOR CROP LOANS UP TO ₹1 LAKH
KALIA EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP IS BEING PROVIDED FOR THE WELFARE OF THE FAMILIES ENGAGED IN FARMING
ODISHA IS THE FIRST STATE IN THE COUNTRY TO PROVIDE INTEREST-FREE LOANS TO FARMERS AND IMPLEMENT WELFARE SCHEMES LIKE KALIA, SAYS THE CM

an interest subvention of ₹415.17 crore had been given. With this, farmers in the state have so far received a total interest rebate of ₹856.99 crore, he claimed.

The Chief Minister said that



AT LORD'S SERVICE: 'Karatia' servitors saw a log for construction of chariots in Puri, Monday

OP PHOTO

BJD against NCST programme in bypoll-bound Jharsuguda

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 24: The ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) Monday urged the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of Odisha to disallow a BJP leader and member of the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) to hold official programmes

Cops detect Tudu's last message on social media

BHUBANESWAR: The law student who Sunday committed suicide by jumping off an apartment near Master Canteen here had posted his last message on social media bidding farewell to friends. The deceased, Aniraj Manas Tudu, was a student of National Law University Odisha (NLUO), Cuttack and a native of Mayurbhanj. Tudu's family resides at Ganganagar in Unit-VI area while he used to stay in the university hostel at Cuttack. Sunday evening, the residents of Chandrama apartment spotted the body of Tudu and informed police about the incident. Kharavel Nagar police reached the spot and sent the body for post-mortem. During examination of CCTV footage, the police Monday found Tudu jumping off the building. He also talked to his sister a few minutes before taking the extreme step.

in the bypoll-bound Jharsuguda Assembly segment.

In a petition to the CEO, the BJD leaders said that they understand that NCST member Anant Nayak in planning to hold programmes in Jharsuguda area where the Model Code of Conduct is in force for the May 10 by-

election.

A BJD delegation visited the CEO office and submitted a petition, saying that Nayak's meeting or programme would be a violation of the MCC imposed for the bypoll.

BJD officials pointed out Nayak has been a BJP leader in the past and

was elected as MP from Keonjhar.

Stating that Nayak is now holding a constitutional position as NCST member, the delegation said there is no justification for him to hold such a meeting in Jharsuguda, especially with the election model code of conduct in force.

India has exported phones worth \$11bn this year: Min

Union Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, and Electronics & Information Technology Rajeev Chandrasekhar inaugurates the 2nd day of Future of Work exhibition under G20 EdWG

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 24: Union Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, and Electronics & Information Technology Rajeev Chandrasekhar Monday said that the country has exported 'Made in India' Apple and Samsung phones to the tune of about \$11 billion this year alone.

The Union minister said this while inaugurating the second day of 'Future of Work' exhibition under third Education Working Group (EdWG) meeting here, Monday.

After the inaugural ceremony, the Union minister visited nearly 70 exhibitors and boosted their morale by appreciating their efforts.

Chandrasekhar also addressed the second precursor event of third EdWG Meeting, a seminar on transforming logistics for coastal economies with focus on Sustainability at IMMT Auditorium in Bhubaneswar. Speaking on the occasion, he said that it is heartening to see so many students have become part of a critical discussion about Future of Work and skilling, and they are the most important beneficiary in any conversation. The conference focusing on intersection of logistics, coastal economies and sustainability is an important topic and integral in the context of skilling in coastal economies. "This is an interesting time for the world, representing opportunities and challenges and in this context India has become the fastest growing nation



Union MoS for Skill Development & Entrepreneurship and E&IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar (2nd from R) at the event in Bhubaneswar, Monday

OP PHOTO

of the world," the minister said. "The world is rapidly looking at resilient logistics and trusted supply chains, moving away from risk and moving to trusted resilient economy. With this, the focus and discussion on logistics is important in coastal states like Odisha," Chandrasekhar added.

In 2014, 82 per cent of cellphones consumed in India were imported, but in 2022, almost 100 per cent mobile phones consumed in India were manufactured in India. In 2014, India used to export almost zero mobile phones and this year alone, India has exported Apple and Samsung phones made in India to the tune of about \$11 billion, said the minister.

"For many decades, one of the arguments has been that India did

not have a viable market and capacity to become a global manufacturing hub as logistics cost of doing business in India was not competitive. However, today global majors are manufacturing semi-conductors, electronic goods, mobiles and many more products in India. The underline logistics ecosystem has become more efficient," he added.

He further stated that the Prime Minister has focused on Gati Shakti, national master plan for multi-modal connectivity, essential to create modern logistics layer, making India emerge as a global hub for blue economy products, food, and agriculture.

"Logistics is going to be an exciting area and full of opportunities for our youths," said the MoS.

Time to deliver zero malaria: WHO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 24: On the eve of World Malaria Day, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has urged the countries affected by the vector-borne disease globally to accelerate the reach of high-impact tools and strategies to prevent, detect and treat malaria, with a focus on reaching the most vulnerable, ensuring that no person is left behind.

In the shadow of Covid-19 crisis, the world is not on track to reach the two critical targets of the WHO Global Technical Strategy (GTS) for malaria 2016-2030: Reducing global case incidence and mortality by 90 per cent or more by 2030, based on 2015 levels. Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh, World Health Organisation (WHO) Regional Director for South-East Asia, said.

In 2021, an estimated 6,19,000 people globally died of malaria as compared to 6,25,000 in 2020. There were an estimated 247 million new

cases of malaria, compared to 245 million in 2020, Singh said. By the end of 2020, the South-East Asia Region was the only WHO region to achieve a 40 per cent reduction in malaria case incidence and mortality compared to 2015, the first GTS milestone, she stated.

Amid the Covid-19 response, the Maldives and Sri Lanka have maintained their malaria-free status, and five countries of the region—Bhutan, DPR Korea, Nepal, Thailand and Timor-Leste—are among 25 countries and one territory globally identified as having the potential to eliminate malaria by 2025.

In 2022, health ministers from across the region unanimously endorsed a statement on 'Renewed Commitment for Malaria Elimination', emphasising the urgent need to scale up proven implementation strategies, while

also adopting innovative strategies and tools.

"Today, the region is at a crossroads. Since 2010, overall funding for malaria prevention and control in the region has decreased by 36 per cent, mostly on account of flagging global support," Singh said. Reductions in the efficacy of artemisinin-based combination therapies, especially in the Greater Mekong Subregion, as well as increased vector resistance to pyrethroids, risk increased morbidity, mortality and spread. In several countries, cross-border transmission continues to be a major impediment to achieving the elimination targets. "Across the region, gaps in services persist: In 2021, there were an estimated 3,85,000 more cases in the Region compared to 2020," Singh said. "WHO is calling for action in several key areas. First, strengthening capacity at the sub-national

level, with a focus on identifying clear and actionable goals, increasing resource allocations, and empowering local decision-makers," she said. Second, shifting power to the peripheries, with a focus on increasing cross-border collaboration, especially in high-burden countries neighbouring nations on the verge of elimination, she said. Third, ensuring adequate and sustained financing for malaria programmes, recognising that transitions in funding must be anticipated, planned for and implemented gradually, based on a time-bound strategy, the WHO regional director said. Fourth, transforming surveillance into a core malaria intervention, ensuring that last-mile barriers are identified and overcome. And fifth, accelerating high-impact innovations, not just in diagnostics and treatments, but also in service delivery, she said.

WORLD MALARIA DAY





UP IN ARMS: Members of Village Resource Person Association staged a sit-in protest at PMG in Bhubaneswar seeking fulfillment of their various demands, Monday

Preparations begin for Metro rail

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 24: A City Coordination Committee meeting was conducted by Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) Tuesday to discuss the many preparatory and planning works related to the proposed metro set to connect Cuttack with Odisha's administrative capital.

The recently formed City Coordination Committee (CCC) specifically focuses on instilling best practices and ensuring integration between various departments, city agencies, working towards making the capital more liveable.

The proposed Metro's draft alignment and its relationship with existing city functions and major proposed activities were discussed during the meeting.

Odisha Rail Infrastructure



Development Ltd (ORIDL), a joint venture of state government and Ministry of Railways) director of operations made a presentation which detailed aspects of metro alignment and the prudent need of multi-agency integration.

Presided by BDA vice chairman Balwant Singh the meeting provided brief information on the preparation of DPR by ORIDL for

which Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) has been appointed. Availability of necessary data, transport and mobility trends in the city proposed projects and developmental works were also discussed during the meeting.

"A master plan will also be prepared to for a metro network covering other areas of Bhubaneswar, Khurda, Cuttack and Puri. Appearing to be a herculean task to prepare the DPR in this short span, the authorities have taken it as a challenge keeping in mind the benchmarks of best of the metro systems globally," said an BDA official.

MD, IDCO, Commissioner, BMC and additional commissioner police, were also present in the meeting and assured complete support and cooperation to the ORIDL to ensure world-class infrastructure development.

New office-bearers for Odisha Congress

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 24: The Congress Monday appointed new office-bearers for the Odisha unit of the party, including five senior vice presidents, 12 vice presidents, 39 general secretaries and 61 secretaries.

The new appointees will work under Odisha Congress chief Sarat Pattanayak. The party president also formed a 67-member executive committee for the Odisha Congress. The appointments have been made keeping in view the next year's assembly election in the state.

"The Congress President has approved the proposal for the appointment of office bearers, and the constitution of Executive

Committee and Media Department of the Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee with immediate effect," a party statement said.

Among the senior vice presidents appointed are Ganeswar Behera, Tara Prasad Bahinipati, Debasish Pattanaik, Sibananda Ray and Saraswati Hembaram.

The newly-appointed vice presidents include Mamata Madhi, Adhiraj Mohan Panigrahi, Rajendra Chhatria, Bibhuti Mishra, C S Rajan Ekka, Janaki Ballav Pattanaik, Kishore Jena, Pratima Malik, Shuvendu Mohanty, Biswa Bhushan Das, Rajat Kumar Choudhury and Nakula Naik. The party has also appointed Santosh Singh Saluja as the treasurer of Odisha Congress.

ARCHANA CASE Couple's phones sent to CFSL

FIVE DEVICES BELONGING TO ARCHANA NAG AND HER HUSBAND HAVE BEEN SENT TO THE CENTRAL FORENSIC SCIENCE LABORATORY IN HYDERABAD TO EXTRACT DATA

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 24: The Commissionerate Police has sent the mobile devices of lady black-mailer Archana Nag and her husband Jagabandhu Chand to the Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL) in Hyderabad for examination in the honey trap case. As many as five phones belonging to the couple were sent by the Khandagiri police to CFSL Friday.

"We have sent five mobile phones of Archana and Jagabandhu to CFSL for data extraction. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) had earlier written a letter instructing to send three of the mobile devices (two of Archana and one belonging to her husband) to the Central Laboratory as the State Forensic Sciences Laboratory at



Rasulgarh didn't have the requisite advanced equipment to extract data from high-end mobile devices," informed a senior official of the Commissionerate Police.

On the other hand, Archana and Jagabandhu Monday appeared before the court through virtual mode in connection with the money laundering case filed by the ED. However, the lady blackmailer's former aide, Shradhanjali Behera, again failed to appear in the court.

Sources claimed that Shradhanjali's lawyer reportedly sought more time from court for appearance of his client which the court later denied.

Notably, Archana and her hus-

band were granted conditional bail by the Orissa High Court in a case registered at the Nayapalli police station based on the allegations of cine producer Akshaya Parija.

As per sources, the couple would have to wait for some time to get out of jail as they are yet to receive bail in other cases.

Notably, the Khandagiri police had arrested Archana over allegations of Shradhanjali October 7 last year. She was again arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) December 13 in the honey trap case. Her husband, Jagabandhu, was arrested from their residence at Satya Vihar by Khandagiri police October 21, 2022.

Continued from P1

MP seeks 'alternate site' for cheetahs

The exact cause of the feline's death is not identified yet, an official earlier said.

The incident is seen as a major setback for the ambitious 'Project Cheetah' under which 20 felines were translocated to KNP in Sheopur district from Namibia and South Africa in separate batches in September 2022 and February this year. One of the eight Namibian cheetahs, Sasha, aged more than four-and-a-half-years, died of a kidney ailment at KNP March 27. Another cheetah, named Siyaya, recently gave birth to four cubs in KNP.

Besides, cheetah Oban, now renamed Pavan, has strayed out of the KNP multiple times. MP Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (Wildlife) JS Chauhan told PTI that his department has written a letter to the National Tiger Conservation (NTCA), overseeing the world's fastest animal's re-introduction project in India, requesting for an alternate place for the cheetahs. "We wrote the letter a couple of days ago," he said.

The letter has sought that the Centre takes a decision on the alternate site, as per forest officials. "If we start developing our sites like the Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary or the Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary in MP as alternate sites, it will take two years and three years respectively," an official said.

Months before the cheetahs were brought to India, a risk management plan was drafted stating a "contingency plan" is in the process of being put in place for dealing with serial escapees. Permissions are being obtained for the release of these animals into the Mukundara Hills Tiger Reserve (in Rajasthan).

"This protected area has an 80 km fence enclosure, sufficiently stocked with game (place with herbivores population), to hold serial escapees. This enclosure is free of tigers, but does support a low density of leopards, wolves and striped hyenas," it said. It can be considered a guaranteed success site for the establishment of a wild cheetah population and will hopefully provide surplus cheetahs for relocation to other protected areas in India in

near future, it stated.

The MP forest officials said it is not a matter about two states.

"The Centre has a major role to play. We need a note from the Centre to proceed. We desperately need intervention from the Centre. If they don't take the decision, it will be detrimental to the interest of the cheetah project," a state forest official said. "We can't release all the 18 cheetahs into the wild in KNP," the official opined.

According to some wildlife experts, a cheetah needs 100 sq km area for its movement.

But, KNP director Uttam Sharma said, "Nobody exactly knows how much space a cheetah needs given the fact that these felines became extinct here seven decades ago. In fact, we are learning about them after their translocation from Namibia and South Africa."

Bhopal-based journalist Deshdeep Saxena, who writes on wildlife and environment, said the international community of cheetah experts and biologists has always questioned this project for its "unscientific approach".

There are issues of lack of space and prey for the African cheetahs in KNP, he claimed. All the 12 cheetahs brought from South Africa were under stress as they were captured nine months ago for translocation and were being confined to small enclosures, he further claimed. They need to be released into the wild, said Saxena, who has written a book on tigers. "In fact, the officials and ground staff linked to the project are also under stress because of the hype surrounding it," he added.

He said the issue of cheetahs straying out of the KNP has surfaced when just four of the felines have so far been released into the wild. What will happen when 14 more cheetahs will be released into the wild, he wondered. "There is a dire need to develop 4,000 sq km of landscape attached to the KNP for the cheetahs to move around easily," Saxena said. These imported animals were raised in fenced game reserves in the two African countries from where they were brought to KNP. Their outings pose a threat of man-animal conflict, he added.

OPHC training hostel inaugurated

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 24: A five storey hostel building of Odisha Hydro Power Corporation Ltd (OHPC) was inaugurated by Energy, Industries & MSME Minister Pratap Keshari Deb here Monday.

Higher Education principal secretary and OHPC chairman Bishnu Prasad Sethi presided over the programme. Amresh Kumar, managing director, Prabodh Kumar Mohanty, director (HR), Ashish Kumar Mohanty, director (operation) and



other officials of OHPC were present during the inaugural ceremony.

The newly constructed complex has been built over a plinth area of 3,662 sq ft adjacent to OHPC Training Centre, Patia, and consists of 12 single bedded rooms, 12 double bedded rooms, conference room, modern classroom and cafeteria.

₹250cr for Jagannath temple in London

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar/London, April 24: If things go well, London will have a majestic temple of Lord Jagannath, with global Indian investor Biswanath Patnaik recently pledging Rs 250 crore for the noble initiative, sources said Monday.

According to Shree Jagannath Society UK (SJSUK) chairperson Sahadev Swain, Patnaik, the chairman of FINNEST Group of Companies, has committed to pro-



viding Rs 250 crore for construction of a temple of Lord Jagannath in London.

Managing Director of FINNEST Group Arun Kar and Sahadev Swain jointly announced this at

the First Shree Jagannath Convention London organised by SJSUK at the Navnat Centre, UK, in the presence of Gajapati Maharaj and Maharani Leelabati Pattamahadei.

Addressing the congregation, Biswanath Patnaik vowed his financial support for the construction of the Mandir and exhorted devotees to join hands and work together with faith in Lord Jagannath to make the dream of a Mandir a reality at the earliest.

Second crop farming generating income for ryots

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 24: A recent crop survey conducted by civil society organisations (CSOs) has revealed the significant impact the state government's Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) scheme has achieved on second crop farming in the state.

The study, conducted by Atmashakti, in collaboration with Odisha Shramajeebee Mancha (OSM) and Mahila Shramajeebee Mancha, Odisha (MSMO), covered 4,003 farmers from 13 blocks of Gajapati, Boudh, Nabarangpur and Deogarh. And it examined six major seed crops: green gram, black gram, arhar, horse gram, mustard, and chickpea.

The findings revealed that the



Green gram is the most profitable crop, with an output benefit of Rs 29,920 per farmer, followed by arhar and black gram

scheme not only promotes sustainable agriculture practices but also helps enhance farmer income, with sustained soil fertility and by increasing protein in their diets. The scheme has achieved sig-

nificant success in promoting second-crop farming, which has had a positive impact on farmers' livelihood. Green gram is the most profitable crop, with an output benefit of Rs 29,920 per farmer, followed by arhar

and black gram. Farmers can expect an output benefit of Rs 21,231 and a net benefit of Rs 21,870 per farmer after input costs for these crops.

of the study findings revealed that, on average, farmers utilized 1.1 acres of land for second-crop farming. According to the study results, 60 per cent of the farmers received seeds from the government, 6.6 per cent obtained seeds from an NGO, and 33.4 per cent sourced seeds locally.

The study findings indicate that 33.75 per cent of farmers reported using traditional organic fertilizer-pot medicine.

97 per cent of farmers studied expressed willingness to continue practicing traditional farming methods the following year, which suggests a growing interest in sus-

tainable agriculture practices.

"Promotion of Second Crop can bring promising results in improving farmer's livelihood," said Ruchi Kashyap of Atmashakti Trust. Further highlighting the potential benefits of a second crop, he said, "Second crop benefit is equal to the wage of 80 days of work in MGNREGS. Additionally, this crop requires minimal irrigation compared to the Kharif crop. Therefore, a second crop could be a win-win situation for farmers to improve their livelihood and prevent large-scale distress migration in these areas if the government promotes its cultivation. Secondly, the government must provide seeds before the end of September so the plantation can occur immediately after the Kharif crop."

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Rampant plunder of black granite in Jajpur

Both leaseholders and stone mafia guilty of extracting huge amounts from the hills illegally



POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, April 24: A 'competition' has started between the leaseholders of quarries and mafias to plunder black granites from the hills under Dharmasala tehsil in Jajpur district, sources said Monday. The sources informed that usually, a particular amount is allowed for extraction during a five-year lease period. However, it appears that the two groups want to extract the entire amount within 12 months.

Sources said that this rampant extraction is happening due to the lackadaisical attitude of the tehsil officials. Taking advantage of the inept attitude both the groups are plundering black granite stones with impunity. Sources said that the leaseholders are also allegedly extracting black stones from hills that have not been leased out to them.

The plundering of black granite from Quarry No 34/2021-22 on Aruha hill is a case in point. The quarry has been leased out to Manoj Samal. He has been allowed to extract 70,000 cubic metres of

black stones in five years. However, he has already extracted 1,08,000 cubic metres in nine months only. The matter came to the fore during satellite mapping of the quarry held March 11. Apprised of the wrongdoing, the tehsil administration issued a show-cause to the leaseholder, April 15.

Residents alleged that the quarry should be closed down as per rules in the environmental clearance (EC) and consent to operate (CTO) documents. However, so far no action has been taken against Samal, they alleged. Locals said that the tehsil officials have the impression that their job is over once they issue show-cause notices. After that they never follow up.

Locals said they have lodged complaints against Samal with the tehsildar but their pleas are yet to be addressed. They said that without the cooperation of senior officials, Samal wouldn't have been able to carry out the extraction in such a brazen manner. Samal meanwhile is on 'mission mode' to extract as much of black granite he can as he apprehends

that his lease may be terminated.

Sources said that the Odisha government had collected penalty of ₹19.86 crore from 14 districts towards illegal extraction and loot of minor minerals than the prescribed limit and mineral transportation and sale without transit form by March, 2022. However, the penalty amount is quite meagre in comparison to extraction of minerals in Jajpur, Bolangir, Bhadrak, Bargarh, Boudh, Deogarh, Dhenkanal, Gajapati, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara, Keonjhar, Khurda, Koraput, Malkangiri, Nabarangpur and Nuapada districts. They added that officials only acted after reports of illegal extraction appeared in Orissa POST and questions were raised in the state Assembly.

Only after a hue and cry were raised, did the district administration get active. It then conducted satellite mapping of the quarries and issued notices to collect penalty from the accused leaseholders.

The frequent use of explosives has irked residents of the area. They alleged that the revenue inspector, tehsildar and even the collector are aware of the developments, but are silent on the issue. Sources said that since the notice was served to Samal in April, he has already extracted more than 15,000 cubic metres of black stone. It has also been alleged that Samal has encroached on the area of another leaseholder, Trinath Jena. The latter however, has not lodged any complaint as he is also guilty of illegal extraction and has been imposed a fine of ₹10 crore.

Efforts to contact Dharmasala tehsildar Swagat Das failed as he did not respond to repeated calls.



FOR PEACE: Girl students take a look at paintings and display their own at an exhibition as part of a programme for communal harmony and amity organised by the district administration at Veer Surendra Sai Stadium in Sambalpur, Monday

Baripada sizzles due to lack of green cover

ENVIRONMENTALISTS BLAME MINDLESS FELLING OF TREES FOR ACUTE RISE IN TEMPERATURES

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, April 24: Baripada, the district headquarters town in Mayurbhanj district in north Odisha recently achieved the distinction of being the third hottest place in the world sizzling at 44.5 degrees Celsius last week. For a few days, the town sizzled in the blistering heatwave and to make matters worse, the humidity was energy-sapping. All this happened despite the green cover of Similipal National Park in the district. Ecological imbalance and rampant felling of trees are stated to be the reason behind the acute rise in temperatures in this town, said sources.

This heatwave has sparked concern among the environmentalists. They have shot off letters to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Forest, Environment and Climate Change Minister Pradip Kumar Amat and secretary, Ministry of Forest demanding to stop rampant felling of trees. They have also urged the administration to close the saw mills in the district.



Sources pointed out that Mayurbhanj, spread over an area of 10,418 square kilometres is the largest district in Odisha. The Similipal National Park is spread over 2,271.78 square kilometres. So despite the presence of such a huge forest area, the blistering heatwave has come as a shock to many.

According to environmentalists, the Similipal biosphere reserve located in the northeast on the foothills of Himalaya lies within two geographical regions, the Mahanadi east coastal region of the Oriental realm and the Chota Nagpur biotic province of the Deccan peninsular zone.

It has always played the role of a climate balancer between the northeast and southern parts of India. However, this time around, the heatwave seems to have beaten all odds, the environmentalists stated.

The environmentalists pointed out that the mushrooming of saw mills in and around this town have contributed to the heatwave. There are two licensed saw mills in the district but several others are functioning illegally.

Residents Sanjay Kumar Behera, Jagannath Parida and Subhash Rout alleged that timber mafias and some unscrupulous persons are felling trees randomly, destroying the green cover around the town. This has been on for the last 10 years, they said and added that the results are there for everyone to see. They warned that if the felling continues in such a rampant manner, the day is not far off when this town may well sizzle at 50 degrees Celsius. They informed that even trees on government plots are not being spared.

Minor boy held for raping classmate

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, April 24: Nimakhandi police here detained Monday a minor boy studying in Plus-II on charges of raping his female classmate. The accused is a student of a private college in the city. Police registered a case and produced the accused before a Juvenile Justice Board (JJB) which heard the case and remanded him to a probation home.

Police recorded the statement of the survivor under Section-164 of CrPC and conducted a medical examination of the two. On being directed by the Juvenile Justice Board, police produced the survivor before the child welfare committee and later handed her over to her father.



The incident came to light after the father of the girl lodged a complaint at the Nimakhandi police station alleging that the accused had kidnapped his daughter April 20. Police launched a probe and found that the accused had taken the victim to a house in Visakhapatnam where he raped her. Police managed to trace the girl and rescued her while detaining the boy.

No 'Akshaya Tiritiya' in Bhogra for last 61 years



POST NEWS NETWORK

Nayagarh, April 24: 'Akshaya Tiritiya', a major agrarian festival, is celebrated across the state as it marks a special occasion. It is on this day the sowing of paddy seeds for the ensuing Kharif season starts and the special ritual is known as 'akhi muti anukula'. The day starts with the ritualistic worship of mother Earth, bullocks and traditional farm equipment. Farmers also pray for a good harvest.

However, the residents in Bhogra village under Khamarsahi panchayat of Daspalla block in this district do not follow the same ritual on 'Akshaya Tiritiya' for more than 61 years now. This is because on this auspicious day 61 years back 28-year old Bharat Pradhan was killed by a leopard inside a jungle close to the village. Since that day residents of the village have stopped celebrating 'Akshaya

Tiritiya'. They do perform the rituals for the Kharif season, but on a different day other than 'Akshaya Tiritiya'. A total of 55 families were living in the village when the leopard attack took place.

The village is surrounded by Barasahi hill and Meghamala jungle on the south and the Sakeri forest on the west. The forests are home to a large number of wild animals. Pradhan was attacked by the big cat when he went to collect wood in the jungle with friends.

Currently, 305 families reside in Bhogra village. The forests have also dwindled and chances of animal attacks have reduced drastically. Life has also become easier for the residents of the village. They have many more facilities now. However, in memory of Pradhan, the residents of the village still do not celebrate the occasion of 'Akshaya Tiritiya'. The seed-sowing ritual is carried out on some other auspicious day.

Five critical in boar attack in Sambalpur

AGENCIES

Sambalpur, April 24: Five persons were critically injured Monday when a wild boar attacked them in Sambalpur district, police said. The injured also included a 16-year-old girl and a nine-year-old girl. The wild boar attacked them inside the Kayakud forest in Jujumura block where they had gone to pluck kendu leaves.

The injured persons were identified as Sakha Dharua, 35, and her daughter Laxmipriya Dharua, besides Santi Munda, 36, and her daughter Rinki Munda, of Amlipani village and Ahalya Bhoi of Kayakud village. They went inside the forest to pluck Kendu leaves early in the morning. A wild boar suddenly attacked them, police said. All the injured are undergoing treatment at VIMSAR in Burla.

Tardy construction pace of PMAY houses worries admin

Technical team to visit Ganjam district to review situation and speed up process

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chhatrapur, April 24: Construction of houses under the Centre-sponsored Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) scheme has been moving at a snail's pace in Ganjam district, sources said Monday. The construction of residences is very slow in urban localities in comparison to that in rural areas. Construction of over 2,000 houses is yet to start in 13 urban areas/NACs, the sources said and added that work on another 1,000 houses is only halfway through.

Concerned over the development, a technical team from the Housing and Urban Development department will visit the district April 26 for three-four days and take stock of the housing projects that are being built under the

PMAY scheme. PMAY houses that have been only half built are located in Buguda, Polsara, Kabisuryanagar, Belguntha, Aska, Bhanjanagar, Sorada, Digapahandi, Gopalpur, Rambha, Purusottampur, Kodala and Khallikote NACs.

The technical team will be led by Parthasarathi Sahu and it will tour the concerned NACs from April 26 to April 29 to review the housing projects. The team members will also hold discussions with the councillors for successful implementation and timely completion of projects. They will also meet the project director of district urban

development authorities, the executive officers of all NACs, nodal officers and sort out various issues. Deputy secretary of Odisha Urban Housing Mission, Prasant Kumar Satapathy has written to all the executive officers of the NACs apprising them about the visit of the technical team.

Satapathy has termed the delay in starting the construction of over 2,000 houses as 'sheer negligence'. He has warned that the state will be deprived of funds if the Centre-sponsored scheme is not implemented timely and in a proper manner.

Farm ponds, ring wells boon for Sundargarh farmers

FROM FY 2020-21 TO FY 2022-23, A TOTAL OF 47 FARM PONDS AND 85 RING WELLS HAVE BEEN DUG UP IN THE DISTRICT



POST NEWS NETWORK

Sundargarh, April 24: The Odisha government has a policy called 'Irrigated Farmlands, Empowered Farmers'. Based on it the Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA), Sundargarh, has operationalised various programmes for farmers' welfare in this district.

To provide irrigation facilities to the lands, farm ponds and ring wells are being dug on the plots of farmers. This has greatly benefited tribal farmers in the area.

Sundargarh district is full of hills and forests. Locals in the area engage in various types of cultivation. But, they are largely dependent on rain water. Hence irregular rainfall leads to a poor harvest and for the farmers the only way out is irrigation.

In such circumstances, the farm ponds and ring wells dug on farmers' lands have helped ensure adequate water supply to the fields. The programme is operational in nine blocks of the district under the command area of ITDA.



POST NEWS NETWORK

"Various initiatives are being implemented by ITDA towards the welfare of tribal farmers. Irrigation is one among the significant programmes undertaken by ITDA. The beneficiaries are identified under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) and subsequently, farm ponds and ring wells are being dug in the beneficiaries' land. Employment for local villagers is also generated through creation of man

days under MGNREGS," said project administrator, ITDA, Ramkrishna Gond.

Between FY 2020-21 to FY 2022-23, a total of 47 farm ponds have been dug up. Similarly, 85 ring wells have also been dug during the same period. Farmers apply for farm ponds and ring wells through the Gram Sabha. Once the proposal is passed by the Gram Sabha, ITDA officials visit the field to identify potential beneficiaries.

"Earlier, we were hugely de-

pendent on rain water for cultivation. But now, a farm pond has been dug in my field. This has greatly lessened my worries regarding cultivation. Using water from the pond, I can now cultivate various vegetables. I sell the produce in the local market and earn a decent income," said Dileswar Pradhan, a farmer from Magarkunda village in Lephripara block.

"With support of ITDA, Sundargarh, I have dug a ring well in my farm. Now, I can easily fetch water for my fields from the well. My irrigation woes have been resolved now," said Chumki Naik, a woman farmer from Bhagapali village in Subdega block.

Sundargarh farmers engage in various types of vegetable and cash crop cultivation apart from food grains. The farm ponds and ring wells dug in their fields have largely benefited tribal farmers in the district. Additionally, the irrigation programme has also helped recharge the receding ground water level while also aiding in soil conservation.

DEPTT. OF WATER RESOURCES
No.A-62: Government of Odisha
"e" Procurement Notice No. EE-DD-CTC- 02/2023-24
1. Name of the Works: Total 01 (One) No. Non Residential Building work.
2. Estimated cost: Rs. 21.80 lakh approximately
3. Period of Completion: 03(Three) months
4. Date and time of availability of bid document in the portal: From 11.00 AM of 27.04.2023 to 18.55 hours of 06.05.2023.
5. Last date/time for receipt of bids in the portal: 06.05.2023/18.55 hours.
6. Name and address of the Officer inviting Bid: Executive Engineer, Drainage Division, Gandarpur, Cuttack- 753003. e-mail Id :- eeddcuttack@gmail.com, eedrnctc-eicwr.od@nic.in.
Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal "https://tendersodisha.gov.in"

Sd./- Executive Engineer
Drainage Div., Cuttack
OIPR-32201/11/0007/2324

Government of Odisha
"e" Procurement Notice
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER,
RURAL WORKS ELECTRICAL DIVISION,
SAMBALPUR
No.O-79:
E-mail - eerwelectricaldivn.sambalpur@gmail.com
Bid Identification No. EE/RW/ELECT/SBP/01/2023-24
1. Name of the work :- Power supply to 65KW SPP load in favour of Principal ITI Banspal,Keonjhar
2. Estimated Cost :- Rs. 21,00,442.00/-
3. Availability of bid document :- 11:00 Hours of 25.04.2023 to 17:00 Hours of 06.05.2023
4. Date of Opening of Tenders :- 11:30 Hours on dt.08.05.2023
Further details and any Corrigendum/Addendum/cancellation of tender can be seen from the Website www.tendersodisha.gov.in only.

Sd./- Executive Engineer
R.W Electrical Division, Sambalpur
OIPR-25186/11/0002/2324

FOCUS CRIMINAL JUSTICE

THE ENCOUNTER MENACE



Extrajudicial killings, whether at the behest of political masters or by a force too stretched to go through due process, are extraordinary excesses. They need extraordinary measures to be put to an end

pursuit under attack or facing bullets from the other side necessarily involves a complete fabrication of multiple legal documents and accounts that are a part of the investigation and eventually judicial records that follow the act of the cold-blooded killing. An entire set of people must make up stories that will inevitably be punctured by latter day investigators. The policemen in the current cases in UP will also likely not get away scot free. Already, the Supreme Court has been petitioned in the matter.

Yet, the menace does not seem to get away; it is only getting worse. We can blame the current set of political leaders for allowing this dangerous slide in governance. But the Indian constitutional system must also throw up solutions that can push back. It is not that difficult to stop encounter killings. One or two harsh judgements of the kinds suggested by Justices Katju and Mishra will send strong signals. Many policemen who acquiesce in these killings are actually not bold or clean, which is why they cannot resist the temptation and orders from above. Further, the use of bodycams can be mandated for any team going out for sensitive operations. It is not difficult to have the entire scenario videotaped by an extra team being asked to go along.

Cleaning up police teams known for these 'encounter' killings can actually be the start of a new set of processes that hold the promise of reforms in ways not thought of before. Not doing this is to accept that the rule of law has collapsed, which is when we may ask how long will it take for it to be replaced by "the law of the jungle" to use the words of the Supreme Court. This is India regressing, sinking and frittering away all that has been built in the name of our democratic traditions that we think we hold dear.

The writer is a journalist and faculty member at SPJIMR. Views are personal.

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A lot has been written on the normalisation of what have come to be called 'encounter killings,' the extrajudicial assassinations by men in uniform that are now taking on a new hue and colour in Uttar Pradesh. While the immediate cause of concern is the 183 'encounter' killings in Uttar Pradesh since 2017, the larger problem is the widespread use of the method across the nation and the public support that such an approach appears to enjoy. Extrajudicial killings make the bizarre claim to a quick delivery of justice by killing the system that is meant to deliver justice. The argument being sold by the authorities and bought by the people seems as simple as it is quixotic: We must break the law to maintain the law.

There are a complex set of socio-political, economic and administrative issues that have brought us to this pass. 'Encounters' have thrived in the absence of a police force that is unable and unwilling to shake off its colonial hangover, is steeped in corruption, unqualified for professional work and has become a handmaiden of power structures within and from outside that make the force work for a select few. Extrajudicial killings, whether at the behest of political masters or by a force too stretched to go through due process, are extraordinary excesses. They need extraordinary measures to be put to an end.

A Supreme Court bench of Justices Markandey Katju and Gyan Sudha Misra on 13 May 2011 went to the extent of calling out fake encounters as the 'rarest of rare' variety of crimes that fit the award of a death penalty. The Justices also warned police officers that they would not get away on the plea that they were carrying out orders from above. In language that was as strong as it could be, the bench recorded the following: "In the Nuremberg trials, the Nazi war criminals took the plea that 'orders are orders', nevertheless they

were hanged. If a policeman is given an illegal order by any superior to do a fake 'encounter', it is his duty to refuse to carry out such illegal order, otherwise he will be charged for murder, and if found guilty sentenced to death. The 'encounter' philosophy is a criminal philosophy, and all policemen must know this. Trigger happy policemen who think they can kill people in the name of 'encounter' and get away with it should know that the gallows await them."

These are words that ought to be framed and put up in every police post to remind everyone that they do not have to obey orders that are prima facie illegal. In fact, this offers a good route to cleaning up a police force that is failing and is taking the Indian State down with it.

In accepting that fake encounters are and will be a way of maintaining law and order, India has collectively accepted that the nation has failed in its basic duties and must resort to extraconstitutional methods to keep a semblance of order. The implications of this are nothing short of horrific. On the one hand is India seeing itself as the rising global power, the

head of G20 today and with an economy that is the fifth largest in the world. On the other hand, India is the story of flourishing gangsters who when they get too big must be taken to a secluded spot and shot.

Many journalists like this writer are aware of cases where criminals were done away in cold blood. Mumbai is the place where these so-called encounters were at a peak at one time. But Mumbai is also an example of what went wrong with this 'solution'. The gangs that were sought to be eliminated in the wild were actually recreated and reproduced within the police force. Gang 'A' killed members of gang 'B' using the policemen of one unit that it befriended; gang 'B' did the same with another police unit to eliminate members of gang 'A'. Both police units involved in the game made money, earned the reputation of being 'encounter specialists' and claimed that they were welcomed by the public. The police force became a breeding ground for a new crop of 'Dirty Harrys'.

It is a plain fact that every encounter that is not a genuine exchange of fire between police in hot



Jagdish Rattanani

THIS IS INDIA REGRESSING, SINKING AND FRITTERING AWAY ALL THAT HAS BEEN BUILT IN THE NAME OF OUR DEMOCRATIC TRADITIONS THAT WE THINK WE HOLD DEAR

Say No

We are always surrounded by the things of which we think.

THE MOTHER



Bureaucrats in India need to learn a lesson from their counterparts in the UK who have been instrumental in the removal of Dominic Raab from the posts of Deputy Prime Minister, Justice Secretary and Lord Chancellor. The bureaucracy that the British bequeathed to India was known as the 'steel frame', meaning bureaucrats cannot be manipulated by their political bosses (or ministers) to wilt and deviate from their duty of advising them what to do and stopping them from doing things that would harm the people's interests. Indian bureaucrats, from the very beginning, performed their duties as slaves serving masters. Soon they all jointly, it seemed, decided to be reduced to puppets and happily wilting in the hands of ministers, doing their bidding and picking the bulk of the money and freebies that flow for governmental favors. For most of them, saving their jobs and getting plum postings by kowtowing before ministers has become more important than helping the politicians in power with correct advice regarding wrong decisions that would hurt the interests of the people and the nation. They never had the nerve to go against ministers, not to speak of defying them for just causes. We must remember the Indian bureaucracy was created to serve foreign colonial masters and not democratically elected leaders.

British bureaucrats have shown they are made of sterner stuff when they decided to take on Raab for his alleged bullying of their colleagues. An inquiry was conducted against him and he was judged to have broken the ministerial code for bullying civil servants. This was the finding reached by Adam Trolley KC who interviewed 66 people during the past three months and examined complaints made during Raab's tenures as foreign secretary, justice secretary and Brexit secretary. He then delivered a damning verdict on the basis of evidence he had got.

The irony is even after having been found guilty, Raab remains obdurate. In the process he only betrays the streak of arrogance that characterised his style of functioning as proved by the inquiry. The probe has established he had acted in an "intimidating," "insulting" and "aggressive" manner with officials. Yet, after the judgement, he suggested he was the real victim of a "Kafkaesque saga" in which he had faced an inquisition. He also sent in a resignation letter which most thought was ungracious. He continued to speak in an arrogant vein and asserted that the government is being constrained by people (meaning bureaucrats) who have not been elected.

Instead of accepting responsibility for his behaviour, Raab complained in his letter that the inquiry would "have a chilling effect on those driving change on behalf of the government - and ultimately the British people."

The removed minister even wrote an opinion piece in a major British daily to spin a conspiracy theory against him. He accused unionised officials of threatening to bring down ministers. In other words, he alleged bureaucrats had ganged up against him to prevent him from discharging his duties toward the nation.

That only shows what British bureaucrats, when united, could do to put in place politicians trying to subvert a democratic system by reducing the bureaucracy into a puppet in their hands. Bureaucrats who prefer to be subservient to ministers asking them to do their bidding for wrong reasons should be considered opponents of democracy and eventually damaging the people and the country. Their role is to be both an instrument of ministerial will and a check on ministerial whim.

There is a strain of thinking among ministers in the UK and India as well that since they have been elected by the people they have the right to do whatever they like without any criticism from any quarters. There are some ministers in India who have gone on record asking Opposition politicians to go sleep in their homes during their tenure as the people have elected them to rule for a definite period of time. The fact is, however, that electoral victory does not give any government immunity from criticism of its acts of omission and commission. Such wrong notions often make ministers believe they can do and say whatever they like with impunity. Last November Gavin Williamson, who was Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's cabinet fixer, had to resign for having told a senior civil servant that he would slit his throat while he was defence secretary.

Now, the question is whether Indian bureaucrats cannot do what their British counterparts can. After all, Indian bureaucracy was built by British rulers but for a completely different purpose. The short answer would be that the spine of Indian bureaucracy has never, ever, been strong and so it would perhaps be expecting too much of them to stand up to their political bosses. However, British civil servants have set a glorious example for democracy-loving people across the globe to emulate.

WISDOM CORNER

The secret of genius is to carry the spirit of the child into old age, which means never losing your enthusiasm. **ALDOUS HUXLEY**

Knowledge can be communicated, but not wisdom. One can find it, live it, be fortified by it, do wonders through it, but one cannot communicate and teach it. **HERMANN HESSE**

Half the world is composed of people who have something to say and can't, and the other half who have nothing to say and keep on saying it. **ROBERT FROST**

WORDSWORTH

Heliotrope

In early 1880, newspaper articles throughout much of the English-speaking world, usually headed "for the ladies", reported that the Paris spring fashions featured a new colour: *LATEST PARISIAN FASHIONS There is no doubt but that the "heliotrope colour" will take the lead in spring materials, such as silks, grenadines, and wollens [sic]; the peculiar shade is that rosy purple conspicuous in the newly-blown flower, and which the dyers call a "false purple" (Launceston Examiner, Tasmania, 24 Apr. 1880).* As the writer hinted, there was nothing new about the colour, nor indeed the word. The pretty flower called the heliotrope had long been a favourite in gardens, one that had been chosen as much for its scent as its rich purple colour. On the face of it, it's an odd name for the flower, as the helio- prefix refers to the sun and so might be better applied to a shade of yellow rather than purple. Heliotrope has been in the language for about a thousand years, originally in Old English as eliotropus, which had come via Latin from Greek heliotropion for a plant that turned its flowers to the sun. The second part is from Greek trepein, to turn, which appears in the English word tropism for the movement of parts of a plant in response to an external stimulus. One obvious tropism is gravity, which is why roots grow downwards and stems upwards and why plants don't grow well on space stations. Many plants have the tropism of turning their flowers to the sun - marigolds and sunflowers, for example, as well as heliotropes - and all were at various times called heliotropes. Eventually, for reasons that aren't clear, the word came to be reserved for the one plant. The colour called purple in antiquity - often specifically Tyrian purple, because it was made and sold at the ancient Phoenician seaport of Tyre in the eastern Mediterranean - was obtained from a tiny gland in several closely related species of shellfish; about 10,000 were needed to make one gram of the dye. Consequently, it was rare and expensive, reserved for the high-born (hence phrases such as born to the purple). The colour varied between a rich crimson red and a dark purple usually said to be like that of dried blood. Heliotrope was being used more widely at that time for another reason. A substance called piperonal or heliotropine, synthesised in 1869, started to be used a decade later in a perfume said to imitate the scent of heliotrope flowers. It has also been described as smelling like cherry pie, an unsurprising association, as heliotrope has long had the popular name of the cherry pie plant. The popularity of the word heliotrope continued to grow throughout the last quarter of the century and into the first decade of the twentieth.

SPECTRUM GEOPOLITICS

China's name game, India's reaction

China is at it again. It has renamed eleven places in Arunachal Pradesh. It is not the first time. Beijing has done so before in 2017, it had changed the names of six places with the territory of Arunachal Pradesh. In 2021, it had renamed 15 places in the name of standardisation.

Recall that China had enacted a Geographical Name Regulation in 1986 designed to name, rename in a standardisation exercise. May be somewhat similar to what New Delhi is doing, in changing some names imposed on India by invaders. But what is shockingly different in Beijing's renaming exercise is that it is giving new names to places under the sovereign possession of other countries. In 2020, China named 80 geographical features in South China Sea which is under heavy territorial dispute with other countries.

Sujan R. Chinoy, a former Ambassador and the current Director of Manohar Parrikar Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses has, in a recent article in the Hindu, elaborated on Chinese irredentism manifesting a well-planned strategy consisting of many layers. First, Beijing lays out the ground work by renaming places in foreign lands and then claiming them by a three-pronged warfare - propaganda, psychological and legal. Chinoy also argued in some detail

how Arunachal Pradesh is an integral part of India backing it with mythological, historical and contemporary facts and practices. That is however not the point for discussion with Beijing. China is claiming Arunachal Pradesh as a part of Tibet as the birth place of sixth Dalai Lama. In fact, China's continued occupation of Tibet itself is questioned by world powers. Let us discuss that on another occasion.

Like Vladimir Putin wishes to reunite Soviet Union which broke up in 1990s, Xi Jinping seems obsessed with 'Greater China' or the Chinese empire. How realistic and rational it is? Be that as it may. It is important to decipher Beijing's strategy and evolve a counter strategy to contain this malafide and malevolent claim. Amit Shah, Minister of Home Affairs, has strongly denied any claim on Arunachal and warned that not even a needle-sized land will be given away by India. The MEA has stated: "This is not the first time that China has made such an attempt. We reject it outright. Arunachal is an integral and inalienable part of India. By assigning invented names will not alter the reality."

To be sure, Indian forces, politicians and the country will all rally behind the leadership to defend India's territory. Yet, shall we wait for Beijing to spring that surprise on us? Are the Chinese ambitions

and attitude not visible on India, Taiwan and other countries they are in territorial dispute with? To ignore the Chinese sinister and surreptitious designs will be naive. Our suspicion is that New Delhi is waiting for China to strike, or expecting it not to happen, but does not want to precipitate matters. It may be a sound one. But preparations to strike back and pre-emptive diplomatic offensives are in order.

The Chinese strategy on territory-grabbing has multiple layers. Most of them are known and discussed by Indians, Sinologists and political commentators. Taking some of them, Chinese are masters in duplicity. They talk nice but do the nasty. The second layer is that they incur into foreign lands and come to the negotiating table after withdrawing a bit and say they have conceded. That is how they nibble away the foreign territories, and this is called salami tactic. Third, they like to negotiate without believing in it. They say we take your territory but you can negotiate.

The other two popularly known strategies attributed to Chinese diplomacy are Sun Tzu's 'Art of War' and Mao's dictum. Sun Tzu suggested the "art of winning without fighting." That means frustrating and exasperating enemies till they give up. There are quite a few manifestations of such strategy. But are we reading them right?

Are we under the illusion of perpetual competition, sort of a hard military confrontation?

Irrespective of Chinese strategies, what could be possible Indian reactions! It has to be obviously multi-pronged. Chinoy has suggested India should start renaming places under Chinese illegal occupation. For example, Aksai Chin could be called Akshaya Chinha (everlasting symbol). Military experts suggest defence preparedness for deterrence or an actual combat. They say three per cent of GDP should be earmarked for India's defence. While these are national approaches, some of us have been advocating for an international approach, given the power disparity between China and India. The approach is to surround China by stitching solid partnerships and alliances with like-minded countries. China as an authoritarian and expansionist power is a systemic threat to the world. New Delhi somewhat seems to be shy in pursuing this strategy; perhaps for various valid reasons which have been discussed. But the international solidarity approach seems to be the most effective involving less cost exposure to India. Surely, this approach merits more discussion as well as immediate attention.

The writer is Secretary General, Association for Democratic Socialism. ©INFA



DK Giri

OUR SUSPICION IS THAT NEW DELHI IS WAITING FOR CHINA TO STRIKE, OR EXPECTING IT NOT TO HAPPEN, BUT DOES NOT WANT TO PRECIPITATE MATTERS

Combating malaria

Sir, World Malaria Day is observed annually on 25 April to bring global attention to the efforts being made to bring an end to malaria and reduce suffering and death from the disease. The purpose of the event is to give countries in affected regions the chance to learn from each other's experiences and support one another's efforts. The theme for this year's World Malaria Day is 'Time to deliver zero malaria: invest, innovate, implement.' Malaria is an acute febrile disease caused by the parasite Plasmodium, transmitted by the bite of an infected female Anopheles mosquito. Symptoms usually appear 10-15 days after a bite and may be mild and difficult to recognise as malaria. Effective vector control, including the use of insecticide-treated nets and indoor residual spraying, is crucial to preventing transmission of the disease. According to the latest World Malaria Report, published in December 2022, malaria claimed the lives of an estimated 619,000 people in 2021, compared to 625,000 in 2020. There were some 247 million new cases of malaria in 2021 compared to 245 million in 2020. While an increase in access to anti-malarial medicines and improvements in clinical management have led to a reduction in malaria-related deaths, more must be done to halt transmission, through increased investment in local-level interventions. **Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD**

Pioneering naturalist

Sir, It was reported in a leading English daily a few days ago that ornithologist Tara Gandhi, who was guided by the pioneering naturalist and ornithologist Salim Ali, got access to his treasure trove of radio scripts. Salim Ali's several talks on All India Radio, popularly known as 'Words For Birds', were broadcast over 45 years ago, revealing his exceptional skills, both as an oral communicator and a passionate bird propagandist. The 'Birdman of India' was the first Indian to conduct systematic bird surveys across undivided India, and penned several books on birds which popularised ornithology in the sub-continent. Ali made ornithology as a serious pursuit at a time when the subject in India was considered an Englishman's pastime. He studied the birds of nearly every region of the sub-continent and wrote with such wit and elegance that he was included in an anthology entitled 'Indian Masters of English', along with Rabindranath Tagore and Sarojini Naidu. It is a matter of pride that under Salim Ali, the Bombay Natural History Society became a premier research centre, and its journal is a staple for biologists the world over. **Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI**

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

OrissaPOST
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of the day quote

At this moment, the MVA is extremely strong and holding rallies jointly. Rallies are being held to send a message that we are united. On May 1, a huge rally will take place in Mumbai where all senior leaders from all the parties (of MVA) will come together

People who go on to have more than two children should not be given any concessions, and even legislators in such cases should be made ineligible to contest elections

The state will be transformed into a healthcare hub by providing better medical services and tourism opportunities in the sector



Look at the bankruptcy of those claiming to be the largest (political) party in the world, they do not even have a candidate to contest elections. This means that either the BJP has no worker or the BJP has a tradition of insulting its workers by not giving them a ticket. The BJP is embroiled in an internal conflict

PM TO ATTEND GUJARAT EVENT Prime Minister Narendra Modi will virtually attend on April 27 an event to mark the completion of 20 years of a citizens' grievances redressal programme in Gujarat that he had launched as the state's Chief Minister in 2003



Sharmila arrested after 'assaulting' cops

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad, April 24: YSR Telangana Party president Y S Sharmila was Monday arrested by police here for allegedly assaulting police personnel following an altercation with them outside her residence here, police said.

Based on a complaint by police personnel, a case was registered against Sharmila in which she was accused of assaulting one sub-inspector, ramming her vehicle on a police constable and causing him a leg injury, and also abusing police officials.

Police said they were also analysing video footage purportedly showing Sharmila's mother Y S Vijayamma too slapping a woman constable during a scuffle near Jubilee Hills Police Station where she went to meet the arrested Sharmila.

The case was registered under IPC sections 353 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of duty), 332 (voluntarily causing hurt to deter public servant from duty), 324 (voluntary causing hurt) and 509 (word, gesture or act intended to insult the

modesty of a woman) against Sharmila and her driver, they said. In TV visuals, Sharmila was seen "manhandling" police officials who tried to prevent her from proceeding with a "protest" for which she had not obtained permission, they said.

Police said they got information that Sharmila was planning to hold a protest at the SIT office. As there was no permission for it, police personnel tried to prevent her, but she misbehaved with them and also pushed the cops including women police personnel, they said.

On reports that Sharmila slapped a woman constable, police said they were verifying it. Sharmila was initially detained by police and shifted to the police station following the incident and later arrested. "When we got information that she was proceeding to the SIT office, police officials went to her residence as she did not obtain any prior permission. The officials went there to brief her and to stop her from going there," Deputy Commissioner of Police (West Zone) D Joel Davis said.



Indian and US Air Force personnel during the India-US joint air exercise at Kalaikunda Force Station in West Midnapore district, West Bengal

SHORT TAKES

Relief for Rahul

Patna: The Patna High Court Monday stayed the proceedings before a trial court here against former Congress president Rahul Gandhi in connection with his alleged slanderous remarks against those having "Modi" surname. Justice Sandeep Kumar stayed the proceedings while hearing a petition of Gandhi, who has contended that since he has already been convicted in a similar case by a Gujarat court, he cannot be put on trial for the same offence again. "The high court has stayed trial proceedings till May 15, the date on which we will be submitting our reply to the petition," said S D Sanjay, the counsel for former Bihar deputy chief minister and senior BJP leader Sushil Kumar Modi.

30 detained in Raj

Jaipur: Prohibitory orders were imposed in Malpura town of Rajasthan's Tonk district till April 26 on Monday, a day after more than a dozen people were injured in a clash between members of two communities. Thirty people have been detained in connection with the incident, police said. Around 15 people, including a policeman, were injured in stone pelting during a clash between two groups in Malpura. Thirty people have been detained and the situation is completely under control, said Superintendent of Police, Tonk, Rajarshi Raj Verma.

'Blood stains' found

Prayagraj: Police Monday found what appeared to be blood smeared on the walls of the abandoned office here of gangster-turned-politician Atiq Ahmed, who was shot dead recently while being taken for a medical checkup. Police also found a "blood-stained" clothes and knife in the Chakia locality of this Uttar Pradesh district, a senior officer said. The police reached Ahmed's office after receiving information that blood marks were seen there, Deputy Commissioner of Police Deepak Bhukar said.

2 militants killed

Kokrajhar (Assam): Two militants of a faction of the Kamtapur Liberation Organisation (KLO) were killed while four others arrested following a gunfight with security forces in Assam's Kokrajhar district on Monday, a police officer said. Two camps of the outfit KLO (KN) were also destroyed in the operation. "Based on inputs regarding movement and training camp of KLO (KN) cadres in Chakrajharia hill and surrounding jungle, a search operation was launched by a joint team of the Assam Police and CRPF," the officer said.

'Operation Kaveri' launched to evacuate Indians from Sudan



Indian citizens stranded in Sudan arrive at Port Sudan for their evacuation from the country

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 24: India Monday launched 'Operation Kaveri' to bring back its nationals from Sudan that has been witnessing fierce fighting following a power struggle between the regular army and a paramilitary force.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said the operation to evacuate the Indian citizens from Sudan is underway and that about 500 nationals have reached Port Sudan.

"Operation Kaveri gets underway to bring back our citizens stranded in Sudan. About 500 Indians have reached Port Sudan. More on their way," Jaishankar, currently on a visit to the Caribbean region, tweeted. "Our ships and aircraft are set to bring them back home. Committed to assist all our brethren in Sudan," he said.

India Sunday said it has positioned two transport aircraft of the IAF in the Saudi Arabian city of Jeddah and naval ship INS Sumedha at Port Sudan as part of its contingency plans to evacuate the stranded Indians.

The government had on Friday said it was focusing on the safety of over 3,000 Indian citizens currently located throughout Sudan. Sudan has been witnessing deadly fighting between the country's army and a paramilitary group for the last 11 days that has reportedly left around 400 people dead.

Jaishankar's announcement on the evacuation operation came a day after the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said that contingency plans to bring back the Indians from Sudan have been put in place but noted that any movement on the ground would depend on the security situation. It said the security situation in Sudan continues to be "volatile" with reports of fierce fighting coming from various locations in the country's capital Khartoum.

"Two Indian Air Force C-130J are currently positioned on standby in Jeddah. And, INS Sumedha has reached Port Sudan," it said. "Contingency plans are in place but any movement on the ground would depend on the security situation, which continues to be

volatile with reports of fierce fighting at various locations in Khartoum," the MEA said.

India is also coordinating closely with various partner countries for the safe movement of those Indians who are stranded in Sudan and would like to be evacuated. Apart from Sudanese authorities, the MEA and the Indian embassy in Sudan have been in regular touch with the UN, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt and the US among others.

At a high-level meeting on Friday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had issued directions for preparation of contingency plans to evacuate Indians from Sudan. After the meeting, the PMO said Modi instructed officials to prepare contingency evacuation plans, accounting for the rapidly shifting security landscape in Sudan and the viability of various options.

Last week, Jaishankar spoke to his counterparts from Saudi Arabia, the UAE 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. In a related development, France evacuated five Indians along with citizens of 27 other countries as part of its evacuation mission from Sudan.

The French embassy in India said 388 people from 28 countries, including India, were evacuated. "French evacuation operations are underway. Last night, two military flight rotations evacuated 388 people of 28 countries, including Indian nationals," it tweeted. French diplomatic sources said five Indian nationals were among those evacuated by France from Sudan. They said the evacuation operations were launched on Saturday and they were carried out by the French Air Force using A400M aircraft from the French military base in Djibouti.

'Mann ki Baat' has 23 cr regular listeners: Survey

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 24: Nearly 23 crore people tune in to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Mann ki Baat' programme on the last Sunday of every month with 65 per cent listeners preferring to hear the talk in Hindi, according to a survey conducted by the Indian Institute of Management-Rohtak.

The survey also found that the 'Mann ki Baat' programme, the 100th edition of which will be broadcast this coming Sunday, is heard more on television channels followed by mobile phones, with radio listeners accounting for 17.6 per cent of the total listenership.

It found that more than 100 crore people have listened to the programme at least once, while around 41 crore were occasional listeners. "As many as 44.7 per cent of the total listeners hear the programme on television sets, while 37.6 per cent tune in on mobile phones," Dheeraj P Sharma, Director of IIM-Rohtak, told reporters here on Monday.

Prasar Bharti Chief Executive Officer Gaurav Dwivedi said apart from 22 Indian languages and 29 dialects, 'Mann Ki Baat' is broadcast in 11 foreign languages such as French, Chinese, Indonesian, Tibetan, Burmese, Baluchi, Arabic, Pashtu, Persian, Dari and Swahili.

Dwivedi said the programme is being broadcast by more than 500 centres of the All India Radio. The survey, conducted by the students of IIM-Rohtak, reached out to 10,003 respondents in four zones - North, South, East and West - and across various age groups, with a majority of them being self-employed and those in the informal sector.

The survey found that 18 per cent of the respondents chose to listen to the programme in English, four per cent in Urdu, and two per cent each in Dogri and Tamil. Listeners of other languages such as Mizo, Maithili, Assamese, Kashmiri, Telugu, Odia, Gujarati and Bengali together accounted for nine per cent of the total listenership, it found.

OPPN UNITY GATHERS PACE

The BJP dubbed the meeting a 'futile exercise' and asserted that such an 'opportunistic alliance' would not yield any result



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, April 24: Ramping up efforts to forge Opposition unity, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar Monday met Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav and said work is on to bring together as many parties as possible to remove the BJP from power in the next general elections.

"No welfare work is being done by the present dispensation which is only relying on publicity," the JD(U) leader said attacking the BJP after meeting Yadav at the SP office here, hours after he held talks with his West Bengal counterpart and Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee in Kolkata.

"I am not looking for any position for myself. My endeavour is to work for the country's good," Kumar, who was accompanied by RJD leader and Bihar's Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav, said.

He alleged that efforts are being made to change the history of the country. Akhilesh Yadav raised the issue of price rise and said there was a need to remove the BJP government without any delay. The Bihar chief minister had come to Lucknow after meeting Banerjee in Kolkata earlier in the day.

The two regional satraps too stressed the need to "prepare together" for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. "It was a very positive discussion... Opposition parties need to sit together and strategise," said Kumar after the meeting at the state secretariat Nabanna in Kolkata.

The BJP dubbed the meeting a "futile exercise" and asserted that such an "opportunistic alliance" would not yield any result. Banerjee said, "We have to give the message that we are all together."

While details of the discussion were scanty with the leaders preferring to speak on the broader consensus, sources said the two sides used the meeting to figure out how they would proceed in sewing together a workable coalition. "Nothing is being done for India's development, those ruling are only interested in their own advertisement," claimed Kumar.

"I have made just one request to Nitish Kumar. Jayaprakash ji's movement started from Bihar: If we have an all-party meeting in Bihar, we can then decide where we have to go next. I want BJP to become zero. They have become a big hero with the media's support and lies," Banerjee said.

26 regional parties got donations over ₹189cr in 2021-22: ADR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 24: Twenty-six regional parties received ₹189 crore in donations in 2021-22 with 85 per cent of it going to just five of them, including JDU and SP, the ADR said Monday.

No donations were declared by AIADMK, BJD, NDDP, SDF, AIFB, PMK, and JKNC for Financial Year 2021-22, according to a new report released by Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), a poll reform advocacy group.

The report focuses on donations declared by regional political parties during the Financial Year 2021-22, as submitted by them to the Election Commission of India (ECI). The total amount of donations declared by 26 regional parties

was analysed, including both above and below ₹20,000, was ₹189.801 crore, from 5,100 donations, ADR said.

The report said 85.46 per cent or ₹162.21 crore of the total donations received by regional parties was received by five regional parties - TRS, AAP, JDU, SP, and YSR-Congress. TRS, AAP, SP, and YSR-Congress declared an increase in their donations while JDU declared a decrease in the donations in comparison with FY 2020-21.

"With regard to the total amount of donations, TRS leads with ₹40.90 crore from 14 donations followed by AAP which has declared receiving ₹38.24 crore from 2,619 donations," the ADR said. JD-U received ₹33.26 crore - the third highest sum received by all re-



gional parties. SP and YSR-Congress declared receiving ₹29.80 crore and ₹20 crore respectively, the ADR said.

Between FY 2020-21 and FY 2021-

22, donations to YSR-Congress increased by 8,00,300 per cent, followed by SP, for which it was 5,807 per cent, RLD - 4,090 per cent, and MGP that saw an increase of

3,583 per cent. The ADR said four parties - RLTP, JMM, PDF, and DMDK - did not receive any donations during FY 2020-21, but declared receiving donations for FY 2021-22. For 2021-22, RLTP reported getting ₹3 lakh, JMM ₹1 lakh, PDF ₹80,000, and DMDK ₹50,000.

"The AIADMK, SDF, AIFB, PMK and AIUDF declared the highest decrease in the percentage of donations received between FY 2020-21 and 2021-22, of 100 per cent, 100 per cent, 100 per cent and 95 per cent respectively," the report said.

Out of ₹189.801 crore declared received by the regional parties, ₹7.40 lakh from 21 donations was received in cash during FY 2021-22. This formed 0.039 per cent of the total donations to the parties,

the ADR said. The maximum donations in cash were declared by IUML, which collected ₹5.55 lakh in cash, followed by KC-M, PDF, PPA, and AAP which received ₹1 lakh, ₹80,000, ₹5,000, and ₹120, in that order.

Donors from Tamil Nadu made the highest donations in cash donating ₹5.55 lakh. About 4.78 per cent or ₹1.828 crore of the total donations above ₹20,000 to AAP was received from abroad.

A total of ₹2.7286 crore (1.44 per cent of total donations received by the regional parties in FY 2021-22), could not be attributed to any state or Union Territory due to incomplete or lack of information provided by the parties, the ADR said.

Naga groups oppose mining in disputed border areas

NEIPHIU RIO AND HIS ASSAM COUNTERPART HIMANTA BISWA SARMA LAST WEEK HELD TALKS ON SETTLEMENT OF BORDER DISPUTES, AND AGREED, IN PRINCIPLE, ON EXPLORING OIL IN DISPUTED AREAS FOR ECONOMIC BENEFIT OF BOTH STATES

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kohima, April 24: The Naga National Political Groups (NNPG), an grouping of six Naga outfits, has asked Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio "to withdraw any kind of agreement with Assam as disturbed, unresolved boundary areas and mineral exploration attempt therein, as it is guarded by Naga historical and political sanctity."

Rio and his Assam counterpart Himanta Biswa Sarma last week held talks on settlement of border disputes, and agreed, in principle, on exploring oil in disputed areas for economic benefit of both states.

Both Chief Ministers also discussed issues of mutual interests and collaboration on oil exploration along the inter-state border.

After the meeting with Sarma, Rio had told the media that both states have, in principle, decided to go in for a MoU on oil exploration in the disputed areas along the inter-state boundary so that oil can be extracted and royalties shared between both states.

"Once it is formalised, there is huge potential for exploration of oil inside Nagaland also. And to move forward as the country needs oil in a big way," he added.

Oil exploration could not be taken up in Nagaland for quite some time as there has been a standoff on the exploration issue



between the Centre and the state.

The Working Committee of the NNPG, in a statement on Sunday, said that it is constrained to demand the Nagaland Chief Minister to withdraw any kind of understanding with Assam on the disturbed, unresolved boundary areas and mineral exploration attempt therein, "as it is guarded by Naga historical and political sanctity and therefore, immoral and unacceptable to the stakeholders."

"Assam and Nagaland do not have any powers to negotiate or enter into mutual agreements on oil exploration or any sharing contract on the unresolved border areas, as the matter has been subject to intense Negotiations between the NNPG and the Government of India," the statement said.

It said that the subject is a core part of Naga political talks, negotiated and awaiting final agree-

ment between the Central and Naga negotiators.

Both Assam and Nagaland state governments are only caretaker governments as far as the disputed areas are concerned, the NNPG said, adding that the two state governments should not forget the past history of violence and conflict along the borders that cost hundreds of innocent lives and police personnel.

"The handshakes should not in-

vide another round of bloodshed. There are armed revolutionary movements fighting for the right to safeguard their historical political rights in both the regions and therefore the MoUs are premature and unwise as it cannot wash away the stain of a thousand's blood."

It added that the proposed MOU on explorational of mineral activities on the undemarcated borders would have serious consequences in the border areas. "Leaders should not take the peaceful situation as a license to do anything they wish on land and resources."

"They will be held solely responsible for my repercussions in the disputed areas. Let it be that Nagas are solely landowners in the disturbed area belt and they have every right to adopt any measure to protect historical and customary rights over land against blatant misuse of power and authority by embezzlers and profiteers. The NNPG has not surrendered our ancestral land to any neighbouring states," the statement said.

The Central government has been holding talks with the NSCN-IM, the dominant Naga outfit and the NNPG to resolve the decades-old Naga political issue. The stalemate continued as the NSCN-IM remained firm on its demand for a separate flag and constitution for the Nagas.

Jharkhand's ragi revolution now Harvard case study



Gumla district known for poverty and Naxalite insurgency is now witnessing a silent revolution centring around snacks made from a type of millet which can help prevent malnutrition

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gumla, April 24: A Jharkhand district known for its extreme poverty and Naxalite insurgency is now witnessing a silent revolution centring around snacks made from a type of millet which can help prevent malnutrition.

The new agro-industry coming up in this backwoods district is an initiative of a young bureaucrat Sushant Gaurav who says he would like Gumla to be the ragi capital of eastern India.

Tucked away around 100 km from the state capital Ranchi, his work in Gumla has been selected for the Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration that recognises exemplary work by civil servants across the country.

Previously Gumla's economy revolved around rain-fed agriculture with the cultivation of one crop rice.

Ragi cultivation was initiated with the procurement of high-quality seeds through the National Seed Corporation, Deputy Commissioner Sushant Gaurav told PTI in an interview.

"From an initial cultivation of ragi in 1,600 acres, it was increased to 3,600 acres. Net output increased 300 per cent... What helped in the success story is procurement by Sakhhi Mandal Samuh (women's self-help group)."

"We established a ragi processing centre which is the first in Jharkhand. Ragi laddus, bhujia snacks and flour are being produced which help battle malnutrition and anaemia (as it is rich in protein, calcium and iron)," Gaurav said.

Avinash Kumar, Mahatma Gandhi National Fellow, Ministry of Skill Development, Government of India, who made a case study presentation at Harvard Business School on behalf of the deputy commissioner, said the institute is doing a case study on the Gumla model that will be circulated among international business schools and

will be used for training bureaucrats.

The deputy commissioner said a door-to-door survey was done among school children, and lactating mothers and they were identified for severe, moderate and medium anaemia and malnutrition for which preventive and curative measures were taken.

A multi-pronged approach was adopted to combat anaemia, aiming to address and identify it at a very early stage among pregnant and lactating mothers and adolescents.

Over 400 model anganwadi centres were set up equipped with digital haemoglobin-meters, height growth charts, innovative blue MTC (malnutrition treatment card) and follow-up cards, the deputy commissioner said.

"Fitness of children has improved. We have ensured indoor stadiums at all three subdivisions where equipment is free besides open gyms... You can see women doing gym in sarees," he said.

Emphasis was also given to education - many schools got IT facilities, he said.

The district where 85 per cent of the population has agriculture as the primary source of livelihood with over 90 per cent of small and marginal farmers, solar lift systems, drip irrigations, and renovation of ponds have also helped increase the proportion of irrigated land, officials said.

The administration has also increased acreage under mango cultivation to 9,492 acres, promoted organic farming in 5,000 acres besides organising pilot projects for dragon fruit, pear and strawberry cultivation.

Recognising the importance of millets or nutri-cereals, and creating a domestic and global demand along with providing nutritious food to the people, India spearheaded the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolution for declaring the year 2023 as the International Year of Millets.

The proposal by India was supported by 72 countries. Millet is a common term to categorise small-seeded grasses that are often termed nutri-cereals or dryland-cereals and includes sorghum (jowar), pearl millet (bajra), finger millet (ragi), little millet (kutki), foxtail millet (kakum), proso millet (cheena), barnyard millet (sawa), and kodo millet (kodon).

Process to repatriate human remains of Nagas from UK museum underway

These human remains were taken from Nagaland and other Naga-inhabited areas in the region by the British more than a century ago for exhibition of the colonised people and the repatriation is part of the 'decolonisation' process



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kohima, April 24: The process to repatriate the human remains of Nagas from a museum in the United Kingdom is underway, with a collective at the helm of the initiative.

The Pitt Rivers Museum (PRM) in Oxford, which houses 213 human remains of Nagas among other artefacts from across the globe, had in 2020 announced it would remove the human remains and other 'insensitive exhibits' from the display.

Coming to know of it, an Australia-based Naga anthropologist, Dolly Konyak, roped in a fellow Naga social scientist, Dr Arkotong Longkumer, who is based in Edinburgh in Scotland, and approached PRM director Laura Van Broekhoven, who in turn urged Forum for Naga Reconciliation (FNR) to be the facilitator in the repatriation process.

FNR has been playing an active role in reconciliation among various Naga factions that have been holding peace talks with the Centre.

These human remains were taken from Nagaland and other Naga-inhabited areas in the region by the British more than a century ago for exhibition of the colonised people and the repatriation is part of the 'decolonisation' process.

FNR convenor Wati Aier said the organisation is working as a facilitator in the process, which is in the initial stage.

Ellen Konyak Jamir, a member of FNR, said the forum, along with Dolly Kikon and Arkotong Longkumer and some other members of the Naga society, formed a Recover, Restore and Decolonise (RRaD) team in 2020 for the repatriation process.

"We have learnt that the human remains were taken under duress and not given due ritual of burial or treated with dignity. They were taken for infotainment or research

purposes which are against our values and belief," Jamir told PTI.

"The actual repatriation process has not yet begun but the process has been initiated and it may take some time as it is an international issue. We have a lot of work to do," she said.

Jamir said the RRaD team has conducted interviews with scholars, elders and tribal organisations and generated awareness on the issue.

She said that mixed reactions were received during their interaction with the Naga people.

"Youths attended morung lectures in Kohima and Dimapur in large numbers. They were very curious. But some elderly people felt that the remains must not be brought back as those will bring back bad memories and the pain associated with it but most of the people wanted the remains to be repatriated," she said.

Jamir said more consciousness needs to be created on the issue.

She said Arkotong Longkumer and Meren Imchen have brought out a graphic novel on the remains titled 'A Path Home' to engage with the people.

"We feel it is an important work... The repatriation of our ancestors' remains is an important initiative and Naga people must be made aware of the issue," Jamir said.

The museum also houses around 6,000 Naga artefacts but the forum is working on the repatriation of only the human remains, which include parts of skulls, fingers and limbs.

Asked if the remains have been individually identified or the descendants are known, she said the museum has some names of regions and tribes they belong to but a lot of work remains to be done with the help of anthropologists and researchers.

"It is going to be a huge task and will involve a lot of research work," she said.

Non-indigenous settlers to be identified

AGENCIES

Dimapur, April 24: A Joint Task Force, comprising officials of district administration and police officers would be constituted soon for implementation of the Inner Line Permit (ILP) system, and identify the non-indigenous settlers as well as those who entered Dimapur after November 21, 1979.

A district administration official said, "Non-local people and non-Nagas who settled in Dimapur or entered the state's commercial hub after November 21, 1979 will have to possess ILP."

"If the non-indigenous settlers have no ILP they will have to compulsorily obtain the document from the competent authority or from the Deputy Commissioner's office within 30 days," the official said.

Dimapur Deputy Commissioner Sachin Jaiswal has recently held a meeting with all the key stakeholders and discussed issues related to the ILP.

The Deputy Commissioner held the meeting following the media reports of a large number of 'illegal immigrants' living in Dimapur.

The Deputy Commissioner has told the district officials and police officers to inform non-in-

INNER LINE PERMIT



The Inner Line Permit (ILP) under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873 is an official travel document that allows an Indian citizen to visit the ILP enforced state and areas for a limited period and with a specific purpose

The ILP had been in force in Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Mizoram

digenous persons living in Dimapur district since November 21, 1979 that they should possess ILP and a person passing through Dimapur to other states as a passenger must have a valid ticket and other documents.

An official said on violation of

the DC's order, penal action would be initiated against the non-indigenous people as per the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873.

Various organisations and NGOs are agitating in several north-eastern states for proper implementation of the ILP system.

Jharkhand's 50K women masons storm male bastion

Traditionally, women have been working as helpers to 'raj mistris' or male masons. But, the 'rani mistris' have broken this male supremacy

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Ranchi, April 24: Men have generally dominated when it comes to masonry work in the construction sector. However, Sunita Devi of Udaipura village in Jharkhand's Latehar district has stunned everyone with the speed of her work.

Famously known as 'rani mistri', Sunita Devi was also honoured with the Nari Shakti Puraskar, the highest award given to working women by the government, by the President in 2019.

Besides Sunita Devi, there are about 50,000 other 'rani mistris' in Jharkhand who have not only established themselves in the masonry profession, but have also amazed everyone with their efficiency.

Success stories these rani mistris have also reached Prime Minister Narendra Modi and he has encouraged them by talking to some of them through video conferencing.

Sunita Devi recalls that four years ago, her self-help group working in Udaipura was assigned the task of constructing 100 toilets under the Swachh Bharat Mission, but due to the non-availability of masons or their refusal to do this small work, they themselves picked up the tools and started the masonry work.

She was given a primary training by the district administration



and later, she along with 20-25 other women completed toilet construction work.

The World Bank has recently published a report on these rani mistris. The report mentions the name of Urmila Devi, a woman from Hazaribagh, who has built more than 1,000 toilets so far.

Urmila Devi has gone to Champaran in Bihar to work as a mason for the construction of toilets. Poonam Devi, who is working with her, has also worked as a mason in the construction of 900 toilets in the last one year.

Nishat Jahan, another rani mistri from Hazaribagh, says that women are in no way inferior to men. What men can do, women

can also do the same, and sometimes they do it better than men. Women have been working in the construction sector for a long time as labourers. Now that they have got an opportunity to work as rani mistri they are showing their skills and abilities there too.

Usha, who works with Nishat Jahan, says that the job of a mason is not much different from a usual construction labourer; and with a little training any woman can do this job. Compared to labourers, masons spend less time in the work but earn more.

Traditionally, women have been working as helpers in construction activities. They are seen carrying bricks, preparing mortar,

and doing other works under the guidance of 'raj mistris' or male masons. But, women in Jharkhand have broken this male supremacy

According to the World Bank report, for the first time, these women joined the work of masons when the construction of toilets started in large numbers in villages under the Swachh Bharat Mission as most of the (male) masons had migrated to the big cities.

In Jharkhand, more than 50,000 skilled women masons have contributed in the campaign to make the state free from open defecation.

Notably, Jharkhand is one of the states that received technical assistance from the World Bank for planning and implementing the

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. As part of this technical assistance, the World Bank conducted programmes to train masons to build toilets, and women workers participated in many of those programmes.

However, initially the people of the village, especially the women themselves, were reluctant to take up this work. The families of many women masons stood against them. But after struggling initially they achieved their destination.

These women have broken another taboo. Even while working as laborers earlier, these women could not even think of going out of their village or going out to work. These women either did their household chores or worked as laborers in the fields. But now the scenario has changed.

Nishat Jahan belongs to the Muslim community and it was a big challenge for her to come out of the purdah. But she got the training in Ranchi along with other women at a week-long programme of the World Bank. She learned the technical know-how of making toilets.

Apart from this, she also learned the techniques of making soak pit and twin pit. After a week, these women were given practical training to work under a senior mason. Now, after completing the training, these women earn double wages as compared to what they used to get in the past.

of the day quote

See, if there is healthy competition there is nothing wrong. If DK Shivakumar wants to become CM and he is an aspirant there is nothing wrong. If I become an aspirant for the CM post there is nothing wrong. Ultimately newly elected MLAs will decide and the high command will take a decision, on the top post

SIDDARAMAIAH | CONGRESS VETERAN

Collective efforts of the common man and panchayats are playing an important role in realising big dreams of small villages of the Union Territory. By establishing and strengthening three-tier grassroots democracy in J-K, PM Modi has ensured rapid and inclusive development

MANOJ SINHA | J&K LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Law and order in the state has improved and the state is now being identified by its grand festivals and not for the mafia

YOGI ADITYANATH | UP CM

SHORT TAKES

Leopard rescued

Patna: A leopard that had strayed into a house in Bihar's Bagaha district, was rescued by the wildlife department of Valmikinagar Tiger Reserve (VTR). The big cat had strayed into the house of one Lalau Yadav, a native of Malahi Tola village under Madanpur forest range, on Sunday night. A goat tied inside the house had attracted him and he entered the house and killed it. "On hearing the cries of the goat, we rushed towards the room only to see a leopard inside. We immediately bolted the door and informed the wildlife department," Yadav said. A team of the wildlife department of VTR reached the village and tranquillised the leopard. They then captured it and took it away in a cage.

Four arrested

New Delhi: With the arrest of four men, the Delhi Police on Monday claimed to have busted a gang of cyber crooks for cheating over 500 people on the pretext of 'online trading' on a huge margin across the country. The official said that the gang members had Chinese accomplices operating from Dubai. The accused were identified as Sanjay Dabas (26), a resident of Sultanpur Dabas, Farhan Ansari (30), a resident of Jaipur, Rajasthan, Pankaj Wadhwa (38), a resident of Rohini and Monu alias Manoj Kumar Sharma (42), a resident of Vasant Kunj.

Three killed

Nagpur: At least three workers were killed in a major fire that broke out in a factory in the Hingna MIDC in Sonegaon-Nipani area of the district, officials said here Monday. The incident occurred around noon at the Kataro Agro Pvt. Ltd. plant and teams of fire-fighters rushed to battle the conflagration. Plumes of dark smoke were seen billowing out of the factory complex that was visible from long distances, said eyewitnesses. At least three workers were charred in the blaze, while another three sustained severe burns and were rushed to nearby hospitals for treatment.

Bodies found

Lucknow: Bodies of a missing minor couple from Barabanki district in Uttar Pradesh have been recovered from the Indra Canal in Lucknow. The family of the girl had lodged a kidnapping/missing case at the Baddupur police station of Barabanki. The police claimed drowning was ascertained as the cause of death of the girl identified as Pujia Pal, 15, and the boy Akash Yadav, 16.



This government is implementing various schemes to provide the maximum relief to people from inflation and unemployment and the central government should take similar initiatives

ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CM

ATTEMPT FOILED

The Pune Customs Monday foiled an attempt to export 3,500 live goats and sheep to Dubai and seized a vessel



NIA attaches properties of Hizbul chief's sons

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

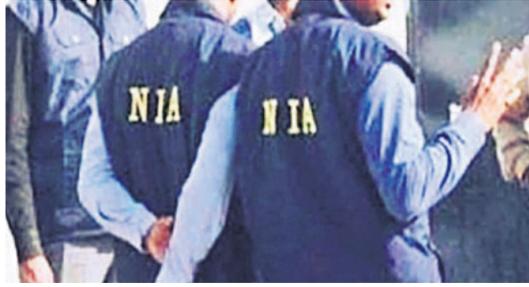
Srinagar, April 24: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) Monday attached a house and two canals of land belonging to Hizbul Mujahideen chief Syed Salahudeen's two sons in Jammu and Kashmir's Budgam and Srinagar districts, officials said.

A team of NIA officials first attached a house in Ram Bagh area here registered in the name of Syed Ahmed Shakeel, son of designated terrorist Salahudeen, they said. "The house, registered in the revenue records in the name of Syed Ahmad Shakeel, was attached by the NIA on court orders under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act," an NIA official said.

Later, the team went to Soibugh in Budgam district, the ancestral place of one of the most wanted terrorists in India, and attached a plot of agricultural land measuring two kanals (10,880 square feet), the officials said. The land is registered in the name of Salahudeen's another son, Shahid Yusuf.

Notice boards announcing the attachments were installed at both the premises by the NIA sleuths. Besides, the NIA also seized six shops in Awantipora area of Pulwama district in a case relating to a 2018 attack on CRPF Group Centre at Lethpora, J&K.

In a statement, the NIA said it attached two properties of the sons of designated terrorist Syed Mohammed Yusuf Shah @ Syed Salahudeen, the self-styled Supreme



Commander of Hizbul-Mujahideen (HM) and Chairman of United Jihad Council (UJC).

"The immovable properties of Shahid Yusuf and Syed Ahmed Shakeel, located in Kashmir - in Soibugh Tehsil, Distt. Budgam and Nursing Garh, Mohalla Ram Bagh, have been attached under section 33(1) of UA(P) Act," the NIA said.

Both Shahid Yusuf and Syed Ahmed Shakeel are lodged in Delhi's Tihar Jail since their arrests in October 2017 and August 2018. They were chargesheeted on April 20, 2018 and November 20, 2018, respectively.

The duo had been receiving funds from abroad from the associates of their father and overground workers of HM, it added. Salahudeen, who had fled to Pakistan in 1993, was designated as an individual terrorist by India in October 2020.

He continues to operate from Pakistan, from where he is guid-

ing and instructing Hizbul cadres as well as activists of UJC, also known as Muttahida Jihad Council (MJC) which is a conglomerate of around 13 Pakistan-based Kashmir centric terror outfits.

Besides instigating and operationalising militant activities in India, primarily in Kashmir valley, Salahudeen has been raising funds and routing finances to India through hawala channels and international money transfer channels for furthering the terrorist activities of HM cadres.

The NIA launched investigations in November 2011 into the criminal conspiracy to raise/collect/provide funds to commit terrorist acts and distribute funds among the terror groups and their sympathizers in J&K for the purpose of committing terrorist acts. The Special Cell of Delhi Police had initially registered a case in January 2011 and the case was subsequently taken over by the NIA.

DOGS KILL TWO CHILDREN IN UP

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Aligarh, April 24: Two children were mauled to death by dogs in separate incidents that occurred in Uttar Pradesh's Aligarh and Moradabad districts.

In Aligarh, a three-month-old infant was mauled to death by a stray dog on Sunday when her family was attending a wedding near their house while she slept unattended. The incident took place under Quarsi police station limits.

The infant's father, Pawan Kumar, a daily wage, said: "My two sisters were getting married and we had stepped out to attend the function. The baby was asleep unattended. In our absence, a dog took away our child and mauled her to death. When I returned, I could not find my daughter. When I looked for her, I saw the stray tearing into her in a nearby plot."



SHO Arvind Rathi said: "The family cremated the body without informing us. A police team later inspected the spot, and higher officials have been informed about the incident." In the second incident, a seven-year-old boy was mauled to death by a pack of stray dogs in Moradabad's Bilari area also on Sunday.

The boy, Savendra Kumar, had gone out with his sister to serve tea to his father when they were surrounded by the strays. The local SP MLA met the aggrieved family and said he would raise the matter in the state Assembly.

SC accepts Lalit Modi's 'unconditional apology'

A bench of Justices MR Shah and CT Ravikumar took note of an affidavit filed by Modi in which he stated that in future he will not do anything which is inconsistent with the 'majesty or dignity of Courts or Indian judiciary' in any manner

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 24: The Supreme Court Monday closed contempt proceedings against ex-IPL commissioner Lalit Modi after he tendered an unconditional apology for his remarks against the judiciary in social media posts.

A bench of Justices MR Shah and CT Ravikumar took note of an affidavit filed by Modi in which he stated that in future he will not do anything which is inconsistent with the 'majesty or dignity of Courts or Indian judiciary' in any manner.

"We accept the unconditional apology. We remind the respondent (Modi) that any such attempt on his part in future, which would tantamount to remotely tarnishing the image of Indian judiciary and courts, will be seen very seriously," it said.

"We accept the unconditional apology with a broad heart because the Court always believes in forgiveness more particularly when an apology is tendered un-



conditional and from the bottom of the heart...Accepting the apology we close the present proceedings," the bench said.

The court said, "Everybody should respect the institution as a whole that was our only concern". On April 13, the top court had come down heavily on Modi over his remarks against the judiciary and directed him to tender an unconditional apology on social media platforms and national newspapers.

Observing that Modi is not above the law and the institution, it had warned any repeat of such conduct will be viewed very seriously. The apex court had also directed him to file an affidavit before it tendering an apology and stating no such posts will be made in future which would tantamount, even remotely, to tarnishing the image of the Indian judiciary.

Judges have no business giving interviews on pending cases: SC



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 24: Observing that judges have no business granting interviews on pending matters, the Supreme Court Monday sought a report within four days from the Registrar General of the Calcutta High Court on whether Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay gave an interview to a news channel about the case related to the school job-for-bribe case in West Bengal.

"I just want to say it that judges have no business granting interviews on matters which are pending," Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud, sharing a bench with Justice P S Narasimha, said while taking strong note of the purported interview given by Justice Gangopadhyay to a news channel about the case.

"The petitioner (TMC leader Abhishek Banerjee) has annexed a translated transcript of an interview of Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay on a TV Channel ABP Ananda.

The Registrar General of

I just want to say it that judges have no business granting interviews on matters which are pending

BY CHANDRACHUD | CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA

Calcutta High Court is directed to clarify from the judge as to whether he had been interviewed by... Of the news channel. The Registrar General is directed to file his affidavit before this court on or before Thursday. We will list it on Friday," the bench said.

The top court said its order will not come in the way of the ongoing investigation by the CBI and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in the alleged scam.

On being told by Additional Solicitor General S V Raju, appearing for the central probe agencies, that this may lead to stalling of the ongoing probe, the bench said the judge should not be giving an interview about the pending case that is before the single judge bench.

Senior Advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, appearing for Banerjee, referred to the translated transcription of the interview given by Justice Gangopadhyay in which he allegedly spoke against the TMC MP and party general secretary. "With the greatest respect and humility, this just cannot be done," the senior lawyer said.



Workers prepare garlands to decorate the Kedarnath temple ahead of the opening of the temple's gates in Rudraprayag district

PTI PHOTO

MAN HELD FOR URINATING ON CO-PASSENGER

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 24: An Indian man travelling from New York to Delhi in an American Airlines flight has been apprehended at the airport here for allegedly urinating on his co-passenger, official sources said Monday.

The accused Indian passenger was stated by the airlines staff to be under the influence of liquor and

he urinated on his co-passenger during an argument, they said.

The incident took place on board American Airlines flight AA 292 and the alleged "unruly" passenger was apprehended by the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) after the plane landed at the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport around 9 PM on Sunday.

The victim passenger has filed a formal complaint with the air-

lines, the sources said.

The carrier reported the matter to the Delhi airport before landing and both the passengers involved were later handed over to the Delhi Police.

A senior police officer said legal action has been taken in the matter under non-cognisable offences. The police initiated the action after the complaint given by the airlines staff about the unruly

behaviour of the passenger. "There was no corroborative evidence or complaint given by co-passengers regarding someone peeing on them," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Airport) Devesh Kumar Mahla said.

Incidents of passengers allegedly urinating on co-passengers purportedly after consuming liquor have been reported in the recent past.

Politics may be burdensome for religion but religion is lethal in politics

Politics may be burdensome for religion but religion is lethal in politics. The after-effects of this corrosive mix is visible every time elections are round the corner in India. Thus it is just plain coincidence that the religious festival of Ram Navami which fell on March 30 this year, before the state assembly elections in Karnataka, became a point of communal friction in various parts of India?

This Hindu festival marks the celebration of the birth of Rama, considered the seventh 'avatar' (re-incarnation) of the deity, Vishnu, to king Dashratha and queen Kaushalya in Ayodhya. A day of joyous mirth and religious merry-making in the days of old, any festival of any religion turns the population pensive these days accompanied by a combined sigh

of relief, if it passes peacefully.

News reports spoke of violent incidents, hate speeches and inciting sloganeering during the celebrations across the country with stone-pelting and arson raising communal temperatures causing death, destruction and damage to property. Caught in the vortex of these violent incidents were at least seven states of West Bengal, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Jharkhand and Bihar with at least two deaths and scores of injured reported countrywide. Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat were the states which went to polls last year.

In April last year clashes had erupted in ten states during Hanuman Jayanti celebrations with such and alike incidents of stone-pelting, sloganeering and arson being reported. The states in-

cluded Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Delhi, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra.

With the BJP-ruled Centre no



longer an impartial ombudsman, the usual political slugfest begins as religious festivals near. Three of these states-Gujarat, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh are BJP-ruled and the remaining four under Opposition rule. This Ram Navami was no exception either. Opposition-ruled states charge

the BJP-ruled Centre with playing partisan politics. There is quite a different yardstick being followed by the Centre in the states where its own party is in power while the rough end of the stick is used in the case of Opposition-ruled states. The Union Home Minister was flexing his muscles when it came to West Bengal and Bihar but had little to say in the case of Gujarat or Maharashtra, which had seen clashes and violence during the recent festivities.

West Bengal shot into the lime-light after Union Home Minister Amit Shah got in touch with the state Governor for a feedback on the violence in the state. Days before the violence in Howrah, Hooghly and Uttar Dinajpur; both the ruling TMC and the BJP had begun focusing on communal issues. The chief minister's announcement of

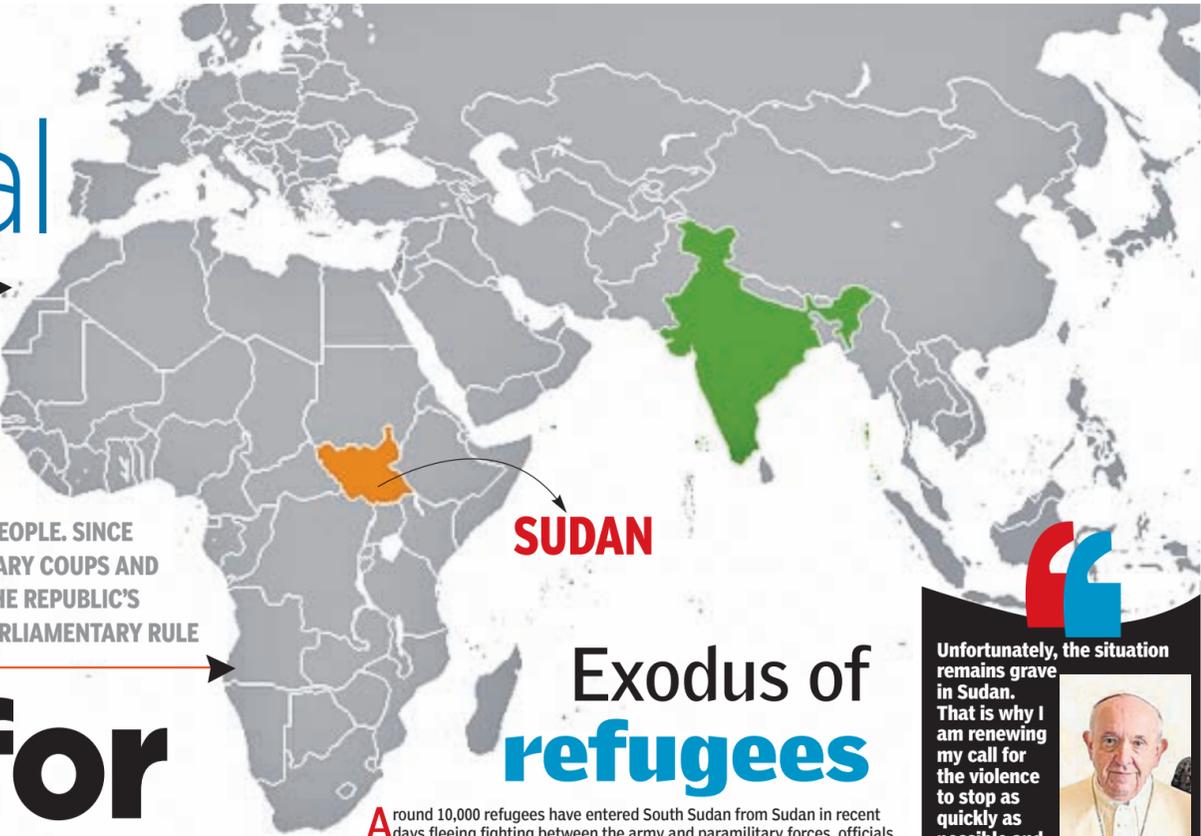
a dharna on March 29-30 demanding payments due to it from the Centre saw the BJP targeting the ruling party with being anti-Hindu for agitating on Ram Navami. TMC countered publicly expressing apprehensions that the BJP-Sangh Parivar planned to foment violence in a bid at communally polarizing voters ahead of local self-government polls. The sloganeering, and carrying of swords and guns during the religious procession made viral through social media was further used to buttress the claim.

The Calcutta High Court which had reserved its judgement on a plea by BJP leader Suwendu Adhikari seeking a NIA probe into the violence reserved its judgement but observed that these were prima facie pre-planned and there was an Intelligence failure.

If the BJP Opposition in West Bengal charged the ruling party with minority appeasement, its approach in self-powered Gujarat was different. Stone-pelting had been reported during two processions organized by the VHP and Bajrang Dal when it was passing through sensitive areas in Vadodara. The second stone-pelting, published reports said, was said to be as a reaction to the first one. A VHP leader's video threatening cops and giving provocative statements had also gone viral. Thirty six people representing those from both communities were promptly arrested and it included the VHP leader for his inflammatory speech. Following directions from senior police officers and with a view to ensure peace and communal harmony, police personnel attended an iftar party organised by Muslim community members.

international

THE HISTORY OF CONFLICTS IN SUDAN HAS CONSISTED OF FOREIGN INVASIONS AND RESISTANCE, ETHNIC TENSIONS, RELIGIOUS DISPUTES, AND COMPETITION OVER RESOURCES. IN ITS MODERN HISTORY, TWO CIVIL WARS BETWEEN THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND THE SOUTHERN REGIONS KILLED 1.5 MILLION PEOPLE, AND A CONTINUING CONFLICT IN THE WESTERN REGION OF DARFUR HAS DISPLACED TWO MILLION PEOPLE AND KILLED MORE THAN 200,000 PEOPLE. SINCE INDEPENDENCE IN 1956, SUDAN HAS HAD MORE THAN FIFTEEN MILITARY COUPS AND IT HAS ALSO BEEN RULED BY THE MILITARY FOR THE MAJORITY OF THE REPUBLIC'S EXISTENCE, WITH ONLY BRIEF PERIODS OF DEMOCRATIC CIVILIAN PARLIAMENTARY RULE



Exodus of refugees

Around 10,000 refugees have entered South Sudan from Sudan in recent days fleeing fighting between the army and paramilitary forces, officials in South Sudan's Renk County said Monday. About 6,500 crossed the border on Saturday and another 3,000 Sunday, and more were arriving Monday, county commissioner Kak Padiet told Reuters. The army commander in Renk, Dau Aturjong, said three-quarters of the arrivals are South Sudanese while the rest are Sudanese, Eritrean, Kenyan, Ugandan and Somali. Sudan hosts 800,000 South Sudanese refugees who have fled long-running conflicts there. South Sudan gained its independence from its northern neighbour in 2011. More than 2 million people are also internally displaced within South Sudan, where civil war from 2013 to 2018 resulted in an estimated 400,000 deaths.



Unfortunately, the situation remains grave in Sudan. That is why I am renewing my call for the violence to stop as quickly as possible and for dialogue to resume



This tragic violence in Sudan has already cost the lives of hundreds of innocent civilians. It's unconscionable, and it must stop



We have to continue pushing for a political settlement. We cannot afford that Sudan, which is a very populated country, implodes because it will be sending shock waves around the world (of) Africa



We call for an end of hostilities in Sudan. The warring sides must protect civilians and secure safe passage for humanitarian operations



Struggle for power in Sudan



Lt Gen Abdel Fattah al-Burhan | Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo

from Lebanon and Syria to Libya and Ethiopia.

WHO IS FIGHTING?
Gen Abdel Fattah Burhan, head of the armed forces, and Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo, the leader of a paramilitary group known as the Rapid Support Forces that grew out of Darfur's notorious Janjaweed militias, are each seeking to seize control of Sudan. It comes two years after they jointly carried out a military coup and derailed a transition to democracy that had begun after protesters in 2019 helped force the ouster of longtime autocrat Omar al-Bashir. In recent months, negotiations were underway for a return to the democratic transition.

The victor of the latest fighting is likely to be Sudan's next president, with the loser facing exile, arrest or death. A long-running civil war or partition of the Arab and African country into rival fiefdoms are also possible.

WHAT DOES THE FIGHTING MEAN FOR SUDAN'S NEIGHBORS?
Sudan is Africa's third-largest country by area and straddles the Nile River. It uneasily shares its waters with regional heavyweights Egypt and Ethiopia. Egypt relies

on the Nile to support its population of over 100 million, and Ethiopia is working on a massive upstream dam that has alarmed both Cairo and Khartoum. Egypt has close ties to Sudan's military, which it sees as an ally against Ethiopia. Cairo has reached out to both sides in Sudan to press for a cease-fire but is unlikely to stand by if the military faces defeat.

Sudan borders five additional countries: Libya, Chad, the Central African Republic, Eritrea and South Sudan, which seceded in 2011 and took 75% of Khartoum's oil resources with it. Nearly all are mired in their own internal conflicts, with various rebel groups operating along the porous borders.



Evacuation mission

Nations including Gulf states and Russia were trying to get citizens out Monday. Diplomats have been targeted in attacks, and at least five aid workers killed.

Despite sustained pressure from countries concerned by the conflict's wider repercussions as well as the safety of their nationals, the two sides have not abided by a temporary truce. Families with children crowded into Spanish and French military transport planes, while a group of nuns were among the evacuees on an Italian aircraft, photographs showed. Some of the flights left from the Wadi Seyidna air base north of Khartoum, the army said. At least two convoys involved in evacuations came under attack at the weekend, including one carrying Qatari embassy staff and another carrying French citizens, one of whom was injured. Several countries sent military planes from Djibouti to fly people out from the capital, while other operations took people by convoy to Port Sudan on the Red Sea.

AGENCIES

Sudan has been going through difficult times as fighting between two strong competing military factions appears to be posing a threat of a national civil war. Till now extreme violence in Sudan has resulted in the deaths of at least 420 people, whereas more than 3700 people are left injured. Fighting in Sudan between forces loyal to two top generals has put that nation at risk of collapse and could have consequences far beyond its borders. Clashes erupted after weeks of

heightened tensions between the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a paramilitary group led by Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo also known as Hemedti and the military, headed by Lt Gen Abdel Fattah al-Burhan. The two generals disagree over the proposed transition to civilian rule in Sudan. Both sides have tens of thousands of fighters, foreign backers, mineral riches and other resources that could insulate them from sanctions. It's a recipe for the kind of prolonged conflict that has devastated other countries in the Middle East and Africa,

Kenya starvation cult death toll rises to 58

REUTERS

Nairobi, April 24: Kenyan police have recovered 58 bodies, mostly from mass graves in a forest in eastern Kenya, thought to be followers of a Christian cult who believed they would go to heaven if they starved themselves, the country's police chief said Monday. The death toll, which has repeatedly risen as exhumations have been carried out, could rise further. The Kenyan Red Cross said 112 people have been reported missing to a tracing and counselling desk it has set up at a local hospital. Followers of the self-proclaimed Good News International Church had been living in several secluded settlements in an 800-acre area within the Shakahola forest. Kenya's Inspector General of Police Japhet Koome, visiting the scene, said the death toll included 50 people found in mass graves as well as eight who were found alive and emaciated, but later died. He added that 29 survivors had been rescued and police were still searching for potential others.



The cult's leader, Paul Mackenzie, was arrested on April 14 following a tip-off that suggested the existence of shallow graves containing the bodies of at least 31 of his followers. Koome said 14 other cult members were in police custody. Mackenzie was arraigned April 15 at Malindi Law Courts, where the judge gave police 14 days to conduct investigations while he was kept in detention.

SECURITY OR INSECURITY

Global military spending rockets

Several nations significantly increased their military spending following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, while others announced plans to raise spending levels over periods of up to a decade



- Global military spending rises to \$2.24trn in 2022
- Spending rising to all-time high since last 8 years
- 4 largest arms spenders: US, China, Russia, India
- Europe's expenditure steepest with a 13% jump

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Stockholm, April 24: Global military spending grew for the eighth consecutive year in 2022 to an all-time high of \$2.24 trillion, with a sharp rise in Europe, chiefly due to Russian and Ukrainian expenditure, a Swedish think tank said Monday. Spending globally increased by 3.7% in real terms, but military expenditure in Europe was up 13% — its steepest year-on-year increase in at least 30 years, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, or SIPRI, said in a report. Military aid to Ukraine and concerns about a heightened threat from Russia "strongly influenced

many other states' spending decisions." The independent Swedish watchdog said that last year, the three largest arms spenders were the

United States, China and Russia, who between them accounted for 56% of global expenditure. India's military spending of \$81.4 billion was the fourth highest in the world in 2022 and saw a jump of 6% from the previous year, the report noted. In the European region, the rise in military spending has been steepest with a 13% jump in expenditure. Some of the sharpest increases were seen in countries near Russia: Finland (36%), Lithuania (27%), Sweden (12%) and Poland (11%). Both Sweden and Finland jointly

The rise is a sign that we are living in an increasingly insecure world

NAN TIAN | RESEARCHER, SIPRI'S MILITARY EXPENDITURE AND ARMS PRODUCTION PROGRAM

applied for NATO membership in May 2022, abandoning decades of nonalignment in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. While Finland has been admitted, Sweden's bid to join NATO remains stalled by opposition from Turkey and Hungary. "While the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 certainly affected military spending decisions in 2022, concerns about Russian aggression have been building for much longer," said Lorenzo Scarazzato, a researcher with SIPRI's Military Expenditure and Arms Production Program. "Many former Eastern bloc states have more than doubled their military spending since 2014, the year when Russia annexed Crimea." Established in 1966, SIPRI is an international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament.

US: The United States continues to be the largest military spender globally, with military spending amounting to \$877 billion in 2022. This figure represented 39% of the total global military expenditure and was three times higher than the military spending of China, which is the world's second-largest spender. Despite the 0.7% increase in US military spending in real terms in 2022, the increase would have been more significant if it were not for the highest levels of inflation since 1981.

is noteworthy that China's military spending has increased for 28 years in a row. **Russia:** It is estimated that in 2022, Russia's military spending increased by around 9.2%, reaching approximately \$86.4 billion. This amounted to 4.1% of Russia's gross domestic product (GDP), compared to 3.7% in 2021. Furthermore, according to figures released by Russia in late 2022, spending on national defense — the most significant element of the country's military expenditure — exceeded budgetary plans drawn up in 2021 by 34% in nominal terms. **Ukraine:** In 2022, Ukraine's military expenditure totaled \$44 billion, marking the most significant one-year increase in a country's military spending

ever recorded in SIPRI data, with an increase of 640%. The surge in military spending, coupled with the economic damage caused by the ongoing war, resulted in a considerable increase in Ukraine's military burden. In particular, the military burden, which measures military spending as a share of GDP, rose to 34% of GDP in 2022, up from 3.2% in 2021. **Cold War mentality:** The combined military budget of Central and Western European countries in 2022 amounted to \$345 billion, which is higher than the spending level in 1989 when the cold war was ending when adjusted for inflation. Moreover, the military spending of these states in 2022 was 30% more than it was in 2013.

Australia unveils its biggest defence reform in decades

Australia to ramp up ties with India, Japan in Indo-Pacific amid China's aggressive actions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Melbourne, April 24: Australia Monday said it will deepen its diplomatic and defence partnerships with key allies in the strategic Indo-Pacific, including India and Japan, in response to China's growing assertion of sovereignty over the South China Sea and its threat to the global rules-based order. Unveiling the Defense Strategic Review in Canberra, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's government set out a blueprint for Australia's strategic policy, defence planning and resources over the coming decades. The public version of the final report did not label China a direct military threat to Australia, but said Beijing's assertion of sovereignty over the disputed South China Sea "threatens the global rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific

in a way that adversely impacts Australia's national interests". It labelled the competition between China and the United States "the defining feature of our region and our time" and noted that America is "no longer the unipolar leader of the Indo-Pacific". "Investing in our Indo-Pacific regional partnerships remains essential. Australia's focus must be to deepen its engagement and collaboration with partners across Southeast Asia and the Pacific. The Defence Cooperation Program should continue to grow, particularly in the Indian Ocean region," it said. China claims nearly all of the disputed South China Sea, though Taiwan, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia and Vietnam all claim parts of it. Beijing has built artificial islands and military installations in the South China Sea. Beijing is also involved in a maritime dispute with Japan over the East China Sea. Australia must continue to expand its relationships and practical cooperation with key powers, including Japan and India, the report said.



business

of the day quote

This venture into NB-IoT strengthens our credentials as the largest cellular IoT player in the country and places us firmly as a partner of choice for Discoms looking to invest in smart meters

AJAY CHITKARA | DIRECTOR AND CEO, AIRTEL BUSINESS

2022 was one of the company's strongest performing calendar years. We crossed remarkable production milestones as well

SATYAKAM ARYA | MD AND CEO, DICV

Over 300 players have confirmed their participation. The players will explore growth opportunities as India moves towards clean sources, strengthening local supply chains system, reducing input cost

PRIVADARSHINI SANJAY | MD, MERCOR INDIA

SHORT TAKES

BoM Q4 net profit more than doubles

New Delhi: State-owned Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) reported a more than two-fold jump in its net profit to ₹840 crore for the March quarter, helped by a decline in bad loans. The bank had earned a net profit of ₹355 crore in the year-ago period. During the quarter, the bank's total income increased to ₹5,317 crore as against ₹3,949 crore a year ago, BoM said in a regulatory filing. Interest income grew to ₹4,495 crore during the period under review, from ₹3,426 crore in the corresponding quarter a year ago. The bank's board has recommended a dividend of ₹1.30 per share or 13 per cent of ₹10 face value out of the net profits for the year ended March 31, 2023. Gross Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) were reduced to 2.47 per cent of gross advances as of March 31, 2023 from 3.94 per cent by the end of March 2022. Net NPAs also came down to 0.25 per cent of the advances from 0.97 per cent at the end of 2022. The fall in bad loans ratio helped cut the provisions towards NPAs for Q4Y23 to ₹545 crore as compared with ₹568 crore a year ago.

Vedanta cuts gross debt by \$1 billion

New Delhi: Vedanta Resources Limited (Vedanta), the parent company of Mumbai-listed mining giant Vedanta Ltd, Monday said it has paid all its maturing loans and bonds due in this month to reduce its gross debt by a further \$1 billion. Vedanta has now reduced debt by a total of \$3 billion since it announced in February 2022 its intention to accelerate deleveraging. It had announced plans to reduce debt by \$4 billion within 3 years. "Vedanta has thereby achieved 75 per cent of its committed reduction in just 14 months," the firm said. The firm's gross debt now stands at \$6.8 billion, down from \$7.8 billion at the end of March 2023 and from \$9.7 billion at the end of March 2022.

FRL insolvency bids

New Delhi: As many as 48 companies, including Reliance Retail, Jindal Power Ltd and Adani group, are in the final list of eligible prospective resolution applicants for acquiring debt-ridden Future Retail Ltd. The Resolution Professional of Future Retail Ltd (FRL), which is currently going through an insolvency resolution process, came out with the final list of Eligible Prospective Resolution Applicants. On April 10, FRL's RP updated a list of 49 firms, which had submitted Expressions of Interest after the company's lenders decided to invite fresh bids after dividing its assets into clusters.



India is witnessing an energy transition towards sustainable sources at an unprecedented pace.

SUMAN SHARMA | MD, SECI

AI TO USE CHATGPT-DRIVEN CHATBOT; INVESTS \$200MN

Air India Monday said it will be using ChatGPT-driven chatbot and various other initiatives as part of modernising the airline's digital systems for which it has made an initial investment of \$200 million



'Allow foreign currency transactions in country via RBI'

At present a transaction fee is levied on US dollars transactions within the country

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 24: Consultants and service providers in the country have urged the government to stop routing domestic foreign currency deals via the US banking system, in order to avoid transac-

tion fees and save foreign currency. Rather such domestic deals involving foreign currencies such as the US dollar should be routed through the Reserve Bank of India. At present a transaction fee is levied on US dollars transactions within the country.

For example, a payment in US dollars from Delhi to even nearby Faridabad from one entity to the other in the current dispensation, is required to be undertaken through the US banking system. "This should be undertaken



directly through the Reserve Bank of India and there should be no re-

quirement of routing them through the American Banking

system. By routing the transactions through the American Banking system, the country is losing substantial money, which is going to the Americans towards transaction costs," ambassador for Asia-Pacific region for the International Federation of Consulting Engineers KK Kapila said in a statement.

Kapila pointed out that a small country like the Philippines does not route its internal foreign exchange transactions through the United States.

"If the Philippines can do it, why not India?" he said, adding "this needs an urgent correction, lest we continue to lose every single day. If it is part of some Trade Agreement, it needs an urgent relook. Let this be addressed on top priority."

According to him, the consultants and the service sector demanded that such deals involving foreign currencies such as the US dollar in the country should be routed through the Reserve Bank of India.

Russian oil slashes OPEC's share of Indian market to 22-year low

Russia overtook Iraq for the first time to emerge as the top oil supplier to India, pushing Saudi Arabia down to third spot in the last fiscal year



OPEC's share of India's oil market slide to 59% from 72% YoY
India's oil imports in 2022/23 surge 9% from a year earlier

REUTERS

New Delhi, April 24: OPEC's share of India's oil imports fell at the fastest pace in 2022/23 to the lowest in at least 22 years, as intake of cheaper Russian oil surged, data obtained from industry sources show, and the major producers' share could shrink further this year. Members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), mainly from the Middle East and Africa, saw their share of India's oil market slide to 59% in the fiscal year to March 2023, from about 72% in 2021/22, a Reuters analysis of the data that dates back to 2001/02 showed.

OPEC's share shrank as India, which in the past rarely bought Russian oil due to high freight costs, is now the top oil client for Russian seaborne oil, rejected by Western nations following Moscow's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

India shipped in about 1.6 million barrels per day (bpd) of Russian oil in 2022/23, the data showed, about 23% of its overall 4.65 million bpd imports.

The decision by OPEC and their allies, a group known as OPEC+ to cut production in May could further squeeze OPEC's share in India, the world's third largest oil importer later this year if Russian supplies stay elevated.

Higher intake of Russian oil boosted the share of Commonwealth of Independent

States (CIS) countries to a record 26.3%, and reduced that of Middle Eastern and African nations to a 22-year low of 55% and 7.6%, respectively.

In 2021/22, Middle East's share was 64% while Africa's was 13.4%, the data showed. Latin America's share declined to a 15-year low of 4.9% in 2022/23.

India's oil imports in 2022/23 rose 9% from a year earlier, as state refiners cranked up runs to meet rising local fuel demand after private refiners turned to exports instead of selling fuel at below-market rates domestically, the data showed. Local refiners together processed about 6% more crude in 2022/23 at about 5.13 million bpd, government data show.

In March, India shipped in nearly 5 million bpd of oil, marginally higher than the previous month, with Russian oil accounting for about 36% of overall imports, the data showed.

"OPEC's output cut decision is helping Russia as well," said Refinitiv analyst Ehsan Ul Haq, adding the planned supply cut has lifted global oil prices and at the same time narrowed the discounts for Russian oil against Brent and Dubai benchmarks.

Some Russian cargoes are being priced above \$60 a barrel - a cap imposed by the Group of Seven nations, European Union and Australia to curb Moscow's revenues while allowing traders to access western ships and insurance.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 24: Equity benchmark Sensex climbed over 400 points to reclaim the 60,000 mark Monday, on strong buying in financial stocks after earnings from ICICI Bank and Reliance Industries matched street expectations.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 401.04 points or 0.67 per cent to reach the 60,000-level and settled for the day at 60,056.10. During intraday, it hit a high of 60,101.64 and a low of 59,620.11. As many as 23 stocks in the index ended in the green and seven in the red. The broader NSE Nifty gained 119.35 points or 0.68 per cent to close at 17,743.40. A total of 24 Nifty shares gained, while 26 declined.

"After witnessing a sluggish trend over the past few sessions, fresh buying emerged ahead of the monthly F&O expiry later this week. While the markets may still be choppy and volatile, we may see select bouts of buying going ahead," said Shrikant Chouhan, Head of Equity Research (Retail), Kotak Securities Ltd.

Among the Sensex firms, Wipro,



Axis Bank, Titan, UltraTech Cement and HDFC Bank, HDFC, HCL Tech and Reliance were the gainers. Bajaj Finance, Infosys, Mahindra & Mahindra and Maruti were among the laggards.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge went up 0.47 per cent and smallcap index rose 0.34 per cent. Among sectoral indices, bankex went up by 1.32 per cent, fi-

ancial services rose by 1.21 per cent and realty by 1.05 per cent. Besides, FMCG, commodities, energy and tech were the other gainers.

On the other hand, healthcare fell by 0.47 per cent, utilities declined 0.28 per cent and auto slipped by 0.04 per cent.

Asian markets saw mixed trends. The Nikkei 225 gained 0.10 per cent, while the Shanghai Composite

FIRST SINCE HINDENBURG

Adani begins \$130mn debt buyback

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 24: Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone (APSEZ) Monday started the first debt buyback programme since billionaire Gautam Adani's conglomerate was targeted by a US short-seller in January.

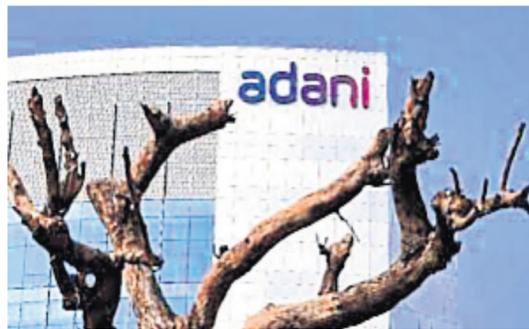
APSEZ floated a tender to buy back as much as \$130 million of its July 2024 bonds and similar amounts in each of the next four quarters, it said in an exchange filing, as it looks to regain investor confidence by showing that its liquidity position is comfortable.

Shares of Adani group companies plummeted after Hindenburg Research in a January 24 report accused it of accounting fraud and improper use of offshore tax havens for stock manipulation.

APSEZ said it had started a buyback programme for its 3.375 per cent 2024 maturity dollar-denominated bonds.

"The purpose of the tender offer is to partly prepay the company's near-term debt maturities and to convey the comfortable liquidity position," it said in a statement.

The company has engaged Barclays Bank, DBS Bank, Emirates



NBD Bank PJSC, First Abu Dhabi Bank, PJSC, MUFG Securities Asia Singapore Branch, SMBC Nikko Securities (Hong Kong) and Standard Chartered Bank to serve as dealer managers for the offer.

"APSEZ today announced that it has commenced a tender offer to purchase for cash up to \$130 million in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding 3.375 per cent Senior Notes due 2024," the statement said.

"After the successful completion of this Tender Offer, the company expects \$520 million Notes to remain outstanding."

Post this tender offer the com-

pany intends to purchase for cash approximately \$130 million of the Outstanding Notes in each of the next four quarters.

"The company may choose to either accelerate or defer this plan subject to its own liquidity position and the market conditions and further subject to the terms, including the pricing, to be separately announced for each of such tranches," it said.

The company intends to fund the Notes accepted for purchase in the Tender Offer from its cash reserves. The tender offer ends May 22, 2023.

and Hang Seng fell 0.78 per cent and 0.58 per cent, respectively. European markets were lower with CAC in France sliding 0.17 per cent while London's FTSE 100 was off 0.08 per cent and Germany's DAX was lower by 0.06 per cent. The US markets ended on a mixed note Friday.

Meanwhile, global oil benchmark Brent crude dipped 0.21 per cent to \$81.49 per barrel.

The rupee appreciated 14 paise to close at 81.92 against the US dollar. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) remained net sellers in the capital market as they offloaded shares worth ₹412.27 crore, as per exchange data. Meanwhile, India's forex reserves rose \$1.657 billion to \$586.412 billion as of April 14, according to Reserve Bank of India data released Friday.

Investors would also keep an eye on key global events viz. Bank of Japan interest rate decision and GDP data for several important economies including the US, Eurozone, Germany, France, and Italy that would announce their Q1 GDP data during the week and would provide an indication on global economic health.

Operations by ADB cross \$20bn in 2022

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 24: Multi-lateral funding agency ADB on Monday said it committed \$20.5 billion from its own resources in 2022 to help Asia and the Pacific continue its recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic despite fresh economic headwinds and crises.

The financial and operational results published in ADB's Annual Report 2022 pointed how the bank combined finance and knowledge, and leveraged partnerships to help the region cope with economic shocks exacerbated by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, a worsening food crisis, and extreme weather events.

Our support in 2022 helped our developing member countries (DMCs) navigate the immediate impacts of these crises while bolstering their longer-term resilience in critical areas such as climate change and food security, said ADB president Masatsugu Asakawa.

The \$20.5 billion comprised loans and guarantees, grants, equity investments, and technical assistance provided to governments and the private sector. ADB mobilized an additional \$11.4 billion in co-financing, it said.

ADB committed \$6.7 billion in financing for climate mitigation and adaptation in 2022, making progress toward its ambition of providing \$100 billion in cumulative climate financing during 2019-2030.

To address the region's worsening food crisis, it said, ADB provided \$3.7 billion under its \$14 billion food security programme, delivering essential food relief for people most in need and strengthening food production systems.

To support economic recovery, it said, ADB financed institutional reforms, strengthened public service delivery and growth in key economic sectors. ADB's \$3.9 billion in commitments to the private sector included vital liquidity support to enterprises facing a difficult business environment.



Hinduja family's truce uncertain, London court hears

THE LAWYER SAID THERE WERE LAWSUITS AND "THREATENED LAWSUITS" BETWEEN MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY, RAISING UNCERTAINTY IN THE HINDUJA FAMILY, WHOSE BUSINESS SPANS SECTORS INCLUDING BANKING, CHEMICALS AND HEALTHCARE, FACES FURTHER LITIGATION

REUTERS

London, April 24: India's billionaire Hinduja family's apparent truce over the future of its global business empire is at risk, a lawyer representing patriarch Srichand Hinduja told a London court Monday.

A ruling published in November said the Hinduja's lawyers had told a judge in June that they would end "all disputes existing between them in all jurisdictions", including a lawsuit at London's High Court over the Hinduja family's

assets.

The wider dispute had come to light in separate proceedings centred on the health of 87-year-old Srichand, who suffers from dementia. His younger brother Gopichand, 83, had challenged the legitimacy of a lasting power of attorney granted to Srichand's daughters, Vinoo and Shanu.

Spokespeople for Gopichand and Vinoo Hinduja did not immediately respond to requests for comment after Monday's hearing.

Nikki Singla - who represents Srichand's court-appointed deputy,



a lawyer managing Srichand's property and affairs - said Monday that not all of the London lawsuit was resolved, though the "lion's share" had been.

He told Judge Anthony Hayden, who oversaw the dispute centred on Srichand's health, that there

were "many pieces of litigation and threatened litigation", including in Mauritius and the Channel Islands, with "murmurings of (legal) proceedings in India".

The judge noted that Singla Monday repeatedly used the word "armistice", which he said was "a

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temporary cessation of hostilities". "But that is not what I was told this (previous agreement) was - this was a treaty signalling the end of the war," Hayden added.

DELHI PIP HAPLESS SRH MI look to sort bowling woes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



Tripathi (15), Abhishek Sharma (5) and Aiden Markam (3) in quick succession in the middle overs, and allowing a mere three fours between overs 5 to 15 which highlighted SRH's plight.

Axar Patel (2/21) dismissed Agarwal before getting rid of skipper Markram to leave the home side reeling at 86/5. With 51 needed from last four overs, Klaasen and Sundar revived SRH with a 26-ball 41-run stand for the sixth wicket, but their effort came too late.

Earlier, Sundar ended his six-wicketless run to take three

wickets in five balls to break the back of Delhi Capitals' batting line-up after they opted to bat.

Then Bhuvneshwar came up with a parsimonious spell, which included the key wickets of Phil Salt (0) and Axar (34) to rattle Delhi further. Delhi slipped from 57/2 to 62/5 after the powerplay, and had their backs firmly pressed against the wall.

Axar (34) and Manish Pandey (34) saved some blushes for Delhi. The pair did well to add 69 runs for the sixth wicket taking Delhi Capitals past the 100-run mark and prevented

a total collapse. Pandey was run out following a brilliant throw from deep midwicket by Sundar.

The tone was set earlier by Bhuvneshwar who struck on the third delivery to dismiss Salt and kept David Warner silent for the majority of his opening spell.

BRIEF SCORES

DC 144/9 (Manish Pandey 34, Axar Patel 34; Washington Sundar 3/28, Bhuvneshwar Kumar 2/11) beat SRH 137/6 (Mayank Agarwal 49, Heinrich Klaasen 31; Axar Patel 2/21, Anrich Nortje 2/33) by 7 runs.

Ahmedabad, April 24: Their three-game winning streak snapped after a loss to Punjab Kings, five-time champions Mumbai Indians will look to address their poor death over bowling when they take on a resurgent Gujarat Titans in their IPL match here Tuesday.

After a familiar poor start, MI enjoyed a hat-trick of wins but their impressive run was cut short by Punjab Kings with a 13-run win on Saturday.

Mumbai were let down by their death over bowling as they conceded 96 runs in the final five overs to allow PBKS post 214/8, and they will have to sort out their bowling ahead of the GT clash.

It was the pace quartet of Arjun Tendulkar, Jason Behrendorff, Cameron Green and Jofra Archer who were put under the pump as all of them conceded more than 40 runs in their quota of overs.

The experienced Piyush Chawla and his spin bowling colleague Hritik Shokeen, however, have been on the money as they restricted the flow of runs, with the former snapping two wickets as well.

MI's batting unit has looked formidable with the top and middle order being among runs. However, things are not going to be any easier for the MI batters as the Titans too possess a strong bowling attack.

Criticised for not being able to defend totals this season, GT showed how to do it with a master class at the death overs to strangle Lucknow Super Giants' chase in their previous match.

The star of GT bowling was



comeback man Mohit Sharma, who walked away with the player of the match award after using his variations to telling effect against the Lucknow side.

GT were in a dire situation with LSG cruising at 105/1 in 14 overs while chasing 136 but the bowlers, led by Mohit, denied them as he defended 12 runs in the final over.

While Mohit has been a revelation, veteran Mohammed Shami too has been among the wickets. However, skipper Hardik Pandya hasn't really fired with the ball, having picked up

only one wicket so far.

Led by Rashid Khan, Gujarat's spin department looks potent with fellow Afghan wrist-spinner Noor Ahmad and Jayant Yadav delivering under pressure against LSG.

If Sundar conceded just seven in his last two overs, Noor took two wickets for just five runs in his final two overs to set up the win for GT the other day. GT batters have chased down totals but they have been sometimes guilty of not being able to push the score in middle overs.

While Wriddhiman Saha and Shubman Gill have scored runs at the top and Hardik top-scored in their last match, GT were about 10-15 runs short against LSG, mainly due to their slow batting in middle overs, something the team will need to address.

Also, GT might need to give their top overseas batter David Miller more time in the middle by promoting him up the order.



Barca move closer to La Liga title

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madrid, April 24: In a slump and facing the hottest team in Spain, Barcelona came through with an important win for its title hopes and quelled any fears of a late collapse.

Barcelona ended a three-game winless streak — and Atletico Madrid's 13-game unbeaten run — with a hard-fought 1-0 win Sunday to stay on track for their first Spanish league title in four years. The home win restored the team's comfortable 11-point lead over Real Madrid with eight rounds remaining.

The victory also halted a six-game winning streak by Atletico, which lost ground to Madrid in the fight for second place. Madrid, which is focused on the Champions League and the Copa del Rey final, beat Celta Vigo 2-0 at home Saturday.

Ferran Torres scored a 44th-minute winner at Camp Nou with a well-placed low shot from just inside the area to end Barcelona's recent problems entering the final stretch.

They hadn't scored in three straight games after being humiliated at home by Madrid 0-4 in the Copa del Rey semifinals and held to scoreless draws against modest league opponents in Girona and Getafe.

It was the 23rd clean sheet in the league for Barcelona, who last won the league title in 2019. They have conceded only nine goals in



Ferran Torres (R) reacts after scoring against Atletico Madrid, Sunday

30 league matches this season. Third-placed Atletico, who have the second-best defense with 22 goals conceded, trail Madrid by five points.

It was the third straight win by Barcelona over Diego Simeone's team, whose last win against the Catalan club was in 2021. Atletico is winless at Camp Nou in 17 consecutive league matches. Its last league loss this season had been at Barcelona in January.

Atletico, the 2021 champion,

threatened first with a shot by Antoine Griezmann that hit the crossbar three minutes into the match.

Atletico struggled early in the season, quickly falling out of contention for the league title and finishing its Champions League group in last place, but it had been the hottest team in Spain in 2023.

Barcelona coach Xavi had the return of Pedri and Frenkie de Jong after they missed several matches because of injuries.

Dhoni fever grips Eden Gardens

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, April 24: In a never seen atmosphere, yellow fever gripped the Eden Gardens in a tribute to talismanic MS Dhoni, who probably played his last match at the iconic venue, as he led Chennai Super Kings to an emphatic 49-run win over Kolkata Knight Riders in the IPL here.

KKR franchise had planted their purple flags in every seat of the 67,000-capacity stadium before the match began Sunday. But once the spectators packed the stadium before the toss, all purple flags disappeared and it was a sea of yellow in support of Dhoni.

"I have played a lot of cricket over here. I had a job at Kharagpur which was two hours from here. The love comes from there," Dhoni said at the toss, overwhelmed by the response.

At the commentary, Ravi Shastri also endorsed the view, saying: "It's the sea of yellow in Eden, tribute to one man. He's the King of East, it's MS Dhoni."

There was, however, no official word from CSK that Dhoni was playing his last season for the franchise but the 41-year-old has hinted few days back that he is in the last phase of his career.

And as Ajinkya Rahane and Shivam Dube were going berserk in their 85-run stand, loud chants of 'We want Dhoni' reverberated the Eden Gardens. Some fans even carried playcards where it was



written: "Dear Mahi, take my life and play 100 years more."

Dhoni finally made a grand entry after the dismissal of Rahane with two balls left in CSK's innings. All the fans greeted him by flashing their mobile phone cameras as he remained unbeaten on two from three balls.

The first ball he faced was a no ball from Kulwant Khejroliya. "We want a helicopter shot," shouted the fans as he gave a big heave but could not connect with the ball. Dhoni finally got off the mark in the last ball of the match with a thump to long-off.

Not just from the city, fans have arrived here all the way from Cooch Behar in North Bengal like Anita

Harijan, who had come with her four-year-old daughter.

"I boarded the train Saturday night. I stayed up all night in the general compartment. I finally came to Eden. I want to see Dhoni from the front," she said. "It was a dream come true. I'm here to see him. Everyone in my family is Dhoni fan. We are here to support CSK."

Another fan Alka Patnaik, who had come to Eden with six friends from Odisha, said: "We just wanted to see Mahi. I came from Odisha to Kolkata to see Dhoni. I want to enjoy the KKR vs Chennai match with my friends. I won't take my eyes off Mahi for a moment," Alka, who had CSK written on her cheek, said with a smile.

Bargarh, Bolangir, Jharsuguda script wins in Sahani Cup meet



Bargarh and Ganjam (in yellow) players in action during their match, Monday

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 24: Bargarh, Bolangir and Jharsuguda registered contrasting victories in their respective matches of the 62nd Senior Men Inter-District Championship for Sahani Cup, Tuesday.

Bargarh thumped Ganjam 5-1 at the Bidanasi Ground, Cuttack. Bargarh scored all their goals in the first half before Ganjam finding the consolation after the halftime break. Francis Lakra struck twice — 14th and 42nd minutes, while Chandar Mohan Murmu (10th), Prabhat Dansena (32nd) and Ankit Behera (44th) scored one goal each to seal the deal for Bargarh. Rabindaar Singh found the consolation goal for Ganjam in the 55th minute. Bolangir, however, toiled hard

for their 1-0 win over Paradip Port Trust at OTM Ground in Cuttack. After a barren first half, Subrat Patra broke the deadlock in the 74th minute, which eventually proved to be enough for Bolangir to seal a victory.

Jharsuguda, on the other hand, defeated Mayurbhanj 3-1 in an entertaining encounter at the 7th Battalion Ground. Jharsuguda drew the first blood inside five minutes through Bishal Munda as the players headed into the halftime break with 1-0 lead. After the change of ends, Ghasi Ram Majhi (60th) and Romi Oram (73rd) extended the lead to dash any hope of a Mayurbhanj comeback. Sukul Murmu found the consolation for the losing side four minutes from the regulation time.

Odisha FC face BFC in battle of attrition

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kozhikode, April 24: Bengaluru FC (BFC) and Odisha FC (OFC) will be involved in a war of attrition when they lock horns in the final of the Super Cup, here Tuesday.

While Bengaluru will be vying for their second Super Cup crown after winning the first edition in Bhubaneswar in 2018, it will be Odisha's maiden attempt to claim any silverware.

Both the teams qualified for the ISL playoffs this season. Odisha lost out to ATK Mohun Bagan at the first hurdle while Bengaluru made it to the final but went down to the same opposition on penalties.

Tuesday's summit clash at EMS Corporation Stadium will be Bengaluru's third final of the season. They lifted the Durand Cup in September last year, where they also met Odisha in the quarterfinal stage. Roy Krishna's 121st-minute winner made the difference in a nail-biting contest on that occasion.

Bengaluru have had their fair share of tight matches in the Super Cup. Simon Grayson's men emerged toppers in a closely-contested Group A, finishing above Sreenidi Deccan FC, Kerala Blasters FC and RoundGlass Punjab FC with five points.

In the semifinal, after keeping



(From R): Odisha FC's Victor Rodriguez, head coach Clifford Miranda, Bengaluru FC head coach Simon Grayson and captain Sunil Chhetri pose with the Super Cup trophy ahead of the final, Tuesday

Jamshedpur at bay in the first half thanks to goalkeeper Gurpreet Singh Sandhu's heroics, Bengaluru powered through in the second half with goals from Jayesh Rane and captain Sunil Chhetri.

If Bengaluru win the final Tuesday, they will also contest the Club Playoffs for the AFC Cup Group Stage against Gokulam Kerala. Representing India on the continental stage after two years is the main prize for the club, according to captain Sunil Chhetri.

"Winning the AFC Cup play-off will be the ultimate thing. Everything comes secondary. We have been fortunate to play in a lot of AFC tournaments, but we weren't there in the last couple of years. We will do everything to get back," said Chhetri.

Odisha head coach Clifford Miranda said there is no pressure on them. "To be honest, we don't approach this match as a first final. For us, it's another game where we have to do the right things against a very

good opponent," he said.

Odisha have made a habit of coming from behind to win games recently. They made it to the last four after overcoming a one-goal deficit at half-time to beat Hyderabad FC 2-1 in their last game in Group B.

In the semifinals, Odisha found themselves a goal down against NorthEast United FC inside the opening minute, but Nandhakumar Sekar's brace turned the tie for them before Diego Mauricio added a third late on to kill the contest.

SCG honours Sachin on his 50th birthday



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sydney, April 24: Honouring Sachin Tendulkar on his 50th birthday, a gate named after Indian batting legend was unveiled at the iconic Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) here Monday.

Tendulkar, who turned 50 Monday, scored 785 runs, including three centuries with a highest score of 241 not out (in 2004) in five Tests at the SCG, which he described as his favourite cricket ground outside India.

Tendulkar scored those runs at an incredible average of 157. "The Sydney Cricket Ground has been my favourite ground away from India. I have had some great memories at the SCG right from my first tour of Australia in 1991-92," Tendulkar said in a statement issued by the SCG.

Another gate in the name of Brian Lara was also unveiled to mark 30 years since the West Indian legend's innings of 277 at the SCG.

The gates were unveiled by SCG and Venues NSW Chairman Rod McGeoch and CEO Kerrie Mather, as well as Cricket Australia CEO Nick Hockley. All visiting cricket players will take to the field through the Lara-Tendulkar Gates, situated between the Members Pavilion's away dressing room and the Noble Bradman Messenger Stand.

A plaque was also erected, describing the Lara-Tendulkar Gates, the achievements of the two legends and their statistics at the SCG.

"It is a great honour to have the gates used by all visiting cricketers to access the field of play at the SCG named after me and my good friend Brian," Tendulkar said. "I would like to thank the team at the SCG and Cricket Australia and for this kind gesture. I look forward to visiting the SCG soon."

Lara, on his part, said: "I'm deeply honoured to be recognised at the Sydney Cricket Ground, as I'm sure Sachin is. The ground holds many special memories for me and my family and I always enjoy visiting whenever I'm in Australia."

Tendulkar and Lara thus joined Donald Bradman, Alan Davidson and Arthur Morris by having a set of gates named in their honour at the SCG.

The Australian cricket team enters the field via the Don Bradman Gates between the Members and Ladies Pavilions, while the Arthur Morris and Alan Davidson Gates front Driver Avenue.