

SHORT TAKES

Badal Sr. no more

CHANDIGARH: Five-time former Punjab CM and Shiromani Akali Dal patriarch Parkash Singh Badal, who was admitted to a hospital in Mohali over a week ago, died Tuesday. He was 95. He was admitted to Fortis Hospital after he complained of uneasiness in breathing. The Centre announced two days of state mourning— April 26 and 27— across India. **P7**

Odisha FC clinch maiden Super Cup

KOZHIKODE: Odisha FC were crowned the champions of the Super Cup after they prevailed over Bengaluru FC 2-1 in the summit showdown here Tuesday, winning their first silverware. While Brazilian Diego Mauricio struck both goals for the winners in the first half, Sunil Chhetri scored from a penalty in the 84th minute to reduce the margin for Bengaluru FC. **P12**

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



AT LORD'S SERVICE: Ahead of the Car Festival, Maharana servitors shape hubs for chariot wheels at Rath Yard in Puri, Tuesday

SC notice to Delhi Police on women wrestlers' plea

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi, April 25: The Supreme Court Tuesday issued notices to the Delhi Police and others on a plea by seven women wrestlers seeking registration of an FIR against Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, who is also a BJP MP, over allegations of sexual harassment, saying the matter is 'serious' and requires its consideration.
 As more political leaders including former Haryana chief minister and Congress leader Bhupinder Singh Hooda and functionaries of some 'khap' panchayats

and farmers' organisations rallied behind the country's top wrestlers protesting at Jantar Mantar here, the petition contended that despite filing complaints the Delhi Police has failed to register the FIR.
 The wrestlers asserted that they won't leave the protest site until Brij Bhushan is arrested. They had resumed their sit-in protest Sunday and demanded that the findings of the oversight panel that investigated the allegations be made public. The oversight committee was set up by the Sports ministry in January after the wrestlers held a three-day sit-in at Jantar Mantar. **Contd...P4**

Joe Biden launches '24 re-election bid

AGENCIES
Washington, April 25: President Joe Biden Tuesday launched his 2024 re-election bid along with his deputy Kamala Harris and appealed to Americans to give them four more years to 'finish the job' and defend democracy, raising the possibility of a rematch with their 2020 Republican rival Donald Trump.
 Biden, 80, the oldest president in US history, made the announcement in a three-minute promotional video that begins with a one-word pitch: 'Freedom'. Biden, a Democrat, argues that abortion rights, the defence of democracy, voting rights and the social safety net will be among the most important issues on the ballot in 2024. **More P10**

HC seeks govt reply on Ratna Bhandar keys

■ The move follows a plea seeking direction to make report of Justice Raghbir Das Commission of Inquiry public

PNN & AGENCIES

Cuttack, April 25: At a time when the issue of missing Ratna Bhandar keys is still shrouded in mystery, the Orissa High Court Tuesday asked the state government to file its response by July 10 on a petition that seeks direction to make the report of Justice Raghbir Das Commission of Inquiry public.

A division Bench, headed by Chief Justice S Muralidhar, asked the Chief Secretary, Law Secretary, and the chief administrator and deputy chief administrator of Srimandir to file their affidavit in response to the writ petition filed by Puri-based social worker Dillip Baral.

According to sources, an attempt was made to open the inner chamber of Srimandir Ratna Bhandar in April 2018 following a directive of the Orissa High Court. However, it was not successful as keys were 'not found' at that time. A team, comprising ASI officials, servitors and others, then carried out an inspection from outside.

The incident of disappearance of keys of the inner chamber of the temple treasury created much furore in the state. Even as the whereabouts of the original keys



were still unknown, the Puri district administration claimed to have recovered a set of duplicate keys inside an envelope from the district record room which sparked a fresh row and intensified the public outcry over the issue.
 The commission was formed in June 2018 to probe the circumstances under which the keys of the Ratna Bhandar went missing. "The commission submitted its 324-page report to the state government in November of that year, but it was not made public," advocate Anup Mohapatra, who argued on behalf of Baral, said.
 "As per Section 3(4) of the Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1952, when a commission submits its

report, it is the responsibility of the government to examine it and table the findings, along with a memorandum, in Assembly within six months. However, the state government is yet to take any step in this direction," Mohapatra pointed out.

Hearing the matter, the division bench, also comprising Justice Gouri Shankar Satapathy, asked the authorities to file their responses by July 10, the next date of hearing.

The petitioner has also urged the HC for making an inventory of the valuables in the treasury of the 12th century shrine and handing over the Ratna Bhandar to Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) for its proper upkeep, added Mohapatra.

Notably, in 2021, then Law minister Pratap Jena informed the House that according to 1978 inventory, the temple treasury had 12,831 'bhari' of gold and 22,153 'bhari' of silver (one bhari is equal to 11.66 grams).

The treasury also had 12,831 grams of gold ornaments with precious stones and other valuables in store, he had said.

As much as 22,153 grams of silver with expensive stones, silver utensils and other valuables were found there, Jena mentioned, adding that due to various reasons, 14 gold and silver items could not be weighed during the inventory process.

DSPL-23

3rd Phase

Koraput District
58 High Schools

Bolangir District
100 High Schools

T5

5 Districts

328 Transformed High Schools

Sambalpur District
61 High Schools

Puri District
53 High Schools

Kendrapara District
56 High Schools

High School Transformation

Inauguration by

Shri Naveen Patnaik

Hon'ble Chief Minister, Odisha

26th April 2023

School & Mass Education Department

OIPR-27045/13/0006/2324

leisure



PITT TO RACE IN BRITISH GRAND PRIX FOR FORMULA ONE MOVIE

Hollywood hunk Brad Pitt has been allowed to take part in the first parade lap in July alongside the likes of Lewis Hamilton in order to shoot scenes for his upcoming yet-untitled film, where he plays a veteran driver who comes out of retirement to mentor a rookie.

ASHLEY NAMED SEXIEST WOMAN BY MAXIM

Ashley Graham has led *Maxim* magazine's annual Hot 100 List. The 35-year-old plus-size model and mother of three claimed the top spot on the publication's annual compilation of the world's sexiest women, a list that includes the likes of Emily Ratajkowski, Beyonce, Taylor Swift, and Rihanna.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

You are creative, and today you will prove to be resourceful and thereby successful! Okay, you are ambitious, says Ganesha, but don't bite off more than you can chew. Be confident of your abilities, work hard and have faith in providence.

TAURUS

You will feel the burden of financial responsibilities on your shoulders today, says Ganesha. Do not let expenses bother you. Money will come to you from unexpected sources later in the day. If you can maintain an impartial judgement, then you will yield wonderful results on the financial front, advises Ganesha.

GEMINI

Today, you would love to spend as much time alone as possible with your sweetheart, says Ganesha. A casual conversation between the two of you may culminate into a sensuous consummation. In the evening, you will keep people charmed with your wit and wisdom, feels Ganesha.

CANCER

There is a fat chance that you will take pleasure in the company of your close friends and relatives, predicts Ganesha. You may have an awesome time with your mate. There may be a few minor problems here and there, but your family will rally behind you and will help you in solving your problems.

LEO

The travel bug inside you is itching to be let loose, but things are not so simple when it comes to finding new destinations, says Ganesha. With you, holidaying goes hand in hand with delays. So, although you might be excited at the prospect of going to new places, this excitement will be somewhat curtailed thanks to postponements of travel plans. Well, such is life, so don't go about taking it to heart and getting all upset.

VIRGO

Motivation will remain high today, says Ganesha. Your talents and skills make you stand out as a superb artist. Words will glow if you let your creativity flow, and should you decide to dance or sing, you'll set the stage on fire today. Cultivate hobbies in performing arts and literature, advises Ganesha.

LIBRA

It sure is tiring to run with the herd. You may feel the desire to get away from the rat race at work today. Maybe it is the monotonous and stressful environment in office that is pushing you to your limits. But you may seek a new direction and lifestyle, one that is less taxing. Sometimes, it becomes imperative to make a few changes.

SCORPIO

You shall follow all things to the dot today. Your approach will be methodical and robotic. It is likely that you shall symbolise the saying, 'Actions speak louder than words'. Your powers of persuasion will help you amass the confidences of many, predicts Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS

Ala a phoenix from the ashes, find yourself reborn as the perfect family person. You are bound to shower love and care on your betrothed. Children, too, will receive your share of love, and they will love it. Enjoy spending quality time with your loved one, says Ganesha.

CAPRICORN

The work load may take away all your vigour, leaving you lethargic and dull, but you will come out of the sluggish phase before it can do any harm to your reputation, says Ganesha. Being observant and attentive while in meetings will help you in the long run, and in more ways than you can imagine.

AQUARIUS

Good news from across the seven seas brings cheer! If you're seeking a visa, you may get one today. Everything looks positive and it reflects in your mood. Share your happiness with your family, says Ganesha, and you will find it multiplies manifold.

PISCES

Conflicts galore will come your way at the workplace today. Keep a calm head over your shoulders and do keep tabs on your tongue. Differences only crop up if there are substantial thought processes involved, and keeping this in mind ought to give you the perspective needed to get ahead, says Ganesha.

Sharvari slays in mermaid gown

Mumbai: Actress Sharvari Wagh has consistently graced the screens with her distinctive fashion choices. And the *Bunty Aur Babli 2* actress is a master at maintaining the oomph factor. She has chosen to wear a distinctive black dress by Shantanu & Nikhil after trying on a number of fashionable outfits.



mermaid-style dress gripped her in all the right places, emphasising her toned physique. Accessories were limited to a matching bracelet and a set of diamond earrings. She styled her hair into a bun and let a few strands fall loosely down her face. Sharvari had shimmering eyelids, thick eyelashes, cheeks that were accentuated and flushed, and glossy pink lips.

Sharvari has undoubtedly made her imprint on the fashion industry, it is safe to say. She is a pro at wearing ethnic clothing or simply glamming up in Western styles. Recently, the actress served as Shantanu and Nikhil's spring 2023 bridal haute couture collection's muse. She slipped into a crystal-studded metallic fitting gown with baroque inspiration. Black net accents held the neckline's plunge together. Sharvari's

Meanwhile, on the work front, Sharvari will be next seen in period drama *Maharaja*.

AGENCIES

Salman gets marriage proposal from Dubai

Mumbai: Dabangg star Salman Khan is currently basking high on the success of his recently released film, *Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan*. Directed by Farhad Samji, the film stars Shehnaaz Gill, Pooja Hegde and Daggubati Venkatesh in pivotal roles.

The actor's videos from Dubai are going crazy viral on social media, where he has gone to promote his film. Amid the same, a video has caught netizens' attention where Salman subtly reacted to a female fan's comment, saying, 'Shaadi nahi karni (don't marry).'

In the viral video, Salman Khan takes selfies with the fans in the audience when a female fan screams, "Salman, Mujhse shaadi kar le (Salman, marry me)". Adding to this, another female fan shouts, "Shaadi nahi karni, Salman. Shaadi nahi karni (Don't marry Salman, don't marry)." The superstar agreed to the latter and replied, "Right, right, right." Celebrity paparazzi Viral Bhayani shared the video on his Instagram handle.

Known as the most eligible bachelor in the industry, Salman has been associated with numerous actresses in the past. However, time and again, he has affirmed his singlehood and likes to engage in fun banter with his fan following regarding the same.



AGENCIES

UAE jails Sadak 2 actress in 'planted' drugs case

Mumbai: It came as quite a shock to *Sadak 2* fame Chrisann Pereira when she was arrested at Sharjah International Airport for smuggling drugs April 17. The incident came to light Tuesday after Pereira's family approached the Mumbai crime branch which started an investigation under the guidance of the joint commissioner.

As the incident revealed further, the crime branch in Mumbai arrested Borivali resident Anthony Paul, a neighbor of Chrisann, and detained his associate Rajesh Babhote, alias Ravi, for allegedly framing the actress into becoming a drug mule Monday. The actress also

worked in some of the most notable films and series, like *Batla House* and *Thikistan*.

As part of the duo's nefarious plan, the actor was sent to Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, for an audition. Just before boarding the flight, she was given a trophy stuffed with drugs. She was told that the trophy was part of the audition prop. Pereira was arrested at the Sharjah International Airport for smuggling drugs and later taken to Sharjah Central Prison.

During the probe, the crime branch officials learnt that Paul is the mastermind and wanted to take revenge on the actor's mother, Premila Pereira; therefore, he, along with Ravi, hatched a plan to frame her daughter with the above plan.

AGENCIES

THROWBACK INTERVIEW

Dimple knew her marriage won't work!

Mumbai: Dimple Kapadia made her film debut with *Bobby* in 1973, but she also got married to Rajesh Khanna in the same year, even before the release of her debut film. She was 16 and he was almost twice her age. She also announced that she wouldn't continue her career after getting married. However, she made a comeback in 1985 with *Saagar* and that's when she spoke about her personal life.

The actress revealed in an interview that she knew her marriage won't work the moment she stepped into his house. Reportedly,



Khanna had banned Dimple from acting, even though she was offered Rs 5 lakh per

project after a hit film like *Bobby*. The actress confessed that she was too young to realise the importance of *Bobby* in her career, but from the day she entered his house, Ashirwad, she somehow knew that their marriage won't work. She further revealed that their marriage was definitely not based on equality. She had left him in 1982 and moved to her parents' house. By then, the actress had two daughters with him - Twinkle and Rinke Khanna.

Dimple will be seen next in a web-series, *Homi Adajania's Saas Bahu Aur Flamingo*.



AGENCIES

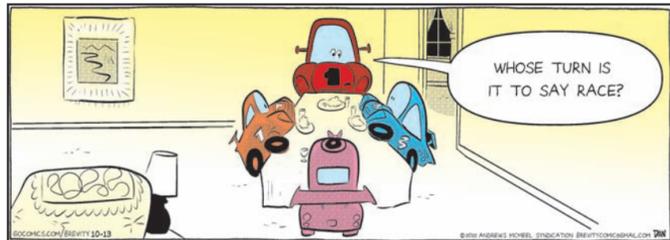
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

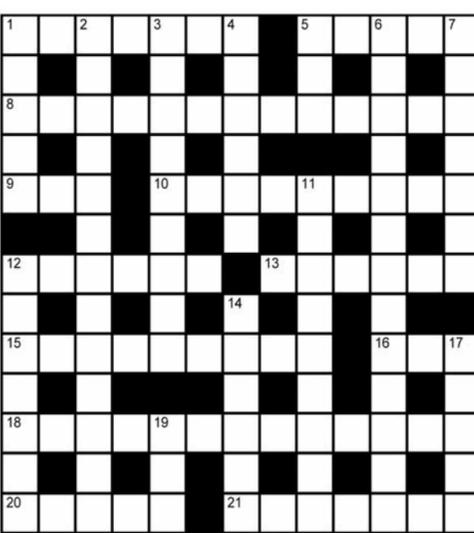


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



Across

- 1 Guanaco relatives
- 5 Passenger
- 8 Fibre-into-yarn machine (8,5)
- 9 Pooch, for one
- 10 Cone-bearing tree
- 12 Foot problem
- 13 Anterooms
- 15 Unemotional
- 16 Shoot the breeze

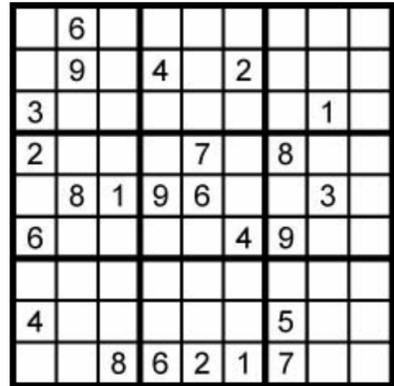
Down

- 18 Dinner time for sharks, maybe (7,6)
- 20 Covered with grime
- 21 Pardoned
- 3 Belt types
- 4 Certain entertainer
- 5 Fracas
- 6 Some oil burners (6,7)
- 7 Yields
- 11 Type of design
- 12 Appraised of a situation
- 14 Blend in at a party
- 17 Howled
- 19 Frigid

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD

SUDOKU

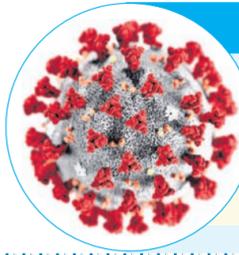


downtown



CIVIC WOES

Vendors and commuters face inconvenience due to waterlogging alongside the Badambadi main road in Cuttack, Tuesday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	68,66,12,727	65,91,65,521	68,60,360
India	4,48,98,893	4,43,01,865	5,31,345
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

Prices of milk-based products to go up

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 25: Prices of dairy products like *chhena* and paneer will increase from May 1, Cuttack District Dairy Product Traders' Association said Tuesday.

The wholesale price of *chhena* will be hiked by ₹20 per kg, paneer by ₹30 per kg and *khoa* by ₹60 per kg, the association said.

The association cited the rise in milk prices as the reason behind the hike in the prices milk-based products.

The general secretary of the association said, "Milk is the base ingredient for all dairy products. When milk price rises, the prices of dairy products will rise automatically. This is the wholesale price and not the retail price which has been hiked."



Explaining the price rise, he said, "Five litres of milk is needed to make a kilogram of *chhena*. So, when the milk price was hiked by ₹4 per litre, we were forced to hike the *chhena* price by ₹20 per kg. That apart, transportation cost has also increased. We do not intend to harass the consumers, but we are helpless."

Recently the state-owned Odisha State Cooperative Milk Producers' Federation (Omfed) hiked the price of milk effective from April 1, 2023.

The federation increased the prices of milk by ₹2 per half a liter packet. It attributed the price hike to an increase in the costs of packaging, logistics, cattle feed, and other operational costs.

Srimandir panel submits compliance report in SC

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, April 25: Shree Jagannath Temple Managing Committee of Puri has filed a status report in Supreme Court apprising it about the steps it has taken in compliance with the 2019 order.

The temple managing committee has submitted a 34-page status report giving details of the action taken in compliance with 23 directions passed by the apex court in November 2019 for better management of affairs at Srimandir including hassle-free darshan for devotees along with other facilities.

The committee has informed the SC that the Srimandir has over 60,000 acres of land and that it has received Record of Rights (RoR) for 38,061 acres. It also submitted that appropriate steps have been taken for the maintenance of hygiene at Rosaghar (kitchen) and for conduct of rituals in traditional manner. It further submitted that Jagadguru Shankaracharya has been consulted along with other pundits for the performance rituals in proper manner.

These apart, separate toilets have been constructed for male and female devotees in the temple complex and steps have been taken for providing cloak rooms, accommodation and other facilities for the convenience of the devotees, the committee submitted.

With respect to school for the children of servitors, the committee informed that it has decided



to set up Srimandira Adarsha Gurukula and over 32 acres of land has been allocated for the same. It also stated that an MoU has been signed with GD Birla Medical Research and Education Foundation, Mumbai to run the Gurukula and a board has also been constituted.

The committee has informed the SC that charges have been framed against five servitors after a preliminary inquiry into the delay in door opening in December 2018 and strict guidelines have been framed to avoid such incidents in future.

It also submitted that I-cards have been issued to servitors as directed by the court.

Earlier, a two-judge bench of Justices MR Shah and CT Ravikumar had asked the Odisha government to file the status report within four weeks and serve a copy of the report to amicus curiae Ranjeet Kumar at least a week before the next hearing, scheduled for May 1.

Shree Jagannath Temple Managing Committee submitted to the SC that appropriate steps have been taken for the maintenance of hygiene at Rosaghar (kitchen) and for conduct of rituals in traditional manner

Separate toilets have been constructed for male and female devotees in the temple complex and steps have been taken for providing cloak rooms, accommodation and other facilities for the convenience of the devotees, the committee submitted

The SC November 4, 2019 had ordered the temple administration to ensure that there should not be any harassment of devotees in the temple. It ordered the temple administration to prevent incidences of misbehaviour with women, snatching and pickpocketing on the temple precincts and also asked them that all the rituals shall be held according to tradition and practices.

"We direct the Temple Administration and the Chief Administrator including the State Government to prepare a roadmap with the help of experts for having proper darshan by the devotees/pilgrims and to implement it effectively and to ensure that there is no commotion, so that everybody is able to have darshan peacefully without any obstruction," the Bench had said.

The court had recommended issuance of I-cards to servitors and temple committee staffers. It had also asked for construction of shelter home for the devotees.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Mismanagement at open air jail

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 25: An internal probe report of state Prisons Directorate has exposed massive mismanagement in and infighting among the staffers of Biju Patnaik Open Air Ashram, the only open prison in the state, located at Jamujhari on the outskirts of the Capital city.

The jailor of Biju Patnaik Open Air Ashram, Ashok Kumar Behera, had stirred controversy by bringing forth allegations of mismanagement and corruption by the prison superintendent Saroj Kumar Biswal.

The whistleblower had vented out his grievances in letters to both his higher-ups and to other forums including the Odisha Human Rights Commission (OHRC). He had also sent videos to authorities in which

inmates blamed the superintendent for various mismanagements in the ashram.

After going through the letter and the video clips, the directorate had launched an inquiry to verify the allegations made by the jailor.

The report not only exposed mismanagement, dereliction of duty but also revealed that both the jailor and superintendent were engaged in a bitter squabble accusing each other of various irregularities.

The investigating officers found that Behera had forced the inmates to make allegations against the superintendent. However, the inmates also confirmed that the quantity of food items such as rice supplied at the ashram had decreased compared to previous years as per government norms.

The officials observed poor qual-

ity animal food being provided for the cattle kept inside the jail for diary training. And they came across lack of regular supervision and monitoring by the superintendent which in turn gave rise to groupism inside the prison.

The report revealed that both the jailor and superintendent were busy fighting with each other neglecting their respective duties.

The investigating officials recommended immediate transfer of both Biswal and Behera to far off places for betterment of the open air ashram.

On the other hand, allegations remain that the report is silent on the issue of harassment of prisoners by an influential inmate close to a political leader. The jailor had demanded transfer of the said prisoner to other jail.

BJP seeks transfer of 10 police officers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 25: Seeking a free and fair byelection to Jharsuguda Assembly seat, the opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Tuesday urged the Election Commission to transfer 10 police officers.

A delegation of the BJP led by its former state president Samir Mohanty visited the office of the Chief Electoral Officer in Bhubaneswar and submitted a memorandum, seeking steps to ensure free and fair voting in Jharsuguda.

The BJP delegation alleged that the transfer orders of 10 police officers were issued March 18, but they continue to remain in the posts as they were not relieved.

These officers should not be allowed to remain within the jurisdiction of Jharsuguda Assembly constituency as they may misuse their positions, the BJP said.

Body fished out

BARANG: Godisahi outpost police Tuesday recovered the body of a youth from Puri main canal near Ratagada. Police suspected that the youth might have died falling off a running train. Some youths spotted the body when they had gone to take bath in the canal. On being informed, Godisahi police and fire services personnel reached the spot and fished out the body.

Farm equipment dealer held for ₹12cr fraud

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 25: The Economic Offence Wing (EOW) of Crime Branch has arrested the owner of a farm equipment dealer in Subarnapur district on charges of misappropriating government subsidy to the tune of ₹12 crore on the purchase of agricultural machinery meant for farmers.

The arrested has been identified as Chautura Deep, proprietor of M/s KBK Deep Agro Sales located at Dunguripali in Subarnapur district.

He was apprehended in connection with a case (20/22) registered at EOW police station here on the basis of information revealed during a probe into another subsidy

fraud case (7/21) involving prime accused Pradeep Kumar Acharya, MD of M/s Annapurna Agro International Private Ltd, an agro equipment manufacturing unit located in Balasore.

Chautura's firm M/s KBK Deep Agro Sales was the registered dealer of M/s Annapurna Agro International Pvt. Ltd.

"The firm is registered under Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) scheme, both as manufacturer and dealer of Agro equipment like post-harvest machines, power driven equipment and rotavator etc. The company has appointed as many as 115 dealers throughout Odisha, and in active connivance with the dealers including the present accused Chautura during FY 2016-



17 to 2019-20, uploaded a series of false/fake invoices/data/information/UTR pertaining to supply/sale of nearly 1,766 agro equipment to as many farmers/beneficiaries and managed to avail subsidies to the tune of crores under DBT scheme and the amount was misappropriated by the manufacturing firm and its dealers," the EOW said in its press note.

The accused persons allegedly uploaded fake invoices, photos of the implements with beneficiaries, UTR numbers and other documents on the DBT portal meant for availing government subsidy on farm implements. Chautura had fraudulently shown to have sold 487 farm equipment to the farmers and in connivance with Pradeep withdrawn subsidy amount worth around ₹3.54 crores.

Earlier, the Agriculture department has blocked the manufacturing accused company M/s Annapurna Agro International Pvt. Ltd. in its DBT portal. Meanwhile, Pradeep along with his two dealers - Prabha Ranjan Dash and Shaik Fayaz - have been arrested in this case.

Efforts on to make skills part of schooling: Pradhan

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 25: The Centre is deliberating ways to formalise skilling in the school education system, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said Tuesday, asserting the UGC, AICTE and NCERT must come together to create a framework for mapping future skills.

The minister also said, "We need to de-link degrees from competency and envision a future where real competency would prevail."

Pradhan made the comments in an interaction with reporters here ahead of the 3rd G20 Education Working Group Meeting.

"Deliberations are going on about how to formalise skilling in our school education system. Today, we discussed with the delegates from Singapore the way forward for a comprehensive and substantive partnership towards skilling," he said.

The minister noted that the deliberations going on at G20 forum will aid the implementation of new National Education Policy by understanding and adopting best practices and global models.

"The University Grants Commission (UGC), All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) and National Council of Education Research and Training (NCERT) must come together to create a framework for mapping future skills," he said.

Foundational literacy and numeracy, tech-enabled learning, future of work, and research col-



The Union Education minister emphasised that there is a need for de-linking degrees from competency

laborations have been among priority areas for deliberations during the third G20 Education Working Group meeting.

A conference on deep technology and transforming logistics for coastal economies, a workshop on the future of work and skill architecture, a seminar on building capacities for lifelong learning and an exhibition on future of work are part of the events which will be held as a precursor to the meeting.

The first meeting of the G20 Education Working Group was held in Chennai earlier this year, followed by the second at Amritsar last month. There would be three supplementary meetings of the education group before it arrives at a consensus in June.



SUMMER FEST: Chandan Yatra of Srimandir deities underway in Puri, Tuesday

PHOTO: TWITTER

Artificial intelligence helps scientists detect exoplanet

Researchers from University of Georgia, US, say their study showed machine learning to correctly determine the presence of exoplanets by looking in protoplanetary disks

Researchers used machine learning tools, a kind of artificial intelligence (AI), and now have confirmed evidence of previously unknown exoplanet.

The researchers from University of Georgia (UGA), US, said that their study showed machine learning to correctly determine the presence of exoplanets by looking in protoplanetary disks, the gas around newly formed stars.

They said their findings, published in The Astrophysical Journal, represented a first step toward using machine learning to identify previously overlooked exo-

planets. "We confirmed the planet using traditional techniques, but our models directed us to run those simulations and showed us exactly where the planet might be," said Jason Terry, doctoral student in the UGA Franklin College of Arts and Sciences department of physics and astronomy and lead author on the study.

"When we applied our models to a set of older observations, they identified a disk that wasn't known to have a planet despite having already been analysed. Like previous discoveries, we ran simulations of

the disk and found that a planet could re-create the observation," said Terry.

According to Terry, the models suggested a planet's presence, indicated by several images that strongly highlighted a particular region of the disk that turned out to have the characteristic sign of a planet - an unusual deviation in the velocity of the gas near the planet.

"This is an incredibly exciting proof of concept. We knew from our previous work that we could use machine learning to find known forming exoplanets," said



Cassandra Hall, assistant professor of computational astrophysics and principal investigator of the Exoplanet and Planet Formation Research Group at UGA.

The models were able to detect a signal in data that people had already analysed; they found something that previously had gone undetected

"Now, we know for sure that we can use it to make brand new discoveries," said Hall.

The models were able to detect a signal in data that people had already analysed; they found some-

thing that previously had gone undetected.

The researchers said that their study is an example of how engaging AI can enhance scientists' work by expanding researchers' accuracy and efficiently economising their time.

"This demonstrates that our models - and machine learning in general - have the ability to quickly and accurately identify important information that people can miss. This has the potential to dramatically speed up analysis and subsequent theoretical insights," Terry said.

MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	60130.71 ↑ 74.61
NIFTY	17769.30 ↑ 25.90
DOLLAR	81.9125 ↑ ₹0.75
EURO	90.0360 ↑ ₹0.44
GOLD	₹60,018 ↑ ₹17
SILVER	₹73,850 ↓ ₹1,146

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
TEMP	MAX 34.8°C	35.2°C
	MIN 24.8°C	24.5°C
Humidity	78%	82%
Rainfall	1.1	Nil
Forecast: Light to moderate rain		

Naveen: 5T will ensure success in all walks of life

Chief Minister Tuesday launched the third phase of High School Transformation Programme through virtual mode inaugurating 357 schools in 4 districts



take this opportunity to showcase their talent and to bring glory to themselves and their families as well for the entire Odisha.

Congratulating the students attending these schools, Patnaik said that if children use 5T in their lives, they can be successful in all areas of life.

Stating that it is the age of technology, he advised children to try to learn new technologies. The second thing is teamwork. If children work together, the chances of success increase. Teamwork is very important in the field of sports.

Similarly, transparency is an essential requirement in life. Honesty increases a person's credibility. Everyone knows the importance of time. So, if all the time is used properly, children will remain ahead in all spheres and it will bring transformation in their lives, the CM stated.

On this occasion, students from different schools narrated their experiences about the 5T transformation.

During the program, the Chief Minister interacted with the children and asked them what they wanted to be in future, to which they replied that they would become administrative officers, doctors and engineers.



RAZING DOWN: An excavator engaged by Puri district administration carrying out anti-encroachment drive near Kumbharapada Police Station along Puri-Bhubaneswar road, Tuesday

State logs 393 fresh Covid cases; mask mandatory in hosps

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, April 25: As many as 393 fresh Covid-19 cases were reported in Odisha during the past 24 hours, taking the total number of active cases to 3086.

According to the state health department, the government tested 5,421 samples Monday, of which 393 tested positive for Covid-19 virus.

The new cases were reported from 24 out of 30 districts of Odisha. Highest 125 new cases were reported from Sundergarh district, followed by Sambalpur (71), Cuttack (65), Mayurbhanj (28), Khurda (27), and Bolangir (21). Out of the 24 districts, 18 districts have reported single digit cases. Sunday, the state had reported 502 cases.

Meanwhile, the state government has made wearing of face

masks mandatory in all health institutions and close door gathering places.

In an official order, the directorate of public health, Odisha, said it has been decided to make wearing masks mandatory by the employees in health institutions to ensure Covid appropriate behaviour.

The order is applicable to all healthcare providers during duty

hours, all officials and others present in the meetings, during congregation of people particularly in close rooms and persons providing clinical/laboratory & other support services in the hospital setting.

Besides, a mask is compulsory for people visiting areas having possibility of high transmission and the persons with influenza-like illness.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 25: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Tuesday launched the third phase of the High School Transformation Programme through virtual mode, as part of 5T initiative.

A total of 2151 transformed high schools will be inaugurated in the third phase. On the first day of this phase, the Chief Minister inaugurated 357 transformed high schools in four districts Tuesday. It includes 106 high schools of Ganjam district, 87 high schools in Angul,

57 schools in Keonjhar and 107 schools in Jagatsinghpur district.

It is worth noting that 3961 high schools have been transformed in the state in the last two phases. After the completion of the third phases, the total number of transformed schools will reach 6132.

Addressing the students through video conferencing, the Chief Minister said that the success of the students is the success of Odisha. Efforts have been made to provide all modern facilities to the children in 5T schools.

He said that the children could

Continued from P1

SC notice to Delhi...

"In spite of the lapse of three days—from April 21, 2023 to April 24, 2023, no conclusive action has been taken by the Delhi Police against Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh. This clearly depicts a sad state of affairs and a clear violation of human rights," the petition by the seven women wrestlers said.

The wrestlers, including Vinesh Phogat, Sakshi Malik and Bajrang Punia, alleged that the WFI president is now resorting to strong arm tactics by issuing threats and offering bribes to the 'victims'.

"If just an FIR is lodged, we will not go from here. He has to be put behind bars. If he remains outside, we won't be safe. How will we train, if he is roaming free," Vinesh said.

A bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justice PS Narasimha was initially of the view that the plea may be listed for hearing Friday.

However, after hearing some arguments from senior advocate Kapil Sibal, who mentioned the matter, it decided to take up the case straightaway.

The top court said normally a remedy to approach police is available under Section 156 (police officers' power to investigate cognisable cases) of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

"What are the charges?" it asked. Sibal said the seven wrestlers, including a minor, have levelled sexual harassment allegations against Brij Bhushan but no FIR has been lodged so far despite the law being very clear on this aspect.

"These are women wrestlers... There are seven which include a minor. There is a committee report which has not been made public. And no FIR is registered," he added.

Taking note of the submissions, the bench said, "There are serious allegations made in the petition by wrestlers who have represented India and sexual harassment meted out to them. The matter requires consideration by this court."

"(The plea) Taken on board. The identity of the petitioners shall be redacted. Only the redacted petition shall be made available in the public domain. Issue notice. Returnable on Friday. Liberty to serve the NCT Delhi. The complaints which form a part of an attachment in sealed cover shall again be re-sealed and shall be paced again together with the... Plea," the bench ordered. The Delhi Police was among other parties who were issued the notice.

5 arrested in fake drugs case

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 25: In a major crackdown on spurious drugs racket and after a rigorous joint operation of nine days carried out by special task forces (STFs) of Odisha and Uttar Pradesh (UP), five accused persons namely Chandra Sekhar Singh (kingpin), Gourab Sharma, Ritesh Kumar Jaiswal, Subham Jaiswal and Abhishek Singh were arrested today from Varanasi in UP.

They have been taken into remand by Odisha Police (Bargarh PS). The team along with local Drug Inspector-City Amit Kumar Bansal and Drug Inspector-Rural Sanjay Dutt seized the suspected spurious drugs of about Rs 25 lakh, a relevant hard disk with a computer. They also traced a transaction of spurious drugs worth more than Rs 1 crore. In the same link, previously March 2, the STF Team of UP had also seized spurious drugs worth around Rs 7.3 crore based on a report from Commissioner-cum-Secretary,

Health and Family Welfare department (H&FW) Odisha to her counterpart Aparna U of Uttar Pradesh.

A source said that the H&FW Department, Govt of Odisha, earlier constituted a special task force on Drug Enforcement comprising a senior administrative officer and selected officers of drugs control administration.

On 19th January 2023, the team arrested an accused named Sunil Agrawal from Bargarh and lodged an FIR against Amit Kumar Sarwagi of Jharsuguda, who was found absconding.

The drugs so detected as spurious included some highly circulated brands in the market such as Antibiotics: IT-Mac 200 and Clavam 625 including a few others. These drugs were found supplied by three firms in Varanasi, UP.

"A team led by ADC-Bhubaneswar II Circle Sudarshan Biswal with Drug Inspector of Jharsuguda Range Sashmita Dehury and Drug Inspector of Bargarh Range Sunita Nag, in a confidential operation, proceeded to Varanasi April 17," an official said.

AcSIR-Research Scholars Day held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 25: CSIR-IMMT, Bhubaneswar organized the AcSIR-Research Scholars Day under the aegis of third G20 Education Working Group meet at Bhubaneswar.

Aligned with the theme 'future of work', the institute nurtures the young researchers for futuristic deliberations. On this occasion, a poster presentation was organized among students who have enrolled under AcSIR-for a doctoral programme.

The event was inaugurated by chief guest Prof. Sunil K Singh, Director, CSIR-NIO, Goa, guest of honour Prof. Manoj K Dhar, Director, AcSIR, Prof. DS Rao, Dean, AcSIR and G Narahari Sastry, Director, CSIR-IMMT Bhubaneswar.

Inaugurating the programme Singh said we have to depend on science to enhance ourselves and increase our economy. We have to organize this type of programme to increase our scientific knowledge and make scholars in our society.

Reduced 95% malaria cases: CM

During 2017, 1.13 crore long-lasting insecticidal nets were distributed in high endemic areas covering around 2.02 crore population, while in 2020-21, 1.56 crore more of these nets were distributed for 2.6 crore of population under risk

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 25: On World Malaria Day, reaffirming his government's commitment to eliminate the mosquito-borne disease by 2030, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Tuesday informed that the state has successfully reduced Malaria cases by 95 per cent in the last five years, a feat that has earned accolades from the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The Chief Minister said, "With effective measures, Odisha's DAMaN initiative has successfully reduced Malaria cases by 95 per cent in last 5 years which has earned accolades from WHO. After leading the fight against the killer sting, Odisha is on the way to eliminate it by 2030."

Similarly, Public Health director Niranjan Mishra Tuesday said that Malaria is a life-threatening disease caused by parasites that are transmitted to people through bites of infected female Anopheles mosqui-



toes. And the disease is entirely preventable and curable.

Mishra reminded that Odisha was once recorded the highest number of malaria cases, with a share of 25 per cent of country's annual malaria cases and 30 per cent of deaths.

"In 2016, 4.4 lakh malaria cases were reported resulting in 77 deaths. However, since 2017, there has been a drastic reduction. In 2022, state has reported an all time low of Annual Parasite Index (API) with many districts currently being on the path of malaria elimination," he added.

In 2022, the state has witnessed 95 per cent malaria case decline in comparison to 2016, he confirmed. This phenomenal decline

was possible due to many interventions made by and the strengthened strategies adopted by the state government.

During 2017, 1.13 crore long-lasting insecticidal nets were distributed in high endemic areas covering around 2.02 crore population. Further in 2020-21, 1.56 crore of these nets were distributed to protect 2.6 crore of population under risk.

A state initiative to eradicate malaria, known as DAMaN, was implemented in 2017 to specifically to target the population of unreachable areas. Special surveillance for zero validation of malaria cases in 24 districts; strengthened routine surveillance; ensuring early diagnosis and complete treatment at community level with trained ASHAs, health workers and community volunteers; intensified awareness, monitoring and supervision have been among strategies that have led to reduction in case burden, informed the Public Health director.

Millennials reshaping real estate sector

India is home to the largest millennial population, forming 34 per cent (440 million) of the total population of the country, as of 2021. Quite evidently, this makes the role of GenZ, a crucial role in defining the country's economy and the trends of the Indian real estate sector. With a positive attitude and high aspirations, GenZ has greater access to opportunities, education facilities, cushy jobs, and higher incomes, creating a conducive environment to invest in homes.

India has also emerged as the most sought-after destination which has been propelled by the IT boom, contributing to a larger demand for residential homes. Indian millennials are also more inclined to own their own homes, which can be contributed to the sentiment of family values, the idea of long-term future investment, and gaining a sense of pride and acceptance in the societal system.

What is driving millennials to buy their property?

Millennials, who are the largest demographic group in India, are redefining the country's real estate



market in several ways. Financial prudence and economic forces are shaping the patterns of millennials in the coming year. The new breed of millennials is likely to turn from the 'carefree spender' to the 'conservative homebuyer', thereby taking the real estate market by storm. According to several statistics, in pursuit of financial stability, post-covid, millennials are going to drive the trend of residential sales in 2023 too, just like the past year. Property forecast by CREDAI revealed that property trends from 2022 in terms of residential sales will multiply in 2023.

Demand for affordable housing: Contrary to the belief that mil-

lennials are spendthrifts, millennials are more cost-conscious than previous generations when it comes to housing and is looking for affordable housing options. This has led to an increase in demand for compact, affordable homes on the outskirts of major cities.

Technological advancements: Millennials are tech-savvy and are using technology to research properties, connect with real estate agents and developers, and even complete transactions online. This has made the real estate market more accessible and transparent.

Emphasis on amenities: Millennials are looking for homes with modern amenities such as swimming pools, fitness centers, and co-working spaces. Developers are responding to this demand by incorporating these amenities into their projects.

Preference for eco-friendly homes: Millennials are more environmentally conscious than previous generations and are looking for homes that are eco-friendly and sustainable. A lot of developers are incorporating green building practices into their projects, to attract millennials.

Shared living or co-working spaces: Millennials are more open to the concept of shared living spaces such as co-living and co-working spaces. This has led to an increase in demand for such spaces and has given rise to a new segment in the real estate market.

BJB COLLEGE FIGHT

4 more held from slum in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 25: The Commissionerate Police Tuesday arrested four more persons in connection with the clash with students of Buxi Jagabandhu Bidyadhar (BJB) Autonomous College over playing cricket on college ground Saturday. Three plus III students residing in Ambedkar hostel had suffered severe injuries in the clash.

The accused were identified as Ritesh Nayak, Biki Dalei, Balia Das and K Laxmi Narayan. All the accused belong to Falikia Basti under Badagada police station.

Saturday, around 20 youths of the above slum area were playing cricket on the playing ground inside Buxi Jagabandhu College. Three students of the college, along with a few of their classmates, reached the ground and requested the non-students to vacate the place as the formers were about to start a match.

The slum youths told the students that they would left after



thirty minutes. When the students came back, the non-students told them that they would play for another thirty minutes.

Meanwhile, heated argument ensued between the students and non-students over the delay.

The non-students vacated the ground when the game ended after an hour.

Later, the accused non-students and their friends armed with weapons came to the ground and assaulted the students playing there.

On the basis of the complaint lodged by students, police lodged a case (201/23) and arrested four non-students Saturday evening. As many as eight accused persons were arrested in the case so far.

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Pollution woes set to rise for Kalinganagar residents



St Xavier's School and Pingal Nodal High School. Sources said that the air and water pollution levels in the area have turned unbearable for the residents. Many people have been affected by kidney diseases and tuberculosis. The fatality rate due to pollution has also grown manifold, they added.

Earlier, cases have been filed over pollution at the National Green Tribunal and Orissa High Court. However, it has not helped. Once it had been decided that companies will take steps to make the Gonda nullah pollution free. However, nothing has happened. Similarly companies have failed to live up to their promise of providing green cover to 33 per cent land in their respective units.

Earlier plants were directed not to release waste water. The units had also agreed to the proposal of Jajpur Cluster Development department regarding the establishment of a common effluent treatment plant (CETP). They had accepted proposals regarding regular sprinkling of water on the roadsides. However, none of the promises have been kept.

The result has been disastrous. A recent air quality monitoring data states that toxic chemicals like phenolic compound, cyanide and chromium are 15 times higher than the permissible limits in Gonda nullah, Kharasrota and Brahmani rivers.

When contacted, SPCB, regional officer Pramod Kumar Behera said that two firms have decided to hold their public hearing camps soon. Steps will be put in place to tackle pollution as per the suggestions of the local residents, he said.

to conduct public hearing April 29 at Danagadi Bhawan here.

The company has said it will employ 60 local residents during construction and once the company is operational, 150 others will be provided jobs. Locals however, are not impressed. They said that in the past many other companies had made such promises only to later employ people from outside the district and the state. Hence local organisations here are in no mood to allow the construction of a new steel plant as they feel it will only increase pollution woes. The management of the firm meanwhile is trying to win over the locals by taking the help of influential people in the area.

A number of people pointed out that once the 'Jatia Steel Plant' becomes operational, air and water pollution levels will increase in Jakhapura, Kacherigaon, Dashamania and Ravana areas. They said that this will have a harmful effect on the students of Jakhapura High School, Raghunath ME School, Jagadaha Primary School, Khapuriapada UP School,

Now a new company, 'Jatia Steel Ltd' is all set to start operations in the town. People are of the opinion that with the advent of the unit, pollution woes will only increase. The proposed plant will come up at Jakhapura and will produce 7.50 lakh tonne of rolled products annually. For smooth operations, the company has published a no-

UPCOMING NEW STEEL PLANT WILL ONLY INCREASE PROBLEMS, FEEL LOCALS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, April 25: Kalinganagar town was given the tag of the 'second-most polluted' area in India according to a report published by 'Greenpeace' five years back. With nothing being done to counter it, the woes of the people have increased manifold since then. The main cause behind the pollution is toxic emissions by various plants operating in Kalinganagar.

The proposed plant will come up at Jakhapura and will produce 7.50 lakh tonne of rolled products annually. For smooth operations, the company has published a no-



CAMPAIGN AGAINST MALARIA: Nursing students take out an awareness rally on malaria eradication from Baji Chowk to Krushak Bazaar in Rathagada locality of Dhenkanal town, Tuesday

Ridley hatchlings start sea journey

PNN & AGENCIES

Kendrapara, April 25: Lakhs of Olive Ridley hatchlings are breaking out of their eggshells on a daily basis at the Gahirmatha beach in this district and are entering the Bay of Bengal. It is indeed a sight to behold. The mass hatching, which is underway over the last three days, marks the culmination of the annual sojourn of the Olive Ridley turtles.

'Arribada' or the annual journey of the Olive Ridley turtles to Gahirmatha, the world's largest nesting site for the aquatic species, to lay eggs ended March 9, with a total of approximately 5.12 lakh



female turtles turning up this year, officials said.

"The hatching of Olive Ridley turtles lasts for seven to 10 days. The number of hatchlings breaking out of their shells would swell considerably over the next few days,"

an official of the Rajnagar Mangrove (Wildlife) Division said.

The site has been made off limits for tourists and only Forest department officials of Bhitarkanika National Park were allowed to witness the annual event. "The tiny

turtles broke out of the eggshells and wandered aimlessly on the beach for an hour before making their way to the sea," a Forest personnel said. "The newborns make a hissing sound, which gets amplified to a soothing cacophony as lakhs of hatchlings cry out together," he added.

The mother turtles bury the eggs beneath the sand and those receive natural incubation, hatching after 45-55 days. However, mothers leave the beach by then, leaving the babies to face the world alone.

The mortality rate among the Olive Ridley babies is very high as only one out of 1,000 reach adulthood, another forest official said.

2 nabbed for lynching youth

POST NEWS NETWORK

Morada/Betanoti, April 25: A day after a youth was allegedly beaten to death for his alleged extramarital affair in Kenduchhatia village under Bhaliadiha panchayat of Betnoti police limits in Mayurbhanj district, police detained a man and his son, Tuesday.

The deceased was identified as Sunam Tuadu (25), a resident of Gondigodha village under Sureidihni panchayat. He died after Jasaya Tuadu and his son Bapun tied Tuadu to a tree and severely thrashed him all through Monday night. They suspected that Tuadu was having an affair with Jasaya's wife.

On being informed, Betanoti SDPO Sudarshan Das and IIC Sasmita Mohanta reached the spot and launched an investigation. A forensic team was also pressed into service. The body was sent for post-mortem and the two accused were



held in this connection. Police said that the incident oc-

curred Monday when the villagers were participating in a cultural programme held during 'Jahira' puja. The deceased along with Jasaya and his wife had also come to the place to witness the event. However, Jasaya's wife and Tuadu slipped away unnoticed.

When Jasaya found his wife missing, he started looking for her. He found Tuadu and his wife in a compromising position inside an abandoned house. In a fit of rage, Jasaya and his son caught Tuadu, tied him to a tree and thrashed him with sticks and wooden planks. A severely injured Tuadu collapsed on the spot and breathed his last.

The villagers only got to know about the incident Tuesday morning. They caught Jasaya and his son and tied both to a tree before informing the police. The cops arrived a short while later and arrested the duo involved in the alleged murder.

Fake certificate racket busted; police arrest 4

AGENCIES

Berhampur, April 25: Police here claimed Tuesday to have busted an inter-district fake education certificate racket. So far four persons have been arrested in this connection including a school teacher and his son, police said. Several fake certificates, marksheets, documents of the Board of Secondary Education (BSE) and Council of Higher Secondary Education (CHSE) and rubber stamps of doctors and college principals have been recovered during raids, they added. The accused teacher has already been suspended, a police officer said. The racket came to light following a complaint lodged by another teacher of private school here.

Man held after ex-GF lodges police complaint

PNN & AGENCIES

Jajpur, April 25: A 24-year-old man was arrested Tuesday for allegedly sharing photos of intimate moments with his ex-girlfriend on social media, police said. The accused is a resident of Basudevpur in Bhadrak district. He was nabbed after a 22-year-old woman of this district lodged a complaint at the Jenapur police station.

The woman met the accused on Facebook two years ago when she was in college. Over time, they became close and fell in love. They

went together to Puri last year and during that trip, the man clicked some intimate photos, she said in the complaint.

However, the two broke up last month and the woman snapped all contact with the man despite his repeated attempts to reach out to her. Irked over the situation, the man posted the photos on social media, following which those went viral, police said.

After the complaint was lodged, police launched a probe and traced the accused to Basudevpur and arrested him. The accused has been forwarded to court, they said.

EAST COAST RAILWAY
e-Tender Notice No. ECoRMDC/HBS/BMWD-SI-04 Dt: 21.04.2023

Name of work: COLLECTION, TRANSPORTATION AND DISPOSAL OF HOSPITAL BIO-MEDICAL WASTE FROM THE RAILWAY CENTRAL HOSPITAL/EAST COAST RAILWAY/MANCHESWAR/BHUBANESWAR FOR A PERIOD OF THREE YEARS (1096 DAYS) WITH BARCODE BASED MANAGEMENT.

Approx. cost of the work : ₹ 22,63,596/-, EMD: ₹ 45,260/-, Cost of tender document: ₹ 2,000/-, Completion period of the work: 03 years (1096 days).

Tender closing date and time : at 1100 hrs. of 06.05.2023.

No manual offers sent by Post/Courier/Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.

Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website <http://www.ireps.gov.in>

The tenders/bidders must have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate and must be registered on IREPS portal. Only registered tenderer/bidder can participate on e-tendering. All relevant paper must have uploaded at the time of participating on e-tendering as per instruction.

Note : The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 15 (fifteen) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/ corrigenda issued for this tender.

Medical Director/Central Hospital/PR-91/O/23-24 Mancheswar/Bhubaneswar

Satkosia Sand Resort makes Nayagarh villagers self-reliant

REVENUES EARNED FROM ECO-TOURISM SITE CHANGING LIVES OF RESIDENTS IN MUDULIGADIA VILLAGE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nayagarh/Gania, April 25: Proper management of the Satkosia Sand Resort under the state sponsored ecotourism scheme at Manganansi under Gania block in Nayagarh district has made the residents of Muduligadia village self-reliant and financially stable. The village has a population of 120 people comprising 35 families. The families get approximately 10% of the total annual revenue earned by the resort. The resort while providing revenue to the state exchequer has also contributed in increasing the funds of the village committee.

With earnings ensured, the lives of the residents of Muduligadia have changed considerably. Earlier they were plagued by a number of problems including water scarcity. However, all that has disappeared now. They had lodged complaints with the BDO, district collector and public representatives over the problems they faced. However, those were not looked into. However, the establishment of the sand resort has given the villagers a new lease of life.

Sources said Tuesday that the state has two tiger reserve projects namely Similipal and Satkosia. Both have been



given the status of 'Royal Bengal Tiger Habitats' by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA). The 'Satkosia Tiger Reserve' constitutes of two forest divisions namely 'Satkosia Wildlife Division' on one side of Mahanadi river in Angul district and the 'Mahanadi Wildlife Division' in Nayagarh district.

To increase the tourist footfalls in Odisha, the government developed ecotourism projects in 18 districts and established 48 sand resorts (nature camps). The Satkosia Sand Resort at Manganansi in Nayagarh district is one of them. The sand resort became operational in FY 2014-15. Initially bookings had to be done on offline mode. However, from 2015-16 online bookings started.

Since then revenues have grown steadily for the resort. In 2015-16, 275 tourists visited the site helping the resort earn ₹2.90 lakh. The revenues during the following fiscals were: ₹19.35 lakh (FY 2016-17, 1,352 tourists), ₹58.79 lakh (FY 2017-18, 2,702 visitors), ₹1 crore (FY

2018-19, 4,449 tourists), ₹1.09 crore (FY 2019-20, 4,807 visitors), ₹1.20 crore (FY 2020-21, 4,529 visitors) and ₹1.23 crore (FY 21-22, 5,180 tourists).

Sources said that the residents of the village have so far earned ₹42 lakh since the inception of the resort and have spent over ₹22 lakh for developing the village. Close to ₹8.50 lakh have been spent for installation of a drinking water facility and ₹5 lakh for the construction of a temple. Currently a community hall is being built in the village at a cost of ₹2.30 lakh.

When contacted, Sumant Kumar Das, president of 'Maa Sata Bhauni Paribesh Vikash Samiti' said 26 persons from the village work at the resort during the tourist season. However, during the lean season the number comes down to nine. The villagers can avail of interest-free loan of ₹15,000 from the authorities of the resort to engage in various revenue-generating activities like farming during the off season.

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Branch Address: Dhiraj Baug, Building "A" Ground & 1st Floor, Beside Axis Bank, Opp. Monalisa Building, Agra Road, Hari Niwas Circle, Naupada, Thane (West) - 400 602.

DEMAND NOTICE

Under Section 13(2) of the Securitization And Reconstruction of Financial Assets And Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with Rule 3 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. The undersigned is the Authorised Officer of Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Limited (PCHFL) [formerly known as Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd. (DHFL)] under Securitization And Reconstruction of Financial Assets And Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (the said Act). In exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, the Authorised Officer has issued Demand Notices under Section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the following Borrower(s) (the "said Borrower(s)"), to repay the amounts mentioned in the respective Demand Notice(s) issued to them that are also given below. In connection with above, notice is hereby given, once again, to the said Borrower(s) to pay to PCHFL, within 60 days from the publication of this Notice, the amounts indicated herein below, together with further interest as detailed in the said Demand Notice(s), from the date(s) mentioned below till the date of payment and/or realization, payable under the loan agreement read with other documents/writings, if any, executed by the said Borrower(s). As security for due repayment of the loan, the following assets have been mortgaged to PCHFL by the said Borrower(s) respectively.

Name of the Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)	Demand Notice Date and Amount with NPA date	Property address
(LC No. 05900001424 of Bhubaneswar Branch) Pradip Kumar Khotol (Borrower) Kitu Khotol (Co Borrower) 1) Sridhar Khatol (Co Borrower 2)	27-03-2023 / ₹ 324768 / (₹ Three lakh Twenty Four Thousand Seven Hundred Sixty Eight Only) NPA (08-01-2023)	Plot No.-2831, Khata No-712 Mouza- Arisal, Tahasil- Delanga Arisal Grampanchayat Limit Puri Orissa - 752016

If the said Borrower(s) fail to make payment to PCHFL as aforesaid, PCHFL shall proceed against the above secured assets under Section 13(4) of the Act and the applicable Rules, entirely at the risks of the said Borrowers as to the costs and consequences. The said Borrowers are prohibited under the Act from transferring the aforesaid assets, whether by way of sale, lease or otherwise without the prior written consent of PCHFL. Any person who contravenes or abets contravention of the provisions of the said Act or Rules made there under, shall be liable for imprisonment and/or penalty as provided under the Act.

Date : 26-04-2023
Place: Orissa

Sd/- (Authorised Officer)
Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Limited

बँक ऑफ महाराष्ट्र
Bank of Maharashtra
एक परिवार एक बैंक

BANK OF MAHARASHTRA BHUBANESWAR BRANCH
Plot No.: 426/2260, N.B. Tower, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar - 751012, Ph.: 0674-2564018, Email id: brmgr1182@mahabank.co.in

POSSESSION NOTICE
[Rule - 8(1)]

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the Bank of Maharashtra under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under sub-section (12) of section 13 read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice calling upon the Borrower/Co-Borrower to repay the amount mentioned in the notice plus interest and expenses thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower/Co-Borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under sub-section (4) of section 13 of Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules. The Borrower/Co-Borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Bank of Maharashtra for an amount stated below with interest & expenses thereon. The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Name & Address of the Borrower/Co-Borrower	Description of the Security Interest taken over possession	Liabilities due on the specified date as per Notice	Date of Demand Notice / Date of Possession
Borrower: Mr. Bhagabat Prasad Bhatta, S/o.: Mr. Krushna Chandra Bhatta, Address: Flat No.: 101, Nandighosh Enclave, Jarada Bungalow, Berhampur, Ganjam - 760004 / Co-Borrower: Mrs. Smitarani Bhatta, W/o.: Mr. Bhagabat Prasad Bhatta, Address: Flat No.: 101, Nandighosh Enclave, Jarada Bungalow, Berhampur, Ganjam - 760004	Equitable Mortgage of Residential Land & Building Situated over Plot No.: 308/2407, Khata No.: 1133/3193, Mouza: Jagamara, Khandagiri, Tahasil: Bhubaneswar, Dist.: Khurda, Area: Ac.0.070 Dec. together with the Buildings and Structures/Residential Block constructed thereon admeasuring 2176 sqft. (carpet) i.e. 4352 sqft (Built up) in aggregate consisting of 5 Rooms on G+1 Floor/s and the fixture annexed, standing in the name of Mr. Bhagabat Prasad Bhatta & Mrs. Smitarani Bhatta, Bounded by East: Road, West: Plot No.: 2406, North: Plot No.: 306, South: Plot No.: 306	₹1,23,50,971/- as on 18.01.2023 + interest & other charges thereon	18.01.2023 / 20.04.2023

Place: Bhubaneswar
Date: 26.04.2023

Chief Manager & Authorised Officer
Bank of Maharashtra

EAST COAST RAILWAY
File No. DRM/Engg/KUR/23-24/ E-Tender/09, Dt. 19.04.2023

(1) Tender No. etender-CENT-KUR-36-2023, Dtd.: 15.04.2023

DESCRIPTION : PROVISION OF 29 BAYS PLATFORM SHELTERS AT LINGARAJ TEMPLE ROAD AND 45 BAYS PLATFORM SHELTERS AT MANCHESWAR STATION OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.

Approx. Cost of the Work : ₹ 926.58 Lakhs, EMD: ₹ 6,13,300/-

(2) Tender No. etender-CENT-KUR-37-2023, Dtd.: 15.04.2023

DESCRIPTION : IMPROVEMENT OF PLATFORM SURFACE AT LINGARAJ TEMPLE ROAD AND MANCHESWAR STATIONS ALONG WITH 4 NOS. LIFTS AND EXTENSION OF PLATFORMS AT MANCHESWAR STATION OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.

Approx. Cost of the Work : ₹ 997.29 Lakhs, EMD: ₹ 6,48,700/-

(3) Tender No. etender-CENT-KUR-40-2023, Dtd.: 15.04.2023

DESCRIPTION : PROVISION OF 25 BAYS PLATFORM SHELTERS AT DHENKANAL AND 20 BAYS PLATFORM SHELTER AT MERAMANDALI STATION OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.

Approx. Cost of the Work : ₹ 528.74 Lakhs, EMD: ₹ 4,14,400/-

Completion Period : 06 (Six) Months (for all SI. Nos.)

Tender Closing Date and Time : At 1500 Hrs. of 08.05.2023 (for all the Tenders).

No manual offers sent by Post / Courier/ Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.

Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website : <http://www.ireps.gov.in>

Note : The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 10 (Ten) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / corrigenda issued for this tender. The tenderers/bidders must have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate and must be registered on IREPS Portal. Only registered tenderer/ bidder can participate on e-tendering.

Divisional Railway Manager (Engg) / PR-96/O/23-24 Khurda Road



The practice of Yoga brings us face to face with the extraordinary complexity of our own being.

SRI AUROBINDO



Hunger & Lamborghinis

India has overtaken China as the world's most populous country, according to latest UN population estimates. The projections are calculated through a combination of factors including dated census data and birth and death rates. The exact figures show India having a population of 1.4286 billion against 1.4257 billion for China. This is the first time since 1950, when the UN first began keeping global population records that China has fallen from the top spot.

This is a dubious distinction that India has attained. The reason is while Indian population has been increasing phenomenally, its economic growth is declining. The exact size of India's population is still not known because the present government has delayed carrying out the census. It was due in 2021, but was postponed presumably due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The reason for the delay seems to be more political than anything else. The BJP-led government at the Centre is yet to announce the date census will commence. This only strengthens suspicion that the Narendra Modi government is obstructing the census process to disguise data that could be politically disadvantageous for the BJP.

One may remember the huge nationwide protests in December 2019 against implementation of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the proposed National Register of Citizens (NRC). The protests against NRC and CAA had touched almost every corner of the country, with many protestors alleging the CAA violates the secular identity of the country while others feared it will endanger their linguistic and cultural identity while alienating certain sections of society. Many would remember Shaheen Bagh in New Delhi which stood as the face of peaceful protests, violence in JNU and Jamia Millia and unrest in Assam and the Northeast. As the protests threatened to throw India into turmoil, Prime Minister Modi contradicted Home Minister Amit Shah's rhetoric that a nationwide NRC will definitely be implemented by 2024. In a public rally at New Delhi in late December 2019, PM Modi backtracked on the Centre's earlier stance and said that his government had never discussed about implementing NRC anywhere except Assam, perhaps to calm the nerves of a country on boil. Thereafter, NRC and CAA have been on hold. A nationwide census will definitely bring back the ghost of NRC and CAA, without which it might be difficult for the government to move forward. There also lies the demand of Opposition parties to implement a caste-based census to which the government has not yet responded.

The government's explanation that the delay is due to an ongoing effort to incorporate technology into the process is not convincing at all. Experts believe the latest release of population figures by the UN could put pressure on the Indian government to undertake the census. According to latest figures, the population has grown by almost 200 million since the last census in 2011. The lack of vital data is hindering policymaking and welfare programmes.

What is worse, as UN figures show, India's demography is not at all uniform across the country. One third of the projected population growth over the next decade will come from just two states - Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. These two states are among the poorest and they mostly depend on agriculture. Uttar Pradesh alone already has a population of about 235 million.

That population control becomes possible with greater education and economic growth is evident from the examples in India's southern states. These states are prosperous and have far higher rates of literacy compared to their northern counterparts. The population rates have also already stabilised and begun to fall. In the next decade, states in the southern region such as Kerala and Tamil Nadu are likely to be faced with the problem of an ageing population. By 2025, one in five people in Kerala will be over 60.

This disparity in population growth between India's north and south may have far-reaching political implications. The country's electoral constituencies are to be redrawn in a few years from now, based on census data. Many politicians in southern states have expressed concern that their successes in bringing down population numbers, through family planning and high literacy, could ironically turn out to be a curse rather than a blessing for electoral reasons. The southern states may suffer a reduction in their political representation (number of seats) in Parliament and a further political domination of Hindi states that continue to have a population boom may prevail.

Another important aspect of the latest UN population figures is that the average age in India is just 29 and the country will continue to have a largely youthful population for the next two decades. China turned a similar demographic development into a boon using the youth power for an economic boom, particularly in manufacturing. But, India continues to struggle with high youth unemployment with less than 50 per cent of working-age Indians being in the workforce. The figure for women is even lower. Just 20 per cent of women are participating in the formal labour market. This figure is further decreasing as India develops.

It is a sad commentary on India's growth trajectory that until 1990 its per capita income was higher than that of China, but now it is only about a fifth of China's. It is ironic that India has become a member of the G20 for its economic growth, while its citizens are the poorest in the group. The richest 5 per cent of Indians can consume the same goods as the average Briton. It is a sign of the times that the latest Lamborghini sports car models, which cost ₹400,000, are already sold out in India. But 350 million Indians went hungry in 2022, up from 190 million in 2018.

It is time to call the government's bluff about India's target of a 5-trillion dollar economy or 'Vishwaguru' for the simple reason that in such a scheme of things, monopoly houses, cronies capitalists and manipulators of share markets such as the Adanis become rich at the cost of the poor.

WISDOM CORNER

Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why.

MARK TWAIN

However difficult life may seem, there is always something you can do and succeed at.

STEPHEN HAWKING

WORDSWORTH

Herf

This is a curious term, with an odd genesis. It has now been firmly established, in part by the work of Barry Popik, that the term first appeared online: *I tried several when I first began smoking cigars and found them all to be very bland and almost impossible to herf, they were so tightly wrapped (A posting by somebody known only by his nickname Prince of Skeeves to the newsgroup alt.smokers.cigars, 21 Nov. 1996).* A few months later the writer explained that he first heard the term at a "junior college in Clyde, Texas, in 1982 from a blueblood derelict friend of mine named Stu". It meant "the ungainly and humorous facial contortion required to deeply draw on a large, hand-rolled cigarette of unknown filling." The word became popular in the newsgroup, leading to coinages such as herfers, herfnicks and herfaholics. A number of Web pages record that a herf, in your meaning of a meeting of cigar fans (a herf obviously enough being a situation in which one herfs) was arranged by members of the newsgroup in April 1997 under the title of The Texas Herf On The Lake. Herf is well established within the cigar fraternity in the US, though it's unknown outside it. One site describes it as "A lively gathering of cigar-smoking comrades who meet in a club, restaurant, cigar store or home to share their appreciation of fine cigars."

VARSIITIES FOR INNOVATION

FOCUS WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY DAY

Of late, we are witnessing the widening gap between universities and the local community.

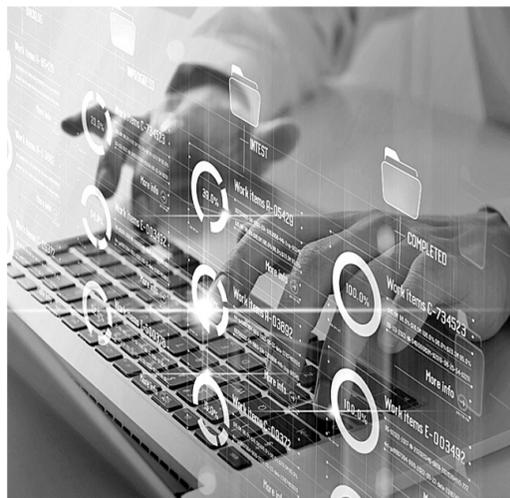
Universities are expected to create intellectual property useful for the society. Let us use the World Intellectual Property Day to develop an agenda for the universities to become more relevant for the society. Modern day economies are becoming more innovation driven. The nations which have invested in creating environment for developing intellectual properties have grown faster than others.

Universities in general and public universities in particular have an important role in creating the necessary environment for the development of intellectual properties. Even though several researchers have shown the positive correlation between intellectual properties and economic development, it is difficult to understand the reasons for the government reducing its financial support to the public universities.

It is time for the universities to become a fertile ground for creation of intellectual properties to solve local problems. It is not enough for the university to remain as another organisation for imparting knowledge only by way of an elitist education. It has to create ways to blend relevant research and rigorous teaching. The regulators, rating agencies, and the society as a whole need to redefine the university's role within the community.

A serious conversation on the issue of the university's role in regional and local development was initiated by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The OECD in 2007 suggested several criteria which should be taken into consideration when evaluating a university's role in the local and regional development.

Let me take the public universities of the state as an example and share some thoughts on the possible action plans for emerging as a leader in creating intellectual properties. Most of them have the potential to emerge as one of best intellectual properties creators, but the actual performance is quite disappointing. No recruitment for years. No major academic breakthrough for ages. No new schools. Even the departments which are supposed to be market driven,



Even though several researchers have shown the positive correlation between intellectual properties and economic development, it is difficult to understand the reasons for the government reducing its financial support to public universities

like Commerce and Management, are struggling to survive. The top management of the universities are now more dependent on the civil servants. Academic vision is conspicuous by its absence. It seems the public universities are drifting away from the local community. It has been observed that the public universities of our state are in the bottom quartile of Scimago's latest ranking of institutions. The Scimago Institutions Rankings (SIR), since 2009, measure areas such as research output, international collaboration, normalised impact, and publication rate.

Even in such dire straits we can be positive because we cannot go further down. The only way available for these universities is to move upwards. The academic fraternity of the universities along with the vice chancellors need to work on a long-term plan to bring back the past glory. Efforts should be made to work towards undertaking effective R & D programme, initiating interdisciplinary research centres, emerging as the knowl-

edge hub for the state, strengthening the interface with the corporate sector, and involving alumni in developmental process. It is time for some concrete actions on the above goals.

The universities may think of developing a vibrant ecosystem of research with a focus on the local problems involving local talent. Yes, for such a dream to become a reality the state government must extend all types of support and give financial and operational autonomy. Let the universities be managed by the academicians and the civil servants provide necessary support from outside wherever required. Here are some of the suggestions for creating a long-term research agenda on the basis of the goals mentioned above.

Power sector: Odisha is the first state in the country to start power sector reforms. In fact, we are the first in the country to have an electricity regulatory commission. However, we have not done much research on technical and commercial issues relating to the power sector. We have data and we have people who under-

stand the sector thoroughly. All that is needed is a platform for pulling them together and creating a research agenda for strengthening the sector. The local universities should take the lead and create a world-class research centre which can undertake studies on all issues relating to the energy sector. It should create a platform for open conversation among the regulators, corporate entities, and the consumers.

Sports research: Odisha, in the recent past, has emerged as the sports capital of the country. Odisha is the first state in the country to sponsor a national team too. The government has made huge investments in physical infrastructure. Physical infrastructure is important, but the athletes immensely benefit from sports science and research too in many ways. Our universities should take a lead on this front too by creating specific courses relating to sports, encouraging students to do research in sports science, and also by creating opportunities for the sportspersons to interact with the researchers.

Business on the street: Another credit that goes to our state is creating proper vending zones in the state capital. Business on the street provides an opportunity to study every aspect of the economy. Different departments of the universities can take up studies in financial literacy, digital literacy, legal literacy, and proper town planning issues. The Prime Minister has popularised "chai pe charcha," let our universities popularise "chai pe research."

There is immense potential in creating intellectual properties in all three themes mentioned above. This will also create an opportunity for the universities to create knowledge which will directly help the local community. Such knowledge will be equally relevant for the rest of the country. These are just some examples to initiate the conversation.

Let the academic fraternity of the state take a pledge on this World Intellectual Property Day to take the conversation forward and initiate steps to make it more relevant for the local community. Hope it will not disappoint the citizens of Odisha.

The writer is a professor at XIMB. Views are personal.

IN JEST THIS

Help needed to alleviate sales addiction



Melvin Durai

If you have something you'd like to sell, here's some advice: Don't just put the item on sale - put the item on "SALE!"

What I mean is this: you need to mark it up and then mark it down. For example, if you want to sell your wide-screen TV online for 25,000 rupees, make sure you write something like this:

"Clearance sale: Sony TV, 55-inches. Almost brand new. Original price: one lakh, but now 75 per cent off. Only one left! Get it before it's gone! Don't miss this chance to SAVE BIG."

To ensure a slew of potential buyers, you can add this line: "Buy today and get FREE batteries with your remote!"

This is a tried-and-true formula for many businesses, including department stores, grocery stores and even airlines. They know that many people can't resist getting a bargain, even if the bargain is something they don't really need.

Some of these people are shopping addicts - they get a dopamine boost whenever they're buying things - but most are sales addicts.

You might be a sales addict if: (1) you spend more time in the clearance section of a store than in the rest of the store; (2) you have poor eyesight, but can spot a sales sticker from a mile away; (3) when you go to sleep at night, the word "sale" flashes inside your eyes; (4) you have a section of unused sale items in your home that's bigger than the store's clearance section; and (5) you believe that the best way to save money is to spend it all on sale items.

I am very familiar with sales addiction because a close family member suffers from it. I don't want to name her, for fear of embarrassing her; so let's just say that her relationship with me rhymes with "life."

Whenever she goes shopping, she comes home with a handful of

sale items. Some of these items are useful - things we can definitely use - but others, not so much.

She: "Look what I bought in the clearance section. Cat food. Only 10 cents a can. What a bargain!"

Me: "But we don't have a cat."

She: "I know, but what if we get one? It was a good deal. If we get a cat, we can feed her for a whole year."

Me: "We are not getting a cat. I'm allergic to cats."

She: "Sorry, I forgot about that. Maybe we can feed one of the stray cats."

Me: "The stray cats don't come to our home, because of our dog."

She: "Oh yes, I forgot about Lulu. Maybe she might like to try some cat food for a change."

Lulu, of course, loved the cat food, which inspired more visits to the clearance section.

As a caring person, I'm writing to my local politicians to see if they can help. You know how the government has a "no fly list" to keep

terrorists from flying? Well, I'm hoping to put my close family member on a "no sale list." Whenever she approaches a 'sale' section, a uniformed officer will stop her and say, "Sorry, madam, you do not have clearance to go to the clearance."

I am also encouraging her to join the support group SAA (Sales Addicts Anonymous). SAA members commiserate with each other about their struggles.

Young woman: "Hi everyone! My name is Nandita and I'm a sales addict."

Group (in unison): "Welcome Nandita!"

Group leader: "Nandita, what did you buy from the clearance section this week?"

Nandita: "I bought a meat grinder."

Leader: "Do you eat meat often, Nandita?"

Nandita: "No, I am a vegetarian, but it was 90 per cent off. What a bargain!"

Cheetahs deserve better

Sir, This refers to "MP seeks alternate site for cheetahs," *Orissa Post*, April 25. The death of two cheetahs within a month at the Kuno National Park, and one of the big cats venturing outside the park area, raises questions about the success of the ambitious project to translocate cheetahs from Africa. Altogether 20 cheetahs from Namibia and South Africa have been brought to the park to establish a free ranging population. Now Namibian experts are warning that the size of their habitat at Kuno is small and the big cats will go outside the park's boundaries causing man-animal conflict. The project authorities have stated that the 748 sq. km. Kuno Park can accommodate 21 cheetahs across its territory or around three cheetahs per 100 sq km based on prey density. But recent research suggests that even in prime habitats, cheetah density is around one big cat per 100 sq km. It is clear that while planning the cheetah project, these factors were not taken into consideration. One way out of this imbroglio is to shift some of the cheetahs to the Mukundara Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan which was also shortlisted for the cheetah introduction plan. However, political considerations may rule out Mukundara as Rajasthan is a Congress-ruled state. Is it fair to jeopardise the success of the much touted cheetah project by choosing politics over pragmatism? The big cats that have made the long journey far from their natural habitat deserve better.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Unscientific move

Sir, The NCERT has dropped the theory of evolution as propounded by Charles Darwin from the science syllabus for the class X. This has been done as a part of the 'rationalisation' exercise taken up during the COVID pandemic to reduce the 'content load' on students. The theory of evolution is fundamental to understanding the basis of several branches of modern biology like genetics, immunology and so on. It is hard to believe that the change effected by NCERT, particularly relating to the chapter on evolution and heredity, has anything to the stated goal of reducing the burden on students in the wake of the pandemic. In 2018, Minister of State for Human Resources Development Satypal Singh had declared that Darwin's theory of evolution was scientifically wrong, because "no one had ever seen a monkey turn into a human." Singh is no more in the ministry but what he desired is being implemented.

Asit Mohanty, JAJPUR

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

B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

national



Urbanisation is taking place at a faster pace. Every minute, 20-30 people are coming (to urban areas). By 2050, India is likely to see 850-900 million people living in urban spaces

HARDEEP SINGH PURI | UNION MINISTER

DRONE SPOTTED OVER DELHI CM'S RESIDENCE

A drone was sighted hovering above the home of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal Tuesday and a probe has been launched, a Delhi Police official said. According to police, information was received regarding a drone seen over Chief Minister's residence in the Civil Lines area



of the day quote

Apart from appointing employees in government departments on an outsourcing basis through the HKRNL, manpower will also be made available to the private sector as per the latter's requirement

MANOHAR LAL KHATTAR | HARYANA CM

The new flyover will create a signal-free corridor at the Sarai Kale Khan T-junction on Ring Road, saving time and reducing fuel consumption

ATISHI | DELHI PWD MINISTER

Developing our railway stations, laying new railway lines, doubling and electrifying existing railway lines, improving our signal systems, increasing the speed of our trains and introducing new trains are all initiatives that need special focus

PINARAYI VIJAYAN | KERALA CHIEF MINISTER

SC asks K'taka not to scrap Muslim quota till May 9

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 25: The Supreme Court Tuesday said Karnataka's earlier regime granting four per cent reservation to Muslims will continue to hold the field till May 9.

A bench of justices KM Joseph and BV Nagarathna also said the decision of scrapping of the four per cent quota for Muslims in 2B category of the 'Other Backward Castes' and granting benefits of increased quota to Vokkaligas and Lingayats in admissions and appointments to government jobs will not be implemented till May 9 after the state government sought time to file its reply.

At the outset, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Karnataka government, said he will be filing the reply, which is prepared and is a bulky document on a batch of the pleas during the day.

"I will be filing it today but the problem is I (solicitor general) am in personal difficulty as arguing before the constitution bench hearing pleas related to same-sex marriage. Kindly put the matter for some other day", he told the bench.

Senior advocate Dushyant Dave, appearing for the petitioners, opposed the request for adjournment by Mehta and said the hearing already has been deferred four times. Mehta said the interim order passed by the court is already in the petitioners' favour.

Dave requested the court to record the submission of Mehta that impugned orders, scrapping the quota for Muslims will not be implemented and the earlier notification dated March 30, 2002, granting the quota will hold the field till next date of hearing. The bench agreed with Dave and recorded the submission, while posting the matter for further hearing May 9.

Mehta urged the bench to record in the order that the assurance was given by the state government without causing any prejudice to its contention.

The bench recorded that the assurance was given by the state without causing any prejudice to

its contention. On April 18, the top court had deferred till April 25 hearing on a batch of pleas challenging scrapping of the four per cent Muslim quota in Karnataka after the state government sought time to file its reply.

It had recorded the assurance given by the state government on April 13 that no quota benefits in admission to educational institutions and appointment in government jobs will be given to Vokkaligas and Lingayats will hold the field till the next date of hearing. On April 13, the Karnataka government's decision to scrap four per cent Muslim quota ahead of the assembly polls came under the scanner of the Supreme Court, which questioned the government order and said prima facie it appeared to be on a "highly shaky ground" and "flawed".

Taking note of the observations, the Karnataka government had assured the top court that it will put on hold its March 24 order by which it had given quotas in admission to educational institutions and appointment in government jobs to Vokkaligas and Lingayats, till the next date of hearing.

The four per cent reservation for Muslims was to be equally split between the two communities. The top court said from the records tabled before it appears that the Karnataka government's decision is based on "absolutely fallacious assumption". At the end of its term, the BJP government March 24 decided to abolish the four per cent reservation for Muslims under 2-B category.

The four per cent was later split into two and distributed among Vokkaligas in 2-C category and Lingayats in 2-D category. The state government announced two new categories of reservation and divided the four per cent Muslim quota between the Vokkaligas and Lingayats, the two numerically dominant and politically influential communities. Muslims eligible for quotas were categorised under the economically weaker sections. The state government's decision has pushed the reservation limit to around 57 per cent now.



Parl has power to legislate; how far can courts go: SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 25: The Supreme Court Tuesday said Parliament undisputedly has the legislative power over issues raised in pleas seeking legal sanction for same-sex marriage and pondered over the "interstices" left open for it to exercise its power and till what extent.

A five-judge Constitution bench headed by Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud was faced with several consequential legal questions, such as adoption, succession, intestacy and laws governing pension and gratuity where a once legally-acknowledged spouse is the beneficiary; if it decides to legalise same-sex marriage.

The bench observed that if same-sex marriage is allowed, then the judicial interpretation, keeping in mind the consequential aspects, will not remain confined to the Special Marriage Act, 1954 and personal laws will also come into play.

"Now, the question which we really therefore have to pose is, if

The bench observed that if same-sex marriage is allowed, then the judicial interpretation, keeping in mind the consequential aspects, will not remain confined to the Special Marriage Act, 1954 and personal laws will also come into play

this is a power which is conferred specifically on Parliament, where does the court really exercise its jurisdiction. Which are those interstices which are left open for the court to exercise its powers," the bench, also comprising Justices S K Kaul, S R Bhat, Hima Kohli and P S Narasimha, said.

Observing that there is no denying that there is a link between the 1954 Act and the personal laws of various religions, the bench said, "Therefore, you cannot con-



FUN TIME: People at Dadar Chowpatty on a hot summer day in Mumbai, Maharashtra

PFI PHOTO

Rahul moves Guj HC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, April 25: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Tuesday filed an application in the Gujarat High Court challenging the order of the Surat sessions court which last week declined to stay his conviction in a criminal defamation case over his "Modi surname" remark, a lawyer said.

Congress advocate BM Mangukia confirmed Gandhi has filed an appeal in the HC here against the sessions court order. The HC is expected to soon take up Gandhi's application for hearing. A metropolitan magistrate's court in Surat March 23 sentenced the former Congress president to two years in jail after convicting him under Indian Penal Code sections 499 and 500 (dealing with criminal defamation) in the 2019 case filed by Gujarat BJP MLA Purnesh Modi. The case was registered against Gandhi following the BJP MLA's complaint over his remark, "How come all thieves have Modi as the common surname?" made during an election rally at Kolar in Karnataka April 13, 2019.

EXCISE POLICY SCAM

CBI files supplementary chargesheet against Sisodia

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 25: The CBI Tuesday filed a supplementary chargesheet against former Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia and three others in the excise policy scam case, officials said.

Special Judge M K Nagpal fixed May 12 for considering the charge sheet after the CBI submitted that the prosecution sanction against Sisodia has already been procured from competent authorities.

The CBI had arrested Sisodia February 26 and it filed the charge sheet on the 58th day which may deny him the chance of getting default bail.

Out of the four accused, Sisodia and Dhall are currently in judicial custody. While Gorrantia was granted bail in the matter March 6, Pandey has not been arrested. The CBI has invoked IPC 120-B (criminal conspiracy) and added new IPC sections 201 (destruction of evidence) and 420 (cheating) which were not part of the FIR. It has also invoked provisions of Prevention of Corruption Act



against the accused.

The CBI probe so far shows that Sisodia was heading the GoM for formulating the excise policy and he was the chief architect of the conspiracy to tweak and manipulate the formulation and implementation of the excise policy under the influence of South Group, officials said.

The tweaking was allegedly done to facilitate monopolisation of wholesale and retail liquor trade for the suspects of 'South Group', a group of businessmen and politicians based in Hyderabad, for taking six per cent of the 12 per cent "windfall profit margin" for wholesalers, provided in the policy, in return for kickbacks, the agency has alleged.

The charges of corruption and

irregularities in the formulation and implementation of the policy have been strongly refuted by the Aam Admi Party and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

It has alleged whole sale profit margin was increased from five per cent to 12 per cent without any cogent reason of justification.

In doing so, the recommendation of expert committee headed by Ravi Dhawan was disregarded as they did not favour the South Group, the agency said.

The agency alleged that it has kept the probe the open into allegations that one of the major player Mahadev Liquor was pressurised to appoint wholesalers linked to South Group.

Recently, while rejecting the bail petition of Sisodia, special judge Nagpal had noted that the then deputy chief minister played the "most important and vital role in the above criminal conspiracy" and he had been deeply involved in formulation as well as implementation of the said policy to ensure achievement of objectives of the said conspiracy.

Parkash Singh Badal: Grand old man of Punjab politics

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, April 25: Parkash Singh Badal was not the one to give up easily, on life or on politics. Only last year, the Shiromani Akal Dal fielded the patriarch again from home turf Lambi in Punjab's Muktsar district for the assembly elections.

He lost but entered the record books for being the oldest person to fight an election in the county. This was his 13th electoral battle in a long political career that began when he became the sarpanch of Badal village in Bathinda district. The five-time former Punjab chief minister died at a private hospital in Mohali near Chandigarh Tuesday, nine days after he was admitted there with breathing



problems. He was 95. The grand old man of Punjab politics first became chief minister in 1970, heading a coalition government that did not complete its term. He was also the CM in 1977-80, 1997-2002, 2007-12 and 2012-2017.

In the last stage of his career, Badal handed over the reins of the SAD to son Sukhbir Singh Badal,

who also became the deputy chief minister under him.

Born December 8, 1927 in Abul Khurana near Malout, Badal graduated from the Forman Christian College in Lahore. His first political posts were the sarpanch of Badal village and the chairman of the block samiti. He entered the state assembly from Malout in 1957 as the Congress nominee. In 1969, he won the Gidderbaha assembly seat on the SAD ticket.

When Gurnam Singh, the then chief minister, defected to the Congress, the SAD regrouped. It picked Badal as its leader on March 27, 1970. In 1972, he became the leader of the Opposition in the House, but went on to become the CM again later. Badal's governments focused on farmers. Under

his leadership, the state assembly passed the controversial Punjab Sutlej Yamuna Link Canal (Transfer of Proprietary Rights) Bill, 2016. This was meant to reverse the progress till then on the project. His party broke off ties with the Bharatiya Janata Party over the farmers' agitation against the Centre new agri laws in 2020. He also returned the Padma Vibhushan award he received in 2015.

Badal's wife Surinder Kaur Badal died of cancer in 2011. They had two children - Sukhbir Singh Badal, the heir to his political legacy, and Parneet Kaur, who is married to former minister Adesh Pratap Singh Kairon. SAD chief Sukhbir Badal's wife is Bathinda MP Harsimrat Kaur Badal.

SHORT TAKES

1 dead, 22 hurt as bus overturns

Mumbai: One passenger was killed and 22 were injured when a state-owned MSRTC bus overturned after hitting a road divider in Maharashtra's Raigad district Tuesday, police said. The incident took place at 3.30 pm near Karnala Bird Sanctuary, nearly 60 km from Mumbai, when the 'Shivshahi' bus operated by the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) was going from Panvel to Mahad, an official said. There were 38 passengers on the bus, he said.

YS Sharmila granted bail

Hyderabad: A local court Tuesday granted bail to YSR Telangana Party president Y S Sharmila, a day after she was arrested by police here for allegedly assaulting police personnel following an altercation with them outside her residence in the city. Sharmila, sister of Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy, was produced before the court after her arrest Monday which remained her to judicial custody till May 8 and she was lodged in a jail here. Sharmila had also moved a bail petition which the court had posted for Tuesday after issuing notice to the police.

J&K: Sex racket busted, 5 held

Srinagar: An alleged prostitution racket was busted in Jammu and Kashmir's Kupwara district Tuesday with the arrest of five people, police said. Information was received about sex racket being operated from Shabir Ahmad War's house in Reshipora area of Handwara in the north Kashmir district, a police spokesperson said. This is the third sex racket that has been busted this month in the union territory.

Fire in hospital

Shahdol: A fire broke out at a private hospital in Madhya Pradesh's Shahdol city on Tuesday afternoon following which 32 patients were shifted to other facilities, officials said. No casualty was reported.

Protest in JNU

New Delhi: A group of students are on a protest at the Jawaharlal Nehru University here alleging they are yet to be assigned hostel rooms despite being in the second semester which has forced them to put up at rented accommodations. The protesting students began a sit-in at the Dean of Students' office in the university Monday evening.

SAME-SEX MARRIAGE



fine to the Special Marriage Act and it has to go beyond it."

On the fourth day of the hearing, senior advocate Saurabh Kirpal, who appeared in the court on behalf of the petitioners, vehemently pleaded for legal validation of same-sex marriage, saying seven per cent of the country's GDP will be affected if the LGBTQIA++ (les-

bian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, pansexual, two-spirit, asexual and ally) are denied this fundamental right.

He said gay and lesbian people are also like heterosexuals and if their marriage is not registered here, they will leave for another country for better rights, and contended that it will be a 'gay

brain-drain".

"There cannot be a situation where the court will say that it cannot give everything so it will give nothing," Kirpal said.

Referring to the possible impact after validating same-sex marriage, the bench quipped, "Aren't we taking too many legislative steps here? You are actually bringing in a contemporary (issue) when the intention was something else that time when the Special Marriage Act was enacted."

It said the absence of a broader legislation covering a wider class of persons like the LGBTQIA community is not a ground to strike down that law.

The bench referred to section 21A of the Special Marriage Act, which provides certain reliefs to Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs or Jains in property and other related issues if they solemnise their marriages under the law, and said it is very specific and if the court has to make some provisions of reading it, it has to be consistent with other provisions.

NIA conducts fresh raids in four states

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Patna, April 25: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) Tuesday conducted searches at 16 locations in Bihar, Goa, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab as part of its investigation against a suspected module of the banned Islamist organisation PFI in Bihar's Phulwari Sharif, officials said.

A spokesperson for the federal

PFI PHULWARI SHARIF MODULE CASE

anti-terror agency said "a hoard of digital devices, along with bank transaction details, were seized during the searches conducted at the premises of PFI suspects... Incriminating documents related to PFI and Indian currency of the face value of Rs 1 lakh were also seized." Locations in Siwan, Sheohar, Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga, Katihar, Araria, Purnea and East Champaran districts of Bihar; South Goa district of Goa, Rampur and Bhadohi in Uttar Pradesh and Ludhiana in Punjab were searched by the NIA officials.

TN's shrimp hub faces heavy losses

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, April 25: Nagapattinam, the shrimp hub of Tamil Nadu, is facing heavy losses after a viral disease has led to the deaths of a large number of the crustaceans.

According to Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) officials, around 40 hectares of shrimp farming in Nagapattinam has been affected by the white spot disease. The farmers are worried that if the shrimps die in large numbers and the news spreads, exports from the area would be affected as foreign buyers are very choosy in placing orders in markets that have shrimps dying in large numbers.

M.K. Murugan, a shrimp farmer who owns around two acres of farmland, said: "In the past one month, a large number of shrimps died in my farm and adjacent farms



Shrimp farming is done mainly in the coastal area between Nagore and Kodyakarai in Nagapattinam district

According to Marine Products Export Development Authority officials, around 40 hectares of shrimp farming in Nagapattinam has been affected by the white spot disease

leading to heavy losses. Our entire livelihood is connected with shrimp farming and I have to overcome this and have already ap-

proached MPEDA for a solution and are working on it."

Shrimp farming is done mainly in the coastal area between Nagore

and Kodyakarai in Nagapattinam district. According to aqua farmers, MPEDA has been surveying the losses of the farmers after the white spot attack has taken place.

The farmers have been advised to chlorinate the ponds to curb the spread of the disease. The disease is fluid-borne, according to officials of the MPEDA, but birds also account for spreading the disease by picking an affected shrimp from one farm and dropping it into the other.

Sources in the industry said that losses in 40 hectares of farm would amount to losses of crores of rupees to the shrimp farmers. Aqua farmers in the district have petitioned the Tamil Nadu government through the district collector and also MPEDA authorities to bring up a solution to the white spot disease that was leading to the death of several shrimps and thereby huge losses to the farmers.

UP schoolchildren to witness Jal Jeevan Mission works

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, April 25: Children enrolled in Uttar Pradesh schools will now go from village to village to witness the development works of Jal Jeevan Mission.

The state government has decided to conduct exposure visits for students through the Jal Jeevan Yatra programme. Issuing directives to basic education officers (BSAs), the education department has asked them to provide a list of authorized schools and children to the state water and sanitation mission office on priority basis.

To be organised by Namami Gange and the department of rural water supply, in collaboration with the basic education department, the yatra will enable students to witness the entire process of ensur-



ing supply of clean drinking water even in remote areas by the Jal Jeevan Mission.

This is a unique effort by any state in the country, in which school students will be apprised of every little step that goes in the supply of clean drinking water, said a government spokesperson.

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Director-general, school edu-

cation, Vijay Kiran Anand said along with 20 students, two nodal teachers each for boys and girls will be selected from each school for the JGY programme. Children who have participated in the national innovation campaign but could not participate in the educational tour, will be given preference.

In addition, BSAs will be responsible for the safety and security of the students.

Zoo officials look for mate



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kanpur, April 25: After almost two and a half months of controversy, the Kanpur Zoo has finally declared that the sarus crane found by Arif of Amethi in an injured state in February 2022 and nurtured back to health, is a female.

The gender was revealed from the DNA report that arrived from a Secunderabad lab. Zoo officials said that they are now trying to find a suitable mate for the sarus.

The gender was revealed from the DNA report that arrived from a Secunderabad lab

The crane that had been living with Arif for the past one year, was taken from him by the forest department in March

Since it is a female, it is not likely that it will be released in the open.

The crane that had been living with Arif for the past one year, was taken from him by the forest department in March.

On April 16, Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) ornithologist Dr Rajat Bhargava took out a small feather from the chest of the crane and had sent it to Secunderabad for DNA examination and its gender was determined.

As per the zoo authorities, it will now be paired with a male sarus crane from the zoo. Samples of four other sarus cranes in the zoo have been sent to the Secunderabad lab for gender testing.

"After the report arrives, the female sarus crane will initially be kept in an enclosure next to a male crane for socialisation and the behaviour of the female and its male counterparts will be monitored for 15 days. After that, it will be moved into the male crane's enclosure for mating," said Kanpur Zoo director K.K. Singh.

GIRLS OUTPERFORM BOYS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Prayagraj (UP), April 25: Girls outperformed boys in the high school and intermediate examinations conducted by the Uttar Pradesh Secondary Education Council this year, a senior official of the board said while announcing the results here Tuesday.

The pass percentage of girls in the high school examination was 93.34 per cent, while it was 86.64 per cent for the boys. In the intermediate examination, the pass percentage of boys was 69.34 per cent, while it was 83 per cent for girls.

Priyanshi Soni of Sitapur topped the high school exam by scoring 98.33 per cent marks while Shubh Chhapra of Mahoba came first in the intermediate exam by scoring 97.80 per cent marks.

Announcing the results, Mahendra Dev, the director of Secondary Education, said of the 28,63,621 candidates who appeared

THE PASS PERCENTAGE OF GIRLS IN THE HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATION WAS 93.34 PER CENT, WHILE IT WAS 86.64 PER CENT FOR BOYS

in the high school exam, 25,70,987 passed and the pass percentage was 89.78 per cent.

He also said that 25,71,002 candidates appeared for the intermediate examination, of 19,41,717 candidates or 75.52 per cent passed. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath greeted students who passed the exams, their parents and teachers and said the top 10 rank holders of

both exams will be felicitated.

"All of you are the pillars of the golden future of new Uttar Pradesh. May the future of all of you be bright with the grace of Maa Saraswati (the goddess of learning). Students who got top 10 positions at the state level in the 10th and 12th board exams, will be honoured at the state level and those who get top 10 positions at the district level will be honoured at the district level," he tweeted in Hindi.

Dev said the evaluation of answer sheets was completed between March 18 and 31 at 258 evaluation centres in different districts. To ensure that there was no cheating during the exam, CCTV cameras with voice recorders were installed in 8,753 examination centres. This is the first time in the last 30 years that neither any question paper was leaked nor any wrong bundle of question papers was opened and as such there was no re-examination, Dev said.



Girls jubilate after UP Board declared Class 10 and Class 12 exam result in Prayagraj

PTI PHOTO

CCTVs installed in UP jails equipped with AI system

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, April 25: CCTV cameras installed in Uttar Pradesh prisons have been equipped with artificial intelligence (AI) system.

This has been done with a view to maintaining vigil on mafias and criminals lodged in different jails of the state.

A state government spokesman said: "Along with dual view scanner baggage, full human body warm scanner, contactless glasses for meeting rooms and other devices equipped with the new technology have been installed in five high security jails of the state."

The proposal to install sophisticated gadgets in jails was sent to the state government after a high-level meeting under the Chief Minister in which he directed the officers to remove deficiencies in jails security, he added.

"The state government has allocated fund to the prison administration and reforms department in the annual budget 2023-24," he said.

Till now, 145 video conferencing halls have been set up, which include 72 prisons and 73 district courts, to conduct 100 per cent remand of undertrials detained in state prisons through video conferencing.

"Five dual view scanner baggage, five full human body warm scanner, 130 contactless glasses for meeting rooms, five panic alarms systems, 15 night vision binoculars and five light protection system ESE units have been set up in five high security jails, including district jails of Lucknow, Azamgarh, Chitrakoot, Gautam Buddha Nagar and central jail Bareilly," he said. The CCTV surveillance units are being set up in a phased manner to enhance the security system of prisons.

Around 30 cameras have been installed in each prison. "At present, more than 3,600 CCTV cameras have been installed in all the jails of the state. The work of increasing the number of cameras, their restoration and arrangement of servers, including storage in 30 prisons, has been completed," the spokesman said.

"A command centre has been set up for high-level monitoring at the headquarters in which the live feed of the cameras installed in the prisons is being received in the video wall."

A letter has been written to the state government seeking financial sanction for body-worn cameras in 10 jails and sanction for heavy duty washing machines in 10 prisons.

Largest nesting site of Indian skimmers found in Prayagraj

THE SURVEY, WHICH LED TO THE DISCOVERY OF THIS IMPRESSIVE NESTING SITE, WAS UNDERTAKEN UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER OF PRAYAGRAJ, MAHAVEER KAULJALAGI

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Prayagraj, April 25: A team from the Uttar Pradesh forest department and researchers of the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) have discovered a large nesting site of the Indian skimmer (Rynchops albicollis) - a favourite among Indian bird enthusiasts - at Palpur village in Chakka block of Prayagraj, along the banks of the Yamuna.

The survey, which led to the discovery of this impressive nesting site, was undertaken under the guidance of the divisional forest officer (DFO) of Prayagraj, Mahaveer Kauljalagi.

"Finding this large colony of Indian skimmer in an island along the river Yamuna is a milestone in the efforts to protect India's rich biodiversity. The only breeding site till now was in the Chambal basin

and, thereafter, it was spotted at two places along the Ganga at Phaphamau in Prayagraj. And, now, we have found yet another nesting site, that, too, where over 300 nests have been spotted," Kauljalagi said.

Earlier in February, a team of WII experts had spotted breeding site along the Gomti river in Barabanki's Subeha village, some 75 km from Lucknow. There is no evidence of Indian skimmers ever been found along the Gomti river, but for the first time in 2022, the group spotted 57 birds in Subeha and again in 2023. Researchers will now study breeding behaviour of birds in greater detail.

The Indian skimmer, according to experts, is native to the Indian subcontinent. Its striking black-and-white plumage and unique feeding behaviour make it a



favourite among bird enthusiasts. Indian skimmers are specialized feeders that use their elongated lower mandibles to skim the surface of water bodies in search of small fish, Kauljalagi said.

It is a protected species under the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972; however, despite this, the population is declining rapidly due to

habitat loss and degradation. The Indian skimmer belongs to the family Laridae and is listed as vulnerable in the Red List of the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

The discovery of the mass nesting site of Indian skimmers at Prayagraj, which stretches for around 2 km along the banks of

the Yamuna, is a significant achievement in wildlife conservation efforts. This is the first time that such a large congregation of Indian skimmers has been observed at a single location.

The nesting site is estimated to be home to hundreds of Indian skimmers. The DFO of Prayagraj and WII's team have been closely monitoring movements and behaviour of Indian skimmers in the region for several months.

Their persistence and hard work paid off when they discovered the nesting site. "We have formed a dedicated team and have also roped in Ganga Praharis, who will not only keep a close eye on the nesting sites but will also make villagers around here aware of the importance of protecting these beautiful birds," the DFO said.

The researchers will now be able to study the breeding behaviour of the birds in greater detail, as well as the ecological factors that contribute to their survival, the DFO said.

In 2017, the WII and the forest department discovered two new breeding sites of the species at the island in the middle of the Ganga at Phaphamau in Prayagraj.



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, April 25: The Tamil Nadu school education department will soon appoint coordinators for extending the free breakfast scheme to all primary schools in the state.

According to officials from the school education department, a coordinator will be appointed for each educational district in the state.

District education officers (elementary) will oversee the programme which is a flagship programme of the DMK government under Chief Minister MK Stalin.

The department has asked for the details of the number of students in each primary school and have directed teachers and school heads to be part of the programme which ensures that breakfast is provided to all primary school children in the state.

The scheme is expected to cover 30,122 primary schools of the state and benefit 18 lakh students. The state government has already allocated an amount of Rs 500 crores for the project in the recent budget.

Notably, Chief Minister Stalin had inaugurated the free breakfast scheme for primary school students on September 14, 2022, at Adhimoolam primary school, Madurai.

The scheme was launched in 1,545 primary schools across the state at a cost of Rs 33.56 crore and benefitted 1.14 lakh students in the first phase.

The success of the first phase of the programme has prompted the government to extend this project across the state in all government primary schools and an amount of Rs 500 crore is earmarked for the same.



national



The party has decided that those who work against it will not be allowed to remain in it. An order will be issued to this effect soon. We will not allow such a person to remain in the party who tries to divide it

FAROOQ ABDULLAH | NC PRESIDENT

ABHISHEK STARTS CAMPAIGN

Senior TMC leader Abhishek Banerjee Tuesday said polls to 42 Lok Sabha seats in West Bengal will be held on the issue of development and not on the "communal" narrative propagated by the BJP



of the day quote

We have given gas cylinders for ₹500. Every other government in the country is fed up with the Rajasthan government as now even they will have to give cylinders at a cheap price

ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJ CHIEF MINISTER

Urban local body polls are important. Population of the state is rising and so are the problem of cities. These problems are gifts from the BJP as it ruled in the cities for a long time. Mayors in cities were from the BJP be it Lucknow, Kanpur, Agra or Varanasi

AKHILESH YADAV | SP PRESIDENT

Deliberations are going on about how to formalise skilling in our school education system. Today, we discussed with the delegates from Singapore the way forward for a comprehensive and substantive partnership towards skilling

DHARMENDRA PRADHAN | UNION EDUCATION MINISTER

PM flags off Vande Bharat Express, Kochi Water Metro

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, April 25: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Tuesday flagged off Kerala's first Vande Bharat Express and dedicated to the nation various developmental projects, including the Kochi Water Metro, and said as states develop, the country will develop faster. The PM laid foundation stone and dedicated projects worth more than ₹3200 crores at the Central Stadium here. He said the central government lays emphasis on cooperative federalism and believes that if the states develop, it will help in the development of the country.

On a two-day visit of the southern state starting Monday, the PM earlier today flagged off the state's maiden Vande Bharat Express service, which will connect the state capital with Kasaragod, Kerala's northernmost district. Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw echoed similar views when said at the event that prior to 2014 the southern state got only ₹370 crore for railway develop-



ment, whereas this year the allocation stood at ₹2,033 crore. Citing examples like semi-hybrid train, Regional Rapid Transport System, Ro-Ro ferry, and ropeway, he said these were situation-specific solutions that were made in India to address connectivity problems. Even the coaches of the Vande Bharat and the Kochi Water Metro and Kochi Metro were

made in India, he said. Modi further said that not just physical connectivity but digital connectivity too was a priority for the country.

"Projects like Digital Science Park in Thiruvananthapuram will give a fillip to Digital India," he said and highlighted the global appreciation for India's digital system.

Mob breaches Sec 144, sets police station afire in Bengal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kaliaganj (WB), April 25: Violating prohibitory orders under Section 144 CrPC, miscreants set fire to Kaliaganj police station in West Bengal's Uttar Dinajpur district Tuesday to protest against the death of a teenage girl whose body was found in a canal here last week.

The mob also set ablaze several vehicles including two-wheelers parked near the police station building which was reduced to ashes. Two police personnel were injured in the attack.

An official said people allegedly belonging to the Adivasi and Rajbanshi communities organised a "Thana gherao" programme Tuesday afternoon protesting against alleged "police inaction" in the case and claiming that the girl had been raped and murdered.



Preliminary post-mortem examination of the girl's body, however, indicated she had not been raped. While the ruling Trinamool Congress blamed the opposition BJP for the incident, the saffron camp alleged "complete failure" of the law and order machinery.

The protestors, who also demanded suspension of Raiganj Police District SP Md Sana Akhtar, threw stones at the police personnel deployed there before breaking barricades. The police started a baton charge and used water cannons but could not stop the mob from entering the police station and setting it on fire.

"The situation is under control at the moment. We have deployed a huge number of policemen including RAF (Rapid Action Force) personnel," the IPS officer told PTI, adding that two policemen were injured in the clash.

First batch of stranded Indians leaves Sudan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 25: India Tuesday evacuated the first batch of 278 Indians from Sudan aboard naval ship INS Sumedha and rushed in essential relief supplies for its remaining stranded citizens as ceasefire appeared to be holding in the strife-torn African country.

The Indian Navy's second ship, INS Teg, arrived in Port Sudan to bring back more people under New Delhi's mission 'Operation Kaveri' that has been launched to evacuate around 3,000 Indians from Sudan, officials said.

India has set up a control room in the Saudi Arabian city of Jeddah to facilitate evacuation of Indians from Sudan. Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan has reached Jeddah to oversee the evacuation mission. "First batch of stranded Indians leave Sudan under #OperationKaveri. INS Sumedha with 278 people onboard departs Port Sudan for Jeddah," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi tweeted.

From Jeddah, India is set to bring back the Indians home in



military transport aircraft of the Indian Air Force. In another tweet, Bagchi said INS Teg also joined the evacuation mission.

"INS Teg joins #OperationKaveri. Arrives at Port Sudan with additional officials and essential relief supplies for stranded Indians. Will boost ongoing evacuation efforts by Embassy Camp Office at Port Sudan," he said.

Sudan has been witnessing deadly fighting between the country's army and a paramilitary group for the last 12 days that has reportedly left around 400 people dead. India stepped up its efforts to evacuate the Indians from Sudan as a 72-hour truce was agreed to be-



tween the Sudanese army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) following intense negotiations. The Indian Navy said its mission deployed warship INS Sumedha was diverted for evacuation of the citizen's stranded in Sudan.

Referring to the evacuation mission, Muraleedharan said necessary infrastructure is in place in both Port Sudan and Jeddah. "Upon ar-



SEEKING SHELTER: Commuters caught in rain on a street in Ranchi, Jharkhand

SHORT TAKES

Kedarnath shrine opens for devotees

Kedarnath (U'khand): The portals of Kedarnath shrine opened after a winter break Tuesday morning, with thousands of pilgrims braving sub-zero temperatures in the snow-covered town to offer prayers at the Himalayan temple. Temple chief priest Raval Bhima Shankar Ling opened the gates of the temple amid rituals and chanting of shlokas.

Five of family drown in canal

Mandya: In a tragic incident, five persons hailing from a family drowned in a water canal while swimming in Mandya district of Karnataka Tuesday. The personnel from the Fire Force and Emergency Services rushed to the spot and fished out three bodies from the canal. The search is on for the remaining two bodies, police said. The incident took place in the limits of Basaralu police station.

15-year-old girl found dead in WB's Malda

Malda: A 15-year-old girl was found dead in West Bengal's Malda district Tuesday, police said. The body of the girl, a class 10 student, was found in a field in Ujirpur village in Akandaberia in Kaliachak police station area, they said. The girl left her home in Nabaganj Monday evening after stealing money from her sister. A few hours later, she called her family and said that she would return home the next morning, police said. "Her body was found by locals at a field in the morning," a police officer said. Police said they were investigating the case from all angles.

High voltage campaigning by Priyanka, Shah

AGENCIES

Bangalore, April 25: Accusing the BJP government in Karnataka of rampant corruption, Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra Tuesday alleged ₹1.5 lakh crore has been "looted" from the state.

She also expressed confidence about Congress coming to power after the May 10 Assembly polls in Karnataka and taking the state on the path of development.

"What is most sad is the 40 per cent government commission that was there in the state looted you (public). They looted you without any shame," Vadra said while targeting the ruling BJP in the state at a public meeting in T Narasipura of the district here.

Seeking to highlight various scams, contractors' dying by suicide,



THE CONGRESS IS GOING ALL OUT TO UNSEAT THE RULING BJP IN KARNATAKA AND FORM THE NEXT GOVERNMENT VOTING IS SCHEDULED MAY 10 AND THE RESULTS WILL BE OUT MAY 13

and the state contractors association even writing a letter to the Prime Minister alleging scams, she said, "But there was no action, as many of those involved were associated with the BJP. You might have read about ₹8 crore seized (by Lokayukta) from the son of an MLA. Instead of action, the MLA was allowed to carry out a parade."

KARNATAKA POLLS

effited the people. AICC General Secretary in-charge of Karnataka Randeep Singh Surjewala, former minister H C Mahadevappa, and MLA Yathindra Siddaramaiah among others were present. Meanwhile, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said if the Congress comes to power in Karnataka, dynastic politics will be at an all-time high in the state and it will be "afflicted with riots". Addressing a public meeting at Terdal in Belagavi district, the former BJP chief also said the development of the state will be on the "reverse gear" if the Congress forms the government.

"If the Congress comes to power, dynastic politics will be at an all-time high and Karnataka will be afflicted with riots," added Shah, one of the party's key poll strategists and campaigners.

Amritpal quizzed by IB officers in Dibrugarh jail

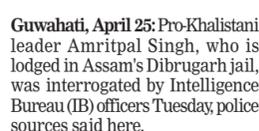
INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Guwahati, April 25: Pro-Khalistani leader Amritpal Singh, who is lodged in Assam's Dibrugarh jail, was interrogated by Intelligence Bureau (IB) officers Tuesday, police sources said here.

The Waris Punjab De (WPD) chief has been kept in a separate cell. As per jail sources, he was not allowed to meet other members of the outfit, including his close aide Papalpreet Singh.

Nine associates of Amritpal were lodged at Dibrugarh Central Jail before he was brought there Sunday. A source in Dibrugarh jail revealed that IB officers went inside the prison this morning and that the interrogation of Waris Punjab De chief is underway. Assam police is tight-lipped on the development.

Prasant Kumar Bhuyan, the Inspector General (Law and Order) of the Assam Police, told IANS, "All central investigation agencies, including IB and RAW, have officers posted in the state. Hence, it is not necessary that somebody from the national capital has to come to interrogate an inmate." He, however, refused to comment on Amritpal's questioning.



Poor air quality linked to cognitive issues in babies: Study

COGNITION IS THE PROCESS OF ACQUIRING KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING THROUGH THOUGHT, EXPERIENCE, AND THE SENSES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 25: Poor air quality in India may be associated with impaired cognition in infants under the age of two, when brain growth is at its peak, according to a study.

Cognition is the process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought, experience, and the senses.

Without action, the researchers said, the negative impact on chil-

dren's long-term brain development could have consequences for life. "Prior work has shown that poor air quality is linked to cognitive deficits in children, as well as to emotional and behavioural problems, which can have a severe impact on families," said lead researcher Professor John Spencer, from the University of East Anglia, UK.

"Very small particulate fragments in the air are a major concern as they can move from the



respiratory tract into the brain," Spencer said. Until now, studies have failed to show a link between poor air quality and cognitive problems in babies, when brain growth is at its peak and the brain may be particularly sensitive to toxins.

"We worked with families in rural India to see how in-home air quality affects infants' cognition," Spencer said. The team collaborated with the Community Empowerment Lab in Lucknow, India—a global health research

and innovation organisation that works with rural communities to engage in science collaboratively.

They worked with families from a range of socio-economic backgrounds in Shivgarh, a rural community in Uttar Pradesh—one of the states most strongly impacted by poor air quality. The study, published in the journal eLife, assessed the visual working memory and visual processing speed of 215 infants using a specially-designed cognition task from October 2017 to June 2019. On one display, the toddlers were shown flashing coloured squares that were always the same after each 'blink'. On a second display, one coloured square changed after each blink. "This task capi-

talises on infant's tendency to look away from something that's visually familiar and towards something new," Spencer said.

"We were interested in whether infants could detect the changing side and how well they did as we made the task harder by including more squares on each display," the researcher added. The team used air quality monitors in the children's homes to measure emission levels and air quality. They also took into account and controlled for family socio-economic status.

The research also indicates that global efforts to improve air quality could have benefits to infants' emerging cognitive abilities.



international



Since taking office, I've spoken to over 1,000 business people - because they are the innovators and change-makers at the heart of our economy, supporting jobs, attracting investment and driving growth
RISHI SUNAK | BRITISH PM

QUAKE JOLTS INDONESIA

A 7.3-magnitude earthquake struck Indonesia's western province of West Sumatra early Tuesday and was potential of triggering a tsunami, the meteorology, climatology and geophysics agency said



of the day quote

Most UN members support reform of the Security Council
ANTONIO GUTERRES | SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UN

Pakistan's ruling coalition is using the pretence of dialogue with the opposition to delay general elections and the government has not yet formally reached out to his party for talks
IMRAN KHAN | FORMER PM OF PAKISTAN

We support the strategic direction and key findings set out in the review, which will strengthen our national security and ensure our readiness for future challenges
ANTHONY ALBANESE | AUSTRALIA PM

Protests in SL over anti-terror bill

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Colombo, April 25: Normal life was disrupted in Sri Lanka's northern and eastern provinces on Tuesday due to widespread protests by the main Tamil party Tamil National Alliance against a new controversial anti-terrorism bill drafted to replace a draconian counter-terrorism law.

The new Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) will replace the much-maligned Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) of 1979. The PTA was introduced as a temporary arrangement to counter the campaign of separatist violence by the Tamil minority militant groups in 1979. On April 1, Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena told reporters that the new counter-terrorism law will be introduced later this month.

The protests, organised by the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), were against the new Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA), political sources from the two provinces said. In the northern Jaffna's Tenmarachchi, Kodikamam and Chavakachcheri, life came to a standstill with all shops and business establishments shut in the

three divisions, they said.

The government in mid-March gazetted a new bill which is set to replace the PTA. The PTA was widely used by the government troops during the LTTE's armed conflict over three decades to set up a separate Tamil homeland in the north and east of the country.

International rights groups and Tamil parties have slammed PTA's provisions that allow arbitrary detention for several years without charges being filed in courts. There have been instances of Tamils being held for involvement with the LTTE for over 20 years without being charged.

The government has also come under pressure from the European Union (EU) to repeal the PTA. Since 2016, the European Union has been urging the government to repeal the PTA and bring in new counter-terrorism legislation in line with international standards.

The EU parliament in mid-2021 resolved that the preferential trade facility of (the Generalised System of Preferences) GSP+ must be scrapped for Sri Lankan exports unless the government took action to repeal the PTA.



A police commando stands near the site of Monday's explosions in Kabal, a town of Pakistan's Swat district, Tuesday. Pakistani police said that twin blasts that struck a counterterrorism facility in the country's northwest was caused by electrical short-circuit

SHORT TAKES

Harry Belafonte dies at 96

New York: Harry Belafonte, the civil rights and entertainment giant who began as a groundbreaking actor and singer and became an activist, humanitarian and conscience of the world has died. He was 96. Belafonte died Tuesday of congestive heart failure at his New York home, his wife Pamela by his side, said Ken Sunshine, of public relations firm Sunshine Sachs Morgan & Lytis. With his glowing, handsome face and silky-husky voice, Belafonte was one of the first Black performers to gain a wide following on film and to sell a million records as a singer.

China eases curbs

Beijing: China Tuesday said it will remove COVID-19 nucleic acid test requirements starting from April 29 for international travellers visiting the country. Travellers entering China need not provide a COVID-19 nucleic acid test result starting from April 29 but still need to have an antigen test result taken within 48 hours before boarding a flight, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning told a media briefing here. "Starting from April 29, inbound travellers may choose to take antigen tests within 48 hours prior to boarding other than nucleic acid tests," Mao said.

Five expelled

Stockholm: Sweden informed Russia Tuesday that five employees of the Russian Embassy in Stockholm were asked to leave the country because they were suspected of spying, Swedish Foreign Minister Tobias Billström said the alleged activities of the five were "incompatible" with their diplomatic status. Billström said Russia's ambassador to Sweden, Viktor Tatarintsev, was informed of the expulsions. The Swedish Security Service, which is known by the acronym SAPO, recently received a list of names of a number of suspected Russian intelligence officers, Swedish broadcaster SVT reported.

Journalist detained

Beijing: A veteran Chinese journalist who worked at a ruling Communist Party-affiliated newspaper and was a Harvard University fellow faces espionage charges after being detained while meeting with a Japanese diplomat in a restaurant, his family said Monday. Dong Yuyu, deputy head of the editorial department at Guangming Daily, regularly met with foreign journalists and diplomats to help understand global trends. But Chinese authorities regarded his contacts with foreign diplomats as evidence of spying, according to a family statement.

Biden launches 2024 re-election bid

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, April 25: President Joe Biden Tuesday launched his re-election bid along with his deputy Kamala Harris, asking Americans to give him more time to "finish the job", less than three years after he defeated his predecessor Donald Trump to become the oldest president in US history.

Biden, the 80-year-old Democrat, made the announcement in a three-minute promotional video that begins with a one-word pitch: Freedom. Biden argues that abortion rights, the defence of democracy, voting rights and the social safety net will be among the most important issues on the ballot in 2024.

"Every generation has a moment where they have had to stand up for democracy. To stand up for their fundamental freedoms. I believe this is ours. That's why I'm running for reelection as President of the United States. Join us. Let's finish the job," Biden said.

Formally announcing to launch his re-election campaign, which has been anticipated for quite some time now, Biden said every generation of Americans has faced a moment when they've had to defend democracy, stand up for our personal freedoms, and stand up for their right to vote and civil rights. "This is ours. Let's finish the job," Biden said. In the video,



Biden turned 80 in November. If re-elected in 2024, he would be the oldest President ever in America

Former US President Donald Trump is currently leading the Republicans to win the party's nomination to challenge him next November

Vice President Harris urged Americans to come together to fight for democracy, continue to make progress, and make sure all Americans can get ahead and thrive

Biden dubbed the 2024 election as a fight against Republican extremism, arguing he needed more time to fully realise his vow to restore the nation's character.

"When I ran for President four years ago, I said we are in a battle for the soul of America - and we still are. The question we are

facing is whether in the years ahead we have more freedom or less freedom, more rights or fewer," Biden said in his video, which opened with images of the January 6, 2021, insurrection and abortion rights activists protesting at the US Supreme Court.

Biden turned 80 in November.

If re-elected in 2024, he would be the oldest President ever in America. Former US President Donald Trump is currently leading the Republicans to win the party's nomination to challenge him next November. Two Indian Americans Nikki Haley and Vivek Ramaswami are also in the GOP presidential race.

Vice President Harris urged Americans to come together to fight for democracy, continue to make progress, and make sure all Americans can get ahead and thrive. "This is a pivotal moment in our history," said Harris, who is the first woman and the first Indian American and first African American to be the vice president of the country.

"For two years we have made transformational investments to build a nation in which everyone can be safe and healthy, find a good job, and retire with dignity. In response, extremists have intensified attacks on basic, foundational freedoms and rights," Harris said in a statement soon after Biden's video was released.

"For example, they want to take away a woman's right to make decisions about her own body. They attack the sacred right to vote and attempt to silence the voice of the people. And they try to block common sense reforms to save lives and keep Americans safe from gun violence," she said.

China minister to visit India for SCO meet

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, April 25: China Tuesday announced that its defence minister General Li Shangfu will visit India this week to attend the meeting of SCO defence ministers from April 27 during which he is expected to hold talks with his Indian counterpart Rajnath Singh on ending the prolonged eastern Ladakh standoff which has severely strained bilateral ties.

Considered a close associate of Chinese President Xi Jinping, Gen. Li's India visit is regarded significant as it comes amid the vexed standoff between the armies of India and China in eastern Ladakh since May 2020.

"Upon invitation, Chinese State Councillor and Defence Minister General Li Shangfu will attend the meeting of the Council of Defense Ministers of the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in New Delhi, India, from April 27-28," China's Ministry of National Defence (MND) said in a statement.

"During the meeting, General Li will address the conference and meet with the heads of delegations from relevant countries to communicate and exchange views on the issues of the international and regional situation, as well as defence and security cooperation", the statement said.

Gen. Li is widely expected to hold a bilateral meeting with defence minister Singh and discuss the progress of the military and diplomatic talks to resolve the festering standoff.

Ahead of Gen Li's visit, the Chinese defence ministry spoke positively about the 18th round of the China-India Corps Commander



Level Meeting held at the Chushul-Moldo border meeting point on the Chinese side on April 23.

It said both sides have agreed to "speed up" the settlement of "relevant issues" related to the prolonged standoff in eastern Ladakh, besides safeguarding peace in the border areas. The two sides had a friendly and candid exchange of views on relevant issues, said the Defence Ministry's statement.

"Under the guidance of the leaders of the two countries and based on the achievements of the meeting between the two foreign ministers, both sides agreed to maintain close contact and dialogue through military and diplomatic channels, speed up the settlement of relevant issues on the western section of the China-India boundary, and continue to safeguard the peace and tranquility in the border areas," it said.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning told the media in Beijing on Monday that the two sides held an in-depth exchange of views on expediting the resolution of relevant issues. "According to the important common understanding of the leaders of both countries, the two sides held an in-depth exchange of views on expediting the resolution of relevant issues," Ning said.

Li's India visit is regarded significant as it comes amid the vexed standoff between the armies of India and China in eastern Ladakh since May 2020

2 killed, 10 injured in Russia-Ukraine war

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kyiv, April 25: A Russian missile hit a museum building in a Ukrainian city Tuesday, killing at least two people and wounding 10 others, part of a relentless barrage that comes as Ukraine is readying its forces for an expected spring counteroffensive.

Ukrainian officials said the Russian military used S-300 air defence missiles to attack Kupiansk in the Kharkiv region, hitting the museum of local history in the city centre. The Russian military has repeatedly used S-300s, which Ukraine's air defences can't intercept, to attack ground targets.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy posted a video from the site that shows the ruined building and emergency responders examining the damage. "The terrorist country is doing everything to destroy us completely," Zelenskyy said. "Our history, our culture, our people. Killing Ukrainians with absolutely barbaric methods."

Zelenskyy said that a museum worker was killed, and Kharkiv regional Gov. Oleh Syniehubov later reported that the body of another victim was pulled from under the rubble. Syniehubov said that three people were hospitalised and seven received minor injuries.

Kupiansk was captured by Russian forces in the earlier stages of the Russian invasion but was reclaimed by Ukrainian forces in a surprise counteroffensive in September.

Prince William got 'very large sum'

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, April 25: Prince William, the heir to the British throne, quietly received "a very large sum of money" in a 2020 settlement with the British newspaper arm of Rupert Murdoch's media empire for phone hacking, according to court documents aired Tuesday in one of his brother's lawsuits.

Prince Harry's lawyer made the revelation in a summary of arguments about why Harry's lawsuit against the publisher of The Sun

PHONE HACK SETTLEMENT



and now-defunct News Of The World should not be thrown out. The suit alleges the newspapers unlawfully gathered information in a scandal dating back two decades. News Group Newspapers, which

Murdoch owns, argued that a High Court judge should throw out phone hacking lawsuits by the prince and by actor Hugh Grant because the claims were brought too late.

But Harry, the Duke of Sussex, said he was prevented from bringing his case because of a secret agreement between the royal family and the newspapers that called for a settlement and apology. The deal, which the prince said was authorized by the late Queen Elizabeth II, would have prevented future litigation from the royals.

Sudan's streets deserted as foreigners, locals flee

REUTERS

Khartoum, April 25: Fighting in Sudan eased Tuesday and more foreigners and locals fled the capital Khartoum, where marauding combatants created what a U.N. agency said was a "high risk of biological hazard" by seizing a laboratory.

The World Health Organization said one of the warring parties had taken control of a national health facility that stores measles and cholera pathogens for vaccinations, and ejected the technicians. It gave few details and did not say which of the two sides - the army or the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) - had captured the lab, which also contains a major blood bank.

An exodus of embassies and aid workers from Africa's third largest



country has raised fears that civilians who remain will be in greater danger if an alternative to hostilities is not found before a three-day truce ends on Thursday.

Yassir Arman, a leading figure in a civilian political coalition, the Forces for Freedom and Change

(FFC), urged humanitarian groups and the international community to help restore water and electricity, and send generators to hospitals. "There are bodies scattered in streets and sick people who cannot find medicine, no water nor electricity. People should be allowed

- ▶ Sporadic fighting despite ceasefire
- ▶ Lull enough to allow more evacuations and departures
- ▶ Sudanese worry about flight of foreign observers
- ▶ Humanitarian situation worsens

to bury their dead during the ceasefire," he said.

One Khartoum resident, who declined to give his name, said he feared that with fewer international observers, fighting forces would show less respect for civilians. The United Nations humanitarian office said it had cut back activities due to the fighting. The U.N. refugee agency forecast that hundreds of thousands of people might flee into

neighbouring countries.

Since the warfare erupted on April 15, tens of thousands have already left for neighbouring Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia and South Sudan, despite the uncertainty of conditions there. With civilians leaving Khartoum in cars and buses, the streets of one of Africa's biggest metropolitan areas were largely emptied of ordinary daily life, with those still in the city huddling at home. RSF fighters were visible in many parts of the city, with the army deployed in other areas.

The fighting has turned residential areas into battlefields. Air strikes and artillery shells have killed at least 459 people, wounded over 4,000, destroyed hospitals and limited food distribution in a nation already reliant on aid for a third of its 46 million people.

business

of the day quote

We have continued to deliver robust sales growth this quarter, which is broad-based with a healthy balance of pricing, volume, and mix

SURESH NARAYANAN | NESTLÉ INDIA CMD

India is a highly diverse heterogeneous country, and as a result, genomic medicine could have transformative potential. With decreasing infant mortality rates, genetic disorders are emerging as an important group of diseases

PREETHA REDDY | APOLLO HOSPITALS GROUP EXECUTIVE VP

With a strong emphasis on creating substitutes to conserve the ecosystem, our tyre has been fully designed & developed using 80 per cent sustainable materials

RAGHUPATI SINGHANIA | JK TYRE CMD

Q4 RESULTS

Bajaj Auto PAT marginally up

Mumbai: Bajaj Auto Ltd Tuesday reported a marginal rise in standalone Profit After Tax at ₹1,468.95 crore for the three months to March 2023. It had posted a standalone PAT of ₹1,432.88 crore in Q4 FY22, Bajaj Auto Ltd said in a release. The company's revenue from operations during the quarter under review increased 12 per cent to ₹8,905 crore from ₹7,974.84 crore in the January-March period of FY22, it added. The growth in revenue from operations was led by the sustained momentum of the domestic business that delivered strong volume-led revenue growth of more than 50 per cent year-on-year, it noted.

TCPL net profit grows by 21 pc

New Delhi: Tata Consumer Products Ltd (TCPL) Tuesday reported a 21.12 per cent rise in its consolidated net profit at ₹289.56 crore in the fourth quarter ended March 31, 2023, led by a mixed growth from volume and price in India business. The company had posted a net profit of ₹239.05 crore in the January-March quarter a year ago, said TCPL, earlier known as Tata Global Beverages Ltd, in a BSE filing. Its revenue from operations was up 13.96 per cent to ₹3,618.73 crore during the quarter under review as against ₹3,175.41 crore in the corresponding period of the preceding fiscal. "It was a very strong quarter with a significant improvement in the growth trends from the earlier quarter," TCPL CFO L Krishnakumar said.

Persistent net jumps 25 pc

Mumbai: Mid-tier IT company Persistent Systems Tuesday reported a 25.1 per cent growth in its March 2023 quarter net profit at ₹251.51 crore. The Pune-based company posted a post-tax net of ₹921 crore for 2022-23, which was a 33.4 per cent growth over the previous fiscal year. For the reporting quarter, its revenue grew 26.3 per cent to ₹2,254 crore, but when compared to the preceding December quarter -- the growth was much slower at 3.9 per cent. Its chief financial officer Sunil Sapre said the company is also impacted by the macro trends and called the demand environment 'tough'.



Open Network for Digital Commerce threatens nobody. Even big e-commerce is not threatened. It only unlocks and opens the doors of opportunity

PIYUSH GOVAL | COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER

AI PILOTS SEEK RATAN TATA INTERVENTION

Air India pilots, who are up in arms against the airline management's decision to unilaterally alter their salary structure and services conditions, Tuesday sought Ratan Tata's intervention in resolving the issue. In a petition, signed by a little over 1,500 AI pilots, the community alleged that the 'pilots' concerns are not being heard or addressed by the current HR team.'



Risks weigh on FY24 growth forecast: FinMin

Factors such as potential risks from El Nino conditions could also lower agricultural output and impact prices, apart from geopolitical conditions, affecting growth and anticipated inflation, the Finance Ministry said in a monthly economic review



risks to our official forecast of 6.5% for real GDP growth in FY24 dominate upside risks," the Finance Ministry said in a monthly economic review.

Factors such as potential risks from El Nino conditions could also lower agricultural output and impact prices, apart from geopolitical conditions, affecting growth and anticipated inflation, the review said.

However, the country is projected to be the world's fastest growing economy in 2023/24 on the back of robust macroeconomic conditions. These include easing inflation, improved current account deficit and a strong banking system.

The Finance Ministry's review also said the country's banking system is less prone to incidents such as collapse of a few banks in

the US and Europe owing to an interest rate tightening cycle.

"Banking supervision is robust with the Reserve Bank of India's overarching coverage of institutions, regardless of asset size, in its bi-annual assessment of financial stability," the review said. Limiting banks' investments in 'held-to-maturity' securities to 23% of deposits insulates value of assets from adverse market developments, the government said. Banks have suitable buffers against securities markets investment fluctuations.

US-based Silicon Valley Bank held bonds that they deemed to be held-to-maturity, or for longer durations, which lost value when interest rates increased, creating losses for the asset side of their balance sheet.

Crackdown on Big Tech looms in UK and EU

AGENCIES

London, April 25: TikTok, Twitter, Facebook, Google, Amazon and other Big Tech companies are facing rising pressure from European authorities as London and Brussels advanced new rules Tuesday to curb the power of digital companies.

The UK government unveiled draft legislation that would give regulators more power to protect consumers from online scams and fake reviews and boost digital competition.

Meanwhile, the European Union was set to release a list of the 19 biggest online platforms and search engines that face extra scrutiny and obligations under the 27-nation bloc's landmark digital rules taking effect later this year.

The updates help solidify Europe's reputation as the global leader in efforts to rein in the power of social media companies and other digital platforms.

Britain's Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers bill proposes giving watchdogs more teeth to draw down the dominance of tech companies, backed by the threat of fines worth up to 10% of their annual revenue.

Under the proposals, online platforms and search engines can be required to give rivals access to their data or be more transparent about how their app stores and marketplaces work.

Personal income tax to GDP ratio rises to 2.94% in FY22

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 25: Personal income tax as a percentage of GDP has gone up from 2.11 per cent in 2014-15 to 2.94 per cent in 2021-22 fiscal, indicating that taxpayer base is widening as a result of the steps taken by the present government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

At a review meeting with the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman was apprised about the impact of various steps taken by the apex direct tax body to widen taxpayer base, the finance ministry said.

The ministry said the personal Income Tax (PIT), which is paid by individuals, to GDP ratio has been steadily increasing from 2.11 in FY 2014-15 to 2.94 in FY 2021-22. The personal income tax collection (including Securities Transaction Tax) increased to over ₹6.96 lakh crore, from over ₹2.65 lakh crore in 2014-15.

Introduction of new data sources in Statement of Financial Transactions (SFT) like dividend and interest; securities; mutual funds and information from GSTIN in recent years has led to 1,118 per cent increase in reported information. This has resulted in addition of information of about 3 crore persons, a finance ministry statement said.

Also, introduction of new tax deducted at source (TDS) codes, which have almost doubled from 36 to 65 in last eight years, led to in-



crease in total reported transaction in FY 2021-22 to 144 crore as compared to the number of reported transactions in FY 2015-16 of 70 crore.

This has resulted in doubling of the number of unique deductees from 4.8 crore (in 2015-16) to 9.2 crore (in 2021-22).

During the meeting, which was attended by Revenue Secretary Sanjay Malhotra, CBDT Chairman Nitin Gupta and all members of the CBDT, efforts for increasing tax payer base, pending disciplinary proceeding cases, disposal of applications for condonation of delay and grant of exemptions under certain sections of the Income Tax Act, 1961, were reviewed. The finance minister emphasised that CBDT should ensure timely and appropriate actions on all applications filed by tax payers and desired a reasonable time frame for disposal of such applications.

She also exhorted CBDT to expand and strengthen its efforts to increase tax payers' awareness regarding the provisions of the direct tax laws and compliance, the ministry said.

REUTERS

New Delhi, April 25: There are risks to India achieving its real growth forecast of 6.5% for the financial year that started April 1, partly due to a rise in oil prices and troubles in the global financial markets, the government said Tuesday.

Earlier this month, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) predicted the Indian economy would grow 5.9% in the 2023-24 financial year, down 0.2% from its January estimate, as it warned that turmoil in the financial system will hurt global growth.

"We reiterate that downside

'Blue-collar job vacancies grew 7% in March'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 25: Overall job vacancies for the blue-collar workforce in India witnessed 7 per cent growth year-on-year in March to 57,11,154, mainly driven by requirements in the security services, a report said Tuesday.

In March 2022, the overall job vacancies for the blue-collar workforce stood at 53,38,456, according to a report by digital job platform Billion Careers, a subsidiary of Quesq Corp. According to the report, the requirement for security service jobs has tripled over the past year and shown a 219 per cent increase on a year-on-year.

The rise in security services in the blue-collar workforce indicates the importance of maintaining a safe and secure work environment, the report said. The companies are now seeking to hire security guards who are approachable, friendly and possess a knack for conflict resolution in the workplace, it stated.

The job roles of event supervisors and on-ground security staff also come under this category, requiring them to have a different perspective on people management.

The report further said the admin and human resource job categories witnessed a rise of 61.75% year-on-year, demonstrating strong demand for HR professionals across various industries. The report is based on data on Billion Careers platform from March 2022 to March 2023. "Despite the changing economic climate, there is an increasing demand for blue-collar workers, especially in the HR/admin and security service job roles. This surge reflects a growing need for skilled professionals," Billion Careers CEO Amit Nigam said.

MSI upgrades its entire range to conform to stricter emission norms



All company hatchbacks, sedans, MPVs, SUVs and commercial vehicles are now compliant with the new BSVI Phase-II real driving emissions regulations, alongside being compatible with E20 fuel as well

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 25: Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) Tuesday said it has upgraded its entire range of vehicles to meet the stricter emission norms under the BSVI regime.

All company hatchbacks, sedans, MPVs, SUVs and commercial vehicles are now compliant with the new BSVI Phase-II real driving emissions (RDE) regulations, alongside being compatible with E20 fuel as well, the auto major said in a statement.

The new RDE compliant Maruti Suzuki cars feature an enhanced on-board diagnostics (OBD) system to monitor emission control systems of the car in real-time and will

notify drivers in case of any malfunction, it added. The products now also come equipped with an electronic stability control (ESC) system, MSI said.

"At Maruti Suzuki, we are always finding new and innovative ways to reduce emissions from our vehicles. The Government's drive to incorporate the new BS6 Phase II norms will go a long way in controlling emissions from vehicles over their entire lifespan," Maruti Suzuki India Chief Technical Officer C V Raman noted.

During this upgrade, the company also took the opportunity to delight customers even more by equipping cars with ESC, a leading safety feature globally, he added.

Maruti Suzuki currently sells 15 models in the country.

From April 1 this year, vehicles need to have an on-board self-diagnostic device to monitor the real time driving emission levels. The device constantly monitors key parts for meeting emission standards such as the catalytic converter and oxygen sensors, to keep a close watch on emissions.

In a scenario wherein the emissions exceed the parameters, the device indicates through warning lights that the vehicle be submitted for a service.

India had leapfrogged to BSVI emission regime from BSIV norm with effect from April 1, 2020. The transition saw the domestic automobile industry pumping in around ₹70,000 crore to upgrade its technology. In 2016, the government asked the automobile industry to upgrade to BSVI norms by April 2020.

Deteriorating air pollution situation in various cities, including Delhi-NCR, was one of the prominent reasons to usher in stricter vehicular emission norms in the country. Sulphur content is the major difference between BSIV and BSVI norms. India adopted Euro-III equivalent (or Bharat Stage-III) fuel with a sulphur content of 350 ppm in 2010 and then took seven years to move to BSIV that had a sulphur content of 50 ppm.

BSVI petrol and diesel contain just 10 parts per million (PPM) of sulphur.

Equity markets log gains for 2nd day

AGENCIES

Mumbai, April 25: Equity benchmarks Sensex and Nifty closed higher for the second straight session Tuesday, helped by buying in power and utility stocks amid positive quarterly numbers announced by heavyweight companies.

However, foreign fund outflows and a muted trend in global equities capped the gains, traders said. In a highly volatile trade, the 30-share BSE Sensex rose 74.61 points or 0.12 per cent to settle at 60,130.71. During the day, it hit a high of 60,268.67 and a low of 60,202.77.

The broader NSE Nifty gained 25.85 points or 0.15 per cent to end at 17,769.25.

Bajaj Finance led the Sensex gainers' chart, spurring up to 2.38 per cent, followed by Bajaj Finserv rising 2.11 per cent and IndusInd Bank closing 1.66 per cent higher. Bharti Airtel, SBI and L&T increased by 1.60 per cent, 1.28 per cent and 0.92 per cent, respectively.

In contrast, HDFC twins, Tech Mahindra, Sun Pharma, Wipro and Axis Bank were among the

main laggards, shedding up to 1.47 per cent.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge remained unchanged and smallcap index inched up 0.19 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, the power went up by 1.49 per cent, utilities rose by 1.32 per cent and bankex went up by 1.49 per cent, financial services rose by 1.21 per cent, oil & gas moved up 0.90 per cent and realty gained by 0.57 per cent. Besides, energy, capital goods and metal were the other gainers.

On the other hand, consumer durables fell by 0.91 per cent, healthcare fell by 0.09 per cent and information and technology declined by 0.08 per cent.

Elsewhere in Asia, equity markets in Shanghai, Seoul and Hong Kong suffered losses, while Tokyo logged gains.

International oil benchmark Brent crude fell 0.29 per cent to USD 82.49 per barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors offloaded shares worth a net ₹412.27 crore Monday, according to exchange data.



More Indians aim to upskill in 2023 versus global counterparts

IN INDIA, 85 PER CENT PROFESSIONALS CONSIDER UPSKILLING IMPORTANT TO FUTURE-PROOF THEIR CAREERS, WHEREAS THE GLOBALLY AVERAGE IS PEGGED AT 76 PER CENT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 25: More Indians consider upskilling key to future-proofing careers as compared to their global counterparts, said a report by edtech platform Great Learning, which also found 71 per cent Indian professionals surveyed confident of retaining their jobs versus 59 per cent, globally.

The report throws light on the latest trends around the intent to upskill, motivation factors driv-

ing people to upskill, hurdles preventing others from upskilling, impact of offices opening up on upskilling, according to a release.

The trends are derived from a combination of Great Learning's own learner behaviour as well as a dipstick among a sample of 3,000 working professionals across the globe.

The report found that more professionals polled in India considered upskilling important to future-proof careers than their



global counterparts. In India, 85 per cent professionals consider upskilling important

to future-proof their careers, whereas the globally average is pegged at only 76 per cent.

Nearly 84 per cent South-East Asian professionals and 76 per cent professionals from Latin America give importance to upskilling when it comes to future-proofing their careers.

In contrast, only 64 per cent and 66 per cent professionals from more developed regions like the US and the Middle East, respectively, consider upskilling important for future-proofing their careers.

The report revealed that 83 per cent Indian professionals plan to upskill in 2023 as against 74 per cent professionals globally.

It found 71 per cent Indian professionals confident of retaining their jobs versus 59 per cent professionals globally.

In stark contrast to the optimism

shared by India's workforce, professionals in the considered international markets were less confident about their job security through 2023 given the uncertain macroeconomic conditions.

"While 71 per cent professionals in India are confident about keeping their jobs in 2023, the global average is 59 per cent. Latin America has the lowest proportion of professionals globally (44 per cent) confident of retaining their jobs this year," it said.

Nearly 59 per cent of professionals in the US are confident about holding on to their jobs while this figure is 60 per cent in South-East Asia and 50 per cent in the Middle East, said the 'Upskilling Trends Report 2023'.

MAIDEN SILVERWARE FOR OFC

All-round Titans crush Mumbai



DAVID MILLER



ABHINAV MANOHAR



NOOR AHMAD

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, April 25: Gujarat Titans produced a clinical performance to outclass Mumbai Indians by 55 runs in a completely lopsided IPL match here Tuesday. Set a stiff target of 208, MI were stopped at 152/9.

MI didn't get the kind of start they would have liked and were struggling at 29 for the loss of captain Rohit Sharma's wicket in six overs, the team failing miserably to utilise the powerplay.

While trying to work the ball on the inside, Rohit got a leading edge and ended up giving a return catch to his opposite number, Hardik Pandya, in the second over.

After the seamers have done their job, star leg-spinner Rashid Khan (2/27) came on and bowled a very economical first over. MI managed to score 13 runs in the seventh over, before Rashid ended Ishan Kishan's painstaking stay in the middle. Three balls later, Rashid had Tilak Varma trapped in front of the wicket to leave MI reeling at 45/3 in the eighth over.

From there, five-time winners MI could not do enough to challenge

the defending champions. Cameron Green chipped in with 33 off 26 balls, while Suryakumar Yadav contributed 23 in 12 balls. Nehal Wadhwa smashed his way to 40 in just 21 deliveries, but their efforts only delayed the inevitable. Besides Rashid, his Afghan teammate Noor Ahmad finished with impressive figures of 3/37.

Earlier, GT's lower middle-order used the long handle to good effect and powered their team to a formidable 207/6. David Miller blazed away to a 22-ball 46, Rahul Tewatia smashed an unbeaten 20 in just five balls, while Abhinav Manohar needed only 21 deliveries to make 42 during a vital partnership of 71 runs for the fifth wicket with the South African. This was after Shubman Gill made a neat 34-ball 56.

Arjun Tendulkar began on a promising note and conceded four runs in the opening over after his skipper Rohit opted to bowl first on winning the toss. MI didn't have to wait long for their first breakthrough as Wriddhiman Saha missed an attempted pull shot to edge one to the keeper off Tendulkar in the first ball of the third over.

Gill gave the GT innings the mo-

mentum it needed after a quiet first five overs. Gill collected 17 runs off Green's first as GT reached 50/1 at the end of the six powerplay overs. However, defending champions GT suffered a major blow when Piyush Chawla (2/34) snared skipper Hardik.

GT were in for another shock as Gill, having played some fine shots on way to his brisk half century, was sent back by Kumar Kartikeya to leave the team 91/3 at the start of the 12th over.

Vijay Shankar was dismissed for 16-ball 19 before Manohar and Miller accelerated with their big hitting. The duo of Manohar and Miller then amassed 22 runs in the 18th over bowled by Green, who was smashed for three sixes.

Finally, Riley Meredith took out Manohar in the beginning of the 19th over. Tewatia had a first ball six, before Miller ended the over with two more maximums.

Brief scores: GT 207/6 (Shubman Gill 56, David Miller 46, Abhinav Manohar 42; Piyush Chawla 2/34, Arjun Tendulkar 1/9) beat MI 152/9 (Nehal Wadhwa 40, Cameron Green 33; Noor Ahmad 3/37, Rashid Khan 2/27, Mohit Sharma 2/38) by 55 runs.

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 25: Odisha FC (OFC) got their hands on their maiden silverware Tuesday as they prevailed over Bengaluru FC (BFC) 2-1 in a thrilling Super Cup final at the EMS Stadium in Kozhikode, Kerala. Clifford Miranda also made history, becoming the first Indian coach to win the tournament.

Diego Mauricio struck twice in the first half to hand a comfortable lead to the Juggernauts. The Blues were left chasing the game and finally reduced the deficit through a Sunil Chhetri penalty strike late in the second half but that was too little too late for them.

BFC, playing their third final of the season, started off strongly in a rain-hit kick-off. The Blues kept plenty of possession in the opposition half, while OFC were con-

tent with sitting back, making a cautious start to their first-ever final.

However, as the rain died down, BFC's command on the ball also went down. OFC began causing trouble from set-pieces, with Carlos Delgado's close-range volley from Sahil Panwar's corner their first real chance. Sandesh Jhingan was on hand to make a last-ditch block to deny the Juggernauts taking a lead.

Miranda's men took the lead in the 23rd minute, when Mauricio's free-kick slipped through the grasp of BFC goalkeeper Gurpreet Singh Sandhu and trickled over the line. The Blues pushed for an equaliser and very nearly found one just before the half hour mark. However, Chhetri whisked the ball wide of the target.

Mauricio doubled the Juggernauts' lead in the 38th minute, against the run of play. Having slipped past his marker in the box,

the Brazilian was at hand to poke home from close range after Jerry Mawihmingthanga nodded the ball down into a dangerous area.

Just before the end of first half, OFC had a chance to add to their lead. It was Jerry causing trouble down the flank, entering the box from the right before thundering a strong effort off the crossbar.

The change of ends saw BFC making quite a few changes to their line-up. The changes helped the Blues push ahead in their quest to reduce the deficit. They came close to doing so through Chhetri, when the skipper rose highest to get his head to a corner, but couldn't find the target.

It took 77 minutes for BFC to test OFC custodian Amrinder with their first attempt on target. And it wasn't particularly threatening as well. The continued efforts of the Blues bore fruit when Sivasakthi

Narayanan was brought down by Aniket Jadhav in the box. Chhetri then stepped up and buried the penalty pull a goal back for the Blues.

The goal forced OFC to make three substitutions in one go as Isaac Vanmalsawma, Saul Crespo, and Paul Ramfangzauva came on for Jerry, Mauricio, and Sekar respectively.

The Blues made one last push in the final minute as Sandesh Jhingan got his head to a cross from Suresh Wangiam, but the defender saw his effort go agonisingly wide, as OFC hung on to emerge victorious.

The Juggernauts will next take the field against former I-League champions Gokulam Kerala FC in the Club Playoffs Saturday. The winner of this tie will secure a spot in the group stage of the AFC Cup 2023-24.

Struggling KKR seek change of fortunes



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, April 25: Kolkata Knight Riders will be desperate to bring their flagging campaign back on track while Royal Challengers Bangalore will look to shrug off the overdependence on its top three batters when the two teams clash in the IPL here Wednesday.

The two-time champions have looked clueless in their last four outings, losing at home while also on the road. The Nitish Rana-led side is currently at seventh spot with just two wins from seven games.

The losses can largely be pegged down to the shoddy performance by KKR batters. They are missing their regular skipper Shreyas Iyer and star all-rounder Shakib-Ali-Hasan.

In the 49-run loss against Chennai Super Kings Sunday, KKR batters were expected to rise to the occasion, chasing a 230 plus score, instead the top-order, comprising the likes of Venkatesh Iyer, Rana and N Jagadeesan crumbled under pressure.

KKR have also struggled to zero in on their opening pair: The former champions have shuffled around with Sunil Narine, Jagadeesan, Litton Das, Jason Roy and Rahmanullah Gurbaz at the top.

Their decision to send Narine to open the innings alongside Jagadeesan against CSK failed as the West Indian departed for a duck. Had it not been for Roy and Rinku Singh's fifties the margin of defeat would have been worse. The duo's performance is the silver lining in an otherwise dismal show against CSK.

But KKR will walk into the game with a slight psychologically edge, having defeated RCB

by 81 runs earlier this season.

Meanwhile, RCB will be high on confidence after eking out a seven-run win over the then table toppers Rajasthan Royals and would be eager to extend their winning streak.

Faf du Plessis and his troops have won four of their seven games, including the last two, and find themselves just outside of the top four in the fifth spot. RCB's wins have come on the back of sensational performers by a few players.

Du Plessis has been in sublime form and has raised several century-stands with Virat Kohli and Glenn Maxwell, who are also in good nick.

Such is the dependence on the three that only they are doing the bulk of the scoring while the other batters have failed to fire. More is expected from the middle-order comprising Dinesh Karthik, Mahipal Lomlor, Shahbaz Ahmed and Suyash Prabhudessai.

Among bowlers, Mohammed Siraj has been in sensational form. The Purple Cap holder has conceded at 7.17 runs per over and has bowled the most dot balls - 89 this season. Siraj is being ably supported by Wayne Parnell and Harshal Patel.

The addition of Sri Lankan spinner Wanindu Hasaranga has also done wonders for the previously struggling RCB bowling unit.



Rahane in, Surya out for WTC Final

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 25: Ajinkya Rahane, who has added a dash of aggression to his batting style, made a comeback to the Indian team Tuesday for the World Test Championship (WTC) final against Australia as the BCCI announced a 15-man squad for the one-off contest. The WTC final will be played in London at the Oval from June 7 to 11.

Aggressive batter Suryakumar Yadav, spinner Kuldeep Yadav and young stumper-batter Ishan Kishan, who were all part of the home series against Australia, have been dropped for the contest. BCCI's five-man selection panel, secretary Jay Shah along with skipper Rohit Sharma and Rahul Dravid met Monday evening to decide on the squad.

Rahane's comeback after 15 months was on predictable lines following Shreyas Iyer's back injury that ruled him out of the grand finale. Iyer recently underwent a surgery in the UK to treat stress fractures in his lower back.

That Rahane was in contention was reported by PTI in its report April 10. Rahane last played a Test

THE SQUAD

Rohit Sharma (C), Shubman Gill, Cheteshwar Pujara, Virat Kohli, Ajinkya Rahane, K L Rahul, KS Bharat (wk), Ravichandran Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Shardul Thakur, Mohammed Shami, Mohammed Siraj, Umesh Yadav and Jaydev Unadkat.

in January, 2022 against South Africa in Cape Town.

His selection has more to do with carrying enough experienced batters in the line-up as Indian teams have had their share of struggles in SENA countries during one off games like these.

The 34-year-old, who led Mumbai during entire domestic season, scored nearly 700 runs but what stood out was how he has improved his attacking game in the IPL and is looking more purposeful than ever before with a strike-rate of 190 in seven games so far. The rest of the

squad led by Rohit Sharma was on predictable lines.

However there is no designated vice captain for the WTC final although it is expected that Cheteshwar Pujara, who was Sharma's deputy in the last two Test matches against Australia at home, would be asked to do the job again. Pujara is currently leading Sussex in the English County Championship.

KS Bharat is the only spe-



cialist wicketkeeper in the 15-man squad, while young Kishan, Kuldeep and Suryakumar, lost their place in the squad. There is every chance that team management might try struggling KL Rahul not only as a middle order but also as a keeper and Rahane could play as an extra batter.

Suryakumar could feel hard done by as he got to play only one Test which isn't an indicator of a cricketer's long format abilities but Sharma and Dravid wanted more experience in batting department.

There are at least four bowling all-rounders in the squad including Ravindra Jadeja, Ravichandran Ashwin, Axar Patel and Shardul Thakur. With the Oval usually assisting spinners during later stages of the game, a second slow bowler could come in handy. Batting deep will be Indian team's mantra and that's been the basis of selection for the one off game.

Mohammed Shami, Mohammed Siraj along with Shardul Thakur will be in contention for first three seam bowling slots. The only man, who as of now, might not be in contention to be selected in playing XI is Jaydev Unadkat, the fifth seamer.

Malik denies divorce rumours with Sania

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Karachi, April 24: Rubbishing divorce rumours with Indian tennis star Sania Mirza, former Pakistan captain Shoaib Malik has blamed their "busy schedule" for the couple not to have seen together in the recent past.

Rumours and speculations about the power couple separating after being married in 2010 were rife after Malik and Sania were not seen together for the past six months.

Appearing on a local television channel in a special Eid show, Malik insisted he and his wife were not in any divorce process neither were they separated. "My wife and son are away on Eid. I wish I could celebrate Eid with my wife and son," he said. The senior cricketer did accept that all marriages go through ups and downs but said this did not mean the relationship was over.

Malik explained why the two had not been seen together for a while now by noting they both had busy schedules as international sports people. He explained that their busy schedules have made it difficult for them to spend time together, but insisted the reports of their separation and differences are baseless.

Odisha roll ball team in quarters



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 25: Odisha roll ball team created history and entered into the quarterfinals of the U-17 National Roll Ball Championship at the Balwadi Stadium in Pune.

This is the first time in the history, where team Odisha U-17 boys reached the last eight stage with an outstanding performance as they blanked Uttar Pradesh 7-0 and Gujarat 12-0 goals. They had a tough outing against Assam playing out a 1-1 stalemate, while their only loss (1-3) came against Tamil Nadu.

The highest goal scorer of the tournament so far is captain of

the Odisha team Pritish Aryan Jena having 11 goals to his name.

"The U-17 boys have given the best performance in this national event and the team is confident of going further in the event," said Partha Sarathi Jena, secretary, Odisha Roll Ball Association (ORBA).

GOALS GALORE

Sundargarh, Bhubaneswar and Boudh scripted big wins, while Jagatsinghpur sealed a 2-0 win over Angul in four different matches of the 62nd Senior Men Inter-District Championship for Sahani Cup football tournament, Tuesday.

Sundargarh humbled Puri 15-1 at the 7th Battalion Ground in

Bhubaneswar: Akash Beck scored five goals (17th, 21st, 39th, 51st & 63rd minutes), while Kishore Khadia struck four (fifth, 67th, 87th & 90th). The other scorers were Swadhin Badhei (53rd & 56th), Sakti Kisan (20th), Mahesh Pradhan (43rd), Jamir Oram (75th) & Prasant Oram (67th). B Siba (67th) found the consolation goal for Puri.

Bhubaneswar decimated Nayagarh 11-2 at the Capital Ground in Bhubaneswar. Bhabagrahi Padihary (33rd, 34th, 45th & 46th) and Papu Majhi (7th, 9th, 56th) shared seven goals between them, while Rajesh Nayak (25th, 45th), Sk Zahid (60th) and Samit Pana (70th) completed the scoresheet. Basanta Hembram (49th) and Munu Gagarai (90th) were on target for Nayagarh.

Boudh crushed Balasore 6-0 at the Bidanasi Ground in Cuttack. Anurag Sahu (29th, 45th), Bikram Naik (72nd, 83rd), Omkar Dehury (51st) and Debashis Behera (54th) found the net for Boudh.

Jagatsinghpur had to toil hard before a couple of late goals by Jadunath Hansda (85th) and Chaturanjan Marandi (90th) helped them seal a 2-0 win against Angul at the OTM Ground in Cuttack.

BABITA ALLEGES RADHICA OVER 'SNATCH' OF REPORT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 25: Former wrestler Babita Phogat Tuesday claimed that fellow oversight committee member Radhica Sreeman snatched the final report on sexual harassment allegations against WFI chief Bri Bhushan Sharan Singh from her before she could read the findings in full, a charge vehemently denied by the former sports administrator.

Babita alleged that she had some objections but Radhica did not let her read the report in full. "I had read just a few pages of the final report and I had some objections but Radhica Sreeman came and snatched the report. She said since I belong to the same family (Phogat), that is holding the protest, I can't read the report," Babita told PTI.

"She was working on behalf of the chairman (Mary Kom) and told me that the chairman has taken a decision (on signing of the report)."

Radhica dismissed the charge as "ridiculous". "Why will I do that? What benefit I will accrue by doing something like that. In fact she read the report 4-5 times and agreed to the findings. Each and every word that was written in the report, was explained to her," Radhica said.

Political support

NEW DELHI: Several politicians, including former Haryana Chief Minister Bhopinder Singh Hooda, and 'khap' leaders Tuesday met with the protesting wrestlers and extended their support to them. Hooda, Udit Raj, another Congress leader, CPI(M) leader Brinda Karat, who was stopped from joining the stir by the wrestlers in January, were welcomed by the wrestlers, a day after they had sought support from all quarters. The Bharat Kisan Union representative also joined the wrestlers' stir.

"Whatever was written in the report is based on testimonies of all those who appeared in the hearing and everything is video recorded, it can't be tampered with. If at all I snatched the report from her why didn't she write that in her dissent note," questioned the veteran administrator. "This is a baseless charge. In fact on the eve of Holi, all the members sat and whatever was being drafted, based on the hearings, Babita was explained each and every word and she was satisfied."

Radhica also said that all members of the committee were requested to assemble at SAI headquarters April 4 for the signing of the report, but Babita did not turn up.